



Lake Tahoe
Visitors Authority

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority (LTVA) requests proposals from qualified public relations agencies to strategically guide and execute a highly visible, hands-on, proactive trade and consumer media relations campaign with a specific focus on top markets, both domestic and international, as defined by the LTVA's strategic plan.

Background of Requesting Organization

The LTVA is a private, not-for-profit corporation funded by lodging taxes and fees, whose mission is to raise visitor awareness, increase visitor stays, expenditures, overall revenues and local employment through the promotion of the area as a regional, national and international travel destination. Formed in 1986, the LTVA is governed by a seasoned board of directors comprised of business, government and community leaders. The office is staffed with 7 to 10 full-time tourism professionals. The organization represents the bi-state destination that is inclusive of parts of El Dorado County and Douglas County, South Lake Tahoe and the Tahoe Township.

Scope of Services Media relations efforts play a critical role within LTVA marketing strategies and have done so since its inception. Media relations have proven to be an effective tool in communicating and building brand awareness for South Lake Tahoe throughout the nation and in key identified international markets. Utilizing effective public relations messages has also assisted LTVA in communicating its role within the community. This is especially relevant when pertaining to potentially controversial and complicated legislation; events; campaigns; and global, regional and local issues as they relate to tourism.

The scope of services for this contract consists of complete strategic creation and full execution of LTVA's media relations plans and efforts, including proactive annual and long-term strategic planning. For the purpose of this RFP, Domestic Media is the focus. International Media may be added to the scope as travel recovery continues. The LTVA requests that the international media component be treated as a special project cost to be implemented at a future time. The LTVA currently has no in-house PR/Communications dedicated staff and the agency/consultant should base its response on the current staffing. Services requested are outlined below.

Qualifications

LTVA is seeking a senior level, hands-on, proactive, self-motivated and highly disciplined public relations agency/consultant with significant familiarity of South Lake Tahoe and experience with Domestic and International tourism related industries. Operations must be cost-effective and efficient. Agency/consultant must be prepared to provide a high level of professionalism and responsiveness while maintaining effective working relationships with LTVA staff, local tourism partners, LTVA board, LTVA agencies of record, other city agencies, as well as local community and business members. Some travel may be required to implement media plan. Agency/consultant should be extremely familiar with South Lake Tahoe as a travel destination, be an experienced marketer, strategist, creative/forward thinker, and be able to provide strategic reputation management counsel to LTVA.

Responsibilities will include:

1. Study and absorb unique South Lake Tahoe "Brand" and its history and current environment.
2. Obtain necessary support or background materials from LTVA and various partners, which will educate agency/consultant on overall aspects of South Lake Tahoe tourism.
3. Review the existing LTVA marketing and sales annual operations plan.
4. Evaluate and measure past, current and future media relations efforts.
5. Review public relations, marketing, and sales priorities/goals for LTVA in order to complete the Brand and media messages.
6. Participate in local events for business leaders throughout South Lake Tahoe to share and collaborate with these key partners.
7. Monitor all South Lake Tahoe specific and appropriate regional news and inform LTVA staff as appropriate.
8. Develop itineraries and host visiting media for meals, activities and tours.
9. Monitor and engage in social media efforts in collaboration with LTVA agencies and staff.
10. Work in partnership with LTVA to develop and implement crisis/emergency media plan in cooperation with city and partner agencies.

The Agency/Consultant will then:

1. Create and present proactive media plan to LTVA.
2. Develop and present method, in accordance with LTVA policies and systems, for responding in a timely and professional manner to media requests, and creation of press materials.
3. Provide budgetary guidelines for an annual program reflective of market(s) involved and scope of program work and expenses.
4. Maintain on-going communications with all media including print, broadcast, and alternative media. Respond to and pro-actively solicit media coverage of South Lake Tahoe primarily as a travel destination.
5. Respond to all media requests in a timely manner.
6. Maintain professional and comprehensive media kits with unified look that are supportive and aligned with LTVA brand, and update as necessary.
7. Assist in organization and implementation of media familiarization tours in accordance with LTVA policies and procedures.
8. Provide measurable status reports to LTVA.
9. Attend client, agency, and staff meetings as requested.
10. Assist in building/maintaining a media database for LTVA.
11. Maintain current clipping service on behalf of LTVA.

Proposal Content Requirements

The prospective agency/consultant is required to submit a written proposal that conforms to the format below. LTVA reserves the right to request additional information from any submittals. LTVA is seeking a three-year contract with potential a four-year option included, beginning July 1, 2021.

Description of Agency/Consultant

1. Firm name, address, telephone number, web site, and email address.
2. Professional history of firm and experience in travel-related industries.

3. Name, qualifications, experience, availability of account supervisor/executive who will serve as primary contact between agency and LTVA.
4. Firm size, distribution of employees by skills and experience relevant to LTVA's projects. Include number of years of each employee with firm.
5. Areas of specific sales, marketing and tourism expertise, which would enhance LTVA projects.
6. Particular qualifications for this account.
7. List of current clients and separate list of past clients.
8. Detailed information on agency/consultant's billing structure, including retainer—with and without international component
9. Proof of insurance.

Approach Task

1. A narrative statement demonstrating the agency/consultant's understanding of the South Lake Tahoe market, travel industry, destination marketing and the media support needed to execute LTVA's media relations needs.
2. Preliminary concept work plan describing how agency/consultant will undertake the required program needs and accomplish them in the area of domestic/international leisure and trade media. Creativity should play a major role in this work plan.
3. Agency/consultant must provide examples of writing skills (pitch letters, media itineraries, news releases and statements) that best relate to LTVA goals and projects.
4. Agency/consultant must provide the names, addresses and telephone numbers of clients and media who LTVA may contact as references. Projects done for these clients should be similar in scope and style to LTVA.
5. Agency/consultant must provide clear guidelines pertaining to projected hours devoted to account on a monthly basis as well as retainer fees, billable projects or hourly rates and projected out-of-pocket expenses. Proposals must include all potential fees and expenses applicable to account.
6. Agency/consultant must include potential fees for International Media project separate from other services and fees. No International travel expenses are anticipated.

Submitted materials will remain the property of the bidding agency and will not be shared with others, with the exclusion of the selection committee, without consent.

Optional Inclusion: If budget allowed an additional \$15,000 - \$25,000, what recommendation would the agency make for its use to support regular PR efforts?

Selection Process

Selection process will be based on the strength of the overall proposal, the experience and the capability of the firm to maintain an effective media relations program for the LTVA, and agency fee schedule. Proposals will be evaluated to ensure that respondent has an understanding of the objectives of LTVA's tourism marketing goals and budget limitations. A firm/consultant's commitment to this project will also be measured by the quality of staff identified as participating in this project and their relevant skills as well as their availability to support the LTVA in-market with events, FAM tours and individual media visits.

In reviewing and evaluating proposals and qualifications LTVA will consider the following:

1. Experience and proven results in providing media relations services within the travel and tourism industry and related media and publications (program of similar scope).
2. Proposed approach, creative plan and methods used in providing the required services.
3. The level at which the proposal meets the requirements set by LTVA.
4. Demonstrated ability to provide creative solutions and ideas.
5. The degree to which the principal(s) will be involved in the planning, design and management of LTVA account.
6. Appropriate distribution of responsibilities within the organization and between outside support services.
7. Qualification, experience and availability of key personnel to be involved in the account.
8. References from other clients and media contacts concerning the ability, proven success and availability of staff.
9. Ability to handle media requests and in-person interaction with timely response to deadlines.
10. Reasonableness of proposed fee and fee structure in relation to proposed programs, services and LTVA budget.
11. Demonstrated ability to present projects to LTVA's Board of Directors, tourism industry members, City Council members and staff members.
12. Overall familiarity of South Lake Tahoe as a travel destination and unique community environment.

LTVA has the sole authority in awarding the contract. Agencies/consultants submitting the highest rated proposals will be invited for interviews. At that time LTVA may request additional information regarding various aspects of the RFP to be submitted either in writing, in person, or both.

Please note that agency/consultant may be disqualified from the selection process if LTVA feels there is conflict of interest with another client that the agency/consultant is currently representing.

All finalists will be expected to complete their presentations within the scheduled time frame.

All finalists will receive written notification within 72 hours of final selection.

Anticipated Timeline

- Issue RFP - October 15, 2020
- Deadline for Q&A - November 2, 2020
- Responses Due - December 1, 2020
- Interviews/Presentations - January 19 – February 2, 2021
- Select Agency/Consultant - February 11, 2021

Prospective agencies/consultants must submit six (6) hard copies of their proposal.

All proposals must be addressed to:

Carol Chaplin,
President & CEO, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority
Physical Address: 169 Highway 50, Stateline, NV 89449
Mailing address: PO Box 5878 Stateline, NV 89449

Questions: carol@ltva.org No phone calls.

October 15, 2020