

**Minnestar**  
Brand Review, Website Redesign & Development  
Request for Proposal

This RFP is for a branding review, design and development services for a new website for Minnestar.

RFP Sent: November 10, 2016

Responses Due: December 31, 2016

Send any questions on the RFP to: Jim Dahline, Board Member, [jim.dahline@minnestar.org](mailto:jim.dahline@minnestar.org)

Send proposals to: Jenna Pederson, Board Member, [jenna@minnestar.org](mailto:jenna@minnestar.org)

Budget: \$5K-15K

Goal for branding review and refresh: Q1 2017

Goal for website launch: Q2 2017

## Minnestar Overview

Since 2006, Minnestar has been acting as a catalyst for the tech and startup ecosystem in Minnesota. Our goal is to promote connections that help our community learn from each other, build their businesses, and start new entrepreneurial ventures. We aim to bridge the gap between software developers, designers, entrepreneurs, investors, and local companies.

## Our Audience

Our primary audience are those working in or investing in the Minnesota tech industry - software developers, designers, entrepreneurs, investors, and local companies. They are attending our events to connect with others in the community to find jobs, others to collaborate with, learn from, to hire, or to invest in.

Our secondary audience are sponsors or potential sponsors. Often these fall within our primary audience as those within the Minnestar community are very active and passionate about supporting it. Our sponsors look to generate more awareness of their own brand, recruit new talent, support and grow the community, and become a recognized leader in the community.

## New Branding and Website Objectives

Our brand needs to communicate who Minnestar is and what we do for the tech and startup community. We want a clear message and consistency across our different brand elements from our website to our community emails announcing events.

An updated website first and foremost needs to present our organization as a leader in the tech and startup community.

Additionally, the website needs to communicate information about getting to our events and making it easier to support/sponsor us.

## Current Branding and Website

We know that our current branding and website create confusion with both of our audiences.

### Our Brand

The Minnestar name and our event names themselves cause confusion as to how to pronounce them and write them: MinneStar, Minnestar, minne\*, minnedemo, MinneDemo, minneDemo, etc. People are also confused whether Minnestar is an organization or an event, and related whether MinneDemo/MinneBar are organizations or events.

Our brand, and thus our mission and future plans, is also inconsistently articulated depending on who you talk to. In the same way there is confusion in regards to minnestar being an organization or event (or both), where we should focus our energy, what initiatives we should support, what key success factors should be reviewed are also inconsistently verbalized depending on who you are talking to. Questions of whether our Community, our volunteers, our supporters, our sponsors, and our board are aligned are very real.

### Our Online Presence

The Minnestar online experience consists of multiple sites:

- the minnestar.org website is a core marketing website with information about the organization, events, and sponsors/supporters
- a wiki which contains more detailed information (<http://wiki.minnestar.org/>)
- the MinneBar schedule and session submitter (<http://sessions.minnestar.org/>)
- the Minnestar donor site takes donations from community supporters (<https://minnestar.donortools.com/>)

Challenges:

- None of these sites have a consistent experience making it confusing for users looking to find information about the organization or an event.

- The core marketing website is very much utility without much aesthetic, leaving little to inspire or show visitors what our community looks like.
- It is difficult to determine who the sponsors are or if they sponsor the organization or an event.
- It is difficult/impossible to find what you are looking for as the flow of information is not consistent or intuitive - the date of the next event (even though on the main page, it's not consistent or obvious), where/how to submit MinneBar sessions from the main marketing website, how to get tickets to the next event, how to become a sponsor, how to contact the Minnestar organization.
- Content, specifically that surrounding our events, is not updated in a timely fashion causing confusion to those interested in attending our events or those presenting. More information about how to attend or what presenters need to know could be communicated here rather than through emails.
- The process to become a community supporter is long, confusing, and error prone.
- The headshots of the Board Members are inconsistent or broken images. A consistency of imagery here and throughout the site will put additional weight behind this being a professional organization with experienced and thoughtful leadership.
- From a maintenance perspective, only one or two people (volunteers) have the ability to update the content. It quickly becomes out of date. We need a way and a process to make this more accessible without losing the design aesthetic and consistency of information presented of an updated website.

## Brand Guide Requirements

A new brand guide :

- Provide clear understanding of the minnestar brand
- Clearly articulate mission and vision
- Provide direction to designers and content creators how to reference the brand

Additionally, a refresh to the minnestar logo may be recommended (and can be part of your proposal) but it's not a requirement.

## New Website Functionality Requirements

Our new website will need:

- An easy-to-use content management system (CMS)
- Intuitive navigation
- Clean and focused design
- All applicable content imported from current site
- Optimized with SEO best practices
- Clear path to conversion/lead generation (Community Supporters, Sponsors)
- A blog
- Social media integration (share buttons, follow buttons, etc.)
- Email update sign-up form

- Contact Form
- A focus on driving Sponsorships, Event Attendance/Participation, Community Supporters

## Optional New Website Functionalities/Wish List

We would love to have the following in our new website, depending on how these elements would impact timeline and/or budget. Please provide cost for these elements separately, and note if any additional design or development time would be required.

- Homepage video
- Dynamic blog feeds throughout website
- Interactive map of facilities/event locations
- Advanced SEO work

## Community Supporter Donation Details

The community supporter donations come through a separate experience on donortools.com.

We currently sell Community Supporter memberships (annual).  
Payment types taken: major credit cards, PayPal.

## Budget Details

As listed in the summary, our budget for this project is [\$5,000-\$15,000]. While we of course prefer the most cost-effective solution, all proposals that fall reasonably within this range will be considered and weighed based on their merits. Proposals that offer flexibility in billing for non-required elements added to the website after initial launch will also be considered, as we may be able to budget for additional funding for these additional website elements or ongoing marketing efforts after this fiscal ends on Dec 31, 2016. Minnestar sponsorships may be offered in kind to help meet budget.

## Proposal Requirements

Please include the following in your proposal response:

- Overview of your company
- Overview of how you will meet our objectives
- Explanation of your proposed platform/CMS
- Outline of your website design & development strategy
- Proposed website timeline from kickoff to launch
- Details about your team
- Recent design & development examples
- References
- Key differentiators about your company

- Pricing with optional elements line-itemed
- Terms & conditions

## RFP & Project Timeline Details

RFP Sent: 11/10/16

Responses Due: 12/31/16

Finalists Selected & Contacted : 1/15/17

Winner Selected & Contacted : 1/31/17

Project Kick-off : 2/15/17

Branding Review and Refresh Target Date: 4/1/17

New Website Launch Target Date: 6/15/17

Thank you for your interest in responding to this RFP with a proposal for our new website. We look forward to your response.