



Why e-Signing Software Doesn't Check All the Boxes

By Susan Saldibar

Are you using electronic signing software (e.g., DocuSign, Adobe Sign, SignNow, etc.) to shepherd new residents through the admissions process? Good for you. You're a step ahead of those who continue to spend valuable time shuffling papers and giving new residents writer's cramp.

I spoke recently with Eileen Gaisser, Business Analyst for LincWare (a Senior Housing Forum partner) about some of the limitations of electronic signing systems, or "e-sign" software that I hadn't thought of. It always seemed like the ultimate convenience tool to avoid signing things over and over again. But it's been around a while and other solutions (Admit+ is one) have leapfrogged what e-sign software can do.

I asked Eileen which capabilities separate Admit+ from e-sign software. Below is a matrix that lists many of them.

Features	Electronic Signing Software*	Admit+
Replaces paper	X	X
Eliminates need for physical signing	X	X
Enables online review of documents	X	X
Provides secure signature	X	X
Version control		X
Centralized storage		X
Automatic form fill		X
Rules-based for accurate packaging of forms		X
Identity verification		X
Enforced “accept before proceeding”		X
Data stored in a separate database, not frozen inside a PDF document		X
On-demand visibility to residents' progress in accessing, editing and completing documents		X
Role-based user access for employees		X
Document security settings to control employee access by role, community, etc.		X
Branded document portal for each community		X
Residents access documents through a password-protected portal instead of via email links		X

*This reflects an across the board average of electronic signing software systems. It is not focused on any specific vendor.

What do all the additional “Xs” mean to senior living communities? Here is a breakdown:

- E-sign software involves much less automation than you might think. You must still create all of your documents. You still must set up all the fields. And you must still manage all your versions.
- You need to decide, each time you send an e-sign packet, which forms must be included. This can be confusing, especially across states where regulations differ. And,

Medicare assignment forms need to be generated. Which documents do you need for which residents? Somebody still needs to make those decisions.

- With Admit+ you will make these decisions one time. The system, using your business rules and protocols, presents the appropriate documents to each resident. It automatically packages and sends them out for signing. No uploading, no redundant filling in fields. All is automated.
- Then, when it comes to signing, the resident just pulls up the form. They only need to complete the information that is required, as opposed to having to scroll through the entire doc to see what is needed. Admit+ forms dynamically show just the pertinent fields.
- With most e-sign software, the input data goes to one place only: the pdf form, where it is “frozen”. And that’s important for security purposes. However, that data, if captured, could be useful elsewhere. Admit+ stores input data in a separate database. It can then be used to automatically populate key fields of other documents or sent to other systems. It can also be used to create valuable reports about the admissions process. You can track things such as length of sales cycle and the status of each document across all locations. This will help determine which forms take longer to execute; valuable information for workflow efficiency. You can’t do that with data used only to populate a static form.
- How do you know that the resident has completed all fields of each form? With electronic signing, it’s easy to miss a checkbox, only to have to go back later and complete. Admit+ has a foolproof method for ensuring that all fields designated by your community as mandatory are completed. It not only highlights these essential fields, but the system will not enable the final signature until all have been completed.

What the people at Admit+ want senior living community leadership to know is that, while e-sign software once represented the pinnacle of automation, the evolution of data management has made a gigantic leap forward. And you need to know about it. It is now possible for the admissions process to go from taking a week or more to complete, to a process that can be completed in about 20 minutes.

But that may not even be the biggest advantage. Creating an admissions process that closes loopholes, identifies process issues, and improves the experience of the residents and their families, just might give smaller, independent communities the added ammunition they need to compete with more prominent, established communities. And that value cannot be overestimated.