

Case Study:

The Golden Age to Stay Connected: How Uniguest Technology Enhances Senior Living at Discovery Village

uniguest



leadingage.org/cast

CATEGORIES

- ◆ Reduce social isolation
- ◆ Reduce feelings of loneliness
- ◆ Reduce depression
- ◆ Increased resident engagement and satisfaction
- ◆ Increased social networks
- ◆ Increased quality of life
- ◆ Increased staff efficiencies
- ◆ Improved accessibility through assistive listening technology

Organization Name:

Discovery Village at Naples

Main Contributor:

Tamara Bowen, national director of celebrations and fitness

Organization Type:

Senior independent living
Senior assisted living
SHINE® Memory Care

Organization Description:

Discovery Village is a senior living community in Naples, FL, offering a comprehensive lifestyle experience focused on independence, wellness, and connection. As part of the Discovery Senior Living portfolio, Discovery Village emphasizes innovation in aging and is committed to creating environments where older adults thrive—not just in comfort and safety, but in community, enrichment, and purpose. Known for its vibrant programming and forward-thinking leadership, the community serves older adults seeking an active, socially connected lifestyle.

Project Description

Discovery Village partnered with Uniguest to implement Community Hub, a digital engagement platform designed to connect residents to community life through technology. By integrating tools like community apps, digital signage, digital calendars, resident TV, and wireless headphones, the community empowered residents to remain independent, informed, and socially engaged. The initiative focused on enhancing communication, reducing isolation, and fostering lifelong learning through easy-to-use, intuitive digital tools.

Socialization Modality

Community apps, digital calendars, digital signage, resident TV, wireless headphones, Alexa integration

Uniguest's technology suite provides residents with access to information about daily events, dining menus, community announcements, and entertainment—all available through digital displays located throughout the community. Beyond these practical features, technology is also used to facilitate communication with family and friends, either through video chat or shared activities, reinforcing emotional connections.

System Embodiment

TV, tablets, desktop computers, wireless headphones, smartphones, digital signs, voice technology devices.

Business Model

Private pay.

Implementation Approach

At Discovery Village, the journey to digital engagement began with a shared vision: to empower residents through intuitive, meaningful technology. The leadership team recognized early on that to truly make an impact, the tools introduced needed to be more than just functional—they needed to be friendly, familiar, and woven into the fabric of daily life.

The community started by identifying key moments in a resident's day that could be enhanced through technology—whether it was accessing the daily dining menu, browsing activity schedules, or simply staying in touch with family. From there, Uniguest's digital engagement platform was introduced with a thoughtful, resident-first strategy.

Uniguest's headset technology was also introduced to improve accessibility, especially for residents with hearing difficulties. These wireless headphones quickly became favorites for

events, lectures, and movie nights, making it easier for everyone to enjoy programming together without barriers.

Technology classes are a cornerstone of this community's success, offering opportunities for residents to familiarize themselves with new tools and devices. "The senior population can still learn these things," says the director of celebration. "When we introduce them to the technology, they realize how much it simplifies their lives. And once they get the hang of it, they're using it everywhere—and even teaching their friends!"

The approach was always grounded in simplicity and empowerment. Staff focused on showing residents how technology could support—not complicate—their routines, and it worked. The response was immediate and enthusiastic: more sign-ups for activities, more conversations, more independence, and a renewed sense of connection across the community.

Outcomes

At Discovery Village, residents don't just age—they thrive. With Uniguest technology seamlessly integrated into daily life, residents embrace independence, stay socially engaged, and continue learning new skills well into their 90s.

"Age is just a number," shares Marion Ungrich, a resident at Discovery Village Independent Living in Naples, FL. "I was born in 1926, which makes me 97 and a half years old. Where I live now, technology doesn't slow me down—it keeps me going." From checking the daily dining specials to signing up for activities through their smart devices, residents have technology at their fingertips, empowering them to make choices that enhance their quality of life.

Social engagement has reached new heights. Movie nights have grown more popular, not just because of the titles, but because the experience is more inclusive. Thanks to Uniguest's assistive headset technology, even those with hearing challenges can fully enjoy the show. "By putting on the wireless headphones, they feel like the person is sitting right next to them," shares Tamara Bowen, national director of celebration. "You can see the light bulb moment when they realize they can hear everything clearly."

Beyond practical benefits, technology fosters connection. "No matter what age, you should never stop learning," says the national director of celebration. Whether it's through video calls with family, exploring new digital tools, or staying updated on community events, Uniguest's platform opens doors to an enriched lifestyle and provides an opportunity for communities to increase prospect outreach and engagement by showcasing this vibrant, tech-enabled way of life.

What Discovery Village has demonstrated is that when technology is thoughtfully implemented and supported by human connection, age becomes a point of pride, not limitation. Residents aren't just keeping up—they're leading the way.

"All of a sudden," says Tamara Bowen, national director of celebration, "we're not living in the past. We're living in the moment."

Challenges and Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Initial Resistance to Technology:** Some residents were skeptical about their ability to learn or saw no value in using technology. These concerns were addressed through personalized training, peer encouragement, and by demonstrating tangible benefits like easier access to information and enhanced hearing capabilities.
- **Overwhelming Interfaces:** It was critical to ensure that technology platforms were intuitive, accessible, and not overloaded with too many features at once. Simple, focused user experiences were key to adoption.
- **Underestimating Support Needs:** Continuous support was essential. Providing just one training session was not enough. Ongoing encouragement, reinforcement, and celebration of small wins helped build confidence over time.

Lessons Learned/Advice to Share with Others

- **Simplicity is the gateway to adoption:** The easier the platform is to use, the more willing residents will be to try it. Start with the basics and let confidence grow before introducing advanced features.
- **Pair technology with human support:** Technology adoption is not just about the tools—it's about the people supporting their use. Staff should be trained and empowered to act as tech ambassadors, building trust and curiosity among residents.
- **Celebrate every win:** Whether it's a resident signing up for their first activity independently or successfully making a video call, celebrating these moments creates excitement and inspires others.
- **Personalize the learning journey:** Everyone learns differently. Offer group classes, one-on-one sessions, and informal support opportunities to meet residents where they are.
- **Accessibility = inclusion:** Tools like assistive listening headphones don't just make life easier; they make participation possible. Prioritize solutions that include all residents, regardless of physical or sensory limitations.