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Being a Mystery Shopper

What is a mystery shopper?

A mystery shopper is a person who poses as a real customer whilst assessing customer service levels provided by a company or organisation. A mystery shopping assignment can be a telephone call, visit, email, letter, website survey, face to face visit, a home visit – the list is endless! If you want to find out more about what's available, register with us and look on Open Opportunities.

How can I become a mystery shopper?

Complete our online application form – go to the login page and click on Become a Shopper. Unfortunately we are unable to accept postal or telephone applications – if you wish to register with us you must have an email address and access to the internet.

What are you looking for in a mystery shopper?

You need to have a good memory, excellent observational and writing skills, a good command of written and spoken English, and an ability to work to strict deadlines. You must also be committed, enthusiastic and reliable.

Can I become a full time mystery shopper?

Very few people can make a full time living out of mystery shopping. The availability of assignments can vary depending on your location, and clients are often looking for a very specific profile. Mystery Shopping is a great way to earn a few extra pounds in your spare time, but is unlikely to provide you with full time work.

Are there any age restrictions?

There is no minimum or maximum age to be a mystery shopper, but if you are under 18 we may need to obtain formal agreement from your parent or guardian. However, our clients often have age restrictions for their assignments, so if you don't fit their profile, you can't complete the mystery shop.

Do I need any qualifications?

No formal qualifications are required, but you must have a good command of written and spoken English, and regular access to the internet and email.

I live in a remote area – is there any point in registering?

Mystery shoppers can be required in any location – we carry out visits on some of the smallest islands of the UK, and remote locations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, so you should definitely register and see what comes up. We never guarantee work to any of our mystery shoppers, but it's quick and free to register so it's certainly worth doing.

I live outside of the UK – will there be any work for me?

Most of our work is carried out in the UK, but we do carry out some assignments overseas (especially the Republic of Ireland), and have franchises in Dubai and Botswana, so it's definitely worth registering if you live outside of the UK.

Can I work from one of your offices?

No, all our mystery shoppers work from their own home. You can check our office vacancies here: <http://www.mystery-shoppers.co.uk/vacancies.htm>

I'm disabled, can I still be a mystery shopper?

Yes, definitely! We also have some assignments specifically for shoppers with access issues or disabilities – when you complete your application form make sure you tick the relevant box, then when we have an assignment relevant to your disability, we can contact you.

Assignments

How long do assignments take?

Assignments vary depending on the type – it could be a 2 minute telephone call, or an overnight stay at a hotel. Always make sure you read the briefing instructions before you agree to complete any assignment.

How many assignments will I get?

We never guarantee regular assignments to our mystery shoppers – the available work depends completely on our clients' needs and requirements. Have a look at the Hints and Tips section for advice on how to get more mystery shopping assignments.

How quickly will I have to complete the form for my assignment?

We normally require the assessment form to be completed and submitted by 9am the day after your assignment, but this may vary for some assignments so you should always check your briefing instructions.

How do I complete the assessment form?

Your briefing instructions will give you guidance specific to your assignment – if you have general questions on how to use the site, please refer to the Using the Website section of these FAQs

Should I keep my paperwork or send it to you?

Unless otherwise instructed, you should keep your paperwork for time period specified in the Shopper Contract in case of any queries, and then destroy it. We may occasionally ask you to post or email scanned /photographed copies of paperwork you receive during the course of the mystery shop, but this is normally detailed in your briefing instructions.

What do I do with my receipts?

You should always keep your receipts safely as we may need to see them as proof of your visit or purchase. Your briefing instructions may require you to scan or photograph and send us a copy.

Hours & pay

How much will I get paid?

The payment will depend on the length and complexity of the assignment – the fee will be stated in the details of the assignment. Sometimes we will ask you to make a purchase as part of the assignment, in which case we often reimburse you for the cost – check the briefing instructions for this information.

Will I be able to claim back travel expenses?

Normally no, we don't pay travel expenses, but for some assignments we may do so – you should always check your briefing instructions and if you aren't sure, check with the team member named in the briefing instructions and they will advise.

If I have to make a purchase, can I keep it?

This depends on the assignment – sometimes you can keep your purchase, sometimes you will have to return it either to us or the client. Check your briefing instructions for clarification if you are unsure.

How will I be paid?

You can choose to be paid via Paypal or straight into your bank account – this is up to you.

When will I be paid?

We normally make payment within 28 days of completion of the assignment and receipt of all required documentation, but timescales may differ depending on the assignment so you should always check the briefing instructions for further details

Who pays my National Insurance and Income Tax?

As a mystery shopper you are classed as self-employed and are responsible for declaring your earnings to the Inland Revenue.

How many hours will I work?

There is no guarantee – this depends entirely on our clients and their current requirements, and what assignments you chose to undertake.

Becoming a shopper

How do I complete the application form?

Follow our instructions here: http://www.mystery-database.com/pdf/shoppertnotes/Registration_Guidance_Notes.pdf

What happens once I have completed the application form?

You will be emailed with your login information, you can then login, fill out any additional information in your profile and search for assignments in your area.

Why do you ask for so much personal information?

Clients can be very specific in their requirements – they might need someone of a certain height, who drives a specific type of car or who is insured with a particular company. Of course, you don't have to fill out all the questions if you don't want to, but by doing so you maximise your chances of being contacted about assignments that are relevant.

Why do you want my bank details?

We ask for your payment information (Sort Code, Bank Account Number OR PayPal email address for example) only so that we can process your payments for any successfully completed assignments quickly and without having to request this information from you after you have completed an assignment. The information that we request can only be used to put money into your account – no money can be taken from you, nor do we ever share this information with any third party companies.

Please ensure that your payment information is correct and kept up to date as these are details that we will use to pay you. We cannot retrieve payments if incorrect details are entered here. Any incorrect or incomplete payment information will cause a delay in processing your payment.

Do you share my personal information with anyone?

Absolutely not. The information you give us is simply to help us find the right mystery shopper for the right assignment.

I forgot my password, what should I do?

Click on the [Forgot Password](#) link on the login page and follow the instructions. Make sure you enter your postcode as it appears on your profile (i.e. with a space in the middle). If you have problems using the Forgot Password link, email Shopper Support for assistance.

Using the website

Forgot your password?

Simply click on the [Forgot Password](#) link on the login page.

Locked yourself out of your account?

Email Shopper.Support@mystery-shoppers.co.uk to get your account unlocked.

Unsure how to check for assignments?

Log in, and click on Open Opportunities on the left hand side of the page. This will automatically show you all assignments in your area.

Want to see assignments that are further away?

You can reset your work area by clicking on map under My Coverage on the left hand side of the page.

Want to see absolutely everything that's available?

When you see the list of Open Opportunities in your area, click on the link at the top of the list that states: *The postal code and distance below are set according to your profile. Click here to reset and show all opportunities.* Please note that you will not be able to see assignments for which you don't fit the profile restrictions. If you then want to filter the assignments by project, click on the 'All Surveys' filter, and select the project you are interested in.

Not sure how to see the assignment information?



Click on the information button of the assignment 

This will open up the summary, and the summary will normally contain more information and a link to more detailed instructions in the Brief. Please make sure you have read the Brief in full before you apply.

Not sure how to apply for an assignment?

Click on the Apply button: 

You will then have to add a note in support of your application. Make sure you state your availability and any relevant information that would help us decide if you are a suitable candidate to complete the assignment – if the Brief asks you to state certain information in your application, make sure it's included. We often receive a large number of applications for assignments, so make sure your Application Note is up to standard to put you ahead of the crowd! Assignments you have applied for will appear on your profile under My Applications.

What's a backup shopper?

If an assignment has already been allocated to someone else, you can apply to be a backup shopper, and then if for any reason it becomes available again, we can give the assignment to you. If you are a backup shopper on an assignment, it will appear on your profile under My Applications.

How will I know when I've got an assignment?

You will receive an email to confirm, and when you login you will see the assignment listed in your Inbox. If an assignment is not in your Inbox, it has not been allocated to you.

What do I do once I've been allocated an assignment?

Log in to your profile, make sure you read the Briefing instructions (available as part of the Survey Summary that appears when you click on the Information button) before you start the assignment.

Where can I find my Scenario?

To view your Scenario, open the assessment form (click on the name of the assignment to open this up) – the link to the Scenario will appear in the notes section at the top of the assessment form.

I have to make a call recording for an assignment – how do I do this?

Your Brief for the assignment should contain an explanation on how to make recorded calls.

How do I submit my form?

First, press Check Complete (at the bottom of the form) – this will check if you have missed anything. Once you have completed all the questions, press Save – then a spell check will be run, your form will be saved and you will be sent back to your Inbox. You will then see that the Submit button on your assignment is green – this means it's ready to submit. Press Submit, and the assignment will be sent straight through to us!

Explanation of features on your Shopper Portal

Home

Clicking on the Home tab takes you back to your Inbox.

My Settings

Here is where you can edit your profile and your password. You can also look at your Pay History to see the assignments you have completed, but please bear in mind that currently this just indicates which payable assignments have been completed – it is not linked to your payments so will not tell you which assignments have been paid. If you have a payment query you should contact the relevant team about the assignment.

My Stuff

Under the My Stuff heading on the left hand side of your Inbox, you can see your current assignments (Inbox), your Certifications, your current Applications, and Open Opportunities.

My Coverage

On the left hand side of your Inbox is a map showing your work area. If you want to change this, click on the map to edit. Make sure you hit Submit when you've finished your changes!

Messages

Visible on the right hand side of your Inbox, this takes the place of the Bulletin Board – we use this to put messages online for shoppers, do have a look on the Message Board as we sometimes use it to advertise assignments that are not available on Open Opportunities.

Grading Summary

This is where you can see a summary of your current shopper grade. For information on how the grading system works, please see Help Documents.

Help Documents

This is where we put documents which we think will be of use to you, including these FAQs, a copy of the current Shopper Contract (which you are bound to) and the Shopper Grading guidelines.

Hints and Tips

Ways in which you can increase your chances of getting Mystery Shopping work:

- Ensure that your profile has as much detailed information on it as possible (this will help us to match your profile with current specific projects).
- Ensure your details are up-to-date (if there are any changes then ensure you login to your profile and update).
- Increase your work distance – Click on My Coverage on the bottom left of your Inbox to change this.
- Sign up with several Mystery Shopping companies, this will increase your chances of getting work. (Tip: Do not sign up with any company that asks you to pay a fee to be on their database as these companies are often not legitimate).
- Make sure you log in to your profile and search Open Opportunities regularly, and check your emails regularly.
- If you use social networking sites, you can
 - Like us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MysteryShoppersLtd.ShopperSupport>
 - or
 - Follow us on Twitter <https://twitter.com/MSLShoppers> -
this way you'll be the first to hear about latest news and job alerts.

Problems

I have a question I can't find the answer to in these FAQs, how can I get help?

Contact Shopper.Support@mystery-shoppers.co.uk with your question and we'll do our best to help

I'm worried about mystery shopping scams, what should I do?

Read our information page on scams http://www.mystery-shoppers.co.uk/mystery_shopper_scams.htm – we have lots of advice on how to spot scams, and what to do if you think you might have been contacted by a scam company.

I don't want to be a mystery shopper any more, how can I remove myself from your website?

Contact Shopper.Support@mystery-shoppers.co.uk with your request and we can cancel your account.