



Civitas Just Wished They Had Done This a Long Time Ago

By Susan Saldibar

If you are going to give up your spreadsheet habit, it had better be for something that checks all the necessary boxes. And more!

I spoke recently with Heather Gullickson, Senior Vice President of Sales for Senior and Affordable, at [RealPage®](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner). They understand the need to check all the boxes, especially for senior living operators who are reluctant to give up their old management-by-spreadsheet methodology. We talked about a client of theirs, Civitas Senior Living that has successfully made this transition. Fort Worth-based Civitas owns and operates a full spectrum of senior living communities in Texas and throughout the U.S. What was cool was hearing about how they basically went from using a combination of QuickBooks and a legacy property management system to a fully integrated RealPage solution.

When Civitas Senior Living was ready to take the plunge into a “grown-up” property management system, they had a few requirements:

1. **Designed specifically for senior living.** This was a big deal (as you’d probably agree). They had heard the complaints of senior living operators frustrated in their attempts to work around modules and fields that were clearly not made for this industry.
2. **Easy to use and navigate.** Sophisticated shouldn’t mean complicated.

3. **Fully integrated.** Information should be easily shared within and between locations.
4. **Experienced in the senior living industry.** They needed a company with the experience and knowledge to answer a broad spectrum of questions as they pertained specifically to senior living.
5. **Responsive.** They wanted to be able to reach someone immediately when they had an issue.

The challenge, given these requirements, was to find an organization with the agility and responsiveness normally associated with smaller providers, and yet large enough to have the bandwidth and resources necessary to meet the complex needs of senior living communities. Civitas found all of this in their relationship with RealPage. “RealPage gives us the best of both worlds, acting like a small company specializing in senior living backed by a large company with deep capabilities,” Civitas’ Assistant VP of Operations, Tanner Stierwalt reports.

Today, Civitas is using three RealPage solutions: OneSite® Leasing & Rents Senior (the property management piece), Accounting, and Business Intelligence. Tanner told RealPage that one of the things he really likes about it is the seamless integration. “What’s going on at the property regarding the rent roll, income and expenses are flowing right into Accounting, and the Business Intelligence software is drawing on the metrics to deliver visibility into performance as you can identify opportunities for boosting profitability and reducing costs,” he said.

The benefits and time savings of weaning themselves off QuickBooks are almost immeasurable. Not having to manually enter data and wait for a limited set of “after the fact” reports have made a big difference.

A great example of the practical application of the platform is the ability to shift their month-end variance explanations over to the site managers. After all, these are the frontline personnel who are responsible for the expenditures in the first place. “This is a big advantage, because the sites are where the spending is actually happening, and it helps make them more accountable for what they’re doing on a day-to-day basis,” Tanner told RealPage.

The RealPage solution checked three key Civitas’ user needs as well: 1) it eliminated all that cumbersome manual data entry, 2) it is surprisingly easy to use, and 3) when they need it, help is just an email or phone call away.

Kudos to Civitas Senior Living for having the foresight and business sense to forge ahead and implement a cutting-edge property management solution that lets them say goodbye to those labor-intensive spreadsheets forever. And hats off to RealPage for making it easier than ever to do so.

You can hear directly from Tanner about Civitas’ experiences in this “In Their Own Words” [video](#).



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