

DATE: June 10, 2024
TO: Interested Bidders
FROM: Old City District Marketing Committee
RE: RFP for Strategic Marketing Plan

Old City District (OCD) seeks proposals from firms with experience in conducting marketing audits, creating marketing strategies, conducting audience research, and developing event proposals for Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Community Development Corporations, or small non-profit organizations. This Strategic Plan will provide critical information and data that will lay the groundwork for Old City District's future marketing efforts and decision-making.

BACKGROUND

OCD is a Special Services District founded in 1998 to supplement municipal services in the Old City neighborhood of Philadelphia. It was organized to fund and deliver services that improve the safety, appearance and perceptions of Old City. This includes keeping the neighborhood clean and safe, spurring economic development, and promoting businesses and commercial properties. Our District encompasses a 22-block geographic area from Walnut to Florist Streets (at the Ben Franklin Bridge) and from Front to Sixth Streets.

Old City's neighborhood has experienced a high level of public and private investment over the past twenty-five years. This vibrant section of Philadelphia includes a diverse mix of historic and cultural institutions, offices, galleries, retailers, restaurants, bars and nightclubs, and residences, ranging from historic townhouses to funky loft apartments. The people who come to experience Old City include tourists, visitors from within our region, daily commuters coming to work, people doing business here and residents.

CURRENT SITUATION

In 2014, OCD produced a Strategic Marketing Plan, which established several goals, including the hiring of a full-time marketing manager. Since then, OCD has developed a successful marketing program, which includes both traditional marketing and communication methods (i.e. social media, email marketing) as well as a slate of annual event programs.

Current marketing initiatives include:

- Regular posting to social media to highlight events and new business openings
- Monthly consumer email newsletter to promote First Friday and other upcoming events
- Monthly "business to business" email newsletter to Old City businesses and stakeholders alerting subscribers of what OCD is working on, business resources, and more

- Commercial real estate newsletter to brokers
- The production of a printed Old City map with a business directory
- Historically, four large annual events (approximately one per quarter) targeting different business verticals:
 - Old City Wedding Stroll (spring)
 - Old City Eats (summer)
 - Old City Fest (fall)
 - Old City Historic Holidays (winter)

CURRENT CHALLENGES

With a decade having passed since the inception of Old City District's last marketing plan, significant transformations have unfolded in the landscape, encompassing shifts in business demographics, evolving marketing trends, advancements in social media, technology, and other pertinent domains, compounded by the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering these changes, there is an opportunity to undertake comprehensive reassessment of strategies and seize the opportunity to revisit and revitalize marketing and event efforts.

While OCD has successfully implemented major programs to market the neighborhood, there are some foundational marketing elements that need to be re-established to help guide OCD and the Marketing Committee on key decisions related to programming, audiences, and marketing efforts. Determining where efforts should be concentrated remains a challenge, particularly considering the constraints of limited staff bandwidth, operating with a one-person marketing team, and a restricted budget.

OBJECTIVES

The goal is to develop a Strategic Marketing Plan, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research to identify target audiences; determine the District's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in marketing and events; prioritize goals and strategies based on their potential return on investment; and offer a selection of event frequencies and concepts.

The selected agency will work with OCD staff and the OCD Marketing Committee to determine desired outcomes and develop a coordinated set of strategies to accomplish them.

The Strategic Marketing Plan should encompass foundational elements to steer OCD decision-making for the upcoming years. Additionally, it should outline strategies for introducing or phasing in new programming, slated to commence in 2025. Moreover, the plan must factor in the challenges and opportunities anticipated in 2026, including significant events such as the 250th anniversary of the United States, the FIFA World Cup, and the MLB All-Star Game.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

1. A final written report that includes the following components:
 - a) An integrated **Strategic Marketing Plan** for the District that works with all existing branding, ongoing communications, and identified existing events;
 - b) Up-to-date market analysis, using both existing reports and data as well as new data collection, to identify and define OCD's audiences; conduct a comprehensive competitive analysis of Old City in comparison to neighboring districts, and establish a SWOT analysis to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
 - c) Policies, procedures, guidelines, protocols and/or best practices with regard to all external communications, including web presence, newsletters, and all social media as related to each audience;
 - d) Recommendations for whether and how we shape the awareness and perception of Old City District's efforts amongst priorities of our more traditional and/or consumer marketing efforts;
 - e) Audit of OCD's current event offerings and suggestions for new and existing event based on OCD's budget, goals, and audience, as defined through this project;
 - f) Prioritization of marketing strategies based on current budget and staff bandwidth limitations;
 - g) Recommendations for metrics to gauge the success of all marketing efforts and initiatives;
 - h) A detailed implementation plan that includes costs and timing associated with implementing the **Strategic Marketing Plan**.
2. Regular written reports describing project activities and progress, any schedule variances, and frequent communication with the project manager to ensure that a mutually agreeable product is being developed.
3. In-person presentation to the OCD Marketing Committee and staff detailing the proposed plan.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSALS

Please provide a written response to this request including the following:

1. Company Name.
2. Principal Name(s), title(s).
3. Contact Information (address, email, phone).
4. Agency Description including a brief description of your firm's history, leadership structure, ownership, area served, and services provided

5. Proposed project team who will manage and work on this assignment.
6. A minimum of three recent (2020-2024) examples of success in strategic marketing consulting for municipal, for-profit and/or non-profit entities. Please provide contact information, the dates of service, and the services provided for those clients.
7. City of Philadelphia Commercial Activity License number (formerly Business Privilege License).
8. Statement of understanding, reiterating what we have requested and how you plan to meet stated objectives.
9. A total project budget for providing the services described above, with individual deliverables and actions itemized with hourly rates for all professional services included.

OCD reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all proposals, and grant final acceptance to the proposal that best meets the needs and interests of the OCD Marketing Committee. OCD may require oral presentations for clarification of proposal but reserves the right to accept or reject a proposal without prior discussions. OCD will be the sole judge of whether a proposal meets the required criteria.

OCD reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all proposals and grant final acceptance to the proposal that best meets the needs and interests of the sponsoring organizations. OCD may request oral presentations for clarification of the proposal but reserves the right to accept a proposal without prior discussions. OCD will be the sole judge of whether a proposal meets the required criteria.

DEADLINE

Respondents are asked to provide this information on or before 12:00 noon on Friday, July 12 by e-mail to Leah Ben, Senior Marketing Manager, Old City District; leah.ben@oldcitydistrict.org.

BUDGET

The budget for this project is undefined. However, respondents should be mindful that the total annual budget for Old City District's marketing efforts is ~\$50,000, not including staffing.

NEXT STEPS

Responding firms must agree to keep their proposed project budget and the other terms of their engagement open for at least ninety (90) days past the submission deadline.

Once a firm is selected, OCD and the selected firm must execute a written contract prior to the selected firm commencing services. Should OCD and the selected firm be unable to agree on the terms of a contract within a reasonable time (at OCD's discretion), OCD reserves the right to suspend or terminate negotiations without advance notice, and to pursue negotiations with another firm to provide the requested services. Any suspension or termination of negotiations shall be without liability to the selected firm(s). Alternatively, OCD may terminate this process (at its discretion), and either discontinue this project or issue a new RFP for the requested services. Each respondent shall assume all fees and costs (including but not limited to legal fees) incurred in responding to this RFP and negotiating a contract with OCD. OCD shall bear no liability to any respondent for any costs, fees, or liability incurred in connection with this RFP or any response thereto.

QUESTIONS

Questions about this RFP should be directed by e-mail to Leah Ben, Senior Marketing Manager, Old City District; leah.ben@oldcitydistrict.org. Please note that phone calls will not be accepted. All questions should be submitted by June 21, 2024. All submitted questions and OCD's answers will be shared with all RFP recipients, unless they withdraw from this process.