



How One Community Turned a Wrong into a Right

By Susan Saldibar

It's nice to see communication platforms finally taking their rightful place in senior living. And not a minute too soon. Residents can now know, with a quick glance at a display or smartphone app, the who, what, when, and where of their communities. No more bugging the concierge over and over again or hunting around for glasses to read a printed calendar.

With any technology provider, however, you have to be careful who you select to do business with. And, sometimes you have to get it wrong before you get it right.

That's what happened to Lisa VanMansum, Communications Coordinator for Rockwood Retirement Communities. She experienced, firsthand, the aggravation of selecting the wrong vendor for the job. After a year of frustration and poor service, Lisa turned to Touchtown to help her "right the wrong."

Lisa shared her experience in a recent interview with Christian Kratsas, Director of Marketing for Touchtown, and Brittany Barr, Marketing Coordinator. Here are some of the highlights of that conversation.

"Second time's a charm."

Three years ago, Lisa and her team set out to drastically change the way information was circulated at Rockwood. Their communication primarily consisted of an older in-room TV channel with poor audio, being used by less than a dozen residents. Residents and staff wanted more flexibility, as well as electronic access to essential information to help plan their day. Having a strong technology background, Lisa naturally began collaborating with a group of tech-savvy residents to put all the pieces together that would make up their wish list.

Collectively, they determined that they needed a “community intranet” to serve as a central hub for all community information and provide multiple ways to access that information.

After reviewing several vendors, they selected the one that seemed to offer a system with the most flexibility for access. But after struggling with hard-to-read digital signage, “clunky” software that was not as user-friendly as demonstrated, and inferior customer support, Lisa knew it was time to find a better communications system.

Bringing in Touchtown did more than “right” a “wrong.” It turned Lisa into an overnight hero.

The decision to start over again was, according to Lisa, the best decision she ever made. “That’s how we found Touchtown,” she says. It was clear from the first conversation that Touchtown was a perfect fit for Rockwood’s needs, and the transition from the sales to deployment was seamless. “It turned out to be the easiest thing I’ve ever done. A slam dunk,” Lisa says.

Even her team of resident beta testers, skeptical after the last experience, were impressed. “It made me an overnight hero.” Here are a few key areas where Touchtown turned them into fans:

- **Smooth handoff:** Getting set up was simple, and they were even able to use all the same displays, saving Rockwood precious budget dollars.
- **Great collaboration:** Sean Porter, Touchtown’s project manager (and a former Apple consultant) was always careful to include everyone and encourage input during the implementation and beyond. “He did a great job, especially with our passionate beta testers,” Lisa says.
- **Ongoing training:** Touchtown facilitated peer-to-peer training, so the residents were actively involved every step of the way. Lisa says it turned them into the best advocates for the system to encourage others to use it. “It’s really empowering,” Lisa says. “We have seen this immediate confidence in using Touchtown.”

And the numbers support it. Since the launch on April 1st, 161 Rockwood residents have begun using the Touchtown Community App. On an average day, they are interacting with the app over 350 times. Some of their favorite app modules include:

- **Resident directory:** Members can search for people with similar interests and text or call
- **Activities:** An always-up-to-date list of community events
- **Staff directory:** Residents can get in contact with a team member on the fly
- **Dining/Food Service:** Over 10 pages of menus! Everyone knows what’s to eat at all times
- **Forms:** Everything from mail-holding services to new resident interests surveys



What's especially gratifying was the response of the once-skeptical resident beta testers. "Since we implemented Touchtown, our beta testers have become the best cheerleaders," Lisa says. "Our biggest fan club."

So what's next on the Rockwood-Touchtown development agenda? Hooking up Touchtown to Alexa to serve their vision-impaired residents. Can't wait to hear how that goes. I have a feeling the fan club will be cheering.

For more information about Touchtown, visit touchtown.com.