



# Relocatable units, any way you want them.



#### Standard Features:

- · Corrugated steel roof prevents water from pooling
- · Wall vents and anti-condensation spray on ceiling
- Roll up or swing doors available
- · Water, wind, dust, and rodent-proof
- Highest grade steel units are stackable 3 high, even when fully loaded
- · All hardware is stainless steel and will not rust
- · Ultra-secure override locks
- · Forklift pockets for safe and easy moving
- · Product warranties & dedicated customer service
- · COVID-19 sensitive buying and install process

#### **Custom Options:**

- · Turnkey site planning and installation
- On demand unit reconfiguration with partitions
- Flexible door placement on side(s) and/or end(s).
- · Climate controlled panels, HVAC compatible
- · Can be wired for lighting and electricity
- Marine grade plywood or diamond plate floors
- Custom colors and company logos
- Hot dipped galvanized steel
- Anchors available, will secure to any ground type
- Got an idea? Just ask. Our units are made to order and tailored to suit your needs

Ready to increase revenue at your facility? Call us today!







# **Expand your facility in 12 weeks**

WITH BOXWELL RELOCATABLE UNITS

#### **Call Boxwell**

Speak with a Boxwell representative to discuss how relocatable storage units can benefit your self-storage facility.



# **Layout Your Site**

Consider your ideal unit mix and quantity, our team will assist with site optimization.



Work with our designers to pick custom colors, logo placement, special unit features and more.



#### **Secure Financing**

Manage your cash flow by working with our network of finance partners.



Congratulations! Your made-to-order units will be delivered and ready to rent in 10-12 weeks.



### **Delivery + Install**

A Boxwell representative will meet you on-site to assist with the drop-off and assembly process.





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**Self Storage 101** 

**Smart Storage Centre** 

Mini-Storage Messenger
Starr Commercial Real Estate

# INTRODUCTION

Whether you're new to the industry or a seasoned storage veteran, it is imperative to continually explore any and all opportunities to maximize your revenue. In this booklet, our goal is to introduce you to one highly effective revenue stream: **relocatable units**. We will provide a look into how moveable storage units can generate additional income for your business by walking you through the process—from feasibility to acquiring renters, and all the steps along the way. For this booklet, we have teamed up with industry-leading partners and clients to exemplify how Boxwell's moveable storage units will benefit your business.



#### WHAT IS A RELOCATABLE UNIT?

There are many names to describe these ultra-flexible and adaptable units, including "portable units" and "moveable buildings." In this booklet, we will refer to this product as relocatable self-storage units or "relocatables." They are the ultimate convenience for businesses looking to increase rentable square feet at a fraction of the cost of traditional structures. This storage solution is fully custom and made to order. Relocatables can be placed within compact or otherwise unbuildable zones with no foundation necessary and minimal site preparation required. Assembly is fast and easy, requiring just 24 nuts and bolts and a build time of less than 30 minutes per unit.



# THE BOXWELL FORMULA

Every detail has been carefully engineered to ensure a simple, durable, and trusted storage solution for your business.

#### **UNIT BASICS**

- Highest grade and best quality steel, SPA-H and SPA-C
- All stainless steel hardware, will not rust

#### **SWING DOORS**

- Waterproof gasketing along top and bottom seams
- Exterior T-latches prop door open for easy loading
- Ultra-secure locking mechanism with override lock function
- · Interior emergency release cord
- · Customizable to any color

#### **ROLL-UP DOORS**

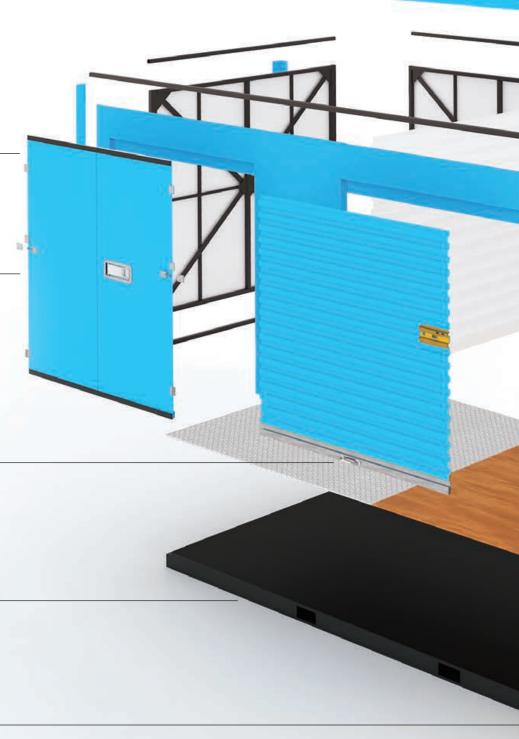
- Ultra-secure locking mechanism with override lock function
- ADA compliant with secondary rope pull handle
- · Available in 32 colors

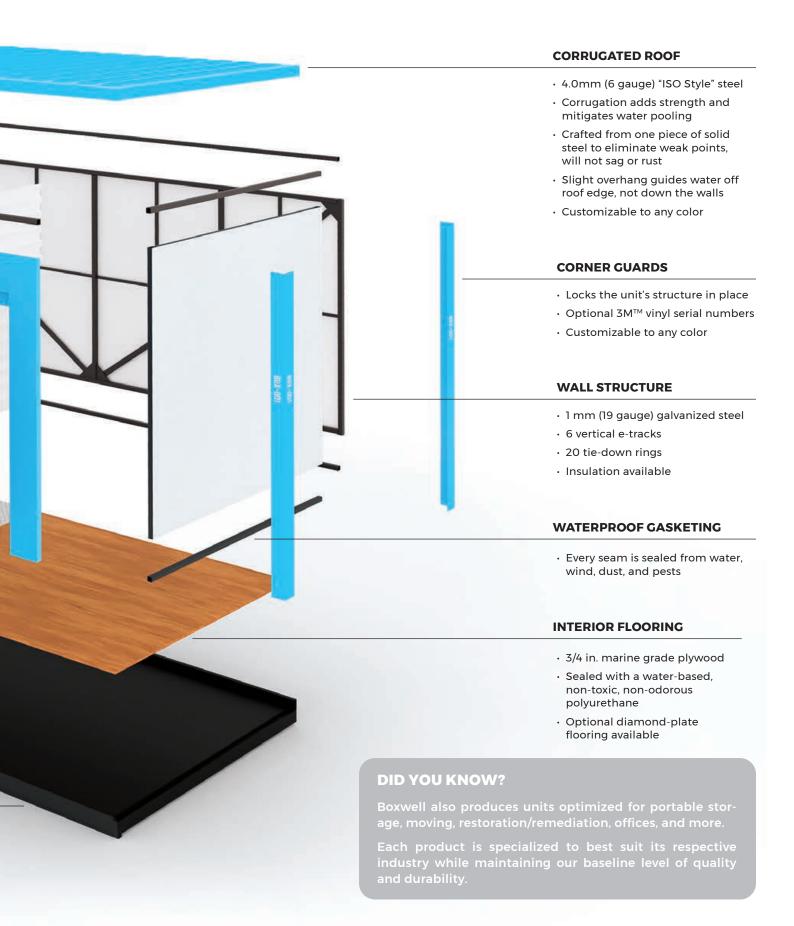
#### BASE

- · Load capacity: 10,000 lbs
- Fork lift pockets for easy moving, even when fully loaded
- · Customizable to any color

#### **SERVICES & WARRANTIES**

- · Free site layout & graphic design assistance
- · Turnkey delivery & installation service available
- · Manufacturing defects/workmanship 1 year
- · 3M™ vinyl decals 7 years
- · Paint 5 years





# FIVE SIGNS YOU'RE READY TO EXPAND

Would you like to add rentable square feet but are unsure of when to execute? Based on client feedback, these are the factors that indicate it's time to grow.



#### Your existing units are nearing 80 percent capacity.

More and more, storage is serving an essential need. For cities, suburbs, and rural areas alike, people are relying on storage now more than ever.

Be prepared to serve your community by ensuring you have the unit capacity to meet their needs.



#### There are underutilized areas on your lot.

Look around your facility. Do you have empty fencelines, easements, and parking lots?

Relocatable units are the ideal solution for these spaces as they do not require a foundation and can be placed in compact or narrow areas.



#### Section 179 tax credits are on your radar.

Did you know? Our units are considered "business equipment" because they are not anchored to the ground and can be moved with a forklift.

Leverage this as a valuable tax write-off for your business.



#### You need financing in order to expand.

While financing isn't always necessary, we are partnered with the best lenders in the industry.

We will facilitate your relationship with our lending partners so you can manage cash flow and order with confidence.



#### You want to maximize revenue fast.

Once your order is placed, your fully custom, made-to-order Boxwell units will be delivered, installed, and ready to rent in just 10 to 12 weeks.

### **ABOUT BOXWELL**

Since 2015, Boxwell has been designing, manufacturing, and distributing customizable storage solutions for businesses around the world. Head-quartered in Boulder, Colo., Boxwell's mission is to build the future of storage, today.

We aim to achieve this by persistently looking for ways to develop more durable storage, installed in a fraction of the time compared to other options. We're continually exploring new technologies, services, and features to support our clients and elevate the industry standard.



#### **BUILT FOR YOUR SUCCESS**

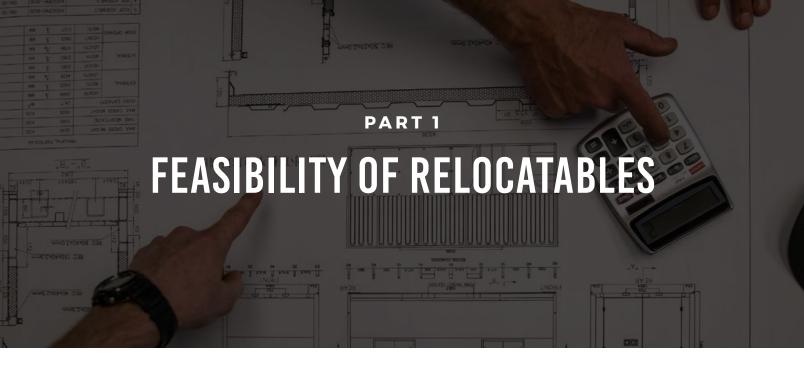
Boxwell challenges the status quo to anticipate and deliver on the needs of our customers in new and innovative ways. We know the importance of getting to know each and every one of our customers. At the end of the day, our success is directly tied to the success of our clients. We stand behind our product and are proud to be a part of Boxwell—and it shows. In fact, the personality of our team is one of our strongest qualities. Once you meet the Boxwell team, you'll feel the sense of camaraderie and true passion for the work we do and the products we offer.

After meeting you and discussing your needs, our design and development team will conceptualize a storage solution that's most suitable for you. We create renderings inclusive of materials, finishes, and branding options. Once approved, we manufacture your relocatable units at our Boxwell-owned facility. We use galvanized rust-proof steel, three layers of paint protection, and innovative designs to ensure long-term, revenue-generating units.

Boxwell works with vetted financial partners and delivery companies, many of whom are dedicated solely to the self-storage industry. Knowing the nuances of the industry, these partners will expedite the process of financial assistance and the logistics of delivery. All along the way, Boxwell is your communication go-between, allowing you to relax while our team keeps tabs on the administrative details. Within weeks, your storage containers are delivered. A Boxwell representative will be on site to guide the assembly team, so you can focus on running your business.

#### WHAT WILL BOXWELL PROVIDE FOR YOU?

- CUSTOM STORAGE SOLUTIONS
- IN-HOUSE MANUFACTURING
- ON-SITE DELIVERY SUPPORT
- TURNKEY INSTALLATIONS
- PRODUCT WARRANTIES
- SITE LAYOUT ASSISTANCE
- DESIGN/BRANDING SERVICES
- DEDICATED CUSTOMER CARE
- TRUSTED FINANCE PARTNERS



# **ARTICLE**

### Feasibility And Relocatables: The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly

by Amanda Helfrich, MAI, Owner of Starr Commercial Real Estate



Let's just start off with the ugly by stating nothing is ugly about today's relocatable units. In fact, relocatables have come a very long way from their prehistoric ancestor, the shipping container. When most people think about portable units, shipping containers come to mind. However, the most recent manufacturers of portable units today have im-

proved the design and aesthetic with considerable upgrades from their ancestral counterparts and have created a unit that is remarkably similar to traditional storage in appearance and functionality with a significantly lower cost.

They offer drive-up capabilities with physical components, including the door and locking systems, that are nearly identical to traditional drive-up units. And it is because of this similarity that it is difficult to distinguish between relocatable units and traditional units—at least from a tenant's perspective. And when tenants are unable to distinguish the two, or when they see minimal to no inferiority to a relocatable unit, they tend to rent them for equal terms as

compared to traditional units. In most facilities studies, relocatable units achieve similar rents and occupancy rates as traditional units, therefore, they are treated equally in terms of market analysis in a feasibility study. What does that mean for you? Well, if relocatables are treated as equals in a market analysis, but cost less, then in most cases your overall return will increase. The design and physical desirability of this unit type is typically covered in the physical feasibility component of a study.

Let's back up a bit and start with the basics. What is a feasibility study and what is included? A feasibility study is very simply defined as an assessment of the practicality of a proposed plan or method, or the study if the cost-benefit relationship of an economic endeavor (Sources: Oxford Languages online and The Appraisal of Real Estate). In a feasibility study, there are three main areas of consideration, generally completed in order: 1. supply and demand 2. physical feasibility and 3. financial feasibility.

When completing market research for a feasibility study, we look for existing supply and pipeline supply. Relocatables should be considered equally in terms of market

**FEASIBILITY OF RELOCATABLES** 

supply. If positive demand exists for self-storage, then a full market analysis is completed. This is the step in a feasibility study where we gather market info—including rents, occupancy rates, absorption rates, and facility amenities. Positive demand justifies a need for storage. Next, we review the physical feasibility of the property and tailor a hypothetical development using relocatables. Once the physical feasibility has been reviewed and a sample unit mix and facility size has been estimated, the financial component can be completed.

Another major positive for relocatables in the physical

feasibility of a project includes land coverage, or the overall building to land ratio. Relocatables cost on average 33 percent to 50 percent less when compared to traditional storage and sometimes can be built on portions of a site that have been deemed as unbuildable for traditional storage. Examples include easements, excessive setbacks, areas in floodplain, etc. So, in a hypothetical development, you can possibly achieve greater net rentable area on a site with relocatables and at significantly lower cost, resulting in more income and ultimately providing a higher return on investment. More square footage at a lower cost = higher income and greater profit!

Let us take a look at an example financial comparison of relocatables and traditional drive-up storage units below. In this scenario, we are assuming a traditional storage facility containing 50,000 net rentable area. Relocatable facilities can usually gain a higher building to land ratio as compared to traditional facilities. So, in this analysis, the relocatable facility is assumed to gain 10 percent more net rentable area, rounded at 55,550 square feet. This is already a plus for the relocatable development with greater square footage attained for development..

Scenarios	Traditional, Drive-Up (Non Climate)	Relocatable, Drive-Up (Non Climate)
NRA Assumption	50,000	55,550
Estimated Cost/SF	\$45	\$30
Total Estimated Costs	\$2,250,000	\$1,666,500
Site Acquisition	\$500,000	\$500,000
Total Development Costs	\$2,750,000	\$2,166,500
Assumed Loan Terms	SBA, 10% Down, 5.5%, 25 yr	SBA, 10% Down, 5.5%, 15yr
Down Payment	\$275,000	\$216,650
Annual Debt Service	\$182,384	\$191,183
Projected Rent/SF/Yr.	\$11.50	\$11.50
PGI	\$575,000	\$638,825
Less: Vacancy & Collection Loss	\$57,500	\$63,883
As % of PGI	10%	10%
EGI	\$517,500	\$574,943
Less: Operating Expenses	\$196,650	\$218,478
As % of EGI	38%	38%
NOI	\$320,850	\$356,464

**FEASIBILITY OF RELOCATABLES** 

Cap rate	7.0%	8.0%
Estimated Value	\$4,583,571	\$4,455,804
EST Value/SF	\$92	\$80
NOI	\$320,850	\$356,464
Less: Annual Debt Service	<u>\$182,384</u>	<u>\$191,183</u>
Net Cash Flow	\$138,466	\$165,282
Return on Investment	50.4%	76.3%

#### Some additional highlighted positives for the relocatable facility include the following:

- Development costs for relocatables are considerably lower as compared to traditional storage units. We have determined you can build 10 percent more, and the total cost is 22 percent less than the traditional unit scenario.
- If development costs are lower for relocatables, then often the loan amount would be lower, translating to a lower down payment for the development. In this analysis, SBA financing terms with 10 percent down to estimate annual debt service (mortgage payment) were utilized. The required down payment for the relocatable facility is approximately 21 percent less when compared to the traditional storage facility.
- In most markets, rental rates for relocatables would be considered equal to traditional storage.
- In most markets, vacancy rates for relocatable units are similar to traditional self-storage.
- For this analysis, an expense ratio of 38 percent was applied in both scenarios; however, it is very possible that a relocatable facility may incur a lower operating expense ratio as compared to traditional storage. Relocatables may be taxed as personal property, which is usually less than real estate taxes. Considering differences in expenses for a relocatable facility is important in a feasibility study, as it directly effects your net operating income (NOI).
- In this analysis, the indicated NOI is greater for the relocatable facility as compared to traditional storage, by approximately 11 percent.
- The bottom line, or the net cash flow, is higher for the relocatable facility by 19 percent.
- The return on investment (ROI) is significantly higher for the relocatable facility. This should be consistent for any relocatable facility as compared to traditional storage, simply because the overall cost is lower, which reduces equity and increases your return on investment. In this example, the traditional facility has an ROI indication of 50.4 percent when compared to the relocatable facility with an ROI indication of 76.3 percent.

This article would not be complete without touching on "the bad." However, as discussed throughout and as shown in the sample analysis, there isn't a lot of "bad" when it comes to relocatables. Because relocatables are considered to be personal property, there may be some differing viewpoints regarding the valuation of a

**FEASIBILITY OF RELOCATABLES** 

# "More square footage at a lower cost = higher income and greater profit!"

facility that is built out completely with relocatable units. If an existing storage facility utilizes relocatables for surplus land or expansion; I tend to think the relocatables would add value similar to the traditional storage units, as the facility is an operational self-storage facility with some supportive, movable units that rent and operate cohesively. However, if a facility is built out using 100 percent relocatable units, there may be some valuation complications from an appraisal perspective. If the units are not secured to the ground, they may be viewed as personal property and not real estate, causing some valuation discrepancies. However, Boxwell has a solution for this if the problem arises, as the units can technically be secured to the ground. Also, because they are considered personal property, an appraiser may be inclined to apply a higher cap rate to the overall net operating income, or a portion of it, resulting in lower overall value. This is highlighted in the comparison analysis with a couple additional "bad."



- Financing terms for relocatable units are generally less desirable because of the personal property classification. This may result in higher annual debt service for a relocatable facility. However, if the project costs significantly less than traditional storage, the annual debt service may actually be less. In the example below, the down payment is less for the relocatable facility, but the annual debt service is somewhat higher.
- In this analysis, the cap utilized is 100 basis points higher for the relocatable facility. This results in a lower reversionary value of the relocatable facility as compared to the

traditional facility. The selected terminal cap rate will vary based upon an appraiser's knowledge, standpoint on relocatables, and experience within the self-storage industry. Again, if the facility utilizes relocatables as an expansion to a traditional facility, the cap rate may be in line with traditional storage facilities. However, a facility utilizing 100 percent relocatable units, that are not site secure, may warrant a cap rate that is eight percent or higher.

As compared to all of the good, the bad is minimal and varies on a case-by-case basis. It would be advised to seek professional opinions and assistance from real estate professionals who have experience in self-storage feasibility and valuation services. I am of the opinion that the relocatables are nearly identical in terms of aesthetics, operation, and use as compared to traditional units. If a facility provides good income and return as a self-storage facility utilizing relocatable units, then it should be valued as such. A buyer purchases a self-storage property to operate as a self-storage property, regardless of the unit type being either traditional or moveable. Relocatable units are a very viable use for an existing facility needing expansion or for those looking to decrease costs or work around planning and design constraints for a new build. They are increasing in popularity, and with increased presence, the valuation services will become more consistent. In terms of feasibility, relocatables should be considered as an equal counterpart to the traditional self-storage unit, with significant upside.

Amanda Helfrich is the principal owner of Starr Commercial Real Estate, based out of Louisville, Kentucky. With complete focus and peaked interest in this industry, she has learned how to gauge a market for demand, canvas an area for supply, research to locate proposed developments, analyze historical development trends, track absorption, and provide realistic financial feasibility for a property.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FEASIBILITY OF RELOCATABLES, VISIT:

STARRCOMMERCIAL.COM



#### **BOXWELL RELOCATABLE** TRADITIONAL SELF STORAGE UNITS VS. STORAGE BUILDINGS

RENTABLE IN 10-12 WEEKS FROM TIME OF ORDER ----- RENTABLE IN 18-24 MONTHS

AVERAGE TOTAL COST: \$21/FT2 - \$25/FT2 ------- AVERAGE TOTAL COST: \$40/FT2 - \$50/FT2

NO FOUNDATION REQUIRED & CAN BE PLACED ------ FOUNDATION AND OTHER MAJOR ON GRASS, DIRT, GRAVEL AND MORE INFRASTRUCTURE IS REQUIRED

TRANSFORM EASEMENTS, SETBACKS, ------ MUST ADHERE TO STRICT BUILDING CODES

FENCELINES, ETC. INTO RENTABLE SPACE AND RESTRICTIONS

REARRANGE (AND EVEN STACK UP TO 3 HIGH) ------ SITE FLEXIBILITY IS COMPROMISED WITH WHEN FULLY LOADED USING ONLY A FORKLIFT PERMANENT STRUCTURES IN PLACE

MINIMAL UPKEEP & MAINTENANCE ----- ROOF REPLACEMENTS AND OTHER COSTS

RODENT, DUST, WIND, AND RAIN PROOF ----- REQUIRE ONGOING PEST MITIGATION

AESTHETICALLY PLEASING WITH COMPLETELY ----- CUSTOM OPTIONS WILL LIKEY AFFECT COST

CUSTOMIZABLE COLORS / BRANDING AND CAN BE LIMITED

UNPARALLELED CUSTOMER SERVICE ----- CUSTOMER SERVICE VARIES

# **ARTICLE**

### **Maximizing Revenue With Portables In The Self-Storage Industry**

by Rod Bolls, Founder and CEO of Boxwell



Almost 10 years ago, I wrote an article on this very subject, during painfully similar times. It was early 2011, and the Great Recession was officially over after significantly impacting American lives. Unemployment remained high, foreclosures continued, and the economy came to a grinding halt half-way through the year. Today, we're

dealing with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic that snapped the U.S. economic growth streak with widespread layoffs and business closures and created an unemployment rate that creeps close to levels of the Great Depression of the 1930s. All that being said, the same way I expressed optimism during tough times a decade ago, I continue to believe in our industry and the idea that where there exists challenging times for businesses, there is an opportunity for those willing to innovate and consider new alternatives for their business.

# "... self-storage operators are sitting on a golden opportunity, which is to maximize the existing space at their facility to generate additional revenue."

In times of slow-to-no growth, self-storage operators can opt to maintain the status quo and weather the storm. The fact remains that in most cases, it doesn't matter whether the economy is increasing or decreasing, expanding or contracting, the self-storage solution is one of necessity, keeping the rental rates at self-storage facilities across our nation at consistently high levels. Rather than becoming complacent with the existing brick and mortar facility and a steady stream of business, self-storage operators are sitting on a golden opportunity, which is to maximize the existing space at their facility to generate additional revenue. Vacant

or unused space exists in various forms at facilities across the nation. Most self-storage facilities were not allowed to build on sections of the property due to zoning regulations, which vary from city to city and state to state.

There are many examples of where vacant space may exist at self-storage facilities:



The bottom line is that there are a lot of ways a self-storage facility owner can capitalize on the spaces or sections of land where they were not able to build a traditional self-storage building. As I mentioned almost 10 years ago in a previous article, and it is as true now as it was then, self-storage operators must continue to seek out innovative ways to turn a vacant or dead space into a revenue-generating space at their respective self-storage facilities. One of the most popular methods today is by utilizing a relocatable storage solution.

There are two main types of relocatable storage solutions that a self-storage owner ought to consider when choosing to add more revenue to the self-storage facility. The first is the ISO, or ocean shipping container, which is widely available as either like new (one-trip) or used in the marketplace. The like-new or often called "one-trip" ocean containers are manufactured overseas, loaded with cargo and shipped

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to the United States. Once they arrive, the cargo is unloaded, and then they are sold. Most used ocean containers have a 10 to 12-year life span in service where they're used for inter modal purposes. Once the ocean container comes out of shipping service, it is sold in the aftermarket for storage or other purpose. The most common sizes are 20 or 40 feet long, and 8 feet wide and 8 feet high. Like-new or used ISO shipping containers present a number of challenges to self-storage operators, including their heavy weight, poor aesthetics, and local zoning regulations.

The empty weight of a 20 foot long container is 4,850 lbs and a 40 foot container is 8,380 lbs, requiring a heavy-duty forklift for unloading and re-positioning. The excessive weight of the ISO shipping container can be problematic, with the potential danger of sinking or shifting into

gravel, dirt, or other natural surfaces. Another challenge in using the ISO shipping container is that it is aesthetically associated with inter modal transport and has low appeal, primarily due to the heavy-duty corrugated steel walls that surrender easily to rust, dents, and fading paint. Another obvious challenge are the heavy-duty double cargo doors with external locks that are difficult to unlock, lock, open, and close. Finally, the various municipal zoning restrictions on ISO shipping containers vary widely across the United States and have become more and more problematic in recent years in receiving official approval for placement on self-storage sites. It is always best to contact your local city or county zoning officials to determine if there are any restrictions or ordinances against the use of the ocean containers at the self-storage facility.







The second, and increasingly more popular, type of relocatable storage solution used at self-storage facilities is the portable storage structure. These are primarily new structures and widely available in the marketplace. The portable storage structure is commonly referred to as "portable," "relocatable," or "moveable," and should not be called a "container" to avoid confusing the solution with its cousin, the ISO shipping container. The most common sizes are 20 feet long, with an 8-foot width or 10-foot width, and an 8-foot height. Other sizes are available in various lengths that range from 5 feet to 19 feet and widths that range from 5 feet to 10 feet. Most are 8 feet in height. There are several advantages when considering the portable storage structure for generating additional revenue at a self-storage facility. One of the most distinct advantages is the aesthetic of the portable storage structures. They can be completely tailored to match the colors and branding of the existing self-storage facility. Most of these structures have roll-up doors to

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complement and appear almost identical to the brick and mortar self-storage facility on the property. In addition, these structures have smooth, steel walls and are completely wind and water-tight. The self-storage operator can choose not only the color of roll-up doors, but also the color of walls, roof, base, and even custom signage to fully adapt the storage structure to the self-storage facility.

to fully assemble each portable storage structure. The average lead time, depending on the supplier of portable storage structures, is eight to 12 weeks. From the date of purchase to the time of arrival, a self-storage operator can have new, revenue-generating storage structures on site and ready to rent in a much shorter period of time when compared to the traditional building process.

Almost all portable storage structures are new construction, and therefore the likelihood of rust, dents, or fading paint is extremely low. Most of the portable storage structures in the marketplace weigh less than 3000 lbs, which is almost half the weight when compared to the 20-foot-long ISO shipping





container. There is very little occurrence of the portable storage structure shifting or sinking into the natural surface at the self-storage facility. The fact is, most of the portable structures can be placed easily on uneven, natural surfaces where a permanent building was not allowed. Most operators who have used a portable storage structure require low-to-no site preparation prior to placement, while others have performed simple grading or added concrete footers at the facility. Each unit is weather-, dust-, and pest-proof. Many portables have roll-up doors, which are the most common door style for self-storage facilities. Most relocatable structures have fork pockets for easy repositioning at the self-storage facility. Almost all portable storage structures come standard with vents to increase air flow. Boxwell even provides an anti-condensation coating on the roof to prevent condensation, mold, and mildew inside the unit.

Most options for portable or relocatable units come in kit form and are built on site in anywhere from a matter of hours to a short number of days. The quantity options for portable or relocatable units vary from a truck or container load to one or two units, depending on which company you choose. The self-storage operator can choose to build the units themselves or hire a team to build the units on site. There is minimal equipment required to build the units; two or three people, a forklift, and standard tools is all it takes

Another distinct advantage when considering a portable storage structure is that it can be classified as equipment. This will assist the self-storage operator to bypass the lengthy process of permitting and zoning, but as mentioned earlier, it is important for each self-storage operator to check for local ordinances on equipment or relocatable structures. There are also tax advantages when classifying the portable storage structures as equipment. In most cases, the units can be eligible for 100 percent deduction after just one year. Because the units are classified as equipment, they depreciate over the course of seven years instead of the usual 39 years for a building. Most portable storage structures are financed with an equipment lease through a bank versus having to take out a traditional construction loan. The entire process requires less effort and creates an opportunity for the self-storage operator to generate additional revenue in a faster, more cost-effective manner.

The relocatable storage structure can be a valuable resource for advertising at the self-storage facility. The self-storage operator, for example, can add signage to all sides of the portable unit in various sizes and locations to allow for more cost-effective advertising options for the business. Some portable storage structures can be stacked two (or three!) high for even greater visibility of the branding and promotions at the self-storage facility. The operator

**FEASIBILITY OF RELOCATABLES** 

has greater flexibility in placement of the portable storage structure with advertising facing a busy road or repositioning to a high traffic or highly visible area. The portable storage structure can be both a revenue-generating asset and mobile-marketing vehicle for the self-storage owner.

Boxwell offers site layout assistance for the self-storage facility. We discuss with the self-storage operator the different sizes and unit mix that will work best given the facility layout. Then we put together a site layout with different configurations, total rentable units, total additional rentable square feet, and estimated return on investment. We work closely with the self-storage operator to determine the best unit mix given the budget and timeline. We often will travel to the potential self-storage site and walk the site with the owner to measure everything to ensure accurate placement at the facility. The self-storage owner also has the option to pay the supplier to perform a full installation, that is, once the portables have been delivered. Boxwell can rent the necessary equipment and provide labor to do the delivery, unload/unpack, and assemble all portable storage structures at the self-storage site. It is important for the self-storage owner to evaluate all options when it comes to site layout and determining the best unit mix to create a speedy return on investment.

The portable storage structures are primarily constructed with standard steel tube, steel angle, steel sheet, and wood floors to keep the costs down and provide a suitable outdoor storage solution. Recently, there has been an increase in demand for temperature control portable storage structures with insulated walls, roof, and doors that can maintain an adequate temperature inside the structure. As you might imagine, the ability to maintain temperature inside a portable greatly depends on the geography and time of year. The self-storage operator can request that the supplier install a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning unit (HVAC) or the operator can install the HVAC unit on their own after the portable storage structure has been assembled. This type of HVAC system seems to be the most requested by the self-storage operator and most capable of performing the task of maintaining an acceptable temperature inside the portable storage structure.

There are a couple advantages of temperature control portable storage structures. One is the ability for the self-storage operator to offer options for both non-climate and temperature controlled, drive-up, outdoor rentable units to the end user. Second is that the self-storage operator will be able to generate a higher rental rate for the temperature control unit versus the non-climate-control unit. What's great is that each type of outdoor unit will have the same aesthetic with their roll-up doors and the same wind and watertightness. They will also look almost identical to the existing self-storage facility. The advancement of climate-control drive-up outdoor units will continue to add more flexibility and further establish the portable storage structure as a versatile solution to self-storage facilities across the country.

A recent development for Boxwell is the ability to innovate with technology amid the coronavirus pandemic and economic slowdown. We can provide virtual demos and tours of the portable storage structure online, which give the self-storage owner the ability to meet the sales team, tour the office, and evaluate the portable storage structure in detail—all from the comfort of their home or business. This provides the opportunity for multiple decision makers from the self-storage facility to join the virtual demo at once, and take full advantage of everyone's valuable time, all while keeping a safe distance.

Another advancement is the ability to incorporate smart lock technology on the portable storage structures. Boxwell offers a device that fits either on the outside of the individual self-storage unit door or on the actual door locking mechanism itself. The end user can easily access the unit by using their smartphone that is Bluetooth enabled. The customer also can share a digital key to grant temporary unit access to a friend, family member, or anyone who may need to access the unit. The smart locks fit naturally on the structure and give the site manager the ability to automate the lock check, revoke digital key access, and perform the override procedure. This type of technology and the ability to integrate with the portable storage structure works well in times of less human contact and social distancing.



There are many ways the self-storage operator can utilize portables to maximize revenue. Portable storage structures can generate additional revenue in vacant space or underutilized space at the self-storage facility. There are significant tax advantages, accelerated depreciation, and equipment financing options making portables an attractive solution. In addition, there are lower capital requirements, less maintenance, more flexibility with on-site placement, and faster construction times when compared to traditional self-storage. The aesthetic of the portable storage structure can be completely customized to look and feel just like the traditional self-storage building.

Today, with our country in tough economic times and the self-storage industry quickly becoming saturated in markets across our nation, the self-storage owner might consider taking a closer look at the available space on their existing self-storage facilities and consider utilizing portables to maximize revenue.

Rod Bolls is CEO & Founder of Boxwell, manufacturing innovative storage solutions for businesses around the world. Rod steers his Boulder-based company with the same honesty and integrity that he lives by, prioritizing a balance between working hard and playing hard. He is truly driven by the idea that the best work is created out of diligence, openness, and innovation. His passions outside the office include running (he has completed 5 Ironmans, 4 hundred-milers, and over 50 marathons), biking, and enjoying time with his wife and two children.



# **ARTICLE**

# Relocatable Storage Units: Financing The Latest Growth Opportunity In Self-Storage

by Terry Campbell, Executive Vice President-Small Business Lending at Live Oak Bank



Over the course of my 26-year career in the self-storage industry, I have experienced many changes and plenty of progress. When I first got into the business, virtually everything was single-story, non-climate-controlled storage. The facilities were not huge—back then 40,000 square feet was a considered a whopper. As

time went on, I started seeing bigger projects being built, and climate-controlled units were becoming the next "big thing." Then came more than one-story, bi-level built into a hill, and two-story facilities. After that came the elaborate multi-story buildings that we see today. Now, we're watching relocatable storage opportunities develop. These are also known as "moveable" or "portable," because they can be moved about a site if needed.

As an investor in self-storage, I recognize the many advantages of relocatable storage. They can sometimes be placed in areas that can't have permanent structures built, such as

easements, right-of-ways, and setbacks. Another benefit is that they can be delivered, on site and assembled quite a bit faster than an actual permanent building. Additionally, you can often avoid permitting issues and delays. Relocatable units don't have to be relegated strictly to areas where you cannot build a permanent structure—you could (and people do) use them as the primary storage units for the business. I have seen them put on land and assembled so that they look just like a storage building.

# "... I have experienced many changes and plenty of progress ... now, we're watching relocatable storage opportunities develop."

With relocatable units, you can write them off your taxes in five to seven years as equipment or personal property, but there can also be some cost segregation advantages.\* It's possible to write it all off even faster, which is helpful while you lease up.

At Live Oak Bank, our team has financed this type of product. These relocatable units are often used in mobile storage businesses where the unit is actually delivered to the

FINANCING RELOCATABLES

end-user's location and then picked up again as needed. Financing for this type of product can sometimes present unique challenges because, typically, there is no land involved in the loan for this product. However, Live Oak is committed to providing capital for these units.



There are a few different types of ways that Live Oak approaches a loan for these relocatable boxes.

SBA 7(a) loans – This type of SBA loan is the most common loan we offer at Live Oak. There are many advantages, including as little as 10 percent equity required to get started. This can help you conserve your cash for unexpected surprises. Another big benefit of this loan is there are no financial covenants, except that you pay your bill each month. For this type product, the loan term will be 15 years. If you are financing land as well, and the land is more than 50 percent of the cost of the project, then it could possibly be 25 years. There is a prepayment penalty of three years, although you can prepay up to 25 percent per year without penalty. The units themselves will be used as collateral. If the units are new, there is a 75 percent collateral requirement. If the units are used, it would drop to 50 percent.

**Commercial loans** – These loans typically require a good bit of equity from the buyer and will probably have a short term of years to repay the loan. Most likely, commercial loans include loan covenants and require your business banking accounts to remain with that same lender, in-house.

**Leasing** — Occasionally, leasing companies will buy the product, lease it to you, and at the end of the lease offer it for purchase at a lower amount.

Here's an example of how it works: If you were buying \$100,000 worth of units, the collateral value would be \$75,000. So, let's say that you brought in 10 percent equity on this purchase. You would have brought in \$10,000. Subtract that \$10,000 from the \$100,000 and that leaves \$90,000. \$90,000 minus \$75,000 collateral requirements would leave you with \$15,000 of collateral shortfall that you would need to come up with. You could use other real estate that you have equity in to cover that shortfall.

The SBA loan program can be beneficial for the reasons mentioned, but banks also sometimes have minimum loan amounts. Be sure and check with your lender to see if your business needs align with what they can offer.

**Credit cards** – I have actually seen some people put the purchase on their credit card, depending on the size of the purchase. This is sometimes a good option, because you can scale the purchases and do a little at a time.

If you buy an existing facility that has some room on the site for more units, it's a wise move to consider adding relocatable units. The cost, speed, and ease of adding these units make them an attractive and feasible way to expand your business. Relocatable units have proven their value and earned their place in the self-storage industry. Live Oak's team of self-storage experts understands this unique industry, inside and out. We want to invest in you when you're ready to build, buy, or expand your business.

As both a lender and an owning partner of six storage facilities, Terry has helped people see things in their potential acquisition or new building that they may not have seen themselves, which can save them time and money.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FINANCING YOUR RELOCATABLES, VISIT:

LIVEOAKBANK.COM/SELF-STORAGE

<sup>\*</sup>Live Oak Bank cannot provide tax or accounting advice. You should consult your own accountant to evaluate your individual facts and circumstances.

# **CUSTOM AT NO EXTRA COST**



Boxwell's relocatable units are fully customizable so they can blend seamlessly with your existing self-storage facility. Better yet - it's free! Speak with a Boxwell representative today to discuss our products and all the perks that come with them.

- Site layout assistance
- Graphic design services
- People who answer the phone
- Lightning fast installation
- Virtual tours & unit demos
- Finance & insurance partners
- Delivery system solutions
- 13 years industry experience
- Product warranties
- ADA compliant roll up doors
- Smart entry compatible
- Pencil sharpeners that work



# **ARTICLE**

#### **Relocatables Fit Our Strategy**

by Bob Copper, Owner & Chief Consultant of Self Storage 101



I've long advocated to owners and operators that one of the most effective ways to increase the revenues and values of their self-storage facility is through expansion. Adding more space to a self-storage facility adds to the revenue line with very little impact to the expenses.

One of our strategies in evalu-

ating potential self-storage acquisitions for our portfolio is the opportunity to increase revenues and value through expansions. In some instances, we have been able to expand facilities by building new traditional buildings. But in more and more instances, we have found that adding space with portable, relocatable storage units is a more efficient, cost effective way to add space at our facilities.



Relocatable storage gives us the flexibility to add space in situations where adding more traditional space isn't necessarily viable, typically due to space constraints. When we first decided to explore the potential for expanding a facility using relocatable storage, our search led us to Boxwell.

While there are other companies offering a similar product, Boxwell's product is always the best option.

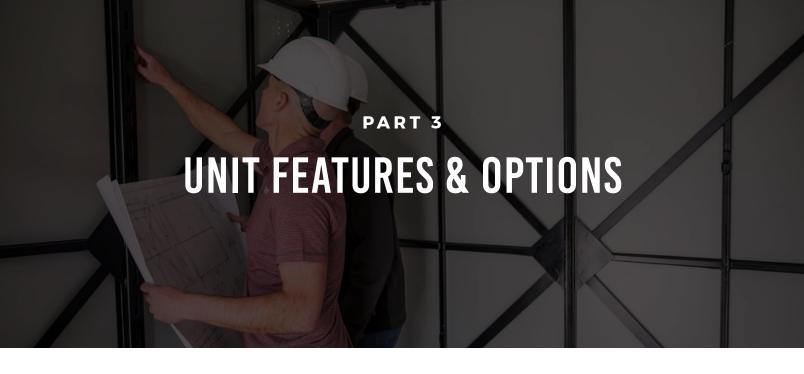
We recently increased the size of our fourth facility using relocatable storage units (and working on a fifth), and we continue to use Boxwell for several reasons:

- 1. Boxwell is cost effective.
- **2.** Boxwell offers a great deal of flexibility in creating unit sizes
- **3.** There is a wide variety of color options for Boxwell's units and doors.
- **4.** The delivery time of about 10 weeks.
- **5.** And most important, the customer service we have experienced with the folks at Boxwell has been fantastic!

In every instance where we have added Boxwell units to expand facilities, our income and asset value has increased. Plus, we have had a great deal of success renting out these new units. We could not more highly recommend using Boxwell relocatable storage units to expand your self-storage facility.

Bob Copper is a seasoned professional in the storage industry with over two decades of experience. Whether you need a high-level review of your operations or completion, new ideas for marketing, or tactical advice on development or expansion plans, technology, or personnel—Self Storage 101 can help. Self Storage 101 consultants have the training to grasp complex business issues—and the experience to know which ones really matter.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AVAILABLE SERVICES, VISIT: SELFSTORAGE101.COM



# **PRODUCT FEATURES**

#### Our base model is built to last.

See our product and company features that guarantee client satisfaction.



#### **EASY TO ASSEMBLE**

Boxwell units are shipped flat-packed and assembly is easily achieved with a small team and basic tools. A lightning-fast build time of less than 30 minutes requires the fastening of just 24 nuts and bolts. That's about 10 square feet of rentable space gained per minute!

Our clients are busy running their business; opt for a turnkey delivery service and our Boxwell installers will build and place your units for you.



#### **ROCK-SOLID CONSTRUCTION**

New clients consistently use one phrase to describe our units: "surprisingly sturdy." Carefully engineered using the highest grade SPA-H and SPA-C steel, our relocatables rival the durability and longevity of any stick-built construction.

These all-steel units have a 10,000 lb weight capacity, and can be moved or stacked up to three high via forklift pockets, even when fully loaded.



#### PROTECTED FROM THE ELEMENTS

Water-, wind-, dust-, and pest-proof, these units will ensure the safe-keeping of your client's possessions, thus reducing headaches for facility owner/operators.

Every seam is caulked and fitted with waterproof gasketing. Designed to withstand 120 mph winds and 6-foot snow loads, these are the ideal solution for self-storage facilities operating in harsh climates. Need even more protection? Opt for hot-dipped galvanized steel, interior anti-condensation spray, and/or insulation.



#### **DURABLE STEEL ROOF**

When shopping for relocatable units, it is very important to scrutinize the roof construction as a poorly crafted roof will lead to an obsolete unit. Crafted from one piece of solid steel to eliminate weak points, our roof is 4 mm (6 gauge) thick and will not sag or rust. The roof fits like a shoe box lid, slightly overhanging from the walls. This guides running water off the roof's edge and not down the unit walls.

Not only does the corrugation add strength, it reduces the surface area for water to pool.



#### **ULTRA-SECURE LOCKS**

Both facility owner/operators and their clients benefit from the peace of mind that comes with a well-protected facility. Our swing door locks are stainless steel, welded and riveted with a solid locking pin. The lock interior featured an emergency release cable. The roll-up door locks offer the same level of craftsmanship and ensure the relocatables blend seamlessly with existing storage units.

All locks feature a built-in override locking function to offer greater control to unit access.



#### COATED AND SEALED FLOORING

Flooring so nice, you'll want it in your home. Boxwell floors are constructed of marine-grade plywood. They are coated and sealed with polyurethane, offering a waterproof, non-slip, non-toxic, and non-flammable surface.

Though our standard plywood floors are heavy duty and optimized for years of wear and tear, diamond-plate floors are available as an upgrade as well.



#### ADDITIONAL SERVICES

At no extra cost to you, Boxwell offers a built-in support team to assist your business.

Utilize our architects to create an optimized site plan using satellite imagery. Next, our design team will provide container mockups and 3D renderings of your units. Need a logo? With your vision in mind, we will create one that stands out against the competition.

Lastly, our operations team will meet you on site to assist with delivery and installation.



#### UNPARALLELED CUSTOMER CARE

Our customer service is the embodiment of our slogan, "Built For Your Success." Boxwell is not simply in the business of selling relocatable units, we are tethered to the achievements of our clients and will provide support for your business before, during, and after the purchase of your units.

Providing excellent customer service is Boxwell's core value as we believe this is how a lifelong relationship with a client is achieved.

# PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT

#### **Aesthetics Meet Function: Roll-Up Doors**

Learn about the features that make roll-up doors an attractive solution.

#### **CUSTOMIZABLE**

When you're adding relocatable self-storage units to your facility, it's easy to do a color match on roll-up doors for a seamless look. Choose from 30-plus paint colors to complement your existing color scheme and logo and complete the look of your facility.

#### **SPACE SAVING**

Roll-up doors literally roll up into the units instead of swinging out into the drive or walkway. This allows for more space for large trucks and cars to maneuver in drive-up self-storage facilities. Within cities and tightly spaced lots, every inch matters.

#### VIRTUALLY MAINTENANCE FREE

Roll-up doors are easy to maintain, as many parts are pre-assembled and enclosed inside of the door's barrel assembly. The roll-up doors also come with lubricated springs and ball bearings for smooth operation—every time.



#### WIRELESS LOCKING AND ENTRY FUNCTIONS

With innovative, "smart" locks and hands-free entry systems available, you can rest assured that your facility will be secure and easy to protect.

Compatible with Boxwell's relocatable units, these innovative locks are activated by a mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet. They can improve the security of individual self-storage units and make life easier for site managers overall.

There are also touchless entry systems that use Bluetooth technology give your customers access to the self-storage facility and their unit from their smart device (think: no lost keys, forgotten gate codes, or worry about spreading germs). These systems also can offer digital key sharing, where tenants can go into the app on their phone and grant temporary unit access to a friend, family member, or anyone who needs to grab an item from the storage unit. Innovation that's automatic, hands-free, and COVID conscious.



20 Minutes.

24 Nuts + Bolts.



# ROCK SOLID CONSTRUCTION.

Easy to build, built to last. Boxwell relocatable units are carefully designed so you can increase rentable square feet at your facility in minutes. Speak with a Boxwell representative and begin customizing your units today. Financing options available.



# **ARTICLE**

#### **Puzzling Out Space For Profit**

by Rod Bolls, Founder and CEO of Boxwell



Each self-storage facility has its own, unique story. It may have started out as an empty parking area, an abandoned mall, a wide open parcel of land, or a city lot. Or maybe it was already a storage facility that needed to be expanded. The variables of each property seem endless—such as the location, the size, the type of land, whether or not there are

existing structures on site, how many units are on the property, and which type of door you choose (roll-up, swing or other style). No two facilities will be the same. Plus, each region has its own set of regulations when it comes to zoning. The fact is that nearly 9.5 percent of households in the United States are renting at a storage facility, and each person uses almost 5.5 square feet of storage space.

Let's consider what it takes to plan a facility on a few different types of properties by looking at some of the creative ways to use relocatable self-storage units. When looking at a square, empty, and level lot, it's easy to visualize all of the components you'd like to see—such as where to put

the office, entry, parking, gates, security, and storage units. It's the more unique properties with existing structures, uneven ground, power lines, and water sources, on the other hand, that make things a little more interesting. Either way, it's essential to look at the needs of the community and the goals and budget of the facility operator to bring a concept to completion (and profit).

"... it's essential to look at the needs of the community and the goals and budget of the facility operator to bring a concept to completion ..."

#### **EMPTY LOTS**

If you're fortunate enough to have a blank slate to work with for a new self-storage facility, there are often still some variables to consider. If the property is filled with dirt or gravel, you'll need to be sure that your relocatable storage units can be placed without foundation. It is important for the self-storage owner to evaluate all options when it comes to site layout and determine the appropriate unit mix. In a perfect world, the supplier will travel to the potential self-storage property and walk the site with the owner to measure and create renderings of where everything should be placed. A creative team can assist with logo design, unit

**CASE STUDIES** 

appearance, site layout, and more. Helping to bring a vision to reality, these designs can show operators the possible site layouts with different configurations, total rentable units, additional rentable square feet, and estimated return on investment. The self-storage owner also has the option for a full installation, that is, once the units have been delivered. The supplier will rent the necessary equipment and provide labor to do the delivery, unloading, unpacking, assembly, and installation of all relocatable storage structures at the self-storage site.

#### **EXISTING STORAGE FACILITIES**

Another need we commonly come across is for existing facility expansion. Self-storage facilities can quickly become rented up and maxed out, especially in areas where the rental market is increasing. With more and more people living in smaller spaces, the need for storage grows. Also, there are a number of vacant or unused spaces within these facilities, such as along a fence line; on unused parking spaces; on setbacks or easements; on grass, gravel, and dirt sections of the property; on uneven surfaces; in narrow alley or driveways; near or under power lines; or on wide open land. Whether a facility has existing self-storage structures or vacant areas, it can be hard to imagine how adding more units will look. Some suppliers of relocatable storage units, however, can do a color match of existing storage spaces for seamless additions. If you have areas where it's hard to imagine how to fit more units, it's key to find a supplier who engineers and customizes units to meet storage space restrictions. Some relocatable units, for example, are shipped flat packed and built on site, so they fit in almost any area—optimizing previously unprofitable space with minimal construction. There are a lot of ways a self-storage facility owner can capitalize on the spaces or sections of land where they were not able to build a traditional self-storage building. And, adding units alongside permanent structures or empty areas is as easy as 1) matching your color, 2) choosing a configuration, and 3) starting to generate additional revenue!

#### **RETAIL SPACES CONVERTED**

We have found recently that there are a number of properties originally plotted out for shopping centers or large retail spaces that have since been deserted, because the needs of the community have shifted from retail to storage. These huge sites with strip malls or big department stores are being abandoned all over the country due to changing consumer needs, online shopping trends, and big box store pricing. Rather than having a full demolition and building from scratch, self-storage operators are getting crafty and converting these into money-making self-storage facilities by adding relocatable storage units where there's room. With some puzzling and creative placement of storage solutions, these concrete areas can be converted into facilities by simply placing relocatable storage units alongside permanent structures. Determining which buildings and structures to remove and which to keep in order to create the right space is paramount. Property owners may choose to do this sort of conversion in phases in order to adjust the unit mix based upon what unit sizes are successfully renting.



# **CASE STUDY**

#### 1. Site Analysis



#### **Unique Site Conditions:**

- Lakeside property Grass, dirt and gravel
- Uneven surfaces
- No existing infrastructure
- East + south fencelines

#### 2. Site Layout



**Breakdown of Boxwell Units:** 

- Total Boxwell Units: 134 Units+1 Portable Office
- Total Configured Rentable Units: 170 Units
- Rentable Square Feet: 21,440 Ft<sup>2</sup>

#### 3. Final Unit Placement



Breakdown of Delivery/Install:

- Delivery Time: 11 Weeks (from time of order)
- Install Time: 10 Days
- ROI Estimate: 2 to 2.5 Years

Here's an empty lot case study where Boxwell was able to strategically place 134 relocatable self-storage units for a total of 172 rentable units that added 21,440 rentable square feet of space. We looked at the national market rate for storage rental revenue, which is at an average of \$0.92 per square foot, and we were able to help create a valuable facility within the community and an estimated ROI at 18 to 22 months. We considered ways to achieve maximum rentable square footage, a secure environment, sufficient parking, wide drive paths, and easy access from the street.

This property was particularly challenging because of its irregular shape and proximity to a water source. As we know, self-storage units are typically rectangular, so placing them in a squared off lot is much easier than a polygon! With this property, we first considered where the owners wanted to enter and place their office and parking lot. We positioned one of our portable offices near the entrance so the operators could conduct their business with a view of the facility. From there, we built out and used a mix of 8-by-20 units, splitting a number of them into 8-by-10 for smaller rental spaces with roll-up doors and partitions.

#### Here are our customer's needs for this site-and here is how we tackled them:

**Near water source** – Relocatable self-storage units act as a fence line for properties seeking an additional barrier. The water source that is adjacent to property posed a liability threat and a possible wildlife intrusion. With the units placed in front of the pond, we were able to blockade the area with minimal fencing and security. Not to mention, we added a natural wildlife decal on the back wall to blend in with the surroundings!

**Uneven surfaces** – This lot was a combination of gravel and dirt and was not level in some places. Not a problem. Without the need for foundation, our solid steel units can be placed practically anywhere. The site owner performed basic grading, and our skilled installation crew was able to position and level the units as needed for a beautiful appearance and straight layout.

**Powerlines overhead** – We were able to place our relocatable units within a safe distance from the powerlines. Plus, our units are built on-site, so we could maneuver our build around the property easily without disturbing the lines.

**Adjacent to fence line** – Contending with the fence line was not a problem; with built-in forklift pockets, Boxwell units can be moved to a precise location with ease.

**Irregular lot shape** – We love puzzling out the shape of a property to fit in the optimal number of relocatable units. Our drive-up storage solutions are easy to navigate around and accommodate a variety of vehicles. Plus, they can be stacked three high (even when fully loaded), so there's no need to worry about running out of room.

**Wide drive paths required** – When a customer requires a large drive path in-between rows of self-storage units for large vehicles, we suggest using industry-leading roll-up doors, which definitely save on space as they conveniently retract into the unit.

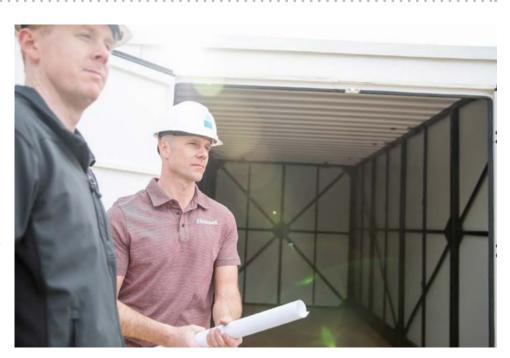
**Wet climate** – A storage facility's job is to keep its customers' belongings safe and dry. Boxwell's seamless design and corrugated steel roof are designed to protect against the elements and prevent water from pooling or leaking. Plus, to reduce condensation caused by humidity and temperature swings, we apply an anti-condensation coating on the ceiling.

**Office Space Needed** – A self-storage facility typically needs an office for its employees to conduct business with clientele. We manufacture portable office containers that are fully insulated and ready for electricity, heating, cooling, and whatever bells and whistles you can imagine. With ultra-secure locks and options for multiple doors and windows, it's a wonderful space to work.

# **FINAL THOUGHTS**

The self-storage industry is thriving. We understand that no two facilities are the same, and we take on the challenge to creatively optimize each space we encounter with revenue-generating units.

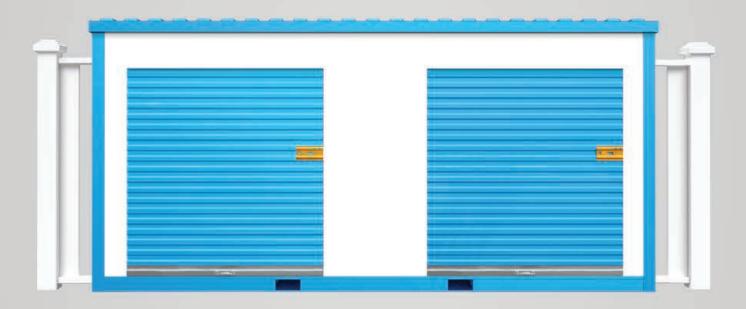
No site condition is too daunting, so let's discuss the needs of your property and position your business to best serve your community.



## **Fence lines?**



# Dollar signs.



Don't leave money on the line. Utilize narrow or compact spaces with Boxwell relocatable units, no foundation required.



# INTERVIEW

#### From Dirt To Profit: A Case Study

Q&A with Max Picton, Owner of Smart Storage Centre



Max Picton is a successful entrepreneur based out of Penticton, British Columbia.

Among several ventures, Picton is the owner and operator of Smart Storage Centre, a self-storage facility featuring the latest innovations in security and technology.

# **BOXWELL:** Why did you choose Boxwell relocatables for your site?

**PICTON:** Upon researching almost every relocatable on the market, I chose Boxwell due to the quality of the product, a fair price point, and exceptional responsiveness on the customer service side of things.

# **BOXWELL:** What was on the lot previous to your facility?

**PICTON:** The site was a dirt lot used as a maintenance storage yard for an aircraft company. Just needed to clean out the accumulated junk.



#### **BOXWELL:** Please explain your site prep process.

**PICTON:** Once we decided on the layout, we dug in the underground conduit in and placed the power poles. We then decided on recycled asphalt as a cost-effective surface

product. It is dust-free, easily repairable, sets up extremely firm, yet still allows for water to penetrate the surface, helping us to avoid costly drainage systems for water runoff. We laid down the product, graded it, and were ready for the Boxwell containers.



# **BOXWELL:** How did you decide layout, unit mix, number of units, and so on?

**PICTON:** Our facility has a difficult shape to work with being triangular by nature, so the layout took a lot longer than anticipated. In the end, we simply tried as many variations as necessary to maximize the number of units we were able to fit. As for unit mix, our layout determined some of the that mix. Due to the offset nature of the back row, we had to use 20-foot units along the back and the "fingers" were limited to either 10-foot or 20-foot containers due to the side access. We had some flexibility on the units outside of these areas.

#### **BOXWELL:** Did you order all at once or in phases?

**PICTON:** One of the key benefits of using the relocatable products from Boxwell was the flexibility in developing the facility in phases. We were able to order phase one and see how our product mix was matching consumer demand. The remaining three phases can now be tailored to fit the purchasing habits of our customers. This approach allows us to build out our facility in a way that ensures that maximum occupancy levels are achieved.



# **BOXWELL:** How was the delivery and installation process?

**PICTON:** The delivery was smooth, with Boxwell lining up all the logistics for offloading the delivery trucks, and the install was straightforward. With the exception of requiring a forklift or loader, anyone could assemble one of these units with simple hand tools. We were down to approximately 20 minutes per unit. It took us three days to assemble 36 units, for a total of 61 doors in phase one.

### "We have a fantastic relationship with the Boxwell team. [Boxwell] has truly done a remarkable job of creating that family feel."

# BOXWELL: What sort of relationship have you developed with our team?

**PICTON:** We have a fantastic relationship with the Boxwell team. Your company has truly done a remarkable job of creating that family feel. There is a high level of responsiveness and a desire to address any issues promptly. It truly does feel like Boxwell values my success as much as their own.

# BOXWELL: How have the units impacted your facility's revenue?

**PICTON:** This facility is a fully automated, unmanned facility with Boxwell storage as my only stream of revenue.

# BOXWELL: How is the keyless/touchless system working for you?

**PICTON:** It's a key component to creating the autonomous business model that we were after. There have been a few hiccups along the way, but nothing that was unexpected with a newer technology being applied. The convenience that we are able to offer to our customers far outweighs the minor inconveniences that came up.

# BOXWELL: What feedback have your customers given?

**PICTON:** Our customers enjoy the convenience, flexibility, and security offered by our products. The most important feedback we have received is to please build more in the sizes they need!

Smart Storage Centre takes pride in offering a simple and hassle-free self-storage experience for all of their customers in Penticton, British Columbia. Smart Storage Centre also offers online rentals and online bill pay 24/7. They are currently looking for strategic partners in their region to construct more of these "pop-up" storage facilities under their brand.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SMART STORAGE CENTRE, VISIT: SMARTSTORAGECANADA.COM

# Can't Build There? Boxwell it.



#### Where traditional buildings flop, we flourish.

Use Boxwell relocatable units to turn unused square feet into rentable space. Speak with a Boxwell represesentative today about your unique site conditions.





# **ARTICLE**

#### **Self-Storage Marketing**

by Tommy Nguyen, Co-Founder and COO of StoragePug



For even the most seasoned self-storage experts, planning a marketing strategy can seem like an overwhelming task that is becoming increasingly complicated in the digital age. Whether you're looking to find new clients, boost revenue, or get your brand out there, smart and well-designed marketing can be the No. 1 factor in what

makes or breaks your self-storage business.

What is your self-storage marketing plan? Perhaps you're answering this question for the first time, or maybe you have some idea about how your marketing plan looks. Either way, there are many aspects you should consider while mapping out your marketing plan. Before you do anything, you have to develop a clear message. Consider what your customers are looking for in their storage facility. From our experience at StoragePug, we've noticed that most customers want to know why they should choose your facility, what features your facility provides, and what kinds of deals and promotions you're currently offering. Make

your business stand out by researching the marketplace and finding out what you can provide that other storage facilities can't or haven't thought of yet. Brag about your 24-hour monitoring, climate-controlled units, high-tech security, and convenient online payments, for example.

"... Standing out in the real world as well as the digital world is critical. It is also essential to target customers' personalities. You want to know as much about your clients and potential clients as possible."

Moving onto the brick-and-mortar aspect of your business, consider how you're displaying yourself to the local community. Make sure you have outstanding curb appeal, clear signage, and easy-to-understand reader boards so customers can get a quick idea of what you offer. Again, standing out in the real world as well as the digital world is critical. It is also essential to target customers' personalities. You want to know as much about your clients and potential clients as possible. By categorizing your customers, you make it easier to understand them at a high level.

**BEYOND THE BOX: BUSINESS PRACTICES** 

You may wonder why your storage facility needs marketing. Think about it this way: If marketing brought you only one rental per week, that would net 52 rentals per year—52 rentals! Consider how much more revenue this would bring in for your business and what that kind of consistent new clientele would do for word-of mouth advertising. The average customer looks at three to five storage facilities before they make their decision. Because we know that self-storage is a need-driven market, it is inevitable that they're going to pick one eventually. Make it yours!

Customers have a variety of storage facilities to choose from when they're looking for their perfect unit, so it's important to make your storage facility their No. 1 contender. Remember this: It nearly always costs more to have empty units than to pay for a successful marketing strategy. With successful marketing, you will be the mainstay in your market for tenants who are looking for a storage facility.



A modern website is extremely important for any business looking to succeed in the 21st-century marketplace. Your website is your first impression to any potential client, so it's critical that you make it as attractive and easy to navigate as possible. Just as you look after the curb appeal of your facility, you should make sure you have "online curb appeal" as well. Your website is the first part of your business that potential customers will see. Maybe you're aware that the majority of internet users own and regularly use a smartphone, so it is essential to make sure that your website is smartphone-friendly and immediately engaging and accessible for viewers on the go. Maybe you're aware that now over 80 percent of internet users own and regularly use a smartphone so not only is it essential to make sure that your website is smartphone-friendly

but also that it is immediately engaging and accessible to viewers on the go.

One more thing to consider is your online aesthetics. Make sure that whenever you use an image that it is exceptionally high quality. Investing in a professional photographer for images of your facilities and a professional designer for your logos is always a smart idea. You'll probably want to include a variety of photos on your site, like facility photos, team photos, stock photos, and custom graphics. Consider using drone videography to capture your facilities set-up. This will give your customers a unique and dramatic view of your business. You want to stand out, and details like this can really make your website pop!

Online PR is the practice of securing online coverage with digital publications, blogs, and other content-based websites. It's a lot like traditional PR but in the online space. The best ways to maximize your PR efforts are to engage comments on your personal website, reviews, or blog and post to social media. You could consider adding live chat to your website. Live chat works for self-storage businesses. By adding live chat to your website, you can talk directly to web visitors who are thinking about signing a lease and convert them into leads or customers. Live chat can also cut back on your expenses by allowing managers to talk to potential clients while completing their regular work. Customers always appreciate the convenience of being able to reach out to your staff immediately for help and this appreciation will convert to sales and longer stays. Chatbots are also super handy, because they can prequalify clients when you're not in the office and auto-respond to questions without any fuss. Think of them as a courteous and efficient employee that you don't have to pay.

SEO is key to online marketing success. Search engine optimization best practices involve choosing and using the right keywords for your self-storage website. Be sure to search for popular keywords on Google and choose keywords with low competition and high volume. If you don't have an expertise in SEO best practices, it's probably worth it to hire someone who does. Ranking high on Google searches can provide a serious boom in your business.

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Social Media is also obviously an important marketing tool. Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook are the standard-bearers for well-trafficked social media sites. You may be feeling wary; many businesses assume that if they have a Facebook page that they must post content to it regularly. Believe it or not, there's no need for that! Sure, it helps to put content out into the world consistently, but the simple advantage of having a Facebook page is to increase your online presence and make it that much easier for your potential customers to find you. Set up your page, make sure all the information is correct, and check it for messages. That's all you need to do.



Backing up to the basics—emailing, calling, and texting are all easy and personable ways to communicate with your customers. Picking up the phone is such a novel idea these days, and one that is always appreciated. And if you prefer to text, it's a great way to send payment reminders as well marketing promotions. Keep your customers apprised of important news, events, promotions, and notify leads about your pricing and features through text reminders. It's direct access to your clientele with very little work. Emailing tenants regularly to ask them to leave reviews is another smart way to build successful online feedback. Come up with an email that is somewhat personal, concise, and always ask what makes your customers the happiest about your business. Remember to link to a popular online reviewer site to encourage them to leave a review and don't send out a ton of emails a week. No one wants to be hounded by a business for his or her feedback

Though most people get their information from the internet

these days, you should make sure that you have a significant presence in the real world as well. Flyers and billboards are some of the best ways to start and are a great way to make sure your storage business is represented in your neighborhood. It's easy to use programs like Canva or Vistaprint to create eye-catching and professional flyers for little to nothing. Advertise on busy roadways near your facility so potential customers are aware that you're right down the street from them. Making a name for yourself in your community is a super important piece of your marketing strategy. Consider giving discounted rates to local charities or other organizations. Support sports teams in your area to get your name out there. Start your own charity by accepting donations for a cause you believe in. Check out how a listing of community organizations can really spruce up your webpage.

There are so many avenues to take when interacting with your customers. Be sure each and every one exceeds their expectations. Your marketing starts with the in-house face of your business—your manager. Because so much depends on first impressions, you have to train your managers with your marketing strategy in mind. Training your manager with an eye toward sales will add another marketing specialist to your business and ensure that your customers are always receiving the best service possible. Think about the whole picture when considering how to improve upon your business's marketing strategy. It's not a one-size-fits-all industry, so be flexible and creative!

StoragePug offers a made-for-self storage website platform that will help you love your website, attract new customers, and rent more units. Understanding that clients need a team of dedicated folks who know the ins and outs of self-storage and how to fill units with renters and streamline the rental process, StoragePug strives to empower people and maximize potential.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MARKETING YOUR FACILITY, VISIT: STORAGEPUG.COM

# **BIG THINGS ARE ON THE HORIZON.**



### Maximize revenue in 10-12 weeks.

Boxwell relocatable units are the easiest way to increase rentable square feet. Line fences, fill underutilized parking lots, place on easements and more.



### **ARTICLE**

### Look Who's Talking: Rod Bolls, Founder of Boxwell

by Erica Shatzer, Editor of Mini-Storage Messenger



While there are indicators that the current development cycle is finally losing momentum, the effects of new supply can be far reaching and potentially long lasting. In fact, the increased competition has already left many self-storage owners and operators searching for ways to box out the opposition and land customers as rental rates begin

to dip from surplus rental space.

Certainly, there are numerous strategies for strengthening operations and boosting your bottom line. From cutting expenses and focusing on curb appeal to creating new marketing campaigns and adding new services, experienced self-storage business owners know that it often takes a multi-faceted line of defense to beat the overdevelopment slump at the end of a growth cycle. But one business owner, Rodney Bolls, founder of Boulder, Colo.-based

Boxwell, a company that supplies custom portable storage containers, has come to find that putting principles over profits can lead to unrivaled growth as well as gains.

#### **Culture Is the Core**

When Bolls decided to start Boxwell in 2015, he knew one thing: A good work-life balance would produce the results he was seeking. "It blows me away that more companies haven't recognized the importance of culture," says Bolls, adding that a good work-life balance enables him and his employees to "enjoy work more." For Bolls, creating a culture with an emphasis on "quality over quantity" was paramount. He wanted to keep his family and spouse as his first priority, but he also wanted his employees to be able to do the same.

To accomplish this, Bolls instated a flexible work schedule, one that doesn't keep track of daily hours worked. Though that may seem counterproductive, and the company does tally paid time off, Bolls notes that the scheduling flexibility allows his employees to come to work when they are







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ready—energized and eager to put in quality hours. In other words, they get their work completed in less time because they are more motivated.

# "... it is so important to put compassion and understanding into customer service interactions and sales."

At Boxwell, Bolls reminds his employees that the reward to doing quality work is not just the paycheck. "It's time," he says, urging them to use their free time to impact their lives in positive ways. Bolls, who is an avid outdoorsman, also makes it a point to "challenge" his team. Leading by example, he makes time for his family and activities he enjoys, such as skiing and hiking. "Life is so busy," he says. "You have to make time; get out of the office." Bolls inspires his employees to do the same, encouraging them to find something they love to do and make time for it. Bolls is adamant that the ability to adjust, pivot, or adapt during busy times is key to having a constant balance in this oftentimes hectic life. "Find ways to fit stuff in," he says.

#### **Caring As A Foundation**

Besides putting a work-life balance at the forefront of the company culture, Bolls made caring the foundation of his business and the customer service it provides. At the crux, he wanted to provide a better product, better service, and help customers grow their businesses, "We've become consultants in a way," he says, adding that he takes pride in partnering with others within the self-storage industry and being able to refer customers to those partners. "We're not just focused on making money," says Bolls. "We're not just in it to get a sale. It starts with caring. We go out of our way to help customers, and that comes back tenfold."

This caring, customer-first way of doing business is essential for establishing an exceptional brand image and a good reputation for his company as well as the industry as a whole. "Your brand and reputation are everything," says Bolls. "You have one chance to make a first impression." Though Boxwell doesn't deal with the end users—the tenants—he is optimistic that their model of caring will be adopted by others.

Indeed, given the nature of self-storage, and customers' frequently troubling reasons for needing storage, such as deaths, divorces, and natural disasters, it is so important to put compassion and understanding into customer service interactions and sales. Considering a 2019 court ruling in favor of tenants in California who were price gouged by a public self-storage company during a state of emergency from the destructive North Bay wildfires, it's vital to conduct business in a way that doesn't sully the character of the entire industry. "It's about upholding a level of service and integrity," says Bolls. "You don't want to overpromise and underdeliver."



Though he recognizes that maintaining high-quality service and respectability becomes more challenging as the company grows, it is the gold standard Boxwell strives to achieve on a daily basis. And, according to Bolls, the only way to accomplish that is by hiring employees with that same focus. "Employees are a reflection of the company," says Bolls, "and that is critical to success." He goes on to say that the right employees will promote and propel your brand. While finding high-caliber candidates can be a challenge, and sometimes a lengthy process, Bolls states that preventing turnover goes back to the company's culture. In addition to advising against making hasty hiring decisions to fill an opening, he recommends looking for like-minded folks who will be pleased to share your mission and support your vision.

### **Reaping Referrals**

Besides finding employees that are a good fit for the company, Bolls notes that Boxwell has found success in being more selective about the customers it takes on. In order to

**BEYOND THE BOX: BUSINESS PRACTICES** 



provide the best customer service possible, he says it is sometimes necessary to turn away business.

More than a means for quality control, Bolls believes that customers should be in tune with a company's values in order to create win-win situations for everyone. "We look for customers who value our service and features," he says, adding that those items should outweigh price. "We don't want to race to the bottom by competing on price."

Obviously, that concept is one that should be resonating within the self-storage industry, especially with new competition upsetting the delicate balance of supply and demand in numerous markets across the country. The price wars that tend to ensue when supply exceeds demand do more than lower the street rates. They damage the perceived value of self-storage and put all competing operators at risk for dramatic reductions in economic occupancy. In other words, profits plummet. Therefore, Bolls suggests focusing sales pitches on the features of the products/facility as well as the unmatched customer service skills of the business' staff.

While it may seem financially foolish to be choosy about which customers to service, Bolls says that sometimes you can tell from the get-go that a customer will require more resources and energy than the sale is worth. For instance, if a customer is on a fixed income and overly concerned with rates, it is possible that they may not be able to afford the fees and quickly slip into delinquency. In this situation, staff could simply suggest a more affordable option at a nearby self-storage facility to avoid taking on a

troublesome tenant without coming off as inconsiderate. There is nothing wrong with retaining a space, service, or product for a customer who would be a better match for your business.

As Bolls sees it, passing on a substandard sale can actually save you money in the end. In fact, he points to potential litigation as a prime example—one that Boxwell unfortunately learned the hard way after dealing with a disgruntled customer.

On the other hand, being selective enables his team to provide stellar service to the customers who are a good match with the company. And their complete satisfaction tends to result in great referrals, reviews, and testimonials. "Referrals from customers are the biggest compliment," says Bolls. "They prove that what we are doing is working!" In the end, it seems that figuring out where to place your time, effort, and energy is key to success—both professional and personal!

Mini-Storage Messenger is the leading monthly publication covering the global self-storage industry as an unbiased educational tool. Articles in MSM are either written in-house or contributed by industry leaders with a specific focus towards owners, operators, investors, developers, architects, brokers, and other industry professionals.

VIEW MORE SELF-STORAGE PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES: MINISTORAGEMESSENGER.COM

### **TESTIMONIALS**

### Read what real Boxwell Customers are saying.

"One of the best investments we made was in Boxwell. Not only are we beyond satisfied with the quality of the containers, the service and partnership has been just as important. Boxwell creates value for our company in countless ways. Value, quality, communication, reliability, and positivity, are a few of the words I would use to describe, Rod, Lisa, and the Boxwell team."

"I have been very pleased with the mobile storage units I have purchased from Boxwell. While the quality of the portable units is great, the people of Boxwell are even better. The service before, during, and after the sales process is fantastic. They genuinely care about their customers." "We were very impressed with Boxwell's excellent business ethics and honesty. They always returned phone calls, emails, and answered any and all questions promptly and completely. I must say that we were also so impressed with the containers upon arrival, they were beyond our expectations and immediately ordered more. We would not hesitate to recommend Rod and his team and have even given tours to his

### CHASE D. CAPSULE

#### **JOHN L. GURLEY**

SECURITY MINI STORAGE

#### **PAM SNOW**

ARMOR STORAGE

potential customers."



"We have now made a few orders with Boxwell. In terms of the containers themselves, they have shown to be durable, open easily, and have a well designed roof to withhold the elements.

I was particularly pleased that we could select the colours so easily and really cater the design to our company branding including the decals on the side. Boxwell even had a designer that could help with that process and send us sketches of how the containers would look with our colours and logo.

The customer service and in particular the ordering process was efficient and very responsive. We had a hold up at the border for our first delivery due entirely to slow Canadian border control, and Boxwell was in touch everyday and did everything they could to speed up the process. This kind of attention to the order was important in particular for my first time going through an import such as this. Boxwell held our hand each step of the way including helping us negotiate a reasonable price for the assembly of the containers, strategies for training, and a business model moving forward.

While we initially intended the containers to remain on our site permanently, however, we have already moved into portable storage off site through the encouragement of Boxwell. A great business decision! I doubt we would have had that kind of time and attention with any other business. Boxwell was always quick to respond to my calls, concerns, had a genuine interest in our success as a business."

#### **SAMANTHA CALLOW**

CALLOWAY STORAGE



### **ARTICLE**

### **How Running 100 Miles Is A Lot Like Starting A Business**

by Rod Bolls, Founder and CEO of Boxwell



There are some things that are commonly considered off limits, if not crazy. Things like running 100 miles or starting a business, for example, are not for everyone. Ultramarathoners and entrepreneurs possess an extraordinary amount of optimism, courage, and flexibility, which sets them apart. They stay positive through the pain

and focus on the big picture. They are not afraid of putting themselves out there, and often do so alone. They have a solid plan and the drive to see things through. Most importantly, they know how to pivot and make adjustments when necessary.

In sports and in business, the hardest part about taking on the unimaginable is just getting started. But turning a notion into an action can be as simple as taking the first step. Sign up for the race. Jot down your business idea. From there, you can plot out what your next steps will be—from mile one to 100 in a race, or from day one to year five in business. That way, you can be prepared for the inevitable

variances to your plan. When you dive into something that is bigger than anything you've ever done, you have to be a few steps ahead of yourself and take care of issues before they become problems.

Ultramarathons are often run on rocky, narrow, root-filled, and steep trails with big changes in elevation. If you are getting a blister, take the time to treat it. If you are getting fatigued, walk a bit. And always know where your aid stations are located on the course! Similarly, when starting a business, there are ups and downs to navigate. You need to think about what you could be doing now to make things run smoothly in the future. Talk to your team often; your employees are your legs in a race. Take care of your customers; it's like fueling your body with necessary calories for the long haul. Keep a pulse on the industry, it's like knowing your environment and competition at all times.

"Ultramarathoners and entrepreneurs all reach a point when it feels easier to just stop. It's those who succeed who have made a clear choice between the doubt and determination in their minds."

**FINAL THOUGHTS** 

It's no surprise that running 100 miles and starting a business will each cause pain and suffering. There are the physical risks with running long distances—everything hurts, bleeds, or oozes. Your mind wants to go to the dark side and your body wants to up-heave, break, and stop. The stress of starting a business can also be painful, bringing ulcers, headaches, insomnia, and the like. In order to lower all of these risks and avoid running out of energy (or shutting down), you need to be ready for the road ahead with a can-do attitude. Learning how to suffer should be one of the goals, and that comes down to how much you want it. Pushing through the skepticism and hard times is what sets apart those who succeed from those who don't. It's going to be uncomfortable and hard. Look beyond each obstacle and be sure to celebrate your milestones along the way.

Ultramarathoners and entrepreneurs all reach a point when it feels easier to just stop. It's those who succeed who have made a clear choice between the doubt and determination in their minds. Once you lay out your own definition of success, you can work toward it. Is it crossing the finish line or completing a race in 24 hours? Is it having 1,000 customers or making your first million dollars? Always have something on the calendar and look at ways you can be prepared for the next race or the next level in your business plan. Having the right amount of support is brilliant, whether that means having enough sustenance along the race or growing your number of employees. Behind every super-achiever is support team of family, friends, and people whose goals align with their own. It's never a question of whether or not it's worth it—of course it is!



### **MEET OUR TEAM**

Boxwell is a small group of individuals who have dedicated their careers to the advancement of the storage industry.



**ROD BOLLS**Founder and CEO

As the company's visionary leader and managing director, Rod studied business and international trade, taught English in China, started a business while in grad school, and has over 13 years of experience in the storage industry. Rod steers his Boulder-based company with the same honesty and integrity that he lives by, prioritizing a balance between working hard and playing hard. He is truly driven by the idea that the best work is created out of diligence, openness, and innovation.

### **SALES**



**LISA MALONEY** Strategic Account Manager



LAURA BROOKS
Strategic Account Manager



**FRANK PENDLETON**Strategic Account Manager



KIM PETERSON Strategic Account Manager



MICHELE PULLO Sales Associate



**JESSICA JOHNSON**Sales Associate

"My job reaches far beyond the purchasing process of our product. Boxwell is Built For Your Success—I mean this wholeheartedly. We are here to guide our clients to financial success, and a better business overall."

Lisa Maloney

### **OPERATIONS**



**AUSTIN KRUEGER**Director of Operations



**TANYA MEYER**Controller



**JENNIFER STROTHMAN**Sales & Operations Specialist



CHRIS BEARS
Operations Specialist



MICHAEL PETERICH
Lead Installer



STEVE KOKITA
Installer



JASON CHADWICK
Installer



PATRICK LOWDER Installer

# **MARKETING & DESIGN**



**JESSIE SMITH**Creative Director



**BRENDA BAKER**PR Coordinator

"A strong brand image is the cornerstone to a successful business. Our design team is here to support this notion. We provide services that ensure our clients cut through the noise and stand out in a competitive industry."

Jessie Smith



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### Thinking outside of the box in Boulder, CO.

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