Check List for Image

Factors as diverse as the physical building, the appearance of the collection, the signage, and the staff's attitude affect the image of the library - how the public feels about the library and its staff. Take time to respond to the following questions. Do not just mentally answer the questions; walk through the library as you make your response. Perhaps a board member, volunteer business person, and/or another library director can also complete the checklist. Perhaps each member of the board could complete this checklist, comparing their results at an "image" board meeting.

The Physical Building

	YES	NO		ACTION NEEDED
1.	___	___	Are there directional signs to the library in the neighborhood?	
	___	___	Do they use the international symbol for libraries?	
2.	___	___	Is overall look of the building attractive? Appealing?	
3.	___	___	Is this a building you would be proud to bring visitors, friends and family?	
4.	___	___	Are there windows that allow people to see inside?	
5.	___	___	Is the view into the library a pleasant, enticing one?	
6.	___	___	Are the windows clean?	
7.	___	___	Are drapes drooping?	
8.	___	___	If there are exterior displays, how do they look?	
	___	___	How frequently are they changed?	
9.	___	___	Do the grounds look well-maintained?	
10.	___	___	Are there plants for landscaping?	
	___	___	Are they trimmed or at least living?	
11.	___	___	Is there trash on the grounds?	
	___	___	Are attractive trash containers available?	
	___	___	Are containers available outside for smokers to extinguish cigarettes? Are they well maintained?	
12.	___	___	Is there an exterior sign with the library name and hours readable from the street?	
	___	___	Does it need repainting?	
	___	___	Does it need to be lighted?	
13.	___	___	Are the mailbox, the book drop, and the flag poles well maintained?	
	___	___	Is the book drop easily accessible and attractive?	
14.	___	___	Is visitor parking prominently marked and adequate?	
	___	___	Is the parking lot well lit?	
	___	___	Is there a designated courier drop-off location?	
15.	___	___	Are bicycle racks available?	
16.	___	___	Is the entrance to the building clearly marked?	
	___	___	Are the hours of operation posted clearly at the entrance?	
17.	___	___	Is the library easily accessible to the handicapped?	
	___	___	Are entrance and exit doors handicap-accessible and easy to use?	
	___	___	If not, what arrangements have been made to assist those with special needs?	
18.	___	___	Is there security available after hours?	

These are features that everyone in the community sees even if they never use the library. Such factors will form the basis for many people's perceptions of the library.

Interior of the Library

	YES	NO		ACTION NEEDED
19.	___	___	What does someone see the first thing upon entering the building?	
			Is the condition of the library generally well maintained?	
20.	___	___	What is the overall "look" of the library?	
	___	___	Does it look organized? Clean?	
	___	___	Or look too cluttered?	
	___	___	Is color scheme pleasant and appealing?	
21.	___	___	Is the building truly ADA-accessible?	
22.	___	___	Are the windows and window treatments clean and well maintained?	
	___	___	Is it possible to increase the number or size of the windows?	
23.	___	___	Is the circulation/information desk readily apparent and close to the front entrance?	
	___	___	Is it staffed at all times?	
24.	___	___	Are there directional signs, posters, flyers, tax forms, books for sale, donation jars, coupon and pattern exchanges?	
	___	___	Is it too cluttered?	
25.	___	___	Do walls need to be repaired or repainted?	
26.	___	___	Is the carpeting or flooring attractive?	
	___	___	Would a professional cleaning help? (If so, would a local business donate cleaning?)	
	___	___	Should carpeting be replaced?	
27.	___	___	Is there sufficient lighting?	
	___	___	Should more lighting be added?	
28.	___	___	Is the furniture in good condition and well maintained?	
	___	___	Is the furniture appropriate for its function?	
	___	___	Is the furniture attractive?	
	___	___	Does the wood furniture need to be oiled?	
	___	___	Are any of the upholstered items losing their insides?	
29.	___	___	Is the dust obviously too deep?	
30.	___	___	Are stacks and seating arranged for optimal use?	
	___	___	Could rearrangement of stacks and seating areas give the library a friendlier, more open look?	
31.	___	___	Are there electrical outlets available to the public for charging personal devices?	
32.	___	___	Are donor walls up to date?	
33.	___	___	Are trash containers strategically placed throughout the library?	
	___	___	Is there an area for collecting recyclables?	
34.	___	___	Are restrooms clearly marked and kept clean?	
35.	___	___	Is there a break room available for staff use?	
	___	___	Are there lockers available for staff use?	
	___	___	Is there a separate restroom for staff?	

Foyer/Entrance

36.	___	___	Is it clean, well maintained, inviting and clear?	
37.	___	___	Is there decrepit furniture?	
38.	___	___	Are displays up to date and well maintained?	
39.	___	___	Are there empty display cases that need to be filled or removed?	
40.	___	___	Does the entry area effectively orient the customer to the library?	
	___	___	Is there adequate signage?	

Signs

41.	___	___	As you stand in the entry area, what directional signs do you see? (Sometimes signs are unnecessary and only add clutter; sometimes the need for them is critical.)	
	___	___	Are there clear directional signs?	
42.	___	___	If you were a new customer, what directional signs would you need?	
43.	___	___	Are the specific areas of the library easy to reach and well marked?	
44.	___	___	Are the signs appropriate?	
	___	___	Is the lettering legible and readable?	
	___	___	Are confusing terms used?	
	___	___	Are the signs crisp and new?	
	___	___	Are they accurate? (Such as, are the 600s really where the sign indicates?)	
45.	___	___	Is the size of lettering consistent from sign to sign?	

The Collection

	YES	NO		ACTION NEEDED
46.	___	___	Does the shelving look well-maintained?	
	___	___	If painted, is it chipped?	
	___	___	Are there fingerprints?	
47.	___	___	Do the shelves sag? (Nothing is as dispiriting as sagging shelves.)	
48.	___	___	Do the books sit at the edge of the shelf?	
49.	___	___	Do the books lean need bookends to keep them from falling over?	
50.	___	___	What part of the collection is on the second, third, and fourth shelves?	
			How much of the collection is on other shelves that may be too high or low?	
51.	___	___	Are the books so crowded that it is difficult to extract one?	
52.	___	___	Is the collection regularly weeded? Really?	
53.	___	___	Do books on the shelves need to be mended?	
54.	___	___	How are the books processed?	
	___	___	Do most books have plastic jackets?	
	___	___	Are the labels at the same level or do they wander up and down?	
	___	___	Are the labels handwritten or typed?	
	___	___	Are the identification stamps neat and straight?	
55.	___	___	Are the paperbacks in good repair, neat and new-looking?	
	___	___	Are the paperbacks yellowed and have curling corners?	
	___	___	Should some be discarded?	
56.	___	___	Have the romance books taken over a disproportionate amount of the library?	
57.	___	___	Do you treat the paperbacks like stepchildren? (Many people prefer paperbacks to hardbacks.)	
58.	___	___	Are the paperback racks attractive?	
59.	___	___	Is there a designated genealogy room?	

Displays and Bulletin Boards

60.	___	___	Are the displays and bulletin boards attractive and well maintained?	
61.	___	___	Are the notices on the bulletin boards timely and current?	
	___	___	Attractive?	
62.	___	___	Is the bulletin board updated? Weekly? Monthly? Annually?	
			Are outdated items removed regularly?	
63.	___	___	Are displays filled with books? Are there gaps?	
	___	___	Do people actually take books from the displays?	
	___	___	Are displays restocked regularly?	
64.	___	___	Are the displays located in “prime” locations?	

Printed Materials

65.	___	___	Do you have a letterhead and envelopes for the library?	
66.	___	___	Does the staff have business cards (or at least the Library Director)?	
67.	___	___	Do your printed materials have a special format or design?	
68.	___	___	Does the staff know the library’s policies on printed materials, such as who approves printed pieces?	
	___	___	Is there a review of all printed materials before they are finalized?	
	___	___	Are printed materials grammatically correct and spell checked?	
69.	___	___	Does the library have a logo?	
	___	___	Is it easily recognized?	
	___	___	Is it current and does it reflect the image you want of your library?	
70.	___	___	Are the bookmarks and promotional materials that list the library’s phone number and hours, and web page correct and readily available?	
71.	___	___	Are flyers colorful and appealing?	
72.	___	___	Do flyers and bookmarks look professional?	
	___	___	Is the typing neat?	
	___	___	Is the print clear?	
73.	___	___	How are the flyers and bookmarks displayed?	
74.	___	___	Are there too many items on the display table?	
	___	___	Are outdated items removed regularly?	

The Staff

	YES	NO		ACTION NEEDED
75.	___	___	Are the volunteers and staff dressed appropriately?	
	___	___	Are staff and volunteers wearing a name badge?	
76.	___	___	Are they available and easily accessible?	
77.	___	___	Are they friendly?	
	___	___	Does the staff smile at customers?	
	___	___	Do they greet people by name?	
	___	___	Are they obviously friendly and willing to help?	
	___	___	Do they just point or do they actually help the customer find appropriate material?	
78.	___	___	Does the person at the circulation desk present the image and impression by which you want the library to be judged?	
79.	___	___	Is the librarian readily available, or is she or he too busy doing clerical chores?	
80.	___	___	Is this a "shhhhh" library?	
81.	___	___	Do personnel listen carefully to requests?	
82.	___	___	Are people with fines and lost books treated politely?	
83.	___	___	How does the staff react to children who pull several picture books off the shelf?	
	___	___	What if the children are noisy?	
84.	___	___	Do children receive the same quality of service as adults?	
85.	___	___	Is the person answering the telephone courteous and helpful?	
86.	___	___	Does staff think it is more important to do clerical chores rather than to help someone?	
87.	___	___	Does the staff help customers with special needs?	
88.	___	___	Is customer service regularly promoted to the staff?	
	___	___	Have they had customer service training?	
89.	___	___	Is staff technologically proficient and able to help customers appropriately?	
	___	___	Is equipment hardware and cabling installed appropriately?	
	___	___	Is there at least one public PC equipped with assistive technology?	

Other Important "Image" Items

90.	___	___	Do all of the public access computers, copiers, fax machines, etc. actually work?	
	___	___	Are they regularly maintained?	
91.	___	___	Are important usage policies posted in a notebook at the front desk?	
92.	___	___	Do positive public relations features about the library regularly show up in local newspaper or on the radio?	
93.	___	___	Does the library participate in community events, such as county fairs, parades, career fairs?	
			If so, where?	
94.	___	___	Does the library offer to conduct library tours for school groups and/or civic organizations?	
95.	___	___	Is the library an active member of the Chamber of Commerce?	
96.	___	___	Are the public rest rooms clearly identified?	
	___	___	Are they close to high traffic areas?	
	___	___	Is there a children's restroom or family friendly facility available?	
	___	___	Is there a diaper changing station in both the men's and women's room?	
	___	___	Are the toilets/sinks clean?	
	___	___	Do the commodes flush properly?	
	___	___	Are there plenty of paper products and refills readily available?	
	___	___	Is there soap available?	
	___	___	Are mirrors clean/streak-free?	
	___	___	Are the partitions clean and free from graffiti?	
	___	___	Is the floor clean and free from trash?	
	___	___	Are the walls freshly painted and attractive?	

Conclusion

If you have been candid, there will be many areas of the library that can stand improvement. Do not be dismayed. Before any problem can be solved, it first needs to be recognized. As the image changes, the library will find that it attracts new customers and move volunteers and that staff morale will improve. Over a period of time, even the powers that be will recognize the new role of the library; thus funding problems can be dealt with in a much more positive manner.

Adapted from **The Dynamic Community Library**. *Beth Wheeler Fox. American Library Association, 1988. (pp.70-73)*