



St. Kitts Tourism Authority

US Public Relations RFP 2021

#RFP US PR – July 9th, 2021

Request for Proposal - US Source Market Public Relations Agency

The following document outlines the specific criteria for eligible firms to submit a proposal for the provision of consulting services to the St. Kitts Tourism Authority for Public Relations to support marketing and promotion of St. Kitts as a premier warm weather destination in the United States. This document is divided into six sections:

- Section I Destination Overview
- Section II St. Kitts Tourism Authority Duties and Responsibilities
- Section III Scope of Work
- Section IV Instructions on Preparations and Submission of Proposals
- Section V Evaluation Criteria and Selection Timeline

Section 1 - Destination Overview

Where the Atlantic meets the Caribbean, you will find the captivating island of St. Kitts. Off the beaten track in the northern Leeward islands of the Eastern Caribbean, one will discover the smallest Federation that is part of the United Nations. With experiences ranging from one-of-a-kind attractions such as the World UNESCO Heritage site of Brimstone Hill Fortress Park to the Caribbean’s only scenic passenger railway to “hidden gems” like the Rum Runners walking tour and Caribelle Batik factory, St. Kitts offers an authentic destination to satisfy travelers looking for adventure.

With nearly 500 years of rich history as both British and French colonies, St. Kitts began as the Mother Colony of the Caribbean steeped in the sugar trade. Gaining its independence in 1983, it is only within the last 15 years that the economy has shifted to tourism attracting visitors primarily from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom with substantial growth from 2015 to 2019. At this time, the audience segments include general leisure, romance, soft adventure, MICE, yachting, golf, and historical/cultural travelers. The target audience ranges in age from 24-64 with a median age



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of 48 and an HHI above \$100K. The vast activities range from soft adventure hiking a dormant volcano at nearly 3,800 feet above sea level to ATV tours and ziplining above the rainforest to a wide array of water sports including kayaking, fly-boarding, and kite-surfing as well as jet ski snorkel adventures, speedboating, and catamaran tours to Nevis, our sister island. The island's many secluded bays and coves provide a private spot for a swim or anchorage for sailing vessels and yachts. Two marinas offering state-of-the-art facilities, convenient customs & immigrations processing and services are also available for yachters.

For more leisurely escapes, the island provides a wealth of relaxation options that include golf, diving among shipwrecks at a shallow 40 feet deep to shopping boutiques and simply sitting at numerous beaches, beach clubs, and pools at the various hotels that can meet the taste of travelers from large resorts to boutique stays. While pre-pandemic, St. Kitts welcomed travelers by cruise of a record 1 million passengers two years in a row and multiple non-stop flights across the East Coast and Southeast, the cruise visitation is now slow to recover and the flights are limited.

During the pandemic, 2020 ushered in a halt to tourism until the island re-opened October 31, 2020 with various travel requirements in place including COVID-19 testing requirements, limited accommodations, and limited outside attractions.

Section II - St. Kitts Tourism Authority Duties and Responsibilities

The St. Kitts Tourism Authority (SKTA) is the agency responsible for the strategic planning and general destination management for the St. Kitts Tourism Industry. The St. Kitts Tourism Authority was established under the St. Christopher Tourism Act December 31, 2002, under the Laws of St. Christopher and Nevis. Following the closure of the sugar industry in 2005, Government in its National Adaptation Strategy 2006 – 2013, earmarked the tourism sector along with other sectors, including financial services, agriculture, offshore education and information technology, to transform the economy. It has been well established that Tourism is a major economic driver globally. It should therefore be no surprise that it has become a key sector for stimulating growth and development for the citizens of St. Kitts and Nevis.

March 2020, the Covid 19 pandemic, halted travel and tourism until the island re-opened October 31, 2020, with COVID 19 travel requirements in place, including arrival and departure RT-PCR testing requirements, limited accommodations, attractions and tours. With a population of only 53,000 people between St. Kitts and Nevis, the management of COVID 19 is paramount for the safety of Nationals/Residents and economic viability of tourism.

The SKTA is responsible for the marketing and promotion of St. Kitts in its primary source markets the United States, United Kingdom and Canada. To be successful in the Covid-19 Pandemic, the SKTA must be innovative and maintain a competitive advantage as premier tourism destination and the leisure segment. The SKTA scope of work includes policy development and implementation, international



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marketing, sales, public relations and industry training programmes. Outlined below are key objectives for the Public Relation Strategy to manage and promote brand St. Kitts.

- Promote St. Kitts as the authentic, quintessential Caribbean destination, for the discerning more experienced traveler.
- Support the efforts of the Tourism Authority and all related institutions in promoting St. Kitts.
- Develop and uncover opportunities that drive awareness and positive perceptions of St. Kitts.
- Develop partnerships and co-marketing opportunities, where appropriate, that drive positive perceptions of St. Kitts.
- Build relationships with media houses, journalists and influencers to promote brand St. Kitts.

On-Island Stakeholders include the Ministry of Tourism, The Hotel Tourism Association (HTA), Chamber of Commerce, St. Christopher Air and Seaports Authority (SCASPA), Retail Operators, Restaurants and Beach Bars, Taxi and Tour Operators, Destination Management Companies of the private sector, other Government Departments and Statutory Authorities, Non-tourism private sector partners, the general community and a host of other local stakeholders.

The SKTA has a wide cross section of its international stakeholders based overseas, primarily in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom and within the Caribbean region itself. These include stakeholders such as: Supplier Partners (Airlines, Cruiselines, Hotels, etc.); Sellers (Wholesalers/Tour Operators, Travel Agents and Online Travel Sellers); Media (Journalist/Broadcast editors); Regional Governments and Regional Tourism Organizations – Caribbean Tourism Organization (public sector) and Caribbean Hotel Association (private sector).

Please note the Minister of Tourism is the Federal Minister for St. Kitts and Nevis and the SKTA is required from time to time under the direction of the Minister of Tourism to include Nevis in PR marketing and promotional activities for Nevis in all source Markets, including the US.

Section III – Agency Criteria/Capabilities

A. Overall

- Relevant experience and understanding of the St. Kitts tourism industry.
- Demonstrated capabilities and understanding of the travel and tourism industry, including air travel, hotels, destination marketing, etc.
- Strong understanding of, and demonstrated success in, developing and implementing fully integrated public relations plans with government entities
- High level of commitment to client service in terms of quality, thoroughness of strategic approach and follow through
- Ability to establish strong rapport with representatives of the SKTA Board of Directors, tourism staff, other source market agencies and consultants and other programme stakeholders (e.g., private sector, industry associations, etc.)



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- A strong mix of senior staff and account managers who have clearly worked well together for some time. The firm should be able to consistently identify team roles (e.g., daily contact, senior counsel, support, etc.).
- Desire to exceed expectations and invest in a strong client-agency partnership
- Existing and effective planning and cost control mechanisms

B. Public/Media Relations

- Demonstrated capabilities in strategic media relations with a proven, results-oriented approach.
- Proven existing relationships with key members of the travel media, across all stakeholder groups – trade, consumer publications and newspapers; and special interest and lifestyle media who support the destinations special interest markets – at both national and regional levels.
- Ability to conceptualize and deliver broad public relations and communications programmes designed to inform and influence opinion formers within the global tourism marketing industry, including travel editors, agents, conference planners, etc.
- Strong experience in crisis/issues management preparedness and response
- Proven methodology for measurement/ROI of communications investment – including, but not limited to research services such as media analysis and opinion former research

C. Government Relations

- Proven ability to reach opinion leaders and influencers within the US tourism, travel and leisure industry.
- Strong intelligence gathering capabilities to be able to decipher and anticipate government decisions and actions and help clients navigate that landscape

D. Exclusions

- Agencies which already work for a direct competitor of the SKTA, will not be considered within this tender process. Competitive set includes Anguilla, Antigua, Nevis and St. Lucia.

Section IV – Scope of Work

The rebuilding of the St. Kitts brand and tourism sector in a COVID world is the responsibility of the SKTA. The SKTA is looking to support the ongoing U.S. marketing and promotional activities with a public relations firm that can elevate St. Kitts's brand awareness, support ongoing partnerships and build new partnerships to drive increased visitation in a rebuilding effort.

The selected PR agency will interface and work with the Chief Executive Officer, (CEO), US Marketing Manager, Home Office PR team, and US Digital Creative Agency. The PR agency will report to the CEO.

The agency will provide the following activities and deliverables:



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PR Communications

1. Manage all public relations activities for St. Kitts in the United States, including gateways and feeder markets.
2. Development and implement an annual US PR plan to support increase in US visitation from current gateways and feeder markets and identify new markets in conjunction with the CEO and US Marketing Manager. Plan to be submitted annually in November at the St. Kitts Annual Marketing Retreat should include:
 - a. Budget
 - b. Press trips for Travel Trade (including MICE), St. Kitts Music Festival, niche segments for consumers (leisure, golf, soft-adventure, yachting, cruise, culinary, romance and lifestyle), and social influencers.
 - c. Promotional activities including earned media, paid media including print, broadcast integration and partnerships, sponsored journalist shows, advertorial and social media for respective channels.
 - i. Earned Media – journalists and media houses for all niche segments.
 - ii. Paid Media – journalists and media houses for all niche segments.
 - iii. Sponsored Journalists/Influencers – e.g. Peter Greenberg
 - iv. Social Media
 - Utilizing Twitter to communicate with journalists, influencers and crisis communication and monitoring.
 - Twitter metrics and reporting including coordination with St. Kitts' other social media channels.
 - Promoted tweets to support campaigns across all source markets (US, Canada, UK, Caribbean).
 - Direct Marketing Activities for media travel trade and consumers.
 - d. Outreach to journalists and or media outlets to promote the destination print digital and social (Twitter).
3. Draft and distribute Press Releases as needed for the travel trade, consumers and local stakeholders.
 - a. Twitter for Crisis communication and general brand awareness
4. PR Outreach - Proactive outreach to print, electronic and broadcast outlets, pitching journalists and providing them with news, information and creative story angles for articles
5. Maintain print and electronic press kits containing general facts, what's new, accommodation and activities information, and Bios for Minister and CEO.
6. Maintain a supplemental photo/video library further to the official brand center library
7. Provide news and tourism authority services to fulfill media requests from journalists and influencers throughout the US



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8. On-site support and post-event support to tourism industry news conferences, tradeshows, St. Kitts Roadshow and/ media functions in the US. Examples below:
 - CHTA Marketplace
 - CTO Media Marketplace
 - CTO and OECS Council of Ministers Meetings
 - CTO Week in New York
 - Florida Caribbean Cruise Association Annual Conference
 - Seatrade Cruise Global
 - OECS Ministers
9. Submit PR monthly source markets report including all activities undertaken for St. Kitts throughout the month.
 - a. Crisis Communication
 - b. Twitter performance
 - c. Earned and Paid media
 - d. Press Releases – US and Local
 - e. Media Activity performance – earned or paid activities.
 - f. Journalists pitched to and segments they cover e.g. general leisure, soft-adventure, travel trade.
10. Crisis Communications consulting and monitoring including coordination with the Home Office PR team and CEO and emergency management authorities to review press statements and/or releases; revisions to the official crisis communications plan as needed; conducting on-island crisis communications seminars as needed.
11. Participation in source market and on-island meetings, webinars and seminars as requested.

Influencer Marketing Activities

1. Identify key destination events or promotions that influencers will support in both St. Kitts and US source market influencers to include in annual PR plan.
2. Conduct outreach to top target influencers, build or develop relationships for complementary or sponsored content creation.
3. Review and evaluate all requests from influencers for destination events or promotions to St. Kitts.
4. Arrange influencer trips to the island for content creation and social media amplification that drives digital awareness, providing an escort as necessary.
5. Monitor effectiveness and ROI of the influencer trip by tracking (KPIs) and providing reporting.
6. Follow-up with influencers to receive feedback and seek additional partnership opportunities.



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Administration for Influencer Marketing Activities

1. Draft and submit project and budget forms for each influencer trip and coordinate all flight, hotel and itinerary arrangements

Direct Marketing Communications Activities

1. Collaboration with CEO, US Marketing Manager, Trade Relations Specialist and Digital Agency to draft, develop and edit custom content via eblasts, blogs or promotional partnerships.
2. Proofreading, copywriting and editing of various tourism communications and promotional materials including speeches, letters, brochures, flyers, etc. as needed.
3. Promotional Partnership opportunities – review, evaluation and outreach to select lifestyle companies whose audience fits with geographic, demographic and psychographic targets; promotional development; coordination of all aspects of approved promotions; trafficking project; tracking KPIs; providing reporting and follow-up.
4. Outreach to stakeholders and sourcing of content including news, information, special offers and images for e-newsletter.

Administration for Marketing Communication Activities

1. Draft and submit project and budget forms for each influencer trip and coordinate all flight, hotel and itinerary arrangements

Section V - Instructions on Preparation and Submission of Proposals

Structure of Proposal

Proposals should be submitted by 4:30pm AST (St. Kitts' time) on Friday, August 6th, 2021. The Proposal should cover a 12-month period beginning September 1st 2021. Proposals should specify exactly how each element of the scope of work will be approached and completed, and should incorporate the following:

- Description and history of the Agency
- Understanding of the scope of work and objectives
- Outline of project approach, strategy for carrying out the scope of work and methodology
- Brief of relevant prior experiences of the Agency
- Agency team: name and title, and a brief CV/Biography for each member
- Financials – which should be quoted in US Dollars



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Proposals should have two distinct elements – a creative/technical proposal and a financial proposal – details of which are specified as follows:

- a) The creative/technical proposal should outline the specific approach and programme recommendations, including how the agency understands the assignment and intends to break down the work, including staffing and service delivery. Agencies are also encouraged to include as part of their submission considerations which demonstrate their suitability for the assignment. In addition, proposals should outline how and to what extent key agency staff will make an appropriate investment of time and expense to learn and fully understand St. Kitts tourism.
- b) The financial proposal should reflect the creative/technical proposal by outlining fees. Please note that all costs should be in United States Dollars . Include a sample invoice with the standard accompanying information submitted (e.g. activity report, itemisation, etc.). Firms should also include any of their applicable policies, as they relate to their financial proposal.

As part of your proposal, please answer the following questions:

- Why is your PR agency a good fit for the St. Kitts Tourism Authority?
- What is the agency's experience with destinations, tourism, and rebuilding during the COVID pandemic?
- Who will be on our account team and who will be our main point of contact? What would an engagement with your agency look like? How does your agency charge for its services?
- What is your agency's approach to project management and campaign execution?
- What three creative ideas, campaigns, or methods does your agency suggest to create drive travel during the COVID pandemic?
- Define a Scope of Work for the engagement, complete with deliverables, specific time frames, and budget.
- What approaches will you use to drive PR results?
- How does your agency propose to meet your overall goals, objectives, and deliverables?
- What are the success measures utilized by your agency?

Section V - Evaluation Criteria and Selection Timeline

Proposals will be evaluated by the St. Kitts Tourism Authority within the following criteria:

- Understanding of scope of work and objectives – 35% weighting
- Project Approach, Strategy and Methodology – 15% weighting
- Relevant Prior Experiences – 15% weighting
- Quality of consultant staffing – 15% weighting
- Pricing of project – 20% weighting



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Depending on the outcome of written submissions, agencies shortlisted will be required to make a ZOOM or MS Team presentation to the selection committee based on their submissions. Evaluation of proposals will be completed by Friday, August 20th, 2021 and shortlisted agencies be required to make presentation between August 23rd and August 27th, 2021. The St. Kitts Tourism Authority reserves the right to exercise full discretion in its evaluation of all proposals against the stated criteria. No single criteria in and of itself will be used to make a final determination and there is no obligation to award the contract to the submission which attains the highest scores in the form of tender.

Timing and delivery of proposals

Proposals must be submitted by email or in a clearly marked envelope including the above-noted RFP reference number and title on the outside of the envelope. The deadline for receipt of proposals is 4:30 p.m. on Friday, August 6th, 2021. Agencies should ensure that they make the necessary arrangements with courier services for submissions to arrive on time. **Submissions received after the deadline will not be accepted.**

- Submissions sent by email should be sent to USPublicRelationsRFP@stkittstourism.kn, Subject Line: Attention Chief Executive Officer – US PR RFP.
- Questions or clarifications can be submitted to USPublicRelationsRFP@stkittstourism.kn through Friday, July 23rd, 2021.
- Proposals can be submitted to USPublicRelationsRFP@stkittstourism.kn before Friday, August 6th, 2021.
- The contract will be awarded by September 10th, 2021.