

The following are answers to questions Brand USA has received to the RFP for our Digital Agency For China.

Thanks to everyone who submitted questions regarding Brand USA's Digital Agency For China. 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; if the answer will not help in responding to the RFP; or if we were unable to understand a question, we did not provide an answer.

Q: Do you envision any further markets will fall within the proposed scope?

A: Focus your response based on your capabilities in China.

Q: What is our allowable budget range for the scope of this RFP?

A: We have been specific regarding our requirements and are asking you to develop a budget that adequately represents your ability to execute against those needs.

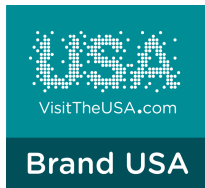
Q: Who are the key stakeholders that will be evaluating this proposal? What are their roles within Brand USA?

A: Our committee consists of senior management at Brand USA. We do not disclose names or titles of the people reviewing submitted proposals.

Q: Who are the key stakeholders that would be interfacing with the selected China digital agency partner throughout the year? What are their roles within Brand USA?

A: Our corporate website, www.thebrandusa.com lists all of our staff members. You will be working with a cross-section of our leadership.





Q: Who are your incumbent providers, partners and agencies?

A: Please look at our corporate website, www.thebrandusa.com for more information about Brand USA, our current partners and our mission.

Q: Is the plan to fully overhaul existing China websites to align with upcoming campaign launches in other global markets? Or to update and refresh what currently exists?

A: A complete website redesign is not part of this RFP. However, If you feel our China website should be completely re-designed, you may include this in your proposal with appropriate pricing. The selected agency will be expected to continue to refresh the look of our China sites regularly.

Q: What are your main in-market business challenges?

A: Efficiently reaching as many potential Chinese travelers to the USA as possible; Creating consistently greater engagement on our websites and social media platforms; Understanding partner goals and developing commensurate communication/content plans; Properly vetting digital media partners; Identifying and mitigating bots and questionable traffic sources; Creating content that is compelling and inspirational for a Chinese traveler.

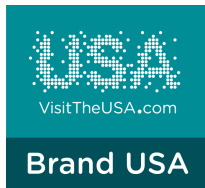
Q: Whom do you consider your top competitors? Do any of these competitors pose a conflict of interest, where you would not be able to work with an agency that also works with this aforementioned competitor?

A: Being the digital agency of record for a national tourist organization that markets in China presents a conflict of interest.

Q: Would you be open to RFP responses that provide services for some of the work streams (Website Development, Social Media Management, Digital Media Partnerships, Content Creation, and Strategy and Logistics) – with the remainder to be provided by partnerships?

A: The approach you take in your response is entirely up to you. We recommend you concentrate on addressing the specifics outlined.





Q: Do you have brand guidelines or style guide documents you could share and how effective have they been?

A: We do have these documents and they will be shared with the agency selected at the conclusion of this process.

Q: Do you have any challenges with editing the pages or managing the current Drupal website?

A: Webpage editing and Drupal management is the selected agencies responsibility. We are not experiencing issues.

Q: Where are Brand USA's Asia Pacific region sites currently hosted?

A: Our China websites must be hosted in China.

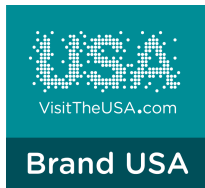
Q: How much does Brand USA currently spend on hosting and ongoing yearly website support/maintenance?

A: Based on the outlined requirements, include this cost in the proposed budget you submit.

Q: Which browsers/versions and mobile devices does Brand USA require to be supported?

A: At minimum: Current and last two versions of Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Internet Explorer.
Supported Mobile Devices: At minimum - iPhone 4, 4s, 5, 5c, 5s, 6, 6s, 6 plus, 6s plus, iPad 2, 3,4;
Google Nexus 9, 5, 4; Samsung SCH-N719; Samsung Galaxy Note II, S5, S4, S3; Samsung Galaxy Tablet 4.7; Xiaomia M14LTE.





Q: What website-related KPIs that you have been tracking?

A: We utilize Google Analytics and track all key metrics.

Q: What is your strategy on integration with a CRM?

A: Integrating our CRM with these websites is not part of this RFP.

Q: What previous and recent user research documentation is available (e.g. user personas, ethnographic studies, task analysis, information architecture, competitive analysis)?

A: Our research will be available for the selected agency.

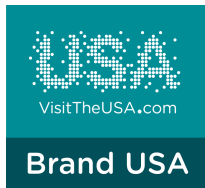
Q: Would a partnership/consortium of companies be allowed for this RFP? In this case, one of the companies would be the focal point/Contract Manager/Account Team.

A: One agency must actively manage and execute this partnership, primarily in-house. You may work with your own vendors to help support. Be sure and outline how you would be using other vendors – and their qualifications - to support your efforts.

Q: Is there any other activities expected on/outside the RFP scope? (Example: traditional Channels like, TV, Airport etc) in China?

A: Activities outside the scope presented in the RFP are contracted separately. Most of this work involves our destination-marketing partners and other constituents. We do have an agency for media purchasing and placement.





Q: How long has the incumbent digital agency for Brand USA in China been handling your account?

A: Three years.

Q: Is the incumbent agency excluded from bidding on this RFP?

A: The incumbent agency may present a proposal and will be considered for renewal.

Q: Regarding the requirement to “Provide limited translation services in Mandarin and Cantonese,” what is meant by “limited?”

A: Brand USA has a translation agency, which is responsible for most of our requirements. The selected agency is responsible for translation of social posts when obtained in English from our global agencies. When content must be pushed quickly, your agency would be responsible for translation. Back translation is occasionally necessary for original content and contracts/legal documents.

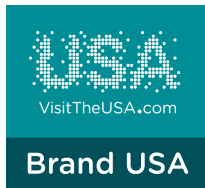
Q: What percentage of the social media posts must be translated to English so your staff can understand what is being featured?

A: We expect a weekly report of topic titles translated into English. We will ask you to translate several posts each week. In the beginning, we will ask for more translation to make certain you are properly utilizing Brand USA’s style and voice.

Q: Regarding the requirement “Must be a business based in China,” is it acceptable for the winning contractor to be headquartered outside of China with offices inside of China?

A: If the work performed in your China office is by people who are immersed in the culture and speak the language fluently, it is acceptable that your headquarters be located elsewhere in the world. To be clear, the office where the work is performed must be in China.





Q: Is a business based in Hong Kong, or Taiwan acceptable?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you clarify what kind of “demonstrated experience” you desire for the selected firm to have generated “revenue via digital platforms.”

A: Show examples of how you created programs for companies that generate revenue through partnership activities (excluding e-commerce).

Q: Would you consider eliminating the “in-house” requirement that the contractor have “capability of translating English to Mandarin and Cantonese, quickly and accurately,” so that the contractor can engage freelance translators who are not employees?

A: You must have staff members capable of translation.

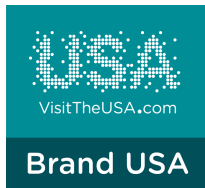
Q: What is the cooperation model between Brand USA and it’s partners and/or members of the US tourism industry?

A: Read all about Brand USA’s mission and partner programs at www.thebrandusa.com.

Q: The RFP document is asking for content in Cantonese, but we have noticed that Brand USA currently only has a .tw website. Is the RFP referring to the use of traditional Chinese for the Taiwanese market?

A: Our websites are in simplified and traditional at gousa.cn and gousa.tw.





Q: What would you consider a conflict of interest and if a conflict of interest is acknowledged, would an agency still be up for consideration if it provides a valid strategy to deal with the issue?

A: Brand USA is the national Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the USA. If you represent another national DMO, we consider this a conflict of interest that can not be rectified with a strategy.

Q: Can the RFP be sent by email only, or does it need to be mailed in hard copy as well?

A: Send your proposal via email and ship the hard copies.

Q: Will the presentations for finalists take place in NYC, China, or elsewhere,

A: As of this writing, it is likely that these will take place at our headquarters in Washington, D.C. You will also have the option of presenting via web-ex, if you choose to do so.

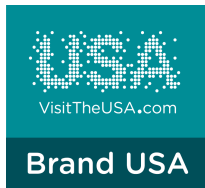
Q: Is there a size (width and height) limitation to the physical copy?

A: No.

Q: Is an appendix or any associated research counted toward the 45-pages limit.

A: Yes.





Q: How often is content refreshed on the websites and social platforms?

A: New content is added continuously to our websites and social platforms. A typical week could be 25 social posts and 15 website articles/updates. You may wish to advise for more or less frequency of content.

Q: Is there an integrated calendar outlining all efforts and activities for China?

A: Yes...and the selected agency, in conjunction with our other agencies, will be updating this calendar regularly.

Q: Will Drupal be kept as the cms of preference?

A: Yes.

Q: Will other map integration be considered for the website?

A: If you can present a better map solution, do so in your proposal.

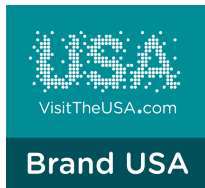
Q: Is it possible for our agency to present a more holistic approach/strategy (e.g. communication strategy, launch campaign, amplification idea) instead of only focusing on development and execution?

A: You may present whatever you like, as long as you address the specifics in the RFP.

Q: Is Brand USA expecting any demo design (visual or wireframe) within the presentation?

A: Not unless you are recommending a completely new design and have budgeted appropriately in your presentation.





Q: Since SEO is not working perfectly well under the situation in China search landscape, can we include SEM approach instead of pure SEO methodology in our proposal?

A: SEM is not part of this RFP.

Q: Is there an existing global digital strategy for Brand USA that we would need to align with?

A: Yes. You will be working closely with our other agencies.

Q: Is the agency selected also in charge of the Go USA brand pages on Weibo, WeChat, Youku, Weishi, Lofter and FB?

A: Yes.

Q: Will we be required to provide infrastructure (hardware such as server, CDN; software such as CMS, analytics,) procurement?

A: For the purposes of this RFP, consider that the current infrastructure needs would be transferred to you.

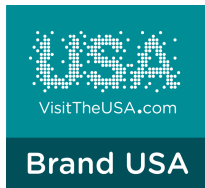
Q: Do you have company guidelines or policies for social media management and communications?

A: Yes.

Q: Will the image assets be provided by Brand USA, or would it be the agency's responsibility to buy assets?

A: Brand USA will provide access to image assets. You will not need to include this in your proposed budget.





Q: There are some questions in section “ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS”. Do we assume they are part of the required responses with the “Intent To Bid” form?

A: Answers to these questions should be part of your RFP response. They should not be submitted with your “Intent To Bid” form.

Q: Are there brand partnerships with airlines and tourist destinations that need to be considered? If so, how often do these occur?

A: Brand USA is a co-operative marketing organization and many of our activities in-market involves partners. Individual (additional) scopes of work will developed for each of these programs.

Q: As there are various domains stated - (website development, Social Media Management, Digital Media Partnerships, Content Creation, Strategy and Logistics) - will the Award contract be granted as a whole, or each part will be granted separately?

A: One agency will handle all specifics stated in the RFP.

Q: What’s the purpose of partnership acquisition and programming? Is there specific scenario to this?

A: Brand USA works with media companies in China to maximize our reach and spend.



Q: Are there KPIs that can demonstrate key areas of importance?

A: Engagement for social and web; content consumption indicators such as length of video watched, pageviews per visit, time on-site; bounce rate; and scroll.

Q: Are there any commerce requirements (travel online/office agencies, ad agencies, US VISA services, hotels, flights etc.)?

A: There are no e-commerce requirements.

Q: Should we include specific info of identified KOLs such as Weibo links and WeChat IDs, engagement metrics, quotes?

A: While this is not a requirement, if you feel that it's important to your strategy, you may include this information.

Q: How will value created by engaging social media influencers be measured?

A: Level of reach and engagement on the specific platform and traffic delivered to our websites.

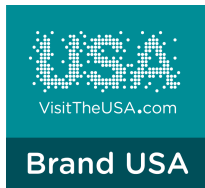
Q: How many agencies have been asked for RFP and how many will finally pitch for?

A: The RFP was distributed publicly via our website and by email to spread the word as widely as possible. We typically ask three to four finalists to present. However, it is possible that we will have fewer, or more finalists.

Q: Are all agencies that submit an RFP automatically in the pitch?

A: We ask a limited number of finalists to present.





Q: Is the purchasing and placing digital media part of this RFP?

A: Only to a limited degree. We have an agency that places Brand USA traditional and digital media in China. However, you will be involved with negotiation and vetting of digital media companies who are interested in partnering at a deeper level with Brand USA. Your agency will be responsible for creating social advertising creative units as needed.

Q: “Including your current industry ranking in China” how is this measured?

A: If you have an official source, state it. If not, rank your company based on your view of the landscape. This might be based on revenue, awards, client roster, or other rankings you consider appropriate.

Q: Are the resumes counted within the 45 pages proposal?

A: Yes.

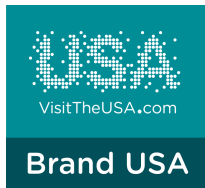
Q: Is there a required/preferred launch timing of the SOW listed?

A: The tentative project start date is January 2017.

Q: Regarding the requirement to allow for continuous improvement and user-based customization, what are the challenges and limitations that you are currently facing with the existing CMS that you wish to address?

A: If you have experience with personalization based on on-site user behavior, include details in your proposal and indicate how this has helped drive success.





Q: Do you have a preferred CMS in mind? or a preferred technical development platform, such as PHP, .NET?

A: The websites are on Drupal 7 and will remain on that platform.

Q: Will the appointed agency have access to the current website analytics, past website monthly reports, market research reports, etc.?

A: Yes.

Q: The current GoUSA.cn and GoUSA.tw websites seem to display the same content with just different languages. For GoUSA.tw, do you need a specific website and media strategy?

A: Not at this time.

Q: Does the appointed agency need to conduct any form of market research in China to purchase any market research reports) to formulate the digital strategy?

A: No, you will not be required to purchase, or conduct research. You will have access to Brand USA research.

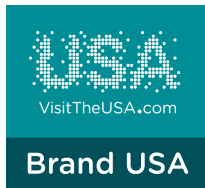
Q: Will the appointed agency have access to historical social media performance reports?

A: Yes.

Q: By “digital media partners,” are you referring to media companies (such as Sina), or media agencies, or both?

A: Media companies.





Q: Does the appointed agency have to create new content from scratch? Based on your current experience, what is the percentage of content created from scratch versus content curated from content provided by BrandUSA/partners/agencies/etc)?

A: Yes, the agency needs to have the capability of creating unique content. The current percentage of unique versus obtained/curated content is approximately – 70% obtained/curated - versus 30% unique. In the case of partner programs (which come under additional scope), the materials are custom created by your agency in Chinese, but the partner will provide assets.

Q: Do you have a library of text content, images and videos that we can leverage for our content creation?

A: Most content from our other international websites may be utilized, plus we have images and video in our digital asset management system.

Q: For "Attend Brand USA quarterly agency and conference meetings in-person," will the quarterly agency and conference meetings be held in Washington, D.C.? How many days will each meeting be?

A: Most of our agency meetings are in Washington, D.C. The meetings are typically two days.

