



USA

VisitTheUSA.com

Brand USA



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

International Public Relations Consultant

January 2019



INTRODUCTION

Brand USA is the destination marketing organization for the United States with the mission of increasing incremental international visitation, spend, and market share to fuel the nation's economy and enhance the image of the USA worldwide. Established by the Travel Promotion Act as the nation's first public-private partnership to spearhead a globally coordinated marketing effort to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and communicate U.S. entry policies, Brand USA began operations in May 2011.

As one of the best levers for driving economic growth, international travel to the United States currently supports 1.8 million American jobs (directly and indirectly) and benefits virtually every sector of the U.S. economy. Brand USA works in close partnership with more than 700 partner organizations to invite the world to explore the exceptional, diverse, and virtually limitless travel experiences and destinations available in the United States of America.

Brand USA is governed by an 11-member Board of Directors. Each director is appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. Each director represents a sector of the travel and tourism industry as identified by the Travel Promotion Act. The executive leadership team possesses strong expertise and experience in the travel, tourism, and advertising industries.

Brand USA delivers a dynamic marketing program that includes, but is not limited to, a global advertising campaign, earned media and public relations strategies, a robust social media outreach plan, promotional and incentive campaigns, trade shows and sales missions, and educational campaigns about U.S. entry policies. Brand USA carefully selected its marketing tools and target audience after vigorous analysis of existing and original market research.

Brand USA is committed to including diverse firms as an important part of its sourcing and procurement activities. In furtherance and support of this goal, we encourage minority, women and locally-owned firms to pursue business opportunities with us. Minority and women-owned firms who otherwise meet the minimum requirements set forth in this Request for Proposal are encouraged to submit a Notice of Intent to Bid. In addition, Brand USA also seeks to do business with firms that also recognize the value of diversity and inclusion in the composition of their workforce and in their own contracting, subcontracting or teaming activities. We encourage such firms who meet the minimum bidding requirements (regardless of size or ownership) to also submit a Notice of Intent to Bid. Brand USA reserves the right to give weight or allocate bidding credit to diverse firms or those with a demonstrated commitment to inclusion as part of its evaluation process.





WHY DOES A COUNTRY AS POPULAR AS THE USA NEED A MARKETING PROGRAM?

Although the United States remains one of the world's most popular travel destinations, during the first decade of this century, while the global travel market was booming, the USA's share of international travelers declined 37 percent—from 17.2 percent in 2000 to 12.4 percent in 2010. The resulting impact on the U.S. economy was an annual loss of 467,000 jobs and \$606 billion in lost revenue. In addition to being seen as unwelcoming (resulting from increased security measures that came following 9/11) and too familiar, the United States was also one of the world's only industrialized nations without a national tourism board to attract international travelers to its shores in order to fuel the nation's economy by inspiring the world to visit the U.S.A.—to see it again, or for the first time.

With the strength of a national marketing effort from Brand USA now in place, the United States is working to regain its share of the global travel market. By welcoming more international visitors to the USA, Brand USA is supporting U.S. economic growth, helping to spur job creation, and creating a more positive impression of the United States around the world.

WHY IS INTERNATIONAL VISITATION SO IMPORTANT TO THE NATION'S ECONOMY?

International visitation helps local communities.

On average, overseas visitors spend nearly \$4,400 per trip and generate tax revenue in communities across America without burdening local services, such as public schools and fire departments. When international travelers spend this kind of money in our communities, it lessens the tax burden on U.S. citizens.

International visitation supports American jobs and economic growth.

When international visitors come to the U.S.A., the money they spend directly supports about 1.2 million American jobs and added over \$180 billion to the U.S. economy. Overseas arrivals represent around 50% of all international arrivals, yet account for over 85% of total international travel spending. (Source: US Travel Association and NTTO 2016 Data)

International visitation enhances the image of the United States worldwide.

Surveys show that international visitors to the United States are 74 percent more likely to have a favorable view of America and 61 percent more likely to support U.S. policies.





WHO PAYS FOR IT?

International visitors and private contributions fund the work of Brand USA— no U.S. taxpayer dollars are used to fund Brand USA's marketing efforts. Instead, the organization is supported by contributions from partnering organizations that are matched by fees paid by international travelers to the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) program.

ESTA is an automated system implemented by the Department of Homeland Security in 2008 that determines the eligibility of visitors from 38 international markets to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). ESTA authorizations are generally valid for multiple trips over a period of two years or until the traveler's passport expires, whichever comes first.

BRAND USA IS BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Brand USA is delivering on a dynamic marketing strategy that includes, but is not limited to, a global advertising campaign, earned media and public relations strategies, a robust social media outreach plan, promotional and incentive campaigns, trade shows and sales missions, and educational campaigns about U.S. entry policies. Brand USA carefully selects its marketing tools and target markets and travelers after vigorous analysis of existing and original market research.

Brand USA with and through the support of more than 700 partners worldwide has made notable progress towards our mission of increasing international visitation to the United States and by all accounts, our efforts are working. Since we began operations in 2011, Brand USA has:

- Established consumer and trade marketing initiatives in more than 30 international markets, which generate 90% of all inbound travel to the United States.
- Expanded our USA consumer campaign to 16 key markets that generate more than 85% of the United States' international visitors.
- Significantly increased the effectiveness of our consumer campaigns during FY2016 that helped drive increases in international traveler intent to visit the USA ranging from 7% to as high as 99%.
- Established the nation's largest in-market representation network to work directly with the international travel trade in 20 top travel markets.



- Increased partner program participation in Brand USA cooperative marketing programs by 13% from 245 in FY2015 to 277 in FY2016, which demonstrated value for partners.

According to studies by Oxford Economics, in the past four years alone (fiscal years 2013 through 2016), Brand USA's marketing initiatives are responsible for welcoming 4.3 million incremental visitors to the USA, benefiting the U.S. economy with more than \$13.6 billion in incremental spending; and nearly \$30 billion in total economic impact, which has supported, on average, nearly 51,000 incremental jobs per year.





PURPOSE

The purpose of the Request for Proposal (RFP) is to identify the appropriate insourced PR agencies that can provide an onsite consultant(s) to help with a variety of communications and media relations initiatives with the goal of promoting Brand USA as a premier travel destination through international consumer media coverage. This vendor will work closely with the Director, Consumer & Trade Public Relations and Vice President of Integrated Marketing to develop and implement a comprehensive and cohesive global public relations platform.

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected vendor will:

- Manage proactive and reactive international media relations functions, including: managing day-to-day program activity of Brand USA's public relations teams in Asia, Europe, Australia and Latin America.
- Provide leadership, manage scopes of work and budgets.
- Act as a liaison for international public relations efforts with Brand USA HQ.
- Work closely with the Integrated Consumer Marketing Team, Global Trade Team, and international PR teams on media missions and events, consumer campaign launches, localized media content, press visits, digital influencer programs, PR stunts/activations, and broadcast productions.
- Represent Brand USA and manage media relations activities for major travel shows including IPW and key media related trade shows.
- Conduct media calls and interviews as required.
- Curate and manage global editorial calendar and work with in-market PR reps to maintain localized content.
- Drive storytelling and travel themes about visiting the USA.
- General office duties which may include writing reports, marketing briefs and presentations, as well as writing talking points and quotes.
- Expected around 40 hours per week. Consultant requested to be on site 2 – 5 days per week, and available otherwise.



QUALIFICATIONS

- Previous experience working with international media and/or travel and lifestyle media.
- Excellent writing and editing skills paired with a strong creative sensibility and strategic mindset.
- Digital and social media savvy.
- International travel experience preferred and foreign language skills a plus.
- 6-8 years of professional experience in public relations, media or marketing, including demonstrated success in achieving strong ROI for a media relations program.
- Strong organizational skills and ability to handle multiple tasks and meet deadlines.
- Proven ability to collaborate with internal partners in development of actionable strategy.
- Excellent verbal communication skills.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office, experience with Cision a plus.
- Selected vendor must have the ability to facilitate working onsite.
- Moderate travel may be required.

PROPOSAL FORMAT AND SPECS

Please submit your response electronically, via email. Every RFP submitted must contain the following information:

- Company history and background
- 1-2 case studies
- Employee biographies for those who may be responsible for the Brand USA account
- 2 writing samples from employee(s) who may be responsible for the Brand USA account
- 3 client references for companies that the vendor has provided similar work
- Recommended budget and staffing structure

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

1. Notice of Intent to Bid (Attachment 1) must be received by February 11, 2019 (due by 5:00 p.m. EDT). The notice shall be sent by email to rfdadmin@thebrandusa.com at the Brand USA office. The NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID, is nonbinding; however, it ensures the receipt of all addenda related to this RFP. 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:** provide description of the nature of the organization’s services and activities. Note when the business was established, brief history and location. List the location(s) of the office(s) from which the primary work on this contract would be performed.
 - b. **1-2 case studies**
 - c. **Employee biographies**
 - d. **Two (2) writing samples**
 - e. **Three (3) client references**
 - f. **Recommended budget and staffing structure**
- 3. Certification Form (Attachment 2) 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.

A. Proposal Released	January 30, 2019
B. Written Questions (due by 5:00 p.m. EDT)	February 7, 2019
C. Written Questions Answered and posted to Brand USA Website	February 8, 2019
D. Notice of Intent to Bid Due (due by 5:00 p.m. EDT)	February 11, 2019
E. Proposal Due (due by 5:00 p.m. EDT)	February 18, 2019
F. Proposal Evaluation by Scoring Committee	February 25, 2019
G. Notification and Scheduling of Finalist Interviews	February 28, 2019
H. Finalist Presentation/Interviews	March 3 – March 4, 2019
I. Notice of Intent to Award Contract and Public Posting	March 13, 2019

DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL

Proposals must be e-mailed to RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com and a hard copy sent by courier such as Federal Express, UPS, etc. to:

Brand USA Headquarters
 C/O RFP Administrator
 1725 Eye Street NW, Suite 800
 Washington, DC 20006
 ATTN: RFP – International PR Consultant
 Phone: 202.536.2060
 Email: RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com





EVALUATION AND CONTRACTING

All proposals satisfying the requirements of this Request for Proposals will be evaluated to establish which of the providers best fulfill 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 Consultant to better define, elaborate upon, and fix the Consultant's final Scope of Work and general Terms and Conditions.





ATTACHMENT 1

NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID

Due: February 11, 2019

SEND TO:

Brand USA Headquarters

C/O RFP Administrator

1725 Eye Street NW, Suite 800

Washington, DC 20006

ATTN: RFP – International Public Relations Consultant

Phone: 202.536.2060

Email: rfpadmin@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 proposal's 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 consultant / Brand USA.

Authorized Signature

Typed or Printed Name

Title

Date

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:

Official Contact Name

Phone Number

Official Contact Title

Facsimile Number

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
Overall Experience: evaluation will include an assessment of professional experience as it relates to the requirements within this RFP.	25	
Capabilities: evaluation will include an assessment of relevant work and writing samples.	25	
Budget	25	
References	25	
TOTAL POINTS	100	

