

Get paid to shop!

FabJob Guide to
**Become a
Mystery
Shopper**



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1. Introduction

1.1 A Career as a Mystery Shopper

Congratulations on choosing a rewarding career as a mystery shopper!

Yes, you really can get paid to shop! Mystery shopping is one of the most effective ways for retail and service companies to monitor how they are doing. Retail stores, hotels, restaurants, theaters, property management companies, and automobile dealers are among the many industries that utilize mystery shoppers to help improve their customer service.

For any business to be successful, it must maintain customer satisfaction. An organization can better serve its customers if it understands how its customers are being assisted and if its product or service is being sold or presented as intended. Objectively measuring service is essential because studies have found that only five percent of unhappy

customers register complaints, while 95 percent simply stop returning to the business after a negative experience. Mystery shopping companies and their shoppers are the link that keeps the corporations informed and allows for improvements or necessary changes to be made for a more positive customer experience.

You will discover how to get started and succeed in this fabulous career in this guide, the FabJob Guide to Become a Mystery Shopper.

This chapter lays the foundation for the rest of the guide. In the pages that follow, you will learn about mystery shopping as a profession, the benefits of this career, and the steps you will need to take to get started.

1.2 What Do Mystery Shoppers Do?

A mystery shopper is like an undercover agent, posing as a regular shopper to evaluate and assess a place of business according to the client's criteria.

All mystery shops have different objectives. In most cases, "shops" are done to find out about the level of service provided to customers. Some may require shoppers to verify that cashiers are properly handling cash, or to make sure that sales associates are knowledgeable about the merchandise they sell, or to find out whether a salesperson mentions specific features of a product or service of their company. Comparison shops are also common. In a comparison shop, you are required to shop not only your client, but also your client's competitor for objectivity and assessment.

When you are on a mystery shopping assignment, you will seek answers to questions such as:

- Were you greeted when you entered the store?
- How long did it take for a sales associate to offer you help?
- How many rings until the phone was answered?
- Were the shelves properly stocked?
- Were the aisles clear?

- Did the waiter suggest an appetizer to begin your meal?
- Were the restrooms clean and working?
- Did the salesperson tell you about the available service contract?
- Did the associate explain the four benefits of opening a Daily Interest Savings Account?
- Did the cashier properly count out your change?
- Did the associate offer another item during the return of your purchase?

After completing the shop, you will fill out either a written or, in most cases, an online report and forward it to your mystery shopping company. Every evaluation you finish aids the client in improving the service that his company provides.

1.3 Why Mystery Shoppers are Needed

Mystery shopping services are one of the most effective quality control programs available for those in the customer service sector. Mystery shopping is an objective view of a place of business through the eyes of an educated shopper. Using mystery shoppers for repeated, impartial evaluations allows an organization to accurately assess its customer service process. Mystery shopping provides organizations with data concerning why customers choose whether to return to a place of business, and helps them review factors that can affect customer contentment and staff performance.

Today's business service environment is extremely competitive. With all the shopping and service opportunities available to the consumer, organizations need to set themselves apart from their competitors. Mystery shoppers can provide a company with feedback on customer service, product knowledge, the handling of returns, company procedures, operational objectives, salesmanship, and professionalism.

Aside from customer satisfaction and staff conduct, mystery shoppers aid organizations in several other areas, including improved transaction procedures, monitoring new procedures, loss prevention and staff member recognition.

1.4 The Benefits of this Profession

Working as a mystery shopper has endless benefits, particularly if you like to set your own schedule and desire flexibility. You often get to pick the time and day you want to do your shop, within a certain time frame. This means you can work as a mystery shopper in addition to any other career you have, or coordinate your shops around family or other obligations. I have even done assignments in different cities when traveling or visiting relatives!

Most assignments will rarely require you to spend more than an hour evaluating a company or business. This means more free time for you to follow other interests. Many mystery shopping companies post their assignments for their trained shoppers. This allows you to choose shops that are of interest to you, and allows for a more meaningful work experience.

Mystery shoppers are almost always reimbursed for everything they buy. If you are not reimbursed for an item, you will be compensated in some other way. Plenty of freebies are available also—free meals when evaluating restaurants, free clothing items at retail shops, etc. I even received a \$250 pair of prescription glasses when evaluating an eye care provider!

Aside from the flexibility and monetary gains, working as a mystery shopper is a fun and fulfilling career with plenty of variety. During my first three months as a mystery shopper, I evaluated restaurants, retail stores, banks, automobile service shops, a childcare center, and a golf course. Every assignment has been challenging and interesting. I have felt personal satisfaction and pride in realizing that I am helping to improve customer service standards and shopping experiences in my own neighborhood!

If you are well-organized, detail-oriented, observant, able to meet deadlines, and are looking for an interesting and exciting work experience, mystery shopping is for you!