



## Richard Nix

Yardi

In this Voices interview, Senior Housing News sits down with Richard Nix, senior director of senior living sales for Yardi®, to learn how sales teams have adjusted during the pandemic to fewer face-to-face visits and how prior to the pandemic, sales teams used Yardi creatively with “Yardi parties,” which helped ensure connections with leads. He also offers a sneak peek into new areas Yardi will enter in 2021.

Editor’s note: This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

**Yardi® develops and supports industry-leading investment and property management software for all types and sizes of real estate companies, including senior living operators. To find out how our technology can help you, visit [yardi.com](https://yardi.com).**

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**Q: Senior Housing News:**

**You've spent your career in technology, with a lot of time in the senior space, and you've been with Yardi since 2014. What lessons do you draw from most frequently in your current role?**

**Richard Nix:** Definitely, the main lesson is to always talk to people. Previously I've worked with the New York Stock Exchange in technology, the United Nations, and for AgingCare.com, which was a website for family caregivers. A lot of folks like to communicate using technology, such as emails and text, but there's nothing like getting on the phone with people and really learning their issues—especially now that we're not seeing them at client meetings and at conferences — and spending a little bit of time getting a quick call with them to see what is really driving them and what issues are pertaining to them right now.

The other key point is teamwork. The Yardi culture is all about teamwork. We have a great team, and we work to solve problems together for our clients.

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**Q: Senior Housing News: One of the early outcomes of the pandemic was the increase in technology adoption, including among sales and marketing teams. The adjustment was not easy, but sales teams have come through. What did you see early in terms of their adjustment, and what are the most important ways that you're seeing technology augment the diminished in-person sales calls in 2020?**

**Richard Nix:** Salespeople are road warriors. We're on the road a lot. We depend on technology for handling many client requests. Since face-to-face meetings have been hard to arrange during the pandemic, continual contact with clients by other means became critical.

In terms of specific technologies, the use of the video meetings has been a shift. This is a personal thing, but I like to put the camera on myself at the beginning of a video call. I think a familiar face for contacts to see can be comforting, but I never pressure them to put their cameras on. A lot of times they do it anyway and say, "Hey, it's good to see you." Some people don't like to turn on the camera and I completely respect that. I like to just keep the camera on for a couple of minutes, to start the conversation, then shut it off, make them feel comfortable and talk through the situation.

Previously, a lot of people might have said, "Do you want to have a face-to-face for the first meeting?" Now you can probably have these video meetings first and see if there is a good business fit. You can avoid unnecessary travel by making that video call first. This is respecting their time and your time. If there is a fit, then you can schedule visits.

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**Q: Senior Housing News:**  
How is Yardi helping families communicate with residents right now?

**Richard Nix:** Several years ago, we came out with a family and resident portal called RENTCafé Senior Living, and it's been vital for our clients. Residents and families have access to make payments with credit card and ACH, or schedule a maintenance request. Families also can opt in to receive text alerts, which is really important now, especially if there's a COVID-related notice or other issue at the community.

Using RENTCafé Senior Living, families can check on wellness participation, communicate with the care staff directly and even book activities. They can see if there is a community trip coming up and go online and pay for it with a credit card. Then they can call their family member and say, "Hey, Mom, guess what? You're going on this trip today. I know you want to stay in, but it's already paid for." This is not something people are doing today with COVID-19, of course, but once things improve, this will really help the communities and families. It's just a nice way to communicate with the community all in one stop, and even sign paperwork electronically through that portal.

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**Q: Senior Housing News:**  
What is the connection between those technological innovations and an operator's ability to manage client needs?

**Richard Nix:** I think the most important consideration is giving family members visibility into how their loved ones are doing. Are they active? Are they being taken care of? Yes, you can call the community and ask to speak to someone, but that can be very difficult. With the portal you actually can have this view into the day-to-day life if that's authorized by the community, which is becoming more and more common based on resident and family desires.

In my case, my sister was my mom's health care proxy, so she could see all her health information. My brother was more on the payment side, so he could check on her bill and financials.



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**Q: Senior Housing News:**  
What is your favorite success story of how a sales team recently used Yardi technology in a winning creative way?

**Richard Nix:** Prior to COVID-19, some of our clients were making the use of our platform fun by having “Yardi parties” that help their team use the platform to work with families who were interested in moving in. Once a resident moves in, our clients use our platform to keep the family engaged.

Instead of just writing, “I left a message for Richard Nix to talk about his mom moving in,” the next step was two days later: “Follow up with Rich.” There was always something to follow up so that lead doesn’t get lost. I think that’s one of the biggest fears: losing track of the lead. Our system can actually drive sales teams to make the next step, and that’s what clients leveraged.



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**Q: Senior Housing News:**  
How has the pandemic affected technology adoption in senior living?

**Richard Nix:** I think operators realized in the past that yes, technology can help, but the pandemic has caused them to really look at using technology to help them become more efficient. Efficiency is especially important now because they have increased costs with PPE and testing and more labor.

How do we use technology to free up more time for our staff to focus on meeting the needs of the residents and their well-being? That’s the name of the game at the end of the day. Community operators work 7/24/365 taking care of families’ loved ones, and it’s tough to carve out time to look at technology and evaluate it. I think maybe some of their team members may have made a little more time to look at it during this time.

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**Q: Senior Housing News:**  
**What's next for Yardi**  
**in 2021?**

**Richard Nix:** We released Yardi Senior IQ, a business intelligence tool that allows community operators to see all of their KPIs. Operators and investors want more and more insight into their data, and Yardi is a data-driven company delivering on that need.

We continue to innovate and make our products stronger and more helpful to our clients. We want to help sales teams be efficient with their time and spend more time actually speaking with prospective residents and their families, helping families in all the steps involved in moving their loved ones in. I know there is no better place than a senior living community for your family member that may need some help, and we want to help our clients get that word out....RENTCafé is a way to do that.



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We are also expanding into the home health market. We have a new platform for that, Yardi At Home Care, which was announced earlier this year, and we anticipate growing our presence in that space in 2021.

Another big initiative for next year is strengthening interoperability, particularly in terms of our connections to hospitals and other systems to exchange resident health information.