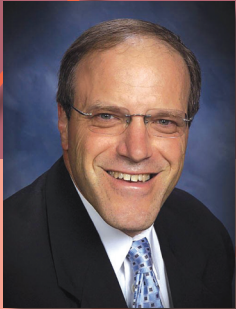


# Signature Press

## TAKE THE MYSTERY OUT OF MISSING RENTAL OPPORTUNITIES



By **Barry Himmel**  
*Rental Management*

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Lately, more equipment rental companies of all sizes are asking about mystery shopping services. The common question amongst these callers is: "I know we are missing rental opportunities when that phone rings, and we need to capture as much business as possible. What can we do?"

Mystery shop calls allow business owners and leaders to better assess how customers are being treated over the phone. These leaders recognize that the phone is their pipeline to customers. For many of the companies, more than 90 percent of the initial inquiry happens with a phone call.

As I speak with many of these customers, they have shared with me the challenges of the past year — declining revenues, layoffs, pay cuts, etc. They are doing everything they can to stay competitive during this recession and need to make certain they are at least maintaining the fundamentals of customer service, such as answering the phone properly, asking the right questions and responding to customers' needs. Employees must be focused on the customer and converting all calls to a rental.

Each phone call must be treated as an opportunity to build a relationship and secure a rental. Mystery shop calls will give you a window into your business and will help answer the following questions:

- What is the first impression that callers receive?
- Is the greeting upbeat, positive and consistent among different employees or different locations?
- What is being done to build a relationship?
- Are employees getting the caller's name and phone number?
- Are employees asking for the rental?

Mystery shop calls are not perfect. The scenarios may not be the ideal match for your company, and the shopper may not sound like a "real" customer. However, when listening to these calls, there are many teachable moments related to interacting with the customer and closing the rental. For example, in 95 percent of the initial shop calls we conduct, we will hear the employee talk about price and availability, and answer any of the caller's questions, but he or she doesn't ask for the rental.

If you are not sure if mystery shop calls are for you, contact me for complimentary shop calls. These calls are confidential and free when you mention this article, so you have nothing to lose.

You spend a lot of money getting the phone to ring. Now is the time to use the phone to increase business.