Senior Living
tech
tips + tricks

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fusing
technology + interior design

When it comes to designing Senior Living spaces, understanding how to accommodate technology is key to creating communities built for the future of senior care. Technology can often be overlooked, underbudgeted or left to the last minute, but considering technology early in the process will help the entire design go smoothly. Here are best practices to ensure technology is seamlessly incorporated into the design.

1. Rendezvous

Early in the design process, meet with the operator and identify the outside stakeholders contractually responsible for designing or procuring technology. After identifying the technology partners, help the operator create their own cross-functional team, which may include representatives from the operator's clinical, IT, facilities and administration teams. Bringing these teams together early in the design process will be instrumental in delivering the best technology design possible.

Questions to consider:

≈ How do you envision residents and staff using technology? What kind of technology will you provide and what will the resident bring?

≈ How prominent will technology be featured? Should it be obvious or passive in the design?

≈ What level of sophistication are you looking for and what is the budget?

Direct Supply® Technology Design Center, Milwaukee, WI

2. Stay In Sync

Establish rapport with this cross-functional team, and schedule regular check-ins to help ensure the group stays aligned on design goals.

Questions to consider:

≈ What team structure will work best to create the experience the operator is envisioning?

≈ How frequently should you review progress? Is it driven by the calendar (e.g., every two weeks) or by design phases (e.g., at 30% design documentation)?

≈ What is the experience level of the team in coordinating between interior design and technology? What areas of your respective disciplines can you help each other learn?

3. Analyze & Align

Conduct a page turn meeting across all disciplines when you have about 60% of the construction documentation complete. This will help you avoid any overlapping details, like hanging a light fixture in front of a security camera.

Questions to consider:

≈ What is fixed and what is flexible in each respective design?

≈ How does the design affect community operations? Is this aligned with the experience they want to create? What needs to happen to ensure the staff is comfortable with the technology in order to maximize the intended use of the space?

4. Put It Into Action

Review the timing for each design discipline and its impact on installation.

Questions to consider:

≈ Are there opportunities to test the look and feel of the interior finishes and technology in advance of final walk-throughs? Can you use virtual reality or visit a design center to "feel" the space?

≈ How can we make sure the respective installation teams are communicating together (or back to the studios) on potential improvement opportunities or design issues they see?

5. Pass the Baton

Ensure staff training happens before the grand opening, and if possible, help your client identify a technology champion – someone who knows the ins and outs of the new equipment.

Questions to consider:

≈ Does the staff have the right skillset to operate and maintain technology? If not, could you use outside resources?

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tech savvy tips

Keep these tips in mind to make it easier to incorporate technology into your next Senior Living design.

Lobby

≈ Since lobbies require a wide array of technology, ensure you closely align with all parties to successfully coordinate the equipment.

≈ Make digital signage pop by adding architectural detailing around monitors.

≈ Determine how visible the security cameras should be. Some communities find comfort in seeing them, while others feel cameras are invasive.

≈ Ensure the lobby is a welcoming place by hiding security monitors and computers and adding a tablet at the welcome station for guest sign-in.

≈ If the lobby is two stories, use electronic-controlled window coverings to easily block the sun.

Resident Room

≈ Motion-sensing floor lighting can help prevent falls in the middle of the night by illuminating walking paths.

≈ Make it easy to conceal technology with charging stations in drawers and cabinets. Place pop-up outlets in desks or countertops, or choose furnishings with built-in USB ports.

≈ Use mirrors with LED lighting that can offer a range of lighting styles, like strong, bright light during the day and softer light at night.

≈ Larger TVs are trending – choose 49" - 55", high-definition, wall-mounted options to display in-house TV channels and other resident engagement content.
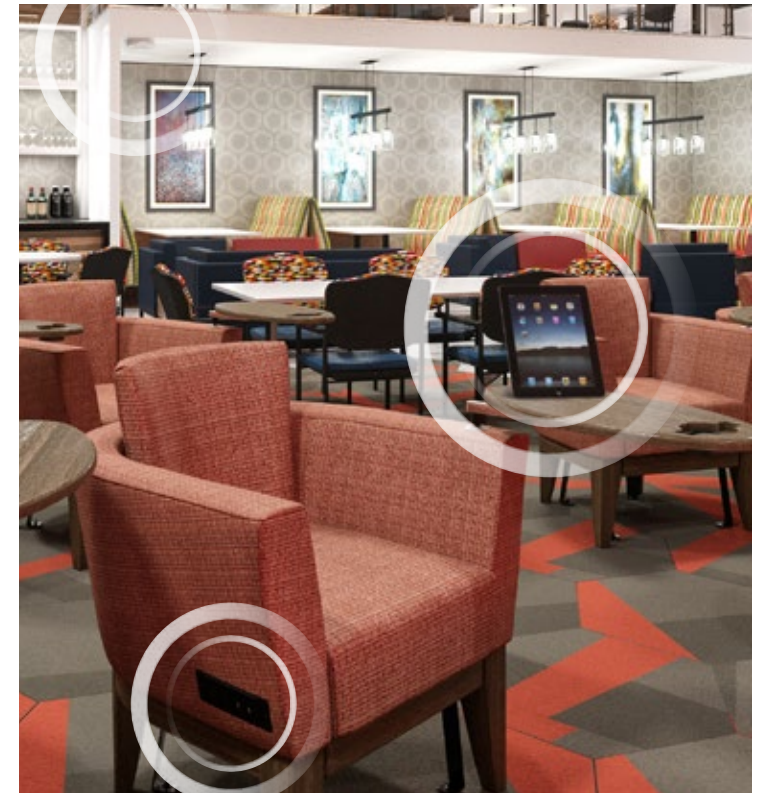
Multipurpose Room

≈ Because newer furniture can feature built-in power outlets, ensure your furniture layout will accommodate electric and bandwidth connectivity.

≈ During construction, keep the outlet location as flexible as possible until after the millwork is complete so outlets don't interfere.

≈ Include flexible technology that's easy to hide away depending on the use of the space. Add portable furniture, wireless mics, drop-down screens and other technology that can facilitate special events or local speakers.

≈ If the multipurpose room has an exterior spillover area, make sure the WiFi signal reaches that space as well. Solid furniture, like a cabana, can be equipped with WiFi boosters.

Theater

≈ Create an immersive experience by adding a popcorn machine, projector, appropriate lighting, electronic curtains in front of the screen and speakers in the walls with architectural detailing to hide them.

≈ Consider the viewing angle that best suits the shape of the room. Seniors' eyesight is more limited, especially peripheral vision, so the room layout will need to support more direct sight lines.

≈ Include electronic room darkening shades if there are windows in the theater.

≈ Install an assisted hearing system for seniors who are hard of hearing.

Learn more about innovative Senior Living technology solutions at **directsupply.com/technologysolutions.**

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on the horizon

See what's up and coming in Senior Living tech.

5G is an advanced wireless system using digital cellular networks that can support a larger number of devices in a given area. In Senior Living, it will allow easier technology setup with less wiring. Be sure to check with local regulators because some municipalities require hardwiring for certain applications.

Smart Home is a general term in which lighting, environmental, entertainment and appliances can all wirelessly connect to simplify and automate activities for residents. More and more seniors will want to enable smart capabilities in their new residences.
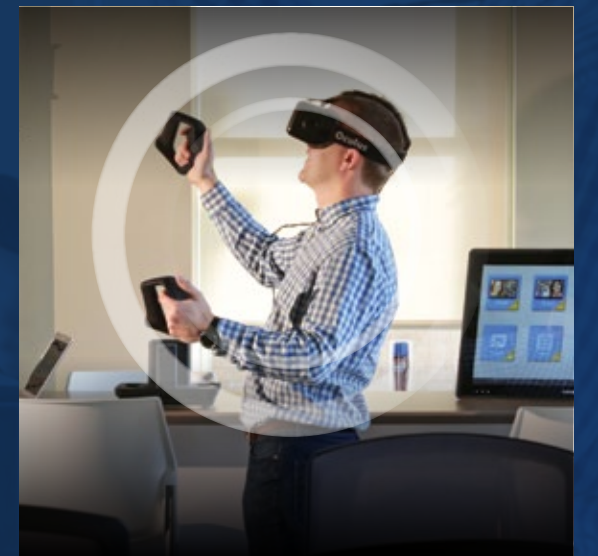

Social Robots are in-home companions that can interact with residents in a variety of ways and often have learning capabilities. For seniors, they can help combat loneliness and provide medication reminders. They typically remain in resident rooms, so excellent connectivity is key.

Machine Learning is the ability for technology to trigger or activate actions based on what it sees. For example, a camera with facial recognition and active learning may record a resident wandering during the night and can send a text message to a staff member to address the situation and care for the resident.

take the grand tour

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