

Digital Strategy Invitation to Tender

*Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base;
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.*

*Thus alone can we attain
To those turrets, where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain,
And one boundless reach of sky.*

The Builders by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

About The Reader

The Reader is a national charity and social enterprise, headquartered in Liverpool. Our work brings books to life and people together. Since 2002, The Reader, has pioneered the use of Shared Reading to improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and build community resilience and connectedness across the UK and beyond. We inspire and support people to read great literature, aloud, together. It is a deceptively simple, yet powerful model which is highly replicable as it works for people of all ages, backgrounds and life situations.

We are driven by the ambition of making Shared Reading part of the fabric of our communities – in every care home; in every library; in every mental health trust and in every community centre –so, like the Scouts and Guides - wherever you find yourself living, there will be a group nearby. Calderstones, our HQ and organisational home, is about to undergo a £4m refurbishment.

About Shared Reading

Shared Reading is a simple yet powerful non-medical intervention to improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and build community. Shared Reading creates a safe and calm place in which people feel a sense of community and a connection to self and others. A piece of literature is read aloud and the group stop whenever to discuss their responses whenever someone has something to say. There is never any pressure to read or contribute, and participation is always self-directed. Group members often describe Shared Reading as helping them to have insight, to recognise themselves, to build confidence, share things they often could not easily say.

About this Project

The Reader is looking for an agency to help us define our digital strategy – the first phase in a transformation programme to reimagine and redevelop our digital infrastructure over the next 18 months. This is an opportunity to get under the skin of a fast-paced organisation that is scaling its unique model of Shared Reading to build stronger and more supportive communities across the UK. We're looking for a collaborative and creative agency, who are can offer us people with outstanding relationship building skills, strategic thinkers and problem solvers who are ambitious yet pragmatic. We're looking for a partner who is committed to user-led design and can grasp organisational strategy and will enjoy working with a range of people, from staff to volunteers, to further enhance it.

Thanks to National Lottery funding through the Big Lottery Fund, we are investing in digital services to help us better attract, recruit, train and support hundreds of volunteers to lead their own reading communities and to achieve better outcomes for the people we read with. We want technology to be an embedded thread running through our shared reading model, which strengthens our model as we

bring it to new communities. We are looking for this project to help us produce a digital strategy that we can then take forward to phase two when we will tender out for digital development. We will be looking to explore products to address a range of needs, including:

- Delivery of volunteer support and engagement at scale
- Streamlining monitoring and evaluation in order to maximise data collection and therefore impact measurement at scale
- Strengthening The Reader's brand and engagement through a new public facing website
- Ensuring back office infrastructure is in place to maintain and support new solutions

We need our digital infrastructure to be built with sustainability and flexibility in mind. It's vital that this work integrates across the organisation to link up with other business processes and systems, including finance and commercial enterprise systems. It's important for us that we adopt an agile, user-led approach so we can place our Reader community at the heart of its development and ensure that technology enhances our model effectively and meets their needs in a cost-efficient way.

Key relationships

There will be a Project Director as key point of contact who sits on The Reader's Directors group. You will be required to work with a range of internal and external stakeholders including;

- Shared Reading volunteers and group members (in several locations across UK)
- Directors Group (Directors of Communications & Communities, Director of Programmes, Director of Development & Partnerships, Chief Operating Officer, Founding Director)
- Monitoring and Evaluation manager
- IT team
- Head of Social Enterprise
- Head of Communications and the marketing/communications team
- Managers in Community Engagement, Volunteer support and Resources/Quality

Project scope

- Lead the creation of a digital strategy for The Reader to further our organisational strategy and deliver social and long-term financial value for the organisation. This strategy will not only specify plans for product development, but also consider evaluation, roll out/launch/, maintenance and data management.
- Produce tender brief for the digital development phase.
- Lead the requirement gathering process and stakeholder engagement – this will include designing the co-creation process and running workshops with user groups; undertaking an assessment of The Reader's current digital capabilities and assets; leading workshops with staff; working collaboratively across all internal teams to ensure that our digital strategy is anchored to our overarching strategy and will result in more integrated business processes
- Work with a Programme Board to establish and maintain effective decision-making, solicit regular feedback and discuss recommendations
- Assess and present options for products across mobile, online and social media that would meet user requirements and business objectives
- Ensure that the digital strategy and development tender is realistic and manageable from both a workflow and budgetary perspective and ensure that medium to long-term sustainability and resource needs are assessed and considered.
- Ensure that the specification for digital products will be accessible to all audiences across a wide range of devices, taking the varied digital literacy and confidence levels into account

- Work with the Monitoring and Evaluation team to ensure a robust monitoring and evaluation plan is integrated into the digital strategy and tender specification
- Build strong relationships with The Reader's IT team to understand ensure that an effective roll out and integration of new products/systems
- Make recommendations to help the organisation become more digitally enabled and learning is embedded

Project timeline and key deliverables

We would be looking for bidders to outline their proposed timeline of delivery at interview, including key milestones and deliverables.

We are looking for a written digital strategy and tender brief for development to have been produced and approved by 12th October 2018.

What we're looking for

- Proven ability to grasp organisational strategy and experience in defining and leading digital strategy to further overarching business aims
- Experience in user involvement and co-creation processes, ideally with a third sector organisation
- Experience working with cross-departmental teams to develop digital strategy
- Collaborative - strong relationship building skills with a range of stakeholders, from senior management to volunteers and beneficiaries, in order to bring people with you
- A strong understanding of online user experiences, customer journeys and tracking/analytics tools
- Excellent understanding of available software and tools on the market - where possible, we will look to combine/customise available products that are cost-effective to maintain and upgrade.
- Experience of working within a third sector organisation
- Strong project management skills, including experience in agile tools and approach
- Outstanding communication skills – ability to translate digital concepts and language to a non-expert audience
- Confident to offer challenge and openness to be challenged
- Demonstrable interest in The Reader's mission and able to work in alignment with our values

Timetable for appointments

ITT Released	1 st June
Clarification/queries period	
Deadline for receipt of submissions	5pm on 18th June
Shortlisting and notification of shortlisted candidates	By 5pm on 22 nd June
Interviews with shortlisted candidates (at The Reader HQ in Liverpool – you'll be asked to do a presentation)	10 th / 11 th July
Notification of successful candidate	By 18 th July

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The Reader reserves the right to amend this timetable as required.

Submission guidance

Please submit your tender via email to jobs@thereader.org.uk

Tenderers are required to return the following information;

- a. Suitable evidence to demonstrate that you understand the project and have the experience to deliver it
- b. Your understanding of the challenges and opportunities of this project.
- c. Introduce a capable and experienced team that can provide us with the skills and experience that we're looking for.
- d. Outline a methodology for how the work will be undertaken and completed.
- e. Explain how you would work with our teams and get under the skin of our organisation as well as involve our beneficiaries in a meaningful way
- f. CV's of relevant staff members as appendices.
- g. Submit a breakdown of costs for works required along excluding VAT
- h. Submit a schedule to outline indicative timelines and deliverables
- i. Select two of The Reader's values which you feel are most pertinent to this project

Tender Selection

Once the deadline for tender submissions has passed the tenders will be scored according to a set criteria as follows:

Price – The price of the tender will be scored and considered at a maximum weighting of 30%.

Quality – The quality of the tender will be scored and considered at a maximum weighting of 70%.

Once scores have been confirmed, the highest scoring tenders will be shortlisted and invited to attend an interview

Queries

Please direct all queries to Jemma Guerrier, Director of Development and Partnerships
jemmaguerrier@thereader.org.uk or Tel: 0151 729 2200