



## Brand USA Global Marketplace 2.0 RFP Q & A

The following are answers to questions Brand USA has received to the RFP for Brand USA Global Marketplace 2.0.

Thanks to everyone who submitted questions regarding Brand USA's RFP for Brand USA Global Marketplace 2.0. Since many of the questions posed were similar, we have condensed and edited queries. Company names have been removed. If the answer to the question is already in the RFP, or if we were unable to understand a question, we did not provide an answer.

- Q How wedded are you to using Drupal? Will suppliers who recommend using this be prioritized?**
- A We are open to other content management frameworks, as long as they are not proprietary. Our other websites are built in Drupal, so there is an advantage in terms of our team and agencies being able to easily utilize the cms.
- Q Considering the amount of requirements mentioned within the scope of work, an indication on budget range would be very useful in order to understand the feasibility of including every item within the proposal. Please can you share what this estimated budget range is?**
- A Budget for what's in the RFP and be as specific as possible. We do not provide a budget range.
- Q You mention 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021 as the project start date. When would you ideally like to have the final version ready for launch?**
- A Submit a realistic timetable based on the items in the RFP. This may be adjusted after you perform "discovery" with our group of stakeholders.
- Q The RFP says: "Proprietary CMS is not acceptable." We offer a managed solution and clients will not have access to platform or CMS. Is this a deal breaker?**
- A You may still submit if you feel that the advantages of your product outweigh our concerns of utilizing a platform that only one company can control.
- Q The RFP says: "Up to 1500 sessions per day": We would like more clarity on the sessions that will be hosted during the event. We have the ability to integrate with a zoom, webex or other collaboration tools but for the most part, sessions will be run through our webcasting solution which is a one/few to many presentation solutions.**
- A These are private person-to-person meetings which are currently 15 minutes, but may be extended based on user feedback. Integration of common collaboration tools is fine. Your own system is also fine, if you've proven reliability.
- Q How many event days on average are you planning per annum?**
- A One to two events per month, one to two – or three to four - days each. We would likely have no more than two to three events over three days. This is tentative and subject to change, but that's how you should proceed for this RFP.

**Q How long will the chosen supplier be contracted for?**

A A minimum of one year, with the possibility of extension.

**Q How many exhibitors on average do you plan to have per event/day? How many did you have for the first Brand USA Global Market Place Europe in November 2020?**

A For Brand USA Travel Week Europe, we had approximately 750 participants. For some events, we can expect about 300-500 participants; other events more like 2000+ participants.

**Q We are assuming there will be a single instance of the site initially, but the solution needs to be modular, so we can then deploy it in a multi-site environment, and be able to construct custom modules on top of it (for example for partner events) - is this correct? Or do you plan to have multiple independent sites from the beginning?**

A We'd like to learn which you find more expedient and cost-effective. It is highly likely that you would build in a language connector for semi-automated translation – as opposed to having to cut and pasting languages - and users should be able to easily switch between languages/sites.

**Q The RFP asks for an integrated appointment matching system, tied to the registration system, which can schedule up to 300 concurrent meetings - up to 1,500 per day - and handle 7 days of concurrent meetings. Our questions:**

**I. How many different user types/privileges should we include?**

A. There are two primary user types for appointments: international buyers, U.S. suppliers. Additional types are media, travel agent and guest. They do require different privilege sets.

**II. Will the match-making criteria change from event to event?**

A. The match-making criteria would change slightly since there are different buyers in each event and the international market may have specific questions related to that country/business interests. However, the general process remains the same. We could also consider an open calendar format for appointment scheduling in addition to match matching appointments.

**III. Should the match-making system allow users to select meetings that they would be interested in, and use this info in conjunction with a matching algorithm?**

A. Yes, it would be great for users to not only select specific exhibitors/buyers they would be interested in, but also that preferences are region/country specific so that if they don't match with specific organizations, they would still have a chance to meet with organizations that are relevant to their business goals.

**IV. Should we include the option to manually adjust the match-making meetings at any point in time?**

A. Yes, the manual adjustment is used in the final stage of appointment matchmaking, especially if appointment books do not fill-up for specific partners.

**V. Do users have the opportunity to accept or reject meetings? Or, once we have set them they are sent their calendar?**

A. Yes, users have the opportunity to accept or reject meetings – and would ideally utilize a top-up function where they can see who is free at any time slot that they have an opening.

**Q You mentioned you have ‘significantly learned’ from your users since platform was launched, is this feedback the main reason why you now want to evolve functionality?**

A The feedback we’ve received concerning our platform has been extremely positive. This next effort will build on our success and enable us to scale to the specifics in the RFP.

**Q Currently, the website is graphically intensive - designed to resemble a live expo hall. However, shrinking such a user interface to fit on a mobile screen will make the background graphics too small to be usable. Should the mobile version resemble a regular website (instead of having the animations displayed on the Desktop version), to improve UX but lose the USP of the original concept?**

A We would like your perspective. Having no solution for mobile/tablet is not tenable, so if responsive design will not work, is it better to have a different mobile experience?

**Q Do you have further information regarding the number of pavilions and pods you would like included in the Buyer Expo?**

A Budget for 40 pavilions and 300 pods. This number may change when you do discovery with us.

**Q The RFP says: “Enhanced filtering system for searching exhibitors.” Could you expand upon the type of filtering you would like to see for searching exhibitors.**

A This enables us to tag exhibitors to help international buyers use the site search to find them via:

State

Region

Attraction type

Activities within destination (ie. golfing, high-end shopping, wine tours, etc.)

Interests

**Q Are you open to a discovery call with our partners?**

A If you are the selected vendor, yes. We do not do pre-calls for RFP submissions.

**Q Have you evaluated other third party conference software?**

A While we researched various solutions, we do the actual evaluations based on what we receive during the RFP process.

**Q Do you have a measurement strategy in place?**

A Yes.

**Q How many characters need to be created in addition to the existing ones?**

A Base your budget on what you see in the design now. You will learn more during the discovery phase.

**Q Are you currently using Salesforce or another CRM to manage User profile information?**

A We are currently using a custom CRM.

**Q Do you want us to build off the original spec, or design something completely different?**

A We'd like hear your suggestions.

**Q The RFP says: "Expansion will include building out a Buyer Expo - similar to USA Partner Pavilion" - is this a separate scope of work or part of the current SOW?**

A Current scope.

**Q What browsers do you expect this marketplace to be supported on?**

A

Desktop PC:

- o Windows 10
- o Edge (Newest)
- o Chrome (Latest)
- o FireFox (Latest)
- o Windows 7
- o IE11

· Desktop Mac:

- o MacOS Mojave
- o MacOS Catalina
- o Safari (Latest)

· Mobile:

- o Latest iOS version on the latest device
- o Recommended iPhone 11 Pro
- o Latest Android version on the most widely adopted resolution- Recommended- latest Galaxy

**Q For the google analytics, are you alright with analytics that is supplied by our platform vs google analytics?**

A Possibly. We are open to learn about your solution.

**Q What is the maximum amount of participants do you think will be on the site at once?**

A Rather than dictating a specific number, explain how this might affect budget based on numbers.

**Q For the live chat during live events, would you be looking for our team to be responding to this or would someone on your end be monitoring this?**

A For the purpose of this RFP, this is not your responsibility. We can discuss more during discovery.

**Q Are you looking for more of a 3D experience as users enter the platform or are you open to other layouts?**

A We would like to learn about your approach.

**Q Is v1 built with Drupal and if so which version?**

A The current website is .net.

**Q What current functionality and integrations exist?**

A We suggest you examine the current site. There currently is an Amazon Chime integration, but you are not required to utilize Chime, unless you choose to do so.

**Q Is there any existing data that should be migrated from v1 into the new version?**

A There is registration and appointment match-making data.

**Q What kinds of user roles and groups are set up on the current website or application?**

A We will discuss requirements during discovery.

**Q Are there any specific user account or user group permissions we should know about? (i.e. user group A can do XYZ things, but not user group B).**

A We'd like to learn about how you would approach this and how it effects budget.

**Q How many additional markets and languages will be a part of the initial roll out?**

A English only initially, but the functionality should be built in to able to quickly launch other languages.

**Q What is the company's guidelines for the American Disabilities Act?**

A Examine our consumer websites at VisitTheUSA.com and our corporate website at TheBrandUSA.com to understand the level of compliance.

**Q Do you need support for compliance reporting on meeting accessibility standards?**

A Not for this RFP.

**Q Are there specific security requirements that the website or application must be able to support or continue to support in other global regions?**

A The Marketplace is currently hosted and accelerated on AWS/Cloudfront. Our other sites are on Acquia/Cloudflare. While you are expected to configure and do maintenance, Brand USA contracts directly for hosting, security and cdn, so those expenses should not be included in your budget.

**Q We currently have a complete working multi-tenant event platform to handle virtual events, while some modules will be customized for your website and RFP. We noticed some places where you want to use an existing CMS platform or use the currently built platform (=Drupal-based). Without being able to review the current code, we cannot properly evaluate the requirements, or possible solution timeline. Could you explain further your reasoning for this requirement and if you had the option would you prefer a faster turnaround vs using an opensource CMS platform?**

A We must be able to simply and quickly alter content (text, graphics, images); add to menus and sections; and make other website changes without requiring time consuming and costly backend code work.

**Q What happens after year 1 is over?**

A Many months prior to the one year anniversary, we will discuss future requirements.

**Q What is your current payment schedule, or are you willing to follow what is specified in the RFP?**

A We realize that the budget you present for this RFP is an estimate. Prior to contract, we will discuss budget in much greater detail before we will ask you to submit a final number.

**Q Can you outline your ideal licensing arrangements?**

A If we are licensing a pre-existing product from you, then we need to understand annual costs. We will require an ability to sub-license the website within the travel industry to other destination marketing organizations (our partners) and other industry organizations. This would no way interfere with your ability to license your website in other verticals.

**Q Can you outline the meeting requirements for 300-1500 meetings a day? Is it a major travel show-style where multiple hosts meet multiple guests in capability/regional subject streams – i.e. like the IPW Marketplace, business speed -dating style – but online?**

A Yes. A notification is activated prior to each meeting for each user informing them that their meeting is about to start. The users who are meeting then either click a link, or are automatically connected to each other - so they may hold a private video conference. They must have the ability to share their screen (one at a time). Just prior to a meeting ending, the users all receive another notification that their meeting is about to end. Then, they receive new notifications indicating that the next meeting is starting.

**Q We note that constant updates and rollouts will be required to maintain functionality within the platform for new browser updates, third-party code adjustments (Example: Zoom), security patches, audits, maintenance, etc. Does this RFP need to show all possible cost adjustments or do you prefer us to create a range of possible adjustments?**

A A range is fine.

**Q ADA Guidelines, outline several elements including video CC. If live events are required do you want the platform to integrate with a live close captioning service - is this a cost that needs to be shown?**

A Video will be pre-recorded and supplied to you by Brand USA.

**Q While YouTube works reasonably well for galleries are you open to the platform integrating with other video players and hosting platforms that may benefit the solution overall?**

A We are open to learning about your solution. You are not expected to produce any video product. While we have no immediate plans to stream any live video, having this option for the future may be important.

**Q Do you want our team to manage the entire platform, service, and support for the virtual event including a helpdesk?**

A For the purposes of this RFP, do not include this as part of your budget.