

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Online Agency and Interactive Services Provider
The Outer Banks of North Carolina[®]
June 1, 2010

Description:

The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, outerbanks.org, is seeking proposals from online agencies with expertise in the areas of strategic development, plan execution, trend identification/analytics, creativity and media planning and buying.

- Minimum one-year contract with consideration for multi-year agreements.
- Annual online spending – outreach and services -- approximately \$1.3 million.

Currently, optimization and social media efforts are handled in-house, but may be contracted out depending upon the strengths of the company selected and budget permitting.

About Us:

The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, a public authority, is the lead marketing and promotional agency for The Outer Banks of North Carolina[®] and is funded by 1% occupancy and 1% prepared meals tax collected in Dare County.

The Outer Banks is a narrow chain of barrier islands stretching nearly 130 miles. Dare County's portion extends from Duck in the north to Hatteras Island in the south and back to the Roanoke Island and Dare mainland in the west.

The area is truly a different kind of place, with unique ties to history and nature. The Outer Banks is home to three national parks, commemorating England's first attempted colonization of the New World, the Wright Brothers historic first powered flight and the Cape Hatteras National Seashore -- America's first National Seashore and site of America's tallest lighthouse (three other lighthouses are also found within the broader Outer Banks). These three national parks, along with preserves, wildlife refuges and state parks mean that 80% of Dare County can't be developed.

Jutting into the ocean as we do means the Outer Banks are constantly witness to spectacular shows of nature. Hundreds of bird species enjoy annual migratory patterns in the skies above the OBX. Global currents converge off the shores and produce world-class fishing. The surfing and kiteboarding are also world-renowned. Despite miles of unspoiled shorelines, preserves and sanctuaries, the Outer Banks still offers its visitors plenty of shopping, historic and cultural attractions and coastal cuisine for a well-rounded vacation.

The Visitors Bureau's marketing efforts are directed at boosting shoulder season visitation while continuing to maintain core summer season business. Event promotion is one strategy for boosting shoulder season business. Our overall goal is to position the Outer Banks as a premier travel destination nationally and internationally.

About You/Requested Information:

1. Business basics:
 - a. Physical address
 - b. Years in operation
 - c. Size of staff
 - d. Billings
2. Please provide bios/qualifications for key staff that would have involvement on our account.
3. What is your process for beginning work with a new account such as ours? How do you work with clients located in different cities, particularly in terms of account management?
4. Please explain your entire fee structure. Describe your billing approach for outside costs and in-house, such as commission structure, retainers, technology fees, travel expenses, creative services, etc.
5. Describe your company's previous travel industry experience.
6. Do you offer creative services in-house? Please outline your digital creative capabilities.
7. Does your company have mobile offerings?
8. Provide a few examples of websites, emails, display advertising, or other digital efforts that best represent your company's creative and programming abilities and describe the extent of your involvement in the examples shared.
9. Please outline exactly what technology tools you use for campaign management and how these tools integrate with one another and the entire campaign management process.
10. Please describe how you manage organic optimization and paid placement together. Please include all aspects of your process.
11. What are the success metrics and measurement tactics you use for optimization and paid placement?

12. What is your philosophy on using Rich Media and Video assets?
13. What is your perspective on branding (online) and how do you measure effectiveness?
14. What is your perspective on social media marketing and how do you measure effectiveness?
15. Considering all of the options available for a digital marketing campaign, how do you prioritize these in terms of importance and in terms of spending (budget allocation percentages).
16. Please provide references.

Timing:

RFP issued

June 2, 2010

Proposals received/deadline for response

June 28, 2010

Finalists selected

Week of July 12th

Finalist interviews

Early August

Company selected

Late August

This is an intended timeline; actual timing may vary.

Please provide 3 printed copies of your submission. These should be mailed to the
Outer Banks Visitors Bureau
c/o Diane Bognich
One Visitors Center Circle
Manteo, NC 27954.

If you have questions about this RFP, please contact Diane Bognich, Finance Officer, at bognich@outerbanks.org, or 252-473-2138. Please note proposal submissions are due by close of business on June 28, 2010. Proposals received after this date will not be considered. Thank you for your consideration.