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Danville, IN 46122  
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## Marketing & Branding RFP

### Questions/Clarifications:

**1. Is there a structure you would like submissions formatted?**

*Submissions would be best formatted to address the following areas:*

- 1. Which of the three areas within the scope of work are the agency or agencies seeking to fulfill?*
- 2. The experience of the agency or agencies and its relevance to working with VHC. Please include examples or links to examples of prior work, references and a list of staff and team structure.*
- 3. Agency fees and budget proposal.*
- 4. A signed letter from the agency or agencies confirming that they meet the equal opportunity requirements, comply with laws and regulations and disclose potential conflicts of interest.*
- 5. Separate sections for each selection criteria identified in the RFP, summarizing how the agency or agencies meet the needs identified under each.*

**2. Are there key audiences that have been identified through research that you could share with us?  
Are there certain demographics that visit more often than others? Do you have updated personas in relation to them?**

*Updated personas would be a desired deliverable from the agency during the branding process.*

*Demographic groups identified among Hendricks County travelers can be viewed here:*

[https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/sv-hendrickscounty/image/upload/v1/clients/hendricks/DemographicsTopRings\\_Export\\_a5260919-f823-406d-a52e-6ec681dec1fb.jpg?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR3exBToQs-9L09uvTLmJO0hdMq97n1GBYrIFPkRv8qh-c545fu5VR0\\_p4Y\\_aem\\_VsaC-UKRwvIv0Tkbp6GbUq](https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/sv-hendrickscounty/image/upload/v1/clients/hendricks/DemographicsTopRings_Export_a5260919-f823-406d-a52e-6ec681dec1fb.jpg?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR3exBToQs-9L09uvTLmJO0hdMq97n1GBYrIFPkRv8qh-c545fu5VR0_p4Y_aem_VsaC-UKRwvIv0Tkbp6GbUq)

**3. Do you only include member destinations and businesses in your marketing efforts?**

*VHC is not a member-based organization. It promotes locally owned businesses that benefit the visitor economy within Hendricks County. VHC does have a few policies for inclusion in promotional activities based on business size, ownership and occasional cooperative payment. Besides that, VHC is not restricted in what is promoted within the county.*

- 4. Are there specific events or seasons that you want to build your campaign around? Are you looking to add visits during existing busy seasons or highlight products or programs to attract people during off-peak dates? If you want to do both, what is the priority?**

*VHC wants to do both. Hendricks County's peak travel seasons are Summer and Fall. Campaigns and spending will be prioritized during those seasons, with smaller campaigns during other times of the year focused on priorities and opportunities defined within VHC's new strategic plan. VHC is looking for the selected agency or agencies to recommend new marketing programs and strategies.*

- 5. Do you have any recent audience data, specifically key markets, drive-time radius, duration of stay? Is there a specific goal to improve any of these or other metrics?**

*VHC's top five markets for visitation (with average duration of stay) are Indianapolis (1.7 days), Terre Haute (1.6 days), Chicago (1.9 days), Champaign & Springfield / Decatur (1.6 days) and St. Louis (1.9 days). Detroit and Cincinnati are other key markets that rank among the top five in visitor spending. VHC would like to focus future marketing efforts on increasing average length of stay and average spend.*

- 6. Do you have any recent information and/or analytics for last year's media buy?**

*Yes, extensive data from recent campaigns will be available by the selected agency or agencies, including a brand image and halo study completed in 2024 by Longwoods.*

- 7. Can you share your current brand standards?**

*Current brand guidelines can be found here: [https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/sv-hendrickscounty/image/upload/v1/clients/hendricks/VHC\\_Brand\\_Guidelines\\_050917SMALL\\_c300c2ff-efbf-4606-a4f6-5e31f24127b6.pdf](https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/sv-hendrickscounty/image/upload/v1/clients/hendricks/VHC_Brand_Guidelines_050917SMALL_c300c2ff-efbf-4606-a4f6-5e31f24127b6.pdf)*

- 8. What is your approval process? When would the board and/or members be involved in approving materials?**

*The Director (VP) of Marketing Strategy approves marketing creative, tactics and spending, with input from the CEO on major new initiatives. VHC is not member-based, and the board is not involved in day-to-day marketing approvals. With a new brand launch, input will be sought from key stakeholders, including the board, industry members and the senior leadership team of VHC.*

- 9. Do you currently partner with an agency? Are they submitting a proposal?**

*VHC currently works with Williams Randall Advertising. Williams Randall has been invited to participate in this RFP.*

**10. What happens after the due date? Will there be in-person presentations?**

*After the due date, the Director (VP) of Marketing Strategy will do an initial review, removing any proposals that are clearly not a fit. The VHC marketing staff will then review the submitted proposals and select a group of finalists. The list of finalists will be reviewed and potentially revised by VHC senior leadership staff, and the remaining finalists will be invited to present in person. Presentations will be made for the VHC selection committee. Those presentations will be in the first two weeks of March 2025.*

**11. Please detail the team members of VHC who would work with the agency day in and day out and what their specialties are.**

*Regular interactions will be between the selected agency or agencies and the Director (VP) of Marketing Strategy (primary contact), as well as the VHC marketing team. The VHC staff directory can be found here: <https://www.visithendrickscounty.com/partners/about-us/staff-directory/>*

**12. With relation to the marketing team notated above, what tactics for execution of marketing strategies are ideally carried through for implementation in house, if any?**

*Currently, VHC marketing staff manages the website, paid and organic social media, web content and PR/communications in-house. VHC also has a contracted photographer/videographer and a team of paid content creators. VHC contracts with Simpleview for web hosting, SEO, and paid search. VHC has staff that can handle small graphic design projects, as well as data and research analysis.*

**13. Which reporting platforms would be integrated with to pull data?**

*VHC has contracted with Tourism Economics for attribution on marketing efforts. VHC also works with Datafy, G4 and other vendors to measure destination performance. The selected agency will demonstrate a strong interest in using that data and working with VHC's Senior Research and Data Manager to inform marketing decisions.*

**14. Production of high-quality photo/video content is part of the scope. Does VHC have an existing library of high-quality photography/video assets, or should the selected agency or agencies budget for extensive new content production? Also, will out-of-pocket costs for the shoots (photographers, travel, etc.) come from this budget, or does this scope just include strategy for and coordination of this new content production?**

*VHC has a contracted photographer/videographer who regularly shoots content; an extensive photo library is growing. Any photo/video creation by the selected agency will be limited to specific branding work or commercial shoots that require more in-depth production. It is not desired that photo/video make up a large proportion of the budget within this contract. Out-of-pocket costs for shoots would come from this budget.*

**15. Similarly, are other production costs like printing, stock photography, music licensing, etc. coming from this budget, or is there a separate budget for production costs?**

*As a practice, production costs for agency projects would come from this budget.*

**16. Does VHC currently manage its website in-house, or should website design and development support be included in our proposal? In relation to the website, who will ideally be updating the web copy?**

*The VHC website is managed through Simpleview and will be handled outside this budget. Upon launch of the new brand, a website redesign will be completed with some agency input, but website costs will be primarily managed through a different part of the VHC budget. VHC marketing staff will update the web copy with guidance from the selected agency or agencies.*

**17. How does VHC currently handle SEO and organic search strategy? Is there an expectation for the agency to contribute to this?**

*SEO and organic search strategy is handled through Simpleview. Occasional guidance from the selected agency or agencies is appreciated, but it does not need to be included in this proposal.*

**18. Are there any media tactics that are off-limits for consideration?**

*VHC will ask the selected agency or agencies to recommend how to use ad spend best to maximize efficiency and KPIs. While VHC has not used some channels in the past (namely broadcast television), it is open to all mediums if they are justified and measurable with data.*

**19. Do you currently have an OTA strategy or programs in place with OTAs?**

*VisitHendricksCounty.com has a hotel booking engine with a few different pages built through ARes. Outside of that, VHC has no other OTA programs in place.*

**20. Are there any digital transformation initiatives (such as augmented reality) that VHC is interested in exploring?**

*VHC is open to new tactics as long as they can be cost-justified and measured effectively with data.*

**21. Have you run brand awareness campaigns in the last 5 years? If so, how did they perform?**

*Yes. VHC has run awareness campaigns across multiple channels, including social media, display, paid search and performance max. Extensive data from recent campaigns will be available for use and analysis by the selected agency or agencies, including a brand image and halo study completed in 2024 by Longwoods.*

**22. What are ideal growth goals (numbers/percentages) for tourism?**

*VHC recently launched a new strategic plan and is in the process of adjusting goals for tourism growth. Year-over-year increases in hotel demand, innkeepers' tax collection, visitation, spending, and economic impact are key performance indicators that will be tracked. As for specific numerical growth goals, those are currently under review.*

**23. What are ideal growth goals for resident sentiment?**

*Resident sentiment was measured for the first time by VHC in 2024. Ideal growth goals are to improve perceptions of the county's offerings, improve perceptions of VHC as an organization, and increase the percentage of residents who spend a majority of their leisure time within the county.*

**24. How many stakeholder groups, as well as individual headcounts per group, would the chosen agency have access to for discovery during the branding process?**

*In 2024, VHC conducted three major studies during its strategic planning process. Those studies included surveys and focus groups of residents, visitors and other stakeholders. On average, the focus groups had 8-10 people, and VHC conducted six focus groups per study. That data is available for the branding process, and other focus groups could be created during the branding process if deemed necessary outside of focus groups used to test the developed branding.*

**25. As part of the new brand identity, are you interested in revising the organization's name?**

*Yes, VHC is open to changing the organization's name, with the caveat that the organization represents a county with four large suburban communities, so Hendricks County will continue to be at the core of the organization's identity, not the name of a municipality.*

**26. Have you done annual campaigns in the past? If so, what worked really well? What didn't work so well?**

*Yes, VHC has run a similar set of campaigns year over year for an extended amount of time. Summer and Fall campaigns are typically the most efficient. Recent research shows visitors and residents value the county's dining experiences and seek more outdoor adventure and events. Webinars about that research can be found here: <https://www.visithendrickscounty.com/partners/strategic-plan/>*

**27. Do you currently manage PR/earned media or have a partner that does?**

*As mentioned, VHC has a Senior Communications Manager who handles PR and earned media efforts. VHC desires the selected agency or agencies to advise and share ideas for potential high-impact PR efforts concerning campaigns created within the contract, ensuring maximum exposure for marketing efforts. It is not desired for the selected agency or agencies to bill hours for PR and earned media efforts.*

**28. How much of this is focused on residents and how much on prospective visitors?**

*Residents are identified as a primary audience for VHC in its new strategic plan, but paid marketing efforts will remain focused on the visitor. It is desired that ~75-90 percent of the budget spent on advertising is targeted toward visitors from outside the county, with exceptions for smaller seasonal campaigns that might come up with a more localized focus.*

**29. Do you own admin rights on your paid ad accounts (Meta and Google, especially)?**

*VHC owns admin rights on paid ad accounts through Meta and Google Ads. Paid search is executed through Simpleview, a relationship that will continue.*

**30. Why are you launching this RFP...what is missing in your current partnerships?**

*VHC recently completed a new strategic plan, and included in that plan is a call to define the brand promise, evaluate and diversify the target markets and facilitate effective marketing opportunities for Hendricks County and the organization. VHC seeks proposals to ensure the proper partnership is identified to meet these goals.*

**31. Is there a need for multilingual or accessibility-focused marketing materials to better serve diverse visitor segments?**

*Accessibility-focused marketing is a priority for VHC in the near future. AudioEye was implemented in 2024 on VisitHendricksCounty.com, and a content audit is included in the 2025 marketing plan with hopes to market more inclusively and to encourage destination partners to become more inclusive.*

*Research has recently been conducted that shows that diverse resident segments are more likely to seek leisure activities outside the county, and this is an area of interest for future VHC marketing.*

**32. How frequently are you measuring these two KPIs: resident and visitor sentiments, ad recall and brand perception?**

*VHC's current research schedule calls for measuring resident and visitor sentiment every five years, as well as ad recall and brand perception every three years. VHC is open to changing that schedule.*