



TRAINING & CERTIFICATION

Section A: Code of Ethics

A code of ethics ensures that the highest standards and ethics are maintained, by both shoppers and businesses, thereby elevating the professionalism and public perception of mystery shopping.

The Truth Sleuths mystery shopping program expects its shoppers to follow **principles** of honesty, professionalism, fairness and confidentiality to guard the interests of the public and our clients in order to promote good business practices.

The Code of Ethics

Each shopper must agree to the following:

- To perform all shops to the best of their abilities
- To perform all shops with honesty and integrity
- To submit all reports on or before the deadline
- To honor all confidentiality agreements
- To give immediate notice to Truth Sleuths if they cannot perform a shop for any reason
- To return follow up calls or e-mails in a timely manner
- To keep paperwork and notes for at least 60 days in case questions arise that need to be answered
- To perform a shop only after having thoroughly read each question on the survey and any guidelines provided
- To NOT falsify or misrepresent reports;
- To NOT ask or encourage anyone to break confidentiality agreements
- To NOT share information with others on which businesses are shopped by Truth Sleuths
- To NOT share information with others on shopping fees and reimbursements for specific clients;
- To NOT share the results of a shop with others in order to protect the clients confidentiality;
- To NOT transfer assignments to another shopper to complete without first asking permission of Truth Sleuths
- To NOT perform any shops under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol or prescription drugs that might cause impairment
- To NOT contact a client directly without approval of Truth Sleuths
- To NOT disrupt the normal flow of a client's business while performing a shop (i.e. do not cause a scene)
- To NOT reveal that they are a mystery shopper to the business being shopped unless given specific instructions otherwise by Truth Sleuths

If, after a thorough investigation, a certified shopper is found to be in violation of this Code of Ethics, certification will be withdrawn and the individual will be permanently banned from registering with Truth Sleuths. Shoppers will be contacted in the event of a complaint or investigation, and given the opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.

Certification to the Truth Sleuths program includes completion of a mandatory test. Applicants must achieve 100% in the Code of Ethics section of the test to become a certified Truth Sleuths shopper. Participating in the test and achieving certification indicates that shoppers have read, understood and agree to closely follow the Code of Ethics and the principles of honesty, professionalism, fairness, and confidentiality that are outlined in this document.

Section B: About Mystery Shopping

This module provides a basic overview of mystery shopping - what it is and what it is not.

What is Mystery Shopping?

Mystery shopping is a "snapshot" of a customer's experience. It is not about finding things wrong, but an objective evaluation of how a company serves the public. It involves:

Careful Observations about:

- Surroundings
- The environment
- People

Active Listening

- What is said

Why would a company want to use mystery shopping?

- Companies can see themselves through their customer's eyes.
- They get valuable feedback on service, cleanliness, quality, and sales efforts.

What kinds of companies can benefit from mystery shopping?

- Retail stores
- Banks
- Hotels
- Fast food establishments
- Airlines
- Car rental companies
- Malls
- And more!
- Insurance companies
- Apartment Communities
- Hospitals
- Airports
- Shopping

Mystery Shopping is Serious Business

While mystery shopping can be fun, it is serious business. Based on information received in mystery shopping reports, employees might receive bonuses or promotions. Companies rely on mystery shopping

reports to make significant decisions regarding marketing, advertising, employment, etc. Other uses include:

- To recognize and reward outstanding performance
- To train employees
- To correct problems
- To adjust staffing levels
- To evaluate performance against competitors

Mystery Shopping and the Internet

Most shoppers are recruited and assigned work via the Internet. Most shopping reports are submitted online. Internet access allows Clients to receive information faster, so the input is fresher and more valuable to them.

Mystery Shopping Reports

Mystery shopping reports must be:

Honest

A shopper's report must first and foremost be:

- Truthful.
- Be at the right store, bank or company.
- Accurately record date, day, time, and names.

Don't even THINK about falsifying a report or making up information that you may have forgotten to obtain. Your integrity is your most valuable asset in this industry! Many businesses today have security cameras that can track your every movement, and the exact dates and times that everything happened from the time you entered the door. It is not unusual for them to review their tapes to validate your shops, so your integrity is crucial.

Fair

A mystery shopper is always fair. Unless otherwise instructed, give the employee being audited a chance to succeed by being generally cooperative, understanding and friendly. Truth Sleuths is not looking for mystery shoppers to be angry, upset, disruptive, demanding or unpleasant. We want mystery shoppers to reflect a "typical average" customer. Mystery shoppers should "blend in" with other customers that are at the shop location. Don't cause a scene, don't do anything that will make you be "remembered". While you do need to be fair, don't make it too "easy", by leading the employee to say the correct thing. Allow them to do their job (or not) without making it too hard or too easy.

Thorough

Mystery shopping reports "tell the story". They are factual, nothing left out. Make the reader feel like they were "there" with you during the shop. Your job is to give a clear picture of your visit. Most narratives should be a step by step "walk through" of your visit. What happened from the minute you arrived until the time that you left.

Accurate

Facts clearly state the situation, events, time, date, and names. Nothing is left out, and all of it must be truthful and absolutely accurate. Opinions are not necessary or wanted. You should provide "Just the Facts". Example: Don't say "I thought the bathrooms could use a good cleaning." DO SAY: "The garbage can was overflowing and the floor was littered with toilet paper. The bathroom had a strong and offensive odor."

On Time

Businesses rely on mystery shopping reports to be timely. They need data fast! Mystery shopping reports must arrive on time. If your report falls outside of the deadline, you risk having your fee reduced, or in extreme circumstances not being paid at all. In general, reports are to be submitted within 24 to 48 hours of performing a shop. Deadlines for submission must be noted and carefully adhered to. Read all guidelines provided.

Well written

Clients must be able to read, understand and comprehend mystery shopping reports. When written reports are required they should be:

- Organized and thoughtful
- Spelled correctly (Use spell check!)
- Grammatically correct
- Businesslike and professional (not flowery, poetic, dramatic, overly lengthy, or obtuse)

Detailed

Reports should have enough detail for companies to know what transpired. Just like a reporter, a mystery shopper needs to include: who, what, where, when, why and how. Make sure to include details that make the reader "see" what you saw during your visit. Include names, descriptions and times! If you answer a question with a "no" be prepared to back it up with factual data as to what DID occur. The more specific the details, the better use your report will be to the client company.

Objective

Mystery shopping reports are not reviews or opinions. They are statements of fact. Tell what happened and what you observed, not what you think the client should do. You will observe or take a "snapshot" of your experience, and the business owner will decide the best course of action for his business. Keep your opinions to yourself.

What Equipment is Required?

Shoppers must have access to the following:

- Ability to get to and from assignments
- Reliable public transportation or car in good working condition
- Telephone with voicemail

Access to the following is also strongly recommended:

- Access to a computer with Internet connection
- Access to an email account on daily basis

- A cell phone

Access to following is not required but would be an asset:

- Cell phone
- Digital Watch
- Scanner and/or Fax
- Digital Camera
- Micro recorder

Confidentiality

You will have to sign a confidentiality agreement because you will have access to very confidential and proprietary information that would not be available to the general public. It is important to take this oath of confidentiality seriously. Violating confidentiality agreements that you sign violates the Code of Ethics agreement that you agreed to and places you in jeopardy of losing your Truth Sleuths certification and registration.

What kind of information is considered confidential?

- The name of the client and its locations.
- The Truth Sleuths name together with the shops performed
- The questions on the shopper evaluation form or survey.
- The instructions or guidelines given to you about the assignment.
- The amount of pay, reimbursement or compensation you are receiving for conducting the shop.
- The results of the shop.

Skills Required

A good mystery shopper possesses the following skills:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observant• Reliable• Detail-oriented• Thorough• Organized• Flexible• Honest | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsive• Accurate• A good writer• Ability to remember details• Computer proficient• Internet, email, word processing, spreadsheet |
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Remaining Anonymous

A fundamental requirement in most mystery shops is to be anonymous - going into the location and acting like a normal customer without being identified as a shopper.

How do you remain anonymous?

- Dress like real customers in that location.
- Don't ask lots of questions.
- Don't be "too knowledgeable".
- Don't stare at name tags.
- Don't be obvious about taking notes (never use a clipboard, notebook, etc.)
- Be confident.
- Make quick notes as entries on your hand held or cell phone.
- Call your own phone and leave a message on your own voice mail or answering machine.
- Use your "shopping list" to mark down names, time or other quick notes.

- Put your cell phone to your ear and pretend you are writing down directions or a phone number while you write notes.
- Don't be obvious about timing. Normal customers do not look at their watches furtively every 20 seconds.
- Be familiar with your scenario. Practice it at home so that you are comfortable with it. Be prepared for any questions that may come up (i.e., if you are doing a bridal shop, know when your wedding date will be, and what color your bridesmaids are wearing)
- Be prepared!

Shopping alone or with companions?

Planning on taking companions with you on your shop? First, be sure it is okay with Truth Sleuths. There are some shops where taking children is simply NOT acceptable. You should never take ANYONE with you that would be a distraction from the job you were hired to complete. If completing a dining evaluation, make sure that the reimbursement is for more than one person, and that it is okay to have multiple meals on your receipt.

If you do get approval to take along a companion, it is okay to share information about the shop requirements with your companion to enable them to help with the shop (when appropriate) to meet the requirements of the shop (e.g., not ordering the same items in a restaurant, allowing employees to do their jobs, etc). Companions must understand the need for confidentiality (i.e., they can't discuss the shop or results with anyone).

Being an Independent Contractor

Truth Sleuths hires mystery shoppers as independent contractors. This allows us to main a large, diverse pool of shoppers that can match any client's customer profile. Upon completion of a shop, shoppers must issue an invoice to Truth Sleuths – a standard invoice that is signed by the shopper is provided by Truth Sleuths together with payment OR the shopper may issue an invoice of his own choice as long as the information provided is accurate.

Is There A Difference Between An Employee And An Independent Contractor? Does It Matter? Yes!!!

1. How you pay your taxes
2. How you file your taxes.
3. Your eligibility for benefits.

As an independent contractor you are in business for yourself and this has certain privileges and responsibilities.

Privileges and Responsibilities

Mystery Shoppers have these responsibilities:

- Pay all applicable taxes on ALL mystery shopping income
- Keep accurate records of all business expenses such as cost of supplies, postage, gas, etc.
- Consult a tax professional for specific advice on taxable income, eligible deductions and liability.
- Supply own tools and materials
- Provide your own work space and equipment
- Establish own work patterns and schedules
- Never list Truth Sleuths as an "employer".

If you are not comfortable with being in business for yourself, mystery shopping may not be a good fit.

Section C: Working With the Truth Sleuths Program

As an Independent Contractor, working with Truth Sleuths will be an easy, pleasurable experience as long as you remain professional, responsible and deliver your contractual obligations.

How to Get Assignments

- Register online with the Truth Sleuths mystery shopping program (<http://www.truthsleuths.akinsights.com>)
- Complete the training and certification test
- Monitor available assignments on the Truth Sleuths job posting page
- Respond promptly to any notifications about available jobs
- Be responsive and prompt when accepting an assignment
- Deliver outstanding work every time
- Live by the Code of Ethics
- Be flexible and expand your geographic horizons
- Take any follow up certification tests offered by Truth Sleuths

Understand the Assignment

Before you accept an assignment, be clear and prepared:

- Understand each shop by reading guidelines and evaluation forms BEFORE you perform the shop
- Review all questions on evaluation forms carefully again before entering the facility, so that you don't forget to make important observations
- Verify location and hours of operation of business you are shopping
- Plan your day so the shop is given adequate time and attention
- Acceptable time windows to complete your assignment
- Note all fees and expenses that you might incur
- Special requirements or tools that you may need to perform your assignment correctly.
- Only accept assignments that work for you
- Bring all necessary tools and equipment with you
- Find out what appropriate attire might be and dress like a real customer
- If you have any questions, contact Truth Sleuths immediately.

What Kinds of 'Shops' does the Truth Sleuths mystery shopping program offer?

- Traditional visit to a store - complete evaluation on service, cleanliness, quality sales skills, etc.
 - Pricing audit - note prices of items
 - Reveal shop - if employee meets certain criteria, the shopper identifies self and presents an award or prize
 - Telephone shop - complete telephone evaluation
 - Audio / video shop - records interactions (subject to legal clearance)
 - Internet service - make online purchase or make online inquiry
 - Digital photo shop - take photos of products, displays, signs
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Best Practices: What if the unexpected happens?

If something goes wrong...what do you do?

1. What if someone accuses you of being a mystery shopper?

It is generally a good idea to act confused or surprised if you are asked if you are a shopper. Simply ask "what is a mystery shopper" or something similar and advise Truth Sleuths as soon as possible.

2. What if the store you are shopping has closed?

If the store is closed, you should contact Truth Sleuths immediately, after double checking the address.

3. What if the employee you dealt with turns out to be an acquaintance or relative?

Complete the transaction normally and anonymously and inform Truth Sleuths

Be responsive and responsible

Being responsive and responsible are two key factors in having a successful relationship with Truth Sleuths:

- Submit work on time.
- If asked a question, respond immediately.
- Always check email and voice mail for 24 to 48 hours after completing an assignment in case there are questions for you.
- If asked about doing an assignment, confirm or decline it immediately.
- Submit accurate, timely and excellent reports.
- Call immediately if you have a problem or issue in completing a shop.

READ Your Guidelines!

As soon as you are assigned a shop, make sure you print and read all assignment guidelines. Don't wait until the day that you are scheduled to complete a dinner shop, to find out that you were supposed to make a reservation 5 days in advance.

Even if you have completed the same assignment before, print out a CURRENT copy of the guidelines every single time!

If you have questions, contact Truth Sleuths immediately, so that we have time to respond to you before you plan to do your shop.

Re-read your guidelines again right before you leave for the shop to refresh your memory on shop requirements, etc.