

THE CONVERGENCE OF MOVING AND STORAGE

The Mobile Industry Provides A New Recipe For Competition

by Rod Bolls



The business of the moving industry and the storage industry has long been considered quite different from each another. One business moves goods and one business stores goods. The emergence of the portable storage and moving industry over the past 10 years has definitely increased the competitive levels among all three industries. Add in the impact of the recent economic recession and you begin to formulate a new recipe for competition and

interactions among these industries. I believe that these industries have more in common than one might imagine. Currently, they are headed down a path of convergence with the eventual meeting place in the very near future vis-à-vis the portable storage container.

These industries all share the same basic tenets: convenience of space, quality in service, and innovative vehicles. A moving company is a

company that helps people or businesses move their goods from one place to another. A storage business is a business that provides space for people or businesses to store and access their goods. The importance of space comes in common forms, whether it is a storage facility, moving van, portable storage container, special containerized van, ocean shipping container, or storage vaults that are all quite typical throughout these industries. To provide a few examples of how this occurs; a self-storage operator that utilizes a moving van, or a moving company that utilizes a portable storage container, or a portable storage company that utilizes its containers as static self-storage. The idea here is that there are commonly shared methods of renting space tangled between these industries.

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The convenience in service exists in these industries as "do it yourself" or "DIY", which is when people independently complete the job without the aid of professionals. This is quite common in the portable storage and moving with containerized moving solutions, allowing people to order a container and have it dropped off at their request to the location of their choice. Once they finish packing the container, it is picked up and moved to their desired location. The self-storage industry is short for "self-service storage" with people loading up their cars and trucks with goods to store and access when it is convenient for them to do so. The convergence theme here is "DIY," whether it is in portable storage and moving, self-storage, or moving industries.

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The economic recession is causing even greater convergence among these industries. In the moving industry, a full-service move is generally considered more expensive when compared with containerized moving solutions. A key difference between the two options is that much of the liability falls on the customer versus the company when utilizing the "DIY" containerized moving service. This gives reason for movers to seriously look at alternatives that are less involved and expensive when compared with full-service moving. The self-storage industry has seen recent

developments with add-on buildings or portable storage containers that are added to their existing facilities. This is mainly due to the fact that utilizing a portable storage container is considerably less construction cost, time, and capital investment when compared with traditional methods of building self-storage facilities.

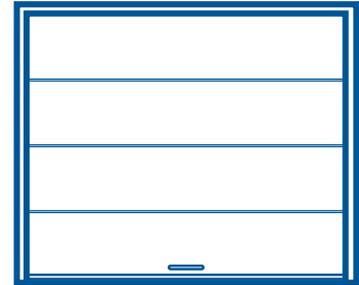
The innovative vehicle that brings these industries even closer together and becomes the key element for convergence is the portable storage container. There are two main types of portable storage containers in the industry. The first type is the ISO shipping container, which are widely available as either new or used in the marketplace. The most common sizes are 20 or 40 feet long, and eight feet wide and eight feet high. The ISO shipping container is primarily used in the shipping industry; however, it is commonly utilized in self-storage and portable storage and moving industries. The empty weight of a 20-foot-long ISO shipping container is 4,850 pounds, and a 40-foot ISO shipping container is 8,380 pounds.

The second type of portable storage container are the mobile self-storage containers, which are primarily available as new containers in the marketplace. The most common sizes are 12, 16, 19 or 20 feet, eight feet wide and eight feet high. The mobile self-storage container is primarily used in the portable storage and moving industry. The empty weight of mobile self-storage containers vary depending on materials used in its construction, type of wall panels, and other features. The average weight of the 16-foot long is 2,500 pounds and the 20-foot container is 3,000 pounds.

In my opinion, the portable storage container must possess a few key elements before it can become the innovative solution utilized throughout these industries. It is assumed that the portable storage container

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will be completely waterproof, wind resistant, stackable, collapsible, secure, quickly assembled and disassembled, lightweight, and aesthetically pleasing. The portable storage container must be capable of being utilized in a static self-storage environment in various sizes, colors, and surfaces to the self-storage operator's liking. And the same portable storage container must be capable of "mobilization" from a static self-storage environment into a portable storage and moving environment in minutes. For this to take place, a critical feature is for the portable storage container to be assembled and disassembled quickly using only a couple of people and commonly found tools and equipment.

The portable storage container will already possess the various fittings required for portable storage delivery vehicles with internal tie-downs, signage, removable wheels, and

have the ability to be dropped off and picked up at any location at any time. The same portable storage container must be the correct size, giving it the capability of being transported long distances or across continents inside of moving vans, ocean shipping containers, or

Once the portable storage container reaches its destination, it can be quickly disassembled and stacked when empty to allow for better utilization of space and freight relocation costs when repositioning assets.

flat beds. Once the portable storage container reaches its destination, it can be quickly disassembled and stacked when empty to allow for better utilization of space and freight relocation costs when repositioning assets. Finally, the container can be quickly re-assembled and returned to either a static self-storage environment, or continue to be utilized as a containerized moving solution for a moving company or portable storage company. ■

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