



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS





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Explore Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau

Thank you for expressing interest in the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau (Explore Asheville) agency selection process. We are happy to provide you with our Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Your responses to this RFQ will enable us to get to know you a little more and allow you to understand what client needs we are particularly focused upon during this process.

While you are welcome to submit a reasonable amount of other information about your firm as a component of your RFQ response, here are the elements that we believe are particularly important to our business:

A. Agency Overview – Please provide the following information:

- Office location of the Explore Asheville account:
 - Capitalized billings in most recent fiscal year:
 - Number of employees:
 - Current clients and length of service to those clients:
1. Who are your current clients, and what is the length of service to those clients? If your agency has multiple offices and Explore Asheville will be served primarily by one office, please note the clients that are also served from that same office.
 2. If you have multiple offices, describe how they work together to serve a single client's needs and what would prompt the use of another office's resources. If you are part of an agency network which you will tap into as a component of serving Explore Asheville, describe how you work within that network.
 3. Please provide biographical information for the agency employees who would be assigned to Explore Asheville, including those in positions other than account service.

4. Describe in detail your agency's "bench depth" and how Explore Asheville would be served in the event of employee leave, vacations, terminations, reassignments, and other similar circumstances. How have you ensured a continued level of professional service to other clients of the agency?
5. Will you be using any subcontractors or partners on the Explore Asheville business? If so, please provide biographical information for the employees who would be assigned to work on the Explore Asheville business.
6. Describe any recent prior experience in the travel and tourism category, particularly with destination marketing organizations. Any relevant category experience should be noted as to whether it is held by the agency as an organization, or by current agency employees while employed at other organizations. (*Recent prior experience in the travel and tourism category is not mandatory for participation in this process.*)

B. Digital Expertise – Explore Asheville is particularly interested in your agency's digital campaign expertise. Please help us understand how your agency excels in this area by providing examples of efforts that were particularly successful (including your measures for success), and include the following:

1. The scope of technical expertise on the agency team and any unique technical and programming capabilities possessed by the agency.
2. Specific examples of the attribution models use by the agency to tie digital advertising campaigns to clients' key performance indicators. These examples do not need to be category related.
3. A case study demonstrating the agency's ability to drive meaningful business results through a highly targeted digital campaign. Again, it does not necessarily need to be from the travel and tourism category.
4. Briefly describe your strategic approach and tactics used in a campaign specifically designed to drive targeted traffic to a web site (preferably a non-transactional site) and how you measured effectiveness of the campaign.

C. Creative – While we are not asking for spec creative, we are interested in understanding your creative approach.

1. Please provide samples of your creative work. In addition, please point out one or two specific examples of work of which you are particularly proud and share with us the reasons why.
2. Briefly share your strategic approach when identifying a business challenge that merits a creative solution.
3. Examples of superior copywriting, including some display ads and sponsored content designed specifically for the digital environment, by someone who would be assigned to the Explore Asheville business.
4. What's an example of something you would consider an agency fail, and what did you learn from it? If a client (past or present) is involved, it is not necessary to reveal their name.

D. Strategy and Analytics – We expect to have more discussion around this in later stages of this process. However, we are keenly interested in:

1. Your approach to analyzing and understanding your client's business and identifying opportunities for growth.
2. Your work around audience targeting.
3. A demonstration of how you apply insights, learning, research and analytics into the strategic process. Share any information you'd like us to have at this stage.

Additionally, we are interested in your responses to the following:

4. What are the essential strategic, planning and analytical tools and service that you rely on when developing and executing key strategies for your client?
5. Share an example of how you effectively used new information –whether from the client, agency resources, or contracted research – that altered your understanding and/or approach to the client's target audience.
6. How does the agency maintain its edge and not fall behind in understanding changes in the broader marketing environment? How do you help your clients not fall behind?

7. Please detail a case study that demonstrates agency innovation, and how that innovation benefited the client's business.

E. Additional Information

1. Is there any pending litigation against the agency, and would such litigation hinder your ability to perform to Explore Asheville's expectations?
2. What planning and research tools do you typically use for media planning and purchase, including digital and broadcast? It is anticipated that the selected agency will use all appropriate tools to make effective media buys, and that these tools will be utilized as a regular and normal component of doing business with Explore Asheville.

Our Process and Schedule

1. Please submit any questions related to the RFQ **by email only** to Marla Tambellini of Explore Asheville at mtambellini@exploreasheville.com and Chris Cavanaugh of Magellan Strategy Group at ccavanaugh@magellanstrategy.com no later than close of business **Wednesday, August 15, 2018. Please use the email subject heading "Explore Asheville RFQ."** We ask that questions be submitted in this format to expedite responses, as members of the Explore Asheville review team will be traveling during this time. Responses to questions will not be made available to all interested agencies.
2. **Responses to the RFQ are due by close of business on Monday, August 27.** Please email responses to Marla Tambellini and Chris Cavanaugh, using a file sharing service as needed for large files.
3. An Explore Asheville staff team will evaluate agency responses and notify selected semi-finalists by the close of business on Friday, August 31. There is no outside board or stakeholder committee which will be involved in reviewing qualifications at this point in the process.
4. Members of the Explore Asheville team would like to make office visits to semi-finalists during the period of September 10-28. We will provide

information about our specific expectations for these visits and how we'd like to spend our time together once we notify the semi-finalists.

5. Following these office visits, finalist agencies will be selected and requested to visit Asheville to spend time with the Explore Asheville team during the week of October 29 and/or the early part of the week of November 5.
6. A final decision by Explore Asheville is expected no later than November 16. Formal approval of the recommendation from the Explore Asheville team by the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) board will still be required before the selected agency can begin work but is expected before December 31.

Other Important Information

1. At no point during this process will spec creative be requested of participating agencies. We are more interested in how you think, your culture, your processes, and your capabilities than we are in assessing creative which may not fairly reflect how you can contribute to our business.
2. Agencies will not be compensated for any costs related to their participation in the process. This includes travel to and from Asheville at any time during the process.
3. Lobbying of Explore Asheville staff or BCTDA board members by the agency is not encouraged and may in fact negatively impact the consideration of the agency.