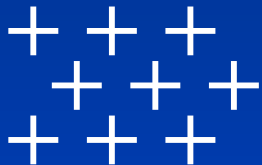




The Self-Storage Customer of 2031: How to Win—and Keep— the Next Generation of Renters

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THANK YOU!

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Why 2031?

- Five to six leasing cycles away
- Customers already forming habits
- Expectations are accelerating

**Your 2031 customers already exist.
They just haven't met your facility yet.**



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2031 Is Not Far Away!

- 2031 customers are already alive, renting and forming habits.
- Most facilities are still built for **2005-2015 behavior**.
- **Customers don't compare storage to storage anymore.**
 - They compare the experience with **Amazon, DoorDash, Uber, banks and other apps.**

What was the **BEST**
digital experience you
had this week?



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In Which Era Are You Operating?

Answer “yes” or “no” to these statements about your facility:

- Customers can **rent a unit in less than five minutes** without calling or visiting the office.
- Our website works **flawlessly on a phone**.
- Rent increases are **clearly explained** *before* customers complain.
- Fees are **easy to understand** and rarely questioned.
- Managers are trained to **explain value, not just enforce policy**.



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In Which Era Are You Operating?

Answer “yes” or “no” to these statements about your facility:

- Tenant protection/insurance is **confidently** and **consistently** explained.
- Claims are **simple, fast** and **human**.
- Communication is **relevant** and **not excessive**.
- Technology **reduces friction** instead of creating it.
- Customers feel **supported** during stressful life moments.



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Diagnostic Truth

- **8-10 yes:** You're operating in **2031**.
- **5-7 yes:** You're in **transition**.
- **0-4 yes:** You're still operating like it's **2001**.

This isn't about being "behind."
It's about knowing where to focus next.



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Who Is the 2031 Customer?

- **Millennials and Gen Z**

- Digital-first
- Speed-driven
- Low tolerance for friction

- **Over-the-hill Gen Xers (the bridge generation)**

- Tech-comfortable
- Value transparency
- Expect fairness

- **Aging Boomers**

- Trust-driven
- Safety-focused
- Want reassurance and clarity

All generations
come to storage
during life
transitions.

—
What's different
is how they
expect to be
served.

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The Emotion Behind Storage

- Stress
- Change
- Urgency
- Vulnerability

Storage isn't emotional to operators.
It's emotional to customers.



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2021 vs. 2031: The Big Shift

2021: Convenience was competitive.

2031: Clarity and confidence are decisive.



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Discovery and Research

2021

- Google search
- Website and reviews
- Calls for answers

2031

- AI-assisted and voice search
- Reputation = decision
- Instant answers expected



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Rental Experience

2021

- Online rentals common
- Office still relevant
- Desktop-friendly

2031

- Online rentals assumed
- Office optional
- Mobile-first, fast, simple



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Communication Preferences

2021

- Email-heavy
- Reactive
- Notices Tolerated

2031

- Text-first
- Proactive
- Explanations expected



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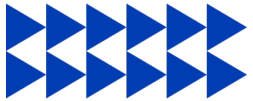
Pricing and Rent Increases

2021

- Increases frustrating
- Large jumps tolerated (high demand)
- Discounts common

2031

- Increases expected
- Smaller jumps tolerated (pricing fatigue)
- Transparency required



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Security and Protection

2021

- Security as feature
- Insurance optional
- Claims = hassle

2031

- Security assumed
- Protection expected
- Claims must be simple and human



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Role of the Manager

2021

- Policy explainer
- Transactional
- Reactive

2031

- Experience guide
- Trust builder
- Relationship-focused



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Automation vs. Human Connection

Automation should handle:

- Transactions
- Access
- Payments
- Reminders

Humans should handle:

- Confusion
- Stress
- Conflict
- Claims

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Trust Is the New Currency

Customers expect:

- Fees
- Increases
- Risk

Customers reject:

- Surprises
- Vague explanations
- “That’s just our policy”



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Marketing That Will Matter

It isn't ads. It's signals.

- Google reviews = credibility
- Response speed = professionalism
- Website clarity = trust
- Consistent messaging = confidence



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Social Proof and Reputation

Your reputation is your sales team.

- Reviews influence decisions more than price.
- Ignoring feedback erodes trust.
- Tone matters as much as resolution.



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Sustainability and Values

What sustainability really means in self-storage:

- Not just solar panels, also:
 - Fair, transparent pricing and policies
 - Honest communication
 - Safe, well-maintained properties
 - Efficient operations that reduce waste and cost
 - Treating customers and staff with respect



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Fix These 5 Things First

You don't need more tech. You need fewer friction points.

1. Fix the rental experience (less than five minutes).
2. Fix communication (less, clearer, better).
3. Fix how you explain money.
4. Fix the human moments.
5. Fix friction before features.



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Why This Works Now

- ☒ No new buildings
- ☒ No massive budgets
- ☒ No overpriced marketing campaigns

Just clarity, confidence and consistency

The capital improvements can come later.



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What Hasn't Changed

- People store during life transitions.
- Trust still matters.
- Clean, safe facilities still win.
- Poor service still loses customers.



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Your 2031 Readiness Roadmap

- Diagnose your era.
- Fix friction first.
- Train for trust.
- Communicate clearly.
- Repeat consistently.



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Final Thought

The self-storage customer of 2031 isn't asking for perfection.
They're asking for clarity, confidence and care.



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**SUBMIT
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