



DISRUPTING THE STATUS QUO BY INVESTING IN EMERGING HOSPITALITY DEVELOPMENTS


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TECH INTEGRATION

Many people wouldn't correlate senior living and innovation as working in tandem. Yet many senior living communities **invest heavily in technology, design and digital automation** to build occupancy by offering a unique experience. Often communities can be compared to full-service resorts with an array of amenities to service residents needs across the continuum of care. The stigma that senior living communities are bland, nursing-heavy and single service is antiquated.

Senior living is an exciting hospitality frontier with dynamic food offerings, premier dining moments and exceptional service.

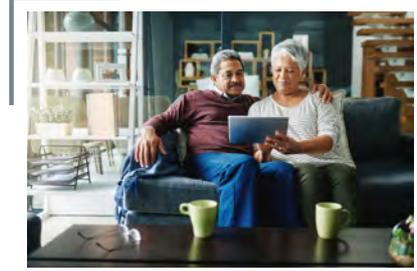
COVID-19 hit senior living communities across The United States particularly hard. Inspiring industry leaders to take action and incorporate emerging technologies into communities to minimize risk and create convenience for the administrators, nurses and team members that care for residents.

Telehealth has been a new avenue in offering convenience for residents who would otherwise travel out-of-home to visit their physician. It offers elders peace of mind surrounding transmission concerns associated with an in-person visit.



VOICE ACTIVATION

Providing tablets and high-speed internet has become commonplace for successful senior living providers as residents value the accessibility and convenience of connectivity. Some communities are even soliciting tech support to guide residents in tracking their health and moving their healthcare services to a virtual platform.



Communities that have residents with dexterity challenges or vision impairment are using voice-based devices to allow residents to speak a request rather than dial a phone. Linking a voice-based assistant to in-room devices allows seniors to ask for things themselves, fostering independence, while still receiving assistance that doesn't necessarily feel like "help". Whether it's turning a light on or off, adjusting the shades, changing the room temperature, making a call or setting a timer, seniors can speak a command and then watch it happen in front of them without moving a muscle. Leveraging voice technology can make the entire resident experience customizable and more livable, revolutionizing the capabilities of someone living with physical or cognitive challenges.



Voice-based assistants.

HUMAN CONNECTION

In support of memory care, residents, their families and caregivers, can easily set reminders for appointments, alerts for taking medication, deadlines for paying bills on time and remembrance of special dates like family birthdays. If you're using voice-based assistance throughout the community, you can also integrate your daily calendar with a list of activities that residents can ask for each day. Voice-based assistants can supplement your service with hospitality by creating convenient, personalized and memorable experiences for residents.



Technological advancement is only one piece of the senior living experience. Human connection, hospitality and customer service are all significant indicators of resident satisfaction. Human-driven hospitality is a collection of attitudes and actions that engages residents and empowers teams to lead with a service first mentality. Hospitality experiences aren't a one-size-fits-all approach – they evolve throughout the continuum of care.



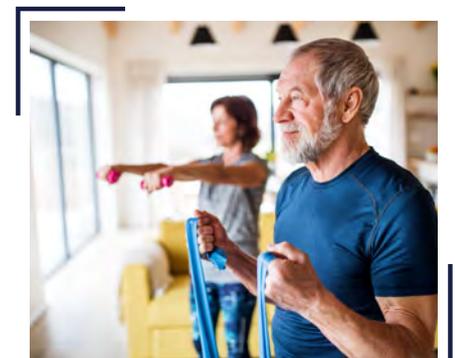
According to the report by Forrester Research, Inc. "Understanding The Impact of Emotion on Customer Experience," the customer experience equation is made up of three variables:

- **50% Customer Emotion** – How did it make them feel?
- **25% Customer Intelligence** – Did the customer achieve their goal?
- **25% Customer Understanding** – How easy was it?



A survey by NewVoiceMedia also found that **86% of respondents** said that if they felt a positive emotional connection, they would be more likely to do business with that company again.

How does it make them feel" represents a significant amount of the customer experience. Providing exceptional and meaningful hospitality that sparks positive emotional experiences is the key to competing in today's industry and fulfilling the needs of the customer. But what does hospitality really entail? It's everything from creating a special anniversary meal to remembering how residents take their morning coffee. When teams are empowered to make deep connections with residents, better business results follow.



HOSPITALITY-CENTRIC TEAMS

While many organizations tout “guests are the most important” Unidine believes it’s our culture, fueled by our hospitality centric team members that really drive satisfaction. Even with artisan food offerings and award winning programs dining partners need the support of confident, inspired and guest-forward team members excited to serve. Our dining teams naturally become the first interaction point for guests when they walk through the door. A smile and an effort to engage them into conversation is an invaluable first step in creating a welcoming and nourishing environment.



Founder of the Union Square Hospitality Group, Danny Meyer spoke to the importance of hospitality in “Setting the Table: The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business,” when he wrote,

“In the end, what’s most meaningful is creating positive, uplifting outcomes for human experiences and human relationships. Business, like life, is all about how you make people feel. It’s that simple, and it’s that hard.”



Meyer added, “Hospitality is present when something happens for you. It is absent when something happens to you.”

Investing in your dining staff is an investment in your community because a dedicated and motivated hospitality team leads to low turnover rates, increased feelings of pride, passion and loyalty resulting in better business outcomes. Just as you invite feedback from customers, you should be requesting feedback internally from your employees to gain insight into how your business is performing on the backend. It’s especially useful to learn where you need improvement from people on the inside. When your employees are at the center of your mission, they understand it more than anyone else and are in the best position to react to and measure actual performance against an ideal outcome.



Proven benefits of high employee satisfaction:

- Employee Loyalty
- Increased Productivity
- Stronger Customer Relationships
- Less Stress correlating to Fewer Sick Days
- High Employee Retention
- Greater Pool of Talent



PEOPLE FIRST



Advocating for your employees will also empower them to participate in the community. Motivating them to give back only helps them improve in caring for one another and taking care of guests. When colleagues work, serve and play together beyond the normal confines of work, they invariably return to work knowing each other better and working together as a more effective unit. They become stronger leaders and tighter teammates. Organizations can facilitate this through formal and informal recognition, celebrating staff's birthdays and planning team outings.

In his New York Times Bestseller, hospitality expert Danny Meyer highlights his 51 percent solution to hire staff with the emotional intelligence needed for organic connections and hospitable service throughout his restaurants. Technical competency can be taught, but having servant leadership in your DNA is the critical ingredient not identifiable on a resume. The skills he recommends looking for are:



- **Optimistic Growth** –

displaying genuine kindness, thoughtfulness, glass-half-full.



- **Intelligence** –

an insatiable curiosity to learn.



- **Work Ethic** –

demonstrating a natural tendency to do something as well as it can be done.



- **Empathy** –

a heightened awareness of, care for and connection to how others feel.



- **Self-Awareness** –

having a clear understanding of your inner-workings and emotions.

As more senior living communities are adopting hotel-like amenities, it's important to keep in mind that they are, in fact, different—and therefore, their strategy should be. As the senior living market continues to change and amenities continue to be added, an authentic approach to hospitality is what can elevate your community into the spotlight and attract the next generation of residents. Maintaining the same dated approach to senior living can miss the mark on what residents crave most—a sense of community, fostered by communication, relationships and personalization.

ABOUT UNIDINE

With operations in over 400 facilities, Unidine Corporation is a leading provider of food and dining management services for clients throughout the United States.

Founded in 2001, Unidine's success is derived from consistent execution in four key areas: an exclusive focus on food and dining management services; a commitment to scratch cooking with fresh, seasonal, responsibly sourced ingredients; exceptional customer service; and a corporate culture enlivened by each team member's passion for culinary and service excellence. For more information visit:

<https://www.unidine.com/>

