

## Are Secret Shopper Jobs Really Worth Your Time?

After searching the web for secret shopper jobs and learning all I can about the subject of secret shopping, I decided to write this article for every mom who's considering this as an option for adding income to their family budget. After having a negative experience myself, I came to the conclusion that once you figure the total hours you spend on each assignment, secret shopper jobs aren't really worth your time.

To help you understand the process better, I've divided the tasks you'll need to perform into three separate categories:

- PLANNING
  - EVALUATION
  - COMPLETION & SUBMISSION
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### PLANNING

First, let's figure the time you'll spend researching, reading reviews, and registering with ten companies that you feel good about working for. I suggest starting with ten because it's rare that any one company will be able to provide enough jobs in your local area to keep you busy. Once registered, plan to spend about an hour each day reading emails, scanning job postings for your area, and \*\*reviewing the details of each assignment you select.

\*\*Reviewing the details of your assignment is a critical step that might take even longer than what I've allowed for here. Make sure you know EXACTLY what day your assignment is scheduled for, where it's at, and what you're required to do once you get there. The more time you spend preparing, the more confident you'll be and the less conspicuous you'll appear on your "secret mission."

### EVALUATION

It's safe to figure at least \$5.00 per assignment for fuel and maintenance for your vehicle (depending on what area of the country you live in). If you run close to meal time and you didn't pack a lunch or can't go home, plan on also spending money for food. If you have small children and no access to free daycare, that will be another expense you'll have to allow for since mystery shopping and kids don't mix well.

Don't forget, you'll be required to pay for certain things in advance, but you normally get reimbursed for a certain percentage of this expense after your evaluation is submitted. The bad part about this is you might be required to buy things you normally wouldn't buy or may not need at the time (like oil changes, meals from gourmet restaurant menus, eyewear, movie tickets, etc). I recommend that you keep at least a \$50 cash or credit reserve to use for your secret shopper purchases.

Depending on where you live, plan at least 30 minutes of driving time per assignment (round trip). If you can't find assignments close to home and you have to travel to a nearby city, then you'll have to adjust this estimate.

Once you arrive, plan to spend a minimum of one hour on location.

## **COMPLETION & SUBMISSION**

In the beginning, it may take an hour or more to complete and submit the written narratives and survey information required for each assignment. Later, with practice, you'll save time in this area. Once you submit your evaluation, plan on waiting 4-6 weeks to receive your compensation. From this point on, with the exception of the few minutes it takes to keep your records up to date, your work is done.

Based on this analysis, it's safe to say that you'll have about 3.5 hours invested into each of your secret shopper jobs, plus fuel and reimbursable costs. To earn even \$10 per hour, you need to clear at least \$35 per assignment (not counting the items you were asked to purchase that you may only be reimbursed a percentage for).

I don't know of a company anywhere that pays its secret shoppers what they're truly worth. You'll be doing well if you clear \$25 per assignment! Most secret shopper jobs pay a measly \$10 or \$15 in cash, goods, services, free meal coupons, or gift cards.

Hopefully, by now you understand why I don't recommend secret shopper jobs for moms. To me, secret shopping makes a better hobby.

If you've been thinking about being a secret shopper, I recommend instead that you keep your mind open to considering a different option altogether—teaming up with a company that's a member of the DSA (Direct Selling Association) that actually pays you to build networks. These companies are reputable, you don't need experience or special selling skills and the pay is excellent! I know because I've been earning income from one company alone for over 14 years. Keep in mind that you'll usually have to spend a small

amount of money to get started (while secret shopping is FREE), but it's not hard to recoup your costs and be into profit right away. Plus, these plans offer the long-term potential for *residual* income!

**About the Author:**

Christina Dodson offers practical advice and personal guidance to moms who are serious about earning income from home. Visit <http://MomsWorkatHome.com> and download your FREE REPORT entitled, *The Beginner's Guide to Researching Work-at-Home Programs*.

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