

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: International Public Relations & Sales Representation

General Information

The Puerto Rico Destination Marketing Organization, Discover Puerto Rico (“DPR”) seeks a single firm or organization to elevate and amplify Puerto Rico’s destination brand and keep Puerto Rico top-of-mind for international travelers thru a research-based and innovative earned media and sales strategy.

Puerto Rico has a unique competitive position in travel and tourism. 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.

In addition to Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico has been limited by frequent changes in brand position due to political cycle changes. Discover Puerto Rico aims to achieve consistency, developing a long-standing brand identity that outlives political cycles and appeals to global travelers.

This Request for Proposal (RFP) seeks professionals from interested firms to represent Puerto Rico as a world-class travel destination to media, travel trade and consumers in Canada, Europe and South America, with an immediate focus in markets with existing airlift: Canada, Spain, Germany and Colombia. The primary function of this representation is to increase tourism to, and general awareness for Puerto Rico. The ideal candidate should have extensive experience and relationships in US and/or Caribbean tourism promotion, especially with media, tour operators and travel agents, aviation, cruise, and other key sectors.

The ideal candidate should be incredibly knowledgeable in interacting with all involved cultures. This applies to everything from the working relationship with Discover Puerto Rico and its partners to interaction with clients in aforementioned international markets. Firms with existing relationships with and extensive knowledge of Brand USA are preferred. Brand USA is a primary partner of Discover Puerto Rico and plays an integral role in Discover Puerto Rico’s international marketing strategy.

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 bringing 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.

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 beaches as key strengths. Furthermore, initial strategic discussions point to positioning Puerto Rico as a colorful, lively, authentic, cultural alternative to competitive destinations. An abbreviated version of this

report as well as an existing air access report can be made available to firms who request this information.

Scope of Work

1. Develop a strategic marketing plan demonstrating a research-based approach. This should include a detailed work plan from which progress is reported monthly to Discover Puerto Rico.
2. Conduct media relations services, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Creating a target list of high-potential media outlets and journalists/writers, including print, broadcast, and social media/influencers.
 - b. Generating media familiarization tours to the destination for qualified candidates.
 - c. Scheduling a prescribed number of media appointments for Discover Puerto Rico during sales trips and/or tradeshows in key markets.
 - d. Providing consultative services to Discover Puerto Rico and its constituents on international media relations issues.
 - e. Representing Discover Puerto Rico to the media in designated international markets and facilitating contacts with Discover Puerto Rico when appropriate.
 - f. Creating and maintaining a media database which is property of Discover Puerto Rico.
 - g. Proposing relevant and timely story ideas to targeted media.
 - h. Tracking media clippings and providing a detailed analysis with a brief translation of coverage.
 - i. Achieving a mutually agreed upon annual goal of earned media coverage.
3. Conduct travel trade services, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Contacting, on a regular basis, tour operators and travel agencies in key markets who are selling Puerto Rico or have the potential to develop new product.
 - b. Establishing an annual tour extract to include tour operator or travel agency name, hotels used, itinerary route, number of departures, receptive tour operators used, and if available, number of tours and/or passengers sold, and room nights booked.
 - c. Generating travel trade familiarization tours to the destination for qualified candidates.
 - d. Scheduling travel trade appointments for Discover Puerto Rico and facilitating agendas during sales trips and/or tradeshows in aforementioned markets.
 - e. Identifying cooperative marketing strategies for Discover Puerto Rico, including participation in road shows, trade and consumer fairs, advertising, sales training, direct mail, etc.
 - f. Maintaining a database of travel trade and providing them with regular updates about the destination. This database is the property of Discover Puerto Rico.
4. Provide travel trade and consumer fulfillment as needed.
5. Budget pending, develop innovative and engaging direct-to-consumer campaigns promoting Discover Puerto Rico.
6. Keep Discover Puerto Rico apprised of travel trends and issues and make strategic recommendations for promotional programs as part of a monthly report.
7. Conduct a minimum of one trip per year to Puerto Rico, preferably by escorting a familiarization tour.
8. Create and distribute an annual report detailing progress with airlines, media coverage, increase in tour development, and a summary of target market travel trends.

Proposal

Minimum requirements for proposal (no more than 15 pages):

- 1) Company history and background in serving global destination brands
- 2) Minimum of two case studies from global destination brands featuring services similar to those described herein.
- 3) Outline research-based market approach, including key strategies and audiences/demographics.
- 4) Prioritize and briefly describe strategy as it relates to earned media, travel trade, airlines, and reaching consumers directly.
- 5) Describe integration approach with Brand USA as a key partner in international sales and marketing strategies.
- 6) Indicate how existing strengths of Puerto Rico would be leveraged to influence international consumers.
- 7) Include a detailed outline of proposed activities to accomplish Discover Puerto Rico's objectives in key international markets. Include proposed metrics for tracking Discover Puerto Rico's success in these markets. Incorporate measurement of earned media, development of available product through travel trade, and tracking of direct-to-consumer campaigns.
- 8) Overview of assigned team, identifying roles of each who will service Discover Puerto Rico.
- 9) Current client list and confirmation there are no conflicts of interest between any existing contract or client relationship
- 10) Provide at least three client references for projects of equal or greater size developed within the past two years.
- 11) Provide fee structure (for current and incremental budget allocations) as well as hourly billing method and rates.
- 12) List location (s) of the office(s) from which the primary work on this contract would be performed.
- 13) Describe methodology for measurement/ROI of Public Relations investment.

Selection Criteria

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

Firm will be selected on the basis of (but not limited to) the following:

- 1) Superior qualifications with respect to the overall firm and the individual(s) assigned to work on this business.
- 2) Successful strategies with other tourism and travel-related companies and destinations
- 3) Demonstrated ability to develop and execute effective and results-oriented earned media and sales strategies.
- 4) Demonstrated superior Travel/Tourism/Destination knowledge.
- 5) Quality and clarity of response, demonstrating the firm's ability to communicate clearly and creatively.

Other considerations

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

After the completion of the interview/discussion process, Discover Puerto Rico will select the agency that best represents itself as capable of meeting the needs of Puerto Rico as a tourism destination. Discover Puerto Rico 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 proposals or otherwise request additional information from any or all applicants.

Proposals & Timing

RFP release date: Jan 21, 2019

Proposals must be delivered to Discover Puerto Rico office by 5:00pm EST on Feb 6, 2019. Please mail 10 hard copies.

Leah Chandler, Chief Marketing Officer
Discover Puerto Rico
500 Calle De La Tanca
Building Ochoa, Suite 402B
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Finalists will be notified by Feb 15, 2019.

Finalists will be asked to present in Berlin, Germany on March 4, 2019.

Final agency selection will be completed on or before March 14, 2019.

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

All materials submitted become the property of Discover Puerto Rico 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 Discover Puerto Rico and its marketing plans are strictly confidential. This information is not to be discussed with any parties not directly involved in this process.