



April 2015 Client Newsletter

Dear Judi,

Since you have an interest in mystery shopping, I thought you'd enjoy the perspectives below.

Judi

How Mystery Shopping Programs Can Evaluate Experiences From Many Angles

A mystery shopping firm is called upon to see, from a customer's eye-view, just how well you might be providing customer service. There are, therefore, many ways to go about evaluating a customer's experience at your company. You can request that the mystery shopper hired to do the job just answers questions based on his or her experience shopping in the company. Secondly, you might ask for more elaborate evaluations, using standards of measurements that can be calibrated across multiple shoppers, usually in the form of a scorecard type of questionnaire.

A third method is to instruct the mystery shopper to keep a diary of her experiences in the store or bank. The diary may be somewhat structured, containing suggested questions the shopper should answer (How did you feel? What were you thinking when...?) Finally, a mystery shopping firm train their mystery shoppers based on specific criteria that the business requests. Perhaps the business is a hair salon and the firm needs an older woman with problematic hair to be the mystery shopper, for example.

Each of these methods has its own strengths and weaknesses. What's right for one company may be a totally inappropriate method for another. The article, [What flavour of Mystery Shopper research is right for you?](#) is a good discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the four different methods used in mystery shopping programs.

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3 Ways Mystery Shopping Keeps Costs in Check

1. Branding

Have you ever gone into a hotel that didn't quite seem like it represented the brand printed on the outdoor sign? One of the more common tasks of the mystery shopper is to check for brand integration - especially in establishments that have recently experienced a change in ownership. The hope is that feedback from the shopper can give chain owners a sense of how their brand identity is translating at the customer level. This saves you money by making sure you get exactly what you pay for. For instance, you shouldn't have to pay four-star hotel prices on a room that displays the branding of a three-star chain.

2. Customer Service Companies are starting to pay attention to how they treat their customers; according to a study by American Express "seven in ten Americans (70%) are willing to spend an average of 13% more with companies they believe provide excellent customer service." How does this directly save you money? Companies that use mystery shoppers to audit customer care are more likely to use that information to tweak their processes to be more customer-friendly - they want a piece of that 13% of additional spending. This, in turn, can save you time and money by making sure you receive proper service the first time you enter a store or restaurant. There is monetary value in not having to return an item, leave a store mid-transaction or suffer through a disappointing experience.

3. Filling the Gaps of Officials We like to think that health inspectors and government regulators will save us from the perils of outdated food products or shoddy handling practices. The reality, however, is that most establishments only get visited a few times every 12 months. Iowa restaurants and grocery stores, for example, only get audited twice a year - provided there is no obvious reason to visit more frequently. Mystery shoppers, on the other hand, can audit stores many times a year - even several times a month - and their findings go directly to the store officials in charge of implementing health and safety processes. This is important to the consumer who can't afford to get sick in the months between inspections; responsible stores will make changes to issues that could affect customer safety right away and not wait for the government to catch their errors.

The Bottom Line There's much more to the practice of mystery shopping than getting free food and fabulous shopping experiences for pay. Shoppers work hard to catch every detail of their secret visit, providing pages upon pages of documentation for store owners to use for process improvements. As long as there is a choice in places to shop, you are ultimately in a position to use your money how you see fit. Mystery shoppers help you stretch that dollar by limiting the risk that a bad experience will happen in the first place.

For complete article, [click here](#).

By Investopedia

Customer Retention Facts:

- Most companies will hear complaints from 4% of its dissatisfied customers while 96% will quietly walk away. Ninety-one percent will never return.
- Seventy percent of complaining customers will buy from a company again if the problem is resolved in their favor; 95% if it is resolved on the spot.

Upcoming Events:

The Cleveland AMA Market Research conference - April 23 in Cleveland. For more information, [click here](#).

ESOMAR Carnival of Insights: Celebrating Research conference - April 26-28 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. For more information, [click here](#).

Loyalty Expo on April 27-29 in Orlando. For more information, [click here.](#)

IQPC's Market Research for Brand Innovation conference on April 27-29 in Chicago. For more information, [click here.](#)

Worldwide Business Research conference on **Digital Marketing for Financial Services** - April 27-29 in Miami. For more information, [click here.](#)

Innovation Enterprise: Simplify Digital Analytics conference on April 29-30 in San Francisco. For more information, [click here.](#)

The Next Generation Retail Summit 2015 on May 4-6 in San Antonio. For more information, [click here.](#)

The Yale School of Management - The 2015 Customer Insights Conference on May 8-9 in New Haven. For more information, [click here.](#)

Red 7 Media's Experiential Marketing Summit - May 11-13 in San Francisco. For more information, [click here.](#)

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