

## **New Options in Self-Storage Facilities**

A bright, clean façade may attract the masses, but when it gets down to it, tenants need more. Safety, for themselves and their belongings, is paramount, as is price and accessibility. Therefore, self-storage owners are well-served to look at new alternatives to necessary components, some of which can actually pay for themselves in lower monthly usage fees or fewer replacement costs.

**Self-storage doors.** Older doors have outdated operational designs, which cause them to grow more difficult to use and require costly maintenance upkeep as they've aged. There are superior door options today that are easier to operate and are virtually maintenance free.

**Surveillance systems.** Older facilities typically have cameras that run all day, again resulting in costly electricity bills and unneeded wear and tear on your system. Motion-triggered cameras can be installed which will only incur utility usage when set off. Considering you may only have 10 visitors a day, imagine the cost savings you'll enjoy and the extended life you're adding to your equipment.

**Keyless Entry.** Keypads are no longer the only option in entry access systems. More and more owners are installing keyless units where the tenant is given a key fob which can be used at any reader at a point of entry. No more worries about entry codes getting into the wrong hands or being forgotten.

## **Expand Your Space... Expand Your Rentals**

Expanding rentable space is a goal of every owner. By thinking outside the box, you can offer more space without having to pay dearly for additional land. Mezzanine systems, or decks, can increase your internal space. Mezzanines can cover all or a portion of a floor, and are particularly growing in popularity for conversions. On a per unit basis, shelves greatly increase usable space by building up, and only cost a fraction of what you'll recoup in increased rental fees. Stackable storage lockers offer a low-cost storage alternative to tenants. And because they can fit in odd-sized spaces, they can turn otherwise unrentable space into profit centers.

## **Turn Service Into Profits**

More services are available today that can actually generate revenue outside of rentable space. Kiosks, or auto-attendants, can be a very valuable service to tenants as well as a pressure-free rental experience for prospects. Kiosks can accept payments and allow potential customers to tour the facility, select a unit, purchase locks and even buy insurance. Because the kiosks are open 24/7 and require no staff assistance, your profitability increases in tandem with your customer service.

Internet transactions are also a low cost alternative to renting space and services. Your website should be easy to navigate and contain high security measures to protect monetary transactions. Make sure your facility rates high on search engine results to generate more transactions and position it as an industry leader. After all, a strong website builds confidence which generates more sales.

A strong retail area is also a win-win scenario. The retail area should be a focal point where an array of packing and shipping supplies can be sold. The display area should be well lit and accessible. In addition, professional signage that clearly states how each product can be used will go a long way in selling your merchandise. Many facilities are also offering multilingual signage to better serve their customers.

Offering amenities as well as cutting-edge core features will make facilities more competitive in the long run. A well-trained management team is critical in helping to sell these features and how they ultimately benefit the customer, add safety and maintain rental rates.

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