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I. OBJECTIVE

The Vail Local Marketing District (VLMD), Vail’s destination marketing organization (DMO), is seeking qualified vendors to assist in tracking sentiment and perceptions of Vail’s destination brand. As a premier Mountain Resort Destination, Vail is committed to ensuring that its brand resonates positively with its target audience. We are seeking a reputable and experienced vendor to conduct a comprehensive analysis, providing both a baseline measurement and brand lift measurement.

The primary objective is to set a baseline in 2024 of brand perception and continue to monitor with the same process for years to come. VLMD’s online and traditional marketing are directed to [DiscoverVail.com](https://www.discovervail.com).

II. 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 workers. The Town of Vail population is approximately 5,000. Vail receives over two and a half million overnight visitors annually.

The Town of Vail is located approximately 100 miles west of Denver, Colorado at the foot of the Gore Range in the Rocky Mountains. The Town of Vail’s mission is to be North America’s Premier International Mountain Resort Community. Founded as a ski resort in 1962 and as a Town in 1966, Vail is well known as a favorite destination for luxury travelers. Vail is renowned 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 (Vail Mountain), which is adjacent to the town and operated by Vail Resorts in the White River National Forest, is one of the largest ski resorts in North America with 5,317 acres of terrain. Vail Mountain consistently ranks as one of the most visited and favorite ski resorts in North America.

Vail is the destination, the town, the mountain and the community. Vail is not Vail Resorts.

III. ABOUT THE VAIL LOCAL MARKETING DISTRICT (VLMD)

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% marketing and promotions tax that is levied on lodging nights. The tax currently generates approximately \$5 million annually. The VLMD, sitting as the Vail Town Council, has final approval of the operating plan and budget of the VLMD. The VLMD functions as part of a broader destination marketing organization that includes special event funding and management, welcome centers, and business development for the town. The VLMD appoints a nine-member advisory council known as the Vail Local Marketing District Advisory Council (VLMDAC), which is comprised of marketing professionals who own property in Vail to guide the efforts of the district. The overarching goal of the district is to drive overnight visitation during the non-winter months of the year. The VLMDAC meets monthly.

With direction from VLMDAC, Town of Vail staff manages the work of the VLMD along with vendors who are contracted for various aspects of the marketing effort. The contracted vendors work together with staff to propose an annual operating plan, which is presented to the VLMDAC for input and approval. All contracted vendors (Partners) are accountable for results-driven, high-quality services and report out monthly on project status, measurement plans and campaign results. 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, under the direction of Town of Vail staff and with the direction from the VLMDAC.

Currently, the responsibility for marketing and managing the destination is shared between the resort operator Vail Resorts/Vail Mountain and the Town's Vail Local Marketing District. 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 season marketing is primarily overseen, funded and managed by the Town's Vail Local Marketing District.

III. COLLECTIVE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of the VLMD are myriad and multi-dimensional. Marketing goals are identified with the annual budget, whereas destination management goals are defined in Vail's Stewardship Roadmap, a 10-year vision for managing the Vail destination. All goals and objectives should be considered during the research and development stage.

Vail Local Marketing District Goal: As Vail's destination marketing organization, the VLMD's 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.

Vail Local Marketing District Priorities: As the VLMD looks to the future, and in service of the overarching business goal, the VLMD's 2024 strategic approach is guided by the following Marketing Priorities:

- Optimize Visitation: Target high net worth guests, maximize longer stays and higher spend, gain greater understanding of customer through research while educating on community values.
- Build Loyalty: Grow customer database and use data to better understand guest to enhance engagement & loyalty.
- Lead Stewardship: Develop and deliver upon a brand position that reflects community values, differentiates Vail in ways that build its competitive edge, and inspires all to care for Vail.
- Brand Positioning: Position Vail as the Premier International Mountain Resort Community and work with community partners to define, support and deliver on the brand.

Vail's Stewardship Roadmap: Marketing and Sustainability Priorities

In 2023, the Town of Vail adopted Vail's Stewardship Roadmap, a 10-year vision for the community that strives to create harmony between the tourism economy and the natural environment, championing the needs of the community that is the engine of the tourism economy.

Vision: Vail is the world's premier sustainable mountain resort community, renowned for its quality of life, inspiring experiences for all, and stewardship of nature.

Values: Quality of Life, Community, Environmental Stewardship, Experience, Respect, Fun

The main focus for Vail Local Marketing District is Action 5: Energize Vail's Brand:

Consumers rank Vail highly as a luxury mountain resort but show more interest in taking trips to competing destinations. The local community wants Vail to target travelers who are in step with local values, including those who care about natural resources and share respect for the local way of life. With U.S. intent to travel softening and other headwinds rising, famed destinations are feeling new pressure to sharpen their competitive edge. Vail can find opportunity -- and the travelers its community wants -- by shaping its brand to amplify qualities valued by its community and claim important attributes valued by visitors.

The Goal

Develop a brand position that reflects important community values and differentiates Vail from its competitive set in ways that attracts more desired travelers.

Targets and Indicators

Lodging Tax Revenue
Marketing Campaign Performance
Occupancy Rate
Average Daily Rate
Brand Health

IV. AUDIENCE AND COMPETITIVE SET: NON-WINTER

Target Audiences: Our primary focus is non-winter months. There is an awareness gap between the brand in winter and non-winter -- winter brand awareness is much higher. We'd like the seasons broken out in terms of awareness measurement.

Primary: High Net Worth Families and High Net Worth Empty Nesters:
Based on analysis of VLMD and Epsilon data, 40% VLMD's database is considered HNW, while only 16% of the total US Population falls into this category

Secondary: Young High Income and International, Mexico

Non-winter markets: Atlanta, Austin, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, New York, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Tampa, Arizona, Utah, Omaha, Colorado

Competitive Set

Aspen/Snowmass
Banff
Breckenridge
North Lake Tahoe
Park City/Deer Valley
Steamboat
Sun Valley
Telluride

VI. SCOPE OF WORK

Project Overview:

The primary objective of this research initiative is to gain valuable insights into the brand associations and perceptions of the Town of Vail. Additionally, the study will focus on key brand metrics, including familiarity, appeal, excitement, and likelihood to visit. The selected vendor will be responsible for designing and implementing a robust research methodology that captures the nuances of the Vail brand perception.

Research Objectives:

Baseline Measurement

The primary objective is to set a baseline in 2024 of brand perception and continue to monitor with same process for years to come. If the scope allows for 2024 summer marketing campaign measurement, please include and outline separately.

1. Brand Perception:
 - Understand current brand associations and perceptions.
 - Identify key metrics related to brand familiarity, appeal, excitement, and likelihood to visit.
 - NOTE: VLMD is in the process of creating a new brand platform to be completed in May of 2024 and launched in 2025.
2. Destination Appeal:
 - Understand the factors that contribute to Vail's appeal as a Mountain Resort Destination.
 - Identify specific attributes that make Vail an attractive destination for visitors.
3. Community Engagement
 - Assess the level of engagement and connection visitors feel with the local community.
 - Explore how community experiences and interactions influence overall brand perception.
4. Outdoor Recreational Image:
 - Examine the association of Vail with outdoor recreational activities such as skiing, hiking, and other outdoor-related pursuits.
 - Evaluate the impact of Vail's outdoor offerings on brand perception.
5. Seasonal Variation:
 - Analyze how brand perception varies across different seasons, considering both winter and summer/fall activities. For reference, we know that winter has a very high brand awareness and the two will be different. Our primary focus is non-winter.
 - Identify any seasonal factors that may influence the likelihood to visit.
6. Cultural and Culinary Identity
 - Investigate how Vail's cultural and culinary offerings contribute to its overall brand identity.
 - Explore the role of local culture and cuisine in attracting and retaining visitors.
7. Competitive Analysis:
 - Conduct a comparative analysis with other Mountain Resort Communities to identify Vail's unique selling points and areas for improvement.

Proposal Submission Requirements:

Interested vendors are invited to submit a detailed proposal addressing the following key components:

1. **Company Overview:**
 - Provide a brief overview of your company, including its history, mission, and relevant experience in brand sentiment tracking.
2. **Methodology:**
 - Outline the proposed research methodology, including sample size, data collection methods, and analytical approach.
3. **Experience:**
 - Highlight any previous experience in conducting similar brand perception studies, particularly in the tourism or resort industry.
4. **Timeline:**
 - Present a detailed timeline outlining key milestones and deliverables, including the baseline measurement and brand lift measurement.
 - Expectation to present findings of baseline by November, 2024
5. **Budget:**
 - Provide a comprehensive cost breakdown, including all anticipated expenses related to research design, data collection, analysis, and reporting.
6. **References:**
 - Include references from previous clients who have utilized your services for similar projects.

Proposal Submission Deadline: April 19, 2024

Please submit your proposal electronically by April 19, 2024 to Liz Gladitsch at lgladitsch@vail.gov. Receipt of proposal will be electronically confirmed and late submissions will not be considered.

We look forward to reviewing your proposal and potentially working with a vendor who shares our commitment to excellence in brand perception tracking. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Liz Gladitsch at lgladitsch@vail.gov

Thank you for your interest in partnering with the Vail Local Marketing District

V. TERM

The term of this Agreement shall be approximately eight months, commencing in May 2024 and concluding on December 31, 2024. The parties shall have the option to renew a contract yearly based on the annual operating plan and contracted deliverables. Such renewal is not automatic.

While the VLMD contracts only in the year, for the year, the ideal candidate will exceed expectations with contract deliverables and would be considered for future contracts on an every other year or similar basis.

VII. TIMELINE & PROCESS

Candidates are asked to submit proposals containing the following items by April 19, 2024 by 3:00 p.m MST. Please email to the following individuals:

Town of Vail

Mia Vlaar, Economic Development Director: mvlaar@vailgov.com
Liz Gladitsch, Marketing Specialist: lgladitsch@vailgov.com

Proposal Guidelines:

Please provide a 10 page (or fewer) proposal to include specifically how your company can best fulfill the needs as outlined in the request for proposal. Proposal should focus on content relevant to the RFP only. Include:

1. Three case studies, focusing on methodology and growth with a client over multiple years
2. Phases of development and activities
3. Cost based on a \$40,000 budget. If additional budget is required, outline scope of work that can be completed with \$40,000. Additional recommendations or requirements to enhance the overall brand perception study to be in a separate scope and budget.
4. Summary of 1,000 words or less as to why this project is a good fit for you
5. Background: A statement covering resources, expertise, client list (indicating any client conflicts) and references. If a team is proposed, please also enclose their backgrounds.

Selection process:

- April 1, 2024: RFP Published
- April 5, 2024 by 3:00 p.m. MST: Interested parties can submit written questions
- April 12, 2024 by 3:00 p.m. MST: Questions answered. All answers will be provided to all interested candidates for equal information sharing.
- April 19, 2024 by 3:00 p.m. MST: RFP deadline
- April 26, 2024: selection made and all candidates notified