

Wayfinding and Brand Perception:

Function and form unite for an improved visitor experience

Wayfinding functions like a utility, but behaves like your brand.

The ultimate expression of your brand lies in your audience's experience. The verbal and visual elements of a wayfinding system act as the framework for your brand expression.

Wayfinding functions like a utility because:

- > the information provides the "fuel" that feeds the system.
- > there is an interconnected quality to wayfinding elements; a gap in the system can lead to confusion.
- > wayfinding elements are often an integral part of an interior or exterior landscape, much as other utility elements.

It behaves like your brand in that:

- > the visual elements of the system can enhance your corporate identity, reinforcing it throughout the system while creating "speakable" landmarks for wayfinding.
- > these visual elements carry the informational "fuel" in a succinct way.
- > as people navigate space, these elements create patterns that people recognize as decision-making points.

The recipe for doing it right boils down to a few key tasks:

- > First, make sure the architecture of your brand is determined succinctly, in keeping with your culture and vision:
 - The physical aspects of your organization: services, facilities, etc.
 - Sub-brands, partnerships, indirectly related entities
- > Second, distill the verbal elements of the brand to a short list of "speakable" items: directions, destinations, services
- > Finally, build a system of visual elements that accurately reflect the items listed above: signage, printed and electronic media, etc.

An effective, functional wayfinding system reflects the underlying intelligence of your brand, presented in an organized way to the public.