

Let Customers Monitor Their Storage Units with Help from the IoT

Running a storage facility venture can be similar to any other business by requiring operations management, staffing and training, marketing and sales, maintenance, customer service, and more. All of these responsibilities are essential to deliver an exceptional customer experience and keep a self-storage business growing.

In addition to keeping these crucial business operations humming, adding value with a product and service that's a win-win for facility owners and customers can create valuable customer loyalty. Offering comprehensive insurance coverage for renters' belongings can sometimes fill this value-add need. However, insurance is often not viewed as a customer benefit because of possible loopholes, lack of coverage, and added expenses.

Sensors connected to the Internet of Things (IoT) that monitor water leaks, access, temperature, and more can be a welcome option for renters to gain more peace of mind about remotely stored furniture, household goods, valuables, and keepsakes. Read how Monnit® can help you and your renters remotely monitor storage unit facilities 24/7.

Spoiler alert: The ROI is significant by providing a value-added remote monitoring service to self-storage renters. It's all easily managed using an online dashboard on a mobile device or computer. Plus, alerts via email, text, or call from a wide variety of fast-install IoT sensors and meters.

Challenges

A national self-storage chain franchise owner was looking to boost revenue and positive, five-star online reviews of her storage facility. Rising competition in the area and recent customer complaints prompted the storage franchisee to seek a solution to help increase customer loyalty and attract new renters.

Recently, the owner had a renter whose stored possessions were damaged by a water leak in one of the building's roofs. This wasn't the first time a water leak had caused damage. The owner realized she needed a way for her and her staff to know about these issues before they turned into more significant problems. She didn't have a way to detect a water leak until a customer discovered one or staff happened to notice water pooling outside of a unit door.

The company wanted to implement an inexpensive and reliable way to monitor storage facilities and individual units for:

- Water leaks from weather and flooding from sprinkling systems and surrounding businesses.
- Potential temperature and humidity wear and tear to facilities and renters items.
- People trespassing and breaking-in that could lead to theft and damage.



The goal was to offer a remote monitoring solution as a value-added service for their renters and one that could augment maintenance, security, unit locks, and entry-gate video monitoring the company already had in place. The solution or systems needed to be easy to set up in individual units and transferred between units.

Solution

One of the franchisee's employees was assigned to research remote monitoring solutions. They came across Monnit.com and recommended the owner partner with us to offer a sensor solution to their customers. The owner decided that Monnit Remote Monitoring Solutions are perfect for putting predictive maintenance measures in place with trending data and alerts to help fix issues before becoming more significant problems like a water leak in the middle of the night.

The self-storage owner's staff self-installed a remote monitoring bundle with ALTA® by Monnit Wireless Sensors for customers who opted to rent the solution with their units. The solution bundle included:

- Humidity Sensors to monitor individual storage unit relative humidity levels and temperatures
- Wireless Water Detection Sensors—Water Rope and Water Detection Puck—in storage units and main office bathroom to detect leaks, pooling, and flooding
- Infrared Motion and Occupancy Sensors to detect trespassers and unauthorized access after hours
- Open-Closed Sensors on unit doors to detect entry and send alerts anytime around the clock
- The iMonnit Sensor Management and Remote Monitoring Software on facilities managers and renters smartphones, tablets, and computers
- Gateways to protect and communicate data sent from every Monnit Sensor and Meter

When a customer signs up for the added service, the office staff assigns sensors to their unit in iMonnit, and the customer is added as an iMonnit user. Sensors send data wirelessly to ALTA Gateways in the maintenance office. The gateways then send aggregated sensor data to iMonnit. Using iMonnit, managers uploaded a graphic showing the storage facility layout of the monitored areas.

This allows the managers to drag and drop sensor tags onto the design or map with live data. Then, they can see the performance of the storage units and doors from an aerial view. Managers set up notifications to alert them and customers if readings fell outside set ranges and signified any potential issues, allowing them to respond immediately.

The wireless water sensors detect the immediate presence of water, and the wireless humidity sensors are set to take readings every 60 minutes. Notifications are set up to alert customers and select staff members via SMS text message if any water, entry, or motion is detected or humidity and temperature get too high or low.

Results

The facility owner purchased a gateway and enough sensors to monitor humidity, temperatures, and water in six units as a trial. After the short test, the franchisee decided to add door and motion sensors to their bundled offering while also making the sensors available individually. Storage facility staff can quickly move the wireless sensors between units as renters come and go.

With rental fees, the sensors quickly pay for themselves and then generate revenue for the storage franchisee. In addition to this value, sensors detected a few instances of water from storms in units during the first few months of use. The sensor alerts helped staff respond quickly and prevent water from damaging the storage units' contents. Maintenance staff repaired the roof over those units to solve the problem. Plus, Open-Closed Sensors alerted staff and customers when people tried to access units without permission.

Using Monnit's comprehensive monitoring solution, the storage facility owner can:

- Generate recurring revenue from renting Monnit Remote Monitoring Solutions to customers.
- Offer value-added services to her customers, differentiating her business from competitors.
- Reduce insurance claims by detecting issues before costly damage occurs.

ROI: After only a couple of weeks using Monnit Solutions, the self-storage company optimized its monitoring with predictive measures that improved maintenance and the renter experience.

Monnit Remote Monitoring Helps Self-Storage Owners Raise Revenue and Renter Loyalty



1

Water Detection Puck Sensors

Drop an ALTA Wireless Water Detection Puck in ideal locations on the storage unit's floor to detect water at the first sign of a leak or pooling. Our puck takes an award-winning approach to monitor water's presence or absence in virtually any facility.

2

Water Rope Sensors

Place an ALTA Wireless Water Rope Sensor along walkways, walls, foundations, and pipes to detect water and help prevent damage from leaks and flooding. Combine up to 10 extensions for up to 100 feet of monitoring and the protection you need.

3

Humidity Sensors

Monitor relative humidity (RH) with a scientific-grade ALTA Humidity Sensor. The sensor measures RH with a +/- 3% accuracy (between 10–90% RH), temperature, and dew point in storage facilities and will instantly send alerts via text, email, or call.

4

Motion / Occupancy Sensors

Know in an instant if someone has broken into a vacant house with an ALTA Motion Detection Sensor. Monitor movement in virtually any room, entryway, or area in and around homes using passive infrared technology.

5

Open / Closed Sensors

Maintain proper access across storage property by monitoring the status of unit doors. ALTA Wireless Open-Closed Sensors use a switch and trigger magnet to detect status. Be alerted when a threshold in iMonnit changes.

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