



**Request for Proposal: Digital Agency**

**Stowe Area Association  
January 6, 2017**

To All Prospective Bidders:

The Stowe Area Association is a member-driven organization that serves as the official destination marketing organization for Stowe, Vermont. The purpose of this request for proposal (RFP) is to seek and acquire a qualified digital marketing firm.

Attached is a RFP to be filled out by those capable of meeting minimum requirements and carrying out the scope of work. All response will be carefully reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria noted in the attached document.

Please send any questions you may have to clarify this RFP to me [amym@gostowe.com](mailto:amym@gostowe.com) or our Marketing Manager, Sharon Harper at [sharonh@gostowe.com](mailto:sharonh@gostowe.com).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Morrison", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Amy Morrison  
Executive Director

## Table of Contents

Overview	4
Introduction	4
Background and Objectives	4
Tentative Schedule	4
Project Summary	4
Scope of Work	5
Case Study	6
Work Plan	6
Budget	6
Process and Requirements	6
Evaluation and Selection Criteria	7
Non-Disclosure	7
Delivery of Proposal	8

**Overview**

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to select a creative and/or media agency for the Stowe Area Association’s digital destination marketing campaigns starting May 1, 2017. Services needed include strategic, research-based creative concepts, creative asset production, media planning and buying, account servicing and general account management.

**Introduction**

The purpose and intent of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to establish a contract with a qualified agency to manage the digital marketing for Stowe, Vermont.

**Background and Objectives**

The Stowe Area Association is a member-based organization representing over 300 businesses. The Stowe Area Association is the destination marketing organization for Stowe, Vermont leveraging multiple marketing and communications, including but not limited to PR, advertising, social media, public engagement programs, group tours, sales and event outreach.

Tourism is a key driver of the Stowe economy, and the Stowe Area Association is committed to growing the tourism industry through:

- Increasing traveler trips to Stowe
- Increasing average traveler spend per trip
- Increasing resident spend on tourism activities

**Tentative Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Element</b>
January 6, 2017	RFP Posting
January 31, 2017	Proposals Due
February 6 – 9, 2017	Selected Proposer (2-3) presentations
February 16, 2017	Selected Proposer Announced & Contract Negotiations Begin
May 1, 2017	Start Date

**Project Summary**

The creative component requires the development of unique creative assets to support an integrated marketing campaign that encompasses the incredible diversity of Stowe, Vermont. This project must also include the complexities of standing out in the current marketplace, the multitude of channels to consider and competing destination that Stowe must rise above. Candidates must demonstrate a proven history of strategic and effective travel and tourism related marketing services. Elements include:

1. Strategic, research based creative recommendations
2. Development and production of results driven creative (online, mobile, etc.)
3. Management of the production of various creative concepts and delivery to media outlets as required
4. Integration of analytic tools to measure and report on the impact of executed media strategies and tactics

The media planning component will be responsible for recommending the most effective channels to reach the potential visitors to Stowe, Vermont. The selected team will develop media plans for Stowe to promote overnight stays, review and analyze media opportunities and select and purchase designated digital media. As appropriate or required by the Stowe Area Association. Candidates must demonstrate a proven track record for leveraging media buy negotiations to garner added value, extending the media dollar as much as possible. Elements include:

1. Strategic, research based integrated marketing, media planning and media buying recommendations
2. Evaluate new media opportunities as needed
3. Determine efficient and effective media mix, recommending appropriate media channels to adhere to campaign goals
4. Create a performance based, evolving mixed media annual plan; implement and manage
5. Coordination and integration with in-house SAA team
6. Negotiations across all media channels
7. Monthly digital reporting, analysis and optimization recommendations
8. Monthly budget reviews
9. Regular post-buy reporting and analysis
10. Implementation of ROI programs with proven results. Examples include:
  - a. Increased visitors to GoStowe.com
  - b. Increase in ad awareness
  - c. Increase in intent to visit

### **Scope of Work**

For each of the following project areas, the Proposer should prove capability; describing strategies to be used and quality controls. Sufficient detail must be given and must include examples of past projects, ability to meet deadlines, and managerial experience. The Proposer should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of our brand in a global marketplace, and the shifting dynamics of how consumers receive and use information today.

- **Strategic Planning:** Provide us an “insiders look” at your strategic account planning process. What goes into the development of plan? What type of research do you do?
- **Advertising Campaign Development:** Demonstrate how your agency develops a holistic approach to client brand advertising, integrating interactive, including social, into the overall strategy. Exemplify how your agency has evolved based on the way consumers are receiving and using their information today.
- **Production/Creative:** Do you do production in-house? If not, how do you manage production? Is your creative team located in the office that this account will be managed? Show current and/or past client examples of how your brand development moves across all mediums.
- **Media Planning & Buying:** Provide us with your process in deciding where, when, and how to purchase media. What tools or analytics do you use? What are the determining elements that make your purchasing decisions? Optimization strategy? Co-op strategy? Give us an overview of your philosophy as it relates to planning and buying media, for a budget of our size and tracking/optimizing to metrics established similar to those used by Stowe Area Association.
- **Promotional and Strategic Partnerships:** Where do strategic partnerships or alliances fit into your overall approach? How have you used strategic partnerships to extend a client’s budget and exposure?

- **Social Media:** Show us how you integrate social media into a brand strategy and how you would approach a global social strategy. Stowe Area Association currently manages all social profiles internally, but is interested in hearing your thinking on how a brand our size should resource to efficiently manage a global social footprint.
- **Research and Analytics:** Provide an overview of how you determine success. What are the analytic tools or services that you use, and what type of information will you be reporting back to Stowe Area Association as it relates to meeting our objectives. Please define how your analytics can be converted into insights, and how the insights will help guide us in making decisions on how we market in the future.

### **Case Study**

Stowe Area Association is constantly seeking new opportunities to connect with our target audiences and build and leverage the power of the Stowe brand. Please provide a case study that demonstrates how your agency has pushed a client beyond the norm for their industry and achieved success. The example does not have to be tourism specific.

### **Work Plan**

Please submit a preliminary work plan or schedule for the completion of the following project tasks based on a contract period of May 1, 2017 – April 30, 2018. The objective of the work plan is to give Stowe Area Association an opportunity to study how Proposers would schedule various elements and distribute the workload among staff.

The Work Plan should include a schedule for completion of the following project tasks:

- Strategic Planning
- Advertising Campaign Development
- Production/Creative Services
- Media Planning & Buying
- Promotional & Strategic Partnerships
- Research & Analytics

### **Budget**

Proposer shall provide an overview of how they would allocate Stowe Area Association’s budget using percentages. These allocations will be used to demonstrate your firm’s philosophy on resource allocation and compensation. If commission or other fees are part of the media or production breakdown, proposers must list the percentage rates of these commissions and fees. Please also provide your point of view on compensation – commission, retainer, hourly fees or any hybrid approach.

The current annual budget for the SAA digital marketing program is anticipated to be \$100,000.00.

Please note that these estimated number change annually, and are based on a comprehensive annual budget for the SAA. The selected partner(s) will be responsible for collaborating and communicating with the SAA staff.

### **Process and Requirements**

Proposer will provide SAA with consulting services as mutually agreed upon and described in a Statement of Work, which will govern any assignment that is engaged under this RFP.

The statement of work (SOW) shall be drafted as an engaged letter between the parties setting forth the following:

- A complete and detailed description of the type(s) of services to be rendered by the Proposer
- The applicable billing rates for the services to be rendered (“Service Fees”)
- Any additional terms and conditions to which the parties may agree

Proposers will submit their proposals within the timeframe indicated.

No extension in the submittal date will be granted on an individual basis. If SAA determines that the timeframe it has established for the RFP is inadequate, it may, as its option, extend the submission deadline for all Proposers.

Proposers agree that their proposals are a firm agreement to provide services at a stipulated rate to the SAA. Those rates will be reflected in the Statement of Work engagement letter. All pricing schedules quoted in response to this RFP, however, must remain in effect for the duration of the contract if awarded.

Proposer may withdraw their proposal at any time by notifying SAA in writing of their intention to do so.

#### **Evaluation and Selection Criteria**

SAA is committed to selecting the most competitive offer. Our evaluation will be geared to identify those proposals that offer the best combination of expertise and value, considering the following:

1. Understanding and provision of all items requested in the RFP
2. Demonstrated prior experience
3. Quality, creativity and relevance of tour and travel samples provided
4. Suitability for project – current work load, staff size, references and a demonstrated effectiveness with similar project
5. Budget approach

SAA will not, however, base its evaluation solely on price and reserves the right to make an award to a Proposer who may not necessarily be the lowest bidder.

- SAA reserves the right to award all, partial or none of this solicitation.
- Travel and travel reimbursement is not authorized for this acquisition.

Proposer shall have the capability, experience, and expertise to provide the SAA with services in accordance with the requirements set forth herein and consistent with the representations made in the submission under this RFP.

#### **Non-Disclosure**

This RFP contains information that is proprietary to SAA and its member businesses. No part of this RFP may be reproduced, in whole or in part, unless specifically required for the bidder’s internal use in responding to this RFP. Disclosure or distribution without the express written consent of SAA and its member businesses is strictly prohibited. The bidder will regard and preserve as confidential all information obtained from any source as a result of this RFP. It is for proposal purposes only and is not

to be disclosed or used for any other purpose. SAA reserves the right to request the return or the destruction of any of the material contained in this RFP document. Information received in response to this RFP will be held in strict confidence and not disclosed to any party other than SAA without the express written consent of said bidder.

**Delivery of Proposal**

Each bidder is required to deliver 4 hardcopies and 1 electronic version of the proposal. Electronic versions of the proposal must be in PDF format and delivered on a digital storage device or emailed to [sharonh@gostowe.com](mailto:sharonh@gostowe.com).

Proposals may be sent by courier such as FedEx or UPS to:

Stowe Area Association  
Attn: Marketing Department  
51 Main Street  
Stowe, VT 05672

**Proposals must be received by the date and time referenced in the Tentative Schedule. Late submissions will not be accepted.**