

# A Whole New Way of Living

Forty years after humans developed the first personal computers, technology and innovation are happening at an unbelievably rapid pace. Businesses that have existed for hundreds of years are being upended overnight. At what point might the industries associated with providing care and services to older adults go through a similar transformation into something wholly new and perhaps unrecognizable?

Every year, Perkins Eastman takes a step back and reflects on trends and the need for unique solutions to the challenges associated with aging. During this process, we decided to undertake a year-long research study co-sponsored by J+J Flooring Group to identify external influences with the potential to reshape the senior living industry. These conversations are the foundation for the [Clean Slate Project](#) — a title (and mentality) that asks: If senior living could have a fresh start, what could it look like?

Perkins Eastman is a global architecture firm dedicated to the idea that design can have a direct and positive impact on people's lives. For almost 40 years, our senior living experts have shared a passion for research and design that focuses specifically on improving the quality of life and level of care for older adults.

A key moment in our research occurred when we presented preliminary findings and concepts for future scenarios to 14 leading CEOs of nonprofit senior living organizations. Their feedback challenged some of our assumptions, clarified others and trained our sights on how these scenarios might reshape current industry paradigms. Participants identified issues of affordability and care for the most frail and echoed the need for partnerships that stretch the current limits of the way most senior living organizations think.

These types of partnerships can connect existing senior living providers with consumers in new and innovative ways. So, whether you are a senior care provider, developer, board member, low income housing/service provider, healthcare provider or tech entrepreneur you will play a key role in responding to changes impacting every older adult in this country.

Above all, we hope our work will inspire and challenge eldercare professionals to question the status quo. With a long list of disruptors and new players in the senior living marketplace, the traditional provider must ask what ideas, practices or standards are you accepting just because that's the way you've done it in the past, or simply because everyone else is doing them?

In a 2017 *Rolling Stone* article about innovator and futurist Elon Musk, author Neil Strauss may have summed it up best by suggesting, "If you want to create or innovate, start from a clean slate. Don't accept any ideas, practices, or standards just because everyone else is doing them."<sup>1</sup> It is only by questioning the status quo that we are able to open ourselves to the unlimited potential that sits in front of the senior living industry today.

If a clean slate is what senior living needs right now, we say... eraser, please.

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