

HEALTH CARE

IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE

MYSTERY SHOPPING IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Since the early eighties mystery shopping has been utilized to evaluate the overall physical attributes of businesses/enterprises and their customer service. As a leader in this industry for over 24 years, ESP having completed over 5 million shops in almost every type of business and in every state in the union, has compiled a vast amount of data related to mystery shopping scores and customer service. Combined with our hi-tech procedures this data has enabled us to ascertain the precise “things” that result in successful levels of customer service.



Mystery shopping data is incredibly valuable because it separates the quality personnel from those employees who effectively promote your hospital or services. In today's economic situation, nothing could be more important as improving customer service and the resultant increase in reputation, revenues, efficiently and cost effectively.

Surely, as a principal of a health care/hospital facility you would want to know if **your** team is doing and saying the right “things?” That is why our Mystery Shopping services are so valuable.

In almost real time you will be able to separate the genuine customer service employees from those that don't measure up to your standards.

THE THEORY BEHIND CUSTOMER SERVICE ENHANCEMENT

Customer Service is the lifeblood of any organization – even more so in a hospital setting. It is not surprising therefore that that most successful businesses exhibit exceptional customer service.

Since 1985, **Evaluation Systems for Personnel (ESP)**, using sophisticated mystery shopping programs, has helped thousands of organizations throughout the USA improve their customer service and revenues. **Mystery Shopping** provides rapid, unbiased and accurate feedback. It pinpoints areas where improvements will have the greatest impact.



In recent years, with the strained economic situation the importance of customer service has become even more relevant. That is why ESP began to develop a high tech approach to the evaluation and improvement of customer service. **MYSTERY SHOPPING** provides you with an instant snapshot of your hospital/health care provider, telling you, at a glance precisely what your people doing and saying or behaving. Armed with this information you can introduce corrective measures into your training or policies, which can only lead to additional successes.

1. PATIENT SATISFACTION

Hospitals who demonstrate the greatest commitment to improvement increase their patient satisfaction scores.



There used to be a time when quality care and the finest equipment were good enough to ensure success in the healthcare industry. This has changed. Now, the disparity in patient satisfaction between hospitals that deliver exemplary patient service and those that provide lower levels of care is increasing.

Unhappy employees translate into poor patient care. Surveys show that administrators and executives are considerably more satisfied with their jobs than nurses and technical workers. This

suggests that: *health care management is losing touch with front-line employees.*

Increases in physician overall satisfaction correlates with patient perceptions of care quality, indicating that *Physicians are loyal to facilities that are customer focused.*

2. EVALUATING CUSTOMER CARE

Since 1985 ESP has helped many facilities in many industries throughout the USA improve their **customer service** via tailored **mystery shopping** programs. ESP's programs pinpoint accurately areas of concern in employee behavior and product knowledge. This is crucial to the success and profitability of any organization – after all, no matter how good your products or services are, it takes just one inept or rude employee to negate all of your advertising and overhead dollars. Surely, if a weak link exists, you'd want to know about it? **Fact:** 95% of dissatisfied consumers do not complain—they simply do not use that facility again and they certainly do not recommend it to friends or family. On the contrary, they bad-mouth it as often as possible. How can you solve a problem if you don't know that it exists? **Enter ESP!**

Mystery Shopping is a sure way of providing rapid, unbiased and accurate feedback. It will enable you to pinpoint areas where improvements will have the greatest impact.

3. ESP'S MYSTERY SHOPPERS

The quality of our shoppers (we call them 'evaluators') is an essential ingredient of our feedback. That is why we utilize only the finest **shoppers**—highly qualified, selected and trained. By drawing from our database of over 600,000 shoppers, nation-wide and by continually grading them, we can assure our clients of the finest, most accurate and cost-effective evaluations. Our web-based on-line setup enables us to perform shops in any city, in any state, and at a moment's notice.

THE QUALITY OF OUR SHOPPERS

Because the information we glean from mystery shopping experiences is of a sensitive



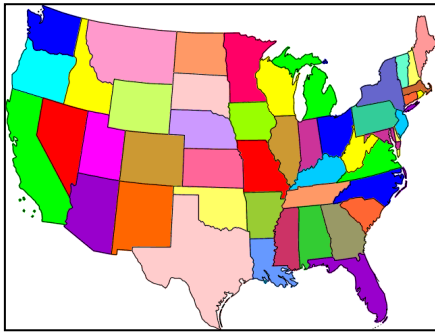
nature it is of paramount importance that the shoppers report accurately every detail of their visit. To this end we set extremely high standards for our shopper – probably the highest in the nation.

To this end we demand that each shopper be fully conversant with business procedures and expectations. We choose our shoppers on the basis of education, experience and professional demeanor.

In the interests of maintaining an exceptionally high standard we test and train our shoppers on an on-going basis.

Our Nation-Wide Evaluators

The quality of shoppers (we call them ‘evaluators’) is an essential ingredient of any feedback. For this reason we use only the finest shoppers—highly qualified, selected, trained and constantly evaluated. By drawing from our database of 600,000 plus shoppers- nation-wide and by continually grading them, we can assure our clients of the finest and most accurate evaluations.



Because of our unique **ON-LINE WEB-BASED** service we are able to perform shops efficiently and accurately in almost any airport in any city in any part of the world, and often at a moment’s notice.

WHAT WE EVALUATE

The general customer service of a hospital setting is determined by many factors such as

- o **VALET PARKING**
- o **RECEPTION (FRONT DESK)**
- o **ADMITTING/REGISTRATION**
- o **NURSE STATIONS**
- o **WAITING ROOMS**
- o **GIFT SHOP**
- o **DELI/CAFETERIA/COFFEE SHOP**
- o **ANSWERING SERVICE/OPERATORS**
- o **ADMITTING SPECIALITY**
- o **HALLWAYS**
- o **RESTROOMS**
- o **GARAGES**
- o **ELEVATORS**

All of these experiences or moments of truth combine to give a snapshot of the hospital’s level of customer service. The attitude of each employee even though they may not be performing health improvement functions is crucial to the overall perception of the facility.

4. ATTITUDE

You only get one opportunity to make a good first impression. Whether the initial contact is via the phone or in person, an enthusiastic and professional individual can set the tone for a top-notch customer service experience. We must ask ourselves the question—are our employees doing everything that they should be doing? ESP’s proven questionnaires and scorecards have been designed to determine if indeed they have. There are two distinct communication methods, which we evaluate:

5. ESP'S OVERALL SOLUTION

Our research has shown that that mystery shopping works best when accompanied by a program which embraces training, corrective actions, satisfaction surveys (patient & physician) and/or incentive programs.

6. TRAINING METHODOLOGIES

TRAIN THE TRAINER— with customized production quality content. We can produce these in booklet or CD form.

E LEARNING — Train thousands of employees on line using our advanced multi media technology. This is a perfect training solution, where employees have conflicting work schedules.



7. SURVEYS

1. **Employee or Physician Satisfaction**—if dissatisfied employees or physicians translate into poor patient care it's essential that we determine the levels of satisfaction - exactly what and why.
2. **Patient Satisfaction—the bottom line**—poor patient satisfaction is what we are aiming to prevent.

We use two methodologies:

- Comment Cards
- Telephone interviews

8. CONSULTING

Everyone should be made to feel part of the process. Focus and discussion groups ensure that everyone is on the same page.

There must be a reason why so many health care facilities have contracted with ESP.

9. REPORTING TECHNIQUES

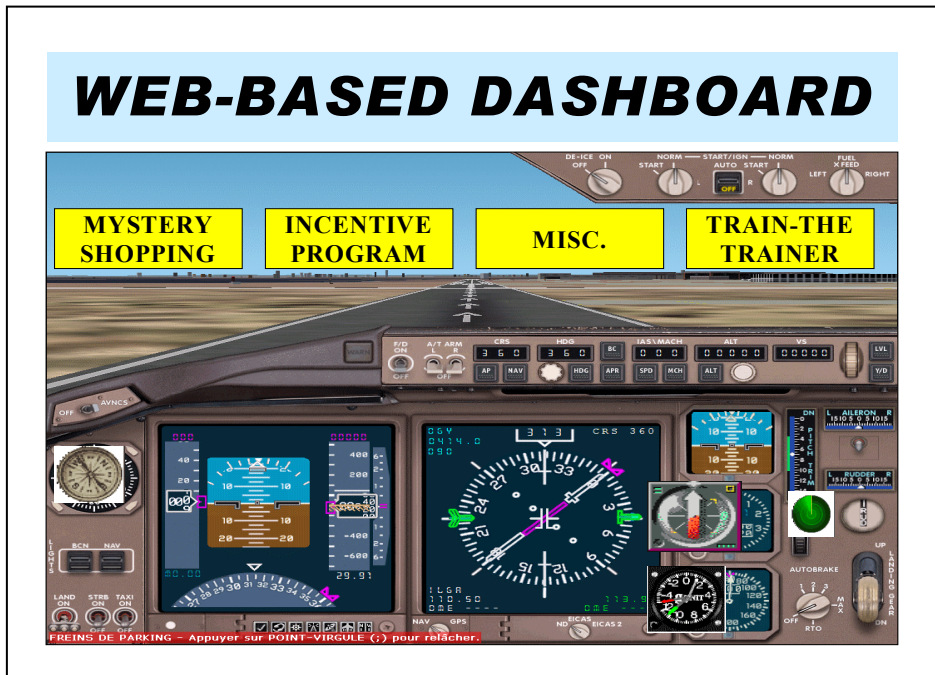
We have developed a web-based reporting dashboard, which allows you, or anyone you authorize, to access data (current and historical). It also allows you to generate bar charts and graphs to make comparisons. **This is the most significant development in our industry and is surprisingly inexpensive.** We offer:

- o Scorecard plus narrative
- o Digital recording plus scorecard.
- o Color bar charts & spreadsheets.

This kind of information provides detailed data of performances by question, by department, by mode, by city, by state and by company.

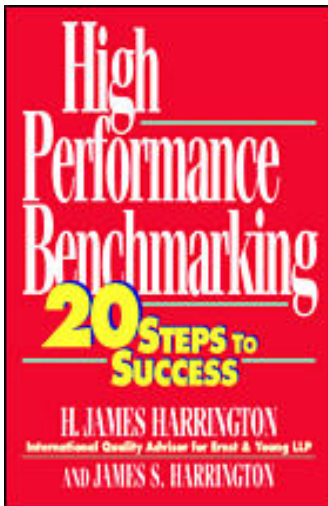
Web One-Click Reporting

We offer the ability to provide all the data in real time, on a web site dedicated to your specific company. This is extremely user-friendly and recommended for companies with multiple locations.



10. BENCHMARKING

ESP has been featured in many major publications, as an innovator in the art of comparing products, product mix, services, customer service and prices. In particular we have in-depth information as to how other companies or health organizations in the various categories perform.



This information provides your organization with benchmarks for future aspirations. According to H. James Harrington in his highly acclaimed book 'High Performance Benchmarking – 20 steps to success,' where ESP is prominently featured, companies can benefit greatly from benchmarking by as much as 2000%. He states, "No matter how good your organization is, or how well regarded your products and/or services are, you cannot stop improving. You cannot stand still. When you do, you really are not standing still; you are slipping backward, because your competition is constantly improving. One of the best ways to keep improving your organization is to benchmark. In the last 10 years, process benchmarking has become the "in" thing to do. Ernst & Young LLP and the American Quality Foundation conducted an extensive international quality study that found a statistical correlation between benchmarking and organizational performance (profit, productivity,, and quality. Benchmarking is one of the few

management practices that can be statistically validated as being a key driver for improvement in the best organizations."

11. MONTHLY REPORTS & ANALYSIS

We have on staff Ph.D. employees who can test the validity of evaluations. Furthermore, we offer monthly reports which not only report for that month but which point out trends and comparisons with previous months

Can it be a coincidence that our clients consistently win awards for “best in customer service & management”?

12. SERVICE-ENHANCEMENT

Incentive Programs

A major factor in getting employees to provide top-notch customer service is the introduction of an incentive program. ESP has been extremely successful in this area and has been contracted by major companies to introduce and maintain such programs. Mystery shopping results are extremely useful in



any rewards program because they give a numerical value to specific performances such as the No. 1 employee or best customer service provider. In addition to cash prizes we recommend the awarding of great-looking monthly certificates of achievement to employees who perform over a certain standard and quality wooden plaques to management twice a year.

13. ESP'S MYSTERY SHOPPING PROGRAM

We divide our shopping services into two types:

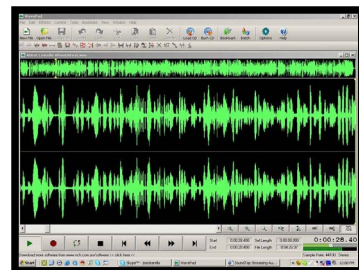
A. THE TELEPHONE EVALUATION

Telephone inquiries are different to face-to-face inquiries. Those individuals responding to a telephone inquiry must project a much stronger verbal approach. You'll never get a second opportunity to make a good first impression. That is why the telephone is so important. It will set the initial tone of the communication between the employee and the caller. The entire thrust of the person answering the phone should be to sell the reputation of the facility. Obviously, it's crucial that they exhibit a high degree of empathy. Our shoppers have the capacity to record and score their experience.



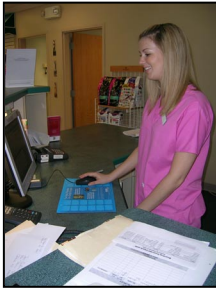
Recording the call.

Each call from our shoppers can be recorded digitally so that it can be Emailed to the client or other interested parties – even the employee. This represents a great training tool. In addition, we provide a scorecard, which reflects the overall quality of the call—the greeting, qualification, presentation and closing the visit. Because it can be presented in spreadsheet format it is very simple to measure trends. That way we can evaluate the success of any training or corrective actions.



B. FACE-TO-FACE EVALUATION

How much more successful would your employees be if they could communicate effectively?



Mystery shopping will tell you exactly what your employees are omitting.

Our shoppers will not only telephone in, but will also pay a visit to the hospital. Using a proven questionnaire the shoppers can give the hospital a ‘blow-by-blow’ description of their experience (from the time they enter the facility to the time they leave - in numerical and in written format. Once again it’s the first impression that is so important – the way in which the consumer is greeted/approached as he/she enters the facility. We cannot make judgments about consumers based upon their appearance, behavior or perceived wealth. Everyone who enters your facility is a potential patient or visitor. That is why mystery shopping is so valuable—it tells you exactly what your employees are omitting from their presentations so that corrective action can be made in real time.

A combination of telephone and face-to-face evaluations can be of incredible value.

14. THE REPORTING

Our professional bar charts and spreadsheets will give you incredible insight into the inner workings of your health facility. They will pin point precisely any weak spots in the individual or company presentations. This information is invaluable for your training methodology.

Specific Areas Measured

- **THE GREETING**
- **THE QUALIFICATION**
- **THE PRESENTATION**