

Online Strategy for Self Storage Companies

Background

The internet has become the primary method for searching services offered by local businesses, including services offered by self storage location. Some interesting search engine marketing facts:

- 73% of all online activity is related to local content. (Source: Google)
- 82% of local searchers follow up with a phone call or show up at your place of business. (Source: TMP/Comscore)
- 74% of internet users use local search to find products and services (Source: Kelsey Group)
- 66% of Americans use local search to find local businesses. (Source: Comscore)
- 54% of Americans have replaced phone books (Yellow Pages & Business Directory) with internet and local search. (Source: Comscore)
- 43% of search engine users are seeking a local merchant with the intent of buying offline.
- 41% of consumers use a location (city, county, state) in their search – “orange county website design”, “California website design” etc.
- Very small percentages of businesses are happy with their local search marketing results.

Search engines like Google, Yahoo, Bing and others do not distinguish between „mom & pop” stores vs. established chain locations. All businesses catering to a geographically targeted customer base are considered “local” and are treated equally. Thus, large chains like Public Storage as well as „mom and pop” self storage facilities need to implement a local search marketing strategy to make sure that customers find the local branches when searching for a self storage facility.

For example, if someone in San Diego searches for “self storage”, one or more of the San Diego self storage locations should show up on the search engine, while the same search in Carlsbad should result in the Carlsbad locations on the first page. If a self storage facility in San Diego does not show up when someone is using “self storage



facility” or other related keywords, the facility does not exist for the person searching, and the business will go to the listing that shows up on the search engine.

Search engines cannot differentiate between different keywords or key phrases that people use when searching for a local business. Thus, a searcher could see different listings when searching “self storage facility” vs. “commercial storage facility”, even though the same location could be offering both products. All self storage locations need to be optimized for targeted keywords and key phrases in order to ensure that they are found when their customers are looking for their services.

GMR has already identified over 400K+ searches every month for different services offered by Self storage. Here are some examples of self storage related searches done monthly:

- Car storage:	49,500
- Commercial storage:	110,000
- Storage solutions:	90,500
- Business storage:	18,100
- Auto storage:	12,100
- Document storage:	14,800
- Long term storage:	18,100
- Climate controlled storage:	18,100
- Office storage:	14,000
- Furniture storage:	74,000
- Industrial storage:	9,900

There are dozens of key words and phrases used to search self storage facilities. Self storage facilities that show up on page 1 of the search engines for most keywords will have a competitive advantage over ones who do not show up.

Strategy for Capturing Your Share of Online Search Market:

Here are the key components of an online strategy:

1. Get customers – get found when a prospect is searching for your services in the neighborhood where store is located. You can accomplish this through local search marketing to bring the store location on the first page of search engines for relevant keywords and key phrases.
 - a. Identification of most relevant keywords used for your business
 - b. Ensuring that your location is found on the 1st page of all search engines for the keywords identified above.

Effective execution of local search marketing strategy requires basic knowledge of how search engines rank websites, initial setup to optimize the website to meet search engine requirements, and ongoing work to move the site on page 1 of search engines for all related keywords, and keep it there.

It typically requires a trained web marketing expert 50 hours of work upfront for researching the web trends, identification of keywords and phrases, optimization of website for the selected keywords, listing the website on all relevant directories and forums, and changing website codes to get the website ready for best result. Successful local search marketing also needs ongoing work of 25 hours of search engine marketing activities every month to make sure search engines rank the website high and keep it there.

Business owners wanting to do it themselves would require -

- Proficiency with basics of website coding. This is needed for optimizing a website for search engines.
- Minimum 100 hours of upfront search engine optimization and marketing training to start working on the project
- 75 hours for set up
- 40 hours a month of ongoing work on the website
- 5 hours a week to keep up with the latest internet search trends

Below are the steps needed to get accomplish 1st page placement on search engines like Google, Yahoo, Bing & others:

One time

1. Analyze and Select keywords
2. Analyze competitors
3. Claim/optimize business page in all three search engines
 - Category–keyword match selection
 - Geotagged picture upload
 - Description-keyword match
4. Claim business on review sites. Some major sites include
 - Yelp.com
 - Citysquare.com
 - Foursquare.com
 - Hotfrog.com
5. Claim on paid site like Angies”s list or other niche sites
6. Identify suitable social media sites and create profiles

Ongoing

1. Site Optimization
 - Tweak website for keywords
 - Metatag
 - Loading time optimization
 - Content optimization
2. Social Media Optimization
 - Selection of suitable geo specific groups (up to 5)
 - Association of those profiles with keywords
 - Regular updates
3. Social Media Marketing
 - Identification of up to 3 influencers & build an association with them.
 - Increase brand awareness
 - Can include paid listing options
4. Offsite Optimization Activity
 - Link Building via content
 - Link Building via directories

Online Reputation Management to Maximize Sales After Prospects Find You from Their Search

Local search activities listed above will make sure that your location is found when a prospect in the target geography is searching for your product or services. Once you are found, the prospect would typically do online research to find more information about you by typically searching for information about your company by using it as the keyword on the search engines. What they find about you on the web will help them decide to either call/visit your location or keep on looking.

You can help your prospects decide to contact you by managing your brand online. Here is the online brand management strategy that will help you convert most of the searchers into customers:

Brand management

- Create profiles on social media networks like facebook, linked-in etc. and generate a following.
- Continuously communicate with your followers on the social media networks.
- Use the followers to propagate your brand's unique value proposition.

Brand reputation

- Create profiles on review sites like Yelp.
- Encourage satisfied customers to write positive reviews.

Increase visit frequency

- Build opt-in consumer database with online and offline activities. Use local search marketing and the social media presence to add new prospects to your database consistently.
- Email/SMS marketing to customer database.
- Online frequency program.



Local Search Marketing Solutions

Local Search Marketing:

1. Market opportunity analysis to identify the number of relevant searches for the business.
2. Identification of key relevant keywords for search engine marketing.
3. Search engine marketing activities to bring all UPS Store locations on page 1 for selected keywords.
4. Maintain the locations on top of search engines for the selected keywords.

Reputation Management:

1. Create/enhance social media presence.
2. Develop program for generating reviews.
3. Monitor reviews.

Increase Visit Frequency:

1. Develop program for creating customer database.
2. Develop email/SMS campaign for the customer database.
3. Execute the program.
4. Develop frequency program.
5. Manage frequency program.