REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: PUBLIC RELATIONS

General Scope

The Puerto Rico Destination Marketing Organization, Discover Puerto Rico (“DPR”) seeks a world-class Public Relations firm to continue elevating and protecting the DPR destination brand and keep Puerto Rico top-of-mind for travelers thru a robust, innovative, cutting edge and outstanding PR strategy.

Puerto Rico has a unique competitive position in travel and tourism, due in part to its 526 years of rich heritage, remarkable attractions, music, gastronomy and extraordinary people. Amidst an increasingly competitive global marketplace and challenging economic climate, growing the visitor economy of Puerto Rico is pivotal to the future success of the Island.

Aside from the challenges that came with hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico has been limited by frequent changes in brand position and creative and strategic approach due to political cycle changes. Discover Puerto Rico aims to achieve consistency, developing a solid and long-lasting brand identity that outlives each political cycle and appeals to global travelers. We will do so by relying heavily upon a talented team of professionals well-prepared to lift the tourism industry to new heights.

We believe in leveraging Puerto Rico’s tourism opportunities to increase media coverage in the mainland US and beyond, which will inspire visitation to the island. As a destination going through a major transformation, strategic earned media efforts are crucial to raise the brand awareness of the destination both in the United States and globally.

About Discover Puerto Rico

Discover Puerto Rico is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization created in 2017 through bipartisan legislation, to manage all off-island global marketing, sales and promotion of Puerto Rico’s tourism industry. Our purpose is to promote the Island as a premier leisure and business destination, powering sustainable economic growth through consumer-centric and research-based marketing, best in class industry standards and strategic partnership. Discover Puerto Rico intends to accelerate economic recovery in Puerto Rico by stabilizing tourism industry revenue/employment and optimizing immediate and long-range opportunities through targeted tourism sales and measurable marketing programs.

We are a newly established enterprise that will bring prosperity to the people of Puerto Rico by positioning the Island’s diversity and uniqueness for leisure, business and events, working collaboratively with key local governmental and non-governmental stakeholders throughout Puerto Rico’s visitor economy.

We believe there has never been a more important time for tourism in Puerto Rico than today. For the first time in its history, Puerto Rico has a solid chance to reimagine and transform itself and we want to capitalize on this unprecedented momentum by building a stronger and better brand.
**Purpose**

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to identify a Public Relations partner. As Discover Puerto Rico builds brand awareness, equity and credibility, it needs a partner who will actively share the “good news” stories of why Puerto Rico should be the destination of choice for leisure and business travelers.

The selected firm will be responsible for supporting and amplifying all Discover Puerto Rico’s public relations, talent-influencer and earned media efforts as it relates to engaging in an “overarching” communications effort. The communications plan should be in alliance with the marketing goals established by Chief Marketing Officer, Ms. Leah Chandler.

This is a pivotal moment in Puerto Rico and as Discover Puerto Rico continues to change the potential visitor’s perception we want to tell the Island story not only in traditional ways but in innovative, thoughtful, provoking and distinctive ways.

The initiatives should showcase Puerto Rico’s unique offerings and assets. We want visitors to come not only for beaches and sunshine, but also for natural wonders, renowned gastronomy, some of the best coffee in the world, our contagious music and of course, the incredibly hospitable and resilient people of Puerto Rico.

Candidates must demonstrate a proven history of strategic and effective travel and tourism related public relations services across the U.S. and ideally, global marketplaces as well as strong crisis management. The public relations plan will recommend the most effective channels to reach the right people at the right time to inspire travel to Puerto Rico.

**Research**

Discover Puerto Rico has conducted a recent brand positioning study. Among other findings, this study identified key attributes – natural scenic beauty, vibrant music, rich cultural experiences, history, and of course, beaches as some of our key strengths. Furthermore, initial strategic discussions point to positioning Puerto Rico as a colorful, lively, authentic, cultural alternative to competitive destinations.

**Scope of Work**

Discover Puerto Rico seeks to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of its communication and media efforts through the selection of a strategic and results-oriented top media relations agency. The selected agency will be responsible for providing strong strategy and insight development for campaigns that inform Discover Puerto Rico’s overall earned media direction across all communication channels.

The selected agency’s responsibilities will include but are not limited to the following:
Objectives

- Position Discover Puerto Rico as a world-class tourism destination for leisure and business travelers
- Identify and develop industry and market-specific trends to generate coverage for Puerto Rico and differentiate the Island
- Develop outstanding brand awareness and publicity to build equity
- Establish working relationships with influential US (including Diaspora) media to help elevate Puerto Rico as a destination and pivot perception
- Enhance the credibility of the organization and its effectiveness in attracting visitors to Puerto Rico
- Mitigate potential negative issues and perception while increasing level of goodwill for the organization
- Manage potential media crisis and protect brand’s reputation
- Promote Puerto Rico’s diverse tourism product
- Secure targeted broadcast opportunities of Discover Puerto Rico key programs and initiatives (i.e. Gastronomy, LBGTQ+, etc.)
- Thought leadership execution including b2b interviews, speaking & roundtable opportunities and media opportunities
- Brand alignment with partners who share common objectives and can elevate awareness and desirability of Puerto Rico’s brand.
- Establish relationships with trade and industry publications to leverage and support MICE
- Monthly, quarterly and annual reporting on media coverage, quality, value and impact. Responsible for all tracking media and influencer tools/software licensing
- Diaspora integration efforts

Proposal Format and Specs

Proposal format is open to presentation style and delivery of the proposing team but must address each objective listed, giving specific details of techniques to be used in achieving these requirements. Proposals may be rejected if minimum requirements are not met. All interested agencies may submit questions in writing to Discover Puerto Rico no later than Dec 19, 2018 (due by 5:00 pm, EST) and sent by email to Jeniffer.rosa@discoverpuertorico.com.

Proposal

Minimum requirements for proposal (no more than 25 pages):

1) Company History and background in media relations for US and global brands
2) Examples of successful crisis PR work (minimum of two case studies) to demonstrate preparedness and management expertise
3) Overview of process and methodology used for earned media strategy development
4) Overview of assigned team, identifying roles of each who will service the DPR account
5) Current client list and confirmation there are no conflicts of interest between any existing contract or client relationship
6) Provide at least three client references for projects of equal or greater size developed within the past two years
7) Provide fee structure (for current and incremental budget allocations) as well as hourly billing method and rates
8) List location(s) of the office(s) from which the primary work on this contract would be performed
9) Description of agency’s tactical process (for day-to-day earned media projects)
10) Description of agency’s entertainment department or resources which would be used to leverage celebrity integrations, partnerships and opportunities
11) Identify approach to amplifying Discover Puerto Rico’s brand re-positioning with earned media
12) Describe agency’s approach to on-island representation if/when necessary
13) Describe experience working with PR budgets $1 million or more
14) Describe methodology for measurement/ROI of Public Relations investment
15) Case Studies of success (minimum of two) with demonstrated results relevant to tourism organizations or DMO’s

Selection Criteria

Following receipt of written proposals, DPR will select finalists who will be asked to travel to Puerto Rico to share a presentation in person. Specifics about the presentation and additional destination documents will be shared with finalists at the time of notification. Final selection of the agency shall be based on a combination of both written and in-person proposals.

Agencies will be selected on the basis of (but not limited to) the following:
1) Superior qualifications with respect to the overall agency and the individual(s) assigned to work on this business
2) Successful strategies with other travel related companies and destinations
3) Demonstrated ability to develop and execute effective and results-oriented earned media activations
4) Demonstrated superior Travel/Tourism/Destination knowledge
5) Background working with a committee (taking and giving direction as appropriate)
6) The quality and clarity of response, demonstrating the agency’s ability to communicate clearly and creatively
7) Crisis management expertise

Other considerations

Once selected, the agency must be prepared to begin work with DPR immediately. Evaluation of the proposals will be under the jurisdiction of DPR. DPR will evaluate all material submitted and engage in interviews and/or discussions with the respondents deemed as most qualified, based on initial responses.

After the completion of the interview/discussion process, DPR will select the agency that best represents itself as capable of meeting the needs of Puerto Rico as a tourism destination. Discussions will then take place between DPR and the agency to define a more detailed scope of work. Ultimately, a contract will be executed between the selected agency and DPR.
If DPR is unable to negotiate a satisfactory contract with the selected agency, negotiations with that agency shall be terminated and the organization shall undertake negotiations with another qualified agency until a satisfactory contract is negotiated. If DPR is unable to negotiate a contract with any of the selected agencies, the organization shall re-evaluate the scope of services and fee requirements.

DPR and the selection committee reserve the right to reject any or all qualification submittals or to waive any minor defects or irregularities in any submittal. DPR further reserves the right, without prior notice, to supplement, amend or otherwise modify this request for qualifications or otherwise request additional information from any or all applicants.

**Proposals & Timing**

RFP release date: **Dec 6, 2018**

RFP general information call: **Dec 14, 2018 (call 787-957-8874 / Access Code – 678815) 3:30 pm**

San Juan time

Proposals must be delivered to DPR office by **5:00pm EST on Jan 3, 2018.** Please mail 10 hard copies.

Jeniffer Rosa López, VP Communications
Discover Puerto Rico
500 Calle De La Tanca
Building Ochoa, Suite 402B
San Juan, PR 00901, USA

In addition to hard copies, proposals should be sent via email to Jeniffer Rosa (Jeniffer.rosa@discoverpuertorico.com).

**Finalists will be notified by Jan 18, 2018.**

**Finalists will be asked to present in Puerto Rico on February 1st, 2018.**

**Final agency selection will be completed before Feb 12, 2018.**

By submitting the proposal, the applicant thereby agrees that DPR’s decision concerning any submittal in any respect is final, binding and conclusive upon it for all purposes, and acknowledges that DPR, in its sole and unqualified discretion, may waive or deviate from the procedures and/or timeline outlined.

All materials submitted become the property of DPR and may be made available to the public. All costs incurred in connection with responding to this Request for Proposal will be borne by the submitting organization.

**Confidentiality**

The recipients hereto agree that this Request for Proposal, its concept, and all matters relating to DPR and its marketing plans are strictly confidential. This information is not to be discussed with any parties not directly involved in this process.