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CASE STUDY

HOW BICKFORD SENIOR LIVING SAVED 4.5 M

JUSTIN STEIN

Chief People Officer
@ Bickford Senior Living

Wise Words from Justin Stein

"In this gig economy why are your caregivers chained to long hours?

At a time when margins are razor thin, why are you calling agencies to fill shift gaps?

With all the great new apps available, why are you using spreadsheets or, worse yet, paper?"

These are the questions Justin Stein, Chief People Officer at Bickford Senior Living found himself asking when he was placed in charge of HR, payroll, learning and development and recruiting. Bickford is a family operated network of 56 communities across the Midwest, providing independent living, home care, assisted living, and memory care.

Side note: You've got to check out the "culture" section of their website, it's powerful, positive, and authentic (unique in this industry).

Justin has one of those great "how did you get into senior living" stories. As a new college grad, the only brush with senior living he had was visiting his grandmother at a local senior living community. But unbeknownst to him, his people skills, warmth, and caring nature were very much on display during those visits. They were also noticed by management. He was offered a job on the spot. It turned into a career, ultimately landing Justin at Bickford Senior Living.

At Bickford, old-school scheduling was costing them between $10-$12 million dollars per year.

Here's why:
1. Management was spending their valuable time pouring over paper schedules instead of _ _ _ _ _ (you fill in the blank).
2. Staff wouldn't show up for their shifts, not because they were deadbeats, but because they didn't know they were scheduled!
3. Lack of schedule flexibility was at odds with the new gig economy.
4. Shift bonuses of over one million per year were being offered in desperation to fill shifts.
5. The knee jerk reaction was to call agencies to fill shifts that their own employees probably didn't know were even available.
6. They were spending a ton of money that they didn't need to be spending.

Justin's goals were simple but ambitious:

- Get rid of paper schedules. They were time intensive, inflexible, and confusing.
- Create an automated gig model that would allow for dynamic scheduling.
- Eliminate the need for expensive agencies.

Then he found a scheduling software that would put Bickford on a path of saving millions of dollars.

It took some time. Some of the high-profile scheduling software solutions were too complicated and over-engineered with distracting bells and whistles which made them hard to use.

Then they found Accushield Flex a powerful, but easy to use software that automates every aspect of workforce scheduling including:

- shift call-outs in seconds,
- browsing and self-scheduling,
- end-to-end schedule management,
- Kiosk based time clock
- … and it's really, really easy to use.

More importantly Flex, along with a few other adjustments, is saving Bickford millions of dollars.

Accushield Flex was a game changer.

But Justin still had work to do.

- Getting workers to adapt. Justin gamified it, holding contests in which users would make videos on what they used to handle schedules compared with the new way using Flex.
- Getting off the agency addiction. They already had a homecare service that they also used as an "internal agency". So Justin made it mandatory that, if a shift wasn't picked up with Flex, staff must contact the homecare internal agency. It saved money and helped them move away from agencies.

At a savings of over $4.5 million, the results were well worth the effort.

- Now, agencies are a last resort. They've gone from 3-4k hours per week to 58 hours of agency across all communities. That means a reduction from $1.1 million per month to about $50k per month. So far they've saved $3.6 million.
- The need to pay shift bonuses decreased. They have saved over $900k.
- Bottom line savings? Over $4.5 million!

Look at the ROI. It's insane. If you do it right.

The numbers speak for themselves. If you're still battling with paper and spreadsheets or "over-engineer scheduling software that are clunky to run, take a page from Justin's book, "Look at the ROI. It's insane. If you do it right."

P.S. Update from Justin just came in. They had their first 100% agency-free week. And you can be sure there are plenty more to follow!

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