

Take the Merchandising Quiz

Mark yes or no

1. _____ **Does the library's exterior sign include library hours that drivers can see from their cars?**

Make it easy for people to know when the library is open. A few libraries even have a neon sign that says "Open." Include special events on your sign and update it regularly.

2. _____ **Is the library's landscaping attractive and well maintained?**

Are the weeds under control? Sidewalks in good condition? Trees and shrubs trimmed and grass mowed? If you have flowers, are they still attractive or are they past their prime?

3. _____ **Is your library clean and free of clutter?**

Are the windows, carpet, and bathrooms clean? Service desks should be neat and free of clutter. Have all worn and outdated signs been removed?

4. _____ **Do you see more desks and furniture than collection displays at your front door?** First impressions are lasting impressions. Service desks should be off to the side and collection displays, welcoming spaces, and public art should be up front.

5. _____ **Does your staff greet incoming customers with eye contact and a smile?**

Greeters who just greet are becoming standard business practice for great customer service. As a bonus, retailers say that eye contact by staff is an effective theft deterrent.

6. _____ **If your library floors are 25,000 square feet or less, is there one service point?** Customers do not want to be shunted from desk to desk. Have a heart and establish one central service point and, for heaven's sake, cross-train your staff.

7. _____ **Is there an ample display of new books, media, and current-interest themes at the front of your library?** Go to a bookstore where you literally run into dozens of tables, gondolas, and wedding cakes bursting with books. Now walk into your front door. See any difference?

8. _____ **Do you have a large new book area with plenty of face-outs?** Stacks are where books go to die. Expanded new book areas, with new titles kept up to two years, will delight your customers.

9. _____ **Are your music CDs in music store-tiered browsers?** If I see another metal-shelving unit with CDs in pullout drawers....

10. _____ **Are all shelving-unit ends slat-walled with bountiful book displays?** End-of-stack panels are valuable real estate in every retail business. Business folks must be roiling in the aisles when they see all that empty and unproductive space. Every library, no matter how small, has dozens of these built-in display opportunities.

11. _____ **Is your signage in English or in math?** Signs are for customers. A sign that says 613.1-646.9 is madness. An aisle number and a few subject headings in plain English is not too much to ask for.

12. _____ **Do you use wood bookstore shelving?** Wood and books go together like books and coffee. A slight slant, backing to keep books upright and with ends of the shelving unit that keep books tight and the shelf full ... beautiful.

13. _____ **Do you have a separate home and garden collection?** Pluck low-hanging fruit by bringing together this collection, which resides in several locations in nonfiction. There is a reason that newspapers have a separate home and garden section every week

14. _____ **Has your print reference collection decreased in size at least 50% over the past few years?** Face it, print reference is a dying animal. Digital reference is also on the endangered species list.

15. _____ **Does your children's area have a percentage of floor space that equals the percentage of circulation?** Play fair, Children's service is the heart of the library, Material budgets and space allocation should reflect usage. **Take** it from reference.

16. _____ **Is your children's room kid friendly?** If it looks mini-adult with the same color scheme as the rest of the library, lack of displays, nothing to play or cuddle on – change it. Children's areas should have more face-outs, more fun, and more excitement in design so that kids can't wait to get there.

17. _____ **Do picture books have as much space devoted to face-out as spine-out?** This is a rule of thumb I tell anyone who will listen: For every section of two shelves of picture books, there has to be three feet of face-outs above.

How to use the quiz:

If you answered yes to most of these questions, congratulations! Your community must love you.

If you answered yes to some, keep up the effort.

If you answered yes to few, you know what you need to do. ☺