Case Study:
Engagement Technology for Senior Care

Categories:

- Resident Engagement & Retention
- Family Communication
- Staff Communication & Retention
- Increased Staff Efficiencies

About the Organization

Organization Name:
Timberhill Place

Main Contributor:
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Organization Type:
Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing, Memory Care, CCRC

Organization Description:
Timberhill Place is a 60-bed licensed assisted living community in Corvallis, Oregon.

Project Description

In mid-2020, we realized that challenges caused by COVID-19, along with state and federal regulations, were going to affect the cadence and content of communication we needed with our residents' family members. In response, we implemented an initiative to establish regular, reliable, and timely messaging with family members.

We did not have a system in place to meet this need in a practical and convenient manner, and had concerns that using several available methods of communication would just get lost in the mountain of information pushed at the family members of our residents each day. These methods included emails, social media channels, text messages, and physical mail.

We had concerns over adopting a technology resource as the answer to our need. Management and staff of senior care facilities are caregivers by nature and training; we are not necessarily technology gurus. Implementing new technology into our daily operations can be a concern to those of us that will ultimately have to use such resources daily.

Socialization Modality

The Quiltt platform provides multiple connection points between staff, residents, and family members of residents. All parties can quickly, conveniently, and easily understand what events are happening in the community, which events are being attended by residents, arrange reservations to visit with loved ones, provide satisfaction feedback, view upcoming meal schedules, arrange for transportation, and much more.

System Embodiment

Mobile app, web app, indoor/outdoor digital signage, and in-room broadcasting, all providing the same information deployed via a centralized portal operated by Timberhill staff.

Business Model

Private-pay senior care

Implementation Approach

With average resident ages close to 90 years, our residents and their family can be used to, and more comfortable with, more traditional methods of communication. We communicated our concerns over technology implementation, reception, and adoption to the team at Quiltt and leaned heavily on them because of those concerns. Quiltt's implementation team was very eager to prove just how easily people of all ages and technical skill levels can adopt, use, and embrace the platform. Quiltt worked hand-in-hand not just with our staff, but also with the family members to get the community activated and live in just a few business days.

Through its collaborative training regimen, Quiltt was able to quickly train our staff on how to push out daily and alert messaging from the Quiltt admin portal—and also how to quickly and easily activate several other features within the platform such as its visitation and amenities reservation system, its staff recognition program, a photo albums portal, event planning and tracking functions, pulse/feedback surveys for staff, residents, and families, and several other features.

Outcomes

Our original concerns about adoption and implementation of technology quickly diminished, with staff, residents, and family members embracing Quiltt not only as the main communication method, but also as a valuable engagement and awareness resource for everyday life at Timberhill.

We have 60 residents in our community and we now have 64 users of the app amongst the family members. Since implementing Quiltt, our staff has averaged nearly three outgoing messages to app users/family members per week. In total, Quiltt has successfully delivered over 5,000 messages to family members during the past nine months alone.

Additionally, because of the other features in the platform, family members have been provided a transparent view into our daily operations. In fact, while we originally subscribed to Quiltt for messaging capabilities, the greatest usage of the platform has been by family members to see daily menus, daily activity schedules, and even pictures and videos of their loved ones through the Quiltt app.

Overall, our 64 users have had 74,000 page views within the Quiltt app. Although we always enjoy speaking with family members, we consider this to be 74,000 questions answered without family members or our staff having to pick up a phone or write an email. The users of our app spend, on average, just over two minutes in Quiltt each time they open it. We have also learned that the longer family members have been using Quiltt to receive communication and information, the more frequently they engage with it. Since implementing Quiltt at Timberhill, the page views of our app have gone from hundreds per day to thousands per day.

The transparency and communication we achieved through Quiltt has also affected our census positively. We have not had a single voluntary departure by a resident since implementing Quiltt; we attribute this to the increased sense of comfort and trust within our community of residents, family members, and staff. As admissions restrictions begin to loosen, and while we all work to get through COVID-19, we are very excited at the opportunity to reach a full census.

Challenges and Pitfalls to Avoid

Be aware of the effectiveness of the messaging through Quiltt! It is important to choose strategic days and times lto send new messaging, as it does lead to inquiring calls from family members. This has been a very positive experience for us, but we did need to adjust the timing of new messaging to ensure we have availability for these important calls. The app does an excellent job of handling the vast majority of questions, but increased awareness will still lead to a small volume of calls from family members with additional questions. This has resulted in great relationship-building with families and keeps us encouraged as we send weekly updates.

Lessons Learned/Advice to Share with Others

The biggest lesson we have learned during our time with Quiltt is that there is no reason to fear technology. We are a fairly small community, and many of us have to fulfill multiple roles and responsibilities. We don't have a dedicated IT/tech team or individual at Timberhill, and in the case of Quiltt, we actually tasked our maintenance director with the responsibility of implementation, awareness, and adoption. The process went smoothly because of the ease of use of Quiltt. Our advice is to avoid putting off the adoption of technology in your in your community. It's an easy implementation and the positive effects begin immediately.