

August 2023

By [Eero Palm](#), CEO at [Trendline Analytics](#)

Why do you need Mystery Shopping? Health check your service...

The question “Why?” can be viewed in different ways. Firstly, “Why?” as in “Why do it at all? It’s not necessary or meaningful” or “Why? I don’t quite understand it, but I’d like to understand”.

I’m not entirely sure because corporate cultures can be quite different. Often, in the past, there were cases where businesses wanted to use the mystery shopping service in order to “coach” weaker employees or to keep the staff “on edge”. Some mystery shopping could be highly critical, quite subjective, relying on the individual mystery shopper’s personal opinions, irrespective of their credentials in the field of customer service. This approach undoubtedly creates some resistance and tension. However, for the purposes of this article, let’s assume that the above-mentioned issues do not apply, and mystery shopping is conducted today in a professional, well executed and in an objective and empathetic manner!

So, what does it mean to be done well? The answer: well-executed mystery shopping visits can support and serve customer service representatives. It’s a service meant to assist them, encourage improvement and recognise excellence. Thoughtfully conducted mystery shopping can be likened to handling a delicate health check – not something meant for public distribution, but to take personal action or pride at good health.

Why take a blood sample?

I am no Doctor, but it seems that when a person’s blood sample is taken, there is a specific purpose behind it. Before we start, it’s crucial to determine what data needs to be analysed. Is it to check iron levels, blood sugar, or search for infection, among other things? Additionally, it’s essential to know the correct (desired) level of said iron or sugar to compare the results accurately. Once the sample has been taken as painlessly as possible, an expert needs to analyse the data. Based on this analysis, the patient’s health status should be personally and privately explained, along with any

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necessary steps to improve. For example, your family doctor might recommend specific medications or other actions deemed necessary.

And now, the most critical part! All of this effort becomes pointless if the patient doesn't follow the advice! However, if they do, their next blood test after a few months will show significant changes. The focus won't just be on the numbers in the test, but also on their overall well-being and improved health. That's the ultimate goal of the process. Does all this sound familiar?

Invest in your personal development with the help of mystery shopping!

You probably already see similarities between mystery shopping and the blood test above. The scale of mystery shopping must be balanced, objective and have specific focus. Data needs to be thoroughly analysed before being brought to you, the customer service expert: what to concentrate on, why, and how. Pure criticism for the sake of it is undoubtedly demoralising - imagine if a family doctor simply criticised you without offering any solutions regarding your health. So, during a manager-employee feedback conversation, clear steps should be provided to guide on why, what, how, and when to proceed. And there we go! Success depends on the doctor, their diagnosis the patient and the cure – or the expert evaluation and personal ownership and action. If a frontline service representative understands that the entire process helps them achieve their job responsibilities and the specific company's service standards, then accepting the advice becomes much easier.

Ultimately, it's us who have to live with our health every day, not the doctor. When you feel like a fish in water while serving customers, it brings a comfortable feeling. Those 8 (or even more) hours spent working daily become much more enjoyable, stress-free, easier, happier, more meaningful, productive, exciting, varied, motivating, developmental, self-confident, calm, and overall, more human! Are you mature enough to utilise the information gathered through mystery shopping to your advantage? The phrase we often heard in school, "You're not studying for the teacher!" takes on a fresh meaning as an adult. As such, you can better adapt knowledge to real-life situations. Maybe

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we should all listen to those that help us understand our strengths and weaknesses, then take ownership and act - many of us think in hindsight that we should have diligently studied foreign languages when we found ourselves as adults in a different environment.

Do what is within your power!

Of course, line managers and internal trainers, who use the data collected through a mystery shopping service, must act wisely for any situation to improve - that's their responsibility. It is essential to remember that giving feedback and advice is a skill it can be challenging and uncomfortable - managers often feel uncertain in that role. Good Doctors do their part with care and empathy, coaching good actions and recognising improvements. While seeing a white coat might still cause some anxiety, and a prick from that needle will be momentarily uncomfortable, they are for the greater good - focus on the bigger picture and confidently use the diagnosis to your advantage!
