# Public Relations RFP Questions & Answers Organized by Topic

*Duplicate questions from repeated submissions have been merged. Where an answer was already provided in the RFP addendum, it's included below the question.*

## Section I. Agency History & Selection Process

1. Is there a current or incumbent PR agency? If so, what prompted the review (performance gap, leadership shift, desire to reposition)? Would this agency be helping build the foundation of your individual PR efforts?

   *The organization underwent a leadership change last year after 41 years of one leader. To the best of knowledge, no previous Public Relations agency or services were outsourced to-date for this organization. Sometimes regional and broader Finger Lakes PR initiatives were financially supported through a separate budget line item, but brand identity was not under Visit Finger Lakes but instead Ontario County.*

2. Who are the internal decision-makers involved in the final selection, and what are the primary evaluation criteria?

   *A small hand-selected committee of county industry partners who represent not just tourism (hotel, large & small attractions), but economic development (county, college) will meet to review criteria as presented in RFP, page 9 or PR RFP Packet.*

## Section II. Regional Landscape, Partnerships & Positioning

1. How do you currently combat the crowded regional landscape and confusion around competing "Finger Lakes" entities? What messaging have you used?

   *To date, our approach has been more reactive than proactive, responding to media and visitor inquiries and servicing requests as they arise, rather than driving inspiration through a distinct campaign. We haven't yet built dedicated messaging or a call-to-action specifically for Ontario County; our communications have largely operated within the broader 'Visit Finger Lakes' framing, which competes for attention against the 14 counties I Love NY recognizes under that same regional umbrella. We see this as one of the clearest opportunities for the incoming agency: helping us shift from a responsive posture to a proactive one, with messaging that gives Ontario County its own distinct identity and reason for media and travelers to seek it out specifically.*

2. What is Ontario County's relationship with the other DMOs in the Finger Lakes region?

   *Ontario County maintains a strong, collaborative relationship with the other DMOs across the Finger Lakes region. We stay actively engaged in regional efforts coordinating on initiatives, sharing resources, and supporting each other's promotion of the broader destination-rather than operating in a silo. That said, this collaboration is part of why establishing a distinct identity for Ontario County specifically is an ongoing challenge: our regional partnerships are healthy, but they also reinforce a shared "Finger Lakes" narrative that our new PR agency will need to help us break out of.*

3. How do your earned media efforts coordinate with the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance, and other regional DMOs – and would the selected agency be expected to align with any regional media programs?

   *Our earned media efforts are coordinated informally with the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance, and other regional DMOs, largely through relationship-building and shared awareness of each other's activity. We have an in-house team member who manages this coordination, so day-to-day alignment with regional media programs* *is not something we'd expect the selected agency to own. That said, we'd welcome the agency's input as opportunities arise, helping us weave regional programming into our broader PR strategy where it makes sense, but this would be a light-touch, as-needed role rather than a core scope item.*

4. Do you have strong or complementary collaborators you'd like to be paired with when possible?

   *Not at this stage. With the 2025 leadership transition, our organization has evolved with a new focus of content and public relations as a priority. Our outreach and engagement is still being built from the ground up. We haven't yet established the kind of long-standing collaborator relationships that would lead us to request specific pairings—we see this as an area where the incoming agency can help us identify and build those complementary partnerships as our foundation matures.*

5. Is there anyone you view more as competition than a collaborator, that you'd rather not be paired with?

   *No.*

6. What perceptions of the Finger Lakes most need to change?

   *This is less about correcting a misperception of the Finger Lakes overall as the region already carries strong, positive brand equity, but more about establishing where Ontario County fits within it. Because our funding and legislative mandate are specific to Ontario County, the perception we most need to shift isn't 'what is the Finger Lakes,' but 'what is Visit Finger Lakes, and why does Ontario County matter within that identity.' Without that distinction, we risk being funded to promote a place that travelers don't yet associate with us specifically, which has direct implications for how we demonstrate value and secure support going forward.*

7. What competitive destinations are you losing to, and why?

   *Our biggest competitive loss isn't to a specific outside destination, it's to the noise within our own region. With I Love New York recognizing 14 counties under the Finger Lakes umbrella, Ontario County competes for attention against a much larger, more established regional identity that we ourselves are branded under as Visit Finger Lakes. Travelers searching for 'Finger Lakes' have dozens of counties and towns to choose from, and without a distinct call-to-action for Ontario County specifically, we risk losing visitation to other parts of that same 14-county footprint rather than to an entirely different destination.*

8. How comfortable are you with unconventional PR approaches or contrarian storytelling?

   *We're quite comfortable with unconventional approaches, and honestly believe some degree of contrarian storytelling may be necessary. Given the challenge of standing out within a crowded 14-county regional identity, playing it safe with conventional messaging is unlikely to move the needle. We'd rather partner with an agency willing to challenge assumptions about what a Finger Lakes story looks like than one that defaults to familiar wine-and-lakes narratives. That said, we'd want any bold approach grounded in a clear strategic rationale—we're open to risk, but not risk for its own sake.*

9. If there's one aspect of VFL's current communications approach you hope a new agency will rethink or elevate, what would it be?

   *If there's one thing we hope a new agency will rethink, it's our posture, moving from reactive to proactive. To date, our communications have largely responded to inbound requests and serviced visitors and media as they came to us, rather than proactively driving inspiration and* *demand. We'd love a partner who helps us get ahead of the story: building a distinct, forward-looking narrative for Ontario County rather than continuing to operate within the broader, more generic Finger Lakes conversation.*

10. One of the RFP's strongest themes is establishing Ontario County as the home base for exploring the Finger Lakes. What research or traveler insights influenced this positioning, and what's the biggest perception barrier preventing travelers from already seeing Ontario County that way?

    *Three insights drive the positioning: geographic centrality (most Finger Lakes within a 30–45 minute drive), a regional shift toward multi-day "loop" itineraries rather than single-destination trips, and Ontario County's lodging capacity to support those longer stays. In terms of the biggest perception barrier? Travelers don't think in county lines, particularly in the Finger Lakes, they think in lakes and towns and/or things to do. Our funding and legislative mandate promoting Ontario County specifically, not only is that not how travelers naturally navigate the region, but two things compound the challenge. First, there's never been a dedicated campaign built around a call-to-action for "Ontario County", so this isn't correcting a misperception, but rather branding. Second, I Love New York recognizes 14 counties under the Finger Lakes umbrella, with our county branding as Visit Finger Lakes, Ontario County is potentially lost.*

11. Which stories remain under-told nationally despite representing the destination's greatest competitive advantage?

    *Ontario County's real advantage isn't any single asset, it's how closely agriculture, heritage, trails, and downtowns sit together and reinforce each other; it's the proximity and interplay between experiences that, in most destinations, live in entirely separate trip categories. A few specific gaps worth closing:*

    - *Agriculture is the real story; wine is one expression of it. National media covers Finger Lakes wine as a varietal story (Riesling, microclimates), but rarely the generations of farming families and working landscape behind it. That depth is what differentiates the region, since "great wine" alone is a crowded claim.*
    - *Ganondagan deserves headline treatment, not a footnote. As the only New York State Historic Site dedicated to a Native American theme, it offers a nationally significant Seneca heritage experience, one that predates every other story the county tells about itself.*
    - *The trail network connects the whole landscape. County parks and rail-trails link directly to working farmland, vineyards, and downtowns, a continuous experience many destinations dont't offer, since they treat hiking, agritourism, and heritage as separate trip categories.*
    - *Water, food, and downtowns round out the picture. Active lake recreation (not just scenery), farm-to-table dining sourced from visible local land, and downtowns with year-round vitality tied to the agricultural economy around them.*
    - *Seasonality is an asset, not a limitation. Planting, harvest, foliage, and winter assets/events give travelers real reasons to visit year-round, positioning the county well for shoulder-season travel.*

## Section III. Target Markets & Audiences

1. Are priority markets mainly NYC, Boston, Philadelphia, Toronto, Montreal, Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse (as listed in the RFP), or is the approach more broadly regional/national?

   *The markets listed in the RFP, NYC, Boston, Philadelphia, Toronto, Montreal, Albany, Buffalo, and Syracuse, do represent our core drive-market priorities, given proximity and established visitor patterns. That said, we see PR as an opportunity to extend beyond that list where it makes sense: markets like the broader Southern Ontario/GTA region, Philadelphia, D.C./Baltimore, and Southern New England show disproportionate near-term potential, and earned media lets us reach audiences that our paid media budget may always cover. So while our drive-market focus is intentional, we're open to the agency's recommendations on where a broader regional or national push could meaningfully move the needle—particularly for stories with national relevance, like our agricultural heritage or Ganondagan.*

2. Which target markets are highest priority for FY27 and through the next 3 years?

   *For FY27, our highest priorities are the markets where we see the most disproportionate near-term opportunity: Southern Ontario/GTA (Toronto, Ottawa), given strong drive access, a favorable exchange rate, and shoulder-season potential; Philadelphia and D.C./Baltimore, which are large, affluent, drive-accessible markets that over-index for wine, culinary, and outdoor travel but haven't been consistently targeted; and Boston/Southern New England, which fits our wine, waterfront, and foliage positioning outside peak summer. Looking ahead, we're also interested in testing air-access markets via ROC, SYR, and BUF, where travelers may be willing to fly for a multi-day experience but haven't yet been reached, but unlikely for FY27.*

3. Which visitor segments have shifted most in the past 12 months (luxury, culinary, wine, outdoor, meetings, multigenerational families, etc.), and what emerging segments should be kept in mind?

   *We don't yet have quantitative visitor data to point to as our STR and geolocation tracking only began on June 1, 2026; data was not a priority for the organization prior to its leadership transition in end of 2025. Rather than characterize shifts we can't fully substantiate, we want to be direct about what the evidence currently supports and where we're relying on informed judgment. Culinary and wine travelers are the one segment where PR efforts could support growth and movement, yet it is not a primary driver for Ontario County, perse. Segments like multigenerational families, outdoor adventurers, and solo travelers reflect national travel industry trends that may be playing out locally, but we don't have destination-specific evidence to confirm the degree to which we're seeing these shifts firsthand. With STR and geolocation tracking now live, we'll have our first real dataset within the next 30 days.*

4. How have Canadian visitors responded to outreach in recent years, given that much Canadian media currently avoids covering American destinations?

   *We've seen anecdotally that Canadian traveler interest, particularly from Southern Ontario, remains strong, often peaking in the winter months given that we're one of the closest ski areas for that market, along with drive access, a favorable exchange rate, and appetite for wine country and outdoor recreation. Media response has been more mixed, though; consistent with the broader reluctance we understand many Canadian outlets currently have toward covering American destinations, we haven't seen the level of earned media pickup from Canadian press that we'd like. We see this as an area where the incoming agency's judgment will be.*

## Section IV. Influencer & Content Creator Strategy

1. When referencing paid media/PR and paid placements through earned media contacts, are you referring primarily to advertorial, influencer partnerships, or other tactics? Influencer marketing is a separate scope item for the AOR—how do you envision responsibilities and budget being divided between the two?

   *This is intentionally a delicate balance between our PR and marketing agencies. Our vision is for the PR agency to help identify the right outlets and shape the messaging for these paid placements, given your team's media relationships and editorial judgment, while the associated advertorial budget itself is funded through our marketing budget rather than the PR budget outlined in this RFP. In short: strategic input and outlet/messaging guidance sit with the PR agency, but the dollars for advertorial placement flow through marketing.*

2. Do influencers/content creators live within your marketing department, or does sourcing them fall to the new PR agency?

   *Influencer and content creator sourcing will live on the marketing side, not with the PR agency. That said, we're a small team, and currently one person manages all content, both paid and earned, so in practice there's already close overlap between those functions. We want to preserve that collaboration going forward: marketing will continue to own sourcing and management, but the PR agency's input and perspective will be sought as those partnerships are identified and developed, particularly where there's overlap with earned media strategy or storytelling.*

3. How is responsibility for influencer identification and vetting currently divided between your internal team and outside support, and does VFL have an established compensation model for creators, or has engagement historically been gifted/hosted only?

   *Given our small team size, influencer identification and vetting has been handled entirely in-house. We don't yet have an established compensation model for creators; we've only hosted a few. This is an area where we'd welcome the agency's guidance, both on building out a more formal vetting process and on whether/how a paid compensation model should factor into our approach going forward.*

4. Have there been past challenges working with influencers, or are there specific KPI priorities (content, third-party credibility, backlinks, video)?

   *We haven't experienced challenges in our limited influencer engagements to date, though as a small team without a dedicated influencer program, ensuring consistent quality and follow-through on deliverables has required close, hands-on management. We don't have firm KPI priorities established yet-this is an area where we're leaning on the agency's expertise. If we had to indicate a direction, third-party credibility and strong content (photo/video) matter more to us right now than backlinks alone, given our current focus on brand-building and awareness over direct-response metrics.*

## Section V. FAM Trips & Media Hosting

1. For media familiarization tours, does "lead" mean planning/coordination, on-site hosting, or both?

   *By 'lead,' we mainly mean planning/coordination over on-site hosting. Given our small internal team, we're looking to the PR agency to take ownership of the FAM trip experience with itinerary development and engage the team liaison to assist with logistics and hosting media on the ground-where it works for scheduling.*

2. Is VFL prioritizing media who cover drive markets over national media for FAM trips – confirming that balance leans that way based on budget/objectives?

   *Given budget realities, drive-market media are naturally easier for us to support and will likely make up the majority of FAM activity. That said, we don't want budget alone to rule out a strong national opportunity-if a media visit is the right fit and has real potential to move the needle for the destination, we're open to prioritizing it even if it requires air travel. So the balance leans toward drive markets, but it's a preference driven by practicality, not a hard rule.*

3. The FAM budget is $10,000 – what typically falls into it (e.g., flights, with local partners covering accommodations)? Given rising flight costs, is there room to grow this budget when the team feels it will translate to quality engagement and coverage?

   *The $10,000 budget typically meals, mileage or a gas gift card, and any lodging or attraction costs that aren't secured complimentary. We've been actively educating our local partners on the value of FAM tours and hosting media, and that effort has paid off – we've had success securing complimentary lodging and attraction access, particularly outside prime summer weekends. Even when complimentary isn't possible, we're typically able to secure workable media rates. As for growing the budget: given rising flight costs, this would only be if the agency identifies a specific opportunity where additional investment would clearly translate into stronger engagement and coverage that is absolutely necessary.*

4. How many media guests do you hope to host in-person each year, to gauge how far the $10K budget goes?

   *In FY26, we had this same $10,000 budget and hosted only a handful of media visits, largely reactive—journalists who reached out to us rather than trips we proactively initiated, and we still have budget remaining that we're reallocating to influencer support for the remaining year. Realistically, we'd like to see that shift toward 8–12 hosted visits a year as we move to a more proactive outreach model, though we recognize the right number depends on the quality and fit of opportunities the agency surfaces rather than hitting a fixed target.*

5. Does it matter whether journalists visit individually or as a group?

   *It doesn't matter to us either way, both formats have value. If anything, our preference leans toward hosting one group FAM trip per year (non-summer), supplemented by individual visits as opportunities arise throughout the year.*

6. Realistically, how many days would an average guest want or need in the destination?

   *Realistically, we'd expect an average guest to need 2–3 days in the destination. That timeframe supports our broader positioning of Ontario County as the home base—enough time to visit more than one town within the county itself, while still spoking out to one nearby lake, town, or experience beyond it.*

7. Is there a budget for attending media marketplace events (e.g., I Love NY media marketplaces, appointment-style shows like IMM)?

   *We don't currently have a dedicated line item for media marketplace events like I Love NY marketplaces or IMM. Once we've explored the value and expected ROI with the agency, we'd be open to making a request for this from a separate budget if bandwidth can support it. We do understand the importance of a full scope PR plan, but starting with our own efforts in-destination may make sense as primary focus for year one.*

## Section VI. Agency Scope & Division of Responsibilities

1. Do you have a specific vision for the PR education component for partners, or are you looking to agencies to recommend that approach?

   *We don't have a fully defined vision for this yet, but we don't necessarily need the agency to formally manage a partner education program—our in-house team is equipped to handle that day-to-day. What would be valuable is the agency's input on shaping the narrative: helping us articulate the value of hosting media and participating in PR efforts in a way that resonates with partners, which we can then take and run with internally.*

2. For desk-side appointments, would the agency set up meetings for an in-house PR rep to attend, or conduct/accompany the meetings on VFL's behalf?

   *This is likely to be a combination of both, depending on who's best positioned to take the meetings. Once we determine whether desk-side appointments are best handled by our CEO or by our in-house PR contact, the agency's role would flex accordingly—setting up and coordinating appointments in either case, and potentially accompanying our team when it makes sense, or conducting select meetings on our behalf if our in-house contact isn't yet equipped or available to lead them.*

3. How do you envision the PR agency working with partners – reaching out directly, or routing everything through the in-house PR rep?

   *Our in-house PR rep will work directly with partners day-to-day, so we'd expect the agency to route partner communication through that contact rather than reaching out independently. The agency's focus would be on strategy, media relations, and storytelling, while our in-house rep manages the direct partner relationships.*

4. Is social media managed in-house, and does the PR agency have an expected role beyond influencer coordination?

   *Beginning October 1, social media will be managed fully in-house by the same team member who handles content and PR. We don't expect the PR agency to have a role in day-to-day social media management—their involvement would be limited to providing input on creators and influencers where it intersects with earned media strategy.*

5. Does VFL have an active travel trade program, and if so, would the PR agency be expected to coordinate with that team?

   *We do not currently have an active travel trade program. Our outgoing CEO had begun laying some groundwork here, but it's unlikely to be a priority for FY27. As a result, we don't expect the PR agency to need to coordinate with a travel trade team at this time, outside of things that come via I Love New York.*

6. The RFP focuses on travel, lifestyle, culinary, and outdoor media – does PR support extend to meetings, group travel, or weddings, or are those handled separately by sales/services?

   *Our VP of Business Development retired in July 2026, and that position is not currently being replaced, so meetings, group travel, and weddings don't have a dedicated internal owner right now. PR support for those segments will likely be needed as opportunities arise, but we see this as more of an FY28 priority than a core focus for the year ahead.*

7. For county presentations and the annual report, are you seeking supporting documents for an internal presentation, or asking the agency to build and deliver the CVB's full report/presentation to stakeholders on-site?

*The outgoing CEO handled county presentations and the annual report in full over the past year, and it's not yet certain whether the new CEO will be positioned to take that on entirely going forward. At a minimum, we'd expect the agency to provide a few slides summarizing PR efforts and results tied to the scope of work, for inclusion in any formal presentations. Support during those meetings, whether in person or via Zoom, would always be appreciated.*

## Section VII. Visual & Content Assets

1. With dedicated funding for visual asset development, where is the current content library strongest, and where's the greatest need for new photography, video, or editorial assets to support national media outreach?

   *Our highest-priority needs are photography and short-form video content that FLVC owns (with advertising rights) and reflects the authentic, contemporary character of Ontario County, capturing the lake, downtown Geneva & Canandaigua experiences, seasonal outdoor recreation, culinary moments, and the kinds of visitors we are trying to attract. We have some existing assets, but much of our library is dated or lacks the lifestyle-forward aesthetic that performs well in digital and social contexts. Beyond hero imagery and video, we anticipate needing social-ready content in multiple formats and aspect ratios, as well as a modest set of evergreen destination visuals that can anchor paid media campaigns, the website, and partner co-op opportunities. We are open to the agency's recommendation on how best to allocate this budget and welcome a phased asset development plan that prioritizes immediate campaign needs while building toward a more comprehensive content library over time.*

2. The scope notes the agency may assist with photo/video shoots—how would responsibilities be divided between the PR agency and the creative agency?

   *We don't want the PR and creative agencies working in silos on this—our visual assets need to tell a cohesive story of the destination, and we've found that PR-minded input often helps pull shoots toward a more authentic, editorial feel rather than a purely polished marketing look. So while the creative agency would likely lead production logistics, we'd want the PR agency actively involved in shaping the narrative and story angles behind each shoot, ensuring the assets we produce are as useful for earned media placements as they are for marketing use.*

   *Where we see the greatest need is in content that supports a national media narrative rather than just a marketing one: lifestyle and experiential imagery featuring real visitors and local voices, b-roll and video assets suited for broadcast and digital placements, and more editorial-style photography that can flex to fit a journalist's specific story angle rather than a single polished campaign look. We're looking to the incoming agency to help us identify and prioritize these gaps as part of a broader content strategy.*

## Section VIII. Budget & On-Site Logistics

1. Do travel fees for agency in-person visits come out of the $60,000 agency budget referenced in the RFP?

   *No, travel fees for agency in-person visits do not come out of the $60,000 agency budget referenced in the RFP—they're accounted for separately. That said, travel fees are limited, and all associated costs will be tracked and shown against PR efforts in the full audit report at year-end.*

2. How frequently do you expect the agency team to be on-site in Ontario County, and is there a budget for an initial immersion visit for the incoming agency?

   *Given the realities of today's working environment, we expect most check-ins to happen digitally on a regular basis, with in-person attendance reserved for occasional public reporting meetings,* *likely around three times a year. Separately, yes, a budget is available for an initial immersion visit for the incoming agency.*

## Section IX. Measurement, KPIs & Data

1. How do you currently measure PR success – should agencies build on an existing framework or propose a new one?

   *We don't have an established PR measurement framework to build on today, aside from what we reported out in [FY25 annual report](). FY27 is a foundational year for us in that respect. We've recently begun subscribing to Tourism Economics (Symphony) and CoStar occupancy data, which gives us a more rigorous lens on market performance than we've had before, but a dedicated PR measurement approach hasn't been formalized. We'd welcome the agency proposing a new framework, ideally one that connects earned media activity to the broader occupancy and demand metrics we're now able to track.*

2. What are the 3 metrics that define success at 6 and 12 months?

   *Given that FY27 is a foundational measurement year for us, we'd propose the following three: the volume and quality of earned media placements (particularly stories reflecting our priority narratives and target markets), engagement and traffic on visitfingerlakes.com attributable to PR efforts, and directional movement in occupancy and demand data via CoStar and Symphony, even if we're still establishing reliable baselines. We recognize 12 months may show more meaningful movement than 6, given how early we are in building out our measurement infrastructure.*

3. Which KPIs matter most: tier-one placements, share of voice vs. competitors, seasonal occupancy lift, or web traffic?

   *Our directional priorities lean toward seasonal occupancy lift and web traffic/engagement, since those tie most directly to our broader goals around demand and ADR growth. That said, we don't have a firm internal ranking across all four yet—tier-one placements and share of voice matter to us as well, particularly for building credibility and shifting perception, but we're open to the agency's perspective on how to weight these against one another as we build out our measurement framework this year.*

4. How does VFL currently define and measure success tied to overnight visitation?

   *We're still building out our ability to measure—we don't have a booking engine, so traditional conversion tracking isn't the lens we use. Our recent subscription to CoStar occupancy data gives us a clearer view of market performance than we've had before, and our directional priority is to move the needle on occupancy and demand while working with our hotelier community to support ADR growth. Establishing reliable baselines tied to overnight visitation is itself a meaningful part of this year's scope, rather than something we're measuring against an established target today.*

5. What KPIs or outcomes define success internally, which benchmarks carry the most weight, and are there preferred measurement frameworks for agency reporting?
   FY27 represents a foundational year for us in terms of measurement. We've recently begun subscribing to Tourism Economics (Symphony) and CoStar occupancy data, which gives us a more rigorous lens on market performance than we've ever had before; data was not supported or thought-after. Our directional priorities are clear: we want to move the needle on occupancy and demand, and we're actively working with our hotelier community to support ADR growth. But we're also being honest with ourselves: establishing reliable baselines is a meaningful part

of this scope. Transparency is key and will win over elected officials who determine our funding model.

On KPIs beyond overnight visitation: traffic growth and engagement on visitfingerlakes.com matter, but we're also thinking critically about how AI is reshaping the way travelers discover and research destinations and what that means for how we should be defining success on our own site going forward. We don't currently have a booking engine, so conversion in the traditional e-commerce sense isn't the lens. We're open to the agency's perspective on what the right digital KPIs look like in that evolving landscape. Symphony does allow for media attribution once we have paid efforts in markets.

6. What past PR effort exceeded expectations, and why?

   *Given how reactive our PR posture has been to date, we don't have a large body of proactive campaigns to point to that exceeded expectations in a measurable way. Where we have seen success has come from responding well to inbound media interest—securing coverage when journalists reached out on their own—which speaks to a receptive market for stories, even without a dedicated proactive push behind it. We see that as encouraging: if reactive efforts alone have generated meaningful interest, we're optimistic about what a more proactive, agency-led strategy could achieve.*

7. What coverage has VFL already received (through its own efforts, Finger Lakes partnerships, I Love NY, or serendipity) that's been viewed as a success?

   *Coverage we've received to date—whether from our own outreach, Finger Lakes partnerships, I Love NY, or simply serendipity—is currently tracked and shared through our LinkedIn channel, and we highlight standout placements in our annual report. That said, this has been more of a running record than a formal success framework, and we'd welcome the agency's help in building a more structured way to capture and showcase these wins going forward.*

8. What current earned media, web, visitor, lodging, or campaign performance data can be shared?

   *We can share what we have, though the depth is limited given our organization's recent transition. That includes our LinkedIn-tracked earned media coverage and the highlights compiled in our annual report, along with the CoStar occupancy data and Tourism Economics (Symphony) data we've just begun subscribing to. Our STR and geolocation tracking only went live June 1, 2026, so historical visitor and lodging data prior to that is limited—data simply wasn't prioritized by the organization before its leadership transition at the end of 2025. We're happy to share and provide updates as new data comes online. Reach out to alicia@visitfingerlakes.com for a recent monthly compilation report.*

9. How frequently can performance data be shared for optimization?

   *Once contracted, the selected agency will have access to monthly executive summary reports covering web traffic, points of interest data, economic impact, hotel occupancy, ADR, RevPAR, supply/demand trends, ad impressions, and meta performance—giving the agency a regular, consistent data cadence to inform and optimize PR efforts throughout the engagement.*

10. What are your dream outlets for stories to be placed in/on?

    *We admit we dream big here, but we appreciate that a savvy blog or digital placement can move the needle just as much as a splashy print feature these days. With that in mind, our wish list spans print, digital, and broadcast, and reflects the breadth of storytelling opportunities we see for the destination: Travel + Leisure, Condé Nast Traveler, National Geographic Traveler, CNN Travel, AFAR, The Points Guy, Travel Weekly, NBC / The Today Show, Forbes & Decanter Wine Sections, Men's Journal, Outside, Better Homes & Gardens, Woman's Day, Eater.com, Thrillist,* *Field & Stream, TripSavvy, Smithsonian Magazine and other history-focused outlets (for stories like Ganondagan), Martha.com, and Parents.com.*

## Section X. Organizational Timeline & Leadership

1. When do you anticipate having a completed strategic plan for Visit Finger Lakes?

   *Work on the strategic plan will begin in September, with the PR agency involved in focus groups and workshops as part of that process. We anticipate having a fully approved plan in motion no later than February 2027. That timeline reflects the importance of securing buy-in from elected officials—both those currently in office and those taking office in January 2027—which is critical to the plan's long-term success.*

2. What's the plan after Alicia's departure – is there an heir apparent, or will VFL be starting fresh with a new CEO?

   *A successor is already identified and begins August 3. They'll be sitting in on final agency presentations and will be a cohesive part of both the selection process and discovery meetings, ensuring continuity through a full hand-off rather than a fresh start with an unfamiliar incoming leader.*