InfiniteLeap
RESULTS IN REAL-TIME

Whitepaper

How to Effectively Implement a Mobile Wayfinding Solution

Mobile wayfinding solutions are a proven way to minimize the risk of late or missed appointments and to provide an enhanced experience for patients and their families. Today's wayfinding solutions for healthcare use indoor locationing technologies to provide the same type of user experience and directional instructions via smartphones as we are all used to getting in our cars from Google Maps, Waze and others. With these capabilities, patients can see themselves walking about the hospital via a "blue dot" moving on a map, just as they are used to watching their car move on a geographic map as they drive about the city. This reduces the anxiety on patients as they move with confidence throughout the hospital. Infinite Leap has significant experience helping healthcare organizations design and implement mobile/digital wayfinding solutions. Below are some of our suggested best practices for efficiently implementing a wayfinding solution.

1 Look at the bigger picture

Don't think about implementing a wayfinding solution as a stand-alone system. Ideally, a mobile wayfinding solution should be part of a healthcare system's Patient Experience Strategy. The benefit of this holistic approach is that it allows for a seamless patient experience, and identifies how existing (and future) systems and processes can work together to enhance patient experience. For example, when integrated with a scheduling system, a wayfinding solution can send automatic reminders about an upcoming visit and provide patients with information regarding the fastest way to get to the appointment. A wayfinding solution can also provide location information to other systems, such as patient education systems, triggering dissemination of tailored educational materials to patients.

2 Understand Technology Options

One of the most confusing parts of selecting a wayfinding solution is that there are so many different technology solutions that enable wayfinding capability. Each one touts its own benefits, and each company is convincing in their own way. Make sure to take the time (and it does take time) to determine if and how to leverage existing investments in technology. For example, existing BLE-enabled wi-fi access points can likely be used in lieu of adding battery powered beacons. If an organization has an RTLS infrastructure in place, it also could be used to enable wayfinding. Infinite Leap guides companies through a process called a "Solution Design," which includes a technological assessment of existing and/or planned standards within an organization. The goal of this process is to find the most economical way to gain value as quickly as possible.

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3 Consider Timing

Take into account when you want to go live with mobile wayfinding. For example, when you need a quick deployment to align with opening a new facility, we might recommend unique solutions to suit your needs. For example, we may recommend deploying battery-powered beacons, while also having a long-term plan to replace or supplement them with an ethernet-powered infrastructure. Another determinant for the type of technology to use is access to the areas that require wayfinding infrastructure. One example is that battery-powered devices can be placed in patient care areas without the need for special infection control measures or closing down the area to pull wires. Battery-powered beacons could also be a necessity in navigable areas where cabling is not an option, such as outside a hospital building or parking garage.

4 Put Yourself in Your Patients' Shoes

If you want patients to use the wayfinding solution, make it easy for them. They need to be able to easily access the wayfinding app via their smartphone (make sure it works on both the Apple and Android platforms), they need to be able to intuitively use the app, and they need to be certain that the app is accurate. Be sure to test the app as if it would be your first time in the facility, be sure the locations in the system are labeled the same way patients would search for them, and see what happens when the wayfinding directions are followed. Take advantage of patient advisory boards and don't be afraid to ask randomly selected patients for assistance testing the app – their feedback will bring the most value!

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5 Create a Governance Structure

To ensure ongoing success of the initiative, create a proper governance structure. Make sure an executive steering committee is in place that includes members from various parts of the organization, including engineering, patient experience, facilities, process improvement, and marketing. And don't forget to set aside time for change management meetings to discuss and approve any necessary changes to the system or policies impacted by the implementation of the wayfinding solution.

6 Account for System Upkeep

When planning for a wayfinding solution, account for system maintenance, which includes updating maps, Points of Interests (POIs), and routes, as well as replacing batteries in beacons. Without a concentrated focus on system upkeep, the system will provide inaccurate information, which will result in patients not trusting the app and quickly abandoning its use. Further, "account for system upkeep" needs to include specific roles and task assignments which are budgeted and resourced appropriately.

7 Take Time to Audit the System

Hand in hand with system upkeep comes system audits. Regularly audit the system to verify it is working properly and that user adoption increases. This can be accomplished by reviewing the number of downloads and monthly active users, as well as monitoring user ratings and reviews in the applicable app stores. If there are any red flags, act quickly to fix the issues.

8 Measure and Share Success

It is critical to continually evaluate how the use of a mobile wayfinding solution impacts patient experience and operational efficiencies. In addition to the standard patient satisfaction indexes, such as Press-Ganey, there may also be value in using embedded patient feedback capabilities in the mobile wayfinding application itself, or by training greeters to ask for feedback when patients are departing. On the operational side, review data related to on-time visits and an overall volume of patient visits to see if there is a correlation between the use of a wayfinding solution and patient throughput. Finally, if patients are willing to share, don't forget to include their testimonials on your website, social media, or newsletter to further promote the system.

These are just a few examples of best practices that can significantly contribute to a successful wayfinding solution. If you have specific questions, please reach out to us. We will gladly share more insights.