



# How Does Smart Access Control Impact Net Operating Income (NOI) in Self-Storage?

Digital access is far more than a matter of convenience. Beyond simply letting your customers in, it can help you increase revenue, reduce costs, and enhance the long-term value of your facility.

In this mini guide, we will walk you through a few realistic scenarios to illustrate how digital access may affect your Net Operating Income (NOI).

We have deliberately avoided exaggerated claims. All scenarios are based on practical, achievable assumptions that operators can relate to. Over the years, Sensorberg has worked with a wide range of self-storage operators, from single-site facilities to multi-location chains, providing individual consultation, operational guidance, and strategic advice tailored to each facility. We are proud to support many clients who continue to scale their operations with our guidance.

The insights in this guide are drawn from patterns and lessons observed across these partnerships, and are further supported by industry research from the Self-Storage Association UK, FEDESSA, and CBRE, demonstrating how small operational improvements can accumulate into meaningful financial results.

## What is NOI and Why It Matters

Net Operating Income (NOI) is one of the most important metrics for self-storage operators, as it provides a clear picture of a facility's core profitability. By focusing strictly on income generated and the costs required to run the property, NOI helps operators evaluate performance, compare assets, and make informed investment decisions. Its simple formula is:

### **NOI = Revenue – Operating Expenses**

**Revenue** includes unit rental income, premium access fees, insurance or ancillary services, late fees.

**Operating Expenses** covers staff salaries, utilities, maintenance, security, and administrative costs.

### **Why NOI matters:**

- Measures the true profitability of your facility
- Directly impacts asset value and investor confidence
- Enables easy comparison across single-site and multi-site operations
- Small revenue gains or cost reductions can significantly improve NOI and long-term value

# Scenario 1: Staffing Optimisation

Let your team focus on what drives value while admin work happens in the background.

Staffing costs are a significant part of self-storage operating expenses, typically accounting for 25 to 35% of total revenue, although this can vary by country and city. These costs include wages for managers and maintenance staff, along with associated benefits. According to the Self Storage Association (SSA) UK Annual Industry Report 2025, the average number of employees per store has declined in recent years, reflecting a broader shift toward leaner, tech-enabled operations. This trend is closely supported by the adoption of digital access technology, which reduces the need for manual supervision and administrative work. As a result, operators can streamline staffing while enabling teams to focus on higher-value activities, ultimately improving overall cost efficiency.

## Example Facility

- Facility with 300 units
- 1 full-time staff member at €40,000/year
- Digital access reduces ~0.25 FTE

### Impact Calculation

- Annual savings: €10,000
- Potential asset value increase (6% capitalisation rate): ~€166,667

Even modest reductions in staff hours improve NOI immediately and help reduce workload pressure, without affecting the customer experience. Automation enables leaner operations, reduces overtime, and minimises administrative errors.

**Tip:** Think of digital access not as a cost, but as an investment in operational efficiency that translates directly into stronger profitability and increased facility value. It not only helps reduce costs, but also allows you to use your staff more effectively, freeing them up to focus on truly important, high value tasks.

## Alternative: 24/7 Access

- Facility with 300 units
- On-site staff during the day: 1 full-time employee (€40,000/year)
- Night-time operations handled via digital access and remote monitoring
- Digital access reduces the need for 0.25 of a full-time staff at night

### Impact calculation

- 1 full-time employee costs €40,000/year
- Reducing 0.25 FTE ( $€40,000 \times 0.25$ ) saves €10,000/year

### Revenue context

- Total revenue if fully booked:  $300 \text{ units} \times €120/\text{month} = €36,000/\text{month}$
- Adjust for 85% occupancy  $\rightarrow €36,000 \times 0.85 = €30,600/\text{month}$
- Annual revenue  $\rightarrow €30,600 \times 12 = €367,200/\text{year}$

Staffing savings: €10,000 staff savings  $\div$  €367,200 revenue  $\approx$  2.7% increase in profit (NOI)

### Asset value effect (6% capitalisation rate)

- Potential increase in facility value  $€10,000 \div 0.06 \approx €166,667$

The 24/7 model maintains a human presence during peak hours while using digital access for overnight and off-hours security. Even in smaller facilities, partial automation reduces costs and improves NOI without compromising the customer experience.



# Scenario 2: Premium Access Upsell & Revenue Acceleration

More tenants in, faster. More revenue per tenant, automatically. That's what digital access enables.

Digital access can also be an effective revenue-generating tool. By offering premium access options and streamlining move-ins, operators can increase occupancy revenue and unlock additional income from services that previously required manual handling.

Recent industry research from FEDESSA and CBRE (2024–2025) confirms that a large majority of operators generate revenue beyond core storage, increasingly relying on additional services, pricing optimisation, and digital tools.

## Premium Access Upsell

- **Assumption:** 25% of tenants opt for 24/7 access or high-security units
- **Example facility:** 300 units  $\times$  25% = 75 tenants
- **Premium access fee:** €10 per month  $\rightarrow$  75  $\times$  €10 = €750 per month
- **Annual additional revenue:** €750  $\times$  12  $\approx$  €9,000

**Operator insight:** Upselling premium access can be automated at booking or move-in, requiring no additional staff. It adds high-margin revenue while improving the customer experience.

## Revenue Acceleration via Faster Move-Ins

- **Problem:** Manual onboarding or key handovers delay move-ins, temporarily reducing revenue
- **Digital access solution:** Immediate customer entry, shortening onboarding by 1–2 days per tenant
- **Assumption:** 5 extra move-ins per month, €120 average monthly rent
- **Additional revenue per year:** 5  $\times$  €120  $\times$  12  $\approx$  €7,200

## Combined Impact

- **Premium access revenue:** €9,000 per year
- **Accelerated move-ins:** €7,200 per year
- **Total added revenue:** €16,200 per year, fully contributing to NOI

**Operator insight:** Even small revenue streams, when automated, compound quickly. Faster move-ins reduce empty-unit days, premium options increase per-unit revenue, and together they strengthen cash flow and NOI.

**Tip:** Digital access management platforms can promote optional services and premium features automatically, maximising uptake and freeing staff from administrative tasks.

# Scenario 3: Reduced Revenue Leakage & Maintenance Costs

Lost keys, missed move-ins, manual check-ins — small problems with a compounding cost.

Even small inefficiencies can quietly eat into your NOI. Digital access helps operators capture all potential revenue and reduce avoidable costs.

## Revenue Leakage Reduction

**Problem:** manual access and analogue systems can lead to missed move-ins, unauthorised access, and lost revenue.

**Realistic assumption:** digital access reduces revenue leakage by 1% of total revenue.

### Example: Mid-sized Facility

- 300 units × €120/month = €36,000 if fully occupied
- Adjust for 85% occupancy → €36,000 × 0.85 = €30,600 per month
- Annual revenue → €30,600 × 12 = €367,200 per year

**Impact of 1% leakage reduction:**

1% of €367,200 = €3,672 added to profit (NOI) per year

### Example: Larger Chain

- 1,500 units × €120/month = €180,000 if fully occupied
- Adjust for 85% occupancy → €180,000 × 0.85 = €153,000 per month
- Annual revenue → €153,000 × 12 = €1,836,000 per year

**Impact of 1% leakage reduction:**

1% of €1,836,000 = €18,360 added to profit (NOI) per year

## Maintenance & Key Costs

**Problem:** Lost keys, lock repairs, and manual check-ins are recurring operational expenses in traditional self-storage facilities.

**Solution:** With smartphone app-based digital access, these processes are fully automated:

- Lost keys are eliminated entirely.
- Lock replacements caused by lost keys are eliminated.
- Manual check-ins are no longer required.

**Impact on mid-sized facility (300 units):** ~€1,000/year savings

**Impact on larger chain (1,500 units):** ~€5,000/year savings

Automation removes recurring key and check-in costs, freeing staff to focus on higher-value tasks and boosting NOI.

# Scenario 4: Customer Experience & Conversion

A smooth move-in doesn't just delight tenants. It fills units faster and keeps occupancy where it belongs.

Digital access doesn't just improve operations, but it also removes friction from the customer journey. A smoother booking and move-in process can directly increase conversion rates and occupancy.

## Conversion Improvement

**Problem:** manual processes, limited opening hours, and key handovers can delay or block move-ins.

**Solution:** Digital access enables instant, self-service move-ins, including after-hours.

**Realistic assumption:**

- 2 additional move-ins per month due to reduced friction
- Average rent: €120/month

**Example facility (300 units):**

- 2 extra move-ins × €120 × 12 months → €2,880 additional annual revenue

**Larger facility (500 units):**

- 3 extra move-ins × €120 × 12 months → €4,320 additional annual revenue

## Reduced Friction means Increased Revenue

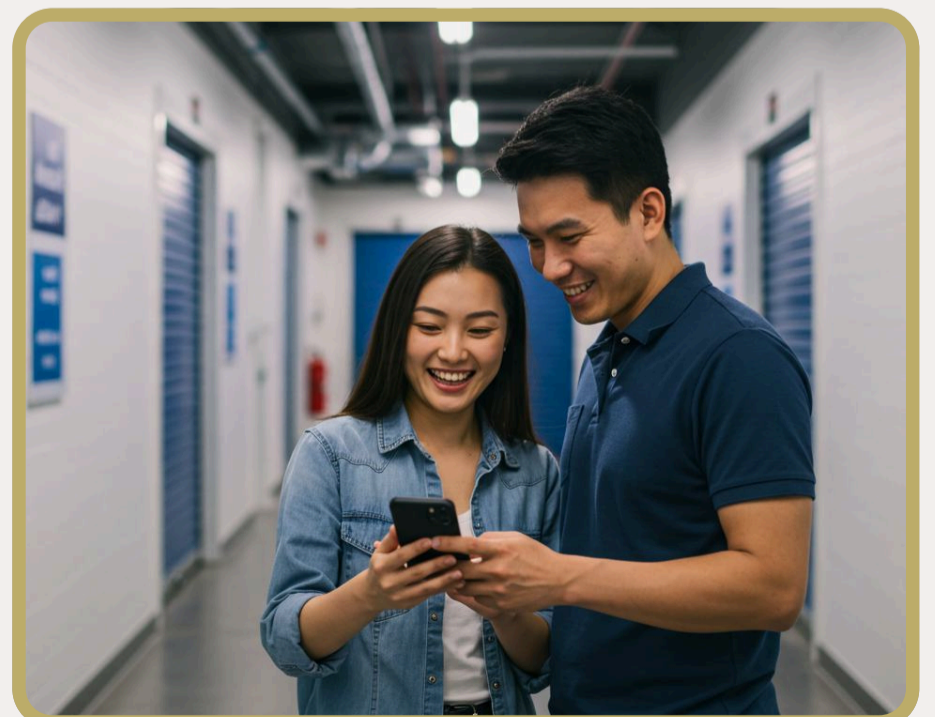
Small friction reductions have an outsized impact precisely because they affect both occupancy and retention simultaneously. Every additional move-in captures revenue that would otherwise be lost to a competitor, while every satisfied tenant represents avoided churn. Together, these effects quietly build a higher baseline occupancy – and a stronger foundation for everything in the NOI summary that follows.

## Impact on Customer Experience

- No lost keys or waiting times
- 24/7 access improves flexibility
- Better experience, which means higher retention and more positive reviews

**Tip:** Reducing friction in the booking and move-in process is one of the simplest ways to increase occupancy without increasing marketing spend.

The CBRE & FEDESSA European Self Storage Industry Report (2025) highlights a clear shift toward digital-first customer behaviour. Younger customers in particular are driving this trend, with continued growth in online bookings and app usage year-on-year.



# Scenario 5: Total NOI Impact & Scaling

Small wins across operations, revenue and efficiency. Compounded over time, they add up to a transformed facility.

When combined, all these small improvements create a meaningful financial impact on your facility. Staffing becomes more efficient. Move-ins happen faster. Revenue leakage closes. Premium features sell themselves. None of these changes is dramatic on its own – but operators who implement digital access don't just benefit from one of them. They benefit from all of them, simultaneously, from day one.

## Total Annual NOI Impact for a Facility With 300 Units

Scenario	Impact on NOI (EUR per year)
Staffing optimisation	10,000
Premium access & acceleration	~8,000 - 12,000
Revenue leakage & maintenance	4,672
Conversion improvement	2,880
<b>Total</b>	<b>~25,000 - 30,000</b>

## What This Means for Your Facility

- Even modest improvements can generate €25k+ additional NOI annually
- These gains come from multiple small optimisations, not one big change
- Digital access impacts both the revenue and cost sides of your business

### How This Scales

As your number of units or sites grows, the impact increases proportionally:

- 300 units: ~€25k - 30k/year
- 500 units: ~€40k - 50k/year
- Multi-site portfolios: significantly higher combined impact

The real value of digital access comes from compounding effects, with small gains across operations, revenue and efficiency that add up over time.

# Conclusion & Next Steps

The numbers are clear. The next step is yours.  
Let's build the case for your facility together.

## How can you continue from here?

Starting a self-storage business – or optimising one – involves more decisions than most people anticipate. The right technology, the right software, the right operational model. Getting these right from the start is significantly easier than fixing them later, when your competitors have already moved.

**That's exactly what a consultation with Sensorberg is for.**

- Map out what your facility needs – from partitions to access control software to operations
- Identify the partners and providers that fit your market and scale
- Get a clear, realistic picture of what modern, efficient self-storage looks like for your situation

**Book a free consultation – no commitment, no hard sell.**



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