

MONTEREY

MONTEREY COUNTY CONVENTION
& VISITORS BUREAU

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL Public Relations + Social Media Agency

July 21, 2023

The Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau (MCCVB) is seeking an agency specializing in public relations and social media to support the Monterey County brand and promote tourism to the County. This RFP aims to seek and retain a qualified agency partner to work with the Marketing Communications team and its current partner agencies, in keeping with MCCVB's strategic business plan. The selected agency will assist in the development and execution of effective, integrated marketing communications programs and social media marketing efforts that execute the following:

1. Solidify Monterey County's standing as one of the world's premier destinations.
2. Drive overnight visitation for leisure, group, and international visitation.
3. Reinforce the principles of safe, sustainable, responsible, diverse, and inclusive travel.

The agency will collaborate directly with MCCVB's internal PR team to plan and execute story ideas, pitches, programming, events, deskside visits, and media/influencer familiarization (FAM) trips to ensure national, regional, trade, and C-suite editorial coverage. The agency's social media team will work with the internal content team to strategize social media marketing programs that integrate with paid, earned, and owned channels to achieve the goals within MCCVB's strategic business plan. Collaboration across PR and social on influencer programs and other activations is expected.

Included below is an RFP for those able to carry out the scope of work. All proposals will be carefully reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria noted. The initial Scope of Work contained within this RFP will be approximately September 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024 (see Budget and Terms section for additional details). The first contract may be pro-rated depending on the RFP's completion date.

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Introduction

MCCVB is a 501c6 Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the County of Monterey. Monterey County consists of several jurisdictions and a vibrant hospitality industry that includes hundreds of hotels and resorts, major attractions, renowned wineries and restaurants, a thriving agriculture industry, and various additional businesses fueling the tourism economy. Tourism is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest in Monterey County.

Monterey County stretches along California's central coast and includes Big Sur, Monterey Peninsula (Monterey, Pacific Grove, Pebble Beach, Carmel, Seaside, Marina), North County (Moss Landing, Castroville), Salinas Valley, and South County (Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, King City).

Monterey County boasts major attractions and resorts such as Monterey Bay Aquarium, Cannery Row, and Pebble Beach Resorts, and hundreds of diverse and engaging offerings and events – including the most iconic stretch of Highway 1, one of the most famous roadways in the world.

For a full review of all Monterey County has to offer visit www.SeeMonterey.com.

Mission

MCCVB's mission is to generate community prosperity for Monterey County through the responsible promotion and growth of the tourism economy. The primary goal of MCCVB's Marketing Communications program is to support this mission by driving intent to visit amongst leisure, group, and international travelers. We seek responsible travelers. We place value on the quality of the traveler over the quantity. The key to our success is synergizing paid, earned, and owned media, including social channels, to develop and distribute compelling, targeted content.

Our Vision: A thriving tourism economy that enriches Monterey County's economic vitality and quality of life

Our Mission: To generate community prosperity for Monterey County through the responsible promotion and growth of the tourism economy

Please read our [2022-2023 Business Plan & Strategic Roadmap](#) to understand our key priorities.

Our Team

The Marketing Communications team is structured as an integrated team, working seamlessly to create, curate and distribute content to targeted audiences. We believe in the COPE method – create once, public everywhere – to maximize the reach of our content. The agency's primary points of contact will be the Public Relations Director and Content Manager, who works in tandem with the rest of the team and under the direction of the VP of Marketing Communications.

To achieve success, the team must liaise with and support a variety of stakeholders, including MCCVB members, committees, and the Board of Directors. The selected agency must understand and support the organization in earning media coverage and strategic social media management and actively suggest, produce, and help guide activities designed to showcase Monterey County's wide range of tourism experiences. This should be done by targeting regional, national, group, and industry market segments and tracking measurable outcomes from activities with proceeding regular reports. MCCVB is

seeking an agency partner that will be an integral collaborator in these efforts and serve as an extension of the team.

Our team also works with Visit California, Visit Carmel, and the Central Coast Tourism Council (CCTC) on broader media relations program initiatives. Collaboration may be needed with these partners and other agencies. Currently, the MCCVB maintains agency relationships for advertising, and digital/web development and research.

Goals & Measurement

MCCVB's Marketing Communications strategy relies upon content marketing to successfully engage with prospective visitors through a variety of paid, owned, and earned tactics that result in measurable KPIs to drive "intent to visit". Intent to visit is measured by a biannual Communication Effectiveness & Marketing Impact Study. Primary KPIs the agency will contribute to include but are not limited to:

- Total earned media placements and placements in the Top 100 outlets
- Earned media impressions
- Media Quality Score (created internally)
- Number of assisted and hosted FAMs
- Total web sessions
- Social engagement

The strategic objectives and KPIs for 2023-24 are outlined in the [MCCVB business plan](#), which we request all submitting agencies review carefully.

Key focus areas in the 2023-24 Fiscal Year include:

- Increase length of stay among drive and target markets, including those adding our destination to their itinerary as part of a larger trip (e.g., a road trip from Los Angeles to San Francisco).
- Increase awareness of lesser-known regions of the county, such as Salinas Valley, South County, North County, Carmel Valley, Marina, and Seaside.
- Establish Monterey County as the most inspirational and transformative meeting destination on the West Coast, expand messaging, and build upon industry relationships within the group meetings industry.
- Reinforce responsible travel, particularly in sensitive areas such as Big Sur. Continuation of MCCVB's stance as a pioneer in sustainable travel promotion, and expanding its current definition with Monterey County resident sentiment in mind.
- Encourage overnight stays while using responsible travel messaging in sensitive areas (i.e. Big Sur) to help balance the influx of visitors and social message exposure in those regions.
- Highlight luxury properties and high-end experiences, and conversely include budget-friendly accommodations of Monterey County in relevant, targeted publications.
- Develop C-Suite story ideas to showcase thought leaders of Monterey County and further establish the destination as the most transformative meetings destination, with a legacy of innovation derived from its inherent inspirational assets.

Target Markets & Audience

MCCVB focuses on three audience groups:

1. Leisure Travelers by Geography

- Drive Markets (90% of Monterey County visitors)
San Francisco Bay Area, Central Valley, Los Angeles, Southern California
- Direct Fly Markets (flights directly into MRY)
Seattle, Phoenix, Denver, Dallas, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego, San Francisco
- Long-Haul & National Markets
Midwest/Chicago and East Coast including New York and Boston

2. Group & Meetings Travelers

- Group Type & Industry
Corporate and incentive groups, meetings and conference planners, and state and regional associations
- Region
Similar to leisure markets including Northern California, Southern California, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Nevada, Texas, Midwest, Northeast

3. International

- Tier I: United Kingdom
- Tier II: Canada & Mexico
- Tier III: Asia Pacific (China, Korea, Japan, India), Australia, Europe (France, Germany, Scandinavia)

Note: International outreach and programming are not included in this SOW. Our team works with Visit California and a UK public relations representative, and in some instances, international partners to target FIT individual travelers and group travel from key target markets.

Scope of Work

Seeking an agency to act as an MCCVB Marketing Communications team extension. The selected agency may be asked to collaborate on projects with other contracted agencies, including 62ABOVE (advertising and creative), Simpleview (SEO and digital development), SMARI (research), and Neolux (UK public relations).

The ideal agency will have a core team located in California, with a nationwide network.

Public Relations

The selected agency will support the public relations team in securing quality, high-profile domestic and international leisure and group/business media coverage for Monterey County while further building the team's media connections.

- Proactive: Focus on the identified Top 100 outlets; research information for story ideas and pitches; provide pitching opportunities to the public relations team; media list building; distribution of press materials, pitches, and releases.
- Reactive: Vet incoming media leads, providing detailed background about the subject and outlet.
- Media Meetings & Events: Provide briefs for media meetings at missions and conferences; coordinate meetings and desksides for the MCCVB team while in key markets; represent MCCVB at industry and media events as requested.

- Media FAMs: Vet, plan, and support media and influencer FAMs, as determined and approved by MCCVB public relations team; create media-facing itineraries on the MCCVB itinerary platform.
- Influencers and Content Creators: Vet, plan and coordinate influencer programs, as directed by MCCVB public relations team; supply social media coverage reports and clips.
- Press Materials: Develop and maintain press materials including but not limited to press releases, boilerplates, and media kits.
- Crisis Communications: Support MCCVB with crisis communications as needed.
- Media Tracking: Share coverage with MCCVB promptly providing analytics and clips; follow up with media pitches and FAMs, providing feedback on interest and run dates.

Social Media

The selected agency will support the content team with an ongoing social media strategy in line with the overall program. Day-to-day execution and community management across social channels will be managed internally by the MCCVB team. The agency is expected to strategize and support content for both leisure and group/meetings initiatives.

- Audit: Conduct an audit of MCCVB social media channels, audience, tone of voice, policies, competitors, and imagery.
- Strategy: Develop an overarching strategy and social tactics that enhance existing campaigns and promotions, amplify MCCVB partner content, and focus on off-peak and shoulder seasons, and responsible travel.
- Content: Suggest content ideas for MCCVB social channels designed to showcase Monterey County's wide range of tourism experiences; create strategies that amplify user-generated content and content created from influencer programs.
- MCCVB's primary social media platforms are currently [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#)
- Additionally, MCCVB manages [LinkedIn](#) (Groups & Meetings focus), [Leisure blog](#), and [Meetings blog](#). The selected agency is expected to align strategies and post cadence accordingly.
- MCCVB would like to develop future strategies and growth: Possibilities include establishing a greater presence on [Pinterest](#) and/or [YouTube](#), strategic planning for vlogs, TikTok and Threads, analyzing the need and developing from scratch.

Reporting & Calls

- Schedule and participate in bimonthly calls, providing agenda and status reports in advance.
- Provide monthly reports that include:
 - Media contacted, pitch subjects, and press in progress.
 - Media FAM coordination, including initial media coverage and social media coverage.
 - Earned media placements.
 - Ongoing social media metrics and measurable outcomes.

It is also requested that agencies can take on special or out-of-scope projects, to be discussed and agreed upon on a case-by-case basis.

Supporting Documents

Supporting documents on MCCVB's current public relations and social media programs include:

- [Media Kit](#)

- [Media](#)
- [2023-24 Content Calendar](#)

Available upon request:

- Branded Content Guidelines
- Community Management Policy
- MCCVB Brand Standards

Proposal & Criteria

Please include the following items in your proposal, agency selection will be based on the following:

- Brief overview of agency history and philosophy, including the agency's core capabilities, differentiators, and track record of success.
- Primary team members, roles, bios, location proposed for this account, and overall organizational chart for public relations and social media teams. Please list the primary agency address and any satellite office locations.
- Current client list and outline any long-term relationships and why they've been successful. Identify any current clients that might be in a potential or perceived conflict with MCCVB.
- Case studies of successful client stories where the agency handled public relations and/or social media within the travel and tourism industry. This should demonstrate innovative, proactive thinking and an integrated approach to public relations and social media channels. Limit three case studies.
- Experience with and approach to strategic planning and goal setting.
- Familiarity with media and influencer FAM trips (include 1-2 sample itineraries).
- Sample of media placements and influencer engagements the agency has procured, including established media contacts and outlets.
- Competitive analysis of our destination; demonstration of the agency's experience as it relates to Monterey County; identify an area MCCVB is lacking awareness and the proposed way you would begin to address it.
- Hourly rates for out-of-scope work.
- Agency must have a policy of non-discrimination and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Beyond the Scope: While this RFP is specific to the detailed Scope of Work and intended only for such work, feel free to share more about your capabilities.

Budget & Term

MCCVB's budget for the scope of work listed above is \$15,000 per month. The agency should provide an estimate based on the scope of work, including agency fees, travel costs, and other associated expenses. Please outline your agency terms, conditions, and billing rate (commission, hourly, etc.) for standard development tasks and out-of-scope expenditures or reimbursable costs.

MCCVB operates on a fiscal year, July - June. The initial term of the contract should be through June 30, 2024. The term may be extended in one-year increments for a total of two (2) years through June 30, 2026, based on an annual review of accomplishments and subject to approval by the MCCVB VP of Marketing Communications and CEO. Each annual review will allow for consideration of adjustments in

agency scope, fees, and extension. MCCVB reserves the right to cancel services for any reason with a 60-day written notice.

The selected agency will be MCCVB's PR and social media agency of record. MCCVB reserves the right to retain other agencies for short-term projects.

Submission Details & Timeline

Please submit the proposal in PDF format to Media@SeeMonterey.com by 11:59 p.m. PST on Sunday, August 6. Any proposals received after this time or via any other channels may be disqualified and deleted. MCCVB does not take responsibility for any technical issues related to agency submissions nor receipt confirmation from MCCVB.

Questions related to this request must be sent to Media@SeeMonterey.com by 5:00 pm PST on Monday, July 31, 2023. Questions will be addressed as quickly as possible in the order received. We *strongly* encourage interested agencies to review SeeMonterey.com, and MeetInMonterey.com and review the [MCCVB business plan](#) before contacting MCCVB with questions.

Notifications will be made by Friday, August 11, 2023, to let agencies know whether there is a desire to move forward in the selection process with presentations. MCCVB will make its best efforts to ensure such emails are received but not take responsibility if for any reason they are not.

The following is the complete timeline and process for agency solicitation, evaluation, and selection. Timeline subject to adjustment.

- RFP Distribution: Friday, July 21, 2023
- Agency Questions Deadline: Monday, July 31, 2023 (submitted via email)
- RFP Deadline: 11:59 p.m., Sunday, August 6, 2023
- Selected Agencies Notified: Monday, August 14, 2023
- Presentations (via Zoom): August 14-21, 2023
- Final Selection: Monday, August 28, 2023
- Start Date: September 1 or immediately upon contract finalization

Additional Submission Information

Agency responses to the RFP can be fashioned however interested agencies choose to respond. Submitting agencies signify understanding and agreement with these terms by responding to the RFP and will adhere to the following terms:

- Do not contact any MCCVB Board Member or MCCVB staff member. Any unsolicited contact with these individuals will automatically disqualify the agency. All inquiries must be sent to Media@SeeMonterey.com.
- All information (written or spoken) shared by MCCVB is deemed confidential and shall not be shared with outside parties.
- MCCVB reserves the right to change any part of this RFP, the process, and/or altogether cancel at any point and for any reason without any liability to submitting parties.
- Agencies understand that any information provided in a proposal that is found to be untruthful or otherwise a misrepresentation will automatically disqualify the submitting agency. In addition,

should untruths or misrepresentation be found with the selected agency after contracting, such would be grounds for immediate termination of the contract without any liability from MCCVB.

- MCCVB represents many members in the tourism industry. The agency may have some of these members as clients. This is not necessarily a conflict of interest so long as the agency pre-identifies in its proposal any potential conflicts of interest and its ability to ensure there will not be a conflict (e.g., firewalled account management).
- Any information, ideas, and concepts shared with MCCVB in this RFP process are submitted in a non-proprietary manner. Presented ideas and concepts are available to use by MCCVB without any liability and do not constitute a formal agreement or requirement for compensation. Materials submitted through the RFP process will not be returned to submitting agencies.