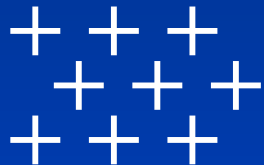




David vs Goliath: How Independent Self-Storage Operators Can Beat the Big Chains

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If you have questions and would like to speak to the presenter(s) at the end of this seminar, please follow them over to Room 305 for “Overtime With the Experts.”

This will help us clear the stage and set the room for the next presenter. Plus, you’ll have 30 minutes to converse in an open, roundtable format.

THANK YOU!

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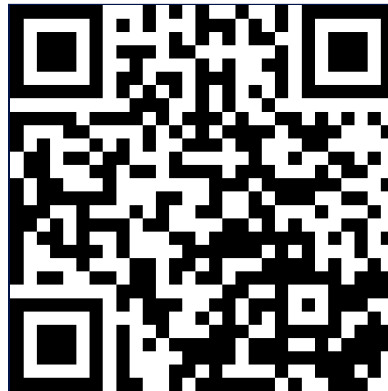




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Is Bigger Always Better?



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The Goliaths We Face in Our Day

- Better name recognition
 - Nearly unlimited funds
 - Tons of resources
 - Lots of people
 - Lots of experts
 - Hundreds, even thousands of stores
- Size and scale advantages
 - Enormous advertising/search budgets
 - Tech advantages
 - Purchasing power
 - No individual debt or mortgages *per se*

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Can You Defeat a Goliath? How?

How do you measure victory or defeat?

- Are you trying to be the biggest?
 - Are you trying to be the newest property?
 - Are you trying to be the nicest property?
 - Are you trying to get the most clicks?
 - Are you trying to get the most reviews?
 - Are you trying to offer more than anyone else?
-
- What really matters to you?
 - What's the goal?
 - What's the worry?

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Understand Your Opponent

They rely on fees.

How do the Goliaths make their money? What's important to them?

- Management fees
- Tenant insurance/protection
- Admin fees
- Late fees
- Product sales
- Call centers
- Advertising

“Without that money, we can't make any money on management.”

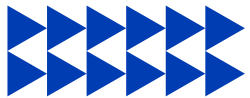
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Solution: Reduce or Eliminate Added Fees

- They aren't going to give up any of that money because they put it in directly into their pockets. It's against their interests.
- They'll chop the owner's rents way before they chop their fees.
- You can be flexible. It's just a little bit to you, but it's everything to them.



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Understand Your Opponent

They bait their customers.

Goliaths offer ridiculous, completely unsustainable introductory rates.

\$1 First month rent!
\$29 per month!

This requires almost immediate rental-rate increases to make any money.

It's a game they play.

Laws are being added to require more transparency.

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Solution: Educate the Customer

- Explain it to the customer in case they don't already know it.
- Sell a **good deal** or **best value**, not a sneaky bait and switch.
- Offer a variety of different specials to customers.
- Have something for everyone.



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Understand Your Opponent

They rely on existing-customer rate increases (ECRIs).

Goliath's play the ECRI game:

- Rent increases based on the calendar, not occupancy.
- The longer you stay, the longer you pay.

“How do you do your ECRIs?”

They brag about it!

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Solution: Don't Play Silly Games

- No one likes unfairness.
- The word is already out. Customers know the games they play.
- Spread the news; use it against them.
- Let's police our industry.
- *Offer a price-rate guarantee.*

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Understand Your Opponent

They operate nationally.

- They have hundreds, even thousands of stores.
- They have thousands of store managers.
- They have hundreds of different markets all over the nation.
- They have share prices to worry about.
- They have shareholders to cater to.
- They have major lawsuits to fight.

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Solution: Compete Locally

- Focus on your store.
- Know your market (2-3 miles).
- Develop relationships with local vendors, moving companies, realtors and apartment complexes.
- Keep up your curb appeal.
- Know your customers, even by name.
- Give a personal touch.
- Treat every customer like a VIP.
- Take care of your customers (real service, not lip service).
- Get real reviews that mention you by name.

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Understand Your Opponent

They pay managers differently.

- Competitive wage or a salary
- Healthcare benefits
- 401ks
- Keep employees long-term
- Prevent turnover because turnover kills them.



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Solution: Incentivize Your Manager

A good manager is ambitious and driven. Offer them incentives for different metrics.

- Rental bonus
- Best month ever bonus
- Tenant insurance enrollment bonus
- Retail sales bonus
- Specific, seasonal benchmark bonus

Incentives bring out the best in your people and makes them feel they get a piece of the profit.

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Understand Your Opponent

They love call centers.

- They have people to answer the phone at all hours.
- They have trained sales professionals.



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Solution: Answer Your Own Phone

- You have *personable* people, not telemarketers.
- Your people *actually care* about making the sale for their property.
- Your people are at the location and *actually know the property*.
- Your people are friendly and accommodating, *not reading off a script*.

Consider a call center for **after-hours** calls.



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Understand Your Opponent

They stick to their systems.

Despite all the tech and algorithms changing in real time, they can't always adapt on the fly.

- They need approvals.
- They don't want to hear too many cases or special circumstances.
- They have to act within certain limits.
- They are highly structured.

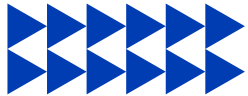
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Solution: Empower Your Employees

- You can adapt.
- You can alter.
- You can waive.
- You can keep customers happy in the moment.



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Understand Your Opponent

They push autopay.

They have way too many customers to manage.

They don't want to manage all those people and payments.

- They often give discounts to incentivize customers to enroll in autopay.
- They waive late fees if the person will enroll in autopay.



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Solution: Consider NOT Pushing Autopay

It may not be right for [you](#).

There's a reason companies don't send invoices!

There's a reason companies don't have you due on the first.

If you can manage it, there's more money to be made without it:

- Reduced merchant fees
- More late fees
- More NSF charges, etc.

It's too much work for them and might be too much for you as well.

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Understand Your Opponent

They are overly complex.

- Highly trained mathematical geniuses
- Custom, in-house tech solutions
- Systems
- Simulations
- Statistics
- Models
- Theories
- Algorithms

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Solution: Stay Simple

- You don't need to be a genius.
- Keep it simple stupid.
- Use your head.
- Be reasonable.
- Be rational.
- Be fair.
- Reduce and simplify.



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Understand Your Opponent

They compete with themselves.

- They have thousands of stores.
- You're just one of many.
- You don't matter as much as you think you do.
- Are you competing against one of their other stores?
- Are you competing against a corporate-owned store?
- If all your calls are going to a call center, are they giving your caller to other stores?
- Do they prioritize their corporate stores?
- No one could say one way or the other for sure.

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Solution: Choose Another Company

- Go with a smaller firm so you get VIP treatment.
- Don't give up any of your tenant protection or other fees.
- Find out if you'll be in competition with their other stores.
- Insist on knowing their team personally.
- Make sure the owner of the firm is always available to you.
- Never commit to long-term contracts.
- Never agree to pay early-termination penalties.



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