



USA

VisitTheUSA.com

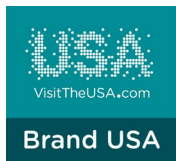
Brand USA



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Influencer Programs

August 27, 2019



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.

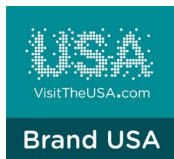
With the strength of a national marketing effort from Brand USA now in place, the United States is working to regain its share of the global travel market. By welcoming more international visitors to the USA, Brand USA is supporting U.S. economic growth, helping to spur job creation, and creating a more 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 entering into a vendor relationship(s) with an agency that can manage an always-on program with international social media influencers of various types described below. This vendor(s) must have specific expertise and relationships in this field. Brand USA's focus markets are India, UK, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, China, France, Germany, South Korea, Japan, and Australia. Influencers from these, and potentially other, markets will utilize their content creation skills and their own platforms to inspire visitation to the United States.

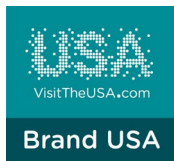
1. **Paid Influencers** with a reach which warrants budget in order to host them. They have a greater influence in the markets than the influencers described below and allow us to produce higher quality, campaign-related content.
2. **Earned influencers** whose following and influence in a market warrant a curated experience, where Brand USA/selected vendor will establish a relationship with them in order to host them in support of broader Brand USA thematic itineraries.
3. **Opportunistic influencers** who are already travelling to or within the USA and through technology supplied by an influencer agency, we can identify and look to extend/improve their trip to the USA.

Technical Requirements

The selected vendor(s) must have or demonstrate the following:

-
- A technology platform that does the following:
 - Vets potential influencers to ensure they are brand safe, professional, and reliable
 - Vets potential influencers' audience location, average engagement rates, and topics of interest e.g., travel and lifestyle
 - Automates reporting





Scope of Work

The selected vendor(s) will provide the following services:

Strategic Development

Identify the right mix of influencers – Paid, Earned, and Opportunistic – from the right markets based on available budget to achieve Brand USA objectives. At the very least, Brand USA expects to implement an Always-On influencer campaign chronicling travel adventures through influencers’ social media and digital channels, and potentially create content for Brand USA ownership depending on the circumstances.

Project Management

Vendor will manage strategic plans by:

- Developing itineraries through work with Brand USA and its various destination and travel-industry partners as directed.
- Briefing and negotiating contracts or arrangements with the three types of influencers described above.
- Facilitating travel arrangements and accompanying influencers as necessary.
- Providing content editing resources as necessary.
- Providing post-project reporting including highlights and analytics.

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

- Provide information that demonstrates how many influencers you have access to for potential partnership with Brand USA.
- Describe your technology platform and outline how it can provide influencer insights during the vetting process and automate reporting post-campaign or in real-time.
- What is your typical timetable from receiving a brief to executing on a global always-on campaign focused on the following markets: UK, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, France, Germany, Australia, South Korea, Japan, China and earned/opportunistic-only markets: Italy, Spain, Southeast Asia, Hong Kong?
- Please rank your channel preference (if you have a preference). For example: 1) YouTube 2) Facebook 3) Weibo 4) Instagram 5) Twitter, by market listed above.
- Please describe how having an office in a market improves relationships or opportunities with influencers in that market.
- Describe your approach to balancing Paid, Earned and Opportunistic influencers to highlight as many of the 50 states, 5 territories and the District of Colombia as per our remit, within the bounds of the annual budget provided below.

- Please provide project plans for at least two influencers that you believe would successfully drive engagement from markets listed above. The project briefs should illustrate how you intend to work and communicate with Brand USA to successfully deliver a program, including the following information. (Please be cognizant of the overall annual budget limitations provided below.)
 - Budget
 - Timeline
 - Thematic Brief
 - Itinerary
 - Management Requirements
 - Metric Delivery Goals
- Have you worked with other destination marketing organizations? Have you worked with lifestyle brands and can you showcase any opportunities for potential partnership with those brands and Brand USA? If so, please provide examples in the Case Study requirement in the Proposal Format and Specifications section below.

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.

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, staff assigned to the account, and evidence of your ability to meet the technical requirements stated above.
- Responses to the questions presented above.
- At least three (3) case studies with demonstrated results relevant to Brand USA (scale, industry, and/or similarity).
- Provide three client references.
- Proposal should not exceed 30 pages.





Request for Proposal RFP – Influencer Programs

BUDGET

Based on the RFP requirements, the proposer must submit an always-on program strategy across our focus markets and inclusive of Paid, Earned and Opportunistic Influencers. The potential annual budget is \$400,000 - \$500,000.

- Paid Influencers with a reach which warrants budget in order to host them. They have a greater influence in the markets other than Tier 2 or 3 and allow us to produce higher quality, campaign related content.
- Earned influencers who's following and influence in a market warrant a curated experience, where Brand USA/Agency Partners will build a relationship with them and host them in support of broader Brand USA thematic itineraries.
- Opportunistic influencers who are already travelling to the USA and through technology supplied by an influencer agency, we can identify and look to extend/improve their trip to the USA.

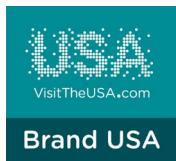
NOTES

- Brand USA may 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 whose audience is predominantly in our current target markets (s) and create content in their native language.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

A. Proposal Released	August 27, 2019
B. Written Questions (due by 5:00 p.m. EDT)	September 2, 2019
C. Written Questions Answered and Posted to Brand USA Website	September 4, 2019
D. Notice of Intent to Bid Due (due by 5:00 p.m. EDT)	September 4, 2019
E. Proposal Due (due by 5:00 p.m. EDT)	September 13, 2019
F. Proposal Evaluation by Scoring Committee	September 17, 2019
G. Notification and Scheduling of Finalist Interviews	September 17, 2019
H. Finalist Presentation/Interviews	September 27, 2019
I. Notice of Intent to Award Contract and Public Posting	September 30, 2019





Request for Proposal RFP – Influencer Programs

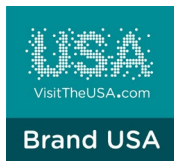
DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL

Proposals may be e-mailed to rfpadmin@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: rfpadmin@thebrandusa.com

Proposals are due no later than September 13, 2019, 5pm Eastern Standard Time.



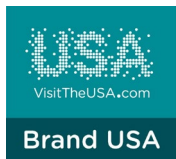


Request for Proposal RFP – Influencer Programs

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.





Request for Proposal
RFP – Influencer Programs

ATTACHMENT 1

NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID

Due: September 4, 2019

SEND TO:

Brand USA Headquarters C/O RFP Administrator

1725 Eye Street NW, Suite 800

Washington, D.C. 20006

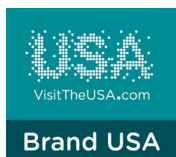
ATTN: RFP – Influencer Programs

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

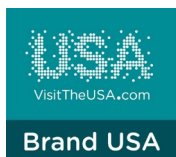
Official Contact

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

Official Contact Title





ATTACHMENT 3
FOR BRAND USA USE ONLY

Bid/Proposal: _____

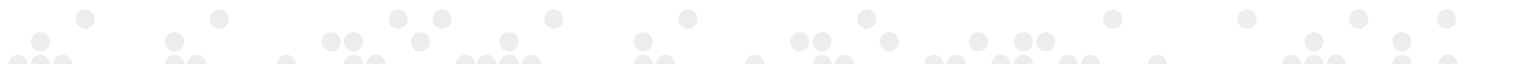
Evaluated By: _____

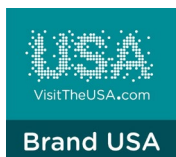
Date: _____

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

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

	MAX. POINT S	SCORE
Ability to meet stated requirements	40	
Case studies and Influencer recommendation examples	30	
Demonstrated management experience and Technology Solution	20	
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	

