

Overview

Second To None's QA team is comprised of a group of dedicated professionals from many different backgrounds, including English, creative writing, business, journalism, and technology. As editors for Second To None, their primary goal is to ensure the on-time delivery of reports to each of our clients daily after validating that all aspects of the shop were completed correctly and the report meets all the proper project requirements.

Our editors would like to share some tips and reminders to help ensure your success as an STN shopper!

Tips for Completing a Successful Shop

- Review the guidelines and questionnaire before each shop.
 - Even if you complete shops for a particular client on a regular basis, it is a good idea to review this information before each shop. The project requirements, scenario, ordering requirements, etc. may have changed since your last shop. Best to know for sure what you will need to say and do!
- Discreetly take detailed notes during your shop and start writing the report when the experience is fresh in your mind.
 - If you are assigned to complete several shops in a day, record the important details of each shop before you begin the next one. This includes visit times, employee name(s), and details of employee interaction. This helps you keep the shop information straight!
- If something occurs that is out of the ordinary, try not to draw attention to yourself by forcing the scenario or asking employees to do something that is beyond their control.
 - Sometimes an assigned location may be closed or an assigned restaurant may be out of the required order. Don't panic. Do your best and report the details.
 - If there is signage at the location that explains the situation, it is helpful and speeds the processing of your report, if you discreetly take a photo of the sign and upload it with your shop documentation.

Submitting Your Report

- Return to the STN Shopper Hub as soon as you can once your shop has been completed to submit your report online.
 - Unless otherwise specified in the instructions, reports should be submitted by the next day after shop completion.
- A complete report includes responses to each required question, required support for all responses, required commentary, and required documentation.
 - The required documentation may be a receipt, a business card, product brochures, a photo of the location, etc. Check the instructions for each shop to confirm the required documentation.
- When saving images of the required documentation, like a receipt, it might be a good idea to name your image with the assignment code of the shop. This helps to eliminate mistakenly uploading wrong images.

- Keep your shop notes for 30 days past your shop and check the Shopper Hub for any clarifications requests that may be sent about your assignment.

Clarifications and Declined Shops

- Occasionally, it is necessary for our team to reach out to you to clarify or confirm information in your report.
 - Our editors are trained on specific clients and have a clear and solid understanding of that client's requirements. Editors send a clarifications request only when necessary. It is usually when critical information is missing or conflicting and would cause the client to decline your shop.
- Editors continually work on very quick turnaround times and appreciate your timely, detailed and complete response to any clarifications request. It is a good idea to take time to read through each question and check that you have answered each fully so that we do not need to send you a follow-up email. (Tip: If we ask you about your receipt or other documentation, it might be a good idea to look it over before you answer the question.) If you are not sure what we are asking, feel free to let us know that. We will be happy to explain!
- Occasionally, a client will choose to decline your shop if the shop requirements were not followed.
 - Check the status of each of your completed shops on the Shopper Hub. If a client does decline your shop, our team will include the reason why.
- A declined shop means we need to start the process all over again. The shop needs to be rescheduled, the shop needs to be completed again, and a member of our QA team needs to edit the new report.
- We're just like you. We don't like declined shops, which is why our team works so hard to try to make sure your shop gets accepted.
 - Anytime a client declines a shop, a member of our QA team reviews the client guidelines to ensure the requirements are clear for our shoppers.
 - We continually make updates to guidelines, report help text, etc. to make sure you are getting the most accurate and helpful project information possible.
 - Please email your scheduler or the Help Desk if you are unclear about a requirement before you complete a shop. Have feedback about the guidelines for one of your completed shops? The Help Desk welcomes your feedback about that too. (helpdesk@second-to-none.com).

Tips for Filling Out Your Report

- Always use a single space between words and sentences. Editors must remove each extra space.
- If you are referring to an employee to begin your commentary, always begin with a proper name or title rather than a pronoun so it is clear who you are referring to.
 - **Incorrect:** He greeted me and asked how I was doing.
 - **Correct:** Joe greeted me and asked how I was doing.
 - **Correct:** The employee greeted me and asked how I was doing.
- Employee descriptions should be formatted like this: Gender, hair color, height, age range
 - Feel free to include other distinguishing characteristics such as beard, mustache, or glasses.
 - Refrain from referencing an employee's race or build and avoid terms that may be offensive such as heavy, old, etc.
 - Always use numbers for height and age range (examples: 5'9", over 6'0", early 20s) instead of general terms such as tall, average height, young, older, middle aged, etc. These terms are not acceptable to our clients. Clients understand you are estimating so do your best and be as detailed as possible.

- If you were unable to get an employee's name because his/her name tag was not visible or readable, explain why it was not visible/readable in the commentary (no name tag worn, name tag upside down, name tag partially obscured by jacket, etc.)
- Use sentence case for your commentary rather than ALL CAPS.
- Use full sentences in your commentary and avoid abbreviations and special characters (@, &, etc.) as editors must change each one to a full word.
- Your commentary does not need to be indented or separated into paragraphs.
- Focus your comments on what the employees said and did and the appearance of the location (if applicable) rather than on what you said and did during the shop.
 - **Correct:** The store looked clean and well stocked. The employee cheerfully answered my question about the muffins on display, telling me they had been baked that morning.
 - **Incorrect:** I checked the store displays for cleanliness and stock issues. I asked the employee if the muffins were fresh.
- Always provide unique and detailed comments for each report you submit, even if there were no issues during the shop, such as what specifically an employee said to greet you, what questions were asked, what recommendations were made, etc. STN and the client will notice when the same comments are submitted in multiple reports, and this may prevent you from getting future shops.
- Avoid commentary that includes comparisons to other shops or other locations. Clients are more interested in factual information about your current shop/location.
- Avoid overusing the word 'very.' Often times, it loses its meaning if it's used too much.
 - **Example:** The displays were very well organized. The store was very clean, and the employees were very friendly.
 - **Better:** The displays were organized. The store was clean, and the employees were friendly.
- It is a good idea to re-read all your commentary before submitting your report. This is especially helpful to prevent autocorrect typos if you are entering your report on a mobile device.
- If a photo is not required as part of the shop guidelines, there is no need to upload it as it will likely be removed during editing. Examples: photos of a dirty restroom, photo of the item(s) you purchased.
 - When you are completing your shop, keep in mind that taking photos that are not required may tip the employees off that you are a mystery shopper.
- When submitting your photo(s) of the receipt, be sure the entire receipt is visible from top to bottom. This includes any header information, bar codes, date, time, and location address.
 - If a receipt is too long to be captured in one photo, we will accept multiple images of the receipt (top and bottom for example.)
- If you forgot about a requirement such as an observation or photo, be honest in your report. We may be able to make an exception for your report.

What Our Editors Do

We treat your report with the same careful eye as you did when you entered it. Below are some of the items our editors are trained to look for.

- Validate that all shop requirements were met.
 - Correct scenario was presented
 - Correct ordering requirements were followed
 - Shop was completed on the correct date
 - Shop was completed within the correct timeframe
- Check each of the Yes/No or other responses to ensure they are supported in the comments if required and are consistent with the comments provided.
- Check all the responses of the report to make sure they are consistent with the experience you described in your commentary. Mostly Yes responses should reflect a positive experience, while mostly No responses should reflect a negative experience.
- Review the entire report for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Ensure the required documentation was uploaded and is valid.
 - Receipt matches assigned location, store number, shop date, visit times, purchase requirement(s)
 - Business card or other material collected matches assigned location, store number, employee name
- Select a ranking for each report based on items such as the quality of the commentary, required support, grammar, and spelling. The higher your overall ranking, the more eligible you are for future shops.
- Our editors apply all of these checks and more to each report and do everything they can to make your shop acceptable.

**Thanks for all you do for STN and from everyone on the QA team, happy shopping!
We look forward to accepting your next report!**