

SHOP INSTRUCTIONS

Welcome to the world of Mystery Shopping! Potential shoppers chosen to perform assignments for GWPI on a continual basis are selected based on the first shop assignment conducted for our company. The more you follow instructions, the more likely we are to keep you. With that in mind, please read over the following very carefully!

Shop assignments are offered by e-mail on a first response system – if you are offered a shop you will have 24 hours to accept the assignment, or it will be offered to another shopper.

Shop assignments are assigned according to **geography** and **availability**.

Geography

On your *Mystery Shopper Application* please mark any/all counties in which you are willing to perform assignments. If a county is checked you must be willing to conduct shops anywhere in that county – this means no partial county or specific city options.

Availability

The more days/hours you are available to shop, the more you will be considered for particular shops. If we have a shop that needs to be conducted immediately, those with the most availability will in all likelihood be contacted prior to those with limited schedules. For example, if a shop needs to be done by Thursday and it is now Monday, shoppers available throughout the week will be contacted vs. those who have indicated only weekend availability.

Please note: There is no guaranteed amount of shops assigned. Some weeks there will be 30 shops available, and on others there will be only 3.

Deadlines

Every shop assigned also comes with a deadline to submit your work. The first deadline you miss will be your last. Missed deadlines will be met with a discontinuation of your services.

Performing Shop Assignments

Before conducting a shop, you must come up with your “story” and stick to it. You need to decide the personal information that you will provide to a leasing consultant when asked (name, address, employment, reason for moving, etc.).

If you do not have your “story” straight, it is likely that a leasing consultant will expose you as a shopper. When performing an *On-Site Shop* you must use your

real name, as most communities do require that ID be provided prior to an apartment tour. You may use an assumed name when performing a *Phone Shop*.

It is very important that you read through your shop report(s) before you perform a shop so that you will be prepared for both performing the shop and completing your report form(s).

THREE Shop Types

On-Site Shop / Rate: \$35.00

The *On-Site Shop* consists of two parts, the most important of which is that you visit the community and interact with the leasing staff. The initial step is to either telephone or e-mail a property (we will designate your method), followed by the visit. DO NOT go to the property without performing the first step.

While performing this shop you are asked to keep the underlying question in mind: would you rent here and is your Leasing Agent a good "salesperson"?

The initial telephone call/e-mail should be about the Leasing Agent taking control of the conversation and asking the questions rather than letting you ask the questions. These conversations usually lead to appointments for you to visit the community. For example: a potential renter asks "How much are your 1 bedroom apartments?" and a Leasing Agent would respond "When would you need the apartment?" or "How many occupants will there be?" and continue to lead into setting an appointment.

The second portion involves a tour of the property/apartment and is about the Leasing Agent selling you on why you should be a resident. An effective consultant will point out the property's perks/amenities. Similarly, they should highlight the features of the model apartment (i.e. large windows, washer and dryer, etc.), and involve you to a degree that you take mental possession of the place.

The sourcing questions on the shop report (question 7 and question 28) are the most important to our company. A sourcing question is one in which it is determined how you heard of the community. If a consultant asks how you heard of the community you are to respond "**the guide**" (those exact 2 words*). If you are asked "Which one?" try to look puzzled, and then reply "Apartment Showcase." **On the report record the exact conversation in the *Comments on Source Questioning* sections for both the Telephone Contact and the On-Site Tour.** To receive full points for sourcing, a consultant must ask both how you heard of the property and

specifically determine what your source was. If the question was asked but never followed through on (i.e. no specific source other than "the guide") they receive NO points. There are NO partial points given for these two questions – they either source correctly or incorrectly (a partial source is still an incorrect one). If the consultant does not inquire about your source, note that on your shop in the *Comments* section and move on.

**The only instance in which your answer changes is if we ask you to source our website, in which case you would say "the internet" and, if prompted, finally reply with "ApartmentShowcase.com".*

After the tour, as the leasing agent attempts to close you on leasing an apartment, you would then exercise your "excuse" out of the rental situation. For example: "I need to talk it over with my wife/husband/roommate/etc."

While performing a shop, try to remember that you are playing the role of a potential renter. If an apartment community does not reach your personal standards please do not discriminate them as a result. There is always a demographic for every community and you must put yourself in those shoes. Do not focus on the age of the community and outdated appliances and/or amenities. Also be careful when making personal comments – the person being shopped may eventually read your report about him/her.

Phone-Only Shop / Rate: \$5.00

Tip: It can be helpful to disguise your voice so that you are not recognized when you call the community. If you are using an assumed name, please do not forget to note the name on the report.

You will perform one thorough call to the community. In this case you would only complete the Telephone portion of the *On-Site Shop Report*.

There are 2 objectives that this shop type accomplishes: did the Leasing Agent source the call (how you heard of the community) and did they attempt to set an appointment for you to visit the property.

Email-Only Shop / Rate: \$5.00

An *Email Shop* requires that you e-mail a community and ask their availability for a 1 bedroom (or whatever that community's smallest apartment is) apartment. If you are not responded to in 1 full day (24hrs), you will e-mail the property again. When submitting the shop report, you must forward/attach all correspondence you had with the community.

For this type of shop you would only complete the E-mail portion of the *On-Site Shop Report*.

Submitting a Shop Report

Once you have performed a shop, fill out the appropriate report as soon as possible – while the information is still fresh in your mind. Please take the time to fill in all of the *Comments* sections where appropriate. For an invoice and shop report to be honored, you **MUST** include a copy or scan of the Leasing Consultant's business card and/or front cover of the community's brochure.

A complete submission will include:

- Shop Report
- Copy/Scan of Business Card/Brochure
- Invoice

Tips/Overview

Apartment Showcase Guide Book

You will receive the most recent copy of our print magazine at the seminar. It is always a good idea to review a client's ad before you conduct the shop. For future issues, you can find our books in street boxes, typically next to The Washington Post boxes outside of Metro stations, fast food restaurants and shopping centers.

Comments

As mentioned, it is important to include relevant detailed comments of your experience during the shop. Utilize the space that is offered on the form with good judgment – please do not write a 3 page essay, or disregard the section altogether.

E-mail as Initial Contact

Occasionally we will ask you to contact a property via e-mail prior to the initial telephone call. This will be indicated on your assignment. In this case, e-mail the community through the "Contact Property" button/tab on the Apartment Showcase website (www.ApartmentShowcase.com) and inquire about a 1 bedroom (or whatever their minimum bedroom apartment they offer) apartment. Allow 24hrs for a response. If you do not receive one, repeat the procedure. After the 2nd attempt or if the first was successful, proceed to the telephone portion of the shop. Make sure to include copies/attachments of ALL e-mail correspondence with the property when submitting your report.

Guest Cards

If they request you to fill out a guest card, skip/leave blank any section that asks your advertising source. Please include comments about any guest cards after questions 7 and 28.

Negative Points

There is one question in the On-Site Report that allows for negative points to be awarded (question 50). If the consultant does not offer another ad's special,

award zero. This is only limited to specials offered by our competitors' advertising, and NOT any specials offered by the community itself.

No Tour Available

If the community does not currently have any vacant apartments to tour, award full points to questions 33 through 42 and note that in the *Comments* section immediately following.

Non-Payment for a Shop

While the chance is rare for this to happen, please take special note of the following reasons why payment will be withheld from a submitted shop:

- Non-compliance with shop instructions
- Lying/Fabricating any portion of the shop report or process
- Missed deadlines and due dates
- Incomplete submissions (make sure ALL portions are submitted)

If a shop requires corrections, you will be notified with one chance to resubmit, and payment will be issued pending your corrections.

Office Closed

When performing an On-Site shop and you are met with a closed office (with no explanation) during their business hours, we ask that you try once more during their business hours. If you go twice and the office is closed both times, award zero points for the shop and note the situation in your closing/final comments.

Points

If a task is completed, award full points. If a task is not completed, award zero points. If a task is completed in part, award partial points with an explanation in the comments section(s) of why only partial points were awarded (THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO SOURCE QUESTIONS 7 and 28).

Specific-Person Shops

Occasionally we will ask you to shop a specific Leasing Consultant at a property. Example: Joe Smith at ABC property. Most of the time, a leasing consultant will say their name when greeting you on the phone. If it is not the person you are trying to reach, make up an excuse and get off of the phone. Then call back until you reach the consultant required. DO NOT ask for them by name – this will give away the shop. Once on the phone with the consultant, you should try your best to set an appointment with this person to ensure they will be the one to help you at the community. If you arrive for your tour and are met by someone else, DO NOT refuse their help – this will again give you away as a shopper – instead, go with the flow and conduct the shop as you would any other. If this happens, you must have at least gotten the correct person for the telephone portion.
