



OVERACHIEVING IN A CROWDED MARKET

Proven Marketing Strategies for a Packed Planet

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The Reality of Competing in Self-Storage Today

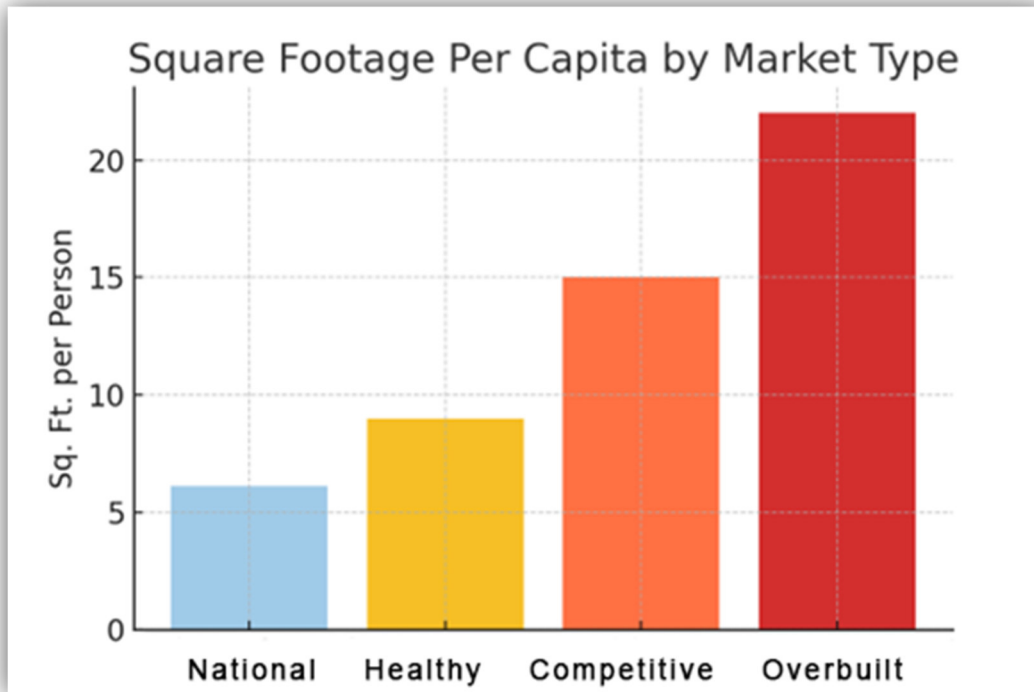
As of 2025, the U.S. has more than 2 billion square feet of rentable self-storage space—roughly 7 square feet per person. More than 290 million square feet has been added in the past 5 years, and another 56 million to be completed by end of 2025. In certain urban and suburban markets, the rentable space can exceed 20 square feet per capita. This saturation means *fierce competition*. Success today means more than having a good location—it means smart, aggressive marketing.

Here we'll lay out a roadmap for outperforming your competition—starting with confirming your market dynamics and ending with a high-conversion, local-first marketing strategy. These strategies will impact the performance of any facility but If you're trying to compete in a saturated market, bringing these tactics to bear on the challenge is essential. Also worth noting, we'll assume you already have the basics: a modern website, SEO and local directories, and instead focus on ideas beyond these essentials.

Know Your Battlefield

First, you should confirm you're actually in a saturated or highly competitive market. We use StorTrack for this, but there are other platforms out there such as Radius+ that will tell you your square foot per capita for your market. This is where you determine the total amount of square footage available per person living in your market (shoot us an email if you'd like us to help determine this for you).

The national average and the state average for Virginia (where we are) is under 8, but our portfolio average across multiple states, is closer to 15. If your market is over 20, it's safe to say you're in a highly competitive market; but if you are under 10, then most likely you aren't.



You Can't Create Demand—But You *Can* Win It

Self-storage isn't an impulse buy. You can't drum up artificial demand, so your focus should be on capturing *more than your fair share* of existing demand.

Hopefully you're getting good traffic flow to your website (and there isn't a universal metric to say how much traffic you should be getting as this varies by market, season and more). I'd suggest focusing on Year-over-Year and Month-over-Month trends.

If you need to increase traffic quickly, try Google Ads; and if you're already doing that, try Meta Ads (they now make it simple for reaching people thru not only Facebook, but Instagram and Threads too). No harm in doing both if your marketing budget can handle it.

If your Google budget is low (like \$400 or less), you should focus on specific keywords like *Storage Units Near Me* or *Self Storage Near Me* (we are seeing >20% Click Thru Rates on these). Use your Competitors' names as keywords too. Remarketing (retargeting / Pixels) is a great tactic to deploy. As potential

customers are searching around, you can target ads to those who have previously interacted with your website. The Cost per Click for this is typically a little lower too.

If not already on Sparefoot, it would be worth at least adding your units types of high availability (lower occupancy) on here. Despite a high cost per rental, the average length of stay remains high for our portfolio for Sparefoot customers (>14 months on average), meaning the return is usually worth it.

Don't Ignore Your Existing Tenants

Email marketing is one of the most cost-effective ways to boost referrals and customer retention. Start with what you (hopefully) already have: your tenants' email addresses.

Offer aggressive referral incentives. It works. Just make sure your campaigns are consistent, professional, and not overly pushy.

- Offer **\$100+** referral incentives (credits to rent, check, or gift cards)
- Send monthly updates with tips, promotions, and referral links
- Automate it with tools like Mailchimp or Constant Contact. Limit your email campaigns to weekly or monthly to help avoid unsubscribes.

You can also send out exit surveys to tenants who have already vacated. Gauging the reasons why people leave can help you shape your business moving forward (maybe even win them back).

Reviews drive local SEO, trust, and conversions. But don't pay for them, it's a bad look and against platform rules. Instead:

- Ask sincerely for feedback
- Explain how reviews help you improve
- Aim for consistency: a few reviews *every month*, not a flood and then silence

Capture the Lead – Conversion Tactics that Work

Once they are on your site, remember the goal in this competitive market is to convert more than your fair share to rentals.

- Match or beat the best special in your market. Customers care most about how much it costs them to move in today and how much their monthly rates will be moving forward. You can get too creative or detailed with your specials and actually lose the sale.
- Match or beat the prices particularly on your units with low occupancy. We use a custom integration between our system (called NOA) and StorTrack to automatically do this for us daily on select units and locations.
- Worry about the rates after the move in letting your revenue management strategy do its job (which it can't do if they don't move in to begin with).
- Make it easy to rent: Show lowest price first; highlight move-in cost (not just monthly rent). *Menu Overload* is a real thing and people will walk away if it is too cluttered or difficult to understand.

- Whether in person or online, *always* create a sense of urgency and ask for the sale. Consider price matching if they mention a better deal elsewhere (but don't send them back to the competitor to get it in writing; this gives the competitor another chance to do what you didn't: close the sale).

Think Local – Ground Campaigns and Long-Term Growth

Here at Packed Planet, we've come up with some creative marketing plans to local businesses, cross-promotions with local Centers of Influence (the businesses and individuals who know everyone in town) and even hosting Community Events on site. These types of tactics should be included in any marketing plan.

Build real relationships through community engagement:

- Host food truck days, car shows or community yard sales
- Offer corporate discounts to local apartment complexes or aggressive referral incentives.
- Share event photos and tag customers on social media

Some Examples seen online: A Texas facility ran a 'Free First Friday' with local coffee vendors, resulting in 31 leads in a week. A North Carolina facility reports writing 22 leases in 60 days sole from partnering with local realtors.

These local strategies don't just boost leads—they build long-term loyalty.

Final Thoughts

Competing in a saturated market isn't a death sentence—it's a signal that demand is present. But winning requires clarity, consistency, and creative thinking.

Use these tools and tactics here to get more than your fair share—and grow your business with confidence. Once you get the rental, then put your revenue management tactics to work and you'll recoup the incentives over time.

Let's Continue the Conversation

There's a lot to unpack here, and even more that wasn't covered. If you'd like to discuss any of these in more detail or need help applying these tactics, just reach out and continue the conversation; we'd be glad to share what's working across our portfolio. And be sure to check our free local SEO report on <https://getnoa.com>.



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