

Hospital Wayfinding: Making the conversion from static signs to interactive maps



Why is wayfinding a challenge?

For patients and visitors, trying to navigate a hospital can be frustrating. The layouts of most hospitals don't always make sense, and every corner is visually confusing with hospital images and jargon. Getting lost can cause lots of aggravation and late appointments that affect administration processes and prohibit staff from being as efficient as possible, which ultimately can cost the hospital money.



What about the static signs the hospital already has?

If you have ever visited a hospital you are familiar with the internal navigating system that is used – numbered doors, color codes, floor maps and sometimes even a network of lines drawn on the floor. While this may be a quick fix and a less expensive route, this solution often causes more issues than it alleviates.

What happens when a department moves or there is a change?

In the event of relocation, there is virtually no way to update the static system quickly or efficiently. Because of this, until additional money is invested to update the signs, patients and visitors will get lost and require assistance. In turn, the hospital staff must assist with directions, losing very valuable time.

Interactive Wayfinding: The versatile solution

Implementing interactive wayfinding into your hospital can open the door to many new found uses and features that ultimately assist staff and visitors in areas beyond navigating.



What can Interactive Wayfinding do for your hospital?

Wayfinding is a solution to the headache of hospital navigation. Incorporating wayfinding into your hospital's services by kiosk, web or mobile will enable you to provide fully interactive line and text directions to every room and department available. Placing a kiosk at the front desk, will not only make wayfinding readily available, but will also produce QR codes so that visitors can take their directions on their phones. Providing wayfinding on your website will enable visitors to prepare themselves before arriving.



Employing the additional features within a wayfinding system

Outside of providing interactive directions, wayfinding provides additional functions that can prove helpful in assisting hospital guests and staff.

- **Provide a staff / doctor / department listing:** With this feature, users can not only retrieve directions to a specific department or staff member, further information regarding those departments or staff members can also be accessed. For example, beyond just getting directions from selecting staff or departments from a list, the user can also find information on services performed in that department, individuals who work in that department and services offered by the doctor or staff member as well.
- **Search Function:** Incorporating a search bar enables users to type in any staff name, room number, building name, department title, and services offered to retrieve directions. The search function can be set to pull a broader range of results, beyond just directions. For example, the search can return with any

announcements, department locations and services (with further info regarding those services) tied to the inquiry.

- **Events and Daily Updates:** A segment for updating daily, weekly and monthly events and announcements can be integrated into your wayfinding project. This can be set as public to provide updates to everyone, or set as private to only be accessed by staff members or even a specific set group of staff members. For example, we have a large church client that uses this feature to share information regarding sermons, group meetings, picnics, etc. Another corporate client uses this feature to share department meetings and inner office announcements with the staff.



What goes into a wayfinding project?

Any wayfinding project needs to begin with a needs assessment. Is this for kiosk, web or mobile? Do you need additional languages? Will you be hosting the project? Will there be any extended features? Looking at

extended features, there are those that are included; such as directions specifically for the handicapped; and the above mentioned that are additional. The quoting process is based on the above items, and specifically the number of buildings, floors and the type of wayfinding that will be offered.

Start your wayfinding project today!

Starting an interactive wayfinding project is simple. You can contact Here2There Software directly for a needs assessment on a full service project, or you can contact Wayfinding Pro to test the app that enables you to build your own wayfinding project.

For an example of a full service project with Here2There Software, visit temple.here2theresoftware.com.

Contact Amanda directly for further information and assistance, and be sure to visit her site dedicated to wayfinding for tips, interface examples, projects, development, whitepapers and more. Amandalynnesmith.wordpress.com

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