

Professional Standards and Ethical Conduct – Best Business Practices

This section is intended to guide members in providing professional, ethical and reliable services. These recommendations are part of our mission to:

Promote excellence in mystery shopping; and
Enhance the image of mystery shopping.

Security - Keep questionnaires, products and information secure.

- obtain non-disclosure statements from all employees and subcontractors;
- return materials to the client within a reasonable time frame, or as requested;
- do not destroy materials without client authorization.

Clear Communication - Provide effective communication with clients.

- provide bids in writing;
- provide payment procedures and cancellation terms as part of a proposal or cost estimate;
- inform clients immediately of any inability to complete projects;
- do not schedule more work than can be effectively completed;
- communicate company business policies to clients up front;
- agree upon acceptable reporting procedures in advance;
- send written confirmation of project specs;
- advise clients of MSPA affiliation and intent to abide by Code of Professional Standards;
- obtain release statements from clients if their employees are to be recorded (audio or video).

Professionalism - Promote respect and trust.

- abide by contracts;
- supply responsible and realistic costing and timing;
- notify the client as early as possible of a cancellation or postponement;
- provide concise, clear, written instructions;
- notify the data collector of changes in project specifications as they occur;

Public Relations - Be an advocate for the industry and MSPA.

- provide communities with positive information regarding the potential benefits of mystery shopping;
- help educate industries about mystery shopping;
- avoid activities harmful to the mystery shopping industry;
- fairly compensate employees and subcontractors;
- insist on compliance with standards and encourage continuous improvement;
- provide communities with positive information regarding the potential benefit of affiliation to MSPA.

Image Projection

Data collectors are the industry's ambassadors to the business community and should conduct themselves as such. Encourage them to:

- exhibit professionalism by being pleasant and courteous;
- show pride in themselves and their work through their appearance, manner, and conduct;
- provide honest information on all projects.