



This Company Wants To Put a Smile On Your Face

By Angela Lewis

*You know I can't smile without you
I can't smile without you
I can't laugh and I can't sing
I'm finding it hard to do anything*

When Barry Manilow sang those words nearly 40 years ago, he probably wasn't thinking about his aging parents living miles away in an Assisted Living community. But, his words ring truer than you might think when loved ones reside a great distance away and you don't know much about what is happening in their daily lives.

Connecting Residents and Families

Understanding that many residents of senior living communities have families that don't live locally or can't always make weekly visits because of work and other family responsibilities, [CarexTech](#) developed Smile™ as a way to enhance effective communication.

Smile™ is a powerful tool that gives families the opportunity to see their loved ones participating in programs and activities, capturing those moments that make everyone smile.

It can be used on any computer, tablet or smartphone. Because it's easily accessible from any device with internet access, both staff and residents' family members have greater flexibility and no time constraints in connecting with each other.

A Deeper Dive

We recently had the chance to catch up with Sarv Devaraj, Ph.D, a co-founder of CarexTech, to find out how Smile™ works and why senior living communities throughout the country are using the Smile™ platform to transform their traditional communication methods into interactive, positive experiences for families, staff and residents alike.

Activity Tracking

In addition to his leadership role at CarexTech, Sarv is the Fred V. Duda Chair Professor of Management at the University of Notre Dame doing research in healthcare for more than two decades. It is this strong foundation in research and science that sets apart the Smile™ solution. CarexTech created Smile™, as a web-based software platform that serves two main functions:

1. To electronically create, track and manage resident activity participation
2. To encourage and engage communication between families and communities.

As Sarv explained, the key to managing resident participation is a powerful Activity Tracker feature that is built into the Smile™ platform. The Activity Tracker is super simple to use and it enables activity and recreation leaders the ability to track residents' participation with just a few clicks of their mouse. This is a welcome change from hours spent manually tracking participants and compiling the information by hand or on spreadsheets.

How It Works

With less time spent maintaining multiple spreadsheets and compiling attendance data, there's more time for Life Enrichment staff to spend on program development and with residents. Using the analytics and reporting capabilities available from Smile™ makes it easy and efficient to monitor the popularity and attendance records of a specific activity.

Is morning yoga more popular than pottery class? Should the second, weekly bingo session be replaced with something more dynamic or physical? Can the community offer more programs that are geared to specific resident backgrounds? For example, can we quickly know who the veterans are in our community so we can organize an activity to honor our veterans on Memorial Day? The data gained from Smile's technology assists Recreation Directors in understanding their programs' effectiveness so they can plan or tweak it accordingly.

Smile's functionality goes beyond data collection and tracking for the purpose of activity management. The family portal gives families 24/7 access to their loved one's daily activities and also allows staff to securely send "smile moments" containing positive messages, pictures and videos to family members.

Communication Is a Two-Way Street

Since communication is a two-way street, families can also use Smile to send messages and photos to be shared with their loved ones. Having this open line of communication allows residents to hear from their families more frequently and not just on holidays, birthdays or special occasions.

As Sarv recounted in our conversation, "it's nice for families to hear from staff members about their loved ones' good moments, and not just their bad days".

By focusing on the positives that are part of residents' daily life, Smile allows families a snapshot into their loved ones' routines and day-to-day highlights. Knowing that mom or dad is having a great time ballroom dancing or sharpening their technology skills in a computer class, can lessen the stress of being far away and also bring peace of mind to families who may have struggled with the decision of moving their parents into a senior community.

User-Friendly Platform

Smile has already helped thousands of users in long term care communities across the U.S. to engage staff, residents and their families. The user-friendly platform is making communication more effective and interaction more flexible in senior living communities. Let the new wave of technology empower the human touch in the care you provide with a Smile.



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