

**YALSA Board of Directors
ALA Annual Conference, Anaheim
June 22 – 26, 2012**

Topic: Status of Marketing RFP

Background: As per Board directive, YALSA’s Executive Director sent out an RFP in April for a marketing consultant to five firms in the greater Chicago area. The deadline for response was May 15th, and three were received. YALSA staff are in the process of reviewing them to determine which one best meets YALSA’s needs and budget.

Action Required: Information

Request for Proposals – Marketing Consulting

Section I: Introduction

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a Division of the American Library Association, is requesting consulting services from an experienced professional with strong knowledge of associations &/or not-for-profits and niche marketing. The individual or firm will work with staff and member leaders to create and support implementation of a comprehensive and innovative strategic plan to market YALSA, its products, programs and services.

Past marketing efforts have focused on the following outcomes

- Increasing YALSA visibility and brand recognition throughout the library community
- Increasing public awareness of YALSA and the organization’s awards for young adult literature
- Strengthening library community’s perception of YALSA as a credible and outcomes-based provider of critical programs and services that support and strengthen library services to young adults (ages 12 – 18)

These outcomes remain important to us; however, as YALSA approaches future marketing, we considered the following:

Future marketing goals

YALSA needs to evaluate its current marketing efforts in order to identify successes and challenges so that a viable plan can be created and appropriate resources and tools can be identified to help YALSA market more effectively and expand its reach and impact. The plan needs to make the most of our limited resources, both human and financial, in order to enable YALSA to

- Promote existing and upcoming products and services, including continuing education opportunities, publications and membership, to existing and new audiences
- Better define our brand to increase awareness about the organization with primary and secondary audiences

- Increase credibility in order to attract funders and raise the profile of the organization
- Market more effectively to our existing audience of members to increase their knowledge of member engagement opportunities as well as products and services
- Market to a new segment
 - Educators and afterschool providers are a target for YALSA to reach with information about our products and services
 - YALSA seeks to grow a pool of advocates from among the general public

Ongoing marketing efforts

- Media news releases
- Sponsor development
- Promoting and covering annual initiatives and events
- Promoting continuing education opportunities, products and publications
- Fundraising efforts
- Ensuring that YALSA is consistent in its look and message

Challenges

YALSA is an association with limited resources; human, financial and marketing. YALSA currently employs some basic public relations and marketing strategies that must be amended to expand its reach and to target key audiences.

- Neither YALSA nor ALA currently has a formal marketing strategy or plan, and we have done little marketing/PR together
- YALSA does not have dedicated marketing staff
- Our relationship with our parent organization can be confusing to members and others, and each organization has its own logo, tagline, etc.
- Our parent organization does not have a marketing department, and marketing activities are scattered throughout the organization in many different departments
- YALSA has made some significant changes in the past five years, but there is only a limited level of awareness of the new opportunities, resources and strategic directions the association has
- YALSA faces significant competition in certain areas, such as online continuing education. The market is already saturated with CE opportunities. Distinguishing YALSA CE from the many options that are out there is a challenge
- YALSA is often in the position as an intermediary, where partners and sponsors seek to target young adults. YALSA, however, has direct reach only to librarians and library workers, and they in turn have direct reach to teens
- Our ultimate focus is teens, and teens are often marginalized and/or viewed negatively by adults and the media. As an age group teens receive the least financial support from government, philanthropic and non-profit agencies, which directly impact YALSA's ability to attract partners and funding. Far more funds, media attention, etc. goes to things like early literacy and preschool education

Throughout the project, YALSA will provide

- Additional background regarding our efforts and vision for the future
- YALSA logo and brand details

- Access to staff and members
- Other supports as determined to be necessary in concert with the marketing consultant

Timeline

- April 3, 2012: RFP distributed
- May 15, 2012: Proposal deadline
- May 16 - 31, 2012: proposal review by YALSA
- June 1 -8, 2012: follow up questions pursued with proposers, if needed
- June 9 - 16, 2012: Contract awarded, negotiated and approved

YALSA reserves the right to revise the schedule as needed.

Section II: YALSA Basics

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) is a national association of over 5,200 librarians, library workers and advocates whose mission is to expand and strengthen library services for teens, aged 12-18. Through its member-driven advocacy, research, and professional development initiatives, YALSA builds the capacity of libraries and librarians to engage, serve and empower teens. YALSA is the fourth-largest division of the American Library Association (ALA), the oldest and largest library organization in the world and a 501(c)3 not-for-profit. YALSA's work supports librarians and library workers who primarily work in public and school libraries and who serve tweens, teens and young adults. YALSA's Strategic Plan can be found at www.ala.org/yalsa/aboutyalsa/strategicplan.

YALSA has five full time staff, but no position dedicated to solely to marketing. YALSA launched a redesign of its web site in November 2011 and is also active on social media, including Twitter (over 11,000 followers) and Facebook (over 5,000 "friends").

Key activities include

- **Providing continuing education** to the library community and beyond via monthly webinars, e-courses, licensed institutes, a biennial symposium and participation in ALA's two annual conferences
- **Advocating** on behalf of the young adult library community via participation in National Library Legislative Day, administration of District Days, the creation of issue briefs and more
- **Administering teen-focused initiatives** such as Teen Read Week and Teen Tech Week to increase awareness of libraries' role in the education and development of teens.
- **Administering six annual awards** and seven annual lists of recommended reading in young adult literature
- **Encouraging and disseminating research** and best practices in the profession via two blogs, a quarterly print journal, an online research journal, a monthly e-newsletter and book-length publications
- **Providing members with opportunities** for growth, leadership and networking via over 60 committees, taskforces, advisory boards, juries and interest groups as well as member grants, scholarships and awards

Key audiences

- Primary: 5,200 YALSA members, who are comprised of

- 24% graduate students in library and information science
- 26% secondary school librarians
- 39% public librarians whose focus is teen services
- 11% other (retirees, trustees, advocates, publisher reps, authors)
- Secondary:
 - Other library staff: librarian generalists, paraprofessionals, directors
 - Secondary school educators
 - After school providers
 - Parents and caregivers of teens
 - Library advocates

YALSA envisions

In every library in the nation, quality library service to young adults is provided by a staff that understands and respects the unique informational, educational and recreational needs of teenagers. Equal access to information, services and materials is recognized as a right not a privilege. Young adults are actively involved in the library decision-making process. The library staff collaborates and cooperates with other youth-serving agencies to provide a holistic, community-wide network of activities and services that support healthy development.

To ensure that this vision becomes a reality, the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA):

- Advocates extensive and developmentally appropriate library and information services for young adults, ages 12-18;
- Promotes reading and supports the literacy movement;
- Advocates the use of information and communications technologies to provide effective library service;
- Supports equality of access to the full range of library materials and services, including existing and emerging information and communication technologies, for young adults;
- Provides education and professional development to enable its members to serve as effective advocates for young people;
- Fosters collaboration and partnerships among its individual members with library and information services that meet the unique needs and interests of young adults;
- Encourages research and is in the vanguard of new thinking concerning the provision of library and information services to youth.

Section III: Proposal Format and Content

The proposal shall contain sufficient detail to convey the consultant's knowledge, skill, experience and ability to satisfy YALSA requirements. The following must be provided:

- Brief summary of proposal
- Organizational information
 - Complete contact information for point of contact at firm
 - A summary of the firm's or individual's history, experience and capabilities. Include information such as: year business was established, strategic intent of company, company location(s), overview of staffing structure and OMWBE certification if applicable

- Resume(s) for staff who will be working directly with the YALSA on this project
- List of recent clients, including not-for-profits
- Contact information for 2 - 3 client references
- Approach and scope of work
 - A proposed description of methodology and timeline for estimated deliverables for the project
 - A pricing plan and total cost estimate: identify rates to be charged for performing the tasks necessary to accomplish the objectives of the contract and itemize the types of anticipated expenses. Individuals who will be working under the contract should be identified by: 1) name, 2) rate or cost basis and 3) expected use during contract execution. YALSA's budget is up to but not exceeding \$15,000. Please bear in mind that YALSA is part of a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization as you prepare a bid for the cost of this application.
- Format
 - Include a cover letter signed by individual authorized to negotiate and execute an agreement on behalf of the company
 - Delivery as a PDF preferred
 - No longer than 10 pages in length, and in 12 point type
- Anything else that you feel is important for us to consider in evaluating your firm's proposal

Section IV: Evaluation and Selection Criteria

To be considered, a vendor must be an individual or consulting firm with expertise in niche marketing. The consultant must be able to demonstrate her/his ability to successfully create and support implementation of a marketing plan for not-for-profit organizations and her/his understanding of YALSA. The successful consultant will be available to meet in person or via conference call with staff and others as identified throughout the course of the project. Vendor proposals will be evaluated as related to the future marketing goals detailed on page one of this RFP.

Selection criteria include

- Compliance with this RFP
- Demonstrated understanding of the project
- Detail of services to be provided
- Track record of success in developing and supporting marketing plans for associations or not-for-profit organizations with a national scope
- Qualifications of the firm
- Competitive fees
- References

Selection process

- Review of RFPs submitted by the deadline
- YALSA review
- Follow up questions by phone or email, if needed
- Reference checks

- Award
- Negotiate and sign contract

Section V: Proposal and Contract Administration

YALSA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received in response to this RFP. A contract for the accepted proposal will be based upon factors described in this RFP.

- Email submission of proposal is required.
- All costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal will be the responsibility of the proposer and will not be reimbursed by YALSA
- Individuals and/or firm selected will function as independent consultants and not as agents of YALSA.
- Contracts may be terminated for cause, without payment, at any time when there is reasonable belief that the consultant is not performing satisfactorily, or has not satisfactorily performed obligations under the contract.
- YALSA will provide email notification of contract award or rejection for all proposals.
- All responses to this RFP must be received no later than 5:00 pm, central time, May 15, 2012. Proposals received after that time will not be considered.
- By virtue of submitting a proposal, the consultant agrees to adhere to all terms and conditions outlined in this RFP.
- The consultant agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless YALSA, its officers, agents and associations from any claims of the consultants, sub-consultants, laborers, or any other person, firm, or corporation furnishing or supplying work, services, materials, or supplies in connection with performance of the contract as well as against any liability, including cost and expenses for violation of property rights, copyrights, or rights of privacy arising out of the publication, translation, reproduction, delivery, performance or disposition of any data furnished under the contract or based on a libelous or other unlawful matter contained in such data.

Contact Information:

All inquiries and proposals for this request for proposals should be directed to Beth Yoke via email at byoke@ala.org or 312.280.4391.

This Request for Proposal and questionnaire does not commit YALSA to award a contract. YALSA reserves the right to reject all proposals, and at its discretion, may withdraw or amend this Request for Proposal at any time. If, in the opinion of YALSA, revisions or amendments will require substantive changes in proposals, the due date may be extended.

Additional Resources

- 2012 Midwinter Board document, www.ala.org/yalsa/2012-midwinter-board-documents
- “Communications, Marketing and Planning,” www.councilofnonprofits.org/resources/communications-planning
- “Critical Role of Marketing Research,” <http://managementhelp.org/marketing/market-research.htm>
- Katya’s Nonprofit Marketing Blog: www.nonprofitmarketingblog.com/