Case Study:
Watermark Retirement Communities & LifeLoop

leadingage.org/cast

CATEGORIES

- Staff Efficiencies
- Quality of Life/Satisfaction with Care

Organization Name:
Watermark Retirement Communities

Main Contributor:
Maureen Garvey, Director of Resident Experience

Organization Type:
Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care

Organization Description:
Watermark Retirement Communities is a senior living operator that has 22 wellness-based communities across the United States and has been in operation for more than 35 years. Watermark describes itself as a wellness company that provides housing and services for older adults, with a focus on choice, integrative wellness, innovation, and opportunities for residents to thrive.

Project Description

Watermark uses LifeLoop and iN2L by LifeLoop across all 22 communities to make resident knowledge actionable from move-in; expand personalized programming; streamline communication; and treat engagement as part of whole-person wellness. The project supports independent living, assisted living, and memory care, and illustrates how resident interests can become meaningful and evidence-informed engagement opportunities.

System Type

LifeLoop platform and mobile app; artificial intelligence (AI) Resident Onboarding and resident profiles; Calendar Management and AI-assisted calendar creation; Resident Management and Activity Tracking; Communication and Photo Sharing; resident and family access; Digital Signage; and iN2L engagement content and systems.

Describe System Embodiment

LifeLoop is deployed across Watermark's 22-community portfolio through browser- and mobile-based workflows used by Community Life teams, residents, and family members. Staff create and update calendars, communicate changes, share photos, manage program sign-ups, and document resident engagement in one platform. Digital displays in community spaces make upcoming programs and recent resident experiences visible to residents, families, prospects, and associates.

AI Resident Onboarding captures interests and life history information at the beginning of the resident relationship, translates interview content into resident profiles and bios, and helps teams identify people with shared backgrounds or interests. Staff can then form affinity groups, introduce new residents to compatible neighbors, and tailor programming to the people currently living in each community. iN2L content gives teams ready-to-use games, music, fitness, travel, spiritual, educational, and reminiscence resources that can support planned programs or spontaneous moments of connection.

Business Model

Private pay

The LeadingAge Center for Aging Services Technologies (CAST) is focused on accelerating the development, evaluation and adoption of emerging technologies that will transform the aging experience. As an international coalition of more than 400 technology companies, aging-services organizations, businesses, research universities and government representatives, CAST works under the auspices of LeadingAge, an association of more than 5,400 nonprofit aging services providers and other mission-minded organizations dedicated to making America a better place to grow old.

For more information contact:
Scott Code, VP CAST
scode@LeadingAge.org
(202) 508-9466
LeadingAge.org/CAST

Implementation Approach

Watermark took a phased, needs-based approach to implement LifeLoop and iN2L across its portfolio: communities adopted the capabilities most relevant to their immediate priorities while Watermark established broader expectations for streamlined communication, more efficient processes, and enhanced programming. This allowed local teams to build confidence without requiring every feature to be adopted at the same pace.

As additional capabilities became available, Watermark expanded from core calendar, communication, display, and content workflows into AI-enhanced tools. AI-assisted calendar creation helps life enrichment teams expand creative engagement programming capacity, while Resident Onboarding with AI-powered transcription features streamlines and standardizes the collection of resident interests and life stories.

Watermark paired LifeLoop technology with its 360Well approach, which integrates mind, body, spirit, and community into daily life, and with established programs such as Watermark University and Extraordinary Outings. LifeLoop serves as infrastructure for Watermark's existing wellness strategy rather than as a stand-alone activity tool.

Advantages to the Approach

For residents, the approach begins with being known. Resident Onboarding allows teams to capture older adults' experiences, interests, abilities, and preferences in a consistent manner, leading to meaningful introductions and programs. Because teams can quickly search resident information and access ready-to-use content, they can respond in the moment: visiting a place a resident mentions, streaming a familiar song, offering an on-demand workout after a missed class, or extending a gathering with a game or karaoke session.

For staff, LifeLoop reduces time spent sourcing materials and recreating communications across separate channels. Calendar updates can be made once and shared quickly, while iN2L Content broadens the range of programs teams can offer without requiring extensive research or preparation. Watermark reported that staff value the streamlined communication and expect AI calendar tools to help prevent creative burnout. For families, direct communication, photos, program sign-ups, and access to current information create more visibility into daily community life.

Outcomes

Watermark reports that LifeLoop has had a major impact on reducing resident social isolation and loneliness, delivering personalized experiences, and increasing staff satisfaction.

Resident Onboarding gives teams a structured way to learn about residents' interests and life histories, create shareable bios, and identify affinity groups. Watermark can connect new residents with neighbors who share similar experiences instead of waiting for commonalities to surface by chance. Maureen Garvey, National Director of Resident Experience, explained: "LifeLoop's Resident Onboarding allows us to dive into learning more about residents from day one, which demonstrates our commitment to resident knowledge and personalization. And within moments of learning about a person, we can identify who else in the community shares their interests and experiences." Watermark teams also noted that the AI-supported interviews offer a more repeatable and timelier alternative to creating biographies which they used to do only when time allowed.

A story from Watermark Southpark Meadows, covered in Senior Living News, shows how resident knowledge can become a health-supporting relationship. Marie Jeannette Pursley, age 93, grew up speaking French with her French Canadian family and later lived in France, but rarely used the language after returning to the United States. At Southpark Meadows, she connected with associate Marie Elvert through their shared French heritage. Their conversations led Elvert to facilitate French classes twice each month through Watermark University, giving Pursley a way to strengthen a valued skill while other residents learn and practice together. Pursley said the relationship made her feel excited and happy and was strengthening her French-speaking skills. The experience combines cognitive stimulation, lifelong learning, friendship, and belonging in one resident-centered connection.

Watermark's 360Well model connects mind, body, spirit, and community. LifeLoop and iN2L help staff translate that framework into daily opportunities, including fitness, music, games, spiritual practices, lifelong learning, social groups, and personalized outings. Because content can be accessed quickly, teams can address niche interests and respond to spontaneous resident cues without losing time to research or preparation. Watermark reported that this expanded range of programming sparks curiosity and gives residents more ways to participate. Speaking to

residents' sense of purpose, Garvey said, "I think we are in the early stages of seeing residents experience purposeful living as a direct result of the LifeLoop platform. In the coming months, I anticipate more residents utilizing LifeLoop to step forward as leaders because they can easily coordinate communication with various resident groups." These tools have not only helped staff improve personalized programming, but have led to improvements in staff satisfaction, who have more time to spend with residents.

Watermark teams reported valuing the ability to update calendars and alert residents about upcoming events, while AI-supported tools "help prevent creative burnout" and create programs for specific groups of residents rather than a general audience. Teams also reported an improvement in family satisfaction, with Community Life teams using the platform to answer questions, share photos, support program sign-ups, and keep loved ones informed. Garvey noted, "While we've always hosted fun, engaging programs in our community, now our visitors can see these programs come to life as they walk through our communities, thanks to the vibrant, multimedia programs on LifeLoop. Whether we're seeing games played, listening to karaoke, witnessing a fitness class or a spiritual practice supported by the content on LifeLoop, it activates spaces and adds another dimension to our Community Life-led offerings."

Challenges and Pitfalls to Avoid

Adoption did not occur uniformly across every feature. Watermark noted that communities were drawn to different capabilities at different times and often began with the area where improvement was most urgent. A portfolio-wide rollout should therefore allow community-specific prioritization while maintaining clear expectations for the core workflows and data that must be used consistently.

Another risk is treating the platform as a digital calendar rather than using it to build resident knowledge and guide decisions. Collecting interviews and attendance data creates value only when teams use that information to make introductions, personalize programs, notice changes in engagement, and follow up with residents who may be losing connection. Organizations should also avoid introducing multiple new capabilities at once without reinforcing training, ownership, and the purpose behind each workflow.

Lessons Learned

Watermark's experience shows that engagement technology is particularly effective when it strengthens an established wellness philosophy. The platform supports Watermark's 360Well model by helping teams connect what they learn about a resident to daily experiences across mind, body, spirit, and community. Technology makes the information visible and actionable; team members turn it into relationships.

The implementation also reinforced the value of starting resident discovery early. When interests and life histories are gathered during onboarding rather than only when staff have extra time, teams can personalize sooner, share knowledge across departments, and connect residents with common interests.

Advice to Share with Others

Begin with the desired resident outcomes. Decide whether the immediate goal is increased participation, more family visibility, less staff preparation, or earlier identification of residents who may be disengaging. Establish a baseline and define a measurable target before technology rollout so that the organization can document time saved and changes in participation.

Build resident knowledge into the standard move-in process, then create clear habits for using it. Review common interests, make introductions, invite residents into relevant groups, and use engagement data to look for both positive momentum and concerning changes. Give teams flexibility to start with the capabilities that solve their most pressing challenges, and reinforce adoption through shared expectations, practical training, and examples from similar communities. Above all, use technology to create more opportunities for human connection—not to replace it.