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## Senior Care

Age might be more than just a number, but when it comes to understanding the potential of the senior-care industry, the numbers say it all. According to the National Institute on Aging, an organization whose mission is to understand the nature of aging and extend the active years of life, approximately 35 million Americans are age 65 or older, and that number is expected to double in the next 25 years. In addition, people age 85 and older constitute the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population: About 4 million people are currently in this age group, and that number is expected to grow to 19 million by 2050.

With the average life expectancy longer than ever and more Americans expressing the desire to age at home, the need for in-home assistance is thriving. "This is about demographics, and we can only take credit for being at the right place at the right time," says Leo Landaverde, 37, a former vice president at a staffing company who opened a ComForcare Senior Services franchise with his wife, Sandra, 38, in North Hills, California. Since opening in 2003, they have already built their system up to more than 250 employees, serving about 500 clients. They were also the recipients of ComForcare's 2007 Franchise of the Year Award and currently operate the largest ComForcare franchise in the country. Sales are growing, too, with a 2008 projected increase of 15 percent over last year's \$3 million.

The franchise gave the Landaverdes a helping hand and the freedom to implement new ideas, which has helped them grow

their business exponentially. Always looking to expand their services, Leo and Sandra regularly research and introduce new services, such as giving veterans the resources to take advantage of the Veterans Administration Aid and Attendance Benefits program, as well as offering care for children with disabilities.

If senior care appeals to you, keep your finger on the pulse of the industry. The sector has already begun to evolve with wider use of technology, specifically for monitoring and communication purposes, says Merrily Orsini, founder of senior-care management company ElderCare Solutions and managing director at Corecubed, an integrated marketing communications agency that tailors many of its products to helping private-duty agencies succeed.

A lack of adequate staff members has many looking to technology to supplement care,

says Orsini, whether it's developing web-based programs (Lotsa Helping Hands helps family and friends schedule care) or specializing in in-home adaptations to reduce the hours of care required. (National Association of Home Builders recently introduced a Certified Aging-In-Place Specialist designation program.) "Pay attention to what the customer is requesting, and look for niche needs that currently aren't being met," says Orsini, who also sees opportunities in creating planned retirement communities. "It's important to understand that this burgeoning demographic bulge just now beginning will change the landscape of the industry incredibly, and solutions that haven't yet been imagined will be in place in the next 10 years."



Owning a senior-care franchise allowed Leo and Sandra Landaverde to bring new ideas to the industry—and new services to their clients.

### SENIOR-CARE FRANCHISES

ComForcare Senior Services Inc.  
comforcare.com/franchise

Comfort Keepers  
comfortkeepers.com

Home Care Assistance  
hcafranchise.com

Home Helpers/Direct Link  
homehelpers.cc

Home Instead Senior Care  
homeinstead.com

Homewatch CareGivers  
homewatchcaregivers.com/  
franchise

Seniors Helping Seniors  
seniorshelpingseniors.com

Visiting Angels  
livingassistance.com