

Travel Leisure and Business Marketing Campaign

RFP-Doc-1413

Questions and Answers

- 1. Does MEDC currently use an internal system or ESP to handle email marketing delivery? If an ESP, which company is it?**

The MEDC is currently using an internal system to handle the delivery of its enewsletters.

- 2. Is MEDC looking for a new ESP to handle email delivery?**

Not necessarily, but are certainly open to consider using an email service provider.

- 3. Is MEDC having any deliverability challenges in the current ISP landscape and are you interested in Deliverability Services or Consulting?**

Yes, the MEDC is interested in Deliverability Services and Consulting regarding its email marketing programs. Our challenges include high bounce rates and white listing.

- 4. Does MEDC know your inbox penetration, Sender Reputation, Bounce Rate, and Spam Complaint Rate?**

We know our bounce rate and inbox penetration. We have reviewed Sender Score analyses provided by Return Path.

- 5. What is your definition of 'email marketing' and what channels are you including for this RFP?**

Email marketing would include blasts and traditional newsletters sent via email to subscribers. We would also like the contractor to suggest innovative email marketing initiatives and channels.

- 6. Is MEDC anticipating using one organization to build strategy and execute work?**

Yes.

- 7. Does this RFP include outsourcing MEDC email deliveries to an outsourced, hosted Email Service Provider? Or is this RFP for Strategic Consulting ONLY?**

The RFP is definitely for strategic consulting and may also include outsourcing delivery services dependent on MEDC available resources factored in with approved email initiatives and budget.

8. What's the requested scope for each of the channels defined? The words "recommend, design and assist" are used, so is it purely strategic guidance or implementation as well? For example, would one vendor be required to manage MEDC's keyword bidding for SEM?

1. For Pay Per Click Advertising and Search Engine Optimization, strategic guidance and implementation is required by the contractor.
2. For Social Media Optimization, strategic guidance and implementation is required by the contractor.
3. For any Interactive Marketing programs, strategic guidance and implementation is required by the contractor.
4. For the Email Marketing Campaign, strategic guidance is required and implementation is dependent on MEDC available resources factored in with approved email initiatives and budget.
5. For the joint marketing partnership programs, strategic guidance and implementation is required by the contractor.

9. How many internal MEDC resources will be participating in this project? Are MEDC's departments segmented by practice, or is it one general e-marketing department?

Currently we anticipate a total of four MEDC staff members participating in this project drawn from Tourism Marketing, Business Marketing and Corporate Research.

10. What specific agencies/partners are on this project and how many staff members will be participating from each? (Please provide names for agencies/partners.)

The contractor will be required to work in concert with the following agencies:

- McCann/Erickson (travel advertising agency)
- Duffey, Petrosky & Co. (business advertising agency)
- Sojourn Communications (travel public relations agency)

The number of staff members participating from each agency depends on the scope of the particular project.

Current Pay Per Click partners include:

- Harbor Country Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB)
- Saginaw Valley CVB
- Silver Lake Sand Dunes CVB
- Grand Rapids CVB
- Ramada Inns of Michigan
- Best Western of Michigan
- The Henry Ford
- Muskegon County CVB
- Kalamazoo CVB
- Native American Casinos
- Lake Michigan Car Ferry

One staff member from each partner works with the contractor.

11. Who are your current tourism/hospitality partners you're leveraging to build your email list (e.g., any airlines, rental car agencies, etc.)?

None.

12. What internal deadlines and milestones are there for project stages?

Generally deadlines are based on the launch of specific campaigns and projects. Timelines will be established in collaboration with the contractor and MEDC staff.

13. What's the e-marketing project budget for the travel and business components, broken out separately?

The project budget has not been determined and will be based on the scope of the e-marketing initiatives implemented.

14. Briefly describe MEDC's past or current marketing programs in each of the channels: SEO, SEM, email marketing, social media.

SEO – MEDC currently contracts with a vendor that provides strategic guidance and implements the SEO initiatives for michigan.org and MichiganAdvantage.org. These initiatives include SEO copywriting, link building and title/meta-tag optimization.

SEM – MEDC currently contracts with a vendor that provides strategic guidance and implements the SEM initiatives for michigan.org and MichiganAdvantage.org. These initiatives include general and geo-targeted pay per click campaigns in high-volume search channels.

Email marketing – MEDC currently handles the email distribution of the travel and business eNewsletters in house. The MEDC is implementing, with its current vendor, an email drip campaign for the Wind Energy Sector. The current vendor is also completing an email deliverability audit. MEDC currently contracts with a vendor that provides strategic guidance and implements the Travel eSpecials program.

Social Media – MEDC currently contracts with a vendor that provides strategic guidance and implements the Social Media initiatives for michigan.org. These initiatives include creating communities serving potential tourists on popular social media sites.

15. How much revenue has e-marketing generated for MEDC in the past three years (broken out by year)?

None.

16. What are the specific goals for increasing MEDC e-marketing revenue year-over-year?

No direct revenue is generated from the e-marketing initiatives.

17. Is there an ROI from a revenue standpoint for this e-marketing campaign, or is it inclusive to Web traffic and email list building?

The ROI for each of the campaigns is as follows:

- Travel Marketing – Click-through to an external tourism industry website, email to a tourism property, new eNewsletter subscription.
- Business Marketing – Email the MEDC Contact Center, initiate a live chat with the MEDC Contact Center, click-through to an external partner website.

18. What's the current size of your email list? What are your acquisition goals for growing your lists?

The current size of the email list is 103,000. The acquisition goal is to increase the email list by 10%.

19. How much of the budget has MEDC allocated to the overall Travel Leisure & Business e-Marketing Campaign?

The project budget has not been determined and will be based on the scope of the e-marketing initiatives implemented for the Travel Leisure and Business campaigns.

20. Does MEDC have in-house staff members whose primary responsibility is online marketing?

Not at the present time.

21. At what percent would you allocate resources to the travel marketing campaign and to the business marketing campaign?

The project budget has not been determined and will be based on the scope of the e-marketing initiatives implemented for the Travel Leisure and Business campaigns.

22. Is there an incumbent agency?

Yes.

23. Are there other states that are models for Michigan in either online travel or economic development marketing?

We continually research the efforts of other states; however, none serve as models.

24. How will success be measured on each campaign?

The ROI for each of the campaigns are as follows:

- Travel Marketing – Click-through to an external tourism industry website, email to a tourism property, new eNewsletter subscription.
- Business Marketing – Email the MEDC Contact Center, initiate a live chat with the MEDC Contact Center, click-through to an external partner website.

25. Will preferential treatment be given to an in-state agency in this competition?

The MEDC prefers to contract with Michigan companies.

26. What is the budget available for the eMarketing initiative as described in the RFP?

The project budget has not been determined and will be based on the scope of the e-marketing initiatives implemented for the Travel Leisure and Business campaigns.

27. How does the budget split out between the Travel Leisure component vs. the Business Marketing component?

The project budget split has not been determined and will be based on the scope of the e-marketing initiatives implemented for the Travel Leisure and Business campaigns.

28. Will MEDC provide brand strategy and messaging guides for the execution of both or either campaigns?

Yes.

29. Will MEDC provide design templates and/or brand guidelines for the design of either or both campaigns?

Yes.

30. Does MEDC have plans to launch a new "offline" advertising campaign for 2009-2010 (e.g. outdoor, print, TV, Cable and Radio)?

The MEDC plans to continue off-line campaigns in 2009-2010, utilizing the current creative strategy.

31. Does MEDC expect full executional continuity (i.e. messaging and visual templates) between offline and online campaigns?

Yes.

32. Is your Decision Support Program intended to provide information or impact to the strategy or executions before or during the implementation of the new e-marketing campaign?

Yes.