



Collaboration Breeds Innovation at the Peninsula Regent: An Important Story

By Susan Saldibar

Here's a question we should all be asking ourselves: Why don't more technology providers collaborate with senior living communities? Especially when the results can be so transformational? (For both sides!)

I recently witnessed a great collaboration session between [The Peninsula Regent](#), an upscale senior community in northern California and Touchtown, developers of integrated communications solutions that flow information to/from TVs, displays, iPads, smartphones, etc.

Melissa Shefer, Director of Programs for The Peninsula Regent, along with Nicole Nasser, Programs and Events Coordinator, form the driving force behind resident technology adoption at their community. They have been working with Touchtown for about nine years now, and it shows in the easy back and forth flow of their conversations. The best part of this partnership is that by relaying feedback and ideas to the Touchtown team, Melissa and Nicole play a critical role in helping to continually evolve the platform.

Residents and staff weighed in; a collaboration that led them to Touchtown.

When Melissa was first brought on board at Peninsula, she found an environment burdened by a disjointed communications process. You know what this looks like: bulletin boards with flyers from every department, a TV channel, and printed activity calendars — all updated manually and re-printed constantly. There was plenty of paper, but little else to connect residents to each other and to what was going on at the community. The result? A lot of time wasted in redundant tasks like re-entering information over and over again just to make a change in a date or menu item.

Melissa began researching various platforms that would enable them to consolidate and integrate information. Her ultimate goal was two-fold:

1. Eliminate manual, duplicative work for staff
2. Provide residents with accurate and ever-changing community-life information each day

An Innovative Solution

Melissa had residents and staff weigh in at each step of the search. Many of the residents didn't want to have to turn on their TVs just to get access to information. Nor did they want to have to rely solely on printed calendars.

Their final assessment was that the community needed a platform that would allow them to grow with new channels of distribution of information like digital displays and mobile interaction. Touchtown checked all the boxes and more.

Since then, Touchtown has been keeping the entire Peninsula Regent community informed. Here's how:

- [Digital displays](#) for the lobby and employee lounge
- [Calendars](#) and dynamic website plug-ins to showcase upcoming activities by level of care
- Dedicated [TV channel](#) with the ability to schedule videos, live streaming, and movies
- Custom [mobile app](#) for residents to access the entire community from their iPhone
- Touchscreen displays in common areas for visiting families and prospective residents

How do residents feel about Touchtown? "Now that they have it, they can't imagine living at The Peninsula Regent without it!"

"Touchtown has become an integral part of residents' daily lives," Melissa says. They've come to expect the visibility and connectivity that technology brings them. Though the app was initially met with resistance by those uncomfortable with technology, they feel "hip" now and use it every day. Many residents who owned flip phones, purchased smartphones, just so they can have the app"

And, the impact of using Touchtown is widespread. Here are some of the benefits:

- Resident directory on the app: Residents can call or email through the app without having to lug around their printed directory. They connect about dinner reservations, enjoy learning more about each other and identify people they'd like to get to know better through bios they can find within the resident directory.
- Menus on the app: Residents can see menus when they want to and further in advance than reasonably makes sense to post on the in-house channel. Dining Services can make changes to menus instantly when the fish the chef ordered was unable to be delivered.

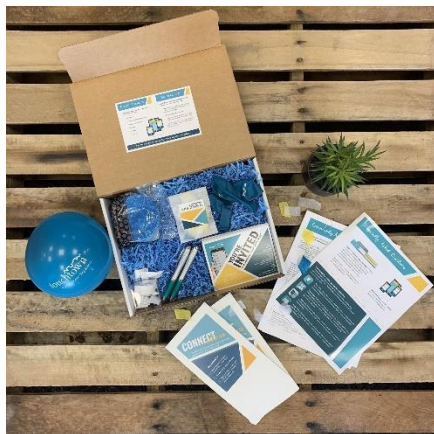
- Requesting dining reservations through the app: The Community App makes requesting dining reservations easy.
- Requesting transportation through the app: The Community App makes requesting transportation a “breeze.” Instead of filling out paper forms at the front desk and waiting on responses, residents submit their information right from their smartphone or laptop and receive a message upon approval.
- Fewer trips to the front desk to inquire about activities: Now the information is instantly accessible on displays, TVs, iPads, and smartphones.
- Using the Interactive Display as a marketing tool: The marketing team loves using the Interactive Display when giving tours to showcase everything the community has to offer. Prospective residents and their families can identify favorite apartment styles, amenities, and social interests even before leaving the lobby.
- Less paper waste on printed calendars. (Amen!)

Collaboration gets results. 7,000 login sessions just in the last 90 days!

The team at Peninsula Regent feels they are in good hands with their dedicated project manager, Beth Swensen. Beth is a veteran at Touchtown and worked with Melissa and Nicole to ensure a successful launch. “A successful launch is key to capturing a high percentage of usage,” says Beth.

Creating Excitement

And I think this is really cool. Touchtown ships what they call a “Launch Box” to create a community-wide buzz about the new app.



Every Launch Box includes:

- FAQs
- Launch tips & best practices
- Pop-up table cards
- Confetti
- Balloons
- Streamers
- Mints
- Pens

Their efforts have returned pretty strong results. Within a month of launching the Peninsula Regent app, 36% of residents began using the platform. “We’ve been gathering feedback from resident ambassadors from the very beginning, which made a big difference,” Melissa says.

The collaboration between Melissa, Nicole, Beth, and Peninsula Regent residents paid off. Now, more than 53% of residents are utilizing Peninsula Regent's Community Apps to stay informed and connected with each other.

The takeaway? Collaboration works. Collaboration gets results. Wouldn't you like to see more of what The Peninsula Regent and Touchtown are doing? I would. It's good for technology, good for senior living, and best of all, good for residents.