Is This the Key to Faster Move-Ins and Higher Occupancy Rates?

By Susan Saldibar

If you are currently in sales or have ever been, you are all too familiar with that nail biting period between getting the verbal handshake and the signature on the dotted line. Darren Mathis, CEO of <u>Admit+</u> (a Senior Housing Forum partner) loves the quote, "The longest distance in the world is from mouth to pen." It's certainly true in senior housing. Until they have signed that residency agreement, you do not have a new resident.

<u>Time is not on your side.</u>

How often have you lost a resident somewhere in those crucial weeks between the "yes" and the signature? Darren sees this happen way too many times. Those days and weeks can become a sort of obstacle course, full of detours, pot holes and competitors who proclaim to offer your (almost) newly minted resident "such a deal" to defect to their community.

When I spoke to Darren recently, we talked about the impact that "time" has in the admissions process and how automation solutions, such as Admit+, are helping communities seize control of time in ways that benefit their staff and their occupancy rates. Here is how it works.

<u>Provide more time: Give your employees back their day and watch what they can do with it.</u>

Ask your sales people what they would do if they spent less time pushing (and chasing) paper. Given the occupancy challenges and crazy competition, one would guess that any extra time could be put to good use marketing, prospecting and even paying more attention to developing leads. Admit+ users tell Darren that spending less time filling out forms gives them more time to further engage and bond with new residents. "So

if you can reduce the initial round of paperwork from a 60 minute process to a 30 minute process, you have that additional time to relax and get to know the resident. You have more time to answer their questions and reinforce the value of your community," Darren says.

Shorten time: Close the time gap between "yes" and the signed residency agreement.

So, how many move-ins get derailed because the paper process lagged long enough for the prospective resident to have second thoughts? Darren has heard plenty of sob stories of communities losing a hot prospective resident who has not only said "yes" but has even put down a deposit! "All they need is just enough of a bottleneck in the paper process for a well-meaning friend or relative to recommend another community to your prospect," says Darren. "And don't think a deposit will secure your resident. I've seen competing communities reimburse deposits made at other communities, just to grab that move-in!"

Automating the admissions process really knocks the antiquated paper process down to size. Data such as addresses, phone numbers and other information gets entered once and automatically fills the form fields. No more writer's cramp, filling in information over and over again. That means most of the onboarding process can occur right in the office. Residents and families can access the forms and complete them remotely. That streamlines the process by removing potential "minefields" that distract your prospective residents and derail your move in.

And there are all the other great things that happen with a fully automated, remotely accessible admissions process.

Being able to access documents remotely makes a huge difference in terms of oversight, Darren tells me. For instance, you might have a community wanting to onboard a new resident, but they currently have an ED vacancy. Remote access to all documents allows an ED from another community to help manage and oversee the process, without skipping a beat.

Having online access to admissions documents also provides badly needed visibility. "It used to be that you'd send Mrs. Jones and her son or daughter home with a pile of forms and fingers crossed they'd get completed," Darren says. "Now, using systems like Admit+, that son or daughter can fill out the forms online and the community can track when they logged in and where they have may have questions, etc. So the sales rep can call and say, 'I noticed that you logged in and didn't finish. Can I help?' A much more proactive use of time," he adds.

Time is precious. The ability to maximize time spent and minimize time wasted is key to survival in an industry that grows more competitive every year. Automation is no longer a luxury; it's a necessary part of doing business. And, if you're going to start anywhere, why not start with admissions?