

# The 'Multiplier Effect' in Mystery Shopping

## How Estate Agents can benefit



Mystery shopping, when designed and executed professionally, is an incredibly powerful weapon in the fight against poor customer experience and sub-optimal sales processes.

**BEST IN CLASS Mystery Shopping** offers 3 exceptional features which multiply the potential insights available, and the consequent business improvements that can be directly achieved:

1. Measures performance across multi-stage customer journeys and interactions
2. Assesses multiple communication channels
3. Delivers results in multimedia formats for maximum impact

## 1 MULTI-STAGE CUSTOMER JOURNEYS

Measuring the customer experience at **different time points** on a customer's property (sale or purchase) timeline achieves authentic insights into the house buying or selling process over time reflecting a customer's changing needs and emotions as they progress through the system.

A high-quality mystery shopping programme could assess the following moments and interactions:

- Initial enquiry after browsing the agent's website e.g. potential vendor
- Initial enquiry after browsing property portals or agent's website e.g. potential buyer
- Appointment booking for a market appraisal or property viewing
- Pre-appointment communication
- Actual physical market appraisal or property viewing
- Follow-up sales activity (48-hours as standard)

Being able to review and assess every one of these touch-points in sequence, as a continuous journey, will give insight into exactly what a customer experiences: how seamless is the process, how easy was it to move from stage to stage, where are the potential drop-out points?

## 2 MULTIPLE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Across every touchpoint we mentioned above, between agent and customer, the customer may have a variety of communication options to choose from. The best mystery shopping will assess interactions across and through a combination of different channels including:

- Social media messaging
- Contact Us via email links
- Web enquiry forms
- Website live chat
- Telephone calls
- Face-to-face physical interactions

The cornerstone of best in class mystery shopping is the ability to measure all channels a customer might choose, to ensure consistent customer service and brand messaging, plus seamlessness of enquiry handling from channel to channel.

## 3 MULTI-MEDIA FORMAT RESULTS

The third invaluable feature of the best mystery shopping services is the rich variety of data output an estate agent can benefit from.

Collecting information in multimedia formats mirrors the customer's true experience and brings the findings to life for all stakeholders.

Again referring to the touchpoints above, examples of holistic data would comprise:

- Quality audio recordings of telephone calls (with time/date stamps)
- Professional transcripts
- Verbatim email and live chat transcripts (with time/date stamps and message ID)
- Covert video footage of all face-to-face interactions
- Individual written reports and complete data sheet (including open comments from shoppers and the closed question data)
- Video vox pops (shopper describes an interaction in their own words to camera)
- Data analysis, dashboard and management reporting

## The Power of Video

It is worth emphasising the unique value of video footage, within mystery shopping, and especially as part of the results output.

By utilising video as part of their research programmes, estate agents gain a first-person opportunity to see what makes their customers tick, and gain insight into how their expectations can not only be met but exceeded. But crucially they see first-hand how their customers and their staff interact with one another.

Greater use of video can also empower agents to drive change within their own companies. Video provides the means to convey emotive stories that are both relatable and impactful when it comes to changing internal attitudes and reinforcing training. The use of video humanises the feedback process and helps to amplify the insights across the business through speech, facial expression and body language. It's much harder to argue with a video story.

Written feedback can often be discounted by stakeholders who feel a situation could have been a 'one-time' experience, or that the respondent is 'not our usual customer'. Video feedback, on the other hand, is hard to ignore and can really drive change. Most importantly, video is a comfortable platform for shoppers and customers to share deeper insight about the service they've received using language and idiom that comes naturally to them.

## CONCLUSION:

Professional mystery shopping is not something an estate agent can do themselves internally. **The greatest benefit is realised through a process which blends the measurement of multiple customer touch-points across multiple channels in multimedia formats.**

Specialist technology, and fine-tuned operational processes deliver unique insights and actionable findings, which can be directly fed back into business improvement processes which in turn drive increased revenue.

The businesses that build Mystery Shopping into their training and development programmes, customer experience improvement initiatives, and sales incentivisation structures, are the businesses that make it ahead of the rest.

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