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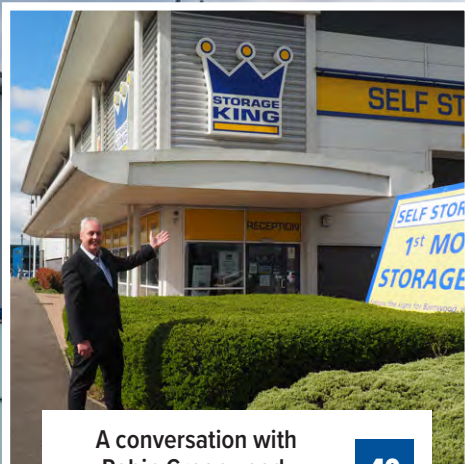


Self Storage in Russia



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Robin Greenwood,
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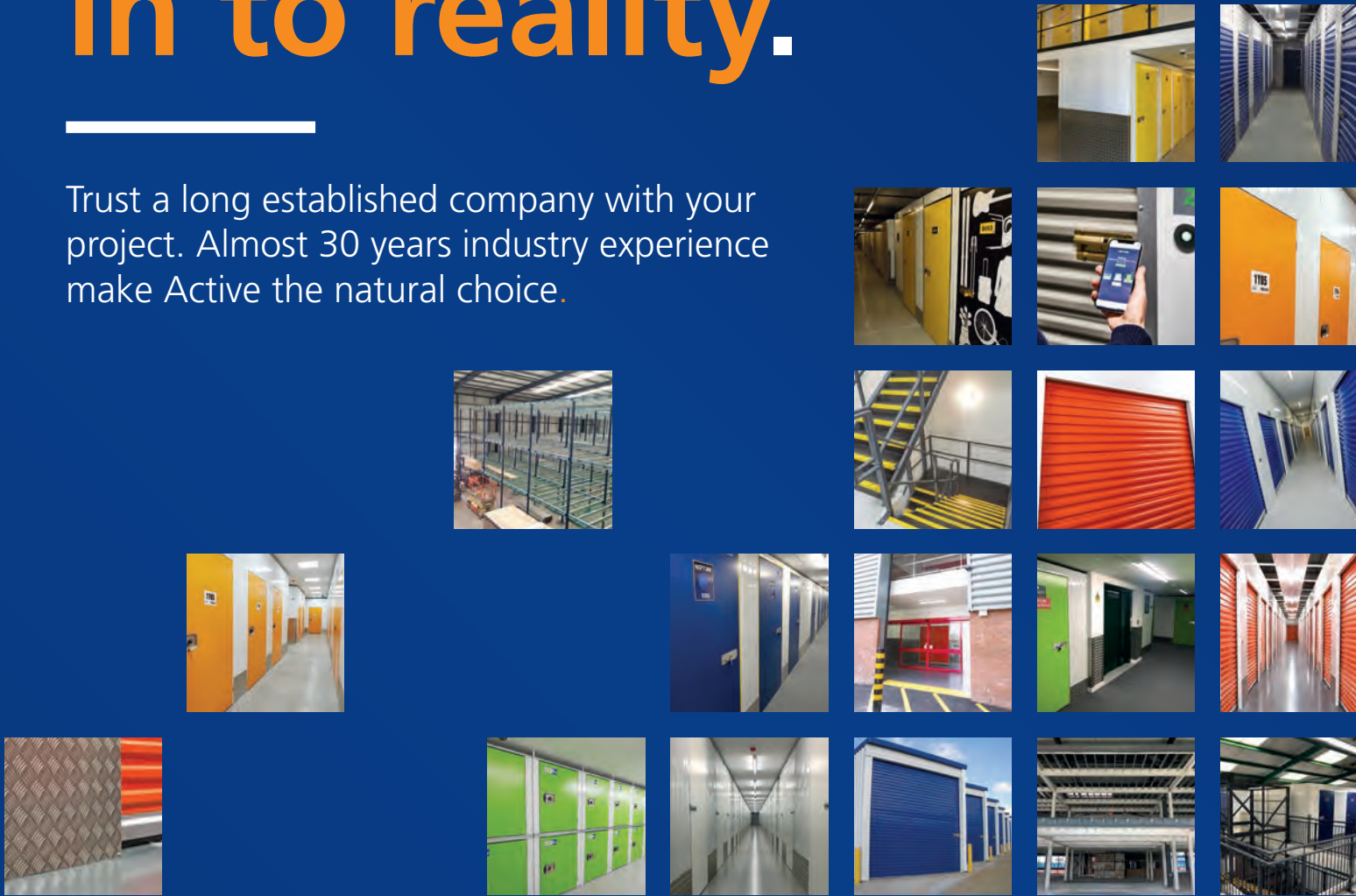


Safestore opens its 5th
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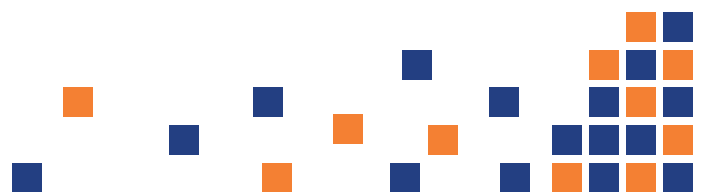
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Carlo Swaab
FEDESSA President

FEDESSA and the country associations have supported their members through this period with advice on operating during lockdowns

Your association membership is fantastic value for what you receive, but you need to use the tools we provide you with

FEDESSA is committed to holding both local and international in-person events as soon as practical

President's Report

The past 12 months have been both challenging and rewarding for most self storage operators. The pandemic has required us all to make changes to our business, from social distancing and working from home to the increase in online enquiries. However, the industry has also been fortunate enough to stay open during the crisis and demand for our product has been maintained and in many cases, increased from the previous year. Many other industries have not been as fortunate. FEDESSA and the country associations have supported their members through this period with advice on operating during lockdowns, online events and webinars and regular correspondence with operators. Importantly, they have provided online forums for members to discuss industry issues, which is one of the key benefits of being a member of your industry association, the ability to seek information from others in the industry.

Membership associations are like a tool kit. They are full of useful tools in the form of information and advice. Some tools you will use more often than others, the standard self storage agreements for example. While others you may not use very often, but when you need them, they make the job so much easier, such as the disaster recovery guide. But like any tool kit it is no use if you are not opening it up and using the tools inside. Sometimes when I speak to members, they talk about how FEDESSA does not provide value for their business. Then I ask them, have you been in the member's section of the FEDESSA website? Do you know we have a marketing guide translated into multiple languages? Have you seen the disaster recovery guide or the annual industry report? Have you attended any of the FEDESSA online events or webinars? Have you contacted another FEDESSA member to talk about the industry or joined one of the new sector forums to connect operators with common interests? How are you dealing with bad payers? Do you have a pricing policy? What is your occupancy vs revenue equation? Are you maintaining your google business page and reviews? All this and more can be provided by FEDESSA and your local association, but only if you open the toolbox and engage with them. Your association membership is fantastic value for what you receive, but you need to use the tools we provide you with.

I know many of you have missed the in-person industry events over the past 12 months. As good as the online events have been, they cannot replicate the information exchange you get with other operators at in-person meetings. FEDESSA is committed to holding both local and international in-person events as soon as practical. This is why the FEDESSA Conference and Trade Show has been moved from Portugal to the UK this year. While small local events are likely to be possible by late summer, bigger conferences are less certain. By moving the conference to the country that has the largest membership and also the most advanced COVID-19 vaccination programme, we are ensuring that we can hold a successful in-person event this year. We know it's not the same as a trip to sunny Portugal but we are still planning on taking the 2022 event to the Algarve, when hopefully the pandemic situation is under control globally. In the meantime, we will continue to offer a balance of in-person and online events and information sessions.

Carlo Swaab
FEDESSA President



Rennie Schafer
SSA UK and FEDESSA CEO

I assisted the business with their communication and PR following the event so they could focus on giving customers access to the site, salvage goods and work with insurers

While you may not be actively marketing your business on social media, your customers, neighbours or even your competitors are most likely talking about you

Reflections from the CEO's Desk...

As you will read in an article in this issue of UNLOCKED, there has been another fire at a self storage facility. This time it was an independent operator who had a large store outside Manchester in the UK. I assisted the business with their communication and PR following the event so they could focus on giving customers access to the site, salvage goods and work with insurers and the fire authorities in terms of cleaning up the destroyed building. Shortly after the fire, we were made aware that a Facebook group had been established for people who were customers of the business. The discussions in the group were clearly emotional with customers distraught about the loss of their goods. There was a considerable amount of misinformation, fuelled by emotional customers that may have heard rumours or been told things by other people. Much of this was targeted against the business concerning the cause of the fire, insurance coverage and the like. I approached the person who established the group and asked if I could join to help provide accurate information from the business. I initially copped a lot of abuse from angry customers. However, I relayed accurate information into the group, compassionately dealt with customers grievances and ignored the particularly hostile members of the group. Sometimes this involved admitting the business had made some mistakes in terms of initial communications but giving honest and practical information helped to build my standing in the group. This allowed me to refute the more obvious 'fake news' in the group and explain exactly what the business was doing to help customers. This then encouraged other positive comments from customers and gave the group a more balanced perspective. There remained some customers determined to blame the business for everything that had happened to them, but they no longer controlled the narrative in the group.

This is an important lesson for all self storage operators. Firstly, make sure that your disaster management plan has an element that considers how you will deal with social media. A Facebook group for customers will almost certainly be created in a matter of hours after a self storage disaster, so either be pro-active and create the group yourself or request an open presence on any group that is created. However, this also applies to your normal day to day business. We have all seen the power of social media and 'fake news' in various scenarios over the past couple of years. While you may not be actively marketing your business on social media, your customers, neighbours or even your competitors are most likely talking about you. If you are not actively managing this then it can lead to a very one-sided conversation. Let's face it, not many people jump onto social media after they have had a fantastic customer experience. You only need to look at your local community Facebook page to see all the people that like to complain on social media. You need a strategy to manage this.

The same applies to customer reviews. Make sure you are actively managing your Google reviews as well as any other platforms such as Feefo. If you are not, then it is only likely to be the people that have something to complain about that will be reviewing your business. You need to balance this with positive reviews and constructive feedback on negative reviews.

Social media may not be your thing, but it is now a mainstream method of communication that will impact your business. You ignore it at your own risk.

Rennie Schafer
SSA UK and FEDESSA CEO



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Tim Burnam, VP Development and Construction, StorageMart.

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Forthcoming Online Events 2021



25 May 2021 - Sector Forum Security

Led by Hugh Murray of Bearbox, security is always a hot topic and there are many security issues to consider and manage. The May meeting will focus on CCTV systems - coverage, storage and regulations. A must attend event for all members interested in self storage security issues.

27 May 2021 – Spanish Sales Webinar – Tron Jordheim

When you speak the language of sales, you make poetry. You know your poetry sounds good by the way in which people react. Each culture and each language can express itself a little differently but when you hear these things, your poetic sales language is working. Learn to speak the poetic language of sales in your language and in your culture.



3 June 2021 - CEO Update Webinar

Hosted by SSA UK CEO Rennie Schafer, join us for our complimentary, monthly member's only update including the latest sector news. We will of course have one or two guest speakers too and details will be published on the website nearer the date.

8 June 2021 – Sector Forum UK Legal

Join us for the second meeting of the group this year led by Lindsey Hemingway. This meeting will focus on who you can deal with when a storer dies and what is the position if a storer is made bankrupt or goes into a corporate insolvency? Time permitting, we hope to take a few questions from members too on your legal matters.



29 June 2021 – Practical Marketing Training Session

This training session focuses on practical marketing skills for self storage operators who are responsible for marketing. With topics and exercises equally relevant for larger chains as for single store operators, the training is beneficial whatever the size of your business. Facilitated by Christel Land, you will review your own branding presence and website, learn how to write engaging content, find out how to best use images and video content and discover how to design effective off-line marketing materials.

6 July 2021 – Sector Forum Containers

Chaired by Chris Bryan of blue self storage who has many years' experience as a container operator, the next meeting will focus on issues arising when developing, expanding and maintaining a container self storage facility. Discussion points will include planning permission, business rates, optimising a site and periodic maintenance. If you are a container operator or a supplier to our container operators, then these complimentary sector forum meetings are for you.



8 July 2021 – Effective Sales Skills for Self Storage

This training session focuses on increasing your conversion rates by better tailoring your pitch. Delivered by Christel Land, this training is for anyone who works with sales in the self storage industry. Designed as a useful foundation course for those new to the industry, it is equally relevant to staff who already have experience selling self storage but want to up their skills to the next level. The course combines the foundations of sales with some cutting-edge insights into how to sell successfully.

For further information and/or to book, please visit www.ssauk.com/events/calendar.html

Missed an event? Our new Sector Forums are held 3 times per year so you can book a place on a future date and the YSN hold regular meetings too. 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.

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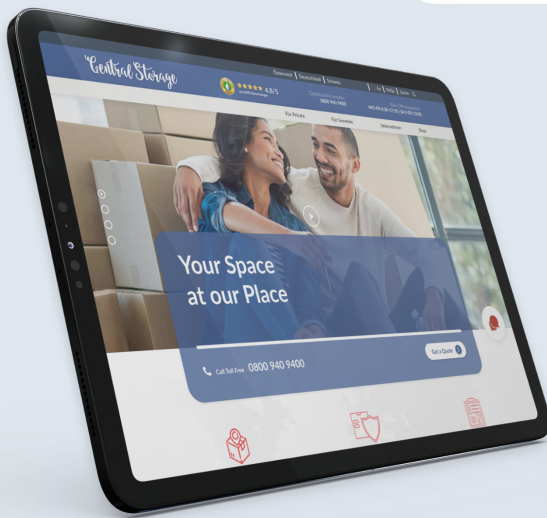
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Summary of FEDESSA Activities

We all hoped to meet each other again in person during the FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show in Portugal after the summer. However, during the last FEDESSA Board meeting which took place in February, the entire Board expressed their concerns due to how the COVID situation was developing. Based on today's situation the FEDESSA Board has decided to postpone the conference in Portugal to next year. Nevertheless, we have decided to organise a FEDESSA conference event in Birmingham from 20 to 21 September. Keep an eye on your mailbox, social media and the FEDESSA website for more information.

In the meanwhile, we are helping the country self storage associations with organising online conferences and webinars. The first one is the online Spanish Conference that will be held over two afternoons on May 4 and 5. By the time this magazine is published, the conference will have taken place. We would like to take the opportunity to thank all our sponsors who make this conference possible.

Together with Christel Land, we are also collaborating on several training sessions for Swedish members. One of the most successful training sessions Christel has delivered was social media in English. She will deliver this training on April 22. She will also deliver training in Swedish on how to sell insurance to your customers on the May 12.

The Irish website has gone live and we are currently finalising the Dutch and Swedish websites, so we hope they can go live during May. Our aim is to have the websites for the Swiss and Italian associations live before the summer. We also agreed with the Danish Self Storage Association to help develop the Danish website and if everything goes to plan, we will be able to launch the Danish website in September.

Finally, we will launch the FEDESSA European Survey 2021 before the summer. Due to COVID last year, we were obliged to launch the annual survey during the summer. However, this year we will launch it again in April so we can analyse the figures during the summer and present the results in October this year. We all count on your support to provide us with the data so we can compare the results with previous years.



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EU Country Profile

PORTUGAL

For the second time in a row, the FEDESSA Conference & Trade Show will unfortunately not take place in beautiful Algarve due to COVID-19. However, we will hopefully have something to look forward to next year when vaccinations are expected to have been rolled out on scale to create mass immunity.

The pandemic and the economy

COVID-19 is still having a grip on most countries, Portugal included. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) predicted in December last year that Portugal's gross domestic product (GDP) would increase by only 1.7% in 2021 and 1.9% in 2022, after falling 8.4% in 2020. According to the OECD the "broader recovery" of the Portuguese economy will only happen after 2022 and this namely in the most affected sectors, such as tourism and accommodation.

The unemployment rate is expected to reach a maximum of 9.5% in 2021, even above the 7.1% in 2020. Unemployment is expected to decline in 2022 to 8.2%. However, naturally this all depends on the pandemic. To facilitate the reallocation of workers into new professions, the government is looking into offering unemployed people professional training programs. A slower-than-expected recovery in tourism and in the economies of business partners may as well, further limit exports. The strong weight of tourism in GDP will slow the recovery until people are allowed and feel safe travelling.

In spite of the many uncertainties today, the property

market in Portugal has been fairly resilient to the crisis with prices rising in 2020. This despite the fact that foreign buyers may have put plans on hold to buy properties due the consequences of the pandemic and also Brexit. Portugal is a popular country to buy property in for many Brits, with more than 50,000 living there.

Over the past ten years, the property market in Portugal has demonstrated how promising it is as prices for buying or renting a house have been increasing steadily. The trend of increasing house prices in Portugal continued in 2020, in spite of the pandemic, which reduced the number of transactions in the market. Property prices in Portugal rose by an average of 5.9% in 2020.

Real estate experts in Portugal are however convinced that the medium term behaviour of the real estate market will depend on the recovery of sectors such as tourism and hospitality. For houses located in Algarve, an area which is popular for



second home buyers, the scenario is still very uncertain for 2021. Pedro Fontainhas, Managing Director of APR (Associação Portuguesa de Resor's) does look optimistic towards the future. In an interview with the Portugal News, he stated that "the pandemic has brought homes to the centre of our lives, so now we are demanding more and better requirements from them", as well as the fact that "the pandemic has further reinforced international buyers' interest".

Self storage in Portugal

Self storage is a relatively new business sector in Portugal, but there is a change and more and more self storage facilities are popping up. According to our figures, there are approximately 19 operators who represent a total of 41 facilities. However, we are convinced there are more active players out there. Based on the growth registered in recent years, it is expected that the growth potential will be closely associated with the concept's ability to disseminate, which will attract new customers.

Opening a self storage facility is not that easy in Portugal because the licensing process is lengthy due to the bureaucracy that dominates the economy. This doesn't however stop companies from entering the market and investing a lot to build premium self storage facilities. Major operators like Bluespace or Homebox are opening Class A facilities and this helps to increase market awareness.

Another operator from abroad also saw potential in Portugal. Self storage company OrangeSpace was officially launched in Portugal in December 2019 following a multi-million-euro investment involving major international backers. This project was being managed by South African based self storage company StoreSmart, and the investment group Holmes Place in Portugal who took care of the local support. This South African self storage company with more than 10 years experience sees a lot of potential for self storage in Portugal.

"OrangeSpace is essentially designed to help residents and businesses who require more space. We provide safe, convenient and low-cost storage solutions for all sorts of objects including furniture, business products and documents to vehicles and boats. Companies such as coffee shops or restaurants can use our storage space for stock to purchase in bulk, while e-commerce businesses can create a physical flexible distribution centres" says Mike Sweidan, Managing Director of OrangeSpace.

According to Hans Koster, President of Holmes Place Portugal, the recent investment came as a major boom



to the local marketplace, driving both services and employment. OrangeSpace did not only bring high-level international expertise to Lisbon, it also provided a much-needed service which is in great demand. *"The firm has created four full-time jobs along with dozens more in construction, marketing, accounting and legal services roles. We are pleased to have been of assistance by sharing our knowledge of the local market and look forward to supporting OrangeSpace's broader growth plans as it prepares for nationwide expansion"* Hans Koster continues.

OrangeSpace's core values centre around safety, convenience, flexibility and simplicity. Their experience of running a large self storage company in South Africa has given them a competitive edge. *"We use technology to make doing business with us as simple and convenient as possible with a strong focus on security,"* says Mike Sweidan. We understand that to be successful we need to be driven to achieve scale and constantly improving our technology. The old saying the customer is king holds true for us and we try and incorporate that into everything we do.





AESS contrata Sole Martínez

La AESS plantea para este año un cambio en su comunicación impulsando la marca propia de la asociación y poniendo a disposición del asociado mejores canales de conexión con el sector y con sus propios clientes. Sole Martínez, la nueva gerente de la AESS, será la encargada de liderar estos y otros proyectos.

Habiéndose formado en dirección de proyectos, la creación de marca personal y el marketing de atracción, a Sole le encantan las nuevas tecnologías, las redes sociales y el mundo digital sin dejar de lado el trato personalizado.

Su nombramiento como gerente ha coincidido con el inicio de la organización del AESS E-CONGRESS 2021, el primer congreso online que celebrará en colaboración con FEDESSA y que tendrá lugar los días 4 y 5 de mayo. Un proyecto en el que está deseando aplicar toda su experiencia para conseguir los mejores resultados.

Además, Sole tiene como objetivo hacer más relevante la presencia de AESS en internet y conseguir así llegar a todos aquellos profesionales del Self Storage que todavía no forman parte de la asociación y dar un mejor servicio a asociados, proveedores y clientes para dar más valor al creciente sector en España.

Su incorporación supone el inicio de una nueva etapa que estará marcada por la revolución de las nuevas tecnologías y la ilusión de alguien dispuesto a poner todas las cartas sobre la mesa con el objetivo de que nuestra asociación gane la partida.

AESS Hires Sole Martínez

This year, the AESS wants to focus on strengthening their communication by first of all promoting the association and secondly offering their members better channels to connect with the sector and its clients. To succeed they have hired Sole Martínez as the new manager of the AESS, who will be responsible for leading many of the new AESS projects.

Sole has extensive experience in project management, personal branding and inbound marketing. She loves new technologies, social media and the digital world.

Her appointment as manager has coincided with the start of the organization of the AESS E-CONGRESS 2021, the first online congress that will be held in collaboration with FEDESSA and that will take place on May 4 and 5, 2021. A project in which all her experience will be valuable to deliver the best results.

In addition, Sole aims to make the online presence of AESS more relevant and thus reach all those Self Storage professionals who are not yet part of the association. This will provide better service to operators, suppliers and customers and hence give more value to the growing sector in Spain.

Her presence represents the beginning of a new era that will be marked by greater use of new technologies and with someone willing to put all the cards on the table with the aim of winning the game for the association.



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Easystorage, the newest member of the Danish Self Storage Association

The Danish Self Storage Association recently welcomed Easystorage as their newest member. Jacob Anker, owner of Easystorage, opened his first facility in Måløv in 2007. Måløv, a suburb within Ballerup municipality, is located close to 20 km west of Copenhagen in the Capital region. Four years later he decided to open a second and smaller facility and he found a facility he could lease in Hvidovre, 10 km southwest of Copenhagen. Both facilities offer in total 609 units (201 units in Hvidovre and 408 in Måløv) and an average size of 8.2 square meters. They offer storage rooms in sizes of 1 to 140 square meter, CCTV, alarms and 24-hour access. Compared to competitors, they are not focusing on selling e.g. packaging materials. At their site in Måløv they also offer shared office space for business customers. Customers can book, pay and cancel the unit online. They like to profile themselves as a low budget operator offering affordable, easy, and flexible storage, 24 hours a day. Therefore, both stores are unmanned and not located on prime locations, for example, in highly populated city centres, but instead in business parks, close to residential areas and highways.

They mainly use Google Adwords and Facebooks Ads to promote their company, as other marketing actions did not bring the results they had hoped to get. "We would like to expand, but right now the prices for suitable buildings in Denmark are very high", says Jacob. According to Jacob, the self storage

Halten sie sich an die fachleute.

Mehr als 25 Jahre Erfahrung im erfolgreichen Aufbau von Selfstorage-Einrichtungen in ganz Europa.

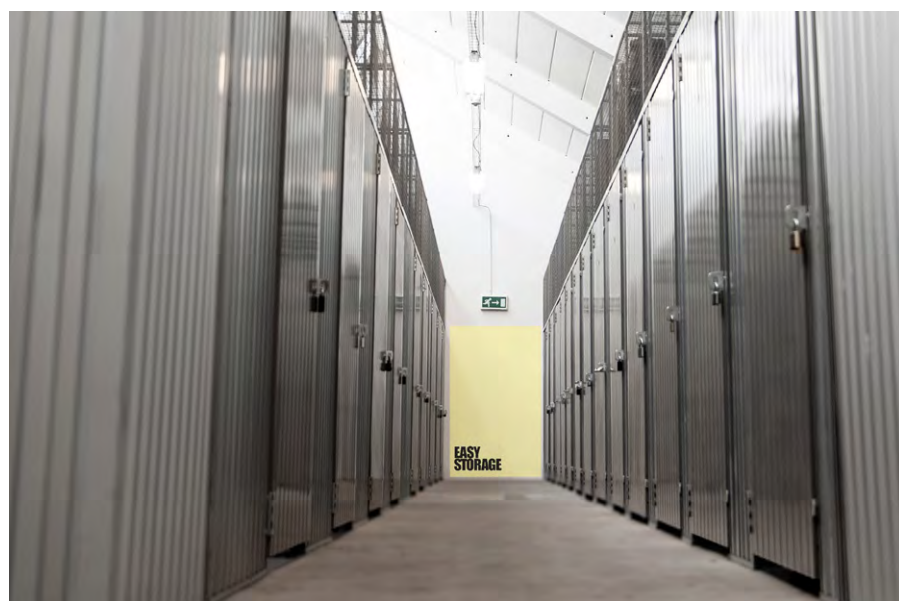
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industry has proven to be very resilient during the pandemic. The industry has not been in a lockdown as many other businesses and Easystorage has seen a steady rise in occupancy since the pandemic started in Denmark. In general, Jacob believes the self storage industry is at a great place. Rising prices on residential property is a way to make people move a lot which of course is great for self storage operators. *“Also, when prices on a square meter of living space is expensive, people will choose not to use their home for storage. Many were forced to work from home due to the pandemic and also had to make room in their homes for desks etc., choosing self storage to store goods. Also, due to the pandemic, people have been at home renovating or just cleaning out, giving self storage even more business”*, Jacob continues. He joined the Danish Self Storage Association because even though members are competitors, they are willing to give advice and share experiences. The idea that together they are stronger, appealed a lot to him.



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FROM THE MARKET LEADER!

Massimiliano Gasperi è il nuovo CEO di Casaforte Self Storage

Casaforte Self Storage, società leader in Italia e Svizzera nel settore del Self Storage, ha annunciato ieri la nomina del nuovo Amministratore Delegato del gruppo.

Si tratta di Massimiliano Gasperi, 47 anni, diplomato all'università Cattaneo in tecniche e gestione della logistica e produzione. Il manager, dal mese di Marzo, ha assunto definitivamente la responsabilità della gestione quotidiana e dello sviluppo strategico del gruppo Casaforte, ricoprendo il ruolo di CEO trasmesso da Cesare Carcano, presidente della società.

Con un'esperienza di quasi 20 anni, il nuovo CEO ha ricoperto in Casaforte vari incarichi di alta responsabilità: da IT & Project Manager a CTO, fino a ricoprire, per circa 3 anni, il ruolo di Chief Operating Officer.

"Sono davvero felice ed orgoglioso di intraprendere questa nuova sfida professionale. Per me è un onore assumere tutte le deleghe operative di una società così forte, solida ed ambiziosa ma soprattutto un'azienda che pone le persone sempre al centro" ci racconta Massimiliano.

Grazie alla buona posizione nel settore e ai recenti sviluppi nella governance aziendale, Casaforte si pone come obiettivo principale quello di consolidare e rafforzare le attività esistenti per prepararsi a una fiorente crescita.

A monte della realizzazione di questo obiettivo, la società ha rafforzato il suo team, annunciando le nomine di Davide Macchi e Ana Mazzeo, come nuovi membri del CDA.

Cesare Carcano, attuale presidente della società, continuerà a svolgere il ruolo di presidente del CdA.



Massimiliano Gasperi appointed new CEO of Casaforte Self Storage

Casaforte Self Storage, a leading company in Italy and Switzerland in the Self Storage sector, announced in March the appointment of the new CEO of the group.

The new CEO is Massimiliano Gasperi, 47, a graduate of the Cattaneo University in logistics and production techniques and management. He will definitively assume responsibility for the daily management and strategic development of the Casaforte group, covering the role of CEO transmitted by Cesare Carcano, president of the company. With almost 20 years of experience, Massimiliano has held various positions at Casaforte from IT & Project Manager to CTO, holding the role of Chief Operating Officer for the last 3 years.

"I am really happy and proud to take on this new

professional challenge. For me it is an honour to assume all the operational delegations of such a strong, solid and ambitious company but above all a company that always puts people at the center", Massimiliano says.

Thanks to its good position in the sector and recent developments in corporate governance, Casaforte has as its main objective that of consolidating and strengthening existing activities to prepare for flourishing growth.

To achieve this goal, the company strengthened its team, announcing the appointments of Davide Macchi and Ana Mazzeo, as new members of the Board of Directors.

Cesare Carcano, the current president of the company and former CEO, will continue to play the role of Chairman of the Board of Directors.

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The Next Generation of Self Storage: Net Zero Carbon Buildings

By Ollie Saunders, Head of UK Commercial and EMEA Alternatives – Valuation Advisory – JLL

The sector has shown itself to be resilient and robust with all our clients across Europe reporting a strong 2020, helping to underline some of the compelling reasons for it as an asset class. This is in comparison to sectors such as retail which have seen significant problems with their occupiers, low levels of rent collection and an acceleration of structural change. Other sectors such as offices have experienced new levels of uncertainty and income volatility.

And combined with the general under supply of self storage in Europe, this has made the sector a focus for a real estate pension funds, private equity houses and developers as they search for new opportunities in what will be our new normal.

However, at the same time, JLL do not think we will be going back to a 2019 normality in real estate – ever.

Real estate is taking the risks of the climate crisis and the built environment's 40% contribution to carbon emissions much more seriously.

Legislation is being used in many countries to force compliance in tackling the need for greater sustainability. Building specifications are developing to meet both legal and market requirements. At the same time, we are seeing real proactivity from property asset managers who are making decisions – either to preserve value in older buildings by making sure in the future they meet the sustainability requirements, or by adding value by investing in upgrading specifications or looking at the viability of developing new buildings with higher environmental criteria. Funds are being established which look to invest solely in Net Zero Carbon (NZC) buildings.

What is a Net Zero Carbon Building?

There is not – yet - an agreed definition of an NZC building, or a globally accepted process of certification. The UK Green Building Council, in partnership with JLL, published a framework definition in 2019 which gets across the concepts.

The two approaches are in the construction and the operational use of them. These are:

Net zero carbon – construction

“When the amount of carbon emissions associated with a building's product and construction stages up to practical completion is zero or negative, through the use of offsets or the net export of on-site renewable energy.”

Net zero carbon – operational energy

“When the amount of carbon emissions associated with the building's operational energy on an annual basis is zero or negative. A net zero carbon building is highly energy efficient and powered from on-site and/or off-site renewable energy sources, with any remaining carbon balance offset.”

With the rapid expansion of Environmental Social Governance (ESG) criteria for investors, doing nothing means that the value of your asset – whatever and wherever it is – will more likely than not be negatively impacted by sustainability issues. At a recent meeting between a self storage developer and a potential investor, one of the first questions that was asked was whether the developer could build an NZC asset – which illustrates to me just how much of a hot topic this has become.

We expect the definition of NZC to evolve but it will look at the carbon across the life of the building – including the embedded carbon in its construction, refurbishment and eventual demolition. The 2050 vision is for all buildings (new and existing) to be net zero carbon across the whole life cycle. The interim ambition is for all new buildings to be zero carbon in operation and at least 40% less in embodied carbon by 2030.

As awareness builds, investors want to know whether a building can achieve a Net Zero status, how to balance their portfolio, and what the cost will be to achieve this. This all impacts on the value and financial performance of buildings.

How well does the self storage industry do with ESG and NZC?

Some major operators have long thought about sustainability. Pelican Self Storage for example has always been conscious of the environment where green features have been part of their building program for many years – and a planning environment which is driven by environmental concerns. Self storage is a relatively low energy use asset class – and whilst procuring energy for a renewable energy provider helps – it is not the ultimate answer.

The opportunity for the sector though is that it can open a new generation of buildings which are NZC across Europe. It could even be the first sector in real estate to deliver this – which I think is exciting - and also financially viable.

What are the emerging trends?

In 2023, we think that a “brown discount” will be firmly established as we start to see obsolescence for buildings with poor ESG criteria compared to greener buildings. That rate of obsolescence, in our view, will increase at an accelerating rate as users and investors in real estate understand the costs and problems of owning and occupying such buildings in an environment of tightening regulations.

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We are already seeing green finance emerge with cheaper debt available for new developments that have strong NZC criteria and for owners of buildings who are investing in moving buildings towards NZC. In acquiring assets, if cheaper debt is available, this can improve values or the return for the purchaser – meaning the financial viability is more positive by this cheaper cost of capital.

JLL have already demonstrated that rents in the office market are influenced by a limited supply of appropriately specified buildings with increased demand from occupiers with ESG requirements. We have found that for BREEAM rated buildings have achieved a 10% rental premium for offices. As Guy Pinsent at Less Mess tells me, the green criteria are increasingly important to his customers. Burkhart Franz at Pelican tells me that customers care about sustainability in everything they purchase. We need to prove our theory with data, but will a key differentiator to the consumer be the self storage operator's approach to ESG? If so, this should logically flow into making a green self storage provide more attractive compared to one who operates in a less sustainable way. Will conversion rates from enquiries be higher for buildings with higher ESG credentials?

But also we are looking closely at the balance between refurbishing and retrofitting older buildings. It can be financially advantageous and much more carbon efficient to upgrade rather than build from new, and possible to provide modern facilities this way. For instance, reusing existing foundations and structures are calculated at zero carbon, compared to new build which takes into account the carbon used in the construction process.

Sustainable buildings have a target energy use intensity

(EUI) based on a kWh/m² – and the rates will vary in each country depending on the amount of renewable energy in the local energy grid. There is not yet a EUI for self storage or logistics buildings – but there will be in the near future, and it will fall as we approach 2030 and 2050. For instance, a majority of offices have an EUI of 250kWh/m², with the current best in class being between 120 – 180 kWh/m² – the target it likely to fall to 70 kWh/m² and then to as low as 55 kWh/m² to meet our 2050 targets.

This is a colossal challenge for the real estate industry.

Why is it viable for self storage?

The sector principally prices self storage assets on a Discounted Cash Flow methodology allowing us to reflect explicitly small changes in inputs.

A key advantage for self storage is that the benefits of lower utility costs goes to the value of the property as it improves EBITDA – unlike in offices which are typically valued on the rental value for occupiers and lower utility cost arguably only has a limited impact on rental value in that market. Also small changes in fill rates and slightly lower discount rates and exit yields lead to some material upside!

If we were to assume a hypothetical self storage building in a regional town with a maximum lettable area of 5,000 sqm and at an occupancy of 70% as it leases up, the value of a green store is prudently 6.7% higher. As shown in the table below, it also provides an improved IRR on the investor's equity; should they accept the same IRR as a brown store then the value differential will be even greater between a green and brown store.

Input	Green Store	Brown Store
Rent per annum	€250 psm	€250 psm
Fill rate	100 sq m per month	90 sq m per month
Rental Growth	4% pa falling to 2% long term	4% pa falling to 2% long term
Stabilised occupancy level	85%	85%
Utility Costs per annum	€10,000	€25,000
Discount Rate	7.4%	7.5%
Debt	10 bps cheaper and 1% higher LTV	
Exit Yield	5.8%	6.0%
Value	€15.850m	€14.850m
Geared IRR	13.50%	13.38%
Capital Value psm	€3,170 psm	€2,970 psm
Multiple	19.42	19.29

Where to next?

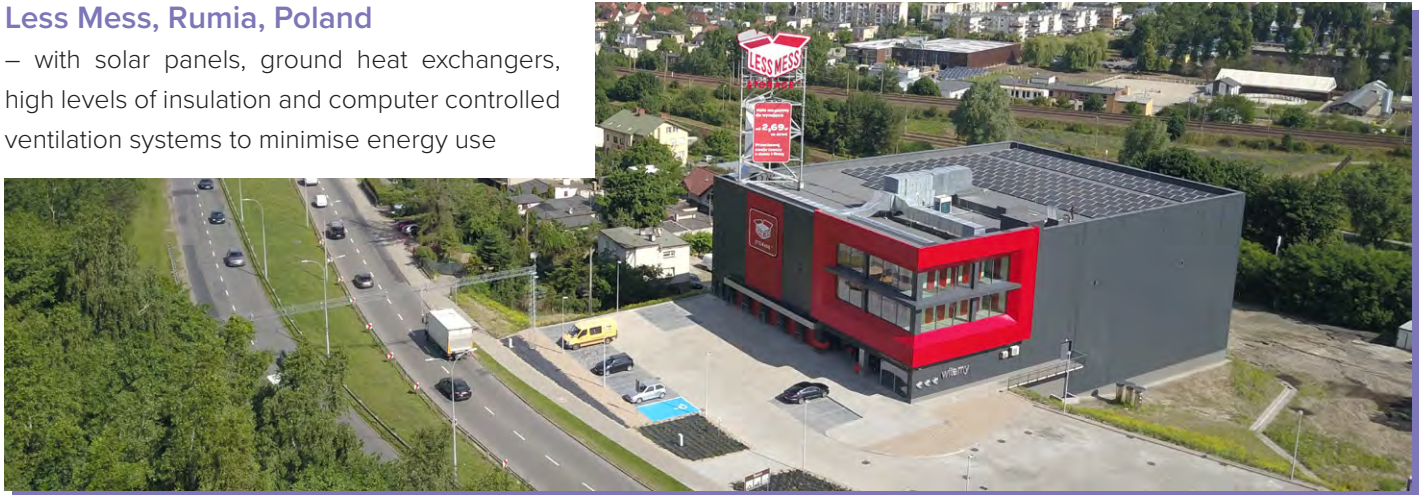
We think that the next 5 years will see an uplift in self storage development across Europe – the level of investor interest and the ways in which operators can access capital in new ways to fund development means that we may have a mini-boom. There is additional value – both in monetary and social terms – if the next generation of self storage assets meets the challenge of delivering NZC assets for the users of facilities and their owners.

Longer term, will investors look closer at social value as part of their ownership of real estate – for instance the impact on biodiversity?

Key to developing this is to understand the costs involved, and to share best practice on how buildings can be built or retrofitted to provide the next generation of NZC stores. I hope that at least this article can start a debate and discussion!

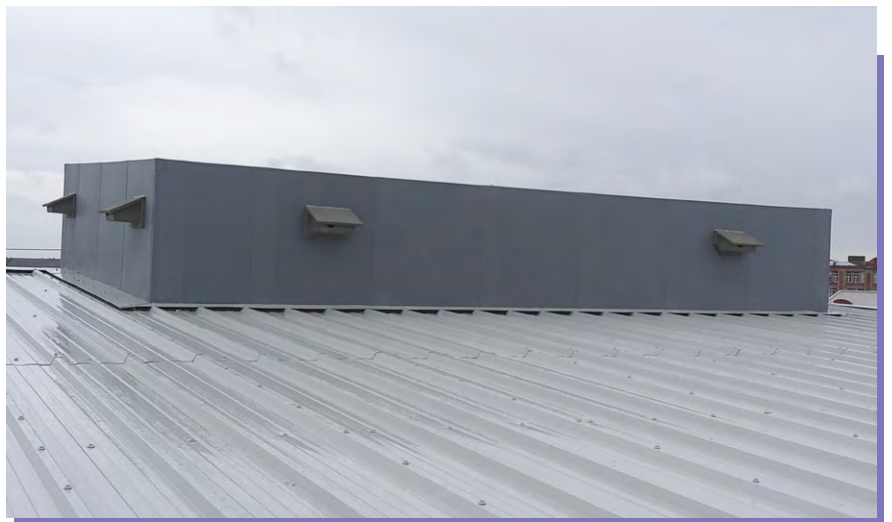
Less Mess, Rumia, Poland

– with solar panels, ground heat exchangers, high levels of insulation and computer controlled ventilation systems to minimise energy use



Sure Store, Wigan, UK

– a new development in the UK with high ESG credentials – including bird boxes on the roof



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"Our store portfolio today is twice as energy efficient as it was in 2011. Our investments in efficiency measures over the years are paying off and 98% of our stores have an Energy Performance Certificate rating of 'C' or better. We remain committed to increasing our solar capacity from our current 27 solar PV installations. All future stores will be fitted with 50kwh installations and we are retro-fitting where we can. We also look to support our customers in making more sustainable choices, for example by installing Electric Vehicle charging pods at our new stores, and we are increasing our communication around ESG with all our stakeholders through our various digital channels. We understand that there are real climate change issues affecting all of us and are in the process of developing a net zero emissions strategy, as this is a key strategic goal for the business."

Jim Gibson, CEO Big Yellow Group

"At Less Mess we are constantly striving to reduce our energy consumption and deploy the latest technology in this endeavour. Being environmentally friendly is important to us, our customers and investors. We maximise the use of solar panels, and combine with pioneering ground heat exchangers, top insulation materials and the latest computer controlled ventilation systems to minimise energy use. All our developments since 2016 do not have a gas connection: there is no need for one. ESG is important to us and the "E" is one area where we can stand out and make a difference."

Guy Pinsent, CEO, Less Mess Self Storage

"Green features have been a part of our building program for many years. The Nordic countries and public opinion are very sustainability conscious. Being a green builder is therefore important for many of our local stakeholders: municipalities whose permitting and urban planning is more and more driven by environmental concerns; customers who care about sustainability in everything they purchase; and our employees whose average age is closer to Greta Thunberg's than mine."

Burkhart Franz, CEO, Pelican Self Storage

"ESG factors are integrated into our investment analysis which offers us and investors potential long term performance advantages. Examples of this being reduction in cost and maintainable efficiencies which lead to increased profitability. Our buildings are designed to be low energy use with solar photovoltaic panels on all roofs, high building insulation values, and increased air permeability."

"With investment into EV charging capability at all sites including Head office, and electric cars for the senior team, we continue to push ESG into our building and operational business model."

Andy Wood, Co-Founder and Development Lead, Sure Store

"We feel it is vital to move the self storage industry forward by observing the urgent need to minimise our impact on local and global environments. We have most recently set ourselves the exciting challenge of constructing our next store to achieve Net Zero Carbon levels."

"We are now finding that our customers consider sustainability in their decision-making process. We feel that this offers us a competitive advantage as we build trust with our customers."

"We are finding that our ESG approach is making access to capital easier, as we can generate greater long-term value for all stakeholders."

Mike Wilson, CEO, Sure Store

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Termination of the self storage contract

Lindsey Hemingway, Knights PLC

If you are using the SSA UK standard licence agreement, then most of your customers will be signed up for an initial fixed period which matches the payment period (usually one month) and then storage will roll on for periods of the same length until the contract is terminated by the customer or by the self storage business.

The contract specifically states it is a licence and not a tenancy agreement, so the customer does not get the right to stay in occupation under the tenancy laws.

The standard agreement allows you as the self storage business to terminate the contract by giving notice after the initial fixed period has ended. The period of notice is set out in the contract and usually matches the payment period and is the same period of notice the customer must give to vacate the unit. Remember that you can't terminate the contract during the initial fixed period or any longer fixed period unless the customer is in breach or is carrying on illegal or environmentally harmful activities, in which case you can terminate immediately by giving notice. You need to bear this in mind if you are offering a longer fixed storage period for a discounted up-front payment.

The customer doesn't need to give you any reason why they have decided to terminate the contract, so do you need to have a justification if you want to terminate? For many years, it was accepted that this wasn't the case where the contract allowed termination on notice and the clause itself was fair and reasonable. However, the Equality Act 2010 brought in new standards for service providers, who

are no longer permitted to do anything that constitutes discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, pregnancy/maternity, religion or beliefs. This includes not only less favourable treatment, but also the application of a

provision, criterion or practice which puts a person at a disadvantage or excluding a person on the basis that they have alleged discrimination or an intention to bring a claim under the Equality Act.

The Code of Practice on compliance with the Equality Act stipulates that terminating a contract can constitute discrimination, harassment or victimisation unless the supplier can show that the way it has applied the termination provision is justifiable as a fair exercise of its powers. It gives as examples of justification the prevention of fraud or

abuse and ensuring the health and safety or well-being and dignity of people using the service. If a customer makes a complaint of discrimination, then the first stage will be for the authorities to assess whether the person making the claim can demonstrate a valid allegation. If this succeeds, then the burden of proof shifts to the storage provider to show it did not act unlawfully on the balance of probabilities.

It is therefore crucial that you consider the circumstances in which you terminate any contract and keep records of how you have arrived at any decision to terminate. Below are some examples of reasons which you might record for termination.

“
The standard agreement allows you as the self storage business to terminate the contract by giving notice after the initial fixed period has ended

”

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keep it real

Trading Standards are working with the Intellectual Property Office and the Self Storage Association UK to implement an industry code of practice aimed at deterring criminals from targeting self-storage facilities to store counterfeit and other illicit goods. For further information about the scheme, please contact matthew.knowles@londontradingstandards.org.uk

Tick B[✓]x
Keep it **real**. Keep it **legal**.



There are a range of operational reasons, often related to gaining access to the unit where there is no alternative space. These include but are not limited to:

- extensive work needs to be completed on the unit or the building it is located in;
- the business is having a change of ownership or management;
- the unit is being resized or relocated;
- access is required to the unit for maintenance that could potentially damage the goods inside;
- the unit or surrounds have been damaged; or
- security in the unit is being upgraded.

In some cases, the reason may relate to the actions of a customer. These include but are not limited to the customer:

- being repeatedly behind in paying their account;
- storing prohibited goods;
- being rude, offensive or aggressive to other customers or staff;
- accessing or attempting to access their unit outside scheduled access hours;
- leaving rubbish or other items outside their unit, in loading areas or other public spaces;
- placing goods in a unit that is not included in their contract or placing padlocks on such units;
- removing an overlock mechanism or preventing a unit from being overlocked;
- residing in their unit or spending extensive time in it during extended access times when management are not on site;
- using the self storage business as a registered address for their business without permission;
- having deliveries sent to their unit when it is unattended without permission;
- giving their access codes/fobs to other people for inappropriate use;
- damaging any equipment, building or units on the premises;
- not following safety guidelines as advised throughout the store and in the move in process;
- damaging or removing another customers goods;
- smoking on site;
- consuming alcohol or illicit drugs on site, or attending the site in an inebriated state.
- not having their goods adequately insured where insurance is compulsory;
- conducting unwanted physical contact with another customer or staff member;
- not following traffic guidance, including speed limits, on site;
- becoming insolvent/bankrupt;
- carrying on activities in a way that may damage the reputation or business of the storage operator or its business.

Make sure you gather your evidence to support a decision to terminate, including grounds, any communications regarding the chance to cure the breach (if capable of being put right) with clearly defined time limits for action, proof of giving notice, notes of conversations and all correspondence in writing (emails and letters).

If you have decided to terminate, then you should send a termination notice. The letter should state that no more payments will be accepted from the customer and any attempts to pay will be refunded to the customer. This is to protect your right to dispose of the goods in the event that the goods are not collected. You will need to include the amount of notice specified on the contract in the letter and calculate the date by which the customer needs to have removed their goods from the site. If the customer does not leave the site and remove all of their goods, you will need to follow the Disposal of Goods procedure.



Tameside Fire



At around 1pm on 21 February, a fire broke out at Self Storage Tameside, near Manchester. The official fire report is yet to be released but it appears the fire started with an electrical fault and then quickly spread throughout the building. At its peak there were over 125 firefighters attending the scene. They managed to contain the fire to the one building which contained over 250 self storage units across 3 levels. Nearby houses were evacuated due to smoke from the fire, but residents were allowed to return early that night once the fire was under control.

There are over 1200 self storage units on the site spread across a number of buildings. The efforts of the fire fighters along with the impact of fire doors and other protection, meant only one of the buildings was destroyed. However, some of the adjoining buildings also received smoke and water damage. The bulk of customers were unaffected by the fire, being located in buildings far enough removed from building that burnt down. Unfortunately, all goods in the building concerned were destroyed with limited likelihood of any salvage given the intensity of the fire.

Staff from the business have been contacting all customers as well as posting updates on their website. In particular, they were initially calling customers to request access to units suspected of water damage so they could be assessed and dried out if required. Fire units were still on site over a week after the fire started, putting out hot spots. The fire and safety authorities have ordered the impacted buildings remains be demolished and cleaned up as a priority due to safety concerns. This process started on 3 March. Customers in the buildings not impacted by the fire were allowed back into their units on an appointment only basis.

Many customers had elected not to take the insurance offered by the self storage company and did not take out alternative insurance so have no financial compensation

for their loss. The current COVID-19 lockdown has made the situation even more difficult for some customers that do not live locally and cannot easily attend the store to assess any damage to their goods. A Facebook page has been established to support victims of the fire along with various GoFundMe pages.

It is a harrowing situation for customers, many of whom have lost belongings of a personal nature or in some cases business stock. Whilst fires in self storage buildings are rare, they do highlight the issue of insurance in the industry. In this case most customers were not insured and hence have not received any financial compensation for their loss. This also led to many complaints on social media, local radio and print media from customers who lost all their belongings. While those customers that were insured may have still lost personal and sentimental items, their insurance claims were dealt with promptly and most received their payments within 2 days of making their claim. This again shows the benefits to both customers and operators in having their goods insured while in storage.



MSO Update

Now that vaccines are rolling out and the roadmap out of lockdown has been released, the membership upgrade visits are looking to get back on track!

Due to lockdowns and travel restrictions over the past 12 months, the amount of upgrade visits that have been carried out over the past year are minimal, along with new members and postponed visits, the waiting list is increasing.

With more time spent focusing on membership and the paperwork, we have had time to make slight changes to the Membership Upgrade Visit process and certain documents that you will need to show prior to a visit.

All members should have now been made aware of the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) If your facility uses CCTV for crime prevention, you must by law be registered with the ICO, this does apply to all self storage businesses that use CCTV, to register [visit https://ico.org.uk/](https://ico.org.uk/).

We are also aware that a large number of internal facilities also play broadcasting, radios, music channels on TV or online. If this is applicable to your facility, you will need to register for a Music License at <https://www.ppluk.com/>

PAT testing isn't a certificate that we require to see,

however please ensure that this is up to date!

With the two new documents which will need to be presented before a visit is arranged, your insurance documents covering Public Liability, Employers Liability, Insurance against the property & Warehouse Keeper Liability (can change once we confirm rewording) will still be required to be sent by email.

Should you have any questions regarding an upgrade visit, please contact Hannah Speed hspeed@ssauk.com or 07539969841



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Safestore opens its 5th store in Birmingham

On 21st April 2021, Safestore opened its fifth store in Birmingham, making a total of 10 stores in the Midlands area. The new Birmingham Middleway store will boast 58,500 sq ft MLA over two floors with a total of 493 internal units and 41 external drive up units. The fully built out store is a conversion of a retail tile and bathroom showroom.

A bit of background on Safestore

Safestore is the UK's largest self storage group with a total of 127 stores in the UK, plus 29 in the Paris region of France. Safestore also recently acquired four stores in Barcelona and in addition, the Group operates eight stores in the Netherlands and six stores in Belgium under a joint venture agreement with Carlyle bringing their total number of stores to an impressive 174.

Safestore has the benefit of a leading national presence in the UK regions – a large proportion of Safestore's stores are in London and the South East (over 70), with the remaining UK based stores predominantly located in the centre of key metropolitan areas such as Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle, Liverpool, Bristol, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The build

In July 2020, the Group completed the acquisition of a freehold 2.17-acre site including an existing warehouse in Birmingham. The site is located on the southern side of the inner A4540 ring-road and Safestore are currently relocating their existing Birmingham South store in Digbeth just 0.6 miles away to the new site.

The store was built within Safestore's timescales and in line with government guidance for Covid-secure building sites with strict measures in place including social distancing across the site to reduce the number of people working in any one area, additional hand washing and sanitising facilities, and additional signage across the site including entrance and exit procedures.

Safestore used a number of suppliers during the build, including: UC Build (Construction Managers), United Storage Systems (mezzanine), Active Supply & Design (internal and external units), Barlows Electrical (mechanical & electrical), Southern Counties Roofing (roofing and cladding), Sterling Building Contracts (partitions, ceilings, joinery), Desem (lift), Sapphire Signs (signage), R&A Flooring (soft floor finishes), East Midlands Landscaping (soft landscaping), DPS Decorators (decorating), LSB Fencing (site fencing), and Boundary Gates (automatic and manual gates).





Why Birmingham Middleway...

Birmingham is the UK's second largest city in terms of population - the regeneration of its shopping and industrial areas in recent years have made it an attractive place to live, work, study and visit. Highgate Middleway is a residential and diverse area in Birmingham, predominantly made up of flats and student neighbourhoods.

The Birmingham Middleway store was not only a suitable size for Safestore's expansion strategy but it is also situated in a fairly densely populated area with good transport links, plus there are many students in the area attending the University of Birmingham.

With the opening of this new store, Safestore took the decision to close and relocate its operations at Birmingham South in nearby Digbeth, which included the mammoth and delicate process of safely moving every customer's belongings over several weeks.

With Safestore's dedicated team in place and a commitment to offering a five-star customer service, the Birmingham Middleway store is sure to go from strength to strength as it fills up over the coming weeks and months.

The store today

The Birmingham Middleway store is located in the Highgate area and is outside of the new congestion charge zone. With a potential maximum lettable area of 58,500 sq ft over two floors, this store will be able to offer many affordable storage options for those who live and work in Birmingham. The store's room sizes will range from 16 sq ft lockers, perfect for the many students in the area, all the way up to warehouse-size space of 850 sq ft, suitable for business equipment and stock.

The store is not too far from Camp Hill Circus roundabout, and is easily accessible by public transport as it is in easy reach of Birmingham Coach Station. The new store's security features include intruder alarms, HD CCTV system and a perimeter security system for the car park.

A team of three manage the store, working shifts to cover the opening hours of 8am until 6pm Monday to Saturday; with the exception of a Thursday which is 8am until 8pm; and Sunday 10am until 4pm. The store will also offer 24 hour access to those requiring it. Safestore monitor their opening hours at each store and adjust them as required, as made evident during the recent Covid-19 pandemic.



Membership Benefit – Access to Online Resources

Often forgotten, there is a comprehensive range of member online resources accessed by logging into the members only area of either the SSA UK or FEDESSA websites. Covering legal documents, back issues of online and hardcopy news items, plus guides and association materials. Please visit the websites to see what is available but in the meantime, here is a reminder:



< UNLOCKED and eNews

Previous issues of the quarterly UNLOCKED magazine, formerly known as FOCUS, can be viewed and downloaded. We have back copies from 2007 should you wish to take a trip down memory lane! The monthly online eNews, UK and European issues, are now available to download too.



< Legal Documents

The Standard Self Storage Licence Agreement (revised June 2021) and important Addendums covering key holding and delivery rooms, and the SSA UK Manual of Advice and Procedures (MAP), are important documents for your self storage facility. These resources offer not only legal protection and therefore peace of mind, but are also incredibly useful for your day-to-day operations.

^ Association Guides

We have a number of operational guides for members covering; Security, Marketing (updated March 2021), Asbestos Removal and Containment, Press Releases, Customer Insurance, Disaster and Prevention and Fire Regulations.

✓ Webinar Recordings

From past CEO Update Webinars to member complimentary and paid online sessions, we have a recording available for download if you've missed a session.



^ New SSA Logo

If you haven't already swapped to the new SSA UK logo launched in March, this FULL UK member only benefit is available to download and in a variety of formats too for use on your websites and communications.

If you experience any issues in locating or accessing member resources, please contact the SSA UK via email admin@ssauk.com or call 01270 623150. For FEDESSA member resources, please email Paola Barraza pbarraza@fedessa.org



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Employee Restrictive Covenants

Gemma Newing, Rooks Rider Solicitors LLP

As we eagerly eye the lifting of the coronavirus restrictions, astute businesses and investors will be taking this opportunity to seek out potential opportunities. Whilst not completely unscathed, Self Storage operators have generally weathered the storm far better than other sectors and may be considering expansion.

When businesses are looking to strengthen their offerings and acquire new talent, particularly from competitors, restrictive covenants need to be considered.

Post Termination Restrictive Covenants

Post Termination Restrictive Covenants typically appear in contracts of employment, with the intention of restricting a departing employee from acting in certain ways following the ending of their employment. The use of such covenants has developed to limit the potential damage a departing employee can cause to a business when they leave.

During the course of their tenure, employees often have clear access to customer and client details – they are frequently the relationship holder with the client – and are privy to key information such as pricing and future plans. The information an employee has during the course of their employment can be considerable, and its value should not be underestimated.

For this reason, it is commonplace for restrictive covenants to be imposed, in an attempt to ring fence and limit the potential damage a departing employee may cause to a business.

The types of familiar restrictions are:

- Non-compete
- Non-solicitation
- Non-dealing
- Non-poaching
- Geographical restrictions
- Duration of the restrictions

Why should you be concerned?

If you are looking to hire new talent, it is important to know whether the proposed employee is caught by any post termination restrictive covenants and, whether such covenants would be considered enforceable by the Court. If a new employee comes to you armed with new clients, contacts and information about one of your competitors, are there any restrictions surrounding such information? The chances are the answer will be yes.

It is best practice to ensure that prospective employees inform you of any restrictive covenants and provide you with a copy of the pertinent parts of their employment contract before they are formally appointed. Whilst some may be prepared to take a risk, in a highly competitive environment the chances are that the former employer – often a competitor - will not sit on their hands. With a former employee acting in breach of their post termination restrictive covenants, the disgruntled former employer may choose not only to pursue the former employee, but also the new employer for inducing or conspiring with them to act in breach of their restrictions. It is important therefore not to ignore the significance of this, as well as the potential financial and reputational damage to your business.

Reforms on the horizon?

In December 2020, the Government launched a consultation on measures to reform post termination non-compete clauses in contracts of employment, in recognition that support is needed to enable businesses to develop and grow for the good of the economy. With Brexit and the global pandemic combined, this need has arguably never been greater.

Whilst we all wait to see what transpires from the consultation and what the future holds, for now the present law remains. Employers and employees need to be mindful of post termination restrictive covenants in place. There are many predictions that once the lockdown eases, the wheels of business will start turning with great pace, and so too will the desire for businesses to retain their talented employees and protect them from being poached by competitors.

Don't underestimate the importance of ensuring you have reviewed your employees' contracts of employment, and carefully considered the contract you are entering into with new employees. Seeking advice early on is key to ensuring you have the greatest protection for your business needs.

Case Study

TITAN STORAGE & SHEPHERD

Using Data to Make Smart Operational Decisions

Titan Storage is using Shepherd to protect people's belongings, cut costs, and optimise their building's condition and maintenance.

The Challenge

Titan's business is self storage. The company operates in a highly competitive market, prides itself on its customer service and recognises the possessions people store, mean far more to them than just "stuff".

Titan wanted to explore the difference that having access to smart building data could make to their service and operations. Their storage facility in Bracknell is large – more than 33,500 square feet over three floors – with 466 units – and is almost fully occupied. But the property was built before building management system technology became standard. So, Shepherd has helped them turn an older building into a smart one.

"Shepherd has turned a standard building into a smart one. Working with them has helped us make smart operational decisions for our business that are based on the knowledge created and the know-how of how to be better, smarter, cheaper and more sustainable."

Adam Rabbitts, Operations Manager, Titan Storage

Objectives

Create a smart building

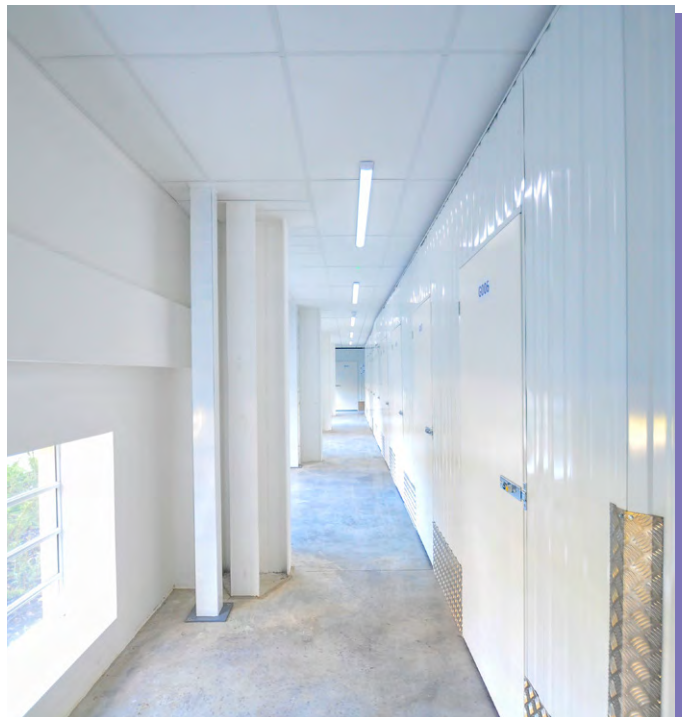
Turn a storage facility into a smart building and transform operational efficiency.

Optimise maintenance

Shift to condition-based maintenance.

Monitor energy use

Understand how energy is used in the building and make it more efficient.



"Customers are at the heart of every decision we make at Titan Storage and making our business more efficient and sustainable means that we can provide an always improving experience for our customers. They appreciate reliable operational assets and know that we are reducing our impact on the planet."

**Adam Rabbitts, Operations Manager,
Titan Storage**



The Solution - New Operational Insights

Shepherd worked with Titan to create a smart building in a storage facility that had no existing in-built systems or monitoring capability. Titan now has a thorough understanding of the overall building's health, its assets, and the environment, keeping an eye on factors like the levels of carbon dioxide, the humidity and atmospheric conditions – to keep their customers' goods free from damage from condensation or water stains.

Before Shepherd, Titan were paying call-out fees for an engineer each time there was an issue with the security shutter, which allows people 24-hour access to the building. Now, the company's operations manager can pre-screen any error message, and decide whether an engineer needs to deal with it, resulting in significant savings.

Titan also discovered that their lighting costs were higher than they should have been. So, they have rethought how they light their building, switching to LED lightbulbs, and adjusting how long they stay on for. They can also monitor the power used in each individual storage unit accurately. So, customers are charged only for what they use precisely.

Monitoring the usage and condition of the lifts and security doors is vital to the smooth running of the building and their business. By adjusting how they operate them, they hope to extend their lifecycle. And they'll have a better idea of when they're likely to need replacing, rather than facing unexpected breakdowns or unforeseen costs.

Outcomes

Peace of mind for customers

Environmental conditions in the storage facility are monitored closely, and customers get the best operational service with lighting and lifts etc. at optimum performance.

Lower operating costs

Reduced maintenance and lighting costs.

Fair billing for energy use

Energy consumption tracking lets them charge fairly for it.

Longer asset lifecycles

Assets that are crucial to the smooth running of the business can be looked after better.

Good for the planet

Using energy wisely increases the sustainability of the Titan business while reducing the strain on our planet.





A conversation with.... Robin Greenwood, CEO of Storage King

This issue our roving focus is on Robin Greenwood, CEO of Storage King in the UK and past Board member and treasurer of the SSA UK.

How did you first get involved in self storage Robin?

I began my self storage career just over 30 years ago. At the time I was a manager at a recruitment company in Swiss Cottage. The approach from senior management to the company was just to make money with no balance between staff, customers, and recruits, so on one fateful day I picked up the Evening Standard and there was a job for a manager of a self storage business in Ealing called Abacus – the rest, as they say, is history.

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

In the early days it was a little bit like the famous line from the movie Field of Dreams, “Build it and they will come”. There was not much awareness of the product and operators were still finding their feet as to what the customers wanted. We were open seven days a week with no coded access, so staff had to be there to open and close the store each and every day. The association was a collection of 3 or 4 operators who met in a pub every 3 months with no real structure.

When I moved to Shurgard, it was at the same time that Big Yellow were starting up and the industry started to change with purpose-built stores, coded access, alarms and 24-hour access. Slowly, other operators followed suit. The industry is much more professional now. We understand customer's requirements, unlike 30 years ago. There is also a lot more awareness of the product itself in the UK.

What do you think are the key reasons self storage has shown to be so resilient to economic and political changes?

Self storage is very much a product that is driven by change in people's lives, so called 'life happens' moments. Whether the economy is expanding or contracting, these 'life happens' moments continue to occur, and they are powerful drivers of demand for our product. At any given point in the cycle, there are a myriad of different reasons why both individuals and businesses need our product. It's the depth of this underlying and constant 'need' that allows self storage to trade so well through the different economic cycles.

Storage King is now owned by a publicly listed company in South Africa. How has that changed your approach to the business?

Stor-Age is a publicly traded real estate investment trust (REIT), listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in South Africa (SA). Across the SA and UK markets we have 75 stores trading, with an additional 10 properties secured in the development pipeline. It's a sizable and fast-growing business.

There are currently 29 stores trading under the Storage King brand in the UK, with 22 of these being owned by the group. We also continue to seek further opportunities to grow our UK operations through acquisitions, new developments, and third-party management contracts.

While we have two distinct operating brands for each of the respective markets in which we trade, at a head office level, the business is fully integrated. Thus, when it comes to support functions like accounting and finance, property management,





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- Competitively priced
- Brand anonymity

the online training platform, the contact centre (receiving both telephone and digital overflow enquiries) and the digital marketing team, there is seamless integration across both markets.

Being part of a larger group has allowed us to expand our offering. Principally this is centred on Management 1st – our bespoke third-party management platform. We view this as a central pillar to our future growth prospects in the UK market.

Offering management services is a little bit like back to the future as this is how Storage King started in the UK. How do you see this complimenting the Storage King portfolio?

Management 1st is a different offering to the historical Storage King franchisee model that we were offering 10 years ago. This model gave individuals the opportunity to operate under the Storage King brand, but the management of the staff and store was retained by the franchisees.

Our Management 1st offering is a full-service management agreement, and any Management 1st store will be run as if it were an owned site. We will employ the staff, coach and train them, manage the marketing, produce annual budgets, and ensure all aspects of the operation are compliant for a monthly management fee. The investor or owner would not be involved in the day-to-day running of the business and it would be branded as Storage King. Management 1st is a critical component of our overall growth strategy for the UK market. By managing third party owned stores on the exact same basis and with all the same effort that we put into managing our own properties, we believe there will be significant alignment between ourselves and the third-party owners.

An interesting development under our Management 1st umbrella was a specialised digital marketing service which we launched last year, under the name of Digital 1st. To our knowledge, it's a world-first within the self storage

sector. As mentioned in an answer to an earlier question, our digital marketing team is an accredited partner with both Facebook and Google. Since we launched Digital 1st, we've witnessed a fairly rapid take-up by independent operators in the UK.

In quite a few instances, existing operators have been keen to retain the day-to-day management of their store or stores, along with their brand. However, there has also been a realisation that it's increasingly difficult to effectively compete with the large local UK self storage REITs when it comes to being able to generate online enquiries at an optimal price. Our Digital 1st offering effectively enables independent operators to seamlessly leverage the significant in-house digital marketing capability and platform across both search and social media platforms. This includes the full range of services over and above the paid and organic capabilities, including items such as design, animation, videography and content generation. At a fraction of the price of trying to set up a dedicated team with the industry knowledge and the technical skillsets, small independent players can now have access to a platform and self storage team of digital specialists, effectively enabling them to compete with the big boys so to speak.

Lets talk about that a bit more, how has your in-house digital marketing and content team changed the way you market the business online?

Historically, before we were purchased by Stor-Age we used external agencies for all our digital marketing requirements and found that they were only as good as the manager of the account. If they left, service levels dropped until the next incumbent learnt the business.

With our own digital marketing team through Stor-Age, which is an accredited partner with both Facebook and Google, we are able to leverage the experience of the team who are all not only specialists in their respective fields (SEO, PPC etc) but also have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the self storage sector. It's the perfect combination. Having an in-house team has allowed us to manage our digital marketing at an extremely detailed level, one that could not be achieved with agencies. This has led to efficiencies across the board and constant improvements to our enquiry generation efforts. Through this dynamic team, we are able to immediately react to nuances in the market, which became especially important during the early stages of lockdown. In fact, last year we broke records in our enquiry generation. We have also saved a great deal of budget by not using agencies and the like.

Are you considering expanding outside the UK and what is your reasoning behind this?

We still see fantastic opportunities to continue growing our business in both the UK and SA and we are very much



focused on these two markets.

That said, we are sector specialists, and we benefit from having a well-established world class operating capability which we believe, if the right opportunity arose, could be strategically leveraged into a new market.

Would you prefer to build a new store or acquire an existing store that met your specifications?

I'm greedy Rennie, so I would do both! Acquiring existing stores has its challenges but is an instant uplift to the bottom line and is very rewarding when you can acquire them at a certain occupancy and grow them to capacity making alterations and improvements along the way. Acquisitions bring a number of challenges, but we have a proven track record over the past decade of acquiring existing stores and turning them around, so it's certainly in our strategic growth strategy. New stores are great to have in your portfolio and have all the up to-the-minute technology, but then the pressure is always on to fill them.

What do you think the Storage King portfolio will look like in 5 years' time?

I'm excited for the next 5 years. We have formed a JV with a private equity group, Moorfields, to build 5 to 10 new sites. In addition, we are still looking for suitable acquisitions, so we are hoping to double the portfolio size in 5 years from 22 owned and operated stores to over 40.

What did you find the biggest challenges during the COVID crisis, particularly the first lockdowns?

During the first lockdown it was very much jumping into the unknown. No one really knew the best way forward. The main challenges were rushing to stock up on sanitiser, cleaning equipment and posters as we wanted to protect our frontline staff and customers as much as possible. Adapting the business to be more automated was the other main challenge as everyone in the industry was wanting to do something similar, so suppliers were backlogged with demand. Despite these challenges, the entire team, from stores to HQ, stepped up and ensured the stores could run safely. Looking back, we have achieved great things over the past twelve months.

The COVID crisis has generally seen an uplift in key self storage metrics. Do you think this will be sustained in 2021 or do you expect a correction in the market as the real economic impact of the crisis hits?

We have experienced an uplift of around 20% in demand year-on-year since the crisis started, but I don't think this is sustainable. The furlough scheme and the stamp duty holiday, which have played an important part in increasing demand, will be ending in the late summer, so I anticipate a gradual slow down after this time as demand returns to normal levels.

What are your thoughts on fully automated sites, particularly the smaller stores we are seeing in Austria and the like?

I think there is a place for semi-automated stores but not fully automated stores. Customers will always want that personal touch, but I can understand how it works for smaller stores as operating costs are relatively fixed and any expenditure you can reduce helps the bottom line. Nothing can replace customer service though. It's an area we put a significant amount of effort into. We are very fortunate to have an outstanding team.

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

Challenges will as always be finding the best sites and acquisition opportunities at a reasonable price. That said, with the retail and leisure sector struggling, there could be more opportunities for self storage in the years to come. Also, with continued urbanisation, shifts in consumer behaviours, the change in how businesses operate and the adoption of more technology, we can expect the industry to continue thriving over the years to come.



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Marketing Self Storage to Businesses

B2B Marketing Tips

Christel Land, Clover Four

Many self storage companies I speak to say that they would like to have a higher proportion of business customers in their facilities. The reason is simple; business customers tend to stay for longer. Many of them are also less price sensitive and more timely payers. And of course, business customers have the added benefit of coming with their own network of customers, who they could refer to us. There are so many benefits to having business customers in our facilities.

However, when I look at the marketing around our industry, our messages and our images are often tailored more directly to the private consumer market than to the business market. So, what kind of simple, low-cost tactics can we use to attract more business customers?

Segment Your Website

Most self storage companies have a page that describes business services, but what if our websites had a whole separate business section? This can be achieved by adding a splash page or selection buttons on your landing banner, where website visitors indicate whether they are private or business customers. After that, they are redirected to a landing page where everything is tailored to their segment. This gives you the possibility of putting together a whole landing page that is specific to businesses. You can give examples of business sectors that store from you, include testimonials from business customers and highlight additional services that may be particularly important to business customers.

Facebook Group

Why not create an online business community with the business customers that store with you? By setting up a closed Facebook group, it can be a place for businesses in your facility to ask for tips, recommendations or even trade with each other. If you set this up, it is a good idea to put community rules in place for how often businesses are allowed to directly market to the group. Without that, your group may end up being more of a spam machine than a community. But if it's done right, this is an easy and cost-effective way of adding value to your business customers by simply using what you've already got – your customers!

Industry-Specific Events

By teaming up with a professional services provider in your area such as a lawyer, an accountant or a specialized business consultant, you can offer informational events for specific business sectors. For example, a lawyer sharing the most common 10 mistakes in the terms and conditions of electrical contractors, an accountant sharing stock accounting tips for online shops, or a consultant specialized in the restaurant industry sharing the biggest learnings on how to survive lockdown. Depending on covid restrictions in your area, events like these might need to be done online and if so, you can include an introduction at the start of the event where you tell people about your facility and why you want to do something actively to support your local business community.

“
By setting up a closed Facebook group, it can be a place for businesses in your facility to ask for tips, recommendations or even trade with each other
”

If you can do in-person events, this is even better because it brings people to your facility and lets them see what you offer with their own eyes, whilst also receiving valuable business advice. Professional services providers will often agree to take part in events like this for free if they are allowed to briefly share information about their own business, because it is also a chance for them to reach new potential customers. Putting on events like this has the added benefit of starting a partnership with these professionals, as they are more likely to refer their customers to you once they know you are a professional and well-intended business.

Connect New Businesses

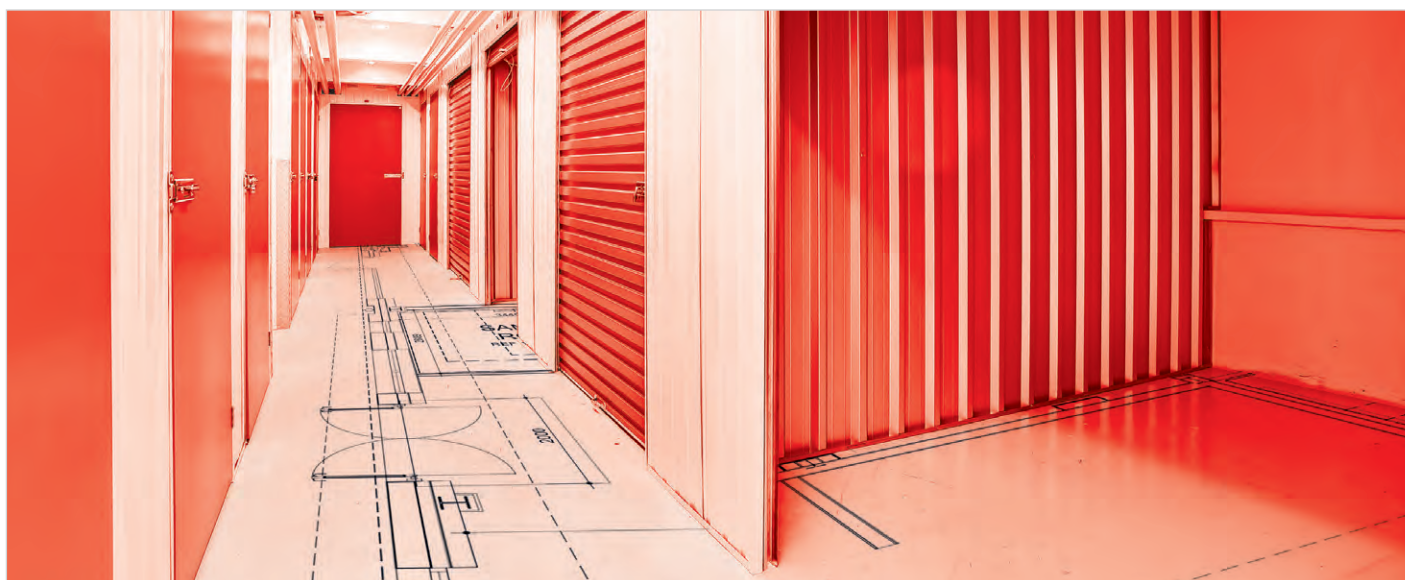
Arrange a bi-monthly or quarterly networking event for newly started businesses. They might not have the budget to rent from you straight away but by getting in with them early, you may very well find yourself being their first choice once their business is big enough to require external storage space.

Get Social, Tell Stories

We all have business customers who come to our facilities on a weekly or even daily basis. Why not ask one of them if



they would be willing to quickly record a 2–3-minute, short video with you where they talk about their business and how they use your facility. Offer them to put their website in the video, so it is also a promotional possibility for them. Then, post it to social media. This is a time and cost-effective way to spread awareness about all the different ways that businesses can benefit from storing with you.



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Why are self storage companies afraid to contact their customers?

Some self storage operators seem to have an intrinsic fear that if they contact their customers, they will suddenly realise they have self storage and move their goods out. This thinking is rather limited and prevents the business from making the most of the data they have on their customers.

Most customers value their self storage unit

We know that when customers use self storage for the first time, they expect it to be cheaper than it really is. But we also know that once they move in, they see the value of the service you provide. This is shown most clearly in the SSA UK customer survey which shows that less than 15% of customers think their storage unit is poor value and 91% are satisfied with the service, with 57% saying they are very satisfied. With such great customer satisfaction why would a customer leave just because you contacted them? Even if they were thinking of moving out, they still have to facilitate this process, hire a moving van, find somewhere to put the goods and so on. This all takes time. So maybe a very small number of customers may consider moving out and some of those will, but they are customers that would have probably moved out soon anyway so worst case scenario, they move out a month or two early.

Your existing customers are a powerful marketing tool

With such great customer satisfaction, you should be reminding your customers how good you are and that they should be telling others about how great self storage

is. Referrals are a big part of attracting new business to a self storage store. 15% of customers say they found their store based on a direct recommendation. That's more than all other active marketing methods combined other than online advertising. So why aren't you making more of your existing customers. Contact them periodically and ask them if they know someone that needs storage, maybe offer them a discount off their storage fee if they bring you a new customer. Then, if that customer stays for a year, send them another thank you message for bringing

you such a great customer. There are lots of ways of encouraging your customers to create referrals, but they all require you to talk to your existing customers and encourage them to promote you.

How can you be extra special if you are not communicating?

Particularly in an online world, people crave exceptional customer service and being recognised as a valued customer. How would you feel if you got a birthday card from your self storage company with a voucher for a free coffee at the local coffee shop? Would this make you think, I need to move my goods out, or would it be the kind of

thing that you might mention to a friend or work colleague or post on social media, as it was such a pleasant surprise? For those customers your staff know well, customise the card with something personal about them for extra value. It is little things like this which make a business stand out and increases customer satisfaction. It can also encourage customer referrals without even asking.

“
With such great customer satisfaction, you should be reminding your customers how good you are and that they should be telling others about how great self storage is
”



Can you communicate with your customers when you need to?

If you don't regularly email or send mail to your customers address, then their contact details can change without your knowledge. If you get a bounced email or returned letter, it is an opportunity to update your contact details. If the customer stops paying their bill, you will want their correct contact details. Even more importantly, what if you have a disaster in your store and you need to contact customers urgently about the status of their goods? Could you contact all your customers tomorrow if you needed to? Only if you have current contact details for them. Having to chase these customers down is one less job you will have to do during a very stressful and busy period if you have accurate contact details. You also are less likely to have customers contacting the media saying they have not been contacted or, turning up weeks later with no knowledge of the incident.

Don't overdo it, there is a balance

Over contacting your customers can be as bad as not contacting them at all. No one wants an email every week from their self storage store. They also don't want constant marketing emails that are not really relevant to them if they are already storing with you. So, choose your communications carefully, make them customer focused and as personalised as possible. Send something to their letterbox once or twice a year, birthdays are always nice for this. Send emails more frequently but make sure they have relevant content and customers can opt out if need be. If you get a lot of customers opting out, it's a sign you are doing something wrong. Also remember this is not as big a job as it seems. Many of your customers only stay a short term so they won't ever get a letter if you only send it to customers who have stayed for 6 or 12 months. Similarly, you may only start the proactive emails to customers who have stayed longer than 3 months.

Instead of sending a customer a birthday message, how about sending them an un-birthday message 6 months before their birthday? Rather than being lost in all their other birthday messages, this will arrive at a quieter time of their life and be more memorable. Alternatively, send a message on the annual anniversary of their storage.





Technology & Innovation Sector Forum

The SSA UK's first Technology and Innovation Sector Forum was hosted on Tuesday, 2nd February - rather fittingly, via video conference. The Forum proved extremely popular, with over 70 supplier and operator members dialling in to the kick-off meeting.

We introduced the purpose and format of the forum meetings and touched on a number of areas to evidence the growing importance of technology in the self storage space. In addition, the attendees were polled to understand which topics are currently of most interest to them. Unsurprisingly, electronic locks polled top of the list with 27% selecting this option. While some of the larger operators continue to view them as a fad, 72% of members in the meeting believed electronic locks will soon become standard in all new builds, and 53% are already considering them for future sites. While this will be a biased sample (after all, members attending the Technology forum are already somewhat predisposed to new technologies!), it remains a very significant number. We will of course be exploring the whole electronic locks topic in more detail, starting with our next meeting.

Interest in electronic locks was closely followed by interest in robotics & automated / unmanned stores (19%). Somewhat surprisingly, when the conversation appears to be moving on to electronic locks, robots and automation, 17% of attendees still wanted to hear about online pricing, quotes and account management options, making it the third most popular topic, followed by CRM

tools & website optimisation. Despite the rapidly growing interest in ESG in the finance world, zero carbon and renewable energy was only top of the list for 2% of our attendees. We also saw a significant number of members interested in having an effective 3rd party handling their out of hours enquiries (43% saying this would be useful), although 34% said it was not for them. This raises some interesting questions which we will be exploring down the line. Of course, it's not just the technology, but the practical,

“
Despite the rapidly growing interest in ESG in the finance world, zero carbon and renewable energy was only top of the list for 2% of our attendees
”

operational and commercial aspects around it that are of interest to members. In our future meetings, we will look to focus on these questions, helping members to explore the different questions they need to consider when assessing new technologies. Perhaps ironically, the choice and method of adoption of any of a number of technological solutions is unlikely to be a straightforward binary choice for most members, less ones and zeros and much more of a spectrum. Finally, innovation is not just tech driven and we would love to hear more about other areas where members are innovating, or are looking to innovate – from marketing and people, through construction and facility design, to processes, systems and reporting. Our meetings are free to attend for all members, and all contributions are welcome. If you have a suggestion for a topic or would like to present at one of our meetings, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



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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.



Supplier Spotlight – Containers

Container storage is a growing part of the industry in the UK and Europe. As the industry matures customers look for different types of self storage solutions and often container based storage can offer a solution that is not typically serviced by purpose built self storage buildings, particularly in regards to drive up access. The SSAUK has over 240 container based storage stores in membership all of whom meet the associations standard for self storage. A growing number of self storage operators are also placing containers on parts of their site that are yet to be developed to gain additional storage income.

Not any old shipping container is ideal for self storage though. You want something that is clean, dry, secure and structurally suitable for self storage. Not some old used container that has been shipped around the world 100 times. You want to make sure the containers you purchase are of the highest standard in terms of structural integrity, durability, security and safety. The best way to guarantee this is to purchase from an established brand with experience in supplying containers for self storage, such as one of our supplier members who are approved and endorsed by the Association.





Material Containers (Flat Packed)

These containers are more than a traditional shipping container. They are purpose built for storage coming in a variety of sizes and usually have easy to use swing doors fitted. They look and function more like an internal self storage unit, and as a bonus are often flat packed so can be easily shipped and stored on site and erected when required. They are also significantly lighter than a full sized shipping container and easier to move around the site.

Some are designed to withstand extreme weather conditions and can be used in difficult geographical locations worldwide from the tornado belt in the USA to areas of altitude and high snow fall. Established brands independently test their products for snow load, high winds, and maximum weight capacity when the unit is lifted by crane.

Some manufacturers of these containers avoid welding which reduces the likelihood of rust, allowing for extensive anti corrosion guarantees. They can also be manufactured with additional insulation, can usually be stacked and many manufacturers offer additional customisation for your business. For only a little more cost than a shipping container these material containers offer a lot more flexibility for self storage businesses.



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Shipping Containers

From humble beginnings traversing the seas, the history of the shipping container is interesting but what is more interesting is how much shipping containers are 'designed' and 'built' for self storage. Dust proof, vermin proof, robust, waterproof and airtight and if necessary, portable from one site to another, or around an existing site.

Shipping containers offer a relatively low cost entry point to self storage that can easily be added to as the business expands. However not all shipping containers are the same, you don't want any old rusty container on your site. You should also consider increased ventilation points

to limit condensation. High locking bars make access easier for your customers. Also consider the quality of the flooring, how thick and durable is it and can it be easily cleaned. Sealed floors are often preferred by self storage businesses. You will also need lock boxes that protect the lock from interference and may want to consider anti-jimmy lugs fitted to the doors for added security. Our container supplier members know how containers are used for self storage and can ensure the containers on your site not only look great but are durable and functional for self storage.








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Shipping
containers offer
a relatively low
cost entry point
to self storage
that can easily
be added to as
the business
expands

For contact details and more information on all our container supplier members see the supplier directory at www.ssauk.com or www.feddessa.org. And remember to join the regular Containers Sector Forum meetings to get the latest updates, share best practice, discuss challenges and solutions and network with other container operator members and container supplier members. Not to be missed! The next forum will be held online on July 6.

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Two Industry Social Media Marketing Successes We Can All Learn From

Is social media marketing a time waster or a money maker? We have caught up with Emma Banks from Squab and Tim Brant-Coles from Brant Self Storage to hear how they have used social media to grow their businesses.

Roughly 60% of Emma Banks's customers first came across Squab through social media. Tim Brant-Coles tells us that he had 50 enquiries from social media in the past week and that he converts on average 8-10% of those to paying customers. So, Emma and Tim are not in doubt. For them, social media marketing is a money maker.

They both identify Facebook and Instagram as the core social media platforms. Tim uses Facebook Marketplace to post free ads about his storage space and he likes to make it specific to the use of the customer he is targeting. For example, advertising motorcycle storage and using photos of motorcycles in his ad attracts more people to the ad than a picture of the facility will.

Emma has experimented with timing of her social media posts and has found that especially when there are TV programs about property or renovations, there is a surge in people dreaming about a possible move or rebuild. Because of that, she times some of her social media post around those programs and also adapts the content of the posts to those dreamers.

Although most of his enquiries come from his Facebook Marketplace ads, Tim also makes regular social media posts where he features his dogs in his facility or uses any other chance he gets to create something attention

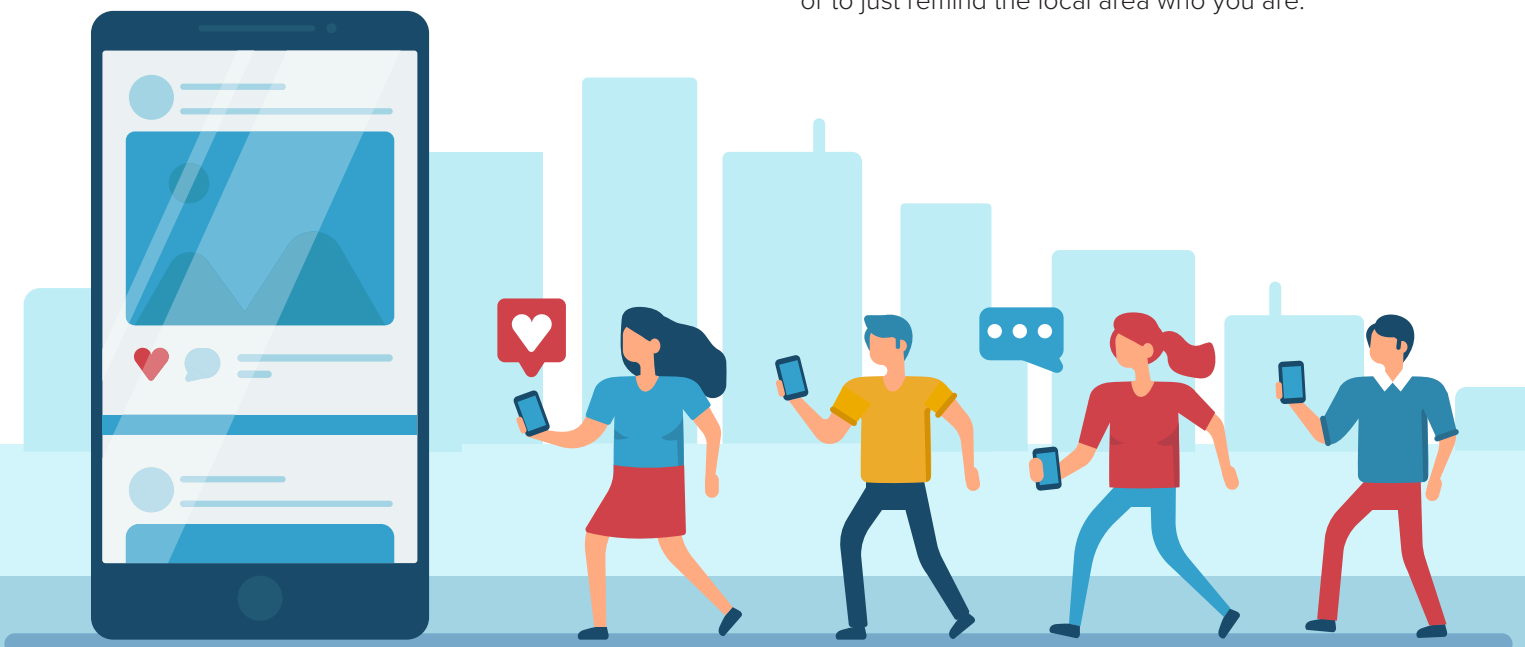
grabbing and different. Perhaps most notably, he posted a video of himself eating a full English breakfast off the floor of his storage facility to prove how clean the facility is. Emma hasn't had a self storage floor-based breakfast just yet, but she agrees that making posts different is crucial when you are building a social media presence:

"When we started out, we looked at other brands in the industry and what they were doing. In hindsight, that was actually the wrong thing to do, because it all ends up looking a bit the same. Today, we focus on being different and speaking about different commercial aspects in our storage, so that people always see something different from us."

What is clear from speaking to Emma and Tim is that for both of them, their social media marketing is an extension of real-life business networking. They both identify reciprocal mentions and shares as a strong force in getting started on social media. By tagging another local business in their posts, they help that business get mentioned to the people who are following them on social media. And in return, that business will often mention them back.

"Don't put something on your page and expect people to come and find you. You need to go out and find people" Emma confirms.

In Emma's local area there is also an initiative called Worcestershire Hour which is driven by the hashtag #worcestershirehour. Twice a week, and at pre-defined times, anyone who posts on Twitter using this hashtag gets retweeted by the organisers. This is a great way to get special offers out to a wider audience completely for free, or to just remind the local area who you are.



Tim does all his social media posts and management himself. He prefers it this way because it keeps it real and authentic. “The best posts are off the cuff, where you capture the moment, because people will recognize a fake post when they see it”. That has also meant that Tim can infuse a lot of his own personality into his posts and give people a sense of the person behind the business.

Emma works together with an external agency and is equally happy with this setup. She describes it very much as a partnership, where the agency’s expertise in social media marketing gets paired with the real-life experience of dealing with storage customers at Squab. Working together, they have been able to build a solid social media presence over time. The external agency that Emma uses was also a storage customer at Squab before they became involved with the company’s marketing. She thinks this has helped make the cooperation a fruitful one, because they know the product firsthand, as a customer.

So, the question is of course, which customers are Emma and Tim reaching on social media that they wouldn’t necessarily reach through other marketing channels?

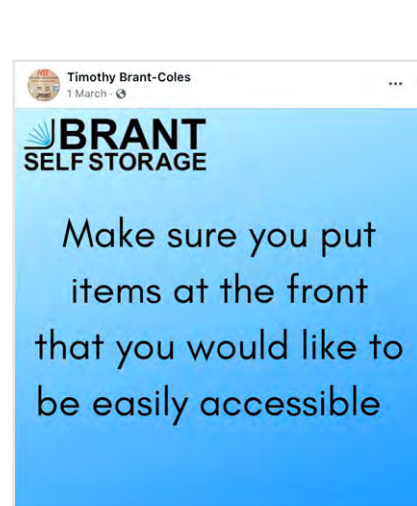
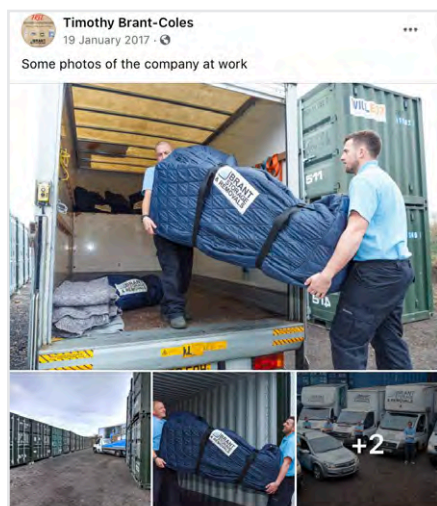
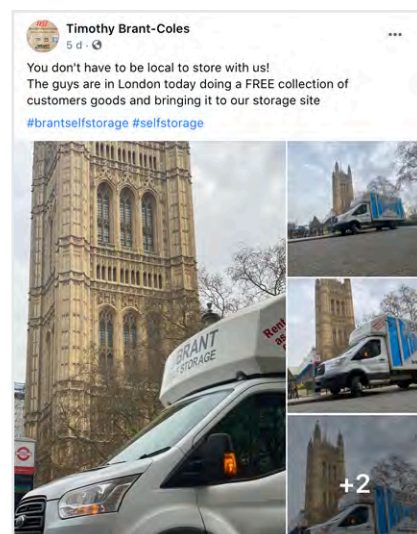
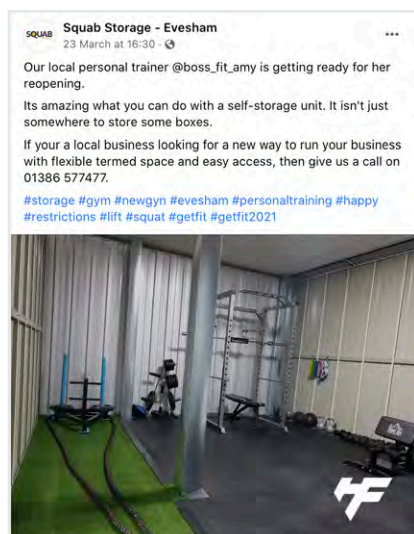
Emma has worked in the storage industry for 4 years and in that time, she has noticed a shift in the demographics

of people who store from her. She is seeing a larger proportion of younger people contacting her and, in that context, she sees social media as an effective channel to reach this demographic. Tim has also noticed a difference in how the younger demographic uses search engines and especially when people are looking to buy something, he sees more people going to Facebook Marketplace first and only if they don’t find what they are looking for, do they use a search engine. This is one of the many reasons they both believe social media marketing is here to stay.

When asked what advice they would give people who aren’t sure about the value of social media marketing yet, they both have clear answers:

“Yes, it takes time to build up and you need to get to know your audience. But you will reach people that you would never reach otherwise” says Emma.

Tim finishes off by encouraging anyone who is still in doubt to simply give it a try: “Just put an ad on Facebook Marketplace and see what happens. It’s free and takes 5 minutes. Don’t put too much information in there, because you want people to contact you to start a conversation. Trust me, it’s the fountain of joy!”



Interview



Chris Bryan
Blue Self Storage

How/why did you first get into self storage?

I was studying Accountancy at the time and looking to further my career and build on my experience. An opportunity came up within the Accounts department of blue self storage (which was Cardiff Self Storage at the time) and I liked the varied nature of the job description. I knew nothing about self storage at the time and did not really know what to expect!

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

Awareness. When I started in self storage, a lot of people did not understand the industry or the offering. It has been impressive to watch the industry grow from strength to strength into an industry that is now widely known and generally well thought of.

What do you like most about the self storage industry?

The people. After a year with blue self storage, I came to realise that the element of the job I enjoyed the most was dealing with various people – I decided therefore that accountancy wasn't for me and focused on developing commercial skills. From customers to competitors, everybody in the industry seem to have an interesting story to tell.

What do you like least about the self storage industry?

As a container operator, it can be frustrating that some low quality facilities give us a bad name. Thankfully, there are a growing number of high quality container operators who are doing a great job in improving the expectation of a container self storage facility.

What is your favourite book or movie?

Godfather Part II. The way two story lines are blended into one film is genius.

If you had a time machine where would you go?

I would travel into the future as opposed to back in time. While there's a lot to be learnt from history, I would love to see how living has evolved in 100 years' time.

I think industry associations like the Self Storage Association UK are important because ...

For me, the SSA do a fantastic job in promoting standards and awareness within the industry. As an independent operator, the opportunity to draw on best practice and others experiences has been invaluable whilst trying to grow the business. Having experts on hand to give advice on speciality subjects such as legal issues, insurance, facility standards has also been extremely helpful as self storage often falls between categories of traditional business practices.

Right now, I would rather be ...

Somewhere high in the French Alps, in front of a log fire with my family, a nice bottle of wine and good food - after a full day skiing.

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

I still consider myself as young!

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

Muhammad Ali. Not sure a sporting great but somebody who achieved so much outside of the ring.

YSN Update



What a fantastic start to 2021 the industry has had, from speaking to many of the SSA UK Young Storage Network (YSN) teams everyone has been extremely busy with an increase in interest for our wonderful product during the first quarter of the year.

Since the last edition of UNLOCKED, the YSN board has been progressing with several of our strategy plans and hosted the first YSN meeting of the year. This session was a huge success and the YSN Board informed the many attendees of our plans for 2021. We presented some of the survey results to date and fielded several questions from members as well as launching the group Facebook page.

A recording of the meeting can be found alongside many of the SSA UK webinars on the website.

Future YSN member meetings have been scheduled for:

Thursday, 20 May 2021 – 11.00am-1.00pm

Tuesday, 24 August 2021 – 11.00am-1.00pm

Tuesday, 23 November 2021 – 11.00am-1.00pm

The first of these three dates will be held over Zoom and more details regarding the meetings will be posted on the SSA UK website and YSN Facebook page in due course. I am sincerely hoping that in future, we may be able to tag a YSN meeting alongside an SSA UK event so our meeting can be in person but if not, the meetings will continue on Zoom.

We have decided to keep the survey running until the end of April so please, if you are yet to complete this, you can find the link through the website or indeed the YSN Facebook page.

We look forward to welcoming you to the May meeting and if you, or indeed any of your teams, are 40 or under and want to be a part of driving the industry forward or require further information, please contact Hannah Speed at the SSA UK hspeed@ssauk.com, call 01270 623150 or contact any of the YSN Board through our Facebook page.

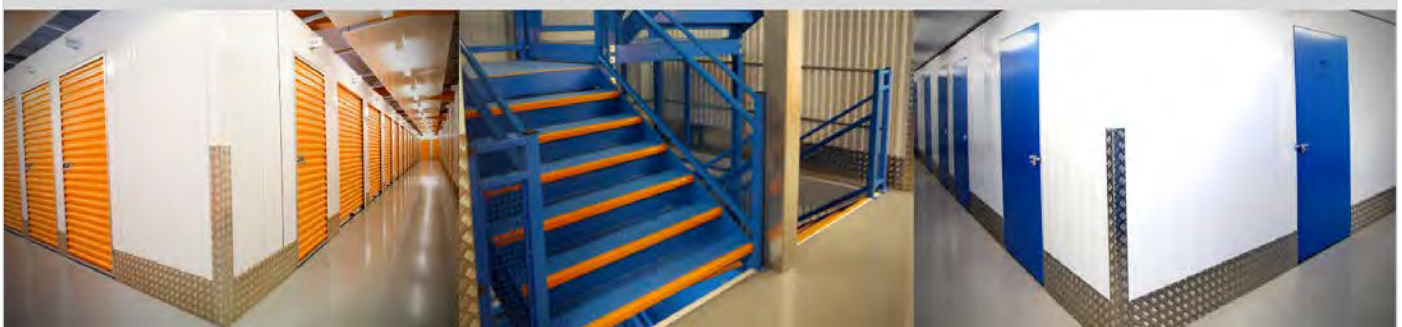
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Self Storage News

Save a Life with a Defibrillator

Sudden Cardiac Arrest can happen anywhere at any time to anyone. Defibrillation is used to treat life threatening conditions that affect the rhythm of the heart such as cardiac arrhythmia, ventricular fibrillation and pulseless ventricular tachycardia. Ensuring there are more defibrillators available across the UK enables any first-aider or lay person to deliver potentially life-saving treatment prior to the emergency services arriving. Safety is important in all businesses and having a life-saving Defibrillator on-site is something every business should consider. You genuinely could save a life!

If you would like to get involved, our new member Defib4Life would be happy to hear from you. Visit their website <https://defib4life.co.uk>, call 0116 4820116 or email sales@defib4life.co.uk

Green Storage opens their 6th store in Handen

It took Green Storage only eight months from the start of construction to finish their sixth facility in Handen a city located in the Stockholm area. In less than two years, Green Storage has acquired and developed properties for a corresponding value of just over SEK 800 million. According to their business plan they are planning to open 20 facilities in the Stockholm region over the next five years. In May they will open their seventh facility in Täby, followed by another facility in Täby Kyrkby. Green Storage is part of the real estate group Green Group which also owns the garage chain Green Park.

Attic Self Storage make a TV appearance

Following the launch of their 3rd store in Marylebone in 2020 and the 4th in Harrow in April, members Attic Self Storage are now looking to use television to reach London audiences. The advert will focus on creating space in the home and will air during April and May 2021, targeted at homes surrounding their 4 stores. Attic Self Storage like to bring the benefits of innovation to self storage customers and the advert features their new app-controlled door locks. Attic continue to grow offering over 30 different sizes of units, packaging materials, online check in and account management, document and archiving, mail box rental and more.

Self Storage Milano Est celebrates their 10th Anniversary with a song

Giovanni Tronchin from Self Storage Milano Est has found a highly creative way to celebrate its 10th anniversary. A year ago, Italy was one of the first countries to go into



lockdown and now, a year later, little has changed, as the virus is still present. Being unable due to COVID-19 to celebrate the anniversary with a traditional event in the presence of guests, Giovanni came up with an original solution, both digital and social, to celebrate his business with a song. Thanks to the vaccination campaign, people are getting new hope again that things will return to normal, and the song is about a hypothetical customer who suddenly, due to a separation, turns to self storage to store his possessions and then, by frequenting the facility, he networks and discovers new business opportunities. If you listen carefully, you will hear a message in the song about hope and never giving up. Giovanni worked together with two Italian rappers to create this song. You can listen to the song by visiting Giovanni's personal LinkedIn profile where you will find a link.

Attic Self Storage Launches eCommerce Accelerator Program

Attic has announced the launch of its eCommerce Accelerator Program, championing budding entrepreneurs in and around the Harrow area, by offering free units, work spaces and funding to help talented locals scale their enterprises. Attic is keen to hear from London based businesses who are just launching or launched in 2020 and want to take the next steps in their growth. Up to 5 businesses will be chosen with each receiving £500 to help with their business, free storage (up to 100sq ft) for up to 12 months and use of work-pods at the Harrow store. For more details, visit www.atticstorage.co.uk/about-us/e-commerce-accelerator This is yet another example of the generosity and support offered by an SSA UK member in their local community.



Trasteros Plus becomes self storage leader in Andalucía

Trasteros Plus opened its first store in November 2013 and today they have four stores in Malaga. During this time, they have become the self storage leader in the region of Andalucía. They recently expanded one of their facilities in the heart of Malaga by adding 200 further self storage units. The facility, located in calle San Millán number 5, has a total net lettable area of 3,000 square metres. This facility is only 10 minutes by foot from the Cathedral. *"Because it is very centrally located, this facility has a lot of B2B customers like companies that do last mile delivery, restaurants and retail shops. Another great advantage of this facility is that it will be very difficult to have competition nearby because there are not big spaces available in downtown, so it pushes the prices per sqm of this facility up with not a lot of resistance"*, says Alberto Serrano.

Bringing Honey to Storage

SureStore's L&G owned Stafford facility installed the first of its Beehives in February. The 56,000sqft facility is now not only host to storage, office, trade and retail customers but a rabble of bees, which through expert BeeKeeper and Store Manager Claire George will be producing SureStore Honey by the autumn, which will be sold instore to raise money for local Staffordshire charities. The beehive is one of many green additions to the SureStore group recently with birdboxes, electric car charging points, green spaces and a solar power across the group.

New Logo for the SSA UK

Did you know it's good practice to refresh your logo around every 5 years? The SSA UK have done just that. You may have already seen it on the website or on recent communications. Though similar to the previous logo, it has been given a modern twist. It is also downloadable for FULL members of the SSA UK from the members only area of the website for use on your website and in customer communications.

Storage King acquires Blackpool's largest self storage operator for 3.6 million

Storage King has purchased Blackpool Self Store, a 30,100 sq. ft self storage facility. Storage King CEO Robin Greenwood comments, *"The acquisition of Blackpool Self Store is in line with our strategic growth plan of further expanding our portfolio across the UK. With its central location, large property and high quality building, Blackpool Self Store is an excellent addition to our portfolio."* The property has a maximum lettable area of 55,000 sq. ft. Storage King has embarked on a strategic expansion plan and continues to look for existing high quality, well-positioned self storage facilities and potential development sites to be added to their growing portfolio.





Country Profile RUSSIA

Self Storage Association established in growing Russian market

Self storage is not new to Russia, with the first stores opening in the early 2000's. However, investment in the industry and the development of more flagship stores in Moscow and St Petersburg has increased the profile of the industry to both customers and developers. Now there is a new self storage association to represent the interests of self storage companies in Russia.

The Russian Association of Individual Storage Companies was established initially by some of the larger operators in Russia to help grow the industry and maintain industry standards. The General Director of Homestore, Dmitry Yuryevich Mayer is the President of the Association. He says that the market in Russia continues to grow despite the current challenges to society. He sees the industry adapting quickly to changes in customer behaviours driven by the pandemic. In particular in the last 12 months, he has seen a growth in operators offering fully online no contact services. In some cases, this even includes delivery of goods so the customer has no need to physically be present at the storage facility, neither to sign a contract with the operator, nor to load or locate his belongings in their unit.

In contrast to the European market, around one third of Russian self storage operators provide services of packing and delivering of customers goods with their own logistics departments. There is also a growing demand for valet style storage where boxes are collected from customers and taken to remote locations. Dmitry says this is more popular for those who don't need quick access to stored belongings.

The challenges for new operators looking at developing significant self storage buildings is the lack of access to project financing and understanding by lenders of the market potential. As a result, there has been a big rise in container storage areas and other budget options that do not require the capital outlay of traditional self storage. This can provide further confusion to customers, lenders and investors in an immature market where people may not understand the differences between a simple container storage park and a complex high security self storage building.

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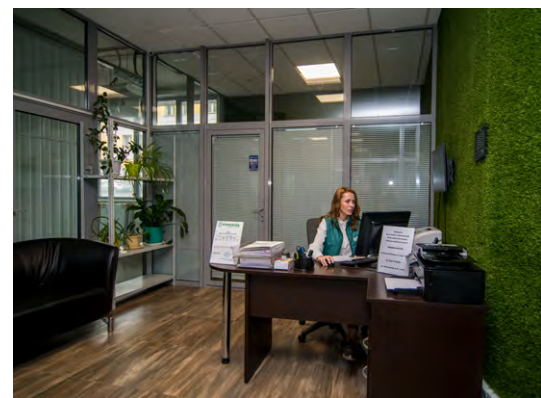
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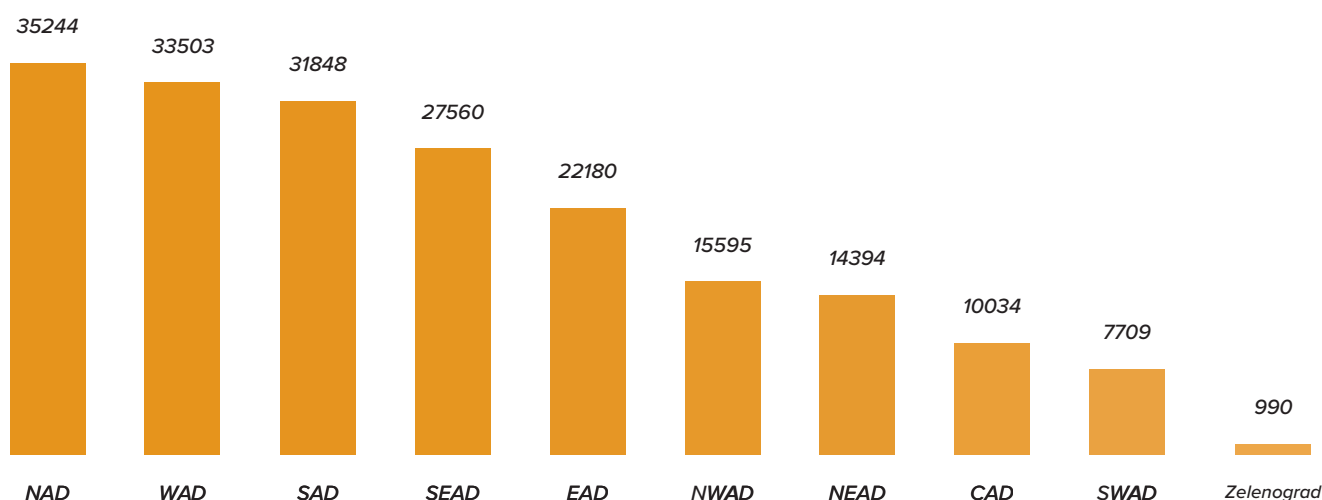
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To help provide more information on the industry, one of the first projects of the new industry association was to develop an industry report on the market. It found that rentable self storage space in Moscow reached 199,057 sq. m in 2020, 5.9% growth in 2019. During the year 8 new stores were added, making a total number of self storage facilities 76, excluding container sites. The Northern autonomous district of Moscow has the most storage space, 35,244 sq. m, an increase of 8,7% on 2019. The western autonomous district of Moscow this year fell to second place with 33,503 sq. m, an increase of 2%.

At the end of the 2020, there were 76 self storage stores in Moscow. In addition to the 169 areas of container storage, up from 117 in 2019. In the self storage market there are 28 operators with the top 10 accounting for 74,6% of overall rental space.

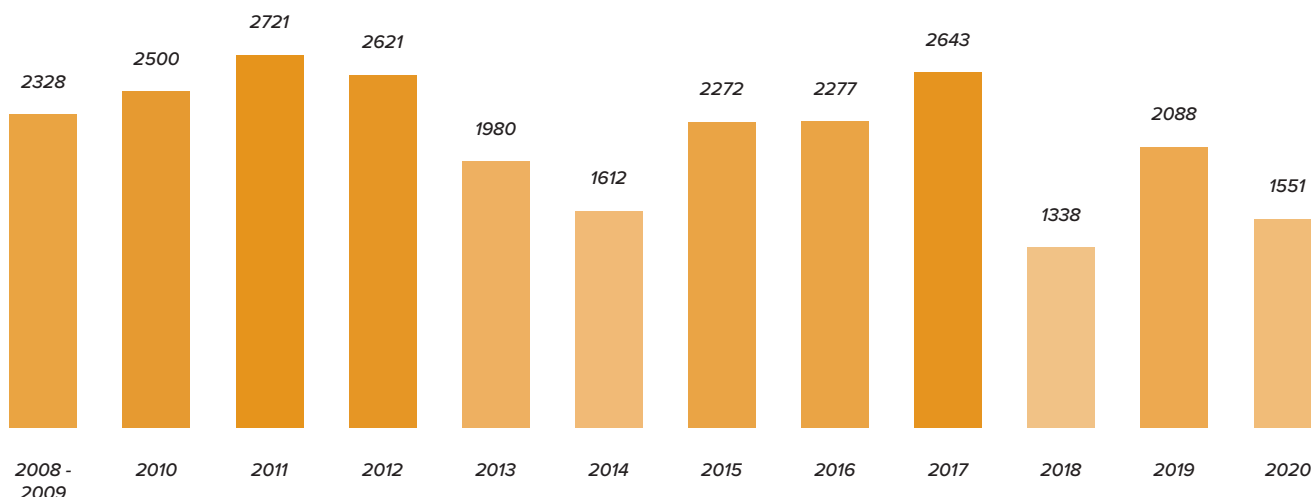


Distribution of self storage rental space by autonomous districts of Moscow, sq. m



In Moscow the average size of a self storage store in terms of rentable space is 1551 sq. m down 25.7% on the previous year as more smaller stores are added to the market.

Average amount of rental space of opened facilities

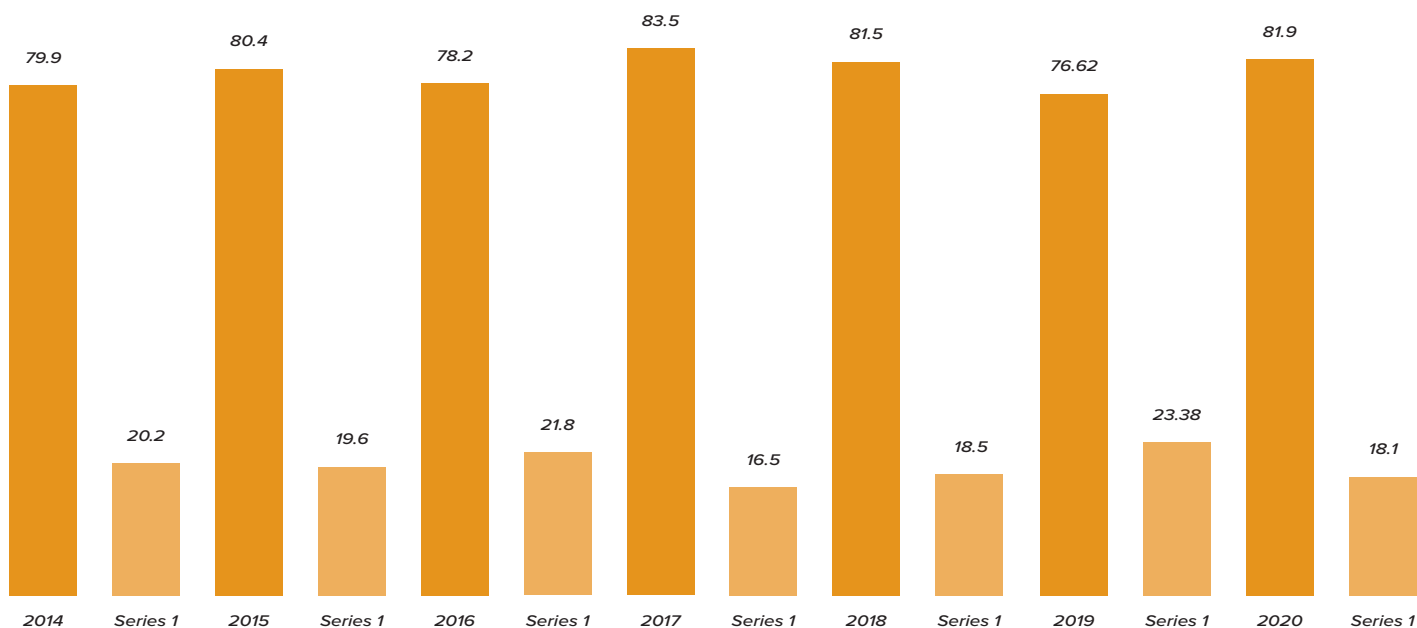


Average occupancy level of self storage facilities in Moscow increased by 3%, making 87.6%. The average length of stay is 7.2 months which is not unusual for a young developing market.

The biggest player is "Skladovka", with rentable space of 29 748 sq. m across 9 stores. Other large operators include "Homesklad", 23 608 sq. m with 6 stores and "Citi Box" 20,035 sq. m over 5 stores.

So far there seems to be a larger demand from domestic customers 81.9% of customers. However, this may be due to the economic impact of the pandemic combined with the immaturity of the industry. In previous years domestic customers have been closer to European norms of 75% of customers.

Domestic/buisness splint by number of clients

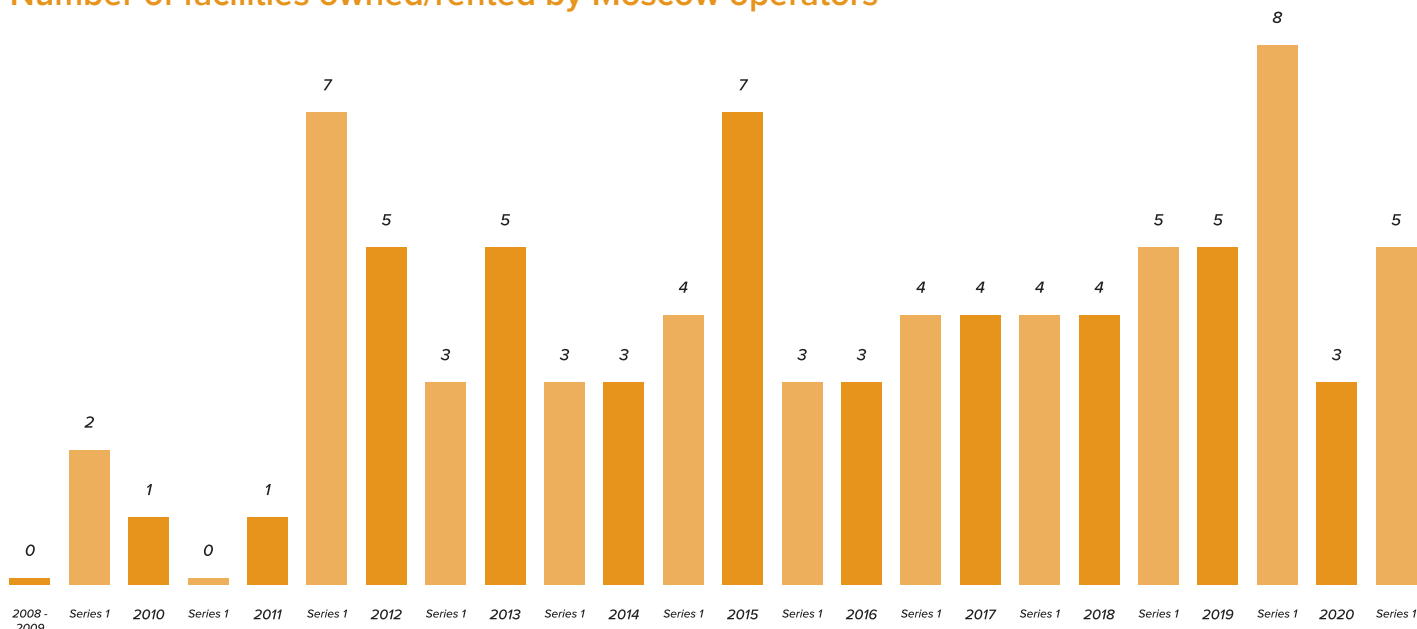


The average rental rate is between 1,620 rub (€17.96) to 1,976 (€21.91) rub per sq. m a month depending on the location of the storage, number and quality of services provided by the operator.

The Saint Petersburg self storage market has 12 operators running 14 facilities with another 4 container storage areas. The revenue in Saint Petersburg in 2020 was similar to 2019 at 1,400 rub (€15.53) per sq. m a month.



Number of facilities owned/rented by Moscow operators

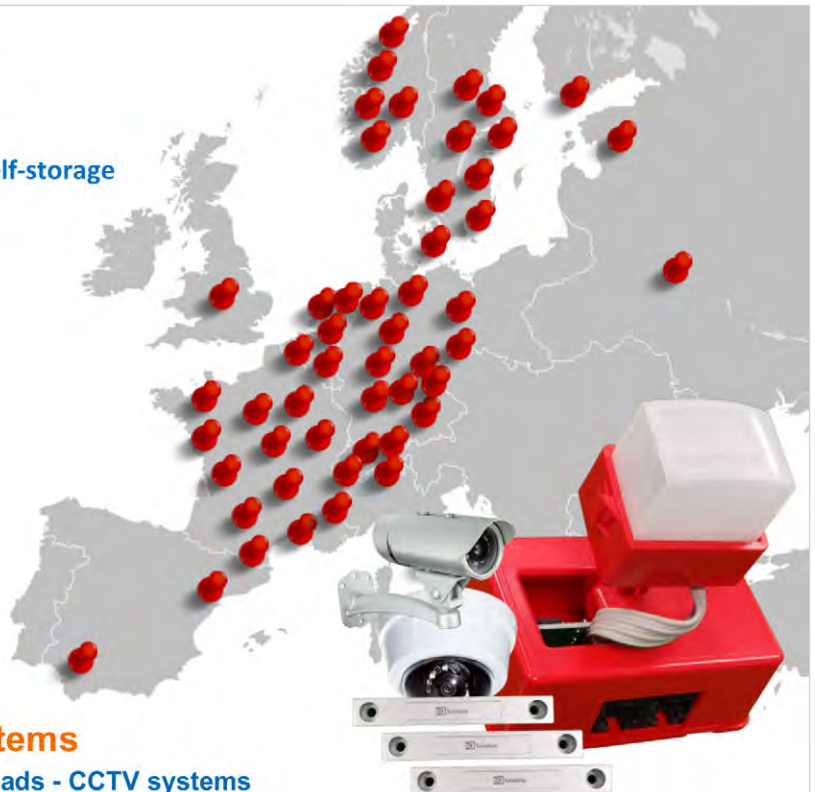


New FEDESSA Member - Prostor

Self storage is still a very young business sector, as the first self storage facility only entered the Russian market in 2007. While the downturn of the world economy in 2008 interrupted all new developments, the interest in self storage development returned when the economy picked up again. Consumer demand in self storage is increasing and new players start to enter the market. In Moscow, number of stores increased from 71 stores to 76 stores in 2020, albeit moderate considering the population of Moscow is 12 million inhabitants. Self storage is also starting to appear in Saint-Petersburg, the second biggest city in Russia.

Jensen Group opened their first facility in St. Petersburg on October 7, 2019, 6 months after acquisition. This facility counts 1,791 units, offers an average unit size of 3 square meters and is located close to a busy road. Increasing consumer demand has made it possible for them to expand and they recently opened their second facility offering 1,570 units with an average size of 2.9 square meters. After just one month they had rented out 10% of their capacity. This store is also located on one of the busiest roads in St. Petersburg. During the pandemic, Prostor have also only seen an insignificant decrease in their occupancy.

They also offer 600 square meters of co-working area at site, where businesspeople can work, meet clients, etc. Both facilities are equipped by freight lifts, packaging materials, CCTV, 24/7 access, physical security guards, and individual alarms in every unit. Prostor is the biggest self storage operator in the area and they clearly differentiate themselves from the other self storage operators in Saint-Petersburg. Compared to their competitors, who mostly offer



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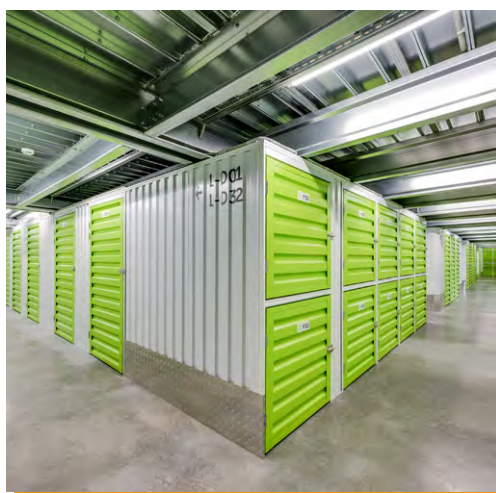
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storage space in basements/underground parking slots, or who only lease part of buildings, Prostor have a self storage facility who meets all requirements. They are also the only operator in Russia that offer the possibility to book online. Each building has three separate loading zones and offer parking space up to 200 cars.

Prostor is planning to open their third facility in the southern part of St. Petersburg in September this year. This will be the biggest facility in Russia with 8,500 square meters of GLA (gross lettable area). This summer they are going to close two more deals including reconstruction of two assets. Overall, by the end of 2021 they plan to have at least four facilities, totaling up to 25,000 sqm of GLA. Concurrent to the St. Petersburg expansion they are also looking into entering Moscow with a self storage offering.

"The biggest challenge that the industry is facing is that the consumer awareness of self storage is low among people living in major cities. It will take some time before the industry becomes known to a wider population and people begin to trust self storage operators with their belongings. 95% of our clients never used self storage before. There is also a need for changing habits away from storing your goods in your apartment, at balconies, in old styled garages, etc.", Sergey concludes.



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Director



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