

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

KITCHENER, ONTARIO – September 2006 - “Thank-you, please come again!” He said with a smile as he closed the cash register drawer. Unbeknownst to him, he just completed a transaction with Julie, a mystery shopper. More and more business owners are recognizing mystery shopping as an integral part of their business. When merchandise and pricing are not so unique, customer service is what sets you apart from your competition.

Julie returns to her vehicle, and captures the details of her shopping experience from entering the establishment to completing the transaction. A questionnaire is completed summarizing her experience, and the results are delivered to the employer via the internet. The employer is now equipped with a wealth of information; results may be compared to the specifics of an employee training regimen, an employee rewards program may materialize, and the employer is empowered with the knowledge of how the service was perceived by the customer.

Mystery shopping is an effective method of evaluating and measuring your company’s performance from the perspective of your customer. Mystery shoppers act as everyday customers but are professionally trained to be an employer’s eyes and ears.

Established in May 2006, local residents Julie Anthony and Ben Matte met the need, and Shoppers Confidential was born. They have over fourteen years combined experience in the industry. Julie, Sales Manager and Co-Owner says, “Many businesses think they can’t afford mystery shoppers. And there are many mystery shopping companies that will not give you a second thought if you don’t have hundreds of locations or branches.” Julie continues, “Why should a business be penalized if they only have a location or two. All businesses should have equal access to affordable and professional mystery shopping services. That’s what we’re here to do.” When referring to starting the new venture, Julie says matter-of-factly, “It wasn’t a hard sell.”

“I find mystery shopping a very effective tool for managing my business. It allows me to gather valuable feedback which I can use to communicate with my staff. The wealth of information can become very addicting.” States Gerry Barg, President of Barg Management Inc., which owns Cambridge Mitsubishi and Cambridge Kia.

Tara Matte, Resources Optimization Manager of Shoppers Confidential, who also has over seven years experience as a mystery shopper for various companies stated, “I took my family bowling for a mystery shopping assignment. Then I got to thinking, ‘This is ridiculous. I’m bowling just down the street but I’m hired and getting paid by a company from the U.S.!’” She pauses, “Why not keep it [the business] local? Or at the very least, keep it Canadian.”

What industries can benefit from mystery shopping? According to Ben, Sales & Operations Coordinator and Co-Owner of Shoppers Confidential, “If you have employees and customers, you will benefit. Industries from banks, to restaurants, to hotels, to retailers use mystery shopping.”

Kyle Dudley, the General Manager of The Walper Terrace Hotel summarizes his thoughts by saying, "In a business built on providing exceptional customer service, being able to have comprehensive and concise feedback on how we are doing overall as a hotel is invaluable to our overall success."

You can visit Shoppers Confidential online at www.shoppersconfidential.com

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