



Mystery Shopping Course: Service Quality Audit Scenarios, Shopper Management and Scoring



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Introduction:

Mystery shopping course on service quality audit scenarios, shopper management and scoring is a 1-week course for customer experience, quality assurance and branch-network functions, ending with a Mystery Shopping Programme Plan for a case organisation. Many organisations commission covert visits and calls yet receive scores that branches dispute, scenarios that miss the published service standards and reports that never change frontline behaviour. Nominees already oversee service audits or branch performance and work through case studies built on visit questionnaires, shopper reports and score extracts. CoreConcept Training Center delivers this mystery shopping course.

Course Objectives:

- Translate published service standards into observable audit checklist items and channel-specific visit scenarios
- Plan visit samples and quotas across branches, service centres, contact channels and time bands
- Recruit, profile, brief and supervise mystery shoppers so that visits remain covert, consistent and ethical
- Calibrate evaluators and weight checklist items into a scoring model that branches accept as fair
- Validate shopper reports, handle branch disputes and manage an external research vendor against agreed service levels
- Convert audit results into coaching conversations, action plans and accountability routines for branch managers

Target Audience:

- Customer experience units responsible for designing and commissioning mystery shopping and covert service audits
 - Quality assurance teams responsible for monitoring service standard adherence across branches and service centres
 - Branch network and area management teams responsible for acting on audit scores and coaching frontline staff
 - Government service centre performance units responsible for checking published service charters at counters and call lines
 - Retail operations teams responsible for store visit standards, staff incentives and audit follow-up
 - Procurement and vendor management staff responsible for contracting and supervising research agencies
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Course Outline:

Day 1: Mystery Shopping Purposes and Current Audit Baseline

- Mystery Customer Research Versus Surveys and Internal Inspections
- Covert Visit Uses for Own Branches, Competitors and Compliance Testing
- In-Person, Mystery Calling, Email, Web Chat and Chatbot Channels
- Existing Audit Questionnaire Health Check and Score History Review
- Programme Objectives Statement and Stakeholder Map for Audit Owners

Day 2: Professional Codes, Research Standards and Programme Architecture

- MSPA Common Codes of Professional Standards and Ethical Conduct
- ESOMAR and MRS Guidance on Mystery Customer Studies
- ISO 20252 Research Service Requirements Applied to Audit Vendors
- Staff Notification, Recording Consent and Personal Data Handling Rules
- Programme Architecture Covering Waves, Channels, Owners and Reporting Cycle

Day 3: Scenario Writing, Visit Sampling and Shopper Management

- Service Standard to Observable Checklist Item Conversion Grid
- Scenario Scripts With Customer Profile, Request Type and Cover Story
- Visit Sampling Frame and Quotas by Branch and Time Band
- Shopper Recruitment Criteria, Profiling and Conflict of Interest Screening
- Shopper Briefing Pack, Detection Avoidance and Post-Visit Report Deadlines

Day 4: Scoring Models, Report Validation, Disputes and Vendor Control

- Item Weighting, Critical Fail Items and Branch Score Calculation
- Evaluator Calibration Sessions and Inter-Rater Agreement Checks
- Report Validation With Receipts, Timestamps and Call Recordings
- Branch Dispute and Appeal Procedure With Rescoring Rules
- Agency Request for Proposal, Service Levels and Wave Quality Audits

Day 5: Case Study: Mystery Shopping Programme Plan

- Case Organisation Service Charter Converted Into a Visit Questionnaire
 - Case Branch Network Sampling Plan and Shopper Allocation Schedule
 - Case Wave Results Analysis With Branch League Table and Outliers
 - Branch Manager Coaching Conversation and Corrective Action Tracker
 - Mystery Shopping Programme Plan Completion and Sponsor Review
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Skills You Will Gain:

- Audit Scenario Scripting
- Visit Sampling Design
- Shopper Panel Supervision
- Evaluator Calibration
- Weighted Score Modelling
- Audit Evidence Validation
- Research Vendor Oversight
- Results-Based Branch Coaching

Why Attend This Course:

- Deliver a Mystery Shopping Programme Plan for a case organisation to the head of customer experience, the quality director or the branch network sponsor
- Decide which standards to audit, in which channels, how often per branch and which items count as critical fails
- Avoid disputed scores, detected shoppers, wasted agency spend and staff grievances caused by unfair or poorly evidenced audits
- Share the checklist conversion grid, scenario script template, calibration routine and dispute procedure with quality and branch colleagues

Conclusion:

Back at work, the participant presents the Mystery Shopping Programme Plan to the head of customer experience, the quality director and the branch network sponsor. They use it to approve the audited standards, the visit sample, the scoring rules, the agency brief and the coaching routine that follows each wave. After the first wave under the plan, the unit should compare disputes upheld, scores rejected at validation and corrective actions closed by branch managers, then revise scenarios, weights and shopper briefings where results proved unreliable.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should participants know before a mystery shopping and service quality audit course?

Participants should already oversee service standards, branch performance or audit results and be able to read a scoring sheet. A sample visit questionnaire, service charter or shopper report from their own organisation, anonymised, helps during the case study day.

How does a mystery shopping course differ from a customer survey or service design course?

A mystery shopping course trains participants to run covert visits and calls that test whether standards are delivered. Survey courses measure what customers say afterwards, and service design courses create the standards and journeys in the first place.

Should mystery shopping scores be used to discipline individual employees?

Generally no. Professional mystery shopping codes recommend using results for coaching, recognition and process improvement rather than punishment of named staff, and staff should be told that covert audits take place even if visit dates stay confidential.

What do participants take back from the mystery shopping and service quality audit course?

Participants take back a Mystery Shopping Programme Plan for a case organisation, with a checklist conversion grid, scenario scripts, sampling plan, weighted scoring model, validation and dispute rules, agency service levels and a branch coaching tracker.
