

Outdated Wayfinding in Hospitals: **Why Evolution is Essential**



Introduction

No one likes getting lost, but imagine you're an anxious patient visiting a hospital for the first time. You're worried about your health and the outcome of your upcoming appointment, but before you even make it to the waiting room, you are met with an over-complicated facility layout. With so many different hallways and floors, a directory can only take you so far before you need to stop every couple of steps to ask for directions.

By the time you get to your appointment, you're exhausted and on edge. You didn't want to be here in the first place, but especially now, you would rather be anywhere else. Your health is important to you, but you simply don't have the energy to ask questions during your appointment. You feel uncomfortable and impatient to make the long and complicated journey back to the parking garage.

Unfortunately, this scenario is all too common. 30% of first-time hospital patients report getting lost [\(1\)](#), leading to stress, frustration, and diminished patient satisfaction. Even worse, 83% of patients have missed or arrived late to appointments [\(2\)](#), because they couldn't find their destination, costing the U.S. healthcare system a staggering \$150 billion annually [\(3\)](#) in missed appointments.

The consequences of outdated wayfinding are clear: frustrated patients, inefficiencies in staff workflows, and significant revenue loss for healthcare organizations. But these problems aren't inevitable. By modernizing your facility with comprehensive digital wayfinding solutions, you can transform the patient experience, streamline operations, and position your hospital as a leader in innovation and care.

This eBook explores the challenges of outdated wayfinding systems and why evolving to digital, patient-focused navigation is no longer optional—it's essential.

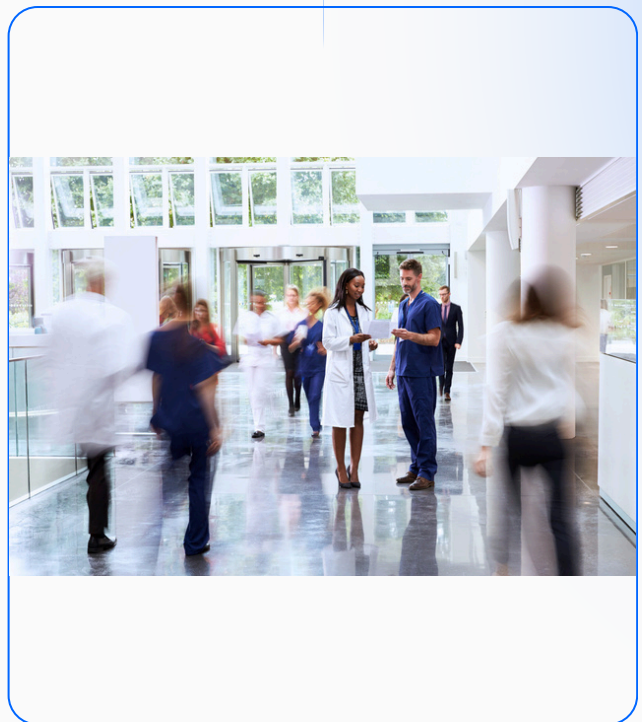


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Chapter One

Why Wayfinding is Essential for Healthcare Settings



Hospitals and healthcare facilities are inherently complex environments, with sprawling layouts, multiple departments, and high visitor traffic. Navigating these spaces can quickly become a stressful ordeal for patients and visitors. Effective wayfinding solutions are no longer a luxury—they're essential for ensuring positive patient experiences, operational efficiency, and modern facility management.



Addressing Navigational Challenges

Navigational confusion in healthcare settings creates a ripple effect of issues, impacting patients, staff, and the facility's bottom line:

- **Patient and Visitor Stress:** Unclear directions leave patients and visitors frustrated and anxious, compounding the stress of healthcare visits.
- **Reduced Patient Satisfaction:** Difficulty navigating facilities negatively affects satisfaction scores, directly impacting how patients perceive the quality of care.
- **Operational Inefficiencies:** Limited wayfinding tools hinder patient flow, leading to bottlenecks and delays in services.
- **Missed Appointment Costs:** Navigational challenges cost the U.S. healthcare system over \$150 billion annually (1) due to missed or late appointments.
- **Staff Disruptions:** Staff are frequently interrupted to provide directions, taking time and focus away from critical tasks—and they may not always have accurate answers.
- **Emergency Preparation:** In high-stakes situations, clear navigation is crucial for ensuring swift movement and safety during emergencies.

Enhancing the Patient Experience

Navigating a healthcare facility is often an added stressor for patients, especially during vulnerable moments. Effective wayfinding solutions address these pain points by:

- **Reducing Stress:** Simplified navigation helps patients focus on their health instead of worrying about how to reach their destination.
- **Ensuring Accessibility:** Wayfinding systems must be ADA-compliant, offering clear, accessible routes for individuals with mobility challenges.
- **Breaking Language Barriers:** Multilingual support ensures non-English-speaking patients can navigate with ease, fostering inclusivity and equity.

Driving Digital Transformation

Incorporating digital wayfinding systems into healthcare facilities is not just about convenience—it's about meeting the expectations of modern patients:

- **Streamlined Navigation:** Digital signage, interactive kiosks, and mobile integrations simplify navigation and provide real-time directions.
- **A Modern Image:** Digital wayfinding positions healthcare facilities as forward-thinking and technologically advanced, reinforcing their commitment to quality care.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Dynamic wayfinding integrates with other systems to optimize workflows, reduce bottlenecks, and enhance facility management.

In a healthcare setting, effective wayfinding isn't just about helping patients find their way—it's about creating a seamless, stress-free experience that reflects the facility's dedication to innovation, accessibility, and patient-centered care.



Chapter Two

An Overview of Basic Healthcare Wayfinding



In the past two decades, more and more hospitals have graduated from traditional physical directories. Hospitals and healthcare facilities realized the headache of updating hallway bulletin boards and replacing wooden or plastic signs every time an office changed location, so they modernized with digital signage to streamline updates. However, many hospitals are still stuck in the past or only using the baseline options for healthcare wayfinding despite the technological advancement of the past few years.



How do Hospitals Typically View and Utilize Wayfinding

Your average hospital typically considers wayfinding as:

- **Signage Systems:** Clear, strategically placed signs for directions, information, and identification, ensuring users can easily locate departments, waiting areas, and exits.
- **Digital Directories:** Interactive kiosks and digital boards offering detailed maps, route planners, and real-time guidance for navigating the facility.
- **Color Coding and Symbols:** Simple visual cues such as floor lines, zone numbers, or universally recognized icons to assist with intuitive navigation.
- **Audio and Visual Aids:** ADA-compliant solutions like braille signage, audio directions, or visual enhancements to ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities.
- **Integration with Information Desks and Staff:** Physical assistance options complement digital tools, providing a human touch for those who prefer direct interaction.

While these tools provide a solid foundation, the healthcare landscape in 2025 demands more than the basics. Today's patients and visitors expect intuitive, technology-driven solutions that not only guide them efficiently but also enhance their overall experience.



Chapter Three

The Need for Evolution: How to Take Your Healthcare Wayfinding to the Next Level



Wayfinding in healthcare settings can no longer remain a basic tool that meets minimal navigation needs. As facilities grow more complex and patient expectations rise, outdated approaches fall short. The wayfinding market is expected to grow by 32% by 2030 (4), so even if your hospital doesn't modernize, your competitors will. Your hospitals must adopt advanced, patient-centered wayfinding solutions to align with the demands of modern healthcare and keep up with the competition.

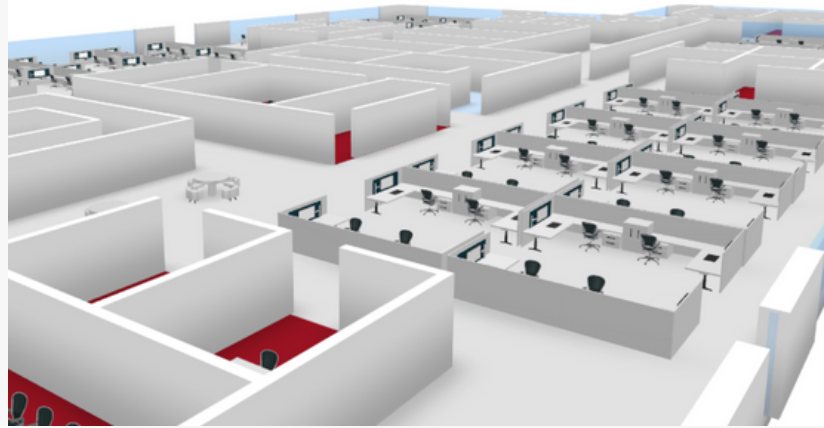


Healthcare Wayfinding Digital Transformation: Key Upgrades

These are the key advancements in digital signage and wayfinding solutions to consider:

Immersive 3D Interactive Maps

Modern wayfinding solutions include detailed, interactive 3D maps offering multi-layered route options. These maps provide clear visual guidance to destinations such as departments, offices, labs, and parking areas. Real-time updates ensure accurate navigation, even during temporary closures or construction.



Mobile Wayfinding for Always-On Support

Mobile wayfinding brings navigation directly to users' fingertips. With QR code scans or mobile apps, visitors can access intuitive, real-time turn-by-turn directions on their smartphones, creating a personalized and efficient experience.

AI-Powered Smart Navigation

AI-powered wayfinding serves as a virtual concierge, offering real-time guidance to rooms, amenities, and departments. These systems adapt to live conditions, optimizing routes to reduce congestion, answering common questions, and providing actionable insights for facility administrators to improve efficiency.



Customized Routes for Different User Groups

Advanced wayfinding solutions can create tailored pathways for specific user needs. For example, patients and visitors can receive guidance along public routes, while employees are directed through staff-only pathways for operational efficiency. In high-priority areas such as quarantine zones, the system can restrict access and provide alternate routes to ensure safety and compliance with health regulations. This customization enhances security, minimizes disruptions, and streamlines traffic flow.



Intelligent Kiosk Integration

Touchscreen kiosks strategically placed throughout the facility act as user-friendly navigation hubs. Equipped with interactive maps, search features, and multilingual support, kiosks ensure accessibility for diverse audiences while reducing the strain on front-desk staff.

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Inclusive and ADA-Compliant Design

Advanced wayfinding systems prioritize inclusivity with ADA-compliant features such as voice commands, touchless interaction, braille, and enhanced visual aids. These tools ensure seamless navigation for individuals with disabilities, fostering a more equitable environment for all visitors.

Emergency Alert Integration

Wayfinding systems integrated with emergency alert platforms ensure that patients, visitors, and staff receive critical updates in real-time. During emergency evacuations, route closures, or security events, these systems dynamically update maps and provide alternative routes to safety.

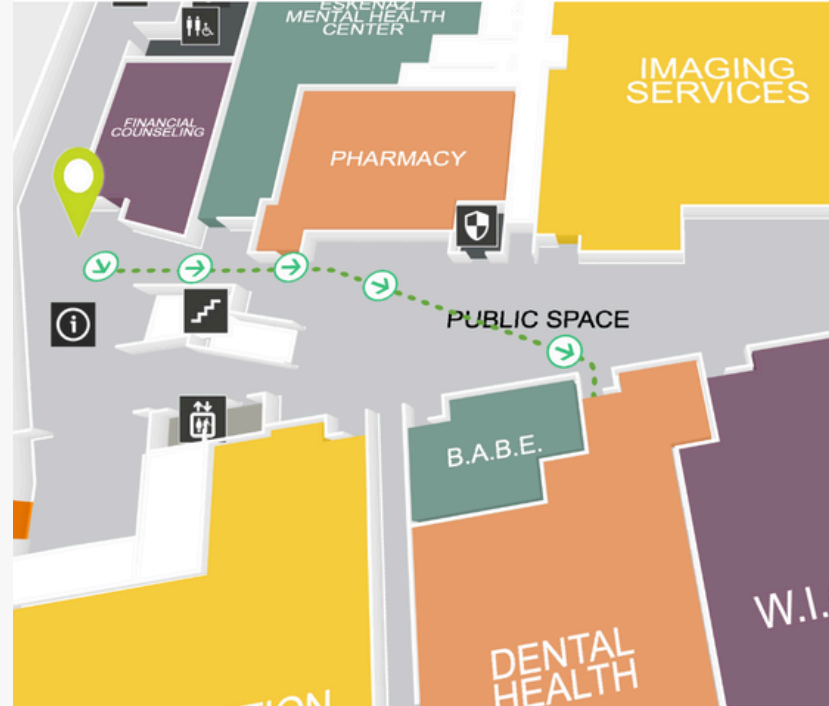
Tip: Integrate Alertus with 22Miles Digital Signage and Wayfinding Solutions:

[The Alertus System](#) delivers the tools necessary to unify healthcare facilities' existing alerting methods and devices under one powerful platform, streamlining crisis communications and response procedures. During an evacuation, Alertus can simplify and expedite the alerting process with pre-set alerts and profiles to target the right people with the right message, instantly activated with just one step.



Streamlined Patient Journeys

Enhanced wayfinding systems simplify the journey from arrival to destination. Some solutions even provide navigation starting from parking areas, guiding patients to their point of care while minimizing stress and confusion.



Data-Driven Optimization

Analytics tools offer valuable insights into how visitors interact with wayfinding systems. Facilities can use this data to refine signage placement, improve route efficiency, and proactively address navigation challenges. This iterative process helps create a more seamless and user-friendly experience.

Dynamic, Self-Updating Maps

Healthcare facilities constantly evolve, with new departments opening, temporary routes changing, or construction taking place. Self-updating maps allow staff to make real-time adjustments to ensure patients and visitors always receive the most accurate guidance.



Seamless Third-Party Integration

Next-generation wayfinding systems integrate with existing tools like scheduling platforms, emergency alert systems, and patient portals. This interoperability streamlines operations, enhances communication, and provides a more connected experience for users.

Case Study

VA Loma Linda Healthcare System



The Breakdown

The VA Loma Linda Healthcare System (5) recently launched a new digital wayfinding service at the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial Veterans' Hospital in Loma Linda, California, to enhance navigation for Veterans and visitors. This interactive service features kiosks located on the first floor in the main lobby and near the north elevators.

These kiosks provide a 3D map of the hospital, allowing users to search for their destination, explore amenities, and get clear, step-by-step directions. Veterans and visitors can easily select their desired location and receive tailored directions, simplifying their journey through the complex facility.

In the near future, VA Loma Linda will extend the convenience of this digital wayfinding system to mobile devices. By scanning a QR code at the kiosk, users will be able to access turn-by-turn directions directly from their smartphones, further improving the hospital navigation experience.

This initiative highlights how digital wayfinding solutions can dramatically improve the patient and visitor experience, ensuring that healthcare facilities are more accessible and easier to navigate for everyone.

Chapter Four

Reaping The Benefits of Wayfinding Evolution with 22Miles



Upgrading to next-generation wayfinding is more than just meeting immediate navigational needs—it's about creating a patient-centered environment that reflects the values of innovation, inclusivity, and care. In a world where yesterday's technology quickly becomes outdated, 22Miles offers a modern, flexible solution that overcomes the limitations of traditional systems. Unlike older hardware-dependent technologies, 22Miles provides hospitals with the scalability, flexibility, and advanced features required to meet today's challenges:

- **Hardware-Agnostic Flexibility:** 22Miles seamlessly integrates with any hardware solution. This reduces costs and enables hospitals to easily adapt to changing layouts and operational needs.
- **Dynamic Navigation:** The 22Miles platform offers real-time, GPS-like turn-by-turn navigation that updates dynamically in response to construction or temporary closures, ensuring accurate guidance for both patients and staff.
- **Scalability:** Hospitals can start with mobile wayfinding and easily expand to include interactive kiosks, digital signage, or indoor-to-outdoor navigation. Software-driven updates ensure continuous innovation without the need for additional hardware investments.
- **Future-Ready Technology:** Unlike static systems, 22Miles leverages AI, cloud-based technology, and real-time data to create a scalable, future-proof platform that adapts to evolving hospital needs and maintains ADA compliance.

With features like immersive 3D mapping, mobile navigation, real-time updates, and AI-powered insights, 22Miles redefines healthcare navigation. Our Digital Signage and Wayfinding Content Management System (CMS) transforms hospital operations by improving patient experiences, supporting staff efficiency, and positioning facilities for future growth.

[Book a demo](#) with us to upgrade your healthcare facility's wayfinding solutions today.