12 places your binder disagrees with itself.

SAMPLE. Marsh Lantern Coffee Co. is a made-up company. This is what a Binder Audit looks like.

Binder Audit. Marsh Lantern Coffee Co., New Hire Binder. 21 pages, read cover to cover.

PAGES READ	CONFLICTS	MISSING	QUICK WINS
21	12	4	5

How to read this. Every page was checked against every other page. Each line below names the two pages and what each one says. Nothing here says which one is right. That is the owner's call.

The 12 conflicts

Two pages. Two answers. A new hire reads both.

1. **Payday.**
   Page 2 says payday is every Friday. Page 8 says every other Friday. Pick one.
   What goes wrong: A new hire reads page 2 and expects a check the first Friday.

2. **Midtown closing time.**
   Page 3 says Midtown closes at 8:00 pm, Monday to Saturday. Page 14 says 9:00 pm. Pick one.
   What goes wrong: Closers at Midtown cannot tell when the doors lock.

3. **Heights store manager's cell number.**
   Page 4 gives the Heights store manager's cell as (713) 555-0142. Page 10 gives (713) 555-0124. Find out which is right.
   What goes wrong: A sick employee calls out to a number that may not be the manager's.

4. **Break length.**
   Page 5 says a shift over 6 hours gets a 20-minute break. Page 7 says 30 minutes. Pick one.
   What goes wrong: Two people on the same shift take different breaks. Both can point to the binder.

5. **Shorts.**
   Page 5 says knee-length shorts are fine. Page 6 says no shorts, any time of year. Pick one.
   What goes wrong: Someone follows page 5 on day one and is told to go change.

6. **First pay review.**
   Page 8 says pay is first reviewed after 6 months. Page 20 says pay is reviewed at the 90-day review. Pick one.
   What goes wrong: A new hire walks into the 90-day review expecting a pay talk. The manager has it planned for month six.

7. **Calling out: how much notice.**
   Page 9 says call out at least 2 hours before your shift. Page 10 says 4 hours. Pick one.
   What goes wrong: Someone calls 2 hours ahead, follows the binder, and is still told they broke the rule.

8. **How you earn paid time off.**
Page 9 says you earn 1 hour of PTO for every 30 hours worked, from your first day. Page 20 says you get 40 hours all at once at day 90. Pick one.
What goes wrong: Nobody can tell a new hire how much time off they have.

9. **Till float.**
Page 11 says every till starts the day at $150. Page 13 says $200. Pick one.
What goes wrong: The opening count is off by $50 before the first sale.

10. **Who can give a refund.**
Page 12 says only a shift lead or manager can refund. Page 17 says any barista can refund on the spot. Pick one.
What goes wrong: A barista follows page 17 and breaks the cash rule on page 12.

11. **How long brewed coffee is kept.**
Page 15 says dump brewed coffee after 1 hour. Page 16 says every 2 hours. Pick one.
What goes wrong: The same pot is fine on one page and an hour too old on the other.

12. **Your phone during a shift.**
Page 18 says your phone stays in the back room, not in your apron. Page 19 says keep it in your apron pocket. Pick one.
What goes wrong: Staff are told to carry a phone and told not to, one page apart.

4 things a new hire needs that the binder never says

The binder points at each of these and stops. Nothing here says what the answer should be. Only that it has to be written down.

1. **Who trains you on day 1.**
Page 5 says you shadow on the register on day 1. No page says who trains you or who to ask for when you walk in. Write it down.

2. **Hours for workers under 18.**
Page 5 says the company hires at 16. No page says what hours or shifts someone under 18 can work. Write it down.

3. **How tips are split.**
Pages 8 and 12 say tips are counted and paid on your paycheck. No page says how they are divided between people. Write it down.

4. **After-hours emergency number.**
Page 19 says to call “the after-hours emergency number.” No page gives the number. Write it down.

5 quick wins

None of these change a rule. They make the binder easier to trust.

1. **Make one phone list.**
   Phone numbers are on pages 3, 4 and 10. Put them all on one page. Everywhere else, point to that page.

2. **Date every page.**
   Only 6 of 21 pages say when they were written or revised (pages 7, 8, 9, 10, 18 and 20). Add a “last updated” line to every page so staff can tell which one is newest.

3. **Say what each memo replaces.**
   Pages 10 and 18 are memos pasted into the binder. Neither one says which older page it replaces. Add one line to each.

4. **Say each rule once.**
   Store hours (pages 3 and 14), the break rule (pages 5 and 7) and the till float (pages 11 and 13) each live on two pages. That is how they drifted apart. Keep each rule on one page and point to it from the other.

5. **Add a contents page.**
   There is none. A new hire has to flip through all 21 pages to find “calling out.”

What this audit does not do. It does not say what any rule should be. Where the binder says two things, the owner picks. Where the binder says nothing, the owner writes the answer.

Sample audit. Marsh Lantern Coffee Co. is a made-up company. Every name, phone number and rule in it was invented for this sample.