



Request for Proposals

Global Content Marketing Services



October 14, 2024

To All Prospective Bidders:

Visit California, a privately funded nonprofit corporation, is seeking a qualified company to provide content marketing services to support our mission of promoting California as a premier travel-destination.

The California Travel and Tourism Commission d.b.a. Visit California is a private non-profit 501(c)6 funded by assessed businesses that have an interest in promoting tourism to California. California Tourism is marketed exclusively by Visit California. The Tourism Assessment Program was created under the California Tourism Marketing Act in 1995 with the passage of SB 256. The legislation authorized self-imposition of an assessment by businesses that benefit from travel and tourism. It also authorized the establishment of a non-profit, public benefit corporation, Visit California, to oversee the promotion of California as a premier travel destination.

Visit California oversees the production of a variety of marketing activities, that may include television and online advertising, content marketing to include Website, social media, content series, visitor publications and maps, cooperative programs with traditional and non-endemic partners, public relations and travel trade programs – all designed to promote California to consumers, media and the travel trade industry. For more details, please visit <http://industry.visitcalifornia.com> in the "Travel Industry" section.

The total budget for this RFP is, on average, USD\$8,100,000 per year including travel and a USD\$1,500,000 paid media budget (inclusive of the agency fee) to support content distribution efforts. The annual contract period for the Scope of Work contained within this RFP will be approximately July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. Visit California may renew the contract each subsequent year for a five-year period, at its discretion. Visit California reserves the right to adjust the budget and related services.

Attached is an RFP for those capable of meeting minimum requirements and carrying out the scope-of-work. All proposals will be carefully reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria noted in the attached document.

Notice of Intent to Bid (a non-binding document), as well as any questions you may have to clarify this RFP, are due to Visit California no later than 4:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (PST), October 23, 2024.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Beteta".

Caroline Beteta
President and Chief Executive Officer
Visit California

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1. Introduction

California is the leading visitor destination in the United States peaking at US\$140.6 billion in 2019 for travel and tourism related spending prior to the pandemic. Since 1998, consistent investment in the California Tourism program (a joint marketing venture of Visit California and the California Division of Tourism) has helped to maintain California's position as a top destination in the U.S.

About Visit California

Visit California is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(6) corporation formed in 1998 to work jointly with the State of California's Office of Tourism to implement the annual Marketing Plan, which promotes California as a premier travel destination. While these two partners (Visit California and Office of Tourism) are separate legal entities, they are commonly referred to jointly as Visit California.

Visit California's marketing budget is directly derived from assessed businesses in the travel and tourism industry, car rental assessment, and a small contribution from the State. Visit California operates under the auspices of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development.

Visit California's 37-member board of commissioners is composed of individuals from all 12 designated regions of California. Members represent five principal industry sectors: Accommodations, Restaurants and Retail, Attractions and Recreation, Transportation and Travel Services, and the Passenger Car Rental Industry. 24 of the commissioners are elected by the industry (representatives of approximately 16,000 assessed businesses); the governor appoints 12; and the 37th is the director of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development. The Commission meets three times a year to direct Visit California's programs and activities. A statewide Marketing Advisory Committee also provides input in developing the marketing plan.

Visit California oversees the production of a variety of marketing activities, including on and offline advertising, visitor publications and maps, cooperative programs, public relations and travel trade programs – all designed to promote California to consumers, media and travel trade industry. For more details, visit industry.visitcalifornia.com. Also visit travelmattersca.com, the site produced by the Public Affairs unit about the economic impact of tourism and industry sustainability efforts.

2. Purpose And Company Expertise Requirements

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this RFP is to seek and retain qualified agencies to provide **Global Content Marketing Services** to support our mission of promoting California as a premier travel destination.

These services include:

1. Website content strategy and experience optimization
2. Domestic editorial content planning, creation, and management
3. International editorial content planning and creation
4. Email marketing strategy and execution
5. Paid content distribution
6. Program monetization and revenue generation

The selected partner(s) will be responsible for developing and implementing data-driven, innovative content strategies across multiple platforms and markets, enhancing Visit California's ability to inspire and inform potential travelers throughout their journey from dreaming to experiencing California.

2.2 RFP Structure and Participation Options

Visit California may select a single agency to handle all workstreams or choose multiple specialized agencies based on which approach best serves our needs.

We recognize that each agency has unique strengths and areas of expertise. As such, we invite you to submit proposals for the section or sections of this RFP that best align with your agency's core competencies. You may choose to bid on one, multiple, or all sections based on where you believe you can deliver exceptional results.

When crafting your response:

- Focus on the areas where your agency is uniquely positioned to execute and excel.
- Clearly articulate your specific strengths and how they align with Visit California's needs for the chosen section(s).

- If bidding on multiple sections, indicate how your services integrate across these areas.
- If bidding on a single section, explain how your specialized services could integrate with other potential partners in a multi-agency model.

We value authenticity and a true understanding of where your agency shines. A focused, high-quality proposal in your core area(s) of strength will be more compelling than a broad but superficial response to all sections.

This approach allows us to evaluate a range of potential partnership structures and identify the most effective way to meet our evolving content needs. We look forward to reviewing your thoughtful responses and exploring how your unique capabilities can contribute to the success of Visit California's content program.

2.3 Company Expertise

Your company should be an expert in Global Content Marketing Services. We require:

- At least five years' experience in that area; and
- Experience in the travel and tourism sector.

3. Historical Context & Future Considerations

3.1 California Now Media Network

The California Now Media Network (CMN) is designed to inspire and inform travelers about the diverse experiences California offers. This robust content network encompasses various owned channels, including:

	Domestic	International
Website	English/United States	German/Germany French/France Italian/Italy Spanish/Mexico

		Japanese/Japan Korean/South Korea
Print Publications	Annual California Visitors Guide Annual Road Trips Guide Official State Map	
Social Media Channels	Instagram Facebook TikTok Pinterest X Threads	Facebook (Australia , Canada , UK , India , South Korea , Mexico , Japan , Italy , Germany , Scandinavia , France) Instagram (Mexico , South Korea , Japan , France , Germany) X (Japan)
YouTube	Visit California YouTube	
Email Newsletters	US	Canada United Kingdom Australia Mexico
Podcast	California Now Podcast	

The CMN is instrumental in delivering compelling content to potential visitors at every stage of their travel planning journey.

The content program is guided by the following key objectives:

1. **Inspire Undecided Travelers:** Our primary goal is to motivate undecided travelers to choose California for their next trip. We define "undecided" as:
 - Travelers who are undecided about visiting California
 - Visitors who are undecided about where to visit within California

- Travelers who are undecided about what activities to do in their chosen California location
- 2. **Increase Visibility of Trip Planning Materials:** We aim to grow the visibility and utilization of our best-in-class California trip planning resources. Our focus is on making our content easily discoverable and accessible to consumers, whether through organic search, paid promotion, or algorithmic distribution.
- 3. **Build an Addressable Audience:** We strive to build and expand our addressable audience of consumers. An "addressable" audience includes individuals we can re-target through various channels:
 - Website visitors
 - Social media followers
 - Email subscribers
 - Print subscribers
 - Podcast subscribers

Strategies and Priorities

To achieve these objectives, we have established the following strategies and priorities:

1. **Leverage the CMN:** We will harness the full strength and foundation of the California Media Network to motivate undecided travelers, providing a cohesive and compelling narrative across all channels.
2. **Context-Based Content Experience:** Our content will be tailored and delivered based on traveler context, ensuring that we provide relevant and timely information at each stage of the travel planning process.
3. **Integrated Metrics:** We will utilize comprehensive, integrated metrics to inform our planning, optimize our programming, and effectively communicate the value of our content initiatives.
4. **Collaborative Content Planning:** We will implement a collaborative and integrated content planning ecosystem to create the most efficient path for content creation and distribution, ensuring consistency and maximizing impact across all channels.

Through these objectives and strategies, we aim to position California as the premier travel destination, providing inspiring and informative content that guides travelers from the initial stages of dreaming about a trip to the final moments of their California experience.

3.2 Historical Context

Visit California's content program has historically been managed through a comprehensive, integrated approach. Key aspects of this management structure include:

Content AOR Partnership

Traditionally, all content planning, development, distribution, and reporting have been executed and distributed by a single agency. This agency has worked in close collaboration with Visit California's internal team.

Visit California Internal Team:

1. Director of Content Marketing
2. Editorial Manager
3. Digital Marketing Manager (website)
4. Social Media Producer
5. Content Manager - Distribution Channels (Email, Podcast, Print)
6. Content Coordinator - Social Channels
7. Content Coordinator - Print & Digital Channels

This structure has allowed for a cohesive content strategy across all channels, ensuring consistency in messaging and brand voice.

Recent Enhancements

To further strengthen the integrated approach to content planning, the Editorial Manager position was recently added. This role was created to drive integrated content planning and reporting across all channels, ensuring a more strategic and aligned content approach.

Supporting Partners

In addition to the primary AOR relationship, Visit California's content program is supported by specialized partners, including:

- Web development agency: Responsible for the technical aspects of Visit California's digital presence.
- Creator and UGC platform (Crowdriff): Facilitates the incorporation of user-generated content and collaborations with short-form video content creators.
- In-market agencies for each of the 12 international markets charged with delivering against the key objectives in each market.

This collaborative ecosystem has allowed Visit California to maintain a robust and diverse content program, leveraging expertise to create compelling and effective content across all channels.

3.3 Future Consideration

As we look to the future of our content program, several key drivers contributed to the structure of this RFP. These considerations are crucial in shaping the direction of our content strategy and will influence how we collaborate with our agency partners moving forward.

1. Shift to Integrated, Cross-Channel Content Planning and Execution

We are actively moving away from a channel-based approach to content planning and execution, towards a more integrated, cross-channel strategy. This shift is being facilitated by our newly appointed Editorial Manager, whose role is to ensure cohesive content planning and execution across all platforms.

We seek to further enhance this integrated approach, creating synergies between different channels and ensuring a consistent, compelling narrative across all touchpoints in the customer journey. We welcome strategies from potential partners on how to optimize this cross-channel integration, maximizing the impact and efficiency of our content efforts.

2. Domestic Content Volume and Efficiency

As the domestic editorial content on the Visit California website has continued to expand, we are critically examining the optimal volume of content needed on an ongoing basis. We aim to strike a balance between comprehensive coverage and efficient resource allocation, ensuring that our content remains fresh, relevant, and impactful without unnecessary redundancy.

3. Reprioritizing Global Website Content

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, California is actively working to regain global market share in key international markets. Consequently, our global website content needs, which were previously deprioritized, now require renewed focus and resources. We seek to effectively address these global content requirements while maintaining the strength of our domestic content.

4. Enabling Contextually-Relevant Content Delivery

Advancements in technology have opened new possibilities for delivering personalized, contextually-relevant content to consumers. We are exploring how to leverage these technological capabilities to better meet diverse traveler

needs. Through this RFP, we aim to evaluate whether editorial production and more technical content distribution needs should be awarded separately or whether they continue to make sense together under one agency. We welcome innovative proposals that address this consideration.

5. Leveraging Technology for Content Process Efficiency

We recognize the potential for technology like artificial intelligence to significantly enhance the efficiency of our content processes. We see opportunities to integrate AI technologies in various aspects of our content creation, curation, and distribution workflows. We are interested in exploring how AI can be responsibly and effectively utilized to streamline our operations, improve content personalization, and enhance overall content quality and relevance.

We invite potential partners to demonstrate their expertise, innovative approaches, and strategic thinking in addressing these evolving needs. We are open to fresh perspectives and creative solutions that can help us navigate these challenges and opportunities, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and impact of Visit California's content program.

4. Contract Term

The initial contract term shall be one year. Visit California reserves the right to renew its agreement prior to the end of each contract term for a total of five (5) years, provided funding to do so is appropriated for this purpose in subsequent budgets. There will be an oral review approximately six months after the contract date and subsequent reviews annually prior to renewal. Proposed renewals are also assessed according to program direction, funding, and consistency of price and scope of work continuity.

The proposal will be based on a contract term of July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

5. Available Funds

We are seeking quality, cost-effective services. **Visit California will fund the contract(s) up to \$8,100,000 (USD) annually.** This is inclusive of agency travel and a \$1,500,000 cost for paid media (inclusive of the fee) to support content distribution efforts. For each section answered, please indicate what percentage of the budget you plan to allocate for that

section.

Visit California reserves the right to adjust both the budget and related services.

The budget for this RFP shall be made in U.S. dollars.

6. Evaluation Process & Criteria

Visit California will form a committee to evaluate the written proposals. The criteria for the scoring of the proposals are included as **Attachment B**. The committee may at any time during the evaluation process seek clarification from Proposers regarding any information contained within their proposal. Final scores for each Proposer will reflect a consensus of the evaluation committee. Any attempt by a Proposer to contact a member of the evaluation committee outside the RFP process to gain knowledge or an advantage may result in disqualification of Proposer.

The top finalists chosen by the evaluation committee will be asked to provide oral presentations to the evaluation committee. All proposers and key team members working on the account should ensure they are available for the Oral presentations at the Visit California offices on the dates presented in the Tentative Schedule. After the oral presentations, there will be a question and answer period. You will be notified of the total presentation time. In addition to Proposer management, key personnel performing day to day activities will be requested to attend.

Please note: Upon completing the selection process under this RFP, Visit California will notify the winning Proposer and all other Proposers who were not selected. Visit California's deliberations are confidential. Accordingly, while we understand that non-selected proposers may wish to ascertain reasons for their non-selection, Visit California is unable to respond to any subsequent questions and/or requests for information as to why a company was not selected.

7. Tentative RFP Schedule

This tentative schedule may be altered at any time at the discretion of Visit California.

Deadline	RFP Event
October 14, 2024	RFP public announcement
By October 23, 2024 (by 4:00pm PST)	Deadline for agencies to submit <i>Intent to Bid & Questions</i>
November 1, 2024	Posting of Q&A on website
December 9, 2024 (by 4:00pm PST)	Deadline for the agencies to submit proposal
January 6, 2025	Compliance review completed – Committee review begins
Week of February 3, 2025	Finalists selected and notified
Week of February 17, 2025	Discovery/Pre-Calls with qualified proposers (if applicable)
Week of March 17, 2025	Management conducts oral interviews
Week of March 31, 2025	Selected proposer announced – contract negotiations begin
July 1, 2025	Commencement date of new contract

8. Minimum Requirements

8.1 Questions

All Proposers wishing clarification of this RFP must submit questions via email to: RFP Submissions rfps@visitcalifornia.com by the date and time referenced in Section 6, Tentative Schedule. **Prior to submitting questions, please review the questions and answers located on our website at:**

<http://industry.visitcalifornia.com/About-Visit-California/Requests-for-Proposals>

8.2 Notice of Intent to Bid

Notice of Intent to Bid (**Attachment A**) must be returned by October 23, 2024 at 4:00 pm, PST. The notice must be submitted via e-mail to rfps@visitcalifornia.com. The Notice of Intent to Bid is non-binding; however, it ensures the receipt of all addenda related to this RFP. Proposals will be accepted only from applicants who submitted a timely Notice of Intent to Bid.

8.3 Budget Form

A complete Budget Form (**Attachment C**) must be included, in the excel file format provided with this RFP, and must include all requested budget line items before submission. All costs associated with the Scope of Work must be included in the format provided in U.S. dollars. Costs for developing proposals are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be reimbursed by Visit California. All proposers agree that budget costs submitted with their proposals are valid for 180 days from the date Visit California receives your proposal.

8.4 Financial Statements

Proposers are required to demonstrate financial viability for maintaining an account of this size. Please provide **one copy** of GAAP / IAS compliant YoY Comparative financial statements, including but not limited to:

- Income Statement; and
- Balance Sheet.

All of the above Financial Statements must be the most recent statements available, but no more than 12 months old. Financial statements can be submitted on-line or be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed and mailed to Compliance Officer, RFP Submissions - Visit California at the address listed on page 48. After review, all financial statements will be destroyed or returned to Proposer.

If Proposer would like a **Non-Disclosure Agreement** (NDA) signed, please complete, sign, and return the NDA (**Attachment D**) along with your Intent to Bid form by the date specified in the Tentative Schedule.

If a proposal is a joint proposal, you must submit financial statements for both Proposers.

Please note that financial statements are not optional, but a minimum requirement, even for private companies. Proposers who do not provide financial statements will not be considered.

8.5 Other Minimum Requirements

We seek a partner with the following minimum experience:

- At least five years' experience in Global Content Marketing Services; and
- Experience in the travel and tourism sector.

All proposals submitted shall become the property of Visit California and shall not be returned to the Proposer. Visit California also reserves the right to:

- Adjust the RFP timeline
- Award all, part, or none of this RFP to any number of proposers.
- Reject any and all bids
- Waive any or all mandatory requirements if no proposers meet one or more of the requirements
- Cancel this RFP
- Revise the amount of funds available under this RFP
- Amend this RFP as needed; and
- Not select a vendor or award a contract from this RFP

All proposers agree that budget costs submitted with their proposals are valid for 180 days from the date Visit California receives your proposal.

Proposals may be rejected if minimum requirements are not met.

9. Content of Proposal

Your proposal should be based on a full year of activities. Each proposer must include a complete and detailed discussion, in a narrative format, for each of the items listed in sections below. The discussion of these items will be used to evaluate the proposer's qualifications for effectively delivering the requirements outlined within this RFP.

Your discussion should include the details and strategies of how you intend to accomplish the tasks involved, your experience in accomplishing those tasks, estimated timeframes for accomplishing those tasks, an implementation schedule, and any deliverables you may provide that will be derived from those tasks. In addition, you should also include a discussion of any relevant managerial experience, examples of any relevant past projects that demonstrate your skills and qualifications, and any other relevant information and evidence to support your skills and qualifications for successfully executing this scope of work and meeting our objectives.

Please note that the Scope of Work and all tasks involved will be subject to negotiation between Visit California and the awardee for the initial contract period. The details of your proposal will be used to negotiate the contract scope of work, and to evaluate your overall proposal as described in **Attachment B**, Proposal Evaluation Criteria.

9.1 Services and Activities

- Provide a letter of interest and executive summary of the proposal.
- Provide a description of the nature of the proposer's services and activities.
- Provide the year in which the company was formed.
- Note the company's history and expertise as it pertains to this RFP, including relevant case studies.
- Note your company's global reach.
- List the address from which the primary work on the contract would be performed (if applicable).
- List the size of the organization by headcount.

- List the number of full-time and part-time employees. Do not list any sub-contractors in this section.
- Provide a current and past client list.

9.2 Conflict of Interest

The proposer must certify that there is no conflict of Interest between any existing contracts. Client relationships that could potentially be a conflict of interest must be listed together with a discussion of how the Proposer will resolve the potential conflict of interest and receive approval from other clients, if needed, prior to the oral interviews.

9.3 Personnel / Management

The proposer shall identify:

- The contract manager for this work; and
- The individuals who will be conducting the day-to-day work.

For all individuals assigned to this account, please provide:

- Current resumes/curriculum vitae (CV) demonstrating qualifications related to this RFP. Include the length of time with the agency, as well as length of time in the industry; and
- Provide an organizational chart for the management and staff that will be assigned to this account.

9.4 Subcontractors

The proposer should identify all proposed subcontractors for work that exceeds US\$5,000. For each subcontractor:

- Document which portions of service will be performed by subcontractor;
- Describe their ability to perform the work;
- Provide the name and background of their company, if applicable; and
- Submit resumes of the proposed subcontractor's key personnel, including those conducting day to day work.

The use of subcontractors is subject to approval by the President and CEO of Visit California. Therefore, not all work recommended by the proposer will necessarily be approved and not all subcontractors listed in the Proposal will necessarily be selected. The proposer must make it clear to any subcontractors included in the proposal that even if the proposer is selected, the subcontractors may not necessarily be selected.

9.5 Account Management Philosophy & Methodology

The proposer shall identify:

- Preferred account management methodology and the organization's overall philosophy/strategy for adoption with new customers.
- Defined account management team roles and responsibilities, both for organization and for Visit California.
- Proposed approach to implement this methodology in the first 30, 60, and 90 days of being awarded this RFP.
- Proposed account management structure and how this account team works with individual contributors and specialists.
- If applicable, how the proposed account management team will work with any subcontractors or partners.

9.6 Proposal Scope of Work

Visit California seeks a comprehensive response from potential agency partners that demonstrates your expertise, vision, and unique value proposition for the section(s) of choice to help us accomplish the goals laid out in section 3.

In your proposal, we want you to:

1. **Showcase Your Agency's Strengths:** Highlight what makes your agency stand out in the realm of the chosen section(s). Demonstrate your expertise through relevant case studies, innovative approaches, and measurable results.
2. **Evaluate Our Current Position:** Provide your assessment of Visit California's current approach. What are we doing well? Where

do you see opportunities for improvement?

3. **Present Your Vision:** How would you transform our approach? Outline your approach to creating a more efficient, effective, and user-centric content ecosystem for Visit California.
4. **Make Your Case:** Why is your agency the best partner for Visit California? Explain how your unique capabilities, experience in the travel and tourism sector, and innovative methodologies make you the ideal choice to elevate our content strategy.

We encourage you to be creative in your response. Feel free to challenge our assumptions and present bold ideas that showcase your agency's thought leadership and strategic vision. Your proposal should reflect a deep understanding of consumer content preferences and the unique requirements of the travel and tourism industry.

Ultimately, we're looking for a partner who can bring fresh perspectives, measurable results, and a collaborative approach to help Visit California maintain its position as a leading destination marketing organization in the digital space.

Section 1: Website Content Strategy & Experience

Visit California seeks a partner to elevate our website content presence by transitioning to a more focused, data-driven approach. We aim to:

- Strategically evaluate content creation needs
- Identify opportunities for content reuse and repurposing
- Leverage data insights for story selection and content creation
- Drive organic search visibility through SEO strategies
- Implement robust content hygiene practices

The ideal partner will integrate these elements with content quality management, strategic planning, and campaign-specific content experiences. This holistic approach should support our overall marketing objectives and enhance user engagement across all digital touchpoints.

Working closely with our editorial creation partner, you will play a crucial role in evolving our content strategy to be more efficient, effective, and aligned with our audience's needs and behaviors.

Agency responsibilities will include:

1.1 Website Content Strategy & Planning

- Assess the role of website editorial content through a website content strategy that focuses on quality over quantity, leveraging data-driven insights to determine optimal content volume and types that truly resonate with and serve our audience's needs.
- Annual and Quarterly Content Planning
 - Develop comprehensive annual website content plans aligned with Visit California's overall marketing strategy and goals.
 - Create detailed quarterly content plans that break down the annual strategy into actionable timelines and deliverables.
 - Ensure plans account for seasonal trends, major events, and key marketing initiatives.
 - Outline strategies for creating new content based on:
 - Data-driven insights from website analytics, user behavior, and search trends.
 - Identified content gaps and emerging travel trends.
 - Propose innovative content formats and experiences to engage visitors and support conversion goals.
- Content Reuse and Repackaging Strategy

- Develop a systematic approach to audit existing content for reuse opportunities.
- Plan for strategic repurposing and repackaging of high-performing content to extend its lifecycle and reach.
- Identify opportunities to update and refresh evergreen content for improved relevance and SEO performance.
- Editorial Content Brief Development
 - Create detailed briefs for the editorial agency based on the annual and quarterly website content plans.
 - Ensure briefs clearly communicate content objectives, target audience, key messages, and desired outcomes.
 - Establish a feedback loop with the editorial agency to refine and improve brief effectiveness over time.

1.2 SEO Strategy and Implementation

- Develop and implement a comprehensive SEO strategy to improve visibility and discoverability of Visit California's content across search engines.
- Conduct thorough keyword research to identify high-value search terms relevant to California travel and tourism.
- Develop a keyword strategy aligning with content themes, user intent, and different stages of the travel planning journey.
- Create a keyword mapping strategy for existing and planned content across the website.
- Provide guidelines for optimizing on-page elements including title tags, meta descriptions, header tags, and image alt text.
- Develop best practices for internal linking to improve site structure and content discoverability.
- Implement schema markup to enhance rich snippet appearances in search results.
- Conduct regular content gap analyses to identify opportunities for new content creation based on search demand.
- Develop strategies for optimizing content for voice search queries and featured snippets.
- Provide recommendations for optimizing content for international markets, including hreflang implementation and country-specific SEO strategies.
- Manage SEO tracking using tools like Google Search Console and third-party SEO platforms.

Provide regular reports on organic search performance, including rankings, traffic, and conversions.

1.3 Content Hygiene and Quality Assurance

- Establish and maintain high standards of content quality across all channels.
- Develop a system to conduct regular content audits across all channels.
- Identify outdated, underperforming, or redundant content for updating or retirement.
- Develop a content archiving strategy to manage older content while preserving SEO value.
- Create a schedule for regularly reviewing and updating evergreen content.
- Develop processes for quickly updating content in response to changes in travel conditions, attractions, or local regulations.
- Implement a system for incorporating user feedback and corrections into content updates.
- Collaborate with the domestic content agency when significant changes are needed to existing content.

1.4 Website Content Experience Planning and Activation for Campaigns

- Lead the development of website content marketing experiences for Visit California's three primary brand campaigns: Overarching Annual Brand Campaign, Family Campaign, and Road Trips Campaign.
- Work with domestic and global editorial teams to develop a content experience strategy aligning with campaign objectives and target audiences.
- Create a comprehensive content journey map outlining how users should interact with campaign-related content across all owned channels.
- Concept campaign-specific landing pages or content hubs on the Visit California website.
- Develop Joint Marketing Requirements Documentation (MRD)
 - Collaborate with Visit California's team to jointly develop Marketing Requirements Documentation for key projects that require website content. These primarily include significant campaign initiatives which take place 3X annually.
 - Defining a standardized MRD template that captures all necessary project details for website content experience.
 - Establishing a process for joint brainstorming and requirements gathering sessions.
 - Participating in the brand campaign planning process.
 - Outlining clear roles and responsibilities for both the agency, Visit California and the website development agency in the MRD development process.

- Ensure a seamless transition between paid brand campaigns and owned media website experiences.
- Work with the website agency to advise on implementation of concepts.

1.5 Developing Reporting Mechanisms

As part of enhancing the website content strategy, it is essential to implement robust website content reporting mechanisms and establish comprehensive content performance dashboards. These tools will allow Visit California to track the performance of content initiatives, measure the impact of SEO strategies, and ensure data-driven decision-making throughout the content lifecycle.

Reporting Mechanisms for Content Performance

To ensure the website content strategy is consistently aligned with Visit California's goals, developing clear and actionable reporting mechanisms is crucial. Please note that Visit California does have a dedicated website partner, Oomph.

The selected partner will work in concert with Oomph and the internal Visit California web team to:

- **Establish key performance indicators (KPIs):** KPIs should reflect user engagement with the content.
- **Customize analytics tracking:** Integrate analytics platforms such as Google Analytics 4, Google Search Console, and third-party SEO tools to track content performance across the website. Tracking should be built to enable detailed insights into organic search rankings, keyword performance, and user interactions.
- **Integrate performance data into web performance dashboards:** Partner with the website agency to ensure all content performance metrics are integrated into web performance dashboards.
- **Setting up reporting schedules:** Develop a system for generating regular performance reports (monthly, quarterly, annually) that highlight content effectiveness, reveal content gaps, demonstrate organic search performance, and understand user engagement. This will support continuous optimization of the website content strategy.
- **Content-specific feedback loops:** Work with the Visit California research team to collect user feedback on content, such as satisfaction surveys or content reporting tools, which will provide direct input from visitors on content accuracy, relevance, and engagement.

Continuous Optimization through Data Insights

The reporting mechanisms and dashboards will play a key role in the ongoing optimization of Visit California's content. The partner will:

- **Conduct regular performance reviews:** Use insights from the dashboards and reports to identify underperforming content, opportunities for repurposing or updating, and gaps in content offerings.
- **Data-driven content strategy adjustments:** Collaborate with Visit California to refine content strategies based on data trends, including adjusting editorial focus, creating new content around emerging travel interests, and optimizing SEO tactics.
- **Real-time campaign monitoring:** Ensure real-time tracking of campaign-related content allows for agile adjustments during active campaigns, maximizing engagement and conversions through timely optimizations.

In summary, the development of reporting mechanisms and dashboards will empower Visit California with the insights needed to make informed decisions, drive continual improvements to content performance, and achieve stronger alignment with both user needs and business goals.

Section 2: Domestic Editorial Content Planning, Creation, and Management

Visit California seeks a highly skilled and strategic partner for the planning, creation, and management of domestic editorial content across multiple platforms. This partnership will ensure the production of nuanced, high-quality content that elevates California's diverse tourism offerings, engages target audiences, and maintains consistency across all digital and print channels.

The ideal partner will demonstrate:

- A deep understanding of California's diverse tourism landscape
- Exceptional storytelling abilities with a keen eye for nuance and local flavor
- Strong collaborative skills for working closely with industry partners
- The ability to produce content of the highest editorial quality
- A depth of experience in producing diverse content mediums
- Flexibility to adapt to evolving tourism trends and audience needs

2.1 Editorial Strategy and Planning

Editorial Calendar Management

- Collaborate with the Visit California team and the Website Content Strategy agency (if a different agency is selected) to drive the ideation for net new editorial content topics.
- Maintain a comprehensive editorial calendar that covers all content channels, including website, social media, email, podcast, paid content distribution, and print. This calendar should reflect Visit California's strategic priorities and ensure a consistent narrative across platforms.
- Work closely with Visit California's Editorial Manager to align content across all platforms and ensure it supports the broader marketing objectives.

Editorial Board Participation

- Actively participate in biweekly editorial board meetings to discuss new content requests from industry partners, balancing partner needs with strategic goals.

Market Research Integration

- Use market research, audience insights, and trend analysis to inform content planning, ensuring that all editorial content meets the evolving needs of California's tourism landscape. Leverage both quantitative data and qualitative insights to drive decision-making.

AI and Technology Integration

- Explore and implement AI and other cutting-edge technologies to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of content creation and management. This includes using AI for content ideation, production, and performance optimization where appropriate.

2.2 Content Creation and Execution

The heart of Visit California's content strategy lies in the creation of compelling, accurate, and diverse content that showcases the state's rich tapestry of experiences. This section outlines our expectations for content creation across various platforms, each demanding a unique approach while maintaining a consistent standard of excellence.

Our content must not only inform and inspire potential visitors but also reflect the depth and breadth of California's offerings. From in-depth website articles to engaging social media posts, from comprehensive print publications to captivating podcast episodes, each piece of content should contribute to a cohesive narrative that positions California as a premier travel destination.

We seek a partner who can seamlessly blend journalistic integrity with marketing savvy, creating content that is both informative and persuasive. This content should be grounded in thorough research, enriched by local insights, and crafted to resonate with our target audiences across different platforms.

The following subsections detail our specific requirements for each content type. Throughout all of these, we expect our partner to maintain an unwavering commitment to quality, accuracy, and engaging storytelling that captures the essence of the California experience.

Website Editorial Content

- Develop and produce web site content on an ongoing basis. Currently, this equates to approximately 200,000 words in a 12-month time period and is a mix of short and long form content. However, through the work outline in section 1, we anticipate that the production of net new content should decrease.
 - Develop in-depth, engaging articles that showcase California's diverse offerings, hidden gems, and emerging trends in travel and tourism.
 - Ensure each piece of content is thoroughly researched, incorporating local insights and expert opinions to provide unique value to readers.
 - Craft content that aligns with SEO best practices and the strategy delivered via the website content strategy work while maintaining a compelling narrative style.
 - Incorporate multimedia elements such as high-quality images, infographics, and embedded social media content to enhance the user experience. Currently, this equates to approximately 1,200 photos annually, and whose rights should last in perpetuity.
- Create content that is easily adaptable for use across other marketing channels (e.g., social media, email campaigns, print materials).
- Thorough fact-checking of content prior to posting.

Print Publications

- Develop and produce three annual tourism publications:
 - California Visitor's Guide
 - Road Trips (or other seasonal publication)
 - Official State Map
- Create a plan to distribute 500,000 Visitor's Guide and Road Trips (note: primary distribution method today is polybagging with like-minded magazine titles, distributing via California welcome centers, and website ordering).

- Track and report on key metrics to evaluate the performance of both digital and print aspects of Visit California publications.
- Current tourism publications specs.:

California Visitors Guide Specs:

Copies printed: 500,000
Trim Size: 8" x 10 ½"
Total Pages: 196
Binding: Perfect
Cover: 100LB #3 Gloss
Body: 40LB #4
Inks: 5/1 cover; 4/4 body
Coatings: Flood gloss UV on C1, C4, spine

California Road Trips Guide Specs:

Copies printed: 1,000,000
Trim Size: 7" x 10"
Total Pages: 64
Paper: 50LB #3 Gloss self-cover
Inks: 5/1 cover; 4/4 body
Coatings: None

California Official State Map Specs:

Copies Printed: 1,000,000
Size Delivered: 5-1/2" x 8-5/8"
Flat Size: 22" x 34-1/2"
Panel Sizes: 8.625" + 8.625" + 8.625" + 8.625" +
Paper: 60lb #3 Satin
Inks: 4cp
Coatings: None

Podcast Production

- Episode Production and Management
 - Produce 20 episodes per year of Visit California's "California Now" podcast.
 - Develop and maintain a production schedule, ensuring timely delivery of episodes.
 - Manage all aspects of pre-production, production, and post-production.
- Host Management

- Evaluate current podcast host performance and determine if a change is needed.
- If required, conduct a search and selection process for a new host.
- Manage and prepare the podcast host, including:
 - Providing talking points and briefing materials for each episode.
 - Conducting pre-interview briefings and post-interview debriefs.
 - Offering ongoing coaching and feedback to enhance host performance.
- Guest Management
 - Identify and secure high-quality, relevant guests for each episode.
 - Conduct pre-interviews with guests to ensure content alignment and quality.
 - Manage all guest communications, including scheduling and providing necessary information.
- Content Strategy and Topic Selection
 - Develop a comprehensive strategy for topic selection, ensuring alignment with Visit California's marketing objectives and target audience interests.
 - Create an editorial calendar for the year, with flexibility for timely or opportunistic topics.
 - Conduct research to identify trending topics, emerging California travel experiences, and unique stories that will engage listeners.
- Recording and Technical Production
 - Manage all aspects of recording, including:
 - Securing appropriate recording facilities or managing remote recording setups.
 - Ensuring high-quality audio capture for all participants.
 - Handle all technical aspects of production, including audio editing, mixing, and mastering.
 - Incorporate music, sound effects, and other audio elements as needed to enhance the listening experience.
- Platform Management and Distribution
 - Secure and manage the podcast hosting platform for "California Now."
 - Optimize podcast metadata, descriptions, and tags for maximum discoverability.
 - Ensure timely upload and distribution of episodes to all major podcast platforms (e.g., Apple Podcasts, Spotify).
 - Monitor and troubleshoot any technical issues related to podcast delivery and accessibility.
- Quality Control and Improvement

- Implement a quality control process to ensure each episode meets Visit California's standards.
- Regularly review listener feedback and analytics to inform content decisions and improve the podcast.
- Provide monthly reports on podcast performance, including listenership metrics, audience growth, and engagement statistics.
- Promotion and Cross-Platform Integration
 - Develop strategies to promote the podcast across Visit California's other marketing channels.
 - Create promotional assets (e.g., audiograms, quote graphics) for use on social media and other platforms.
 - Explore opportunities for cross-promotion with relevant partners or complementary podcasts.

Social Media Management

- Content Calendar and Strategy
 - Create and manage a comprehensive Social Content calendar aligned with editorial content and cross-organizational initiatives.
 - Utilize content trend research and data analytics to inform the Social Content calendar.
 - Develop and maintain an overall strategy for short-form video content across all VCA social channels
 - Maintain alignment with the brand and advertising team and agencies to ensure content strategy aligns with key brand and advertising moments.
- Content Creation and Posting
 - Produce and post up to eight (8) social media updates per day across the domestic channels in the following platforms:
 - Facebook
 - Instagram (including feed posts, Reels, and Stories)
 - Threads
 - X
 - TikTok
 - YouTube Shorts
 - Ensure all posts align with current sentiment and include necessary elements:
 - Engaging copy
 - Relevant links
 - Appropriate partner tags and DMO mentions

- Regional mentions when applicable
- Up to four (4) high-quality images per post
- Create and post short-form video content for TikTok, Instagram, YouTube Shorts and Facebook
 - Manage the creation of video content for VCA social channels.
 - Collect and curate raw video assets from Crowdriff and other sources.
 - Create content from creator-submitted short-form video for use on VCA social channels.
- Platform-Specific Management
 - Manage Visit California's social media channels, including content creation and performance tracking. Note that community management and moderation is handled by a moderation agency.
 - Optimize content for each specific platform, adhering to best practices and leveraging platform-specific features.

Content Quality and Consistency

- Editorial Guidelines and Style Guide
 - Maintain comprehensive editorial guidelines ensuring consistency in tone, voice, and messaging.
 - Create a Comprehensive Visit California-specific style guide, including guidance on terminology and brand-specific language.
 - Provide training to all staff working on content to ensure adherence to established guidelines.
- Fact-Checking and Accuracy
 - Establish and execute rigorous fact-checking processes, especially for travel information and destination details.
 - Implement a system for regular review and updating of factual information.

2.3 Analytics and Performance Monitoring

To ensure Visit California's editorial content strategy is continuously optimized and aligned with the broader marketing objectives, robust analytics and performance monitoring must be integrated across all content creation and management efforts. The selected partner will be responsible for establishing systems to track, analyze, and report on the performance of content across all platforms, ensuring data-driven decisions and ongoing improvement.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Development

- The agency will work closely with Visit California to establish relevant KPIs that accurately reflect the success of editorial content. These KPIs should provide a comprehensive view of content performance across different platforms and formats.

Performance Reporting and Adjustments:

- Provide regular content performance reports (monthly, quarterly) to ensure that editorial output aligns with Visit California's engagement goals.
- Track channel performance across print, social media, and the podcast.
- Use data to understand how different platforms contribute to overall audience engagement. Ensure content is optimized not just for SEO but for audience interaction and cross-channel amplification.
- Implement a feedback loop where insights from performance metrics (e.g., social media likes, podcast ratings) inform the content creation process.

Performance Dashboards

- As part of their responsibilities, the chosen agency will be tasked with managing a performance dashboard that tracks and analyzes the success of Visit California's social media, podcast, and print content.
- This dashboard will provide real-time insights (where available in cases like social media), allowing the team to make data-driven decisions and optimize content strategies across these platforms.
- The selected agency will be provided with a requirements document to inform the dashboard production.

Section 3: International Editorial Content Planning, Creation, and Management

Visit California recognizes the potential for expanded content marketing efforts in local regions and is evaluating how to efficiently grow content that motivates undecided travelers. As a reminder, we define "undecided" as:

1. Travelers who are undecided about visiting California
2. Visitors who are undecided about where to visit within California
3. Travelers who are undecided about what activities to do in their chosen California location

To help understand the international market approach, there are currently three tiers of markets:

	Canada	Mexico	U.K.	China	Australia	France	South Korea	India	Japan	Germany	Middle East	Nordics	Italy
Airlift Development	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Basic Inspiration & Information Available	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Market Intelligence	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Foundational B2B/Trade	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Foundational B2B/Earned	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Targeted B2BC Partnerships	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
Content Marketing	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
Digital Direct to Consumer Media	•	•	•	•	•								
Multi-Layered Direct to Consumer Paid Media	•	•	•	•	•								

3.1 Strategic Approach to International Content Marketing

Visit California is seeking an agency partner capable of writing a highly strategic and efficient content marketing approach for our international regions. Global audiences represent approximately 12% of our ad-influenced spending. Our resources are not unlimited, and we must be judicious in our allocation.

We need a partner who can evaluate:

- The role of existing content created for domestic audiences and how to localize and reuse that content at scale in international markets.
- The optimal owned channel mix for each market, that will inform content creation prioritization. (note, this could lead to the creation of new channels for markets, or the deprioritization of existing channels in markets).
- What content needs to be newly created specifically for each market, identifying gaps that cannot be filled by adapted domestic content.
- How to leverage technology like AI effectively to scale content creation, localization, and distribution in global markets.

Visit California and existing partners in the regions can provide a deep understanding of each market's nuances (although we appreciate and value the experience and input of the selected agency here). We are looking for a partner that can help develop a strategy and framework to repurpose and adapt content across regions where appropriate and provide the strategic acumen to identify where unique, market-specific content is truly necessary.

The ideal agency will demonstrate how they can leverage content marketing in these regions in the most impactful way, balancing the need for tailored, high-quality content with the realities of our resource constraints. We're looking for innovative, scalable solutions that can maximize our reach and engagement with international audiences while maintaining cost-effectiveness and efficiency in our global content marketing efforts.

3.2 International In-Language Consumer Planning Content Plans

While we are looking to build a long-term strategy that identifies the opportunities of content marketing overall, there are specific current needs that need to be addressed and effectively executed:

Market-Specific, In-Language Evergreen Content Plan

Develop evergreen, in-language content plans for websites tailored to each priority market, considering cultural nuances, travel preferences, insights and analytics like SEO data. This should focus on evergreen content with a long shelf life that aids in trip planning, not time-sensitive campaign material.

Prioritize evergreen content creation and adaptation based on the following market tiers:

- Tier 1: Mexico, Canada, UK, Australia, China
 - 30-50 pieces of editorial content for the website
- Tier 2: France, South Korea, India, Japan, Germany
 - 20-30 pieces of editorial content for the website
- Tier 3: Middle East, Nordics, Italy
 - 10-20 pieces of editorial content for the website

Identify key topics and themes relevant to international travelers across different markets, such as:

- Destination guides
- Transportation information
- Accommodation options
- Year-round attractions and activities
- Practical travel tips (visas, customs, local customs, etc.)

Create a content calendar for the development and regular updating of evergreen planning content, ensuring it remains current and valuable for potential visitors.

3.3 International In-Language Consumer Content Production

Website Evergreen Content Creation

- Create high-quality, engaging evergreen content for the Visit California website as identified in the consumer content plans, tailored specifically for international audiences. This content should:
 - Be written in the local language of each target market, ensuring linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance.
 - Reflect the unique interests, travel preferences, and information needs of each international market.
 - Incorporate local SEO best practices to improve visibility in market-specific search results.
 - Be designed for easy navigation and consumption on both desktop and mobile devices.
 - Include appropriate calls-to-action that guide international visitors through their travel planning journey.
- Ensure all content is factually accurate, up-to-date, and aligns with Visit California's brand voice and messaging guidelines while being culturally appropriate for each market.
- Incorporate rich media elements to enhance the user experience and content effectiveness, including high-quality, culturally relevant images

Leverage Crowdriff Content for International Social Media Asset Development

Crowdriff is a visual content marketing platform that Visit California uses to source, manage, and rights-manage user-generated content (UGC) and creator short-form video content. Crowdriff provides access to a wealth of photography and authentic, diverse short-form video content created by travelers and influencers showcasing California experiences. The video content typically has no voiceover, making it particularly suitable for repurposing in international markets.

We expect the selected agency to efficiently adapt and optimize this content for each target market, ensuring cultural relevance and alignment with local social media trends while maintaining the authenticity of the original UGC. The resulting videos should be versatile enough for our in-market teams to use across various

social media platforms and website applications, effectively showcasing California's diverse experiences to international audiences.

This would be needed for Tier 1 and Tier 2 markets.

- Develop a systematic approach to reviewing and selecting the most relevant and high-quality Crowdriff video content for each market, considering:
 - Cultural relevance and appeal
 - Alignment with market-specific travel preferences and interests
 - Visual quality and storytelling potential
 - Diversity of experiences, locations, and travelers represented
- Create a library of market-specific video assets by repackaging and adapting selected Crowdriff content:
 - Edit videos to optimal lengths for the two primary international social media channels (e.g., Instagram Reels, Facebook Stories)
 - Add locally relevant text overlays, captions, or subtitles in the appropriate language
- Incorporate market-specific calls-to-action
- Ensure all edited content maintains the authenticity and spontaneity of the original UGC
- Develop a content calendar for each market, planning the strategic use of these video assets across various social media platforms throughout the year
- Create a mix of content types using the Crowdriff videos, such as:
 - Destination highlights and virtual tours
 - Seasonal experiences and events
 - Thematic compilations (e.g., food and wine, outdoor adventures, urban experiences)
 - Travel tips and practical information presented in an engaging visual format
- The agency partner should demonstrate their expertise in adapting UGC for international markets, showcasing their ability to maintain authenticity while ensuring cultural relevance and brand alignment. Proposals should include examples of successful UGC adaptation strategies implemented for other destinations or travel brands, highlighting the agency's capacity to leverage platforms like Crowdriff effectively.
- Additionally, the agency should outline their approach to measuring the effectiveness of these adapted video assets in driving engagement and supporting Visit California's marketing objectives in each international market.

Section 4: Email Marketing

Visit California seeks a strategic partner to elevate our email marketing program, focusing on audience growth, engagement, and personalization. The ideal partner will leverage innovative email strategies to distribute compelling content, nurture subscriber relationships, and support our broader marketing initiatives across diverse markets.

We've designated email marketing as a distinct workstream due to its potential. While we have successfully tested greater segmentation, our current program lacks a holistic approach, presenting a clear opportunity for enhancement. We believe that by partnering with an agency with a specialty in advanced email marketing, we can substantially increase the program's sophistication, effectiveness, and overall impact on our marketing efforts.

The selected partner will be tasked with developing and implementing more refined segmentation strategies, creating personalized content journeys, and employing data-driven tactics to boost engagement and conversion rates. This focused approach will allow us to transform our email marketing from a broad communication tool into a powerful, tailored touchpoint in our customer experience.

Agency responsibilities will include:

4.1 *Email Strategy Assessment and Refinement*

- Conduct a thorough audit of the existing email strategy, including goals, metrics, and performance.
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities within the current email program.
- Recommend strategic adjustments to improve alignment with overall content distribution and campaign integration efforts.
- Propose updated, measurable goals for the email program based on industry benchmarks and Visit California's specific objectives.
- Develop a strategic roadmap for evolving the email program, with a focus on increasing personalization and relevance over time.
- Develop and implement lead-generation tactics to increase list sizes, with a particular focus on building in-state audiences.
- Explore and implement new tactics for list growth, commensurate with available budget.
- Create strategies to reactivate dormant subscribers and maintain list hygiene.

- Implement interactive email elements and campaigns to increase engagement, within available budget constraints.

4. 2 *Technology Stack Management (Current provider: Zeta)*

- Evaluate the current email marketing technology stack to ensure alignment.
- Recommend enhancements or new tools to support advanced personalization and automation.
- Implement and manage selected email marketing platforms and tools.
- Ensure seamless integration of email technology with other marketing systems (e.g., CRM, website analytics) to create a unified view of the consumer.
- Stay abreast of innovative email technologies and propose implementations that could enhance the subscriber experience.

4. 3 *Audience Segmentation and Personalized Email*

- Develop and refine detailed subscriber personas based on demographics, psychographics, and travel behaviors.
- Design and implement a scalable segmentation framework that allows for increasingly targeted communications.
- Create a roadmap, outlining the progression from basic to advanced email personalization tactics over time.
- Implement dynamic content modules within email templates for personalized content delivery.
- Utilize behavioral triggers to create automated, personalized email journeys.
- Apply machine learning algorithms for advanced content recommendations and personalization.

4. 4 *Email Creation and Deployment*

Content Curation and Adaptation:

- Regularly review and curate content from Visit California's website, blog, social media channels, and print publications to identify high-potential stories and themes for email.
- Adapt selected content for the email format, ensuring it is concise, scannable, and optimized for various devices and email clients.
- Develop a content repurposing strategy to maximize the value of existing editorial assets across different email types (e.g., newsletters, promotional emails, triggered emails).

Email-Specific Content Creation:

- Craft compelling subject lines, preheaders, and call-to-action (CTA) copy that align with the curated content and drive open rates and click-throughs.
- Develop email-exclusive content when appropriate to provide added value to subscribers and encourage ongoing engagement with the email program.

Visual Content Optimization:

- Select and optimize images from Visit California's asset library to complement the editorial content in emails.
- Create email-specific graphics, infographics, or interactive elements that enhance the narrative and encourage engagement.

Editorial Calendar Integration:

- Align email content planning with Visit California's broader editorial calendar to ensure timely and relevant communication.
- Develop a content pipeline that anticipates upcoming themes, events, and campaigns, allowing for strategic content development and curation.

Accessibility and Inclusivity:

- Ensure all email content adheres to accessibility best practices, making it consumable for all subscribers regardless of abilities.
- Develop content that reflects the diversity of California and its visitors, ensuring representation and inclusivity in storytelling.

Email Deployment Management

- Manage twice weekly email deployments in the United States.
- Manage biweekly email deployments in U.K., Canada, Australia, and Mexico, contingent upon local market conditions.
- Note: Translation services are not covered under this scope; Visit California or its translation vendors will handle all translations.
- Ensure timely and error-free deployment of all scheduled emails.
- Monitor and respond to any delivery issues or technical problems.

Testing and Optimization

- Design and implement a comprehensive testing strategy to continually refine email elements, including subject lines, content, design, and send times.
- Establish a process for rapid testing and implementation of learnings to drive ongoing performance improvements.
- Develop and apply predictive models to optimize send frequency and content mix for individual subscribers.
- Continuously analyze test results and provide recommendations for program improvements.

Compliance

- Ensure all email marketing activities comply with relevant regulations (e.g., CASL, GDPR, CAN-SPAM) across all markets.
- Develop and maintain email marketing best practices guidelines for Visit California, covering areas such as permission, transparency, and subscriber preferences.
- Implement a process for regular audits of email practices to ensure ongoing compliance and adherence to industry standards.
- Stay informed about changes in email and data privacy regulations and adjust practices accordingly.
- Provide guidance and training to relevant Visit California staff on compliance requirements and best practices.

4.5 Integrating with Content Sales for Sponsored Email

Collaborate closely with Visit California's content sales team to develop and execute effective sponsored email content that provides value to sponsorship partners while maintaining the integrity and engagement of the email program.

- Partnership Strategy Development:
 - Work with the content sales team to create attractive sponsorship packages that leverage the email channel's strengths and audience reach.
 - Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) for sponsored content that align with both partner objectives and email program goals.
- Sponsored Content Integration:
 - Create guidelines for seamlessly integrating sponsored content into regular email communications without disrupting the subscriber experience.
 - Develop templates and best practices for sponsored content that maintain Visit California's brand voice and editorial standards.
 - Implement native advertising techniques to ensure sponsored content feels organic and valuable to subscribers.
- Customized Partner Campaigns:
 - Design tailored email campaigns for high-value partners that showcase their offerings while aligning with Visit California's overall messaging.
 - Develop co-branded email templates that balance partner visibility with Visit California's brand identity.
 - Create exclusive partner content series or themed newsletters that provide in-depth exposure for sponsors.
- Audience Segmentation for Sponsors:

- Utilize email subscriber data to identify and target the most relevant audience segments for each sponsorship partner.
- Develop capabilities for partners to reach specific geographic, demographic, or interest-based segments within the email audience.
- Performance Reporting for Partners:
 - Create comprehensive performance reports for sponsored content, including engagement metrics, click-through rates, and conversion data.
 - Develop benchmarks for sponsored content performance to guide future partnerships and pricing strategies.
 - Provide partners with actionable insights based on campaign performance to inform their broader marketing strategies.
- Compliance and Disclosure:
 - Ensure all sponsored content is clearly labeled and complies with relevant advertising and email marketing regulations.
 - Develop clear disclosure language that maintains transparency with subscribers while satisfying legal requirements.

- Partner Education and Onboarding:
 - Create educational materials and onboarding processes for sponsorship partners to understand email best practices and performance expectations.
 - Offer consultative services to help partners optimize their content for the email channel.

4.6 Performance Measurement

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Development

- Work closely with Visit California to establish relevant KPIs that accurately reflect the success of email marketing efforts. These KPIs should provide a comprehensive view of email performance across different types of campaigns and subscriber segments.
- Develop KPIs that go beyond standard email metrics (open rates, click-through rates) and work with the Visit California research team to develop and implement a measurement framework that shows how the email program affects brand metrics like intent to visit.

Performance Reporting and Adjustments

- Provide regular email performance reports (weekly, monthly, quarterly) to ensure that email marketing output aligns with Visit California's engagement goals.

- Track performance across different email types (newsletters, sponsored emails, triggered emails) and subscriber segments.
- Use data to understand how email contributes to overall audience engagement and trip planning funnel. Ensure email content is optimized not just for opens and clicks, but for driving website traffic and engagement.
- Implement a feedback loop where insights from email performance metrics inform the content creation and segmentation strategies.

Performance Dashboards

- Develop and manage a comprehensive email performance dashboard that tracks and analyzes the success of Visit California's email marketing program.
- This dashboard should provide real-time insights where possible, allowing the team to make data-driven decisions and optimize email strategies quickly.
- Include visualizations of key metrics, trend analysis, and segment comparisons to facilitate easy interpretation of data.

Advanced Analytics

- Utilize predictive analytics to forecast email performance and identify opportunities for optimization.
- Conduct regular cohort analysis to understand how subscriber engagement evolves over time and inform retention strategies.

A/B Testing and Optimization

- Develop a robust A/B testing program for continuous improvement of email performance.
- Test various elements including subject lines, content, design, send times, and personalization strategies.
- Provide detailed analysis of test results and clear recommendations for implementing learnings.

Competitive Benchmarking

- Conduct regular competitive analysis to benchmark Visit California's email performance against industry standards and direct competitors.
- Provide insights on emerging trends and best practices in the travel and tourism email marketing space.

Integration with Other Channels

- Analyze how email performance correlates with other marketing channels (e.g., social media, website, paid advertising) to inform cross-channel strategies.
- Provide insights on how email can be better integrated with other channels for a cohesive marketing approach.

Section 5: Paid Content Distribution

Visit California is seeking a partner to design, implement, and manage a subset of the digital media program with the primary objective of amplifying Visit California's content and driving traffic to the Visit California website. This includes seeding published content, extending well-performing content, and capitalizing on timely, seasonal content. The partner will be responsible for creating and managing a paid content budget, currently set at \$1.5 million including fees.

Agency responsibilities will include:

Budget Management

- Create and manage an annual paid content distribution budget of \$1.5 million.
- Develop a strategic allocation plan for the budget across different content types, platforms, and seasons.
- Implement a flexible budgeting approach that allows for real-time optimization based on content performance and emerging opportunities.
- Provide regular budget utilization reports and forecasts to ensure efficient use of resources throughout the year.

Content Amplification Strategies

- Develop comprehensive strategies for paid social media and content distribution across various platforms.
- Create tailored approaches for:
 - Seeding newly published content to kickstart engagement and reach.
 - Extending the life and reach of well-performing content through additional paid support.
 - Capitalizing on timely and seasonal content to maximize relevance and impact.
- Identify and leverage emerging digital platforms and formats to stay ahead of content consumption trends.
- Implement advanced targeting techniques to ensure content reaches the most relevant audiences.

Platform Selection and Optimization

- Continuously evaluate and select the most effective platforms for paid content distribution based on audience presence, engagement metrics, and cost-effectiveness.
- Optimize content for each platform's unique features and audience behaviors.
- Stay abreast of new advertising products and beta opportunities across platforms that could benefit Visit California's content distribution efforts.

Real-time Optimization

- Establish processes for real-time monitoring and optimization of paid content campaigns.
- Implement A/B testing strategies to continually refine messaging, visuals, and targeting approaches.
- Develop a rapid response system to capitalize on trending topics or unexpected opportunities relevant to California tourism.

Cross-channel Integration

- Ensure paid content distribution efforts are integrated with organic social media strategies and broader marketing campaigns.
- Collaborate with other marketing teams to ensure alignment of paid content efforts with overall brand messaging and campaign objectives.

Reporting and Insights

- Develop a set of KPIs that align with Visit California's overall content and marketing objectives.
- Implement robust tracking and analytics to measure the performance of paid content distribution efforts.
- Conduct regular performance analysis (monthly) to identify top-performing content types, formats, and themes.
- Deliver actionable insights and recommendations based on campaign performance and industry trends.
- Integrate paid content distribution performance metrics into existing Visit California dashboards, ensuring seamless reporting and analysis of how paid distribution efforts impact overall content performance, engagement, and conversion across channels.
- Conduct quarterly strategic reviews to assess the effectiveness of the paid content distribution program and proposed refinements.

Section 6: Program Monetization

Visit California is seeking a partner to continue its comprehensive monetization strategy for its content program across various channels. The ideal partner will work to maximize revenue opportunities that help offset the cost of the content program. It's critical that this program continues to provide partners with valuable opportunities to reach target audiences while maintaining the integrity of Visit California's brand and content.

Agency responsibilities will include:

6.1 Revenue Generation Strategy

- Review the current revenue generation strategy and create a strategy that grows the sales/revenue strategies for the content marketing program.
 - Create innovative approaches for sponsored content, influencer partnerships, and social media-specific advertising products.
 - Develop native advertising and branded content opportunities that align with Visit California's content strategy.
- Develop strategies for handling unsold inventory:
 - Create last-minute deal structures or packages
 - Implement remnant inventory strategies to maximize overall yield
- Develop and maintain revenue share program:
 - Implement a revenue sharing model based on the current Ad Target Goal of \$1,440,000.
 - Develop protocols for handling revenue that exceeds the Ad Target Goal.
 - Create a framework for negotiating amendments to the revenue share amount in case of rapid growth.

6.2 Advertising Sales Management

- Manage all aspects of advertising sales, including pricing, terms, and potential discounts.
- Leverage market knowledge to scale sales efforts effectively.
- Develop and execute a comprehensive sales strategy:
 - Create a detailed sales plan with targets
 - Identify and pursue key accounts and industry verticals
 - Develop pitch materials for different types of advertisers
- Develop and maintain media kits and rate cards:
 - Regularly update offerings to reflect new opportunities and market conditions
 - Ensure competitive pricing while maximizing revenue potential

- Coordinate with content and marketing teams:
 - Ensure alignment between sales efforts and content creation
 - Develop custom advertising solutions that integrate seamlessly with Visit California's content
- Manage the proposal and contracting process:
 - Develop standardized proposal and contract templates
 - Ensure timely follow-up and efficient contract execution
- Manage a sales team that interfaces with potential advertisers to manage all sales.

6.3 Revenue Sharing Model

- Implement a revenue sharing model based on the current Ad Target Goal of \$1,440,000.
- Develop protocols for handling revenue that exceeds the Ad Target Goal.
- Create a framework for negotiating amendments to the revenue share amount in case of rapid growth.

6.4 Revenue Projections, Performance Reporting and Analysis

- Provide regular revenue projections showing overall costs, advertising offset, and total cost to Visit California.
- Provide regular sales forecasts and pipeline updates
- Determine audience growth targets necessary to achieve program goals.
- Implement a system for regular reporting on advertising sales performance and revenue generation across all platforms.
- Track and report on the ROI of various monetization strategies.
- Integrate agreed upon KPIs into Visit California dashboards

6.5 Compliance and Quality Control

- Develop processes for integrating advertising into content delivery mechanisms while maintaining content integrity.
- Implement a review and approval process for advertising content to maintain brand consistency and quality.
- Ensure compliance with relevant advertising regulations across different platforms and markets.

10. Billing and Related Requirements

10.1 Contract Requirements & W-8 / W-9

The winner of the RFP will be required to abide by Visit California contracting requirements. This includes the conditions and terms contained within our standard Contract Template. **Please review this template prior to submitting a proposal to ensure these terms are acceptable.** The Information on contracting requirements can be found at:

<http://industry.visitcalifornia.com/About-Visit-California/Requests-for-Proposals/>

You will also be required to submit a United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form W-8BEN-E or W-9.

10.2 Internal Control Structure

Please provide a detailed discussion of your internal control structure for ensuring the following controls are in place and operating effectively:

- Controls for ensuring exchange rates are calculated properly (if applicable);
- Controls for ensuring the accuracy of invoices from Proposer's sub-contractors, and the accuracy of invoices provided to Visit California; and
- Controls for ensuring that no expenses are incurred without prior approval.

10.3 Billing

We limit contractor invoicing to two invoices per month. One invoice shall be for Administration & Overhead. The other invoice shall be for out-of-pocket expenses (if applicable). Receipts are required for all out-of-pocket expenses.

The budget for this RFP and all payments shall be made in U.S. dollars. All program and out-of-pocket costs will be reimbursed in the currency in which they were incurred. The RFP budget shall not be adjusted for the rate of currency exchange.

11. Proposal Submission

Each bidder is required to deliver **ten** hard copies in addition to an electronic/PDF version of their proposal. Electronic versions of the proposal must be in PDF format and sent to RFP Submissions at rfps@visitcalifornia.com. Hard copies must be sent by courier such as FedEx or UPS, by December 9, 2024, to:

Visit California
Request for Proposal: GLOBAL CONTENT MARKETING Services
Attn: RFP Submissions
555 Capitol Mall, Suite 1100
Sacramento, CA 95814 USA

Please Note:

- **Proposals must be received by the date and time referenced in the Tentative Schedule.**
- **Late submissions will not be accepted.**
- **Proposal may not be faxed.**
- **No gifts can be accepted.**

ATTACHMENT A

NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID

GLOBAL CONTENT MARKETING SERVICES RFP SERVICES

Due: October 23, 2024
4:00 PM PST

Send to:
rfps@visitcalifornia.com

Name of Proposer:	
Contact Person:	
Mailing Address:	
Agency URL:	
Telephone:	
Fax Number:	
Email Address:	
Sections Agency Will Bid On	
Signed:	<hr/>

ATTACHMENT B

WRITTEN PRESENTATION/PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Written proposals will be reviewed, evaluated, and scored by an evaluation committee. The evaluation committee may, if they deem necessary, select certain proposers for oral interviews. Interviews apply only to the top finalists, as determined by the evaluation committee. Evaluation of written proposal will be based on the following criteria.

Criteria	Description	Points
Agency Experience and Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall experience of the firm - Relevant case studies and measurable results - Experience and qualifications of key team members - Relevant expertise of any subcontractors - Experience in travel and tourism sector 	
Section 1: Website Content Strategy & Experience		15
Section 2: Domestic Editorial Content Planning		15
Section 3: International Editorial Content		15
Section 4: Email Marketing		15
Section 5: Paid Content Distribution		15
Section 6: Program Monetization		15
Understanding of Visit California	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrated understanding of Visit California's objectives - Evaluation of current content approach and identification of improvement opportunities 	
Section 1: Website Content Strategy & Experience		10
Section 2: Domestic Editorial Content Planning		10
Section 3: International Editorial Content		10
Section 4: Email Marketing		10
Section 5: Paid Content Distribution		10
Section 6: Program Monetization		10

Strategic Vision and Approach	- Innovative vision for improving Visit California's content ecosystem	
Section 1: Website Content Strategy & Experience		20
Section 2: Domestic Editorial Content Planning		20
Section 3: International Editorial Content		20
Section 4: Email Marketing		20
Section 5: Paid Content Distribution		20
Section 6: Program Monetization		20
Section Capabilities		
Section 1: Website Content Strategy & Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience in updating and refreshing evergreen content for improved relevance and SEO performance - Creative approaches to repurposing and repackaging high-performing content - Ability to identify and address outdated, underperforming, or redundant content - Experience in conceptualizing and designing campaign-specific landing pages or content hubs 	25
Section 2: Domestic Editorial Content Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capability to produce high-quality, differentiated, editorial content - Forward-thinking approach to content creation and distribution - Proven ability to produce multi-modal content - Proven expertise in managing comprehensive editorial calendars across multiple channels - Understanding of the importance of and proven plan for quality assurance and fact checking 	25
Section 3: International Editorial Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expertise in localizing and adapting content for different cultural contexts at scale - Ability to identify content gaps in international markets and determine needs for market-specific content creation - Access to native speakers or high-quality translation services for target markets - Skills in adapting and optimizing short-form video content for international markets 	25
Section 4: Email Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skills in optimizing email programs for both list growth and engagement improvement - Ability to design and implement scalable segmentation frameworks for targeted communications - Skills in implementing dynamic content modules and behavioral triggers for personalized email journeys 	25

Section 5: Paid Content Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience in developing comprehensive strategies for paid social media and content distribution - Strong capabilities in performance tracking, analysis, and real-time optimization of paid content campaigns - Proven track record in integrating paid content efforts with organic social media and broader marketing campaigns 	25
Section 6: Program Monetization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovative revenue generation strategies for content marketing program - Experience in managing and optimizing sales programs - Approach to balancing monetization with maintaining content integrity and user experience 	25
Account Management and Execution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposed account management structure - Quality control and performance measurement processes 	15
Collaboration Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proven experience working across agency teams to drive client success - Collaborative spirit comes through in the proposal 	10
Cost Effectiveness and Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reasonableness of proposed budget - Value of services in relation to costs - Innovative approaches to maximizing ROI 	15
Overall Proposal Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarity and organization of the proposal - Thoughtfulness and detail in addressing RFP requirements - Creativity and ingenuity of proposed solutions 	10
Total Possible Points		
	1 Section	120
	2 Sections	190
	3 Sections	260
	4 Sections	330
	5 Sections	400
	All Sections	470

ATTACHMENT C

BUDGET FORM

GLOBAL CONTENT MARKETING SERVICES

An excel version of both budget forms is required to be submitted, and can be found at:

<https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/about/request-for-proposals>

PROPOSED BUDGET

Budget Line Items	Name of Service	Program Cost	% of Total
		\$ -	0%
			0%
			0%
			0%
		-	0%
			0%
			0%
			0%
		-	0%
			0%
			0%
			0%
PROPOSED TOTAL		\$ -	

STAFFING BUDGETS

Title	Years with Company	Years in Industry Field	Hourly Rate	% Time Assigned to Account

Number of FTE's 0.00

ATTACHMENT D

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (Proposal Information)

THIS NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (“**Agreement**”) is made as of _____ (“**Effective Date**”) by _____ and _____ between _____ a _____ (“**Disclosing Party**”), and the California Travel and Tourism Commission, a California non-profit mutual benefit corporation dba Visit California (“**Receiving Party**”), on the following terms and conditions:

1. Background and Purpose. Receiving Party has issued a request for proposal to which Disclosing Party intends to respond with a proposal (the “**Proposal**”). The proposal and supporting documentation will contain certain financial and other business information that is considered confidential and proprietary information by the Disclosing Party (the “**Confidential Information**”). The Disclosing Party has agreed to provide and the Receiving Part has agreed to hold and use the Confidential Information pursuant to the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

2. Requirement to Retain Confidentiality. The Confidential Information is regarded by the Disclosing Party as highly valuable and is not known publicly. Its continued value depends, in part, on retaining its confidential nature. The requirements of this Agreement will apply to the Confidential Information for a period of five (5) years from the Effective Date.

3. Use or Disclosure of Confidential of Information. The Receiving Party recognizes that the improper use, disclosure or release of all or any portion of the Confidential Information could cause substantial damage to the Disclosing Party and its affiliates and damage his potential opportunities and revenues, and otherwise have a detrimental impact on the Disclosing Party. Accordingly, all Confidential Information received by the Receiving Party shall be (a) used solely for the purpose of the Receiving Party’s evaluation of the Proposal, and (b) kept confidential and shall not be disclosed by Receiving Party in any manner whatsoever, in whole or in part, to any person who is not a party to this Agreement, or (ii) used or included in any information or reports disclosed or distributed by the Receiving Party to any person who is not a party to this Agreement; provided that Receiving Party is authorized to disclose the Confidential Information to affiliates, attorneys, agents, representatives, or employees of the Receiving Party who will review the Confidential Information in connection with the Proposal, subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

4. Information Not Covered by Agreement; Disclosure under Legal Compulsion. Confidential Information shall not include such portions of the Confidential Information as are or become: (i) generally available to the public other than as a result of a disclosure in violation of this Agreement, (ii) available to a party to this Agreement on a non-confidential basis from a source (other than a party to this Agreement), which source is not prohibited from disclosing such Confidential Information by a legal, contractual, or fiduciary obligation, (iii) known by the Receiving Party prior to such disclosure as shown by credible evidence, or (iv) subject to a governmental, judicial, or administrative order, subpoena or discovery request. If the Receiving Party receives any subpoena, order or other document legally compelling the Receiving Party to disclose any of the Confidential Information, the Receiving Party shall provide the Disclosing Party with prompt written notice of such request so that the Disclosing Party may seek a protective order or other appropriate remedy and/or waive compliance with the provisions of this Agreement. If such protective order or other remedy is not obtained or not requested, the Receiving Party agrees that it shall furnish only that portion of the Confidential Information that it is advised by counsel that it is legally required to disclose and shall exercise reasonable efforts to obtain assurance that confidential treatment will be accorded the Confidential Information so disclosed. Additionally, notwithstanding the foregoing, Disclosing Party acknowledges and agrees that Receiving Party is subject to the California Public Records Act, ("PRA") and shall provide any materials and make any disclosures required for Receiving Party to comply with the PRA.

5. Safeguard Confidential Information. The Receiving Party agrees to safeguard all Confidential Information in a secure place and restrict the disclosure of any Confidential Information as provided herein.

6. Property. The Confidential Information shall remain the exclusive property of the Disclosing Party. Upon the termination of the discussions regarding the Proposal the Receiving Party shall return any documentation or recordings of the Confidential Information, together with all copies thereof, immediately to Disclosing Party, provided that Receiving Party may retain a copy in its records, pursuant to its records retention policy, subject to the continuing obligation of confidentiality with respect to such Confidential Information.

7. Attorneys' Fees; Prejudgment Interest. If the services of an attorney are required by any party to secure the performance of this Agreement or otherwise upon the breach or default of another party to this Agreement, or if any judicial remedy or arbitration is necessary to enforce or interpret any provision of this Agreement or the rights and duties of any person in relation thereto, the prevailing party shall be entitled to reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and other expenses, in addition to any other relief to which such party may be entitled.

8. Severability. If any provision of this Agreement is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of the Agreement which can be given effect without the invalid provision shall continue in full force and effect and shall in no way be impaired or invalidated.

9. Governing Law. The rights and obligations of the parties and the interpretation and performance of this Agreement shall be governed by the law of California, excluding its conflict of laws rules.

10. Notices. All notices and communications pursuant to this Agreement shall be given in writing by personal delivery, prepaid first class registered or certified mail properly addressed with appropriate postage paid thereon, or facsimile transmission, and shall be deemed to be duly given and received on the date of delivery if delivered personally, on the second day after the deposit in the United States Mail if mailed, or upon acknowledgment of receipt of electronic transmission if sent by facsimile transmission.

11. Waiver of Breach. No covenant or condition of this Agreement can be waived except by the written agreement of the party entitled to enforce the covenant or condition. Forbearance or indulgence by either party in any regard whatsoever shall not constitute a waiver of the covenant or condition to be performed by the other party.

12. Miscellaneous. This Agreement contains the entire understanding of the parties with respect to the matters described herein. This Agreement supersedes all prior and/or contemporaneous agreements and understandings between the parties, written or oral, with respect to the matters described herein. This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original document and all of which, taken together, shall be deemed to constitute but a single original document.

Each of the parties hereto has executed this Non-Disclosure Agreement as of the Effective Date first set forth above.



DISCLOSING PARTY:

By: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

RECEIVING PARTY:

California Travel and Tourism
Commission, a California non-profit
mutual benefit corporation dba Visit
California

By: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

