# Metering Is a Management Decision

**GUIDING QUESTION** *Take the list of your sub-meters and read what each one is called. Count how many are named after a machine (chiller, air handling unit, pump set) and how many are named after a part of the business: the kitchen, the laundry, the spa, the banqueting floor. Then ask which of your heads of department could be handed a number this month and asked to do something about it.*

Property: _____ Completed by: _____ Date: _____

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

## 1. Verification Pact: what is commonly believed, what actually holds, and your property

| What is commonly believed | What actually holds | In our property |
|---|---|---|
| «Our building is well metered.» | It may be well metered for diagnosing plant. Ask instead which head of department can be handed a number. | |
| «Metering is a technical question.» | Where to measure decides who can be held answerable. That is a management decision with technical consequences. | |
| «More points give more insight.» | More points on the same axis give more of the same insight. Three points on the other axis change what the property can manage. | |
| «People can be made aware through training.» | Awareness of impact requires the impact to be observable at the boundary of their behaviour. Being told is not the same thing. | |
| «The data would have shown us.» | Four years of correct readings cannot reveal that the boundaries are wrong. Every reading is right about what it measures. | |
| «We will add meters when we need them.» | Adding them later costs panels, isolations and a weekend. During a refurbishment they cost almost nothing. | |

## 2. What the standard requires, and what demonstrates it

*From Table 2.3.a. The third column of the book (what is method, not requirement) is left out here: write what your property actually holds as evidence.*

| What is required | What demonstrates it in a hotel | In our property |
|---|---|---|
| **Plan specifies the data needed for the key characteristics** | A metering schedule that names departments as well as plant | |
| **Operation of significant uses monitored** | A figure that moves when the use is operated differently | |
| **Persons affecting each use identified** | A name beside each use, from the energy review | |
| **Criteria communicated to those persons** | The criterion and the number reaching the same person | |
| **Awareness of the impact of activities on performance** | A head of department who can see the effect of what they changed | |
| **Significant deviations investigated** | A deviation attributable to a department rather than to a board | |
| **Measurement equipment accurate and repeatable** | A record of verification for the points you rely on | |

## 3. The instrument: Table 2.3.b, Who could be handed a number

*The instrument of this subchapter. Fill the third column before proposing any expenditure.*

| Department | What they decide | Measurable today | Proxy, if not |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Kitchen** | When machines are switched on and off | | Gas, if electricity is shared |
| **Laundry** | Load sizes, machine selection, hours | | Water consumption |
| **Spa and pool** | Set points, plant hours, opening times | | Water and make-up heat |
| **Banqueting** | How a room is set up and set down | | Hours sold against a per-event figure |
| **Housekeeping** | Windows, thermostats, floors in service | | Rooms in service on closed floors |
| **Front of house** | Lobby set point overnight | | Night floor consumption |
| **Maintenance** | Everything else | | The plant meters you already have |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

*The rows above are the book's; the empty rows are for lines your property needs to add.*

## 4. Common mistakes: self-check

| Common mistake | Present here? (Yes / Partly / No) | Where we see it |
|---|---|---|
| Specifying metering from a technical brief and expecting a management instrument. | | |
| Launching a departmental programme before checking whether departmental numbers exist. | | |
| Presenting a blended board figure to a department as though it were theirs. | | |
| Assuming awareness can be produced by training where the impact is not observable. | | |
| Missing the refurbishment, which is the one moment when boundaries are cheap to redraw. | | |
| Redrawing everything by department and losing the ability to diagnose the plant. | | |

## 5. Action plan

| Step from the book / gap found | Action in our property | Owner | Deadline |
|---|---|---|---|
| Put your metering points and your heads of department in two columns and look for correspondence. | | | |
| Identify the three or four departments that would act differently with a number. | | | |
| Establish what it would take to give each of them a boundary. | | | |
| Where a true boundary is impractical, use a proxy and say plainly that it is one. | | | |
| Write down now what you want metered at the next refurbishment. | | | |
| Keep the plant axis intact; you need both, and the management axis usually costs only a few added points. | | | |

| Step from the book / gap found | Action in our property | Owner | Deadline |
|---|---|---|---|
| Give the number to the person who takes the decision, not to their director. | | | |
| Ask the head of department what they would want measured, before deciding anything. | | | |
| State what each departmental number excludes, before anybody asks. | | | |
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| | | | |

## In brief

A meter does not exist to record energy. It exists to make somebody answerable for a number, and where it is placed decides who that somebody is. A building can be measured to any depth on the plant axis and still hold nobody to account, and that is a failure of drawing rather than of instrumentation.

*Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 4a: The Helm, subchapter 2.3. This sheet does not reproduce the text of the standard; work with your own copy of ISO 50001:2018 from an authorised source.*