

Giuseppe Attoma Pepe

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Speaker Qualifications

Born in 1957 in Italy, Giuseppe Attoma studied communications science and architecture, and has been working in the design field for more than 20 years. He created Attoma in Paris in 1997 and is passionate about the value of design for institutions, particularly the importance of preserving information quality in highly constrained situations.

In January 2009, the architectural firm Berger & Anziutti entrusted him with the design of the master guidelines of traveler information and the way-finding sign system of the restructuring of Châtelet-Les Halles, the biggest multimodal public transport hub in Europe, managed by RATP.

Welcoming 750,000 Travelers a Day – or – how to fit lots of busy people in the same space

Abstract

Châtelet-Les Halles, in the heart of Paris: one of the biggest public transport hubs in the world. Just think: 750,000 people go through that place every single day!

Just think – what?

We're all supposed to know that quantity isn't everything. Nevertheless, high stake decisions are mainly based on quantitative analyses – because stake-holders feel like they understand them. Do they really?

Figures facilitate the discussion as they create the illusion of a consensus on a shared, objective and indisputable vision. Yet, beyond the staggeringly huge figures are real people; talking about Châtelet-Les Halles, 750,000 travelers a day means lots of living, breathing people with their own expectations and desires about how to travel, each of them having a personal purpose at a given time, not to mention their individual cultural background, emotions and cognitive abilities.

So, how can we make all these people happy or, at least, "happy enough" to transit through such a complex and anxiety-provoking place? Commuting doesn't necessarily have to be difficult or confusing. It can even be a pleasant experience. To ensure that it is, we must focus on the quality of that experience from the users' point of view.

That's where Information Design comes in with a one-two punch:

- to facilitate stake-holders' decision making, by clear, meaningful models of qualitative information;
- to provide final users with the right information at the right time – clear, inclusive, usable information.

Not surprisingly, it just so happens that there's an inherent consistency between these two objectives. As a member of the project team hired by RATP to redesigning the Châtelet-Les Halles public transport hub, Giuseppe Attoma Pepe shall share with the audience his own experience in making design decisions in such extreme large-scale projects.