

Customer Success at Sabra:

Improving Quality and Efficiency of Operations in Senior Living with Autonomous Solutions



INTRODUCTION:

Sabra Health Care REIT, Inc., is a Maryland corporation that operates as a self-administered, self-managed real estate investment trust (a "REIT"). Through its subsidiaries it owns and invests in real estate serving the healthcare industry throughout the United States and Canada.

Two properties **The Chateau McKinney, TX** and **Traditions, Beavercreek OH** are featured in this article.

Peter Nyland, EVP Asset Management for Sabra Health Care REIT Inc. (Sabra) sat down with Christian Barnes from SoftBank Robotics America to talk about Sabra's overall experience with the SoftBank program.

**BUSINESS
CHALLENGE:**

Peter Nyland has millions of square feet of flooring to keep clean and is always looking for smart ways to use capital for Sabra's Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) program.

Peter was curious about how technology – specifically robotic automation - could help care for the floors and, at the same time, address Sabra's ESG goals.

The ESG program focuses on four pillars related to the improvement and efficiency of:

- Quality of life for residents
- Quality of care for residents
- Quality of the work environment
- Efficiency of staff

Any new initiative must be scalable, practical, and build on existing investments.

Peter had previously looked at a lot of different technologies but could not find the right solution. Working with **Justin Smith, Head of Innovation at Direct Supply**, Peter began evaluating whether autonomous floor care could deliver measurable ESG, labor and asset-protection outcomes at scale.

At the same time, Sabra wanted to improve the efficiency of staff, allowing staff to spend more of their time on higher priority areas such as deep cleaning apartments.

After the success of an initial project featuring two locations, Sabra decided to go all in on automated floor care from SoftBank Robotics America under the guidance of Direct Supply.

DEFINING BUSINESS OUTCOMES:

At the outset of the project, several **KPIs** were set to track and ensure the project was on course to meet its objectives.

1. **Cleaning Performance** (which was measured by the data platform, [SoftBank Robotics Connect](#)). Metrics included:
 - a. **Runtime.** Total hours of the robot running autonomously.
 - b. **Coverage.** Square footage cleaned per route, per day.
 - c. **Route Completion Rate.** % of planned routes that were successfully run each week.
 - d. **Assist Frequency.** Number of times a human intervention was needed per hour of runtime (aim for ≤ 1 every 2-3 hours).
 - e. **Resolution Time.** Average time the robot sat idle, waiting for assistance.
2. **Cleaning Quality** (which was measured **Before** and **After** the project).
 - a. Specifically, there was a **Dust Bag Collection Comparison** where the contents of the dustbag were weighed and visually documented from the first run compared to subsequent runs.
 - b. The goal was to **reduce the weight of the dustbag once the program was underway**. This would be consistent with more frequent clean, a clear outcome the program was looking to achieve.
3. **Labor Efficiency & Reallocation**
 - a. This objective tracked **manual labor hours saved** by using time logs or staff schedules.
 - b. It also measured **new tasks completed** now that labor was freed up from manual vacuuming.
 - c. The **Return on Work** model was used to show additional benefits achieved, such as higher resident engagement and the ability to disinfect and deep clean hard to reach places, because the robot was handling repetitive cleaning tasks.

In addition, **subjective metrics** were defined to monitor and measure:

1

Resident & Staff Sentiment. Surveys and interviews were conducted after 2-3 weeks of the program commencing. The team also took note of comments or themes such as residents naming the robot or having increased interaction or curiosity with the robots. The latter is a sign of cultural acceptance.

2

Perception of Clean. To assess this, staff and residents were asked to rate cleanliness before and during the use of commercial cleaning robots. Before and after photos were taken too.

3

Ease of Use Feedback. This process documented how long it took new users to learn the interface, complete a route or respond to a request for help from the robot. Staff generally responded faster by week 2 of the initial program. This indicated a strong path to full adoption of the technology.

**PROGRAM
ADOPTION THAT
SCALES:**

In order to deliver program adoption, and the foundation for ongoing robotic automation investment, Peter had to get key stakeholders involved at all levels of the organization – from the CEO and C-Suite in general, all the way to the regional manager level, administrators and staff. Board members were kept informed on performance too.

At the start of the project, SoftBank Robotics America was on site with Direct Supply to provide operator training, advise and answer questions, and to assist in mapping the floor space to be cleaned. Sabra considered this as an essential foundational step and an investment in and commitment to the sustainability of the program. Without the onboarding, on-site assistance and ongoing monitoring, Peter is convinced *“the robots would be sitting in a closet”*.

SoftBank Robotics Connect's dashboard was integral in measuring and tracking utilization rates as well as identifying potential issues such as causes of downtime so that status like 'battery low' could be addressed straight away with members of the facilities team. **With over 70 communities using almost 100 robots daily**, reports and analytics are critical for managing program adoption and helping protect investment in the program.

Ongoing project support is provided on a daily basis, as needed, by the responsive, customer care helpline.

Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) have capital to spend but it is important that expenditure is practical and delivers measurable value. Sabra tried to eliminate as many barriers to success as they could.

“From the beginning, the conversation wasn't about robots,” said Justin Smith, Head of Innovation at Direct Supply. “It was about outcomes; how to protect the asset, improve the resident experience, and give staff time back for the work that really matters. Robotics was simply the right tool to support those goals.”

Peter valued the highly collaborative partnership built on mutual trust, team engagement and alignment on business outcomes. Peter firmly believes that you can *“buy stuff from anyone”* but this doesn't guarantee business outcomes.

**BEST-RUN
OPERATIONS
AND MORE:**

During the initial project, over 2,000,000 square feet of carpet were vacuumed over a 15-week period. In the history of operations at Sabra, that was a new productivity milestone.

Labor Optimization, Higher Quality and Enhanced Experiences:

In addition to meeting their ESG goals, Sabra confirmed that they would be able to avoid a cost increase in operations, provide a higher quality of cleanliness, better air quality and leverage their housekeeping staff in more meaningful ways.

*“As a company, we decided that we were **not** going to cut labor because of the robots. We needed housekeeping staff spending their time in areas that couldn’t be automated, such as deep cleaning resident rooms.”* said Peter Nyland.

Housekeeping staff spend more time with residents than with anyone else in the building, so by enabling more staff to do deep cleaning, it allows more residents “relationship time” which, for the elderly in particular, is vital.

“Residents feel better when they know the employees better so there are other benefits besides having more efficiently cleaned buildings.” added Peter Nyland. *“It’s a human business. You can’t use technology for everything, but this [robotic automation] is clearly something we can use without negatively impacting our employees.”*

Positive Impact on Life and Work:

Sabra has invested money in autonomous floor care so that employees can spend more time doing things that cannot be automated. The company has a sincere interest in helping housekeeping staff improve their efficiency so that they feel better about their work and can positively impact the lives of the residents entrusted into their care.

“We want our staff spending their time doing the most impactful things [...], and vacuuming hallways isn’t one of them. We can [..] engage technology to do that,” said Peter Nyland.

Following the introduction of floor care robots, Staff have appreciated that their hours were not cut and that they now have additional help with cleaning that is both easy to use and easy to maintain. One member of staff commented that the floors look better and smell better with robotic automation than when staff are cleaning the same floor four times a day. An executive director added *“The robot is simple to operate, just a button to press and a screen to touch your selections and it’s off to work. No need to think about it until it returns to its home base. The residents are fascinated by it and test it from time to time to see if it will stop and/or move around them. Several have already talked about naming this newest member of the team.”*

Residents and their families have appreciated the fact that Sabra has continued to innovate and find ways to improve resident experience as well as the quality of the overall operation. *“When you have residents telling you that the building looks better and smells better, that means we’re achieving our [joint] objectives”* commented Justin Smith.

Families touring the Sabra facilities to decide whether to take up residence are impressed when they see the autonomous robots in action. The robots operate safely during the day, navigating around objects and stopping as necessary for individuals before continuing on their route. They are a visible way of educating families that Sabra is different and committed to providing quality of life and care to residents. Peter commented, *“I believe intuitively that there is a correlation between the quality of care and the use of new technology, like robots, and a decision to move in for new residents”*.

Bonus Benefits: Cleaner Air Quality

Vacuuming carpets with a robot has beneficial side effects too - related to air quality. Even though the buildings did not appear to be dirty, autonomous floor care robots were more efficient at capturing dust and dirt without releasing it into the atmosphere, compared to a traditional vacuum. Maintenance teams confirmed that the dust and dirt load on HVAC filters in the common area, HVAC and heating systems, were significantly lower following the projects. This in turn reduced utility costs because the machines didn’t need to work so hard.

Air quality is an extremely important criteria for a health care facility, and the benefits of cleaner air are well known – reduction in allergens, improved respiratory health, lower rates of illness and infection, enhanced sleep quality and long-term cardiovascular benefits.

Bonus Benefits: Carpets Last Longer and Cost Less

Re-carpeting a building can cost anywhere from \$400K to \$500K, according to Peter, so by taking better care of them, Sabra is able to keep the carpets looking fresh for longer, perhaps 1-2 years or more, and delay a significant capital expense.

**DELIVERING
OUTCOMES
THAT MATTER:**

The primary indicator of business value was for Sabra to meet its stated ESG goals to improve the experience for the residents, and staff, and improve the quality of the environment. (See figure 1)

Cost savings and possibly lower infection rates due to cleaner air quality are just some of the additional benefits Sabra has identified to date.

FIGURE 1: EARLY RESULTS FROM RESIDENCES SHOWED SUPPORT FOR AUTONOMOUS CLEANING MACHINES.

	The Chateau McKinney, TX	Traditions, Beavercreek, OH
Robot Name	Rug Rat	R2 Clean 2
Labor Efficiency Goal	Every area, Every day	Every area, Every day
Cleaning Quality	Positive Clean after Day 6	Positive Clean after Day 11
Resident Perception		
# Surveyed	39	22
Looked Cleaner	87%	86%
Robot Positive	82%	91%
Air Quality Fresher	63%	68%

Source: Final Report (June 13, 2025). Survey conducted by Direct Supply. Survey Data from SoftBank Robotics America.

**SOFTBANK
ROBOTICS
AMERICA
CREATES
A LASTING
IMPACT THAT
MAKES THE
DIFFERENCE:**

For Peter Nyland, the service provider’s longevity and experience were critical in the decision-making process. In his experience it was *“really, really difficult”* to find companies that would *“probably make it”* and he experienced that many technology providers were *“hunting for solutions”*.

Peter ultimately chose Softbank Robotics America because of its longevity, integrator vision, experience with both cleaning automation and robotics in general and their market presence. Attention to detail, and ability to implement programs that yield quantifiable results was key. It was important for Peter that any technology used on-site had been thoroughly tested elsewhere. It was also important that, to the extent possible, any robotic automation program could provide 100% uptime.



“The robot is no good to me if it doesn’t work and I think we created a win-win situation with the program. The robot runs as much as possible,” said Peter. He added “Sometimes doing the right thing costs money”.

INNOVATING FOR THE FUTURE:

Quality of care both now and in the future is a primary goal for Sabra. Robotic automation – both for cleaning and for the environment in general - will be a necessary capital expense for the long term.

Justin Smith, Head of Innovation at Direct Supply, sees the shift to robotic automation as foundational to the future of senior living. *“The future of senior living will require us to rethink how work gets done,”* Smith said. *“Technology like robotics allows organizations to do more with the people they have without compromising care, culture, or quality. That’s the kind of innovation worth investing in.”*

“At some point, there are going to be more seniors than housing. We’re not going to have enough employees. We have got to continue to find technologies like these robots [...] that can help shift some of the workload”. said Peter Nyland. *“And Softbank Robotics America and Direct Supply are amazing partners to work with.”*

When asked to summarize his relationship with Softbank Robotics America and Direct Supply, Peter said: *“We have an amazing partnership built on trust that enables us to meet our objectives and deliver more value than expected for our residents and staff.”*



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