

# Home Biz Idea: Mystery Shopper!

By BB Lee

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Many of SmallBizBits Subscribers are looking for a little part-time income. Or a business they could easily start out of the home with minimal investment. Mystery Shopping is one of the easiest businesses to start out of the home and although you will never get rich at this biz, it is an idea worth investigating.

Mystery Shoppers are akin to Private Eyes. Why? Both go undercover, to investigate certain situations for their clients. Except, Mystery Shoppers scout out retail stores, hotels, restaurants, video stores, theaters, banks, government agencies. You name it! Where-ever undercover surveillance is needed to evaluate an employee's performance in handling customers, you might find a Mystery Shopper on duty. The day of "Big Brother Watching You" is here!

## Duties:

Mystery shoppers visit or call businesses posing as ordinary customers and provide detailed evaluations of their experience using written reports or questionnaires.

## Skills:

Be detailed oriented.

Very observant.

Know the local area well.

Good acting skills would be a plus.

Extra training(if required) is provided by the company hiring.

## Equipment:

No special equipment is required.

## Startup:

Around \$100.

Advertising:

Contact major retailers, department stores, directly. Inform them about your service and your willingness to work for them. Another alternative is to go to one of the popular search engines. Type in "Mystery Shopper" surf to the top ten sites and see if they interest you. If so, contact them about joining their "Mystery Shopper Team."

Remember, be cautious when you deal with Online Employment Opportunities. You will have to dig a bit to find the legitimate Mystery Shopper sites.

Charges:

Usually paid any where from \$10 to \$25 and up per shopping trip. They will usually compensate you for any purchases required on your trip. For example, if you had to evaluate a local fast food chains service and purchased a meal or rented video's at a local store to evaluate how they handled customers.

Potential Income:

Limited By the Mystery Shopper Opportunities In your Area. It is possible to make a good part-time income if you live in a large urban community with many businesses that deal with the public.

Note: A few states consider Mystery Shoppers similar to a Private Investigator. Therefore, they must be licensed and follow certain rules and regulations.

Mystery Shoppers are also considered Independant Contractors. You will be responsible for all taxes. Keep good records!

If a Mystery Shopper Organization ask for money up front for you to join their team...think twice! Legitimate companies will pay you. Not the other way around.

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