

UK MARKETING SERVICES RFP 2024 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- Q** Is there a preferred format? The RFP documents confirm both pdf and hard copy versions but should the original format be in WORD or presentation style such as PowerPoint or KEYNOTE for example.
- A.** Presentations will be accepted in PowerPoint or WORD format.
- Q** Please confirm the desired format /file type for the agency video, both for the electronic submission and for the hard copy to be sent.
- A.** Video can be embedded in the proposal with a link or sent separately in an MP4 format.
- Q** What are the specific KPIs or success metrics for this engagement?
- A.** We have various KPI's for differing disciplines.
- Q** What are VCA's main PR objectives?
- A.** You can find our FY 24/25 Strategic Marketing Framework at <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/about/plans-publications>, which outlines our priorities per discipline.
- Q** Can you please clarify the potential for media buying within the UK market mentioned in the RFP?
- A.** We currently handle media buying from our global media buying agency, this may continue with the input of a local agency so we are looking for the capabilities of your firm in this regard.
- Q** Assuming there is some media buying, would the budget be separate from the budgets listed in the RFP?
- A.** Yes
- Q** Are there specific partnerships or collaborations VCA wants the agency to maintain or leverage?
- A.** We look to you for your suggestions on partnerships. We are open to maintaining some existing partnerships, along with investigating new ones.

- Q** Are you looking for full-service management of localized pages inclusive of calendar development, posting content, community management, and reporting or simply consultation?
- A.** We are open to your recommendation, but currently, our agency is responsible for creating the content calendar, posting content, and creating report-outs. Community management is handled by another party.
- Q** Do you offer paid compensation to influencers or trade only?
- A.** It varies by market and program. We always try to maximize dollars and avoid fees, whenever possible.
- Q** Do you have any minimum social following requirements or benchmark metrics for influencer partners?
- A.** We look to our local in-market agency to assist in developing these benchmarks.
- Q** Confirming you are looking for the selected agency to handle consulting/strategy for content development being handled by VCA's content team, and you do not require the actual creation of the original content?
- A.** The selected agency will be responsible for content creation with both owned assets and through asset collection and will also have the opportunity to share Visit California content.
- Q** Other than UK English, are there any languages that your agency partner should plan to handle translations for?
- A.** No, not for the UK market
- Q** What percentage split would you like to see in terms of resource/focus across PR, travel trade, marketing, and owned channels? And what is it currently?
- A.** We look to the bidding agencies to make these suggestions of how to best use the dollars across all disciplines.
- Q** Will you contract European market agencies through the appointed UK agency?
- A.** We currently have other European agencies. Information can be found at <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com>
- Q** Can you share detailed UK audience profiles?
- A.** The market profile can be found at, <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/research/researchdashboard>
- Q** Do you include the Republic of Ireland/Northern Ireland in this brief?
- A.** We do have our UK market agency conduct limited work in Ireland and Scotland.

- Q** Can you confirm that the total spend is \$2M, rather than \$3.3M (i.e., inclusive of \$700k in additional programming to be submitted alongside the core of \$1.3M)
- A.** VCA operates on a fiscal year budget, and our international budget numbers can vary slightly year-over-year. We are looking for two budgets, one at a base of \$ 1.3 million, and an additional budget of what programming can look like at a \$2m level.
- Q** In addition, confirming the \$2M should include staffing costs per attachment B?
- A.** Yes
- Q** As an integrated proposal, could you share any envisioned or preferred split across sectors (i.e., consumer marketing vs PR vs trade vs social?)
- A.** We look to the bidding agencies to make these suggestions of how to best use the dollars across all disciplines.
- Q** With regards to social media management, confirming the in-market FACEBOOK page/website are the only pages to be managed when considering the global social media approach and strategy?
- A.** Yes
- Q** How many years have you worked with your current UK PR & marketing partner?
- A.** Our current agency has been our firm for over a decade.
- Q** Are they also pitching for this work?
- A.** This information is proprietary to Visit California.
- Q** How many agencies will be taken through to the proposal response part of the project?
- A.** This information is proprietary to Visit California as the number of finalists varies.
- Q** On page 10 in Section 9: Tentative Schedule: The chart indicates that on December 5th, the QA will be provided to proposers- will proposers receive answers to those questions they submitted or answers to all questions submitted by all participating agencies?
- A.** Answers to all questions are provided to all agencies that submitted an Intention to Bid.
- Q** Regarding the requested agency video how should it be submitted, as 10 hard copies of the proposal are required to be delivered?
- A.** Video can be embedded in the presentation or sent via email or separately from the proposal.

- Q** Page 26 continuation 1.0 Proposal Outline / References- how many references are desired?
- A.** You are free to submit as many references as you like, so long as the overall length does not exceed two pages.
- Q** Will you consider a partner whose heritage sits in culture and entertainment rather than travel, given the need for modern marketing campaigns to connect with consumers in their passion areas?
- A.** We are open to various types of agencies, as long as the capacities written into the RFP can be met.
- Q** Who do you consider your competitive set and how does VCA differentiate itself?
- A.** We are depending on your market expertise as to whom would be the main competitors for Visit California in the UK.
- Q** On page 14 in Section 1: Marketing Structure- Audiences are referenced as 'core' and 'opportunity'- can you please elaborate more on VCA's target audiences and offer insight into prioritization?
- A.** Any public/nonproprietary research can be found at:
<https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/research/researchdashboard>
- Q** On page 7 in the Introduction to Visit California- in the second paragraph of 'About Visit California' – commission members representing 12 Regions of California as referenced:
- Are programs and initiatives tailored to the regions?
 - If so, is a strategic plan and support required for each regional initiative/campaign?
 - Are all 12 regions equally important or are some more of priority than others?
 - If there are priority regions, can you please specify?
- A.** All 12 regions of the state are important to our marketing efforts. More regional details can be found at Information can be found at industry.visitcalifornia.com Other information can be found at <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/about/plans-publications>
- Q** Page 15, in continuation of Section 1.1 Public Relations, in paragraph I- key marketing messages and initiatives are referenced
- Can you share the current message platform?
 - Do you have an available 2025/2026 roadmap of initiatives?
- A.** You can find our FY 24/25 Strategic Marketing Framework at <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/about/plans-publications>, which outlines our priorities per discipline

- Q** Page 15, in section 1.2 Travel Trade, the CALIFORNIA STAR education platform is referenced- is PR/Marketing needed to promote this digital tool to agents?
- A.** We look to the local agency to make suggestions on how best to execute this program.
- Q** Page 15, section 1.3 Partnerships, marketing partnerships are called out as an important vehicle to increase visitation and support global programming.
- Can you provide a list of current partners?
 - What brands, organizations, etc. are priority targets to cultivate partnerships?
 - What role will your new agency play in strategic identification and procurement?
- A.** You can find our FY 24/25 Strategic Marketing Framework at <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/about/plans-publications>, which outlines our priorities per discipline.
- Q** On Page 16 in Section 2.0 Market Insights, the RFP states the selected marketing agency must possess a deep understanding of ... insights into...
- Are you seeking data and research to be included in the RFP response?
 - Is it helpful to provide background information on the agency's analytics expertise?
- A.** We welcome any market insight and intel to be included in your proposal.
- Q** What is the source of Visit California's market research?
- A.** Visit California has an extensive research & insights program of work and we use various domestic and global agencies to source our data.
- Q** Page 17, continuation of Section 3.0, Scope of Work
- Consumer Marketing Cooperative and Partnership programs are listed- can you provide details on 2025 partnership programs?
- A.** You can find our FY 24/25 Strategic Marketing Framework at <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/about/plans-publications>, which outlines our priorities per discipline.
- Q** Page 17, in Section 3.1 Communications, within Public Relations Strategy
- Identification of potential story angles against niche markets is referenced- what stories have not been told about Visit California that you would like to see placed?
 - Target publications is generally stated- can you specify priority media targets?
- Within Scope of Work Duties
- Second Bullet – Create a stable of engaged digital influencers- can you share the list of current influencers VCA has relationships with?
- A.** You can find program details at industry.visitcalifornia.com. You can find our FY 24/25 Strategic Marketing Framework at

<https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/about/plans-publications> which outlines our priorities per discipline.

- Q** Page 19, continuation of Section 3.2 Travel Trade/ Scope of Work Duties
- Specific to conducting regular educational seminars with the travel trade in the UK- is the intention to have the new agency team lead the sessions or manage the RSVPs/attendance? Can you clarify the responsibilities of the agency?
- A.** We rely on our in-market agency to handle all program details.
- Q** Regarding forming a trade advisory board:
- Does a trade advisory board currently exist?
 - Please elaborate on the role of the agency in assembling the board and hosting the annual meeting.
- A.** We look to the local agency for suggestions on this type of programming and we rely on the agency to handle all in-market programs and meetings.
- Q** Page 18, continuation of Section 3.1 Communications / Scope of Work duties, pertaining to assisting with crisis communication support (as needed)
- What recent crisis situations has Visit California encountered/navigated?
 - Does a crisis plan already exist?
- A.** <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/partner-opportunities/programs/crisis-response>
- Q** We note the need to adopt a Pan-European perspective. Can you confirm whether or not we will need to place earned and paid media articles and partnerships in other countries/languages or whether we just need to bear in mind that, for example, a partnership with The Telegraph or ESPN, may also be read or watched by English speaking consumers in mainland Europe?
- A.** We expect our European agencies to collaborate as needed on Pan-European programming.
- Q** Confirm that channel management does not include any social media community management or customer service and will be within UK business hours.
- A.** Correct, no social media community management or customer service is required.
- Q** Does Visit California have an awards program? If so – do you require assistance with identifying opportunities, submissions, and post-win marketing?
- A.** We have an awards program for our in-state industry partners. We don't rely on our global agencies to assist in our in-state programming.

- Q** We note you've said there is potential for media buying within the country, which may involve leveraging an additional budget, can you confirm that we do not need to factor any media costs into the budget? Where would influencer and content partnership costs sit? Presumably with the two budgets you have outlined.
- A.** Media buying costs and agency fees are not part of this specific agency RFP or budget. You do not need to factor media costs into your proposal, but influencer and content partnerships are part of your country's budget.
- Q** The two budget outlines (\$1.3M and \$2M) do these include agency fees as well as hard costs, or is this the budget allowance for the hard costs?
- A.** Yes, this includes agency fees and any and all activations, fees, and costs that occurred on behalf of doing business for Visit California.
- Q** Page 26, continuation of 1.0 Proposal Outline/Budget & Pricing Structure- do you prefer to have the budget based on a blended rate or staff hour model?
- A.** Prefer a budget based on a staff hourly model.
- Q** Where would influencer and partnerships costs sit- presumably within the two budgets you have outlined?
- A.** These costs are within the allocated country budgets. There is no additional funding.
- Q** How should the selected agency balance a UK-focused strategy with a broader Pan-European perspective to ensure marketing programs resonate with both UK and European travelers effectively?
- A.** It's up to you to recommend a balance, but please know that the UK is our only direct-to-consumer market in Europe, and we expect our European agencies to work together on Pan-European programming.
- Q** Beyond the UK, which European markets are priorities? Where else do you have European agency representation?
- A.** We have representation in The UK, Nordics, France, Germany and Italy.
- Q** Are there any inspiring campaigns you've liked or disliked, or that Visit California considers especially successful?
- A.** We admire many of our competitor's work including Tourism Australia, Incredible India, and many others.
- Q** What has been a standout piece of work in the last 12 months?
- A.** We are proud of many of our global campaigns. Examples can be found throughout our Website – <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com>

- Q** How many agencies do you anticipate inviting to provide oral presentations?
- A.** This is proprietary to Visit California.
- Q** Beyond the procurement cycle, is there any particular reason for the re-pitch now? What change would you like to see?
- A.** Visit California is mandated by its Board of Commissioners to go out to bid in each global market every five years to make sure all of its vendors are delivering competitive services and pricing.
- Q** Are all agencies required to activate under the current ‘playground’ umbrella creative?
- A.** That is our global brand and all agencies work within this platform, with market nuances, as needed.
- Q** What is the breakdown of visitor numbers across the year, and is there a focus on increasing numbers during specific times, such as the shoulder season?
- A.** Information about visitation can be found on our industry website: <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/research/researchdashboard>
- Q** Do you have further insights into the target audience, including core and opportunity segments? So we are able to use our audience and insight tools to their best advantage, at a minimum basic demographics are helpful
- A.** The market profile can be found at, <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/research/researchdashboard>
- Q** We read that Research conducted by Visit California emphasizes the importance of play in people's lives, with more than 85% of consumers across six global markets expressing a desire to incorporate play into their daily routines. <https://www.designrush.com/news/a-beach-ball-is-the-star-of-california-s-new-ad>
- A.** The F24/F25 Strategic Framework has a section on Play you may refer to: <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/about/plans-publications>
- Q** A section on Visit California’s website features a quiz for travelers to identify their “play style” and connects visitors to regions of California and activities that align with each style. Have you found anything interesting from this Quiz, especially in relation to the style preference of UK participants in the Quiz?
- A.** We have not conducted market-specific research/intel regarding the initiative.

- Q** Can you expand when you talk about ‘unconventional means to gain exposure’?
- A.** Visit California prides itself on being a leader in the travel space. We encourage our local agencies to be creative and have new ideas and initiatives.
- Q** Could you clarify if the digital influencer strategy is a global or pan-European initiative? If global, are there opportunities to adapt it for local relevance within the UK?
- A.** We have a global strategy but local, in-market agencies map to their country’s own priorities and nuances.