Mystery Shopping vs. Digital Dealer Audits

Decision Scorecard

A structured comparison tool to help OEM and distributor teams choose the right audit method for each use case

Organisation / Network	
Completed by	
Date	
Region / Market	

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How to Use This Scorecard

Use this scorecard to evaluate which audit method — Mystery Shopping, Digital Field Audit, or a combination — is best suited to each specific audit objective. Score each criterion for your context, then review the Decision Matrix to arrive at a recommended approach.

Side-by-Side Method Comparison

Dimension		Mystery Shopping	Digital Field Audit
What it measures		Mystery Shopping	Digital Field Audit
Primary focus		Customer experience & perception	Process, compliance & standards adherence
Who conducts it		Trained anonymous shopper (external)	ASM / ZSM / Auditor (internal or third party)
Visibility to dealer		Hidden — dealer unaware	Transparent — dealer is present
Frequency		Periodic (quarterly / bi-annual)	Structured cycles (monthly / quarterly)
Depth of coverage		Single customer journey	All operational areas per checklist
Evidence captured		Shopper narrative & ratings	Photos, scores, non-compliance records
Action plan generated		Recommendations only	Structured action plan with owner & due date
Cost		High per visit (agency fees)	Lower per audit at scale
Network scalability		Limited — logistically complex	High — digital platform handles volume
Blind spots		Misses back-office & parts operations	Misses unscripted customer moments
Best suited for		Brand experience, CX perception, NPS drivers	Standards compliance, 5S, safety, aftersales ops

Decision Matrix — When to Use Which

Audit Objective	Recommended Method	Rationale
Measure customer experience quality	Mystery Shopping	Captures real customer perception invisibly
Audit dealer operating standards (5S, safety)	Digital Field Audit	Structured checklist; evidence-based scoring
Validate parts department compliance	Digital Field Audit	Requires physical inspection and DMS cross-check
Test sales consultant product knowledge	Mystery Shopping	Requires realistic customer scenario
Track improvement across audit cycles	Digital Field Audit	Historical data, trend view, benchmarking
Identify CX gaps before a brand launch	Both — combined	Triangulates perception and process data
Escalate non-compliant dealer to OEM	Digital Field Audit	Audit trail, signed evidence, action plan record
Assess after-sales customer handling	Both — combined	Mystery shop the call; audit the workshop process

Score Your Network Context

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For each factor, tick the option that best describes your network. Count the ticks per column to arrive at a recommended approach.

Factor	MS	DFA	Both	Notes / Context
Primary audit goal is CX perception	■	■	■	
Primary audit goal is process compliance	■	■	■	
Network size > 20 dealers	■	■	■	
Audit budget is constrained	■	■	■	
OEM requires documented evidence	■	■	■	
Action plan follow-up is required	■	■	■	
Audit frequency is monthly or higher	■	■	■	
Back-office operations must be assessed	■	■	■	
TOTAL				

AutoSmart Tip: With AutoSmart Audit, digital field audits run on a structured cycle — questions, scoring, photo evidence, and action plans are all captured in one platform. Mystery shopping data can be tracked alongside audit scores to give leadership a complete network performance view.