



**Brand USA**  
**Strategic Communications, Media & Public Relations RFP**  
**Public Q&A: Draft Responses**

**1. Does a budget range exist and if so what is it?**

Brand USA is looking to allocate no more than \$600,000 towards the retainer fee for public relations services.

**2. Is there a preferred format for the issue brief and executive messaging document mentioned on Page 8 of the RFP? For instance, as an addendum to the proposal?**

You may provide the issue brief and executive message document as an addendum to your proposal. A PDF may be the easiest format for the addendum, but we will accept other formats as well.

**3. What are the key goals/needs for the corporate communications strategy/proposal?**

Please see page 3 of the RFP document for a detailed explanation of the purpose and objectives of this RFP.

**4. What is the desired percentage mix of brand to destination partner public relations results/concentration?**

The agency should expect to focus the significant majority of their efforts on Brand USA's initiatives from a corporate perspective. However, occasional amplification of partner-led messaging through Brand USA's channels may be needed.

**5. What are the priority countries/regions of the most interest to Brand USA and its marketing strategies and programs?**

To fulfill marketing objectives in key international markets, Brand USA maintains a presence in 20 international markets covering over 40 countries. Travel from these markets makes up 93% of inbound visitation to the United States. These markets include:

- Australia & New Zealand
- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- France, Luxembourg &
- Belgium
- Germany, Austria, Switzerland & Netherlands
- Hong Kong
- India
- Italy
- Japan
- Mexico
- South Korea
- Southeast Asia
- Spain
- Taiwan
- U.K. & Ireland

However, it is important to note that the main focus of this RFP is corporate media relations and PR, not PR/marketing to international travelers. Please see page 3 of the RFP document for a detailed explanation of the purpose and objectives.

**6. Is the PR agency required to have offices or representatives in these countries?**

The agency is **NOT** expected to have representatives in any of our international markets.

## **7. Why is Brand USA seeking a new agency at this time?**

As part of our procurement process, Brand USA releases RFPs for all major vendor relationships at established intervals to account for changes in the market and industry environment.

## **8. Who are Brand USA's key competitors?**

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. Our organization is a public-private partnership and not-for-profit organization. As such Brand USA does not have any direct domestic competitors.

Internationally, the USA's top competitors vary greatly by target market. However, popular destinations for foreign visitors tend to include:

- Canada
- Mexico
- The Caribbean
- Western Europe

## **9. What are the key challenges for the organization that should be addressed in the PR program?**

Please see page 3 of the RFP document for a detailed explanation of the purpose and objectives.

We are looking to you to share your insights on what the challenges are.

As you prepare your proposal, it will be important for you to know that Brand USA is not allowed by law to participate in or coordinate federal lobbying efforts. However, we have an obligation and a business interest to ensure all of our stakeholders are aware of the work of Brand USA and our progress and successes via a strong corporate media and public relations strategy.

In addition, Brand USA is tasked with communicating information about U.S. visa and entry policies and procedures, including identifying and correcting misperceptions about policy as well as conveying changes in policy. The successful agency will play a role in helping the organization communicate this information to domestic and international partners in the travel industry as well as through corporate media engagement. This will include leading or supporting the drafting of key communications, possibly with limited notice. It may also include helping us navigate the most useful approach to communicate policy information in conjunction with the story of how we promote the range of diverse destinations and nearly limitless travel experiences available in the United States.

## **10. Can you provide recent examples of crises and situations Brand USA has or is facing and the impact on the organization's marketing strategies and programs?**

Brand USA's "Crisis Management" plans typically involve supporting destination partners experiencing events that could potentially have a significant impact on international travel to their destinations (e.g.

adverse weather events).

Brand USA responds to these situations on a case-by-case basis and would work directly with the selected agency, members of our marketing team, and any impacted partners to identify appropriate responses and assist as possible.

**11. How do Brand USA and agency partners work together to achieve coordinated and integrated campaigns?**

Brand USA works closely with its agencies and cross-departmental teams (consumer, trade, and partner program marketing) on all aspects of its campaigns, from inception to planning to execution. In order to achieve the desired level of collaboration, the agency must be available for weekly phone calls at a minimum, as well as a quarterly in-person strategy planning session at the Brand USA offices in Washington, DC.

**12. For PR purposes, how will the agency coordinate with Brand USA's internal resources or other agency partners on specific integrated elements (landing pages, social media support, etc.)?**

We are looking for your recommendations on how the agency can best serve as an extension to Brand USA's corporate communications team on all projects.

**13. Are research, digital insights and paid/organic social media part of the RFP?**

Research, digital insights and paid/organic social media are **NOT** a component of this RFP. However, we will look for your recommendations, expertise, and ability to track success of corporate media relations and public relations efforts (quantitatively and qualitatively). We will also look for recommendations on best practices for incorporating our research results and insights into our corporate messaging.

**14. Does Brand USA have a promotions department to develop strategic partnerships and promotions? Will the agency be asked to generate partnerships, events and creative promotional opportunities – or promote these for exposure?**

The agency will **NOT** be expected to generate partnerships, events and creative promotional opportunities. The agency may be asked to promote ongoing initiatives for exposure through earned media and PR.

**15. Are media missions, influencer programs, inbound media fam trips, promotion of Brand USA at international trade shows and other similar activities expected of the agency?**

Media missions, influencer programs and inbound media fam trips are **NOT** expected of the agency. Agency staff may be asked to accompany the Brand USA team to major tradeshow and initiatives to facilitate media engagements, as well as support strategies and message preparation before, during, and after these events.