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Morocco Tourism taps HL Group for US outreach

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NEW YORK: The Moroccan National Tourism Office (MNT0) has hired HL Group as its AOR, following a competitive RFP process in the US.

Chakib Ghadouani, marketing manager for MNT0, said four agencies were reviewed for the role, all of which offered compelling pitches. According to documents relating to the RFP, the four agency finalists were HL Group, 5W Public Relations, Latitude, and BPCM. The budget for the three-year contract is in the range of \$390,000 to \$1.9 million* per year.

MNT0 selected HL Group because of its “expertise in establishing brands,” as well as its impressive proposal.

“We gave them a very layered program above and beyond media relations—there's events, influential relations, social media—and we built that all into a three-year campaign targeting the US market,” said Guillermo Zalamea, Partner at HL Group.

The agency will have 8 people in the New York and Los Angeles offices working on the account. The team's goal is to increase the awareness and appeal of Morocco as a tourism destination and vacation spot for Americans.

“We want HL Group to use all the channels possible to show Americans that Morocco is a safe and welcoming country that's not far from the US. The flight from New York City is only six hours,” Ghadouani explained

Regarding recent political turmoil in the Moroccan government, Zalamea said the agency will shift focus to the country's cultural aspects, revealing the many amenities and activities available there. If a serious issue does occur in the future, however, HL's crisis management division will be prepared to act, he added.

HL Group has also recently been working with ThisNext.com, helping the interactive shopping website create social media buzz around its recent partnership with Conde Nast's *Lucky* magazine.

**All figures were converted to US dollars from Moroccan dirhams using the XE currency converter.*