

## ***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.