



Case Study

Total Longterm Care, Inc.

Client

Total Longterm Care Inc. (TLC), a Colorado-based nonprofit organization, enables frail individuals to live with dignity in their own homes and communities. By providing and coordinating a full range of in-home services, medical and therapeutic care, plus transportation to and from day/health centers, TLC helps aging individuals and their family caregivers enjoy enhanced quality of life. Serving the Denver metro area since 1991, TLC employs almost 600 caregivers and staff across 10 locations.

Prior to using online learning, TLC held in-person inservices, holding up to eight inservices per year to meet training requirements. All tracking was done manually.

Challenges

In-Person Inservices Were Difficult to Schedule/Manage

With a small employee education staff, TLC struggled to deliver training and improve employee attendance. Kathy Strecker, Employee Trainer for TLC, says, "We have four day centers and training could only be done between the work hours of 7:00 am and 5:00 pm; you can imagine how disruptive it was to split the staff in half for inservices and find coverage for those in training." In trying to deliver eight inservices per year, Kathy's staff also struggled with scheduling makeup sessions for those who didn't attend—and getting employees to attend in the first place.

CHALLENGES

- Traditional training was difficult in terms of scheduling and attendance
- Manual record-keeping lead to challenges during survey
- Employees had limited computer skills and fear of technology

"We would have employees coming and going, in and out of the sessions," she says. "The number of inservices, with constant interruptions, eventually led to employees not taking them seriously."

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*Kathy Strecker,
Employee Trainer,
Total Longterm Care Inc.*

Manual Records Lead to Survey

Keeping manual records proved inconvenient when surveyors were in the building. "Surveys in our buildings could take a while, depending on

the level of records requested," Kathy says. "If a surveyor asked for individual employee records, it would take a long time to pull each record and make sure it was accurate."

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Employees had Limited Computer Skills and Technology Fear

One of the biggest obstacles for TLC's general business goals was a fear of technology among a number of employees, especially frontline workers. "A significant number of our frontline employees were afraid of computers," Kathy says. TLC tasked Kathy with getting Silverchair running for the frontline staff: "It was one of my first big responsibilities to get this rolled out to the company, starting with frontline staff," she says. "We needed to get them familiar with [technology] and teach them basic computer skills."

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Results

Training is Easier to Manage

Once Kathy launched online learning to the frontline staff, managing inservices (and tracking compliance) became easier. “[Silverchair] has saved us a lot of time and frustration,” Kathy says. “It used to take weeks to prepare and put on inservices between scheduling and reserving time and space. Now planning is more convenient.”

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TLC also uses the online system for their annual competency check process. “Offline tracking helped the registration and check-in processes go really smoothly. The tracking piece is great,” she says. “Registration for Annual Competencies went very smoothly last year, and that’s a good thing! It proved to be a great time-saver.”

Surveys Are More Efficient

Now that all training is tracked through an online system, Kathy has seen an improvement in time spent during surveys and the frustration levels of surveyors. “The surveyors have been very happy with the reports we can pull from Silverchair,” she says. “It’s much easier—for them and us—than looking for physical reports and records.”

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Employees Now Embrace Technology

According to Kathy, “One of the major improvements we’ve seen since using online learning is the positive effect of Silverchair on employees’ computer skills.” She mentions that as the system rolled out, there were a few ‘bumps in the road’ and some nervousness, but once TLC’s frontline staff starting using the system, “They accepted [Silverchair] and it has nurtured their computer skills.” Employees also like the fact that courses are in English and Spanish, and nurses are enjoying the availability of CE courses: “We’re making as many CE courses available as possible for our nurses,” Kathy says.

TLC was able to use online learning as a transitional technology that built the foundation for other technological tools. “We started with Silverchair, which was such a gentle transition into using computers,” Kathy says. Using Silverchair made the transition to other computer applications, like Electronic Medical Records (EMRs), much easier.


Conclusion

TLC was faced with the challenge of delivering a consistent, accountable training program with a relatively small and time-crunched training staff. They also knew that technological programs would need to be implemented, but many of their employees were technology-averse. By using online learning to streamline their training and tracking, TLC saw the benefit of consistent training and reports; smoother surveys; and a workforce that gained the computer skills needed to work in today’s ever-changing senior care industry.

“Computer programs are everywhere now,” Kathy says. “Launching these programs was a huge transition, and I’m grateful to Silverchair for

helping the employees gain the skills they needed.”

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