

The following are answers to questions Brand USA has received to the RFP for Travel Marketing and Public Relations Services in the UK and Ireland 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: Why have you put out this RFP now?

A: Brand USA regularly re-competes existing contracts to make sure that it is getting a competitive price and the best service.

Q: What do you feel are the key tourism challenges that you currently face globally and, more specifically, in the UK/Ireland?

A: Brand USA would like to understand what you think are the key tourism challenges the USA currently faces globally and specifically in the UK and Ireland. Please include your assessment in your proposal.

Q: What are the key audiences (demographics) that you are targeting with this brief and why?

A: Brand USA would like you to articulate what you think are the key audiences that we should be targeting and why. Please include your recommendations in your proposal.

Q: What is the weighting between trade vs consumer delivery requirements from the scope?

A: Brand USA would like your recommendations between weighting for trade and consumer delivery requirements. Please include your recommendations in your proposal.

Q: How does Brand USA work with other organisations promoting the USA (for example, state-led tourism campaigns, the entertainment industry, the business community, etc.)?

A: At Brand USA's direction and consistent with the staffing and budget constraints, the in-market representative is expected to work collaboratively with other Brand USA partners, including U.S. tourism boards based in the UK and Ireland among other industry fields

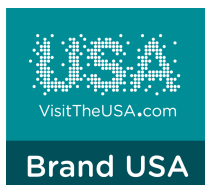
Q: Your requirements for deliverables are very case-study and experience based. Are you also requiring agencies to share bespoke creative solutions to your brief?

A: No. We do not require bespoke creative solutions to the brief.

Q: Due to the current political climate in the USA, as well as the UK, there are serious marketing challenges Brand USA must address. How much of a point of view on this are you looking for from us?

A: Brand USA's mandate established by the Travel Promotion Act is to market the entirety of the United States to, through, and beyond the gateways—and to communicate visa and entry policy and correct misperceptions about that policy. The respondent should include recommendations regarding both the opportunities and challenges facing the USA based on the marketing environment in the strategic plan provided in the proposal.





Q: Under the Market Intelligence section, you ask for a two-month content calendar. We weren't clear on why this was in the Market Intelligence section. Are you looking for us to base this on UK/Irish market-specific events and cultural pillars, for example half term (school holidays), or how we would position Independence Day, for example? Some more clarity on what you are looking for would be useful.

A: Brand USA is looking for examples of content and other suggestions for use in Brand USA's in-market social media feeds – Instagram, Facebook, etc. – that are relevant to UK and Irish travelers. The requirement is under "Market Intelligence" because it is a demonstration of the respondent's insight into its market.

Q: What format should our submission be in? Are there limits as to size/length/use of moving images? Would you be happy to accept some of the submission via an online resource (for example, a bespoke online credentials portal)?

A: The submission deliverables are laid out on page 13 of the RFP. The RFP does not require or limit any specific format. Delivery requirements for the response are detailed on page 15.

Q: Would it be a problem to work with subcontractors (e.g., travel trade) in delivering the brief?

A: The proposal should be from the agency and sub-contractors or other vendors responsible for delivering the Scope of Work.

Q: Do you consider agencies' work for other tourism authority/boards to be a conflict?

A: Brand USA requires a complete client list from all proposers. Please see page 14 of RFP.

Q: Are you able to provide access to any high-level brand performance survey findings recently done or any examples of what you have done in the past that worked – either in the UK/Ireland or other key markets? Are there successful areas you want us to develop further or gaps which we need to address from previous campaigns?

A: Brand USA is looking for the respondent to propose ideas and strategies that it believes will best achieve Brand USA's mission of increasing international visitation to the USA from the UK and Ireland.

Q: Are you able to provide access to any existing measurement/evaluation data for communications activities done in 2015/2016?

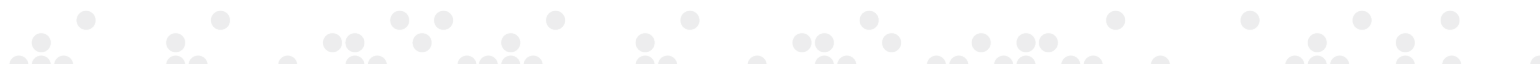
A: Publicly available information about our results and how we evaluate performance can be found in our annual reports and business plans, which are posted on TheBrandUSA.com.

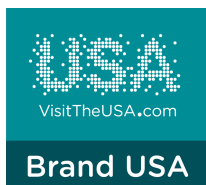
Q: Do you have any planned above-the-line (ATL) campaigns coming down the line and can we have sight of wider global marketing plans?

A: Brand USA is looking for the respondent to propose ideas and strategies that it believes will best achieve Brand USA's mission of increasing international visitation to the USA from the UK and Ireland.

Q: Is there a lead central communications agency working on global strategies to help unify market-led plans or are markets working in silos?

A: Brand USA works with a U.S.-based agency that provides the overall marketing and communication strategy.





Q: Are there other UK/Ireland advertising, brand, media, and digital/social agencies that you are already working with and how do they work in an integrated fashion with this brief?

A: No. There are currently no advertising, brand, media, and digital/social agencies that we are working with in the UK/Ireland. As noted above, we coordinate these efforts through a centralized agency based in the USA.

Q: Can you confirm who will be the key stakeholders and individuals in the room at pitch presentation stage?

A: Members of Brand USA's senior leadership team will be present for all proposal presentations. Please see Evaluation and Contracting on page 16 of RFP and also Attachment 3 Proposal Evaluation Criteria for more information.

Q: How many agencies will be part of the pitch process?

A: Brand USA will determine which agencies will be invited to provide presentations after receipt of the proposals.

Q: Who will be the final decision maker on the pitch?

A: Members of Brand USA senior leadership team will be the final decision-makers based on their independent evaluation of the proposals against the criteria established in the RFP and provided to the oral presenters during the scheduling phase. See Attachment 3 Proposal Evaluation Criteria for more information.

Q: The brief requests us to "Develop, promote and execute at least one Brand USA sales mission in market." What do you define as a sales mission?

A: A sales mission is a business-to-business session consisting of a delegation of private and public sector members visiting travel trade distributors and consumer and trade media in market. Formats may alter based on the specific participants.

Q: Is a Tour Operator Advisory Board already in place in the UK? If so, who currently sits on it?

A: Yes. A Tour Operator Advisory Board is already in place. Key tourism-related industry leaders participate on the Board.

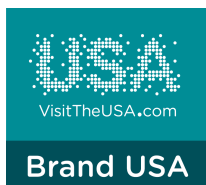
Q: Can you please provide a more detailed explanation of the annual brochure analysis? Is this feeding back on the global material that requires localization?

A: The selected representation firm will be required to evaluate the global inspiration guide.

Q: Aside from those that Brand USA currently partners with, do you have existing relationships with tour operators, wholesalers, travel agents, and so on? Or is this something that you are looking for us to initiate the connections? How about media and public relations relationships?

A: Yes. Brand USA has existing relationships with tour operators, wholesalers, travel agents, media, and trade media. As part of our assessment of the proposals, Brand USA will consider the relationships you have with the travel trade and media in market and those that you suggest Brand USA target in order to further the mission of increasing visitation from the UK and Ireland.





Q: Strategic planning is a strength of ours. Would we be provided with the opportunity to provide input on the creation of the overall strategic consumer and trade media and PR plan?

A: Yes. The selected representation firm will have the opportunity to provide input on the strategic consumer and trade plan for the UK and Ireland.

Q: We noted that the only UK contacts listed are the incumbent Agency. Can you please advise if there are any in-market contacts? For example, a spokesperson or a senior leadership team that could be used for media opportunities?

A: There are no other in-market contacts. Brand USA has approved spokespeople that we will make available for media opportunities as coordinated with our communications and public policy team.

Q: Likewise, on issue management – is there a UK-based contact? If not, in what time zone is the U.S.-contact based?

A: There is no UK-based contact. The U.S.-contacts are based in Washington, D.C., which is in the Eastern Time Zone of the United States. Issues management is handled by our communications and public policy team. This team will coordinate with the selected representation firm on issues management and response.

Q: What is currently in place for monitoring media during a crisis situation?

A: Brand USA will share this information, as appropriate, with the representation firm upon selection.

Q: Where does crisis management fall in the budget?

A: Crisis management falls under the Communications/PR budget.

Q: Can you define any of the crises we'd be planning against (e.g., issues of national security)

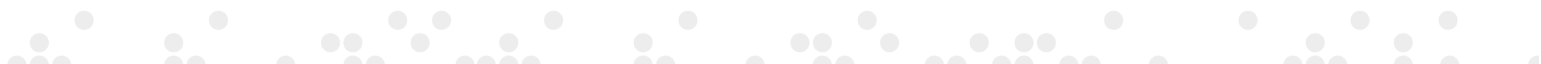
A: No. Brand USA has a core crisis communications plan, which will be shared with the representation firm upon selection.

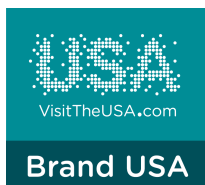
Q: How much weighting will you apply to crisis response in the proposal?

A: Please see Evaluation and Contracting on page 16 of RFP and also Attachment 3 Proposal Evaluation Criteria for information on how proposals will be evaluated.

Q: Are reputational issues, related to new executive orders like the revised Travel Plan, areas that you need to address in crisis management?

A: Brand USA will provide key message points and strategies for the communication of travel policy.





Q: Is there a peak period that you specifically wish to drive awareness of the brand? Or is it a case of different destinations for different times?

A: Brand USA looks to effectively promote the United States as a year-round destination by ensuring we have the right message, in the right markets, at the right times, using the right channels to reach our targeted base of international travelers. We will look to respondents to provide insight into the market on those issues.

Q: We noted the presence of Andi MacDowell and Harry Connick Jr in Discover America. Do you regularly have access to celebrities? If not, do you have access to other brand ambassadors or case studies – that are not via Brand USA's Visiting Journalist program.

A: Brand USA does not guarantee the presence of celebrities in the Brand USA marketing and communications campaigns. Please provide access that your firm might be able to deliver in an effort to further Brand USA's mission to increase visitation from the UK and Ireland.

Q: Results are to be reported on showing reach, sentiment, message retention and other measurements. But what does success look like? What would the dream campaign achieve?

A: Success is measured ultimately on incremental increases in visitation to the United States and incremental increases in visitor spending. We look to the respondents to suggest strategies and tactics that further that mission in their responses.

Q: Regarding partner marketing support, we understand there are existing partnerships with brands in the UK (including, BBC Worldwide, British Airways, FlightCentre UK, Royal Horticultural Society) alongside existing international partnerships with organizations such as Expedia. Are these relationships still ongoing? Are there any further to add?

A: In any given year, Brand USA works with new or existing partners to promote the USA to international travelers. We will look to the representation firm to recommend new, relevant partnerships for collaboration.

Q: When sourcing new partnerships, are there any guidelines as to brands that Brand USA would (not) work with?

A: Brand USA looks to the representation firm to recommend new, relevant partnerships for collaboration to support our mission and achieve our business objectives.

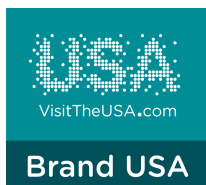
Q: Are you looking for any ongoing speaker opportunities for your Speaker Bureau?

A: No. We are not looking for ongoing opportunities, but any relevant opportunities that support our mission should be presented.

Q: Regarding Consumer Marketing Support, does the year-long market specific editorial calendar provide content for advertorials? If not, can you brief us on where this might go?

A: The editorial calendar guides Brand USA's marketing and communications messaging through various channels. Advertorials are a viable channel and, depending upon the audience, may fall under communications/public relations or travel trade/consumer.





Q: Consumer Targeting – are there specific demographic profiles or regions within the UK that you would like to target?

A: Brand USA looks to the representation firm to recommend specific demographic profiles or regions within the UK to target.

Q: Metrics & Reporting – Is a yearly report with product placement prospectus simply our end of year report, including all coverage achieved?

A: Please review page 10 Metrics and Reporting for details.

Q: Team Structure – is a blended US/UK team seen as advantageous (based on dual market knowledge and extension of working day by working across time zones) or do you prefer the entire team be based in the UK?

A: Brand USA is looking for the representation firm to build the best team possible to represent Brand USA in the UK and Ireland. Please provide your recommendations based on this premise.

Q: Regarding submission deliverables and schedule, the brief mentions developing two months schedule of possible social media content. However, prior to this, the brief mentions that this is currently managed by the consumer marketing team. Does this mean you are looking for social content development but not community management?

A: The two months schedule is for ideas on content that will be localized to be relevant and integrated into the overall social media management of Brand USA's message.

