



Request For Proposal for Public Relations Services

Overview

This is a request for a public relations proposal for the Lodi Winegrape Commission and the Lodi wine region – *Wine Enthusiast Magazine's 2015 Wine Region of the Year*.

The proposal should incorporate the development of a public relations plan and the following activities: media relations, relationship building with appropriate centers of influence, and community relations activities that support overall marketing messages for the Lodi wine region.

There will be several unique opportunities for engagement with the Lodi Winegrape Commission and the wine region in 2016 and beyond.

We anticipate these activities would include the following:

- Arranging local, national and international media coverage including interviews and appearances, inbound visits to the region, desk side editorial visits and others
- Identifying and training key spokespersons from our region – winegrape growers, winery principals, regional representatives
- Creating, coordinating and/or promoting special events, as appropriate
- Identifying possibilities for speaking engagements and appearances
- Identifying additional public relations opportunities within the designated budget

The proposal should be based on a yearly budget of approximately \$100,000 for fees and expenses. The deadline for submitting this proposal is March 31, 2016. Address the proposal to:

Camron King
Executive Director
Lodi Winegrape Commission
2545 West Turner Road
Lodi, CA 95242

At a minimum, all proposals should include:

- Recommended key messages, primary program elements and evaluation criteria
- Estimate to develop a public relations plan
- Detailed budget and timeline
- List of proposed team members, including biographies, billing rates and level of participation in the account
- Brief case histories that illustrate ability and experience in wine, agriculture, lifestyle, and or travel media
- List of current and former clients in the wine or related fields for whom you have worked in a similar vein, including independent contractors
- Explanation of PR firm's billing procedures including rates, mark-ups, etc.
- References

Additional areas of focus may include:

- Brand messaging: Continue to develop the Lodi wine region brand
- Press and media outreach: This should include many different modes and can include editorial desk-side visits and press trips
- Media follow-up on outreach efforts
- Creative development of wine trade media outreach
- Event outreach and support (as needed)
- Ongoing story pitching and follow-up
- Additional creative and inventive programs are encouraged to be included

All proposals will be evaluated on:

- Demonstrated expertise in and understanding of the wine industry in California, US and abroad, industry and consumer perspectives
- Understanding of and ability to meet our goals and objectives
- Firm and personnel qualifications and experience with weight given to experience of account team
- Ability of proposal to be executed within budget

About Us

Lodi Winegrape Commission: In 1991, local growers voted to fund the Lodi Winegrape Commission, an organization working to meet the mission of the growers of California Crush District 11. The Commission represents approximately 750 growers, farming premium winegrapes on over 110,000 acres of land. Through an extensive marketing campaign, targeted research and education programs, consumer and industry focused events, and managing the state of California's leading sustainable winegrowing certification program (Lodi Rules™) among other programs and services, the Commission works to increase the recognition and value of the Lodi winegrape region and the value of its vineyards.

The region has seen growth in size and recognition in recent years with the last decade seeing an increase in Lodi's winery community, growing from 10 in 1998 to over 85 today. In terms of vineyard acreage and recognition, the number of vineyards has nearly doubled over the past 20 years and crop value has quadrupled with many wineries seeking fruit for Lodi appellation wine programs.

The Mission of the Lodi Winegrape Commission is: To serve the common interests of all Lodi Crush District 11 winegrape producers and to enhance the profitability of winegrape production through promotion, research, and education.

Our key messages

Depending on the outlet and pitch, key messages may vary. Samples of key messages used within the last year include the following:

- Lodi is a world-class winegrape and wine producing region with a strong heritage of multi-generational families working vineyards to supply wineries with quality grapes to make award winning wines. Lodi has been growing grapes for over 150 years.
- Lodi's success with Iberian, German, Italian and Rhone (basically Euro-revival) varieties is introducing a whole new audience to grapes like Kerner, Picpoul and Verdelho, among many others. These varieties complement Lodi's leadership in terms of production of many of the major grape varieties produced in California.
- The story of Lodi is the story of its growers. The region single-handedly kept the American wine industry alive during Prohibition. Their role today is just as critical - Just like Champagne growers, they know their land better than the houses to whom they historically sold their grapes. Lodi's focus has started to shift towards the higher-quality, boutique wines that focus more on the taste of old-vines and soils.
- Lodi has a Mediterranean climate due to the influence of the San Francisco Bay Delta directly to its west. As daytime temperatures rise during the growing season, cool air is brought in across the Delta creating a moderating effect on the climate. This creates relatively moderate daytime highs and cool evenings. Since Lodi generally doesn't see as large of a temperature swing as other wine regions, the resulting wines tend to have a more approachable fruit-forward character and supple tannins.
- Lodi leads California in sustainable farming practices and maintains the state's first third-party peer-reviewed, accredited sustainable wine growing standards: Lodi Rules. 20,000+ acres are currently "Certified Green" in the Lodi Appellation, and the Lodi Rules standards serve as the model in both agricultural sustainability as well as sustainable general business practices and work conditions, both in California as well as the Finger Lakes and throughout the world.

Business/public relations priorities

The overall organizational objectives of the Lodi Winegrape Commission focus in on the three major areas of focus of our work – Marketing/Promotion, Research and Education. The primary focus of the Public Relations contractor will be to support the efforts of marketing and promotion of the region. However, from time to time, certain aspects of the Commission’s research and education work may also be appropriately used in telling the Lodi story.

Objectives of the Lodi Winegrape Commission:

- Raise awareness of the Lodi wine region among the wine industry, media, and wine consumers
- Enhance recognition of the Lodi region through expanded use of the Lodi appellation on wine labels, by facilitating development of wineries in the district, and by supporting wine oriented tourism
- Provide growers with information, materials, education and strategies directed at profit improvement
- Facilitate two-way communication among growers and vintners concerning characteristics of quality that enhance the value of grapes and wine
- Create opportunities for Lodi growers to supply vintners serving higher retail price segments and improve the relative value of their grapes in the California market
- Conduct a proactive viticultural research program to maintain Lodi’s technological leadership in the winegrape industry
- Identify and encourage implementation of environmentally benign and economically viable pest, weed, disease, and cultural strategies through the district-wide sustainable viticulture program

The Public Relations and Communications program seeks to meet and provide contact and outreach with numerous audiences including, but not limited to: The wine industry, wine trade, on- and off-premise wine retailers, wine writers, key wine decision influencers, and consumers. These audiences can be reached through numerous multi-media platforms and any submitted proposals should outline the potential means of contacting each audience. The reach and scope of outreach opportunities is limitless and targeted efforts to influence audiences should be considered at any geographic level, from those in closer proximity (San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento Metropolitan region) to national audiences.

Existing Capacity:

- Strong social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Consumer focused website, www.lodiwine.com
- Industry focused website, www.lodigrowers.com
- Expansive marketing and advertising campaign, both print and digital placement (LoCA campaign) – *developed by MeringCarson*
- In-house Marketing and Communications staff

- Strong event program development – Lodi Wine & Chocolate Weekend, ZinFest, Lodi winery road show participation (national and regional wine & food events in key markets)
- Lodi Wine Blog written by Randy Caparoso

Questions

Please call Camron King, Executive Director at 209.367.4727 or via e-mail, Camron@lodiwine.com if you need additional information or have any questions no later than March 25, 2016.