

Front Office

The Shift Handover Standard

Five steps for handing the desk to the next shift. A promise made to a guest at 14:00 still belongs to the hotel at 23:00, whoever made it and whoever is on.

Who	When	You need
Front desk agents on every shift, checked by the shift lead	Every change of shift, at your hotel's set times	The handover log, open items in the PMS, the float, 10 minutes' overlap
Measured by Every open item has a name and a time · Both agents at the desk for 10 minutes · Float counted and signed by both		

1 Write it first

Fifteen minutes before the end of the shift, write the handover log: open requests, promises with their times, guests to watch, arrivals still due. One line each, with the guest's name and room.

"412, Mrs Laurent: late checkout to 14:00 agreed. Confirm with housekeeping by 09:00."

Common mistake Writing the log during the handover itself. Half of it goes home in the head of the person leaving.

2 Talk it through

Both agents stand at the desk for ten minutes and go through the log aloud, line by line. For each open item the incoming agent asks one question: what exactly has the guest been told?

"Ms Rossi was told her taxi is at 06:15. Has the company confirmed it?"

Common mistake "It's all in the log." The incoming agent reads it at 01:00 and there is nobody left to ask what it meant.

3 Count together

Count the float together and sign the sheet with both names. Check the key encoder and the card terminal both work. Report any difference to the duty manager before the outgoing agent leaves.

"Float €500 counted, correct. Encoder and terminal working. MR and JS, 23:05."

Common mistake Signing for a float you haven't counted because your colleague is in a hurry. The difference is now yours.

4 Own the promises

Each open item now carries the incoming agent's name in the log. If a guest was promised a call at a set time, the new agent makes that call, using the guest's name and the promise as it was given.

"Mr Al-Harbi, my colleague promised to call you about the car. It's confirmed for 09:30."

Common mistake "My colleague dealt with that, and she's gone home." The guest hears that nobody owns the promise.

5 Check next day

Every morning the front office manager reads the last 24 hours of logs and checks three items at random: were they closed, and when? Anything open for more than two shifts goes to the morning meeting.

"3 of 3 checked. 518 car request open since Tuesday 15:00. Raised at the morning meeting."

Common mistake Keeping the log as a diary nobody reads. Within a month the team stops writing in it.

What Goes in the Handover

The lines every handover log covers, each one filled in or marked "none". A blank line is a question nobody asked.

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| ☐ Arrivals still due, with expected times | ☐ Wake-up calls set for the next shift |
| ☐ Departures not yet checked out | ☐ Cars and transfers waiting for confirmation |
| ☐ Promises made, with the time given to the guest | ☐ Messages and parcels waiting for guests |
| ☐ Open requests and who they were passed to | ☐ Lost property logged this shift |
| ☐ Rooms out of order or waiting for engineering | ☐ Float counted and signed by both agents |
| ☐ Guests to watch: unwell, upset, celebrating | ☐ Key log and encoder checked |
| ☐ VIPs in house and the notes on them | |

How to use this with your team

Print it as the header of the log page and brief it at every shift change for a week. The shift leader signs the first handover of each shift; the front office manager spot-checks three a week.

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