

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL:
Marketing Communications
Services for the Rowan
County Brand Taskforce**

Responses are due by 5 p.m. ET on August 13, 2018.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Marketing Communications Services for Brand Rowan County

The Brand Rowan County Taskforce is seeking a marketing communications partner or partners to develop and implement a program of work promoting Rowan County, North Carolina as a desirable place to live, work, and visit. This initiative is a natural extension of the Rowan County community brand development and implementation work that has occurred since the official launch of the brand in 2016.

About the Brand Rowan County Taskforce

Supported by the Rowan County Board of Commissioners and comprised of marketing and business professionals with diverse experience across many industries from throughout Rowan County, the Brand Rowan Taskforce will promote the many positive attributes of Rowan County in a way that aligns, motivates and empowers residents of Rowan County to become passionate brand ambassadors for our community and gains their support to make Rowan County a community of choice for new residents and businesses.

We feel that Rowan County is a great community with even greater potential. A 2016 brand study discovered that residents of Rowan County have a more negative perception of their home than those who reside outside of the county. We hope to change that perception significantly through communication, education, and other forms of outreach.

Our focus areas are education, public safety, the economy, and natural assets such as High Rock Lake. Brand Rowan will be proactive in overcoming the negative stereotypes that exist of these areas.

The Rowan County Community Brand

The Rowan County community brand was launched in 2016 following an extensive development process. This project included extensive market research among residents of both Rowan County and surrounding markets using interviews,

surveys, and focus groups. The process involved hundreds of stakeholders who provided their input and was guided by a taskforce of citizens representing a broad cross-section of the community. The brand has been adopted by several community organizations since its launch, including Rowan County government and the Rowan County Tourism Development Authority.

An extensive amount of background information regarding the development of the brand, including summaries of the market research performed, can be found here: <https://www.visitsalisburync.com/about/community-branding/>. All marketing communications developed as components of the proposed campaign must use the Rowan County community brand as the creative platform.

Scope of Marketing Services

This RFP seeks to identify professional marketing services providers for the execution of marketing initiatives specifically to enhance the image of Rowan County as a place to live, work, and visit. The target audiences for this effort include residents of Rowan County and those living in the surrounding region in places such as Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, and Concord. This audience may include influencers such as economic development officials, business owners, media, and others who can contribute to the economic vitality of the county.

The Brand Taskforce has established as a guide a ratio of 65% of the campaign targeted at current residents of Rowan County and 35% at audiences outside of Rowan County, but we are open to hearing alternate strategies from the selected partner. We also anticipate shifting these ratios to focus more outside of Rowan County in the future (as the internal perception improves). This initiative is not intended to replace the marketing of the Economic Development Commission or the Tourism Development Authority, both of which have their own ongoing marketing efforts.

We anticipate that digital marketing will be a significant component of this campaign, along with search engine optimization and public relations. While some

photography and video content is available, the selected agency may recommend producing additional imagery as part of the campaign. The scope of services includes any management of production and delivery to media vehicles as required. The selected firm may propose a suitable landing page which serves as a portal to other Rowan County resources as a component of its marketing plan recommendations.

As a part of the scope of services, the Brand Taskforce also seeks assistance with measuring the impact of this campaign through the use of digital marketing analytics, and other mechanisms such as a follow-up online survey distributed among local Rowan County residents.

Budget

The Rowan County Brand Taskforce has budgeted \$80,000 for this marketing effort, to be deployed over a six-month period. This budget is inclusive of any agency fees, media, production, travel expenses, and any regular and usual out-of-pocket costs for service. Results for this initial effort will be assessed and any future marketing budget then determined in collaboration with the selected partner.

Desired Characteristics of a Marketing Partner

The following characteristics are desired in a marketing partner by the Brand Taskforce. This list is not intended to be exhaustive but should be considered a guide.

1. The financial resources and credit-worthiness to plan, purchase, and make payment for all media.
2. The capacity to begin working with the Brand Taskforce as soon as possible to execute a successful campaign utilizing the assigned budget.
3. Expertise in basic analytical tools for measuring the results generated by messaging and media.
4. Expertise in all aspects of digital and social media, and the skill to evaluate, recommend, and produce online campaigns.

5. The ability to think strategically and to employ that strategic insight across all executions consistently and efficiently.
6. Assignment of a single point of contact that will collaborate regularly and directly with the Taskforce.
7. Production of accurate and timely invoices for the execution of services.
8. Production of written estimates for any project in advance of any work on that project.

Qualifications of the Firm

Please include the following as components of your proposal:

1. The size of your firm.
2. How long your firm has been in business.
3. A list of current clients.
4. Any relevant experience your firm has had with similar types of campaigns, including the clients served.
5. A summary of your firm's qualifications and recent experience in digital marketing and the tools used to measure its effectiveness.
6. A brief biographical sketch detailing the expertise and experience of the client service person(s) or team that will be assigned to the Taskforce.
7. References for your firm, including names and contact information (e-mail address and telephone).

Details of the Proposal

Please provide the following as part of your proposal:

1. The process your firm proposes for this initiative, including a project schedule over the six-month run of the campaign.
2. An initial recommendation of how you would address the needs of the Taskforce given the assigned budget.
3. A specific fee proposal for executing the proposed plan of work. All parts of the proposal will be considered negotiable.

Response Specifications, Delivery Instructions, and Schedule

1. The RFP response should be concise, and pages numbered.
2. The response should be delivered digitally via PDF file and sent to Chris Cavanaugh of Magellan Strategy Group at ccavanaugh@magellanstrategy.com.
For large files, please use Dropbox or a similar file-sharing service.
3. Responses received will be considered final and complete.
4. **Responses are due by 5 p.m. ET on August 13, 2018.**
5. Face-to-face interviews for finalists are slated for August 29 or 30, 2018.
6. Selection of a marketing partner firm will be completed by September 7, 2018.
The selected firm should be prepared to begin work immediately.

Additional Questions

Requests for additional information should be directed by e-mail to Paula Dibley, chair of the Rowan County Brand Taskforce, at paula.dibley@rccc.edu or James Meacham of the Rowan County Tourism Development Authority at meacham@visitsalisburync.com. Please copy Chris Cavanaugh of Magellan Strategy Group at ccavanaugh@magellanstrategy.com on any questions. **All questions must be submitted by July 30, 2018.**