

DIGITAL MARKETING RFP

2019



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BUTLER COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU BACKGROUND

The Butler County Visitors Bureau (BCVB) is the premier Destination Marketing & Management Organization for Butler County, Ohio. Representing and promoting the diverse communities of the region located between Cincinnati and Dayton has been a distinct privilege and responsibility of the BCVB for the last 12 years.

Focusing on economic development through the power of travel and tourism, the BCVB has won numerous accolades and received international recognition for the quality of its work to attract leisure travelers, sports groups, meetings, conventions, and tour operators to Butler County. Recent recognition ranges from a prestigious U.S. Travel Association Destiny Award to NASC's Sports Tourism Organization of the Year.

PARTNER QUALIFICATIONS

The BCVB is now looking for a smart, dynamic, and innovative digital marketing agency partner to help drive leisure visitation to Butler County through a series of seasonal campaigns and inventive promotional engagements.

Does your company have robust experience in the travel industry, love working with engaged and creative client partners, seek out out-of-the-box ideas and digital campaigns, and enjoy making a real difference through advertising and marketing? Then you might just be the right one.

Qualified respondents will have the following experience:

- Work with at least 2 travel/tourism related businesses/companies in the last 3 years
- Managed complex and multi-faceted digital advertising campaigns for at least 5 years
- Capabilities to do design in-house for associated campaigns
- Willingness to work on seasonal campaigns, not retainer-based model
- Have a passion for the travel industry

GOAL OF RFP

The goal of this digital marketing RFP is to aid the BCVB in selecting the most qualified and appropriate agency partner to:

- Advise, place, and conduct a minimum of 2 seasonal digital campaigns with the intent of driving increased leisure travel visitation to Butler County, Ohio
- Manage and optimize 12-month pay-per-click strategy
- Develop and deliver necessary creative elements in collaboration with BCVB staff for campaign elements
- Provide metrics, integrate, and utilize agency and BCVB's marketing data stack to optimize campaigns

BCVB GOALS

A successful partnership will do the following:

- Elevate brand awareness and Butler County as a destination of choice for travel regionally and nationally
- Increase the number of documented arrivals to Butler County
- Improve visibility of the BCVB as an innovative and forward-thinking marketing organization within the DMO landscape
- Meet and exceed mutually identified key performance indicators

CURRENT STRATEGY & BELIEFS

The BCVB has progressively built and raised the visibility of Butler County as a travel destination over the last decade. With the emergence and constant flow of new technologies, the digital advertising space is constantly changing. To continue to be effective marketers and promoters, the BCVB needs to stay on top of this changing landscape and leverage multiple technologies to reach the new and existing audiences.

Digital advertising and its integration with other BCVB promotional activities (i.e. public relations, owned media) are essential to keeping Butler County top-of-mind as a destination of choice for travel in the Midwest.

In the past several years, the BCVB has tested, refined, and optimized a variety of digital tactics including, but not limited to, PPC, display, pre-roll, social campaigns (Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat), and native. We're looking to extend into new areas of marketing to continue to leverage a multi-channel approach to drive more visitors to our destination.

BCVB MARKETING LANDSCAPE

The BCVB team is small and lean. However, we market our destination with creativity and energy. The following list outlines our current marketing landscape. We look forward to seeing and understanding your strategies to amplify Butler County as a tourism destination if your company is chosen for the BCVB's 2019 digital advertising efforts.

- **Butler County as the name of our destination** – our destination name cannot change, so we must be creative to market and maximize our destination. However, we actively work to counter feelings of a rural or remote area which is only a small piece of our diverse landscape.
- **Increase awareness of Butler County as a destination** – we have made strong gains in this area in the past few years, but there is still much to be done.
- **Our communities** – Butler County is made up of several cities, townships, and communities. As the county's tourism marketing arm, it's our job to bridge that gap between communities in the minds of potential travelers.
- **Attraction diversity** – while development has added several new and interesting attractions to our destination in the last few years, we continue to be scrappy and inventive to market our destination in new ways.
- **Seasonal budget** – our marketing budget does not allow for 12-month advertising campaigns. We must be strategic with seasonal campaigns.

MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

There are many areas of strength for Butler County as a travel destination. The BCVB desires to continue to amplify these opportunities to gain more visitation to our market.

- **Excellent & Convenient Location** – within a one-day drive of 60% of US population and between Cincinnati and Dayton.
- **New Countywide Brand** – Butler County, including the Visitors Bureau and County Government, launched a countywide brand one-year ago to present a more cohesive look and messaging to potential visitors, residents, and businesses.
- **Successful, Award Winning Campaign** – The BCVB has developed and leveraged an award-winning “Hello Weekend” campaign for the last 5 years. This can be built upon or evolved into a new direction.
- **Excellent Public Relations Coverage** – with the development of the Butler County Donut Trail along with other key initiatives, the BCVB has received media coverage from major outlets including NBC, CNN, American Way, USA Today, Backpacker, and more. This can be leveraged more fully in a marketing/ advertising context.

- **Up-and-Coming Destination** – while name recognition is low, the amount of major development and investment dollars pouring into the region is high.
- **Diversity of Product** – From a quaint college town to urban city centers and bustling suburban areas, Butler County has a wide range of tourism-related product to promote.
- **Tracking Technology** – BCVB subscribes to a third-party data platform, which provides us insight into which campaigns and advertising opportunities are driving actual arrivals/visitation into our destination.

DIGITAL NEEDS

The BCVB's marketing goals are relatively simple. We work to drive increased visitation into our destination. We plan to continue with the following strategies with the assistance and help of a new digital agency partner, but are open to new and emerging technologies as well.

Including, but not limited to:

- PPC
- Display
- Native
- Email
- Social media advertising (not channel management)
- Creative services associated with above list

Website management, maintenance, SEO, landing page build out, print, and out-of-home are not part of this RFP. Creative design for landing pages is included.

TARGET AUDIENCES

Butler County is primarily a drive destination within the Midwest. Although, we are receiving more and more visitation from farther parts of the US and world, we primarily draw from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, West Virginia, and Kentucky. Due to high hotel occupancy during the week, we strive to encourage more weekend business than weekday business. Additionally, the quantity and quality of our products lend more generally to a 2-3 day stay than longer full week vacations. The focus of our digital marketing efforts includes leisure travel, not business travel.

LIST OF COMPETING DESTINATIONS

Depending upon seasonality, our competitors are generally in the Midwest. A short list of primary competing destinations is listed below. We certainly compete with others, this is an abbreviated list.

- Cincinnati, OH
- Dayton, OH
- Dublin, OH
- Hamilton County, IN
- Clermont County, OH
- Warren County, OH
- Lexington, KY

MINIMUM PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Please describe your company structure, size, experience, and list qualifications of people to work on this account.
2. Please outline all fee structures including management fees, commissions, etc.
3. Please list at least 3 client references.
4. Please provide 3 samples of recent (within last 3 years) creative projects as well as 3 case studies of successful digital campaigns.
5. Please explain your approach to client-vendor relationships.
6. Please list a statement of confirmation that you are willing to work on a project-related structure not a retainer model.
7. Please disclose any conflicts of interest with staff members or current clients that you work with who are direct competitors to this account..
8. Wow us! Enthusiasm, energy, presentation, and attention to detail are key.

TIMELINE/BUDGET

This RFP is specific to 2019 digital initiatives and associated creative services, but does not include website management, maintenance, SEO, print, social channel management, or out-of-home .

Annual budget for all digital activities runs between \$80,000 and \$110,000 inclusive of all fees, creative development, and tactics. Please keep this in mind when proposing on this work.

- Questions can be emailed until November 7, 2018 directly to Tracy Kocher, Director of Marketing, tkocher@gettothebc.com.
- Proposals are due by November 12, 2018.

- BCVB follow up question and answer period will conclude November 19, 2018.
- Interviews (remote or in-person) will be conducted during the week of November 26-30, 2018.
- Final partner selected by December 3, 2018.

New agency will begin account work in February 2019. First campaign will launch in April.

INVITATION & QUESTIONS

If this project seems like a good fit for your company, we invite you to send in a proposal. The BCVB is excited to take the next step in our journey of travel marketing and we're hoping you might be the right partner.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used by the BCVB in making a selection. The criteria are generally listed in order of relative importance.

- **Demonstrated Experience & Skills** - Within the past three years as evidenced by account work and performance for at least 2 other travel/destination accounts of similar size, scale, and scope.
- **Quality & Clarity** - Proposal will be considered a representation of the company's ability to communicate and execute work.
- **Cost Effectiveness** - The ability of company to maximize funds to produce the most efficient, effective, and compelling work to drive visitation to Butler County.
- **Capacity** - Ability and staffing available to complete the work outlined in this document.
- **Satisfactory References** - Please list a minimum of 3 references for work within the last 3 years.

The BCVB reserves the right to reject any and all proposals at its sole discretion. This RFP is intended only to select an agency partner for 2019 work. The BCVB is not liable for any preparation or presentation costs associated with proposing for this work. Subcontracting of work is not permitted. Any and all verbal or written discussions and responses are not binding.