

A person with curly hair, wearing a green t-shirt and brown pants, is sitting on a large, dark red rock formation. They are looking out over a desert landscape. In the background, there is a tall, reddish-brown rock formation with vertical ridges. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is a scenic view of a desert landscape.

USA

VisitTheUSA.com

Brand USA

Brand USA

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Social Media + Content Creator Marketing

April 2024

## INTRODUCTION

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.

Established by the Travel Promotion Act of 2009 as the nation's first public-private partnership to spearhead a globally coordinated marketing effort to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and communicate U.S. visa and entry policies, Brand USA began operations in May 2011.

As one of the best levers for driving economic growth, international travel to the United States currently supports 1.2 million American jobs\* and benefits virtually every sector of the U.S. economy. Since its founding, Brand USA has worked with more than 900 contributing organizations to invite the world to explore the exceptional, diverse, and virtually limitless travel experiences and destinations available in the United States of America.

According to studies by Oxford Economics, over the past 11 years Brand USA's marketing initiatives have helped welcome 8.7 million incremental visitors to the USA, benefiting the U.S. economy with nearly \$63 billion in total economic impact, and supporting more than 36,800 incremental jobs each year.

Brand USA's operations are supported by a combination of nonfederal contributions from destinations, travel brands, and private-sector organizations plus matching funds collected by the U.S. government from international visitors who visit the United States under the Visa Waiver Program.

For industry and partner information about Brand USA, please visit [TheBrandUSA.com](http://TheBrandUSA.com).

For information about exceptional and unexpected travel experiences in the United States, please visit Brand USA's consumer website at [VisitTheUSA.com](http://VisitTheUSA.com).

## PURPOSE

Brand USA is seeking proposals from qualified social media and content creator agencies to handle our social media marketing and content creator marketing across key international markets (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, France, Germany, India, Mexico, South Korea, Japan, and the U.K). Brand USA is open to working with agencies that have expertise in either social media or content creator marketing or both. This agency(ies) should have a global footprint, ideally with a presence and expertise in some or all our key markets. This agency (or agencies) will work in conjunction with Brand USA, as well as our existing roster of agencies (e.g.,

brand and creative, media planning and buying, public relations, in-market trade representation, etc.), to ensure brand-led marketing, co-op marketing, and ad hoc campaign efforts are effective across our social ecosystem and drive an increase in international visitation and spend to the USA.

## BACKGROUND

With the final remnants of the pandemic receding, FY2024 will be a year to look beyond recovery. The new National Travel and Tourism Strategy focuses on fostering a sector that drives economic growth, creates good jobs, and bolsters conservation and sustainability. The national strategy specifically calls out Brand USA's important role in promoting the USA as a top travel destination, an especially important mechanism to increase international visitation to the USA. Work on improving perceptions of the destination and increasing desirability to visit is crucial to sustain success in delivering that visitation and spending over time.

Brand USA's global consumer marketing efforts create a powerful platform to drive international visitation to the USA. Our investments in consumer marketing activities enhance the brand perception of the USA as a travel destination, raise awareness about many lesser-known destinations and experiences in the United States, and drive visitation desirability. Through direct-to-consumer marketing initiatives like always-on content, social media marketing, content creator campaigns, targeted advertising campaigns, and captivating storytelling, Brand USA is able to reach the right people, with the right message, at the right time to influence their travel decisions.

Brand USA creates and distributes inspiring and informative content to a set of global travelers where consumers spend the majority of their time online— TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Ongoing social content educates prospective travelers on what the USA has to offer and serves as a consistent marketing tool to help grow brand affinity. Through community managers in 11 key source markets—Australia, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Colombia, France, Germany, India, Mexico, South Korea, and the U.K.—we regularly engage with consumers, listen



and gain timely insights about travel experiences and brand perceptions, and then develop relevant and meaningful social content to maximize impact.

Travelers are significantly influenced by word of mouth and recommendations from travelers who have experienced a destination first-hand. Brand USA taps into the reach and content creation skills of influential content creators to share stories that highlight the limitless possibilities of a USA holiday and encourage multi-destination road trips. These content creators are trusted voices in their market and have engaged audiences outside of the USA seeking inspiration and information curated to their interests. Content creators are an important word-of-mouth marketing tool and a cost-efficient source of user-generated content to keep our always-on social content feeling fresh and up to date with social trends. Please note that Brand USA also refers to influencers as content creators, and for the purpose of this RFP influencers will be referred to as content creators.

On social media, Visit The USA has a presence across Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube amassing over 7.7 million followers. Under Facebook's global infrastructure, Visit The USA has one global account and 11 hyperlocal channels. Additionally, Visit the USA has a presence in China with a [Weibo](#), WeChat, [Red](#), and [Douyin](#) account— these channels and their strategy sit separately from our global social media strategy and are not part of the scope of work in this RFP.

- Facebook: [Global](#), [India](#), [Japan](#), [South Korea](#), [Canada](#), [France](#), [Brazil](#), [México](#), [Germany](#), [UK](#), [Australia](#), [Colombia](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- YouTube: [Global](#), [Spanish](#), [French](#), [Portuguese](#), [German](#), [India](#), [Korean](#), [Japanese](#)

## SCOPE OF WORK

The selected agency(ies) will be responsible for:

- Social Media Responsibilities:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive global social media strategy that accounts for both our global presence and our market-specific presence across 11 markets and that is platform specific (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube).
- Create and curate engaging content for various platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Threads, and YouTube.
- Conduct regular reporting, analysis, and optimization of social media campaigns and ongoing tracking against established social KPIs and strategy.
- Global creative strategy, social content planning, and creative production of short-form vertical videos for organic and paid social campaigns.
- Content boosting strategy and execution in support of organic content across 11 Facebook local channels and global TikTok and Instagram (paid social media) and overall performance analytics.
- Coordinate and lead strategic and operational processes with 11 local markets including editorial planning, content creation, transcreation, scheduling, and community management/moderation and proactive engagement.
- Collaborate with wider inter-agency team in monthly calls, special projects, provide ongoing strategic guidance as it relates to social and participate in Brand USA's annual planning process.
- Content Creator Marketing Responsibilities:
  - Develop content creator marketing strategies that tie into our larger marketing strategy and align to our messaging objectives tailored to each international market including but not limited to Canada, México, Brazil, Colombia, Australia, South Korea, Japan, India, China, Germany, France, and the UK.
  - Conceptualize and manage creator campaigns from ideation to execution to measurement.
  - Create a strategic framework that identifies content creators' purpose across various business functions (e.g., Public Relations, Consumer, etc.) and identifies the best way to deploy creators across these areas.

- Provide creative direction for content creator content and providing timely recommendations for leaning into trends for social and video content.
- Handle content creator casting, contracts, itineraries, content briefs, reporting, and performance analysis.
- Manage on the ground support for content creator trips and management of real-time approval processes with Brand USA.
- Collaborate with wider inter-agency team in monthly calls, special projects, provide ongoing strategic guidance as it relates to content creators and participate in Brand USA's annual planning process.

## PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposal format is open for the agency to determine. Proposals should not exceed 30 pages. Agencies may submit additional pages in the appendix but should not presume that they will be read. Proposals must be delivered electronically, and it must include the following information:

- Agency Overview
  - Include company history and background in social media marketing or content creator marketing.
  - Outline your internal DE&I efforts and how this trickles into your clients' work.
  - If applicable, indicate the number of years and nature of your experience in the tourism industry and include any specific knowledge and familiarity marketing U.S. travel destinations.
  - Describe your level of expertise in developing social media strategy or content creator campaigns in each of Brand USA target markets.
  - Please provide 2-3 case studies that are relevant to the scope of work for this RFP or relevant to Brand USA.
    - If you're bidding for the social media portion, at least one case study should include samples of social-first content created in-house and performance results.

- If you're bidding for the content creator portion, at least one case study that includes a campaign creative concept featuring multiple creators with example content and performance results.
  - Please list any existing clients that could be considered a conflict of interest to Brand USA.
- Client Services & Project Management
  - Provide an overview of staffing plan and specific individuals that would work on the Brand USA account.
  - Illustrate how the agency team, and the Brand USA team will interact as a part of the continued planning and creative process.
    - If bidding for social media responsibilities, please outline how a global network of community managers would fit into this.
  - Provide details on the project management process, specifically timelines and workflows. Outline your standard or average timelines from briefing to completion for various projects, such as a major campaign, small campaign extensions, and relevant real-time situations.
- Social Media Strategy: (Respond if bidding for social media responsibilities)
  - Assuming a \$1.5M annual budget, please describe your approach for researching, developing and implementing a social media strategy, including content strategy, content creation, active community management across all markets, a measurement plan, and budget allocation. (Please note: this is a hypothetical budget for the purposes of this exercise).
  - As you're completing this exercise, please ensure the following questions are addressed in your proposal:
    - Assuming you were to be awarded the RFP, what would you do first? How might you manage the onboarding process?
    - What do you think is working well for Visit the USA on our social media content? Where would you take our social media tone and voice moving forward, and how would you take it there?

- What examples can you provide of ways you've leaned into pop culture and in-the-moment social conversations for other clients? How would you ensure Visit the USA is timely on social media trends and tapping into American pop-culture?
  - Given the global scale of our social media presence and community management needs, how would you structure and staff the team to maintain a highly localized approach to community management and content creation?
  - What are your in-house production capabilities for social-first content including content capture and remixing of assets? Please describe your approach for testing and maximizing assets between organic and paid social strategies.
  - Explain how you approach a pricing structure: hourly, milestones, retainer or another model. Additional information and backup detail should be included as appropriate with your proposal. Please also include a rate card for all services.
- Content Creator Strategy (Respond if bidding for content creator responsibilities)
    - Please complete the following assignment that can be found [HERE](#).
  - References
    - Provide contact information for at least two current clients and two former clients that Brand USA can contact. For each reference, please indicate the following:
      - Contact Name and Title
      - Contact Vendor Name
      - Contact Phone Number
      - Industry of Client
      - Service Description and length of Relationship
      - Brief explanation regarding the end of the business relationship, if applicable.



## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Proposals may be rejected if they do not include all deliverables. Proposers wishing clarification of this RFP must submit questions in writing to Brand USA, no later than April 19, 2024, and sent by e-mail to [RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com](mailto:RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com). Questions will not be answered on calls, with the exception of meetings with scheduled finalists during, or after the meeting. Company names will be removed from the published question/answer document. Duplicative questions, irrelevant questions and questions already addressed in this RFP may not be published. Pitches will not be accepted outside the RFP process.

Costs for developing proposals are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be reimbursed by Brand USA.

1. **Notice of Intent to Bid** must be received by **April 30, 2024** (due by 5:00 PM EDT).

The notice shall be sent by email to [RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com](mailto:RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com). The NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID, is nonbinding; however, it ensures the receipt of all addenda related to this RFP.

Proposals will be accepted only from applicants who submitted a timely NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID.

2. **RFP Responses** must contain information that addresses the requirements outlined in the above section titled: *Proposal Requirements*
3. **Certification Form**: Must be signed and accompany all RFP Response submissions.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

This tentative schedule may be altered at any time at the discretion of Brand USA. Brand USA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or any part thereof; waive an informality in the proposals and accept the proposal that best meets the needs of Brand USA.

A.	Proposal Released	April 9, 2024
B.	Written Questions (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	April 19, 2024
C.	Written Questions Answered and posted to Brand USA website	April 23, 2024
D.	Notice of Intent to Bid Due (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	April 30, 2024
E.	Proposal Due (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	May 8, 2024
F.	Notification and Scheduling of Finalist Interviews	May 15, 2024
G.	Finalist Presentation/Interviews	June 14, 2024
H.	Notice of Intent to Award Contract and Public Posting	June 21, 2024

## **DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL**

Proposals should be e-mailed to [RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com](mailto:RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com). We will acknowledge receipt, so if you do not receive a receipt notification within two business days, please contact us. If the file size of your proposal is too large to email, or send via a FTP service, contact us and we will make arrangements.

## **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.

## ATTACHMENT 1

### NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID

Due: August 19, 2022

SEND TO: [rfpadmin@thebrandusa.com](mailto: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.

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Authorized Signature

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Typed or Printed Name

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Title

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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:

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Official Contact Name

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Phone Number

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Official Contact Title

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Facsimile Number

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Email Address

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Street, City, State, Zip

### 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:

#### Social Media Rubric:

	Max Points	Score
Project Management Experience	20	
Social Media Strategy	25	
Global and Localized Capabilities	20	
Content Creation Capabilities	25	
Cost effectiveness	10	

#### Content Creator Rubric:

	Max Points	Score
Project Management Experience	25	
Content Creator Strategy	30	
Localized Expertise and DE&I Approach	25	
Cost effectiveness	20	