

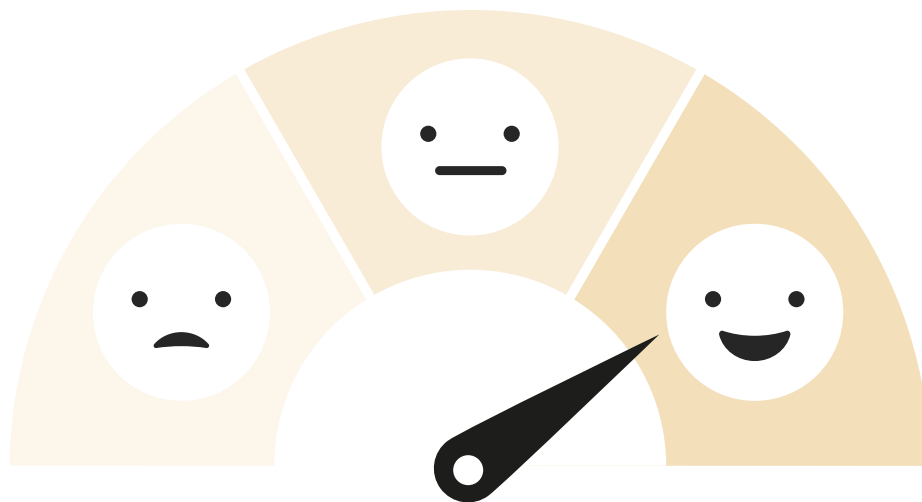
Assessing a Veterinary Practice Using a Mystery Shopper: Where to Start?



If you have chosen to proceed with an evaluation of your service delivery, you already know that there are many advantages to using a mystery shopper.

You may be wondering how to get your project off to a good start.

The practical steps below will make your evaluation a hassle-free investigation that guarantees results!



Select the right person

The mystery shopper is entrusted with evaluating client experience in order to ascertain its strengths, but also to identify opportunities for improvement. Their goal is to assess service quality from a client's objective point of view, for all the contacts they have with your facility. Some mystery shoppers even conduct telephone evaluations.

Ideally, the person you choose for this role will be:

- ✓ Neutral, with no preconceived ideas about your facility or team.
- ✓ Unknown to your employees and colleagues (your spouse is not necessarily the best person for the job!).
- ✓ Able to remain objective at all times.

You can entrust this assignment to someone close to you. Or, even better, use a professional agency that specializes in this field. To establish a comprehensive and accurate picture of the diverse expectations (and personalities!) of your many clients, it is best to have several mystery shoppers evaluate your business over the same period of time.

Explain the purpose

Is there a particular aspect you want the evaluation to focus on, such as reception, accompanying clients in the retail space, or booking appointments?

To evaluate the overall client experience, **use the veterinary client experience evaluation form** that we have designed, which provides concrete results and areas for improvement.

Tell the employees...or not?

Obviously, you don't want your team to mount a charm offensive to obtain unrealistically good results. However, letting them know that occasionally during the year mystery shoppers will come and evaluate the practice's service quality may be an excellent way to motivate them. These evaluations could even be part of their professional objectives, which you will discuss together **during the performance management process.**

Assess the results

Now that your mystery shoppers have filled out the evaluation forms, it is time to analyze the results, then take action and boost client experience.

- 1 Take note of recurring comments.
- 2 Share the evaluation results (both positive and negative) with your team so they feel included and take part in implementing corrective measures.

The goal here is not to use any unsatisfactory results to make your employees feel guilty, but rather to involve them in finding solutions, and to motivate them to rise to the challenge as a team.

Together, for each item that needs improvement:

- 3 Determine what steps need to be taken to achieve the targeted goal, specifying timing and who is responsible for each step.
- 4 Decide which items need to be addressed first – those that will have the greatest impact on your clients' perception and experience.
- 5 Where appropriate, provide training
- 6 Make the appropriate change
- 7 Finally, be sure to tell your clients that you listened to them, and share the information on your social networks

8. Ensure continuous improvement

Improving customer service is a continuous process that requires constant attention. Making the mystery shopper exercise a regular practice would be a step towards an ever more attentive and professional service.

