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Narendra Modi to hire a Delhi-based PR agency with an eye on general elections 2014

Mitul Thakkar & Binoy Prabhakar, ET Bureau Jul 4, 2013, 04.00AM IST

Tags: West Bengal | Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd | Narendra Modi government | Narendra Modi | Lok Sabha | Information Commissionerate | Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation | Gujarat Government | Ernst & Young | Chhattisgarh | Apco Worldwide

NEW DELHI: With an eye on next year's general elections, the Narendra Modi government's Information Commissionerate wants to hire a Delhi-based public relations agency.

Modi, BJP's chief campaigner and Gujarat's chief minister, is expected to make frequent visits to the capital ahead of assembly elections in Delhi and Lok Sabha polls next year.



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The chosen agency will have to ensure at least half a dozen stories each in national, regional and vernacular newspapers based on the inputs provided by Gujarat government, officials said. [Gujarat government](#) is also seeking at least one story each in national magazines and television based on its inputs every month.

The PR firm will need to create awareness about brand 'Gujarat' in India and overseas to make it an ideal destination amongst various stakeholders. It will be responsible for informing the Information Commissionerate about critical stories about Gujarat and its leadership.

Gujarat is one of the very few states in India to hire PR firm for its Information Commissionerate and probably the only one to prefer a Delhi-based one. A number of states including [Chhattisgarh](#), Karnataka and [West Bengal](#) as well as central government agencies such as [Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd](#) and Indian Rare Earths Ltd have floated tenders for choosing a PR agency.

For the past couple of years, Delhi-based Mutual PR has managed the Gujarat government's image and it will submit its bid by this weekend. The amount for retaining Mutual PR is not known. Last week, four agencies including Dilip Cherian's Perfect Relations, Acti Media, Kamnath Mudralaya and Mutual PR attended half an hour long pre-bid conference called by the government of Gujarat in Delhi.

More firms are expected to submit bids as the Gujarat government reduced a threshold to 1 crore each in turnover for past three years from 1.5 crore in 2011 for bidders while most tenders seek much higher revenues.

The bids invited by Commissionerate of Information, which has staff strength of at least 150 employees dealing directly with media houses in and outside of Gujarat, have expanded the scope of the work to include promotion of Vibrant Gujarat Summit also. But it doesn't prohibit American lobbying company [Apco Worldwide](#) from partnering the summit because Industrial Extension Bureau (iNDEXTb), the state government's nodal agency for investments, will launch two tenders for knowledge partner and

specialised partner. Consultancies PricewaterCoopers and Ernst & Young won the bid for knowledge partner in 2013 and 2011, respectively while Apco won both the bids as a specialised partner. iNDEXTb will launch these tenders in two months and select a winner by Dec for the bi-annual event.

"We will take note of the qualification criteria and will take decision on participation accordingly," said a senior Apco executive, requesting anonymity.

Many of the state ventures of Gujarat have also hired separate public relations firms. For instance, Gujarat International Finance Tec-City has roped in Adfactors PR; Metro Express Gandhinagar-Ahmedabad project has signed Perfect Relations and [Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation](#) has tied up with Simulations. However, the state government employees dealing with Gujarat's brand promotions are not very upbeat about presence of PR firms on the board. "PR firms barely understand the requirement of government and lack good connect with right journalists. Lately, Gujarat and Modi drew media attention on their own and we see no point in bringing outsiders by paying high fees," said a Gujarat government official dealing with media relations.

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According to an Information Commissionerate official, "In the new age of countless 24 hour news channels and the Internet, we require strong public image management to effectively propagate and publicise the initiatives and achievements of Gujarat government through national and international media."

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True Indian (New Delhi)

04 Jul, 2013 04:31 PM

Modi is just wasting his money. Outside Gujarat nobody believes any of his LIES! Furthermore he is expecting at Government. The creditability of Gujarat Govt machineries is less than zero! They are considered as big a pathol mantra India is chanting. Jai Hind!



Aslam Banerjee (mumbai) replies to True Indian

05 Jul, 2013 04:37 AM

u like people can trust only on pakistan & terrorism. Also to congress due to supporting terrorism for

Ritz (Ahmedabad)

04 Jul, 2013 02:47 PM

Wow!! this proves that PR people are now being considered of Prime importance; and part of growth stories.. Wa

M M MISHRA (VARANASI)

04 Jul, 2013 02:04 PM

PR FIRM KO HIRE KAREGA RE,.... LEKIN INDIAN VOTERS KO KAHA SE HIRE KAREGA,SAB INDIANS KO KYA

sidhu manisha (g)

04 Jul, 2013 10:39 AM

After the resounding victory for BJP in Zila and Taluka panchayat elections across Gujarat, one thing is proved that people of Gujarat have rejected the negative politics of Congress. For development, support and follow Sh. Nare

Keshav Sachdev (Chandigarh)

04 Jul, 2013 10:27 AM

Good idea particularly when UPA seems to be working overtime on monopolising the media.
