



Response to RFP

18-R0023 COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT SERVICES
CITY OF MYRTLE BEACH, SC

Submitted by Gordon Hirsch
dba G2CS, LLC
April 11, 2018

(A) Description of the firm and its principal

G2 Contractor Services (G2CS) is a sole-member LLC registered and in good standing with the State of South Carolina and IRS (EIN: 82-3934536). The company was created by Gordon Hirsch of Myrtle Beach as a means of delivering services to clients requiring counsel and representation in the fields of digital marketing, public relations, strategic communications and brand identity.

Gordon has four decades of experience as a journalist, advertising agency principal, public relations counsel, and digital marketing entrepreneur. He worked at South Carolina's leading newspapers in Charleston, Columbia, and Greenville as a writer, editor and senior manager. In 1989, he supervised The State newspaper's coverage of Hurricane Hugo, which was nominated and selected as a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize in Journalism. In 1990 Gordon joined The Sun News as the youngest managing editor in Knight-Ridder Newspapers, the leading national journalistic publishing group of its time.

For the past 17 years, Gordon has been immersed in the world of virtual business and digital marketing entrepreneurship as a co-founder of TicketReturn, LLC and TicketReturn.com. Launched in 2001 in direct competition with Ticketmaster and Tickets.com, TR now issues more than 25 million tickets annually, primarily in service to Major League Baseball Advanced Media (MLBAM) and Minor League Baseball (MiLB), in addition to dozens of college venues such as Coastal Carolina University; The Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago; and motorsports, horse racing, and concert promoters. Gordon originated all of TicketReturn's client business, and architected its digital consumer and B2B industry marketing strategies.

He joined LHWB Advertising of Myrtle beach in 1993 and was chosen the following year to lead LHWB's service to Burroughs & Chapin, working as an outsourced VP of marketing and public relations strategies, reporting directly to the CEO of B&C. Gordon's duties included oversight and advancement of the company's image in the community, serving as company spokesperson, authoring quarterly and annual communications to shareholders, and management of marketing and PR for properties such as the Pavilion, Myrtlewood Golf, Myrtle Square Mall, and creation of the Grande Dunes brand. But the bulk of his efforts were directed toward the marketing launch of Broadway at the Beach, which he managed from inception through Phase 3 development, including the Grand Opening of BATB Phase 1, which still stands as the largest outdoor event in Myrtle Beach history. Gordon also provided PR and marketing launch services to major B&C tenants, such as Hard Rock Cafe, Ripley's Sea Aquarium, John Q. Hammons and the Palace Theater, NASCAR Café, Hampton Inns, and NASCAR Speed Park, as well as anchor restaurants, retail and entertainment properties. He was instrumental in the introduction and launch of the Broadway at the Beach brand, the New Center of Fun positioning campaigns, and creation of BATB sub-brands such as Celebrity Square and Revolutions night club.

In 2004, Gordon and his wife Patty founded He's Not Here Barber Spa, a pioneering men's salon and spa experience, operating at 513 Broadway Street in downtown Myrtle Beach. HNH has been named one of America's Best Salons for Men, by Men's Health Magazine, and is a leading brand in men's grooming services along the Grand Strand today. All of HNH's marketing is digital and it now ranks No. 1 in organic Google search results for its business category.

(B) Experience in similar work and experience of the principal

Gordon's experience and accomplishments in similar work or work which contains essential elements of the skills called for in this RFP, include:

WE STARTED THE FUN

Working as the account manager for LHWB Advertising, Gordon oversaw strategic development and management of an image/branding campaign for Burroughs & Chapin Co. that preceded and overlapped with development of Broadway at the Beach. In 1990, Myrtle Beach Farms Company had joined with Conway-based Burroughs & Collins Company to form Burroughs & Chapin Company, but no clear understanding of B&C yet existed in the public eye. The ensuing public image campaign required significant consultation with the company over a period of months to explore and define its communications philosophy, strategies, platforms and messaging. Research of the company's history, identification of milestones in the company's growth and development, and interviews with company executives, department heads and shareholders also were undertaken. The resulting image/brand campaign, "We Started the Fun", told the story of F.G. Burroughs, his early acquisition of regional properties, and how F.G.'s vision for Myrtle Beach grew out of his experiences traveling to Northeastern beach resorts. Execution of the resultant creative campaign also included placement of full page and double-truck newspaper ads to tell the company's story, a redesign of the B&C logo and business materials; consistent placement of the redesigned brand and recognition of the company's ownership umbrella throughout its various properties and vehicle fleet; upgrades of all company and property-related media collateral materials such as leasing brochures and rack cards; design, creation and placement of a monolithic memorial to F.G. Burroughs in the lobby of the Grand Strand Area Chamber of Commerce; and various internal messaging changes focused on the value of developer contributions to communities. Gordon also provided similar services to the Catawba Indian Nation, HTC, and other regional/national companies, particularly in the golf industry.

Reference: Andy Lesnik, President LHWB Advertising / 843.448-1123

THE NEW CENTER OF MYRTLE BEACH

Introduction of the Broadway at the Beach brand involved a strategic, multi-disciplinary marketing program incorporating the full spectrum of public relations and advertising platforms. The project commenced during construction of Phase 1 development, with original creation of the BATB brand logo and signage, design of a core media campaign, and design of a core public relations campaign. The media campaign launched with placement of a series of outdoor billboards at the north and south bounds of Myrtle Beach along US Hwy 17 business, US Hwy 17 Bypass, and other strategic corridors. The primary introductory message was designed to position BATB as the New Center of Myrtle Beach, unfolding over time and distance with supporting images positioning the development as the New Center of Fun, the New Center of Dining, the New Center of Entertainment, the New Center of Nightlife, and the New Center of Shopping. Placement of these defining messages was reinforced with a similarly themed saturation campaign of advertisements in print, radio and television. Public relations strategies primarily involved reports to news media and the public of construction progress, announcements of major tenants, and reporting on plans for the project opening.

Reference: Douglas P. Wendel, former CEO, Burroughs & Chapin / 843.424.9300

CITIZENS FOR BASEBALL & THE MYRTLE BEACH PELICANS STORY

In 1997, while working at LHWH, Gordon was retained by Capitol Broadcasting of Durham, NC, owners of the Single A Durham Bulls Minor League Baseball franchise. Capitol Broadcasting asked Gordon and Attorney Thomas Moran of Nelson Mullins Riley Scarborough to lobby the Myrtle Beach City Council and Horry County Council for funds to build a home for relocation of the Bulls franchise. Moran served as the dealmaker and legal counsel. Gordon created Horry County Citizens for Baseball, which successfully built constituent support for the City and County to jointly fund what became Coastal Federal Field, home of the Myrtle Beach Pelicans. Gordon has maintained his service to the Pelicans through the years, providing advice and counsel to ownership and management, as well as sponsorship of the current TicketReturn.com Field naming rights.

Reference: Thomas F. Moran, Managing Partner, Nelson Mullins / 843 946 5652

A CAREER BUILT ON USING AND IMPROVING DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

Gordon's involvement in communications technology management and decision-making started in the early 1980s with mainframe newsroom computers, the migration to PC and Apple desktop workstations, and digital design/satellite transmission/publishing of electronic publishing. He helped computerize LHWH in the 1990's, moving the agency to digital design and creation of advertising content. In 2001, as a co-founder of tech start-up TicketReturn.com, Gordon immersed himself in the virtual world of online sales and marketing. He was an early adopter of the Internet, Google Adwords, Google Analytics, Google Reviews, Google Maps, YouTube, and Facebook target marketing. Over the past 15 years, Gordon has advised more than 100 TicketReturn client companies in online marketing strategies utilizing traditional and social media and has conducted multiple sessions at national MLB Promotional Seminar conferences on AnaWhatics?, a primer for baseball executives in the use of analytical marketing data in strategic digital marketing campaigns. He also has worked extensively with programmers and engineers in the successful design/build of web sites and dynamic, database-generated content, end-user interfaces (UI), end-user experiences (UX), digital payment systems and merchant banking gateways.

Reference: Andy Milovich, President, Myrtle Beach Pelicans / 304 741 3767

VITAE

Gordon is a 1997 honors graduate of the University of South Carolina College of Journalism, with an emphasis on media law, English and business studies. While working as an editor at The State Newspaper, he taught required classes at the College of Journalism in news writing for broadcast, print and communications students and studied Leadership for Newspaper Leaders at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies. Gordon also is a graduate of Leadership Grand Strand, serves on the Board of the Eastern Carolina Homeless Organization (ECHO), and is a member of the Beach Advisory Committee to Myrtle Beach City Council. He and his wife, Patty, live in the Pine Lakes neighborhood of Myrtle Beach and operate two businesses in the City's downtown area, which entail regular interaction with City staff. For more on Gordon's service to the community and professional life, please see his LinkedIn profile at: www.linkedin.com/in/ggordonhirsch.

(C) Description of the Study Methodology

We propose a simple study methodology to review the City's current communications infrastructure, platforms, strategy, practices and staffing, as follows and as required by the RFP:

Starting with the City's current Media Strategy, as defined by the Director and Public Information Officer, conduct a collaborative review that examines existing working processes, identifies components where change is warranted, and explores resources needed to effect compelling change through new or different strategies. Results shall be documented at each stage of the review and amended to the working Media Strategy. The resulting product shall be recast as a Strategic Communications Plan, endorsed and recommended by City Staff, presentable to the City Council for approval. Special emphasis shall be placed on advanced utilization of digital marketing, video communications, Social Media strategies, Digital Media placement, and development of survey metrics which allow for measurement over time of the Plan's effectiveness. (Please Note: While metrics methodology and survey measurements normally take place at the completion of a Strategic Plan, every effort will be made to develop the groundwork for survey metrics in a fashion that is concurrent with final project development.)

(C1) DESCRIBE YOUR PLAN TO EVALUATE THE STRENGTHS/NEEDS OF OUR CURRENT COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS.

An orderly, collaborative plan of evaluation is proposed, based on requirements of this RFP, as follows:

- ❖ Review existing communications INFRASTRUCTURE. Brainstorm, challenge, and identify practical opportunities for change.
- ❖ Review existing communications PLATFORMS. Brainstorm, challenge, and identify practical opportunities for change.
- ❖ Review existing communications PRACTICES. Brainstorm, challenge, and identify practical opportunities for change.
- ❖ Review existing communications MESSAGING. Brainstorm, challenge, and identify practical opportunities for change.
- ❖ Review existing communications STAFFING. Brainstorm, challenge, and identify practical opportunities for change.
- ❖ Conduct an internal ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION of the City's communications needs, comprised of all executive staff, department heads, and other stakeholders TBT.

(C2) DESCRIBE HOW EACH TASK WILL BE CARRIED OUT AND WHAT SERVICES OR INTERACTION IS REQUIRED FROM/WITH THE CITY.

This is a collaborative process which depends on committed participation among senior stakeholders, for a duration of 10-12 weeks (90 days). If the process can be fast-tracked, we will do everything possible to do so. Successful completion of all tasks requires, at a minimum, weekly in-person meetings of one hour in duration at City Hall or other suitable location. The meeting place should be equipped with a white board and/or flip chart easel; a PC with Internet access; and overhead AV screen. Recorded or stenographic minutes of each meeting may be beneficial to all.

Ideally, the weekly meeting time should be scheduled for early morning on a Tuesday or Wednesday, to ensure fresh, creative expression of ideas by all involved.

Regular meeting attendees should include the Evaluation Committee and other key staff stakeholders, as deemed necessary, such as public safety representatives. A Roundtable event comprised of City staff stakeholders is proposed no later than the 4th week of the process. In addition, the Consultant (Gordon) may request additional one-on-one meetings with City department heads and staff, the PIO, the City Manager, the City Attorney, Police and Fire Chiefs, and other senior staff.

For the purpose of developing metrics and survey tools, it is proposed that we identify and start conversations ASAP with potential survey providers, such as those utilized by the Chamber of Commerce. In fact, there may be good reason to consider partnering with the Chamber long-term on such surveys and metric evaluation.

(C3) OUTLINE THE STRATEGIES/SKILLS THAT WILL BE USED TO MANAGE THE PROJECT'S EXPECTATIONS, RESOURCES, AND QUALITY CONTROL.

This is the fun part of the process, if we understand the question correctly. First, the overall project expectations, as outlined in the RFP, are:

General (platforms):

1. Improve communications with residents and guests alike.
2. Develop a metric to evaluate how messages are perceived by the end-user and analyze the results of communications efforts.

Situational (strategy and practice):

1. Communicate more clearly and rapidly, especially during emerging situations.
2. Develop strategies to more effectively respond to negative social media attacks.
3. Develop protocol to stay ahead of Social Media.

Internal (infrastructure and staffing):

1. Improve internal communications throughout the organization.
2. Outline related training needs and opportunities.

SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

An RFP of this kind is an invitation for change, and the City is to be commended for undertaking this adventure. Identifying opportunities for change requires a willingness to think outside the box, change the paradigm, become a disruptor ... (choose your favorite consultant jargon). The ideas are similar. We feel the need to catch up with a world that's changing faster than we are. And, more than just catching up, we want to leap ahead to a place of communication leadership.

To move forward in an examination of the rules of engagement in public and internal communications, the following exploratory topics are proposed:

Does the City of Myrtle Beach require image-building and Brand-Aid?

- ❖ Who/what are we?
 - To local audiences?
 - To guest audiences?
 - To internal audiences?
 - Rethinking our brand
 - Messaging to locals and guests.
 - Does "First in Service" do us justice with all audiences?

Driving the narrative. Anticipating issues and covering them in depth.

- ❖ How did we get here? And why are we spending so much time reacting?
- ❖ How do we stop reacting and start leading?
- ❖ The case for going beyond transparency.
- ❖ Claiming our successes, owning our needs.
- ❖ Honesty isn't the best policy, it's the only policy.

Dealing with The Media ... and duh media.

- ❖ Where have all the reporters gone? How can we help those that remain?
 - What is the new definition of News?
 - The power of video in redefining news.
 - How do we correct or counter false and misleading misinformation in today's fast-paced, multimedia world?
- ❖ How Search Engines and Social Media have failed as a purveyor of news, and what they are doing about it.
 - Facebook and Google initiatives.
 - Identifying and encouraging "authoritative" journalism.
 - Saving newspapers from extinction, after almost killing them off.
- ❖ The breathless drama of the 24-hour News Cycle.
 - When to feed the beast.
 - When to delay feeding the beast.
 - When to starve the beast.

Social Media engagement strategies.

- ❖ Dealing with Fake News and Fake Newsmakers.
 - Is Trump right about the mainstream media?
 - Case Study: myrtlebeachsc.com
 - How to read a news story
 - How to read opinion presented as news
 - What can we learn from angry audiences
- ❖ What are other communities doing?
 - Rock Hill, SC
 - North Charleston, SC
 - Bangor, Maine
 - Others?

Dealing with Flash Events

- ❖ Responding to unpredictable videos and events on Social Media
- ❖ Case Studies: McDonald's homeless man; 2017 Boulevard livestream shooting.
 - What did we do? What did we learn. What will we do next time.
 - Developing a response protocol
 - Acknowledging developing events
 - Establishing event context
 - Reporting our findings

Digital Media dissemination of information

- ❖ How mobile devices are reshaping news consumption.
- ❖ Filling the void, replacing bad information with authoritative information.
- ❖ Developing strategies to communicate digitally.
 - Originating authoritative content
 - Homing and driving authoritative content
 - Homing and driving positive attitudinal content
 - Using digital media marketing tools to bring content to our audiences.
 - Measuring the penetration and readership of content we generate.

Using Survey Tools and Analytics to measure results

- ❖ Defining attitudes and opinions of locals about the City of Myrtle Beach
- ❖ Defining attitudes and opinions of guests about the City of Myrtle Beach
- ❖ Using web site Analytics to gauge progress.
- ❖ Using digital marketing Analytics to gauge effectiveness of paid content promotion.
- ❖ Using focus groups, surveys of locals and guests, to measure progress.

Getting Real about resources and staffing.

- ❖ What are the short-term budget realities?
- ❖ What are the long-term budget realities?
- ❖ What value do we put on the cost of maintaining, protecting, and building the reputation of Myrtle Beach?
- ❖ Is this the highest priority we have?
- ❖ What is practical to expect and recommend to City Council?

(C 4) DESCRIBE HOW GATHERED DATA, SUGGESTED APPROPRIATE ALTERNATIVES, SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT, OR UNIQUE APPROACHES/CONCEPTS WILL BE PRESENTED.

Gathered data and recommendations will be documented in a draft and subsequent final Strategic Communications Plan report, bound as required by RFP standards, and accompanied by a PowerPoint stack suitable for presentation of summary points to the City Council.

(D) Timetable for completion.

Date	Action	Task Description	Principal Hours
Week 1	Review	Communications Infrastructure / Platforms	15
Week 2	Review	Communications Strategy / Practices	15
Week 3	Review	Communications Messaging / Staffing	15
Week 4	Review	Stakeholders communication round table	15
Week 5	Discuss	Brand-Aid / Driving the Narrative	15
Week 6	Discuss	Social Media / Flash Events	15
Week 7	Discuss	Digital Media / Survey Tools & Metrics	15
Week 8	Discuss	Getting Real: Agreeing on attainable goals	15
Week 9	Agree	Reach consensus on goals to recommend	15
Week 10	Write	Draft written report for internal approval	20
Week 11	Write	Finalize written report / build PPT presentation	25
Week 12	Present	Revisions & Presentation to City Council	15
Total			195

This proposed Timetable for Completion may be modified by mutual agreement prior to commencement of work.

(E) Proposed study compensation breakdown

The following compensation breakdown is proposed:

- Firm Fee: \$19,500 for the work outlined in this response to RFP, payable in full upon completion, which shall be defined as initial presentation to City Council of a Strategic Communications Plan.
- The hourly rate for the principal is \$100.
- Any work with third parties requested and approved in writing by the City will be scheduled and conducted upon mutual agreement, at a rate of \$100 per hour.

(F) Description of anticipated incidental expenses, excluding travel.

No incidental expenses are anticipated. If any such expense shall arise, a request will be submitted to the City for approval, before any expense is incurred.