

## It’s the Twenty-First Century! Is Your Marketing Program Still Wearing Beads and Bell Bottoms?

by Michael L. McCune



These are very difficult times for any real estate-related business, especially when the business primarily relies on individuals and small business for its clientele. Most real estate endeavors require a virtual army of real estate brokers to find, pitch, and close their deals for renters. Self-storage owners, on the other hand, must rely on advertising and marketing to get their clientele.

In the past, the marketing strategy for the self-storage industry has consisted of a sign, a listing in the Yellow Pages and a friendly, yet often lonely, manager behind the desk. This strategy worked just fine for a long time. In fact, there is an entire industry to prove that it worked just fine until *bam*— it all changed! We are almost 10 years into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and we are faced with a very new dynamic marketing paradigm. Google, Facebook, Craigslist, Twitter, databases and DVRs dominate communications. The great newspapers and magazines that served the advertising needs of American business for centuries are all but gone. Even the United States Post Office is losing revenue because advertisers are finding better ways than direct mail to promote their products. Yellow Page directories are more often used as door stops now. And if you don’t have a website, you are considered a dinosaur by anyone under the age of 40.

And this is just the start! Someone sent me the following link to a very interesting video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVXKI506w-E>. Click it and see how the advertising methods are not only changing, but also notice how *fast* they are changing. You may not recognize the names of many of the things this link talks about, but rest assured that most of your renters know about them. You may wonder, “Why all the change?” The answer is really quite simple: it works, and it is cheaper too!

### So What Should I Do?

Updating your marketing methods may seem overwhelming, but in fact, it is relatively simple to solve and not nearly as expensive as you might think, especially when you compare the costs to your Yellow Page bill! To start the process you need a crisp, clean, and simple website; a complicated site with too much information is a detriment. The page will include your address, telephone, email; a map, the name of your local area, and a few pictures. Your rates (by size), hours and access are also important. List very briefly your other amenities: security, other services, free rent, etc. Lots of “white space” is a good thing - you don’t want the viewer to get confused.

If you don’t currently have someone to work on your website, just post an ad for a web designer on Craigslist. You will likely get calls from a lot of young, hungry folks who can quickly make a web page and at a very reasonable price. Interview two or three web developers, and choose one who understands the needs of your

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business and can build a site that functions smoothly. To get an idea of what is out there, take a look at other websites. But just keep yours simple! If you do want a fun trick, however, one that is easy to do is a 45 second video with the owner or the manager personally welcoming the visitor. Your web developer can add this to your site in about ten minutes, and it adds a warm, personal touch that will make your page more distinctive.

You may know that Google and Yahoo! rank websites based on their quality, traffic, volume, and links to other sites, as well as a variety of other obscure criteria. Thus, we recommend that you also list your property on two or three of the portal sites that specialize in finding self-storage. While each site has a different approach, they all get a lot of traffic and have high-ranking positions on the various search engines. These portal sites improve your chances of getting a response from potential renters. Furthermore, they are quite inexpensive relative to other advertising methods and the additional rentals you will secure can more than pay for the costs of listing on these sites.

Self-storage is a relatively “local business” in the sense that your website and marketing area is relatively small. Thus, it is important that your marketing and web efforts focus on the area where you actually do business, most often within a five-mile radius or within four or five zip codes around your facility. Again, this is where the self-storage portal sites can be helpful because they often restrict searches to the geographic criteria of the renter. If you would like to try a self-storage portal for free for two months, we have made a special arrangement with [www.selfstorage.com](http://www.selfstorage.com). Your Argus Broker Affiliate will give you a code to sign up for a free two-month trial – just call your local Affiliate listed on the last page of the [Market Monitor](#).

### A Little “Home Cooking”

While we have noted how important electronic marketing is today, we must also remember other effective marketing ideas that require less technology. After several years of operation, for example, many operators report that the majority of their new clients are actually their old clients. Thus, it is important to keep in touch with these folks on a regular basis - at least every six months, or better yet, every quarter! A picture postcard of the facility with a handwritten note is a very effective reminder to the client that Grandma’s junk is still in the garage and winter is coming. The note needs to say nothing more than, “We miss you! Come back, and the first month is always free for our favorite clients. Thank You, Bob.”

Be sure you start collecting email addresses from all of your renters as well-they will be immensely valuable in the future as your online marketing increases! Additionally, emails can be very useful for communicating general messages, such as notifying renters that the facility is closed due to a blizzard. These emails not only give them information, but also let the renter know that you are professional. Likewise, you can send an email to current clients to offer a referral fee of \$50 if they know of a potential renter. Simple contacts with customers are very effective and build relationships and client confidence.

All of these “new fangled” strategies do not mean that you should abandon the marketing efforts you currently have. They will generate leads as well. Just make sure to carefully track where your leads come from and then adjust your budgets to reflect the most cost-effective type of advertising.

The future of marketing is not written on the wall but on the web. The times have certainly changed in the marketing world and it is important that you and your business change with them, for as Bob Dylan warned, “You better start swimmin’ or you’ll sink like a stone.” **MM**

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# Property Showcase

## Rifle, CO • \$810,000

- 13,502 RSF
- 113 Units
- Excellent visibility from I-70
- Seller has increased rents by 50% since 2004
- Expansion potential on boat and RV parking space
- Located 1/8 mile from Garfield County Airport

**Joan Lucas**  
**720-855-6587**  
[jlucas@selfstorage.com](mailto:jlucas@selfstorage.com)



## Middletown, NY • \$450,000

- 19,923 RSF
- 207 Units
- 1.4 Acres
- For lease with option to buy
- May be purchased with locations in Port Jervis and Matamoras
- Building capable of 129,000 SF expansion

**Linda Cinelli**  
**908-722-5661**  
[lcinelli.lcrealty@earthlink.net](mailto:lcinelli.lcrealty@earthlink.net)



## Swansea, MA • \$3,000,000

- 40,325 RSF
- 275 Units
- 4.5 Acres
- Built in 2001
- Great exposure on Route 6 thoroughfare
- Climate and non-climate units
- Assumable CMBS loan

**Joe Mendola**  
**603-668-7000**  
[joe@nainorwoodgroup.com](mailto:joe@nainorwoodgroup.com)



## Port Jervis, NY • \$1,900,000

- 19,809 RSF
- 199 Units
- 0.32 Acres
- May be purchased with locations in Middletown and Matamoras
- 15,000 SF expansion potential
- Computerized access and digital surveillance

**Linda Cinelli**  
**908-733-5661**  
[lcinelli.lcrealty@earthlink.net](mailto:lcinelli.lcrealty@earthlink.net)



## Topsham, ME • \$1,000,000

- 21,850 RSF
- 181 Units
- 3.5 Acres
- Great location with visibility on Route 196
- Expanded office for more than one business
- GoIn' Postal franchise for sale separately
- Possible expansion onsite

**Joe Mendola**  
**603-668-7000**  
[joe@nainorwoodgroup.com](mailto:joe@nainorwoodgroup.com)



## Matamoras, PA • \$1,100,000

- 15,097 RSF
- 160 Units
- 0.51 Acres
- May be purchased with locations in Middletown and Port Jervis
- Truck rental on site
- All units are climate controlled

**Linda Cinelli**  
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# Sells Self Storage Nationwide!

- Over \$124 million in self storage properties currently for sale
- Prices range from \$150,000 to over \$6.1 million to meet the needs of every buyer
- Check out our current inventory of 71 properties listed in 27 states and contact the listing broker for more information or visit [www.selfstorage.com](http://www.selfstorage.com)!

## Alabama

Mobile \$385,000 Bill Barnhill 251-432-1287

## Arizona

Lake Havasu \$2,380,000 David R. Laney 888-602-3335

## Arkansas

Fort Smith \$1,050,000 Barney Lehmsbeck 405-627-5481

Garfield \$750,000 Larry Goldman 913-339-0641

Gravette \$800,000 Larry Goldman 913-339-0641

## Colorado

Cortez \$1,150,000 Joan Lucas 720-855-6587

Englewood \$2,690,000 Joan Lucas 720-855-6587

Mead \$925,000 Joan Lucas 720-855-6587

Rifle \$810,000 Joan Lucas 720-855-6587

Superior \$1,400,000 Joan Lucas 720-855-6587

## Florida

Jacksonville \$2,950,000 Frost Weaver 904-733-0039

Pensacola \$3,900,000 Bill Barnhill/Shannon Barnhill 251-432-1287

## Idaho

Sugar City \$2,600,000 Larry Hayes 406-728-0088

## Illinois

Antioch \$1,850,000 Bruce Bahrmassel 312-518-3550

Chicago \$3,600,000 Bruce Bahrmassel 312-518-3550

Elgin \$1,550,000 Bruce Bahrmassel 312-518-3550

Mt. Olive \$599,000 Bruce Bahrmassel/ 312-518-3550

David S. Johnson 314-862-3000

Rockford \$825,000 Bruce Bahrmassel 312-518-3550

Sandwich \$1,499,000 Bruce Bahrmassel 312-518-3550

Savanna \$1,890,000 Bruce Bahrmassel 312-518-3550

## Indiana

Roachdale \$299,000 Bruce Bahrmassel 312-518-3550

## Iowa

Mason City \$1,350,000 Bob Randklev 319-533-6927

## Kansas

Junction City \$2,600,000 Larry Goldman 913-339-0641

Kansas City \$2,300,000 Larry Goldman 913-339-0641

## Kentucky

Crestwood \$1,640,000 Mike Helline 502-253-1811

## Louisiana

Denham Springs \$4,250,000 Jack Stumpf 504-366-6800

Metairie \$1,695,000 Jack Stumpf 504-366-6800

## Maine

Topsham \$1,000,000 Joe Mendola 603-668-7000

Woolwich \$1,490,000 Joe Mendola 603-668-7000

## Maryland

Baltimore \$2,300,000 Grady Riggs 301-468-0606

## Massachusetts

Swamsea \$3,000,000 Joe Mendola 603-668-7000

## Mississippi

Flowood \$3,400,000 Bill Barnhill/Stuart LaGroue 251-432-1287

## Missouri

Belton \$1,990,000 Larry Goldman 913-339-0641

Branson West \$895,000 Larry Goldman 913-339-0641

Farmington \$3,295,000 Sheldon Johnson 314-862-3000

Joplin \$900,000 Larry Goldman 913-339-0641

Nixa \$1,820,000 Larry Goldman 913-339-0641

Ozark \$1,600,000 Larry Goldman 913-339-0641

Sedalia \$950,000 Larry Goldman 913-339-0641

## Montana

Kalispell \$1,200,000 Larry Hayes 406-728-0088

## New Hampshire

Hampton Falls \$4,400,000 Joe Mendola 603-668-7000

## New Jersey

Egg Harbor Twp. \$1,650,000 Linda Cinelli 908-722-5661

Stanhope \$5,375,000 Linda Cinelli 908-722-5661

## New Mexico

Artesia \$579,700 David R. Laney 505-286-2060

Eunice \$595,000 David R. Laney 505-286-2060

Eunice \$650,000 David R. Laney 505-286-2060

Gallup \$2,040,977 David R. Laney 505-286-2060

Las Cruces \$1,399,722 David R. Laney 505-286-2060

## New York

Ft. Edward \$479,000 Guy Blake 845-522-5900

Kingston \$2,500,000 Guy Blake 845-522-5900

Lowville \$499,900 Guy Blake 845-522-5900

Middletown \$450,000 Linda Cinelli 908-722-5661

Port Jervis \$1,900,000 Linda Cinelli 908-722-5661

## Pennsylvania

Bechtelsville \$1,350,000 Chuck Shields 610-828-0100

Drexel Hill \$1,600,000 Chuck Shields 610-828-0100

Matamoras \$1,100,000 Linda Cinelli 908-722-5661

## South Carolina

Hollywood \$3,450,000 P. John DeStefano 843-406-7979

Moncks Corner \$995,000 P. John DeStefano 843-406-7979

Summerville \$3,900,000 P. John DeStefano 843-406-7979

Summerville \$1,500,000 P. John DeStefano 843-406-7979

## Texas

Lubbock \$1,390,000 Barry Comiskey 806-797-3231

Princeton \$695,000 Richard Minker/Tyler Trahant 888-7-MINKER

Terrell \$640,000 Richard Minker/Tyler Trahant 888-7-MINKER

Texarkana \$860,000 Richard Minker/Tyler Trahant 888-7-MINKER

## Virginia

King George \$1,400,000 Grady Riggs 301-468-0606

## Washington

Concrete \$2,750,000 Ryan Layton 509-435-2424

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Spokane \$6,100,000 Ryan Layton 509-435-2424

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## Argus is pleased to welcome our newest Broker Affiliates!



**Bill Young** and **Kevin Watt** of Westar Commercial Realty in Lubbock, TX will be representing Argus in West Texas. Bill is the First Principal Broker of the firm and has been involved in commercial real estate since 1984. He is a 1970 graduate of Texas Tech University. Kevin Watt has over 13 years of experience in the West Texas real estate market in sales, investment analysis, build-to-suit and land acquisition. Bill and Kevin can be reached at 806-797-3231.



Join Argus at the Inside Self Storage World Expo in Washington D.C.! Stay up to date with the latest industry news, products and services at the tradeshow and learn from industry experts at a variety of educational sessions. The exhibit hall is open October 7-8, 2009. Still need to register? Send an email to [argus@argus-realestate.com](mailto:argus@argus-realestate.com) and we will provide you with a free exhibit hall pass, or \$50 off a full expo registration. Don't delay - offer ends on Sept. 28!

### Contact an Argus Broker Affiliate

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