

ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Request for Proposals for Phase I of a Pittsburgh Region Brand and Image Enhancement

The following questions were received regarding the Allegheny Conference's RFP for services related to Phase I of a Pittsburgh region brand and image enhancement. A pre-bid conference call was held on Friday, October 19, 2018 to address questions of prospective bidders. The answers to those questions as well as questions received subsequently are included below.

Q: Can you describe most recent work (research and activation) on Pittsburgh Region Branding and Image? When was the work completed and by whom? What worked well, what didn't, why?

A: A comprehensive branding campaign was researched, completed and launched 15 years ago – Imagine What You Can Do Here. It was the communications basis for Pgh250 and became the basis for regional messaging during the G20 Summit, World Environment Day, and One Young World.

The original Imagine What You Can Do Here positioning was modified for talent attraction and retention with additional research and creative development and became the basis for ImaginePittsburgh.com in 2011.

Outside of talent attraction and retention, the core innovation messaging has been updated to support the Frontiers Conference, media tours, outreach with Tech Council and Airport, including GeekWire.

Q: Is there a trigger that has led the Conference to decide to pursue this work now? For instance, has there been a drop in a metric or some segment of the population that is the catalyst for this work?

A: It has been nearly 15 years since the region has taken on a comprehensive brand, image and messaging effort. In that time, much has changed in our community and economy. At the same time other branding and messaging initiatives are in various stages of development and execution. Also, the competition for talent and business expansion has intensified, particularly for talent as a key to business expansion. This effort is intended to develop a differentiated unified brand and message that partners – public, private, nonprofit – can all use.

Q: How do you see this effort being different from past efforts (branding and the overall process)?

A: It has been nearly a decade since we undertook such a comprehensive process. With that comes notable changes in economy, opportunities, challenges for the region, and perception of the region. The role digital and social media will play will be vastly different now versus the prior comprehensive effort. While our audiences are largely the same, the importance of talent as a target has increased over past efforts.

Q: You identified three audiences (noted below). Are these ranked in importance? If so, can you provide your rationale?

- a) Skilled workers, 18-65, with a primary focus on skilled workers, age 24-36, particularly those in high demand fields such as tech, business/financial services, engineering and healthcare
- b) Business decision makers interested in expansion
- c) Business- and leisure-visitors to Pittsburgh

A: Yes, these are in priority order.

Given the demographic shifts that our region is experiencing and the changing nature of work, the Allegheny Conference, with the input of our members and partners has identified talent attraction, retention and elevation as top priority. The primary group would be skilled workers, age 24-36, particularly those in high demand fields such as IT, business and financial services, engineering and healthcare. Access to talent is a top site selection criteria for businesses looking to invest in any region.

Business decision makers considering an investment in the region (expansion or attraction) are a target of this effort. This includes business specifically those in the five sectors of the economy that we proactively target (energy, financial and business services, healthcare and life sciences, IT, and advanced manufacturing).

Business and leisure visitors to our region are a target as well. Our tourism promotion agency – VisitPittsburgh – has an existing brand and marketing campaign in place. Our objective is to create a regional brand, image and message that complements their work.

Q: Can you tell us more about the broad age spread (18-65)? Do you have a specific age in mind for business decision makers, versus talent or even visitors who might travel to the Pittsburgh region?

A: We are targeting working aged talent. Skilled workers, 18-65, with a primary focus on skilled workers, age 24-36, particularly those in high demand fields such as tech, business/financial services, engineering and healthcare.

We have no specific age in mind for business or visitors, except to the extent that these audiences would map to the talent audience.

Q: You mentioned your primary focus is on employers and talent. How much of a focus would you like us to dedicate to the business and leisure visitors? Do they have equal weight? Do you have lists for this target? Should we include tourism/arts/attraction entities as an industry sector (in addition to advanced manufacturing, financial and business services, energy, healthcare and life sciences, information technology and robotics)?

A: In priority order, the audiences are talent, business and visitors. They do not have equal weight. The top factor driving business investment decisions is the availability of skilled talent. We have talent-related research and detail on our business investment strategies and targets that will be made available to the agency selected. The deliverables from this process are

intended to complement existing tourism efforts (by VisitPittsburgh) and as such tourism should factor into the research.

Q: If you had to pick one or two markets across the country you feel are, “doing it right,” what would they be relative to their identity as it relates to attracting and retaining talent, etc?

A: Austin, Nashville, Columbus

Q: What is the ultimate goal of this work? Is it to enhance the perception of Pittsburgh or to enhance it in service of something else?

A: The goal is to enhance the perception of the 10-county Pittsburgh region to attract and retain talent, business investment and visitors to advance our mission of improving the region’s economic future and quality of life.

Q: Besides messaging, what other initiatives do you see the research and brand strategy work informing? For example, would you be rethinking your media/connections planning? How you design 1-1 engagement with prospective corporations? Other experiential marketing initiatives?

A: Yes, the research would inform our media planning, and efforts to market to talent and business investment targets. It will guide how we talk about the region with audiences internal and external to the region.

Q: Ultimately, do you plan for all government, tourism, economic development, corporate and nonprofit entities/organizations will adopt and communicate this brand promise, position and messaging?

A: Our hope is to encourage a unified way of presenting the region. We have had great success in engaging partners with a unified message in the past. For example, more than 100 organizations used the shared messaging developed for the G20 Summit. Our hope is to create something powerful and effective that the community – public, private, nonprofit entities - will elect to use it.

Q: How will this work be used? By whom?

A: The research will inform efforts to market the region to the target audiences with the ultimate goal of attracting talent to live here, companies to do business here, and travelers to visit here. It will be used by the Allegheny Conference and ideally public and private partners around the 10-county region.

Q: How do you envision the different sectors (employers, nonprofits, educators) using the messaging we’d create? Would they be directly using and sharing our designed collateral materials, or would they incorporate the messaging into their own collateral? Or, would we produce materials/tailored messaging for each specific sector?

A: We envision our members, partners and others in the region would use the messaging when talking about the region to talent, businesses, and visitors. At this time, we don’t plan to customize collateral by sector.

Q: Are you able to share more on the research you currently have and why it is insufficient? Where is it lacking? Are there select audience attitudes that have not been explored well enough? Or are there general topics that have been missed?

A: The research was conducted annually over a four-year period and as such, some of it is dated. Ideally, we would test some of the findings that have held true from year to year, i.e. we can assume that everyone is selling jobs and many are selling various aspects of quality of life. But we would want to understand whether the consistent theme of the genuine/authentic/friendly nature of people of Pittsburgh is still a worthwhile selling proposition, and if so, we may want to explore that concept in more detail. Given the intensified nature of competition for talent over the past several years, and the limited scope of our past research, we do feel the need for a more comprehensive look.

Q: You recently conducted research that you'll make available to the winning bidder. Will we be expected to continue to partner with your current research partner/provider?

A: No.

Q: Does the Conference have any specific requests for how the research is conducted (focus groups, online methods, surveys, etc.), or are you looking for the recommendation of the selected firm?

A: We are looking for the recommendation from the selected firm.

Q: Is there a hard deadline on Phase 1 deliverables and do these deliverables need to dovetail with any other planning processes, other than Phase 2 as outlined in the RFP?

A: We were anticipating approx. 90 days from the commencement of work. We need to have Phase 1 completed no later than the end of Q1 2019. Deliverables will inform at least two existing marketing/communications initiatives – one talent related and the second related to the 75th anniversary of the Allegheny Conference.

Q: What is the timing for Phase 2?

A: Our current plan is to commence work on Phase II (creative development and implementation) in 2019 to be in a position to launch in Q4 2019.

Q: Regarding the Phase II (not part of the SOW), are you expecting this to be addressed in our response? For example, creative portfolio, media buying/planning capabilities, etc.?

A: No.

Q: What is the budget / budget range for Phase 1?

A: No we do not have a budget expectation or range to share.

Q: Are you able to clarify what is meant by “Phase II is subject to the successful completion of Phase I, which would provide materials to support a fundraising initiative to garner sufficient resources to proceed with Phase II”? Is Phase I a fundraising campaign? Or, is part of Phase I to create some preliminary marketing materials for a fundraiser to execute the full campaign in Phase II?

A: We can't do Phase II until Phase I is completed. We expect to be able to raise the funds for each phase from our board and other Conference members. This is not a fundraising campaign.

Q: Who would be handling the fundraising aspect?

A: The Allegheny Conference

Q: How did you go about determining who received the RFP?

A: We have a board led committee that guides our strategic communications efforts. A subset of that committee provided input on the distribution list. We also disseminated the RFP via the Pittsburgh Advertising Federation.

Q: Will the firm selected for Phase 1 also be the firm to work on Phase 2, or will it go back out to bid?

A: We plan to put this work back out to bid.

Q: Are you expecting participating agencies to commit to submitting the proposal at any point prior to the Nov. 7 deadline?

A: No

Q: Is there any benefit to the Conference in working with a WBE, SDB or DBE partner?

A: This is not part of our current policy.

Q: Can an agency bid on one phase of the RFP vs. participating in both?

A: Yes.

Q: Will additional organizations from the region be participating in agency selection for Phase 1 research and brand positioning process?

A: We have a board led committee that guides our strategic communications efforts. A subset of that committee provided input on this RFP and will be part of the selection process and make a recommendation to our board leadership who will make final approval.

Q: Are you open to our sharing case studies and processes we use to meet the needs of this RFP?

A: Yes, we are happy to review case studies and processes used in similar work. If the question relates to sharing the work performed for the Conference, we prefer that it remain confidential.

Q: Is the agency chosen for Phase I eligible to submit a proposal for Phase II?

A: Yes.

Q: What metrics do you plan to use to measure/determine the success of the campaign?

A: The delivery of the research and positioning by the deadline will determine the success of the initial phase. The metrics for the Phase II campaign have not yet been determined and will be part of the initial development of that work.

Q: What executions are expected, e.g., advertising, community initiatives to support Region brand essentials, Region proposals for corporate relocations, etc?

A: This type of execution would be part of Phase II. For Phase I we are looking for the research on our competitive position as a region and recommendations as to positioning.

Q: Can you provide us with the list for the 10-county Pittsburgh region? And are these counties expected to be included in the study in addition to the key strategic geographies? Have you identified a list of local key stakeholders by key industries?

A: The 10-county region includes: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Greene, Fayette, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington and Westmoreland. The region and its assets as a whole are to factor into this study. If the winning bid requires a list of local stakeholders by industry, we will work with the agency on the development of that list.

Q: In the RFP, you mention six key strategic geographies as examples to concentrate our efforts (Boston, NYC, ATX, the Bay Area, Cleveland and Columbus); Can you share with us the rationale for the decision to focus on these, and are these in fact the cities to be used for this study? Would you be open to other cities that follow the same criteria/rationale? Is there a minimum/maximum number would you like to focus on?

A: These are examples of key strategic geographies. They were selected as examples because they have a highly-concentrated pool of both in-demand talented workers and businesses that align with the region's target sectors. These are examples and are not intended to be a final list for the purposes of the Phase I research. We are open to other cities that align with our rationale and criteria. While we are not offering a min/max we are ultimately limited by budget in the number of locations we can focus upon.

Q: Are there any current initiatives in place with some of the key strategic geographies/industry sectors (and vice versa)?

A: We have conducted marketing efforts in some of these geographies.

Q: Are you going to provide us with a list of contacts representing the targets in these markets and industries?

A: To the extent that we have contacts representing the targets in these markets and industries, we will share as we are able with the agency selected to advance Phase I.

Q: Who would be our primary contact on the assignment?

A: Cecelia Cagni, SVP, Marketing & Communications for the Allegheny Conference.