

A Guide for Customer Experience Managers When Evaluating a Wayfinding System

Introduction

Customer experience is an ever-evolving landscape, and in a world where inclusivity is becoming a norm rather than an exception, ensuring accessible wayfinding is crucial. But it's not just about ticking boxes; it's about genuinely improving the user experience for everyone. Let's explore how to achieve this.

Providing a Rule-Independent Experience

Empowering the end user with autonomy is vital. A well-designed wayfinding system should offer a fully independent experience, requiring no human intervention—not even from a remote call centre. This level of autonomy is not just a feature; it's a necessity for those who rely on it.

Accessibility vs. Usability

Compliance doesn't always mean usability. Take Braille signs as an example. They might fulfill ADA requirements, but they're not usable for a large percentage of the visually impaired community (as only about 10 percent of people who are blind can read Braille). A wayfinding system should focus on both accessibility and usability to truly cater to everyone's needs.

Language Support

Supporting multiple languages in your wayfinding system is not just a nice-to-have feature; it's essential for a diverse clientele. Providing a multi-language system increases the inclusivity and usability of your services, enhancing the overall customer experience.

Audio Description Pace

For users with cognitive disabilities or neurodiversity, the pace of audio descriptions can be crucial. A wayfinding system should allow the user to control the speed of audio descriptions, thereby catering to a wider range of cognitive abilities.

24/7 Availability

A system's availability is crucial. Whether the Wi-Fi is down or whether it's a holiday season with fewer staff working, your wayfinding solution should be up and running.

Any downtime not only affects the user experience but can also lead to negative brand perception.

Universality of Interface

One app, multiple locations. A wayfinding system should allow users to navigate various facilities with the same user interface. This not only makes life easier for the end user but also streamlines the experience across different touchpoints.

Conclusion

Ensuring an inclusive and accessible wayfinding system is no longer an option—it's a necessity. By focusing on rule independence, usability, multi-language support, audio pace control, continuous availability, and a universal interface, you can significantly enhance the customer experience.

Wayfinding Checklist: Your Quick Evaluation Guide

Rule-Independent Experience:

- Can the user navigate independently?
- Is the system free from human intervention, even remote?

Accessibility vs. Usability:

- Does it fulfill ADA requirements and cater to actual user needs?

Language Support:

- How many languages does it support?

Audio Description Pace:

- Can the user control the pace?

Availability:

- Is it operational at all times, regardless of Wi-Fi or human support?

Universality:

- Can the user use the same app across different locations?

By using this checklist, you'll be better positioned to select a wayfinding system that genuinely improves customer experience for all.