

**Request for Proposal (RFP)**  
**Marketing and Communication Plan 2025-2026**



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June 18, 2024

## Request for Proposal

The London Downtown Business Association (LDBA), also known as and branded, Downtown London! is seeking proposals from marketing and communications consultants for the development of a Marketing and Communications Plan for 2025-2026, that is aligned with [Downtown London's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan - Downtown Reimagined](#).

### Introduction and Background

LDBA is a Business Improvement Association (BIA) established by the City of London in 1993 using business improvement area provisions in the [Municipal Act, 2001](#). It is made up of a dynamic team of 6 full-time staff and is governed by a 13 member board of management drawn from the organization's membership consisting of over 1400 members who are business and/or commercial property owners. Our boundary area consists of approximately 83 city blocks.



LDBA's mandates under the Ontario Municipal Act are as follows:

- Oversee the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally-owned land, buildings and structures in the area, beyond that provided at the expense of the municipality generally
- Promote and market the area as a business, shopping area and dining district



In addition to this mandate, LDBA:

- Acts as the leading voice of downtown businesses
- Operates with a network of partners that contribute to the success and experience of London's downtown (eg. City of London, Dundas Place, Tourism London, Budweiser Gardens, RBC Place, Small Business Centre, London Economic Development Corporation, Fanshawe College, Covent Garden Market, and other community event organizers, etc.) that:
  - Creates and maintains street-scaping and public realm improvements
  - Develops, delivers and/or sponsors downtown events
  - Promotes other initiatives that create vibrancy, celebrates culture, builds on heritage, improves the quality of life and attracts new business and investment downtown London

Downtown London's Vision and Mission:

Vision: Downtown London represents a thriving, progressive and welcoming district in the heart of the city. The people that own businesses, visit, work, learn, and live in the district are the essence of its vibrancy and diversity.

Mission: Downtown London represents and supports its members, fostering a strong, thriving downtown in the economic and cultural heart of the city of London

The selected consultant will be responsible for creating a Marketing & Communications Action Plan for LDBA starting in 2025 to the end of 2026. The Marketing and Communications Plan, and its critical path for action, will form an integral part of the overall organization's capacity development and work planning process. This plan will recommend strategies, tactics, actions, timelines, priorities, budget, resources and measures that will help guide LDBA's marketing and communications programs.

### **Scope of Work**

The selected proponent will work with LDBA staff and the board to build a Marketing and Communications Plan that will advance downtown London and guide LDBA's marketing, promotions and communication efforts from 2025 to the end of 2026. The key objectives and goals of this work include developing an actionable marketing and communications plan that:

- Establishes target markets and builds upon LDBA's marketing campaigns and communication activities that are aligned with these with identified targets (eg. Londoners, out-of-town visitors, business and investment prospects, City elected officials, current and future downtown residents, secondary and post-secondary students, etc.)

- Identifies recommended communication and marketing channels, develop tactics and content that will help promote and communicate LDBA and downtown's value proposition, and enhances community pride and identity
- Leverages and builds upon existing downtown/city assets to create our next marketing and communication plan - e.g. culture - UNESCO City of Music, heritage, quality of life, downtown business community,, business investment readiness, BIA and City programs and overall assets for visiting, living, working, investing and starting a business downtown
- Creates and aligns positive, innovative, aspirational and exciting key messages about downtown among LDBA staff/board/members, partners and other identified ambassadors
- Review and provide recommendations for LDBA's crisis communications plan
- Differentiates Downtown London - the organization vs. downtown London - the geography
- Communicates the value and positive impact that LDBA provides to members and the community, through the programs and services we offer
- Influences municipal policy and decision making, collaboration and shared accountability and leadership among LDBA and City elected officials and administration for downtown revitalization efforts
- Identifies public and media relations opportunities and community partnerships to help positively promote downtown and tell more good news stories about downtown (eg. media, tourism, etc.)
- Establishes marketing and communications priorities, timelines, budget and staff resources required to implement an updated plan

## **Project Deliverables**

The consultant is required to create a customized marketing and communication plan along with a plan for implementation, that is aligned with the organization's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan - Downtown London Reimagined. The Plan will contain a detailed action plan for the period of 2025-2027 that will be guided by and will include:

- A review of LDBA's current marketing and communications activities, financial and resource capacity (what should we keep doing, stop doing, start doing or modify?)
- A SWOT analysis and environmental scan of London's downtown businesses and cultural and other assets that can be built upon in the plan
- A best practice review of other BIAs' (and similar organizations') marketing and communications tactics and similar organizations that have been innovative and had proven and successful marketing and communication outcomes

- Market research and identification of target audiences along with recommended marketing campaigns and communications plans tailored to each (LDBA members, downtown visitors/patrons, downtown residents, business prospects/entrepreneurs, City of London and community partners, etc.)
- Clear and consistent key messages and value propositions, ensuring messaging is aligned with the values and interests of the identified target audiences
- Identification of effective communication channels to reach target audiences
- Recommendations of a mix of traditional and digital marketing and communication platforms (website, social media, email), community events, partnerships, and other relevant tactics and channels to consider in the action plan
- Identify enhancements to LDBA's website, social media platforms, newsletters and digital marketing and communication efforts, including suggestions on regular content updates, engagement strategies, etc.
- A plan for public relations and media outreach, to secure coverage in traditional and online media outlets focused on positive downtown storytelling and image
- Iterative draft reports to LDBA's Marketing and Communications Task Force as required
- Final report including research findings, recommendations and 2 year action plan with established marketing and communications goals and targets, prioritization and timelines, a method for evaluation and measuring, as well as the determination of budget and staff resource requirements
- Deliver a minimum of 3 presentations to the LDBA's Marketing and Communications Task Force, Staff and/or Board with updates on interim reports, findings and the final plan.

4. Deadline for the completion of the Marketing and Communications Plan shall be no later than **November 15, 2024.**

5. Proposal Evaluation: Proposals submitted in response to this RFP will be evaluated by the LDBA Marketing and Communications Task Force that will include LDBA's Project Manager, Executive Director, and 3-4 LDBA board members. RFP submissions will be evaluated by this Task Force according to the following criteria:

- Cost/benefit/value
- Consultant/firm relevant experience and qualifications
- Scope of work and detailed work plan



- Compliance with proposal requirements
- Value-added or Innovativeness

Proposals must include:

- The demonstration of the consultant's understanding of LDBA, its mandate, strategic plan, etc.
- Consultant(s)/Consulting firm's background and experience
- Detailed CV of each individual working on the project and providing service, including any subcontractors and their firm's name, along with their qualifications and experience
- Identification of the project manager of the consulting team, detail of what each consulting team member will be responsible for and will carry out as part of the project deliverables
- Outline the methodology by which the consultant proposes to create the Marketing and Communications Plan
- Critical path that clearly identifies the project tasks, deliverables, timelines and milestones
- Any previous experience in regards to other relevant projects that have been carried out
- A fee schedule including deliverables, hours, rate/hour and total cost to complete the work of the project with breakdowns along with a proposed payment schedule tied to project milestones and/or deliverables.
- Total costs must include all service costs and reimbursable expenses. No additional charges will be considered unless there is a change in the scope of work that has been mutually agreed upon by both parties in writing
- Minimum of three references detailing the work the consultant and any subcontractors have carried out on similar projects
- Completed Acknowledgement Form (see below)
- Completed Agency Information Form (see below)

## RFP Timeline

Deadline for questions will be **June 28, 2024**. If you have any questions please contact the Manager of Programs and Partnerships at [hailey@downtownlondon.ca](mailto:hailey@downtownlondon.ca). The goal will be to answer each question within two working days of its receipt. These questions and answers will be posted regularly at [www.downtownlondon.ca](http://www.downtownlondon.ca)

Deadline for submissions: Proposals must be received by **July 5, 2024 at 12:00 pm (noon)**.

If shortlisted, you will be contacted by **July 12, 2024**. At this time, you may be asked to provide us with a presentation and answer clarifying questions we may have.

Final decisions will be made by **July 19, 2024**.

### Project Schedule

Please note that the selected agency's project lead will be expected to establish their own detailed schedule as part of their RFP submission. The following schedule provides dates for the completion of project key milestones. As part of the agency's detailed schedule it should identify weekly communications and updates with LDBA's Project Manager (see contact information below)

<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Deliverable</i></b>
	RFP Closes
	Proposals reviewed and evaluated by LDBA Staff and Board Task Force
	Short-listed proponent presentations as required
	LDBA to notify successful candidate
	Project kick off with Marketing and Communication Plan Task Force for presentation and final input on work plan
	Draft marketing and communications findings and highlights presentation to Marketing and Communication Plan Task Force
	Completion of final draft marketing and communication and implementation plan
	Presentation of final draft marketing and communication and implementation to Marketing and Communication Plan Task Force for approval
	Present the final plan and implementation plan for board approval
	Communications to LDBA members wrt to new marketing & comms plan

\*Please note that throughout the project timeline, the project manager of the selected agency will schedule a minimum of one standing meeting each week for up to one hour each (virtually or phone call) with LDBA's Project Manager and Executive Director to address questions, discuss progress and updates, unless otherwise notified.



## Proposal Next Steps

RFP's will be presented in a PDF digital format and electronically sent by the RFP deadline to the Project Manager:

Hailey Etchen: [hailey@downtownlondon.ca](mailto:hailey@downtownlondon.ca)

RE: Downtown London Marketing and Communications Plan

## Ownership of Intellectual Property

The ownership of the final plan and information and recommendations contained within this plan is expected to remain with LDBA. The selected consulting agency agrees not to share or disclose information and data contained and/or used for the development of this plan without written permission from London Downtown Business Association.

As part of the RFP response, firms will need to provide a statement regarding the ownership of the produced materials or provide the firm's policy regarding intellectual property issues. Please include in the proposal what will be required for the LDBA to own the final work produced.

## Proposal Conditions

- 1. Indemnification:** Proponents who submit responses may, at the option of the LDBA, be required to make individual presentations to representatives of the LDBA. Should a proponent be selected directly from the RFP proposal, the successful vendor shall indemnify LDBA for all damages suffered by it as a result of the negligent actions or wrongful acts of the successful supplier, its employees and agents. The successful vendor shall indemnify and hold harmless the LDBA, Board of Directors, employees, members and agents from all claims, demands, losses, costs, damages, actions, suits, or proceedings initiated by third parties arising from the negligence of the vendor, its employees and agents.
- 2. Opening of Proposals:** the LDBA reserved the right to open proposals privately and to reject any or all proposals received, Any proposal need not necessarily be accepted.
- 3. Disqualification:** Proposals that do not adhere to the RFP terms, conditions, schedules, instructions or requirements as provided herein shall be disqualified.





4. **Withdrawal:** The LDBA reserves the right to withdraw, at its discretion, this RFP at any time and shall not be liable for any expense, cost, loss, or damage incurred or suffered by a proponent as a result of such withdrawal.
5. **Rejections of Proposals:** The LDBA reserves the right, without prejudice, to reject or accept any, or any part of, or all proposals and also reserves the right to award a contract to other than the proponent submitting the lowest total acquisition cost.
6. **Confidentiality:** The LDBA will consider all proposals confidential with respect to content and detail.
7. **Clarification of Intent:** The LDBA reserves the right and in its sole discretion to short-list and/or request one or more proponents to provide additional information, clarification, greater detail, present and/or address specific matters after the RFP closing date, without being obliged to offer the same opportunity to all proponents.
8. **Acceptance of Terms and Conditions:** The proponent must acquaint themselves with the terms and conditions and clearly identify, by clause, and exceptions. It will be deemed that all terms and conditions have been accepted by your organization should you fail to do so. Submitting your organization's standard terms and conditions will not be acceptable to fulfill this requirement. These terms and conditions will apply to all purchases arising from this RFP. Any terms or conditions which cannot be fulfilled should be clearly stated in the proposal.
9. **Other Information:** The LDBA may require additional information to determine if there is financial stability, quality control, and qualified professional staff to conduct proper business with the LDBA. All proposals submitted become the property of the LDBA.
10. **Selection Process:** All valid proposals will be reviewed and evaluated to determine which proponent best meets the requirements of the LDBA. Consideration may also be given to any additional information and comments if they should increase the benefits to the LDBA. All proposals will be reviewed and evaluated in complete confidence and considered to be open for negotiation unless otherwise stated by the proponent.
11. **Acceptance of Proposals:** The LDBA will not be liable for any costs incurred by the proponents in the preparation or submission of their Proposals. All materials submitted by the Proponent/s in response to this RFP will become the property of the LDBA and will not be returned. The LDBA reserves the right to either select a vendor or vendors whose proposals offer the best value to the LDBA directly from this RFP process. However, the LDBA is not under any obligation to award a contract and reserves the



right to terminate the proposal process at any time and to withdraw from discussions with any or all of the prospective vendors who have responded. The LDBA may, at its sole discretion, terminate negotiation with the selected proponent and negotiate with another proponent of its choice with no liability to the previously selected proponent.



## Acknowledgement Form

To be read and completed by the Proponent.

I/We the undersigned, do hereby:

- a) Acknowledge receipt of and accept all general and specific terms and conditions of the RFP document.
- b) Submit the enclosed proposals and submissions in accordance with the terms, conditions, and requirements as set out in the RFP document.
- c) Agree to supply any and all supplementary information pertaining to our submission separately at the request of the LDBA.
- d) Declare that all matters stated in the Proposals are in all respects true.

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Company Name

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Contact Name

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Position

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Email Address

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Telephone

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Street Address

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City, Postal Code

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Authorized Signatory's Name

---

Authorized Signature

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Date



### Agency Information Form

This form must be completed, signed, and returned with a proposal.

Name of Organization	
Address	
City/Province/Postal Code	
Contact Person	
Position	
Telephone	
Email	
Signature of Authorized Person	
Date	