The Lead Auditor, and the Hotel's Side of the Table

GUIDING QUESTION *Think of the last time a certification auditor asked one of your receptionists a question. Who answered? If it was a manager, a coordinator or a consultant standing beside her, the auditor learned what that person knows, not what the receptionist does. And if the auditor's team treated your staff or your guests' information without care, did anybody tell the certification body? Both sides of the table have duties.*

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
«The consultant knows the system best, so he should guide the auditor.»	The auditor needs the hotel's people. A guide arranges and clarifies; he does not answer.	
«Preparing answers helps staff feel confident.»	Scripts teach what to say to auditors. The finding that follows is about awareness.	
«Staff get nervous, so a manager should be present at interviews.»	A guide may be present. Nobody may answer for the person interviewed.	
«The auditor may see anything she asks for.»	The hotel may restrict access to guests' information. The certifier then judges whether other evidence suffices.	
«Complaining about an auditor risks the certificate.»	Certifiers have complaints processes and expect clients to use them.	

2. What the standard requires, and what demonstrates it

From Table 4.5.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 during the audit	In our property
Guides do not interfere	A hotel guide who arranges and clarifies, and staff who answer for themselves	
Observers agreed in advance	Any consultant's presence notified, agreed and silent	
Team disclosed, objections possible	Names and backgrounds of all team members, including technical experts, received beforehand	
Confidential access judged	Conditions for guest data and sensitive areas agreed before the audit	
Competence and awareness	Staff on every shift explaining their own work	
Complaints possible	Feedback to the certifier on the audit team, positive and negative	

3. The instrument: Table 4.5.b, The hotel's side of the table

The instrument of this subchapter. Agreed before the audit and shared with everybody who will meet the auditors.

Role	Who	Does	Does not
Guide	Coordinator or senior manager	Arranges access, introduces, protects guests and confidentiality, clarifies when asked	Answer for others, steer, explain away findings
Head of department	Manager of each area	Explains how the area works and what it controls	Speak for staff at their own work
Staff at work	Receptionists, night team, housekeeping, spa, events	Describe and show what they actually do	Recite prepared answers

Role	Who	Does	Does not
Top management	General manager, owner's representative	Opens and closes; answers for policy, resources and decisions	Delegate its answers to a consultant
Consultant	Only if agreed as observer	Listens; answers only if the auditor asks	Guide, answer, interrupt; hold a fee tied to the result
Audit team	Lead auditor and any technical expert	Gathers evidence within agreed conditions; treats staff with respect	Read, copy or photograph guest data beyond need; enter occupied rooms
Certification body	Its office, after the audit	Receives feedback and complaints; evaluates its auditors	Penalise a client for raising a concern

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
Letting a consultant guide the auditor and answer for staff.		
Leaving a consultant's success fee in place while he attends the audit.		
Preparing scripts of answers for the desk or any other team.		
Letting heads of department speak for what their teams do.		
Failing to agree conditions for access to guests' information beforehand.		
Staying silent about an auditor's conduct for fear of the certificate.		
Leaving the auditor unaccompanied, so that nobody knows who she is.		

5. Action plan

Step from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
Choose the guide from the hotel's own staff.			
Agree any consultant's presence as a silent observer, and remove fees tied to the result.			
Tell every team what to expect, and remove any scripts.			
Agree written conditions for access to guests' information and sensitive areas.			
Read the backgrounds of every audit team member, including technical experts.			
Let staff answer for their own work, with the guide in earshot and silent.			
Record what the auditor asked and what staff said, for the hotel's own use.			
Give the certifier specific feedback on the audit, good and bad.			

Step from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline

In brief

The hotel's side of the table is the hotel. A guide from its own staff arranges, introduces, protects and clarifies; heads of department explain their areas; the people who do the work answer for it, without scripts and without anybody answering for them; top management answers for policy and resources. Any consultant is a silent observer without a stake in the result. Conditions for access to guests' information are agreed in advance, the audit team is checked beforehand, and the hotel gives the certifier honest feedback afterwards.

Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 5b: The Lens, subchapter 4.5. This sheet does not reproduce the text of the standard; work with your own copy of ISO/IEC 27001:2022 from an authorised source.