



THE INVISIBLE SHORTLIST
PRACTICAL DIAGNOSTIC NO. 01

How does AI describe your hotel?

AI DISCOVERY READINESS DIAGNOSTIC

A five-step check for your team. It shows where the facts about your hotel are wrong or different across the web, and what AI assistants say about you today.

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For general managers, revenue and marketing teams, and the agencies that work for them.

Companion to *The Invisible Shortlist* · Version 3, September 2026

Comes with a workbook that guides every step. Free to use, copy and adapt.

	Website	Google	Booking.com	Expedia	Reviews	Other
Name	○	○	—	○	○	—
Address	○	◇	○	✗	○	○
Location	○	○	—	◇	—	○
Rooms	✗	○	○	—	○	○
Room types	○	○	○	○	◇	—
Restaurant	○	—	✗	○	○	○
Spa	◇	○	◇	—	○	○
Pool	○	○	—	○	✗	○
Parking	○	○	○	◇	—	—
Transfer	○	✗	○	—	○	○
Check-in	○	○	◇	○	—	✗
Pets	○	—	○	○	○	◇

○ MATCHES ◇ INCOMPLETE OR UNCLEAR ✗ CONTRADICTS — NOT LISTED

ILLUSTRATION · ONE INVENTED HOTEL, TWELVE FACTS, SIX SOURCES. EACH MARK IS ONE COMPARISON.

FOR THE GENERAL MANAGER

Forward this to the person who looks after your online listings

Travellers now ask AI assistants for hotel advice. The assistants build their answers from what the web says about your hotel. This check shows what the web says, where it is wrong, and what the assistants answer today.

It needs no software and no budget. Your revenue, e-commerce or marketing team can run it, or your agency. Everything happens in one workbook: **ai-discovery-diagnostic-workbook.xlsx**.

A MESSAGE YOU CAN SEND

“Please run the quick check in this workbook for our hotel and send me tab 5 when it is done. Ask AI before you change any listing.”

WHAT COMES BACK TO YOU

Tab 5 of the workbook, one page: how many facts are confirmed, how often AI names your hotel, how often it names your main strength, where the big websites contradict your facts, and the first five problems to fix, each with an owner and a date. It shows counts only. The method is good at finding problems and too rough for a score.

CHOOSE THE SIZE OF THE CHECK

	QUICK CHECK · START HERE	FULL CHECK · LATER, IF USEFUL
Facts	12	23, plus your own
AI answers to record	$3 \times 2 \times 3 = 18$	$6 \times 3 \times 3 = 54$
Website checks	$12 \times 4 = 48$	$23 \times 6 = 138$
Time, rough estimate	About half a day	About two days
Good for	A first look, then every quarter	The first baseline, or after a big change

AI answers: questions × assistants × three runs each. Most hotels should start with the quick check and stop there until it shows a reason to go further.

BEFORE THE TEAM STARTS: FOUR CHECKS

- 1 Is your main competitor open? A closed hotel makes the comparison question useless.
- 2 Use ChatGPT and Gemini: they answer without a login. Perplexity stops after about five questions.
- 3 Note where the computer is. The answers follow its location.
- 4 Take the facts from your team, not from your website.

THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN THE RESULT COMES BACK

- 1 For which reason does AI recommend us, and is it our main strength?
- 2 Did we ask AI before anyone changed a listing?
- 3 Who owns each "correct now" problem, and by when?

WHY THIS CHECK

Your hotel is described in many places. They often disagree.

Take Hotel Aurora, a 22-room family hotel in the Engadine. Aurora is invented, but its story comes from a real hotel we tested in September 2026, with names and details changed.

Aurora has no pool. It has an unheated natural pond in the garden. Expedia calls it a “mountain retreat with seasonal pool”, and Google’s hotel card adds “and pool”. One AI assistant then described a heated outdoor pool in 5 of 9 answers.

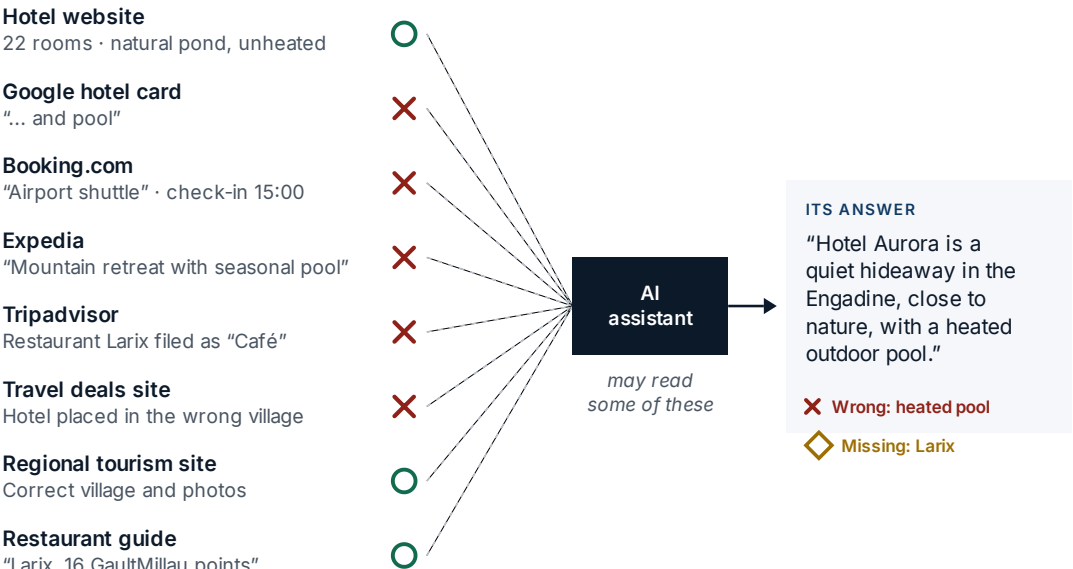
Nobody outside the AI companies knows which sources each assistant uses. So start simply: find out what the web says about your hotel, and correct what is wrong. A guest who books for the pool and finds a cold pond may write a review about it.

WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW YET

We found no study showing that cleaner listings make AI recommend a hotel more often. In one study of 1,885 general web pages, with no hotels in it, adding machine-readable data barely changed how often AI tools cited the pages.¹ So treat any change in AI answers as something you watch and test.

Eight websites describe Hotel Aurora. Five get something wrong.

An AI assistant may read some of them and build its answer from the mistakes.



○ MATCHES ◇ INCOMPLETE OR UNCLEAR × CONTRADICTS — NOT LISTED

Illustration with the invented Hotel Aurora. Which sources an assistant reads, and how much each counts, is not public.

THE FIVE STEPS · EACH HAS ITS OWN TAB IN THE WORKBOOK

STEP 1 · TAB 1

Write down what is true

Your own list of facts, signed off by the GM.

STEP 2 · TAB 2

Ask AI, without help

The same questions, three times each.

STEP 3 · TAB 3

Compare the websites

Each website against your list.

STEP 4 · TABS 4, 5

Sort the problems

Fix first what could change a booking.

STEP 5 · TAB 6

Repeat and compare

Every quarter, and after big changes.

NOW OPEN THE WORKBOOK
Start here

Type your hotel's details once: name, area, competitor, main strength, AI assistants. Do the four checks there. Then work through tabs 1 to 6.

STEP 1 · WRITE DOWN WHAT IS TRUE

Start with your own list of facts

Every later step compares against this list. So it has to be right.

Give each fact one checked answer. Ask the head of each department: rooms, F&B, front office, spa. Write down who confirmed it and when.

Do not copy the facts from your website. The website is one of the sources you check in step 3, and in our pilot it had gaps of its own.

Write “not offered” when the hotel does not offer something. An empty cell means nobody checked.

Fact 5 is your positioning sentence: one sentence that says what kind of hotel you are, and for whom. Hotel Aurora’s reads: “A small family hotel in the Engadine for guests who travel for food.” The GM approves it.

THE RULE FOR THE WHOLE CHECK

Your team decides what is true. AI answers come later, and they get checked against this list.

AREA	#	FACT	QUICK
Identity	1	Official hotel name	●
	2	Street address	●
	3	How you describe the location, in one line	●
	4	Brand or operator, if any	
	5	Category and positioning, in one sentence	●
Location	6	Distance and travel time to the airport	
	7	Distance to three landmarks guests ask about	
Rooms	8	Number of rooms and suites	●
	9	Room categories	
	10	Accessible rooms and access features	
Food and drink	11	Restaurants and bars, with cuisine	●
	12	Opening days and seasonal closures	
Facilities	13	Spa and wellness	●
	14	Pool: indoor or outdoor, seasonal or all year	●
	15	Meeting and event space	
	16	Family facilities	
	17	Parking: where, and the price	●
Policies	18	Airport transfer: on request or scheduled, and the price	●
	19	Check-in and check-out times	●
	20	Pet policy and fee	●
Other	21	Sustainability claims and certificates	
	22	Year opened and last major renovation	
	23	Phone, email and website address	

● In the quick check (12 facts). The full check uses all 23, plus any you add.

NOW OPEN THE WORKBOOK
Tab 1 · Facts

Fill in the 12 facts marked for the quick check. Write who confirmed each one. The GM signs off at the bottom.

STEP 2 · ASK AI, WITHOUT HELPING IT

Ask AI about your hotel before anyone changes a listing

Use the AI assistants that travellers in your main market use. Ask like a guest. Give no links, no files and no background: you want to see what the assistant says on its own.

Do this before step 3. When your team starts fixing listings, you lose the starting point.

- 1 Open a new chat, logged out or in a private window, in your market's language.
- 2 Ask each question three times, each time in a new chat. The answers change: in one study, the hotel in first place stayed the same in only half of repeated searches.²
- 3 Write down why it recommends you, in its own words, and save a screenshot.

THE MOST USEFUL COLUMN

In our pilot, ChatGPT listed the hotel in every answer and never once named its restaurant, the hotel's main strength. Being named is the easy part. The reason AI gives is the finding.

THE SIX QUESTIONS, WRITTEN FOR HOTEL AURORA

DISCOVERY · QUICK “Recommend five hotels in the Engadine for a couple looking for good food and nature.”	CONSIDERATION · QUICK “Tell me about Hotel Aurora in Silvanta. What is it known for?”	COMPARISON · QUICK “Compare Hotel Aurora and Hotel Borealis for a three-night stay.”
ATTRIBUTE “Which hotels in the Engadine have good wellness facilities?”	LOCATION “Which hotels would you recommend close to the Engadine lakes?”	SUITABILITY “Is Hotel Aurora a good choice for a couple looking for good food and nature?”

WHAT AURORA WROTE DOWN

ASSISTANT · RUN	POSITION	WHY IT RECOMMENDS AURORA	NAMES LARIX?	FACTS RIGHT?	PROBLEM FOUND
A · 1	3 of 5	“Small, high-quality, close to nature”	✗ No	○ Yes	Food never mentioned
A · 2	3 of 5	“Quiet, stylish, away from the crowds”	✗ No	○ Yes	Food never mentioned
B · 1	2 of 5	“Top cuisine, pine-wood suites, heated outdoor pool”	○ Yes	✗ No	Invents a heated pool

DISCOVERY QUESTION · MODELLED ON THE PILOT, NAMES CHANGED

NOW OPEN THE WORKBOOK
Tab 2 · Ask AI

First type your hotel's details in the tab Start here. The questions then write themselves. Quick check: 18 rows.

STEP 3 · COMPARE THE WEBSITES

Compare each website with your list. The differences often explain what AI said in step 2.

FACT	WEBSITE	GOOGLE	BOOKING.COM	EXPEDIA	TRIPADVISOR	OTHER SITES	ISSUE
Pool	 Natural pond, unheated	 "and pool"	 Open-air bath	 "Seasonal outdoor pool"	 "Spring-water pool"	 "Natural pool"	Two sites invent a pool
Transfer	 Free station pick-up	—	 "Airport shuttle"	—	—	—	Booking.com invents an airport shuttle
Check-in	 14:00	—	 15:00	 15:00	—	—	Two sites say 15:00
Restaurant	 Larix, 16 GaultMillau	 "Gourmet cuisine"	 Listed, no rating	 "Alpine gastronomy"	 Filed as "Café"	 Guide: 16 points	Main strength missing on booking sites
Parking	 Outdoor free; garage CHF 20	 "Free parking"	 "Free parking"	 "Free self parking"	 "Free parking"	—	Garage fee missing everywhere
Village	 Silvanta	 Silvanta	 No house number	 Municipality only	 Silvanta	 Wrong village	A deals site names the wrong village
Closures	 Not stated	—	—	 Dates listed	—	—	Only Expedia shows the closures
 MATCHES  INCOMPLETE OR UNCLEAR  CONTRADICTS  NOT LISTED HOTEL AURORA · INVENTED EXAMPLE							

Aurora’s pool shows the pattern: Expedia and Google say pool, and an AI assistant in step 2 repeated a heated pool in 5 of 9 answers. Many booking sites take their text from your channel manager or extranet, the systems where you send rates and content. Fix it there once, then check each listing. Check your own website too: facts written as normal text are easier for machines to read than facts inside pictures or PDFs.

LOOK BEYOND THE FACTS

Two descriptions can both be correct and still describe two different hotels. Read each website's own text and compare it with your positioning sentence (fact 5):

- ☐ Type of hotel
- ☐ Area and neighbourhood
- ☐ Guest it is for
- ☐ Signature experiences
- ☐ Restaurants and bars
- ☐ Wellness
- ☐ What makes you different

Note where a website describes a different guest. AI answers often follow.

NOW OPEN THE WORKBOOK
Tab 3 · Channels

Pick one word per cell: Matches, Incomplete, Contradicts or Not listed. Quick check: 12 facts on 4 websites.

STEP 4 · SORT THE PROBLEMS · STEP 5 · REPEAT

Fix what could change a booking first. Then ask the same questions again.

Most hotels find many small differences. For each problem, ask one question: could this change a guest's booking or their stay? Then give it one of four categories and an owner: a role or a person.

THIS WEEK

Correct now

A fact is wrong and could change a booking or cause a complaint.

AURORA EXAMPLE

Expedia: "seasonal outdoor pool"

THIS QUARTER

Improve next

Important information is missing, unclear or described differently.

AURORA EXAMPLE

Larix missing from booking-site descriptions

ONE CHANGE AT A TIME

Test

A change where nobody knows the effect. Change one thing and note the date.

AURORA EXAMPLE

A hotel description that leads with Larix

NEXT RUN

Monitor

Small, with little effect on a booking.

AURORA EXAMPLE

A deals site names the wrong village

REPEAT THE CHECK

ONCE

Baseline

The first full check. Keep the screenshots.

EVERY QUARTER

Quick check

Same questions, same assistants, the 12 quick facts.

AFTER A BIG CHANGE

Check again

Renovation, new brand or operator, a restaurant opens or closes, new website.

The aim is modest. Make the hotel's most important facts clear, the same everywhere, and easy to check. Then watch how AI answers change over time.

NOW OPEN THE WORKBOOK

Tabs 4, 5 and 6

List each problem in tab 4. Tab 5 fills itself in: send it to the GM. Add one line in tab 6 after every run.

Sources. 1 Ahrefs, "We tracked 1,885 pages adding schema. AI citations barely moved", 11 May 2026. About 4,000 comparison pages, 30 days, general web pages, no hotels. AI Overviews citations -4.6%; AI Mode and ChatGPT changes not significant. Ledger L118, Verified. 2 N. Sitter, "AI hotel rankings consistency study 2026". Vendor study, 8 cities, 4,000 Google AI Mode hotel queries, February 2026: first place stable in 50.5% of repeats. Ledger L048, Qualified. Both from the evidence ledger of *The Invisible Shortlist*. Hotel Aurora is invented; its findings are modelled on a pilot run on a real Engadine hotel on 30 September 2026, with names and details changed. Pilot counts describe one hotel on one day.

Free to use, copy and adapt inside your hotel. It describes a method and makes no promise about AI visibility. Comments and corrections: riccardo.giacometti@cross-point.ch