

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**  
**For Vail Local Marketing District**  
**Creative Agency**

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**I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

Location and History: Town and Resort

Vail is an iconic destination mountain resort community in North America with world-class offerings and is an industry leader driving the snow sports, outdoor, and travel categories. While widely known for its winter offerings, Vail is also the ideal summer mountain destination. Vail in the summer is relaxing and adventurous with resort and village amenities, events and activities for visitors from across the world to experience.

Tourism is the overarching driver of the local economy. The community, like most mountain resorts, is comprised of a mix of full-time and part-time residents, and full-time and seasonal workers. Vail's population is approximately 5,000 full- and Vail receives over two and a half million visitors annually.

The Town of Vail is North America's Premier International Mountain Resort Community, located approximately 100 miles west of Denver, CO at the foot of the Gore Range in the Rocky Mountains. Founded as a ski resort in 1962 and as a Town in 1966, Vail is well known for its beautiful mountains, plentiful sunshine, and quaint pedestrian villages. Surrounded by the White River National Forest, the Town of Vail totals 3,360 acres, and is 10 miles long and at most one mile wide.

Vail Ski Resort, which is adjacent to the town in the White River National Forest, is one of the largest ski resorts in North America with 5,317 acres of terrain. Vail Mountain is owned by Vail Resorts, and consistently ranks as one of the most visited and favorite ski resorts in North America.

## **II. OPPORTUNITY BACKGROUND**

### **Agency to the Vail Local Marketing District (VLMD)**

The Vail Local Marketing District, which is a marketing district within the Town of Vail municipal government, is seeking strategic, creative and digital-first marketing partner/s that will support the achievement of destination marketing goals including, but not limited to; driving overnight visitation from May through October, 2023. The district seeks partner/s that can demonstrate strong collaboration, agility, creative problem solving and deep passion/understanding of the travel industry and competitive landscape.

## **III. ABOUT THE VAIL LOCAL MARKETING DISTRICT (VLMD) AND**

### **THE VAIL LOCAL MARKETING DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL (VLMDAC)**

The VLMD was formed in 1999 to market and promote the Vail destination its natural attractions, local lodging, businesses and special events. The VLMD is funded by a 1.4% lodging tax that currently generates approximately \$4 million annually. The VLMD, sitting as the Vail Town Council, has ultimate approval of the operating plan and budget of the VLMD. The VLMD appoints a nine-member advisory council known as the VLMDAC which is comprised of marketing professionals who are property owners in Vail, to guide the efforts of the district. The stated focus of the district is to drive overnight visitation during the non-winter months of the year, and the VLMDAC meets on a monthly basis.

More information can be found on the Town of Vail web site at <https://www.vailgov.com/government/boards-commissions-authority-district/vail-local-marketing-district> and <https://www.vailgov.com/government/boards-commissions-authority-district/vlmd-advisory-council-vlmdac>.

With direction from VLMDAC, Town of Vail staff works directly with contracted vendors who manage various aspects of the marketing effort. The contracted vendors (“partners”) work together to propose an annual operating plan, which is presented to the VLMDAC for input and approval. The Town of Vail and the partners report monthly on marketing results, insights and recommendations. They work collaboratively to execute the plan and make revisions as the market and needs change throughout the year. Partners work together on projects and consult one another as needed.

Full Service Creative Agency Partner/s will serve as thought leaders to the Vail Local Marketing District Advisory Council (VLMDAC), and Town of Vail staff; responsible for creative platform development, campaign executions, and channel / communication planning through channel tactical delivery. Partner/s will be accountable for results-driven, high-quality service that reports out monthly on project status, measurement plans and campaign results.

Currently the responsibility for marketing and managing the destination is shared between the resort operator Vail Resorts/Vail Mountain and the Town of Vail. These two entities work closely to present Vail as a single year-round brand. Winter season marketing is primarily overseen,

funded and managed by Vail Resorts, while non-winter marketing is primarily overseen, funded and managed by the Town's Vail Local Marketing District (VLMD).

#### VLMD Business Goal

The key VLMD business goal is to drive responsible revenue growth in Vail by focusing on quality of guest, length of stay, and guest spend, along with effective communication of community values. Measurement is primarily gained through occupancy levels and average daily rate, lodging and sales tax revenues, guest satisfaction surveys and net promoter score. An emphasis is placed on driving demand during lower demand time periods.

As the Vail Local Marketing District Advisory Council (VLMDAC) looks to the future, and in service of the VLMD's overarching business goal, the VLMD's 2023 strategic approach is guided by the following Marketing Priorities:

- **Optimize Visitation:** Target overnight guests who stay longer, spend more and embrace the community's values, in addition to targeting specific times of the year with an emphasis lower demand periods including mid-week and shoulder seasons.
- **Grow Database and Build the Relationships:** Expand the Vail database, use data to understand the guest, enhance guest engagement and loyalty by optimizing content and 1:1 personalized messaging to achieve stated goals.
- **Destination Stewardship:** Protect Vail's natural assets and resources, while elevating the guest and resident experience by educating the guest on Vail's community values including sustainability. Incorporate outcomes of Steward Vail destination stewardship plan in 2023.
- **Brand Positioning:** In accordance with the town council action plan, position Vail as the Premier International Mountain Resort Community. Continue to strengthen and reinvigorate the Vail brand through "Life is but a Dream" campaign. Support partners and the community in delivering on the brand promise.

#### Marketing and Sustainability: Vail's Destination Stewardship Plan

The Town of Vail is in the process of creating Steward Vail, a Destination Stewardship Plan (DSP) that will be used as a tool to help guide marketing efforts in 2023. Since its certification as Sustainable Destination in 2018 under the criteria set forth by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Town has established itself as a leader in sustainability practices. Vail works with six Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) partners (U.S. Forest Service, Vail Resorts, Eagle River Water and Sanitation District, Vail Recreation District, Holy Cross Energy and Walking Mountains Science Center) on the ongoing certification.

#### Current Environment and Challenges

The Town of Vail recognizes that tourism is the primary driver of the economy, creating jobs, opportunities and revenue that support our municipal operations. The Town also acknowledges that it's critical to achieve a balance between the tourism economy and the protection and preservation of Vail's natural assets and recreational sites and experiences. Vail's commitment to sustainability sets the stage for a long-term approach to protecting the quality of life for the community by protecting our environment, climate and natural resources including wildlife and ecosystem services, and natural attractions.

**VI. TERM**

The term of this Agreement shall commence on January 1, 2023 and conclude on December 31, 2023. The parties shall have the option to renew a contract yearly based on the annual operation plan and contracted deliverables. Such renewal is not automatic.

## **V. SCOPE OF WORK**

Interested bidders are invited to provide proposals and/or documentation including comparable work, testimonials, and content that demonstrates professional qualifications for part or all of this Request for Proposal. The RFP selection team, which is comprised of members of the VLMDAC, will evaluate all proposals and select a vendor for each part of the proposal. Bidders are not required to respond to all 4 scopes of work. The proposal includes the following scopes of work or areas of expertise:

1. Creative Agency: Strategic Consulting, Campaign Development and Account Management
2. Communication/Content Strategy, Creation and Management
3. Website Technical Management/Development/Population
4. Media Planning, Buying, Optimizing, Billing and Reporting

All scopes of work require:

- Development of measurements and metrics
- Collaboration on the year-round Vail brand with all of the stakeholders
- Fulfillment of deliverables and tangible results based on KPIs
- Leverage of existing research to identify top markets and develop strategies to grow overnight visitation - domestically and internationally.

The successful partner will demonstrate the ability to:

- Manage expenses to approved budgets
- Provide accountability and meet deadlines
- Establish positive working relationships with all stakeholders
- Keep planning and execution pace with the ever-changing tourism and travel industry
- Be resourceful, nimble, flexible, dedicated and results-oriented
- Be positive and creative in bringing innovative solutions to the table

RFP Selection Criteria:

1. Successful Capabilities Presentation outlining performance for creative campaigns, communication strategy and omni-channel planning
2. Proven reporting of campaign and channel effectiveness
3. Project Management Approach and Cross-Functional Integration / Collaboration style
4. Demonstrated skills and staffing disciplines to implement channel delivery
5. Proposed staffing plans (with team bios)
6. Flexibility in cost proposal structure and ability to establish menu-pricing
  - Full cost transparency including detailed breakdown of cost structure (services, hourly rates, benchmarks)
  - Client testimonials (please provide 2-5 client reference and contact information in response)

## **1. FULL SERVICE CREATIVE AGENCY:**

### **STRATEGIC CONSULTING, CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT AND ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT**

#### General Account Management

- Please describe your process, collaboration style, project management tools and timeline implementation plans as well as your account leadership and oversight
- General Account Management
  - Account leadership and oversight
  - Bi-weekly status document
  - Partner/agency status calls
  - Travel to and from Vail for partner meetings as needed, including monthly board meetings and/or Town Council Meetings

#### Strategic Planning

- Develop and lead brand strategy, creative and messaging across all categories with a focus on public relations, international and destination marketing, web site, digital marketing and visual assets
- Provide ongoing strategic brand planning and marketing consultation on marketing activities to ensure campaigns and initiatives remain strategically aligned with annual marketing goals.
- Look ahead and develop an overarching 2024 marketing communications strategy and integrated, high-level, tactical plan that will be used as the road map for all 2024 initiatives.
- Recommend creative efforts/tactics across paid, earned, owned and shared communications efforts based on results and insights gained from the 2023 marketing campaign.

#### Strategic Consulting & Creative Campaign Development

The VLMD is seeking a creative agency partner who can enable a streamlined strategic and creative development process that leverages consumer insights, takes competitive deep dives (in and out of category), while delivering a distinct creative campaign that resonates in the marketplace and with the community, guests, and aspirational consumer target to achieve business goals for the summer season.

#### Production

- 2023 Campaign
  - Concept additional content ideas to support and expand upon existing "Life is but a Dream" campaign
  - Budget to cover hard costs to produce the content ideas conceived
  - Budget to cover creation of all paid media assets
- 2024 planning:
  - Based on direction given from VLMDAC, media performance and other factors, provide recommendation for 2024 campaign

#### Data Support

Work with the Data partner, to support their efforts as needed with bi-weekly meetings as part of the data steering committee.

Manage, monitor and report out on VLMD Data Systems and tools with support from Brown Analytics.

- Adara, AirDNA, Insights/Business Intelligence tools, Tableau, Data DDO Data Connector (TOV to pay contracts unless otherwise negotiated)

Budget not to exceed \$185,000 professional fees and agreed upon direct expenses.

## **2. CONTENT STRATEGY, CREATION AND MANAGEMENT**

The VLMD seeks an overarching omni-channel communication plan that leverages the creative agency proof of concept and translates it into a clear roadmap for channel strategy, time in market with key performance metrics attached to each communication task and channel tactic. This approach should leverage guest-centric and data-driven insights to inform recommendation.

This partner would be responsible for creation, management, partner management and reporting against the content communication plan.

### **Content and Content Communication Plan (Omni-Channel)**

- Annual Omni-Channel Content Calendar (by week, by tactic, by channel)
- Proof of execution & measurement plan by channel and message
- Production & final mechanicals to traffic by channel
- Clear, open communication with partners on their role(s) in input, execution and measurement

#### Owned content channels to be incorporated into plan

- Website
  - Content creation, support, execution, delivery to website team
    - Create a content editorial calendar incorporated into wholistic content communications calendar
    - Four long form blogs per month (approx. 1500 words) with creative assets. Includes internal or outsourced monthly articles
  - Ongoing SEO
    - Incorporation of SEO tactics into plan as needed
    - Partner education and communication of SEO best practices and requirements
    - Keyword Research
    - On Page SEO
    - Off Page SE
    - Content Gap Analysis
    - Reporting
    - SEO Optimization for 1 content piece/month
    - Competitive Analysis
    - Competitive Tracking
    - Monthly Backlink Analysis and Cleanup
    - 30-minute monthly meeting with SEO/Content partner team
    - Backlink Building
- CRM
  - Existing Vendor: Brown Analytics evaluates, builds and distributes campaigns through Active Campaign platform. Work closely with this team to supply content and collaborate on content strategy and tactics as needed.
  - Ongoing Newsletter Content and Creation
    - Create a newsletter editorial calendar incorporated into wholistic content communications calendar



- Create three monthly newsletters
- Video
  - Work with partner group to define content story telling strategy
    - Existing Vendors: Local project manager is in place to help with managing specific shot lists/project management and execution oversight. Existing film team is local with strong understanding of brand, vision and existing assets. Open to pulling in other vendors as needed.
  - Create a distribution first plan to integrate all videos into content communication plan, inclusive of what can be integrated into paid media, social, web, in-resort businesses and beyond.
- Social
  - (Instagram: @DiscoverVailCO and Facebook: @DiscoverVailCO)
  - Existing Vendor: Social Community Management vendor is currently in place who oversees, schedules, posts, monitors and responses on Instagram and Facebook channels. Manage vendor expectations as it relates to their deliverables.
  - Provide strategy, audit, channel recommendations and content recommendations
  - Incorporate social into wholistic content communications calendar
  - Provide ongoing communication plan to Social Community Manager
- Local Distribution Communication
  - Town of Vail has access to many resources to communicate in-resort and an in-resort content communication plan is required. Budget for physical materials and execution not included in this scope. Examples of Town of Vail resources available as communication source includes:
    - Event sponsorship agreements for events held in Vail year-round.
    - Signage in the village, in-town busses, parking structure (all pending approval and may be limited)
    - Distribution of materials in the welcome centers
    - Access to communication with businesses and local outreach for business participation
    - Lodging Liaison dedicated to communication with the lodging community
    - Vail Free WiFi - all users provide email and zip code to access internet then routed to landing page of our choice

Budget not to exceed \$120,000 professional fees and agreed upon direct expenses.

### **3. WEBSITE TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT/DEVELOPMENT/POPULATION**

Services provided to include:

- General Account Management of website, DiscoverVail.com, built in WordPress.
- Website security and stability
- Website product vision and roadmap
- Technical support, including site security and stability
- Development support, including frontend, backend, and CMS
- UX strategy and design
- Visual design, including UI and interaction design as needed
- Ongoing website management and implementation
  - o SEO updates as provided by Content Management Team
  - o Content implementation, updates, and management
  - o General management of website built in Wordpress
- Web data analysis, reporting, insights, and strategic recommendations
  - o Performance Testing Strategy & Implementation
  - o Optimizations
  - o Monthly reporting
- Testing and QA
  - o Usability
  - o Technical / Development
- Digital strategy and leadership
  - o Creative technology consulting
  - o Digital ecosystem consulting
- Current optimization and tracking tools being used include Wordpress, Pantheon, Cloudinary, Hot Jar, Gravity Forms, Connekt, Userway

Budget not to exceed \$90,000 professional fees and agreed upon direct expenses.

#### **4. TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA PLANNING, BUYING, OPTIMIZING, BILLING AND REPORTING**

- Adapt the existing communications strategy based on insights, research, results and findings gained from the 2022 campaigns and continue to work with the VLMD partners to finalize the strategic plan for the 2023 media campaign.
- Develop the 2023 media flowchart that outlines the detailed media plan including tactics, media outlets, buy details, flights and frequency, impressions and costs, and geographic
- Determine and refine relevant measurement criteria and campaign key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Continuously monitor all media in market, ensuring accuracy and proof of placement, while optimizing creative as needed based on performance and pacing, and provide reporting to the VLMD to evaluate the campaign KPIs and success metrics
- Provide transparency in billing for media vs. professional fees

Budget not to exceed 10% of total Paid Media budget and agreed upon direct expenses.

## **VI. TIMELINE & PROCESS**

Step 1: Candidates are asked to submit proposals containing the following items by August 31, 2022 by 3:00 p.m. MST. Please email to the following individuals:

Town of Vail

Mia Vlaar, Economic Development Director: [mvlaar@vailgov.com](mailto:mvlaar@vailgov.com)  
Liz Gladitsch, Marketing Specialist: [lgladitsch@vailgov.com](mailto:lgladitsch@vailgov.com)

1) Background

A statement covering resources, expertise, client list (indicating any client conflicts) and references. If a team is proposed, please also enclose their backgrounds.

2) Examples of previous work relevant to the travel industry. Detail specific case studies that demonstrate abilities and results in these areas.

3) Approach to the scope of work previously outlined.

Step 2: Selection process:

- August 10, 2022 by 3:00 p.m. MST: interested parties can submit questions and answers will be provided to all interested candidates for equal information sharing
- August 17, 2022 by 3:00 p.m. MST: Questions answered
- August 31, 2022 by 3:00 p.m. MST: RFQ deadline
- September 8, 2022: narrow field to maximum of 3
- September 15, 2022: presentation to Vail Local Marketing District Advisory Council
- September 15, 2022: selection