

# PRESS RELEASE

**Media Contact:**

Karen Kistenmacher  
Service Intelligence  
(704) 973-0355

**Scam Artists Target Mystery Shopping Industry**

*Fraudulent Checks Sent to Individuals with Guarantees of Work Assignments and Fast Cash*

**Charlotte, NC – October 28, 2008** – Mystery shopping has long been utilized as a form of marketing research in highly competitive, consumer-focused industries such as retail, restaurant, lodging, and banking because it yields unbiased and valuable customer insight. In recent months, at the expense of both mystery shopping firms and corporations utilizing this research methodology, the mystery shopping industry has become a recurring target for opportunist scam artists. The scam preys on individuals who are looking to make extra spending money via mystery shopping and instead are defrauded out of thousands of dollars.

The scam is executed in this way: an individual receives a letter detailing potential mystery shopping work and containing a check usually in the amount of \$2,500. The scam requests the recipient deposit the check, and then send a money gram to a specific address with the pretense that the shopper is evaluating the money gram service. The mystery shopper's compensation is stated to be the \$200 difference between the check and the money gram. The letter and check appear valid and use the name and logo of a prominent mystery shopping firm. But, in actuality, the check is fraudulent, and when the check bounces, the victim who has already sent the money gram is left liable for the funds forwarded. Because the scam devises the whole process as a mystery shopping assignment and uses the brand names of prominent mystery shopping providers and prominent retail chains, many unsuspecting individuals have fallen for it.

As a leading mystery shopping provider for some of the world's most recognized brands, Service Intelligence™ is one vendor whose name and logo have been pirated by scam artists for their fraud scheme. In efforts to protect consumers and avert reputational damage, Service Intelligence has joined with federal authorities in the United States and Canada to identify the scam artists and shut down the fraud scheme. Since the scam has been used throughout North America, Service Intelligence encourages individuals to contact authorities should they suspect they are the target of this scam, including their local police, the FBI, RCMP, and the Federal Trade Commission. Individuals may also alert Service Intelligence of the receipt of such an offer bearing Service Intelligence's corporate name at the following e-mail address: [pravichandran@serviceintelligence.com](mailto:pravichandran@serviceintelligence.com).

"Service Intelligence is encouraging radio and television media throughout North America to run consumer alerts to help publicly expose this scam," states Steve Reynolds, Service Intelligence Vice President of Business Development and Operations. "The more the public understands about the fraudulent business scheme as opposed to the manner in which legitimate mystery shopping firms operate, the less likely anyone will fall for this scam", adds Reynolds. "Reputable mystery shopping firms do not require shoppers and evaluators to make up-front payments nor do they charge sign-up fees. Additionally, shopper compensation is made after the completion of assigned mystery shops, not before."

# PRESS RELEASE

Service Intelligence assures its clients and current and prospective mystery shoppers that it continues to operate with the utmost of integrity in gathering and delivering shopper information. “Through mystery shopping, we are providing our clients with valuable customer insights that enable them to adjust operations and strategic plans in order to increase top-line revenues and bottom-line profits”, comments Reynolds. “To ensure consistent and accurate data, mystery shopping providers require intelligent, dependable, and conscientious mystery shoppers to gather the data. Since the fraud scheme is a deterrent to interested mystery shoppers for fear that they will be swindled, Service Intelligence is anxious to see the fraud scheme shut down for the benefit of both corporations utilizing mystery shopping and mystery shoppers desiring to make extra spending money.”

Service Intelligence’s mystery shoppers can rest easy. Screening for quality mystery shoppers is rigid, and to instill absolute confidence for its shoppers, Service Intelligence pays contractors via automatic bank deposit following the completion of assigned work. Mystery shopping candidates interested in applying for shopper positions with Service Intelligence may go to the following website to apply: <https://www.experienceexchange.com/ShopperLogon.do>

## **About Service Intelligence**

Since 1992, Service Intelligence has been an authority and trendsetter in customer experience evaluation. Core services include mystery shopping, compliance evaluations, and employee awareness campaigns. Service Intelligence is a wholly owned subsidiary of ethics and compliance industry leader Global Compliance™ who provides a comprehensive line of information intake, information management, and awareness and education offerings to enable organizations to create and maintain a culture of ethical and compliant business behavior. Together, Service Intelligence and Global Compliance serve greater than 2,300 clients including more than one-half of America’s Fortune 100, one-third of America’s Fortune 500, one-third of America’s Fortune 1000, and nearly one-fourth of the Global 500.

[www.serviceintelligence.com](http://www.serviceintelligence.com)

[www.globalcompliance.com](http://www.globalcompliance.com)