



Request for Proposal, Media Buying Services

December 20, 2017

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Introduction

The Saint Louis Science Center seeks proposals from qualified media buying and planning companies to plan, buy, track and measure media purchases for Science Center exhibitions, events and venues, films and attractions. Various types of media could include, but are not limited to, broadcast, digital, social media, print and outdoor.

About Us

Background on Saint Louis Science Center

The Saint Louis Science Center traces its roots to the Academy of Science of St. Louis, founded in 1856 as the first scientific organization west of the Mississippi River. In 1959, the Academy created the Museum of Science and Natural History in Clayton's Oak Knoll Park. When the Metropolitan Zoological Park & Museum District (ZMD) was formed in 1971, the Museum of Science and Natural History became a member, independent from the Academy, which continues to operate as a separate entity to this day.

The Museum outgrew the facilities at Oak Knoll Park in the mid-1980s and in 1984 the Museum acquired the James S. McDonnell Planetarium from the City of St. Louis. After extensive renovations, the Planetarium reopened in 1985 as the Saint Louis Science Center.

Following a \$34 million expansion to construct the current main building on Oakland Avenue, the Science Center opened November 2, 1991 in its larger footprint including the five story OMNIMAX® Theater and a highway-spanning connection bridge. The Science Center added the EXPLORADOME in 1997 in order to provide an additional space for large traveling exhibitions. With the popularity of the EXPLORADOME, the Science Center took action to create a permanent exhibition space. In October, 2011 Boeing Hall opened dedicating 13,000 square feet of exhibit space for traveling exhibitions.

The 50,000 square foot area previously used for the EXPLORADOME was renovated into GROW, a permanent indoor/outdoor exhibit dedicated to the experience of the journey of the food supply from farm to fork. The agriculture exhibit opened to the public on June 18, 2016.

The Saint Louis Science Center was named a Smithsonian Institution Affiliate, the first in the St. Louis region (?), in 2016. This title provides access of Smithsonian artifacts, traveling exhibits, and educational collaborations locally and nationally.

The Saint Louis Science Center features more than 700 interactive exhibits in ten galleries, including GROW, Mission: Mars, Life Science Lab, Makerspace, Discovery Room, Ecology and Environment, Human Adventure, Structures, Liftoff and Experience Energy. In addition, guests can see science in action through Amazing Science Demonstrations at CenterStage, enjoy a thrilling film experience at the OMNIMAX® Theater and gaze at the stars at the James S. McDonnell Planetarium.

In 2011, Bert Vescolani joined the Science Center as President and CEO, leading a team of 225 staff members and more than 400 volunteers. Today the Science Center serves more than one million people each year, and is one of the nation's 25 largest museums. It has built a national reputation for programs and exhibits, community partnerships, and visitor experience. The Science Center is part of many local, regional and national initiatives to build better and stronger links between formal and informal education.

Mission Statement: To ignite and sustain lifelong science and technology learning.

Project Scope

Currently, the Saint Louis Science Center purchases media through a variety of ad hoc channels, including a consultant who buys broadcast (terrestrial television and radio), a digital media buying agency, outdoors (both directly from a vendor and also through a broker), and with individually negotiated contracts with regional print media and other partners. In addition, social media advertising (primarily Facebook) is done internally by the marketing department, and it is our goal to bring that into the overall media buy plan and analytics.

While we do anticipate continuing a mix of both digital and traditional media, the objective of this RFP is to move towards a more unified and strategic approach to media purchasing.

In recent history, the majority of paid media dollars has been used to support special exhibitions and OMNIMAX® Theater films. While we anticipate this will still be the case in 2018, we also anticipate some media dollars will be allocated to support the rebranding effort of the Science Center. Exhibitions and OMNIMAX® for 2018 include:

Destination Moon: The Apollo 11 Mission

The Saint Louis Science Center is one of only four U.S. institutions to receive **Destination Moon: The Apollo 11 Mission** during its two-year tour across the Nation. In St. Louis from April 14 – September 3, 2018, this internationally-recognized traveling exhibition presents the drama, excitement and enthusiasm of the 1960's and '70's Space Race. The Smithsonian Institution has memorialized our reach for the Moon by gathering into one exhibition such national treasures as the Apollo 11 Command Module Columbia, Buzz Aldrin's Helmet, survival kits, tools, historical documents and more. While here in St. Louis, the Destination Moon story will be supplemented with St. Louis's aerospace and aviation history.

OMNIMAX® THEATER Films

- **Journey to the South Pacific**
Journey to the South Pacific will take moviegoers on a breathtaking IMAX® adventure to the lush tropical islands of remote West Papua, where life flourishes above and below the sea. Jawi, a young island boy, takes us on a journey of discovery to this magical place where we encounter whale sharks, sea turtles, manta rays, and other iconic creatures of the sea. (This film is launching January 12, so it will not be part of the agency's media buying consideration for 2018.)
- **Pandas**
Join panda cubs raised in captivity in China as they learn to "go wild." Using techniques learned in rearing orphan black bears, Chinese and American wildlife biologists team up to bring captive born pandas back to their natural habitat, work critical to saving native panda populations. Filmed on location in Chengdu, China and New Hampshire by the team that made Born to be Wild. (Film tentatively launching April 6.)
- **Aircraft Carrier: Guardian of the Seas**
The mission to protect and defend the world's oceans has become far more complex and challenging in recent years, and naval aviation has become increasingly vital to success. One of the greatest engineering feats in history, the modern U.S. nuclear carrier is a masterpiece of technology, and the flagship of the fleet. (Film launching Memorial Day weekend. Expected tie-ins both to recognition of military service as well as tie-ins to Destination Moon.)
- **Fourth OMNIMAX® film TBD**

Our goals for unifying our media purchase under one contractor include:

- Gained efficiencies and effectiveness of paid media
- Better understanding of the data about our target audience and how to reach them
- Leveraging search
- Growth in attendance
- Growth in top of mind awareness
- Growth in new audiences
- Growth in repeat visitor attendance

Value Adds

It is our goal also to find an agency partner that can bring certain “added value” components to the relationship. These could include providing strategic counsel to our internal marketing team, which includes a public relations manager and a digital media coordinator who manages the slsc.org website (currently in redesign), social channels, social media purchases, email strategy and content. It could also include the negotiation of trade media opportunities for Science Center events, including Science at Sunset, Science on Tap, Science Uncorked, among others.

Scope of Work/ Deliverables

- Market and Audience Research
- Media Audit
- 2018 Media Plan (to start Q2)
- Ongoing monthly media buy and reports

Budget:

- The budgeted media spend for 2018 is approximately \$1MM, including any agency fees/commissions. We are open to agency compensation based on commission or fee, and look forward to learning more about each respondent’s point of view and philosophy regarding agency compensation best practices.
- Currently, the Saint Louis Science Center is invoiced directly for media. This can continue to be the process should the agency and Science Center agree to a method of invoicing that is as seamless as possible for SLSC and in a way that enables us to project media costs month to month. Please indicate if your agency would prefer SLSC to be invoiced by media rather than passing dollars through the Science Center team.
- Conversely, if an agency prefers to pay media directly and invoice SLSC for media costs, please indicate how your organization would manage that as well.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Overview and Scope

Your response to this solicitation should specifically include the following:

- A cover letter indicating the submission of the proposal, with pertinent contact information;
- A brief background on the organizations submitting the proposal, including relevant experience in media buying services, search and analytics, as well as other relevant services the organization provides;
- Identify and share bios of proposed team to conduct the work;
- An outline of the planning process or methodology you would use and a corresponding timeline;
- An estimate of your fees to develop the media plan as well as a point of view and proposal for method of compensation for ongoing media buying services (i.e., is a media commission assessed (and if so, what is the percentage) and/or is there a consulting fee (set out hourly, and if hourly estimated hours);
- Your needs/expectations of staff and/or other resources in supporting and participating in this process;
- Experience or case studies of your work with non-profits, museums, attractions/theme parks, government or civic organizations (up to five);
- List of three references.

Agency Description

- Agency's name and contact information and web address
- Description of your agency including philosophy, unique differentiator, position in marketplace, strongest capabilities or service niches
- Organization Structure: office locations; number of full-time employees showing the breakdown by function (management, account service, creative, planning/research, media promotion, interactive, admin/financial, production, etc.)
- Accounts won in the past two years
- Accounts lost or resigned over the past two years and explain why the account has moved
- Number and percentage of business-to-business clients vs. business-to-consumer clients
- Current client account(s) that could be in potential conflict
- Range of monthly budgets of on-going clients, as well as your "sweet spot" for clients best suited to your agency

Account Management

- Please describe the way your firm organizes account teams for similar clients. Include titles, short biographies, reporting structure, seniority levels, location and other pertinent data. Also include details on any portion of the work that would be outsourced.
- Regarding well-defined managed and cost controlled budgets. Please define the following:
 - How your firm sets budgets, manages invoices and modifies client budgets
 - Rate structure (non-profit rates)
 - Billing Methods
 - Out-of-pocket expenses including travel
- Please describe the processes and tools your firm employs to evaluate and measure results of your media buying efforts. Please be specific as to overall program / campaign measurement.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against several criteria:

- Proposal completeness
- Capabilities and experience
- Ability to measure and report results
- Budget
- Simplicity of process
- Method of account management

Submittal

To be considered, please submit a hard copy and an electronic file of your proposal by no later than close of business on January 18, 2018.

Please deliver to:

Ann Balsamo
Chief Marketing and Communications Officer
Saint Louis Science Center
5050 Oakland Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63110
Ann.balsamo@slsc.org

Please submit questions regarding the RFP by email to Ann Balsamo.

Timing

Action	Timing
RFP Issued	December 20, 2017
Response with Intent to Submit	January 4, 2018
E-mail question period	December 26, 2017 – January 12
Media Buying Services RFP due to SLSC	January 18, 2018
SLSC RFP review	January 22 – 24, 2018
Select Agency Meetings	Week of January 29, 2018 (tentative)
Final Agency Selection and Notification	February 2, 2018 (tentative)

We anticipate that the selected media agency will be in place in late first quarter, and be responsible for the plan and purchasing of media starting in the second quarter of 2018.