



Making More Money With Self-Storage Kiosks

*An Audiocast Presentation Provided by
Inside Self-Storage and the Self-Storage Training Institute*



Introducing Our Presenter...

As vice president of marketing for OpenTech Alliance Inc., *Curtis Sojka* has more than 15 years of high-tech marketing and product management experience. Prior to joining OpenTech, he held senior positions with Bank of America, Prism Solutions, Hyperion Solutions and GolfSwitch. His responsibilities have included marketing, product development, customer service, finance and operations.

During his career, Curtis has founded his own search-engine company; participated in early-stage startups and initial public offerings; launched 12 new software products; and consulted regularly for a number of high-tech companies. He is an avid sailor, having spent almost two years sailing the Caribbean before joining OpenTech. He received his MBA in marketing from St. Mary's College and a bachelor's degree in business economics from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

For more information, visit www.opentech.com.



Frequently Asked Questions about Kiosks

Below are some frequently asked questions from storage owners about kiosks.

Do we have to allow 24-hour access to our property when using a kiosk?

No. Kiosks do not control access to your property. Access codes given to new tenants by a kiosk follow the same access policies you defined in your security system. If a customer rents a unit through the kiosk outside of your access hours then the access code they receive will only work during your standard access hours.

We have historically kept all of our empty units locked. How can we keep our empties clean but still allow new tenants to rent a unit through the kiosk without a manager onsite to take the lock off the empty unit?

Facilities use several different approaches including:

Installing electronic locks on each door.

Replacing the lock on an empty unit with a plastic tab or wire tie that a new tenant can remove when accessing an empty unit.

Limiting the number of units available for rent through the kiosk and then leave only those few units unlocked.

Putting a combination lock on empty units and include the combination on the receipt of the rental paperwork.

Leaving all empty units unlocked.

Some operators are phasing in the use of a kiosk. They are starting by allowing tenants to complete rentals without a manager but require the tenant to meet with a manager during office hours to access their unit for the first time.

How do new tenants sign their lease so it is legal?

During the rental process customers are required to sign their lease using the kiosk's digital signature pad. The signature is then embedded in the lease and appears on the printed copy of the lease. The lease is presented to the tenant upon completion of the rental and also stored for later retrieval by the manager.

Can I limit the number of units displayed by the kiosk for each type?

Yes. If you are concerned about exposing your facility's entire inventory you can limit the number of units available for rent for each type of unit. Additionally, customized groups of unit types can be defined to prevent tenants from renting a specific unit type, such as mailboxes or wine storage bins.

What does a tenant get at completion of a rental?

The tenant receives a receipt of the transaction with their unit number, account number, and access code along with a complete lease agreement including their signature and fingerprint and a lock if they purchased one.

Does the kiosk give change?

No. Facility owners have two options when customers purchase with cash. They can have the extra amount escrowed for a specified amount of time so the tenant can get their change during office hours, or the overpayment can be applied as a credit to the tenant's account.

How is the kiosk installed at the facility?

There are two primary types of kiosk enclosures - thru-the-wall and freestanding.

Thru-the-wall enclosures are the most secure and are designed to withstand even the harshest of weather conditions. These enclosures are designed based on the proven ATM model with a set back style to protect the components from weather and vandalism. The electronic connections are secure inside of the building and eliminate any tampering or disconnection of power or data cables.

The second enclosure type is Free Standing. These enclosures are typically exposed to more chance of vandalism and weather damage. The kiosk's freestanding enclosures are made of thick metal that will not rust or be penetrated easily. Locks on a freestanding unit have multiple securing points and are recessed in the unit for additional security. The freestanding enclosure should have a minimum of four mounting points at the base of the unit to keep it from being tipped over or moved. The cabling is brought inside the base of the enclosure through an opening in the bottom to eliminate exposure to weather and vandalism.

Some operators have chosen to install the thru-the-wall enclosure in a vestibule with a security camera mounted overhead. This helps protect the kiosk and the tenant using the kiosk.

Can the kiosk offer customized special pricing and promotions?

Yes. Kiosks allow the operator to set up special pricing and promotions to be displayed in real-time to prospects.

Can tenants make payments with cash, check or credit card?

Yes. Kiosks offer all three forms of payment.

Accepting checks can be done in two ways. Checks can be collected by the kiosk and deposited in the bank by the manager or the check can be processed on-line (ACH transaction). When accepting check payments it is very important to validate the check routing and account numbers by electronically scanning the check. Kiosks can also require a digital signature authorizing the withdrawal, which is very valuable in the case of payment disputes.
