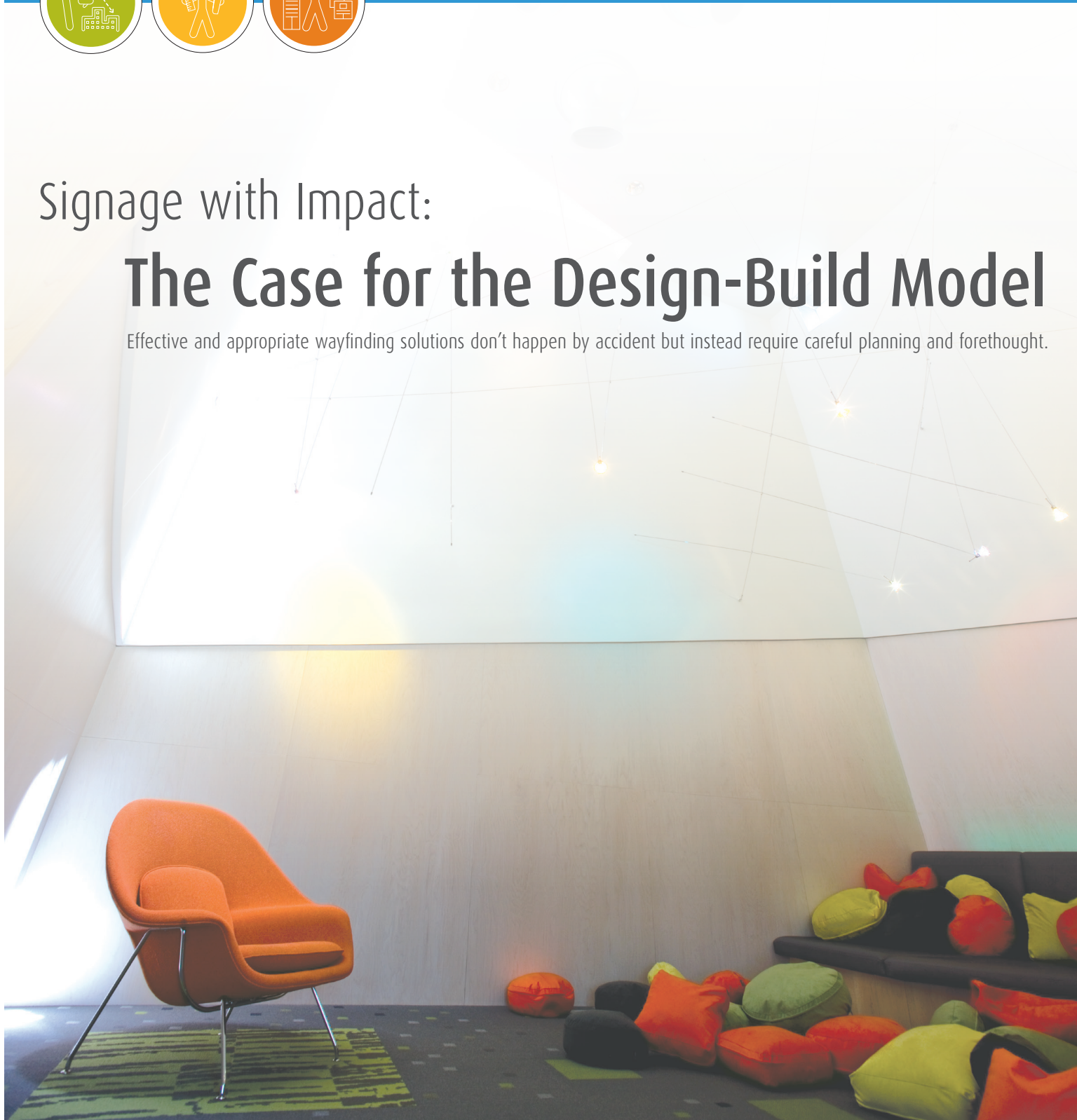




Signage with Impact:

The Case for the Design-Build Model

Effective and appropriate wayfinding solutions don't happen by accident but instead require careful planning and forethought.



Implementing Successful Wayfinding Systems

In order to derive the greatest financial benefits, an organization must integrate wayfinding at the beginning of its facility's design and construction process rather than at the end. Fortunately, modern wayfinding solutions – from flexible modular signs to interactive digital displays – excel in meeting just about every need an organization may have, whether it's enhancing a visitor's experience throughout a facility or reinforcing the organizational brand, or both.

Most architectural signage projects have traditionally followed a common development approach:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Design of facility interior and exterior | 4. Manufacturing of signage |
| 2. Construction | 5. Installation of signage |
| 3. Design interior and exterior signage | 6. Ribbon-cutting |

More often than not, the important decisions about designing, manufacturing and installing a wayfinding and signage program for a new or existing facility comes at the end of the architectural design phase. Unfortunately, waiting till the very end of the construction project to determine how wayfinding fits into the overall layout of the facility too often results in a haphazard and ill-conceived navigation system. Visitors and even staff of such facilities frequently complain about the failed-logic behind much of the signage and facility layout, thus confusion and disorientation is the inevitable – but as we are about to discuss, avoidable – consequence of ill-conceived wayfinding plans.

Poor wayfinding adversely affects not only the visitor's experience of a facility but the facility's brand reputation as well. Visitors who have trouble navigating a building or campus will conflate their negative experiences with their perceptions of the organization as a whole. To preserve the integrity of the brand and create a cohesive and pleasant experience for visitors, staff, and guests, a facility's wayfinding must be consistent, logical and intuitive. It must take into consideration traffic patterns, architectural and environmental elements, and the psychological experience of the average person visiting and/or working in the facility.

Designing and implementing a successful wayfinding system that integrates all of these key factors requires a solution that prioritizes them well in advance of the first sign being installed. However, the traditional development and installation model really doesn't allow for this to happen. To address the current model's limitations, many architectural and signage firms have pioneered a Design-Build Model that addresses the shortcomings of the traditional model, reduces schedules, streamlines project management, and lowers project costs.

TIP FOR CHOOSING A DESIGN-BUILD FIRM

Research and interview design-build firms with experience in your industry, e.g., healthcare, hospitality, retail, education, public sector, etc.



Design-Build as a Total Solution

Visitors at many modern healthcare facilities are probably all too aware of this scenario: After circling around a sprawling hospital campus, they finally locate a parking spot near their intended destination. They walk toward the building but have difficulty determining where the entrance they want is located. Once they find it, they scan the building directory adjacent to the elevators. They find the department they are looking for but are uncertain as to which direction they must go because the directory may not be up-to-date with the most recent additions or department changes. They ask the lone person at the information desk, who is also busy assisting several others seeking directions to other departments in the building. Some of them are in the wrong building and must be directed back outside to a tower two more buildings north of their current location. Our visitors finally receive instruction to take the second bank of elevators further down the hall to the 11th floor and follow the signage to their destination. Once they reach the 11th floor, however, they must scrutinize another slew of signage hanging from the ceiling, after which they find themselves disoriented once again.

Modern wayfinding solutions can alleviate much of the pain and frustration that stems from poor navigation cues and signage. However, because wayfinding firms are often only brought in towards the end of the build phase, they are limited in what they can do to improve the user-experience of the facility's visitors, guests and staff. Signage can mitigate some of the wayfinding flaws in a particular facility, but many of the costs associated with retrofitting appropriate signage to ameliorate design weaknesses could have been avoided had wayfinding been considered at the beginning of the design phase rather than at the end. Most facilities will typically require updates in signage and design, regardless of how carefully planned and integrated their wayfinding system was during their initial construction, but even future modifications (e.g., in the wake of an organizational rebranding or expansion phase) can be facilitated if true modular functionality was built into the interior solutions at the outset.

One elegant and cost-effective solution that helps prevent wayfinding problems is the Design-Build model. Design-Build is an integrated project delivery system whereby both design and implementation are managed by a single firm. Such a solution eliminates the risks inherent in the difficulties of communicating and organizing the often competing timelines, goals and budgets of the different parties involved in the development of a wayfinding system. Most importantly, the streamlined process of the Design-Build solution allows for greater cost- and project-management efficiencies. To the Design-Build team, the goal is neither the design itself nor the manufacturing and installation of signage, but rather the creation of a logical, seamless wayfinding system that will integrate harmoniously into the existing facility's architectural and physical layout. Being able to launch the wayfinding program with that objective firmly in place from the very beginning eliminates much of the extra time and effort built into the non-collaborative traditional approach.

TIP FOR CHOOSING A DESIGN-BUILD FIRM

Review project portfolios to determine the breadth and depth of their experience

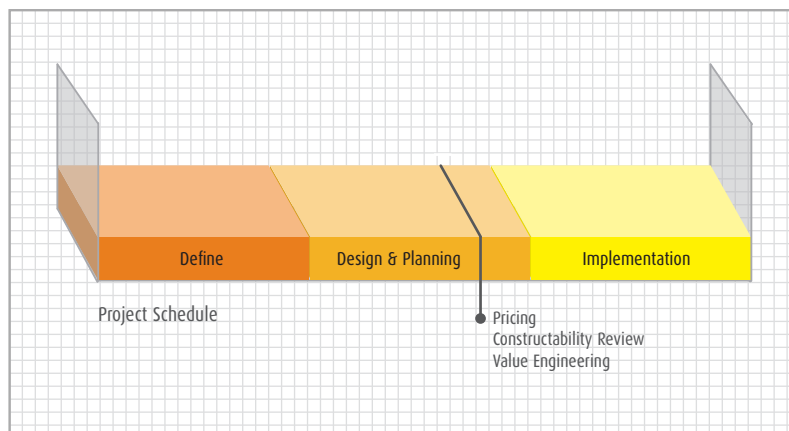


The Design-Build Delivery Model

With a single source for design, manufacturing, project management, and installation, Design-Build allows all stakeholders to be involved throughout the process of developing a comprehensive, integrated wayfinding and signage solution, reducing costs, timeframes, and risk. The traditional Design-Bid-Build delivery model slices the process into often asynchronous segments that may involve multiple participants from different firms: a project manager, architect, designer, subcontractor, supplier, and of course, the client itself. Communication is often hampered because of the lack of direct connection between one party and another, e.g., the client and the manufacturer.

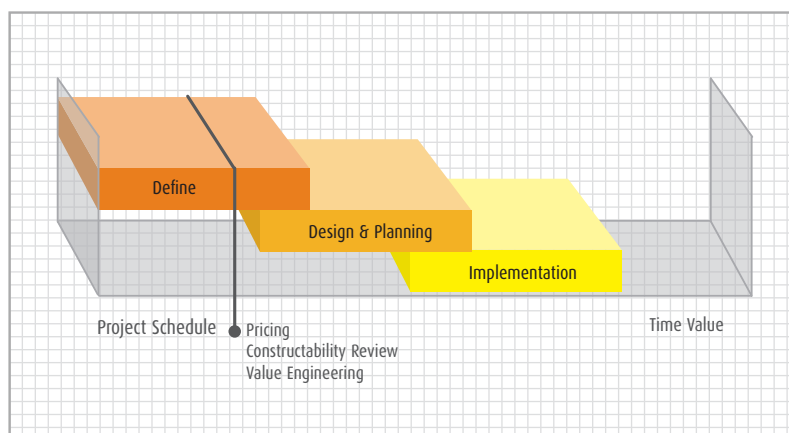
Typical Project Schedule:

For example, a hospital in the process of expansion needs a new wayfinding system that will integrate its existing facility's navigation signage with that of its new wing. In the traditional Design-Bid-Build model, the hospital might issue a Request for Proposal to environmental graphic design and architectural firms, with the understanding that their participation in the project would not commence until the end of the construction phase of the new wing. After reviewing the proposals, interviewing candidates and finally making a selection, the chosen designer would create specifications for the signage, after which another selection process would ensue, this time for a signage manufacturing firm to actually fabricate and install the signage. The chosen company then completes the project with the installation, usually under the direct supervision of the design firm.



Design-Build Project Schedule:

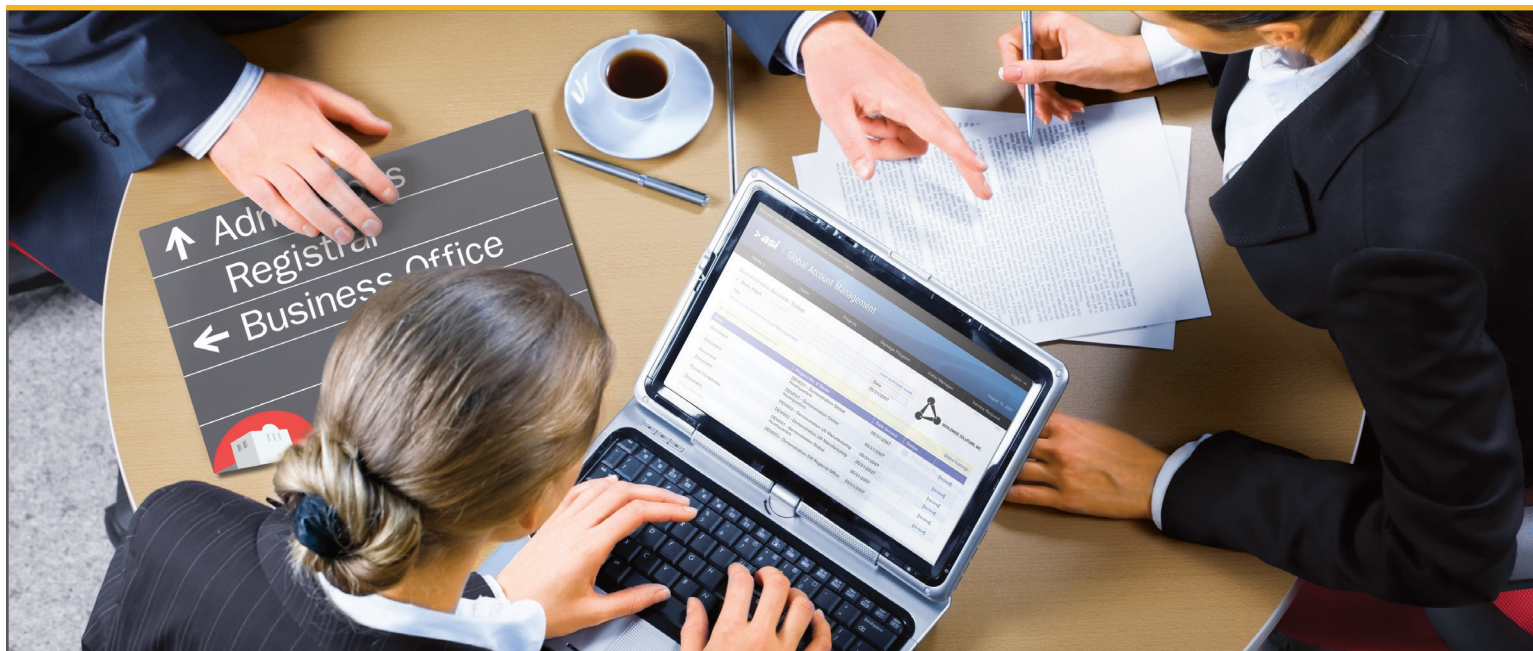
The Design-Build model, however, can shorten this lengthy and convoluted process. Most importantly, with a single, experienced firm overseeing and executing the entire project from beginning to end, clients can be assured that communication flows freely among all the parties involved, minimizing delays, cost overruns and unreasonable expectations. The Design-Build model encourages close collaboration among all the parties, reduces the risk of conflict, simplifies management and implementation, and shrinks the project delivery schedule, resulting in lower costs overall.



TIPS FOR CHOOSING A DESIGN-BUILD FIRM

- ✓ Review their project management processes and schedules, including how milestones are achieved and measured
- ✓ Ask about their Design-Build process, ideally in relation to a specific project they've completed that is in your industry
- ✓ Request to meet with current or previous clients. Discuss with them their experiences with the firms under review, including both challenges and benefits

Six Competitive Advantages of the Design-Build Model



1. Accountability is built into the model

With a single point of contact during the entire process, responsibility for the project is easier to manage. In the traditional Design-Bid-Build model, communication flows can be encumbered by the layers of bureaucracy that often develops when too many companies and individuals are involved in a project and competition arises between firms competing for leadership and visibility. The Design-Build model ensures accountability with its emphasis on coordination and collaboration among all stakeholders throughout the process.

2. Experience breeds teamwork and trust

Choosing a firm that specializes in Design-Build typically means choosing a group of experts who have established close professional relationships with each other. Their experiences have helped them establish trust and confidence in each other's abilities and working styles, thus minimizing the risk of project delays resulting from conflict.

3. Common goals

In the traditional Design-Bid-Build delivery model, participants at various stages of the process typically have competing goals. For example, the graphic design firm hired to design the signage system may have aesthetic requirements that turn out to be too expensive to manufacture because of the cost of materials. The design firm's priority is to create a pleasing, attractive sign that fulfills the client's branding and wayfinding requirements, but the fabricator's priority is to turn the specifications and design plans into a physical signage network within a budget established for them by the architectural firm that subcontracted the work to them. In the Design-Build model, the goal of everyone in the process is the same: to design, manufacture and install a signage network that meets all of the client's needs in terms of budget, delivery date, and wayfinding solution.

4. Fast-tracked project management

The streamlined project management that comes from having a single point of contact from planning to completion also reduces the risk of cost overruns and delivery delays, and thus reduces the total overall cost of the project. In addition, an experienced Design-Build team, with colleagues familiar with each other through previous projects and with whom they have established relationships already, will be ready to work from launch and avoid the need to introduce themselves to new vendors, project managers, suppliers, and other contractors.

5. Improved efficiencies in delivery schedules and cost

Design-Build firms share one goal: completing the project on time and on budget, according to client specifications. Their experience in Design-Build projects has given them the ability to identify and implement cost savings and efficiencies early on and provide accurate budget and time estimates from the very beginning.

6. Consistency in implementation throughout the project

A single administrative and management source ensures consistent adherence to, and implementation of design, branding requirements, regulatory requirements, and signage standards. Knowing who all the stakeholders are from launch allows the project to move forward with plans and processes already established, without having to interrupt the workflow in order to create and negotiate new specifications for additional contractors who would otherwise be brought in under the traditional Design-Bid-Build model.

TIPS FOR CHOOSING A DESIGN-BUILD FIRM

Ask about the role they client plays in the process and how information is communicated throughout the project

Case Study ❖ Methodist Women's Hospital & Medical Office Building

The management team at Methodist Women's Hospital needed a partner to deliver a turn-key signage solution for the new hospital and medical office building. The management team asked ASI to design and implement a complete signage solution, including interior, exterior, digital and donor recognition signage.

ASI designed a complete custom signage solution that complements the interior design, color scheme and materials used inside the building. After completing a site survey, ASI consulted with the Methodist staff to identify the functionality and performance needed for the new signage program. ASI determined that the solution needed functionality to allow for future updates, meet current ADA guidelines and be the primary wayfinding resource for the hospital. In order to ensure the client was satisfied that the signage design would meet these three key needs, ASI created select prototypes that demonstrated the look, function and performance.

Visit asisignage.com/cases to review complete project details.



Despite hopeful signs of an economic recovery, budgets remain tight across all industries, including construction and expansion. Many companies and organizations, however, continue to invest in expansion and renovation projects to enhance their existing facilities and improve their service delivery.

As companies seek to upgrade their facilities, they've shifted much of their focus not only to the process of development but to the bottom line as well. They want function as well as form, substance as well as style, all within more limited budgets. They want to know that visitors and staff who experience and navigate their way through their buildings and campuses will come away with memories of a pleasing, stress-free experience. They understand that the physical environment of their facilities reflects their brand and want to ensure that the aesthetics enhance the visitor experience, not detract from it.

The holistic, streamlined approach of the Design-Build model ensures that brand integrity and mission is paramount throughout the development process, particularly with regard to wayfinding and signage.

Signage is too important and too integral to brand identity to simply tack on at the end of a construction/renovation project. The Design-Build model – with its emphasis on accountability, open communication, efficiency, and cost-savings – establishes the focus of the development process squarely on the end goal: a consistent, coherent wayfinding and signage system that reinforces the power of the client's brand while also providing a practical and welcoming experience for the client's visitors, guests and employees.

TIPS FOR CHOOSING A DESIGN-BUILD FIRM

Ask about their Design-Build teams, who the key players are, and who the project managers/leaders are



If you're interested in learning more about turn-key signage solutions for your company or organization, visit ASI's website at asisignage.com, email us at marketing@asisignage.com, or call us at 1-800-274-7732, to request a signage consultation. ASI has 45 years of experience designing and installing wayfinding and identity solutions to companies and organizations around the world, including hospitals, educational institutions, and nonprofits, and can help you develop the best and most effective wayfinding system that will meet your needs.