



4 Ways Smart Lockers Increase Revenue and Enhance Customer Service

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Smart lockers are smart business.

Before spring 2020 and the outset of the coronavirus pandemic, the storage solutions had become popular options for consumers seeking added convenience and increased access to purchases. Amid widespread shutdowns and social distancing mandates over the last year, those solutions have become necessities to keep many businesses going.

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“Businesses are always looking for ways to increase access for customers and availability to their products,” said Chris Gilder, CEO of Meridian Kiosks, a leading manufacturer of smart lockers. “Those needs were only amplified in recent months. Smart lockers, especially in such an adverse time as the pandemic, seem a natural progression in that evolution.”

Eventually, normalcy – or at least some semblance of it – will return, and smart lockers are a lock to be a key piece of how goods get into the hands of consumers going forward. As such, the devices represent opportunities for businesses to enhance the customer experience and increase revenue.

Here are four ways the units can achieve both.

Increase customer base through diversity of locations

Millions of workers transitioning from traditional work locations to work-at-home situations have left scores of offices vacant for much of the last year. That means, in many cases, there’s no one there to receive packages upon their arrival.

Though tens of thousands of lockers have been set up worldwide, the strategy of deployers such as Meridian Kiosks is to tactically create hubs in locations that offer easy access to customers, both from the standpoints of physicality and time. Packages destined for dark offices can easily be routed to lockers, where employees can simply go from their homes at their convenience to pick up parcels without coming into contact with others.

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Lockers also can decrease congestion at businesses. Instead of waiting in line, conversing with a store worker about the item and waiting longer for it to be retrieved, employees instead can place ordered pieces in lockers for customers to grab and go. That enables workers to focus more of their attention on other tasks, such as in-store customer assistance.

Many lockers are positioned in spots where users can gain access in easy-to-reach, safe, well-lit locations and at various points of the day, including nights and weekends. Those places include groceries, convenience stores, malls, other retail outlets and the entrance areas and lobbies of condos and apartment buildings. Even non-traditional settings are prime locker locations. Libraries, for example, rely on lockers to stash books and movies checked out online, and universities have added them for placing mail, personal items and supplies for students.

Flexibility and Security

Successful smart locker strategy hinges on preparation. Simply positioning a unit in a spot doesn't guarantee sufficient usage. Beyond there being enough users, there also must be the right users. Otherwise, too few users could lead to operational expenses outweighing revenue.



Those expecting a package don't always want it dropped off at their home or outside their business for a couple of reasons. There either isn't enough space to put parcels – particularly in crowded areas – or they don't want their purchases potentially exposed to the elements.

In recent months, bold thieves see unattended packages as easy prey. Cameras can be easily integrated to monitor the use of the lockers for added security.

Smart lockers are self-service kiosks that safely hold packages for retrieval at times and locations convenient to purchasers. And as consumers look for alternative delivery options amid the pandemic, experts see smart locker usage as another tool to closing a purchase loop.

Strategy, intent, available space and consumer appeal all play into the configuration of a smart locker setup. There are multiple ways to configure the units and locker doors are available in multiple sizes to ensure compatibility with packages of varying sizes

Lockers offer considerable durability as well, which make them viable for either indoor or outdoor use. Powder-coated finishes and tamper-resistant locks require little maintenance and are able to withstand whatever Mother Nature or heavy users can dole out.

Functionality and appearance

Smart lockers can be integrated with back-office systems and hundreds of different components, including payment terminals, scanners and more, offering a complete pick-up and drop-off solution.

Smart locker operators, through their networks, can email customers when a package is ready for pickup, sending them a unique six-digit code or barcode. The customer can then go to the corresponding unit, enter the code or scan the barcode on the unit's touchscreen, then remove the package after the locker door opens.

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Locker manufacturers like Meridian offer administrators access to software development technology to create and customize their software application. The system can also integrate with Meridian's MzeroManage remote management software to allow operators to monitor and manage multiple lockers in offsite locations and push updates remotely.

The system aggregates all inventory of the smart locker system into a single database that provides operational views in real time, giving administrators visibility of their entire array. Operators can receive alerts notifying them of when lockers are open, closed, full, empty, assigned for pickup or unassigned.

Reduce overhead costs

As labor shortages mar the ability of all types of business to fill critical positions, companies find themselves facing the daily chore of how best to position staff to effectively keep pace with activity. Smart lockers enable them

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to dedicate only a small number of workers to picking goods from shelves or stockrooms and placing them in designated storage spaces.

Monitoring systems prevent businesses from having to designate employees to constantly monitor the lockers. Instead, sensors notify managers of functionality problems and other issues. The keyless locks and heavy-duty construction eliminate frequent maintenance.

With lockers positioned in highly visible areas, deployers can use them as opportunities for additional revenue via advertising wraps of the units or paid messaging on the digital display. The locker compartments can even be rented out to businesses and individuals seeking additional storage .

Using smart lockers can save time both for the business using the lockers and for the customer. Neither has to disrupt their schedules to place and retrieve packages.

Because lockers can be positioned within stores, order fulfillment time can be cut considerably and failed deliveries, which in the past have meant additional time and effort with follow-ups, are non-existent.

ABOUT THE SPONSOR:

Meridian is a fully integrated manufacturer of indoor and outdoor kiosks, automated smart lockers, interactive digital signage and self-service software. As a complete end-to-end self-service innovator, Meridian develops products and services all under one roof, providing greater efficiency, and lean, high-quality results.

For more than two decades, we've helped our partners succeed by designing, engineering, manufacturing and integrating hardware and software solutions from our 13-acre headquarters in North Carolina.

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