MSPA MYSTERY SHOPPING PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

MSPA Code of Professional Standards and Ethics Agreement for Mystery Shoppers

The Mystery Shopping Providers Association (MSPA) is dedicated to improving service and promoting excellence in the mystery shopping industry. A fundamental aim of the Association is to ensure that the highest standards and ethics are maintained. To improve the value, reputation and stimulate the use of mystery shopping services, it is important that information about mystery shopping services is accurately communicated to both the business community and the public at large, while complying with applicable government laws, regulations and ordinances.

The MSPA expects members and shoppers to follow principles of honesty, professionalism, fairness and confidentiality to guard the interests of the public and our clients in order to promote good business practices. For this purpose, MSPA encourages shoppers to obtain MSPA Shopper Certification.

The Mystery Shopping Providers Association's **Shopper's Code of Professional Standards** has been established to ensure that all shoppers collaborating with MSPA members conform to the following principles.

− Commit, in principle, to the purposes of the association: improving service and promoting excellence in the mystery shopping industry;
− Conduct mystery shopping services in an honest and ethical manner;
− Conduct mystery shopping services according to industry procedures and regulations set forth and agreed to by MSPA members;
− Instill confidence in mystery shopping and encourage public cooperation;
− Respect MSPA members, clients, and the general public.

In addition, we agree to the following Rules of Ethical Conduct:

− I agree to perform all shops to the best of my ability;
− I agree to perform all shops with honesty and integrity;
− I agree to submit all reports on or before the deadline;
− I agree to honor all confidentiality agreements;
− I agree to give immediate notice to the mystery shopping provider if I cannot perform a shop for any reason;
− I agree to return follow up calls or e-mails in a timely manner;
− I agree to keep paperwork for a period as required by the mystery shopping provider in case questions arise from the client. I will not perform a shop unless I have thoroughly read each question on the survey and the guidelines provided by the mystery shopping provider;
− I will not falsify or misrepresent reports;
− I will not ask or encourage anyone to break confidentiality agreements with other firms for whom they conduct mystery shopping assignments;
− I will not use MSPA media to publish complaints against vendors, clients, shoppers or mystery shopper providers except in connection with the decertification process;
− I will not share information with others on which company shops which clients;
− I will not share information with others on shopping fees and reimbursements for specific clients;

− I will not share the results of a shop with others in order to protect the clients confidentiality;

− I will not perform any shops under the influence of illegal drugs, or prescription drugs that might impair my abilities;

− I agree not to become inebriated or drink beyond the legal limits set forth in my state or perform any other activity that may cause harm to myself or others while mystery shopping;

− I will not contact a client directly without approval of the mystery shopping provider;

− I will not disrupt the normal business flow of an operation in the process of performing a shop (do not cause a scene);

− I will not announce myself as a mystery shopper to the business being shopped unless given specific instructions by the mystery shopping provider;

− I will accurately disclose the nature of my business relationship with mystery shopping providers to any governmental agency requesting the information;

− I will declare any relationship through family or friends as required by the mystery shopping provider.

− I will disclose any potential conflict of interest now or in the future or related to any assignment.

Violation of the Rules of Conduct may result in your removal from the mystery shopping provider' database. If you are a credentialed MSPA shopper, certification may be withdrawn. Should a complaint be filed against you by an MSPA member, you will be contacted by the MSPA and given the opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.

By signing below, or accepting electronically, I indicate that I have read, understand, and agree to follow the principles of honesty, professionalism, fairness, and confidentiality that are outlined in this agreement.

I further understand that not conforming to this agreement may result in termination of my collaboration with MSPA members and my certification by MSPA.

Signature: _____Date: _____

Professional Standards – Enforcement: Violations by Shoppers

Complaints of alleged unethical behavior may be filed against a shopper who is suspected to have violated the MSPA Code of Professional Standards and Ethics Agreement for Mystery Shoppers. Complaints must be based on violation of one or more elements of the Code. Such charges must be documented in writing. A shopper who is found to be in violation of the Code may appeal the findings.

One of three possible actions may be taken against a shopper for violations:

1. Warn the shopper against any further behaviors which led to the complaint.
2. Censure the shopper and notify all MSPA members of the action.
3. Revoke the shopper's MSPA certification and notify all MSPA members of the action.

Complaint Against a Shopper

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Please use this form to file a formal complaint against a Shopper. Only complaints that are properly and completely filed will be investigated. Properly filed complaints will be investigated by an MSPA complaint panel consisting of staff and volunteers. If the complaint is found to have merit, the shopper against whom the complaint was filed will be given the opportunity to rebut the complaint. The decision reached by the complaint panel will be final, subject only to review by the MSPA Board of Directors, which may, in its sole discretion, opt to review the complaint panel's decision. Complaints must be based on violation of one or more elements of the *MSPA Code of Professional Standards and Ethics Agreement for Mystery Shoppers*. The complaint panel may take any of the following actions upon finding a complaint against a shopper to be valid:

- Warn the shopper against any further behaviors which led to the complaint
- Censure the shopper and notify all MSPA members of the action
- Revoke the shopper's MSPA certification and notify all MSPA members of the action

1. *Shopper's Name:* _____

2. *Shopper's Email Address:* _____

3. *Is this Shopper MSPA Certified?* ❑ Yes ❑ No)

4. *If Yes, Shopper's MSPA Certification Code:* _____

Complaint Specifics

5. *Identify the **SPECIFIC** section of the MSPA Code of Professional Standards and Ethics Agreement for Mystery Shoppers that you allege the shopper to have violated:*

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_____

continued

6. *Provide details of **exactly** what the shopper did or did not do to warrant this complaint. Include dates, times when possible, and all other pertinent details. Include details about communications you have had with the shopper to attempt to remedy the situation, if applicable.*

7. *Provide **copies** of any correspondence, email, relevant instructions given to the shopper, etc. that will corroborate your complaint and the shopper's infraction(s).*

   Please list the items you are including with this complaint:

8. *Your Name:*

9. *Company Name:*

10. *Telephone Number:*

11. *Email:*

12. *Date this complaint was filed:*

13. *Signature (REQUIRED):*

File this complaint:

*Europe: by fax to **00 31 70-358 73 77** or by email to **contact-eu@mspa-eu.org***

*North America: by fax to **00 1 972 755 2561** or by email to **contact-na@mspa-na.org***

*Asia Pacific: by fax to **00 91 124 438 1203** or by email to **contact-ap@mspa-ap.org***

*Latin America: by fax to **00 55 11 2613 8550** or email to **contact-la@mspa-la.org***