



Request for Proposals for Marketing Communications Services

Proposal Deadline: Tuesday, February 2, 2016 | 4:00PM PST

The Regional Accelerator & Innovation Network (RAIN), a nonprofit organization, requests proposals for Marketing Communications (MarCom) Services for RAIN to be completed and submitted to RAIN by 4:00PM (PST) on Tuesday, February 2, 2016. Please provide notice of your intention to submit a proposal by 4:00PM on January 21, 2016.

Electronic submissions of the proposals should be submitted to caroline@oregonrain.org with "RAIN MarCom Proposal" in the subject line. No hard copy submissions will be accepted. If your proposal is considered, we will contact you by February 9th and invite you to present your proposal to the RAIN Marketing Committee and the RAIN Executive Director the week of Feb 15th.

Introduction

RAIN requests proposals to provide MarCom services. The selected organization will be asked to work in close collaboration with and in support of RAIN's executive team and marketing committee in the development of RAIN's marketing communications and branding goals. As a nonprofit organization that receives mostly public funding, RAIN is committed to the effective and efficient use of its limited marketing budget. The proposed contract period for services is through the end of 2016.

RAIN's Background

RAIN is a mission-driven nonprofit organization dedicated to serving entrepreneurs in Oregon's South Willamette Valley and Mid-Coast regions by helping them turn ideas into high impact, innovative, traded-sector* companies that can grow and thrive locally. We serve a four-county area including Lane, Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties. RAIN was founded in 2014 and was born out of the Oregon Governor's Regional Solutions initiative as a means to address the innovation economy in the South Willamette Valley and Mid-Coast regions (Florence up through Lincoln City).

We achieve our mission by partnering with the two research universities in our region (UO and OSU), various government and economic development organizations, as well as the private sector. We support two accelerator programs – one in Eugene (RAIN Eugene) and one in Corvallis (OSU Advantage Accelerator/RAIN Corvallis). These programs provide disciplined and mentored business acceleration programs. For additional information, please visit the RAIN Website:

www.oregonrain.org

* *Traded Sector* means the company's goods or services are traded nationally or internationally.

Background on RAIN's Marketing Communications and Branding

- To date, no formal brand exploration has been done for RAIN beyond the development of a logo, and this proposal includes the redesign of the logo (see 'Design Brief' below)
- We believe the RAIN name is well-known within our region and holds some brand equity; however, in an informal study, people, especially entrepreneurs when shown the logo either think the organization has some connection to an LGBTQ program (majority think this – due to the inclusion of the rainbow) or they think it's connected to a water engineering company. Very few think of entrepreneurship or innovation.
- RAIN has done a good job of garnering local press (see News: <http://oregonrain.org/news/>). We believe the Eugene area in particular has been covered well via the local newspaper; however, rural Lane county, the other 3 counties, statewide and beyond is ripe for media opportunities.
- RAIN has had some activity on our social media channels, but we've barely scratched the surface. We need help developing, implementing and measuring a social strategy.
- RAIN has done well with traditional public relations, but needs help with developing and measuring digital marketing and communications activities.

Scope of Work

We seek a partner with a proven track record for creative excellence in marketing communications – including brand development and execution – to help us:

- Develop and implement (with RAIN) a comprehensive marketing communications program that clearly communicates the scope of RAIN's services and audiences – and is both strategic (brand) and tactical (marketing).
 - Include in proposal helping us engage more with our audiences by enlisting them to talk about RAIN and share success stories (stakeholder engagement).
- Develop a new logo for the organization (based on the 'Design Brief' below) – one that speaks first and foremost to our entrepreneurial audience. Awareness and respect for current branding and equity needs to be considered.
- Develop a branding guideline indicating internal and external usage of the logo/name.
- Develop and maintain a MarCom calendar of events/activities for 2016.
- Define how our MarCom metrics will be tracked and measured.

Proposal Requirements

- Provide a brief description of your firm's structure, capabilities and your philosophy on measuring MarCom activities.
- List all services provided in-house and services provided by any outside consultants. If any services are to be provided by outside consultants, please provide a brief description of the firm, its role, and capabilities.
- Describe in detail your MarCom approach and process.

- Introduce your proposed project team, including consultants. Provide resumes of all personnel assigned to the project including specific experience that each team member would contribute to the project. Identify and define their individual roles.
- Provide case studies of your firm providing similar services to firms our size.
- Submit a detailed schedule with your proposal for the project which includes critical milestones, assuming a start date of March 1, 2016.
- Provide a detailed fee proposal which outlines the specific activities that will be performed during the MarCom process.
- Supply at least three (3) references that have used your professional services for a similar project. Include a contact name, address and a contact phone number.

Anticipated Schedule

RFP issued:	Jan 14, 2016
Notice of intent to submit:	Jan 21, 2016
Proposals due to RAIN:	Feb 2, 2016 4PM (PST)
Invitations to present to RAIN:	Feb 9, 2016
Presentations made to RAIN	Week of Feb 15 th
Selection made:	Week of Feb 22 nd
Project commences:	March 1, 2016
Project concludes:	Dec 31, 2016

Contract Terms

The proposed contract period for services is through the end of 2016. All material produced, data collected, and reports generated by the subcontractor on behalf of RAIN are confidential and become the exclusive property of RAIN. The contractor may not share program materials, customer data, industry or program participant contact information, etc. unless explicitly authorized by RAIN to do so. This RFP does not commit RAIN to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal or the procurement of a contract for services. RAIN reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this RFP, to negotiate with all qualified bidders, and to cancel the RFP, in part or in its entirety at its sole discretion.

Contact Information

RAIN's Venture Catalyst and Marketing Committee Member:
Caroline Cummings, caroline@oregonrain.org

Design Brief: RAIN Logo

RAIN'S GOALS: Startups are the seed capital for economic development leading to job creation. This initiative is created to provide resources to entrepreneurs and innovators who are creating traded sector,* scalable companies. Research shows that when startups have mentors/advisors, and access to key resources – both physical (e.g., access to labs/equipment) and financial – their odds of success double. RAIN's goal is to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the South Willamette Valley and mid-coast region so that more companies, jobs and wealth are created. RAIN accomplishes this through a unique collaboration of higher education, government, and the private sector – which we believe can be a template for other regions in the state and beyond.

The ultimate goal is to create more jobs, generate higher wages, increase talent and wealth in our region, and position the Southern Willamette Valley and the mid-coast region as viable places to start and grow companies due to the high quality of work/life our region offers.

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RAIN'S MOTTO: “*What's Next?*” As entrepreneurs you always have to be thinking about what's next, and how you will respond to your market and competition. Entrepreneurship is all about innovation, disrupting markets and achieving the impossible. It's about not being threatened by statements like: “that's not possible,” “that won't work” and “you can't do that.” “What's Next?” is about being ready for the next big thing, and not being afraid to take risks to get there.

AUDIENCE: The primary audience for this logo is entrepreneurs – entrepreneurs who are starting or scaling companies that are shooting to solve solve real-world problems. These people are risk-takers who get excited about starting new things, challenging the status quo and impacting change. Secondary markets include university partners, angel investors, mentors, funders, elected officials and others who support the entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs come in all ages and backgrounds, but the majority of entrepreneurs we serve fall between the ages of 21-51.

SERVICES RAIN PROVIDES TO ENTREPRENEURS: RAIN provides the following services to help entrepreneurs start and scale their ventures:

- *Accelerating* (accelerator programs)
- *Connecting* (to resources like lab/office space, mentors, capital, educational resources, etc.)
- *Mentoring* (connecting to “been there done that” people who are willing to share their time and expertise with entrepreneurs)
- *Coaching* (helping entrepreneurs get their business plans in place, investor pitches, leadership, etc.)

EMOTIONS, ACTIONS OR WORDS:

- Launching
- Growing
- Scaling
- Disrupter

- Moxy
- Bad-ass!
- Excitement
- Risk-taker
- Different
- Inventing
- Freedom
- Smarter
- Faster
- Unique
- Mover and Shaker
- Success!
- Passionate/motivated
- Revolutionary

IMAGERY: Avoid rainbows. Avoid looking like a small initiative. Avoid looking like an economic development or government initiative. We would like the logo to have an icon that can stand-alone and become known for what we do/who we serve. Such an icon should make you feel like things are moving in an upward motion, but should avoid the use of arrows or seedlings showing growth (both icons are overused). We want our entrepreneurs and innovators to feel proud of the brand and their association with RAIN. We believe a successful logo is one that ends up affixed to the outside of laptops. Such a logo contributes to a culture of entrepreneurship in our region.

Here are some examples of logos that depict the emotion we want to achieve with the RAIN logo:

- [EDCO's logo](#) (Bend, OR - they run the Bend Venture Conference. We like the curves in the letters, it shows movement and is approachable. Also modern-looking)
- [TechStars](#) (one of the top accelerator programs in the world. We like the star at the top of the mountain - since this program was founded in Colorado it fits their location and the star fits with their name)
- [AlphaLab](#) (a tech-focused mentor-driven accelerator based in PA - one of the top ten best startup accelerators in the US)
- [JumpStart Foundry](#) (a healthcare-focused mentor-driven accelerator based in TN - also one of the top 10 best in the US)
- [Fundera](#) (We like the orange, and the movement of the icon showing growth)
- [Zendesk](#) (We like the simplicity and the movement of the logo)

LOGO USE: Logo will be used online, in print and on large signage (e.g., walls inside or outside of the two accelerator programs. Must look good in color and b/w. We would like a version with the motto and without – as well as with the acronym spelled out and not. It must work in horizontal and vertical formats.

We would like one version for Eugene and one for Corvallis – exact same logo, but one that has the word “Eugene” w/it and one “Corvallis” w/it.

We would also like a version that works on a white background.

TIMELINE: Would like three options to chose from. We would like one version to take the existing logo and see if it makes sense to tweak this version (removing the rainbow colors, reducing heaviness of font). We would like to see logo options by the third week of March 2016.