

## Foreword

Thank you for purchasing this book. In these pages you will find everything you need to know to begin a successful career as a mystery shopper.

This book was written under a pseudonym for ethical reasons and in order to protect confidentiality agreements. The people featured in this book are real, but their names have been changed for the same reasons.

Enjoy the knowledge this book will give you. Good luck!

# Introduction

Congratulations on buying this e-book and taking the first crucial step to becoming a professional secret shopper. Mystery shopping is a fun, rewarding career that allows you to get paid for doing something you already do.

While mystery shopping will probably not make you enough money for an early retirement in luxury to the Cayman Islands, it will earn you some extra coin to pay bills, or buy a little something special for yourself or a loved one.

Are you ready to get started? Then read on! This book will tell you everything you ever wanted to know about becoming a successful mystery shopper.

## 1.1 What is Mystery Shopping?

Mystery shopping (also known as secret shopping, service evaluating, service investigating, ghost shopping or quality auditing) is a technique used by businesses to determine the level of service provided by their employees. For a business to be successful, it must keep the customer satisfied. As the saying goes, a happy customer is a loyal customer. And a loyal customer means more money in the pockets of business owners.

Studies show that only five per cent of unhappy customers register complaints. The remaining 95 per cent silently take their business elsewhere. This results in a huge loss of money for the affected companies. So to prevent this, business owners hire ordinary people, like you and me, to act like undercover agents of the retail world.

As an undercover agent of the retail world, you will turn an average, everyday shopping trip into a test of all your observation, and sometimes acting, skills. You will seek answers to questions like:

- Were you greeted in a friendly manner when you entered the store?
- Did the sales representative use a suggestive selling technique?
- Were the washrooms clean and well maintained?
- How long did it take for an associate to offer to help you?
- Did the cashier deduct the amount of all your coupons from your final bill and properly count out your change?
- Was the establishment well lit and clean?
- Did the server suggest an appetizer or alcoholic beverage with your meal?
- Did the sales representative tell you about an available service contract?
- Were employees knowledgeable about the products offered?
- Did the employees present a professional image?

- Did the associate explain the top three benefits if you were to invest with a certain company?
- Was your call answered promptly and pleasantly?
- Are proper business hours being maintained?

Depending on the needs of each company, you may sometimes be required to buy an item and be reimbursed for the price. Other times you will be doing more observing than shopping.

After completing the shop you fill out a written report and forward it to your mystery shopping company or directly to the owners of the business evaluated. In most cases companies want the report completed using an online database. Sometimes a report is accepted as an e-mail attachment. Few companies accept surface mail submissions for the simple reason of time. It's crucial for businesses to receive evaluations as soon as possible and e-mail allows this to happen.

Business owners often like to know what their competitors are doing, so they hire mystery shoppers to complete comparison shops. In a comparison shop you are required to shop not only your client, but also your client's competitor. In a comparison shop you evaluate the competitor company based on the criteria supplied by your client.

Mystery shoppers have varied levels of education, and come from every ethnic group and all income levels. Shoppers can be male or female, employed or unemployed, homemakers or business owners, or retirees or students.