

Request for Proposals - Strategic Marketing Plan

Resource Centre for the Arts (RCA) Theatre
RCA Marketing Sub-Committee
c/o Suzanne Mullett
General Manager

Background/Context

The Resource Centre for the Arts (RCA) is a not-for-profit, registered charity organization, governed by an elected volunteer board of directors. RCA is dedicated to the development, promotion and presentation of art and artists in Newfoundland and Labrador and is also committed to expanding programming to include national and international performing artists for a more eclectic and diverse roster.

Founded 42 years ago, RCA operates out of the former Longshoremen's Protective Union Hall (LSPU), a registered heritage building in the heart of downtown St. John's. In 2010, with the financial contribution of three levels of government, the LSPU completed a significant renovation providing a quality, purposeful designed theatre for arts producers, state of the art theatre equipment and an enhanced space for audiences.

The renovation of the building has allowed RCA to offer a much more comfortable and enjoyable theatre experience to audiences. The downstairs now has a lift for patrons with mobility issues – before the renovation they had to enter the theatre via the side alleyway. Now patrons with mobility issues can enter the building and attend the theatre like everyone else. The bathrooms were enlarged and upgraded and are also wheelchair accessible. The former gallery was renovated to include the bar so that the space is both a crush area for audiences before shows and a multipurpose room used for events such as receptions, board meetings, theatre, dance, and poetry readings. The Main Stage Theatre seating was upgraded from a bleacher-style movable seating system to fixed, upholstered seating. All the equipment from lighting to sound was also upgraded to digital specifications, allowing for a great overall experience of any event or show that comes to the Hall.

These building enhancements have resulted in some audience growth; however, there is an opportunity to retain and extend existing audiences as well as build new audiences.

Project

The board of directors, through its Marketing Sub-Committee, comprised of two volunteer board members and RCA staff - General Manager, Artistic Animator and Communications Officer - has identified the need to prepare a strategic marketing plan which has as its primary objective the retention and expansion of existing audiences and the building of new audiences.

Existing marketing initiatives have primarily focused on specific theatre productions without a comprehensive and cohesive strategic marketing plan. With nearly four years of experience operating in the renovated hall, RCA has grown its audience but the opportunity exists to build a larger and more knowledgeable theatre audience.

The objectives of the strategic marketing plan are to:

- build a strong, identifiable, relevant message in support of audience development
- build and brand RCA as the premiere theatre experience in the Northeast Avalon region
- create awareness and generate interest and knowledge of the RCA product, RCA presentation programming
- leverage existing and identify potential new marketing partnerships in support of audience development

Deliverables

The Marketing Sub-Committee is seeking a qualified consultant to:

- develop a detailed strategic marketing plan incorporating a specific series of measurable and attainable tactics to build a sustainable audience
- prepare a marketing plan with a phased approach
- recommend and prepare possible media buy program with associated cost estimates and ranges of funding options and considerations
- recommend new and creative marketing approaches, partnerships, tactics etc., which are respectful of and consider the financial limitations of a not-for-profit theatre

In preparing the plan the consultant will conduct research to including, but not limited to, the following:

- review of marketing plans from similar theatre operations,
- analysis of existing RCA audience data and audience opinion surveys,
- review of RCA product including selection and pricing,
- analysis of relevant and appropriate demographic, socio-economic and related data to prepare a plan which will increase the growth potential and ultimate sustainability of RCA.

The consultant must present a plan to the Marketing Sub-Committee which it can realistically implement.

The consultant will be required to meet a minimum of three (3) times with the Marketing Sub-Committee as well as provide regular correspondence with RCA staff.

RCA will provide the successful contractor with a series of information including box office data, information about shows produced, audience surveys, sponsorship package and current marketing program information. This remains the property of RCA but will be provided to the successful contractor for the sole purpose of completing the strategic marketing plan.

Qualifications

Consultants who meet the following qualifications will be considered:

- minimum of 5 years' experience in preparing strategic and creative marketing plans
- demonstrated experience in preparing marketing plans, tactics and/or programs for not-for-profit and/or arts organizations
- clear understanding and knowledge of arts organizations
- proven experience in developing media buy programs, including traditional and new media
- knowledge of the local advertising landscape

Demonstrated experience in developing effective and creative marketing partnerships may be considered an asset.

Proposal Requirements

To be considered, proposals must include the following:

- One page executive summary
- Listing of similar projects completed, including summary of deliverables
- Detailed timeline and project schedule with a clearly presented series of work to be undertaken, and associated deliverables
- Detailed budget with hourly charge out rates by team members
- Team members and clear identification of their roles and qualifications
- Identification of dedicated team leader
- Three references

Evaluation Criteria

The Marketing Sub-Committee will evaluate submitted proposed based on the following criteria.

Project team (qualifications, experiences)	= 25%
Comprehension of project	= 30%
Cost and effort	= 10%
Project management	= 25%
Other (creative suggestions etc.)	= 5%
References	= 5%

Project Budget and Schedule

The maximum level of effort will be \$26,500 HST Included.

The **deadline** for completion and delivery of a final marketing plan to the Marketing Sub-Committee is **March 31, 2015**.

Questions

Only questions related specifically to this Request for Proposals will be considered. Questions must be sent by email to communications@rca.nf.ca

The subject line must state "RFP for Marketing Plan"

All questions must be received no later than **December 19, 2014**.

All bidders asking questions will be provided answers and confidentiality of bidders will be maintained. Answers to questions will be provided no later than **December 22, 2014**.

Proposal Submission

Five (5) paper copies of proposals must be received at the LSPU no later than **January 9, 2015**. An electronic copy will be sent to communications@rca.nf.ca.

All submissions will become the property of RCA.

Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Faxed submissions will not be accepted.

Proposals are to be addressed:

RCA Marketing Proposal
c/o Marketing Sub-Committee
Resource Centre for the Arts
3 Victoria Street, St. John's NL A1C 2V3

Reserved Rights

The RCA Marketing Sub-Committee reserves the right to cancel this project at any time, for any reason without compensation to anyone. The RCA Marketing Sub-Committee is under no obligation to award a contract. The RCA Marketing Sub-Committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposal. The RCA Marketing Sub-Committee is not obligated to accept the lowest bidding proposal.

The project is pending external funding.