
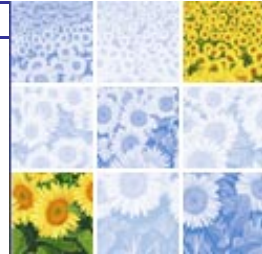



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### Journey Into Mystery

By Jane Edwards - 24/09/04

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The 5th Mystery Shopping Providers' Association Conference, Paris, September 2005.

The 5th Annual conference of the MSPA was organised by Jane Edwards, Director of [Mystery Customer Research](#) at Research International. With 78 delegates from 24 different countries in attendance – the largest ever delegation – the conference was a great success.

The main theme of the conference was *“How do you understand and measure the value of mystery shopping?”*

Four companies who use [mystery shopping](#) spoke at the conference - Air France, Disneyland Paris, Accor Casinos and the Paris Tourist Committee. This was the largest client representation to date at an [MSPA](#) conference. Delegates welcomed the opportunity to discuss and understand the ways that our clients use and act on mystery shopping data. They gave us valuable insights into the strategic uses of [mystery shopping](#) information beyond local action planning.

The afternoon sessions were devoted to workshops on added value services in [mystery shopping](#), and how to demonstrate return on investment. We also addressed some concrete issues such as the certification of mystery shoppers in Europe and how to work with [ESOMAR](#) on defining more realistic guidelines for [mystery shopping](#) work. These were very constructive and articles based on all the six work groups will be posted on the [MSPA](#) website.

Jane Edwards – who was voted in as [MSPA](#) Europe's Vice President for the next year - and her fellow [MSPA](#) board member Patricia Bas (from MSM in Germany) gave a presentation on how to market [mystery shopping](#). The aim is to get it more widely adopted as a recognised tool amongst service companies in Europe and the presentation discussed how delegates could take action with this in mind. It is evident that the USA is still very far ahead of the game both in terms of recognising the importance of the service culture and in terms of developing the necessary tools to investigate and monitor performance in those industries. Our North American delegates shared data with us that suggests we still have a long way to go.

At the Friday board meeting it was agreed that one of the main action points from the [MSPA](#) this year is to compile industry figures on the size of the [mystery shopping](#) market in Europe. This data will then be published on the [MSPA](#) website and regularly updated.

Overall it was a fascinating Conference and we're already looking forward to the 6th one.