

GLOBAL MARKET RESEARCH

radius

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# radius report

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

**Mystery Shopping Your Retail  
Channel Partners**

Understanding Your  
Customer Interactions

## Mystery Shopping

Understanding Your  
Customer Interactions

### Are your products correctly displayed on store shelves by your retail channel partners?

Are retail sales professionals describing your products accurately? Are stores using your marketing materials appropriately or at all? Are your competitors gaining an advantage because of their in-store presence?

Surprisingly, most organizations don't know the answers to these questions, or they rely on anecdotal feedback from their retail channel partners themselves. If your organization struggles with any of these questions, you should consider mystery shopping.

Mystery shopping involves the use of trained research professionals who visit retail stores posing as ordinary consumers. Following a memorized script, mystery shoppers interact with store personnel or view in-store product displays to collect specific pieces of information about your and your competitors' products. This might include information on product displays,

pricing, marketing materials, and the role of store personnel in the sales process. Mystery shoppers remain anonymous throughout the interaction – store personnel do not even know that they are mystery shopped.

What kinds of organizations should consider mystery shopping? It is typically used by organizations that rely on outside partners to interact with end customers. In its most common form, mystery shopping is done to outside partners who perform a sales function, such as retail channel partners. In other cases, it involves outside partners who are involved in other types of interaction with customers, such as customer service or help centers, distributors, authorized repair centers, intermediaries, or other types of partners. In most cases, mystery shopping is conducted at the retail level, meaning that mystery shoppers travel to physical store locations to collect data.

The telephone or Internet (using chat or e-mail communications) are other methods of data collection.

Mystery shopping can also be used to support internal audits of corporate procedures, to test effectiveness of employee training, and to measure compliance with corporate initiatives or other efforts to monitor retail operations. Results can be compiled and reported at the store level, store-chain level, or for specific geographic regions.

Data Development Worldwide is a full-service custom market research firm with a dedicated mystery shopping practice. Utilizing a network of mystery shoppers across the United States and Canada, we have the resources to meet the geographic breadth of your outside partners. As examples of our work, we recently completed projects involving:

- Over 900 mystery shops in consumer electronics stores across the United States and Canada to understand the role of retail sales professionals in guiding consumer product selection decisions.
- Over 450 mystery shops in retail stores across the United States to determine the use, placement, and visibility of in-store marketing materials.
- Nearly 100 mystery shops in retail stores on selected times and dates to evaluate the effectiveness of store promotional events.

Can mystery shopping help in your research and marketing efforts? Feel free to contact us to discuss the possibilities and to see how it can work for you.

→ **Want to learn more?**

**Please contact:**

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