



RFP to Develop Marketing & Branding Strategy for USCB

SCOPE OF WORK

The University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) proposes to develop a university-wide marketing and branding strategy in collaboration with a full-service Contractor with extensive, proven marketing and branding experience – minimum three (3) years – in a variety of sectors, including higher education. USCB seeks a knowledgeable, proven partner that will help identify market niche and articulate the USCB brand to current and prospective target audiences. Contractor will be responsible to develop and implement a robust strategy that raises USCB's profile positively and measurably in local, regional, national, and international markets. The strategy must create a consistent, unifying brand message that positions USCB to advantage in a highly competitive higher education landscape.

Contractor deliverables include – but are not limited to – bold, effective brand messaging and creative content as well as a structured, feasible rollout plan.

TIMELINE

6/6/22	RFP Published
6/17/22	(Virtual) Pre-Proposal Conference at 10:00am
6/30/22	Deadline for Questions by 2:00pm EST
7/11/22	Proposals Due to avaughn@uscb.edu by 5:00pm EST
7/18/22 – 7/20/22	Interviews with Finalists
7/22/22	Notification of Selection

To request a link for the pre-proposal conference, please e-mail Abby Vaughn at avaughn@uscb.edu. All questions regarding this solicitation should be sent directly to avaughn@uscb.edu and proposals should be submitted electronically to this e-mail address as well.

Please note: The selected vendor will be asked to submit a fixed price bid to USC Columbia following the USCB RFP process. Documentation will be provided at that time to move forward with the appropriate award process.

REQUIREMENTS

- A. Contractor will conduct market research, inclusive of external and internal assessments, to identify current brand strengths and opportunities, unique brand position, and more. Research deliverables will include reports, presentations, and/or other agreed-upon tangible products that clearly articulate and/or demonstrate research results. Outcomes will yield

evaluative reports providing strategic direction for positive positioning and differentiation along with an associated communications plan and digital and print communications collateral.

- B. Contractor will address, as an immediate need, marketing for the Hospitality, Marine Biology and Cybersecurity programs.
- C. Contractor will provide evidence of expertise in designing and implementing comprehensive branding and marketing/communication plans, including substantive measurement criteria and timelines for implementation.
- D. Contractor will identify brand niche and create consistent, university-wide brand message that positions USCB to advantage in the higher education market. This process will include, but is not limited to, creation of brand campaign creative collateral that embodies branding and that will inform the design and feel of future creative collateral. Contractor will present at minimum two
(2) novel messaging and design concepts and, upon adoption of a concept, present a design and style guide.
- E. The process for arriving at agreed-upon design and implementation strategy will be collaborative and will involve USCB leadership and other constituents, including the chancellor, vice chancellor for Advancement, members of the Advancement team, and select members of the university community.
- F. Contractor will likely design student recruitment and/or donor and alumni solicitation pieces that incorporate brand messaging, including, but not limited to, toss piece, viewbook, admit pack, fundraising campaign pieces, and exterior banners.
- G. Contractor will develop a robust implementation strategy across multiple communications channels/platforms to reach target audiences and thus measurably increase awareness, student applications, and donor support.
- H. Contractor will assess USCB.edu and related websites to identify redesign needs, if any, that support alignment with strategic messaging and branding and that optimize user experience across platforms/devices. This process would include a written assessment of existing site and may include new design of wire frames and templates.

PROPOSALS + PRESENTATIONS

A written proposal and a live or remote presentation to a USCB Evaluation Panel will be required of every Offeror. Offeror's presentation attendees/participants should include, but are not limited to, key members of the account management team, key technical personnel, and key subject matter and execution experts. Presentations will be limited to 45 minutes and should address Scope of Work and Requirements as stated above. Further, presentations should address the Offeror's proposed solutions and strategies as described in the Offeror's written proposal. Offerors may not seek preliminary

assessment of proposal components from Panelists prior to the formal presentation.

USCB Evaluation Panelists may ask questions pertaining to the Offeror's presentation. The Offeror's answers will be restricted to statements of fact and information contained in the written proposal. The Offeror will not be permitted to introduce new information, i.e., not included in the written proposal. Moreover, neither negotiation nor changes to the written proposal will be permissible during the presentation stage of the process.

SUBMISSIONS

Offerors' submissions should include the following information for purposes of evaluation:

A. Cover Letter

Offerors will provide a cover letter that contains a commitment to provide the services and deliverables described in this solicitation. The cover letter must include: 1) the name and signature of the Offeror's representative, who is authorized to negotiate a contract with USCB, 2) a summary of the benefits of selecting the Offeror, and 3) what the Offeror considers the most important and salient factors in the development of a successful marketing and branding strategy.

B. Technical Proposal

Offerors will provide a Technical Proposal with detailed descriptions of how Offeror's services – both development of brand messaging and creative content as well as strategy implementation – meet or exceed requirements as specified above.

C. Qualifications

Offerors will provide an overview company qualifications and résumés of personnel who would work on the project – if awarded the contract. Further, Offerors will provide at minimum two (2) examples of similar work performed for other organizations/institutions and a minimum of three (3) professional references from organizations/institutions familiar with the Offeror's company and quality of work. Offerors will provide contact names, organization/institution names, physical addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses for references.

D. Price Proposal

Offerors will provide itemized pricing for all services (including time and travel, if any) and deliverables identified and described as necessary to fulfilling the Scope of Work as detailed in the Offeror's Technical Proposal. All charges, including time and travel, for which USCB would be responsible – if contract is awarded – must be included in the Price Proposal. Further, the Price Proposal must be separate from the Technical Proposal.

PHASES OF WORK

A. Brand Messaging

1. Discovery and focus groups
2. Identify current brand strengths and opportunities

3. Identify key brand niche
4. Deliver report summarizing key findings
5. Deliver comprehensive implementation plan with timeline and substantive measurement criteria

B. Creative Content

1. Deliver minimum two (2) novel messaging and design concepts with specifications for distinct collateral pieces, e.g., toss piece, view book, admit pack, fundraising campaign pieces, exterior banners, website redesign (if any), etc.
2. Deliver design and style guide
3. Produce tangible and digital assets for internal and external rollouts

C. Internal Rollout

1. Communicate key messaging
2. Deliver talking points and training (if any) for key USCB ambassadors, including but not limited to the chancellor, cabinet members, USCB Education Foundation Board members, faculty and staff association leaders, student ambassadors, student government leaders, and other influencers
3. Share collateral pieces, promotional strategies, and timelines

D. External Rollout

Timeline and implementation strategy will be developed during the process.

****USCB reserves the right to be selective regarding any Offeror's services and/or deliverables. USCB, in its sole discretion, will determine which services and/or deliverables to include in any contract awarded. Further, inclusion of any services and/or deliverables in this RFP or in an Offeror's proposal submission does not constitute commitment by USCB to contract for any/all services and/or deliverables.**