



The Highest Occupancy Ever . . . Here Is How They Did It!

By Susan Saldibar

How fast can an ED transform a struggling senior living community into an engaged, connected community? Ask Christopher Romick, Executive Director of Grace Ridge Senior Living. Be prepared to be surprised.

When Christopher took the helm as executive director of Grace Ridge Senior Living in 2018, he could see that the community needed what he refers to as “revitalization”. His first step was to get some resident focus groups together, see how that paired with his own marketing analyses and, finally, to sit down with staff to identify the top hot button issues. Then he was ready to dig in and identify a starting point for an ambitious list of improvements.

Exactly what they needed to move ahead.

That starting point was to upgrade outdated, low tech methods of communicating to residents, families and staff.

With over twenty years in the industry, Christopher was already savvy as to the technology platforms available. And he liked what [LifeShare Technologies](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner) was doing with its in-room, mobile and community apps. It was, as Christopher puts it, “exactly what we needed.” The team picked it up easily, and LifeShare was running on all cylinders quickly, without requiring days and days of training. The impact, according to Christopher, was almost immediate. “The community went from nearly zero technology to a robust and professional looking system of displays and applications within a week,” Christopher says. A one-week transformation, in anybody’s book is pretty amazing.

Better yet was the positive ripple effect using LifeShare had on the community as a whole. Here’s where the impact was felt:

- **Cost savings.** They were able to cut printing costs by 75% which, Christopher feels pretty much paid for the LifeShare system. Going green and saving money. Not a bad combination.
- **Time savings.** The staff was able to reduce the time spent doing low value work. “No more hours spent stuffing mailboxes and posting paper memos in many locations, just to take them down and throw away in a day or two,” Christopher says.
- **Increased engagement with residents and family members.** Family members liked the fact that they could use the same technologies they have at home to interact with their loved ones and with staff members. “I have received many emails from families praising the mobile app that is part of LifeShare,” Christopher says. “Now families can see what is going on, scan menus and view event photos on their mobile devices.” And it’s significantly reduced our phone-ins from families asking question like “What is on the menu for mom tonight?”.
- **More move-ins; higher occupancy levels.** Christopher attributes this to his sales team using the LifeShare application to share all the great things about their community to prospective residents and families. “We can easily invite a prospect to use the app and see what is happening and what life is like in the community while they are considering a move,” Christopher says.
- **Positive culture shift.** Bringing in LifeShare has helped create an environment where staff feels more connected and able to spend more time getting to really know the residents and families. That sense of connectedness has helped foster a much more inclusive, value-driven culture.

Try this on your next tour.

What I like, as a marketer, is that Grace Ridge is using the LifeShare system to do some really cool, person-centered marketing. They put personalized “welcome” messages on their lobby displays as well as on their model room TV. Just as an example, during a tour, sales can encourage a visitor to send a picture or message off their iPhone to the LifeShare demo account. When they see their photos pop up instantly on the TV they know they have this great conduit to engage with mom or dad on a day to day basis.

It’s nice to see a community take technology and really rock it to the benefit of everyone. And it’s not surprising that Christopher has no reservations about recommending LifeShare to other communities that are ready to transition away from ineffective, outdated processes. “Having over twenty years of experience in this industry, I can confidently say that this is a product I highly recommend for any community,” he says. “Our occupancy is highest it has ever been, and we are not slowing down!”



This article has been brought to you by [LifeShare Technologies](#) in partnership with [Senior Housing Forum](#).