



The Complexity Audit

A practical operational worksheet from The Hospitality Cure

Introduction

Most hospitality venues do not collapse because of one major failure.

They slowly become harder to operate.

Menus expand. Prep increases. Waste creeps up. Staff become overwhelmed. Communication breaks down. Owners work longer hours. Systems become inconsistent.

Over time, complexity becomes operational debt.

This short audit is designed to help hospitality owners and operators identify hidden friction inside their business and begin simplifying operations into something calmer, clearer, and more sustainable.

There are no scores here.

This is simply a structured reflection tool designed to help reveal pressure points.

Part One: Menu Complexity

Ask yourself:

Menu Structure

- Are there too many dishes on the menu?
- Are some items rarely sold but still difficult to remove?
- Are there dishes requiring unique ingredients used nowhere else?
- Does service become noticeably harder during busy periods?
- Are specials adding operational stress rather than excitement?

Prep & Workflow

- Are staff arriving earlier and earlier to keep up with prep?
- Are multiple staff doing overlapping prep tasks?
- Is prep often rushed or unfinished before service?
- Are recipes inconsistent between staff members?
- Are you relying on memory instead of systems?

Ingredient Control

- Are ingredients regularly expiring or being thrown away?
- Are there ingredients ordered “just in case”?
- Are there too many supplier orders each week?
- Are portions inconsistent between staff?

Part Two: Labour Pressure

Ask yourself:

Staffing Reality

- Does the venue operate smoothly only when specific people are working?
- Are managers or owners constantly covering gaps?
- Are staff regularly stressed during service?
- Is training inconsistent or informal?
- Are newer staff overwhelmed quickly?

Sustainability

- Are sick days becoming more frequent?
 - Are staff difficult to retain?
 - Are people emotionally exhausted after busy shifts?
 - Are you relying on “pushing harder” instead of improving systems?
 - Does the business depend too heavily on your own energy?
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Part Three: Operational Systems

Ask yourself:

Systems & Procedures

- Are opening and closing procedures written down clearly?
- Are cleaning systems consistent?
- Are recipes properly costed?
- Is wastage tracked?
- Are ordering systems calm and predictable?
- Are stocktakes completed regularly?

Communication

- Are standards communicated clearly?
 - Do staff know what “good” looks like?
 - Are recurring mistakes happening repeatedly?
 - Are expectations dependent on verbal reminders?
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Part Four: The Bigger Picture

Reflect honestly:

- Is the venue becoming calmer as it grows — or more fragile?
 - Are you building systems, or simply working harder?
 - Are complexity and novelty driving decisions?
 - Could the menu be reduced without hurting the business?
 - Are there areas where simplicity would improve quality?
 - Does the business currently support a sustainable life?
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Final Thoughts

Healthy hospitality businesses are rarely the most complicated.

They are usually:

- structured
- repeatable
- calm under pressure
- labour-aware
- operationally disciplined
- and intentionally sustainable.

Complexity is not always visible at first.

But over time, it quietly increases stress, labour pressure, inconsistency, and burnout.

The goal is not perfection.

The goal is to build systems that allow both the business — and the people inside it — to function sustainably.

The Hospitality Cure

Practical hospitality thinking for calmer systems, clearer operations, and better margins.

www.thehospitalitycure.co.nz