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FEDESSA Conference, Trade Show & Awards Winners 2021



Move Outs -
First Impressions, Last

57



Country Profile:
Spain

22



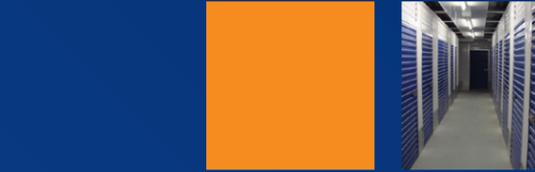
A conversation with
Norman Galbraith

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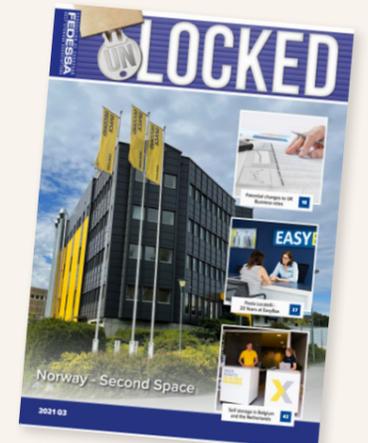
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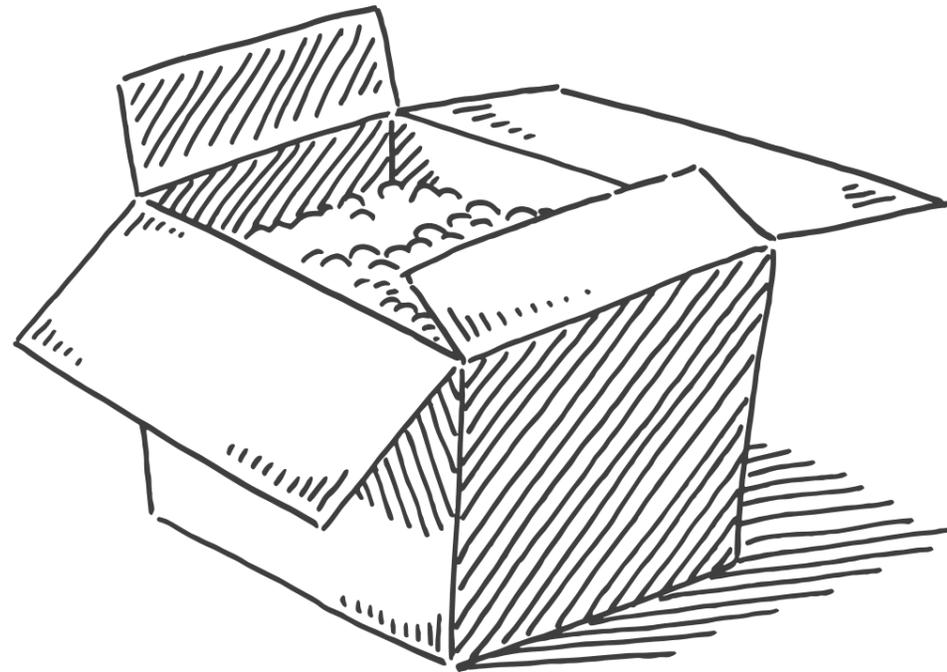
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Carlo Swaab
FEDESSA President

We are all looking forward to the FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show in Portugal next year, when hopefully, we will have put the pandemic behind us and can welcome more international guests

There is a role for FEDESSA in working with industry to create this standard before the regulators start dictating their terms on a more general level

President's Report

This year's FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show proved to be a huge success despite the challenges of holding the event as we came out of the pandemic. Overall, the level of attendance was much higher than expected, but there were less delegates from the continent. This was largely due to the travel restrictions, COVID-19 testing and flights which were well off their pre-pandemic frequency. There was certainly a very positive vibe at the event, with some healthy debate on topical issues such as environmental standards, use of technology and pricing. It was certainly good to see people in person again. Online events are fine for delivering information, but nothing can replace meeting people in person for networking and learning from your peers. We are all looking forward to the FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show in Portugal next year, when hopefully, we will have put the pandemic behind us and can welcome more international guests.

Before the conference the FEDESSA board met in Berlin to discuss the future direction of the Association. The past focus was discussed as well as what is required now the Federation has grown so significantly. A basic framework was developed that was then agreed to by the General Council in Birmingham. One of the elements is an increased focus on lobbying at an EU level as well as improving the level of technical support and data to members. The Board will be meeting more regularly in the coming months to develop the plan further along with the budget to support it.

Work is continuing on future amendments to the industry standard. Some of the key elements that need changing to reflect current industry practices have been identified. Local associations are also working on re-establishing the various standards committees required to make changes at the next review. The aim is to have the draft changes approved by all associations in 2022 so they can be put into the appropriate legal language and sent to the relevant committees.

As I mentioned earlier, environmental standards were one of the issues debated amongst operators at the Birmingham conference. There is no doubt that the world is moving to a more environmentally sustainable way of life. Self storage already uses limited energy in its operations, but the idea of net zero carbon construction for buildings is more challenging. At the conference the major operators confirmed they have already set targets to reduce their environmental impact in construction. The valuers also spoke about investors seeking out 'green' buildings. There is a role to play for all operators, large and small in improving the green credentials for the industry. Many independent operators are also working towards BREEAM standards in construction and introducing energy efficiency measures at an operational level. The problem at the moment is there is no firm guidance on what a net zero carbon building would be for self storage. There is a role for FEDESSA in working with industry to create this standard before the regulators start dictating their terms on a more general level.

In closing, I would like to wish all of you a safe and happy festive season. Let's hope we can all enjoy it unrestricted with friends and family.

Carlo Swaab
FEDESSA President



Rennie Schafer
SSA UK and FEDESSA CEO

Reflections from the CEO's Desk...

It was fantastic to see everyone in person again at the FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show in Birmingham during September after so long being restricted to video calls. With over 500 people attending the event, it exceeded our attendance expectations, particularly considering the ongoing conditions on travel. I found it interesting to see how attitudes in the industry had changed so much over the past 2 years. At the London Conference in 2019 the main debate was about automation and how it was removing the need for staff which many operators thought was a bad thing. Now the automation conversation has moved on to how operators use the data automation creates, how it assists with marketing and can improve the customer experience online. It is not just about fully unmanned sites but how automation can be used differently for all self storage stores. The new topic of debate was environmental sustainability, particularly net carbon zero construction and operation. While people realise that becoming more environmentally sustainable is a good thing, there was concern by some of the independent operators that the pace and direction of change in the industry was being driven by the corporates and large operators to meet their shareholders and investors ambitions. This did not necessarily align with the objectives of the independent operators. There was also debate about the long-term valuation prospects for properties that do not meet these developing environmental standards. This is clearly an issue that will continue to develop at future FEDESSA Conferences and events.

It's not just the FEDESSA Conference that is returning in person. The Spanish, Swedish, Dutch, and Italian associations all have in person events in planning with details to be released soon. The UK Association has also held a Regional Members' Meeting and Dinner in London during November. With online training and webinars continuing, along with the return of in person events, there are even more opportunities for members to network and learn from their industry associations.

The Annual European Industry Report produced in conjunction with JLL was launched at the conference and is now available on the FEDESSA website. As many would expect, it shows the industry has performed exceptionally well during the pandemic. Average occupancy is at 81.5%, the first time it has been above 80% and almost half the survey respondents had an occupancy over 85%. Couple this with a 7% increase in average return per square meter and it has been by far the most successful year for the industry since we have been producing the report. Linking back to my earlier comments on sustainability, there has been a significant uplift in operators putting in energy reduction systems such as LED lights, recyclable packaging, and green roofs. Understandably given the impact of the pandemic, more operators are now displaying prices on their website and allowing customers to complete the entire sign-up process online. Optimism remains high in the industry, despite challenges in finding land for development and increasing construction costs, that there will continue to be strong growth in the coming years.

To finish, I wish all our members a safe and happy festive season. Hopefully, you can all spend time with family and friends, and we will be talking about pandemics much less in 2022.

Rennie Schafer
SSA UK and FEDESSA CEO

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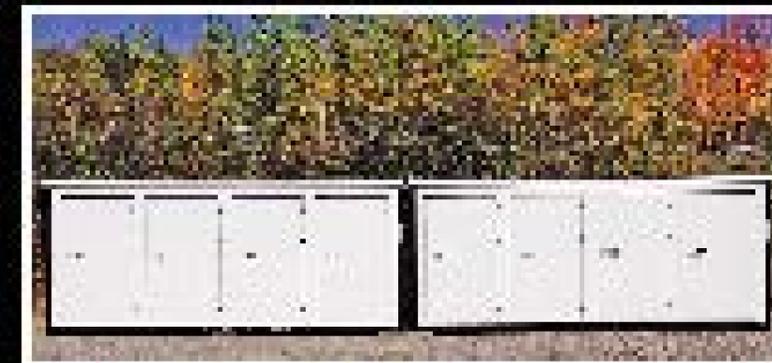


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FEDESSA & SSA UK Forthcoming Events

UK H&S Fire Management Training **NEW!!**

7 December 2021 - Online via Zoom

It is essential organisations manage fire safety in line with current regulations - **Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005** - which means any person who has some level of control in premises must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and ensure people can escape safely if there is. If not, you could be exposing your company to potential fines and prosecutions. It is surprising how many businesses are unaware of the requirements and operational tasks that should be carried out on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis. This session is designed to explain the key fire safety issues and procedures for self storage facilities and details the maintenance regimes and responsibilities for fire safety systems in occupied premises.

Sector Forum Meetings

The first Sector Forum Meetings of 2022 will be held online via Zoom at 10.30am-11.30 on the following dates. Further information on the topics will be published early in the New Year:

Sector Forum Technology & Innovation – Tuesday, 1 March 2022

Sector Forum Containers – Tuesday, 8 March 2022

Sector Forum Security – Tuesday, 15 March 2022

Sector Forum UK Legal – Tuesday, 22 March 2022



Operations Management training session

Online (Zoom) - 11 January 2022

Social Media Marketing training session

Online (Zoom) – 27 January 2022

Regional Members' Meeting

Edinburgh – 15 February 2022

Winter Workshop

27 February – 2 March 2022, St Anton, Austria

The SSA UK, with major sponsors Storage Future, are proud to present the 2022 Winter Workshop. Two days of speakers, industry workshops, skiing and networking in St. Anton, in the Tyrolean-Alps region of Austria.

Spanish Self Storage Conference

Atletico Madrid, 30 – 31 March 2022

Dutch Self Storage Conference

NH Eindhoven - Eindhoven, 20 April 2022

Swedish Self Storage Conference

7A Odenplan - Stockholm, 5 May 2022

FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show

27 – 29 October 2022

Tivoli Marina, Vilamoura, Portugal

More details will be released soon but prepare to be challenged with a completely different conference that breaks all the rules.

Recent Events & Training Sessions

7 September 2021 - Sector Forum Technology & Innovation

14 September 2021 - Sector Forum Security

20 & 21 September 2021 - FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show

5 October 2021 - Sector Forum Containers

7 October 2021 - CEO Update Webinar

8 October 2021 - Danish Members' Meeting

12 October 2021 - Sector Forum UK Legal

4 November 2021 - CEO Update Webinar

18 November 2021 - Regional Members' Meeting & Dinner – London

23 November 2021 - YSN Members' Meeting

30 November 2021 - Operations Management Training Session

2 December 2021 - CEO Update Webinar

Missed an event?

Many of our training sessions are repeated throughout the year so there will be further opportunities to attend. Complimentary webinars including the CEO Updates are recorded and available to members to download and view from the member's only area of the SSA UK and FEDESSA websites. The very popular Sector Forums are also held 3 times per year so you can book a place on a future date if you've missed a meeting and the YSN hold regular member meetings too.

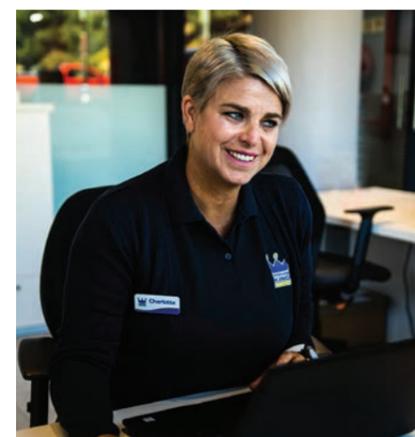


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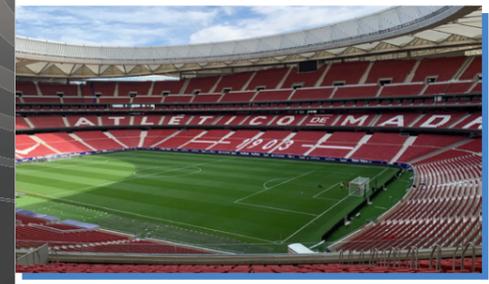
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FEDESSA Activities

Following home working for around 18 months organising meetings, webinars, and online events via Zoom, it has been a very busy period for FEDESSA. The FEDESSA Board meeting was held in September, followed by the FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show in Birmingham and then the Danish Self Storage Association meeting in Odense. A number of visits to venues in different countries in preparation for local conferences have also taken place plus the development of many new FEDESSA Association member websites.



Local European Conferences

We have all missed the in-person meetings and events which was really obvious during the FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show in Birmingham during September. Hearing how much everyone appreciates, now more than ever, the effort the team put into these conferences was very much appreciated.

Following on from the annual European conference, FEDESSA is pleased to announce that almost all the venues and dates have now been booked for the next series of local conferences. The first to take place is the Spanish Self Storage Conference which is to be held in the beautiful stadium of Atletico Madrid on March 30 and 31. Attendees will of course get the opportunity to explore the stadium that has been renovated and reopened to the public on 16 September 2017. Though you may not be a football fan, it is worth coming to listen to the range of Spanish and international speakers. More information regarding other local conferences will be published in the next issue of UNLOCKED and of course, further details will be on the website or in emails to members.

Spanish Self Storage Conference

Atletico Madrid - Madrid, 30 – 31 March 2022

Dutch Self Storage Conference

NH Eindhoven - Eindhoven, 20 April 2022

Swedish Self Storage Conference

7A Odenplan - Stockholm, 5 May 2022

Danish Self Storage Association Meeting

Twice a year the Danish Board gets together to discuss topics relevant to the Association and members. However, recently they requested FEDESSA's help to organise a meeting for both members and non-members. Compared to other countries, the Danish self storage market is still very small, and so the Danish Board were delighted that despite this, the meeting still attracted 20 attendees. Starting with a presentation on the Danish Self Storage Association by Allan Agerskov, the Association's President, members were then given the opportunity to introduce themselves. Just before the suppliers' presentations, FEDESSA made a short presentation too. Three suppliers attended the meeting with the first, FEDESSA supplier member USC, who recently began operating in Scandinavia, having the perfect opportunity to introduce themselves. The second was Danish supplier member SolarVenti Ltd who have 27 years of experience in the development, production, and professional servicing of solar air collectors. The last presentation was by Ambitlocker who deliver digital locking solutions for storage and locker units. After the presentations, everyone enjoyed a great lunch, and we think all will agree that the meeting was a big success with great opportunities for suppliers and operators to network. A big thank you also to our three suppliers who kindly sponsored the lunch.



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Czech operator visits stores in the Netherlands

Dominika Dudova, owner of Super Storage, decided in the summer to combine a pleasure visit to Amsterdam with some store visits. Super Storage is an automated container facility in Prague, Czech Republic which opened in November 2020, with more facility openings planned before the end of this year.

The first store Dominika visited was Shurgard Amsterdam Central, a store with more than 1,400 units. Store Manager Sevil Arturk took time to explain a bit the history of Shurgard and the facility. They discussed many areas from how their facilities differed to how they deal with customers. Very helpful to Dominika as a new player in the industry, was the discussion on how to work with late payments, delinquent tenants and how they auction off units. In the Czech Republic you can no longer charge a late fee due to a lot of unfair "cheap pay day loans" commercialized in the past, where money was made with high late fees and high interest rates. *"However, thanks to this visit I learned how I still can get these payments within a reasonable time by just contacting the tenant every day by email, then by phone after a few days, and then on day 15, sending a new invoice for the next period in addition to the amount owed"*, says Dominika. The visit ended with a quick tour of the inside and outside areas.

Following the Shurgard visit, Dominika visited with Mark Elsendoorn from Universal Storage Containers, one of their clients De Opslagconcurrent in Lelystad. The manager Michel took his time to show their main indoor facility and they spoke about the materials they used to build their indoor units. *"They recently acquired outdoor storage containers from USC and were testing them out in terms of popularity. They said were very overwhelmed with the interest in storing by outdoor driveup containers from clients"*, explained Dominika. She shared and explained how their fully automated facility works with software. Together with Mark she examined the containers in detail and discussed the differences between the ones she had and the more premium ones from USC. A very interesting tip for her was the use of heavy-duty nylon pads for leveling the containers instead of bricks. They are now considering using USC for their next facility.

"The whole visit was extremely educational for me, and I am so grateful that Paola Barraza from FEDESSA made this possible", Dominika added. Dominika also took one additional important advice from Sevil Arturk: *"Do not take things personally and just focus on the operations and the job that needs to be done"*.



Store Profile – Alkila Trasteros

Alkila Trasteros was founded by a Barcelona-based family. The passion they feel about this business, has led them to develop a wonderful project with all their enthusiasm. After 15 years of experience in the self storage sector, and with a long period working for City Self Storage, Lucas, Jorge and Laura decided it was time to create their own brand, based on the value of their people. “We enjoy and we learn day by day, as if it were the first one”, says Laura Perez Andreu, CEO.

In 2018, they decided to open Alkila Rubí which started as a family project and that was the start of their success. They quickly, together with support from shareholders, fully aligned with their long-term vision expansion of the company. Today they are currently owning and operating four locations, with a bigger business expansion plan in Spain.

Alkila Trasteros has a total of 10,000 sqm storage space distributed over four centers located in the vicinity of the city of Barcelona, (Alkila Rubí, Alkila Santa Coloma, Alkila Sant Adrià and Alkila Granollers). All their sites have the highest standards of quality, excellent customer service, and services such as balanced working hours with two sales representatives, reception and delivery, key accounts management, certified destruction of documents, removal services and selling of packing materials.

“Our greatest value is a one-to-one service to all our customers. We aim to go beyond their expectations, we always want to go that extra mile with them. For us, our sites are the extension of our customer’s home, where they leave their most valuable objects. We are aware of this fact, and we take very good care of all of them”, says Laura.

They are currently working to give their clients the possibility to book and register online. Their goal is to be different based on the human touch, by being the closest and the most cordial professionals.

Laura decided to become a member of the AESS (Spanish Self Storage Association), as she knew the AESS from her period as a representative for City Self Storage, so she is fully aware of the support the AESS can offer them. *“We love industry conferences, interacting with other colleagues, and finding in AESS the support we may need. We have seen that Sole is doing a great job in the AESS”,* Laura concludes.



The Grid Box – 2nd Place FEDESSA Innovation Award 2021

Grid Box, smart storage with a sustainability focus

In September, 24Storage applied for the Innovation Award with the Grid Box solution. Although they did not win the Award itself, they can be very proud with their second place.

24Storage was founded six years ago and the company had a clear vision from the start: improving people’s quality of life. They wanted to challenge the established players on the Swedish storage market. Mainly by disrupting the existing self storage market through vast digitalization and by raising the general awareness and usage of self storage as an everyday life service. Today the company accomplished more than the two missions they set up. In those six years they have disrupted the market by establishing 27 facilities, encompassing 71 000 sqm of lettable storage area and they are today the number two player on the Swedish market.

24Storage’s vision of improving people’s quality of life and customer centric innovation is the DNA of the company. In 2021, they asked their customers how they could simplify their storage solution and what frictions they experienced. The simple survey showed that one of the biggest frictions

was related to using, and more precisely finding things, in fully packed storage boxes in a packed storage unit.

With this information they started to innovate and test boxes. After three months of product development the Grid Box was born. With the Grid Box, 24Storage has presented a totally new way of packing, finding, and using your stuff. The moving box has neatly designed mini boxes within with exact measurements, smart external design to label, and a lifting handle to access any box easily. 24Storage developed the box together with a prominent packaging designer.

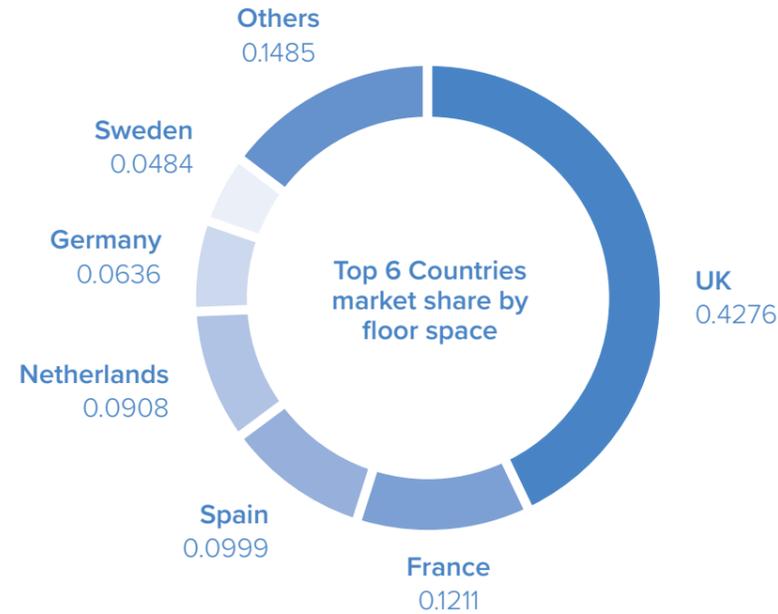
The Grid Box became a success this spring. Initially the box was given away for free in the new online shop and launched and promoted by several of Sweden’s big influencers to create awareness.

“Store it right and use it for years”.



European Annual Industry Report 2021

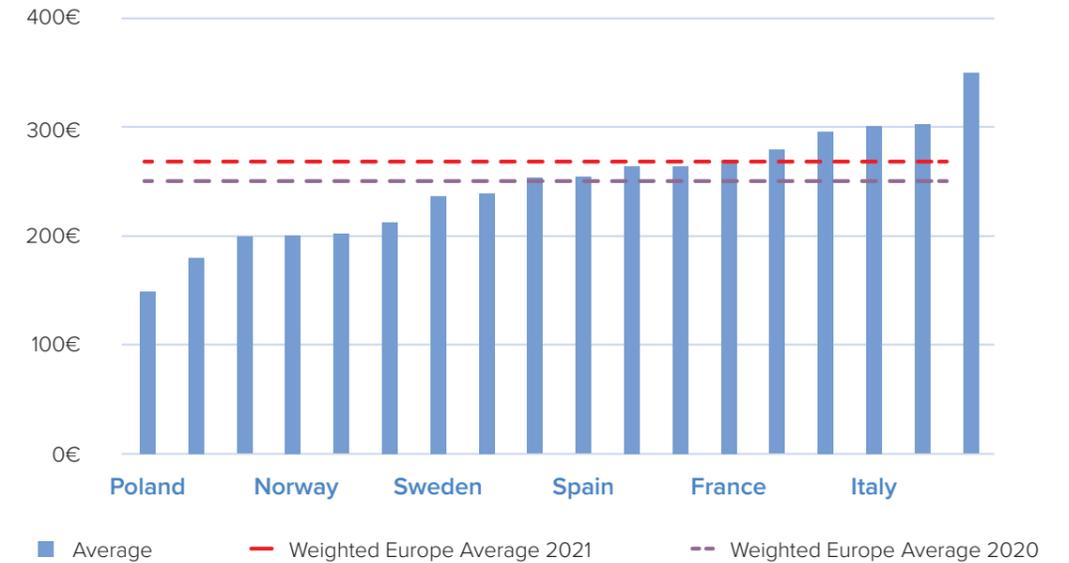
The tenth annual FEDESSA European Industry Report completed in conjunction with JLL has now been released. The report provides data and insight into the growth of the sector and its performance, plus examines some of the key future trends that are emerging. It shows there has been a consistently strong and robust performance during the Coronavirus pandemic across Europe, with strong occupancy and rental levels, continuing growth in supply, coupled with ever increasing investor interest in the sector. The last decade has seen the total number of facilities more than triple. There are now 5,173 facilities across Europe, providing nearly 11 million square metres of self storage space compared to 1,711 facilities a decade ago.



Rental Returns

The weighted average rent across Europe was €268.74 per square metre per annum. The last year has seen the biggest increases in rental rates ever recorded by our survey, rising by 7.4%. The pandemic did cause rental rates to initially fall, but only by around 3% at the peak of lockdown restrictions in Europe which was soon recovered. The largest rental rate increases were seen in Italy, Portugal, and the Netherlands. All three of these countries saw year on year increases of over 20%.

Average return per sqm excluding VAT



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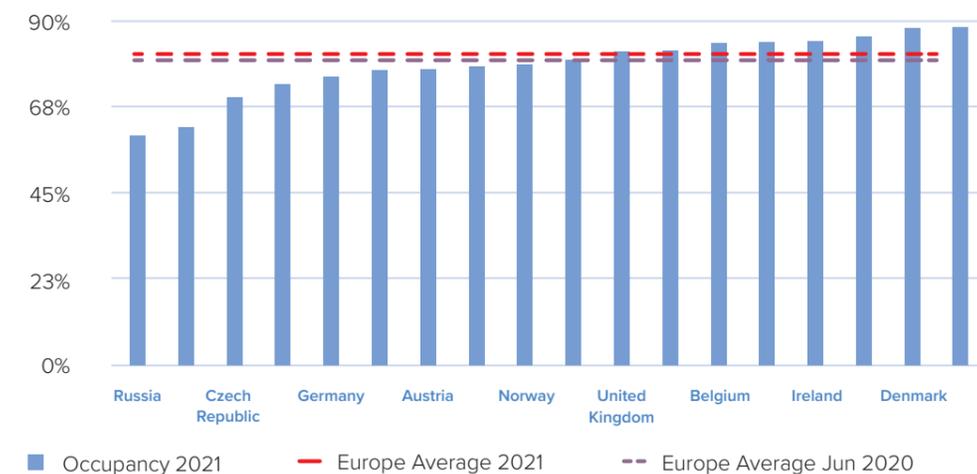
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Occupancy

The average occupancy across Europe saw a 1.7 percentage point increase from 79.8% in June 2020 to 81.5% in 2021. Occupancy levels are now higher than what was seen in February 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic hit Europe and in 2019. The largest occupancy increases were seen in Spain, Ireland, and the Netherlands. We should take care when comparing occupancy rates in isolation as there are a number of contributing factors that influence occupancy. New facilities tend to have lower occupancy rates as they typically take three to five years to reach maturity. For example, the average occupancy rate for a facility in our dataset that is under five years old is 68% when compared to facilities that are more than 10 years old which have an average occupancy rate of over 85%.

Average occupancy



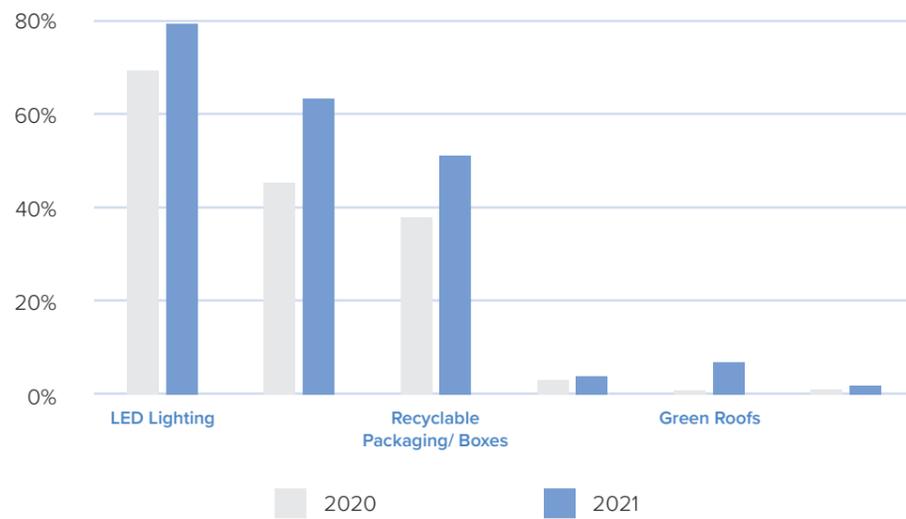
Business/Domestic split

The European average of occupied space by business customers has decreased from 32% in 2019 and 2020 to 27%. This is a reversal of the trend we had seen over the last three years of business customers taking a greater percentage of floor area. This is potentially linked to the contraction in GDP during the pandemic. It is also possibly linked to the increasing occupancy of the industry. The yield is generally higher on smaller units, so as a store reaches mature occupancy, operators may look to reconfigure larger units to smaller sizes where demand allows. Smaller units are generally less suited to business customers.

Sustainability

The survey shows that important steps are being taken to reduce energy consumption. There has been a good adoption of energy saving technology and sensors, and in consumer products, but still relatively poor take up in solar panels, green roofs, and electric charging points. Evidence from JLL's database shows that approximately 85% of stores in the top 6 countries in Europe are typically first-generation sites that were opened as the industry emerged in Europe. These are typically in older converted industrial properties which will be in need of retrofitted improvements, along with the real possibility that there will be increasing levels of obsolescence and some "stranded assets" as legislation is introduced. We also expect to see emerging new technologies and building construction techniques to reduce embedded carbon in new build assets.

Adoption of environmental initiatives



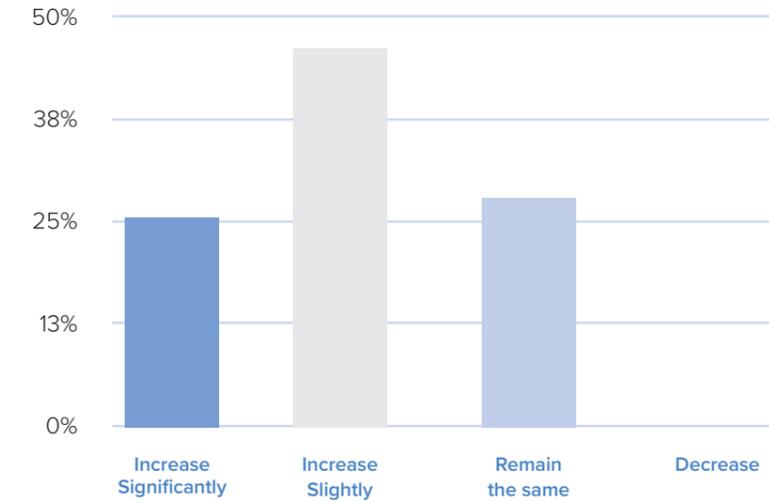
Outlook

We asked operators their views on what they perceive as the biggest threat to the self storage industry over the next 12 months. We asked this same question last year, and over a quarter of operators highlighted the ongoing impact of COVID-19 as the biggest threat. This year, the impact of COVID-19 saw only 13% of operators view it as the biggest threat. A third of operators highlighted oversupply as the biggest threat, with similarly related issues such as rising land costs and planning permission difficulties in 2nd and 3rd place. This is somewhat surprising given that self storage is still relatively young in Europe, especially when compared to the USA. However, in major urban markets it can be very competitive particularly in the countries with more established self storage markets.

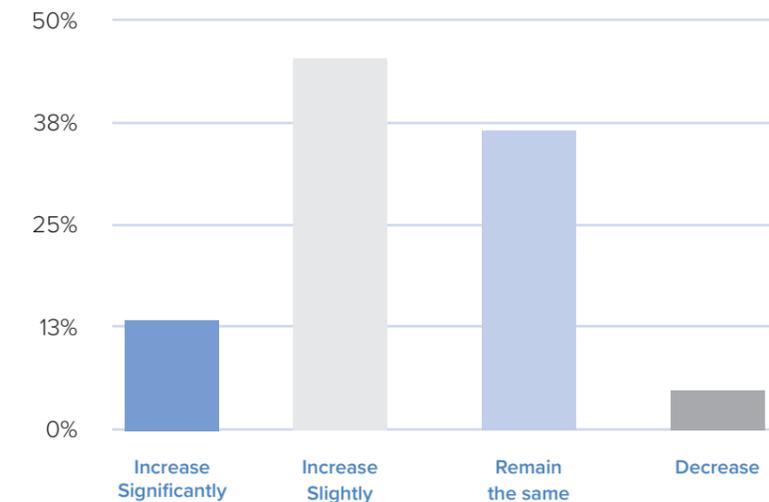
None **Rising land cost** Availability of suitable properties
Difficulty relating to planning applications
 Increase in taxes applied to self storage buildings
 Environmental regulations **Oversupply**
 Metal's price increasing Recession Increase in rents
 Dramatic cost increase in metal supply and other building materials Short term oversupply resulting in decreasing prices / price wars.
 Ongoing Impact of Covid, eg more lock downs, less community movement

No operator is expecting occupancy rates to decrease over the next year, with nearly three quarters of operators anticipating occupancy rates to increase over the next 12 months.

What do you expect to happen to occupancy rates over the next 12 months?



What do you expect to happen to net rental rates over the next 12 months?



Interestingly, operators were slightly less confident regarding rental growth with only 59% predicting an increase. However, over a third of operators were expecting rental rates to stay the same and only 5% of operators were expecting a decrease in rental rates over the next 12 months, which is more optimistic compared to historic years.



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Country Profile SPAIN

Despite the pandemic, the self storage industry in Spain continues to grow, both inside the major cities and in regional locations. We estimate that there are around 600-700 self storage stores in Spain offering around 1 million square meters of storage space.

As with most European countries, the self storage industry in Spain started in the major cities, Barcelona and Madrid. As little as 12 years ago there were few major storage stores outside the cities. Today the Spanish self storage market is the third largest on the continent in terms of space with stores all across the country including regional areas. When considering storage space per person, Spain ranks 8th with 0.022 square meters per person which is exactly the same as the European average. It is estimated that there are around 340 operators in Spain of which 280 operators own and operate only one store. This makes it one of the most fragmented self storage markets in Europe. Up until the last few years, Bluespace was the only major operator in the market. However, recently Homebox has entered the market using their franchise model and Safestore has acquired 4 stores in Barcelona.

According to JLL, the highest concentration of high-quality stock remains in Barcelona and Madrid, albeit the current supply also has a significant amount of lower quality stock in these cities. Most other main conurbations in Spain have less high-quality stock particularly on the Northern coastline around the Basque region and in the South. The density of housing is significantly lower in these regions and awareness of the product is also lower, which is possibly why operators continue to look to build larger high-quality stores in the city locations. The pattern of development is not

dissimilar to other larger countries like France and Germany who also have larger concentrations of prime stores in the main cities. Like in these countries, we are now seeing more independent operators in Spain opening prime sites in secondary cities and locations, albeit usually smaller than their city equivalents.

"We are in a growing industry where 80% of customers live within a 3 km radius of a storage facility. This implies that an independent operator in a location within the city can compete and even beat an international chain that has a large center on the outskirts of the same city. The great advantage of independent operators is that they are able to reduce their operating costs compared to large chains that have very heavy fixed structure costs" says Alberto Serrano, Vice President of the AESS.

According to Javier Arambari (CEO Eurotrasteros and CEO Tuweco), the self storage sector has grown in 2021 in Madrid. Large operators like Bluespace or Oh My Box are developing new centers and buying already established operators. On the other hand, you have investors that want to enter the self storage market for some years, and they are in contact with small and medium-sized established operators. They are entering the market without any publicity about these transactions. And then you have the mini centers with less than 300 m² and with little capital.

Bluespace remains the largest operator in Spain and is now expanding into Portugal and France. They recently added six new facilities to their portfolio in Madrid through the acquisition of Extraroom and Vallekas Store. This brings their total number of stores in Spain to 50 of which 23 are



in Madrid with their other stores located in Barcelona and Valencia y Bilbao. They truly have a national coverage.

There are changes occurring in the industry, particularly as new technology is implemented in stores around automation and online integration. The pandemic led more people to book storage units online, a trend that looks like remaining after the pandemic. "Operators are looking at how they can use technology and innovation to attract more younger customers and retain them for the long term" as an example we have the smart lockers that allow us to make purchases and return orders or carry out any type of receptions and shipments without staff of merchandise, Jesús Fernández (CEO of RedTras) also confirms. He sold his share in Espaciogeo to focus on Third Party Management which gives him the opportunity to continue developing apps and using the latest technologies.

There is no doubt that the self storage market in Spain will continue to grow, but it does have its challenges. Awareness and understanding of the product remains low, an issue



not assisted by the fact that the "self" in self storage does not easily translate into Spanish. Often getting called the equivalent of storage rooms. As mentioned earlier, housing density outside the cities is not as high as in other European countries and the economy was still largely recovering from the last recession when the pandemic hit. The FEDESSA Annual Industry Report shows that the returns per square foot on storage in Spain remain below that of the other larger countries like France, Germany, Italy, and the UK and interestingly, are also below the much less developed neighboring Portuguese market. Getting planning and building permits can be a challenge, particularly in regional areas where authorities have limited knowledge of self storage. However, the development of other European markets would suggest that many of these issues will resolve as the industry grows and awareness increases. Having more large operators entering the market and stronger, high profile independent brands will assist with this. It will be interesting to see where the Spanish market is in another 10 years.



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Irene Sapena: a passion and commitment for self storage

Meet AESS member, Irene Sapena, Manager of MilCuartos. MilCuartos is a self storage center located in Elche, where the vocation of service and customer service is the most important.

Self storage as the best opportunity

After a few years of working in the footwear sector and having a family, Irene decided she had to find an activity that would allow her to be with her family more and that is how our interviewee and the self storage sector met. MilCuartos was founded in 2011 and from that moment, it became the central axis of Irene's professional life. This without leaving aside the footwear sector in which she continues to work, but in a more balanced way.

Customers building business

When MilCuartos opened its doors, Irene could not even imagine the number of companies and entrepreneurs who would use its services. If there is something that Irene likes about her work, it is to listen and talk to her clients, with the aim of getting to know them, detecting their needs and thus making MilCuartos the ideal self storage center for all of them. Storage rooms of all sizes, reception of goods, meeting rooms.... Basically, everything that any company

or individual would need from the self storage sector can be found in this center of Elche.

A stable and evolving sector in which to stay for a long time

Irene is clear, she has found her place in our sector. It is the type of business that has allowed her to grow professionally, establish synergies and in addition, reconcile her personal and professional life.

"My goal is to give a good service to my clients and for that specialization is very important"

Another aspect of self storage that convinced Irene was the support she received from colleagues in the AESS. Some of them helped her in the beginning by offering valuable advice that today continues to be very present.

After 10 years of experience in the sector, Irene is one of those professionals with whom a conversation about self storage can help you clarify your ideas in case you want to undertake in the self storage world. The main keys according to her: take into account the location of your new center and determine the profile it will have: automated, with staff, focused on professionals and companies.

Irene Sapena: pasión, tesón y compromiso por el self storage

Conoce a uno de los miembros AESS, Irene Sapena: gerente de MilCuartos. Un centro de self storage situado en Elche donde la vocación de servicio y el trato al cliente es lo más importante.

El self storage como la mejor de las oportunidades

Tras unos años dedicada en cuerpo y alma al sector del calzado y tras formar su familia, Irene decidió que tenía que encontrar una actividad que le permitiera estar con los suyos. Y así fue como nuestra entrevistada y el sector del self storage se encontraron. MilCuartos nace en 2011 y, a partir de ese momento, se convierte en el eje central de la vida profesional de Irene, sin dejar a un lado el sector del calzado en el que sigue trabajando pero ya de una manera más relajada y tranquila.

Cientes que construyen negocio

Cuando MilCuartos abrió sus puertas Irene no podía ni imaginar la cantidad de empresas y emprendedores que utilizarían sus servicios. Si hay algo que a Irene le gusta de su trabajo es escuchar y hablar con sus clientes, con el objetivo de conocerlos, detectar sus necesidades y conseguir así hacer de MilCuartos el centro de self storage ideal para todos ellos. Trasteros de todos los tamaños, recepción de mercancías, salas de juntas... Todo lo que cualquier empresa y particular necesita del sector del self storage lo encuentra en este centro de Elche.

Un sector firme, en evolución y en el que permanecer durante mucho tiempo

Irene lo tiene claro, ha encontrado su sitio en nuestro sector y es que según nos cuenta, se trata de un tipo de negocio que le ha permitido crecer profesionalmente, establecer sinergias y, además, conciliar su vida personal y profesional.

"Mi objetivo es dar un buen servicio a mis clientes y para eso la especialización es muy importante"

Otro de los aspectos del self storage que conquistó a Irene, fue el apoyo que sintió por parte de todos los compañeros de la AESS. Algunos de ellos le ayudaron en sus inicios ofreciéndole valiosos consejos que hoy en día sigue teniendo muy presents.

Tras 10 años de experiencia en el sector, Irene es una profesional de esas con las que una conversación sobre el self storage puede ayudarnos a esclarecer nuestras ideas en caso de que queramos emprender en el mundo de los trasteros. Nos ofrece dos claves de lo más importantes: tener en cuenta la ubicación de nuestro nuevo centro y determinar el perfil que tendrá: domotizado, con personal, enfocado a profesionales a empresas.



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FEDESSA Member Spotlight – Toro Box

The first professional self storage service in Serbia

FEDESSA is proud to introduce you to Toro Box, the first, self storage member from Serbia. In Serbia there are only ten operators with a self storage concept, but none of them promote self storage as a prime option as most of them are mainly removal companies. Toro Box is the first professional self storage service in Serbia.

Toro Box is a customer service driven, family-owned business and the only company in Serbia professionally managing this market segment. They have long-term experience leasing large commercial spaces. Working with large companies, highlighted the need for smaller storage places. They quickly understood that there was a growth potential. In 2017, Zoran Stajic (owner) ordered ten custom made containers and started to rent them out. In no time they were fully occupied and that was the beginning of their self storage history in Serbia.

Their facility is located in a residential area just 7 km from the center of Beograd, which makes it easy for customers to find and reach. Toro Box offers 24 hours access, the majority of the units have a personal alarm code, there is a guard on duty during the night shift, and they also offer moving services. They are currently working on an online reservation service too. The company name stands for strength, safety and domination which is expressed by Toro (meaning bull in Spanish) and Box which stands for the basic geometry shape used for storing. Right now, they are converting the big warehouses to small units which will give them another 230 units, so they will have 430 units in total with the possibility to expand for another 350 units in the whole plot.

Currently, they are looking for suitable land to build new facilities on two other locations in the same town. But their

expansion plan goes further than Beograd as they would like to open facilities in other major cities in Serbia the coming two years. "Serbia is a very good market for the self storage industry because we have an enormous number of building prospects, apartments and as people are moving, buying, and selling apartments, there is no more storage in new buildings. Cities are growing particularly rapidly, and storage is extremely needed. Office space is expensive, and companies would rather rent extra space to store archives", explains Zoran.

Self storage awareness is very low in Serbia and therefore they are fulfilling the role of educating people and they try to be creative with outdoor marketing. There is a lot of potential for the self storage market in Serbia, but banks are still not willing to support and invest materially in self storage in Serbia. Although it is not so easy to get banks to buy in to the projects and the concept awareness is really low, Zoran is convinced the market will change and as he admits, series like "Storage Wars" helps a lot to improve the concept recognition.



Business Reputation Protection: Protect what you have created

Defamation Act 2013: "a statement is not defamatory unless its publication has caused or is likely to cause serious harm to the reputation of the claimant. Harm to the reputation of a body that trades for profit is not 'serious harm' unless it has caused or is likely to cause the body serious financial loss".

The digital age of the internet and social media platforms gives us all the ability to provide views and opinions with relative ease, sharing them widely at the click of a button. But what cost can this have businesses?

In the corporate sphere, defamation can be caused by unscrupulous competitors intentionally wanting to cause harm to dilute the competition, or by a disgruntled customer. For some businesses, the comments made can cause serious harm to their reputation. Letting it simply pass in the hope of becoming 'old news' is not an option.

For defamation to arise there needs to be:

- The publication of words or other matter referring to the claimant;
- The words are capable of causing serious harm to the claimant's reputation;
- The words cannot be proved to be true or excusable by a legal defence – i.e. honest opinion.

The degree to which serious harm is assessed will depend on the type of publication where the written words have been published, for example mass media versus small scale publications.

In some circumstances, the nature of the defamatory statement is so damaging to a business' reputation that legal action is required for vindication. The Courts of England and Wales are well equipped to deal with this, with the redress sought taking the form of a written correction, removal of the publication, a public apology, and/or a financial settlement. If legal action is necessary, there is a time limit of one year from the date of the publication to bring a claim.

Another way to seek redress can be via the internet search engine itself. Google, by way of example, has operated a 'voluntary take down' policy for several years. If information has been published on the internet, you can complete an online form to request that Google takes that down. However, Google cannot remove content from websites hosting the information. This would require one to go to the website owner themselves to request the removal directly. If they refuse to do so and/or the damage to reputation will cause financial loss, then action through the Court's may be required.

Your business reputation can take a long time to build up, yet mere seconds to destroy. If you find yourself in a situation where a defamatory comment has been made which can or will cause you financial loss, you should not delay in seeking legal advice to protect yourself.

Gemma Newing, Rooks Rider Solicitors LLP



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FROM THE MARKET LEADER!

The importance of learning from peers

The Young Storage Network recognises and supports the youth in our industry and is here to encourage networking and the sharing of ideas.

Networking is important because your colleagues within the self storage industry, can help you find ideas and solutions that perhaps you couldn't find on your own. If you are experiencing hurdles that you can't overcome, it's likely a colleague has faced that hurdle before too and will be able to help you find a way to overcome it. Networking is one of the most effective methods for accelerating the pace of your career development and providing you with new opportunities to succeed.

The YSN actively arranges networking opportunities by holding events for learning, such as our next virtual member's meeting in November. In these complimentary sessions, we invite industry experts to share their knowledge with us for a short period and then answer questions to help us become better informed and more capable professionals. At these meetings we have a 'no question is a stupid question' rule so encourage 'all' questions from attendees.

It's also important for us to encourage our managers and directors to invest in their youth and you can do this by asking them to sign and support us via the YSN Charter.

The YSN is well placed to provide good quality training, free of charge. Everyone knows the importance of providing training for new employees, but we shouldn't ignore the advantages of training for staff that have perhaps been around a while too and know the culture, missions, and goals of their companies. They will be able to more actively see where their businesses can improve and how any training received via the YSN can be implemented quickly and effectively.

Allow the SSA UK and the YSN to support you, bring us together via meetings and learning opportunities and move us forward in our careers for the benefit of our employers which in turn, will contribute to this wonderful industry of ours.

Alex Lane - Young Storage Network



Have you got the correct signage in your storage facility?

Safety and security signage plays a key part in providing clear communication in your facility for the benefit of customers. While each sign will serve a different purpose, having the correct signage in place will provide your current customers and potential customers with important or even essential information whilst on-site.

There may be several different types of signage displayed at your facility. Direction signage such as restrooms, customer parking, goods lift, stairs, walkways, main reception etc., should be used in all sizes of facilities, particularly those sites with multiple floors and or corridors. You may also have additional signage in place for services that your facility offers such as a Defibrillator, First Aid supplies, CCTV and especially recently, COVID-19 signage for the wearing of masks and hand sanitizing stations.

The main types of signage that all self storage facilities must offer is standard safety signs. This includes non-smoking, prohibited items (list of the items which should not be stored in a storage unit), fire regulations and fire exits, evacuation procedures including muster points, Health & Safety (HSE) and emergency contact details inside the facility for internal facilities and within the facility premises on a container site.

So, there are a few things to keep in mind when choosing your signs:

1. **Visibility** - is your sign clear from any obstruction and is all the text visible from a distance?

2. **Installation** - are you using a substantial material and does the area where the sign is placed keep clean and dry?

3. **Quality** - is the quality of the sign durable and would this become perished over a period of time?

Safety signs can be installed pretty much anywhere and can also be produced in line with your company branding. Maintaining them is also just as important as displaying them so ensure they are clean, visible and if electrical, check they work!

It is important when opening your facility and or acquiring a new site that all the correct signage is displayed for your customers.

Should you have any questions about the signage at your facility, please contact Hannah on hspeed@ssauk.com or call 01270 623150.



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StorageMart Daniel Saunders,
Director at StorageMart



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Recently Upgraded Members

We are pleased to announce the following three members have been upgraded to full membership of the SSA UK.



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Trading Standards News

Biggest ever UK anti-counterfeiting raid

September 2021 saw the largest seizure of counterfeit goods in the UK, as 55 units and 200 tonnes of counterfeit clothing, footwear, accessories and cosmetics were seized from a self storage facility in Manchester.

The goods are imported, stored and distributed by organised crime groups linked to other serious crime. They operate from the Strangeways area of the city, a notorious counterfeiting hot-spot. A drive along Bury New Road will give you a snapshot of the problem. Shops are hidden behind metal shutters and teams of spotters can be seen looking out for law enforcement officers. Their use of spotters and shop sellers highlight associated immigration offences and concerns of modern-day slavery and human trafficking.

Criminals in these circumstances target facilities convenient to their distribution routes. Staff here will be at a greater risk of deception as criminals try to muddy the trail between themselves and their criminality. Deception methods include:

- Fake identification documents
- No bank details given by the person named on the licence agreement
- Irregular payment history
- Cash, credit card or BACS payments from unknown third parties
- Changing the named person on the account or transferring units between different accounts
- Staff being asked to accept deliveries to unknown people

Intelligence is being collated nationally about storage locations and the illicit supply chain. This will focus on facilities close to hot-spot physical markets, distribution hubs and ports. This will run alongside prevention in the form of the Tick Box. Keep it Real. Keep it Legal. Code of Practice: <https://tick-box.org.uk/>.

SSA UK Members who are participating in the campaign are:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apex Self Storage • Barn Store • Big Yellow • Blue Space Self Storage • Britannia Lanes Self Storage • Britannia Legerstar Self Storage Ltd • Bullmans Shipping Containers • BWI Storage Ltd • Camel Self Storage • Dash Self Storage • Go Self Storage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hogleaze Self Storage Ltd • M Store Self Storage • MyLockUp • My Secure Selfstore.com • Nanpean Self Storage • Safe & Dry Storage • Safestore • Stock N Lock Self Storage • Storage King • Storage World Self Storage • SureStore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U Can Store It • We Store Cornwall • Your Room Self Storage Ltd • Eversley Storage • Ready Steady Store • The Container Team • Access Self Storage • Guardian Self Store • Border Caravan Storage |
|---|---|---|

Tick Box
Keep it **real**. Keep it **legal**.

Code of Practice Update

Trading Standards and the Intellectual Property Office, supported by the SSA UK, launched the code of practice in March 2021. Businesses were asked to sign up to the code which sets out simple procedures aimed at preventing the storage of illicit goods. Once signed up, businesses are provided with marketing and staff training material. The code aims to increase industry awareness and engagement with law enforcement, and represent a symbol of consumer confidence and fair trading.

Although in its infancy and following a challenging start due to Covid 19, we now have over 50 signed up businesses comprising over 400 physical premises and 1,300 staff. If you would like to sign up to the scheme or would like more information, please contact enforcement@ipo.gov.uk.





Member Benefit – UK Legal Support

One of the key benefits, and most widely used by operators, is the comprehensive legal support service offered to both provisional and full members.

There are many legal challenges self storage businesses face from time to time and as the industry grows it is important members are protected. By adopting the practices we suggest and using the agreements, addendums and advice manual we provide, you will minimise your risk and prevent considerable business disruption and loss.

Standard Self Storage Licence Agreement

We encourage all operator members to use the Standard Self Storage Licence Agreement provided. The agreement, completely revised in September 2020, now has simpler language and a clearer front cover. It was also updated for Data Protection, use of social media to contact customers and adaption for completion by customers online.

Key Holding Agreement

The managed storage addendum is to be used whenever a business keeps keys to a storage unit or otherwise has access to the unit without using force. However, use of the agreement should be limited as there is significantly more liability on an operator when you have access to a unit. This addendum must be used in conjunction with the Standard Self Storage Licence Agreement.

Delivery Room Agreement

In order to minimise liability and reduce the use of the managed storage addendum, some operators choose to accept deliveries into a common storage room. Note: the agreement must be used in conjunction with the Standard Self Storage Licence

Agreement and cannot be used in isolation.

Manual of Advice & Procedures (MAP)

As a complementary resource, the Manual of Advice & Procedures, or MAP provides legal direction and support for members when tackling the many challenges that can arise when operating a self storage business. It is a 'go to' guide for managers and owners when faced with a situation that is outside the norm. Note the MAP must be used in conjunction with the Standard Self Storage Licence Agreement. If you are not using this Agreement, the advice in this manual may not apply to your business. Another reason why you should switch your storers to the most current Storage Agreement provided by the SSA UK. This comprehensive guide to operating a self storage business provides the maximum level of legal protection and practical solutions to often difficult problems. If you don't have the latest version to hand, you can access the document by logging into the members only area of the website to download.

Access to Legal Advice

We can offer advice on legal matters affecting your business and are just a phone call away when you need our assistance. Requests may be made by email too. If you're unsure of the solution to a legal issue, please contact us on 01270 623150 or email admin@ssauk.com. We are here to help.

GDPR & Data Protection

We also have a GDPR Guide to ensure you understand your obligations and a Data Protection Policy template to adopt within your policy manual, so you understand your data protection responsibilities.



The SSA UK at the Movers & Storers Show 2021

SSA UK CEO Rennie Schafer, and the newest member of the team Stephen Ramage, attended the event on 2 and 3 November in Stoneleigh. Rennie was invited to speak about self storage and its prospects for the future and Stephen manned our trade stand, promoting the SSA UK and the industry.

On day one, Rennie spoke to attendees about how self storage has fared over the last couple of years, the impact COVID 19 has had on the industry and where he sees it going in the future. On the second day he was joined by Sarah Manning of Secure Stores Nationwide to discuss container storage and how it could be a cost-effective way for startups, and for companies looking to take their first steps into the self storage industry. Both sessions were well attended. Rennie's booming Aussie tones and enthusiasm brought people from all over the arena



to the sessions. Although scheduled for half an hour each, both sessions ran over due to the number of audience questions.

For the SSA UK, it was a successful two days as it provided the opportunity to promote the industry to an audience who may not already know just quite how brilliant, lucrative, and rewarding it can be. We received plenty of interest from businesses considering joining the sector and from those who already have a facility but are now looking to expand due to the increase in demand.

We received a number of membership enquires and even had a new member join us right there and then on the stand! Vinnie Dynes from VK Removals and Storage joined after hearing about all the benefits membership could offer to his growing container site in Cookstown, Northern Ireland. It was a pleasure to meet him, and we are delighted to have him on board!



FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show 2021

Over 500 self storage owners, operators and investors travelled to Birmingham for the FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show held on 20 and 21 September. This was the first in person event in the industry since the pandemic, with delegates keen to network and meet in person again. The event featured a range of business and industry speakers covering all issues relevant to self storage. Marketing guru Geoff Ramm was hugely popular as he challenged operators to find a new way of marketing instead of following the crowd. Richard Mullender described how becoming a better listener improves your sales skills. Marc Ourisn, CEO of Shurgard, talked about how he saw technology influencing self storage and the room for further growth in the industry. A range of industry expert panels covered issues from digital marketing and pricing to sustainability and automation.

A new feature this year was the Container Park, where a range of storage containers were on display including innovative double stacked containers, flat pack storage containers and purpose built, drive-up units. There were also a range of container accessories on display such as levellers and accessories to enhance the storage experience for customers. A special breakout session was held for container operators too dealing with expanding your site, automation, and the increasing costs of containers.

As always at this FEDESSA event, networking and social interaction were a key part of the programme. On the first night delegates were treated to an exclusive festival experience at Warwick Castle complete with a range of street food, duelling knights, magicians, musicians, and fireworks show to finish. It was a fantastic way to meet other self storage professionals. On the final night we held the Annual Industry Awards Dinner, a more formal event recognising the achievements of the industry and its staff.

The self storage trade show was the biggest ever held in Europe with a host of first-time exhibitors, many demonstrating technological advances in the industry. Along with construction, insurance, packaging, financing, management companies, apps, lifts, auction houses and loads more. The show was so big some delegates stated they did not have enough time to see everything.

Overall, the event was a huge success with 93% of delegates rating it great or excellent. Next year's conference will be held in The Algarve in Portugal, 27 – 29 September 2022.



"The FEDESSA team did an absolutely fantastic job of organising the event. I have attended a number of different property sector conferences, and this is by far the most enjoyable and well-organised."
Daniel Thorpe – JLL

"Taking us out of our comfort zone, negotiating and radical marketing presentations were very thought provoking and challenging."
Tim Shuldham, Hive Self Storage

"The external container area was a brilliant idea!"
Emma Chesterton-Kay – Storage King





Market Outlook – Container Supply

We continue to be plagued by supply chain issues which are disrupting the shipment of new containers from China. Port congestion, driver shortages and limited production availability all continue to disrupt the flow of new containers into the UK for container traders. These issues are also causing problems for shipping lines, and there remains a shortage of empty containers for general shipping in key locations. Because of this, the shipping lines continue to order large volumes of new containers from the factories in China, which is keeping the demand strong and pricing high.

Experts predict that the supply chain disruption will continue throughout most of 2022, as these issues are not an overnight fix.

Containers which are shipped empty from China to the UK such as 10fts, 8fts, and multi compartment containers are still in short supply. The reason for this, is the increase in freight rates for shipping empty containers from China to the UK. The shipment of 2 x empty 10' containers from China to the UK was around \$1,650 USD in December 2020 and is now in

the region of \$12,000 USD. Once freight of \$6,000 USD is added to the cost of a 10ft container, the cost of them becomes extremely high. For this reason, the majority of containers traders have refrained from building many or any 8fts, 10fts or Multi Compartment containers this year. Freight rates show no signs of dipping at present, and while this remains the case you can expect very limited supply of these products. If you require containers for your self storage site, the message remains the same, which is to plan ahead as much as possible to try to ensure a ready supply to meet your needs.

MARKET OUTLOOK – CONTAINER PRICING

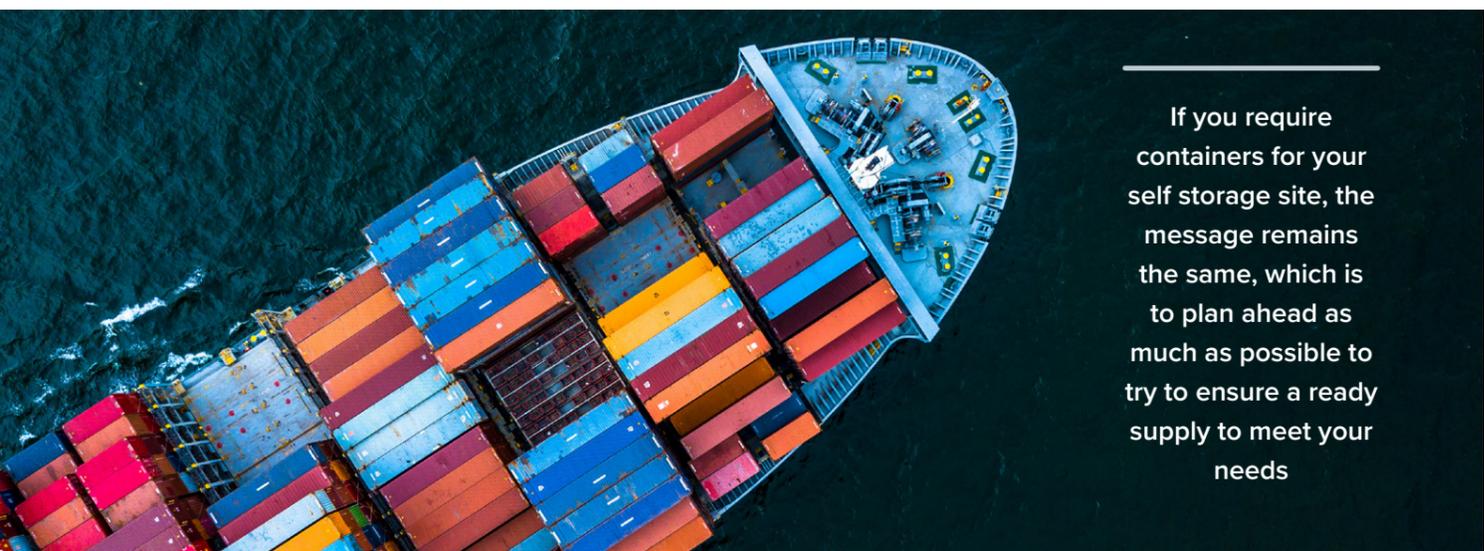
The price of containers has steadily risen over 2021 and is currently sitting at the peak (\$4,000 - \$4,050 USD per 20ft container). Note that these costs are ex-factory in China, and do not include any of the associated costs incurred when importing the containers into the UK and preparing them for delivery out to customers. Pricing seems to have stabilised at this level for now.

It is predicted that there is unlikely to be a sudden dip

in pricing, while demand for them from shipping lines remains so strong. With shipping lines charging such high freight rates, they have never been so profitable, and can therefore afford to pay top price for more containers to add to their fleet. The general feeling across the industry is that if there are any reductions in pricing, they won't be large at this stage. It is worth noting also that the cost of manufacturing a container has increased – for example paint costs have risen 40% over 2021, and corten steel has also risen in cost this year. It's therefore unlikely that even when we do start to see pricing reducing, that it will return to levels such as £2,000 for a 20ft container. Perhaps the 'new normal' will become somewhere between £2,500 and £3,000 for a new 20ft once things settle down? Time will tell on this front. The container factories are also unable to increase production output at the moment by working extra shifts, due to energy shortages in China. Oversupply in China forcing down pricing is therefore unlikely in the near future.

The information contained in this article was correct at time of print.

“
The general feeling across the industry is that if there are any reductions in pricing, they won't be large at this stage
”



If you require containers for your self storage site, the message remains the same, which is to plan ahead as much as possible to try to ensure a ready supply to meet your needs

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UK Employment Law Round-Up

Government to introduce 'day one' right to unpaid carer's leave

The government has published its response to its consultation on introducing a new statutory right to 'carer's leave'. It has confirmed that it intends to introduce a 'day one' right to carer's leave, which will consist of one week (five working days) of unpaid leave per year for employees managing long-term caring responsibilities alongside work. The leave will be available to take flexibly (i.e. from half-day blocks to a whole week). This right will exist alongside the current right to time off for dependants.

The full carer's leave consultation can be viewed here.

In view of the new right being introduced, employers may wish to update their staff handbooks in due course.

The End of Furlough:

What to do with returning workers?

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, known as the furlough scheme, ended on 30 September 2021. In most cases, employers have taken steps in relation to their returned furloughed employees.

However, there are many employers that for various reasons have yet to make arrangements in relation to returning employees, whether that be returning those employees to their previous roles or undertaking a redundancy exercise.

Those employees on furlough leave should have automatically returned to their previous role with their employer. However, with the economy still struggling in certain sectors, such as air travel, many employers simply do not have the finances to bring furloughed employees back.

In those cases, there are various options available to employers, such as undertaking a redundancy consultation, short-term working, lay-offs etc. Another point to bear in mind is that during their time away from their workplace on furlough, employees may have acquired the right to protection from unfair dismissal legislation.

Government launches consultation on making flexible working the default position

Following the changes to working practices brought about by

the pandemic, the government is considering making the right to request flexible working a 'day one' right and whether to require an employer to consider alternatives when refusing a request¹.

In its consultation, the government is seeking views on five proposals it has set out to potentially reshape the current legislation:

- removing the 26-week qualifying period for making a request, making the right to request flexible working a 'day one' right;
- whether the eight existing business reasons for refusing a statutory request for flexible working remain valid in today's world;
- requiring employers to suggest alternatives if they intend to refuse a request (rather than simply rejecting it);
- the administrative process underpinning the right to request flexible working; and
- how the right to request a temporary flexible arrangement could be better utilised.

As part of the consultation, the government also invites its 'flexible working taskforce' to consider how to develop flexible working beyond Covid-19 and make the most of the lessons learnt (good and bad) over the last 18 months as more people start to return to the workplace and as employers respond with new approaches to working; and considering how to secure a genuinely flexible working friendly culture across and within organisations.

The government also intends to launch a call for evidence looking at the sorts of 'extra' flexibility people may need to help them live their lives in the best way they can – both at work and at home. It will explore the need for 'ad hoc' and informal flexibility and how this can best be supported.

The consultation closes on 1 December 2021.

For more information on the above or to discuss any other employment issues, please contact Aaron Heslop, Rooks Rider's employment law specialist, on Tel: **020 7689 7209** or email: aheslop@rooksriders.co.uk.

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¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/making-flexible-working-the-default>



The clock is ticking...are you at risk?

It has been a challenging time for so many of us, with having to constantly adapt to changing COVID restrictions on what seemed like a weekly basis. Now, as we move into this next phase of transition and head towards something that might feel more like normal, we can't lose sight of the challenges we may yet have to face.

Delinquent units or bad debts are part of normal day to day business. However, now the furlough scheme has come to an end, and the full financial impact of this pandemic begins to hit, more debt is an unfortunate certainty.

Where a unit is no longer providing income; there is a strong commercial need for a storage provider to remove unwanted items to allow for a rapid re-let.

There are a few options currently being used to manage that process in an attempt to recoup some of the lost revenue. These include sorting through and selling them yourself, possibly using an online auction site such as eBay; or by utilising an online provider who empties and sorts the unit for you, taking a cut of any money made and returning the rest to clear off as much of the debt as possible.

Sorting through a unit can be a costly and timely process, as each item has to be sold for the best possible price, and evidence kept as per the advice in the SSA UK Manual of Advice and Procedures (MAP). There are also a few other issues you need to be mindful of when going through the process:

1. The first thing to consider are any environmental factors. As a company who offers a service to help deal with unpaid units, we often find hazardous materials, chemicals, and needles, each of which can result in injury if not handled correctly.

2. The next on the list is weapons such as knives, swords, and guns. In some parts of the country, we are seeing weapons in more than 50% of delinquent removals. We feel a strong sense of responsibility to remove these items and ensure they are sent to be melted down.

There is an increasing number of firearms being stored away from the owner's property and while most of these are on the list of prohibited items in a self storage business, they still manage to find their way into self storage units. These include tasers which are classed as a firearm and carry a mandatory prison sentence if you are found to be holding one. You need to transfer these items into the relevant Police firearms teams for permanent disposal.

Occasionally drugs are found in units, be they old prescription medications or other substances. These need to be disposed of carefully and in line with current waste regulations. We suggest these are taken to a local/ community pharmacy or dispensing doctor (if appropriate).



3. Caution must also be taken with counterfeit goods, such as fake cigarettes, cosmetics, and clothing. You cannot resell these goods, they must be returned to your local Trading Standards office. However, it is not always easy to identify counterfeit goods, especially when they may be individual items purchased by the storer and mixed in with other goods.

4. The most common sensitive item to be found in a self storage unit is personal data, whether that be a passport, driving licence, birth certificate, bank statements or electronic data on a PC or mobile device. There is limited responsibility on the storage company to protect this data as the responsibility is on the owner who is the data controller. However, you cannot pass on or sell this data, knowingly or unknowingly, so the items need to be destroyed or in the case of electronic items, data cleaned before they are sold. Passports must be returned to the local police station.

Care must be taken when selling customers goods. It is not just a case of taking a few photos from the doorway of the unit and sticking them on eBay. This is why many operators choose to use a managed auction house that look after the entire process for you.

Lee Rosan

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Is your self storage business at risk of being left behind in the race to adopt digital marketing?

If COVID-19 taught us anything, it's the importance of an online reputation for a business. The pandemic has been a stark reminder that self storage operators need to adapt how they approach digital marketing, if they want to remain competitive in the market and retain high-value customers.

even visited a website. A question we continue to ask operators across Europe and the UK is, 'Are you ahead of your peers when it comes to digital marketing or are you being left behind?'. Often the answer is simple, "I don't know."

What has happened over the past 20 months though, and how have leading operators shifted the way in which they manage their online presence? We recently spoke to Chris Oosthuizen, Executive Manager of Digital First, a digital marketing agency for the self storage industry in Europe and the UK, who shared key insights into the importance of adopting digital marketing best practice and what trends all operators should be taking careful note of.

While staying ahead of digital marketing trends in the sector can be overwhelming for some, here are a few simple fundamentals that every operator should be incorporating into their marketing strategy.

Here's what you need to know.

It comes as no surprise that within the self storage sector, in all markets, enquiry generation is the lifeblood of the business. With digitalization having taken the sector to a completely different landscape over recent years, further accelerated by the pandemic, generating enquiries in the online space has become vital to the success of any operator. Having the capability to identify new online customer acquisition opportunities, develop solutions, deploy to the live environment, measure, and evaluate results at speed, and then repeat the cycle in the online space, is a key skill set and one which gives savvy operators a competitive advantage.



Truly understand your audience

While the product may in its simplest form be space, the reason that people use it varies significantly. It's important that operators understand the 'life happens' moments that drive the product use, and how these various target audiences are segmented. A question we ask operators often is, "How are you segmenting your audience?"

Consumer behaviours have changed, and traditional marketing strategies are not as effective as they once were. The reality is that consumers are now making decisions about self storage before they've

What are the materials made from?

Frame work - 100mm wide, 1.2mm Galv punched and rolled to any length

Roof/walls/ Insulation - Composite cladding, 40-80mm depending on preference.

Base - The base can be a cassette system then decked with 22mm plywood T&G or direct to concrete base

Doors/locks - Roller door or double skin swing doors are available with a slide lock with padlock or barrel Stainless Steel or Zinc coated. Higher grade security locks are a option also.

Manufacturing to completion time?

Based on 10 160sqft units, manufacturing takes 7-10 days from order then 14 days to erect on a flat surface, uneven surface subject to survey.

What sizes are available?

These units can be designed to fit virtually any space, making any odd areas/corners rent-able from 80sqft up to 500sqft.

How will they arrive?

Two options for delivery, the elevations put together in our factory then fitted on site or completely flat packed. Flat packed will save on the delivery price but will take longer to install on site.

Any issues with condensation? Life expectancy?

Condensation isn't a issue with our insulated options and have a 25 year life expectancy.

How much weight will a wooden floor hold?

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What is the difference compared to a shipping container ?

Our drive ups are user friendly, adaptable sizes, condensation free and offer a professional and attractive appearance

How secure are these units?

Depending on door style these units are as secure any commercial building , they can also be alarmed and connected to access control systems.



Curated and targeted messaging

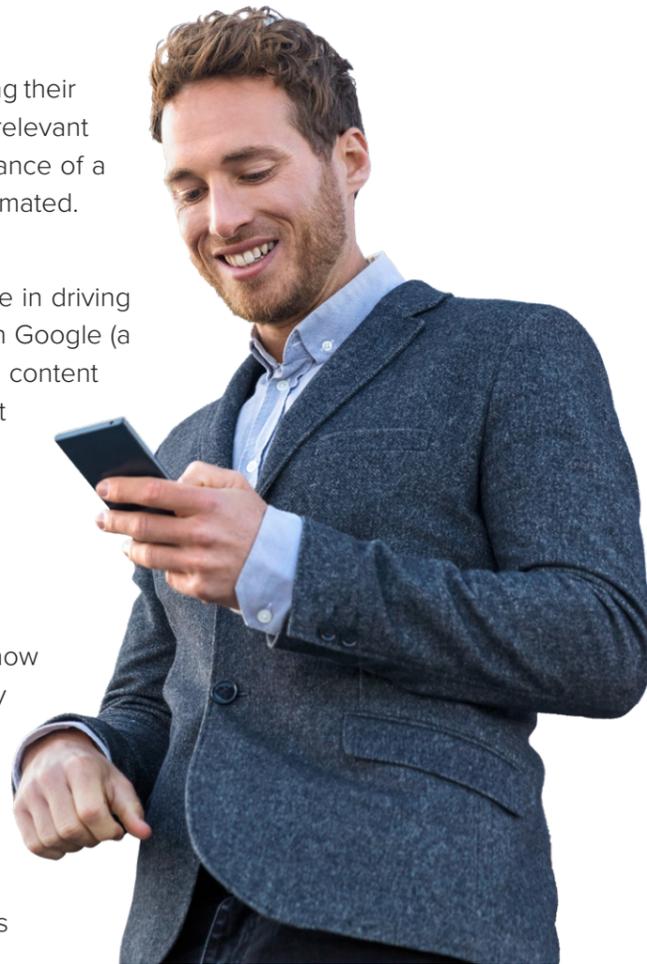
It's vital that operators execute a strategy of hyper-segmenting their potential customer userbase and delivering customised and relevant messages across their various digital channels. The importance of a relevancy-based and targeted strategy cannot be underestimated.

Make sure you have a clear SEO strategy

SEO, or Search Engine Optimisation, plays an important role in driving traffic to your website and increasing your store's ranking in Google (a fundamental driver of enquiries). SEO in 2021 goes beyond content marketing, keywords, and technical SEO. It's also about setting clear business objectives, using data to guide the path, ensuring that your website provides the best user experience, load times, leveraging listings such as Google My Business and so much more.

Google and social media

As a Google and Facebook accredited partner, we know how important a clear and well-executed digital content strategy is, specifically on Google, Facebook, and Instagram. In fact, these three platforms have been key to Digital First generating over 1 million enquiries across multiple markets to date. Through Digital First's partnerships with these platforms, we continue to benefit from access to beta products through their technical and creative teams to further drive enquiries.



Social media goes hand in hand with SEO efforts and other marketing strategies, giving your self storage business the boost that it needs to attract potential customers. Choosing which platforms to invest in is, and how you roll out content is one of the first steps.

Focus on mobile

Across our UK and European accounts, we are finding that mobile traffic is growing and becoming the greater resource for enquiries over desktop users. We often discover that websites with manual form completion are lagging behind this mobile growth for 'instant interaction' that consumers are now expecting. Users on a mobile device want their data to pre-populate a form from their phone, not have to type in their contact details.

Leverage the power of data

Marketing efforts are significantly more impactful when analysing the data. Creating a content calendar, selecting keywords, and having a functional website is only half the job. The other half involves looking at the results and analysing the insights. Always look at the data. Marketing has shifted from the "post and hope" mentality to an environment where we actually have incredibly detailed data available to us.

Analysing data is as important as anything else and, although somewhat cliché, the trend is indeed your friend.

Looking ahead

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fact that self storage operators need to adapt if they want to remain competitive in the market and retain high-value customers in the online space. This is one of the key ingredients to the success of Digital First, as we are able to be agile in our approach and adapt to any shifts in consumer behaviour in terms of how target audiences engage with self storage operators digitally. By continually refining our approach, while at the same time remaining focused on the key fundamentals that influence demand, we are able to improve enquiry generation from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective for self storage operators across Europe and the in the UK.

Chris is offering all UNLOCKED readers a complimentary digital marketing audit for a limited time. [Find out more and claim your audit at www.digitalfirst.co.uk](http://www.digitalfirst.co.uk)

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Suppliers Spotlight - Steel Partitioning, Building Systems, Mezzanines & Lifts

Whether you are starting a new business, a new store, or expanding a current facility, if you are offering storage units within a building, you are going to need some form of partitioning to form your individual units, and potentially a lift (or two) if you have multiple floors. Some will be on a tight budget and may be tempted to source the materials for the units themselves, and decide against a lift, forcing customers to carry potentially heavy goods up and down the stairs to units on higher floors. There are plenty of successful businesses who have done just this, however there are other benefits to using the experts to provide these services.

Steel Partitioning, Building Systems & Mezzanines

Using the experts to fit any partitioning and mezzanine floors, not only saves you the labour, and hard work but can also maximise your space, and ensure you meet safety standards and fire regulations. The experts can help advise on the distribution of different unit sizes, the layout in your building to help minimise wasted space, and fire exits and lighting to ensure your facility meets all the relevant fire regulations.

The materials provided by the suppliers in the industry are often superior to other sourced materials, and the finish is clean and more professional. They also will consider areas such as ventilation and air movement within the facility, reinforced corners and panels where trolleys may be more likely to be crashed into unit walls, and wire mesh to stop access from

neighbouring units over the top.

If you are looking to build a new store or expand an existing facility, contact the suppliers to discuss your requirements and how they can help you - details of our supplier members can be found below:



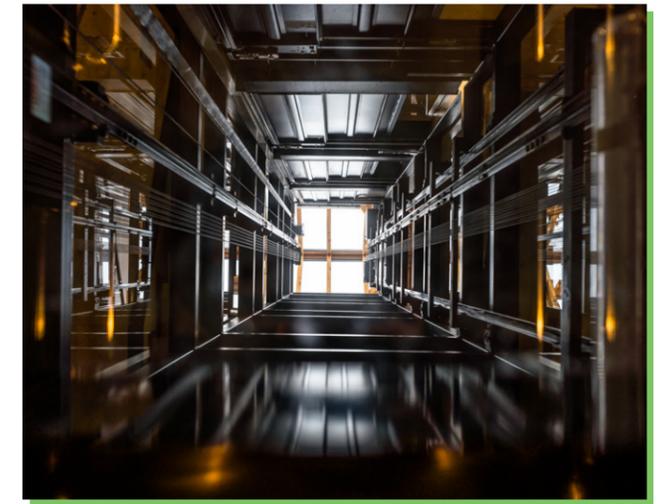
Lifts

While lifts are not a necessity in a self storage facility, particularly if you only have two floors, it is favoured by customers. Heavy items such as furniture can be a nightmare to move up flights of stairs, and much easier if they can be loaded onto a trolley from the car and be able to be wheeled to the unit, through corridors, and upstairs using lifts.

There are different types of lifts, depending on where you wish your lift to go in your building, and your budget. You may wish to have a goods only lift, where

customers can load in items, and move them between floors, while they take the stairs. Alternatively, you may wish to have a goods and passenger lift, where the customer can travel up with the items. Whichever you choose, you need to consider lift options early in the development so the necessary building work can take place, such as fitting a lift shaft, and not cause unnecessary complications, and restricted options.

It is best to discuss with the experts while you are planning your layout with the suppliers of your units, and again, our suppliers listed below are the best place to look at options and ask any questions:



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FEDESSA CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW 2022 27 - 29 SEPTEMBER



TIVOLI MARINA - VILAMOURA - PORTUGAL

With Major Sponsor, JANUS International Europe, the 2022 FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show is finally heading to the Algarve. As the must attend industry event for all organisations operating within the self storage sector and aimed at both SSA UK members and members of all the FEDESSA member associations, we encourage you to attend.

It's a unique opportunity to keep up to date with industry developments, meet suppliers at the Trade Show, network with colleagues and participate in the range of social events including the prestigious Annual Industry Awards Ceremony.

If the recent FEDESSA Conference in Birmingham is any indication, the 2022 Conference is going to be another smash hit with members from all around Europe.

Be prepared to be surprised, challenged, and expect the unexpected as this will be a completely different conference that breaks all the rules.

More details will be published early in the New Year.



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A conversation with Norman Galbraith, Go Store Self Storage

This issue of UNLOCKED we have the pleasure of interviewing one of the pioneers of the industry. Someone who has had 3 separate self storage portfolios over the past 26 years, was a past Chairman of the SSA UK and as those of you in Birmingham saw, is a pretty mean dancer. Norman Galbraith from Go Store.

Norman, let's start from the beginning. How did you first get involved in self storage?

At the time I was working for Savills as a land agent and was sent to Washington DC to open our first USA office. Working in agriculture, I was travelling all over the rural US and kept seeing these self storage places everywhere. This was 1982 and there wasn't much self storage in the UK at that time. One of the first I visited was in the old 6 storey Glasgow Tobacco Warehouse right in the middle of town. It had ancient industrial lifts and all the units were separated with wire mesh so you could see into them all. I knew it was a good idea, but it took me 12 years to take the

plunge. I partnered with Alastair Jack, and we opened our first store on my 40th Birthday in 1995. We were so keen to get the store open we poured the slab before we had even completed the purchase of the building. After 3 years we bought in a third investor, and we had 10 sites when we sold the portfolio in 2002. One was sold for development and the other 9 to Mentmore PLC who were the start of what has become Safestore today.

You are on your third iteration of self storage having sold your first 2 portfolios. What led you to sell them rather than continue to develop them?

Hindsight is a wonderful thing and looking back we probably shouldn't have sold that first portfolio. My partner was concerned we were over exposed in the one business and we were offered what seemed an unbelievable price. At the time we were one of the largest independent self storage operators in Europe, so if we had continued to grow that portfolio then who knows where we would be now. Then again it takes a different skill set to run a business

with 20 plus stores than one with 10 or less and as things turned out it was just as well we took the opportunity. My second sale was mostly driven by a desire to restructure. Hindsight again, but maybe if I had put more effort into it, we could have found a way to do this without selling. Still, I am very happy where we are now, building ever better looking, brand new, stores with all the latest technology and environmental initiatives.

How have you seen the industry as a whole change during your self storage journey?

I guess the product itself is much the same. We're still selling space to people that need it. But the quality of the stores has changed immensely. We started with basically derelict buildings that we bought cheap and then tried to make them look appealing. Our first store was a huge high bay shed with a leaking roof and terrible condensation issues, so we put a huge marquee roof inside to keep it dry. It made it look quite smart! When Big Yellow and others started building these striking purpose built stores with great exposure, that took the industry to a whole new level. Now we seem to be getting ever smarter, increasingly professional, integrating technology, and delivering an altogether higher standard of product to our customers. The other change has been in the Association. I remember our first meetings in a pub under the Ritz with 8 or 9 people. Now we are holding seriously professional conferences with 800 people and the Association is a vital backbone of the industry with a huge suite of resources for its members.

What role do you think the larger

players have in the industry? How much consideration do you give to their actions when developing your business?

My philosophy is to consider what they're doing, but not necessarily follow the major brands slavishly. Ultimately, they could be our customers and buy our stores, so we need to keep this in mind when developing.

“

Now we seem to be getting ever smarter, increasingly professional, integrating technology, and delivering an altogether higher standard of product to our customers

”

I always enjoy their company when we meet at Association events and in the past, they've led the way, improving the image of self storage. Today I think their support for the Association and industry helps us in remaining self regulated, but as an independent operator I want the Association to make sure we don't end up with regulations that the large operators can deal with, but which could hinder the independents. This happens in other industries and is a mistake. You need a broad range of offerings to keep an industry healthy.

At the conference you were quite active in the debate about green construction and your new stores have many environmentally sustainable features. What do you think is driving this change and how will it influence self storage buildings in the future?

I spend a lot of time skiing in the alps, and I've seen glaciers retreat unbelievably, so I'm acutely aware of the impact of global warming. What frustrates me is that the current approach to energy tariffs and grid management ensures that a lot of the rhetoric about what we should be doing is actually not very relevant to our industry. Self storage is already a low energy user, and our key issue is the peak energy demand when starting the lifts. The risk with solar or other energy



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generation on site is that we push energy into the grid for most of the day, for very limited return, and because we can't generate enough for that lift surge, we have to pay full price to cover our peak demand. So, the investment and return figures just don't stack up and this isn't doing much to encourage environmental change at store level. In terms of new construction, we do need to keep up with the major operators' and investors' requirements to remain relevant and investment grade. Go Store has signed up for the race to net zero and we are trying for a 'very good' BREEAM standard on our new construction. This is a lot of work and money, but we believe it is what will shape the new build market in time to come.

What are your thoughts on fully automated sites and the use of technology in self storage?

I like the idea of unmanned sites, but I don't think the idea is particularly relevant to larger sites like we are building, though they certainly work for smaller sites and drive-up units. Innovative operators can use the technology for sites with insufficient space for larger stores and provide a solution not common in the market now. It will be interesting to see if fully automated sites can provide a solution for locations that are currently too awkward for self storage. We are using some of the new access technology in our ground floor units which seems to be attractive to our customers and it helps us to manage our provision for extended hours access.

What do you think a storage store will look like in 10 years?

I don't think they will be fundamentally different. There will be more technology and more focus on sustainability but I



think that self storage buildings have a great lifespan. Most of the stores from my original portfolio are still being used as self storage and I think the buildings we are creating now will still look new in 10 years and last a lot longer than that. The question is will our customers have changed their habits and will the demand for storage change as society moves to become less disposable and with less focus on personal possessions?

What do you think will be the challenges and opportunities for the industry in the coming few years?

It's a mixed picture. The main challenge now is to find new sites at the right price. Planning authorities have not provided land to cater for the demand for semi-industrial and retail land that accompanies residential property growth, so sites are hard to come by. However, if retail changes dramatically this may open up more land for self storage development and that will bring its own challenges. We





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certainly don't want over building as has occurred in parts of the USA at certain times and there is a limit to how much space a town can absorb at any one time. The rising cost of construction may help to manage the pace of new development and of course, barriers to new development are good for existing stores, but a lot of sites are close to maximum lettable area with optimal occupancy so that may give confidence for growth. Inflation could be a bit of a challenge in the coming years. Many independent operators have never experienced this and will not realise the impact it can have on their business. Particularly those that have traditionally been conservative with their price rises. If inflation kicks in, as some are predicting, the costs of self storage can escalate quickly, and you need to keep increasing prices to match inflation at the very least.

To finish up, if you could go back in time, what tips would you give yourself when you were starting your self storage journey?

As I said earlier, hindsight is a wonderful thing and it's easy to second guess yourself but really, I would not have changed too much. Maybe stay more focused on the business and spend a little less time skiing. Perhaps be a bit braver. I rejected some sites on a conservative basis that others ended up making into successful stores. But then I prefer quality to quantity, and long term that's the lower risk. I do wish I'd learned how to use other people's money more effectively but in the end my message would be don't be in a hurry to get rich quick as cash seems to disappear quickly and long-term growth will come. If you dig in for the long term, then maybe you will find you have founded a dynasty.



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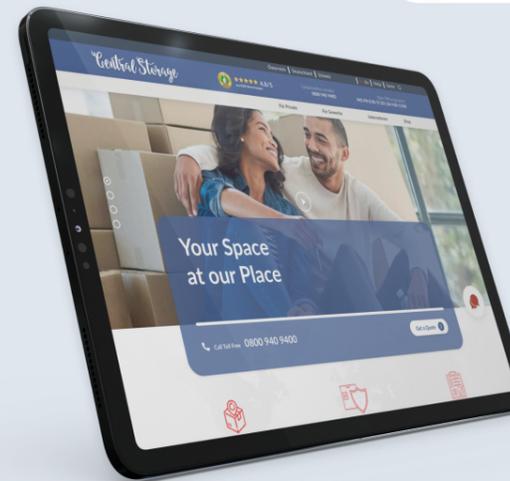
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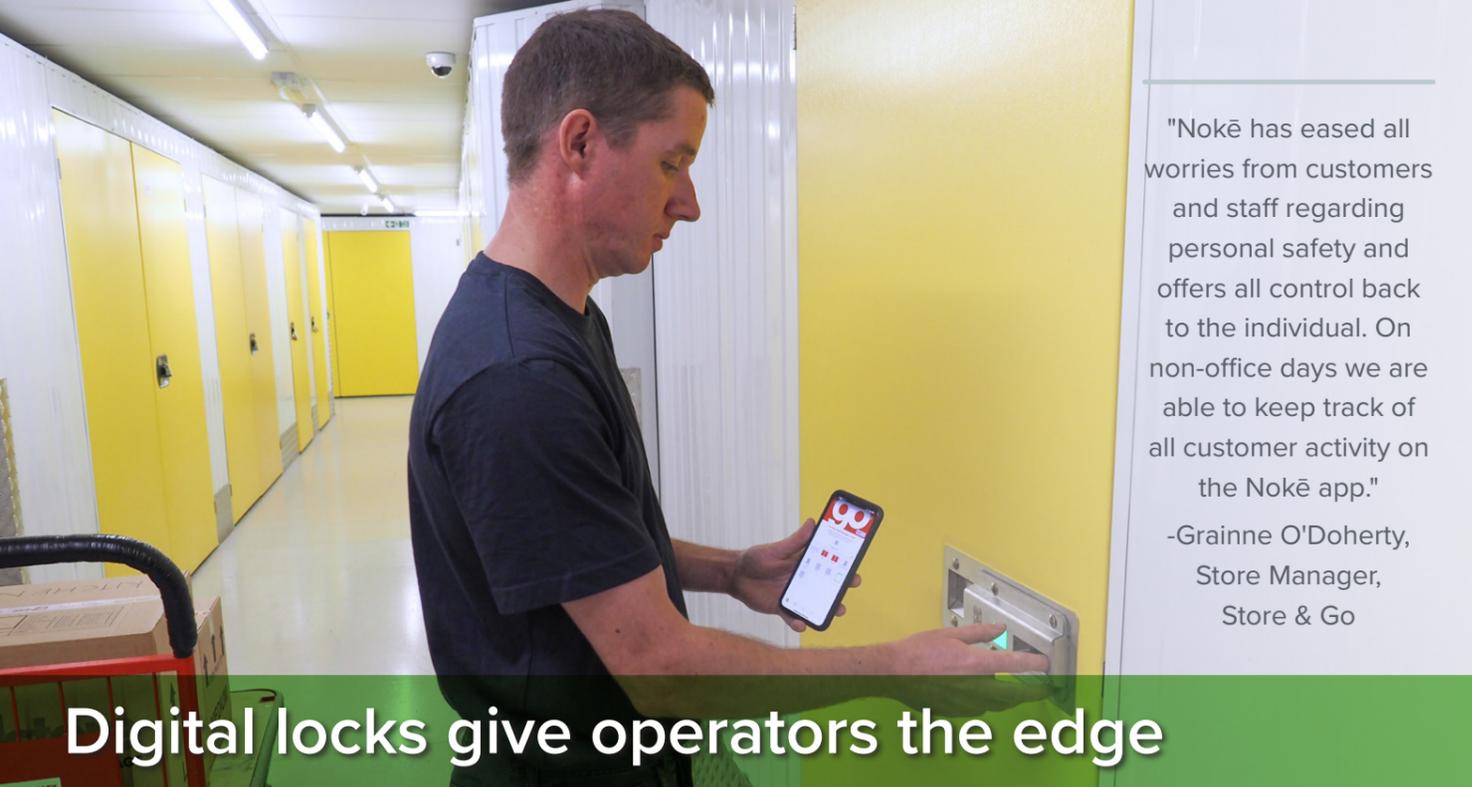
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"Nokē has eased all worries from customers and staff regarding personal safety and offers all control back to the individual. On non-office days we are able to keep track of all customer activity on the Nokē app."

-Grainne O'Doherty,
Store Manager,
Store & Go

Digital locks give operators the edge

Many industries are using automation to adapt to what the modern customer demands and finding ways to offer a better, more convenient experience. The self storage industry is not immune to being disrupted by this technology and storage operators are utilising the capabilities of smartphones with digital locks to offer customers an easier and improved self storage experience. This is an opportunity to gain a competitive edge over local competitors.

The Nokē Smart Entry system by Janus International is a perfect example of a digital lock that helps improve the customer experience. Let's take a look at some of the benefits of the Nokē Smart Entry digital lock solution and see how smartphones are now the key for the modern self storage customer.

Move in at Their Own Convenience

Customers can shop for the unit they need on your storage facility's website, pay for the unit, and complete the entire onboarding process in minutes. A digital key is then automatically sent to their smartphone, allowing the tenant to immediately move their belongings into their new unit, even if it's after hours or the site manager is busy assisting another customer.

24/7 Rentals and Facility Access

Industry leading smart entry systems provide tenants with a digital key that grants them access to your facility's gate, entry points, lifts, and their individual unit so they can access their belongings whenever it's most convenient for them. Having the ability to offer extended or even 24/7 access can be critical for busy customers and allows you to capture that additional business you would otherwise miss out on.

Digital Key Sharing

Tenants no longer have to arrange to hand off keys to family members, movers, or employees when giving them access to their unit—not to mention worrying about someone making copies of those keys. With each digital key that is shared, tenants can track who has accessed their unit and when, and even revoke the key at any time if needed.

Everything in One Place

Integrating your website and property management software with a Smart Entry system gives your customers the ability to do everything they need to from one convenient app. Tenants can complete automated move-ins, e-sign documents, pay bills, and obtain gate and unit access—all from the palm of their hand.

Unmatched Security

Smart Entry systems have now beefed-up security monitoring capabilities to the point that it's virtually impossible for a break-in to go undetected. The addition of motion sensors inside each unit detects movement and allows you to immediately pick up on theft and track down who was inside your facility during that time, whether or not they accessed their unit, or any unusual activity upon entering the facility.

The Nokē Smart Entry system is game-changing in self storage access control solutions. Designed specifically for the self storage market, this innovative digital lock will help keep you ahead of your competition and meet the expectations of your future customers.

Learn more at: www.januseurope.com/noke

Move Outs - First Impressions, Last

As self storage operators, we often put a lot of effort into making our first impressions impressive. Websites, facades, and move-in processes are parts of our business that we tend to give a lot of attention to and as a result, they are often memorable.

But let's reflect for a moment on one part of our customer journey that is just as important as our first impression; our last impression. That moment customers leave us. What if the experience of moving out of our facility could be just as memorable as moving in? What if our first impressions also came last?

Make it valuable to stay in touch

Self storage is a needs-based industry and when people no longer need the extra space we offer, they will move out. To encourage people to stay in touch with us after they move out, we need to make it valuable for them.

- Invite them to a Facebook group where there is value to the past customer in joining. Perhaps it becomes a place where business customers of yours can give exclusive offers to the group's members. Perhaps it becomes a place where people can share home decorating tips. The key is to find a way to make them so valuable that people want to join, even though they don't need your services anymore.
- If you do raffles, sponsorships or family events at your storage facility, offer people to go on the invite list so they can still come and attend events even though they don't store with you.



- Shout from the rooftops about your referral scheme and above all make it very easy for past customers to refer their friends to you. To make your referral scheme effective, you need to be offering a benefit to both parties in the referral.

Being memorable

Memories are best created when there is emotion involved. So, whether your customers get a giggle or a surprise, it is an emotional response you should be aiming for when you are wanting to be memorable. Giving your customers a little parting gift or sending them flowers can be one way to show them that your care. A handwritten thank you card can do the trick too. Or if you want to try something a bit more humorous, create a playlist on Spotify with songs that relate to the move-out somehow (think Abba "breaking up is never easy I know...") and send moved-out customers a link to it to give them a giggle. Or create a YouTube video that is humorous and un-listed, so that only people with a direct link to it can see it.

There are so many ways we can make the move-out memorable and valuable to our customers. Our creativity is the only limit we have in that process. If you haven't taken a fresh look at what you can do to make the move-out a sales and marketing opportunity, then now is a great time to do that. What will your last first impression be?



European Awards Winners 2021

This year's annual FEDESSA Industry Awards winners were announced at the conclusion of the Conference & Trade Show during the Gala Dinner attended by almost 300 delegates. After missing 2020, there was a record number of entries this year and the judges commented on the high quality of the entrants.

Manager of the Year

Sponsored by RADical Systems



Shannon Duncan, MyStore Self Storage

Shannon has worked for MyStore Self Storage since 2016. With a background in retail management, customer service and digital marketing, Shannon understands what customers are looking for. She also has many years' experience in leadership and management, administration, and new business start-up, mainly gained from her previous role working as a store manager for Starbucks UK.

Shannon plays a large part in the day-to-day management of the store and has continually contributed to the business by increasing sales figures, running successful marketing campaigns and building strong rapport with local businesses and with customers.

Shannon took the entire digital marketing programme for the business in house with incredible results. Actively managing the paid advertisements as well as social media and customer reviews, decreasing cost of acquisition and managing the marketing spend based on seasonal fluctuations and occupancy rates. She also runs a range of active offline marketing initiatives engaging with the local community and businesses.

She also knows a thing or two about complaint handling and knows to stay calm and collected in any heated situation. Shannon even has her SIA door supervisor licence, so she's trained in diffusing a situation! She always listens to the customer, before offering a solution to the problem and turns it around. Every scenario always ends with the customer leaving with a smile.

With strong leadership skills she focuses on coaching and encouraging the small but mighty team through the creation of training plans and team target schemes.

Shannon strives to be the best and is continually looking for ways to grow and improve.

"Shannon is the kind of manager you long for - always putting the wellbeing of her team and customers at the forefront of everything she does. Her positive leadership and ambition has guided us as a team which has had a positive effect on the team morale"



KEY FACTORS

- 50% conversion rate over 4 years including online
- Strong focus on customer experience
- Excellent conflict resolution skills
- Thinks outside the box in finding solutions
- Near zero complaints
- Numerous successful online campaigns



Charity Initiative

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Shurgard

The Mayor's Fund for London was launched in 2008 to improve the life chances of young people in London from low-income backgrounds, where levels of inequality and poverty have always been the highest in the UK.

Shurgard believes that now, more than ever, it's important to invest in the future of youth.

COVID-19 has made life really hard for London's young people. They have missed out on schooling, crucial career advice and now face an uncertain future. The Funds' focus on wellbeing and employment fits hand in hand with Shurgard's own business vision and goals. Donating is one thing, but Shurgard believes it's extremely important to be actively involved in the Fund's Access Aspiration programme as well so they can help to deliver vital career guidance, build confidence, and ultimately improve the employment prospects of thousands of young Londoners from low-income backgrounds.

Shurgard has supported the Mayor's Fund by donating £15,000 which has been invested in food, education and job support, offering free storage space to Kitchen Social, the Fund's food and wellbeing programme. Importantly they are also an active part of the charity, organising and hosting high quality workshops and webinars, supporting young adults from low-income households with work experience, interview preparation and CV writing as part of the Fund's Access Aspiration programme, created awareness by promoting the Fund on their social media platforms and corporate website and placed flyers in stores to encourage customers to make a donation. Every donation counts no matter how big or small and by scanning the QR code with their mobile phone, Shurgard's customers are taken directly to the Fund's website to make their donation.

Shurgard's support really has made a difference to young people.

"I feel more equipped now to go into the work environment."

"It boosted my confidence!"

"I'm now motivated to find work because my application will stand out in a competitive job market."

"Liked the face-to-face sessions, as I haven't had many of these lately, it was a really nice change!"



KEY FACTORS

- £15K for food, education and support
- Organised and hosted high quality workshops for young people
- Encouraged donations from customers
- Support the Access Inspiration programme
- Promotion of the fund to the community
- Real and visible outcomes on young people

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Shurgard has supported the Mayor's Fund by donating £15,000 which has been invested in food, education and job support, offering free storage space to Kitchen Social, the Fund's food and wellbeing programme

Multi-Site Operator Store of the Year 

Sponsored by Kuboid

EasyBox, Milano Ovest

EasyBox's newest, flagship Milano Ovest store opened on 1 July 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and mid-lockdown in Italy. An 11 million Euro newbuild storage facility, EasyBox Milano Ovest presents itself as a modern, vibrant facility, with 5 floors covering 7,200 m2 and capacity for over 800 storage units and 15 flexi offices. It has a secure perimeter fence, keypad, and app-controlled site access, 24-hour CCTV surveillance and individually alarmed units ensuring EasyBox Milano Ovest is one of the safest self storage sites in Italy and was 60% filled in the first year.

Its online presence is at the heart of the company's marketing activity with a string presence on LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook, as well as being the backdrop for EasyBox's videos on YouTube, which not only offer customers a taste of what EasyBox and self storage can do for them but serves also to showcase this state-of-the-art facility. An October 2020 collaboration with the viral Italian comedy channel Il Milanese Imbruttito gained over 2 million views on multiple platforms from all over Italy, presenting EasyBox to new, younger audiences likely not familiar with self storage. This collaboration increased enquiries exponentially and contributed to increasing awareness of the industry.

By filling the ground floor straight away with temporary bulk units while other floors were still under development, close to two thirds of the originally available space was let within the first year, almost half of the total site MLA. The temporary units have already been downsized and yield for the site is at over €300 per m2.

EasyBox is committed to reducing its carbon footprint with a solar panel array, making it self-sufficient for most of the year and EV charging points in the car park. EasyBox is also eliminating the use of single-use plastics across the business and Milano Ovest is the first branch to have drinking water dispensers supplying filtered, chilled mains water – eliminating the need for plastic bottled water coolers. Re-usable drinking bottles and biodegradable cups are provided to ensure waste is kept to a minimum. In-store lighting is all LED and is sub-divided by sector and controlled by movement sensors, ensuring customer safety when moving around, but switching off when not needed to prevent energy wastage.



KEY FACTORS

- Great environmental credentials
- A well-run business with excellent rate management
- Well marketed with innovative thinking
- YouTube how to videos
- Online presence at heart of the company
- Viral comedy video with 2 million+ views

EasyBox is committed to reducing its carbon footprint with a solar panel array, making it self-sufficient for most of the year and EV charging points in the car park



Container Storage Facility of the Year

Sponsored by Universal Storage Containers



blue self storage

blue self storage launched their Llanishen facility in June 2020 with 105 containers totalling 11,344 lettable Sq ft, albeit with a muted opening due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 0.75 acre site was previously an unused brownfield site in the North of Cardiff, chosen due to the abundance of residential and business premises in close proximity and in a great location near the M4. Their 2019 rebrand brightened the facility with vibrant colours and the custom-made, two-tone containers are neatly labelled and RNIB compliant for visually impaired customers.

Ahead of opening, 32,000 flyers were distributed in the local area. There was extensive SEO development prior to the site opening to ensure they dominated search results for the locality. Videos were produced featuring tours of the site and how to use the entry and exit system using QR codes. These were published and promoted on their website and social channels.

Access to the facility is easy due to their partnership with Space Manager and BearBox providing a completely digital sign-up experience which allows users to gain contactless access 24 hours a day though a QR scanning access technology. The facility also has a very spacious layout allowing for better lighting and enables vehicles to pass one another within the facility. Storage containers are purpose built by Containex and benefit from a lightweight design with single handle doors for easier customer access. The containers are also better ventilated for moisture protection, but blue self storage still insulate with closed cell polyurethane. They maintain quality standards by regular documented inspections using a purpose-built audit template through iAuditor.

Security is a top priority, and the site is managed by an in-house security team remotely using cutting-edge technology. The site has full perimeter fencing and full LED lighting, industry standard high-grade security locks and motion sensor CCTV including night vision software. The site is also supported by 24-hour security and a dog patrol team.

Prices are made clear on the website and customer interactions are digital, so the site is paperless! From sign-up to inspections, everything is done electronically - for the benefit of customers and the environment.

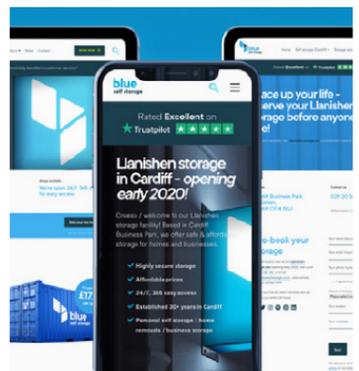
Actively involved in the community, blue self storage work hard building relationships with local businesses and people and have a 4.9 Google star rating.

As part of their commitment to the environment they offer an electric vehicle charging point and operate a fully 100% electric fleet.



KEY FACTORS

- Fantastic performance despite COVID impact on opening
- Looks amazing with outstanding online presence
- 11,344 sq ft filled in 6 months
- Soft yield of £11.28
- Complete digital sign-up experience
- QR scanning access technology
- Ventilated and insulated containers
- Digital journey for new customers



Independent Store of the Year

Sponsored by Basil Fry Insurance Solutions



Squab Storage, Evesham

Squab Evesham has everything, fantastic performance, innovation marketing, community involvement and a great location. The store is a purpose built, green-field development constructed in 2018 and located just one mile from the town centre. It currently has 17k sq ft lettable space but has a potential capacity of 37k sq ft. During construction there was significant investment made in technology and environmental sustainability. Number plate recognition allows entry to the site, extensive CCTV coverage indoors and out, full access control including alarms on every room, individual 16-bit security fob/code for access throughout the site. Safety and security were also key drivers to ensure customers felt comfortable whilst in store. Long, wide, open corridors with high ceilings were created to provide a sense of space. There is bright LED lighting in all corridors and rooms for visibility, and external LED lighting across the site. Using mobile technology, an out of hours service is available via a help button on the website, direct to the store manager.

Since opening revenues have grown by a compound annual growth rate of 480% supported by a mixture of ancillary services that makeup around 10.5% of total revenues. This is primarily a result of a disciplined pricing

Since opening revenues have grown by a compound annual growth rate of 480% supported by a mixture of ancillary services that makeup around 10.5% of total revenues

As a family-owned business, Squab Evesham looks to solve any customer's problem whilst providing a high-quality differentiated solution.

strategy with no default introductory discounts. Occupancy levels have grown to 93% over 27 months and despite the high proportion of customers, the store have zero delinquent customers, and have never been required to cut a lock.

Pricing is simple, transparent, integrated into the website with live pricing updates as availability changes and without the need to input any personal details. There are no upfront discounts, but prices are held for the first 12 months guaranteed. Price is based on access – ground floor premium access rooms are highest with a tiering system for the other floors.

The large solar array provides most of the site's power requirements including the free electric car charging points and metered electricity in certain units. Additional incremental revenue is generated through export to the grid, thus reducing the site's carbon footprint.

All marketing is done in house, including management of their extensive online campaigns utilising all online platforms including, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Squab Evesham collects around 30% of its enquiries from social media. They also have a Sky AdSmart campaign targeting locals.

KEY FACTORS

- 17,000 ft filled to 93%
- Focus on maximum revenue
- 30% enquiries from social media
- NO upfront discounts
- 5 Star Google rating
- Effective use of Sky Adsmart
- Maximum revenue during fill-up
- Individual alarmed units
- No debtors or lock breaks in 2 years
- 3D tour of store online
- Real time pricing and availability online
- Solar panels
- Over 10% revenue from ancillary services



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Self Storage News

Construction starts for Sesame Self Storage's very first facility

Next spring, Sesame Self Storage, a new Swedish company headquartered in Malmö, Sweden, will open their first facility in Helsingborg, and a second facility in Lund following in the autumn. Their plan is to expand the business to more locations in Sweden.

In October, the construction of their fully digitalized storage facility was celebrated when representatives of the City of Helsingborg and Sesame Self Storage jointly signed a concrete slab, a symbol of the foundation of the company's very first facility.

Sesame Self Storage offers a new and unique storage solution. "Sesame Self Storage will be a smooth, automated and lively contribution to the storage industry, which today is very analogue. Instead of padlocks and paper handling, we collect everything related to the service in a digital system, accessible via computer or mobile phone. Being able to book a storage room or share your digital storage key via mobile phone provides a hassle-free everyday life and fewer car journeys", says Rickard Pålsson, one of the founders and owners of Sesame Self Storage.

"Concepts such as Sesame Self Storage can become important components for greater mobility in the housing market", says Christian Orsing, Chairman of the City of Helsingborg's City Planning Board. "We need to increase the number of moving chains, so that more families with children have the opportunity to move to villas. Greater opportunities to rent storage for shorter or longer periods will contribute to this development".

Green Speed Machine sponsored by SureStore

The self storage industry always wants to sell space fast. However, nothing has been moving as quickly as Flexiss Director Paul Whittaker who has been helping 15 (yes, fifteen) year old Sam Pattison take part in the Junior 1000 Rally Championship for youngsters aged 14-18. Co-driving for Sam, Paul who has previously won rally events across Europe said "It's all about giving something back, teaching Sam to not only drive, but to do it safely and quickly in these eco-friendly 1ltr rally cars has been a fantastic and rewarding experience, although traveling at speeds in excess of 90mph with a teenager behind the wheel on mixed surfaces has been a challenge". Paul and Sam are currently leading the 2021 English Championship in the SureStore backed car with two rounds to go.



Trasteros Plus, Malaga donates free space for La Palma victims

The Malaga company Trasteros Plus has decided to give its spaces for free to all those citizens who want to help those affected by the eruption of the volcano of La Palma, with the delivery of clothes, storage items and any other products that the residents of the island may need.

People can bring their donations in any of the four locations that Trasteros Plus currently owns in the Malaga Capital and in Mijas. Alberto Serrano, CEO of the company, affirms that it is a joint action. "We offer the storage rooms and the space, and the people of Malaga brings the products they want to donate. This is an initiative in which we hope to work side by side with all those who want to collaborate with our neighbors in La Palma".

A new property at Helsinki, Roihupelto to Cityvarasto Oyj

Cityvarasto Oyj purchased from Finanssiikiinteistöt Oy a property managed by Trevian Asset Management Oy at June 30, 2021. The property is located at Roihupelto, Levytie 2-4, and has 2 three-storey buildings with a total gross floor area of 12,665 m². The property has a great location, distance to the Center of Helsinki is about 9 km and the closest metro station – Siilitie - is less than 10 minutes to walk and the two main driveways, Itäväylä and the Ring Road are a only few minutes away by car.

In the property at Roihupelto there are many flexible spaces for conversion; business premises, offices, storage premises, work and production premises, garage premises and in the yard there is a large parking area. The property is already home to several companies and entrepreneurs whose operations will continue as before. A modern small self storage facility is also planned to the premises and is scheduled to open in 2022.

With this real estate transaction, Cityvarasto will strengthen its position in the Helsinki metropolitan area, where the company already serves customers in 19 facilities. Roihupelto is responding to the growing demand for self storage space for residents in the Eastern Helsinki area. After the transaction, Cityvarasto Oyj will have 51 self storage facilities in the largest cities throughout Finland: Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Oulu, Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Kotka, Kouvola, Kuopio, Lahti, Lappeenranta, Naantali, Järvenpää, Kerava, Turku, Tampere, Seinäjoki, Savonlinna, Pori, Porvoo, Hämeenlinna, Rovaniemi, Porvoo, Ylöjärvi, Vaasa and Hyvinkää.

Bryony expecting first baby

You may have read recently that Bryony is due her first baby in January 2022. As such, she will be leaving the Association on maternity leave for a few months from Christmas. The team at the SSA UK would like to wish her all the best and hold her to her promise that she'll be back in time for the FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show in Portugal in September. Bryony's role is being covered by Hayley Wood.

New Bluespace in Bilbao

Bluespace, the leading self storage operator in Spain with over 50 centres in Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia and Bilbao has opened a spectacular new center in Bilbao. In the rest of the country they offer services and solutions through their excellent partners. The Bluespace Bolueta facility has a large loading and unloading area and offer space for individuals and companies with units sized from 1 sqm to 28 sqm. With this new facility, Bluespace now has four centers in Bilbao.



How/why did you first get into self storage?

We first became involved in self storage about 6 years ago when we were looking for diversification projects for the family farm. Farming, particularly livestock farming, was not making great returns for us so we looked at other ways to utilise the ground.

What has been the biggest change in the industry since you started?

Obviously, the input costs of everything have changed significantly since we set up. The rise in the cost of containers and other materials is something we are acutely aware of at the moment particularly where demand is high and therefore driving expansion. I would also say the way people view and use storage has changed to the benefit of the industry. People are becoming more aware of how using storage can greatly enhance their lives and how it provides a real alternative to the traditional stressful "move everything on one day" house move scenario.

What do you like most about the self storage industry?

I love all the different people you meet on a daily basis. People come to us often at life changing times in their lives and we can make everything less stressful for them by making the whole process as easy as possible for them.

What do you like least about the self storage industry?

Chasing debtors and cleaning units out on a wet cold day!

What is your favourite book or movie?

Notting Hill is my favourite film.

If you had a time machine, where would you go?

I would travel forward by 15 years to see what my children were doing so I knew whether I needed to stress so much about their school grades!!

I think industry associations like the SSA UK are important because...

They provide a central guidance hub for everyone in the industry whether you are a storage site operator or a supplier looking to sell into the industry.

Right now I would rather be...

On a beach as I love swimming!

What life advice would you give a younger version of yourself?

Spend more time doing the things that you love and that make you happy.

I'd really like to have dinner with...

My husband as we are always either at work or ferrying our children around to various sporting activities.

Interview



Ali Goodwin
Clear Storage

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