

The logo consists of the letters 'USA' in a white, pixelated font, set against a solid blue square background.

VisitTheUSA.com

Brand USA



Brand USA

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Brand Strategy + Creative Agency

January 2023



INTRODUCTION

As the destination marketing organization for the United States, Brand USA's mission is to increase 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 of 2009 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. visa and 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 1.2 million American jobs* and benefits virtually every sector of the U.S. economy. Since its founding, Brand USA has worked with more than 900 contributing organizations to invite the world to explore the exceptional, diverse, and virtually limitless travel experiences and destinations available in the United States of America.

According to studies by Oxford Economics, over the past seven years Brand USA's marketing initiatives have helped welcome 7.5 million incremental visitors to the USA, benefiting the U.S. economy with nearly \$55 billion in total economic impact, and supporting more than 50,000 incremental jobs each year.

Brand USA's operations are supported by a combination of nonfederal contributions from destinations, travel brands, and private-sector organizations plus matching funds collected by the U.S. government from international visitors who visit the United States under the Visa Waiver Program.

For industry and partner information about Brand USA, please visit TheBrandUSA.com

For information about exceptional and unexpected travel experiences in the United States, please visit

Brand USA's consumer website at VisitTheUSA.com.



PURPOSE

Brand USA is seeking an agency to evolve its consumer brand and promote international visitation to the USA. The purpose of this RFP is to identify an agency (or agencies) to support Brand USA's brand strategy, creative brand development, campaign creative, and *ad hoc* marketing initiatives. This agency will work in conjunction with Brand USA, as well as our existing roster of agencies (e.g., media planning and buying, community social media management, public relations, in-market trade representation, etc.) , to ensure brand-led marketing, co-op marketing, and *ad hoc* campaign efforts are effective and drive an increase in international visitation and spend to the USA.

BACKGROUND

With the reopening of U.S. borders to international travelers in November 2021 and the subsequent removal of the pre-departure COVID testing requirement in June 2022, the U.S. travel and tourism industry is poised for a robust recovery.

Brand USA's marketing efforts will support the [2022 National Travel & Tourism Strategy](#), with the objective to attract and welcome **90 million** international arrivals with **\$279 billion** in spending annually **by 2027**. These overarching objectives will better position the United States in the fierce global competition for travelers. By working to support this strategy, Brand USA will continue to add value for industry stakeholders of all levels of budget and sophistication. Over the coming years, Brand USA will regain sustainable financial footing, drive economic vitality in communities around the country, and facilitate the industry's long-term (re)entry into established and emerging international markets.

Brand USA will continue to deploy market-driven strategies to increase inbound visitation to the United States and drive tourism spending to communities across all 50 states, five territories, and the District of Columbia. These will include a wide series of approaches to build brand awareness, desirability, and engage travelers to consider a trip to the USA. Some of these approaches will build on the success



Brand USA has achieved in more than a decade of global marketing, while others will be developing and executing new initiatives with the potential to take the travel promotion space to new heights.

Brand USA is delivering on a dynamic marketing strategy that includes, but is not limited to, a global advertising campaign, robust earned media, PR and social initiatives, and a strategic travel trade program with promotional and incentive campaigns, including trade shows, sales missions, and educational campaigns about U.S. entry policies. Brand USA carefully selects its marketing tools, target markets, and travelers after a vigorous analysis of existing and original market research. Our current target markets may include, but are not limited to:

North America

- Canada
- Mexico

LATAM

- Chile
- Colombia
- Brazil

EMEA

- UK / Ireland
- Germany
- France
- Italy
- Spain
- The Nordics (Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden)
- Switzerland
- Netherlands

APAC

- Australia
- India



- Japan
- Korea

SCOPE OF WORK

Brand USA is seeking an agency (or agencies) that will work in partnership with Brand USA, as well as our existing roster of agencies, to create research-informed brand strategies, effective brand creative, and advertising campaigns that will increase international visitation and spend to the USA. The selected agency must specialize in brand strategy and creative development, and must be able to do the following:

Brand Strategy

- Partner with Brand USA to create effective research-informed brand strategies, creative platforms, and advertising campaigns for designated target audiences.
- Provide a strong strategic rationale and insight development for creative development for both global and market-specific campaigns.
- Provide creative strategies that are informed by leveraging Brand USA's proprietary research, as well as global and market-specific trends and insights.
- Develop and support cooperative marketing campaigns. Campaign will include both Brand USA stand-alone and cooperative (multi-brand) messaging. As such, it is expected that the selected agency will work with both our in-market representatives and our Brand USA partners (domestic destination entities, attractions, hoteliers, etc.) to develop integrated campaign plans that will achieve the greatest impact.
- As needed, the agency may advise on paid media strategy for placing and running media on all channels, including traditional offline, digital, and social platforms. The agency will work in partnership with our designated Media Agency to develop an integrated approach that will best meet the market objectives. Overall, the agency must have a deep understanding of global channels and innovative methods to communicate directly with international consumers across our key markets.



- Produce industry thought leadership documents covering relevant advertising, communications, in-market consumer behavior, and technology trends, identify how these trends affect Brand USA's strategies, and recommend a course of action.
- Develop a messaging strategy/messaging hierarchy across paid, owned, and earned channels.
- Align with Brand USA's PR/comms strategy to expand and evolve a messaging framework across our international markets.
- Utilize expertise, agency tools, data, partnerships, and other resources to measure brand and campaign impact and performance. Provide reports that include both qualitative and quantitative results mapping to larger objectives, as well as insights and recommendations to continually evolve the brand strategy and/or campaign(s).

Creative Development

- Design a strategic approach to refresh Brand USA's current brand platform (*United Stories*). The brand evolution should be broad and flexible enough to support the multi-faceted tourism experiences available in the United States while also appealing to a specific traveler audience.
- Provide creative services to develop global and/or market-specific campaign executions.
- Create high-quality, emotive, and experiential travel content (including both short and long form) that evokes the brand identity, positioning, and mission of Brand USA (as stewards of the tourism brand of the USA).
 - Content must establish a sense of place and be uniquely USA.
 - Content must be compelling to international audiences.
 - Content must be engaging.
- Provide production services for the following types of channels and mediums: social, digital video, digital display, native, out of home, experiential, interactive digital, HTML5, 360-degree video, TV, radio, Direct Marketing, and any other medium that may come up.
- Manage the entire content creation process from concept - to draft - to revisions - to delivery of final product, across any single-area of focus.



- Keep assets organized through the use of content management systems, digital asset management platforms, and content marketing software. Agencies may be required to submit their own content into Brand USA’s digital asset management platform and/or other marketing software.
- Develop campaign extension opportunities that allow Brand USA’s partners to seamlessly integrate into Brand USA’s marketing initiatives.
- Develop a toolkit that provides creative assets that can be customized and adapted to fulfill Brand USA’s partners’ promotional needs.
- Manage production projects of all sizes and budgets.
- Incorporate local perspectives into our target market strategies to ensure there are no messaging restrictions, missed unique market opportunities or potential clearance issues.

Integrated Marketing

- Collaborate with the marketing teams at Brand USA and its agencies to enhance the organization’s ability to develop and execute a fully integrated marketing approach.
- Work in coordination with in-market representation to appropriately translate brand creative across different channel executions and markets.
- Be an important part of Brand USA’s agency team roster and, depending on the initiative, lead, collaborate, or support the work of other agencies and Brand USA’s internal teams in order to achieve overarching strategic goals.

The successful bidder will deliver an original United Stories “Evolution” campaign strategy and concepts that directly respond to Brand USA’s main objective of increasing intent to travel to the USA. The brief for this campaign evolution will be provided to those who submit their intent to bid.



PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposal format is open for the agency to determine. Proposals should not exceed 30 pages. Agencies may submit additional pages in the appendix but should not presume that they will be read. Proposals must be delivered electronically and it must include the following information:

- **Agency Overview**

- Company history and background in brand strategy, creative development, creative production, and campaign planning.
- If applicable, indicate the number of years and nature of your experience in the tourism industry and include any specific knowledge and familiarity marketing U.S. travel destinations.
- Describe your level of expertise in developing brand creative in each of brand USA's target regions.
- Please provide 2-3 case studies that are relevant to the scope of work for this RFP or relevant to Brand USA. At least one case study should feature an example of your agency's experience with co-op marketing campaigns.
- Please list any existing clients that could be considered a conflict of interest to Brand USA.

- **Client Services & Project Management**

- Overview of staffing plan and specific individuals that would work on the Brand USA account.
- Illustration of how the agency team and Brand USA will interact as a part of the continued planning and creative process.
- Details on the project management process, specifically timelines and workflows. Outline your standard or average timelines from briefing to completion for various projects, such as a major campaign, small campaign extension, and relevant real-time situation.

- **Brand Strategy**
 - Describe your process for researching, developing and creating a brand that meets the client’s strategy, goals, and objectives.
 - Include information on how you approach campaign strategy, goals and objectives, as well as how you use insights to guide the process. Include information on how you gather these insights/research.
 - Provide your approach to measuring success. How do you leverage metrics and analytics to optimize campaigns and for future strategic planning?
- **Creative Development**
 - Describe your creative services capabilities (including through affiliated or sub-contract relationships).
 - United Stories Evolution Proposal
 - Provide a campaign strategy and creative direction in response to the United Stories brief.
 - Briefs will be provided once an intent to bid is received.
- **Pricing/Cost Structure**
 - At a minimum, we’re looking for an agency to develop a brand strategy, a global creative platform, campaigns, and development of potential creative opportunities. Provide detailed pricing for account management and fees for services outlined in the RFP. Pricing must be fully comprehensive, and complete. Production would be scoped separately.
 - Explain how you approach a pricing structure: hourly, milestones, retainer or another model. Additional information and backup detail should be included as appropriate with your proposal.
 - Please also include a rate card for all services including production.
- **References**
 - Provide contact information for at least two current clients and two former clients that Brand USA can contact. For each reference, please indicate the following:
 - Contact Name and Title



- Contact Vendor Name
- Contact Phone Number
- Industry of Client
- Service Description and length of Relationship
- Brief explanation regarding the end of the business relationship, if applicable.

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 **January 23rd 2023**, and sent by e-mail to 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 be 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 **January 30th 2023** (due by 5:00 PM EDT).

The notice shall be sent by e-mail to RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com. 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. Agency Overview



- b. Client Services & Project Management
 - c. Brand Strategy
 - d. Creative Development + United Stories Evolution
 - e. Pricing/Cost Structure
 - f. References
3. **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.

A. Proposal Released	January 17, 2023
B. Written Questions (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	January 23, 2023
C. Written Questions Answered and posted to Brand USA website	January 25, 2023
D. Notice of Intent to Bid Due (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	January 30, 2023
E. Proposal Due (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	February 15, 2023
F. Notification and Scheduling of Finalist Interviews	February 24, 2023
G. Finalist Presentation/Interviews	March 21-22, 2023
H. Notice of Intent to Award Contract and Public Posting	March 24, 2023

DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL

Proposals should be e-mailed to RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com. We will acknowledge receipt, so if you do not receive a receipt notification within two business days, please contact us. If the file size of your proposal is too large to email, or send via a FTP service, contact us 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: [Date]

SEND TO: 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
Brand Strategy Capabilities	20	
Creative Development Capabilities	20	
Brief Response	20	
Client services/project management experience	15	
Cost effectiveness	15	
Integrated Marketing - Collaboration	10	
Total Points	100	