

Request for Proposals

Development of a “How-To” Social Media Guidebook & Resource Index For the Toronto Fashion Incubator (TFI)

Objective & Project Description

The purpose of this request for proposals is to obtain the services of a contracted consultant to develop a detailed “How-To” guidebook for the Toronto Fashion Incubator (TFI) that will assist small- to mid-sized Canadian designers/manufacturers (SMEs) of apparel and accessories, including TFI Outreach and Resident members, to understand, use and exploit social media websites to increase their capacity, authenticate a brand and develop a meaningful exchange with potential customers which can lead to increased sales and market opportunities. The consultant will also develop an alphabetized Glossary of Terms and a Resource Index containing a brief company description of, and full contact information for any website, suppliers, related organizations, potential funding programs and key (relevant) companies referenced throughout the guidebook.

Introduction

Officially known as the Toronto Centre for the Promotion of Fashion Design, the Toronto Fashion Incubator is an innovative, non-profit, small business centre dedicated to supporting and nurturing new fashion entrepreneurs. TFI plays an essential role in the Canadian fashion community, helping new designers and small- to mid-sized enterprises develop their creativity and business skills to survive and thrive in the challenging world of fashion. TFI offers strategic programs and services including one-on-one business consultations, mentoring, educational sector-specific seminars, shared workspace, in-house design studios, exclusive promotional and marketing opportunities, valuable business resources, contact information and market leads.

TFI was the first official fashion incubator in the world, established in 1987 by the City of Toronto. TFI’s work benefits the local and national economies by stimulating business retention and job creation. Its success in developing new start-ups over the past 20 years has attracted international attention, inspiring cities such as Melbourne, Auckland, Kent, Los Angeles, Chicago and San Francisco to start their own similar centres. For more information, visit www.fashionincubator.com.

TFI Mandate

TFI’s mandate is to contribute to the growth and promotion of the fashion industry by providing essential resources to start-up fashion designers to develop their creative and business skills, to establish themselves as entrepreneurs and exporters, or to enter key positions in the fashion industry.

TFI Membership Programs

TFI offers two levels of membership to recognize the different needs of an individual or new business. TFI’s popular Outreach Program is a great way to gain insider information about the fashion industry at a low-risk, low-cost investment of \$130 per year. Annually, approximately 300 Canadian businesses enjoy Outreach benefits such as business consultations, discounts at various industry suppliers, exclusive networking, promotional and marketing opportunities and members-only access to information housed in the TFI Resource Centre. Celebrated TFI Outreach members and alumni include Brian Bailey, Comrags, Annie DiLalla, Foxy Originals, Thien Le, Todd Lynn, Jason Matlo and Siphay Southidara.

In TFI’s nurturing, creative, co-operative workspace, TFI Resident members enjoy a semi-private, onsite studio, access to industrial equipment, 24/7 access, unlimited mentoring and business advice and daily interaction with other top calibre (juried) talent. Celebrated alumni of the TFI Resident program include successful brands such as Joeffer Caoc, David Dixon, House of Spy, Juma, Mercy and Arthur Mendonça.

This Project Will Address And Include The Following Content:

- Demystifying Social Media: What is it, who is using it, why and how?
- What are the new, existing and emerging social media websites and where to find them?
- Understanding what's driving this wave of social consciousness and its popularity;
- A SWOT analysis of the most popular social media websites;
- A SWOT analysis of the effectiveness & user-friendliness of online tools to enhance marketing objectives;
- Tips on how to exploit social media websites to increase sales;
- Examples of effective and successful social media marketing tactics employed by apparel designers, fashion retailers and others (Canadian fashion and/or beauty industry examples must be included);
- Social media & networking etiquette: the basic do's and don'ts
- Potential pitfalls and off-brand alignment;
- Footnotes and references as applicable.

Guidebook & Resource Index Format

- To be delivered as an unlocked Microsoft Office Word 2003 document
- All statistical claims must be verified, referenced and footnoted (*for example, "ABC company saw their profits rise by 50% within 6 months after creating and using Twitter¹..."*)
- Subjective claims to be avoided (*for example, "Although ABC company's reputation is questionable, they were smart to create a Facebook page..."*)
- Margins: 1" perimeter
- Font type: Arial or other common sans serif; main text body font size: 12. Headers/footers/ footnotes font size: 8.
- Images (screen shots, graphics, photos etc.) pre-inserted into text body to indicated placement but also provided and identified individually on a CD ROM or DVD disk
- Photo/ image credits included if applicable
- Page numbered – lower right
- Footnotes – lower left & numbered in chronologic order
- Welcome page (About the Guidebook and Resource Index) - template to be provided by TFI
- Table of contents (with automatic chapter pagination)
- Alphabetical Resource Index with brief description and full contact information
- Alphabetized Glossary of Terms
- Approximate total number of pages: 75 (Table of contents, welcome page, guidebook, glossary of terms and Resource Index)

Copyright Ownership

TFI will retain perpetual copyright ownership of the Guidebook, Resource Index and related marketing/ promotional materials. The consultant will be contracted and paid for their services and will not claim copyright ownership of any content and materials developed under the agreement.

Deliverables

The consultant is expected to:

- Commence work no later than **September 18, 2009**
- Collect and analyse all relevant data;
- Research, write, fact-check and develop the materials described above and/or as requested. Suggestions for additional, relevant, content are welcomed.
- Brief TFI Executive Director periodically and/or as requested;
- Submit draft chapters weekly to the TFI Executive Director in Microsoft Office Word 2003 format;
- Revise and correct materials as requested;
- Deliver a complete draft set of materials no later than **October 26, 2009**

¹ Example footnote: "All a Twitter" - Women's Wear Daily Beauty Biz, June 1, 2009

- Develop and present a complete, corrected, final set of materials no later than **November 9, 2009** in the format specified above;
- Meet the following deadlines:

Commencement date
 Draft Guidebook & Resource Index delivered
 Final Guidebook & Resource index delivered

September 18, 2009
October 26, 2009
November 9, 2009

Proposals must include:

- The proponent's understanding of the TFI's goals and objectives;
- A description of the written products/deliverables that will be produced by the consultant;
- A work plan with proposed scheduling including all meetings with the TFI, within the time frame outlined;
- A description of the applicant's experience working on similar written initiatives;
- A profile of the team and lead person, outlining each person's key area of responsibility;
- The cost for undertaking the project including all fees, disbursements, taxes etc;
- A cost breakdown showing estimated hours for each task and who will be undertaking the task(s);
- Three (3) references from previous assignments.

Proposals should be reasonable in length and succinct. Three (3) printed copies of the proposal should be sent along with a PDF version sent electronically.

TFI Will Provide

TFI is able to provide the following resources for the selected proponent:

- Addressing TFI members at a TFI Membership Meeting (with advance notice) for the purposes of collecting and sharing project information, surveying challenges and opportunities facing members;
- Ongoing guidance and feedback from TFI's Executive Director and/or its project Steering Committee;
- A **MAXIMUM project fee inclusive of ALL incidentals, disbursements, supplies, travel, licences, subscriptions, taxes etc.** of \$8,000 to include:
 - Researching, writing and revising
 - Fact-checking & editing
 - Proof of usage permission of photos/images that may appear in the materials
 - Agreement not to duplicate or simulate this project, in whole or in part, in any format, for any other person, company or organization in Canada for five years
 - Agreement that TFI assumes ownership and copyrights to the design, graphics and content, in whole or in part, contained in the finished assembled materials developed under this project

-30% deposit paid upon contract signing on **September 18, 2009**

-30% deposit paid upon receipt of final draft Guidebook and Resource Index on **October 26, 2009**

-40% paid upon receipt of final, corrected & approved Guidebook and Resource Index on **November 9, 2009**

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

TFI's project Steering Committee will evaluate all proposals received by **5:00pm EDT on September 14, 2009**. In selecting a consultant with whom to negotiate an agreement, the TFI will not use any single criterion. Among the criteria, however, will be the following:

- A high level of compliance with all or most of the requirements and provisions of this RFP as well as proposal completeness and content;

- Demonstrated understanding of the scope of work and the RFP requirements;
- Degree of skill reflected in the proposal;
- Overall quality and scope of offered services;
- Appropriateness of proposed methodology and plan;
- Demonstrated understanding of the fashion industry and of TFI;
- Relevant experience, qualifications and successes demonstrated, including the ability to provide dependable, reliable, timely and accurate service and deliverables.

Approval Process

The following schedule of events will apply to the selection process:

- **August 31, 2009:** Release of RFP
- **September 14, 2009 by 5pm EDT:** Deadline for submission of proposals;
- **September 16, 2009:** Interviews with short-listed proponents;
- **September 18, 2009:** Selection of preferred proponent & signing of agreement.

Submission

Proposals must be sent to the Toronto Fashion Incubator no later than **5:00pm EDT on September 14, 2009**. Please **deliver three (3) printed copies** to the address below:

Toronto Fashion Incubator
285 Manitoba Drive
Exhibition Place
Toronto, ON M6K 3C3
Attn: Susan Langdon, Executive Director
Re: Social Media Guidebook RFP

And email one (1) copy of the complete proposal to webmaster@fashionincubator.com.

Proposals will not be considered unless received by the date and time specified and received as outlined above. Faxed proposals will not be accepted. Proposals that are not accepted will not be returned unless a prepaid return envelope/package is included.

The Toronto Fashion Incubator reserves the right to not award the contract to any of the respondents to this RFP.