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Secret Shopping as User Experience Assessment Tool

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Secret Shopping as User Experience Assessment Tool

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Particularly useful when paired with other data, secret shopping reduces measurement and observer effects. Used heavily in business and retail, secret shopping provides feedback on the experience.

What is Secret Shopping?

- Mystery shopping or unobtrusive evaluation of a service point
- Proxies engage in a typical transaction and provide feedback on the experience
- Used heavily in business and retail
- Reduces measurement and observer effects
- Particularly useful when paired with other assessment tools

Why Shop the Library?

Small sample sizes are enough to gain useful insights. With 5 participants, you can save 80% of your problems.

With a combination of qualitative and quantitative data, secret shopping can produce rich results.

You can very quickly identify trends across service points.

What questions do you want answered? What do you want to focus on?

- Holistic impressions
- Accuracy of answers provided
- Concerns regarding student employees
- Combination of the above or others

Who do you want to use as your shoppers?

- Professionally trained shoppers
- Representatives from primary user groups
- Representatives from a specific user group

How much money and time do you have to commit to a project?

Basic Instructions for Shoppers

Working with the project leader, choose a question to ask at the service point(s) in question.

Maintain your anonymity as a secret shopper.

Pay attention to all aspects of your experience.

Leave the area.

Complete any and all evaluation forms with as much detail as possible.

Follow up with project leader for discussion/debriefing.

Questions to Ask Before Beginning

What is Secret Shopping? How can it be used to evaluate customer service in public libraries? What are the benefits of using secret shoppers? How does secret shopping differ from traditional customer feedback methods?

Why Shop the Library? What makes the Ames Library a good candidate for secret shopping? How does the library's mission and values align with the goals of secret shopping? What unique features of the Ames Library should be considered when designing a secret shopping study?

Questions Asked by Secret Shoppers

- Can you show me how to renew my books online?
- How much does it cost to use the copiers at the library?
- What is the policy regarding the use of mobile devices in the library?
- Can you help me locate a book that I need for my research?
- Is there a color printer and how much does it cost to use it?
- Can you help me find academic or scholarly articles on a specific topic?