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SMART LOCKER BUYER'S GUIDE

A practical framework for evaluating, selecting and implementing smart locker solutions

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Introduction

WHY SMART LOCKERS MATTER NOW

Smart lockers are no longer a "nice to have" or a niche solution used only in high-end office environments. They've quickly become a practical response to a much larger shift in how organizations handle physical deliveries, asset exchanges and internal distribution.

Over the past several years, package volume has increased across nearly every industry. What used to be occasional deliveries has turned into a steady, daily flow. At the same time, workplace dynamics have changed. Hybrid work, decentralized teams and extended hours of operation have made it harder to rely on traditional handoff methods like front desks or centralized mailrooms.

Most organizations didn't proactively design a system to handle this shift. Instead, they adapted as volume increased. Packages were stacked in back rooms. Staff were pulled away from core responsibilities to manage deliveries. Manual logs or spreadsheets were introduced to keep track of items. Over time, these temporary solutions became the standard operating model.

That model is now showing its limits. Lost packages, lack of visibility, security concerns, and constant interruptions are no longer small inconveniences. **They're operational challenges that impact productivity, employee experience, and in some cases, customer satisfaction.**

Smart lockers address these issues, but not simply by adding secure storage. They introduce structure, automation, and accountability into a process that has historically been informal and reactive.**Organizations that approach smart lockers as part of a broader operational strategy, and not just a piece of equipment, are seeing the greatest impact.**

This guide is designed to help you evaluate smart locker solutions through that lens, so you can make a decision that improves not just package storage, but the entire workflow around it.

The Problem

WHY TRADITIONAL PACKAGE MANAGEMENT BREAKS DOWN

Most package handling processes weren't built for the volume we see today. They were built for occasional deliveries. A few packages here and there. Something that could easily be managed alongside other responsibilities. That's not the reality anymore. Now you have multiple deliveries a day, sometimes dozens. And the process usually looks something like this:

The Traditional Package Process

Looks Simple.
Works poorly.

1 Packages are presented to whoever is available.

No clear ownership of accountability, or identity verification.

2 They're placed in a designated area, or left unattended.

Items sit around and pile up creating delays and clutter.

3 Someone might log them manually.

Tracking depends on staff volunteering their time and is prone to error.

4 Then the recipient is notified, if there's time.

Notifications may be sent late, or not at all.

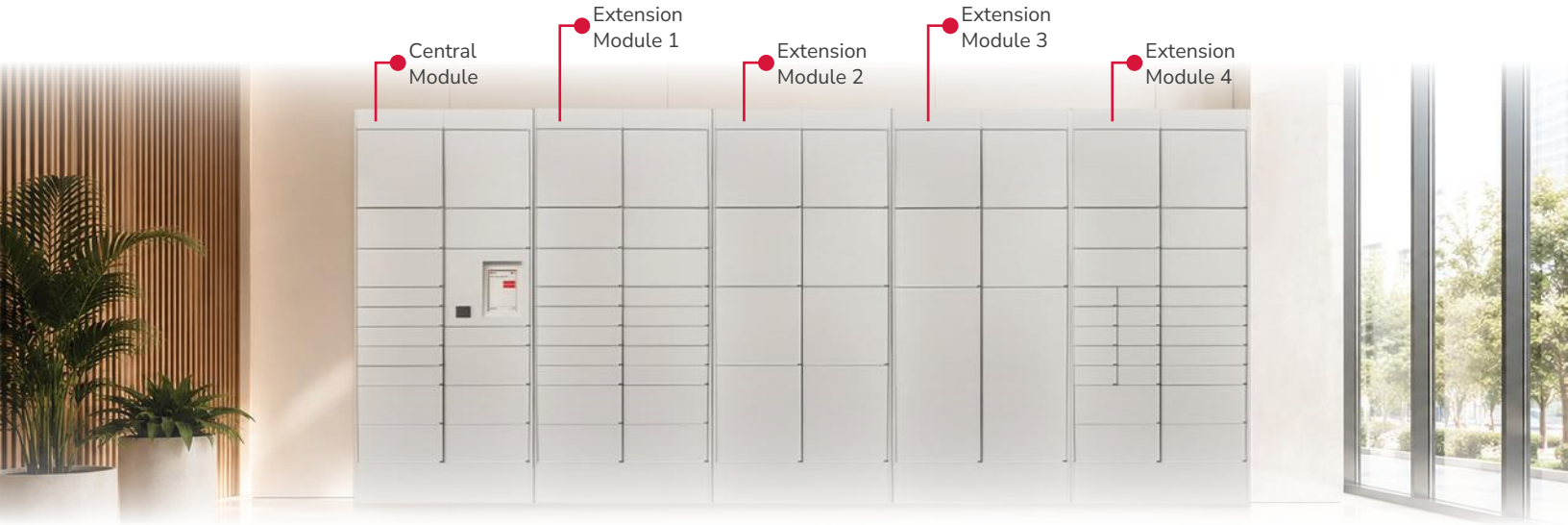
WHAT THIS CREATES

- Delayed Or Overlooked Packages
- Frequent Staff Interruptions
- Overflowing Storage Area
- Limited Visibilty Of Package Delivery And Pickup Status

Solution Review

WHAT IS A SMART LOCKER SYSTEM?

At a basic level, a smart locker system is a secure, self-service storage solution that allows authorized users to deposit and retrieve items without requiring direct staff involvement. But that definition only captures part of what makes these systems valuable. A complete smart locker solution is made up of two key components: the physical locker infrastructure and the software platform that manages it.



Physical Locker Infrastructure

The hardware includes the locker compartments themselves, which come in various sizes and configurations to accommodate different types of items and workflows. These lockers may be installed indoors or outdoors and are typically modular, allowing organizations to scale capacity as demand grows. Many can be wrapped to help integrate the lockers into the enviroment.

Software Platform

The software is what transforms lockers from static storage into an operational tool. It controls access, tracks activity, automates communication, assigns compartments, notifies recipients, provides secure access credentials, and records each transaction to create a complete chain of custody.

This combination of hardware and software removes the need for manual intervention in most delivery and pickup scenarios. Staff no longer need to sign for packages, notify recipients individually, or manage handoffs. Users can retrieve items on their own schedule, which is especially valuable in environments with extended hours or limited staffing.

More advanced systems go further by integrating with existing platforms such as HR systems, student databases, or carrier networks. This allows for automated user management, streamlined workflows, and deeper visibility into how the system is being used.

HOW SMART LOCKERS ARE USED

One of the reasons smart lockers have taken off is because they're flexible. The same system can solve very different problems depending on where it's used.

Offices

In an office, the focus is usually on employee deliveries. Instead of packages stacking up at the front desk, they're placed directly into lockers and assigned to the recipient. Employees get notified and pick them up when it's convenient.

Schools

In schools, the use case expands. It could be student packages, library materials, or even shared equipment like laptops. The added benefit here is access outside of normal hours, which takes pressure off staff.

Residential

In residential buildings, lockers help manage a constant flow of deliveries. Carriers can drop packages into lockers directly, and residents are notified immediately. It keeps common areas clear and reduces the risk of theft.

Healthcare

Healthcare environments can use lockers for secure medication deilvery or for asset managment. They're often tied to controlled access. Staff can retrieve supplies or equipment as needed, without relying on someone to distribute them.

The common thread in all of these is simple. You're taking something that used to require a person to manage and turning it into a self-service experience.

TYPES OF SMART LOCKER SOLUTIONS

Not all smart lockers are the same and this is where buyers sometimes get tripped up. At a high level, you'll see differences in how lockers are designed and where they're meant to be used. There are also differences in how they scale. Modular systems allow you to add more compartments over time, which is helpful if you're not sure how demand will grow. Fixed systems are more static and require more upfront planning.

Weatherproof Lockers

Some locker systems are designed for outdoor or semi-outdoor environments. These systems need to do more than provide secure storage. They also need to hold up against changing weather conditions, temperature shifts and heavier day-to-day use. Weatherproof lockers are useful when indoor space is limited, when users need access outside normal building hours, or when deliveries need to be handled in an exterior location. The important thing is making sure the system is built for the environment it will actually be placed in.

Indoor Lockers

Indoor lockers are usually the most straightforward option. They're designed for controlled environments like offices, schools, residential buildings and healthcare facilities, where the system does not need to account for direct weather exposure. The focus is usually on convenience, security and making the delivery or pickup process easier to manage day to day. If packages, supplies or assets are currently being handled by staff, indoor lockers can help turn that process into something more consistent and self-service.

Temperature Controlled Lockers

Temperature Controlled lockers are used when items need to stay cold or hot until they are picked up. These are most common in grocery, food service, healthcare or other situations where temperature-sensitive items are being stored for a short period of time. Not every organization needs these lockers, but they are worth understanding if managing temperature is part of the delivery or pickup process.

Then there's the question of use. Some lockers are optimized for packages of varying sizes. Others are better suited for asset management, where items are more consistent and tracking is more important than size flexibility. The right option depends less on what looks best and more on how you plan to use it day to day.

THE SMART LOCKER USER JOURNEY

1

Access Locker

User authenticates using a code, app, badge, or other secure method. The Software verifies access and begins the transaction record.

2

Deliver Or Store Item

Item is placed in an available locker. The locker/software assigns the compartment, records the delivery, and creates a searchable record.

3

Recipient Alert

The Locker sends an instant notification with pickup details, delivery status, and secure access credentials.

4

Self-Service Pickup

Recipient authenticates, opens the locker, and retrieves the item. The Locker records pickup for proof of delivery and audit trail.

CORE FEATURES TO EVALUATE

Once you understand the types of lockers available, the next step is looking at features.

Access Options

Access is one of the first things to consider. How will people retrieve their items? PIN codes are common, but many systems also support QR codes, badges, or mobile apps.

Integrations

Integration is worth paying attention to as well. If the locker system can connect with your existing systems, it reduces manual work and keeps everything more aligned.

Notifications

Notifications matter more than people expect. A system that reliably alerts users and sends reminders can make a big difference in how quickly items are picked up.

Tracking And Reporting

You want to know when something was delivered, when it was picked up, and who accessed it. That level of visibility helps with both accountability and reporting.

Accessibility

Optional add-ons like speakers are available to increase accesability for visually impaired users. Motion sensor lights also make the locker easier to access at all hours.

Security Hardware

Cameras for surveilance or biometric verification can be used for the most secure enviroments where additional measures are needed.

The goal here is not to chase every feature. It's to focus on what will actually make your process smoother.

Understanding this distinction between hardware and software is critical when evaluating solutions. While many locker systems may appear similar physically, the capabilities of the software platform often determine how much operational value the system will actually deliver.

WHAT DRIVES COST

Cost is one of the first questions that comes up, but it's not always straightforward. There are a few factors that tend to have the biggest impact. Understanding these drivers helps you evaluate quotes more accurately and avoid surprises later.

Locker Configuration

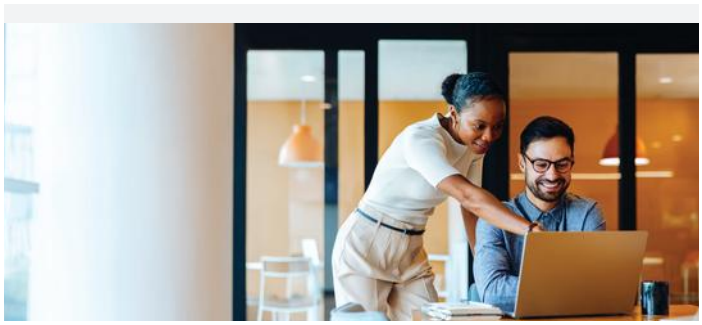
The size and configuration of the locker system is a major one. More compartments, locker wraps, and outdoor or secure setups will naturally increase the cost.

Software Capabilities

Software also plays a role. Basic systems may cover the essentials, while more advanced programs offer more tracking, integrations, and automation.

Installation Environments

Installation can vary depending on the environment. Indoor setups are usually more straightforward, while outdoor installations will require additional up front costs.



Service And Subscriptions

Do you need to pay for ongoing support, software or yearly maintenance? Whats included in these costs and who is available to help you moving forward?

TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

Looking at upfront cost only tells part of the story. Total cost of ownership gives you a better picture of what the system will actually cost over time, and what value it delivers in return.

On the cost side, you have the initial investment, software subscriptions, and any ongoing support or maintenance. On the value side, you start to see savings in areas like labor. Staff are no longer spending time managing packages. There's less need for additional storage space. And fewer items are lost or misplaced.

There's also the impact on experience. People get their items faster. They don't have to track someone down or wait for assistance. That may not show up as a line item, but it does matter.

When you look at both sides together, the decision becomes less about cost and more about overall efficiency.

Implementation

WHAT TO EXPECT

Putting in a smart locker system is not just about installing hardware.

There's some upfront planning involved. You'll want to think about where the lockers will go, how people will access them, and how deliveries will be handled.

Installation itself is usually straightforward, especially for indoor setups.

After that, the focus shifts to getting people comfortable with the system. That might include basic training or simple communication so users know what to expect.

The smoother the rollout, the faster you start seeing the benefits.

1

Complete A Needs Assessment

Start by filling out a customer questionnaire with your sales representative. This helps identify your current pain points, goals, and what you need the system to solve.

2

Order Your Custom Solution And Prepare For Installation

Once your solution is selected, your sales representative will walk you through the next steps and let you know if any construction or site preparation is needed before installation.

3

Prepare The Site And Plan Integrations

If software integrations are needed, this is when that process begins. Any required physical preparation, such as concrete slab work, should also be completed before the system is installed.

4

Install The System And Connect Software

Your team will install the locker system and connect it to your software as needed, helping make sure the hardware and platform are ready to work together.

5

Train Your Team And Track Results

After installation, the focus shifts to helping your team feel comfortable with the system. From there, you can begin tracking usage, efficiency gains, and overall return on investment.

Next Steps

GETTING STARTED

If you're starting to think about how a smart locker system could fit into your organization, the next step is simple. Have a conversation.

Talk through your current process. Look at where things are working and where they're not. From there, it becomes much easier to determine what kind of solution makes sense.

And if it turns out a smart locker system is the right fit, you'll move forward with a clear understanding of what it will actually do for you.

Questions to Ask Before You Buy

- Does this system fit how we actually operate today?
- Will it scale as our needs grow?
- How easy is it for people to use without assistance?
- What level of visibility do we get into what's happening?
- What kind of support is available if we need help?
- Are locker wraps available to help integrate the lockers into your enviroments?

WHY PARTNER WITH FP

Choosing a smart locker system is not just about the product. It's about the experience you have working with the company behind it.

At FP, the focus is on making sure the solution fits your operation, not the other way around.

That means taking the time to understand how you handle deliveries today, where the friction points are, and what success looks like for your team.

Consultative Approach

We start with your workflow, not our product.

Right Solution Fit

We match the right solution to your needs.

Experienced Team

Decades of expertise in secure technology solutions.

Ongoing Support

We're here long after installation.

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