

Wayfinding Design

IN THE PUBLIC
ENVIRONMENT

Andrew Hodson



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Published in Australia in 2015 by
The Images Publishing Group Pty Ltd
ABN 89 059 734 431
6 Bastow Place, Mulgrave, Victoria 3170, Australia
Tel: +61 3 9561 5544 Fax: +61 3 9561 4860
books@imagespublishing.com
www.imagespublishing.com

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The Images Publishing Group Reference Number: 1189

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National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:

Title: Wayfinding Design in the Public Environment / Andrew Hodson (ed.).
ISBN: 9781864706338 (hardback)
Subjects: Visual communication
Signs and signboards—Design.
Public spaces—Design.
Graphic arts.

Dewey Number: 741.6

Coordinated and edited by Images Publishing, Shanghai office.

Printed by Toppan Leefung Printing (Shenzhen) Co. Ltd

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INTRODUCTION

Wayfinding Design in the Public Environment has been put together to showcase some innovative and eye-catching examples of wayfinding systems in action, from internal directories through to larger scale outdoor applications. Some of the initial drawings and artworks are depicted, along with the finished projects, all of which are truly inspirational as wayfinding schemes that not only do their job, but also help to create pleasing environments, in tune with their surroundings.

Case studies within the book include hotels, shopping centers, public and corporate buildings as far afield as Brazil, Finland and Australia and show just how far the designers have gone to integrate functionality with aesthetic qualities. I am pleased to say that it also includes an example of one of ICON's projects, a temporary public wayfinding system put in place for the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, and focusing on routes to and from Rio de Janeiro's Maracanã Stadium, and around the city itself.

The increasing complexity of our public environments increasingly demands an easy-to-understand orientation and secure wayfinding that have been planned and developed by properly trained and experienced specialists. Extensive research consistently shows that the success of any public area is reliant on both thoughtful architectural and methodical wayfinding design, and it is essential that wayfinding is considered as an integral part of the architectural design process.

Wayfinding is not just about directional signage. A clear understanding of how people react in unfamiliar and complex environments, coupled with the effective use of urban, building, interior, process and information design disciplines will help create areas which are intuitive to use and easy to navigate. Signage must not be relied upon to overcome basic venue / building design inadequacies, and the requirement should be considered at an early stage of the design, following the key principles of simplicity, appropriateness and consistency of messaging style.

An effective wayfinding system has to incorporate a high level of versatility and is, at the end of the day, one of the most important means of getting residents and visitors alike around a city or venue. Aside from its directional role it can also play an important part in communicating information about events, landmarks and places of interest. Take for example the Legible London scheme, which was introduced by Transport for London (TfL) to provide an simple-to-use signage system presenting information in a range of ways to help people find their way easily and safely. Legible London is already working successfully across London, with more than 1,300 signs – half in central London and in nearly every London borough – with research showing that nine out of ten people were keen to see more Legible London signs introduced.

TfL is now working with boroughs, Business Improvement Districts and other organisations to expand the scheme further.

Any orientation system has to reflect that it is going to be used by groups with varying degrees of knowledge of a location. These can be summarised as follows:

- a) Thematic routes can provide a comprehensive overview of special features and provide new visitors with a safe orientation process.
- b) General plans can provide these and additional information, which may be new to the visitor, so they can find the places they knew.

So what are the main considerations for those designing a wayfinding system?

- Instantly understandable information: use simple, recognisable pictograms not only across the wayfinding elements, but also consistently throughout other informational media
- Contrasting colours and anti-glare materials
- Easy-to-read fonts and font sizes
- A simple-to-process information hierarchy from start to finish
- An easily expandable / updateable system
- Use of information points at key areas of visitor concentration, as well as pedestrian intersections or sites of special importance; especially points of arrival such as car parks, bus / train stations and airports

Finally, the onset of a wealth of digital media opens up exciting new opportunities, such as multi-lingual information, but this must be simple to use, even for those not familiar with computers. Route maps to all local amenities, attractions and facilities can be generated from the visitor's starting point, and the recent developments in smart phone technology such as QR codes, NFC (Near Field Communication) and navigation apps can provide useful and interesting additional information.

We hope you will see the importance of these elements through the case studies that follow and come to understand just how creative and artistic wayfinding can be without losing its functionality and legibility. The customer experience – be it at a one-off event, or their regular journey through the working environment – is an important consideration for the host and one which is influenced to no small extent by the wayfinding and information systems that visitors and residents encounter on a day to day basis.

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Hospital Marie Curie

Completion
2014

Designers
André Rodeghiero, Élise Auge
Client
Hospital Marie Curie, Charleroi
Location
Charleroi, Belgium

< étage -1 urgences +

< étage -1 médecine nucléaire - scintigraphies
soins intensifs
unité coronaire

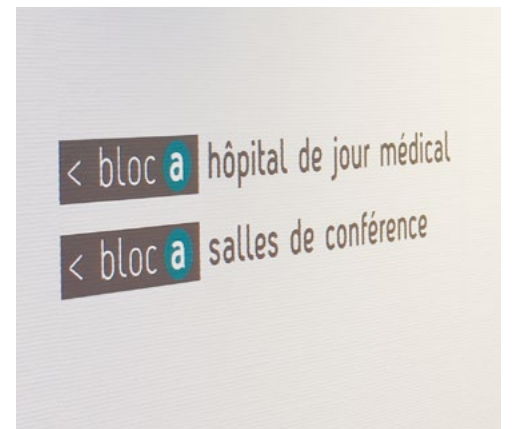


This hospital signage provides different perspectives for users such as patients, medical staff and visitors. In addition to the orientation function (name of places, easier flows and reassurance), this project developed specific environments making them human through the colour choices and the creation of an illustrative family.









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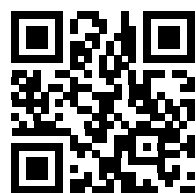
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Modern public space requires wayfinding information that can help users familiarize or adapt themselves in new building environments. Wayfinding systems designed to fulfill the essential functions of direction, notice or explanation often absorb creative designing elements.

This book is an informative and systematic compilation of many updated design works for wayfinding by international designing studios, ranging from shopping malls, gardens, hospitals, schools, office buildings, museums, libraries, among others. And the wayfinding design works represented in this book originate from their application in various public spaces.

This book is a great reference for graphic designers, architects, scholars, or students majored in the design disciplines.



US50.00 UK35.00
ISBN 978-1-86470-633-8
9 781864 706338 55000