

## Facilities Management from A to Z

Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard  
published monthly in Facilities by Lexis Nexis between 2008 and 2016



Wayfinding is the process of using information from the environment to help to find your way around. Signage is an important part of the process but wayfinding involves far more than a few well placed signs.

The design of a facility is the starting point for good wayfinding. Features of the built environment such as floor coverings, artwork, lighting and sound all offer clues to help people find their way around. In addition, clues such as culinary aromas from coffee shops, restaurants and aromatic plants and flowers can be useful as navigational aids for people who are blind or vision impaired.

People in the workplace need consistent, concise, accurate and timely information. When they are unable to find their way it leads to frustration, stress and a poor occupier experience. Appropriate static, dynamic, audible and tactile information can all contribute to successful wayfinding.

Wayfinding systems are measured by how users experience an environment and how the communicative elements facilitate getting from point A to point B. Wayfinding systems should reassure users, create a welcoming and enjoyable environment and, ideally, provide answers to potential queries before users have to ask for assistance. Wayfinding systems can also indicate where users should not go.

A successful wayfinding system should provide information for users to confirm they are at the correct start or finish point of an individual journey, to identify their location within a building or an external space, and identify their destination on arrival. It should reinforce that they are travelling in the right direction, help to orient themselves within a facility and to understand the location and any potential hazards so they can escape safely in an emergency.

The language used to describe environmental cues for wayfinding is derived from many design disciplines such as architecture, landscape architecture, town planning, surveying, geography and access consulting. Wayfinding systems need to take account of the way people with varying abilities negotiate the built environment.

*Recommended reading on wayfinding is The Wayfinding Handbook by David Gibson published by Princeton Architectural Press ISBN 1568987692*