

WORKSHEET



The Brand Standard Test

Nine questions to run against every standard in your manual

Most brand manuals contain three kinds of entries: standards that protect the business, standards that made sense once and nobody removed, and standards that can't be enforced because nobody can tell whether they were met.

Run each standard through the questions below. The ones that clear all three sections are worth your field team's time. **The ones that don't are costing you credibility every time someone gets written up for them.**

Work through one section at a time. **If a standard fails Section 1, stop.** Don't spend effort making an unnecessary standard observable.

STANDARD UNDER REVIEW

SECTION 1 Is it worth having?

1. Who does this protect, and how?

The brand, the franchisee, the customer, or the corporation. If you can't name one clearly, that's your answer.

- ☐ Brand
 ☐ Franchisee
 ☐ Customer
☐ Corporation
 ☐ Can't say

How: _____

2. What happens when it isn't followed?

Write the actual consequence, not the category. "Inconsistent experience" is a category. "Customer waits four extra minutes at the counter" is a consequence.

3. Can that damage be quantified?

Not every standard clears this bar, and that's fine. But the ones that do are the ones you can explain to an owner who pushes back.

- ☐ Yes, roughly: _____
☐ No, but the risk is real
☐ No

4. When is deviating from this acceptable?

Every system has locations where the build-out won't take the standard planogram. Decide the exception now, in writing, or your field team will improvise one at a hundred locations.

- ☐ Never
☐ Under these conditions:

SECTION 2 Can it be observed?

5. Would two people inspecting the same location on the same day record the same result?

This is the question that separates a standard from a preference. **If the answer is no, the standard isn't enforceable, no matter what the agreement says.**

- ☐ Yes
☐ No, rewrite it

SECTION 2 Can it be observed? (continued)

6. What exactly does someone look at, and where?

Name the thing and the place. If this line is hard to fill in, the standard is describing a feeling rather than a condition.

Thing: _____

Place: _____

7. What closes it out?

A photo, a temperature reading, a signature, a count. Something that exists after the person leaves.

- **Observation only is a warning sign. It means the record of this standard is one person's memory.**

☐ Photo

☐ Reading or measurement

☐ Document

☐ Observation only

SECTION 3 Can it be enforced?

8. Does it carry legal or safety weight?

These get scored differently and escalate faster. Flag them so they don't sit in the same bucket as a window display.

☐ Legal

☐ Safety

☐ Neither

9. Does it get in the franchisee's way?

Specifically: does it stop the owner from promoting the location, running their business, or explaining the value to a customer? **A standard that makes the unit harder to operate will be quietly ignored,** and every standard your team lets slide teaches owners which other ones are optional.

☐ No

☐ Yes, and here's why it stays anyway:

The verdict

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Keep it. | Clears all three sections. Add it to the review with a defined evidence requirement. |
| ☐ Rewrite it. | The standard matters but fails Section 2. Rewrite it as a thing, in a place, in a condition. Most entries in most manuals land here. |
| ☐ Drop it. | Fails Section 1, or fails Section 2 and can't be rewritten. Cutting these makes the rest of your manual more enforceable, because a review that scores twelve real standards carries more weight than one that scores forty of mixed quality. |

Worked example

AS WRITTEN

"Maintain a clean and welcoming entry area."

Section 1: protects the customer and the brand. Consequence is a first impression that undercuts the brand promise. Hard to quantify but real. No acceptable deviation.

Section 2: fails. Two field managers score "welcoming" differently and both are right.

REWRITTEN

"Entry glass free of handprints and streaks. Floor mat flat, clean, and in position. No boxes, signage, or equipment in the entry path. Photo of the entry from the doorway at open."

Section 2 now clears. One thing, one place, one condition, one piece of evidence.

Verdict: rewrite, then keep.

