

Summary

Problem

Storage USA, Inc. needed a way to expedite and refine its data mining process to produce accurate site maps and reports.

Goals

- Create detail demographic reports
- Improve efficiency of report and map generation

Results

- Increased the number of reports and maps
- Reduced its production time in half
- Other departments can perform analysis projects in shorter time frames
- Reduced the potential risk of erroneous site selection

“The biggest impact on our operations has been the ability to successfully automate 90 percent of our site analysis process.”

Cory Grubbs
Financial Analyst
Storage USA, Inc.

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Successful Site Selection – Automatically!

Overview

Everyone knows the real estate mantra of “Location, location, location.” Selecting the best site to locate a business is very difficult; if the wrong site is chosen, this decision can be costly.

Storage USA predicts that the average cost of a new facility is more than *\$4 million dollars!*

Cory Grubbs, financial analyst with Storage USA says that, “Locating sites where our product can best serve our customers is one of the more challenging aspects of the self-storage business.”

Storage USA’s main focus for more than 19 years has been to provide dependable, convenient, affordable, and safe self-storage service solutions for its residential and commercial customers. Operating from more than 500 locations nationwide and a network of more than 5,000 affiliates, Storage USA acquires, develops and manages self-storage facilities in 34 states and the District of Columbia.

The Challenge

After Storage USA evaluates hundreds of potential sites annually, only a few proposed sites survive the rigorous site analysis process that includes performing demographic, competitor, and traffic volume analyses. Storage USA supports each site analysis with detailed tract, ZIP Code and trade area maps. Creating these reports and maps manually for more than 30 sites each week was burdensome for Storage USA personnel. Manual site selection was far too time-consuming and laborious. Storage USA realized that a new solution was needed to expedite and refine the data mining process and produce exact site maps and reports.

The Solution

Cory Grubbs, Storage USA’s Financial Analyst, actively sought help from other providers. However, “other companies could not handle the amount of data that we wanted to analyze at one time. Their reports were canned and didn’t include enough demographic detail. Their products simply failed to perform as the sales personnel promised.” Storage USA also investigated the possibility of outsourcing these analyses, but found that the cost would be prohibitively expensive - \$150 for each report.

Storage USA turned to ESRI business GIS solutions for an automated solution to this demographic analysis and mapping challenge. Storage USA implemented Business Analyst software to generate custom demographic reports and maps in batch mode.

Software Used
Business Analyst

The Solution

As part of the analysis process, Storage USA also uses data from ESRI. Data variables such as home values, income ranges, and population density are extracted for areas that Storage USA believes are optimal for potential self-storage facilities. If necessary, more statistical analysis is performed so that Storage USA can determine if the site matches the selection criteria and if competition and other supply/demand factors should be considered before selecting the proposed property.

“Instead of our having to manually generate hundreds of reports and maps each week, the entire process was streamlined by incorporating an ESRI data “plug-in”, a custom script that can generate more than 500 reports and maps at one time.” This application enabled Storage USA to efficiently produce presentation-quality reports and maps using *only* the demographics they wanted to analyze. According to Grubbs, “Each report and map looks like someone spent hours putting it together.”

Results

Using a custom integrated solution designed by ESRI, Storage USA increased the number of reports and maps generated each week and halved the production time. This time saving automation allowed other internal Storage USA departments to perform other analysis projects. Now, additional requests and projects can be turned around in shorter time frames.

Using data and software from ESRI, Storage USA has increased the efficiency and accuracy of its site selection process, provided the ability to create custom applications, the flexibility to run them with existing ESRI products, and reduce the potential risk of erroneous site selection.

“The biggest impact on our operations,” says Grubbs, “has been the ability to successfully automate 90% of our site analysis process.”

**For more information about
ESRI, call 800-292-2224.**

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