



Communications & Marketing

Tel 201 216 3472

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Request for Proposal

January 3, 2014

Background

Stevens Institute of Technology (Stevens) is seeking to undertake a Communications and Marketing campaign targeted at other university presidents, provosts and deans of admissions and deans of engineering, for the dual purposes of creating broad awareness of the university, and also conveying the attributes and strengths of Stevens. The university's objective is ultimately to improve its ranking on the U.S. News & World Report (USNWR) annual list of top national colleges and universities.

It is the administration's belief that Stevens may be well known among peer institutions in the category of technology and engineering-based universities, particularly those in the Northeast including Lehigh, Rensselaer, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Carnegie Mellon, Drexel, NJIT, NYU Polytechnic, and several others. However, among the breadth of college administrators that vote in the USNWR surveys conducted in April of each year, Stevens may not be known at all; Stevens may be known, but awareness of the breadth and quality of Stevens' offerings as a premier technology-oriented university may be limited; or the perception of Stevens is not as desired.

Stevens is currently ranked 82 in the top 100 national university rankings, and its rank has fluctuated between the upper 80's and mid-70's. A [recent USNWR article](http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/college-rankings-blog/2013/12/12/us-news-analysis-shows-universities-where-reputation-rank-dont-match) (12/12/13) outlines the "under-performers" and "over-performers" in rankings (<http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/college-rankings-blog/2013/12/12/us-news-analysis-shows-universities-where-reputation-rank-dont-match>). Essentially, it shows the gap between the university's final ranking and the peer assessment ranking with an explanation that much of the final ranking is based on factual data about the university, but a university's peers may not know enough about the academic quality of a university. They describe an "over-performing" school as one whose undergraduate reputation among its academic peers has not kept pace with what it has achieved in the underlying academic indicators. Stevens is one of the leading over-performers in terms of this ranking gap. Most of these underperformers are private, somewhat smaller in size, with a few being of a technology and research orientation.

Conversely, the underperformers may have a high peer assessment ranking, but all the other related data does not necessarily indicate that the higher total ranking is warranted. Most of these universities are large public institutions, so broader general awareness is likely on the side of those institutions.

Peer assessment accounts for 15% of a university's overall ranking, and as an "over-performing school" Stevens feels strongly that there is significant opportunity for improvement in this area. It is our



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intention to improve that peer assessment ranking in order to improve our overall ranking. A challenge Stevens faces is that it does not know how it is perceived now, or even how aware other administrators are of Stevens. In other words, what problem are we attempting to solve?

At this point Stevens is seeking a brief proposal from your firm to determine if your company is best suited to assist Stevens in the acquisition of the data necessary for the development of its campaign. Only a few firms are receiving this RFP.

Research Proposal Requirements

Please provide a response to each question below. Include the question with each response.

1. What is your recommended approach to a research project that will best enable Stevens to understand the depth and breadth of its awareness and perception challenges?
 - a. Would your recommended approach be a blind research study?

2. What are the advantages of the approach you are recommending? Please outline the insights Stevens would gain by undertaking the approach you are recommending.
 - a. What are the weaknesses of the approach you are recommending? We need this information to manage expectations.

3. If your recommended approach has a quantitative element to it, versus a totally qualitative approach, can you provide a statistical projection on a confidence factor? What would that be?
 - a. How many individuals by each title would you recommend be surveyed?

4. Have you provided similar research solutions as Stevens is requesting to other universities that are also technology or engineering oriented?
 - a. Please explain the nature of those projects and what your client was able to learn as a result of your services.

5. Can you provide two references that we may contact from other universities that have utilized your services for similar research programs as Stevens may be employing?

6. If one of the two references you provide is not your "ideal" case study, what is your ideal case study that you would like to share with us?



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7. What is the process you undertake in order to implement a research project of the type you are recommending for Stevens?
8. What support activities would you expect Stevens to provide if the university was to you utilize your services?
9. Please outline the project timetable, including each phase of the project, based on the approach you are recommending.
10. In the approach you are recommending, are all the services provided by your employees and are these employees in the U.S. or off-shore? If you utilize third parties Stevens would need to know who they are, their relationship to your firm, and their qualifications and credentials.
11. What will be included in your final report? For example, will there be a results summary, audience segment data such as the number of individuals surveyed by title, analytics and interpretations, recommendations, etc.?
12. How will you present your findings? Do you do that in person?
13. What is your pricing model? Please include a list of fees if you are recommending multiple activities or anticipate providing multiple services. Please include any recommended incentives Stevens may need to pay survey participants if your approach requires such incentives.
14. What is your best estimate for the gross cost for such a project? A range with assumptions is fine.
15. How and when do you bill for your services?
16. Stevens would like to move quickly with this project. If you are awarded this project, how soon can you start?

Proposal Review

Review of submitted proposal will include evaluation according criteria including, but not limited to, the following:



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1. Does the vendor's proposal demonstrate a clear understanding of the scope of work and related objectives?
2. Is the vendor's proposal complete and responsive to the specific RFP requirements?
3. Has the vendor successfully completed similar projects and provided references to support that work?
4. Does the vendor have the qualifications necessary to undertake this project?
5. Does the vendor have the appropriate staff to develop the project in an expeditious time frame?
6. How does the cost compare to other proposals of similar caliber?

Contact Information

Edward Stukane

VP, Communications & Marketing

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Email: estukane@stevens.edu

Please aim to ask your questions via email.

We would like your response by January 13, 2014, at 5pm. Please submit your response to Edward Stukane. Please confirm by January 7, 2014 if you will or will not provide a response to this request.

Responses can be provided in a simple Microsoft Word document format. Please include each question posed with its respective response.

Thank you.

About Stevens Institute of Technology

Stevens Institute of Technology, *The Innovation University*®, is a premier, private research university situated in Hoboken, N.J. overlooking the Manhattan skyline. Founded in 1870, technological innovation



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has been the hallmark and legacy of Stevens' education and research programs for more than 140 years. Within the university's three schools and one college, more than 6,100 undergraduate and graduate students collaborate with more than 350 faculty members in an interdisciplinary, student-centric, entrepreneurial environment to advance the frontiers of science and leverage technology to confront global challenges. Stevens is home to three national research centers of excellence, as well as joint research programs focused on critical industries such as healthcare, energy, finance, defense and STEM education and coastal sustainability. The university is consistently ranked among the nation's elite for return on investment for students, career services programs and mid-career salaries of alumni. Stevens is in the midst of a 10-year strategic plan, *The Future. Ours to Create.*, designed to further extend the Stevens legacy to create a forward-looking and far-reaching institution with global impact.