6 steps to choosing the right locker management system

A complete guide to asking the right questions

nedap

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About Nedap Security Management

Part of Nedap, a Dutch multinational technology company listed on the
Euronext stock exchange since 1949, Nedap Security Management is a leader
in the design and manufacturing of electronic access control systems having
introduced the first fully web-based IP based security system in 2000.

Security for life is Nedap Security Management's dedicated offering, as one of
the first companies to view security systems as IT systems.

Introduction

Whether you need hundreds or thousands of lockers, selecting the right **locker management system** can bring a **host of benefits**. Ranging from increased efficiency, convenience and productivity to improved security, compliance and sustainability – not to mention savings on space and costs.

But how do you know what to look for in a locker management system to make sure it suits your needs?

Consider the value locker management can bring

The steps in this guide will help you to first work out what you want from a locker management system, and maybe uncover opportunities and benefits you've not yet considered.
To get the best value, consider your organisation's long-term vision and think beyond storage for personal belongings. Work environments are more agile than ever, so now is prime time to rethink how your people will be using your office space. Smarter workspaces now call for smarter storage.

And, to help future-proof your investment, assess which other systems your locker management could be integrated with – from physical access control to your HR system and more.
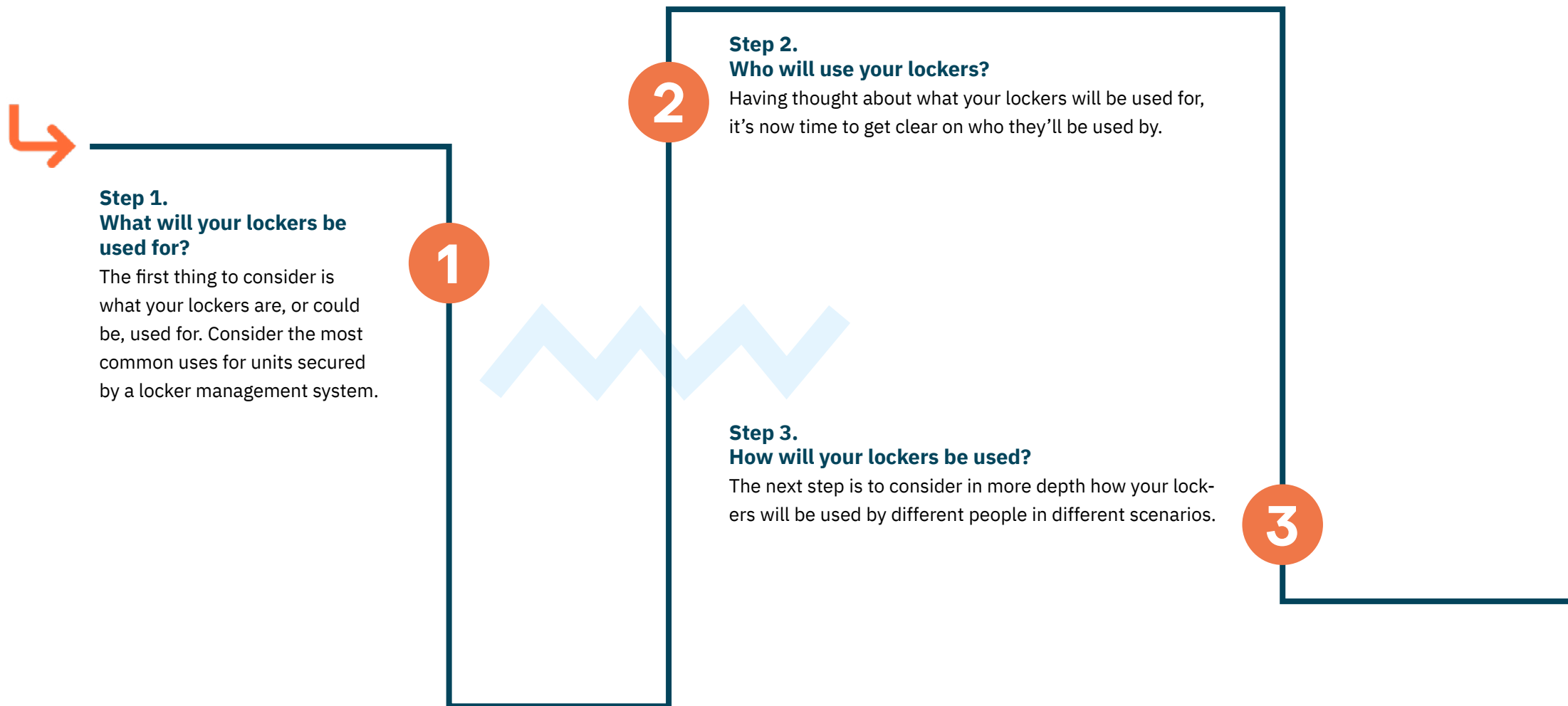
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Consult widely and involve suppliers early

We always recommend consulting with a range of stakeholders to ensure you select a locker management system that's right for your whole organisation. This could include representatives from senior management, IT, security, reception, HR, facilities management, and employees as a whole.

As you're working through the steps below, it might also be helpful to talk to other organisations about their locker management for inspiration. And never be afraid to contact **locker management system suppliers** early in the process. The right supplier should be happy to partner with you in working out your requirements and guiding you through the planning and decision making. So that, ultimately, you end up with a locker management system that meets all your needs regarding operation, space, cost, usability, security and aesthetics.

6 Steps

Step 1.
What will your lockers be used for?

The first thing to consider is what your lockers are, or could be, used for. Consider the most common uses for units secured by a locker management system.

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Step 2.
Who will use your lockers?

Having thought about what your lockers will be used for, it's now time to get clear on who they'll be used by.

Step 3.
How will your lockers be used?

The next step is to consider in more depth how your lockers will be used by different people in different scenarios.

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Step 4.
**How will your lockers
be secured?**
Another important consideration
is how your lockers will be
secured – both in terms of how
they'll be locked and unlocked
and how the system itself will be
protected.

Step 5.
**What will help you get more value from locker
management?**
Now you're getting a clear idea of what you're looking for
from locker management, it's time to consider what capa-
bilities will help you achieve your goals. And what could
bring added value.

Step 6.
Create a plan of requirements
By going through the questions above, and
discussing needs, wants and opportunities
with stakeholders and other organisations, you
should have arrived at a wish list for your locker
management system.

Step 1. What will your lockers be used for?

The first thing to consider is what your lockers are, or could be, used for. Here are four of the most popular uses for units secured by a locker management system.

1. Secure storage for personal items

This is the most obvious use, and it's certainly seen a sharp increase in line with the post-pandemic rise in **hybrid working** and **"hot desking"**—employees without a permanent desk need somewhere safe to store their things.

Another instance when you may have to provide lockers for personal items is if people need to change their clothes while on your premises. Or leave behind valuables like mobile phones or jewellery, or bulky items like coats, rucksacks or helmets.

2. Secure storage for communal items

Some locker management systems let you secure an unlimited number and variety of storage spaces, which opens a wide range of possibilities.

You may, for example, have:
- Filing cabinets containing valuable or confidential data
- Post boxes
- Medicine cabinets
- Laptop storage
- Cabinets for dangerous substances
- Cupboards for team or project materials

All of these can be secured by a locker management system, so you can limit access to specified people at specified times. And, if the system enables it, track who accessed them and when.

3. Asset management

Assets such as laptops, handheld scanners, medical equipment and construction tools are too valuable to leave lying around. With the right locker management system, you don't need someone available to check them in and out. You can authorise who can borrow which assets when and produce reports on their usage.

4. Drop-off & pick-up

Do you need to manage a drop-off and pick-up service for couriers, IT repairs, out-of-hours collections and so on? This is another potential use for your locker management system.

Step 2. Who will use your lockers?

Having thought about what your lockers will be used for, it's now time to get clear on who they'll be used by.

Break it down with detailed analysis

In general terms, user groups are usually employees, contractors and visitors or customers. But it's helpful to do a more detailed user analysis and break this down further into user categories. This will help you consider the needs of each so you can then determine what you need from your locker management system.

In a hospital, for example, a nurse will have different storage needs from an office worker. In a school, a 5-year-old will have different storage needs from an 11-year-old and a history teacher will have different needs from a PE teacher. And a contractor with a manual trade will have different storage needs from a desk-based contractor, etc.

Questions to guide you

To help you work out what each category of people is likely to need, consider the following questions:

1 Will they be based in once place or moving around?

2 What equipment or baggage are they likely to bring with them?

3 Might they need extra storage on some days but not others?

4 Will they be getting changed during their visit?

5 For how long will they typically need a locker and on which days?

6 Will they need access to lockers outside of standard hours?

7 What communal items will they need to access?

8 Do they have any special accessibility requirements – for example wheelchair users?

Step 3. How will your lockers be used?

The next step is to consider in more depth how your lockers will be used by different people in different scenarios.

**Permanent lockers or dynamic use?**

An important question to consider if you're providing lockers for personal items, for example, is will you supply one locker per person? Or will you look to use your lockers more flexibly?

Providing a permanent, personal locker for each employee, plus spare lockers for visitors and contractors, is expensive and requires lots of space. Dynamic locker use, where people simply select a locker that's available on each visit, means you need fewer lockers overall. It also increases convenience for the people using them because they can choose a locker in a location and position that suits them for that day.

24/7 or restricted availability?

Another way to minimise the number of lockers you need is by not making lockers available to everyone 24/7. Instead, you can restrict access so people can only use a locker during their shift, for example.

Reducing the number of lockers you have not only gives opportunities to save space and money – it helps to increase sustainability too, because you're using fewer materials and less electricity.
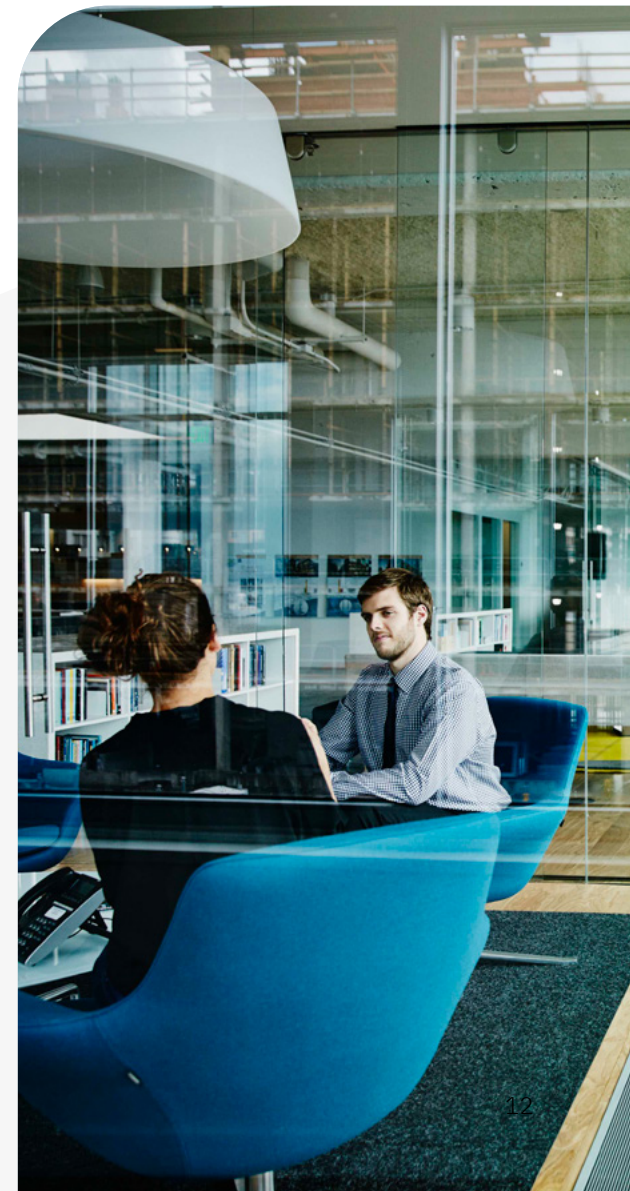
What are the exceptions?

Other things to think about at this stage are the exceptions to the rules. A good benchmark is to aim for 80% of your lockers to be standardised and 20% to be given over to specific requirements and exceptional circumstances. If, for example, some colleagues arrive by motorbike and need a large or second locker to store their helmet, this should be set aside as an exception. Then the majority of your lockers won't be specified unnecessarily large.

Where will your lockers be housed?

Consider whether your lockers and other lockable storage will be housed in one place or across a wide spread of locations. And will there be different needs and rules for different locations?

What benefits could flexible storage management bring?

A good locker management system can help you address all of the above. Not only by increasing the variety of lockable storage you can use, but by letting you determine who has access to which storage space, at which times and under which circumstances.

Some locker management systems will give you total flexibility, so you can do all the following, for example, and much more:

- Authorise employees, visitors, customers and contractors to use lockers in a range of different ways.
- Assign specific lockers to people or allow them to choose which they use each day.
- Assign lockers to teams as well as to individuals.
- Authorise how many lockers someone can use per location, building, city or country.
- Define when, or for how long, lockers can be used, or set no time limits for some or all lockers or users.
- Export loan and return data to create reports and visualise information.
- Assign a group of lockers to a supervisor, so they can manage who uses them.

Step 4. How will your lockers be secured?

Another important consideration is how your lockers will be secured – both in terms of how they'll be locked and unlocked and how the system itself will be protected.

How will people lock and unlock your lockers?

Traditional lockers are secured by basic, non-electronic components such as keys, coins or padlocks. But carrying keys and fiddling with manual locks is inconvenient. They often break and people regularly forget or lose keys, which gives administrators the hassle of resolving the issue.

A modern high-quality locker management system that runs on your IP network should give you the flexibility and functionalities mentioned above. It will let you use electronic locks, so people can use access control ID, such as a card, fob or badge, to unlock and lock your storage spaces and lockers.

More advanced systems also allow people to access and secure storage spaces using biometric identification, such as facial or fingerprint recognition. Or a virtual credential on their smartphone or printed QR code, which is particularly useful for visitors, as they can be issued remotely before they arrive.

Look for increased user convenience and security

Using this kind of identification to operate lockers is much more convenient for users. It means you can let them use the same ID card, for example, to access external and internal doors, as well as lockers and other secure storage. It also helps to increase security because you can instantly revoke access rights if a card gets lost. When a key gets lost, you either have to hope it doesn't fall into the wrong hands or replace the key or lock itself.

This issue of user convenience is important to bear in mind when considering the support offered by locker management systems too. No one wants to be queuing at terminals or following complex instructions. So choose a system that makes lockers simple to access and provides easy-to-use information points to help users if they need support.

Tamper-proof and cybersecure

Convenience isn't the only consideration, of course, when it comes to deciding how your lockers will be operated. Security is an obvious priority too, so you need to ensure the locker management system you choose offers the right level of security for your needs.

If you opt for a modern IP-based system to give the functionalities and flexibility you're looking for, it's important to ensure the platform itself is secured, as well as the individual locks. Make sure the platform is cybersecure to prevent it being overridden by hackers. And check that each lock is tamper proof and has a tamper sensor.

Our locker management system takes this a step further by allowing you to set up your locks in transparent mode, so decryption keys aren't stored in the locks. And so aren't easily accessible to hackers.

For this aspect of your planning and decision making, it's crucial to consult your ICT team and collaborate on a plan for cybersecurity, cabling and identification technologies.
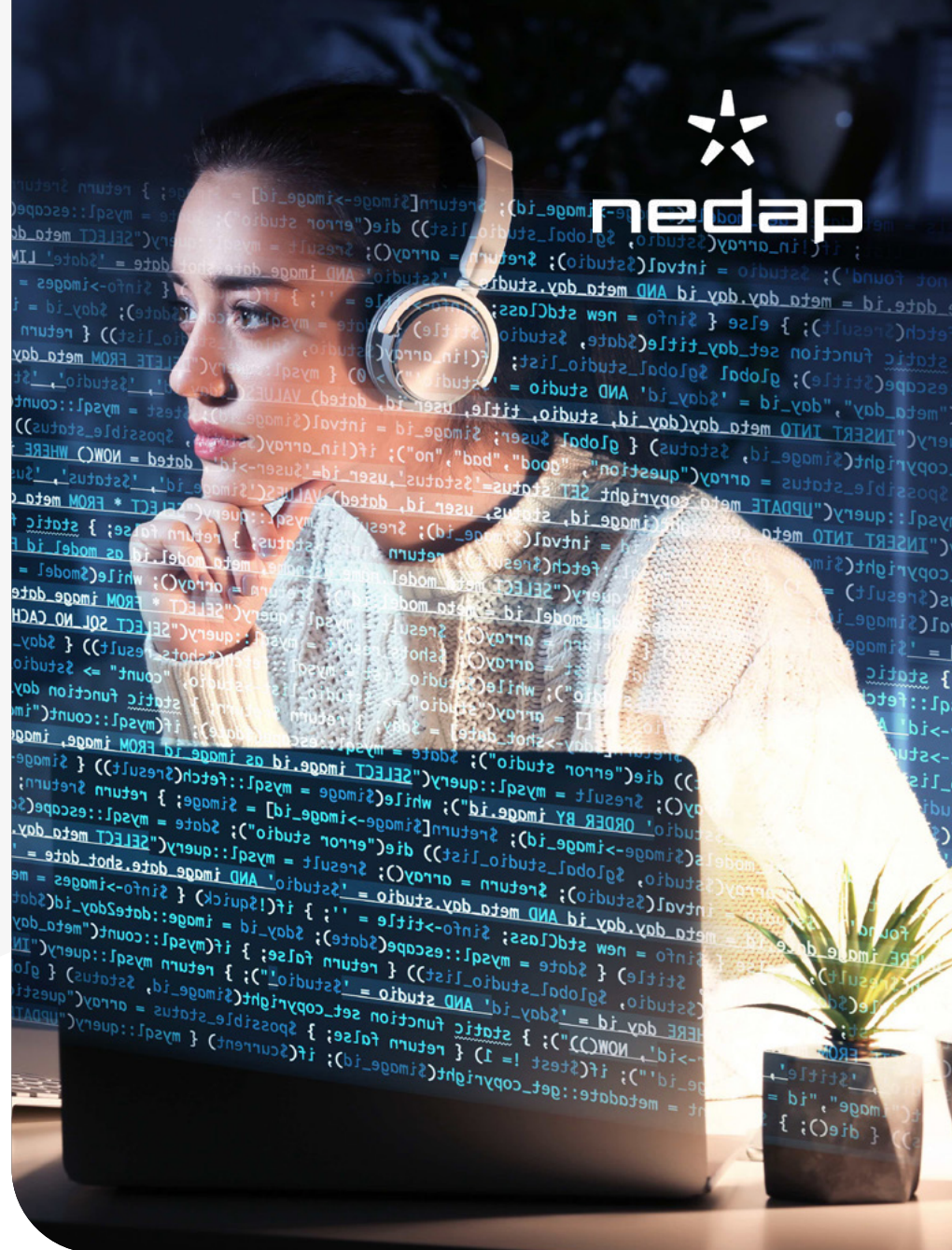
Step 5. What will help you get more value from locker management?

Now you're getting a clear idea of what you're looking for from locker management, it's time to consider what capabilities will help you achieve your goals. And what could bring added value.

Remote, centralised control

Managing vast numbers of lockers and storage spaces can be a time-consuming headache. A system that enables you to manage your lockers remotely and centrally can simplify the process and improve workflows and efficiency.

If your locker management system can be operated via a mobile device, that adds even more value. It enables administrators to respond quickly to requests and incidents and keep everything streamlined, easily making changes and providing support, as and when needed.

Integration with physical access control

If you can integrate your locker management system with your physical access control system, it helps to increase security, efficiency and convenience by extending your access control principles to your lockers. If, for example, someone's only authorised to be in a building during their shift, you can set your system so they can only use a locker during their shift too.

It means people can use the same identifier (such as a badge) to open doors, barriers, lockers and more. And you can use the same functionalities for lockers and other storage spaces as for doors. This may include, for example, group settings and time schedules.

It also allows you to stay in close control. If, for example, someone's physical access rights are blocked, you can instantly and automatically block their locker.

Integration with other systems

Integrating your locker management system with other systems such as HR, visitor management and facilities management also adds value. It allows you to easily assign access to lockers and storage according to each person's role, department, shift pattern, contract length and more. And it means you can reduce mistakes and save time by avoiding duplication and centralising tasks.

Data and reporting

A locker management system that has [powerful tracking and reporting functionalities](#) can offer data that's easy to access and interpret. This helps you to:

- Keep close control of access by seeing who's used which locker and when – particularly helpful if there's an incident.
- Analyse how your storage spaces are being used and make well-informed, data-driven decisions about them.
- Monitor your storage spaces in real time, so you can provide efficient support and maintenance while upholding security.

Low maintenance and low energy

Also look for a system that helps you minimise maintenance tasks. If, for example, it's a wired system, there are no batteries to replace. And, if it has low power consumption, this will help you minimise energy costs too. As will the ability to automatically switch off lockers during periods when they're not accessible, such as overnight.

Step 6. Create a plan of requirements

Create your wish list of requirements from all your research and stakeholder conversations.

Be specific but stay openminded

When creating a plan of requirements for prospective suppliers, be specific about what you're looking for – but also be open to suggestions. The best suppliers often have ideas for tackling your challenges, meeting your needs and adding value in ways you may not have considered, so it's worth collaborating.
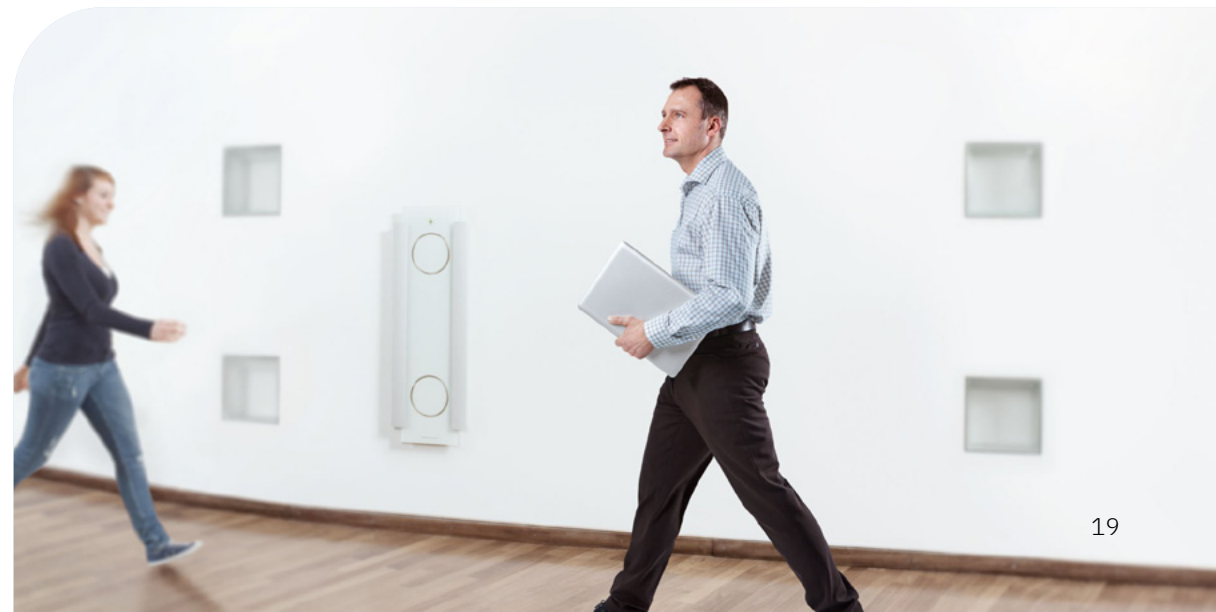
In conclusion

Keep flexibility and long-term value in mind

A locker management system is a long-term investment that can and should be able to serve a wide variety of needs for your organisation, both now and in the future. Choosing the right system can bring great value, and the flexibility to address existing challenges and opportunities and those you've not yet considered or that haven't arisen.

1. Keep flexibility and long-term value in mind

2. Test to check and validate your decisions

3. Ask for help and input

Test to check and validate your decisions

Make sure you think through every aspect carefully, taking your time to go through each step above. And when you think you've arrived at a decision, test to make sure it's the right one. 3D imaging tools, for example, can be an excellent way to review and validate locker management systems or locker bank layouts. So you can see how they could work for your organisation before making a final choice.

Ask for help and input

If you have any questions about locker management or would like support in choosing, planning and designing your system, we're always here to help.

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The new way of hybrid working is being widely adopted and creates an increased need for lockers, but also changes how they're used

Geert Leemkuil, Product Owner, Nedap Security Management

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Nedap Headquarters

Parallelweg 2
7141 DC Groenlo
The Netherlands

+31 (0)544 471 111
info@nedapsecurity.com