



How Would \$740k Impact Your Bottom Line?

By Susan Saldibar

Think about this. With every passing year (or month, as some may argue) a new technology or iteration thereof is introduced into the senior living space. We hear about it at conferences and in the news. But who is doing anything about it?

It's hard to believe that, given the technology available today, there are senior living communities that are still not even offering free Wi-Fi throughout. How are they competing?

For a recent article -- "[Three Reasons Why 2017 Will Decide Who's at the Table](#)" -- I interviewed Travis Palmquist, VP and General Manager for Senior Living with [PointClickCare](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner). During the interview, he shared four key trends that are driving providers to embrace technology. In the second part of the interview, we took a deeper dive into the areas where technology stands to benefit communities as they struggle to compete for the best residents and staff. This is what he had to say.

Six Areas That Could Spell Community Success or Failure

1. **Mobility for team members:** Senior living communities have always strived to provide a more home-like environment, trying to avoid a clinical institutional environment with nurses' stations. Technology helps them achieve this by equipping staff with mobile devices. We're seeing some exciting new apps that provide a lot more face time with residents. And they are as easy to use for older workers as they are for millennials.
2. **Attracting a more informed population of residents:** Senior living operators know that when a resident and their family tours your community, they're looking at 2 or 3 others as well. This is a new, highly informed, prospect. As a former operator who has conducted many tours, one of the first things I'd talk about is how we're using technology to track things they care about, such as the services that they will receive each month. Not being able to do this will take points off your community.

3. **Attract and engage a new generation of young caregivers:** Let's put it this way; they expect it. Young people are accustomed to managing their lives around technology. You can't expect them to engage with your community without an acceptable level of mobility and automation.
4. **Save time without impacting accuracy and quality of care:** Let's face it, many communities are still using paper to maintain their core functions and processes. That means multiple points of input. And it all has to be logged separately. Others may have information buried in multiple systems that don't talk to each other. All this makes it harder to capture, track and ensure that services (especially "unscheduled" services) are being recorded. If not, they won't get billed. And this is an industry that is 95%-100% private pay. We need to see an ROI. We now have technology that will automatically make across-the-board changes as well as tightly integrate services with the billing records. We had a customer in their first year, across 15 assisted living communities, who told us that they saw a \$740k impact, just from deploying our service package management application. That's the kind of ROI technology helps deliver!
5. **Manage care transitions more efficiently:** We are already seeing technology being used to engage a resident long before they move in. Senior care communities are getting ahead of the curve with in-home care programs; equipping prospective residents still living independently with technology, such as iPads. These tablets come preloaded with software, such as medication reminders or "face to face" check-ins. By helping these individuals remain independent for as long as possible, communities are building the relationship in advance. Then, when the individual finally makes the move, theirs will be the community they gravitate to.
6. **Improve caregiver/resident engagement:** We are now seeing an exciting assortment of creative resident engagement tools as well as family portals. This area of technology is growing quickly and operators need to stay on top of it.

The benefits of technology in these areas are clear. But where to begin?

"When you look at the entire technology landscape, it's immense and daunting, especially to smaller and midsized operators," says Travis. "But, communities that see success generally start with small but meaningful actions," he adds. In other words, understand what you need to do to remain competitive and create a schedule to tackle each piece.

"Making these kinds of meaningful decisions about how you integrate technology will help providers to establish a leadership position as the industry continues to evolve," says Travis. "But that window of opportunity will close quickly. You need to be smart about how you integrate technology into your existing practices."

You can learn more about what the future of Senior Living holds in a recent article on PointClickCare's Blog – [2020 Vision: The Future of Senior Living](#).

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