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By Richard John Potton, Managing Director – Hoed Research New Zealand - <https://www.hoed.co.nz/>

Is Mystery Shopping Still Relevant in a Digital-First World?

The Online Shift Is Real, But So Is the Need for Insight

The shift toward digital-first experiences is undeniable. Consumers increasingly interact with businesses through websites, mobile apps, social media, and online customer service channels. This trend is not just continuing, it's accelerating.

However, this doesn't mean everything will become purely digital. In fact, the rise of "positive friction" a concept where consumers value meaningful, humanized interactions over speed, suggests that people still crave personalized service, even in tech-heavy environments.



Mystery Shopping Is Evolving, Not Disappearing

Far from becoming obsolete, Mystery Shopping is adapting to meet the needs of this digital transformation. Here's how:

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1. Online Mystery Shopping

Evaluating customer journeys through websites, mobile apps, and email interactions is now a core part of our offering. This ensures that digital touchpoints align with brand expectations and delivers a seamless experience.

2. Social Media Mystery Shopping

To assess consumer experiences across platforms like Facebook and Instagram. This helps businesses refine their social strategies and improve engagement.

3. Hybrid Models

Our services include both walk-in (face-to-face) visits and digital evaluations, email, web forms, and phone calls, allowing clients to gain insights across all customer channels.

4. Compliance and Auditing

Mystery Shopping remains a powerful tool for compliance checks and asset management, whether overt or covert. This is especially valuable in regulated industries or multi-site operations.

5. Training and Employee Engagement

Mystery Shopping continues to provide actionable feedback for staff training and performance improvement, which is just as relevant in digital interactions as it is in physical ones.

Bottom Line:

Mystery Shopping isn't going away; it's becoming more strategic. where they felt good. Even for something as trivial as a phone cable, the quality of the interaction can determine whether the customers choose to return – not because they had to, but because they wanted to.
