

Intuitive cues in the environment influence behavior:

Merge design disciplines to create a seamless environment

The shortest
distance between
two points
may not be
a straight line!

Have you ever walked down a hallway that you weren't sure was public?

Ever gotten off a highway exit and knew immediately that you were in the wrong place—and felt uneasy and unsafe?

Ever gone to a sporting event on a college campus, only to find that you can't park anywhere on that campus?

These are very real problems for most people. You know that visceral feeling you get when you're lost, when you feel like you've made a mistake and now you've got to find your way out of it.

A comprehensive wayfinding solution considers all aspects of the environment that a visitor might encounter, then takes advantage of those positive, intuitive features to aid in navigation. What are the best routes from the highway into town? The largest, most attractive streets? The most beautiful entrances to campus? Where is public parking most plentiful and most easily accessible?

Laying the groundwork prior to your visitors' arrival is key to success: communicating the best route from their point of origin to their destination will help them draw a picture "in their mind's eye," allowing them to anticipate the experience in advance and move confidently through the environment once they arrive.

Proper planning for circulation through the environment is important as you design the experience for your visitor. Consider the following:

- > Department of Transportation signage on highways, surface streets
- > Routing to the most logical parking area or transit stop
- > Designating the proper building or area entrance, and
- > Completing the internal route to the destination.

Information provided at each of these decision points will help direct and inform your visitors, making them more confident and competent as they navigate. As you plan these routes, recruit a team of architects, landscape architects, planners, lighting, interior and environmental graphic designers to help create that seamless experience.

A wise person once said "Good design goes unnoticed"—this is certainly true of a wayfinding system. When it's working, you see empowered, confident (and happy) visitors. When it's NOT working, you hear about it!