



Healdsburg Lodging Coalition

Public Relations Request for Proposal

January 16, 2009

Background

The Healdsburg Lodging Coalition (HLC) was formed under the auspices of the Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau. It is striving to promote Healdsburg as an overnight travel destination with a focus on attracting visitors during the off peak (November-April) and mid-week, thus increasing lodging industry profits and generating additional tax revenue for the City of Healdsburg. The HLC is a collective made up of Healdsburg lodging facilities as well as those who wish to participate outside city limits. Associate memberships are available to area wineries, restaurants and merchants. There is an opportunity that the scope of participating businesses may expand beyond the current membership as new partnerships are forged. The collective's primary objective is to direct customers to the businesses of the supporting participants.

The catalyst for the formation of the HLC was the increase in the Healdsburg TOT tax from 10 to 12%, and Healdsburg's rejection of the proposed countywide BIA (Business Improvement Area) tax that was initiated to support the tourism promotion efforts of the county. In response to the lodging industry's complaints that Healdsburg would not be competitive with the increased tax rate, and in an effort to increase Healdsburg lodgings gross revenues, the Healdsburg Community Redevelopment Agency/City Council offered to match each private dollar raised with two dollars. The primary goal is to promote overnight travel. The funding has been authorized for a period of two years.

An overall budget and plan was created by the HLC for the promotion of Healdsburg. The membership has decided to fund the first phase of the program and to retain the services of a public relations firm for the initial period of one year with an option to renew.

Public Relations Objectives:

The HLC is seeking a public relations firm that will provide strategic planning and implement a plan to publicize Healdsburg to consumers and the travel trade. Coverage received in various targeted media outlets should be aimed at increasing the exposure of participating lodging with a result of increased occupancy at member hotels.

Overall Goals:

- Increase the awareness of Healdsburg as a world-class travel destination.
- Differentiate Healdsburg from other wine tourism regions and increase Healdsburg's name recognition among travelers and travel trade.
- Increase overnight and longer leisure travel with emphasis on midweek and off peak travel.
- Attract small meeting and incentive business to Healdsburg.
- To increase revenues and occupancy from the prior year.

The Public Relations Agency is expected to develop new creative strategies for publicity or promotional opportunities involving traditional and non-traditional partnerships.

The Public Relations Agency shall design an annual strategic public relations plan to include but not be limited to:

- Revising and expanding upon Healdsburg's media kit with an emphasis in overnight travel
- Oversee and direct the development of a press section on the website, www.healdsburg.com
- Develop and pitch Healdsburg story ideas to media on an ongoing basis

- Initiate and recruit group and individual press trips to Healdsburg for qualified travel journalists on assignments or with a proven track record of stories. Coordinate details of the trip with the HLC.
- Provide updated and new information on Healdsburg to travel books and websites.
- Create and develop strategic alliances with airlines, media or other entities for Healdsburg.
- Respond to press inquiries about Healdsburg and evaluate and assess press trip requests in terms of appropriate target audience reach.
- Maintain supply of Healdsburg photo library and b-roll footage and distribute to press when needed
- Establish a baseline and measurement tool to determine effectiveness of the campaign.
- Establish a reporting schedule for providing updates to the Healdsburg Lodging Coalition.

Proposal Content Requirements:

The proposal shall provide a concise description of how the firm will organize its resources, expertise and experience to create a comprehensive plan to execute the needs of the HLC. The proposed plan should describe how the Public Relations Agency intends to perform the scope of work for a 12-month period. Please provide a detailed discussion on the approach, methods, plan and assumptions, directions, sequence of events, time lines and special requirements. Also detail the method of reporting results to the Lodging Coalition.

Provide a detailed discussion of the Public Relations Agency's tourism/ destination marketing experience, qualifications, professional memberships/affiliations, awards, and recognition received for similar service. Give examples of previous work as applies.

Provide a list of the Public Relations Agency's current clients including those located in Sonoma, Napa, Lake, Marin and Mendocino Counties and those that may pose a conflict of interest. Provide a list of tourism related accounts held in the last three years.

Election Procedure:

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by our committee based on:
 Submitted documents and information
 Qualifications and experience of The Public Relations Agency
 References and bid price with a detailed budget
 An oral presentation may be required of selected candidates

Budget:

Proposal should be based on a funding level of \$35,000 to \$45,000 annually with up to \$20,000 available for expenses. The Public Relations Agency should provide a detailed analysis of costs for services rendered and estimated annual expenses at start of contract.

Proposals Due by February 15, 2009

Please submit proposals to:
Craig Schmidt, President/CEO
Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau
217 Healdsburg Avenue
Healdsburg, CA 94558
www.healdsburg.com

or electronically to craig@healdsburg.com

If you have questions contact:

Craig Schmidt, 707-433-6935 or e-mail craig@healdsburg.com