

RFP-CASE-320669 Business & Tourism PR & Social Media Q & A:

Overview Questions

1. Are there major travel industry shifts / trends that impacted how you designed this RFP?

The continued growth and importance in digital communications and growth and evolution in social media channels; the realities of COVID-19 short-term on travel; and an organizational commitment to DEI all factored into the RFP design.

2. Are you open to evolving your travel audience archetypes in the coming year?

These archetypes are aligned with target audiences in the paid marketing campaign, but the Pure Michigan campaign always seeks to evolve with changing travel and audience trends.

3. What in-state industry groups do you use at subject matter guideposts?

We use a wide range of industry groups and local partners to serve as subject matter experts across MEDC communications efforts. A list of partners is available at <https://www.michiganbusiness.org/services/partners/> but others may be utilized as well as needed.

4. Are you considering hiring multiple agencies for one RFP?

Agencies may bid on just the business or just the travel component of the RFP, in addition to the RFP in its entirety. All proposals will be reviewed using the same criteria and point allocations.

5. How many agencies are involved in this process?

The decision lies with the MEDC, though industry representatives from local economic development and tourism industry partners will be included on the JEC.

6. How would you describe your ideal agency partner?

Able to provide integrated PR and social planning and execution, as well as collaborative and cooperative engagement with MEDC marketing agency(ies).

7. We would like to partner with one or two other firms. Is there a website or form that we can use to make all bidders aware of our interest in partnering?

Multiple firms may collaborate and submit one response to the RFP, but MEDC does not have the ability to facilitate those connections.

8. Would the MEDC prefer one comprehensive agency team to manage all aspects of this RFP, or a team focused on business and a separate team focused on tourism, working in tandem?

Proposed project staffing will be a key component of the technical proposal. Bidders can, and should, determine the best proposal regarding staffing. Please note that in addition to agency team(s), all proposed subcontractors should also be listed in the proposal.

9. What partners, if any, will be highlighted - we noticed “Venture Capital”, “investment”.

We use a wide range of industry groups and local partners to serve as subject matter experts across MEDC communications efforts. A list of partners is available at <https://www.michiganbusiness.org/services/partners/> but others may be utilized as well as needed.

10. Are we allowed to use the names, for the purposes of illustration in the RFP, names of partners?

Yes

11. What are some influencer campaigns that MEDC didn't execute that you admire?

Our most successful initiatives, including influencer activations, take on an integrated approach to earned and owned content demonstrating that Michigan is a world-class business and/or travel location. Examples of types of influencer campaigns bidders would recommend or be able to implement would be relevant to include within the proposal.

12. What would you say is the greatest challenge you face in attracting visitors to Michigan that you would like to see PR and social media efforts solve?

In 2021, the pandemic is the greatest challenge for the travel industry. Educating the traveler of the travel safely messaging and recognition that Michigan is naturally a vacation destination that embraces social distancing with the outdoor natural resources available. Economic recovery of the tourism industry in Michigan, over the next several years, will rely greatly on the ability to increase travelers to the state.

13. What prompted you to issue this RFP? Is your current AOR being considered?

The current contract is ending and an RFP is required. All submitted proposals will be considered.

14. What challenges have you faced with previous pr agencies or campaigns in the past?

We continue to prioritize integrated agency PR/social media efforts with both internal MEDC marketing and communications efforts as well as digital and campaign marketing strategies executed by marketing/advertising agency partners.

15. What does success look like in a year's time? Where do you hope to see progress or change?

Please refer to Public Relations and Social Media Objectives in the RFP. Incremental, but consistent progress on these objectives would define success.

16. How does the MEDC evaluate the effectiveness/successes of a campaign (measuring awareness, perception, etc.)? How satisfied are you with the current tools and systems you have in place to evaluate this?

Our most successful campaigns take on an integrated, multi-media approach that captures engagement at every stage of the awareness funnel and showcases why Michigan is a world-class business and travel location. Success metrics typically include placements, impressions, social engagement and website referrals.

17. Does this contract include only domestic support across the state, or is the selected agency expected to support international social and PR efforts, as well?

As of today, PR & social media efforts with international reach are not a proactive need of the organization – national-level support is expected. However, there are times that the MEDC PR & social team is tasked with supporting Michigan's presence at an international industry events and/or international missions.

18. Regarding international efforts, how many trade missions and business attraction events does MEDC typically participate in each year?

It varies year to year, based on strategic priorities and opportunities and has been as low as one in the past year to 10 in a single year at high point.

19. Will the selected agency be responsible for managing the social and PR co-op efforts?

There is not currently a co-op program within the PR/social media initiatives. Coordination with local EDO and DMO partners may be required at times however.

20. Will the selected agency be responsible for developing longer-form, narrative content across owned digital ecosystems?

Content development and creation across owned digital ecosystems would be part of the contractor responsibilities in collaboration with the MEDC internal communications team.

21. Approximately how many group and individual media fams do you execute annually in the business program and the leisure travel program?

It varies based on strategic objectives and available budget. On the travel side we have executed as many as 3-5 small group FAMs and additional independent press trips in a year and up to three small group FAMs/IPT on the business side.

22. Will agencies located outside of Michigan be included in this process?

Yes, agencies outside of Michigan are eligible to submit proposals.

23. Please share the names, roles and responsibilities of the MEDC team members who will be engaged with the agency selected.

The overall contract manager will be the Managing Director, Communications & Partnerships with additional internal communications team members directing specific components of the contract.

24. Who will the contractor report to? What is the desired frequency of calls?

The overall contract manager will be the Managing Director, Communications & Partnerships with additional team members directing specific components of the contract. Desired frequency of calls would be determined between MEDC and the selected contractor based on RFP proposal.

25. Who are the key spokespeople for both business and travel media opportunities?

For business: MEDC CEO, MEDC COO, MEDC Chief Business Development Officer and EVP, Chief Mobility Officer and Senior Vice President of Community Development. For travel: Vice President of Travel Michigan

26. Will current working members of the MEDC team be involved in the decision-making process?

Yes

27. Who will own the agency relationship?

The overall contract manager will be the Managing Director, Communications & Partnerships with additional internal communications team members directing specific components of the contract.

28. What do you think will make for a successful client/agency relationship?

This is a contract that requires close collaboration with the internal MEDC team, integrated efforts across agency partners, the ability for quick turnaround and covering diverse subject matter effectively and seamlessly.

29. How do responsibilities overlap with the MEDC's marketing agency of record?

Overall, MEDC's marketing agency of record handles all advertising and paid media opportunities (including social ads, custom content, etc.). The PR/social agency of record is lead on earned media efforts (including SME speaking opportunities) and owned channel content and strategy. There is some budget for amplification of organic content on owned channels the PR/social agency would manage.

30. How many assets (print, online) will the contractor be developing content for? What is the frequency?

Primarily website content for michiganbusiness.org and michigan.org and digital assets (infographics, etc.) for MEDC, Mobility MI and Pure Michigan social channels. However, this is not an exhaustive list and additional needs may arise.

31. How many staff does MEDC have in-house managing its PR and social media?

There are nine internal staff on the MEDC communications team.

32. How many events do you anticipate the consultant will need to lead? How often are they?

There is not a predetermined number at this time.

33. Will the PR agency have an advertising budget, or will digital advertising be managed separately?

Digital advertising budgets will be managed by the MEDC/Travel Michigan marketing agencies. However the PR/social contractor will be expected to evaluate and implement opportunities for paid social media support of organic content across relevant channels.

34. What is the estimated budget for the work laid out in the RFP?

You may use \$100,000 as an estimated out-of-pocket budget for travel and \$400,000 as an estimated out-of-pocket budget for business or propose another scenario. Any out-of-pocket budget will be included in the total contracted budget amount and should be included in the price proposal. Agency or labor fees should be proposed by the bidder. Actual budgets will be dependent on the overall State of Michigan budget.

35. We understand that state budgets have come under increased pressure due to the pandemic, so it would be helpful to know what do you anticipate the budget (both fees and out of pocket) will be so we can plan accordingly?

You may use \$100,000 as an estimated out-of-pocket budget for travel and \$400,000 as an estimated out-of-pocket budget for business or propose another scenario. Any out-of-pocket budget will be included in the total contracted budget amount and should be included in the price proposal. Agency or labor fees should be proposed by the bidder. Actual budgets will be dependent on the overall State of Michigan budget.

36. How many consultants do you plan to hire, and for which responsibilities (TV, radio, print, digital, etc.)?

There are currently RFPs out for Business advertising and Travel advertising.

37. What states or regions do you consider your top competitors who we should benchmark against?

Respondents should assume no regional targets for the national attraction campaign on business efforts. Regarding the business targets, please refer to our list of "Focus Industries" on page 3.

38. Are there any big milestones or announcements in the next year for the overall organization?

At this point none that are able to be shared.

39. How would you describe current perception of Michigan as a place to do business or invest venture capital among your top sectors/decision makers?

Perception has been steadily improving,

40. What are the top three reasons decision makers would choose to do business/invest in Michigan versus competitors?

Affordable cost of living combined with quality of life (for talent attraction purposes), diverse and skilled talent pipeline, competitive business environment.

41. What national policy issues are you watching on the horizon as it relates to economic development and the state's ability to compete?

Mobility/EV-related policies, Industry 4.0 adoption/advanced manufacturing, talent migration trends, and Buy American trends as they relate to onshoring or reshoring.

42. How would you describe the awareness of/engagement with your public business development resources? Good, room to grow? Are your stakeholders engaging with your reports and tools?

Awareness of MEDC suite of services continues to rise, based on annual research. However, there continues to be room for growth in overall statewide awareness of MEDC suite of services for in-state businesses, as well as attraction efforts nationally.

43. Are there specific initiatives that work exceptionally well and must be continued? Are there other areas where a boost is critical?

Our most successful programs take on an integrated, multi-media approach that captures engagement at every stage of the marketing funnel and showcases why Michigan is a world-class business and leisure travel location.

44. What are the core KPIs that you measure against today for both reaching business and community leaders and leisure travelers?

Increased coverage in targeted media publications, thought leadership opportunities and engagement, increased engagement and website referral from social media channels.

45. Can you describe current daily media tracking/coding (tools used, metrics reported) and how you are correlating to business and perception goals?

Media placements and mentions are tracked daily via Meltwater in addition to media monitoring tools utilized by the agency. Monthly, quarterly and annual reports help to inform strategies for growing awareness of MEDC programs and initiatives that align with our strategic focus.

46. Contractor will provide TOS and agency fees related to the program and the knowns outlined in the RFP. However, program tactics such as media tours and interviews can be difficult to estimate. Can the contractor bill out-of-pocket expenses that may arise during the program?

Any out-of-pocket budget will be included in the total contracted budget amount and should be included in the price proposal. Out-of-pocket expenses beyond those included in the contract will not be allowed.

47. Is the RFP being weighted 50/50 for business and travel?

Please refer to Section III of the RFP: RFP Process and Terms and Conditions.

48. What is the anticipated split between business attraction and tourism in both agency time and resources (i.e. annual budget)?

Annual budget is determined based on the legislative appropriation for MEDC programs, and the Travel Michigan as its own line item. It is unknown what those FY22 appropriations will be at this time.

49. Is there a budget sheet that Pure Michigan would like us to follow in this RFP?

No, but all information included in the Price Proposal section of the RFP must be included.

50. What do you see as current barriers to accomplishing your objectives (in business and travel)?

Budget uncertainty, competitive marketplace for coverage

51. What has been your most successful program/campaign within the past three years for business? Tourism? Based on what criteria?

Our most successful programs take on an integrated, multi-media approach that captures engagement at every stage of the awareness funnel and showcases why Michigan is a world-class business and travel location.

52. Will the chosen team work directly with the governor's office and other legislative entities to coordinate announcements that pertain to talent attraction? Tourism?

No, the contractor will work with MEDC who will serve as the liaison with the Executive Office, legislative entities and other local partners and stakeholders.

53. Which newsletter from the MEDC is the one referenced in the Contractor Responsibilities?

The Michigan Mobility newsletter - <https://www.michiganbusiness.org/ofme/newsletter/>

54. Does the winning bidder require to have an office in the state of Michigan? If not where would we need to be located?

No, there is not a requirement there be an office in the state of Michigan, however applicants should show unquestioned passion for and commitment to Michigan.

55. In the RFP there is mention of MDC promoting its service and offering to "new markets." Can you please identify these markets internationally and domestic? Please identify MDC primary markets domestic USA and international.

These markets are specific to export support opportunities by the international trade team, and not markets that are included in PR/social media targets.

56. Do new markets include Canada?

Canada, specifically Southern Ontario, is a target market of travel marketing efforts.

57. Is there a requirement for trade marketing efforts, such as booth designs, event attendance, and representation?

No

58. What are Pure Michigan's partnership program or plans with BrandUSA? Does this have to be accounted for in the RFP?

Partnerships/plans with BrandUSA will be accounted for in the marketing contract and do not need to be accounted for in the PR/social RFP.

59. What was the previous Fiscal Year spending on:

- social media initiatives
- public relations initiatives
- FAM trips and frequency of FAM trips
- strategy and planning
- paid media spends for Puremichigan.org and other paid media initiatives

You may use \$100,000 as an estimated out-of-pocket budget for travel. Any out-of-pocket budget will be included in the total contracted budget amount and should be included in the price proposal. Agency or labor fees should be proposed by the bidder. Actual budgets will be dependent on the overall State of Michigan budget.

60. Are trade initiatives such as Air Route Development, Event Management, Virtual Event Hosting, Webinars, and MICE a requirement of either PR or Social Objectives?

No.

61. Is there any preference for local firms or for out-of-state firms with a local partner?

Please refer to Selection Criteria in Part D of Section III of the RFP.

Target Audience

1. How much emphasis will be placed on your international markets in terms of time and resources? Do you have existing agencies in Canada, UK and German? Will content need to be produced in German?

As of today, PR & social media efforts with international reach are not a proactive need of the organization – national-level support is expected. However, there are times that the MEDC PR & social team is tasked with supporting Michigan’s presence at an international industry events and/or international missions. There is existing in-country agency support for leisure travel efforts in Germany and UK.

2. Which market(s) the RFP is applicable? Does it include the requested services in Germany or the German speaking countries (Germany, Switzerland and Austria) as well?

This RFP is applicable for in-state and U.S.-based markets.

3. Are the four consumer target audiences built with any typing tools? Or built within any specific syndicated research tools (Simmons, MRI, etc.)?

Research tools

4. What percentage of the plan should be devoted to in-state vs. out-of-state travelers?

There is not a set percentage and varies based on strategic priorities and available budget. Proposals should detail strategies for both in-state and out-of-state with an emphasis on out-of-state visitors.

5. What percentage of the plan should be devoted to the Business and Community Leaders target audience vs. the Leisure Traveler audience?

There is not a set percentage and varies based on strategic priorities and available budget for business PR/social and travel PR/social. Please refer to RFP for Contractor responsibilities across business and travel that would be expected regardless of breakdown.

6. Under focus industries (Business), which of the areas of focus have received the most attention in the media and which areas have received the least attention in the media?

Most attention: Mobility and Automotive Manufacturing. Least attention: Professional and Corporate Services/Medical Device Technology

7. On the business side, what are your key international markets for export services? What markets do you envision expanding to?

More details on MEDC's export support efforts are available at <https://www.michiganbusiness.org/services/international-trade/>

8. How are you handling international trade missions now/near future due to COVID?

Those plans are still under consideration. Currently, MEDC staff is not traveling internationally.

9. Toronto/Southern Ontario is a key market - how have you been navigating that with border closures? Do you anticipate a need to rebuild reputation/transit logistics?

All Canadian paid marketing is on hold until the border is reopened. Re-engagement strategy after the border opening will be needed to elevate Michigan as a travel destination.

10. What are top barriers to Michigan travel among target audiences (and any changes/new challenges to address related to COVID)?

COVID continues to be the greatest challenge at this time. Post-COVID, there is a challenge of limited resources compared with other states in reaching our key targets for travel consideration to Michigan.

11. Michigan was in the news a lot in 2020. What reputational impact have you seen, if any - as a leisure destination or place to do business - as a result? How would you characterize the need for issues mitigation?

From the leisure travel perspective, there is a focus on regional, drive-market travel and reinforcing the safe travel protocols in place in Michigan. From the business perspective reinforcing that Michigan is well positioned to take advantage of key trends resulting from the pandemic, including remote work and onshoring of manufacturing.

12. What are the common misperceptions about the State of Michigan as a place to work, live and play that the Pure Michigan campaign is trying to overcome?

The Pure Michigan campaign itself is focused on promoting leisure travel in the state as its primary KPI. It is also an asset on the economic development side in showcasing the quality of life Michigan has to offer businesses and talent alike. But that is not the primary intent of the campaign itself.

13. What's resonating with audiences about Michigan as a desirable place to live, work, play, and what is falling flat?

Affordable cost of living, vast recreation opportunities, vibrant communities big and small and emergence in key industries including mobility, tech, cybersecurity are all playing a role.

14. If existing, can you share relevant existing research: Audience, brand perception/reputation, demographics, etc.?

Available research/audiences beyond what was included in the RFP will be shared with the selected contractor.

15. What does a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion look like to MEDC?

Read more here: <https://www.michiganbusiness.org/news/2021/02/putting-values-into-practice-to-prioritize-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>

16. What perceptions are you most interested in changing in the minds of your targeted audiences?

Business audience: that Michigan is not only a manufacturing leader, but a place where tech, mobility, professional services and medical device/life science industries are thriving. Travel audience: Reinforcing the diversity of experiences and seasonal diversity Michigan has to offer.

17. What is the biggest perception issue that Michigan needs to overcome as a desirable place to do business? How have you identified that this is an issue? Is relevant data available?

Relevant data will be provided to the contractor. We continue to strive to grow the perception of Michigan as a state that embraces technology, and tech businesses, while embracing our rich manufacturing heritage.

18. What travel audiences would you like to see a greater focus placed upon? For example: disabled, pet-friendly, single travelers, LGBTQ, adventure seekers.

Diversity, equity and inclusion continues to be a top priority for MEDC across both business and travel PR/social media efforts and finding compelling stories about travel in Michigan across key audiences, including those specified in the RFP will remain a priority.

19. Does Pure Michigan currently work with a trade travel representative in both domestic US and the International market?

Travel Michigan has in-country representation in the UK and Germany.

20. Does Pure Michigan have a multicultural strategy, and is one needed, for the purposes of this RFP to encourage multicultural travel?

There is not a specific multicultural strategy. The selected contract will be expected to ensure a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion in all media plans and pitching for both business and travel.

Tourism PR

1. Are there any milestones and/or announcements to consider when building out scenarios?

Not currently, but bidders are welcome to use past announcements to inspire scenarios in their RFP response.

2. How is your social team structured and how would you see the agency working with them across organic and paid? For example, content planning/ideation/production, community management, etc.

MEDC's Digital Media Director directs overall social media strategy across business and travel with our agency partner providing strategy recommendations, digital content/post creation, community management and key reporting. The PR/social agency partner will also be expected to work collaboratively with both business and travel marketing agencies on relevant paid social strategies as needed.

3. In terms of talent and influencers, do you have existing relationships that we should be aware of? Are you looking to create new relationships or expand those relationships?

No. Influencer recommendations would be relevant to include in the proposal.

4. Are there brands in travel or otherwise that you admire? What campaigns have stood out to you recently?

Any brand or campaign is admirable that stands apart in their strategic messaging and emotionally connects with their intended audience in an unexpected level.

5. If you could write a headline that best encompasses the Pure Michigan experience, what would it be?

Michigan offers an authentic, four-season travel experience with national caliber recreation and cultural opportunities.

6. Beyond the "Pure Michigan" campaign, are there any other planned advertising activities rolling out in 2021/2022 that we should be aware of?

No. The Pure Michigan campaign is the only leisure-travel campaign planned for 2021/2022.

7. Does creation of campaign content for industry trade events also include booth production/visual design?

No.

8. Are there strategic relationships in place with OEMs, suppliers, manufacturers to support ongoing business media outreach?

MEDC works with a wide range of strategic partners to serve as subject matter experts and advocates on business media outreach efforts, including all of the above. These are utilized on an initiative and/or as needed basis based on MEDC relationships, rather than as formal partnerships.

9. Which recent media placements for business and tourism are considered to be wins in the eyes of the MEDC? Can you provide links and context? What is considered a success and why?

Placements that highlight the impact MEDC programs and services have on businesses and communities in Michigan in in-state media outlets and/or that demonstrate Michigan's leadership and competitive advantage in our focus industries in national/trade media would be considered a success.

<https://www.corpmagazine.com/industry/economy/medc-working-to-build-optimism-in-2021-and-beyond-for-state-businesses/>

<https://businessfacilities.com/2021/02/shovel-ready-sites-certified-and-ready-to-go-2/>

<https://chiefexecutive.net/clearcover-mixes-tech-mastery-with-legacy-expertise/>

10. What national consumer/tourism media placements have been secured in the past 24 months?

This is an extensive list. Over the past two fiscal years more than 380 national placements have been secured through Pure Michigan PR outreach efforts in publications including National Geographic, Travel + Leisure, Out & About, Readers Digest, Billboard, Family Circle and Gear Patrol.

11. What are some examples of wish list opportunities in terms of PR? Where have we not been that the MEDC would see as a home run in terms of media visibility?

Please refer to the PR Objectives listed in the RFP. Specific tactics to achieve those objectives is relevant content to include in the RFP proposal.

12. How long has the incumbent agency retained this work? Does the same agency manage the MEDC's social media efforts?

The incumbent agency manages both PR and social work for business and travel for the MEDC. They have served as the MEDC PR agency of record since October 1, 2011.

13. Is there a dedicated budget for media familiarization tours, or should agency partners propose one? How many media tours have been executed annually in the past? Are there example itineraries or materials from tours?

Agency partners should propose a budget and high-level itinerary recommendations. The number of media tours has varied from year to year based on strategic objectives and available budget.

14. For consumer/tourism media, is a spokesperson willing to travel if requested or required by an outlet?

Yes, within reason.

15. What percentage is seeding media opportunities and bringing those new relationships to the table, and what percentage is managing inbound vetting of requests?

There is not a pre-set percentage. However, MEDC internal communications team manages the majority of in-state, inbound media requests with the agency partner managing national & trade opportunities.

16. How does MEDC define business media placements compared to consumer placements? Can you provide a deeper explanation as it relates to crossover topics on mentioned on Page 3?

Business media placements are those in outlets that target business decision makers, C-suite executives, site selectors, etc. Consumer audiences would broadly be a Michigan resident. There are topics, like talent initiatives, affordability, supporting downtown businesses that are relevant from both a business decision-making perspective, and overall general interest standpoint by a broader Michigan audience.

17. Are there any state or regional economic development or tourism offices that MEDC considers a “conflict of interest?”

Not within the state of Michigan. Other Midwest states, or states with similar travel offerings or industry focus may present a conflict, but all proposals will be considered.

18. What changes/trends have you observed in business or leisure travel sparked by the pandemic (e.g., many cities/states lost residents to other regions, while others saw gain)?

In business there is a new trend in remote work, especially to smaller communities, that is impacting decision making post-pandemic, as well as a renewed focus to onshoring/nearshoring in supply chain logistics. In travel, drive markets are more important than ever, with more travelers looking to take road trips in the coming year, and a continued emphasis on safe travel protocols in place for destinations.

19. What work (in tourism) do you particularly admire?

Any campaign is admirable that stands apart in their strategic messaging and emotionally connects with their intended audience in an unexpected level.

20. How / why were the listed national markets identified? Is there research that is available to share?

Available research will be shared with the contracted vendor. The national markets for public relations efforts were selected to align with the markets that paid advertising is/is expected to be active in based on available budgets.

21. How / why were the non-Michigan regional markets identified? Research?

Available research will be shared with the contracted vendor. The regional markets for public relations efforts were selected to align with the markets that paid advertising is/is expected to be active in based on available budgets.

22. Is ‘over tourism’ a concern in some areas of the state? If so, what programs are currently in place to manage this challenge? Should ways to mitigate this problem be addressed in our proposal?

Creating media pitches to increase awareness of Michigan’s “hidden gems” and diverse communities, as well as encouraging in-state travelers to travel to new regions of the state and create opportunities for weekend getaways are included in the Public Relations objectives for leisure travelers.

23. Are international travel organizations a priority for media tours and general outreach?

Travel Michigan has in-country representation in the UK and Germany. The PR/social media contact is primarily focused on US, regional and in-state initiatives.

Social Media

- 1. Can you share the current range of social platforms that are being utilized across the 27 accounts? Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Reddit, Snapchat, TikTok, LinkedIn, etc.? Any video channels? YouTube? Any plans on exploring TikTok?**

We maintain an active presence on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest. In addition to evaluating opportunities with emerging platforms, the agency will be expected to be aware of and provide recommendations for content trends, industry best practices, changes in consumer behavior, and other opportunities for growing the MEDC and Pure Michigan social presence.

- 2. What are the MEDC's 27 economic development social media channels? How many are managed by your agency? How would you prioritize them? What new channels do you want to explore?**

Across the MEDC, Pure Michigan, Mobility MI channels we maintain an active presence on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest, with our agency partner providing community management for all except YouTube. There are several units within MEDC that also maintain specific social channels, separate from agency support. Priority is given to content and relevant audiences rather than individual channels. We are always evaluating emerging platforms for opportunities to reach our target audiences in new ways.

- 3. How open are you when it comes to new digital channels? What's the overall direction, style and tonality for social media? Traditional, informative, official or fun, trendy, next Gen?**

The PR/social media agency will be expected to have awareness of, and provide recommendations around trends and best practices in social media, new channels, changes in consumer behavior on social, etc.

- 4. What has the budget for paid social media been in the past? Can we get a percentage breakout for what was spent on each group of [social media platforms]?**

It has varied based on strategic objectives and available budget. Specific breakdowns will be determined with the contractor working collaboratively.

- 5. Can you share what, if any, responsibilities the selected agency might have for YouTube given that it is managed internally by the MEDC communications team?**

YouTube will continue to be managed in-house but the agency is always welcome to provide recommendations for optimizing performance of all MEDC channels.

- 6. Given the objective of "Increase website traffic to michiganbusiness.org from MEDC social channels", which of your social channels are used primarily as B2B communication tools? And which are used only as consumer touchpoints?**

MEDC's business social presence (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) are focused primarily on reaching B2B audiences. The Pure Michigan social channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube) are focused on driving consumer engagement.

7. Beyond the stated monthly and annual need, do you have a preferred cadence for performance reporting? Real-time Dashboards, Quarterly, Campaign end, etc.?

Please refer to the contractor responsibilities section(s) of the RFP for reporting requirements. We welcome recommendations and examples of additional reporting functionality from the agency.

8. Do you have existing influencer relationships that we would be continuing with?

No. Influencer recommendations would be relevant to include in the proposal.

9. Can you share examples of your best-performing posts for both business and tourism—organic and paid—over the past 12 months? Why are these posts considered wins?

Examples of our most-engaged organic posts for MEDC in FY20:

Twitter: <https://puremi.ch/2QqCRec> - A video announcing the opening of applications for Michigan Restart grants, which provided critical financial support to Michigan businesses impacted by COVID-19.

Facebook: <https://puremi.ch/3gcE3fR> | An episode of a video series highlighting stories of success in Michigan's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

LinkedIn: <https://puremi.ch/2QqCRec> | Visuals and details to support the announcement of a first-of-its-kind connected and autonomous vehicle corridor stretching from Detroit to Ann Arbor.

The above posts helped us achieve our goal of reaching the right audience with the right message at the right time while advancing the strategic goals of the organization.

Examples of our most-engaged organic posts for Pure Michigan in FY20:

Facebook: <https://puremi.ch/3g7sGpr> | 1.2M reach, 19k shares highlighting fall travel in Michigan

Twitter: <https://puremi.ch/3mJk7Cw> | 48k impressions, 3.6k engagements celebrating the 50th anniversary of one of Michigan's signature destinations

Instagram: <https://puremi.ch/2Rpizly> | 55k engagements highlighting the beauty and culture of Michigan in our 'Top Nine' for 2019

Posts that successfully inspire travel to and within Michigan – whether reaching 1.2 million users with an organic post or featuring a hidden gem in the state that inspires travelers to new places – are among those considered “wins.”

10. Can you share examples of your posts for business and tourism that did not resonate—organic and paid—over the past 12 months? Why do you think audiences did not respond?

The MEDC social presence targets multiple audiences - some more narrow-focused than others. Content that 'did not resonate' with the larger audience likely applied to a smaller segment of overall reach.

11. With 27 channels currently managed by the MEDC targeting its business audience, how will the agency be utilized to provide support? To be more specific, is community management (content development, posting of content and monitoring/response) needed for all channels, or are certain outreach channels managed by existing teams (the agency would serve more as a liaison or strategic counselor)?

The agency will provide community management for 6 MEDC channels, including the Mobility MI channels (1 Facebook, 2 LinkedIn, 2 Twitter and contribute to 1 Instagram) and 4 Pure Michigan channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest), including content development, scheduling/publishing, monitoring, and audience engagement.

12. Where has the MEDC seen the most social media growth in terms of its reporting/data collection?

One area of data collection that has seen significant growth is video analysis. We've tested video length, format (1x1 vs 16:9) and other platform-specific metrics that have helped to inform our video production and distribution strategy.

13. Does the MEDC have its eyes on any emerging channels for business and tourism?

The PR/social media agency will be expected to have awareness of, and provide recommendations around trends and best practices in social media, new channels, changes in consumer behavior on social, etc.

14. What is the current social media technology stack utilized by the MEDC? Are you utilizing any paid community management, social listening or content distribution services?

Sprout Social, Social Studio, Google Analytics

15. How long has the incumbent agency retained this work? Does the same agency manage the MEDC's PR efforts?

The incumbent agency manages both PR and social work for business and travel for the MEDC. They have served as the MEDC PR agency of record since October 1, 2011.

16. How satisfied are you with the current method of media tracking and coding procedure in place? Are you looking for the contractor to provide recommendations for improvements or a new process overall?

Recommendations on options and optimizations for tracking are welcome.

17. What tools does MEDC currently use to track and analyze social media presence and conversation?

Sprout Social, Social Studio, Google Analytics

Technical Questions

- 1. For the \$15MM marketing budget, assuming that \$8.3MM is working media placement, can you share what the split between event/activations, PR, Social Media, creative/content, production, etc. might be? Is the current budget inclusive of in-market activations?**

You may use \$100,000 as an estimated out-of-pocket budget for travel and \$400,000 as an estimated out-of-pocket budget for business or propose another scenario. Any out-of-pocket budget will be included in the total contracted budget amount and should be included in the price proposal. Agency or labor fees should be proposed by the bidder. Actual budgets will be dependent on the overall State of Michigan budget.

- 2. What percentage of the budget is typically allocated to an influencer marketing program? Should this include influencer discovery and creative programming/activation?**

It varies based on available budget and strategic priorities for the fiscal year. Influencer recommendations would be relevant to include in the proposal. All estimated costs related to influencer proposals should be included in the price proposal

- 3. Regarding Subcontractors, is this inclusive of production companies that we might consider using?**

Please refer to the subcontractor section of Part A in Section II: Proposal Format of the RFP. All proposed subcontractor costs should be included in the price proposal.

- 4. On Page 15, Point #2b, the primary evaluation variable is "Statement of Work". Is this specific to Points 2, 3, and 4 on Page 12?**

Yes.

- 5. Should we assume that only FTEs and hours allocated should be included in the Technical proposal? And rates/pricing + those corresponding FTEs/Hours included in the pricing proposal?**

The price proposal should include all expenses covering each of the services and activities identified in your proposal, including proposed out-of-pocket costs.

- 6. Do you have a specific Annual Hours base that you typically work from? [Our company] typically works on an 1,800 hours base, but we adjust as need be for our client partners.**

No, we do not work in annual base hours. Contract is on a retainer.

- 7. Please clarify what is meant by "a detailed research outline" for the Technical Work Plans, found on page 12 - section II, A.4 of the RFP.**

Bidders should outline how they intend to tackle the duties/responsibilities spelled out in Section I, with a proposed timeline for completion included.

- 8. Is there a preferred file type or format for the Price Proposal?**

Aside from following the instructions in Section II(B) and Section II(C) for submitting the Price Proposal (and including Attachment B (page B-1) Prices Held Firm Certification), the only requirement we have for

formatting is that the file is digital, as the proposals must be submitted via email to contractsandgrants@michigan.org. PDF is preferred as it is the most universal and easiest to work with, however Word doc or an image file (i.e., .jpeg) would also be accepted.

9. Is paid social handled through the overall advertising budget or should that be budgeted as a part of the social media agencies price proposal?

Digital advertising budgets will be managed by the MEDC/Travel Michigan marketing agencies. However the PR/social contractor will be expected to evaluate and implement opportunities for paid social media support of organic content across relevant channels and should include any recommended budget in the price proposal.

10. Is a physical copy of this submission required? Or, will it be submitted to contractsandgrants@michigan.org only?

Submit separately marked electronic versions of each of your Technical Proposal and Price Proposal to the MSF via email to contractsandgrants@michigan.org not later than 3:00 p.m. on May 19, 2021. Proposals will not be accepted via U.S. Mail or any other delivery method.