



If You Don't 'Feed The Beast', Sooner or Later It Won't Work

By Pam McDonald

If you've ever watched the TV series Property Brothers (one of my personal favorites), you know that opening a wall during a renovation can reveal all sorts of nightmares – from a termite infestation to knob-and-tube wiring. It's the stuff in the background, hidden from view that really matters.

And, if you think about it, the same can be said for software-as-a-service (SaaS) products. That's why [LifeShare Technologies](#), a communications and engagement programming system and Senior Housing Forum partner, goes to great lengths to keep their technical stack functioning smoothly and efficiently.

"Feeding The Beast"

Co-Founder John Moore calls this "feeding the beast" or "paying the toll". He says, "These are popular euphemisms for all the work we as an SaaS provider do to maintain peak performance from our hardware and software."

He points out, "Today's computing environment is full of moving parts: hosted servers . . . databases . . . third party as well as [Open Source](#) code libraries. And, LifeShare Tech supplements these assets with our own in-house developed software. We think of this environment as a living, breathing entity requiring regular care and feeding."

LifeShare Technology's System

The system includes a compact set top box that is loaded with sophisticated software that adds massive engagement (activities) programming, communications functionality, internet connectivity (including email), and digital infrastructure to ordinary TVs.

Its hassle-free system is designed specifically for older adults and for senior living communities. Just a click of the simplified remote allows individual LifeShare Tech users to quickly and easily access all of its programming, including email – without a computer.

Benefits Senior Living Communities Gain

Senior living communities also gain a powerful communications/marketing tool with a myriad of functions, such as the following:

- Personal alerts and notices to individual residents' room via TV, phone, text, or all three
- In-house signage that showcases the community's lifestyle or features special events, menus, and upcoming activities
- Added resident engagement resources and wellness programming that can be geared to individuals, groups, or memory care residents
- Direct communication to and from residents' families

What's Happening Behind-The-Scenes

LifeShare's maintenance and updating routine specifically is looking to accomplish the following:

- **Fix bugs** – No software is perfect; regular updates ensure that the system has the latest fixes to known errors to make it possible to deliver more reliable service
- **Install additional features** – Just as LifeShare itself adds new features, so do the software providers whose products are incorporated into its environment
- **Use more efficient code** – Software is constantly being rewritten to make its inner workings more efficient and LifeShare incorporates these to make its service more scalable to thousands of customers
- **Make security changes** – As new security threats are identified and software is hardened to prevent exploits of those vulnerabilities, LifeShare regularly upgrades its hosted server operating systems to greater safety from fewer security breaches

John recommends that senior living companies ask their SaaS providers how much of their product development budget is targeted toward "paying the toll". He says, "You should get a knowing look and a quick answer of 15-20%."

"If you get a blank stare or paper shuffling, be wary that either the work isn't being done or it is being done as an afterthought, definitely not as part of a planned product development roadmap."



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