



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

INFLUENCER PROGRAMS

February 2, 2017



INTRODUCTION

Brand USA is a public-private not for profit organization created by the Travel Promotion Act of 2009. The mission of Brand USA is to generate increased international visitation to the United States and to grow its share of the global travel market. Brand USA will accomplish this via marketing campaigns and programs and partnerships with the travel industry. The incremental increase in international visitation will generate billions of dollars of revenue, which will in turn create new American jobs.

While the United States welcomed 60 million visitors in 2010, its share of the international travel market has decreased significantly over the past decade. The U.S. share of long haul international travel fell from 17.2 percent in 2000 to 12.4% percent in 2010. Brand USA, the U.S.'s National Tourism Marketing Organization will reinvigorate the nation's image and recapture its share of the market.

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 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 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 \$4,500 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 more than 1 million American jobs and added \$181 billion to the U.S. economy. (Source: US Travel Association and NTTO 2013 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—with half of Brand USA's budget generated by contributions from the private sector and matching funds provided by a \$10 fee paid by travelers from



markets that are not required to have a visa to enter the United States. These markets are designated as visa-waiver countries. As a result, U.S. taxpayers contribute \$0 toward Brand USA's marketing efforts.

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.

In 2013, we were fully deployed (consumer, co-op, and trade marketing) in eight markets (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom)—and delivered a 47:1 return on marketing investment, 1.1 million incremental visitors, \$3.4 billion in direct travel spending, and \$7.4 billion total spending—which supported 53,000 new jobs. In 2014, Brand USA expanded the consumer campaign to China and Taiwan, and in 2015 will be fully deployed in 14 international markets (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom). Every 1 percent increase in travel from these markets fuels the nation's economy by generating 500,000 additional visitors and \$1 billion in international visitor spend a year.





PURPOSE

Brand USA is interested in contracting international Social Media Influencers through agencies with specific expertise and relationships in this field. These Influencers will utilize their content creation skills and their own platforms to inspire visitation to the United States.

SCOPE OF WORK

Requirements

The selected vendor(s) will:

- Provide international Influencers to visit the USA, who will chronicle their travel adventures via their own social media/digital channels and possibly create content for Brand USA.
- Have access to Influencers at all levels of reach – from “Micro-Influencers” with a few thousand followers - to “Mega-Influencers ,” who have half a million followers.
- Conduct pre-screening of Influencers to ensure they are professional, reliable, and preferably focused on the subject of Travel or Lifestyle.
- Understand the importance of social media engagement/reach and be accountable for generating pre-negotiated delivery of specific metrics.
- Manage the entire process of working with Influencers. This includes negotiating contracts; assisting with travel arrangements; working with Brand USA and local/state destination marketing organizations; providing staff to accompany Influencers when necessary; functioning as a conduit to edit content as needed; managing briefs and approvals, providing a wrap-up with highlights and analytics.

Our Questions: (Direct answers are required in your proposal).

- With how many Influencers do you have direct on-going relationships?
- What is your typical timetable from receiving a brief - to providing Influencer candidates - to actual contracting?
- How do you conduct background checks on Influencers?
- In which of Brand USA’s target markets have you worked with Influencers?
- Have you worked with other destination marketing organizations?
- How did you solve the biggest issue you’ve ever encountered with and Influencer?



Your Questions:

- Questions you have concerning this RFP must be submitted to rfpadmin@thebrandusa.com by the date listed in the schedule. Answers to questions will be published on www.thebrandusa.com. Company names will be removed. We do not accept questions via phone calls and do not conduct interviews, or have conversations prior to selecting finalists.

QUALIFICATIONS

- A minimum of two years of demonstrated experience providing Influencers for major brands.
- Significant project management experience.
- Superior references from large consumer brands currently utilizing your services.

PROPOSAL FORMAT AND SPECS

Proposal format is open to presentation style and delivery of the proposing team, but it must include the following information:

- Provide background information on your company, including a list of current clients.
- Demonstration of an ability to meet the qualifications and specific answers to the questions presented.
- State unique selling proposition over competitors.
- Showcase studies (minimum of three) with demonstrated results relevant to Brand USA (scale, industry, and/or similarity).
- Recommend at least two Influencers as examples of whom you believe would be a great match for working with Brand USA. Articulate potential locations they should visit; their country of origin; projected cost; and metric delivery goals.
- Rank your channel preference (if you have a preference). For example: 1) YouTube 2) Facebook 3) Weibo 4) Instagram 5) Twitter, etc.
- Illustrate how we will interact for execution and optimization.
- Describe your experience working in a multi-agency, fast-paced and integrated marketing environment.
- Provide three client references.
- Proposal should not exceed 30 pages.



BUDGET

Based on the RFP requirements, the proposer must submit a realistic pricing matrix for two levels of Influencers.

Level One: “Mega-Influencers” with more than 500,000 followers. These “Mega Influencers” can guarantee major reach and engagement. This type of Influencer likely focuses on their own channel(s). Level Two: “Micro-Influencers” with fewer than 25,000 followers, who are primarily content creators and are willing to attend almost any event and go where they are required. This level of Influencer would be creating content for Brand USA to utilize as we wish – in perpetuity – for our own channels.

NOTES

- Brand USA will select multiple agencies with whom to work on obtaining Influencers. We are only able to work with agencies that have been approved through the RFP process.
- Brand USA is interested specifically in international Influencers who live in our current target markets (see thebrandusa.com for details) and create content in their native language.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

A. Proposal Released	February 2, 2017
B. Written Questions (due by 5:00 p.m. EDT)	February 10, 2017
C. Written Questions Answered and Posted to Brand USA Website	February 16, 2017
D. Notice of Intent To Bid Due (due by 5:00 p.m. EDT)	February 17, 2017
E. Proposal Due (due by 5:00 p.m. EDT)	February 27, 2017
F. Proposal Evaluation by Scoring Committee	March 10, 2017
G. Notification and Scheduling of Finalist Interviews	March 13, 2017
H. Finalist Presentation/Interviews	March 21/22, 2017
I. Notice of Intent to Award Contract and Public Posting	March 27, 2017



DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL

Proposals may be e-mailed to rftadmin@thebrandusa.com and six (6) printed copies must be delivered by U.S. Mail, Federal Express, UPS, etc. to:

Brand USA Headquarters C/O RFP Administrator 1725 Eye Street NW, Suite 800 Washington, D.C. 20006

ATTN: RFP – Influencer Programs

Phone: 202.536.2060

Email: rftadmin@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 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: February 17, 2017

SEND TO:

Brand USA Headquarters

C/O RFP Administrator

1725 Eye Street NW, Suite 800

Washington, D.C. 20006

ATTN: RFP – Influencer Programs

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 contractor / 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
Ability to meet stated requirements	60	
Case studies and Influencer recommendation examples	20	
Demonstrated management experience	10	
Cost Effectiveness	10	
TOTAL POINTS	100	





ATTACHMENT 4 FOR BRAND USA USE ONLY

ORAL INTERVIEW / DEMONSTRATION CRITERIA

The evaluation committee may, if it deems necessary, select certain proposers for oral interviews and/or demonstrations. Interviews/demonstrations apply only to the top finalist(s), as determined by the evaluation committee. The oral interviews/demonstrations will allow finalists to demonstrate their understanding of the project objectives and to articulate their capability to meet or exceed the requirements of this RFP.

The evaluation committee reserves the option of conducting the oral interviews/demonstrations via teleconference, at the Brand USA office, at the finalist's and/or the proposed subcontractor's site, or other designated site.

The evaluation committee reserves the right to designate one or more members of the committee to perform the oral interviews/ demonstrations, if needed, so that grading of oral interviews/demonstrations may be done by fewer than the entire committee.

If interviews/demonstrations are not required, the maximum number of points is 100. If interviews/demonstrations are deemed necessary, the maximum number of points is 150.

If a finalist cannot meet on the designated interview/demonstration date, the evaluation committee reserves the right to disqualify the finalist as non-responsive.

The following criteria will be used for scoring the oral interview/demonstration:

	MAX.	SCORE
1. Provider demonstrations will be judged on the same criteria as listed in Attachment 3 "Proposal Evaluation Criteria".	50	



Request for Proposal

