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Wayfinding & Signage System

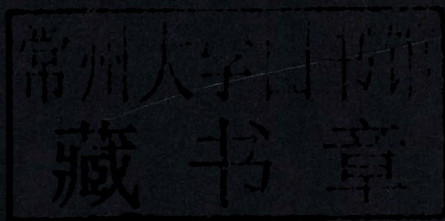
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FOREWORD

Delicious Signage

Generally, in a stage of undertaking a signage planning, the building is still in the process of conception. The first process is to decipher the purpose and nature of the building from the drawings and building models. The ambience of the building is determined by valuable factors such as proportion of the space, types of finishing materials, reverberation of sound, smell, etc. The role of signage and pictogram is to characterize this ambience through analogy of design materials.

Further, the purpose of the signage should not be just "easy to understand", just like eating is not simply taking nutrition. The signage plays more various roles.

It may be a bit weird to compare signage to eating but I feel they have many things in common.

There are many factors to determine the "deliciousness", for example:

- Unprecedented excitement
- Contrasting sensation such as bitter / sweet, salty / sour, hot / cold
- Unexpected surprise
- Even if it is not tasty at first, people will be gradually addicted to it.

I think all these factors can also be applied to the signage. The life will become monotonous and boring if it were only comprised of things that are easy to understand.

It is ok to have some surprising and witty signs, not just the ones that are easily understood but also some which may stop you and make you think "hey?"

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The signage is not just a signpost showing a direction but should serve as a tool to infect people's emotion. I hope it would be a tool for sharing such feelings as "how delicious!"

Naoki Terada
Teradadesign Architects / Founder
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naoki terada
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When asked, people do not comprehend the meaning of the practice of wayfinding. Yet whether they realize it or not, most are involved with wayfinding in their everyday lives. Whether it is riding the subway, finding a seat at a baseball game, visiting a friend in a hospital or locating a lecture hall on a large campus. All of these actions rely on orienting oneself to an environment by searching for signs that provide information in a meaningful way.

The need to navigate by looking for signs is part of human development but what we call wayfinding is more than just following directions, it is a soundless graphic communication that provides important message. Wayfinding may not be consciously noticed by the public, but there is a process in wayfinding that directs people in a user friendly and strategized way that ensures a streamlined movement through the natural or built environment.

A successful wayfinding signage system achieves its purpose by becoming memorable and attentive in creating a "sense of place". The importance of "place" is becoming increasingly popular as more and more neighborhoods, downtowns, college campuses, sporting arenas, etc., appreciate approaches that make getting around a location easier and less frustrating. The fact is, finding one's way can become a welcoming and memorable experience. This is what successful wayfinding aims to achieve.

The challenge involved with wayfinding is making navigation a natural process by providing comprehensive and cohesive direction for all user groups. Wayfinding must be clear and functional to be effective. Doing so can be achieved through a multitude of design concepts, whether it be a graphic communication, through color, shape, objects, textures or digital application. A design can also take on any form, and in a sense becomes one with the architecture. Wayfinding helps integrate spaces, whether in context to an interior or exterior space.

Wayfinding that is functional makes understanding information and direction self-evident. However, even simple decisions such as finding your seat at a stadium can be difficult. One such project I worked on was designing a signage system of channeling large crowds of 82,000 spectators into MetLife stadium before and after a game. Every directional sign, every map and every exit was an integral part of the entire signage system. Each component was integrally designed to work together and tell a story that guided the users. With a variety of audience groups and a brand that changed per event it was essential to create signage that was dynamic and functional. In the case of the MetLife stadium, most fans liked the idea of identifying their team colors and branding elements creating a personal and memorable connection with the event taking place.

There is no end to where ideas and inspiration for wayfinding can come. Importantly, more and more resource books are published every year, helping the designer or anyone else connected to the field. Case studies from around the world are continually being introduced. New technologies and fabrication methods are updated. Because of the many implementation aspects of wayfinding, the need to collaborate is essential. On the project worked on for Met Life Stadium, I had discussions with ownership, marketing teams, signage fabricators and lighting engineers. The opportunity to get an in-depth look from seeing projects from around the world is exciting, especially when being able to use lessons taken from the expanding number of resources available. These materials are especially appreciated when executing one's own personal project. As the field of wayfinding grows, so does the opportunity expand to encourage and teach the gospel of design. This book is meant to do just that.

Corey Mintz
Gensler / Designer

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Corey Mintz". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "C" and "M".



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