



December 11, 2019

Council Meeting of December 17, 2019

Subject: Award Proposal –
Communications Plan and
Marketing Strategy

The Honorable Mayor
and
Members of the City Council

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The City solicited a request for proposals (RFP) for a Communications Plan and Marketing Strategy. Eleven proposals from qualified firms were received and are as follows:

- 1. Q and M - Ann Arbor, MI \$22,000
- 2. Thrive POP - Muskegon, MI \$24,000-\$54,000
- 3. Truscott Rossman - Grand Rapids, MI \$25,000 (does not include reimbursables, 5% admin fee, and 15% commission)
- 4. Revel - Muskegon, MI \$27,500
- 5. SJC Marketing - St. Joseph, MO \$30,000
- 6. Airfoil Communications - Royal Oak, MI \$35,000
- 7. Whitesmith Marketing – Bismarck, IL \$47,795
- 8. Grey Matter Group – Grand Rapids, MI \$52,000
- 9. Divining Point – Austin, TX \$69,000
- 10. Cubic – Tulsa, OK \$85,000
- 11. MLIVE Media Group – Grand Rapids, MI \$90,000

Staff has reviewed the proposals and is recommending Revel. The proposal received from Revel satisfies the requirements of the RFP at a reasonable cost for the services requested. The firm also has a proven reputation in the Muskegon area.

Attached is a resolution for City Council’s consideration to approve the proposal from Revel for a Communications Plan and Marketing Strategy in the not-to-exceed amount of \$27,500.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark C. Meyers
City Administrator

MCM/adc

Administration/City Clerk (231) 798-4391	Assessing Division (231) 799-6806	Building Division (231) 799-6801	Finance/Treasurer (231) 799-6805	Fire Prevention (231) 799-6809	Fire Department (231) 798-2255
Parks/Recreation (231) 799-6802	Planning/Zoning (231) 799-6800	Police Department (231) 733-2691	Public Works (231) 799-6803	Streets Division (231) 798-2156	Water/Sewer (231) 799-6804

RESOLUTION

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Proposal for a Communications Plan and Marketing Strategy is hereby awarded to Revel in the not-to-exceed amount of \$27,500.

At a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Norton Shores, held at the Norton Shores Branch Library, 705 Seminole Road, on the 17th day of December 2019, the foregoing resolution was moved for adoption by Council Member_____. The motion was supported by Council Member_____.

Ayes:

Nays:

Shelly Stibitz, City Clerk



Internal Memo

December 5, 2019

TO: Mark C. Meyers, City Administrator

FROM: Anthony Chandler, Director of Administrative Services

SUBJECT: Request for Proposals – Communications Plan and Marketing Strategy

The concept to pursue a Communications Plan and Marketing Strategy was initiated during the strategic planning process that took place in the spring of the year. Communications and marketing became an “area of focus” and staff solicited proposals from qualified firms to deliver such a plan and strategy. The City received eleven (11) proposals and following a review staff is recommending the proposal from Revel in the amount of \$27,500.

The proposal from Revel was the most relevant and complete proposal which included objectives directly from the City’s strategic plan. The proposal from Revel will accomplish the following:

- Develop a Marketing Strategy for a strong brand development.
- Develop a Communications Plan that aligns marketing efforts with the City’s strategic plan.
- Design and develop a creative theme complete with visuals and messaging procedures to communicate the newly developed brand.

The work schedule from Revel to complete the project will consist of:

Phase 1 – Gather the Facts (6-8 weeks)

- a. Brand Audit
- b. Whiteboard Session
- c. City Tour
- d. Goals and KPI’s
- e. Research – online survey, two community conversations, phone interviews with business leaders.
- f. Baseline Analytics and Report
- g. Report of Findings

Phase 2 – Respond with a Strategy (8-12 weeks)

- a. Creative Theme and Messaging
- b. Unique Value Proposition
- c. 10-Step Marketing Approach
- d. Establish a Unified Communications Plan

Following the completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2 at a not-to-exceed cost of \$27,500, the City may consider the services of Revel to provide us with the execution phase of the Communications Plan and Marketing Strategy. The plan we receive will include an additional budget for the recommended strategies and tactics to complete the execution phase. The proposal included an initial estimate of \$30,000-\$50,000 for this phase.

The proposals from Q and M, Thrive POP, and Truscott Rossman were, generally far less specific in terms of work plan. Some proposals were also difficult to quantify because they included additional costs such as reimbursables, fees, and commissions.

Similar to the recently approved Police and Fire Staffing Study, it should be noted that a mid-year budget adjustment will be required to fund the initial investment of \$27,500 for the Communications Plan and Marketing Strategy. Funding of \$33,355 has been identified in the City Administrator's budget to fund the project. These funds were appropriated for the City's contract with Muskegon Areas First for economic development services. However, the Muskegon County Wastewater System is now paying for those services on behalf of the Muskegon Municipal Wastewater Management Committee of which Norton Shores is a member.

I am requesting that this item be included on the agenda for the December 17, 2019 City Council meeting.



City of Norton Shores Communications Plan and Marketing Strategy Proposal

October 15, 2019

Prepared for: Anthony Chandler, Director of Administrative Services/Assistant to the City Administrator

Prepared by: Jason Piasecki, Partner

Our Understanding of Your Situation

The City of Norton Shores is a community known for its high quality of life, natural beauty, recreational activities, diverse neighborhoods and top notch schools. You've earned a reputation as being a great place to live, work and play.

That's a compelling story. The challenge is that dozens of other municipalities in Muskegon County alone are trying to do the exact same thing. To stand out from the crowd, you need to let people know what makes Norton Shores unique.

You're looking to develop a communications plan and marketing strategy to spread the word to residents, businesses and the surrounding community.

Revel has a proven process for doing just that. We'll start by completing research with your audience, developing a creative theme (e.g. – Watch Muskegon) complete with visuals, and then pulling it all together in a cohesive communications plan.

To begin, we've outlined a few highlights from your request for proposal (RFP):

- Develop a Communications Plan to reach city residents and other key audiences
- Complete the plan within 6-12 months
- Develop a marketing strategy for a strong brand development
- Effectively communicate brand promises to multi-generational audiences
- Integrate the marketing strategy to share the city's newly developed brand statement
- Research and develop a set of strategies to promote the city's values, activities and benefits
- Communicate with the audiences within the city and metropolitan area
- Initiate a focused effort to engage civic and residential business groups on a consistent basis

We'll develop a tailor-made solution to fit your organization's unique needs that includes:

- Assessing your current marketing efforts
- Researching key audiences including residents, employees, local industry and business owners
- Developing a creative theme and messaging to communicate the city's brand
- Creating a communications plan that aligns your marketing efforts with your strategic plan
- After the plan is approved, executing the necessary marketing initiatives

The investment for your creative theme, messaging, communications plan and marketing strategy is \$27,500.

A budget for the recommended strategies and tactics will be included in the plan. Based on our work with similar clients, the investment for the execution phase will range from \$30,000-\$50,000 depending on the strategies selected and resources available.

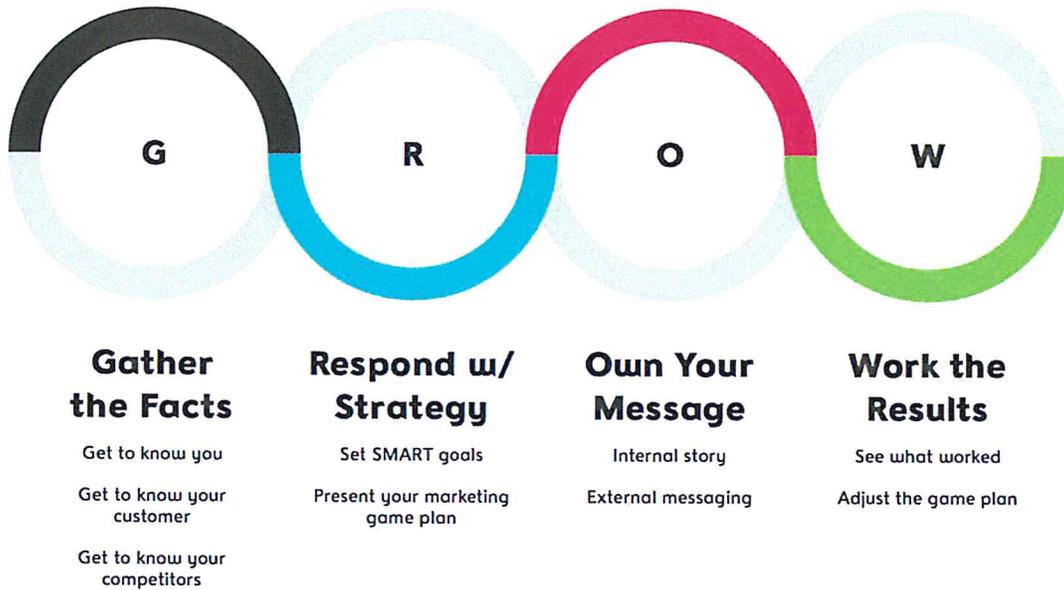
To make sure we're speaking the same language, we've highlighted the sections from your RFP that apply to our proposal throughout the following pages.



A Proven Process to GROW Your Organization

Through years of experience, we've developed a proven way to provide results for our customers. First, we seek out facts and do our research, then we use that information to develop a strategic plan. From there, we help our clients fully realize their organization's story, and share it with others through targeted campaigns. Lastly, we evaluate the results and adjust our tactics to deliver ongoing marketing direction.

Our process is called GROW and it's outlined below. You'll find details on the following pages.





Phase I: Gather the Facts

Our proven GROW process aligns your business and marketing goals. It starts by getting to know you better. The best way to do this is to have our group spend a day at your facility learning the ins and outs of who you are and what you do.

The discovery phase of the process includes:

- Brand Audit
- Whiteboard Session
- City Tour
- SMART Goals and KPIs
- Research
- Report of Findings
- Baseline Analytics+ Report

Brand Audit

A brand audit is a review and diagnosis of anything and everything your organization touches: things like your website, social media, email marketing, presentations, print collateral, and more. In some ways, it's a type of SWOT test, pointing out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to your brand as a whole.

This applies to the following section of your RFP:

- *Assess and evaluate the existing communication and public outreach*

Whiteboard Session

We begin with a "Start With Why" whiteboarding session inspired by Simon Sinek's TED talk on "How great leaders inspire action." We will talk about *what* you do, *how* you do it, and most importantly *WHY* you exist. In addition to the whats, hows, and whys, we will revisit your business and marketing goals, discuss the challenges facing your company, and go over any project-specific details. This session will be abbreviated due to the two meetings we've already had with your team.

Tour

We will take a tour of the City of Norton Shores to get boots on the ground knowledge of your unique features. This process will give our team the perspective we need to develop a solid strategy for marketing your city.

SMART Goals and KPIs

What gets measured gets done. We work with your team to set SMART goals and establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to ensure your marketing objectives are achieved.



Research

Research builds consensus. It helps tailor your message and effectively reach your audience. It allows you to base decisions on facts rather than opinions. To find out what your audience truly thinks about the City of Norton Shores, we'll ask questions.

Our primary research will include an online survey to your residents, employees, local industry and business owners.

We will also facilitate two community conversations – one for residents and the other for business leaders. Think of these as town hall meetings where we get firsthand feedback from your audience.

Phone interviews with 8-10 business leaders will supplement the survey and community conversations.

We will promote the survey and conversations on the City's website and in your newsletter. The City will supply the contacts for the phone interviews.

Lastly, we will review any secondary research findings available from the City of Norton Shores and perform secondary research of our own.

This applies to the following section of your RFP:

- *Actively listening to the residents and property owners*

Report of Findings

After the research is complete, we will compile a document detailing our findings. The results will provide insight into what loyal customers are looking for from their interaction with your City. The research phase is critical to creating effective marketing messages. The report of findings will be included in the Market/Customer Analysis (see following page).

Analytics+ Report

In order to have a better understanding of where your marketing stands currently, we will use our Analytics+ service to perform a baseline audit. Here at Revel, we use analytics to regularly test and improve the return on our own marketing investment, ensuring that we are placing the right amount of dollars into the highest ROI producing channels, at exactly the right time. Revel Analytics+ can do the same for your organization.

This applies to the following section of your RFP:

- *This will create a baseline to monitor the effectiveness of these strategies and modify as needed*



Phase II: Respond with a Strategy

After our research is complete, we'll compile our findings and recommendations into a strategic Marketing Communications (Marcom) Plan complete with a creative theme and messaging.

Creative Theme and Messaging

As part of our plan, we'll develop a creative theme and messaging, coordinating multiple deliverables all executed to achieve your goals. This will establish the look and feel of the marketing that is done as a result of the plan. We'll apply the theme to items like your website, social media, billboards, newsletter, print ads, etc.

Unique Value Proposition (UVP)

Your UVP is a clear statement that describes the benefit of your product, how you solve your customers' needs, and what distinguishes you from the competition. This is a statement that clearly communicates what is unique and meaningful about the City of Norton Shores

This applies to the following sections of your RFP:

- *Development of a Communications Plan and marketing strategy for reaching citizens on key issues*
- *Develop a Marketing Strategy for a strong brand development*
- *Research and develop a set of strategies to effectively promote the values, activities, and benefits of living in Norton Shores*
- *Continue to develop and expand efforts to communicate with audiences within the city and the metropolitan area*
- *Propose an overall strategy to identify and promote what makes the Norton Shores community appealing*
- *Establish a unified communication plan*

Our 10-step marketing approach includes:

- Step 1: Market/Customer Analysis
- Step 2: Set Marketing Strategies
- Step 3: Marketing Channels and Tactic Recommendations
- Step 4: Team Plan
- Step 5: Integrated Marketing Calendar
- Step 6: Marketing Budget
- Step 7: Messaging and Positioning (Future phase, not included in plan)
- Step 8: Go To Market
- Step 9: Reporting (Future phase, not included in plan)
- Step 10: Metrics of Success (Future phase, not included in plan)

A sample timeline is included in this proposal.



Phase III: Own Your Message

Once we have developed your strategy, it's time to spread the word. We will craft a brand position for the City of Norton Shores and then execute compelling messaging and marketing tools to move your audience to action.

This applies to these sections of your RFP:

- *Continue to develop and expand efforts to communicate with audiences within the city and the metropolitan area*
- *Promotional strategies of the services offered*
- *Initiate a focused effort to engage civic and various residential business groups on a consistent basis*
- *Convey a consistent message and image to audiences both within and outside the Norton Shores community*
- *Increase awareness of a strong and vibrant economy*
- *Recommend specific initiatives to effectively convey the message*

The messaging campaign for the City of Norton Shores will be multifaceted. Based on our work with similar clients, our tactics may include:

- Brand Positioning
 - Voice Guide
 - Audience Personas
 - Brand Promise
 - Brand Story
 - Brand Standards
 - Elevator Pitch
- Marketing Calendar
- Print Collateral (e.g. – Postcards, Newsletter, Annual Report)
- Presentations
- Press Releases
- Website Improvements
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Digital Advertising Campaign
- Google AdWords Campaign
- Social Media Strategy
- Social Media Management and Engagement
- Marketing Videos
- Drone Videos
- Media Plan
- Analytics+ Reports, Insights and Recommendations

The potential annual investment for these tactics will range from \$30,000-\$50,000 depending on the strategies selected and resources available. The details will be firmed up in the marcom plan.



Phase IV: Work the Results

Now that you have your new brand and marketing tools created, you're just getting started. You need a plan for ongoing interaction with your audience and continued growth. We will monitor and analyze results and make any adjustments necessary to keep your plan on track and working toward your goals.

This applies to this section of your RFP:

- *Monitor the effectiveness of these strategies and modify as needed*

Post Launch Survey

Six months into the campaign, we'll conduct a community survey on the effectiveness of the campaign. Revel will create the survey methodology and questions as well as execute the research and prepare a report of findings with recommendations.

Revel Analytics+

This includes monthly insight reports and quarterly deep dives to measure the effectiveness of your marketing.

Based on the surveys and reports, we'll optimize the campaign to produce maximum results.

Timing

The timing for this phase is ongoing throughout the duration of the campaign.



Requested Information



Revel has been recognized the past three years as one of West Michigan's Best and Brightest Companies to Work For.

Revel is a strategic marketing partner built to help you grow. We are passionate about changing how people view advertising agencies and what to expect when working with one. We don't just want to help you build your brand. We want to *Build Something Greater*®.

Firm Overview

Revel
351 W. Western Ave, Suite 200
Muskegon, MI 49440
(231) 727-9778
www.revel.in

Established: 2010
Employees: 18
Agency of Record Agreements: 15
Websites Developed: 400+
Videos Produced: 200+

A few of our notable clients include:



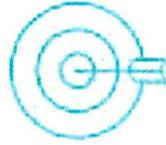
351 W Western Ave Suite 200 | Muskegon, MI 49440 | (231) 727-9778

revel.in



Capabilities

As an integrated strategic marketing firm, our capabilities include:



Marketing Strategy

We do our homework. Then we take what we learn and use it to align your business goals with your marketing efforts in a strategic plan of attack customers can't resist.

- Research
- Whiteboards
- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- In-Depth Interviews
- Marketing Strategy
- Marketing Comm Plans
- Media Planning



Marketing Operations

We'll work with you however you need us to, whether it's project-based or management driven, we'll use a customized mix of services to accomplish your goals.

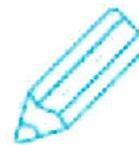
- Outsource Marketing Programs
- Marketing Director Program
- Tactical Execution
- Senior-Level Leadership
- Goal Accountability
- Establish KPIs
- Set & Manage Budgets
- Manage Plan Execution
- Reporting to Leadership



Brand Building

With our tried and true GROW process, we get to the bottom of exactly who you are, what you stand for, and where you want to go, then we set the course to set you apart.

- Brand Positioning
- Content Creation
- Brand Identity
- Graphic Design
- Video Production
- Photography
- Website Design & Development
- Website Management
- Managed Website Hosting
- Search Engine Optimization
- Search Engine Marketing



ROI

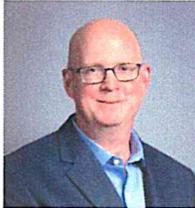
The key to maximizing Return on Investment (ROI) is believing you can always do better. Measurement allows you to gain insights and make decisions based on facts.

- ROI Reporting
- Monthly Insight Reports
- Campaign Reports
- Data Strategy
- Data Visualization
- Optimization
- Analytics+ Reports



Training and Experience of Key Personnel

Revel offers a team approach with experience in all facets of marketing. Our dedicated people are here to help you reach your goals. We all have one thing in common: We revel in getting results for the organizations with whom we work.



Jason Piasecki, Partner and Account Executive

Jason is a graduate of Central Michigan University where he earned degrees in marketing and graphic design. He started his first agency in 1998, and is a founding member of Revel. He is a recipient of the 2014 Muskegon Chamber Entrepreneur Award and a Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow.



Sarah Powers, Account Manager

Sarah graduated from Michigan State University where she earned a degree in advertising. Before joining Revel, Sarah created and managed marketing strategies as an account executive for MLive Media Group, where she gained significant digital advertising and search engine marketing experience.



Pete Lounsbury, Creative Director

After graduating from art school, Pete spent years in our industry. He is now leader of Revel's creative department. Pete's design credo of simplicity and straightforwardness has garnered recognition throughout his career, including several ADDY awards. Pete is a man of few words, but when he talks, it is worth listening.



Kelly Kalis, Content Specialist

Kelly is Revel's Content Specialist who has years of experience in advertising, marketing, and content development. Kelly honed her writing, editing, and management skills during her years in large Detroit area agencies where she acquired multiple awards for her work.



Similar Projects

Watch Muskegon Case Study



Campaign Results

Muskegon community partners rallied together in 2015 to launch Watch Muskegon, a three-year campaign to improve the overall image of Muskegon. Midway through the campaign, a perception research study was completed and data shows the efforts are working.

Revel is proud to be the driving force behind the Watch Muskegon campaign. We were one of the initial stakeholders and continue to be actively involved in the messaging. As the campaign continues to focus on its three pillars of Education, Beautification, and Marketing, the study shared the impact throughout Muskegon County and beyond.

Research Findings

An independent research study performed by ISR Avenue found:

- 95% of Muskegon residents and 38% of respondents throughout West Michigan recall seeing or hearing messages related to the Watch Muskegon campaign.
- Muskegon County's greatest points of difference appear to be its natural amenities (beaches, parks, lakes), as well as cultural amenities and diversity.
- The most positive comments about the area tend to focus on things related to the lakeshore and recreation.
- The Watch Muskegon campaign has been effective at being noticed and helping to positively influence the image of Muskegon, both locally and throughout West Michigan.
- Compared to the results collected in 2014, Muskegon-area residents have an improved view of Muskegon.

For more information visit watchmuskegon.com. To view additional case studies, visit revel.in/work.



Expectations for the City

The key stakeholders for the City will be invited to participate in a whiteboard kick off meeting. That includes city officials and staff that will be involved in the project. We will need a contact to guide us on a tour of the City. Our work together will be a partnership. To be successful, we need a dedicated point person to respond to questions, provide feedback and attend regular meetings. The frequency of the meetings will vary depending on the phase of the project and your preference.

Timeline

The following is a timeline for the proposed scope of work. Assuming timely feedback, the duration of the project will be 4-5 months. The timing for each phase is outlined below:

Phase I: Gather the Facts.....	6-8 Weeks
Phase II: Respond with a Strategy.....	8-12 Weeks
Phase III: Own Your Message.....	TBD*
Phase IV: Work the Results.....	Ongoing

** Timeline and investment for Phase III will be included in the plan.*

Cost Estimate

The investment for the City of Norton Shores Communications Plan and Marketing Strategy is not to exceed:

Investment.....\$27,500

Expenses

The proposal presented above is all-inclusive. No additional expenses are expected unless the scope changes.

Terms

- 50% Down Payment
- 25% Payable Upon Presentation of Plan
- 25% Payable Upon Completion



Assumptions

All "work made for hire" is the property of the client. No deviations from the service description (above) will be acted upon without prior cost determination and a mutually agreed scope. Revel shall not be limited to provide its services to other clients or institutions similar or different from the client listed below.

Task Order Form

This Task Order, along with the Basic Ordering Agreement for Time and Materials, and any prior Task Orders, sets forth the entire Agreement between Seller and Buyer and may not be changed or modified except by an instrument of writing duly signed on behalf of both parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have signed this Task Order by officials authorized to bind their respective organizations as of the last date set forth below.

City of Norton Shores

Revel

Authorized Signature

Authorized Signature

Name (Please Print)

Name (Please Print)

Title

Title

Date

Date