

Request for Proposal

Destination Marketing Guelph



RFP Outline

- Destination Marketing Guelph (DMG) is seeking a full-service agency to come on board and provide creative and media buying services to assist in developing and amplifying the “Guelph visitor brand” and promote tourism to the city of Guelph. The selected agency will assist in the development and execution of effective, integrated marketing programs that:
 - 1) Drive overnight visitation
 - 2) Solidify and reinforce Guelph as a premier tourism destination
- The purpose of this RFP is to seek and retain a qualified creative and media buying agency to work with the DMG team in planning, developing and executing marketing programs that integrate Paid, Earned and Owned channels to achieve the goals within DMG’s strategic marketing plan.
- Included in this document are details regarding this Request for Proposal for those able to carry out the scope of work. All proposals will be carefully reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria noted. If selected, you will be asked to attend a follow up meeting/presentation. The initial Scope of Work timeline contained within this RFP will be approximately June 26, 2023, to June 21, 2024.
- **Any questions you may have should be submitted to DMG no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday May 12th. Responses are due to DMG no later than 5:00PM on Friday, May 19th, submitted via email to hilary@guelphchamber.com**

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ABOUT US

- Destination Marketing Guelph (DMG) was created in December 2022 under the Guelph Chamber of Commerce with a mandate to market Guelph as a must-see visitor destination. Funded by the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) and working in tandem with the City of Guelph, DMG was created to promote and illuminate Guelph as a vibrant, unique, and authentic place to come play, stay and enjoy. Through a strategic and integrated marketing approach we will produce a long-term brand and messaging, digital and promotional products and assets that generate awareness, attract visitors, and create value for all our businesses, organizations, and events.
- This work will be built through targeted market research, stakeholder and community engagement, and strategic planning that will ultimately inform and support the tourism sector through the creation of products, destination development opportunities, and marketing. Led by the Guelph Chamber of Commerce as a not-for-profit organization, our goal is to drive awareness of Guelph and entice visitors to come and discover the many wonderful things our city has to offer.

Project Overview

- DMG requires a full-service marketing agency to assist in the integration and extension of the brand and creation of assets and products required to position Guelph as a must-see visitor destination. Initial branding work has been completed (please see appendix A) and requires conceptual expansion in order to incorporate and facilitate brand and messaging throughout products. This work must be coordinated with and incorporate digital properties currently under the City of Guelph (www.visitguelphwellington.ca website and @visitguelph SM channels).
- Branding/Messaging: Collaborate with DMG to finalize the creation of a consistent and compelling brand image, messaging and Guelph “story” that supports the brand. The look, feel and messaging must uniquely illustrate and incorporate the emotional response aligned with Guelph’s brand and DNA.
- Website and Logo incorporation: The DMG is tasked with all promotional aspects that will be “visitor facing” but must work in conjunction with the City of Guelph to incorporate the existing www.vistguelphwellington.ca (name subject to change) website as a content portion of a new website. This amalgamation of digital properties will be discussed further should you reach the in-person presentation/interview stage of the application process.
- Unique selling propositions (attractions and benefits unique to Guelph): Help define and identify UPS’s and incorporate them into overall creative. Help create the narrative of the “Guelph story” that promotes the UPS. Stakeholder/product/package/event information will be available at initiation of contract.
- Key Markets: Help identify channels and create assets that will target specific markets and ideal/future visitor profiles via UPSs and visitor profile information (visitor profile information will be available at initiation of contract). A visitor to Guelph is defined by anyone coming to the city beyond a 40-kilometer radius. Key market targets will be categorized as 1) Adjacent Markets i.e., Elora, St. Jacobs, Cambridge etc., 2) Regional Markets i.e., 401 corridor, GTA, Burlington, Hamilton etc., 3) National Markets i.e., Quebec, Ottawa, etc., 4) International Markets (niche) i.e., Upstate New York, Michigan, targeted parts of Europe (that align with UPS(s), sports, nature etc.
- Meetings, conferences and events: DMG has been mandated to help facilitate the attraction of appropriately-sized conferences, sporting events and initiatives. DMG, in collaboration with the City of Guelph, will proactively work to attract these specifically targeted groups.

Scope of Work

*A market research survey is currently taking place that will help inform and support much of the work regarding visitor profiles, stakeholder products and USP(s).

- The general Scope of Work includes the following:
 - Strategy: Working closely with DMG, collaborate on strategy to further develop, execute, and track results against an annual marketing plan that supports the strategies and tactics set forth by DMG. Includes strategic direction, creative strategy, brand development and stewardship and media plan.
 - Creative & Production: Develop a holistic approach to brand advertising including the production of creative materials and campaign elements. Produce creative, provide strong yet attainable recommendations for consideration, and manage the process of working with subcontractors as needed. Bring to final form the approved advertising materials to run/air on behalf of DMG.
- Creative materials may include but are not limited to:
 - Website creation
 - Print advertising
 - Broadcast-TV/CTV (budget dependent) radio, video assets
 - Digital ads
 - Signage, collateral, exhibit products
 - Content creation, newsletter and e-blast templates
 - Direct mail

Scope of Work

- Database/CRM: Help develop CRM/database (to be discussed further during presentation portion of application process).
- Influencer Identification: Assist in the identification and leveraging of social media users with a considerable following to showcase Guelph.
- SEO: Optimize website for search engines, to improve search engine rankings and increase visibility to potential visitors who are actively searching for travel destinations.
- Content Planning: Work with DMG to develop a comprehensive, integrated content marketing plan that leverages market intelligence to shape strategy and includes goals specific to DMG objectives and defined target markets, audiences and opportunities; strategies/tactics to achieve success; specific action steps that guide and track workload; and measurable outcomes.
- Media Planning & Buying: Help identify target outlets and channels based on key market indicators. Orchestrate media buys (based on short term and long terms goals and budget).
- Develop and prepare media plans for each key market. Utilize research and market insights to develop strategic recommendations for budget allocation, market prioritization, and channel mix. Leverage paid media partnerships and placements as a means to effectively distribute and amplify owned and earned content. Provide DMG with insights on emerging trends and new media to continually evolve and reach the target audience.

Scope of Work

- Execute offline and online media plans with strategic and cost-effective planning, buying and audits. Execution includes placement, optimization, cancellations, auditing, payment to vendors, and billing.
- Work with DMG to develop cooperative marketing programs to amplify the efforts of our members and stakeholder businesses and support DMG's overarching objectives.
- Reporting & Analytics: Once operational, regular monthly reporting on campaign and brand continuity program performance utilizing expertise, agency tools, data, and other resources to manage program efficiency and performance. End of campaign wrap up reports, including screenshots of all assets, dashboard of goal performance and executive summary of key takeaways that include qualitative and quantitative results mapping to larger objectives.
- Continue to look for ways to evolve measurement and reporting to show the bigger picture and communicate value to MAT contributors and DMG partners/stakeholders/Board of Directors.
- Research: Participate as needed in customer insight, creative testing and segmentation research. Provide data, creative assets and/or insights as requested for DMG's research and reporting.
- Account Support: Maintain regular communication on all activities/production development and provide a regular summary of all activities. Attend on-site meetings throughout the duration of the agency relationship as needed, at agency expense.
- Provide clear budgets and plans outlining when payment and materials are due for paid insertions prior to placing insertions. Agency and client will review, and client will approve before work begins.
- *It is also requested that agencies have bandwidth to take on special or out-of-scope projects, to be discussed and agreed upon on a case-by-case basis.*

Agency Selection Criteria

Agency selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Track record in building successful, or out-of-the-box marketing campaigns with measurable ROI
- Ability to deliver exceptional and innovative integrated work while strictly adhering to ROI/KPI metrics
- Highly creative and enthusiastic people across all parts of the agency and cultural fit with DMG team
- Familiarity with existing City of Guelph brand and products
- Experience in the travel trade/tourism/hospitality industry, associations and not-for-profit organizations, and/or group sales/meetings advertising
- Capabilities in goal setting, strategic planning, client/agency communication and measurable outcomes with proven ability to turn research and insights into innovative messaging
- Ability to integrate owned media content and public relations efforts
- Budget management, experience delivering cost-effective solutions and ability to negotiate favorable media rates
- Turnkey administrative and account support, from strategic level planning to concise day-to-day communication to timely billing that aligns with budget plans provided by DMG
- Level of experience of agency personnel who will take active, day-to-day responsibility for this account and adapt to customer needs
- Proximity to Guelph and availability to meet with DMG team in market
- Fee/Cost proposal that is reasonable and appropriate for the SOW, providing maximum services in relation to fees charged
- Contracts will be considered on a yearly basis. A substantial amount of the work and products required will take place over the first 6-month period. Further efforts will be required throughout the remaining 6 months but will be scaled based on timing and objectives outlined in the DMG's overall strategic marketing plan.

Measuring Success

The #1 goal for DMG is increasing overnight visits. DMG's overarching goal is to increase intent to visit, as measured by our research partner Probe. In addition to this goal, DMG has a set of strategic and tactical metrics to measure success, which will be tracked monthly.

1. **Web Visits:** increasing website visits has been (with existing www.visitguelphwellington.ca) and will remain a key metric. While overall focus is to increase numbers (quantitative), qualitative considerations are also important. The goal is to increase the overall number of unique visits and ensure the right traffic.
 2. **Partner Handoffs:** while attracting traffic to the DMG site is important, just as important is moving users down the funnel and sending them directly to stakeholder and business sites to book, reserve, buy, etc. This metric allows DMG to show value by bringing customers directly to stakeholders' digital door.
 3. **Social Engagement:** DMG will consider a like, share, comment or video play on any of DMG's social platforms an engagement. This is a valuable metric showing success in both paid and owned efforts.
- Additional metrics may be added to show success in different and specific ways. The agency should be prepared to work with DMG to find ways to effectively communicate metrics and results to the board and stakeholders.

Budget and Terms

- Proposed monthly agency fees should include work as identified in the scope above – with the exception of media buys.
- DMG will consider proposals that demonstrate the ability to fulfill the requirements of this RFP.
- Please outline specific budget considerations for fee, production, expenses, etc.
- The term of the agreement with the selected agency will commence on or around June 26, 2023, and extend to June 21, 2024.
- The term may be extended in one-year increments based on an annual review of accomplishment and subject to approval by DMG. Each annual review will allow for consideration of adjustments in agency scope and fees. DMG reserves the right to cancel contracted services for any reason with 60-day written notice.

Proposal structure and requirements

Please include the following sections and items within your proposal, with clarity and brevity in mind.

1. Company background and how your agency differentiates itself
2. Company leadership and day-to-day account staff
3. Initial ideas that demonstrate how your agency's experience and capabilities can address the following areas of opportunity:
 - **Solidifying the brand:** Guelph's many attractive aspects are well known to residents. How would your agency help to communicate and solidify the Guelph brand as a travel destination?
 - **Meetings and events:** An objective for both DMG and the City of Guelph is the attraction of meetings, conferences and sporting events. The return of the group business segment will play a very important role in Guelph's tourism and the travel industry's economic recovery. How can your agency help us reach this critical segment to drive and grow group/meeting business?
 - **Owned media strategy:** How would your agency help take our website, blog and social content strategy to the next level and integrate paid and owned media programs? How can you work with our PR initiatives to include earned media in the mix as well?
4. Account management procedures and how your agency balances strategic and tactical duties, including who will provide strategic leadership and who the main point of contact will be
5. Your agency's billing and reconciliation processes and amount of annual company billings
6. Current client list, including identifying any that might pose a conflict of interest with DMG
7. Three client references that your agency has worked with on similar programs with the expectation that DMG may contact some or all of them. Agencies understand that by providing references they are giving DMG permission to contact these clients.

Submissions

- Proposal submissions are due to DMG no later than 5:00PM on Friday, May 19th, submitted via email to hilary@guelphchamber.com. Any proposals received after this time or via any other channels may be disqualified and deleted. DMG does not take responsibility for any technical issues related to agency submissions nor receipt confirmation from DMG.
- Any questions you may have should be submitted to DMG no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday May 12th at hilary@guelphchamber.com. Questions will be addressed as quickly as possible and, in the order received. DMG will not take responsibility for the completeness or timeliness of answers.
- Notifications will be made by Wednesday, June 2nd, 2023, to let agencies know whether there is a desire to move forward in the selection process with an in-person meeting/presentation. DMG will make best efforts to ensure such emails are received but not take responsibility if for any reason they are not.
- Agencies that are selected for presentations will have the opportunity to submit questions prior to meeting/presenting.
- Submitting agencies signify understanding and agreement with these terms by responding to the RFP and will adhere to the following terms:
 - Do not contact any DMG Board Member, staff member, or members of the evaluation taskforce. Any contact with these individuals will automatically disqualify the agency.
 - All ideas and concepts shared with DMG in this RFP process are submitted in a non-proprietary manner. Presented ideas and concepts are available to use by DMG without any liability and do not constitute a formal agreement nor requirement for compensation. Proposals will not be returned to submitting agencies.
 - DMG reserves the right to change any part of this RFP, the process and/or altogether cancel at any point and for any reason without any liability to submitting parties.
 - Agencies understand that any information provided in a proposal that is found to be untruthful or otherwise a misrepresentation will automatically disqualify the submitting agency. In addition, should untruths or misrepresentation be found with the selected agency after contracting, such would be grounds for immediate termination of the contract without any liability from DMG.
 - All information (written or spoken) shared by DMG is deemed confidential and shall not be shared with outside parties.

Timeline

- The following is the approximate timeline and process for agency solicitation, evaluation and selection. DMG reserves the right to alter this timeline and will provide participating agencies notification of such adjustments.
- RFP distributed: Friday, April 28, 2023
- Agency questions deadline (via email only): Friday, May 12, 2023
- **RFP submission deadline: Friday, May 19, at 5:00 p.m.**
- Agencies notified of selection to move forward with presentations: Friday, June 2, 2023
- In-person agency presentations (at agency expense): Week of June 5, 2023 (dates subject to change)
- Final selection and agency notified: no later than June 16, 2023
- Contract development: Week of June 19, 2023
- Agency start date: Approximately June 26, 2023

Appendix A

