



SELF STORAGE SALES NETWORK

Market Monitor

America's Premier Self Storage Brokers

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Reputation Management:

What Your Online Presence Says About Your Business

by Amy Hitchingham

Everyone has an opinion, but in today's ultra-connected, social media-oriented world, opinions are much easier to share (and harder to erase). Why is this important to self-storage operators? The image that you project online is one of the primary reasons that people will choose to rent from your facility. The opinions shared on review sites, social media and even your own online Yellow Pages listing can tell a story about your business, and you want it to be a positive one! Here are some quick ways that you can keep tabs on your facility's online reputation and manage the image that your customers and potential customers will see.

Opinion/Review Sites

Websites and apps like Yelp and Google Reviews are popular ways for customers to check out a business, restaurant, hotel, etc. before buying. Yelp averages around 162 million unique visitors per month, with nearly 75% of those visits occurring on a mobile device. By listing your business on their site, you are tapping into this traffic whenever people search for self-storage in their local area. Customers are able to post their reviews of your business with a simple 1-5 star rating and their comments. Positive reviews will help draw new customers to your listing, and hopefully then to your door!

The downside, of course, is that customers may also post a negative review of your facility, and perhaps even rant about a bad experience that they had with one of your employees. I feel that the best way to deal with these negative reviews is to face them head-on. Yelp and other sites allow the owner of a business to respond (either privately or on a public thread) to comments that are posted about them. When a manager or owner takes the time to address the negative review, it can show that the company is listening to criticism and willing to improve. As long as you remain professional and polite, even a negative review can show your business in a positive light.

Ultimately, the online conversation always boils down to Google search rankings. As the formulas for calculating rank become more complicated, the entire online profile of a business is taken into consideration. According to Alex Chambers of Argus Professional Storage Management, a business needs to maintain "velocity" with its online reviews and engagement in order to improve its search ranking. Consistent engagement over time will result in a better ranking than sporadic spikes in reviews, so plan your promotions and customer incentives consistently throughout the year. In the end, Alex says, "a business that gets 1 or 2 reviews a month for 2 years

will usually outrank a business that receives 36 reviews in just one month."

Social Media

Facebook and Twitter are important to businesses because consumers are increasingly likely to reach out to a company via their Facebook or Twitter pages to receive support or customer service. Consumers want their concerns addressed quickly and social media gives them an opportunity to voice their issues in a very public way, which usually gets results! As such, it is important to have a presence on these sites to make sure you aren't missing out on opportunities to provide great customer service.

Aside from being a great venue to provide customer service, social media helps you stay in front of your customers on a regular basis. Encourage people to "like" your Facebook page by offering a coupon or giveaway. You'll be able to share news, specials and event information with your followers that will hopefully enhance your facility's brand within your local area.

Community Involvement

We all know that the majority of a self storage facility's customers come from roughly a 3-5 mile radius around the property. This makes maintaining a high profile within your local community even more important. Self-storage facilities have a unique ability to offer both financial support and physical use of the property to local organizations. Consider sponsoring a local sports league or community event, or offer the use of one of your vacant units to collect items for a food or clothing drive. Check with your local Chamber of Commerce to see if there are any events planned that need sponsors - blood drives, car seat checks and community yard sales are all a great way to drive traffic to your location and raise awareness about the services that you offer.

The bottom line is that you do have control over the image that your facility projects, both online and out in your community. Facilities that are successful at reputation management will find themselves in a position to grow their business and adapt to the changing needs of their customer base. In today's world of information overload, make sure your message rises above the chatter to promote the image that you want people to see! **MM**

Amy Hitchingham, Vice President of the Argus Self Storage Sales Network, can be reached at 800-557-8673 or amy@argus-realestate.com.

Russellville, AR \$1,495,000

- 79 Units
- 23,804 RSF
- 3.34 Acres
- Retail/Office Warehouse/Self-Storage
- Well-leased facility with room to expand
- Surrounded by major retailers and restaurants
- Just off Interstate 40 in Russellville



Larry Goldman, CCIM
913-707-9030
lgoldman@selfstorage.com

Loveland, CO \$1,270,000

- Boat/RV Development Site **NEW!**
- 17.78 Acres
- Fully approved and platted development site
- Will accommodate up to 900 boat/RV spaces, along with up to 95,000 SF of self-storage



Joan Lucas
720-855-6587
jlucas@selfstorage.com

Terre Haute, IN \$1,100,000

- 218 Units **NEW!**
- 23,000+ RSF
- 14 Acres
- 80% occupied with room to expand
- Apartment building included in sale for additional \$850,000



Mike Helline & Paul Grisanti
502-296-4586
mike@grisantigroup.com

Lincoln, CA Call for Price

- Self-Storage Development Site
- 176,865 Proposed RSF **NEW!**
- 780 Proposed Units
- 11.9 Acres
- Fully entitled project to be built in two phases with climate and drive up units
- Excellent location in high income area



Tom de Jong
408-282-3829
tom.dejong@colliers.com

Starke, FL \$1,100,000

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- 1.71 Acres
- 90% occupancy since 2014
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- U-Haul truck rentals included
- Expansion possible



Frost Weaver & Josh Koerner
904-265-2001
jkoerner@weaver-realty.com

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- 10,800 RSF
- 1 Acre
- Visible from well-traveled North Scott Ave. and minutes from I-71
- Priced below replacement cost



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913-707-9030
lgoldman@selfstorage.com

Ft. Collins, CO \$9,400,000

- 544 Units **NEW!**
- 74,550 RSF
- 5.25 Acres
- Project under construction to be delivered at C of O
- Highly developed area with office, hotel, retail and residential



Joan Lucas
720-855-6587
jlucas@selfstorage.com

Plymouth, IN \$1,975,000

- 191 Units **NEW!**
- 31,419 RSF
- 9.63 Acres
- Opened 11/2016 and 4 additional buildings to be completed due to rapid lease up
- Outstanding location and visibility
- Abundant room to expand



Bruce Bahrmassel
312-518-3550
bruce@selfstorage.com

Harrisonville, MO \$1,750,000

- 268 Units **NEW!**
- 50,545 RSF
- 4.62 Acres
- High profile location on Interstate 49
- 12 miles outside Kansas City Metro
- Room for expansion
- Conventional, climate control and Boat/RV storage



Larry Goldman, CCIM
913-707-9030
lgoldman@selfstorage.com



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For property details, visit www.argus-selfstorage.com or contact your local Argus Broker Affiliate!

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Congratulations to Larry Goldman, CCIM of RE/MAX Commercial who sold The Storage Place in Texarkana, AR! Contact Larry at 913-707-9030 for details.



Congratulations to Mike Helline and Paul Grisanti, CCIM of Grisanti Group Commercial Real Estate who sold T&C Mini Warehouse in Rineyville, KY! Contact Mike and Paul at 502-296-4586 for details.

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Contact your Argus Broker Affiliate (listed below) to receive a **free** tradeshow pass to the **Inside Self Storage World Expo in Las Vegas!** Free passes are available for the Exhibit Hall on April 11 and 12, or save \$50 off the cost of a full conference registration package. Contact your Broker Affiliate today!



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