Definition of mystery shopping:

Mystery Shopping is a process in which a person visits a retail store, restaurant, bank branch or any such location with the objective of measuring the quality of customer experience.

Many companies define detailed processes and parameters to ensure that customers will have a good experience in their sales locations. Some examples are:

* How customers will be greeted
* What is the maximum acceptable waiting time
* What should be the temperature of the facility
* How many products should be on display etc.

To ensure that these processes are followed, these companies hire **Mystery Shopping Companies** to conduct regular audits on their locations.

The mystery shopping companies (also called **Mystery Shopping Agencies**) find people who match the target customer profile, provide them a questionnaire for recording their experience, and provide some training on how to measure various parameters. This person is called a **Mystery Shopper**. These mystery shoppers then visit the location pretending to be a customer and make careful note of things they have been asked to measure. The data is reported to the mystery shopping company, who compiles and analyzes data gathered from different locations to help their clients measure and improve their customer experience.

Mystery shoppers are usually freelancers or people who do this on the side, and are paid a fee to conduct each mystery audit. If the audit involves purchasing or consuming anything - the mystery shoppers are usually provided a full or partial reimbursement of the money they spend as well.