

**where**

**do**

**I**

**go?**

**how  
do  
I  
get there?**

**which  
floor is  
it?**

**where's  
the  
elevator ?**

**my mom is in  
surgery . . .  
somewhere . . .  
and I can't find  
her**



Thousands of people find themselves in this type of situation when navigating hospitals for the first time. In New York State, 2.6 hospital discharges occurred in 2006 (Dept of Health, NYS). If 50% were new patients and had one visitor who didn't know the hospital, over 1.3 million confused people could experience frustration just in New York State alone in one year visiting hospitals. And that's not counting the patient who may have had a negative experience navigating the hospital upon admission.

Some people upon entry into the hospital building will look for some kind of map or directory listing room numbers and departments. Then, scanning the map and/or directory, they find out where they are, they discover where they need to go and next must figure out how to get there.



Other people, because variations occur in how people process information (Chen et al., Kato et al., & Lawton et al.), simply ask directions of the first person they see. If you're in a hurry, or don't feel well, it's much easier to ask for directions than to try to figure out where you need to go all by yourself.



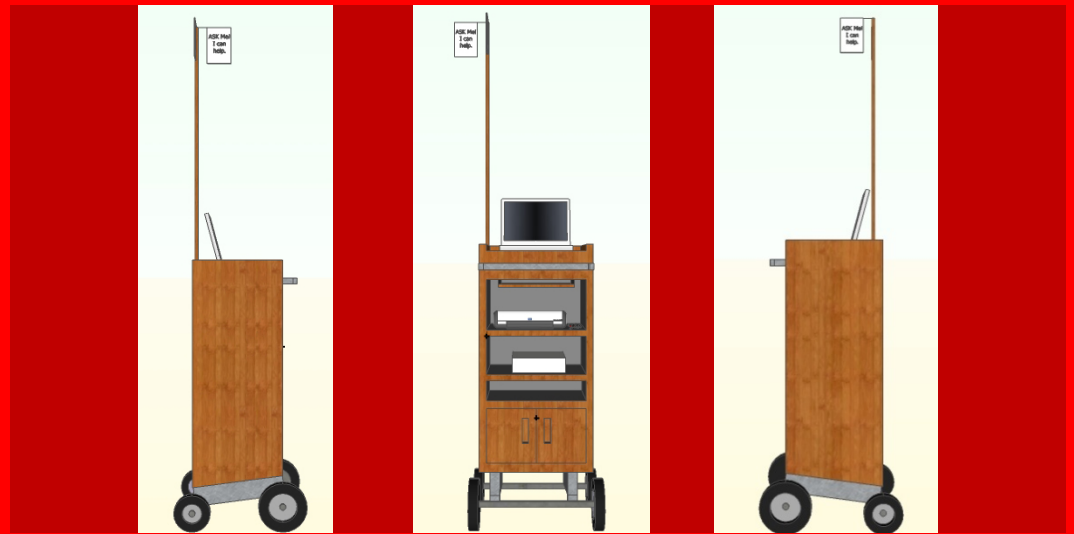
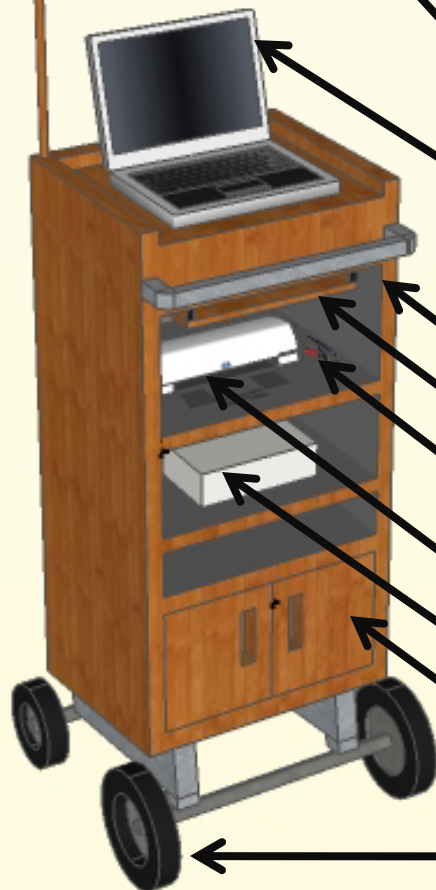


What if that **first person** you saw was actually someone designated by the hospital to help people find their way in the hospital?

Instead of putting that 'information' person behind a desk, put them into the hallways and lobbies with a **movable cart** loaded with technology and help them help people. Print off maps, draw directions on the maps, give them directions verbally. Smile. Be calm. More importantly, make a personal connection to the person asking for directions. Help them get to where they need to be.



# The Movable Cart



Train employees or volunteers in giving directions

Flags at top that say "ASK Me! I can help."

Computer laptop to search for patients, doctors and print out directions for visitors and patients

Small size, 18" x 15" for maneuverability

Pull out drawer for drawing on maps

Marking pens to trace path for visitor on print out

Battery operated printer

Paper storage

General storage

Movable cart

## Small Hospitals

- laptops are inexpensive, under \$600, or could be donated
- cart could be made by facilities department
- use volunteers for the help person, properly trained
- use doctor's white coat for identification
- keep one cart around main lobby, more on other floors



## Large Hospitals

- place one help cart and person at each entrance
- one cart at least on each floor, more if have wings and hospital configuration is confusing
- help person should be happy, up-beat and friendly, looking for visitors to help
- provide extensive training and support to help employees as they are the front line of advertising for the hospital



Hospitals are about people. Signs help, but doesn't make the complete experience. Your hospital will benefit from personalized service and the miniscule costs of installing a go-to person for directions. Increasing patient and visitor satisfaction for your hospital will increase revenues.

The more people are satisfied, the more likely they will be to recommend and return to your health services (Clark & Malone). **Isn't that what you want?**

**lets's try this  
again . . .**

**where**

**do**

**I**

**go?**

**how**

**do**

**I**

**get**

**there?**

**Oh, there's**  
**a person . . . I'll**  
**ask**  
**them**

**T h a n k s !**



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NOTE: In addition to resources listed here, I used a personal hospital experience from 2005 concerning my mother. She required emergency surgery to repair some stitches that had ripped. I took her to the emergency room and one of my brothers joined me later, waiting in a surgery waiting room with me. He was very frustrated and emotionally upset in trying to find the room and where we were in the hospital. The first part of this report reflects those emotions.