

CANADA TRAVEL MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES RFP Q & A

The following are answers to questions Brand USA has received to the RFP for Travel Marketing and Public Relations Services in Canada 2017.

Thanks to everyone who submitted questions regarding Brand USA's RFP for travel marketing and public relations services. Since many of the questions posed were similar, we have condensed and edited queries. Company names have been removed. If the answer to the question is already in the RFP, or if we were unable to understand a question, we did not provide an answer.

Q: How many agencies have received this RFP and is there any indication of how many will be submitting their credentials?

A: The RFP was sent to all major travel and tourism agencies throughout Canada and also was posted on our corporate website (TheBrandUSA.com). We do not disclose the number of companies that submit proposals.

Q: How does Brand USA intend to "weight" the various marketing disciplines?

A: The evaluation criteria are outlined on the RFP (Attachment 3).

Q: What does Brand USA consider to be a conflict of interest in terms of travel, tourism clients?

A: Any and all potential conflicts of interest must be included in the response to the RFP so we can determine whether an actual conflict exists. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Please disclose any situation or relationship that has the potential or appearance to be a conflict including, but not limited to, any situation in which your organization would may have competing interests that may limit your ability to be impartial or fulfill your obligations to Brand USA should you be awarded the contract.

Q: Is there currently an incumbent Canadian PR/Marketing firm and if so will they be submitting their credentials in response to this RFP?

A: Yes, there is an incumbent Canadian PR/Marketing firm. We have received their Intent to Bid.

Q: In past Brand USA experience, have these types of mandates been led by PR, Trade or Marketing firms?

A: Brand USA has worked with representation firms who have travel trade experience in marketing and/or public relations.

Q: Is there currently a digital firm mandated by Brand USA in Canada?

A: Brand USA works with a U.S. based digital agency for Canada.

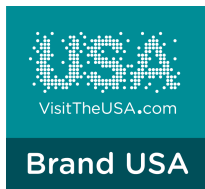
Q: Has Brand USA ever worked with an independent firm or has the experience been primarily with multinationals?

A: Brand USA works with both independent and multinational agencies.

Q: Is there currently a global public relations agency of record (AOR) on behalf of Brand USA?

A: Yes, there is currently a global public relations AOR.





Q: Is there/will there be an advertising campaign in conjunction with this mandate and if so, will there be an in-market agency search for this initiative?

A: Brand USA works with a number of agencies to support its umbrella consumer campaign. Details of Brand USA's consumer campaign will be reviewed with the successful candidate.

Q: How significant is the Quebec market to Brand USA?

A: The province of Quebec is a significant part of Brand USA's consumer, trade, and cooperative marketing efforts.

Q: Is there market research available to support Brand USA's marketing strategy in Canada?

A: Yes.

Q: What would Brand USA view as an optimum relationship with its agency? Can you provide examples of what has NOT worked in the past with reference to workflow, productivity, etc.?

A: The optimum relationship is one that collaboratively works with Brand USA's leadership in order to execute against a fully integrated effort in market.

Q: What does success for Brand USA look like? (e.g., what are the top 3 KPIs you are seeking to achieve from your agency in Canada for Travel Marketing & Public Relations Services in 12 months?)

A: Success will be based on the number of incremental visitors from Canada to the United States and their incremental spend. More information about our core KPIs can be found in our business plan and annual report found at TheBrandUSA.com.

Q: Other than Western Canada targeting inbound Asian leisure and MICE operators, are there any other gateway priorities or areas in Canada Brand USA would like to grow?

A: We would like your recommendations regarding best strategies to grow different segments of travel to the USA and from what gateways or priority areas you propose.

Q: What are the key states, regions and cities you want to promote during the first year of this mandate?

A: As stated in the Travel Promotion Act, Brand USA is required to promote the entirety of the United States—and to equally promote rural and urban areas.

Q: Can you provide three examples of marketing partnerships that have benefitted Brand USA from Canada?

A: Details of successful marketing partnership campaigns will be discussed with the successful candidate.

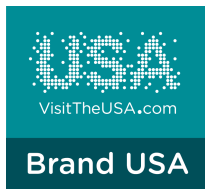
Q: How do you measure a travel trade show's success from a marketing standpoint?

A: We look to our representation firm to provide their input on the value and success of individual travel trade shows.

Q: Do you view states and CVBs as your marketing partners?

A: Yes, the states and CVBs are key marketing partners.





Q: Are French translation costs included in the budget or are they additional costs?

A: Translation costs are included in the budget.

Q: Will the Canada-based firm be responsible for media buys for consumer/travel trade outlets in Canada or does Brand USA head office manage media planning and buying?

A: Brand USA's corporate office in Washington, DC manages media planning and buying.

Q: In the overall budget, are cooperative marketing campaigns with tour operators, OTAs, airlines or travel agency groups to be included in the Canada budget or is there a separate budget managed by head office?

A: Brand USA's corporate office in Washington, DC manages the cooperative marketing program and will look to the successful candidate to provide recommendations and facilitate in the establishment of certain of those initiatives.

Q: Sales Mission – Does Brand USA charge any partners (CVBs, hotels, attraction partners) to pay a participation fee for these sales missions or is Brand USA Canada expected to budget 100% of expenses?

A: Registration for the sales mission will include a fee for participation and will assist in offsetting expenses.

Q: Distribution of brochures and marketing materials – does Brand USA currently have a third-party storage and distribution company in Canada managing this at an additional cost? Should this cost be included in the overall budget? Are promotional materials sent to both consumers and travel trade?

A: Brand USA does not have a third-party storage and distribution company in Canada. The management of this must be covered in the budget. Promotional materials are sent to both consumers and the travel trade.

Q: Is there currently an Advisory Board in Canada? Does Brand USA have criteria and objectives for selecting members for this advisory group?

A: There is not an advisory board in Canada.

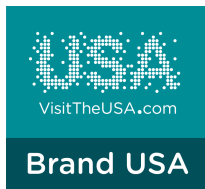
Q: Is it expected that for budgeting media and trade fam trips, including the MegaFams, the destinations, hotels, attractions involved will be responsible for all of the costs, (accommodation/meals/tours etc.), or should we consider the budget as if we had to pay for these activities 100% and then negotiate with partners including airlines when planning the fams?

A: There will be some budget for visiting journalist, media and travel trade fams, including the MegaFams. However, Brand USA does rely on partnership and hospitality of hosting states and regions and negotiation with major private suppliers to support the fams.

Q: Is there a cost to include in the budget for management of the Destination Training platform being developed for the travel trade?

A: Brand USA currently has a destination training platform for the travel trade, which is managed and budgeted by Brand USA's corporate office.





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Q: What media clipping service is currently in place for the Canadian market monitoring? Is social media being tracked currently by a separate monitoring service?

A: We have a core budget for these services at the corporate office, but look for your recommendations on whether a supplemental budget is needed in market.

Q: The RFP states that “third-party marketing costs are not included in the budget.” Can you clarify what is considered a “third party”?

A: Examples of third-party marketing activity costs are the cost of placing an advertorial in a travel-trade publication; and securing, negotiating, and leveraging localized media for consumer use such as digital, print, television, out of home, trade publications.

