



Professional Marketing and Communications-Services

Scope of Work

Overview:

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) seeks to engage a full-service marketing and public relations firm that can supplement CATS' internal resources by providing specialized expertise in areas such as general marketing, public relations, digital communications, community engagement, event planning, and crisis communications. The services are aimed at promoting CATS' services, engaging with the community, and enhancing the public's perception and use of public transit in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area.

The firm(s) should have experience and be prepared to assist in disciplines such as strategic and targeted marketing, graphic design, website design and/or management, photography, social media, public relations and affairs, crisis communications, copywriting, script development for radio or television promotional commercials, media placement, branding, printing, and/or special events.

Contract Duration:

The initial term of the contract will be **three years**, with the possibility of **two one-year renewals** based on performance, evolving agency needs, and mutual agreement.

Key Objectives:

The selected firm(s) will be expected to contribute toward achieving the following goals:

- Build Community Engagement and Support
- Communicate the CATS Story and Value Proposition
- Increase Fixed-Route Ridership
- Strengthen Brand Identity and Visibility

Specific objectives include:

- Promote ridership growth through creative campaigns.
- Enhance brand visibility and trust in CATS.
- Support outreach efforts to keep the public informed and involved.
- Deliver consistent, transparent communications.
- Track, measure, and optimize campaign impact.
- Expand internal and external communication efforts.

- Foster business partnerships in untapped markets.

Scope of Services:

Strategic Marketing and Advertising

- Develop and implement integrated marketing campaigns across print, digital, social, direct mail, events, and broadcast.
- Create paid media strategies including planning, buying, placement, and performance tracking.
- Produce creative assets (examples: graphics, copy, videos, radio/TV scripts).

Targeted Marketing

Design and execute targeted marketing campaigns for key audiences:

- Employers
- Uptown workers
- Students (college and secondary)
- Commuters
- People with disabilities
- Low-income families
- Tourists and special event attendees
- Riders of specific CATS services

Strategic Communications

- Executive and internal communications
- Agency-wide key message development, dissemination, discipline, & coordination
- Employee engagement campaigns
- Newsletters and stakeholder updates
- Communication for foundational and organizational initiatives

Community Outreach

- Develop and execute outreach strategies and presentations.
- Assist in the creation of presentations for public hearings, job fairs, trade shows, events, and stakeholder meetings.
- Produce outreach materials including flyers, presentations, and signage.
- Solicit and incorporate community feedback on projects and services.
- Recommend outreach approaches for service changes or expansions.

Public Relations

- Develop and execute public relations strategies for media engagement for crisis events and natural disasters.
- Write and distribute press releases.
- Identify and secure speaking opportunities and appearances.
- Manage media relations during emergencies and planned events.
- Organize and execute press conferences.
- Experience with **IAP2** standards.

Digital and Social Media Management

- Create and manage content for CATS' website, social media, and newsletters.
- Support website development and maintenance.
- Implement SEO and SEM strategies to increase digital visibility.
- Monitor engagement metrics and optimize accordingly.

Crisis Communications and Issues Management

- Develop and maintain crisis communication plans.
- Provide real-time support during emergencies and high-profile incidents.
- Coordinate clear messaging during service disruptions or disasters.

Research, Analysis, and Reporting

- Conduct market research, surveys, and focus groups.
- Analyze ridership and public sentiment data.
- Provide monthly, quarterly, and annual campaign performance reports, ROI analytics, and KPI's.

Additional Deliverables

The firm(s) may be required to:

- Attend internal CATS staff meetings and executive briefings.
- Participate in CATS board, public, and stakeholder group meetings.
- Support planning and emergency response coordination sessions.

Agency Qualifications:

Proposals should demonstrate the following:

- Relevant experience with public sector, transit, or transportation marketing.
- Familiarity with financially constrained public agency environments.
- Proficiency in executing integrated marketing and communication strategies.
- A proven record of driving public engagement and increasing ridership.
- Knowledge of Mecklenburg County and the municipalities in the service area, demographics, media and governance.