

A D V E R A N K TM

S E L F - S T O R A G E

SEO *Sucks*



**Your Goal Isn't Traffic.
It's **Occupancy.****



"SEO Sucks!"

Especially for industries like self-storage.



I'm probably going to get a lot of flack for saying this, but after 15 years as an SEO consultant, it's time to come clean.

Don't get me wrong, in my career I've seen SEO be a game changer! It works for many industries and I've always been a strong advocate for using it alongside paid search marketing.

It's typically most successful for companies with long sales cycles and a target audience that often searches for a lot of educational content prior to engaging with a vendor. Showing up in search can make or break a business, and for some industries, that makes sense to go further up the funnel and be the creators of that educational content.

But for self-storage, the traditional SEO approach isn't just ineffective—it's a waste of time and money.

Let me explain why.

Mitch Briggs, CMO
Adverank.ai

SEO Is a Never-Ending Money Pit

Many agencies promise ongoing SEO services with hefty monthly fees. And I get it! SEO takes a wide variety of skills and expertise, and as a consultant, you want an ongoing relationship to effect success, not just a one off project.

But for most self-storage businesses, once your website and content are properly optimized, there's no reason to keep throwing money at it month after month.



Backlinks?

They're overrated. Building artificial links doesn't work anymore and can even have negative effects on your site if the person building them isn't doing it according to Google's guidelines (which is essential, don't do it). Instead, focus on natural opportunities like local partnerships or references. Create a website worth linking to!

Content churn?

Creating endless blog posts like "Tips for Packing" isn't helpful. Especially if they are low quality and not offering anything new or unique. Are you really going to out-rank national giants like REITs or high-level content creators on a global term? Probably not. Even if you do, the traffic you get probably won't be worth it because these are terms that signal buying intent.

Technical Issues?

Say goodbye to clunky systems that Google ignores! Your SEO checklist—title tags, headers, descriptions, sitemaps, and page speed—should be tackled when launching or auditing your site. There's no need for monthly fees for "monitoring" or "ongoing optimizations." Instead, have an expert review your site annually and address updates as a one-time project.

You Can't Beat the REITs Sorry

The Battle for the Organic Results Real Estate Isn't Worth It



It Starts with Search

Google PPC Three Pricing Bundles

Public Storage, Extra Space, CubeSmart—these are household names with multimillion-dollar budgets and massive SEO teams. Together, they control over **30%** of the U.S. self-storage market, with Public Storage alone owning more than 2,800 facilities across the country.

There's no such thing as a permanent '#1 spot' in digital advertising or search results because rankings are highly dynamic, constantly influenced by a variety of factors like user behavior, location, time of day, and even search intent.

Competing with REITs for top organic rankings is like bringing a knife to a gunfight. The amount of domain authority accumulated over time and the scale of their operations is hard to overcome for small and midsize operators.

Studies show that Google updates its algorithm hundreds of times a year—an average of nearly 1.6 changes per day—making it impossible to guarantee a fixed position in search rankings. This fluidity highlights the importance of a data-driven strategy that adapts to changing trends and consistently works to maintain visibility.

The top spots in organic search are crowded with paid ads, map packs, and national players. Fighting for the **scraps** left over isn't a good use of resources. For searches like "**storage near me**" are extremely top heavy with paid placements, that even the "#1 ranking" can be half way down the page.

Most of your organic search traffic will land on these two types of pages:

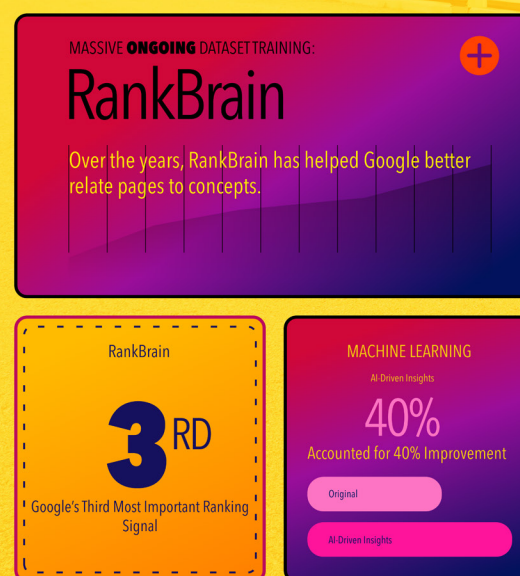
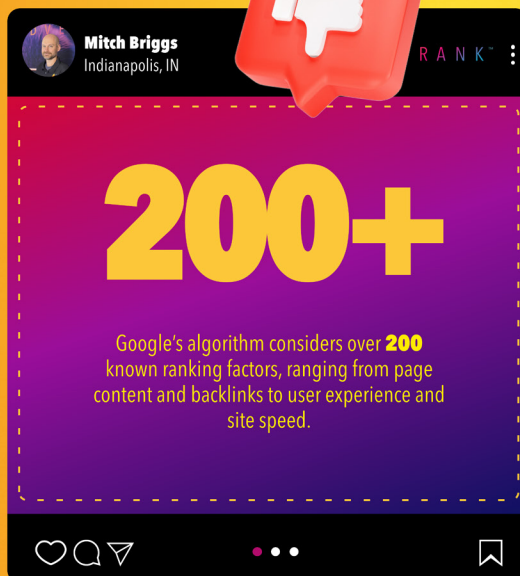
Homepage

Your homepage (via branded search terms)

Location Page

Your location pages (via "near me" and city specific searches)

If you're going to invest in content, make sure it's published on your **location** pages and tailored to that specific area. Think **local** insights, FAQs, and unique details—**not** generic blog posts.



SEO Is Too Slow for a Demand-Based Industry

It Starts with Search

Self-storage is a demand-driven business. People don't casually shop for a storage unit—they search when they need one now.

6-12 MONTHS

GOOGLE ADS GET THE CLICKS

SEO IS SLOW

100% UNCLEAR HOW LONG

22% OF TOP-RANKING PAGES TOOK OVER A YEAR TO REACH SPOT

63% OF USERS CLICKING ON A GOOGLE AD

SEO is a slow burn, and results can take months, if not years, or...ever! But by the time your rankings improve, your units might already be full (or worse, you've missed the busy season).

What good is driving traffic to your website when you have no units available to rent? Instead, focus on high-intent leads with immediate results through paid advertising. This gives you the flexibility to pay more when occupancy is low and demand is high, and dial down your spending for locations that don't have inventory available.

5.7% RANK IN THE TOP 10

Only 5.7% of new pages will rank in the top 10 search results within a year (Ahrefs).

NOT ENOUGH

USE LOCAL LISTINGS

USE REVIEWS

Good Content Converts

SELF STORAGE USERS

64% Search A Week Out

64% of self-storage users seek storage within a week or less of needing it, according to SpareFoot.

Content Should Support, Not Drive

Content for content's sake isn't helpful. Your blog doesn't need to be a **packing advice** hub.

What matters is that your content supports the customer journey:

PERSONALIZED RESULTS MEAN NO TRUE #1

#1

MOST SEO IS SITE WIDE NOT LOCAL

Important to have separate pages for each location

Answer their immediate questions. What's the price? Where are you located? Highlight what makes your location unique. Why should someone rent from you over a competitor?

Focus on conversions, not just traffic.

Remember, your goal isn't to **entertain**—it's to lease units.



Focus on Paid Ads and Website Experience Instead

Instead of pouring money into endless SEO campaigns with foggy results, focus on these two areas:

Paid Advertising

Drive high-intent traffic immediately. Target renters who are ready to make a decision today within your targeted market. Get the flexibility to adjust budgets, pause, optimize and grow whenever you need.

★ 1-3 Miles

GOOGLE ADS GET THE CLICKS

Geo Target

ONLY ADJUST WITH MARKET

30% of customers travel less than 10 minutes.

32% WILL TRAVEL 10 TO 19 MINUTES


Website Experience

Make your website easy to use and conversion-friendly. Focus content production on helping prospective customers answer their questions.


Ensure your location pages are optimized with accurate information, high-quality photos, and clear calls to action.

Don't lose them during the checkout process! This is a critical part of the online rental process where a lot of prospective customers can bounce if the forms are confusing or cumbersome.

GOOGLE PPC AD BUDGETS
ADJUST BASED ON OCCUPANCY



More money going towards driving occupancy where needed, not consulting or site wide.



R | DRIVE TO RENTALS

Sends customers closer to leasing action, not to blog posts and homepages.

GET RENTALS 0% BLOG POSTS 0% HOMEPAGE



Good Content Converts

These strategies yield immediate and measurable results, unlike the long and uncertain path of SEO. Your time and money are much better spent trying to master these marketing strategies vs. dealing with the ever changing algorithms of Google and being in the dark about what works and what doesn't.

Stop Believing the Myth: "If You Stop SEO, You'll Lose Rankings"

SEO agencies love to scare clients with this myth: "If you stop "doing SEO", your rankings will disappear." That's simply **not true**.

Most of your rankings are tied to foundational work—like having a well-optimized, fast loading and easy to use website with solid local listings. Once these are in place, you can shift your focus to paid advertising for instant results and qualified traffic for keywords you control.

Your organic traffic is certainly something to monitor to make sure something isn't broken with your site, but that doesn't mean you need to pay someone monthly to do so. Google Analytics and Google Search Console are free tools that are easy to use. Make sure you have these things set up and have access to them - something your agency is likely gatekeeping.



What Are You Paying For?

Know Your Contract



SEO IS A PROJECT AND NOT A SUBSCRIPTION



SEO Isn't Dead—It Just Sucks for Self Storage

Haven't you thought about it?

For self-storage operators, SEO should be a one-time setup and review, not an ongoing expense.

Once your site is optimized, there's no need to keep paying an agency every month for vague promises of rankings, content and backlinks.

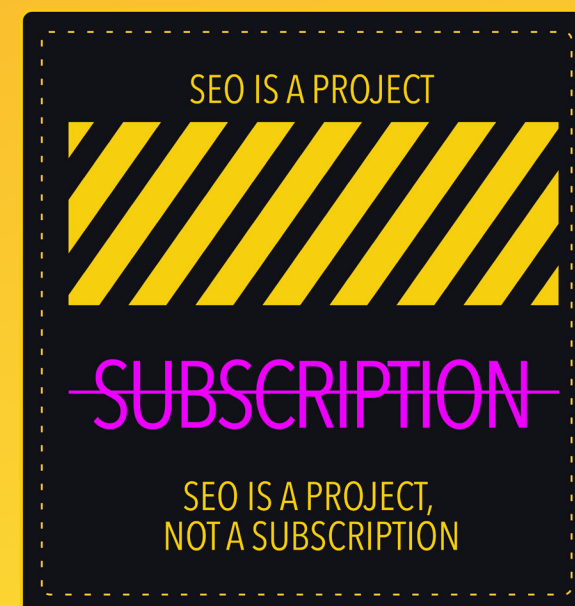
Instead, invest your resources in strategies that directly impact your bottom line—like paid advertising and creating a seamless website experience. Because at the end of the day, your goal isn't traffic. It's occupancy.



"SEO Sucks!"



Stop chasing rankings and start focusing on what matters most: filling your units with paying customers.



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Thanks