



The Two Secrets to Perfect Technology Training

By Susan Saldibar

Imagine a new senior living community. To say there is a lot going on is an understatement. Technology and plenty of applications being installed and tested. Everyone getting in everyone else's way. At some point, someone pulls out a contract that reads something like this:

"Ensure all subcontractors provide user manuals and training on [you fill in the blank] application prior to occupancy."

Wait a minute. How many of the people who will be using the system have even been hired at this point? And aren't they already overwhelmed by all the other things they need to do to get onboarded?

Jacquie Brennan, VP of [Vigil Health Solutions](#), has witnessed this scenario many times. "What happens is that training does occur, but only for those few staff members available. And it's long before they will be actually admitting residents," says Jacquie. "So there is very little chance of remembering what they learned by the time have to use it," she adds. (And some of those folks may no longer be around by the time the building opens!)

Training: The Right Way

Thankfully, Vigil is working to change the way training is managed, from start to finish. Their goal is pretty simple: to make sure individuals using their solutions are a) able to use them proficiently and b) able to make optimum use of the features they need.

Here is what Vigil recommends for any community attempting to train a team on a new application.

1. **Start small**

With any new system come all kinds of great features that you're itching to try out. Resist the temptation to implement too much too fast. This is especially true in an industry populated by caring staff members who are more "high touch" and less "high tech". Jacquie uses Vigil as an example:

“For example, if you are using a nurse call system or resident monitoring system you want the staff to know how to respond to resident calls and how to cancel them when the first resident is admitted. This training can typically be accomplished through online videos and basic instruction manuals. Save the in-person, more detailed training for after you have more staff hired, have gotten to know the first few residents, and things have settled down a bit. Then you can really benefit from learning the more complicated aspects of your system and putting them to immediate use, which means you’ll remember them.”

2. **Make the most of your training tools.**

Many providers of software and technology systems provide a range of training tools and materials -- everything from traditional printed user manuals and instructions to online videos and demos. Many will augment them with practice quizzes, games and handouts. Make sure you have access to all of them.

Well produced videos can be great tools. They are a popular way to meet the needs of a variety of learning styles and also overcome language barriers. But, often, they remain unused due to:

- Inflexible IT policies that prevent staff from going online to watch the videos.
- Strict policies against personal cell phone use during work hours.

You need to work with your IT department to allow access to some websites. This can be done, while still limiting general use.

Don't Waste It

Above all, don't let your training go to waste on construction or development personnel that won't even be using the system. “Recognize that successful training will only happen if the right people are trained by the right people,” says Jacquie. “We always push back when general contractors ask us to come and train too early. Instead we will agree to come back to the site when the owner is ready for us.”

Training is important. Period. Inadequate training can waste thousands of dollars in unused features or incorrect usage of the application itself. Good training will ensure that your applications are supporting your team's hard work, not making it harder.



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