

CASE STUDY FOR USSTORAGESEARCH.COM

Industry: Self Storage/ real estate
Client: US Storage Search
URL: www.usstoragesearch.com

USStoragesearch.com is a directory for the self storage industry. The business model is to charge storage facilities a small monthly fee to list their facility on the site much like in the traditional yellow pages. In addition they offer premium priced listings on the site. In order to sign up storage facilities, the site needed to show traffic to the site which for the first year was all obtained via pay per click on the search engines. If they wanted to sign up facilities in a specific city, then they ran a geo-targeted PPC campaign.

Goals

Because their business model required traffic in order to sell subscription based listing to storage facilities, the company wanted to increase traffic through organic search. They were already spending money on PPC and this was sufficient to allow them to sell the advertising. In order to be able to reduce PPC expenditure and also sell more listings, they need to be able to show traffic to specific geo-targeted pages. USStoragesearch.com wanted to rank on the first page of Google for top industry terms such as “self storage” and also for as many geo targeted terms like “[city name + self storage”].

Initial State

When USStoragesearchc.com came to SEO Inc. the website had been online for less than a year and a half. The site was attractive and fairly user friendly, but it was not search engine friendly. They had signed up many storage facilities in hundreds of cities. The website included a search feature by city, state and zip code. What the site lacked was any search engine optimization and most importantly rankings on search engines.

When we ran their initial ranking report, it was apparent that there was plenty of room for improvement. The website did not have any keywords ranking in the top 30 on Google, Yahoo, or MSN. In fact, there was only one keyword (find self storage) which ranked in the top 100 of any of those top three search engines.

Google, Yahoo & MSN Visibility Statistics – March 2005

First Place Rankings: 0	Top 5: 0	Top 10: 0	Top 20: 0	Top 30: 0
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Challenges

There were some technical challenges which needed to be addressed in order for the site to rank. While the site visually had a page for every state and every city in the US, the URL was the same for all of these



(www.usstorageearch.com/locate.php). This meant that the search engines indexed one page when in reality there were tens of thousands of pages on site.

In addition to the obvious architecture problems, there were many other things that would need to be addressed and improved in order to achieve success. Upon doing a competitive analysis, we found the following:

- Only 23 total pages indexed by Google and Yahoo
- Poor Link Popularity - Only 2 Inbound links according to Google & only 16 according to Yahoo
- Almost no readable text content on the site
- No internal text link structure

This site needed a full scale search engine optimization campaign including web development to improve site architecture, code optimization, URL rewrite, aggressive link popularity campaign, and content generation.

Strategy

After several conversations with our client, we decided that our Enterprise Level Search Engine Optimization package best fit the client's needs, budget, and goals. Because the client also needed to make significant changes to the website in order to accomplish these goals, we included full consulting and site strategy through the web development process.

- Search Engine Optimization (site wide)
- SEO Consulting & Strategy
- URL Re-write & database consulting
- Content Writing
- Moderately Aggressive Link Popularity Campaign
- Web Analytics

We did a targeted keyword analysis for their industry and based on results and analysis of competition, we decided to target the most highly searched keywords in addition to a full scale nationwide geo-targeted campaign.

The first step of the optimization required that SEO Inc. create a strategy to get all city and state pages indexed by the search engine spiders, as well as create a robust internal linking structure. In addition, these geo targeted needed content, so we developed a simple initial content strategy that was designed to focus on all pages with more unique content being developed for the top cities and states. SEO Inc. developed the strategy and the client's web developer implemented most of it. Once the architectural problems were fixed, SEO Inc. optimized the entire website and integrated content.



Accomplishments

The client is ecstatic with the organic results. The results listed below are one year after the campaign started. Below are the results of our initial 12-month optimization campaign. The site did not have rankings on any of the Top 5 Keywords when the campaign began.

Top 5 Keywords			
	Google	MSN	Yahoo
Self Storage	6	6	17
Mini Storage	11		
Find Self Storage	2		17
Storage Unit	1	13	6
Mobile Storage		5	5

Geo targeted Keywords Rankings

When the campaign began, this site had very few if any of their geographically targeted keywords ranking in the top 50 of the major search engines. The date below is based on ranking reports run on 183 state keywords and 101 city keywords. Keywords targeted here include:

- [state] self storage
- [state] mini storage
- [state] mini storage locations
- [city] self storage
- [city + state] self storage
- And variations on the above phrases

	States 4-19-07			Cities 4-19-07		
	Google	MSN	Yahoo	Google	MSN	Yahoo
1st Place Rankings	0	18	16	2	8	1
Top 5 Rankings	20	118	74	7	44	3
Top 10 Rankings	59	173	125	24	73	20
Top 20 Rankings	114	241	179	50	113	74
Top 30 Rankings	142	278	220	70	145	112

Pages Indexed and Link Popularity

	Google		Yahoo	
	Pages Indexed	Inbound Links	Pages Indexed	Inbound Links
Start Date	23	2	21	25
Completion Date	84,900	27	26,889	348



Search Engine Traffic

SEO also set up Clicktracks web analytics in order to measure traffic from search and other sources. By the completion of the first year, traffic from organic search increased by over 400% from below 8,000 visitors per month in May 2006 to over 35,000 visitors per month a year later.

