



July, 2012

Dear Judi,

Telephone and Internet mystery shops are useful tools to enhance customer service for those interactions that are not "face-to-face".

Judi

Telephone Mystery Shopping

Telephone mystery shopping allows managers to learn details of employee-customer telephone interactions. Are associates placing clients on hold too long? Do they sound enthusiastic? Is the information in compliance? We have seen clients who use telephone mystery shopping in a variety of ways:

- Financial service and banking mystery shops measures if customer service representatives invite prospective customers into the branch to open a checking account.
- Law firm mystery shops help identify if associates provide accurate information on services.
- Restaurant and bar mystery shops monitor employee phone skills when handling reservations.
- Healthcare, medical practices and doctor's office mystery shops learn if associates provide clear information, invite the caller in for a visit, and encourage prospective patients to choose their medical facilities.
- Automotive companies want to listen to associate calls to learn how they handle inquiries. They want to ensure that associates handle calls well, in order to gain more business from those "calling around" for prices on automotive services.

Telephone mystery shopping meets these needs and many others. Managers use the results to focus training efforts overall for the company and spot small problems before they grow into larger ones. In addition to providing a training focus for the group, mystery shop results can point out training needs at the individual level. Companies face challenges with individual training, including timing and expense of face-to-face training. They need a balance between the advantages of "live practice" and training that is convenient for the employee. For complete article, [click here](#)

Aug 30, 2011 by Confer Inc.

Seven Tips for Coping with Customer Questions

Do you sometimes think your customers are clueless based on the questions they ask? If so, you are not alone.

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A new survey from IT-employment agency Robert Half Technology reveals chief information officers get asked some pretty bizarre questions - and many of them clearly fall outside the realm of an IT staff's job description. Among the IT help-desk requests the surveyed CIOs got:

- Can I turn on the coffeepot with my computer?
- How do I start the Internet?
- Can you come over and plug in this cord for me?
- How do I pirate software?
- Can you recommend a good dry cleaner?

Funny - and yet not. But the range of crazy questions demonstrates how important it is to train customer-service employees to be ready for anything.

Here are seven tips for excellent customer service that any business can use:

Listen. Sometimes, customers just need to know someone at the company is interested in their problem, notes John Tschohl, co-author of *Achieving Excellence Through Customer Service*.

Apologize. Don't engage in fault-finding or laying blame, but do let the customer know you are sorry they had a problem, says Tschohl. Take them seriously. Customers' questions may seem ridiculous, but they're important to that customer. Try not to laugh.

Stay calm. Customers may be irate, frustrated, or just irritating. But don't get down on their level, ever. Just staying calm can make customers feel you care and have the ability to help them.

Suggest solutions. Help-desk workers should have the power to resolve more than 95 percent of customer issues without having to pass the customer on to another person. Allow line workers to give out free coupons, accept returns, give refunds, and take other needed remedies without having to consult anyone. Then they can offer customers a range of options for resolving their problem, and get the job done, Tschohl says.

Be available. These days, smart customer service means setting up a help desk on Facebook, Twitter, or wherever else your customers hang out online.

Acknowledge your limits. If you're asked a crazy question like the one above, simply say that you're sorry their request isn't within the scope of what your company provides. You can't be everything to everyone.

By Carol Tice

[Entrepreneur, April 2012](#)

Mystery Shopping - Step Beyond the Guest Card

As we have commented on before, mystery shopping services are an effective training tool. They are not something to be used to write someone up. Mystery shopping services provide an opportunity for the leasing professional to enhance their skill set. However if a leasing

professional is going to progress in their career and if they want to improve their overall scores they need to step beyond the guest card.

Where we see the most challenges in shops is usually the telephone and internet category. Why is that? More than likely it is a result of the lack of face to face interaction that inhibits a flowing conversation. A flowing conversation is such a crucial element to the leasing cycle. When we don't have that face to face interaction then we can sometimes forget how to talk. [Click here](#) for complete article.

By Jonathan Saar
The Training Factor

Upcoming Conferences:

Corporate Researchers Conference - Sept 19-21 in Dallas. For more information, [click here](#).

Social, Local, Mobile Market Research Innovations Congress - Dec 4th & 5th in San Francisco. For more information, [click here](#)

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