

## Innovationen in der Self Storage-Industrie: „Daten sind der Schlüssel zu allem“

Auf der Europäischen Self Storage-Konferenz im Oktober in Berlin wird es wohl eines der heißesten Diskussionsthemen sein: Wie Digitalisierung und Automatisierung das Produkt Self Storage verändern, vereinfachen und kundenfreundlicher machen. Michael Fogelberg, Pionier der europäischen Branche, CEO von 24Storage AB in Stockholm und Vorsitzender der schwedischen Self Storage Association, spricht in unserem Interview (das wir in der englischen Originalfassung wiedergeben) über den Übergang, die Geschwindigkeit des Wandels und Modelle, die heute schon funktionieren. Fogelberg: „We need to wake up to self storage 4.0“.

*Mr. Fogelberg, you are a pioneer of the self storage industry, you brought the idea from the USA to Europe almost twenty years ago. In countries like Germany the market is developing much more conservative than e.g. in the UK or in Sweden. What innovative means do you recommend to self storage companies to improve “social awareness”?*

Our industry is definitely benefiting of the macro trends as urbanization and the compact living that follows – the self storage awareness among people must however rise. And this is our job!

You, me and everyone else found in the self storage industry are experts of different areas of usage of storage units. We know that is good for small business owners as for example book keepers, we know that it is good to use even before you are actually moving or that it is the perfect place to keep your golf bag during off-season.

Most of our prospects never rented a unit before or have heard the term self storage. The need is out there, but you need to inspire and educate the future prospects in a much broader sense to also gain prospects. I believe digitization has given us a lot more platforms of how to fun and easily communicate this to the broader masses. Today you can put together a video production with your own smartphone which tells your story in the same quality as the traditional production houses and one person have the distribute power equivalent to Eurovision song contest – times ten.

*After about 30 years of digital revolution self storage is still an analogue product. Did this sector of business miss the boat?*

No, OUR boat has just started to sail. The digitization through IoT, the Internet of Things, and trends like automated smart homes has just now become available and favorable for us.

We can now deal with fully automated solution and an affordable price – in scale – which is a must for driving a cost-efficient business. That was simply something that was just not there a couple of years ago. Industries like ICT and media are of course a lot higher up in the digitization chain, almost completely digitized. Now it is finally our turn. Our biggest challenge is to change operationally and our current ways of working, for example how our lock check is being performed when bringing in the digital customer experience. Digitization is already a commodity in most parts of Europe. With digitization comes speed as a key. If you are not fast enough, you will simply down.

*In what way will the digital revolution change the product self storage in the future? And what kind of specific experience is already made today?*

First and foremost, as all digitization, the customer will get much more in control and in the center. Second of all, the actual core product of self storage will move from the properties and the actual units to instead cover the overall customer experience – from booking, through move-in, the notice to leave and the move out.

Customers already judge brands in every touch point – as we are being judged. Any hurdles from the customers will result in a negative experience.

*Which techniques of e-commerce are recommendable to give more attraction to the product self storage?*

Data is key to everything. Using data in the correct way makes you a wizard of insights. You no longer have to make a bet on a theory – you can actually prove through smaller tests before going in full production mode.

And do not forget that user trends shapes e-commerce as well. If being an online retailer you can not expect to launch a digital shop and customers will just keep coming. You constantly need to keep yourself up to date with the search engine algorithms to attract your prospect funnel.

*Will the client in the future be able to manage the whole proceeding of self storage from booking to payment on his own in an online shop?*

This is not in the future – this is now. This is also what you actually can perform at our site, 24storage.se, already today. As I stated previously, the customer gets in control, which also puts expectations on us. The customer is expecting to contact us through all channels. If we cannot please that, the customer will simply move away to someone else. If we are not flexible enough, we will get a bad review, instantly shown online, which will affect the decision making in future prospects.

*Do we have to imagine unmanned and fully automatic self storage houses in the future? Or isn't an extensive range of individual and general services an indispensable asset to compete successfully in a growing market?*

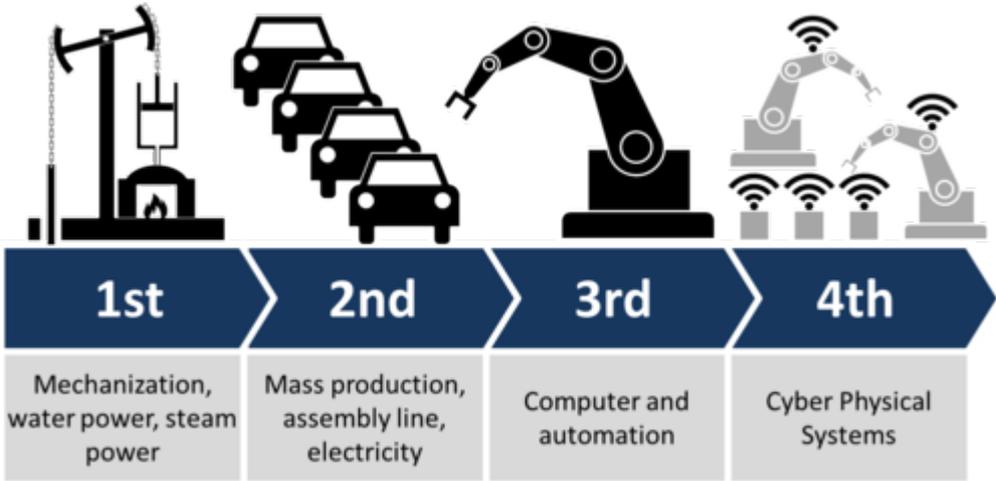
We will definitely see a much lower rate of staffing out in the properties. It is in our own business model as well. The point being is that digitization brings other ways to communicate and helpful tools which are even more useful for our customers.

No customer is the other alike. Some prefer to meet the local shop owner and chat about the weather, some prefer a non-human contact, ordering everything online, getting it delivered to your own door.

The digital natives become more and more in size. Millennials will not have analogue references in their head. Sadly, that implicated in social lives as well. We have never been more global and connected as we are with each other digitally, but in the same time we have never experienced so few human touchpoints.

*Which fresh impetus do you expect from the forthcoming Berlin Self Storage Convention?*

The big hype within manufacturing is "Industry 4.0", and this is where I would like us to focus.



Industry 4.0 is where data and the "things" connectivity is used to improve production efficiency. Real-estate as a sector is slow to adopt new technology, even slower than industry.

We, within self storage, are probably at stage 2.0 today. We need to wake up to self storage 4.0 (altogether skipping 3.0), where technology is not used to improve our efficiency, but to make our products more convenient, more user-friendly and more relevant.

The sector needs to wake up to that reality, we should stop to be shy of the technology and only think of our sector as a brick and mortar.

That is what I am expecting out of this event.

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*Die diesjährige europäische FEDESSA Self Storage Convention findet vom 16. bis 18. Oktober im Berliner Hotel „Maritim pro arte“ statt. Es ist die größte Branchenkonferenz in Europa und die größte außerhalb der USA. Der Verband rechnet mit weit mehr als 500 Teilnehmern und will damit, nach 455 Teilnehmern im Vorjahr, einen Rekord aufstellen. Klicken Sie hier für [Preisangaben](#) und [Anmeldeformular](#).*

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