

Unpredictable logistics create urgent need for space at Norfolk Leisure

“Smart-Space helped us to respond to and prepare for significant change in the leisure sector”

A combination of several disruptive factors has recently created new challenges for Norfolk Leisure. The business is a key player in the outdoor living sector and supplies garden furniture, outdoor heaters, barbecue equipment and other popular outdoor items across the UK.

The company had to adapt to meet the changing needs of its garden centre customers as they were dramatically affected by the pandemic. Closure and limited reopening, followed by one of the busiest seasons ever experienced in the garden centre sector, Norfolk Leisure was very keen to respond well. Brexit and its ensuing supply chain issues also had a big effect on how and when stock was delivered to Norfolk Leisure's Kings Lynn depot.

“There are a number of other issues that have made the management of supply and demand less fluid than usual but, above all, unpredictability is the main challenge for us” explained Commercial Manager, Spencer Harnwell. “The demand for garden furniture is off the scale as people are more likely to meet outside, gardens were a lockdown focus for many,



The Smart-Space temporary building provides immediate warehousing for unpredictable delivery dates and product volumes.

the hospitality sector is enjoying an outdoor boost in custom (whatever the weather) and holidays abroad continue to be less attractive”

As Spencer considered how best to move forward - supporting customers, growing the business and ensuring they were able to operate efficiently - he contacted Jamie Southam, Business

“Jamie always responds straightaway”

Manager at Smart-Space who was able to provide options for storage and solutions for the immediate and longer term. "Jamie was great - he always responded instantly with everything happening exactly as promised".

Smart-Space took care of the groundwork and Norfolk Leisure added its own drainage system to ensure that their products were completely weatherproof. The teams there have commented on how much warmer the temporary building is than their main warehouse! The inflatable PVC panels provide an effective level of light, airy working space together with good protection from the inclement British weather.

A pre-build health and safety meeting ensured that all regulations were comfortably met and the build went very smoothly. The new building now houses the equivalent of ten 20 ft containers which means Norfolk Leisure has a tidier site and its stored contents are so much more easy to locate. This is especially key as most of their products are large, bulky items.

"The Smart-Space guys work like clockwork and that's not something you can ever take for granted"

Spencer Harnwell

Commercial Director, Norfolk Leisure

Key to Norfolk Leisure's future planning is the ability to work with the continuing uncertainty of supply conditions. The new warehouse is working out so well that a second building is currently in planning. "It serves us to be ready to accept deliveries throughout the year, even when garden centres aren't taking stock, and that's where our affordable extra space comes into play" said Spencer.

Norfolk Leisure already has two huge, permanent warehouses covering 1.25 acres of ground. The additional space provided by Smart-Space will be ideal for accepting deliveries whenever they can be made. It gives the company the ability to flex around market conditions and operate effectively despite the seasonal nature of its products.

