EDUCATE. ELEVATE. INSPIRE.

Grace Hill® | FORT WORTH, TX

TUESDAY, OCT 14

The Enduring Value of Mystery Shopping in the Age of AI

EDUCATE. ELEVATE. INSPIRE.

Grace Hill® | FORT WORTH, TX

AGENDA

The Enduring Value of Mystery Shopping in the Age of AI

- Welcome + Introduction To Our Panel

- The New Customer Journey: From Bot to Human

- AI Superpower: Instant Results Across the Portfolio

- The Human Heart: Why Empathy Still Wins

- The Game Plan: Building the Perfect Blended Strategy

Host and Featured Industry Expert

Multi-Decade Multifamily Experience- Operations Sales and Training

Passionate about Human to Human Connection in Multifamily

Graduated from a Theater Conservatory in NYC

Freelance Podcast Host of Rooms With Ronald

Multifamily Trainer and NAA Excellence Award Finalist

Has an incredibly impressive Starbucks mug collection

Jessica Ford
Sr. Customer Success Manager
Grace Hill

Ronald Harrington
MA, CAM, CALP, NAAEI Faculty
Owner & CTO
RWR Consulting

EDUCATE.
ELEVATE.
INSPIRE.

Grace Hill | FORT WORTH, TX

EDUCATE.
ELEVATE.
INSPIRE.

Grace Hill | FORT WORTH, TX

The New Customer Journey:

From Bot to Human

The Starting Line: How AI Has Entered the Mystery Shop Space

- The prospect journey is now mostly online, and our first impression is now online(chat, text, email)

- Smart assistant type AI can be used to handle most initial questions and inquiries 24/7

- AI can handle the basic stuff- Availability, pricing, setting up a tour and connecting our prospects with our teams on the ground

- AI is a fantastic gatekeeper for simple data, but to what extent?

Grace Hill®

Technology is taking over the early steps of apartment hunting. How much of the *entire* prospect journey is actually being handled by smart tools now, and how is that a big, positive win for our teams?

And what does this huge shift mean for the old way we used to do mystery shopping?

Can AI Be the Automated Auditor?

 A Few Examples of What AI Can Automatically Audit:

- **Smart Checkers (like Realync, Intelligence+):**

  - These smart programs observe interactions to ensure they're in line with training/policy,turn interactions into written notes, create automatic tasks, enhance communication with branding and create automatic action plans/next step focus

- **Automated Resident and Prospect Feedback Analysis (like Reputation Builder or PerformanceHQ Survey, GracieAI, Action Plans/Intelligence+):**

  - Tech instantly reads through massive amounts of online reviews and survey comments to find recurring themes (like "staff is friendly" or "maintenance is slow"), identifies sentiments. This helps quickly spot big trends in the resident experience that need to be addressed in training and coaching

Grace Hill®

AI is fantastic at analyzing huge data sets, like the thousands of online reviews and survey comments we see. It can tell us exactly **what** our prospects and residents are complaining about. That data is great for the 'what,' but it's often cold…

Why is human mystery shopping essential for understanding the emotions and the 'feeling' behind that feedback?

EDUCATE.
ELEVATE.
INSPIRE.

Grace Hill | FORT WORTH, TX

AI Superpower:

Instant Results Across the Portfolio

The Speed Advantage: Scaling at Warp Speed

- AI gives **Instant Feedback** (minutes, not weeks) for quick fixes

- Eliminates personal bias, ensuring **fair results** across the board

- Ability to measure **ALL shops and shop types**, not just a few shops per month as there is capacity

- Allows us to spot **big training gaps across the company or region** immediately

Grace Hill®

We've established that smart tools give us instant, unbiased data on thousands of interactions across the portfolio. When you achieve that kind of warp speed and scale, **where does the human element get lost in the sheer volume of numbers?**

And more importantly, how does a human mystery shop help us **find and restore that critical emotional connection** that the data missed?

Bot-to-Bot Shopping: Limitations

The AI machine is great at making sure we check all the boxes when someone contacts us online (like through chat or forms)

- **Current Limitation:**
  - Inability to handle complex, **unexpected questions** in a live, spontaneous conversation that requires creativity

- **Critical Risk:**
  - For big, sensitive topics like **Fair Housing** and **legal risk**, a person must do the shop. Only a **trained human** can gather the specific details needed to help mitigate risk

Grace Hill®

We've seen smart tools used for bot-to-bot shopping. Are we reaching a point where we can completely replace human phone and internet shops with highly sophisticated conversational **bots**?

The Human Heart:

Why Empathy Still Wins

The Irreplaceable Human Element

AI struggles with **Empathy, Instinct, and Environment** ('The Vibe') and misses **Three Key Human Insights:**

- **Reading People:**
  - Detecting body language, confidence, and **authentic enthusiasm**

- **Testing Knowledge in Real-Time:**
  - Going naturally off-script to test how deeply an agent knows their stuff and how they handle pressure

- **Telling the Full Story:**
  - Weaving together curb appeal, office cleanliness, and tour quality into one complete report about the **overall feeling** of the community

Grace Hill®

In a world of potentially perfect 100% scores from the machines, what are those 3-4 most critical emotional insights only a person can capture during a visit?

And why is a human mystery shop the only way to make sure we actually get this vital information?

The Traditional Mystery Shop: Giving Our AI the Human Touch

- **Human Feedback is the AI's Teacher:** The shopper's subjective feelings ("I felt so welcomed!") become the specific emotional data used to train the smart assistants to sound warm and human

- **Sets the High Emotional Bar:** The human shopper sets the standard for warmth and connection, which the AI then works to copy. This is the human teaching the AI to be "more human

- **Validates the Brand Promise:** Only a person can answer the ultimate question: "Did this experience make me want to sign a lease and stay here?" The shop confirms that the service lives up to the community's promised brand

Grace Hill®

If we keep making the AI friendlier and smarter, **will it eventually get so good that the human mystery shopper is no longer needed**?

How does this affect our pool of "qualified" prospects, and what is Mystery Shop's role in the seamless bot to human interaction?

The Game Plan:

Building the Perfect Blended Strategy

The Game Plan: Architecting the Blend

- **Tech's Job:** Checking tons of early calls/chats for speed and system rule compliance

- **Human's Job:** In-person tours, complex follow-up scenarios, and checking the feeling and connection

- **The Learning Loop:** Human reports are used to **make the AI's rules and guidance better**

Grace Hill®

If you were building the best mystery shop program today, how would you put the hybrid model together?

When do you use the machine, and when do you use the person?

Why We Need to Stay Balanced

- **Risk of Leaning Too Hard on AI:**

  - When **AI focuses only on perfect scores**, it can lead to a robotic team that misses the genuine human connection needed to sign a lease

- **Importance of the Human Element:**

  - Human mystery shops are essential to balance the data by providing the deep, emotional context and narrative required to turn a high-scoring transaction into a signed lease and loyal resident

Grace Hill®

We see the amazing power of AI, but if we lose our focus and let the machine drive, **what is the real cost of that imbalance to our leasing success and resident retention?**

Your Next Move: Building a Blended Program

- **Recap:**
  - **The Machine's Job** is fast, consistent checks on the basics. **The Human's Job** is **using human mystery shops** to deliver the nuance of empathy and connection needed to close the deal and ensure renewal

- **Action Item:**
  - **Perfect the Tech-to-Team Transition:** This moment—when the bot passes the lead to your team—is the biggest risk. Use a human shop to specifically test this transition and ensure the agent picks up the conversation smoothly, proving the validity of the AI data

Grace Hill®
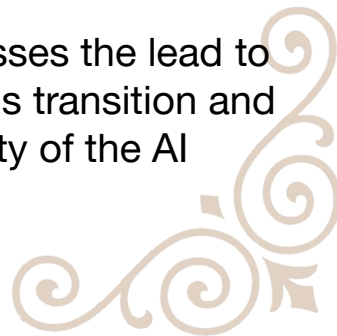
This whole conversation comes down to one powerful idea:

Better Together

What is your final, one-sentence takeaway on why embracing this blended approach—**where the numbers are the map, but the human connection is the journey—is the most important strategy for multifamily success right now?**

EDUCATE.
ELEVATE.
INSPIRE.

Grace Hill | FORT WORTH, TX

Better Together
with YOU

Ronald Harrington

Jessica Ford

RWR Consulting
RoomswithRonald.com

ROOMS with RONALD
Uncharted Conversations Podcast

revyse
Most Loved
2025

revyse
Support Star
2025

revyse
Best Value
2025

An Award Winning Team!

rxharrington@gmail.com

jford@gracehill.com

765-722-1120

864-403-5258

CONTEST

LET'S GET SOCIAL

Use Official Hashtags: #GraceHill #PerformanceSummit #GHImpact

FOLLOW

Follow Grace Hill's social media accounts

POST

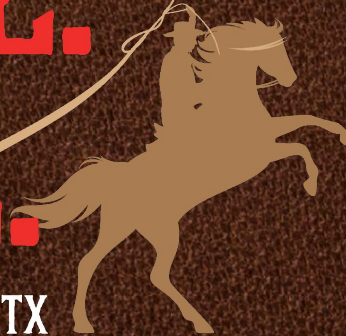Post photos, videos and event updates daily

TAG

Don't forget to tag @GraceHill

EDUCATE. ELEVATE. INSPIRE.

Grace Hill® | FORT WORTH, TX

October 13-16, 2025