



Think You're Connecting? You're Not!

By Susan Saldibar

About a week ago I had the opportunity to visit a well-known assisted living community here in SoCal. My husband and I were in the area and thought we'd visit a couple of his relatives; a lovely brother and sister (I'll call them Bob and Mary), aged 87 and 93, respectively. They've been residents for a few months now. It's a nice community. Very high-end with spacious rooms, attractive furnishings, a pleasant dining room, and friendly helpful staff.

My first thought was they need Touchtown.

I asked Bob and Mary about the activities in the community. Bob pulled out a paper calendar (with tiny print, by the way). I asked if there was any other way to access their programming, such as a kiosk or on their TVs. Waving the paper calendar, he said, "No. You have to hang on to these things. If you lose it, you're stuck." I then asked about the people in the community. What were they like? Did they have any special friendships? "They're nice, but we only really see them down in the dining room."

I have to admit that my first thought was "They need Touchtown." I had just spoken the week before with Touchtown's Christian Kratsas, Director of Marketing, and Brittany Barr, Marketing Coordinator. ([Touchtown](#) is a Senior Housing Forum partner.) Christian and Brittany were telling me about some of the new applications they are rolling out to senior living communities. One is this cool [YouTube integration](#), which allows residents to access live streaming activities occurring within or outside the community. As for calendars, it's a no-brainer. Touchtown lets you access them on digital displays, tablets, smartphones and TVs (and, yes, even paper). That's why I was surprised to see Bob and Mary in this "luxury" community clutching their printed calendars. Why wouldn't their community have something like Touchtown?

What I like about Touchtown is that they're industry veterans and yet they design and develop with the energy and innovation of a startup. It's a great combination because they have the perspective that experience brings (what works, what doesn't) and yet they keep their fingers on the pulse of the latest technologies.

"We're in the business of connecting people," Christian tells me. "And that means multiple audiences, both within the community and outside the community." To date, they have, through their technology solutions, connected over 500,000 people throughout 1,200 communities in the U.S. and Canada. And they are growing.

There's an awful lot this platform does, so I asked Christian and Brittany to run me through some of the key applications. They are as follows:

- **Content Manager:** Christian calls it the control center or “brains” of the operation. It drives all the connecting applications. You simply enter all your content -- photos, videos, announcements, etc. -- and check a box to set where it goes (Alexa, mobile app, digital sign, etc.). To make it super easy, they’ve included thousands of professionally-designed templates. Since it’s cloud-based, you can access all this 24/7 from anywhere.

CONTENT MANAGER

The control center of Touchtown.

One point of data entry to **publish content to one or many platforms.**

Cloud-based. Access from anywhere.



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The process is as simple as checking a box.



- **Resident Concierge:** This is how residents find out what’s happening at the community. From digital displays in common areas to a mobile app in each resident’s pocket, they can access today’s activities and plan their week. Touchtown’s new YouTube streaming capability allows residents to tune in remotely to group activities, even if they can’t be there in person. “Using Touchtown has increased wellness attendance by 28% in one of our client communities,” Christian tells me. “Almost half of their residents are using the mobile app.”
- **Community Apps:** This is how Touchtown is connecting people to other people and it’s amazing to see the results they are getting. To begin with, it integrates with all the major technology platforms; Google, Apple, Amazon, Android, Windows, and so on. In addition to connecting residents to each other, their Staff Communicator and Family Connector allow for 100% communication inside and outside the community, via virtually any device. Communities use these apps to spotlight staff accomplishments and special milestones. “With staff turnover averages at 40% or higher, this is a great way to make employees feel more appreciated and connected to the community,” Christian says.

Here are a few more details:

- Collects and stores all the information that residents consent to share with others (Bob likes to play chess, Joan loves to garden, Ed served in the Air Force, etc.).
- Residents can review profiles and reach out to each other. They can also connect with appropriate staff members through an organized directory.
- Centralizes employee resources. Staff can access HR information, announcements, and training materials from a single location — even on the go.
- Residents can receive messages on their device of choice (i.e., "the shuttle is leaving in 10 minutes") and respond back accordingly.
- On-demand dining menus. Residents can see what’s being served at a specific dining venue and plan their meal with friends and family.



COMMUNITY APPS

Promote **independence** and **enhance wellness** through an interactive experience—right from residents' fingertips.

By way of a **custom app** residents access:

- Resident Directory
- Upcoming Activities
- Service Requests
- Dining Menus



- **Census Builder:** One of Touchtown's newest solutions, this takes the "tour" and turns it into an immersive experience. Communities can embed a full, 360-degree Virtual Reality tour that allows prospective residents to "walk" through rooms, see fabric and carpet swatches, and leaf through floor plans as though they were right there in the building. "It really is transforming how people tour," Christian says. "You can put these virtual tours on interactive displays in the showroom and the sales team can bring them to public events to expose your community to a broader audience," he adds. As future residents engage with digital content from the app, sales and marketing teams can monitor digital body language and follow up accordingly.

As Christian and Brittany say, they are in the business of connecting people. And, looking at their platform there truly is **no one left unconnected and nothing not communicated** (unless by choice, of course). "Residents want choices and staff want choices," says Christian. "We are about connecting people in the ways they are most comfortable being connected."

Given today's senior living environment and the new generation of "always connected" future residents, clearly, Touchtown is at the right place at the right time.

** Cover image provided with permission from Janice, a resident at a Presbyterian Senior Care Community called Longwood. Janice is leading an educational session on our Community Apps product for her fellow peers (residents of Longwood). Each Friday, residents of Longwood get together in the main common area to teach new residents how to use the apps and gather feedback.*

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This article has been brought to you by [Touchtown](#) in partnership with [Senior Housing Forum](#).

