Where a Stranger Starts in a System With No Aspects Register

GUIDING QUESTION *If a competent stranger had two days in your property and no idea where anything was, which nine documents would they ask for, and in what order? The order is the answer.*

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 our property.

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

What the market says	What actually holds	In our property
The process map is the quality equivalent of an aspects register.	No. A process map can help describe sequence and interaction, but ISO 9001 does not make it a ranked register equivalent to an environmental aspects register.	
A property must rank or score its processes.	No. The standard requires processes and their controls to be determined; it does not require a numerical ranking of every process.	
The auditor follows the clause sequence of the standard.	No. A process-based audit need not follow clause order; audit planning is driven by objectives, scope, processes and evidence.	
The audit plan is fixed before the audit begins.	No. It is planned in advance but can be adjusted when audit evidence, risks or circumstances justify a change.	
Customer contracts are commercial documents outside the audit.	Incorrect. Contracts can contain customer and other requirements that are directly relevant to conformity.	
Complaint records are examined only under clause 9.	No. Complaints can be relevant evidence across customer communication, operational control, nonconforming outputs, corrective action, performance evaluation and improvement.	
An auditor may not use the property's public material as evidence.	Incorrect. Public claims can be relevant evidence where they create or communicate requirements about products and services.	

2. Objective evidence: what an auditor would examine

Line	What to examine	Found? (Yes / Partly / No)	Notes and location
Document	The scope statement, the largest customer agreements, the list of external providers who deliver to a guest, and the record of changes in the cycle.		
Record	Twelve months of complaints as a file that can be sorted, and the property's own record of what it found itself as against what customers found for it.		
Read	The property's public material for the services the agreements concern. It is the fastest available comparison between what has been promised and what has been declared.		
Told	Ask which processes cannot be recovered if they fail. Experienced managers usually answer quickly, and the answer is usually a handful of things.		
Seen	The seams. Where a customer's journey passes from one department or one company to another is a physical place and can be stood in.		

Line	What to examine	Found? (Yes / Partly / No)	Notes and location
Absence	There will be no page listing which agreements carry service undertakings and no list of providers who reach a guest. Both take a morning and neither exists in most certified hotels.		

3. Common mistakes: self-check

Mistake	Why it matters	Present here? (Yes / Partly / No)
Treating the process map as a ranking.	It names processes and their interaction and weights nothing, which is exactly what the standard asks of it and exactly why it cannot direct an audit.	
Scoring the processes to compensate.	A five-point scale invented in a meeting, with no evidence behind it, is a ranking of opinions and adds little to the ranking a certifier will construct.	
Overlooking the contracts.	They are where the requirements the property accepted are written, they are unevenly distributed, and nobody wrote them for an auditor.	
Reading complaints as a queue.	One at a time it is a workflow; sorted it is a distribution, and the distribution is a ranking produced by customers.	
Having no list of providers who reach a guest.	It is where the seams are, a certifier asks for it early, and most properties cannot produce it.	
Ignoring irreversibility.	Recovery reaches almost everything in a hotel, and a certifier with two days will spend them where it does not.	
Assembling the four the week before the audit.	They are useful because the property uses them; produced for an auditor they are four documents nobody reads.	
Assuming the auditor knows something the property does not.	Almost never. They have never seen it before, they have two days, and they cannot go to where the answer is already known.	

4. Action plan

Position from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
The property knows where its obligations are concentrated.			
The complaint log is held as a distribution, not as a queue.			
The list of external providers who reach a guest exists and is current.			
The irreversible processes are identified.			
The property can state what has changed in the cycle.			

In brief

An environmental certifier opens a ranked register the property wrote about itself. A quality system contains no such thing (the process determination names and sequences without weighting), so a quality certifier constructs the ranking in the first hour from documents the property produced for other people entirely.

Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 2b: The Lens, subchapter 4.6. This sheet does not reproduce the text of any standard; work with your own copy of ISO 9001:2026 from an authorised source.