

Request for qualifications: website design and development

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RFQ response deadline: July 15, 2009

Introduction and background

The Boston Society of Architects (BSA) is seeking a web design and development company for the development and implementation of a new public website. The BSA is a membership and mission-driven organization, with more than 4,500 members--and a substantially larger community of individuals and companies in New England and beyond who read our newsletter and magazine, attend our events, participate in our tradeshow and convention, and contact us for information and referrals.

The BSA's site, www.architects.org, is the primary source of information and interaction for this diverse community. The current site, launched in 2002, employs basic content management and provides limited ability for BSA staff members and others to manage the site content. The goal of this project is to bring the design, technology and functionality of the site up-to-date and provide flexibility as the organization evolves over the next several years. In parallel with the initial development stages for the new website, the BSA is undergoing a strategic communications-planning process. It is anticipated that the planning initiative will inform and be integrated closely with this website development project. Major strategic goals of these related projects include:

- New visual design and information architecture
- Strategic integration and deployment of content across print and online communication tools (currently the BSA has a print newsletter, a magazine, various electronic newsletters, several websites, and various print and electronic announcements)
- Integration with a new third-party association-management system (AMS) database, slated for deployment in late 2009
- Improvement of content-management capabilities to empower BSA staff members and volunteers (committee chairs, etc.) to more fully manage all web properties
- Extension of content management and design approach to "micro sites" currently managed separately from BSA's main site
- Development of new strategies around social networking, user-contributed content and community interaction to make the site a robust center for communication among the BSA's various constituencies
- Development of new strategies around advertising and other income-generating features to enhance revenue generation

- A heavy emphasis on content syndication across sections of the website as well as between various BSA-managed sites

Process

The goal of this RFQ is to seek an experienced web-development firm capable of working collaboratively with the BSA through the design, planning and execution of a new site and associated technologies.

Because the design process will be collaborative and greatly will impact the requirements and costs of the project as a whole, this RFQ does not solicit costs for a site design/build/deliver cycle. Rather, we seek information on firm qualifications and approaches to similar projects.

Firms identified as viable candidates as a result of this RFQ will be asked to submit bids for the first phase of the project, which will be focused on discovery, site design and information architecture.

Responses to this RFQ should include a detailed outline of firm capabilities and approaches for:

- Collaboration with the BSA on discovery, content-infrastructure design and visual design of a new site
- Collaboration with BSA on the development of expanded business/revenue-generating features such as online advertising, membership maintenance and growth, resources offered by the BSA to members and the public at large, and marketing for BSA programs, educational offerings and tradeshow
- Implementation of the content-management system (CMS) recommended by the vendor for a project of this scope, including the technology/products recommended and their benefits
- Your firm's approach to project management, scheduling, and strategies for cost control and managing an identified scope of work within a budget

RFQ overview

Proposal requirements: In addition to the specific application functionality outlined in the sections below, vendors should address the following topics in their responses:

- Corporate profile describing vendor's current client base in terms of quantity and industry, firm history and core strengths
- Client list with sample projects and a narrative of challenges faced by the customer/how the designed solutions solved these challenges (particularly experience helping clients solve complex and complicated online communication goals with multiple audiences, business/revenue goals and need for site flexibility)
- Technical architecture of proposed CMS system (hosted vs. installed, overall platform design)
- Description of vendor's account-management practices and support timelines
- Three or more customer references from projects of similar scope and complexity
- Completion of the vendor profile form included in this RFQ
- Brief biographies of key individuals to be involved with this project

Vendor information

Please provide detailed information on experience, examples of work, and capabilities in the following areas:

- Website design, to include examples of work, process used to involve clients in developing designs, and staff capabilities
- Information architecture, to include examples of sites developed, process used to define information architecture and overall methodology
- Content management, to include preferred systems, staff expertise and examples of work involving use of CMS to syndicate and leverage content across multiple sites or sections of sites
- Online business/advertising strategy experience and examples of projects
- Analytics/reporting capabilities
- Database-integration projects undertaken to link web applications to existing backend data sources

Anticipated functional requirements

- Content management: The ability to make majority of day-to-day changes to websites without vendor assistance. Examples include:
 - adding or removing static pages to the website
 - adjusting all entries of site navigation/site map
 - replacing graphic banners on templated pages
 - adding custom HTML to display media players and multimedia elements
 - adding URL redirects to the site (for print promotion of long URLs)
 - setting start/expiration dates for content
 - managing unlimited contributors and various tiered content-approval chains
- Syndication: Enable robust syndication of content across sections of BSA site as well as between multiple sites. Syndication should be based not only on the basic keyword/category style tagging of content and destination containers but should also allow display of specific classes of content based on known interest codes for repeat/logged-in visitors, through interaction with the third-party AMS database. Examples include:
 - Display chronologically upcoming calendar events/award submission opportunities throughout site
 - Display links to relevant articles from sources throughout site, including site content and BSA publications such as the BSA's magazine *ArchitectureBoston*
 - Re-use content from committee pages throughout site
 - Syndicate advertising content across site sections
- Manage multiple sites from a single platform
- Control contribution process via flexible rules and workflows
- Recover some currently separate sites that should ideally be unified with the visual design and site management framework of www.architects.org, such as www.architects.org/placemaking

- Allow for creation and management of micro-sites managed using the same CMS framework as the primary site, but with distinct visual identities, such as <http://www.rotchscholarship.org/competition>
- Unified calendar function--multiple categories, with various display options and filters that take advantage of interest-tagged content drawn from multiple sources.
- Part of the integration with the third-party AMS will be integrating pages coded by that vendor into the design/navigation of the site

Technical requirements

- Leverage APIs in third-party AMS system for single sign-on, identification of member types and interaction/interest tracking
- Publishing of multiple, separate root URLs with content shared between them and managed centrally
- Generate content from API access to calendar/event data in third-party AMS
- Unlimited content contribution and publishing roles/optional approval chaining
- Integrated search engine as portion of solution
- In-house creation/modification of site/page templates
- Direct export for one-off or syndicated event items to outlook or ICS calendar format
- In-house creation of redirects (www.architects.org/something) for accurate tracking/reporting
- “Mail-to” form creation engine allowing CMS creation of simple forms on site that submit responses to designated email addresses
- Output templates and automated process for CMS to generate daily updated content for display on building-lobby projection systems
- Robust analytics integration: reports showing pages visited, source URLs and click paths through the site
- Accessibility compliance: generation of site version for users with disabilities, such as implementation of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
- Method for management of image files and other site assets (downloadable files, etc.)
- Strategy for publishing versions or subsets of sites in mobile-device-optimized versions (BlackBerry, iPhone, Windows Mobile)

Schedule

The deadline for response to this RFQ is July 15, 2009. Our goal is to identify a provider by August 15, 2009.

Omissions

Please provide a list of questions/issues we should have (but failed to) include in this RFQ.

Thank you.

VENDOR PROFILE

Name of Business:

Address:

Phone Number:

Federal Tax ID Number:

- **Business Type:** ☐ Profit ☐ Nonprofit/Public Sector

Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. ☐ Corporation/LLC
☐ Publicly held | 6. ☐ Educational Institution |
|
☐ Franchise | 7. ☐ Partnership |
|
☐ Subsidiary | 8. ☐ City, county, state or federal entity |
| 2. ☐ Sole Proprietor | 9. ☐ Public Utility |
| 3. ☐ Foreign Vendor | 10. ☐ Hospital Utility |
| 4. ☐ Independent Contractor | 11. ☐ Historical Minority College or University |
| 5. ☐ Labor Union | 12. ☐ Foundation, Business Association, Other
Nonprofit 509c3 (if applicable) |

- **Business Ownership** (Check all that apply. If none apply, go to next section.)

☐ **Veteran-Owned – Please indicate:** ☐ **Disabled** ☐ **Non-Disabled**

A business that is at least 51% owned, managed and controlled by individual(s) identified as “veteran(s).”

☐ **Minority-Owned** – A business that is at least 15% owned, managed and controlled by individual(s) identified as “ethnic minority.” Please select eligible minority from the list below:

- ☐ African American
- ☐ Asian American
- ☐ Hispanic American
- ☐ Native American (American Indian, Aleut, Eskimo)
- ☐ Other Minority (specify):_____

☐ **Woman-Owned** – A business that is at least 15% owned, managed and controlled by individual(s) identified as “women.”