VisitTheUSA.com

Brand USA

FY2021 Objectives, Summary Marketing Plan, and Budget

August 1, 2020

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Introduction



Brand USA and the entire U.S. travel industry faces unprecedented conditions in Fiscal Year 2021 (FY2021). Never before has the U.S. travel industry confronted such uncertainty about its future — in particular the lucrative international segment.

By August 1, 2020, the outlook for international travel to the United States is murky at best. Attempts to forecast or project international arrivals and spending for FY2021 will be frustrated by the sheer number of uncertainties and variables. These uncertainties include conditions in key source markets, conditions in U.S. destinations, and fiscal status of the organization and its sources of revenue.

Brand USA continues to engage with the travel trade and media in our key markets and with our domestic partners, even as the organization develops plans to help the industry recover. On top of the market conditions at home and abroad, Brand USA's outlook is complicated by COVID-19's negative impact on the finances of partner organizations and on ESTA applications, which provide the federal matching funds for Brand USA.

It is of primary importance that Brand USA deploy resources allocated for an industry recovery plan when conditions are adequate to attract international visitors and their spending effectively and at sufficient scale. In the meantime, the organization must maintain a state of readiness and pursue a limited number of strategic priorities. Therefore, Brand USA will approach FY2021 in two phases with well-defined criteria to move from one to the other. Each of the two phases has specific strategic priorities detailed below. If sufficient gating criteria are not met during FY2021, Brand USA will execute against state of readiness priorities for the entirety of the fiscal year.



Global Travel and Tourism Environment



As the world struggles to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and its enormous economic impact, international travel has suffered particularly drastic consequences. Predicting the pace of recovery is exceptionally difficult because much of the pandemic's course is determined not just by scientific and government leaders, but also the behavior of billions of individuals. Inconsistency in approach and opinion have led to a wide variation in the way countries have succeeded or failed in their attempts to contain the virus.

Additionally, the pace of COVID-19's spread/containment in many ways sets the pace for travel's recovery, but it is not the only factor. With much of Europe and East Asia maintaining a low case count, these regions will have the ability to return to international travel (both as origin and destination) sooner than others. However, Brand USA consumer research shows that intent to take an international trip in the next 12 months remains weak even in these markets, showing little to no improvement in July compared to April results. In fact, the Asian markets surveyed show a stronger decline in July than in preceding months, indicating that getting the viral spread largely under control locally is not enough to restore confidence, even when considering a full year into the future.

As the United States has not yet reached a level of containment similar to other mature economies, it will likely lose global market share to these regions in the near term. Oxford Economics estimates that U.S. inbound travel receipts will decline by \$146 billion (-75%) in 2020 compared to 2019. The firm projects that U.S. inbound travel receipts will not reach 2019 volume until 2024, reflecting a slow-paced recovery.

While timing remains unclear, there are several key drivers that enable Brand USA to effectively create plans that can be executed when the conditions are appropriate. For example, the top priority for most travelers as they plan their trips is minimizing risk of exposure. Given the relatively high risk of air travel, inbound drive and short air trips from Canada and Mexico have the strongest immediate potential once restrictions have been lifted. Similarly, a strategy that emphasizes the outdoors experiences available in the United States is likely to lend an advantage to Brand USA's consumer messaging. Brand USA is well positioned to help the industry navigate the choppy waters ahead.

FY2021 Priorities and Objectives



In the face of this unprecedented uncertainty, Brand USA has multiple responsibilities and strategic imperatives to pursue. These include:

- Maintain a state of readiness so Brand USA may quickly deploy a recovery campaign when appropriate.
- Spend efficiently to affect relevant factors to travel during state of readiness and prepare for a robust recovery effort when appropriate conditions are achieved.
- Keep important travel distribution networks engaged with the USA in key source markets.
- Create infrastructure to provide supplier/buyer engagement opportunities.
- In key source markets, maintain a baseline level of inspirational content to keep consumers travel dreaming about the USA.
- Maintain a constant pulse with industry partners to disseminate, collect, and aggregate critical decision-making input as well as a basic infrastructure to service partner needs.
- Stay engaged with all partners to keep them informed about market insights and plans, help them maintain a state of readiness to return to market, and service a baseline level of partner needs in key markets.
- Determine the appropriate criteria and indicators to scale up recovery marketing.
- Target important KPIs in the recovery campaign to resume flow of traveler dollars, DMOs funding, and ESTA fees.

Brand USA will approach FY2021 in two phases: state of readiness and recovery marketing. While it is impossible to know when the transition from one to the other will occur, it is important to stake out well-defined criteria that will give the organization and its partners confidence that the time is right to launch the international recovery effort.

State of readiness

Fairbanks, Alaska



Priority: Spend efficiently to affect relevant factors to travel during state of readiness and prepare for a robust recovery effort.

Objective: Prepare for a robust recovery with as many resources as possible. **Measure:** Resources allocated to recovery campaign.



Priority: Maintain a state of readiness.Objective: Recovery campaign ready to go, including partner opportunities.Measures: Ready launch plan and assets by beginning of FY2021.



Priority: Maintain engagement with travel distribution networks.

Objective: Maintain travel trade presence in key source markets to keep the USA top of mind via training, webinars, and B2B engagements (e.g. new virtual global marketplace). **Measures:** Number of travel trade engagements and number of partners engaged.



Priority: Keep the drumbeat of inspiration alive.

Objective: Deploy inspirational consumer messaging through organic digital and social channels, GoUSA TV, and earned media.

Measures: Engagement (comments, likes, share), video views, and impressions.



Priority: Help the industry maintain a state of readiness.

Objective: Provide Brand USA partners and the U.S. travel and tourism industry with market intelligence and a global infrastructure to maintain a presence in the international marketplace.

Measures: Participation in research webinars and small roundtable groups; participation in Brand USA travel trade programs; partners returning to market when conditions are right.



Priority: Maintain a pulse on market and industry conditions.

Objective: Track market and industry conditions to monitor gating criteria, provide value to the industry, and inform marketing messaging.

Measures: Consumer sentiment; consumer behavioral indicators; market, travel trade, and media reports from international offices.



Priority: Communicate entry policy and opening status.

Objective: Maintain and disseminate a central repository of up-to-date entry policy and procedure information as well as critical state-, city-, and company-level opening information and health protocols.

Measures: Information is regularly maintained and included in proactive trade engagement and external communication to stakeholders.



One of the big questions confronting the travel industry since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the timing to resume international marketing and begin a recovery campaign. However, the when and the where are both functions of market conditions and other factors. Brand USA has aggregated a set of "gating criteria" to help determine when the conditions are appropriate to transition from state of readiness to recovery mode. Brand USA's criteria span three categories: conditions in key source markets, conditions in the United States, and corporate/partner fiscal conditions.

Brand USA will monitor these gating criteria on a rolling basis to determine when sufficient criteria across all three categories show sustained momentum sufficient to justify a transition from state of readiness to deploying resources against a recovery marketing campaign.

Category	Criteria	Indicator
Source market conditions	Air service	Planned increases in seat capacity from source market
	Consumer sentiment	Increase in intent to visit the USA
	U.S. entry policy toward market and source-market policy toward travel to the USA	Entry to the USA is allowed
		No onerous requirements in home country (such as 14-day quarantine)
	Consumer behavioral indicators	Substantive increases in search and product queries for travel to the USA
Home market conditions	COVID-19 levels	Sustained decline/maintained low volume of cases
	Destinations are open and eager to accept visitors	A majority (~80%) of gateway destinations allow recreational attractions, retail stores and restaurants to operate at full capacity
Partner/fiscal conditions	Partner demand for international marketing	Partner surveys and roundtable group feedback
	Partner contributions	Partner dollars allocated for international and LOAs to Brand USA



Once Brand USA is confident the time is right to generate bookings for future travel in each individual market, the organization will transition to recovery marketing via the consumer-facing USA Campaign. Brand USA will only launch recovery when conditions warrant.

The recovery campaign will differ from the typical USA campaign that Brand USA has deployed in the past in that it will be focused on activation rather than inspiration and intent to visit. Brand USA will accomplish this by including product and calls-to-action of selected tour operators, airlines, and OTAs to drive bookings. The campaign will incentivize tour operators, airlines, and OTAs to utilize Brand USA itinerary programs and other tools. It will also build on proven creative approaches, include as many U.S. destinations as possible, and provide for cooperative marketing opportunities. While the duration, target markets, and spending on the recovery campaign will be a function of the criteria listed above, the priorities and objectives for the recovery campaign include:



Priority: Drive international arrivals, spending, and revenue for travel suppliers, as well as state and local DMOs in the United States.

Objective: Generate measurable bookings through an inspirational campaign that integrates selected tour operators, airlines, and OTAs through calls-to-action and use of Brand USA itinerary programs and other tools.

Measures: Attributable bookings; participation and engagement by tour operators, OTAs, airlines.



Priority: Deploy an effective and efficient campaign.Objective: Make the USA the easy and obvious choice as a travel destination.Measures: Engagements, video views, CPM; campaign-led bookings.



Priority: Represent the entirety of the United States, including rural and urban areas.
Objective: Include as many states, cities, regions, and territories as possible in the creative for the recovery campaign, ensuring a balance of rural and urban destinations.
Measures: Number of city and states included, and rural/urban ratio of included destinations.

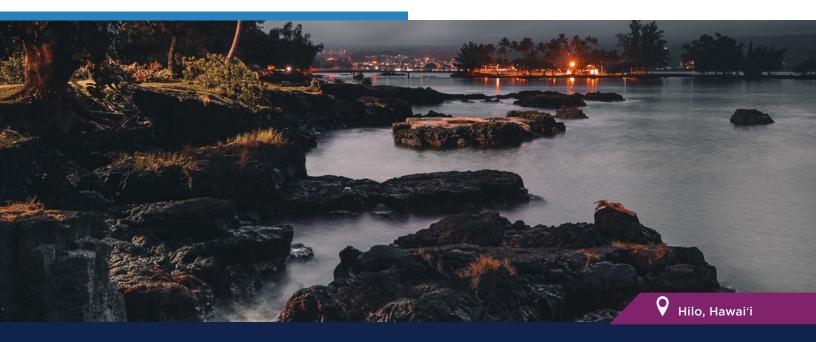


Priority: Use recovery platform for cooperative marketing.

Objective: Implement cooperative marketing opportunities in conjunction with the campaign with focus on activation.

Measures: Number of partners participating; percentage of returning partners YOY; attributable bookings.

FY2021 Summary Marketing Plan



State of Readiness Marketing Plan

Brand USA will begin the fiscal year in a state of readiness. The readiness mode does not refer simply to having a recovery marketing campaign ready to launch when the conditions are appropriate, though it does include this. Instead, Brand USA has a series of strategic priorities that it will pursue to ensure the U.S. travel industry, in-market stakeholders, and consumers are ready to resume when the time is right.

These priorities will also continue to keep the United States top of mind as a travel destination and create opportunities for partners to stay engaged in the marketplace even if travel is not yet possible or recovery marketing not yet advisable. Brand USA's marketing priorities while in a state of readiness include:

- Maintain engagement with travel distribution networks.
- Keep the drumbeat of inspiration alive.
- Help the industry maintain a state of readiness.
- Maintain a pulse on market and industry conditions.
- Communicate U.S. entry policy and reopening status.

Maintain engagement with travel distribution networks

Brand USA will continue to engage with the travel trade and distribution networks in key source markets around the world. It is important to keep the USA top of mind with these networks even if there is little or no travel from those markets to the United States. Brand USA will accomplish this through a steady schedule of training programs, educational webinars, newsletters, and virtual and in-person events that will reach thousands of travel agents and tour operators each week. Highlights will include:

USA Discovery Program

The USA Discovery Program is Brand USA's official online agent training tool about the diverse destinations and experiences available in the USA to inspire and help the travel industry get accredited as USA Specialists. International travel agents learn geographical information on regions, as well as individual states and territories, to become a Regional Expert. Agents can then earn special badges for travel themes such a luxury or great outdoors. Brand USA runs promotions to increase agent participation in the training program.



Categories

About the USA	-
Visa & Entry	-

Welcome to the United States of America.

It's so much more than a destination. It's a land where everything is possible, so anything is possible. Where imagination becomes reality and nothing is too new, too big or too far away to actually happen. Whether you're exploring a larger-than-life city or wandering way off the beaten path, there is something different to experience around every corner.

In total since the program's inception,

+40K agents enrolled

DK **14** dges mpleted



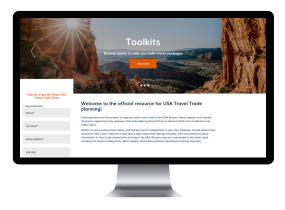
Brand USA Global Marketplace

COVID has forced much of the U.S. travel and tourism industry into an existential posture. DMOs, attractions, hotels, and others will focus first and foremost on local and regional recovery. Many of these organizations have disengaged from international markets, which creates a serious challenge to the collective ability of the industry to rebuild its global marketing footprint.

The Brand USA Global Marketplace will launch in FY2021 and allow the U.S. travel and tourism industry to continue to interface with key tour operators around the world. This always-on, virtual tradeshow platform enables Brand USA and partners to host major activations such as the 2020 Brand USA Travel Week Europe as well as destination-specific or market-specific meetings and events.

Brand USA Travel Trade Website and Toolkits

Brand USA's travel trade website and toolkits make it easier for tour operators and travel agents to package and promote the USA as a premier travel destination. The travel trade website is available at **VisitTheUSA.com/TravelTrade** and provides quick and easy access to training tools, videos, photos, destination descriptions, suggested itineraries, important contacts, and essential travel information. Also available on the site are digital promotional toolkits that include regularly updated photo and video assets hosted on Brand USA's digital asset management system; translated sales presentations in Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish; "USA Insider Guides" self-drive itineraries; and the "Brand USA Global Inspiration Program."



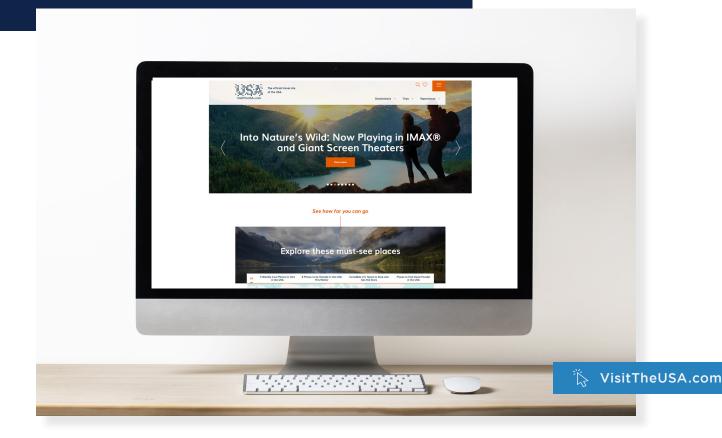
Keep the drumbeat of inspiration alive

Brand USA will continue to deploy entertaining and inspirational content organically to the millions of hand raisers around the world who have signed up to follow consumer channels or who otherwise seek out USA travel content. Brand USA will distribute this content through a variety of platforms, including:

Visit The USA/ Go USA Digital and Social Platforms

Brand USA maintains its digital presence with robust social media outreach through platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as market-specific channels like WeChat, Youku, and more. Brand USA continuously works to enhance these platforms and has earned a substantial following throughout the world through paid search engine and social media marketing, compelling content, and interactive features. Each market in which Brand USA maintains a fully developed marketing presence and dedicated in-language website has a complementary set of social channels with localized digital media efforts.







GoUSA TV: Brand USA's Connected Television Channel

GoUSA TV streams entertainment-driven travel content "on demand" to viewers on smart TVs or streaming devices via Roku, Amazon Fire, Apple TV, Android TV, Google Chromecast as well as iOS and Android apps for mobile devices and tablets. The channel is available for free and without a subscription and takes advantage of digital video trends and the growth of households that are cutting their reliance on cable television programming in favor of on-demand entertainment. The channel attracts viewers worldwide with its range of original and curated episodic content, documentaries, and films about U.S. destinations and experiences told from the diverse perspectives of real people across America.





Media and Public Relations

Brand USA promotes destinations and travel experiences through earned media coverage in both travel trade and consumer media, including broadcast, print, and online.

Brand USA will continue to make pitches in-market during state of readiness to keep the USA top-of-mind as an attractive tourist destination.



Help the industry maintain a state of readiness

Brand USA works with more than 200 contributing partners each year to deploy cooperative marketing platforms and programs through the consumer, trade, and media infrastructure that the organization has built around the world. Most cooperative programs will remain on hold during the state of readiness phase. However, Brand USA will pursue several key priorities with partners, including:

Education and insights

Brand USA will stay engaged with all partners to ensure they are aware of the marketplace conditions and marketing plans. This will take place through a combination of initiatives such as regular research webinars, aggregation of in-market insights, and convening of small roundtable groups. Such market intelligence will be particularly valuable to partners that have eschewed their own international presence.



Partner state of readiness

It is crucial to the overall state of readiness that the entire U.S. travel industry, including Brand USA's contributing partners, be in a position to interface with and receive travelers from around the world. As many destinations and travel companies have scaled back their global footprint, Brand USA provides an infrastructure to help them maintain their international presence through in-market representatives, cooperative marketing, digital and social platforms, key media partnerships, and earned media pitches. As noted above, the Brand USA Global Marketplace will be one of the key tools to help partners maintain a foothold with key travel trade around the world.

Baseline cooperative marketing

There will be some instances of cooperative marketing programs against which Brand USA and partners will activate, even during the state of readiness. Brand USA is able to deploy these efforts through existing digital, trade and media infrastructure focused on activation. These instances will be highly consultative to ensure the funds entrusted to Brand USA by contributors are utilized appropriately and provide adequate value to the organization.



Maintain a pulse on market and industry conditions

Brand USA will maintain a pulse on market and industry conditions through a combination of consumer sentiment testing, regular reports from international offices, headline news, and inquiries from media and the travel trade. These tools will allow Brand USA to monitor its established gating criteria, optimize communications strategy during the readiness and recovery phases, and provide critical guidance and information to the U.S. travel and tourism industry and Brand USA partners.



Communicate entry policy and reopening status



Brand USA will maintain and disseminate a central repository of up-to-date entry policy and protocols as well as critical state-, city-, and company-level reopening information and health protocols. This information will be particularly useful to consumers and the travel trade as entry restrictions are lifted and public health protocols are integrated into U.S. ports of entry and the aviation system more broadly.

Recovery Marketing Plan: Reset and Go



Brand USA will constantly monitor conditions in international markets, at home, and among industry partners to determine when the gating criteria are met to move from a state of readiness to a recovery marketing plan. The criteria for this determination are listed in the priorities section above. This section previews the recovery campaign.

Brand USA's recovery campaign will differ from its normal campaigns in a few key respects. Most notably, previous campaigns have focused on "upper funnel" messaging to create inspiration for travel to the United States with calls-to-action that invite the consumer to continue exploring inspirational travel content. The recovery campaign will focus lower in the marketing funnel and contain calls-to-action to drive bookings through selected tour operators, airlines, and online travel agencies (OTAs).

Brand USA will pursue this objective to drive travel bookings quickly to create needed revenue for U.S. destinations and travel suppliers that have been hard hit by COVID and its economic fallout. Brand USA will also seek to include as many U.S. destinations as possible in the campaign and will design cooperative marketing programs for partners that tie into the overall recovery campaign.





Brand Truth

The USA is an aspirational destination that truly reflects the spirit of reinvention.

Reset and Go

Laddering up to a unified goal

Driving intent to visit the USA and increasing engagement with / within Brand USA all work toward a single goal:

Leading the recovery of the United States Travel and Tourism Industry.

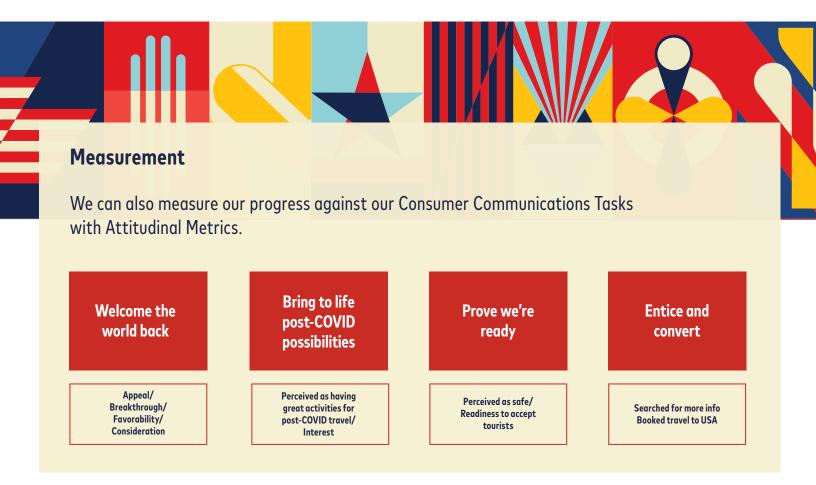


Summarizing our Communications Tasks



Engagement Framework





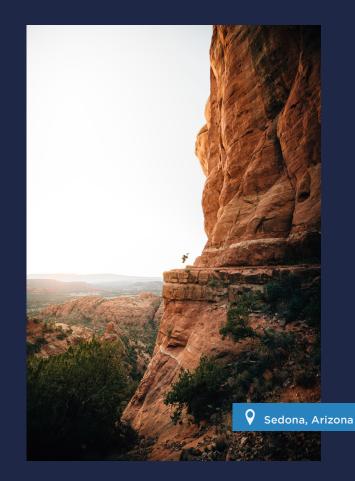
FY2021 Summary Budget

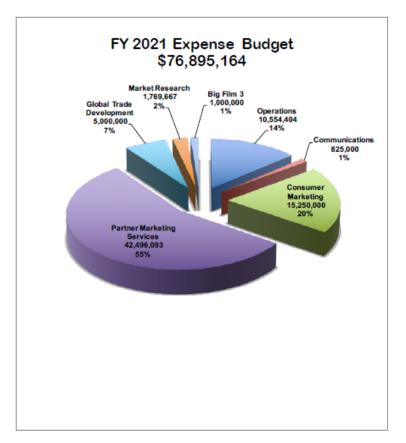


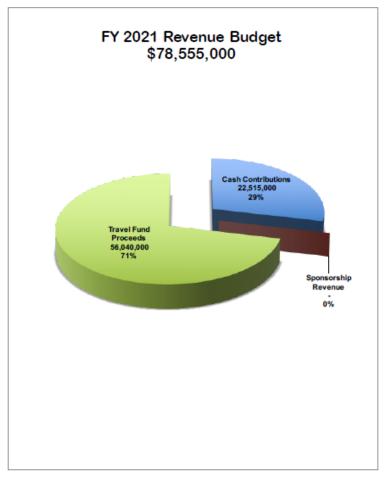
Brand USA's FY2021 budget reflects the organization's revenue projections and maps to the framework and objectives laid out in this document.

On the revenue side, Brand USA projects total cash and in-kind contributions collected and submitted for matching funds to be approximately \$60 million. However, Brand USA forecasts the majority of partner contributions to occur in the latter part of the fiscal year, which means not all matching funds will be received prior to September 30, 2021.

On the framework side, Brand USA will maintain a state of readiness until such time as sufficient gating criteria are met to transition to recovery mode. During state of readiness, Brand USA will manage expenses to a lower target than this budget. Therefore, the FY2021 budget assumes the launch of recovery marketing around April 1, 2021.







Explanation for Budget Items over \$450,000

Vendor: Account Name	Туре	Range of Expenses
Alchemia	International Representation and PR Services - Mexico	\$600,000.00
Aviareps Brazil	International Representation and PR Services - Brazil	\$600,000.00
Aviareps Japan	International Representation and PR Services - Japan	\$450,000.00-600,000.00
Beautiful Destinations Limited	Creative Content Development and Distribution	\$500,000.00-2,000,000.00
Code and Theory	Digital Development	\$500,000.00-750,000.00
Edelman PR Korea	International Representation and PR Services - Korea	\$600,000.00
Farragut Center	Rent	\$1,000,000.00-1,200,000.00
Fexy Studios	Insertion Order	\$600,000.00
Finn Partners	Global Public Relations	\$500,000.00-800,000.00
Gate 7 Pty Ltd	International Representation and PR Services - Australia	\$600,000.00-900,000.00
Hills Balfour Limited	UK and Eruorpean Representation, Public Relations, and Event Management	\$1,000,000.00-\$2,000,000.00
Hylink USA	Chinese - Consumer Digital Development, Social Media Management, and Media Buying*	\$1,000,000.00-1,500,000.00
Insomniac Design Inc.	Digital Development	\$400,000.00-600,000.00
MacGillivray Freeman Films, Inc.	Global Film Distribution	\$1,000,000.00
Mediacom	Media Planning and Buying Services*	\$1,000,000.00-\$2,000,000.00
Miles Partnership LLLP	Content and Digital Developent, Media Planning and Buying, Printing and Distribution*	\$500,000.00-2,000,000.00
Novak Birch Synchronized Communications	Scope of Work	\$500,000.00
Sartha Marketing Consultants	International Representation and PR Services - India	\$550,000.00
SDL International America, Inc	Translation Services	\$750,000.00
Ykone	Influencer Management and Content Development	\$500,000.00-1,000,000.00

Note: The expenditures built in to Brand USA's budget in developing the broad categories reported to the Department of Commerce are budgeted as opposed to actual expenditures. Some budgeted expenditures may correspond to specific contracts or commitments that are in place at the time that the budget is prepared or specific expenditures for which Brand USA expects to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP). Other budgeted expenditures may be for predictable specific expenditures because they are types of specific expenditures that are repeated from one year to the next. In cases where there is no contract in place, we've included an estimate based on prior years or budgeted figures that correspond to the agreement, but may not be an exact figure. Where no vendor is listed, we have provided a budget range so as not to interfere in the competitive bid process by providing bidders too much information. When the Brand USA budget is prepared, Brand USA does not know where or how a substantial portion of its marketing budget will be spent. Where and how marketing dollars will be spent depends on variables such as what ideas will interest partners, market research, exchange rates, discounts, travel trends and other similar factors. Even if Brand USA reasonably anticipated that it would spend \$X million promoting travel from a particular international market to the United States, it often would not know during the budgeting process what specific expenditures it would make. The majority of Brand USA's budget comprises these types of expenditures.



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- TheBrandUSA.com
- 🕑 @BrandUSA
- Facebook.com/TheBrandUSA
- YouTube.com/BrandUSATV
- in Linkedin.com/Company/BrandUSA

For information about exceptional and unexpected travel experiences in the United States, please visit or connect with us on our consumer channels:

- WisitTheUSA.com
- 💟 @VisitTheUSA
- Facebook.com/VisitTheUSA
- YouTube.com/VisitTheUSA
- @VisitTheUSA

To get the latest on new shows and episodes, follow our GoUSA TV social channels:

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