



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

EXPLORE EDMONTON
AGENCY OF RECORD

RFP RELEASE DATE: JULY 1, 2022
RESPONSE DEADLINE: JULY 15, 2022

RFP CONTACT:

Mikey Scott
Director, Global Marketing
Explore Edmonton

MScott@exploreedmonton.com

**EXPLORE
EDMONTON**

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT EXPLORE EDMONTON

Explore Edmonton is a city and partner-funded, not for profit, focused on driving the visitor economy. The business is a strategic, forward thinking Destination Management and Marketing Organization (DMMO), promoting and generating tourism revenues for Edmonton. Together, we tell our city's story, elevate Edmonton experiences and generate inbound visitation and tourism export revenues. In collaboration with our hotel partners, attractions and tourism businesses, and in alignment with Business Events Edmonton and Edmonton Events, we strive to make Edmonton a four-season destination of choice, delivering year-round transformational visitor experiences. Explore Edmonton operates two venues, EXPO Centre and Edmonton Convention Centre and recently took on the operations and events associated with Northlands.

THE M'S IN DMMO

Traditionally, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) have focused on marketing and promoting a destination. Tourism as a whole has been decimated through the pandemic, and that story rings true for Edmonton's tourism sector. The destination has seen business volumes drop to just 10% of pre-pandemic numbers. Explore Edmonton has been ahead of the curve and shifted to not solely being a marketing organization but a destination management and marketing organization (DMMO), taking our responsibility of destination stewardship and sustainability to heart. As a DMMO, we create legacy experiences and products with our partners, we share our stories regionally, nationally and globally to drive intent and action to visit our city.

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PURPOSE, MISSION AND VISION

We are aligned through a unified purpose, mission, and vision to increase the economic impact of the visitor-based economy in Edmonton:

PURPOSE To increase the economic impact of the visitor-based economy in Edmonton.

MISSION To showcase and inspire more people to visit Edmonton for exceptional experiences, while also enriching the quality of life for residents and creating economic prosperity.

VISION Edmonton will be a destination of choice, delivering year-round transformational visitor & guest experiences.

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PROJECT DETAILS

THE NEED

Explore Edmonton has identified a need to source and secure external agency support for the planning and execution of select marketing and communications deliverables for the 2022-2024 edition of Edmonton Icons.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Explore Edmonton is seeking an Agency of Record to help build on our strategic insights, marketing and media strategies. The work outlined will be the first step in identifying an ongoing partnership. Explore Edmonton operates a full-service, Global Marketing team but is looking to build strategic insights as well as general capacity when needed.

Strengthen Edmonton experiences and events - We work in partnerships to enhance existing and develop new experiences and events to meet the needs of guests, visitors, and stakeholders.

Increase awareness and attraction - This will be accomplished through quality research (working with industry experts and our in-house teams), enhanced partner relations, as well as building and leveraging Edmonton ambassadors, which will help in targeting and prioritizing activities to build awareness and ultimately attract guests/visitors. We undertake marketing and communication activities that build awareness and positive recognition for Edmonton. With our understanding of various target audiences, we deliver content that is emotionally engaging and inspires guests/visitors to action. Campaign content can also be shared by our partners and ambassadors for Edmonton to drive attendance to events in Edmonton and in the venues.

We know that Edmontonians sit behind the pack when it comes to an understanding of Edmonton's tourism products and industry. We also know that residents are more likely to recommend their own city and have pride in their tourism products if they know 3 or more facts, products or services. A recent Province-Wide research study uncovered some harsh facts about how Edmontonians doubt their city and talk about it to friends, family and in other interactions. We need to shift this narrative to ensure Edmontonians are educated about the industry and what's on offer so that they can share with their own networks.

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OUR OBJECTIVES

What is the desired outcome of this project?

As we go into the second-half of 2022, we have fully aligned our Global Marketing team to support each of the verticals across the organization: consumer, venues, sports & culture, business events and community & signature events. Coming out of the pandemic, we have an opportunity to reinvent ourselves and build a new creative vision centered around the iconic experiences within Edmonton. This campaign mindset will feature a seasonal refresh of branded assets that will serve as the face of all the consumer focused work we are doing in local, national and international markets. To date we have been very tactical and done a lot of one-off work to promote individual events, without a holistic long game view. This needs to change moving forward.

How we position ourselves into the remainder of 2022 and beyond is centered around two main goals:

1. Change perception

Properly position Edmonton as a world-class destination for sporting, cultural, festival and business events through our iconic event led experiences. This can be achieved by utilizing sports/cultural events for the immediate success at the organization level, followed by leisure/consumer direct, then business events for 2023-2025.

- Insight - We have a -30 Net Promoter Score (NPS). Only 5% of Edmontonians strongly believe the community offers remarkable experiences, and only 1 in 7 strongly feel 'the attractions, events and things to do here are an important part of making their community a vibrant place to live'. The key barrier to increasing sentiment in Edmonton is lack of familiarity of what makes up Edmonton as a destination. Once Edmontonians better understand what tourism is, and how it supports the things they care about, sentiment should lift. This holds true for key national and international markets.

2. Drive Awareness

Strategic positioning for Explore Edmonton that drives awareness of our iconic experiences and allows us to capture leads within the NA traveller conversation

- Insight - Canadian travellers' brand perceptions of Edmonton are moderate across the board. Edmonton's tourism offering is familiar to just under a third

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of Canadians (30%) – Spontaneous associations with Edmonton suggest that most travellers have a fairly sketchy awareness of the city. West Edmonton Mall is very clearly the dominant association with Edmonton, with top-of-mind comments otherwise fairly generic, albeit mostly positive.

OUR TARGET AUDIENCE

1. Curious Adventurers

Audience Overview

- Age range: 40 – 55
- Gender split: Equal
- Lifestyle & Interests: Online shoppers, actively looking for opportunities to learn. Spend more on camping, outdoor excursions, home entertainment and technology.
- Income: Higher than general population
- Points of Motivation: Discovery, exploration, personal growth, rich experiences, hearing from locals

2. Hotspot Hunters

Audience Overview

- Age range: 30-45
- Gender split: Female-led
- Lifestyle & Interests: Sports fans and avid investors. Spend money on high-profile activities like live concerts, museums and sporting events
- Points of Motivation: Achievement, completion, collecting stories, personal status, hearing from other travellers/experts, want to be in control

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KEY COMPONENTS

The successful third party will be responsible for managing a fully integrated creative/media plan in collaboration with Explore Edmonton's Global Marketing team.

At its core, this campaign should have the clear objective of driving awareness, traffic, and most importantly, leads for Explore Edmonton's business verticals via Icon messaging. We are looking to drive more visitation, events, and economic impact for Edmonton, so illustrating how your proposed tactics link to our mission, should be core to your response.

Our ideal partner provides leadership, insight, and expertise in the field of tourism marketing, and has a strong portfolio of award winning creative, media buying and digital advertising.

Key components of the campaign include but are not limited to the tactics below. Please note that interested parties do not need to include all the following deliverables in their proposals and additional ideas are not only welcomed but encouraged:

- Leverage strategy work from Destination Canada and Travel Alberta into a city focused creative/media push in fall of 2022 and spring/summer of 2023 and beyond.
- Yearly roll out over the next 2-3 years through a phased approach of introducing (yr1), reinforcing (yr2) and establishing (yr3) Edmonton as THE festival city within Canada.
- Digital advertising should be core to the proposal and may include search, display, and social advertising, among other placements of the third party's recommendation.
- Always on/evergreen campaign work that supports all of the verticals, positioning Edmonton year-round, and build our lead funnel.
- Interactive creative landing page(s) within the exploreedmonton.com CMS (Craft) and domain.
- Monitoring, reporting, conversion and ongoing optimization of media in key markets.
- Traditional advertising could include print advertising, out of home, radio, or TV, if recommended by the third party as part of the campaign strategy.

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PROJECT SCOPE

We are seeking proposals from external agencies to support the following deliverables:

1. Campaign Development – Developing and designing all seasonal campaign advertising collateral using Explore Edmonton brand standards.

2. Digital Media Buy/Optimization – Planning, buying, execution and ongoing monitoring of digital media buy. Tactics may include: geofencing across Western Canada and key regional, national and international markets, website re-targeting, keyword advertising. Explore Edmonton will provide appropriate access to social media and online platforms.

3. Traditional Media Buy – Planning, buying, placement and execution of the 2022 media buy in local/national publications/outlets using Explore Edmonton brand standards.

4. Project management and other support for above as necessary.

OUR IDEAL OUTCOME

The Icons campaign will allow Explore Edmonton to invest into the right markets with a long terms focus on building customer profiles/audiences that align with our product and have achieved successful results through targeting them. This success should be easy to measure and tied to longer term goals with milestones being reached seasonally. All efforts tracked will be presented in a regular reporting schedule that will be established between the third party and Explore Edmonton. The Icons campaign KPIs should be set towards the beginning of campaign planning based on the deliverables proposed by the third party and agreed upon by Explore Edmonton. A campaign post report and meeting will be expected upon the completion of the campaign within one month of the seasonal campaign ending in market. This will be a seasonal roll out piloted in the beginning of fall 2022 and stretch until 2025.

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PROPOSAL FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must include the following:

- i. Introduction letter and summary
- ii. Company experience and references
- iii. Proposed project resourcing
- iv. Project approach and ideas
- v. Availability of team and timelines
- vi. Pricing (agency fees and anticipated in-market spend)
- vii. Examples of similar projects
- viii. Certificate of insurance

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BID AND CONTRACT SCHEDULE

This is for information only and may be adjusted by Explore Edmonton as warranted:

RFP release date:	July 1, 2022
Submission deadline:	July 15, 2022
Agency of Record awarded:	July 29, 2022
Work begins:	August 8, 2022
Traditional and digital advertising in key markets:	September 30 , 2022 (tentative)- December 31, 2022

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BUDGET & INSTRUCTIONS

BUDGET

Agency fees + in-market spend: \$150,000-\$230,000
(TBC based on proposal)

This is for information only and may be adjusted by Explore Edmonton as warranted.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

All inquiries and questions regarding the RFP can be addressed to:

Mikey Scott
mscott@exploreedmonton.com
Director, Global Marketing
Explore Edmonton Corporation

Only electronic submissions will be accepted. Please send all final submissions to Mikey Scott at mscott@exploreedmonton.com

SUBMISSION TIMELINE

All submissions must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. MST on July 15, 2022