Stage 2: When the System Speaks Through People Who Did Not Build It

GUIDING QUESTION *Pick one customer from two years ago and follow them through every department that touched them. How many of the people in that chain have ever been in a room with an auditor?*

Property: _____ Completed by: _____ Date: _____

How to use this sheet: work through the four parts with the people who own the process. The left-hand text comes from the book; the empty columns are for what is true in your property.

1. Verification Pact: what the market says, what actually holds, and your property

What the market says	What actually holds	In our property
Staff must be able to state the quality policy.	No. Awareness is not a memory test. People need to understand the relevant policy, objectives, contribution, implications of nonconformity and the 2026 culture/ethical-behaviour expectations applicable to them.	
The auditor decides whether the certificate is granted.	No. The audit team makes findings and a recommendation; the certification decision is made through the certification body's independent decision process.	
Agency and casual staff are outside the audit.	Incorrect. People doing work under the organisation's control can be relevant regardless of employment status.	
The auditor interviews only heads of department.	No. Auditors select interviewees based on the audit objectives and evidence needed, including people who actually perform the work.	
A stage 2 may be conducted entirely remotely.	Not as a blanket rule. Remote methods can contribute, but stage 2 must obtain sufficient evidence of implementation and effectiveness in the actual operation.	
Night and weekend operations need not be audited.	Incorrect where those operations are relevant to the scope. Audit planning must take relevant shifts and operating periods into account.	
The audit scope is agreed with the client in advance.	The certification scope and audit plan are established with client information and agreement on logistics, but the client cannot contractually exclude applicable requirements or relevant evidence from audit.	

2. Objective evidence: what an auditor would examine

Line	What to examine	Found? (Yes / Partly / No)	Notes and location
Document	The customer file end to end: enquiry, proposal, contract, annexes, amendments, function sheets, and the closing statement.		
Record	What each department recorded at the time, including the changes and who authorised them, and whether the customer was informed of anything that was not delivered as agreed.		
Read	The induction given to people who work occasionally, against the property's stated awareness arrangements. The gap is usually the whole of the culture and ethics element.		
Told	Ask somebody who works twelve shifts a year what		

Line	What to examine	Found? (Yes / Partly / No)	Notes and location
	they do when something goes wrong. The answer is the property's culture, offered by a person the property has never briefed.		
Seen	The operation on a shift other than the one the system was designed on, which the rules require to be considered and which many properties have never been audited on.		
Absence	There will be no record of the customer having been told about anything that was changed or not delivered. In most files the amendments are visible and the disclosure is not.		

3. Common mistakes: self-check

Mistake	Why it matters	Present here? (Yes / Partly / No)
Preparing the population.	Fifty people cannot be rehearsed, and the attempt produces the theatre Volume 1b described, which has a run length of about a day.	
Preparing people to state the policy.	Recitation has never been the requirement, and this edition, by adding quality culture and ethical behaviour to awareness, has moved the question further away from it.	
Leaving occasional workers outside the awareness arrangements.	They perform the service in the weeks that matter most and they will be spoken to.	
Never walking a customer trace.	It is the certification auditor's characteristic method and the property can perform it on itself for the cost of a day.	
Recording amendments without recording disclosure.	A change agreed verbally with a client and delivered well is a change nobody can demonstrate was agreed.	
Rescuing an answer in the room.	The rescue is more informative to the auditor than the answer, and corrections belong at the closing meeting.	
Managing the auditor.	The team recommends and the certification body decides, with people who were never in the building.	
Assuming the ordinary shift is the audit.	Where shifts operate, they are considered in the audit plan and the extent to which they are audited is justified.	

4. Action plan

Position from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
The property cannot rehearse the population.			
The customer trace is walked in advance, once.			
People who work occasionally are inside the audit.			
The awareness conversation has changed.			
Shifts other than the ordinary one are considered in the plan, and the extent to which they are audited is justified.			

In brief

A Stage 2 evaluates implementation and effectiveness at the operation, and it is the first occasion on which the system speaks through people who did not build it. In a quality certification that population is the whole of

service delivery rather than the functions where the aspects are, which makes rehearsal impossible and makes the reality of the practice the only preparation that works.

Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 2b: The Lens, subchapter 4.5. This sheet does not reproduce the text of any standard; work with your own copy of ISO 9001:2026 from an authorised source.