

The Importance of a Good Sign System

Consider the following questions:

- Has your facility undergone growth or change?
- Do your departments and staff positions change on a monthly or annual basis?
- Do employees constantly have to direct visitors?

If these questions sound like some of the challenges you face in your facility, then you probably have realized the importance of a good sign system. Having an effective sign system entails much more than placing a sign at every entrance, door, or cubicle. It is a process that considers the layout and design of the facility, how best to guide traffic throughout the facility, and how to address any future changes that may occur, without over signing. This process is known as wayfinding.

Wayfinding can have an impact on how visitors perceive your facility. When people enter unfamiliar settings with no clear direction on where they need to go, their levels of frustration and stress can increase. (In a hospital, especially, that stress increases dramatically when visitors and patients are not quickly able to find where they need to be.) Planning an effective system can help ensure that your visitors will not leave your facility with a negative image. It addresses the information that they need, such as the layout of the facility, where they are, where their destination is, and the directions to get them there and back out to their car. Another way signs can enhance the image of your facility is through design. When all exterior and interior signs are consistent in design, they become easier to recognize and follow. Aesthetic design also plays an important role in determining a good sign system. Today, more than ever before, signs are being considered as a part of the interior design package of new facilities and come in a variety of styles and designs that can accent any interior.

Finally, a well-planned system can actually save you money. Considering a modular sign system will enable you to be prepared for any updates or changes that occur in your facility. Modular systems allow you to change out components, which can be done for a fraction of the cost of replacing the entire sign. It also reduces the likelihood of having to repair damaged walls that can come from removing permanently mounted signs. Laser printed paper inserts are becoming an increasingly popular option for facilities where change is a regular occurrence. By enabling end-users to create their own inserts using a computer and a laser printer, updates can be made in a matter of minutes for next to nothing. The life cycle of the sign system increases with its level flexibility and in the long run will more than make up for the money that was invested in it.