



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake**

**5-YEAR STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL MARKETING PLAN**

RFP Issue Date: 5 August, 2022

Proposals must be received by Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce & Tourism  
Niagara-on-the-Lake on or before 5:00PM (EST) on 26 August, 2022

Submit to:

**Minerva Ward**

*President & CEO*

Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce & Tourism NOTL

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## 1. Introduction- Who we are and what we do

Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau is a not-for-profit organization. Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake is its subsidiary and the official destination marketing organization (DMO) for the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau is funded largely through membership fees, event revenues, sponsorships, and a subvention from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake for the provision of visitor services.

As the official DMO for Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce through its subsidiary Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake will receive 50% of revenues collected from the town's municipal accommodation tax (MAT) less administrative costs. MAT came into effect in the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake on 1 July 2022.

As a chamber of commerce, we are the voice of business in Niagara-on-the-lake and serve our members by promoting their interests and that of the wider business community, advertising/marketing through our communications channels, affinity discount programs, education and training, advocating on behalf of members and the business community at the federal, provincial and municipal levels, business consultancy/guidance, and targeted campaigns.

As the DMO, we market and promote all of Niagara-on-the-Lake as a touristic destination. We operate a visitor centre at our office on the main street in the heritage district, Queen Street. The town's group of volunteer "Ambassadors" also fall under the Chamber and provide visitor information to tourists in the heritage district on weekends in summer. The Chamber also provides visitor information and visitor servicing at the Town's bus lot, the designated parking for day-trip buses and the shuttle bus service which runs between Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

## 2. Key Relationships

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce is part of the Tourism Partnership of Niagara (TPN). The Tourism Partnership of Niagara (TPN) is a non-profit industry led organization funded by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCSS). The TPN is one of thirteen Regional Tourism Organizations in the Province of Ontario (RTO2). Its sub-regional partners are Niagara Falls Tourism, Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake, City of St. Catharine's Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Twenty Valley Tourism Association and Niagara's South Coast Tourism Association.

The TPN does the big-picture marketing of the Niagara region, which Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake markets to potential visitors and visitors further along the path-to-purchase or are already in-destination.

Role of the TPN and Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake in marketing along each point on the visitor path-to-purchase:

Role/ function	Key Area of Responsibility
Building the awareness of the Niagara region as a tourism destination	TPN
Moving potential visitors along the path-to-purchase to making a decision to visit:  (1) Desire and intent to travel- this is internal to the consumer (e.g. need to get away, looking for a place to celebrate a special occasion, need to explore, needing a venue for a wedding or conference, etc)  (2) Dreaming- compelling, inspirational campaigns where the potential visitor can imagine themselves there  (3) Building the big-picture, macro-level awareness. Encouraging consideration	Traveller/ corporate  TPN and Tourism NOTL  TPN
Trip planning- providing specific information on accommodation, tours, attractions, dining, wineries, shopping, travel routes	Tourism NOTL
Booking	Tourism NOTL
In-destination experience through the creation of a sense of place, visitor servicing and visitor information	Tourism NOTL
Building advocacy for Niagara-on-the-Lake as a touristic destination	TPN and Tourism NOTL

### 3. Destination overview of Niagara-on-the-Lake

Nestled in the north-east corner of the Niagara Region just down-river Niagara Falls, the picturesque Niagara-on-the-Lake epitomizes old town charm. It is located right at the mouth of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. Its eastern boundary is the Niagara River, its northern boundary is Lake Ontario, its western boundary is the Welland Canal, and it shares its southern boundary with Niagara Falls.

“Niagara-on-the-Lake is one of Canada's best-kept secrets. For nearly 50 years, honeymooners and romantics of all kinds have traveled to Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL) for the scenery, charm of the heritage district, the shopping, the wineries, and to see world-class performances and well-known actors at the Shaw Festival. Perhaps the greatest attraction is the NOTL environment itself. Small in scale, NOTL inspires walkers, hikers, joggers, and bike riders to explore its beauty. In season, plantings along the main street of NOTL are lovingly tended, yielding neat beds of flowers in every color. A well-landscaped park, complete with benches for daydreaming and enjoying the sunset, overlooks the shimmering lake.”

Wander through the Heritage District as you discover whimsical boutiques, enthralling antique shops and delightful bistros - maybe even a horse drawn carriage or two. Beyond the quaint old town, explore the area's several wineries, breweries and distilleries, world class theatre at the Shaw Festival, important historical landmarks, and stunning waterfront views. Attend iconic annual events

including the Ice Wine Festival, Dig Our Roots, the White Effect Dinner, Artistry by the Lake, Shades of Summer Street Dinner, the Candlelight Stroll, or one of many summer carnivals and music festivals

Niagara-on-the-Lake played a substantial role in the shaping of Canada's history especially in the War of 1812. Throughout the 18th and 19 centuries, British, Canadian and Indigenous allies fought tirelessly to protect Canadian sovereignty and culture. Fort George served as the headquarters for the Centre Division of the British Army during the War of 1812 and played a pivotal role in the defense of Upper Canada. The Indian Council house site located on the Commons, was the meeting place of over 25 Indigenous nations from around what is today called Canada and the USA, and representatives of the Crown of England from the mid-1700s. It was also the signatory location of several of Canada's existing and historic treaties and a location of neutrality between nations wishing to meet with each other. Niagara-on-the-Lake was a major entry point for black people fleeing slavery in the USA and finding freedom and refuge in Canada. These freed blacks flourished in Niagara-on-the-Lake, eventually owning property, businesses and serving on the town's Council. The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, restored pumphouse and Voices of Freedom Park all bear testimony and tell stories of Niagara-on-the-Lake's vibrant history.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is the perfect day trip during a visit to Niagara Falls. With its centuries-old world-class historical hotels and tree-lined streets dotted with preserved heritage homes transformed into bed and breakfasts, Niagara-on-the-Lake is the perfect getaway for a romantic escape, and a place to mark a special milestone. And with its acres of vineyards and orchards, and lavish to rustic wineries as the backdrop, it is a place for beautiful, picturesque, sun-drenched weddings. Or the perfect place to bond with colleagues over team building exercises after corporate meetings, conferences, and retreats.

#### 4. Project Overview

Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce through its subsidiary Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake seeks a qualified full-service marketing and creative agency to create a 5-year strategic and tactical marketing plan with the preliminary marketing elements to go along with that plan.

The 5-year strategic plan will describe the big picture goals such as the brand strategy, identification of key target markets, and market development goals. Some of the goals identified are: (1) to position Niagara-on-the-Lake as a year-round destination (2) to drive multi-day visitation during weekdays (3) further develop the MCIT and weddings markets (4) ensure our target markets are high-yield low-impact visitors.

The tactical marketing plan will focus on the specific actions to achieve these broader goals and bring the strategy to life with attention to the details and measurement. The tactical marketing plan will include media, PR and advertising plan, trade/consumer shows, MCIT strategy, social media plan, and defining what the destination marketing website should look and feel like according to the brand strategy.

Along with the 5-year strategic and tactical marketing plan, this project includes the design and development of collateral and content pieces and a costed plan for further creative elements to be rolled out over 5 years.

The purpose of this RFP is to provide information on the project, expectations, and deliverables, as well as a method for evaluation of proposals submitted.

## 5. Scope of Work:

Elements	Methodology	Deliverables
5-year Strategic Marketing & Communications Plan	Research, environmental scan, stakeholder engagement, tourism businesses focus group, visitor survey, resident survey, key partner interviews, SWOT analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identification of key existing, new, emerging, and high yield potential audiences</li> <li>2. Identify tourism brand</li> <li>3. Tourism brand development including the delivery of a Brand Toolkit and logo for Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake</li> </ol>
5- year Tactical Marketing Plan		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Digital content strategy (images, video, virtual reality)</li> <li>2. Social media strategy</li> <li>3. Events strategy (current and new events)</li> <li>4. Media plan</li> <li>5. MCIT plan *</li> <li>6. Weddings market plan *</li> <li>7. Trade and consumer shows</li> </ol> <p>(*MCIT and weddings market plan to be developed with input from Marketing Committee. Collateral to be developed as part of this project)</p>
Marketing Elements	Via agency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social media, digital ads, virtual reality templates and content pieces</li> <li>2. Design and development of new collateral pieces in keeping with the strategy</li> <li>3. Newsletter templates</li> <li>4. Concept and design a new tourism website for Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake in keeping with the new brand (building the website is not part of the scope of this project)</li> <li>5. Costed content and collateral elements for future phases</li> </ol>
Future Phases (NOT INCLUDED IN THE SCOPE OF THIS RFP)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Website rebuild in keeping with the revised brand, brand guidelines, concept, and design. Repurpose content on existing website adding in new content pieces. Website should be optimized for mobile</li> </ol>

## 6. Qualification Requirements:

- Have a thorough understanding of the Niagara-on-the-Lake tourism product and touristic potential
- Be knowledgeable about international, national, and provincial trends in destination marketing
- Understand the dynamics of the local Niagara-on-the-Lake tourism sector and resident sentiment
- The agency selected must be a full-service creative agency or work closely with external agency partners to deliver on all elements of this project
- Experienced in destination marketing
- Interested agencies must be able to demonstrate measurable success in previous tourism creative campaigns.

## 7. Response Requirements:

Responses to this RFP shall include the following information:

- Full name and address of your organization
- Brief company overview, including qualifications, experience in tourism marketing and ability to fulfill the scope of work described in this RFP by the due dates. Explain key relationships with outside partners you will be using to fulfil the terms of this project
- Please provide two recent examples of destination marketing plans or creative campaigns (placed in the market) of which you are particularly proud and share with us the reasons why

## 8. Process of Competition:

This is an open and competitive process. To be considered, proposals must be received by 5:00PM (EST) on Friday, 26 August 2022.

The price quoted in the proposal should be inclusive, itemizing all fees and charges associated with providing the services requested.

The process for selecting the vendor to provide the services outlined in this RFP shall be conducted by the President & CEO and the Marketing Committee for Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake. Applicants will have the opportunity to present their proposal to this panel.

Evaluation Criteria:

Understanding of Niagara-on-the-Lake	15
Relevant experience in similar projects	15
Content and creativity of past work	20
Strategic thinking/ planning approach	40
Comfort level, convenience, and confidence in working with consulting agency	10

## 9. Project Management, Payment & Timelines

This project will be headed by the President & CEO of Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL and supported by the Director of Marketing & Events, and the Marketing Committee.

Payment will be made according to the terms from funding body Tourism Partnership Niagara with 50% of payment being made at the halfway point, and 50% being paid on completion of project.

The President & CEO of Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL will be responsible for signing off on deliverables, approving scope changes/adjustments, and handling support and payment.

Activity	Date
RFP issued	5 August, 2022
RFP Deadline	26 August, 2022
Proposal presentations to CEO & Marketing Committee panel	August 31- September 2
Decision made and contract issued	September 9
Draft strategic marketing plan submitted	October 14
Draft tactical marketing plan submitted	November 4
Submission to funding body for payment	November 7
Design development of agreed on content templates and collateral pieces	November 4-18
Content templates and collateral pieces completed	December 2
Final 5-year strategic and tactical marketing plan, along with completed content templates and collateral, and costed concepts for future content and collateral presented to panel	December 9
Approval by Board of Directors of Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Niagara-on-the-Lake	December 16
Submission to funding body for final payment	December 19

**In keeping with the funding criteria for this project, this 5-year strategic and tactical marketing plan along with marketing elements must be completed by December 31, 2022.**

*Thank you for your interest.*