



Multi-Family Maintenance Training

How to Drive Engagement, Adoption,
and Motivate Continuous Upskilling



Table of Contents



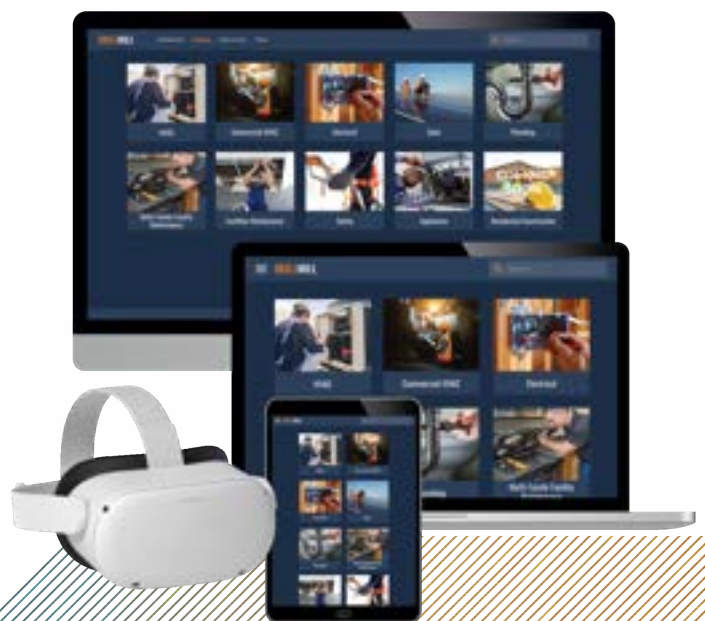
02	Independence Realty Trust (IRT) Living
07	J.C. Hart Apartment Communities
12	Sares Regis Group
15	Dominium Management Services
18	Wallick Communities

Introduction

Once an investment has been made in a technical training program for your maintenance associates, the next critical step is motivating them to use it.

A well-thought-out program intended to engage all levels of your associates can quickly translate to cost savings, faster promotions, fewer accidents and injuries, and higher employee retention. Yet how you structure, socialize, roll out, and incentivize the program can make the difference between it successfully being adopted or not.

In the following report, we highlight five multi-family organizations that have uniquely implemented Interplay's courses into their maintenance training programs to gain employee adoption, motivate upskilling, and increase their returns on training investment.





Independence Realty Trust (IRT) Living



Key Successes

- › Effectively scaled a new standardized maintenance training solution across the company:
 - 87% of Interplay courses started are completed by users.
 - 5,525 courses have been completed since the program's re-launch.
 - 8,579 Interplay training hours completed by all users, an average of 13 hours/user.
- › Created a career progression program with continuous and engaging upskilling:
 - Upskilled entry-level techs in 6 months.
 - Reduced average work order completion times within five months of re-launching the training program.
 - 91% of employees found Interplay's training courses engaging.
 - 92% of employees report Interplay's courses are relevant and applicable to their roles.
- › Tied incentivizes and promotions to professional development:
 - Awarded 24 internal promotions since program re-launch that were directly related to Interplay's training and are on track to triple promotions next year.

Communities	121
Units	35,000
Maintenance Associates Using Interplay	350+
LMS Provider	Litmos
Top Reasons for Investing in Interplay	Level up the skillsets of their maintenance associates to increase job growth and promotions

About Independence Realty Trust (IRT) Living

Independence Realty Trust (IRT) is a publicly traded real estate investment trust (REIT) that owns and manages communities containing more than 35,000 apartment homes in 14 states throughout the Southeast and Midwest US. IRT strives to provide its 55,000 residents with the best place to live, and with over 900 employees nationally, they strive to create the best place to work too. In 2021, IRT merged with Steadfast Apartment REIT (STAR), expanding communities and maintenance workforce to 350+ maintenance employees. By investing in cutting-edge skills training, IRT is creating better career paths, faster job growth & advancement for their maintenance staff.



Managing an Underskilled Workforce

IRT Living and STAR faced similar pre-merger challenges with attracting and retaining skilled maintenance workers. The growing skills gap left them with an inexperienced talent pool from which to hire, placing the responsibility on the management companies to recruit, hire, and develop the skills of their maintenance workforce.

IRT and STAR were no strangers to maintenance training and the challenges inherent in building a thriving maintenance training program. In addition to hands-on training, both companies offered general training workshops, vendor training, and basic safety courses through in-person classes and online, using their Learning Management Systems (LMS).

Their associates, however, needed even more ongoing training support, practice, and just-in-time resources to fill critical gaps in HVAC, plumbing, and electrical knowledge. Green new hires required more foundational knowledge and time to gain efficiencies quickly; experienced techs needed to be more engaged in training on advanced skills, specifically where their knowledge gaps lie. One size didn't fit all.

Persistent skills gaps led to slow and ineffective hands-on training sessions, taking time away from experienced technicians to complete jobs. Further, employees struggled to perform their duties timely and effectively, creating unhappy residents, costly errors, slowed ticket completion, and often bloating budgets. With these known issues, the facilities teams at each company sought to strategically uplevel their individual teams, bringing Interplay on board to supplement and enhance hands-on training, level up their associate's foundational skillsets, and gain visibility across their portfolio.

Relaunching Bigger and Better—Learning as a Company Priority

In 2021, IRT merged with STAR. When the L&D and Facilities departments came together to plan their maintenance training strategy, they were thrilled to discover that both companies had invested separately in Interplay. Since they each utilized Interplay in different capacities, they were eager to learn tips and best practices from one another to maximize their investment and training success.

With the collective goals of leveling up their maintenance associates' foundational skill sets in-house and building long-lasting maintenance careers, IRT's L&D and Facilities teams relaunched a bigger and better post-merger maintenance training program with Interplay at its core.



Jacquie Hafele
Learning & Development
Content Manager



James Olson
Facilities Operation
Manager





Gaining Maintenance Training Adoption—Program Breakdown

By implementing the following six best practices into their training strategy, IRT demonstrated a significant commitment to their employee's career development and gained impressive maintenance training adoption.

1. Universal Socialization

With executive buy-in established and a strong bond forged between the L&D and Facilities teams, led by Facilities Operation Manager James Olson, IRT began communicating the new program to stakeholders. Jacqui Hafele, IRT's Learning & Development Content Manager, explains how communication was key to adoption success.

“A key piece to socializing the program was a strong hand-in-hand partnership between the L&D and Facilities teams. This wasn't just another training that L&D was telling people to take; both departments bought into its importance.

With Facilities personnel on-site, they had boots on the ground in various operational roles. Having their support to help socialize it in meetings and in person was instrumental in making it successful.

Another key piece to socializing the new training to maintenance associates was creating an email campaign. Before launch day, everyone knew what Interplay was, what it looked like, how to use it, and how it would support their career growth. By launch day, people were just excited it was here.”

2. LMS Integration

IRT integrated Interplay into their existing LMS. The additional resource supplemented hands-on training and rapidly closed gaps in foundational knowledge in HVAC, plumbing, electrical, safety, and appliance repair. Jacqui shares:

“Interplay gave them a way to get the foundational knowledge under their belt and get everyone at the same baseline, so in-person training is next-level and more effective. Now, onsite training is more productive because they can jump right into practical application.”

3. Custom Learning Paths

Three custom career skill paths were created and assigned to each employee based on their positions—Assistant Service Technician, Service Technician, and Service Manager. Pathways are assigned to new employees as soon as they complete their onboarding.

Within each of the three career skill paths are 4-6 skill pathways filled with video and 3D simulation courses. The courses continue to build on existing knowledge, providing additional hands-on practice opportunities that mimic job scenarios.

Skill paths continue to auto-assign as courses are completed and competencies are achieved. The paths increase in difficulty and complexity of job responsibilities until employees have completed all the courses required to graduate to the next career skill pathway.

As employees complete their skill paths, IRT gains an ever-growing in-house skillset and faster, more confident technicians that can tackle jobs the first time. Mike Szramek, the Facilities' Senior Vice President, explains:

“Interplay doesn't get overly complicated with troubleshooting something. It takes them in steps where they completely understand it, and the classes are in short enough increments that you're not going to lose someone's attention.

You can learn in small chunks, and it keeps them engaged. Plus, it's interactive. They're not just sitting there watching a video. They have to move the test probes when looking at electrical voltage on something. This is the next best thing, short of hands-on and physically touching equipment.

Because the training is directly related to what our techs see and do daily, we have seen our average work order completion times reduced over the past six months. I do expect to see this trend continue with make-ready's resulting in quicker turns, few callbacks, and ultimately fewer year-over-year work orders.”



4. Dedicated Employee Development Hours Contribute to Increased Performance

Every employee gets two hours of paid development time a week. Maintenance associates are expected to complete at least one hour of Interplay training during this time. Offices are closed during these hours, and IRT-issued tablets and laptops are available to use. Mike shares:

“We made a huge commitment to this program. We are giving folks career opportunities and a career path, but more importantly, the time to do it. In a forty-hour week, we’re sacrificing two hours of productivity to enable them to better themselves and their careers. We want to ensure we give them all the tools to succeed.”

“With Interplay, we have seen our entry-level techs better prepared and eager to learn more as they transition into their next skill level in as few as six months. As that training is put into practice, the confidence levels soar, and the quality of work has a noticeable improvement.”

5. Tied Training to Promotions

Employees who complete their regular training and those who go above and beyond to train in their own time are more favorably considered for promotions and pay increases. Mike shares,

“We had this one young Service Tech; he was pretty green when he started with us but hungry. He got through all of his courses, took most of them on his own time at home, and got certifications on his own dime instead of waiting for us to give them during certain quarters of the year.

He wanted it so bad that he did everything he was asked to do in accelerated time. This is a perfect example of a tech that trains to succeed, and he will soon be receiving a promotion to Service Manager.

Since re-launching this program, we have seen 24 internal promotions directly related to Interplay’s courses. Having just re-launched the training program eight months ago, this is great penetration, and we expect this number to triple by next year.”

6. Employee Feedback

After completing each skill pathway, associates are auto-surveyed about their training experiences to ensure the content is new, engaging, and relevant to their role. The L&D team then uses the results to refine and improve the next quarter’s training experience.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“I found the courses engaging.”

Assistant Service Technicians	89.25% Agree or Strongly Agree
Service Technicians	92.83% Agree or Strongly Agree
Service Managers	90.34% Agree or Strongly Agree
Overall Average	91%

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“The course is relevant to my role and/or I will be able to immediately apply the information learned in this course.”

Assistant Service Technicians	86.5% Agree or Strongly Agree
Service Technicians	92.5% Agree or Strongly Agree
Service Managers	96.49% Agree or Strongly Agree
Overall Average	92%



When it comes to usage, Mike has been blown away by the adoption response in all maintenance positions.

“The learning modules of Interplay are hands down the best I have used in my 40 years in multi-family. The feedback from our teams also backs this up. The training courses are set up to serve the inexperienced up to the advanced, and it’s easy to understand; step-by-step instructions along with interactive 3D simulations make this a memorable experience.

Of all the courses we offer through IRT University, the maintenance folks are more engaged than any other group. I think it’s because they can see themselves benefitting from them daily.”

- 87% of Interplay courses started are completed by users
- 5,525 courses have been completed since program re-launch
- 8,579 hours of Interplay training completed by all users, an average of 13 hours/user

Incentivizing Learning—Your Knowledge is Your Bounty

To further increase training motivation among maintenance associates for 2022 year-end, Mike and the L&D team turned their training paths pirate-themed.

Skill paths became treasure chests, and certain levels contained hidden knowledge coins. Mike explains, *“Once techs collected their knowledge coins, I would personally phone the ‘matey’ to congratulate them, get their course feedback, and send them pirate treasure like gift cards and t-shirts.”*

Initiatives like these made learning fun, interactive and engaging, leading to an uptick in end-of-year usage.

Training Pays Dividends

While it can be challenging for employers to motivate and maintain training momentum, IRT Living has implemented several best practices to ensure success in training adoption. With thoughtful investments into building their workforce and growing onsite skillsets and careers, their maintenance associates are increasingly motivated to remain upskilling with IRT. Mike shares,

“We have more and more team members asking about additional training and how they can accelerate their learning for additional advancement considerations. This tells me that training matters to our team, and they understand that career advancement is tied to job knowledge.”

Jacqui adds, *“I would recommend Interplay to other multi-family organizations because I think it has strong content and material for a scalable way to level up your associates. Nowadays, you can spend a lot of money to fly someone around the country for hands-on training. But in a really scalable way, this online content and how Interplay has presented it is as close to repeating an in-person experience as I think you can find. I think that’s why it resonates with our onsite associates.”*



Mike Szramek

Facilities' Senior Vice President



J.C. Hart Apartment Communities



Key Successes

- › 82% of workers completed one course or more, and one employee completed 76 courses!
- › Promoted Groundskeepers to Tech roles in less than a year, compared to 1+ years before Interplay
- › Created an annual review process with Interplay points as a KPI
 - 107,370 total points earned, an average of 1,376 points/user
 - 746 courses completed, an average of 9.6 courses/user
- › Delivered remote access to on-demand training
- › Created a personalized learning plan for each associate
- › Remediated recurring performance issues



Communities	26
Units	5,600
Maintenance Associates Using Interplay	60
LMS Provider	SkillMill Whitelabel
Top Reasons for Investing in Interplay	Remote training personalized to each associate's skill level and property needs

About J.C. Hart Apartment Communities

Since 1976, J.C. Hart has been the leader in developing, constructing, and managing luxury apartment communities in Indiana and the Midwest. J.C. Hart believes in investing and developing their associates, offering extensive learning and development opportunities. From a structured onboarding program to committee opportunities, virtual-reality learning, and more, there are several opportunities for associates to learn and develop personally and professionally.



Your Associates' Voices Matter

Upon administering an associate survey, J.C. Hart learned their maintenance employees were looking for more value from their training. Tracie Kraft, J.C. Hart's Training Program Manager, explains,

"The feedback we got from our associates was two sides of the same coin. We had some people that have been here forever saying they weren't learning anything new, so it didn't hold value for them. On the flip side, our new hires were green to the industry and thought the training content was over their heads."

Additionally, associates that worked at properties further away from the corporate head office expressed frustration over the inaccessibility of in-person workshops and vendor training. Long commutes took them off essential jobs, and some could not attend sessions when emergencies arose.

J.C. Hart understood that listening to their associate's needs was crucial for improving their training program and operations. With this information, they partnered with Interplay to resolve the issues of aligning targeted training to their associates' current skill levels and offered remote access to technical courses.

Rolling Out Interplay

When it came to socializing Interplay, J.C. Hart hosted orientation sessions over three days. Tracie shares,

"We split our portfolio into three groups. While one group attended the training as an entire team, the other groups could cover each other's properties. During orientation, we rented out a computer lab, and each associate had a computer to use while learning the platform. Interplay worked with us to create welcome video content to support our training team, and everyone walked through the platform in a setting where they could ask questions in real-time and get a good handle on how to use everything."

Most importantly, they gave their associates the context of why they were doing this—because of their valuable feedback.



Tracie Kraft
Training Program
Manager



Skills Assessments and Personalized Learning Plans

Post-roll-out, Maintenance Supervisors were responsible for developing a learning plan for their teams and giving it to the Director of Maintenance. Training expectations differed by property, as different properties have different demands. Older assets have twice as many weekly work orders, so supervisors determine realistic training goals for their teams. Supervisors then created a personalized learning plan for each associate based on the team plan.

During onboarding, the new hires get oriented to Interplay's platform and take their welcome skills assessment. Assessments are used to determine the best starting point for their associate's training and to match recommended courses to their current skill level. Associates are then expected to enroll in all of the recommended courses.

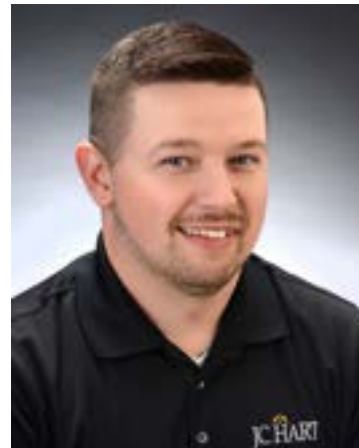
Chris Williams, J.C. Hart's Maintenance Training Manager, oversees training adherence and uses Interplay to bridge learning gaps.

"If we're noticing higher callbacks or performance issues in a specific area, I will work with associates to identify knowledge gaps that can be addressed using Interplay. This supplemental training method has enabled our associates to remediate problem areas quickly."

Further, the skills assessments have been an excellent tool for hiring inexperienced associates and getting them up to speed from day one. Delivering the right training in the right order has enhanced their employee's confidence and given them the skills to take on entry-level job duties much faster. Tracie Kraft reports that J.C. Hart can now promote a Groundskeeper to a Tech role in less than a year, compared to 1+ years before Interplay.

Additionally, J.C. Hart partners with The Mackenzie Center, an organization that runs a workforce program preparing high school students with trade skills. Tracie explains,

"Several of our Grounds Technicians have come from the Mackenzie Center, and they've really taken to Interplay's easy-to-follow course progression to grow themselves professionally."



Chris Williams

Maintenance Training Manager





Interplay as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

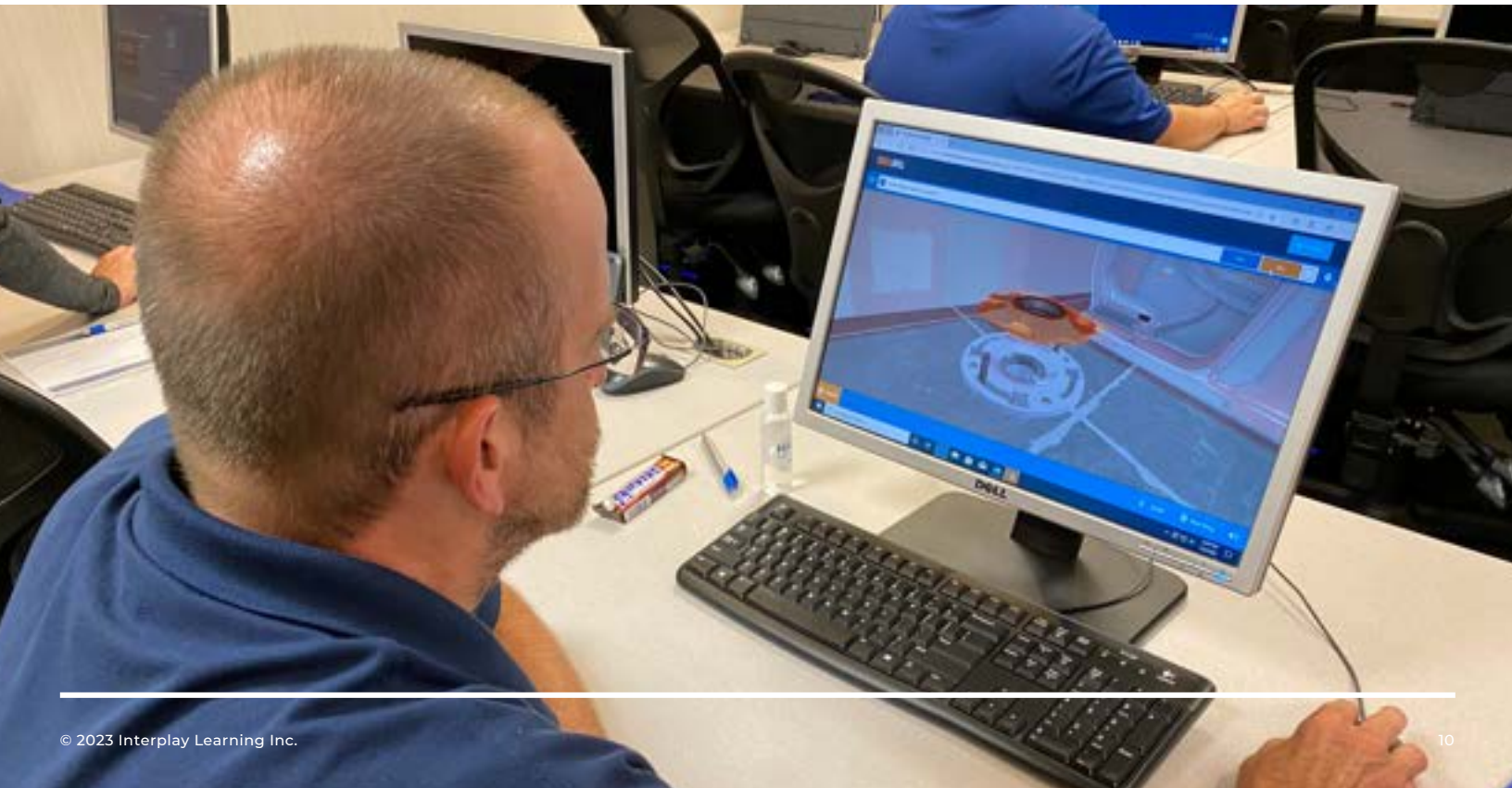
In 2021, J.C. Hart rolled out an annual review process with Interplay as a KPI for maintenance workers. The number of in-app points accrued over the year from using Interplay determines their annual pay increase percentage.

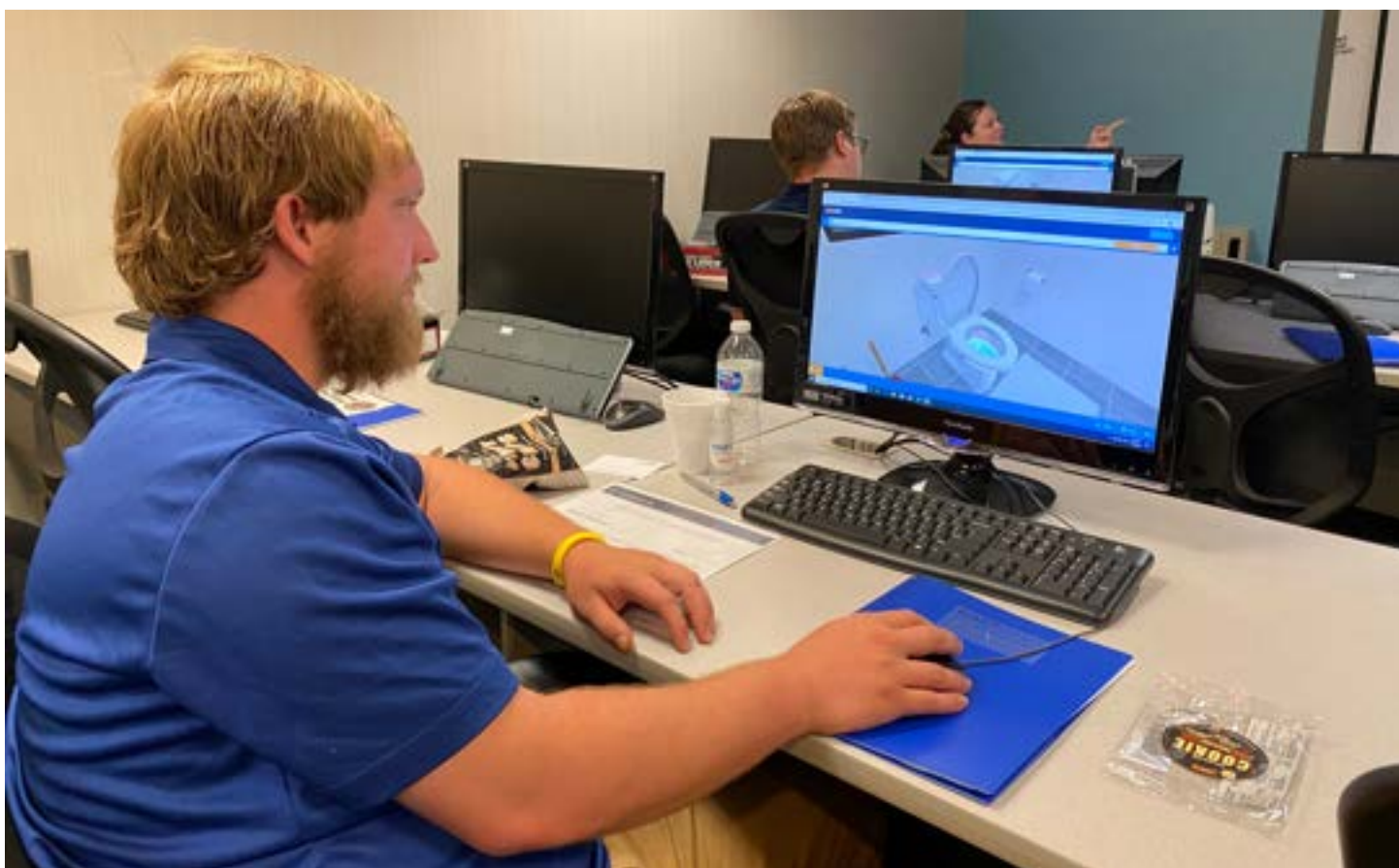
0-100 points	1%
101-200 points	2%
201-300 points	3%
301-1,199 points	4%
1,200+ points	5%

The new review process has given J.C. Hart greater visibility into their A-players and which associates should be rewarded with pay increases and promotions.

- **82% of employees have completed one course or more**
- **27% have completed 10+ courses**
- **One associate completed 76 courses!**
- **All time points: 107,370 points, an average of 1,376 points/user**
- **All time courses: 746 courses completed, an average of 9.6 courses/user**

Tracie shares, “We had one Groundskeeper, Joey O’Neil, that came in without experience, and he achieved the highest usage of all our associates with 11,835 points in one year! He’s now been promoted to a Grounds Tech position. Another stand-out associate was promoted from Maintenance Tech to Maintenance Supervisor. He accumulated impressive points while filling in for his supervisor alongside his own job. Overall, our associates love the training, are very engaged, and many have asked us if they can use it to train in their personal time.”





Here's what they had to say about Interplay:

“Interplay Learning is great for beginners like me and even seasoned technicians to brush up on skills. The videos that they offer are high-quality and very detailed. It helped me learn the names of each component of a furnace and A/C unit and helped me understand the refrigeration cycle in a simple way. Interplay has taught me electrical, such as wiring a 3-way switch, and the dangers of anything you do that involves electricity. All of the videos I have under my belt from Interplay have given me confidence in my everyday work life. - Joey O’Neil

“I would say that Interplay does a great job developing classes for all different skill types, whether you’re entry-level or advanced; there’s a class and something to learn for everyone. The simulations are also a very neat addition as it gives you an opportunity to get as close as you can to hands-on practice without touching the equipment.” - anon associate

By listening to their associates' training pains and frustrations, J.C. Hart delivered targeted, accessible courses at their employees' current skill levels. Realistic training expectations tied to professional development and achievable incentives supported adoption while accelerating upskilling. In partnership with Interplay, J.C Hart continues to expand their in-house skill sets at all levels of their maintenance organization and promote their hard-working associates internally based on training efforts.

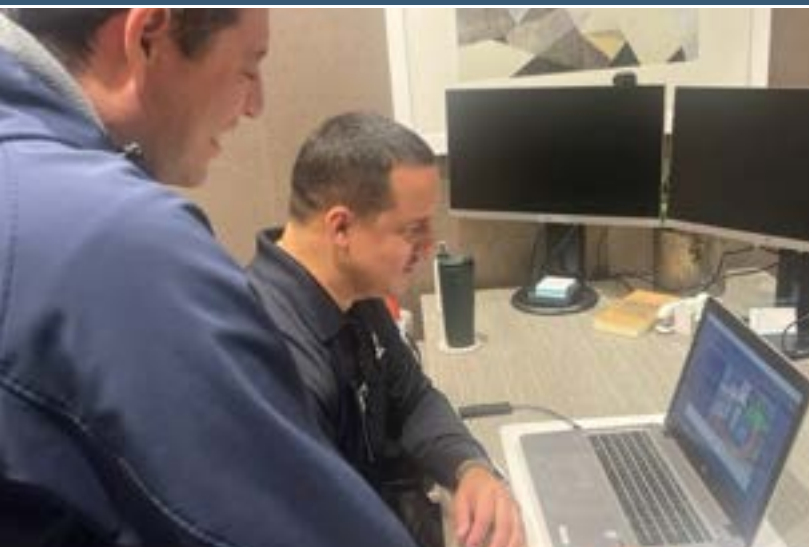


Sares Regis Group



Key Successes

- › 1,824 courses completed in the last year, an average of 6.3 courses/employee
- › 3,767 hours of training completed in the last year, 12.5 hours per employee
- › 98% of associates are actively enrolled in a career pathway
- › Closed critical gaps in hands-on training
- › Decreased the need for third-party calls
- › Attracted applicants with industry-leading training



Communities	126
Units	28,709
Maintenance Associates Using Interplay	250
LMS Provider	Yardi Aspire
Top Reasons for Investing in Interplay	Provide associates in every position an opportunity to develop their skills and have a more defined career path

About Sares Regis Group

Sares Regis Group (SRG) is a real estate development, investment, and management firm specializing in multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial properties in the Western United States. At SRG, their greatest assets are their people. With competitive benefits like top-notch training, Sares Regis invests in innovative technology to assist their associates in growing their careers and adding unique skills to their teams.



The Trouble with Technical Training

When it came to hands-on training at SRG, their maintenance organization wanted to provide greater practice opportunities to their associates. Pam Sanders, the Director of Learning, reflects,

“We used to hold one-day, in-person vendor training that I’d schedule across the different cities, but they weren’t ongoing, and not everyone could attend. Then, Covid led to online webinars, but those weren’t totally appropriate for skills training and left a severe gap.”

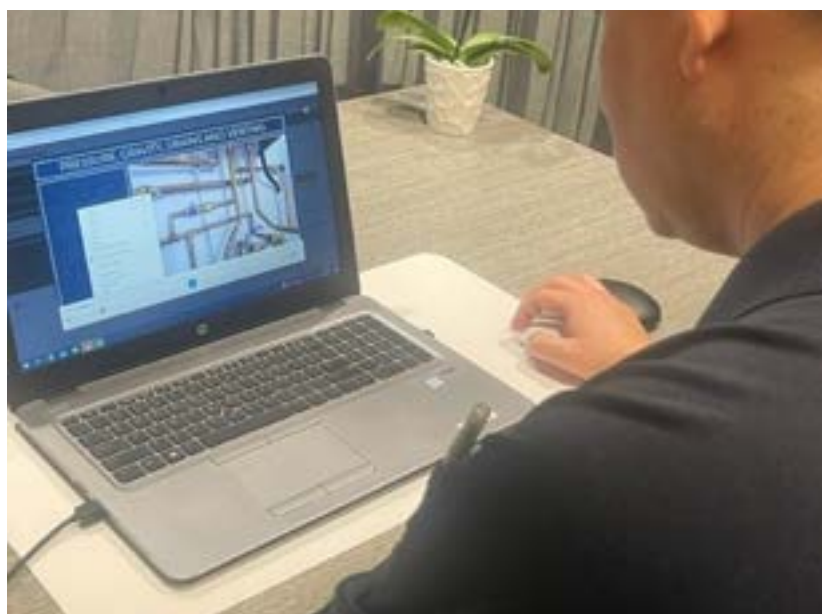
Without a dedicated maintenance trainer or training facilities, SRG began searching for a training solution to bulk up their LMS and give their associates access to more technical development opportunities.

After discovering Interplay through YouTube, Pam secured the budget to invest in the platform. Not only would this fill critical learning gaps, but it would also enable Pam and her team to leverage Interplay’s courses to build an elaborate career pathing program to upskill and retain their entire maintenance team.

Practitioner Plans for Every Role

SRG’s four Maintenance Practitioner Plans are at the heart of their maintenance organization. From entry-level Housekeepers all the way to General Maintenance Managers, they formulated a clear, engaging career path for their associates to upskill based on their hiring position.

1	Housekeeper and Groundskeeper
2	Maintenance Tech 1
3	Maintenance Tech 2 and Assistant Maintenance Supervisor
4	Maintenance Supervisor and General Manager (Maintenance Supervisor 1, 2, 3, Sr. Maintenance Supervisor, General Maintenance Manager)



“After piloting Interplay, many of our associates raved about it, so we wanted to make a big deal about it. We made a huge effort to communicate that we’re taking the time to invest in them. Interplay has greatly helped us with career planning and development that aligns with the different maintenance positions we created. Now, they can come to work and focus on their career progression.”

Currently, 98% of associates are actively enrolled in a practitioner plan. The entry-level Housekeeper and Groundskeeper plan takes employees without experience and quickly mobilizes them to clean and handle basic duties. Maintenance Tech 1 covers plumbing, HVAC, and electrical basics. Then, the Maintenance Tech 2 and Assistant Service Manager plan builds on those foundations. Finally, the Maintenance Supervisor plan goes even deeper, requiring associates to master complex troubleshooting scenarios in simulations with toilets, 3-way wiring, HVAC, and Appliance repair.

Tony Collins, the Regional Maintenance Director, is pleased with the gaps the training has filled. He reports,

“My conversations with several team members is that they don’t call vendors as much as they used to. Due to what they’re learning in these classes, it’s no longer necessary to call out a vendor to do the work they now know how to do.”



Your Role Is What You Make Of It –Recognizing Upskilling

New hires begin using Interplay 30 days after onboarding, and everyone is expected to take the Practitioner Plan for their job title. While hard due dates are not assigned to training completions, usage and engagement have remained high due to their clear career paths and incentive structure. Without substantial technical training pre-Interplay, SRG has exponentially increased opportunities for their associates to get hands-on practice.

- **1,824 training courses completed in the last year, an average of 6.3 courses/user**
- **3,767 training hours completed in the last year, 12.5 hours per associate**

Associate's efforts are tracked and factored into annual reviews and bonuses. To be considered for a promotion, associates must complete the practitioner plan for their desired role. Training is continuous for those hungry to learn, and Pam runs monthly reports to identify the associates going above and beyond, taking the time to send personal recognition emails.

"I've been looking at some reports, and wouldn't you know, the ones taking the biggest advantage of their training are the entry-level roles. I'm seeing Maintenance Tech 1's working ahead to Maintenance Tech 2 courses, and some are even taking the Supervisor courses!"

Your Training is Marketing

Skilled talent is tough to find, but Interplay's online courses have supported Tony Collins in attracting potential candidates for in-demand maintenance roles. Tony explains,

"In my role, I interview candidates for buildings with complex systems. During a recent interview, I discovered the candidate did not have hands-on experience with chillers or large generators. I searched Interplay and showed them that those classes are offered with us, so I encouraged the applicant that if they were to get hired, they could take these classes to get up to speed for the job. When I show candidates Interplay's courses during interviews, they all get excited about it."

With industry-leading technical training as a selling point during recruiting and practitioner plans thoughtfully laid out, SRG is optimistic about its ability to attract the right talent and tackle industry retention issues.



Tony Collins

Regional
Maintenance
Director



Pam Sanders

Director of
Learning



Dominium Management Services



Key Successes

- › 2,036 courses completed since launch, an average of 6.3 courses/employee
- › 84% of employees on the platform have completed at least one course
- › Scaled robust maintenance training curriculum
- › Generated career upskilling excitement
- › Created a competitive recruiting advantage

Communities	230
Units	35,000
Maintenance Associates Using Interplay	350
LMS Provider	Yardi Aspire
Top Reasons for Investing in Interplay	Recruitment advantage, skills assessments, robust curriculum, and scalability



About Dominium

Founded in 1972, Dominium is a leading affordable housing developer, owner, and manager helping tackle the affordable housing crisis. With a portfolio of more than 35,000 apartment homes in almost half of U.S. states, Dominium continues to bring much-needed affordable housing to new markets. With a strong dedication to growth, integrity, creating long-term value, and developing people, Dominium invests in state-of-the-art career training for its maintenance associates.



Rudimentary to Robust Training

Like most multi-family organizations, Dominion was looking to scale, supplement and standardize its maintenance training curriculum across all sites and positions. Eric Pogue, Dominion's Vice President of Maintenance and Capital Improvements, shares,

"Before Interplay, lower-level maintenance training was completed onsite, with an elementary curriculum. It was mostly up to the supervisor to fill gaps, and not all of them were good trainers.

We had tried several times to create upskilling programs for our senior positions, but they never seemed to stick, as the time and costs associated with running the training were too high for the value they provided. Ultimately, we were looking for a web-based training platform to span all sites, provide basic evaluation and assessments, and establish a standard training curriculum accessible to every role."

As Interplay expanded its maintenance and property management courses, Eric felt the partnership would greatly impact their maintenance organization, from reducing training costs to continuous in-house upskilling.

"Interplay checks all the boxes. The curriculum and modules are just like real life. This is really what happens in property management. It's not a dead, stagnant curriculum. It's learning paths that are ever-evolving based on your assessment skill level that never ends. There's always something else available to improve.

If you have an internet connection, you can participate, which matches where we are with remote lives; plus, we don't have to pay for travel, food, or take them off their property. It's at their pace and availability."



Eric Pogue

Vice President of Maintenance and Capital Improvements

Excitement is Contagious

The first step to Dominion's successful training adoption was generating excitement. Their 2022 leadership conference was the perfect opportunity to create a big bang and socialize the program from the top down.

A representative from Interplay was there to introduce the training program to eager associates and facilitate questions. Technicians had the opportunity to demo VR simulations in interactive breakout sessions and had a blast getting familiar with the platform. Eric reflects,

"We had a phenomenal launch of Interplay at our Leadership Conference. We had all of the Maintenance Supervisors there to see it. We had some VR headsets there too, which was very successful. I think the whole team was totally engaged. And after the fact, I kept hearing, 'When is this coming? I can't wait to get training on Interplay.'"





Assess, Train, Repeat

After a successful pilot, Interplay was integrated into Dominion University, scaling training access to all maintenance employees. Maintenance Supervisors deployed Interplay's skills assessments to each associate and, based on their scores, determined which learning path to send them through. Employees are given 60 days to complete their assessment.

An Ops team member then takes those assessments, averages the scores, and assigns the learning path appropriate to that individual's score and property needs. Each learning path has approximately 15-30 modules, and they have twelve months to complete their assigned learning path. Training is self-paced, and the Regional Maintenance and Community Managers ensure employees are given the time to train and maintain progress.

Once a learning path is completed, skills assessments are reassigned to associates. The expectation is to score higher and move on to the next learning path.

After just a few months of onboarding their associates to Interplay, Dominion quickly saw high engagement and adoption success. Eric shares,



"I'm very happy with the implementation, the absorption of information I see, and how our teams take to it. Our adoption rate so far has been extraordinary. I think everybody is taking it to heart and understands that this is for them and a great training opportunity for them at their own pace."

Kristin Peterson, Dominion's Project Assistant, adds,

"People are having a lot of fun with these courses, and you could even say that a few of them are spending too much time on them!"

By taking the time to test the training with a pilot, create excitement around the training at their leadership conference, and build out intentional learning paths, Dominion was prepared when they rolled it out widely, which helped with the quick adoption.

Dominium has big plans to take its training to the next level. In addition to building out career paths and creating benchmarks for an incentive program, Dominion is planning to leverage Interplay as a competitive advantage during the recruiting process. Eric explains,

"Our long-term goal is to utilize this training platform as a differentiator between other companies and us. We want to show that we're willing to offer our maintenance teams employee engagement and professional and personal development."

- **2,036 courses completed since launch, an average of 6.3 courses/employee**
- **84% of workers on the platform have completed at least one course**
- **20% of users have completed 10+ courses**
- **7% of users have completed 20+ courses**
- **2% of users have completed 40+ courses**



Wallick Communities

WALLICK *Communities*

Key Successes

- › The 6 highest course completions are from the Safety catalog
- › Created a company-wide safety culture
- › Leveraged Interplay safety courses to attract maintenance associates to the platform
- › Delivered engaging training that technicians want to use
- › Supported safe career development

About Wallick Communities

Wallick Communities develops, builds, manages, and oversees affordable multi-family housing and senior-assisted living in over 2,000 communities in 9 states. Setting the bar high in the industry for building and encouraging a company-wide safety culture, Wallick integrates highly-engaging virtual courses into its onboarding and maintenance training program.

Fostering Safety Training Culture

Safety training accounts for 56% of all workforce investments, making it the top line item in many training budgets. On a practical level, a significant safety training investment is required for compliance and to lower insurance premiums; however, Wallick Communities goes beyond compliance, weaving ongoing safety training into the fabric of its unique company culture.

Nikki Pannell serves as Wallick’s Learning and Development Manager. Having been in various L&D roles throughout her career, Nikki cares deeply for people’s well-being and actively champions putting safety at the forefront of learning.

Communities	2,000
Units	14,000
Maintenance Associates Using Interplay	120
LMS Provider	Yardi Aspire
Top Reasons for Investing in Interplay	One-stop-shop for engaging, scalable safety and technical training aligned to company culture

“We just love and adore our residents—they are our priority. They already have needs that regularly go unfulfilled, so we want to ensure that we provide them with everything they need to feel safe and secure in their homes. There’s nothing worse than when you feel like the world’s already against you, and then your toilet stops working. The smallest things can be a deal-breaker to our residents on any given day. That is why maintenance and safety training is so important to us. We want to make sure that all of our Wallick associates are giving our residents top-tier, quality customer service all the time because our residents are the heart of why we’re doing what we’re doing.”



Nikki Pannell

Learning and
Development Manager



The High Cost of Safety Training Inertia

Every multi-family organization offers safety training, but whether employees are engaged and retaining what it means to work safely is another matter.

It's no secret that traditional safety training is often characterized as boring and uninteresting, serving more as compliance formalities than effective lessons in safety. However, the role safety training plays in tackling rising workers comp claims, increasing protection from liability lawsuits, and the costs associated with employee injuries and illnesses is significant.

- 1 worker is injured every 7 seconds in the U.S.
- Employee safety programs can reduce costs related to injury and workplace illness by as much as 40%, according to OSHA
- For every \$1 invested in safety programs, \$4-\$6 can be saved. These savings can add up to thousands of dollars annually

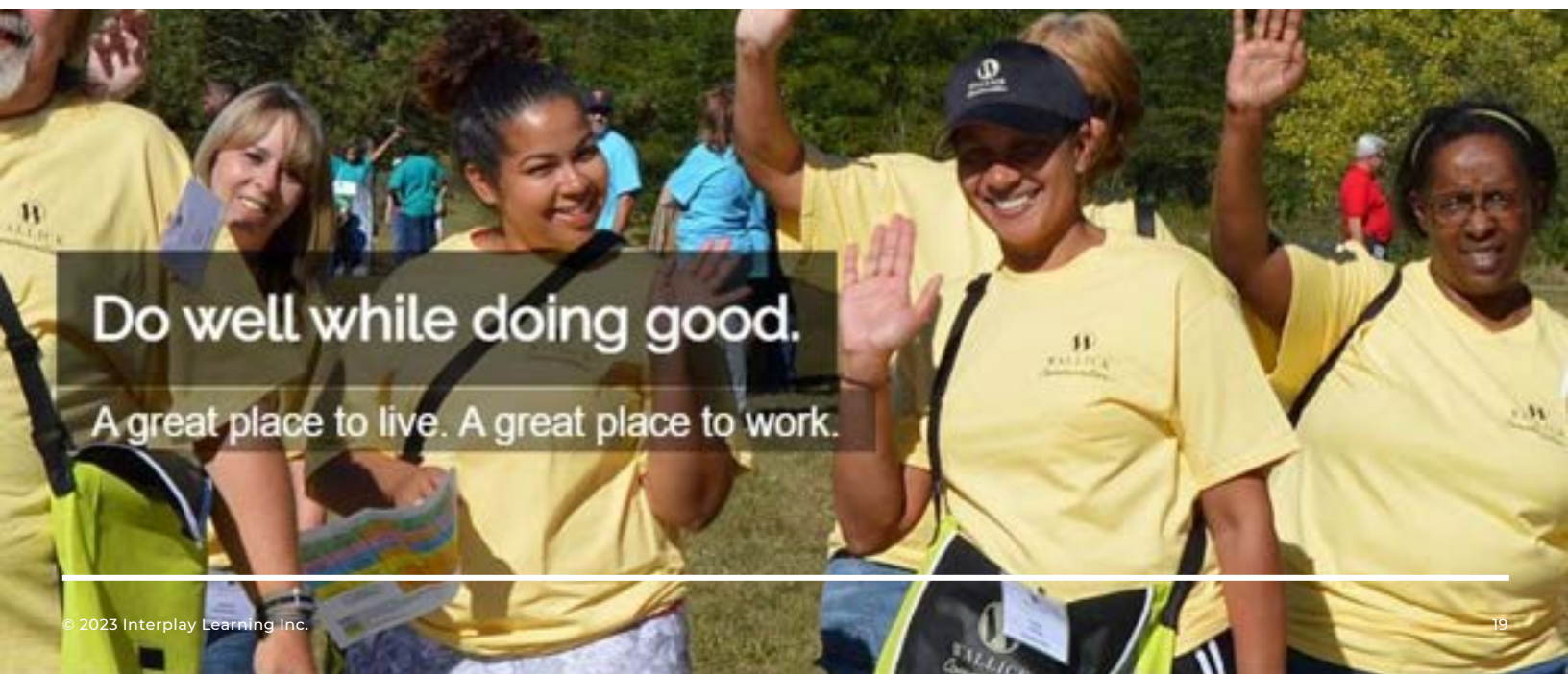
When multi-family organizations are already struggling to fill open maintenance roles, they can't afford to keep offering the same old, passive safety training videos to the associates at the highest risk of taking leave from injuries and illnesses.

Nikki explains the negative impact that safety training inertia can have on operations,

"Maintenance staff being out on sick leave or disability is a huge opportunity cost that has a detrimental impact on the organization. We are already short-staffed, and it's very hard to attract and retain maintenance people. We have several communities sharing maintenance techs, so if somebody's out sick or injured, and that person is responsible for two or three properties, it could lead to twenty to thirty residents with outstanding work orders. The well-being of our associates is huge, and we want our people to be well-versed in safety protocols so they're fit to work."

One of the biggest things that we want to focus on is the proper use of tools and how to lift and pull things. Even though it sounds basic, these things have a huge impact and can prevent back injuries, which is the #1 workers comp claim."

For multi-family companies like Wallick Communities that have taken a strong position on safety, it was important for them to invest in interactive, scalable technical training for their 120+ maintenance staff that would align with their safety mission and support their associates' career development.



Do well while doing good.

A great place to live. A great place to work.



It All Starts with Engagement

Before using Interplay, Wallick relied on various e-courses offered through their property management platform and LMS. In tandem with vendor training, they pieced together a package of courses that they would assign to their new hires and maintenance staff to be completed annually. As their need to hire and fill entry-level maintenance roles grew more critical, they began searching for a modern, comprehensive solution to scale and support learning retention. Nikki shares,

“We have a bunch of maintenance staff all over the place, so we needed to find a way to address our training needs in a scalable manner. It wasn’t feasible to send vendors out to our communities and have consistent training across the board. When we came across Interplay, we were excited because it is modern training and conducive to our safety culture and business needs.”

What they found in Interplay was a scalable, one-stop solution that not only delivered an entire online trades catalog for maintenance training at all levels but an upgraded suite of interactive safety courses aligned with their culture and compliance requirements. In fact, the addition of Interplay’s safety catalog enabled Wallick to replace the inferior courses from their LMS.

“With Interplay, our training is now more engaging. It’s more feasible for our associates to get the information they need and learn effectively because of how the courses are structured. It’s unlike the old-school e-courses where you read some stuff, and there’s a picture as you click next. It’s active, more engaging, and resonates with them, so they retain the information better because they want to keep using it.

I remember showing Interplay to a young maintenance tech when we first got it. I pulled up one of the courses, and we were walking through it, and his eyes were so big; he was so excited about it. He’s like, ‘This is super cool. I can’t wait to use it!’ which made me so happy because I knew we had made the right decision to upgrade our training.”



Achieving Training Adoption, Compliance, and Retention

At Wallick Communities, Safety training begins on day one. Regardless of position, all maintenance associates are assigned an onboarding learning path front-loaded with mandatory safety courses. Course completions are then diligently tracked for compliance and skills inventory.

Impressively, of all the Interplay courses available to Wallick's associates, the top 6 courses completed are all from the Safety catalog.

Course Name	% Average Completion
HVAC Safety Basics	95%
Ladder and Fall Safety	95%
Lockout/Tagout	99%
Electrical Safety	97%
Plumbing Safety	96%
Electrical Panels: Components and Safety	99%

Associates are given dedicated time on the clock to complete their safety training courses and have access to Wallick-issued smartphones and laptops. Since a safety mindset is present at each level of the organization, they feel supported by their managers to use this time. Additionally, courses are available on-demand if a refresh in specific safety lessons is required at any point.

The upside of cultivating a safety-first company culture is the secure environment it creates for associates to grow and upskill. Nikki explains,

"It's like Maslow's hierarchy of needs. If you feel you're working in a safe space, and trust the people around you to follow proper protocols and procedures, then you're motivated to focus your attention on next-level things like improving your finances and career. I think that helps lead to happier and healthier employees who want to work for us, so it's been an important step in helping us with retention as well."

Jason Sawyer, Wallick's Regional Maintenance Manager for Affordable Housing, adds,

"Interplay's classes have revolutionized how maintenance professionals learn and get on-the-job experience through a very interactive platform. This platform has changed how I view maintenance roles and the possibilities for career advancements within property management."

When it comes to Wallick's low-income housing and senior living facilities, there is nothing more important than creating a secure environment for residents and employees to thrive. With a strong dedication to company-wide safety training culture, Wallick is not only mitigating costs associated with accidents but improving lives and careers.



Jason Sawyer

Regional Maintenance Manager for Affordable Housing



Summary

When multi-family organizations thoughtfully plan and deploy their technical training program, they will have a greater chance of achieving adoption and reaping a return on their investment. By engaging associates with interactive content, communicating its mutual value, setting clear training expectations, and incentivizing accordingly, companies can look forward to building in-house skillsets and careers that dramatically decrease costs associated with inadequate training.

Drive Engagement and Continuous Upskilling with Interplay Learning

Contact:
sales@interplaylearning.com

