

Find Out What Retail Employees Are Really Saying About Your Brand

Access New Insights with Mystery Shopping

Imagine this: you are part of a brand's marketing team, and your company has invested heavily in designing eye-catching point-of-sale materials. You have developed a comprehensive training program for retail employees, ensuring they understand your product inside out. You have worked to position your brand as the top choice, confident that customers will see the value.



But when a customer approaches a sales associate for advice, something different happens. Instead of recommending your product, the employee suggests a competitor's brand—praising its benefits and downplaying your own. All that investment in marketing and training? It is not paying off the way you hoped.

Sound familiar?

When you rely on retailers to sell your products, you give up a degree of control over how your brand is represented to customers. Frontline employees play a critical role in shaping the perception of your product in your customer's mind.

How can you be sure retailers are promoting your brand the way you intend?

That is where mystery shopping comes in.

Mystery shopping isn't just for retail stores and restaurants—it is a powerful tool for brands looking to gain real insights into how their products are being presented, recommended, and sold in the competitive retail environment.

Mystery shopping provides your brand with a direct line to the in-store conversations that shape customer choices. By capturing what is really happening on the sales floor, you can take strategic action to influence how your brand is presented. In the next pages, we present the top 10 insights you can collect through a well-executed mystery shopping program.

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Top 10 Insights Mystery Shopping Provides for Your Brand

#1: Which brand is the employee recommending first?

During their interaction with a retail employee, the mystery shopper will state their needs and ask for a product recommendation. Is your brand at the top of the list, or is the employee promoting competitors first? Knowing which brand is recommended first tells you where your product stands. If competitors are consistently mentioned before your brand, it may indicate a need for better positioning, promotions, or training to increase your brand's visibility.

#2: Which brand is the runner-up?

After getting a first recommendation, the mystery shopper will ask if there are any alternatives, identifying the second brand mentioned by the employee. If your product is not the first choice, understanding where it falls in the employee's recommendation hierarchy provides additional context.

#3: Why is the employee recommending this brand?

The mystery shopper can inquire why the employee recommends a certain brand, allowing you to capture the reasoning behind their choices. This feedback helps you see whether employees are aligning with your brand's key selling points, or if they are emphasizing factors that you have not prioritized. Understanding the employee's motivation behind their recommendation can help you better understand your customer's experience. Is the employee highlighting a specific feature, recommending a low-priced option, or sharing their personal preferences? You can find that out with mystery shopping.

#4: Why is the employee not recommending your brand?

If your brand is not recommended, the mystery shopper will prompt the employee and ask why. This allows you to gather feedback on potential barriers or biases. Whether it is due to a lack of awareness, a preference for competitors, or misinformation, this insight provides you with the data needed to shift perceptions and improve sales outcomes.

#5: How does the employee assess customer needs?

The mystery shopper will pay attention to the questions employees ask to better understand what the customer is looking for. The quality and focus of employee inquiries determine how effectively they can match customers with your brand. If employees are not asking the right questions, they may miss chances to recommend your product.

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#6: Is the employee sharing their personal experience?

The mystery shopper will report on any personal stories or feedback employees offer regarding their experiences with products, whether positive or negative. Employees' personal experiences can heavily influence customer decisions. Knowing what stories are being told—good or bad—gives you the power to address issues, promote positive testimonials, or adjust messaging accordingly.

#7: Is the employee knowledgeable about your brand?

When interacting with the retail employee, the mystery shopper will ask a few questions about your product to gauge how knowledgeable the employee is about features and benefits. If you find out that the staff can't answer questions about your product, you can take action to ensure your brand is accurately represented and customers feel informed.

#8: How does the employee position your brand?

The mystery shopper can listen to how employees describe your brand—whether they position it as budget-friendly, premium, or a customer favourite—and compare it to how they position competitor brands during their interaction. This feedback is crucial for ensuring your brand is being represented consistently and accurately.

#9: Is your brand visible in the store?

Brand visibility is crucial to attracting attention in the retail environment. If your product is not in a prime location or if the only signage is from competitors, customers may not even know it is available. The mystery shopper can report on your product placement, availability, and signage, ultimately evaluating your brand's in-store presence.

#10: What promotions are advertised in-store?

Promotions can dramatically influence buying decisions. If your brand's promotional efforts are not being implemented properly, you are missing opportunities to drive sales. Mystery shoppers can report if your retail partners are executing your marketing strategies effectively.

Get the full picture of how your product is being sold by uncovering the real conversations happening on the retail floor.



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