



Request for Qualification & Pricing

Managed Online Store and Merchandise Distribution Services

January 5, 2007

OVERVIEW

The Common Ground Alliance (CGA) is seeking a partnership with a vendor to develop and distribute CGA promotional items, educational publications and campaign materials using an online website. The CGA would expect the partner to distribute existing CGA literature and educational materials such as the organization's Best Practices manual. These educational products may or may not be developed by the selected vendor, but would be distributed through the same e-commerce site. The online catalog will be developed and operated by the selected vendor; however, the primary entry point to the catalog will be through the existing CGA web site. The CGA would like the online catalog to reflect the general "look and feel" of the existing CGA website.

BACKGROUND

The CGA is a non-profit organization that receives financial support from the owners of underground utilities (oil and gas pipelines, electrical power lines, water systems, telecommunications lines, cable television systems and others) excavators, one call centers, equipment manufactures, the insurance industry, government regulators, the general public and the federal government through the U.S. Department of Transportation, Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) which is the parent agency of the Office of Pipeline Safety.

CGA was created, in part, to promote the concept that underground safety is a shared responsibility and that it is in the public interest to ensure the safety, environmental protection and utility service reliability of underground facilities. Damage to underground utilities results in deaths and injuries to individuals, damage to the environment and can create utility service interruptions.

The CGA would like to promote membership in the organization and the use of the new national 811 phone number that will be used for relaying information concerning upcoming excavations so that underground utility lines will be located. In support of this, the CGA wishes to offer both the CGA and 811 logos on promotional materials such as shirts, cups, key chains, etc. and is interested in obtaining the services of a third party vendor to develop, operate and maintain an online catalog website and a hard copy catalog/mail order system to do so. This website is intended to be linked to the CGA home page and allows members and non-members to purchase promotional materials from a catalog developed and maintained by the vendor. This website would be customized to appear to users to be a CGA website ("CGA Store"). Please view an example of the CGA website format and educational materials at "Publications and Resources" found at www.commongroundalliance.com

SCOPE OF WORK

Candidates will submit a proposal that outlines their capabilities in the following areas:

ONLINE CATALOG / MERCHANDISING THROUGH CGA STORE

Vendor must possess the following capabilities and be able to provide at a minimum, the following:

- Capability to provide a broad selection of promotional materials and printed educational reference publications
 - Merchandise should be available from a standardized inventory provided by the vendor customized with CGA approved logos. We anticipate that users should be able to purchase quantities from 2 to 500 of items in this category with the standardized price available at time of purchase.
 - Fully customized merchandise may also be available as a special order. The vendor would work with CGA customers to offer specialized merchandise or large quantity orders at negotiated prices.
- Responsive to CGA customers in setting up orders
- Capability to submit orders using phone (preferably toll-free) or mail
- Experience in building and operating online ordering systems that are user friendly
- Access to all relevant product information
- Visualization of product with artwork
- Ability of interactively design promotional items: product color, decoration method, size and color options, and tag lines.
- Generation of instant price quotes with contracted/negotiated pricing for standard items and quick responses to special orders, if allowed
- Offer national brands and decorators
- Track promotional order through the entire order cycle
- Instant electronic order acknowledgement via email
- Security measures for safe online ordering
- Responsible for selection of standardized merchandise inventory and all risk associated for managing such inventory (In all cases, CGA assumes no risk for inventory unless such inventory is specifically provided to vendor by the CGA; such as, the CGA Best Practices Manual)

PRODUCT INFORMATION:

Vendor should be able to provide all relevant ordering information

- Lead or production time status
- Decoration Methods
- Price
- Dimensions
- Imprint Area
- Material
- Sizing (men and women)
- Color selection

- Weight for shipping purposes
- Ability to search for products
- Full color pictures of each product

BRAND IDENTITY AND LOGO CONTROL

Vendor should be able to control logo usage and decorate items electronically using CGA approved logos within logo guidelines (as found on various CGA websites; for example: www.commongroundalliance.com; www.call811.com; www.digsafely.com)

- Accommodate the addition of new logos
- Ability to chose specific logo vs. unique artwork
- Feature a distinct art library for CGA logos that cannot be modified or altered
- Display logo guidelines to end user
- [As an optional submittal the candidate can address their capability on the following
 - Ability to decorate promotional items online
 - Show all possible imprint methods supported and accurately displayed (silk-screening/embroidering)
 - Ability to move the location of a logo within an imprint area
 - Ability to add customized taglines
 - Change product and logo color options

NOTE: Any agreement between CGA and the successful bidder will not provide exclusive use of CGA authorized logos. However, the successful bidder shall have exclusive access to offer promotional material via the CGA website.

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Vendor should have a support team of specialists who can promptly respond to a customers need anywhere in the United States and Canada.

- Designated account contact
- Offer a toll free phone number
- Vendor should be able to provide a proposal response to an urgent request within 1 business day

VENDOR INTERFACE WITH ITS SUPPLIERS

Vendor should be able to work effectively with its promotional suppliers and manufacturers. Vendor must also agree to interface with the CGA's current vendors and publishers in connection with the distribution of CGA materials.

SHIPPING

Vendor should be able to accommodate all manners of shipping requests.

- Knowledge in international shipping requirements is a plus
- Vendor must agree to ship CGA publications and materials for a fixed and nominal handling charge.

REPORTING

Vendor should be able to provide sales reporting based on specific CGA needs.

BILLING AND INVOICING

Vendor should provide a 100% satisfaction guarantee on each order.

- Provide policy on samples of the products
- Periodic reports on vendor-initiated customer satisfaction surveys

COST REDUCTION

Vendor should be able to offer quantifiable discounts and promotional sales

- Reduced unit costs for purchases made directly by the CGA in support of its own activities
- Periodic sales promotion and advertisements displayed on the CGA website

VENDOR CREDENTIALS

Vendor should have the creditworthiness to manage a promotional program for CGA customers and consent to a credit check.

OPERATING COST

Vendor shall operate and maintain the online catalog / merchandising website / mail order system at no cost to CGA except where related to costs involved in CGA direct purchases.

BID SUBMISSION

To express interest in providing this service to the CGA, the party shall submit a comprehensive proposal to the CGA addressing:

- previous experience of the party with developing and operating online catalog websites, mail order catalog systems, promotional product development and merchandising, account management including customer interface and reporting, delivery performance options, and
- A recommended pricing structure for CGA and 811 branded materials.
- At least 3 references involving similar customer relationships as outlined in the Scope of Work should be submitted with the proposal.
- The proposal may also include catalog / website formatting examples to indicate capabilities.

The foregoing should not serve to limit the scope of the information the party can submit as part of its proposal.

CONTRACT TERMS

The Scope of Work will most likely start immediately upon contract award, and will extend up to but not exceed two years.

Shipping and handling charges should follow selected shippers rate scale and not include vendor overhead charges.

Successful candidate shall enter into a written agreement with the CGA encompassing not only this RFP and the proposal submitted to the CGA, but also contract terms as would be generally appropriate for this type of arrangement.

Successful candidate shall be responsible for submitting samples of all products to the CGA for quality review prior to offering for sale.

Successful candidate will replace any defective merchandise at no charge to the purchaser.

SUBMITTAL DATE

This request is being distributed to all who have indicated an interest in providing this service to the CGA or who have been recommended by CGA members. For all such parties, a mandatory pre-submittal teleconference will be held on **Tuesday, January 16, 2007 at 11:00 AM EST** to answer any questions you have regarding this request. Please e-mail Erika Andreasen if you plan to participate on the teleconference (erikaa@commongroundalliance.com). [The phone number for the required teleconference is 866-285-7780. When prompted, enter the access code 2352651#.]

Proposals must be submitted electronically to erikaa@commongroundalliance.com and received no later than **5 PM EST on Wednesday, January 24, 2007**.

Additional materials or samples can be sent to the following address:

Send to:

Erika Andreasen
Common Ground Alliance
1421 Prince Street, Suite 410
Alexandria, VA 22314