

How a UK Pub Chain improved their guest experience and grew sales using Mystery Shopping

Sector/Location

Large Pub Chain, with 1000+ locations nationwide across UK

Why is it important to measure?

Our client wanted to measure the guest experience against agreed criteria, then analyse performance and delivery against the targets set.

By measuring performance, and overlaying sales information, they wanted to link service to sales, and prove the positive impact that a better guest experience has on the bottom line.

Why use an MSPA member company?

By choosing a MSPA member, the client was confident that the programme of activity would be designed and implemented ethically and using industry best practice.

A selection process was undertaken, using the MSPA provider search tool [MSPA Provider Search](#) to create a shortlist of competent service providers in the local area.

Why use Mystery Shopping?

Mystery shopping was the best methodology to meet the objectives, on the basis that it is the only methodology that evaluates the **experience designed** versus the **experience delivered**.

Mystery shopping can be used both **operationally** and **strategically**, as it speaks to different departments within a business.

What was the project background?

Our client used guest feedback to establish that:

- When guests were welcomed promptly and warmly the overall satisfaction was **35% higher** on average than when they were not.
- Guests virtually always cited food quality and speed of service as “**make or break**” facets of their overall experience.
- Giving a positive impression was key; where staff did this well, guests’ overall satisfaction was **44% higher** on average.

What were the project specifics?

Whilst this data was insightful, the client realised that, in isolation, it could not be used as a vehicle for change. Keen to drive service improvements across their estate, the feedback survey findings were used as the foundation for developing a bespoke mystery guest programme with Proinsight.

A programme was set up to feedback the guest experience to the client at individual pub and whole estate level. The questionnaire design was developed to measure the key ‘moments of truth’ as identified by the customer feedback study, as well as an end-to-end feedback of the guest experience. Upsell questions were also added to support a commercial ROI objective. A continuous model of activity was applied.



Mystery shopping activity took place at each unit every month. Units that performed below a pre-agreed threshold received additional mystery shopping visits to help support them in raising their performance levels.

What were the results?

Over the first year of continuous activity, significant improvements were made in relation to the behaviours of the frontline teams on the basis of the mystery shopping activity carried out. Selling skills performance metrics improved alongside the soft skills, as the frontline became more confident in talking to customers and helping them get the most from their experience. Key improvements made over a 12-month period were:

- ✓ 5% improvement in welcome performance
- ✓ 8% improvement in upsell performance
- ✓ 10% improvement in Food Quality
- ✓ 8% improvement in final impression performance

What were the commercial benefits?

As the client became more confident in the data we were providing, they began to overlay sales and footfall data with the performances we were identifying through mystery shopping. The pubs performing most strongly (top quartile) in relation to their welcome and final impressions scores improved footfall by 5% above the company average. Similarly, top quartile performers against the upsell metric as evaluated through the mystery guest programme increased their sales figures by 11% compared to poorer (bottom quartile) performers on this measure.

“This programme has paid for itself many times over. By using mystery shopping to evaluate performance against the metrics most important to our guests in terms of likelihood to return and recommend to their friends & families, we have been able to better engage our teams so that they understand the difference they make. Our frontline is certainly more engaged in the delivery of excellent guest experience than they were a couple of years ago. Thank you Proinsight!”
Head of Insight, UK Pub Chain



This article was submitted by Jill Spencer, Director of Business Intelligence at Proinsight. Proinsight has been a member of MSPA Europe/Africa for 8 years, and an Elite member for the past 4 years.

As a current MSPA member, they are a provider of good standing within the mystery shopping industry.