

Customer Success at LCS:

Dedication to Innovation with Autonomous Robotic Cleaning for LCS Senior Living Communities



INTRODUCTION:

LCS is an award-winning organization with more than 50 years of dedicated senior living experience offering operations, development, real estate and group purchasing expertise. LCS serves the residents and team members at more than 135 communities throughout the country in support of the organization's mission to create opportunities for purposeful living filled with rich experiences.

LCS's commitment to service and quality has made the company a leader in the senior living industry. In 2020, driven by an innovative and resident-focused mindset, LCS began partnering with SoftBank Robotics America to test and ultimately implement an automated cleaning solution. The companies have been working together since 2020 and, jointly, won the McKnight's Technology Award for their partnership in 2022.

Care Purchasing Services (CPS) is an LCS group purchasing organization dedicated to bringing on innovative vendor partners for LCS Senior Living communities.

**MULTI-
PROPERTY
CHALLENGES:**

Cleaning a senior living community is demanding and takes valuable time away from resident-focused services. Communities need to be cleaned efficiently while maintaining the highest-level of safety and cleanliness for residents. LCS needed to balance this with the priorities of providing excellent resident care, maintaining the high standards for cleanliness and ensuring the long-term care of the properties. To continue providing innovative solutions to better serve communities, LCS partnered with SoftBank Robotics America.

**RIGHT
SOLUTION,
TRUSTED
PARTNER**

LCS originally contacted SoftBank Robotics America to learn more about their robotic program and determine if both the program and the SoftBank Robotics America team offered a viable solution for better serving residents and team members. During this exploratory phase, the team agreed to rollout the cleaning technology at a handful of communities. LCS and CPS were impressed with the effort SoftBank Robotics America took to fully understand the unique challenges and opportunities in the environment and work with the team members to achieve the value of the program.

“SoftBank Robotics America was willing to work ‘elbow to elbow’ with us, learning together, implementing together and providing appropriate training. We were impressed with the effort SoftBank Robotics America took to understand our processes and meet our needs.” commented **Sam Topping, Senior Director, Plant Operations, LCS.**

After a successful test trial, CPS, the LCS group purchasing organization, onboarded SoftBank Robotics America as a new vendor partner. **Elisa Baptiste, SVP and Chief Operating Officer CPS,** said *“SoftBank Robotics America helped us tell the story of the value of their robotic program so that we could increase adoption of automation across our communities.”*



EASE OF DEPLOYMENT:

This was a first-time use of robotics for the team at LCS and the results were positive. Topping believes the level of support and involvement from SoftBank Robotics America was instrumental to the success of autonomous robotic integration into their cleaning operations. *“SoftBank Robotics America was engaged and proactive, with customer success being the most valuable piece of the program”*, he said. As with all new projects, there was an initial learning curve. LCS needed to understand and implement new procedures for their cleaning operations. SoftBank Robotics America worked closely with LCS and enabled the organization to make the changes necessary to deliver value from the program. The value was evidenced by several metrics including best cost/hour to run the program, SOP completion, and program productivity (which is discussed later in this case study).

ENHANCED EXPERIENCE:

From the onset of the project rollout, staff and residents appreciated seeing automation at work. At first there was a high level of curiosity with staff and residents constantly watching the robots. The communities were engaged and even had competitions to name the robots. It has now reached a point where, if staff and residents don't see the robots, they are concerned and question where the robots are. The staff have also found the robots to be simple to deploy and use. *“It has been a good investment for our communities. Our environmental operations teams have easily adopted the program and are grateful to have something to assist them in their daily work. This has allowed us to create a happier operations team and enabled them to complete more with the time saved”*, said Sam Topping. Maintenance is easy too. It typically involves wiping sensors, cleaning brushes, and changing filters every 3-4 months, with brush replacements annually.

The hardest aspect of any successful autonomous program is the process of change management and integration of robotics into the operations. Change management is necessary for the program to demonstrate value. Key aspects for LCS:

1

Deciding who should be involved in the initial rollout process

2

Having senior level support and engagement

3

Expectation setting and constant communication

**INCREASED
PRODUCTIVITY,
SOP
CONSISTENCY:**

Using Whiz, a commercial vacuum robot, has provided increased productivity and enhanced the resident experience by allowing team members to focus on other tasks to better serve residents. Each location requires a different number of robots to meet the cleaning SOPs of the 50+ communities being serviced. The number of robots is determined by community needs as well as floor space dimensions. There are also multiple shifts to take into consideration, split between different teams ranging from maintenance to security to environmental services. Even the security team is playing its part in cleaning operations! Whiz requires initial operator training lasting just 2 hours, with no need for lengthy, specialized technical training.

The implementation of SoftBank Robotics America's technology has allowed LCS communities to remain focused on providing a high standard of cleanliness while also allowing associates to spend their time in ways that enhance the resident experience.

Sam Topping, Senior Director, Plant Operations, LCS said: *"Our ability to depend on staffing levels at certain sites enables cleaning 7 days per week. We have approximately 3M sq. feet to clean on a weekly basis across all properties"*

**HIGH VALUE,
STRATEGIC
INVESTMENT:**

LCS has met or exceeded productivity objectives for team members and SOP coverage that were set at the beginning of SBRA's industry leading robotics program. Some of the results:

Increased productivity and empowered EVS staff by enabling staff to focus on high-touch areas while robots manage the cleaning of open spaces. Robots handle repetitive tasks with ease, which reduces physical strain on the workforce, and reduces the potential for workers' comp claims. This approach has been especially helpful during vacations and when there are gaps in labor. The communities that deployed the SoftBank Robotics America autonomous floor care program, benefited from stable operations costs, as they were able to lock in pricing for the program over a five-year period.

Enhanced resident experiences and overall satisfaction by showcasing robotic innovation to the residents, in their environment, and demonstrating a commitment to thorough cleaning. In the sales cycle to drive occupancy, some communities noticed that robots were recognized by prospective residents and their families. The program was believed to have an overall positive effect, with perception of clean and commitment to innovation. Sam Topping, commented that *"The robots for our floors have been bringing smiles to the residents and their families, making them feel happy and that they are in a high-tech environment."*

**BEST RUN
CLEANING
OPERATIONS:**

Since the first deployment in August of 2020, LCS has continued to expand the robotic cleaning fleet. In total LCS is using over 70 [Whiz](#) units, which vacuum carpets as well as sweep hard floors. LCS has also started integrating the larger, autonomous [S50 Pro Scrubber](#) robots which scrub and mop hard floors. Over 50 communities in the US are using SoftBank Robotics America's solutions at LCS managed communities.

Using robots to handle repetitive cleaning tasks, LCS has increased productivity, optimized labor costs, and enhanced the experience of staff and residents alike. Overall, it has been a valuable, strategic investment for LCS. When asked to summarize his experience, **Sam Topping, Senior Director, Plant Operations, LCS**, was quick to point out: *"Having the robots in our communities gives us peace of mind that we are accomplishing our SOPs and have more time to attend to high priority tasks that may arise. It also helps us stay on track with our daily tasks."*



ABOUT SOFTBANK ROBOTICS

SoftBank Robotics America is the North American arm of SoftBank Robotics, driving technology forward by becoming a worldwide leader in robotics solutions. Headquartered in San Francisco, SoftBank Robotics America is a trusted partner and robot integrator that helps clients think beyond the technology, to incorporate the people and processes that solve the most pressing challenges and deliver best run operations. SoftBank Robotics America brings value and relevancy to senior living, hospitality, aviation, class A office space, multi-family, education, facilities management, and commercial cleaning. The goal is to develop a strong partnership and foundation for automation that will realize maximum strategic value on the investment in robotics. For more information on SoftBank Robotics America, please visit us.softbankrobotics.com