

Best Practices for Wayfinding & Directional Signage

Directional Signs & Wayfinding

For many years companies have taken for granted that their employees know where everything is located at the facility. Now with increased employee turnover and visits from customers and vendors, companies want their facilities to look like airports. Their goal is to allow someone who has never entered their facility be able to navigate to any department, work cell, machine or process without asking a single question.



Navigation, also known as wayfinding, is the ability to travel from point A to point B easily, without detour and without confusion, on the first attempt. There are considerations that should be made when designing a wayfinding plan for manufacturing facilities. These principles are scalable to every facility. If your facility is smaller and does not lend itself to extensive wayfinding, at least provide it on a smaller scale to demonstrate your commitment to communication.

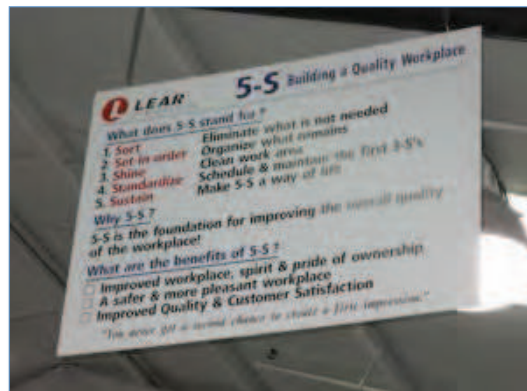
Principles for Creating Wayfinding Visuals



1. Collect data to determine the critical paths.
 - Use outside resources that are not familiar with your layout to gain objectivity.
2. Create a master wayfinding map.
 - Use the data collected.
3. Include support functions in the map
 - Consider areas such as: Production, Human Resources, Engineering or Accounting.
4. Utilize color or other unique identities for segregating general areas or zones.
 - Use within departments or on a larger scale.
5. Provide visuals at decision points for decision-making.
 - Simplify the choices.

Why is this important in a manufacturing facility? You only get one chance to leave a first impression with your prospective customers. When you bring in your prospects through your facility and they observe the attention to detail that was placed on wayfinding it provides greater assurance that there is this same type of detail in their production processes. It gives a feeling of discipline, regulation and control.

Information displayed on directory signage not only helps a person navigate through a facility, but can incorporate other important messages such as mission statements, quality policies, team members, resource contacts and other corporate messages.



Directory signs are commonly used at aisle intersections or as a four-sided message boards, placed in key locations. They can be made using a PVC substrate, hung with brackets from the ceiling or attached to a surface, and are easily updated.



Frames can be made using a welding angle iron or simply using connectors and conduit.

The importance of navigation should not be overlooked in the workplace. We expect directional information in our hospitals, airports and on our roadways. Wayfinding in our work environments can have a significant return on the investment. Wasted motion and repeated questions are eliminated with the use of wayfinding and navigational visuals. This detail can also be attributed to creating a culture of discipline and employee engagement. You can also expect to make a noticeable impact on your prospective customers.

