

Visit Oxford Request for Proposal Public Relations

Questions & Answers

Tourism Industry Recovery, II



The below questions were submitted to Visit Oxford by the published deadline of April 3, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. CDT. No further questions will be accepted in reference to the RFP for Public Relations services.

- 1. Are hard costs for hosting journalists (transportation, lodging, etc.) included in the agency budget or allocated from a separate budget?**

These costs are allocated in a separate budget line from the PR agency budget line. Visit Oxford will discuss this budget and the number of journalists per year based on budget and travel costs.

- 2. Do you expect agency representation for media marketplace representation (i.e. IMM, IPW)? If so, do you have a list of anticipated shows?**

Yes, Visit Oxford does expect agency representation for IMM along with a Visit Oxford staff person. Visit Oxford staff can represent at all other market places but would like PR agencies suggestions on which.

- 3. If possible, please provide a copy of your current media reports and/or most relevant KPI's.**

Visit Oxford has not had an active PR firm since fall of 2021.

- 4. Please provide a breakdown of expected number of media to be hosted in-destination and the breakdown percentage of influencers to traditional media.**

Visit Oxford would hope to host anywhere from 6-8 journalists a year. These can be individual trips which seem to work best for us or 2-3 media FAMs. We prefer 70% traditional and 30% influencer although that breakdown is flexible based on agency recommendations.

- 5. Tell us a little about your commitment to DEI as an organization and as part of your marketing communications plans.**

- a) Do you have a DEI vision, mission, or statement? If so, can you please share?**

We do not have a DEI vision statement but hope to accomplish this through our Strategic plan, process will be completed with ARPA funds and completed before next fiscal year. Visit Oxford mission statement is: *Visit Oxford is the marketing organization for the City of Oxford whose purpose is to bring visitors to Oxford for the economic benefit of the community.*

b) How do you incorporate DEI into your organization?

Visit Oxford tracks special taxes of F&B as well as H&M, STR and AirDNA each month. Our mission is to increase these special taxes through sales and marketing efforts on none-peak periods.

c) How does DEI play a part in your marketing and public relations mix?

Visit Oxford wishes to increase visitation on non-peak periods such as January, July and mid-week. Any sales and PR strategies built around these efforts would be helpful.

d) Do you desire or envision DEI having the same, more or less of a part of your marketing and public relations mix in the coming year? Why?

We believe it will be the same as in the past, we have a good reputation, a great leisure market, SEC sports market but need mid-week business.

6. Can you provide access to the recent FY22/23 marketing plan and public relations plan?

The FY23 Visit Oxford Action Plan can be found [here](#).

7. What would be the proposed budget for the remainder of FY22/23 (engagement through

With work expected to begin in June 2023 through September 2023 to finish out the FY23, the budget for this time period would be \$20,000.

8. Included in the RFP, is the following note: "Enhance the organization's credibility as a source for visitors." Are there current issues in the destination that have lowered the organization's credibility?

No, there are not any current issues in the destination that have lowered the organization's credibility.

9. Are there any destinations that you really admire or would like to emulate? If so, which ones and why?

Visit Savannah, Visit Athens, Explore Charleston

10. Who is the incumbent Public Relations Agency of Record?

The previous agency of record was Bandwagon PR.

11. Is the incumbent Public Relations Agency of Record participating in the RFP?

No, the previous agency of record disbanded.

12. What are the top few areas of the existing or past Public Relations plan that worked well? Why?

Individual visits, if we can get a freelance writer or even better a writer on assignment to our destination they fall in love and generally write multiple stories over many months

and years to come. We've also brought some writers back to introduce new Oxford hotels, restaurants, etc. and have had great luck with their work.

13. What are the top few areas of the existing or past Public Relations plan that didn't work as planned or expected? Why?

Press trips or FAMS work just fine but I've found that the writers generally want their own story so if these are necessary to meet numbers, we prefer small groupings of around 3 writers so we can give them each their own special attention and fill individual requests.

14. Which destinations are considered in your competition set?

Athens, GA; Baton Rouge, LA; Franklin, TN

15. How do you, tangibly and intangibly, measure success of PR and marketing efforts for Visit Oxford?

We like to give circulation rates as well as paid advertising comparison numbers for earned media.

16. What is the current destination brand campaign?

We Are Your Type. The brand standard guidelines can be found [here](#).

17. How closely do you work with Brand USA's programs and initiatives?

We only work with Brand USA through Visit MS, so not much work has been done.

18. Regarding hosting media, is it the plan for a PR AOR member to be onsite in Oxford to host to media? Or is this something the Visit Oxford team will manage?

The Visit Oxford team is capable of hosting media when they travel to Oxford; however, depending on the journalist and whether there are multiple journalists, additional support from the PR team may be necessary to host successfully.

19. Will the cost of travel (flights, mileage, accommodations, F&B, etc.) for media members visiting the destination be part of a "media hosting" budget or should we assume that they are to be part of the outlined PR Services budget?

These costs are allocated in a separate budget line from the PR agency budget line. Visit Oxford will discuss this budget and the amount of journalist per year based on budget and travel costs. Visit Oxford does prefer the agency to book journalist travel with Visit Oxford reimbursing the agency.

20. Congratulations on all of your 2022 MTA and STS awards for being an outstanding DMO and achieving 44% YOY growth. Do you see these tourism KPIs (hotel occupancy, visitor spending and overall revenue) continuing to grow at this rate in the next year? If not, why?

Visit Oxford does believe that we will continue to see growth which will be visible in the tourism KPIs listed; however, we do not know that it will be at the same high level.

Visitor pent up demand played a large role in the amount of travel and money spent in 2022 and we believe that some of that demand may have slowed a little. With the 2022 College World Series National Champions in baseball, as well as a burgeoning football team aid to visitors wanting to travel to Oxford. Data from the University show that applications for freshman at Ole Miss are at an all-time high so that is a good indicator for the tourism economy of Oxford.

21. Can you tell us which industry memberships you have? (Such as Destinations International, Brand USA, U.S. Travel, STS, MTA, others?)

U.S. Travel; Destinations International, Southeast Tourism Society, MS Tourism Society Destinations International, US Travel, STS, MTA, MS Hills Heritage Area Alliance, Cities of the SEC, MS DMO Association, MSAE

22. What research partners do you work with or subscribe to?

We are currently seeking RFPs for a Strategic Plan and Visitor Profile Study.