



VISUAL MERCHANDISING
FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES
PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR APPLYING BOOKSTORE
INSIGHTS TO LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

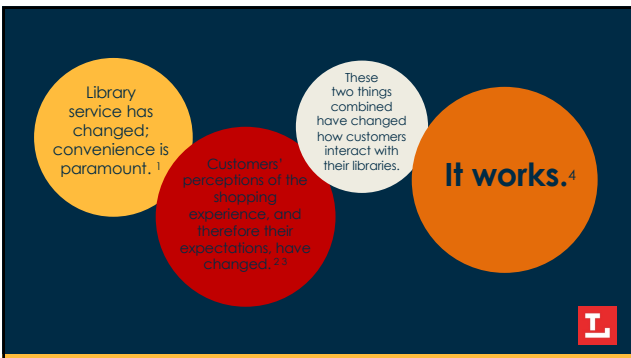
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Branch Manager, Toledo Lucas County Public Library





WHY MERCHANDISE?






Library service has changed; convenience is paramount.¹

Customers' perceptions of the shopping experience, and therefore their expectations, have changed.^{2,3}

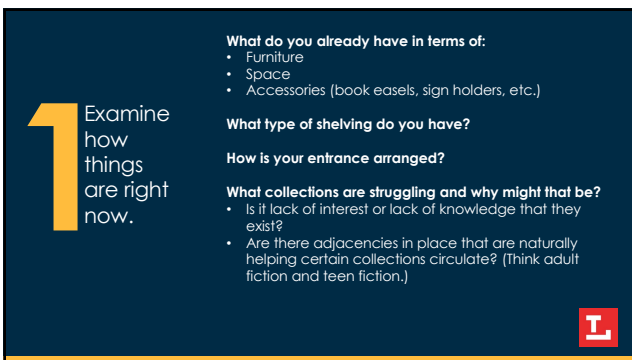
These two things combined have changed how customers interact with their libraries.

It works.⁴









2
Study how your customers are currently interacting with your space.

Pick an hour each day for a week and sketch a heat map of people entering/exiting your library.

3
Create a plan.

What collections can be moved around to help promote their circulation?

- Map this out for clarity. More than one person will likely be helping.

Similarly, what collections are easily accessed or prominently featured that don't need to be?

Plan to shift and possibly weed.

- You may not need as much space as you think you do for certain collections. If you can condense to free up ranges for display, you should consider it.

What furniture is currently being used or could be repurposed to display books? (No folding tables!)

3
Create a plan.

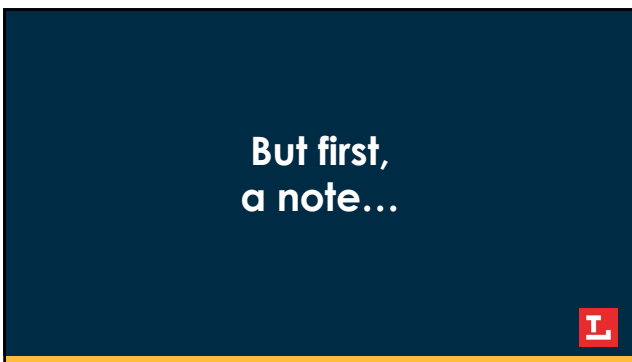
Do you have fixtures or small shelving units that can be moved to a different area of the library?

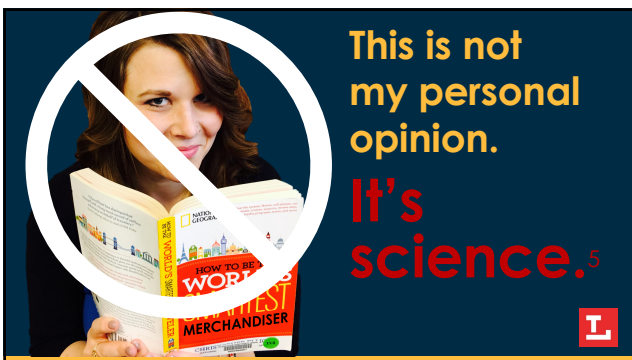
- It's easier than you may think. Defining an entryway that promotes your products and leads people through your building will help to encourage them to explore for longer periods of time and in deeper areas of the space.

Consider developing and committing to a brand identity.

- This should be all-encompassing, from the font used on signs and promotional materials to the colors associated with your library.







Pyramids
Face Out/Front Up
Straight Lines
Balance and Symmetry
NO PROPS.



PYRAMIDS



























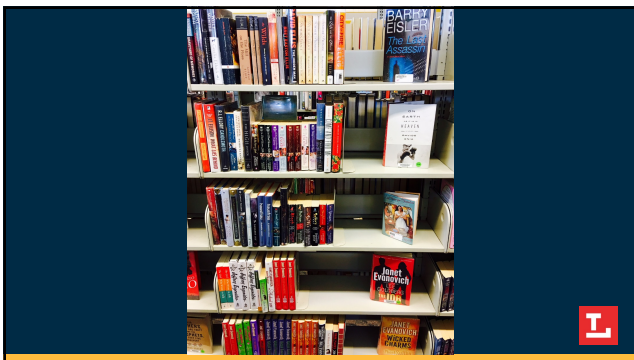




















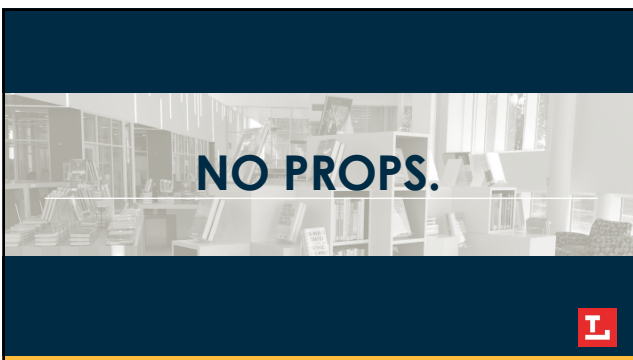




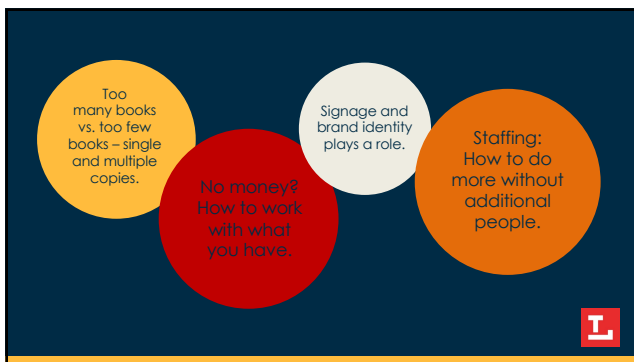














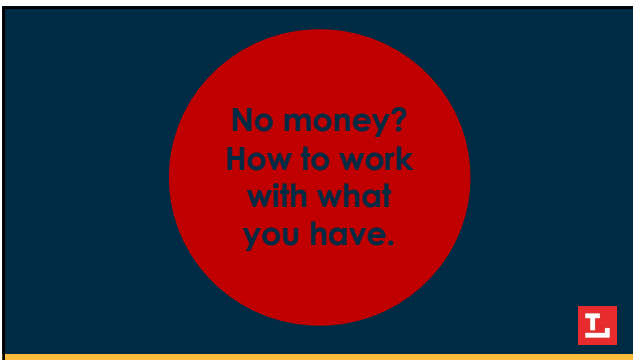
The rules are
set up to
work for both
scenarios.



















Does your
library have
slanted
shelving?



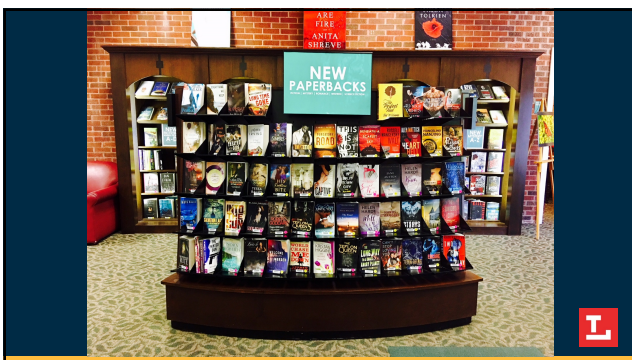




**Are there area
bookstores you can
reach out to?**
(i.e. Barnes and Noble,
Books-a-Million)







Do you have
book stacks
that are out in
the open?







Signage
and brand
identity plays
a role.



If you library already has an established "brand" (i.e. logo, colors, font, etc.), lean into it.

- Though it may seem boring to you, it will help customers to know that the merchandising and signage are something the library is taking ownership of. This will help them to associate the "shopping experience" with your library.

Use your brand colors and font for all signs associated with displays. Not only does it appear more professional, but it will aid in the book browsing process.

Create a template that all staff can access and adjust as need presents itself.

- Library displays will often be more spur-of-the-moment than we expect as we respond to the ebb and flow of checkouts. Having the ability to switch it up and keep it branded is important.






Staffing: How to do more without additional people



First, recognize that this is most likely a culture change for your library.

- We are not used to having to push our product. In many libraries it was simply never a priority and so the work that goes into it wasn't a priority either.
- Be open with staff about why this is important and stress that this is everyone's responsibility. Repeat this often.

Build the work into your daily schedule.

- Make it a portion of your opening and closing routine to recover the entire library.
- Provide time for it on the schedule if possible.

Hold people accountable.

- If someone isn't following the rules, correct them – preferably in the moment.
- Avoid the temptation to make this just one person's responsibility. It takes a team.



QUESTIONS?

