

I began working with Bethany Mooradian almost 10 years ago, when she contacted my company about becoming a secret shopper. Little did I know at the time, that Bethany was not "just a shopper," but an entrepreneur extraordinaire with an extremely high standard of excellence. In all of her endeavors, Bethany seeks to support and serve others, while making the best of every situation she encounters. Even under fire, Bethany maintains her composure, grace, enthusiasm and incredible sense of humor. In reading "Become a Mystery Shopper!" you will gain great insight into what it takes to be a sensational secret shopper. You will also have fun while you learn, as you experience through Bethany's eyes what secret shopping is REALLY like. She has a humorous, engaging writing style, while providing accurate and practical information. This book will hold your attention, and you will refer back to it again and again throughout your mystery shopping career!

—Joyce Kirby, owner Shoptalk Service Evaluations (www.shoptalkservice.com)

Bethany is a good friend and mentor for me and my husband. Her wealth of knowledge and advice is drawn from her wide range of life experiences and business pursuits. She has a bounty to offer anyone from any walk of life. I have used her mystery shopping CD-ROM and materials to jumpstart my own mystery shopping pursuits, and the materials are not only clear and easy to follow but also humorous and entertaining. She presents the information sequentially and points out the possible pitfalls and scams to look for in the realm of mystery shopping. And the advice does not stop there - at any point, contact Bethany with any questions or concerns, and she will get back to you! This woman is successful, savvy, and most of all, sweet!

—Christine Kaputsky-Moore, Ian Tadashi-Moore (www.iantm.com)

I ordered Bethany Mooradian's Mystery Shopping Training Program a few months ago and it was the best investment I could have made. Bethany explains in detail how to get assignments, how write a report, and provides a list of legitimate companies to work for. Bethany's training program book is my bible! She is always there long after me buying the program to help and answer any questions I have. Mystery shopping is a great part time job and Bethany did an excellent job creating this training program. I highly recommend it!

—DS in Michigan

When I was looking to supplement my income, I turned to Bethany's "Become a Mystery Shopper" program. Within days I was accepting and completing assignments like a pro. The information she provided was clear, concise, and really helped me avoid the pitfalls and scams. Bethany has also been an invaluable resource in helping me streamline my business practices. Her knowledge of all things Internet has propelled me to a level of success I never knew possible! Any time I have questions regarding scams, marketing and social media, she is the first on my list to contact. Actually, she is the only person I would trust in giving me the whole picture about home based jobs, Internet marketing, social media practices, and scams.

—Jen Davidson (Jen Davidson Photography)

Bethany is truly the most knowledgeable person I know. When I needed extra money while trying to start my business, she taught me creative ways to earn an income. I continue to e-mail her new opportunities I see on Craigslist, and she always knows which ones are legit and which ones are scams. Her breadth of knowledge does not stop there, she also helps my new business with social media and keeps me updated on the newest Twitter rules and standards and ways to pimp out my Facebook fan page! She is truly a maven and a godsend to my business.

—Shalonne Foster (www.seattlefashiontv.com)

Bethany is extremely knowledgeable about mystery shopping and similar employment opportunities. Her presentation was enthusiastic and realistic. I especially appreciated the book she provided with listings of real companies to get started with. She obviously enjoys sharing her experience and knowledge, and anyone would benefit from her classes.

—Anonymous student review through Canton Adult Education

Bethany makes working from home and Mystery Shopping sound like a real adventure! Her energy and enthusiasm throughout our class was contagious. I was really impressed with the book provided. It was comprehensive and laid out in a very organized manner. The class was well worth its value, and had much more information than I was expecting.

—Anonymous student review from Farmington Community Education

I really enjoyed Bethany's presentation! The information was comprehensive, well organized and thought out. Bethany was easy to follow and constantly asked if we had questions, making sure we all understood each concept before moving onto the next subject. She was amazingly knowledgeable and gave us numerous resources to pursue after class. I am highly impressed with her professionalism and was amazed that an adult education class could be so outstanding. She belongs on the lecture circuit!

—Anonymous student review through Dearborn Adult Education

Bethany exceeded my expectations and gave me all the information I wanted and more. I took both her mystery shopping and work from home classes and feel totally prepared to get started. The information she provided about scams alone was worth the price of admission! She was clear, concise, enthusiastic, engaging, personable, professional, and was genuine in her interaction. The books she provided were well organized, and I can't wait to get started!

—Anonymous student review through Shoreline Community College

Bethany did a fabulous job of introducing us to mystery shopping! I had no idea it could be so involved and so much FUN. I can hardly wait to get started. Her genuine enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject was contagious. I look forward to learning more about other ways to make extra income in the future.

—Anonymous student review through Troy Continuing Education

I recently was laid off from GM, and started cleaning out the house, looking for things to sell. I stumbled upon your Mystery Shopping program that I purchased a few years ago. The information was so easy to read, and well laid out, that I could just jump right into Mystery Shopping without hesitation. I knew where to get started, and what to avoid. Although I haven't been able to replace my income as a machinist, (I wasn't really expecting to) Mystery Shopping has gotten me through these hard times, helped me to feed my kids and give me a bit of hope. I know you probably don't remember me, but I wanted you to know that I remember you, and I'm so thankful that you took the time to help people like me find a way to make some extra money.

—Anonymous student from Royal Oak Community Education

THE MYSTERY SHOPPER TRAINING PROGRAM

Everything You Need Know
about the *BEST* Part-Time Job!

Bethany Mooradian



Moreradiant Publishing

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Introduction

Mystery shopping came into my life in 1999. At the time, I had just gotten off a year-long tour as a professional puppeteer and was looking for my next adventure. I found a book about odd jobs in hopes of supplementing my meager, random income. The book didn't give a lot of information about mystery shopping, just to contact local market research companies for information. I dutifully went through the yellow pages, and the very first company I called left me skeptical.

"Do you do...mystery shopping?" I tentatively asked.

"Why yes! Of course we do," said the woman, much like a used car salesman. "All you have to do is pay \$40 to take our class, and YOU can become a mystery shopper!"

Right away, I was sure I was going to be scammed, and I HATE being scammed. I will admit that when I was in college, I did send away \$19.95 so that I could learn how to become a millionaire stuffing envelopes at home. Surprisingly, that didn't work out, so I'm always hypersensitive about these "work from home" jobs. I signed up for the class anyway, and I actually was planning on canceling later on. After all, \$40 is a lot of money to a broke puppeteer. The very next week, I got a frantic call.

"We have an EMERGENCY SHOP!" the woman said frantically (yes, there is such a thing as an "emergency shop"). "Someone was supposed to shop an apartment building, and they canceled, and we need it done and back into the client's hands by 5 P.M. TODAY! Can you do it?!?!?"

I was beside myself. I still didn't even understand what the heck mystery shopping was, and here they wanted me to go out into the real world and DO it?

“Um, ah, but I haven’t even taken your class yet!” I mumbled, terrified of the notion.

“It’s okay,” said my contact, “Have you ever looked for an apartment before?”

I thought, *Of course!* We all have at some point looked for apartments, rooms for rent, new homes, something like that.

“That’s all you have to do. Call the property, talk to a leasing agent over the phone, go to the apartment, evaluate the conditions of the apartment, the conditions of the community, the agent’s closing style, and write up the report.”

I was still uncertain, but she then e-mailed me a copy of the form, so that I knew exactly what to look for. I headed out to this \$2,000-a-month apartment community, all the time thinking, “I’m going to get caught. I have no business being in a \$2,000-a-month apartment. I’m a puppeteer!”

But I didn’t get caught. Somehow I managed to pull through, finish the shop, convince the leasing agent I actually fit in there, and two weeks later, I got my first check as a Mystery Shopper.

I’ve been shopping ever since!

Over the past 10-plus years, I have done every aspect of this business. I started out as a shopper, I’ve done scheduling and editing, I’ve worked with companies to train their employees, I’ve worked with mystery shopping companies to train their shoppers, I teach classes on mystery shopping, I wrote this book, I created the training CD, and for two years, I ran Shop Incognito, a full service mystery shopping company in the Detroit metropolitan area.

The great thing about mystery shopping is that it can be done anytime, anywhere. You are your own boss. You choose what assignments you want to take and when you want to complete them. I personally have shopped in nine different states and two different provinces. When I get burned out, I take a break. When

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I'm ready to work again, I jump right back in. Mystery shopping is always available as a source of income.

Every business that deals with customers can be shopped: Apartments, banks, retail stores, self-storage facilities, cell phone providers, airlines, hotels, motels, and resorts, restaurants, bowling alleys, casinos, amusement parks, child-care providers, weight-loss facilities, and many more *all* have shopping programs. Shops are conducted in the United States, Canada, and around the world. There are even a host of professional organizations, conferences, trade shows, and certification courses for shoppers and companies to be involved in. Mystery shopping is a *real* business where you can make a great extra income!

My purpose with this program is to help you get started in the wonderful world of mystery shopping. I am going to walk you through every aspect of the business, and answer the questions you didn't even know you had.

In the U.S. and Canada, there are about 500 mystery shopping companies and I have listed over 170 in the Resource section to get you started. The ones I have selected have a good reputation within the industry, and they are ones that I, or my fellow shoppers, have worked for, so I can personally recommend them. If you exhaust this listing (in which case, I'd be really impressed!), I have also listed the professional organizations, message boards, and many more ways to find assignments and other companies to work for.

I can't guarantee that you'll find employment with the companies in this book. You need to develop the skills needed and conduct yourself in a professional manner to get assignments. By the time you finish this program, however, you'll definitely, be well versed on how to behave as a responsible, reliable shopper.

Good luck, and happy shopping!

Before You Begin!

This book was created as a reference for *The Mystery Shopper Training Program* CD Rom. If you do not have the video to guide you, please start by reading the Glossary before beginning the book so that you will at least be familiar with common terms within the mystery shopping industry.

If you were sold this book without a video, it may be a pirated or used copy. However, you can still purchase a video if you so choose through **www.QueenoftheRandomJob.com**. It's up to you whether you want to return to the point of purchase, grumble at the owner, and try and get the full program. It would probably be quicker and easier (and more cost-effective) just to get the video directly from **www.QueenoftheRandomJob.com**, but again, it's your choice!

Chapter 1

What Is Mystery Shopping?

Mystery shopping is an aspect of market research. I'm sure you've heard of "focus groups" where people sit around a table to talk about the kind of kitty litter that they buy so the company can make it "new and improved." That's market research. Mystery shopping is just another way to get a customer's opinion.

Have you ever had a great experience at a store? One where the employee really went the extra mile for you? Conversely, have you ever had an experience where an employee just didn't get it? Very rarely do patrons of a store actually contact the management to praise or complain about employees or services. As customers, we are more likely to tell our *friends and families* about an experience at a store rather than the management. Mystery shopping is a tool that companies use to get inside a customer's head, so that they can improve their business.

As a mystery shopper, you will be asked to report back on how employees, products, and services are viewed by the average person. The companies can use this information to:

- Evaluate customer service
- Observe loss prevention methods
- Maintain compliance issues (alcohol and tobacco purchases)
- Observe fair housing practices

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- Train employees on proper and improper methods of interacting with a customer
- Improve the cleanliness, surroundings, products, and services
- Motivate employees with bonuses, rewards, and incentives
- Observe potential employees
- Observe the competition within their industry

Any one of these reasons can help a business to build better customer service, employee satisfaction, and improve productivity within the workplace.

Mystery shopping was first developed as a way to check on employees and their honesty. Creating “integrity” evaluations, people would pose as customers to make sure that the employee was doing everything as he or she should: closing a cash drawer, ringing the proper sale amount, giving back correct change, etc. These evaluations helped with a company’s loss-prevention program. With the influx of security cameras, point-check stands and other technological advances, mystery shopping evolved into a customer service evaluation program.

The most common misconception about mystery shopping is that shoppers are hired to get employees fired. This couldn’t be further from the truth. Mystery shoppers are hired to see what a company is doing right, and how it can improve. As a mystery shopper, you will be asked to give an honest and objective evaluation about the service you received. Simple as that!

Although it does sound too good to be true, mystery shopping is a legitimate way to earn a great part-time income. There are professional organizations, certification courses, Web forums, and conventions devoted to the practice of mystery shopping.

As a mystery shopper, you get to choose what kind of assignments you want to accept, be it a restaurant, movie theater,

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retail store, self-storage facility, bank, grocery store, apartment community, or whatever else piques your interest. You set your schedule depending on your availability and what cities you want to shop in. You can shop in the mornings, afternoons, evenings, weekends, on your lunch break, or even when you're on vacation! There are shops all over the world just waiting to be accepted. You do not have to have any experience to get started (if you live in Nevada or Texas, check around, because you may need to get a private investigator's license), just the ability to take notice of details, be objective in your opinions, and write clear narratives of your experience.

How It Works

Mystery shopping companies, *not the individual stores*, hire shoppers. Do not call your local grocery store, retail outlet, or bank and ask about mystery shopping. The employees can't help you, and you run the risk of giving yourself away as a shopper before you get started!

Mystery shopping can be viewed as a 3-tiered system:

The "**Client**" (Department Stores, Chain Restaurants, etc.)
hires the
Mystery shopping company, (ABC Shoppers)
which then in turn hires the
Mystery shopper (YOU!)

It is imperative that you remain anonymous as a mystery shopper. That's where the middleman, the mystery shopping company, comes in. It will contract you as a mystery shopper. It

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will talk to the stores, the apartment buildings and the service providers, to set up shops to be completed by you, the shopper. That way the people at the stores you visit will never know who you are. This way, you don't have to worry about some disgruntled employee knocking on your door at three o'clock in the morning!

Clients used to have their own shopping programs, but then all of the owners, managers, and eventually employees got to know the mystery shopper. It's hard to have an objective evaluation when everybody knows who the shopper is!

Shops are found in several different ways:

1. The mystery shopping company will place available assignments on its own or other websites and hope that shoppers will fill them on their own. This is the quickest way to get assignments, as you don't have to wait for schedulers to contact you. You can pick and choose what assignments you want from those available.
2. It has people within the company who schedule shops to shoppers, either through individual contact or mass e-mailings. Some companies are now set up on Twitter and Facebook and post available assignments there as well.
3. For whatever reason, the mystery shopping company is too big, too small, or too busy, so it hires independent scheduling companies to take care of assigning and editing shops.

Mystery shopping companies range in size. They can be very large with hundreds of employees, offering other services in addition to mystery shopping. The benefit of working with a large

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company is that you can be considered for a greater number of assignments. You also have the benefit of being one of many, so you won't be called every second for a job, since there are other shoppers who can fill assignments.

Some companies consist of just a handful of people. The benefit of working with smaller companies is that they tend to provide better service to the shopper and the business being shopped. If you provide quality work, you are more likely to get preferential assignments. You tend to develop closer relationships with smaller companies, and you will receive assistance unlike that which you get from a larger, multifaceted corporation.