



Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited

Private and Confidential: NO

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Developing a Strategic Marketing Proposition for Lancashire

Report Author: Ruth Connor, Chief Executive, Marketing Lancashire

Executive Summary

This report is regarding the development of a Lancashire marketing strategy and communications plan.

Recommendations

The LEP Board is asked to:

- (i) Note and comment on the contents of this report;
- (ii) Approve the proposed approach to developing a strategic marketing proposition for Lancashire, as set out in this report;
- (iii) Approve the proposals, as set out in 4.1, 5.4 and 5.5 of this report, regarding the outputs and costs to progress with the strategic marketing brief;
- (iv) Delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development of Lancashire County Council and the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire, to progress with the agency Appointments, as set out in this report; and
- (v) Require the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire to provide regular updates to the LEP Board on the appointment of consultants and the resultant work programme and stakeholder engagement strategy.

Background and Advice

1. Background and context:

1.1 At the LEP Board meeting on 17th March, approval was given to progress with the procurement of a strategic marketing tender that was split into two key elements;

- i) The requirement for the development of a compelling Lancashire story, or economic narrative, that clearly sets out a strong identity and a clear sense of purpose and place. This will underpin future place marketing and positioning by the LEP and also secure



the support of its key partners, including Marketing Lancashire, who will find it sufficiently engaging to be able to deploy in support of their own activities. It will also be effective in generating the endorsement and support of the private sector.

ii) The requirement for an initial 12-month media and communications campaign, as part of an overarching strategy, to increase awareness of the Lancashire offer and progress on delivering key initiatives with key stake holders and business sectors by employing a range of communication approaches, especially digital channels, appropriate to key target audiences.

2. Objectives of the Work

2.1 In summary, as agreed at the LEP Board meeting in March, the key objectives of the commission are to:

- Improve the positioning of Lancashire in a national context and the LEP and Lancashire in a regional context.
- Establish a strong and clear economic identity for Lancashire that highlights key attributes and benefits by sector.
- Identify key stakeholders and opinion formers regionally and nationally and transform them into supporters and influencers of the Lancashire brand.
- Stimulate interest, enquiries and subsequent inward investment enquiries to Lancashire.
- Raise the profile of strategic investment opportunities which flow through the LEP.
- Identify the key achievements and messages that best portray the Lancashire Story through a multi-channel approach to target audiences.
- Develop engagement and closer working relationships with the private sector in communicating a united and proud Lancashire that has a confident and ambitious voice.
- Identify a suite of marketing collateral and opportunities to showcase the Lancashire Story regionally and nationally.
- Develop a LEP media and communications strategy, which will review current communication activities and assets, including the LEP's website and use of digital media to reach key target audiences, with an initial programme of media and communications activity.



3. Proposed Budgets and Timelines

3.1 The total budget for the term of the contract, exclusive of VAT, but inclusive of all fees, disbursements, and other expenses is £50,000 for the Lancashire Story (including collateral) and £50,000 to develop the media and communications strategy.

3.2 This level of funding has been previously agreed by the Board in considering the LEP's core budget for 2015/16.

3.3 The proposed immediate timeline for the selection and appointment of the preferred agency to deliver this commission, subject to Board approval, is as follows:

- ITT document to be circulated across relevant media/audiences w/c 23rd March
- Agencies to submit proposal by 22 April
- Agencies shortlisted and advised by 30 April
- Shortlisted agencies interviewed by mid-May
- Agency (s) appointed by 31 May
- Inception meeting in early June
- First progress report to the LEP Board on 16 June

3.4 Under the direction of the LEP Chairman, with the support of the Head of Communications and the Director of Economic Development at Lancashire County Council it was agreed that the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire managed this commission on behalf of the LEP. The Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire would also provide progress reports to each LEP Board.

3.5 The ITT subsequently went out to open market on 30th March inviting agencies to send in submissions by 24th April.

3.6 The tender went live on marketinglancashire.com and via social media reaching a 400,000 audience. The tender brief was featured in Prolific North, Lancashire Business View, Creative Lancashire and The Chest. Marketing Lancashire also contacted the PRCA (the Public Relations Consultants Association) and after a "client match" process 50 agency contacts were supplied to Marketing Lancashire who were then emailed the ITT. Acknowledgements and initial interest was received from many national and international agencies such as Havas PR, Bell Pottinger and Ogilvy.

3.7 Over 25 agency responses were received by the close date. A shortlisting panel comprising of the Director of Economic Development and Head of Communications for Lancashire County Council and the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire met to review all of the submissions on 28th April. This resulted in 5 agencies being shortlisted and asked to attend an interview on 12th May. The 5 agencies were Thornton Media (Lancashire-based), Weber Shandwick (London/Manchester), The Influential Agency (Liverpool), SKV Communications (Manchester), and Thinking Place (Hull/Lancashire).



3.8 The interview panel comprised of the Chairman of the LEP, the Director of Economic Development and Head of Communications for Lancashire County Council and the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire. The interview scoring was based on overall value for money, proposed methodology and approach, knowledge, experience and references, planning, timelines and record keeping. The interviewees were asked to present on the following;

i) It's an evolving digital world from both a marketing and technological perspective. How can we ensure we are better placed to connect with our audiences with relevant and timely content that promotes both the strengths of the county and the progress that the LEP/Lancashire is making? How would this be a step change from where we are currently? How would this translate into results whether it be enquiries, followers, hits, calls, etc.? Can you provide relevant examples of how you have helped to deliver such results?

ii) We are confident that we already have some strong messages that could position Lancashire in a better way quite quickly. What do you think they are, to whom would they be directed, and how would you approach this early task whilst developing a compelling Lancashire narrative?

iii) Lancashire is a large and diverse county with much to offer in its own right but has two neighbouring city regions with much greater profile. What are your thoughts on balancing the need for a unique Lancashire identity against the potential for association with our better known neighbours, and in positioning Lancashire within the context of the emerging Northern Powerhouse initiative? What relevant experience have you had in engaging multiple stakeholders in developing a strong and clear place marketing strategy and approach?

3.9 After the interview scoring process, there were two stand out agencies, SKV Communications and Thinking Place who the panel were impressed by. Each of the agencies brought different strengths and experience relevant to certain aspects of the brief; Thinking Place for their place marketing/Ambassador programmes and SKV Communications for their PR and digital media experience. After further discussion the panel agreed that perhaps a dual agency approach would work best to deliver the strategic marketing brief and asked the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire to identify if this approach was adopted, what would be the outputs and costs of doing so.

4. Proposed Dual Agency Approach

4.1 Following further discussions with the two agencies, the outputs and costs identified below have been proposed:



SKV - media and communications plan 12 months campaign (June 2015 - May 2016)

Work-stream 1 – Managing and Maintaining LEP’s Digital Presence. To include:
Re-write of current LEP website as an ongoing project
Twitter – set up and ongoing management of new LEP twitter account in conjunction with client. Also SKV to lead on twitter influencer strategy including ongoing ‘follow and engage’ activity
LinkedIn – set up and ongoing management/population of new LEP LinkedIn company page
Weekly e-bulletin ‘The Wrap’ – SKV to research and populate weekly digest of Lancashire, LEP and partner business and regeneration news sourced from local and regional media, LEP website, partner websites. NB Client to manage email database and fulfilment of e-bulletin
Monitoring of online ‘chatter’ and stories linked to Lancashire and LEP agendas
Ongoing consultancy advice re. LEP and online positioning and opportunities
Client meetings and briefings by telephone, email and in person
Planning and research time
Liaison and collaboration with website administrators, SEO agency as appropriate etc
Liaison and collaboration with consultation programme agency
Reporting, measurement and evaluation (NB SKV to work with client to agree KPIs, benchmarking and appropriate measurement/reporting approach)
£2,000 + VAT per month to research/planning, set up and ongoing delivery.
Work-stream 2 – PR and Media Relations - “Ownership of the Lancashire/LEP PR strategy for an initial 12 months delivering a stream of ongoing positive inward investment, business news and destination features with messages and stories targeted at local, regional and national media. Building the reputation of the LEP through the positive coverage of Lancashire itself with a regular flow of positive case study stories and changing the image perception of a "passive" LEP/dormant Lancashire. Leading the quick win implementation of ‘Lancashire - No 1 for aerospace’, and identify next opportunities to emerge as place making/creation process e.g. review of Boost brand, new Place Board, new Ambassadors programme, Steering Group announced, etc.”
All pro-active and reactive media relations to include:
Consultancy advice re. key message development, media angles and shaping PR narrative
Planning and research time (e.g. forward features)
Press releases - drafting and amendments process including liaison with partners for sign off
Statements – drafting and amendments process including liaison with partners for sign off
Media relations and media sell-ins including engagement of key media, one to one briefings with reporters and editors etc.
Ad-hoc copywriting and editing of LEP written material as required
Integration of media material and other written content with social media platforms
Attending press conferences, photo-opportunities, events etc. where required
Client meetings and briefings by telephone, email and in person as required
Liaison and collaboration with consultation programme agency re. emerging narrative (s)
Issues Management advice, guidance and strategy as required
Reactive press office services and including out of office hours availability
Advocacy/ambassadorial role utilising SKV’s extensive network of contacts and influencers on behalf of Lancashire and the LEP (North West and nationally)
Reporting, measurement and evaluation (NB SKV to work with client to agree



KPIs, benchmarking and appropriate measurement/reporting approach)
Fees £3,500 + VAT per month.
Total for all above services = £5,500 pcm
Total over 12 months = £66,000 + vat

Thinking Place - media and communications plan (June 2015 - November 2015)

Stage 1 - Developing the Lancashire Story:
Understanding Lancashire:
Review of desk research, strategies and plans
Communications review
Brand geography and immersion
Confirm target audience and key stakeholder groups
Issue invitations to stakeholder events
Undertake 50 1-2-1 stakeholder conversations (public and private sector)
In-depth focus group
Workshops
Develop questionnaires for online views
Online surveys
Creating the Lancashire Story:
Development of the proposition with Lancaster University
Developing personas
Brand room' analysis
Presentation of story and themes to steering group
Writing the Lancashire story
Stage 2 - Establishing arrangement mechanisms:
Place board
Place plan
Ambassadors scheme
Launching the Lancashire story
Total projects costs + VAT = £54,750.00
Expenses (at cost but capped + VAT) = £1,500.00
Overall project fees + VAT = £56,250.00

5. Rationale and Costs

5.1 This brief was the first of its kind for the LEP/Lancashire and it was unknown if one single agency could deliver the full brief because of the skills required for each of the elements. With a dual agency approach outlined in 4.1 a robust consultation process engaging with SMEs across the county, a Lancashire narrative, an Ambassadors programme, a Place Board and Place Plan would be delivered by Thinking Place, and an ambitious 12 month PR and media campaign (taking immediate effect) and an improved LEP digital strategy implemented by SKV Communications.



5.2 Each of the two agencies have considerable experience, capabilities and track record; Thinking Place have completed place marketing initiatives for Burnley, Hull, Coventry and Warwickshire, South Downs National Park and are currently working with Belfast. SKV's clients have included MIDAS, Marketing Manchester, AGMA, Transport for Manchester and Liverpool Vision. SKV Communications are also one of only 5 agencies in the UK who have been appointed to the Crown's Commercial Service's Creative Solutions Framework for major government marketing and communications campaigns.

5.3 Each agency has submitted financial accounts from the last 3 financial years and have provided references.

5.4 The Board previously agreed to deploy £100,000 from its core budget in support of this commission. However, the total proposed costs for both agencies is £122,250 plus VAT. This still represents significant value for money, especially given the extent of the proposed dual agency work programme set out above.

5.5 It is proposed that the additional funding required to support this commission is sourced as follows. The LEP's Growth Deal programme secured £400,000 in funding support to further develop Boost. It is recommended that the £15,000 set aside to undertake the Boost brand review is best channelled and delivered via this commission, with the remaining balance of funding (£7,250) drawn from the currently unallocated budget line in the LEP's core budget set aside to support evidence and analysis activity.

5.6 Subject to Board approval, an inception meeting with the agencies will be led by the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire, with support from the Director of Economic Development and the Head of Communications at Lancashire County Council. The first meeting will aim to take place w/c 22nd June, with regular update reports to the LEP Board provided by the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire.