

Category: **Wayshowing**

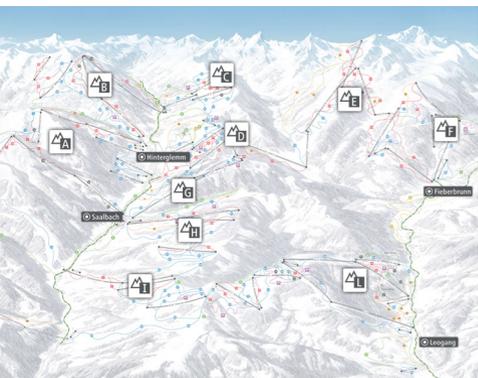
Project: **Ski resort wayfinding system**

**The Challenge**

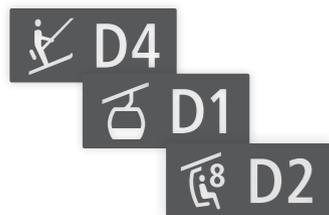
The *Skicircus Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn* is a vast ski resort in Austria, extending over an area of around 30 square miles, which has grown over time by consolidating a series of smaller resorts. The 350,000 visitors to the Skicircus each year were facing many navigational challenges and we were hired to improve their experience with a new wayfinding system: better orientation, more safety, accessible information and more freedom to explore, without language barriers.

**Strategic solutions**

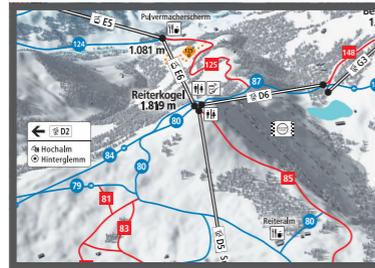
→ Division of the resort into 10 separate zones, to allow us to organise the information in discrete fragments to be disclosed progressively, presenting, at any given touchpoint, the minimum amount of information required to reach the next.



→ Using short labels for each zone (one capital letter from A to L), we assigned alphanumeric codes to the 70 cable cars and lifts, reducing the cognitive load required to navigate the space, regardless of language.



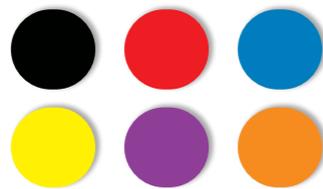
→ This fragmentation allowed us to visualise the topography of the resort in much finer detail, with digital zone maps where perspective is not distorted, and attractions, slopes and lifts are easier to find.



**Design solutions**

Our conceptualisation of the visitors' movement flows within the resort as a traffic problem, equating the ski slopes and ropeways to road networks, provided the perfect metaphor, so we could rely on conventions and widely held knowledge from road literacy.

→ Clear colours: six colours are enough to communicate relevant information tested to be clearly visible with ski goggles and in all weather conditions.



→ Accessible design language: conventional colours – blue, red, black, orange – enhanced with geometric shapes to mark the difficulty level of the slopes without ambiguity.



→ Modern, tested pictograms: pictograms were carefully redrawn, modern and true-to-life. Optical sizes for each pictogram ensure optimal clarity for every application.

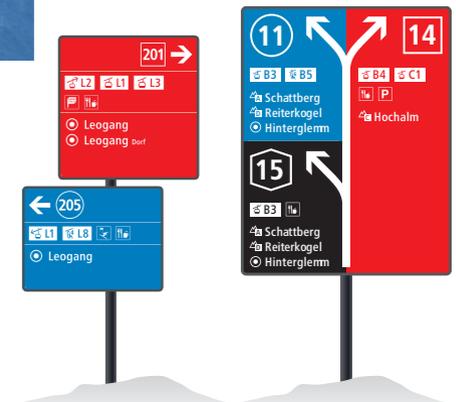


**What was the effect?**

The division in zones and the traffic sign logic were the groundwork for the new concept. Analysing each element of the information landscape to consider how it could be improved, applying our expertise as typographers and information designers, iterating possible solutions and testing them was the core of our design process. The result was a modular system of user-centered graphic devices to maximise orientation, safety and minimise stress and uncertainty: slope markings, directional signs, panoramic map information points, and entrance portals to cable cars and lifts. The resort has earned a five-star rating for orientation from the specialist website skiresort.de, and the system has received great feedback from both visitor groups, resort staff and trade experts in the months since its introduction in November 2019, setting a new benchmark in ski resort wayfinding and visitor management.

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Critical information about dangers, risks and how to prevent them is now consolidated in the new safety panels. Using text-free storytelling, dangerous situations are clearly depicted and linked to the icons and symbols found in situ throughout the ski resort. This improves the awareness and comprehensibility of safety risks.

The combination of colour and shape and the use of signs announcing approaching ski slope junctions help to take quick decisions during the ride. Mountain rescue numbers are made available at every point in the skiers' journey, printed through the resort providing constant reassurance.

Signs are placed at slope junctions, and they show destinations in order of proximity, and carry the colour corresponding to the difficulty of the slope they lead to. Some signs are placed before the junctions, to allow skiers the time to decide where to go and avoid sudden turns that can lead to accidents and collisions.