



USA

VisitTheUSA.com

Brand USA

Brand USA

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Integrated Corporate Communications  
and Public Relations

April 2021

## INTRODUCTION

Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States was established by the Travel Promotion Act as the nation's first public-private partnership to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and to communicate U.S. travel policies and procedures to worldwide travelers. The organization's mission is to increase international visitation to the USA in order to fuel the U.S. economy and enhance the image of the United States worldwide. Formed as the Corporation for Travel Promotion in 2010, the public-private entity began operations in May 2011 and does business as Brand USA. According to studies by Oxford Economics, over the past eight years Brand USA's marketing initiatives have helped welcome 7.7 million incremental visitors to the USA, benefitting the U.S. economy with \$56 billion in total economic impact and supporting, on average, more than 45,000 incremental jobs a year. Additional information about Brand USA is available at [www.TheBrandUSA.com](http://www.TheBrandUSA.com).

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to identify the appropriate agency to support Brand USA's integrated corporate communications, which include executive communications, digital and social media, and domestic and global public relations. The successful agency will help Brand USA identify and maximize opportunities to share stories of our partnerships and successes to key stakeholders across owned and earned channels. This work is critical to managing the organization's reputation and increasing industry engagement as we work to shape the future of international travel to the United States. Brand USA's partnership-driven business model is based on trust, and the integrated corporate communications function is at the center of attracting new and diverse contributors, deepening awareness among the existing partner base, and bolstering the reputation of the organization among key stakeholders, employees, and the public.

## SCOPE OF WORK

**Term:** Brand USA expects the contract will run 36 months with options

**Objectives:** Fully integrate Brand USA's corporate communications across its owned platforms, including earned media and social channels, and create an operational strategy that:

- Positions Brand USA as the thought leader and key storyteller for international travel to the USA
- Conveys Brand USA's impact to stakeholders, partners, and media
- Promotes Brand USA's marketing activities to business, consumer, marketing, and travel trade media
- Highlights Brand USA's contributions to U.S. communities of all sizes and travel's ability to connect cultures.
- Generates PR for corporate initiatives and consumer campaigns in global media outlets

## FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

### OVERALL

- **Goal Setting:** Work with Brand USA to set objectives and measurement for all comms initiatives
- **Strategy:** Develop an integrated messaging strategy for corporate (B2B and stakeholder), earned (PR, media outreach) and owned (digital and social media) communications.
- **Measurement and Optimization:** Establish metrics and analytics to maximize impact of communications
- **Editorial Calendar:** Create and manage integrated editorial calendar.

### Corporate Communications:

- **B2B Communications:** Assist with identifying and executing B2B communication opportunities.
- **Executive Communications:** Create strategic plan with integrated editorial calendar; thought leadership content creation, identify speaking opportunities, and high-profile interviews; media training as required.
- **Voice/Message Development:** Establish a 'unifying' voice and ensure it is incorporated across all communications. Craft message points and briefing documents for campaigns, initiatives, and issues.
- **Story mining:** Find stories that highlight Brand USA's work, value add to partners, economic impact, etc. by reviewing insights, research, campaigns, etc.
- **Crisis & Issue Management Support:** Monitor news coverage for issues which may impact international travel to the United States or a destination partner and provide advice on a strategy to include media and PR response as well as partner support.

**Earned Media (Domestic/Global Public Relations & Media Outreach)**

- **Strategic Support:** Development and implementation of a strategic plan to showcase Brand USA's innovative marketing and share our value proposition to key audiences.
- **Voice/Message Development:** Creation of consistent messaging and narrative using a 'unifying' voice across Brand USA's channels of communication.
- **Highlight Brand USA as premier DMO:** Story-mining and generation of earned media coverage for Brand USA initiatives in key domestic outlets and top-tier global outlets. Assets may include, but are not limited to research and initiatives, trade initiatives, consumer marketing campaigns, partnerships, sponsorships, awards, events, milestones and more.
- **Media Relationships/Database:** Regular contact with established media relationships, maintenance of an updated database of key travel, trade, and news media to successfully pitch strategically placed stories. Create and maintain Brand USA and Global Visit The USA media toolkits.
- **Measurement:** Manage global measurement framework for earned media activity across all international markets. Compile global earned media reports on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. Brand USA has PR representation in 14 international markets including, Australia/New Zealand, Brazil, China, Canada, Germany, Austria/Switzerland, France/Belgium/Luxembourg, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, Southeast Asia (Hong Kong/Singapore/Taiwan), Spain, and U.K./Ireland.
- **If/As Requested:** In Canada, and on a country-by-country basis, Brand USA may ask for support in the following areas:
  - **In-Market Insights:** Provide sentiment and media landscape reports about travel to the USA.
  - **In-Marketing Media Outreach & PR:** Regular contact with established media relationships, maintenance of an updated database of key travel, trade, and news media to pitch strategically placed stories. Create and maintain media toolkits.
  - **In-Market Activity:** Coordinate logistics for in-market events, consumer activations, and more. Represent Brand USA at relevant industry events, as assigned.
  - **Measurement:** Completion of measurement tracker for earned media activity on a weekly basis and submit templated earned media reports on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis.

**Owned Media (Digital / Social Media):**

- **Strategic Support:** Develop a strategic social media plan that complements corporate communication and PR efforts with integrated campaigns across LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube.
- **Content Creation:** Excellent storytelling skills with the ability to curate, create, edit and publish written and visual content optimized for social and digital platforms.
- **Community Management:** Engage with Brand USA audiences and industry stakeholders to build on our current audience and extend our reach to new audiences.
- **Measurement & Optimization:** Establish metrics, glean community insights and reporting/recommending strategies that achieve corporate communication objectives and goals.

**METRICS & REPORTING**

- Coordinate bi-weekly/monthly team calls to discuss strategy, tactics, and upcoming activities.
- Reporting due dates:
  - Weekly status reports should be received by Friday at 12 PM ET.
  - Monthly reports should be received by 10th of the succeeding month.
  - Quarterly reports should be received by the 15th of the first month in the next quarter.
  - Annual report should be received January 15.
  - Campaign-specific reports should be received within 30 days of the end of the campaign.

## QUALIFICATIONS

- Proven success with tourism clients
  - Two case studies showing integrated corporate communications and PR
  - Knowledge of Meltwater, Sprinklr, Salesforce, Wrike, Mailchimp, and MediaValet
  - Global PR representation to manage public relations activity in Canada, and other markets if/as requested

## BUDGET

Based on the RFP requirements, the proposal must include a detailed, realistic budget, including FTEs and estimated hours per functional area.

## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Proposals may be rejected if they do not include all deliverables. Proposers wishing clarification of this RFP must submit questions in writing to Brand USA, no later than **April 7, 2021**, and sent by e-mail to [RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com](mailto:RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com). Questions will not be answered on calls, with the exception of meetings with scheduled finalists during or after the meeting. Company names will be removed from the published question/answer document. Duplicative questions, irrelevant questions, and questions already addressed in this RFP may not be published. Pitches will not be accepted outside the RFP process.

Costs for developing proposals are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be reimbursed by Brand USA.

1. **Notice of Intent to Bid** must be received by **April 12, 2021** (due by 5:00 PM ET).
  - a. The notice shall be sent by email to [RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com](mailto:RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com). The NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID, is nonbinding; however, it ensures the receipt of all addenda related to this RFP.
  - b. Proposals will be accepted only from applicants who submitted a timely NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID.
2. **RFP Responses** must contain the following information:
  - a. Executive Summary.
  - b. No Conflict of Interest: Client relationships that could potentially be considered a conflict of interest must be listed.
  - c. Team: identify account team members, includes names and bios.
  - d. Case Studies: provide two case studies showing integrated corporate communications strategy and conceptual abilities (include PR, digital, social, and executive communications results.)
  - e. Specific Monthly/Annual Budget.
3. **Subcontractors**: Disclose all proposed subcontractors and document the portions of service that will be performed by subcontractors and their ability to perform the work. Please provide the name and resume of each subcontractor company, if applicable. Note: The proposer must make it clear to any subcontractors included in the proposal that if the proposer is selected, the subcontractors may not necessarily be selected.
4. **Response Length**: Not to exceed 25 pages total.
5. **Certification Form**: Must be signed and accompany all RFP Response submissions.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

This tentative schedule may be altered at any time at the discretion of Brand USA. Brand USA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or any part thereof; waive an informality in the proposals and accept the proposal that best meets the needs of Brand USA.

● Proposal Release	April 2
● Questions Due (due by 5 PM ET)	April 7
● Answers Due (due by 5PM ET)	April 9
● Notice of Intent to Bid Due (due by 5:00 PM ET)	April 12
● Proposal Due (due by 5:00 PM ET)	April 19
● Notification and Scheduling of Finalist Interviews	April 26
● Finalist Presentation/Interviews	w/o May 3
● Notice of Intent to Award Contract and Public Posting	May 12

## DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL

Email proposals to [RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com](mailto:RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com). We will acknowledge receipt. If you do not receive a receipt notification within two business days, please contact us. If the proposal file size is too large to email, please contact us via the above email address, and we will make arrangements.

## EVALUATION AND CONTRACTING

All proposals satisfying the requirements of this Request for Proposals will be evaluated to establish which of the providers best fulfills the needs of Brand USA and this project. This Request for Proposals in no way commits Brand USA to award a contract, to pay any costs in preparation of a proposal, or to contract for the goods and/or services offered.

Brand USA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, to negotiate with all qualified providers or to cancel this Request for Proposals. After awarding the contract, the schedule will include a period of collaboration between Brand USA and the selected Contractor to better define, elaborate upon, and fix the Contractor's final Scope of Work and general Terms and Conditions.

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID**

Due: April 12, 2021

SEND TO: [RFAdmin@TheBrandUSA.com](mailto:RFAdmin@TheBrandUSA.com)

NAME OF BIDDER / COMPANY:
CONTACT PERSON:
MAILING ADDRESS:
TELEPHONE:
FAX:
E-MAIL ADDRESS:
SIGNED:

## ATTACHMENT 2

### CERTIFICATION

*Please include this statement as part of the Proposal*

#### Certification Statement

By submission of this proposal and authorized signature below, Proposer certifies that the undersigned corporate officer has authority to bind the bidder to the terms of this Proposal and hereby certifies on behalf of the bidder that:

1. He/she has read and understands all commitments and terms of this Proposal.
2. The information contained in this Proposal is accurate.
3. Proposer's quote is valid for at least 120 days from the date of signature below.
4. Proposer understands that if selected as the successful Proposer, he/she will have ten (10) business days in which to complete contract negotiations, if any, and execute the final contract document. Date of execution can be extended by mutual agreement of the contractor / Brand USA.

Authorized Signature Typed or Printed Name

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Title/Date

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Official Contact

Brand USA requests that the Proposer designate one person to receive all communications for clarification and verification of information related to this proposal. Please identify this point of contact below:

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Official Contact Name

Phone Number

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Official Contact Title

Facsimile Number

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Email Address

Street, City, State, Zip

## ATTACHMENT 3

## FOR BRAND USA USE ONLY

Bid/Proposal:

Evaluated By:

Date:

## Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation committee will judge each written proposal based on the following criteria:

	MAX. POINTS	SCORE
Demonstrated success developing and executing strategic integrated communications plans	20	
Demonstrated success creating, executing, and optimizing social media plans	20	
PR knowledge, creative, and successful pitching and demonstrated media relationships with top-tier reporters (domestic/global)	20	
Demonstrated success effectively utilizing the CEO and top executives to amplify organizational communications objectives	10	
Demonstrated success creating thought-leadership content	10	
Qualified staff	10	
Cost effectiveness	10	
TOTAL POINTS	100	