

MYSTERY SHOP

Methodology and FAQs



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MYSTERY SHOPPING REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Since launching the annual Home Moving Trends survey in 2011, the agent's ability to market a property, combined with the likeability factor have consistently featured among the top 5 drivers of consumer choice when deciding which agent to trust with the sale or let of their most valuable asset.

Marketing ability and likeability



Source: Property Academy, Home Moving Trends Survey, 2017
Base: 5,838

Nice websites, portal advertising, fees, recommendations and reviews all have their place when it comes to considering which agent to invite to conduct a market appraisal, but at the point of conversion, it all comes to nothing if the customer experience at the point of contact fails to trigger feelings of like and trust.

Background

We used the insight gathered over years of listening to the voice of the customer and consulted with practising estate and letting agents to map out a perfect customer journey. Following in-depth data analysis by Rightmove designed to benchmark marketing and results performance, Property Academy then commissioned an experienced market research company to design and conduct mystery shops.

The combination of data analysis and mystery shopping resulted in an overall branch score, which in turn determined a rating of the top 20% of branches: Highly Rated, Excellent or Exceptional.

These ratings are published in the Best Estate Agent Guide.



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METHODOLOGY

A representative sample project of 70 different agents, operating across a variety of business models and sizes was conducted to fine tune each questionnaire and scenario.

All questions are applicable for all Agents including where possible online agents, auction houses and Housing Associations. Commercial agents were not included.

There are a variety of weighting metrics applied to each measure. These remain confidential, but are tailored to recognise the agents that truly deliver an exceptional level of customer experience. Every questionnaire response will score either a Yes or No, (except the final experiential question that is graded from 0 to 10).

Any measure can score a Yes if discussed conversationally.

We made two phone calls and one email enquiry, for each qualifying sales and/or lettings department within a branch office – up to 6 enquiries per branch office. We conducted c.30,000 mystery shops in total - the most comprehensive mystery shopping exercise of its kind of the UK property industry.

National Results

At a national level, the results reveal some interesting insights about the Property Industry as a whole, including:

- 40% of sales and over half of lettings call-handlers failed to ask for the applicant's name.
- Only 1 in 5 sought to establish ability/readiness to proceed with the move.
- ¾ failed to establish the caller's timescales.
- c. 70% failed to show interest in the caller by asking about their requirements.
- 40% of web enquiries received no response within 1 working day
- 88% of shoppers who made a web-based enquiry are detractors

We are pleased to include an extra report alongside your individual scores, which provides a breakdown of results at a national level shown alongside the scores for each branch to enable you to benchmark your performance against the national average.



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YOUR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Mystery phone calls

What if we failed to answer the call?

If the call was not answered on the first attempt, the shopper made a second attempt to make a connection with an agent at your branch. After two attempts, the call was recorded as a 0 score.

This approach was used for both calls (ie up to 4 attempts were made to make a connection).

What questions did the mystery caller ask?

For every mystery call, our callers asked a question about a property available with that agent on Rightmove, or on the agent's own website.

In a small number of cases, where there were no properties available at the time of the call, our shopper called with a generic interest in properties in the patch covered by the branch.

What times and days did you conduct the calls?

Calls were conducted between 09:00 and 17:30 on working days and none took place on national bank holidays.

What was the identity of the caller?

We are not disclosing this information in order to limit the potential for future mystery shop patterns from being discovered and to prevent the identify of the individual who took the call from being revealed.

Did the mystery caller book a viewing, appointment, valuation or mortgage appointment?

No, they were instructed and trained not to commit to any booking.

What happens if the call was disconnected/cut off?

Our shopper called the branch back and endeavoured to speak with the same person. The call was scored based on the combined experience across both calls.

Can we listen to a recording of the call?

Audio recordings were not made of the calls. The mystery shoppers recorded the responses directly on to the score sheets.

Mystery emails

We sent one web enquiry, either via the contact form on Rightmove (preference), or via the agent's own email address or web form as provided on their own website at the time of the exercise, where they had no listings on Rightmove.

Email responses were assessed based on the content in the body of the email. Any attachments or external links were not measured.

We also tracked responses made by telephone for a sample number of email enquiries to create an overall picture for the industry – these responses were not rated and did not count towards an individual branch score.

The mystery shopper expressed a preference to be contacted via email.

What was the content of the email enquiry?

For every mystery email enquiry, our shopper asked for assistance with selling or letting their property. Where the enquiry was made via the Rightmove or agent's own web form, all required information was completed in the form.

What is classed as a 'working day' (or working minutes)?

A working day (or working minutes) is Monday to Saturday from 09:00 to 17:30. Any email received within 8.5 hours (510 working minutes) was included in the measurement.

What if my email response goes to the mystery shopper's junk/spam folder?

These were checked and included in the assessment.

Are automated emails scored?

No. Automated emails were not included in the scoring of the web enquiry measurement.

Can I have a copy of the web enquiry?

To protect the identity of individual members of staff, we are not providing copies of the emails exchanged.



A structured programme of mystery shopping exercises using professional shoppers can deliver customer service improvements and help you to monitor front line performance. If you are interested in exploring this further, we recommend that you contact 360 Perspectives on **01403 230650**.

If you have questions about this report, or you are interested in becoming a member of the Property Academy, please contact **info@propertyacademy.co.uk** or call **01372 370847**.