



Can You REALLY Justify Your Strangle Hold on New Technology?

By Susan Saldibar

The easy way to explain why advanced technology hasn't gotten better adoption in senior housing is to blame the operators. Those luddites with their old school ways, digging in their heels and refusing to budge from the old familiar ways.

But what if it's really nobody's fault? What if the solutions put forth through the technology just need to 1) come together more cohesively, and 2) get better at proving their value?

"An exciting, but complicated time."

What got me thinking about that was a series of Conversations videos that Steve Moran made at the recent Argentum conference with [Vigil Health Solutions](#) CEO, Troy Griffiths. Vigil (a Senior Housing Forum partner) develops and markets call systems and resident monitoring solutions.

During the course of the videos, Troy and Steve talked about the fast moving pace of technology and the challenge in taking all the bits and pieces and making them work for senior living. Troy described it as "An exciting but complicated time." No kidding.

The exciting part, as he sees it, is that we have lots of great mainstream technologies out in the marketplace -- GPS, voice activated intelligent systems like Amazon's Echo and Google Home. What makes it complicated, Troy says, is bringing it to the doorsteps of senior living communities and showing how it works in their environment. That means taking things like compliance and regulatory issues into consideration.

Steve agreed that it seems like we have lots of separate tools but few real solutions for them. "It's tricky to make it all work together," Troy concurs. "But we're moving in the right direction. We can now provide solutions that, at least, feel integrated and are easy to use."

Steve asked, “Have you seen any technology that makes you scratch your head and say “Why did they do that?”

Actually, there may be no one in a better position to answer that question than Troy. Vigil Health Solutions has been in the business of providing call alert solutions for 18 years and they’ve seen a lot of young, so-called “innovators” come and go. “There are lots of companies and start-ups out there with grand ideas,” says Troy. “But their revenue models don’t align with the industry. Solutions need to be exciting, yes, but also good for the residents and good for the community.”

It isn’t hard to see why operators may be still checking out all this technology from the sidelines. Troy says one of the keys is managing the expectations from the standpoint of the operators. “What’s the right technology, at the right price, that gets me where I want to go,” he says. “And, hopefully, it has scalability if I want to expand or change, to allow me to do that,” he adds. That’s not trivial, especially in an industry anticipating some occupancy challenges in the not so distant future.

Is Software as a Service “SaaS” still too outside the box? Maybe, but not for long.

They also talked about the delivery models. Typically, as Steve noted, things like emergency call systems, which Vigil markets, are sold as a product rather than SaaS. But will it change?

Troy’s sense is that it probably will change eventually. He thinks there is value in software as a service or, as he prefers “solution” as a service. “The idea that you have technology that you can pay for over time and automatically scale up effectively makes a lot of sense,” he tells Steve, who agrees. In fact, Vigil Essential, one of their solutions for smaller communities is based, in part, on the SaaS model. Still it may take some time to open up operators to the idea of paying monthly for software. Operators may decide to roll some of the costs into residents’ monthly fees, or other models may emerge. But, as Troy says, there is more work to be done.

Maybe there is some wisdom to those who are still pacing back and forth on the sidelines waiting to see where this all goes before they take the first step. But, sooner or later, they’ll reach that “tipping point”. And, it may be sooner, rather than later.



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