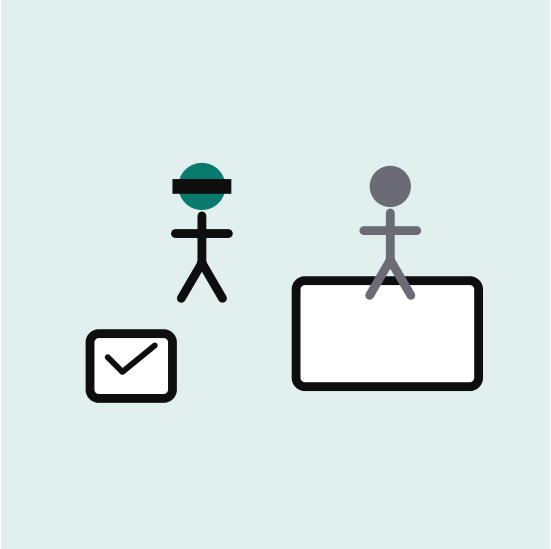
Method

Mystery shopping

A trained person poses as a customer to experience a service and evaluate it against defined criteria, without the staff knowing they are being observed.



In Spanish

Cliente misterioso

Origin

A services marketing practice; analyzed by Wilson (2001)

Output

An evaluation of the service against set criteria, seen as a customer

What it's for

It shows how the service is delivered in reality, which often doesn't match what the processes say.

Key elements

Clear criteria

What is evaluated at each step, decided before the visit.

Real situation

A journey any customer would make.

Ethically

The organization knows, and specific individuals are not judged.

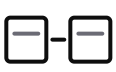
How it's done

1 

Define. The journey and the evaluation criteria.

2 

Visit. Experience the service as a customer and write it down right after.

3 

Compare. Contrast visits, locations and channels.

Applications in design

When to use it

To check whether the service is delivered as designed, across different locations and channels.

Avoid

Using it to monitor or punish specific employees.

Don't fall for it

One visit is an anecdote: do several, at different times.

Connections

Related to

- Service safari
- Service blueprint

Authors and works

2001	**Alan M. Wilson**	Analyzed its use for measuring service quality, and the ethical issues of the deception it involves.

Sources

Original sources

- Wilson, A. M. (2001). Mystery shopping: Using deception to measure service performance. Psychology & Marketing, 18(7), 721–734. View source (https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.1027)

Last reviewed: October 25, 2026

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