

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MYSTERY SHOPPING PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS FTC'S CHARGES  
AGAINST FRAUDULENT MYSTERY SHOPPING SERVICE**

DALLAS, March 23, 2007 – The Mystery Shopping Providers Association, the largest professional trade association dedicated to improving service quality using anonymous resources, supports the Federal Trade Commission's recent action against Mystery Shop Link and the Tangent Group.

Mystery Shop Link is not and has never been affiliated with the MSPA, and the MSPA does not support the company's practices.

The FTC filed deceptive practices and contempt charges against Mystery Shop Link on March 22, which promised consumers hundreds of dollars in income for conducting mystery shopping exercises. According to the FTC, consumers were charged a \$99.95 fee for training and to obtain mystery shopping job opportunities. In reality, those who paid the fee had no advantage over others interested in the same opportunities who accessed the information for free, according to the FTC.

The MSPA has cooperated with the FTC in its investigation of Mystery Shop Link and encourages the FTC to continue investigating all mystery shopping-related scams.

The MSPA believes mystery shoppers should not have to pay to find mystery shopping work. The association's 200 member companies around the globe are required to follow a strict code of ethics that prohibits them from charging mystery shoppers a fee or misleading applicants on actual mystery shopping job opportunities.

The MSPA has taken steps to warn consumers about this and other mystery shopping scams.

"The MSPA is committed to maintaining the integrity of the mystery shopping industry and will continue to denounce the practices of fraudulent and deceptive companies that use mystery shopping as a cover to take advantage of people," said John Swinburn, Executive Director, MSPA. "The MSPA is also taking action to combat other mystery shopping scams, particularly scams involving an unsolicited cashier's check."

Mystery shopping is a growing field servicing nearly every consumer industry, including restaurants, retail stores, hotels and resorts, travel and tourism, banks and financial service providers, convenience stores, grocery stores and other consumer locations. Legitimate mystery shopping is the practice of using educated, experienced shoppers to anonymously evaluate the customer experience. Businesses use the information to monitor and improve the customer service it provides.

For more information about the MSPA and its stance on mystery shopping scams, visit [http://www.mysteryshop.org/news/searchresults\\_pr.php](http://www.mysteryshop.org/news/searchresults_pr.php). More information about the FTC's charges can be found at <http://ftc.gov/opa/2007/03/mysteryshop.htm>.

**About the MSPA**

With more than 200 member companies worldwide, the MSPA ([www.mysteryshop.org](http://www.mysteryshop.org)) has a diverse membership, including marketing research and merchandising companies, private investigation firms, training organizations and companies that specialize in providing mystery shopping services. Its goals are to establish professional standards and ethics for the industry, educate providers, clients and shoppers to improve quality of service, improve the image of the industry and promote the membership to other industry associations and prospect clients.

###

**Media Contact:**

Brad Leone

Hart Associates for MSPA

419-893-9600