

## Brookdale Improves Efficiency and Compliance with AccountCourier



### Profile

Brookdale Senior Living operates more than 550 senior living and retirement communities with 52,000 residents.

### Users

8,000 users in facilities throughout the U.S.

### Key Benefits

- Reduced the time required for changes from three to five days to under 24 hours.
- Able to change accounts on 15 systems in as little as five minutes, compared with one hour to change five systems manually.
- Reduced overall IT costs by about \$150,000.
- Improved compliance with key regulations, and reduced SOX compliance reporting effort by 60%.
- Improved security by eliminating weak password practices.

Founded in 1978, Brookdale Senior Living prides itself on providing seniors with a range of attractive, innovative senior living options. Today, as the result of an aggressive acquisition strategy, Brookdale is one of the nation's largest owners and operators of senior living communities throughout the United States and a leading national provider of senior-related services.

Brookdale is constantly evaluating new and better methods for enriching the lives of its residents by delivering exceptional senior housing, active adult living, value-added services and continuing care. Some Brookdale innovations include:

- Brookdale is one of few national senior living providers that offer the full spectrum of senior living options, including independent living, personalized assisted living, Alzheimer's and dementia care, rehabilitation and skilled nursing.
- Brookdale operates its own Culinary Arts Institute as a training ground for chefs and dining staff, who serve approximately 100,000 meals daily at Brookdale communities, more than many large restaurant chains.

Recently, Brookdale embarked on an aggressive growth strategy, growing almost five-fold over the past three years from \$400 million to \$2 billion in revenue. As the result, Brookdale now operates more than 550 senior living and retirement communities across the nation, where more than 32,000 Brookdale associates serve over 52,000 residents in a variety of settings.

### Identity Challenges

However, this growth did not come without its challenges. First, Brookdale added more than 7,000 employees to its user base, who had to be accounted for and provided access to a variety of internal systems. Second, Brookdale's IT staff had to deal with the complexities of dozens of new systems which were acquired as a result of the mergers, each with its own unique user set-up specifications. Third, like many services companies, Brookdale must manage high employee turnover, with some jobs turning over between 40-60 percent annually.

Another challenge that Brookdale faced was that their users were often forced to create and remember different passwords for each application they used. With each user accessing an average of nine different systems, some users wrote passwords on Post-It notes, which they stuck to their computer monitors. Brookdale needed to ensure that passwords were being used in accordance with internal policy, in addition to protecting resident private health information in accordance with HIPAA regulations.

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“Courion helped us address our need for more efficient processes that not only save time and money, but also increase our service satisfaction levels.”

Scott Ranson,  
CIO  
Brookdale Senior Living

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Despite the fact that five full-time personnel were dedicated to the task of processing an average of 70 access-change requests every day, new hires were waiting as long as four days to get set up with the applications to do their job, which hurt effectiveness. The staff also had to ensure that not only were new employees getting access to the appropriate systems, they also had to make sure that dormant accounts were terminated appropriately when employees leave the organization.

### Supporting Regulatory Compliance

Brookdale is subject to government and industry regulations, principally the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA.) These mandates require that access rights to vital information assets be appropriately managed to ensure that only authorized personnel have access to systems based on their roles and responsibilities. They also have requirements concerning periodic recertification of access controls. One of Brookdale's goals was to automate the process of attesting that employee access rights were appropriate and introducing a process for remediation when access rights were out of compliance with policy.

### Implementing the Solution

Scott Ranson, CIO of Brookdale, made the decision to address these problems by implementing Courion's Enterprise Suite to automate the process of setting up and managing user accounts across Brookdale's applications.

Brookdale used the Enterprise Suite to first take care of provisioning end-user accounts on a variety of systems. Currently, Brookdale is provisioning accounts on 15 systems, and expects to expand coverage to more than fifty systems over time. By tackling the provisioning problem, Brookdale was able to reduce the time required to add new users to the system from three to five days to under 24 hours. In addition, Brookdale was able to slash the time required to make changes to a user's profile on five systems to as little as five minutes, compared with the one hour it used to take using the old manual process. They intend to automate up to 15 systems.

Users can now select a single password that they can use for the 5 major systems they need to access. When a user makes a change to their password, it is automatically and transparently propagated to all other systems they have access to. Having one password for multiple systems makes it easier for users to remember their password and eliminates the need for them to write it down in an insecure location.

Brookdale also implemented Courion's self-service password management capabilities. IT used to get 400 help desk calls monthly to reset passwords. After deploying the Courion solution, these calls have been almost completely eliminated. And, even when someone does call the help desk to reset their password, the help desk staff can do it from a single screen, rather than having to go to multiple systems and manually reset the password, as they were forced to in the past. Finally, although Brookdale is a nationwide organization, the IT help desk is open 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. at headquarters. Previously, if someone forgot a password after hours, they were forced to wait until the next morning to get it reset. Now, users can change their password 24 hours a day using a secure web interface.

Brookdale plans to leverage Courion's RoleCourier solution to determine who gets access to what for a variety of business, technical and clinical roles. Ultimately, Brookdale expects to shift access policy management to business owners rather than security administrators, which will further improve business effectiveness and free up additional IT resources.

### Provisioning Benefits

In addition to the other benefits described above, Brookdale was able to:

- Trim three staff positions, reducing overall IT costs by about \$150,000.
- Improve compliance with key regulations, by ensuring user access rights to vital systems are consistent with policy and regulatory requirements.
- Reduce the process of producing reports demonstrating SOX compliance by 60 percent.
- Improve security accuracy and accountability.

### About Courion

Courion's award-winning Access Assurance solutions are used by more than four hundred organizations and over 7.5 million users worldwide to quickly and easily solve their most complex identity and access management (password management, provisioning, and role management), risk and compliance challenges. Courion's business-driven approach results in unparalleled customer success by ensuring users' access rights and activities are compliant with policy while supporting both security and business objectives. For more information, please visit our website at [www.courion.com](http://www.courion.com).



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