

Request For Public Relations Proposals



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CONTRACT AMOUNT AND TERM

The initial contract term will be for a period of two years with an option for a one year extension. The total annual budget is not to exceed \$500,000 including all expenses and fees. Each year, the total budget will be evaluated based upon the results from the prior year. Megabus reserves the right to increase or decrease the total budget at the end of each 12 month period. The effective date of the contract will be determined at time of award.

PURPOSE

Megabus.com is issuing a public relations request for proposals seeking an agency to develop a strong and creative media strategy with a focus on cultivating a steady pulse of media coverage throughout the year. The prospective firm will work with our internal retail and marketing team to build brand awareness and generate ticket sales.

TIMELINE

September 4, 2018: RFP Announcement

September 14, 2018: Offerors may submit any questions regarding the RFP via email to prproposals@coachusa.com. Megabus will then review all questions and reply to all applicants with a list of answers to the pertinent questions by September 18.

September 28, 2018: all bids must be submitted via email by 11:59:59 PM EST to prproposals@coachusa.com. Bids must be received by e-mail only or will be disqualified.

Week of October 15: The top 5 proposals will be notified and asked to present in person to a committee of key megabus stakeholders

Week of October 29: Presentations will be made to the committee in Elizabeth, NJ.

November: Winner announced

December/January: Work begins

QUESTIONS AND SUBMISSION OF RFP:

Please direct any questions regarding the RFP via email by the date stated below as follows:

Email: Prproposals@coachusa.com

If the proposal or questions are sent to another e-mail besides prproposals@coachusa.com they will not be reviewed or considered. Only written responses from the above e-mail should be relied upon as a formal response by megabus.com. Megabus.com will not be responsible for oral answers or instructions to the RFP. Improper contact with megabus.com personnel will be subject to immediate disqualification.

BACKGROUND

Megabus.com operates safe, convenient, affordable daily express double decker bus service to/from more than 100 major cities and more than 400 origin/destination pairs in North America from \$1 (plus a reservation fee). Since its launch on April 10, 2006, megabus.com has served more than 65 million customers.

Key Messages:

- Megabus is an industry leader in safety. Megabus.com maintains the highest (Satisfactory) safety compliance rating with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.
- Megabus is a market-leading provider of affordable and high value travel across the country.
- The megabus fleet is modern and offers such amenities as reserved seating, and free Wi-Fi and power outlets. The free onboard entertainment app, Megabus RIDE was also recently introduced. Through the app, customers are able to choose from a selection of movies and television shows during their trip.
- Megabus is green certified and proud to be an eco-friendly option. The company has rolled out GreenRoad technology on its entire fleet which helps to reduce fuel consumption and carbon emissions, improve customer comfort and cut the risk of accidents. The GreenRoad 360 system uses a dashboard traffic lights-style system to provide drivers with real-time feedback on their driving style, including speed, braking, acceleration, lane-handling and turning.
- Megabus offers many economical benefits to the cities it serves (e.g. jobs, supporting tourism and local economy, improved connectivity for citizens on lower incomes)
- Megabus is a good corporate citizen and has a history of supporting charitable causes through donations, events, volunteer activities and raising awareness.

SCOPE OF WORK

Coordinating with megabus key stakeholders, the agency will prepare and execute a comprehensive public relations plan and strategy that will focus on generating a steady stream of positive media coverage while attracting, growing and retaining potential customers. Key strategies will include:

- Developing messaging for new or enhanced routes as they are announced throughout the year while tying in to key travel seasons (Christmas/holiday travel, Thanksgiving, summer travel, spring break, back to school for college students, etc)

- Develop creative, outside the box concepts that will help in drawing large media pulses throughout the year. Create surprising ways to integrate megabus into media discussions and pitch to the appropriate parties.
- Regularly analyze and utilize key data to identify, build, and maintain key ridership markets on the corridor including but not limited to: college students, parents, as well as business and leisure travelers.
- Identify, develop and execute comprehensive earned media strategies. While some media strategies require paid amplification, megabus most heavily values the success of earned media strategy.
- Regularly identify “news jacking” opportunities to promote megabus when possible. This requires the ability to react quickly to relevant news stories and/or pop culture moments and insert megabus into the conversation when applicable, frequently in real time.

DELIVERY REQUIREMENTS

Over the course of the contract term, the agency will be expected to deliver:

- On-call consultation services to the megabus retail team as needed and a weekly status call with pertinent members of the team.
- Weekly clips from earned coverage that is cultivated through strong relationships with statewide earned media outlets (online, print, blogs, television, radio, college newspapers, social media, influencers, etc). to identify and develop opportunities for pitches and stories
- Draft annual marketing plan with budget breakdowns, including an annual schedule of marketing events, pricing and other strategies (i.e. special promotions) to maximize media coverage
- Perform monthly performance assessment of earned and paid public relations outreach efforts including a full report of all metrics. This will also require a monthly review of strengths and weaknesses and plans to adjust accordingly.
- Monthly invoicing including progress reports detailing work completed and anticipated work over the next billing cycle (30 days). Completed work should be broken down by task, employee fees, number of hours, full billing rate, and direct operating expenses.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In order to be considered for selection, agencies must submit a complete written response to this RFP. In addition, the agency will be required to make a subsequent oral and/or visual

presentation detailing how the agency would approach the specific program objectives outlined in the Scope of Work.

All information requested must be submitted. Failure to submit all information requested may result in megabus requiring prompt submission of missing information and/or giving a lowered evaluation of the proposal. Proposals which are substantially incomplete or lack key information, may be rejected by megabus at its discretion.

Proposals must be organized in the order in which the requirements are presented in the RFP. All pages of the proposal must be numbered. Each section in the proposal must reference, by requirement section and subsection, the corresponding section of the RFP. The proposal must contain a table of contents which crossreferences the RFP requirements. Information which the agency desires to present that does not fall within any of the requirements of the RFP must be inserted at an appropriate place or be attached at the end of the proposal and designated as additional material. Proposals that are not organized in this manner risk elimination from consideration if the evaluators are unable to find where the RFP requirements are specifically addressed.

SPECIFIC PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should be as thorough and detailed as possible. Agencies are required to submit the following items in order for their proposal to be considered complete. Each tab must be labeled within the proposal. Any additional information that the agency deems relevant may be submitted at the end of the proposal.

Tab 1 Understanding of Work and Plan for Providing Services – The agency must provide a detailed description of its understanding of the services to be provided with descriptions of the approach, methodology, and procedures they will employ with megabus. This section should also focus on any analysis of megabus’s past public relations work, current state in the market, creative engagement ideas or concepts and activation ideas for reaching megabus’s target audience. It should also detail out strategies for earned vs paid media coverage.

Tab 2 Experience and Qualifications – The agency must describe the skills and qualifications it has available to perform the various types of tasks described in the Statement of Needs. The key personnel who could be assigned to these various tasks must be identified. The agency must demonstrate that it has sufficient personnel with the various types of skills needed to staff the purchase orders when needed. The agency shall provide all of the following information concerning its company, subcontractor and personnel qualifications. If more than one firm is involved in this project, state the type of arrangement between the firms and the percentage of work to be performed by each.

Tab 3 Measurement of Success – The agency must detail any reporting systems used and how success is measured. Any tracking systems and key metrics should be included in detail. Examples of reports for other clients should be included in this section.

Tab 4 References – The agency must submit a list of references to include name, address, telephone number, email address, company name and project. Budget/size of project should be included if applicable.

The agency must also submit examples of relevant work or case studies developed for any similar projects completed in the past. Quantifiable success rates should be included in applicable.

Tab 5 Staffing, Budget and Pricing Plan – Offeror shall identify all staff positions by person and actual hourly rates.

Additionally, the offeror shall provide a budget breakdown of proposed operating expenses, fees and out of pocket expenses directly related to the plan and services referred to in Tab 1.

Tab 6 Agency questionnaire – Offeror shall complete the attached Agency Questionnaire (See Appendix A) in its entirety and include it without substitutions or additions as Tab 4 in the proposal. Proposals that are submitted without responses to the questionnaire will not be considered.

SELECTION PROCESS:

Proposals will be checked initially for compliance with this RFP and for completeness. Proposals which are not late or incomplete will not be considered. Proposals will then be evaluated against the criteria listed below in equal measures before a firm is selected.

- Ability to meet businesses requirements
- Ability to bring innovation, creativity and best practice by providing megabus specific plans
- Identifying key opportunities to add value
- Relevant experience to deliver public relations services and counsel
- Total contract cost

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

This RFP is not an offer to enter into an agreement with any party, but rather a request to receive proposals from Proposers interested in providing the services outlined herein. Such proposals shall constitute offers to enter into an agreement. Proposers are advised that an agreement may result from this RFP. Proposers are also advised that there is a possibility no agreement will result from this RFP. Agreements may also be put in place with other Proposers, at the sole discretion of megabus.com.

Megabus.com will not be liable for any costs or expenses incurred by any Proposer including, without limitation, any expenses incurred in the preparation and submissions of the bid.

Megabus.com reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals in whole or in part (including, without limitation, any of the optional proposals) and have the right to make an award to one or more Proposers or not to proceed with the project whatsoever.

Megabus.com intends to enter into an agreement with successful Proposer. If the agreement is not completed and executed by the successful Proposer within 60 days, Megabus.com reserves the right to agree to an extension of time to execute the agreement or enter into an agreement with another Proposer. The agreement will be subject to negotiation with the successful Proposer based on responses to this RFP. Changes may be made to the agreement based on the negotiations and other factors that megabus.com finds are in megabus.com's best interest as determined by megabus.com in its sole discretion.

APPENDIX A

Megabus.com Public Relations Questionnaire

Please complete the following questionnaire providing as much relevant information as possible at this stage in the process. Incomplete questionnaires will not be considered.

Company Information	
Company name	
Registered company address	
Location of offices (please include any North American offices)	
Number of employees	
How many years has your company been in business?	
Company lead contact (for this project)	
Job title	
Contact details (include phone number & email)	
Does your company have any clients in the transportation and/or travel and tourism industry? If yes, please specify.	
What relevant digital technology is your agency	

proficient in? What digital tools do you typically utilize? (as related to public relations)	
How does your agency assure client satisfaction?	
Does your company have any conflict of interest or other ethical conflicts with megabus.com or Coach USA?	
Does your company have any current or outstanding lawsuits?	