



Movement Matters is a series of thought leadership events, presented by Steer, exploring new ideas about places, people and economies and providing a burst of fresh thinking.

Post-event summary

WAYFINDING: WHAT, HOW, WHERE & WHY?

May 11, 2017

7.30am-9.30am

The Standard Downtown LA
550 South Flower
Los Angeles, 90071



As part of our Movement Matters series, we brought together two industry experts to explore how wayfinding can enhance the experience of place to help people explore their surroundings. The speakers highlighted wayfinding best practices and their recent experience working together to develop a comprehensive wayfinding system for the PATH, a sixteen-mile pedestrian tunnel system in Toronto connecting over 1,200 retailers.

The first speaker was **James Brown, Principal Consultant at Steer**. He shared his 10+ years of in-depth experience designing wayfinding systems across a range of city sizes and typologies. In his presentation:

- James set the stage by defining wayfinding and explaining why physical wayfinding is still important in today's age of smartphones. He observed that a place should be viewed as a network and the whole journey should be considered.
- James spoke of the importance of placing the user at the heart of the wayfinding system. He pointed out that wayfinding gives people the confidence to get lost and engage with the city, and should be seen as a good investment.
- Using recent case studies, he explained the design process and demonstrated how each system should be specifically designed and scaled to enhance identity and create a seamless user experience.
- James summarised the basic needs for any wayfinding systems as:
 - Accessible – design for universal accessibility
 - Continues – reveal the city as a whole
 - Humanized – provide information relevant to abilities and scale
 - Consistent – use consistent nomenclature
 - Uncluttered – remove obsolete structures and rationalize signage

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EVENT SUMMARY

Evan Weinberg, Former Policy and Advocacy Manager for Toronto Financial District BIA presented next.

He shared his experience partnering with businesses, landlords, Steer Davies Gleave and the City of Toronto to develop a new wayfinding strategy for the PATH, which is used by over 200,000 people daily. In his presentation:

- Evan began by explaining the current confusing maze-like conditions of the pedestrian pathway in Toronto, which zigzags beneath the city grid to connect over 75 buildings. The soon-to-be implemented wayfinding system could prove substantial increases in revenue.
- Evan went on to highlight the important lessons he'd learnt whilst working on the project, including:
 - Systems should be seen as a wayfinding tool, not a retail marketing opportunity
 - The overall wayfinding strategy should be solidified before you start thinking about signage details
 - Develop the project based on the broader strategic directives, e.g. the Master Plan
 - Complete a signage audit
 - Invest in developing a business case / economic assessment
 - Use a map-first approach; digital should be your last action
 - Use pilot projects to demonstrate value and collect feedback
 - Engagement strategies should consider different and unexpected stakeholders, such as Government, private properties and the general public
 - Leverage partnerships
 - Solutions should be flexible – one size doesn't fit all

The Q&A after the presentations sparked a lively discussion with the audience on how wayfinding could draw people out of their cars and onto the streets throughout the Los Angeles region. The group also discussed the interconnection between on the ground wayfinding, electronic real-time wayfinding options, mobile applications and mobile mapping options.