



Request for Qualifications and Proposals: Public Relations Company or Individual

Introduction

The Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) is soliciting proposals and qualifications from interested parties for the public relations representation of the Society. The contract begins January 1, 2011 and is expected to run for two years with an option for renewal.

With 1,200 members, SATW is the preeminent professional organization of travel communicators. Now in its 55th year, SATW is a not-for-profit professional association of writers, editors, photographers, electronic media and journalists, film lecturers, broadcast/video/film producers and public relations representatives. The purpose of the organization is to promote responsible journalism, provide professional support and development for its members, and encourage the conservation and preservation of travel resources worldwide.

SATW members strive to provide readers, viewers and listeners with complete, accurate and interesting information on travel destinations, facilities and services.

SATW members communicate travel information through the media: magazines, newspapers, guidebooks, Internet websites, blogging, and social media as well as on radio and television.

SATW works to raise the standards of the profession. In addition, it seeks to guard the right of freedom to travel and to encourage conservation and preservation of historic sites and natural wonders.

SATW believes that travel is the bridge between peoples. Its earnest desire is to make and keep travel a quality experience for everyone.

Background

The Society of American Travel Writers, a not-for-profit professional association, operates as a 501(c) 6 organization. The 1,200 members represent "Active" members (media), "Associate" members (PR) and "Senior" (semi-retired /retired) members (both media and PR) who hail from all 50 states, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean.

Membership is held by the individual. The individual may represent a particular company. However, the membership is the individual's and there are no company members.

SATW members are divided into five geographic chapters: Atlantic-Caribbean, Canadian, Central States, Northeast and Western. Additionally, SATW members are divided into three councils, with members belonging to Freelance, Editors, or Associates.

SATW is governed by an 18-member board of directors and is managed by an association management firm.

An annual SATW convention is usually held in the fall and is planned by a volunteer convention committee. Each chapter and council holds annual meetings as well as periodic meetings, albeit not as large as the national convention.

Recent convention sites include Guadalajara 2009, Houston 2008, Manchester UK 2007, Chile 2006, Las Vegas 2005, Switzerland 2004, Orlando 2003, Hawaii 2002, Bermuda 2001 and Wales 2000.

Agency Profile: Marketing agency known for successful brand building campaigns for travel industry clients. Experience in promoting professional, not-for-profit associations is a plus. Proven relationships with travel news media, both print and electronic, required. Ability to work with strong personalities and other SATW suppliers (such as the association's new management company) an absolute necessity. Ability to work closely with both the SATW Board of Directors and the SATW PR Committee. The bidding is open to both SATW members and non-members.

Target Audiences: There are three primary audiences in two countries, the United States and Canada.

- The travel journalism community (SATW members and non-members);
- Travel/tourism news media read by consumers of both print and electronic outlets;
- Travel/tourism trade news media.

How the PR Agency - SATW Client Relationship Works: The PR agency would report to a core SATW integrated marketing team composed of up to four seasoned members representing the active and associate membership. This core client SATW team also will work as liaison between the Board and the PR firm, reporting the firm's progress and marketing achievements to the Board, and also advise/work with the PR firm to coordinate marketing programs with SATW's other suppliers as appropriate (association management firm, web site management firm, etc.). The chair of the SATW team will be the single point of routine contact for the PR firm.

Scope of Services/Work

Services Requested:

1. Media Materials: an ongoing, consistent distribution of pertinent SATW releases aimed at both bringing attention to the Society as expert in the industry, a strong resource for both the consumer and travel media, and as a vehicle to attract additional members. New, tech savvy approaches for media outreach and communication should be included in the plan. Some releases may be written by committee members of SATW, but the distribution would be overseen by the PR firm. Input, suggested topics and the writing of some of the releases pertaining to world/travel events would be done by the PR firm. Newsworthy and SATW brand building topics should include: SATW's leadership role in the travel industry; the Society's rich history and timeline; travel tips on commonly reported items and seasonal subjects; spokespersons' bios; member benefits; awards conferred upon members (both internal and external); photography and writing contests; professional development; training opportunities; community outreach; etc.
2. Spokesperson(s): working with the Society board to identify and work with one or two chosen SATW spokespersons. These spokespersons would be made available for pertinent travel events as well as for comments and offering expertise to the mainstream media when such a need is called for. Examples may be traveling in uncertain times, things to look out for when traveling, and other non-brand/non-political oriented requests. It is expected that some assistance may be needed in preparing these spokesperson(s) for media exposure.
 - a. An alternate suggestion would be to build an 'expert' panel of SATW members - using both Active and Associate members - to be able to cover a host of topics.
 - b. Secure speaking opportunities for SATW experts at industry-hosted conferences.
 - c. Secure speaking opportunities when travel events take place that affect the industry: Haiti earthquake, swine flu, recession, etc.
3. Branding: utilizing SATW's recently adopted brand, "Travel's Most Trusted Voices," the PR firm would be expected to market that brand to the public and the industry, predominantly as a tool for membership recruitment and Society recognition. Even to the extent that the brand becomes a sort of seal of approval for the travel industry and for consumers.
4. Utilize membership polling to best understand the direction/needs of the membership and to capture additional ideas for marketing.
5. Social Media: work with SATW to decide what social media platforms might make sense for the Society publicity efforts. SATW would also look to the PR firm as an advisor to its members when they have questions regarding these platforms and/or professional development on this topic

during conventions.

6. Membership: publicize the benefits of SATW membership. This can be done by way of publicizing new membership guidelines, new benefits, possibly coordinating membership drives at both the national and chapter level, building a membership kit that can be given out by current members, whether at media events or through personal relationships.
7. Work with the designers of the revamped SATW website to ensure it is news media and potential new member user-friendly; ensure journalists interested in using SATW as a source can navigate the site to garner compelling information for their reporting.
8. Work with the SATW Sponsor Committee to offer input, ideas and proven techniques to secure convention and Society sponsors.
9. Work with SATW Convention Chairs and Convention Host to leverage the upcoming convention into a newsworthy event to attract prospective members as well as sponsors.

Goals:

- Build Active membership.
- Offer input in a variety of areas - including Marketplace improvements (Active/Associate Media events at conventions), spokespersons, branding, new benefits, membership guidelines, and other areas that may crop up from time to time.
- Build a strong, flexible platform for SATW to leverage its industry leadership role in consumer and trade news media outlets.
- Promote SATW as a gold standard for both the travel media professional and, through them, the consumer.

Results:

- Develop methods to track and measure results of integrated marketing efforts against clear, achievable goals.
- Quarterly reports on activities and successes are expected.
- Continuous communication with the SATW PR Committee and periodic updates to the SATW Board of Directors is required.

Note:

The efforts of the selected PR firm and the direction given by SATW will understandably develop as the public relations process takes root over time. Integrating the PR efforts into other marketing strategies, offering strategic counsel, and essentially being a partner with SATW in the drive to increase its exposure and recognition as the premier travel writing association will demand a willingness to be flexible.

Term of Contract

Two years with options to renew for two additional two-year periods. Contract to take effect on January 1, 2011.

Contract Requirements

The selected firm will be invited to enter into a contract with SATW. This contract will stipulate the terms and conditions of the services to be provided. SATW reserves the right to change any terms and conditions of the contract prior to execution of the contract. SATW also reserves the right to terminate the contract at any time and for any reason within 30 days of notifying in writing the selected firm.

It is the intent of the SATW Public Relations Firm Selection Committee to review proposals, advance the most qualified respondent(s) to the next stage, and then select a firm or individual with which to negotiate a contract. A formal recommendation will be presented to the Board of Directors by the Selection Committee. SATW reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and to request additional information from one or more applicants.

RFP Submittal Requirements – Deadline: No later than 1:00p.m. Eastern Time, July 23, 2010.

Firm/Individual is required to specifically address the following items with the format clearly identifying each subject area. Proposals will be evaluated by a Selection Committee, based on the firm's or an individual's response to the following areas:

1. Proposal describing the firm or individual's background, clients, experience and specific areas of expertise in relation to the scope of work outlined above. Include number of years in business and scope of general services provided to clients.
2. Contact information – name, address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of firm or individual.
3. Full name and title of individual who would serve as the main contact for SATW.
4. Provide a professional bio/resume for the person/personnel who will be assigned to the contract. Include any accreditations, licenses or special training related to the services requested.
5. References – Provide name, address and phone number of at least three travel-related clients who have used your marketing services within the last four years. Include descriptions of principal work activities, principal responsibilities, and end results.
6. SATW members bidding on the project shall avoid all real or perceived conflicts of interest and should be prepared to explain how they will avoid inadvertently leveraging SATW as a client to the benefit of any of their other clients. (SATW Code of Ethics, Principal IV).
7. Proposed public relations fee as well as any expected expenses.

Respondents are responsible for all costs related to the preparation of their response.

RFP Questions/Clarification – Questions regarding the RFP or requests for clarification of the RFP must be sent to satwpr@satw.org. Requests must contain an e-mail address to which the appropriate response can be sent; the committee will attempt to respond within 48 hours of receiving any such requests. Responses to questions that the committee feels could be of value to all applicants will be sent to the applicant who asked the question and copied to all other applicants who supplied an e-mail address when obtaining an RFP packet.

Contract Award

SATW reserves the right to award one or multiple contracts for the outlined scope of work; SATW also reserves the right to not award a contract to any candidate, if none are deemed suitable. SATW further reserves the right to cancel the contract at any time and for any reason within 30 days of notifying in writing the selected firm.

Submit Proposals By Electronic Form, either in Word or PDF, to: satwpr@satw.org

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PUBLIC RELATIONS CANDIDATES

If you wish to be copied on questions posed by other RFP applicants (anonymously) and/or the answers to those questions, please email the following information to satwpr@satw.org.

Please add me to your responses to questions posed by other public relation candidates.

Name of company/individual:

E-mail address: