

Project Diagnostics

Particularly in the property industry, a large focus is placed on evaluating the monthly financial performance of businesses – so, shouldn't the same concept apply to the sales and customer experience efforts of the on-site staff? It's crucial that developers and builders know how effectively their prospects are nurtured, and how well the on-site team represents the brand. A great way to refine your customer experience is to conduct mystery shopping.

The mystery shopping process can be used to evaluate performance throughout a variety of touchpoints including the online experience, follow-up protocols, presentation of the sales office and overall helpfulness of sales staff.

The Objective:

Essentially, the overarching objective of all mystery shopping initiatives is to create a baseline for the current customer experience, in order to create a sales process and build standards to enhance the customer journey.

If you expect to achieve exceptional sales results for your project, then you must demand high standards from the front line.

Spending a significant amount of your budget on lead generation is a misuse of assets if the customer's experience with your sales team is ordinary and inconsistent. Most builders and developers don't need more customers, they just need the ones they have to be followed up and nurtured throughout their customer journey.



Property professionals are at risk of burning through prospects with unimpressive service and bad word-of-mouth. Without the insight acquired from unbiased mystery shoppers, property businesses may never know which aspects of their service require improvement, or how to implement the necessary changes.

Unfortunately, online prospects are often considered of a lesser value than those who visit the sales centre – this is because they are in the more premature stages of the buying process. Rather than ignoring or sidelining online enquiries, sales teams must begin implementing nurture sequences that educate and develop a relationship with these potential customers, to help them progress through the buying cycle, and ultimately convert. Mystery shopping can help to both identify and solve this problem.

Mystery shopping is most definitely not about trying to catch out slacking sales representatives, rather, it endeavours to establish the current standard of customer experience to develop and improve the customer journey.

The Benefits:

Mystery shopping affords property businesses the following benefits:

- + Provides an overall view of the strengths and weaknesses of the sales team
- + Pinpoints the sales team's ability to gain new business
- + Objectively measures the quality of your service, against competitors and industry benchmarks
- + Acts as a great tool for performance management or staff reward programs
- + Helps to identify any service gaps that will help improve your enquiry conversion rates

Ultimately, the process helps to improve sales teams' customer service efforts, ensures the optimal representation of the brand, and encourages consistency between sales representatives and the information they provide to prospects. It's an effective way to identify the areas of service that require attention and improvement, and is a great starting point to develop strategies to improve these services.

For example, if a business wanted to gain insight to their follow up initiatives for their online enquiries, a mystery shopper could register online to gain an understanding of the whole experience and evaluate it on a variety of factors: Did they receive a welcome email? Were they provided with valuable and meaningful information to educate them and nurture them through the purchasing process? Did they receive a follow up call? Were they invited to make an appointment and visit the sales centre?

Mystery shopping is an important component of our Project Diagnostics services at Property Republic. We start with online, telephone and in-person enquiries, monitor all communication and visit the sales centre. We then audit any follow up and provide a comprehensive report with recommendations.

Done correctly, mystery shopping is about improvement. How the marketing team can improve the digital experience, how the development team can improve on-site presentation, how the sales manager can better coach the sales team. It's not about picking holes in a sales team who probably haven't had the necessary training and expectations set in the first place.

This year, we re-engineered our mystery shopping process through creating a closed Facebook group where shoppers would submit a short video log of their experience at every stage of their process – initial enquiry, follow-up and sales centre visit. Being able to provide our clients with this 'face-to-face' feedback was highly beneficial.

Our methodology provides you with intimate video feedback, as well as a survey approach, from our shoppers who are genuinely looking to purchase. This keeps your whole team in the loop as the exercise progresses and provides you with some valuable insights into how you can improve your brand presence, upskill your sales team and set market-leading customer service standards.

