

# Matchstick Social + IOP

## Brand Strategy & Identity Development City of Isle of Palms, South Carolina

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Prepared in response to RFP 2026-02  
Submitted by Matchstick Social | Charleston, South Carolina  
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## Opening Statement

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For nearly thirteen years, Matchstick Social has helped Charleston organizations define who they are, how they communicate, and how their brands connect with the people they serve. Our work sits at the intersection of strategy, design, and storytelling. We build brands that feel authentic to the places they represent and flexible enough to grow with the organizations behind them.

Over the past decade, we have partnered with some of Charleston's most recognized companies and institutions to shape their brand identities and marketing strategies. Our team has developed brand systems for organizations including Seabrook Island Real Estate, Charleston Regional MLS, South Carolina Commercial MLS, Charleston Tea Garden, The Archive, King & Society, Gerald's Tires & Brakes, and many others. This experience has given our team a deep understanding of the Charleston region and the coastal communities that make it unique.

Isle of Palms is truly remarkable, combining its natural coastal beauty with quintessential Southern hospitality that has rolled out the welcome mat for visitors and residents for generations. Wide stretches of shoreline, proximity to historic Charleston, and the balance between residential life and vacation travel create a destination that feels both laid back and luxury.

Developing a brand for a community like Isle of Palms requires more than designing a logo. It requires a thoughtful process that brings together community insight, stakeholder collaboration, and strategic creative development. Matchstick's role is to guide that process from initial research through implementation. Our team will work closely with City leadership, staff, and key partners to develop a brand identity that reflects the spirit of Isle of Palms and communicates it clearly across every platform where the City engages residents and visitors.

This proposal outlines the strategy, process, and creative approach we will use to develop a brand identity that represents Isle of Palms with clarity, consistency, and pride.

## About Matchstick Social

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Matchstick Social is a Charleston-based brand development and digital marketing agency with nearly than thirteen years of experience helping organizations clarify their identity and connect with their audiences through thoughtful storytelling and strategic design.

Founded in Charleston, Matchstick Social has built a reputation for developing brand strategies that reflect the character of the Lowcountry while supporting long-term growth for organizations and businesses. Our team has partnered with companies and organizations throughout the Charleston region across hospitality, real estate, tourism-adjacent industries, and coastal businesses.

### Clients have included:

- Charleston Tea Garden
- Seabrook Island Real Estate
- Charleston Regional MLS
- South Carolina Commercial MLS

- King & Society Construction & Real Estate
- Crosby Land Co.
- The Archive
- Gerald's Tires & Brakes

#### **Firm Highlights:**

- Named Best Marketing and PR Firm in Charleston multiple years
- Winner of Charleston's Choice Awards in two categories
- Nearly thirteen years in business designing & building brands in the Lowcountry
- Trusted partner to many of Charleston's most recognizable and growth-oriented organizations
- Women-owned business with a team diverse in background

As a Charleston-based agency deeply connected to the community, Matchstick Social brings both strategic expertise and local perspective to the Isle of Palms branding initiative.

## **Project Team**

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Matchstick Social will assign a dedicated project team to the Isle of Palms branding initiative. Each team member brings relevant experience in brand strategy, design, and coastal market communications.

#### **Amber Ludeman — Partner, Messaging Strategist & Primary Project Contact**

Amber serves as the primary point of contact for the City of Isle of Palms throughout the project. She leads messaging development and brand voice for Matchstick Social, helping organizations define how they communicate their identity across audiences. Amber will oversee day-to-day project coordination, lead tagline development and messaging frameworks, and ensure alignment between city leadership and the project team at every phase.

#### **Rachel Davis — Partner & Brand Strategist**

Rachel supports brand strategy for Matchstick Social and brings more than 15 years of experience developing strategies for Lowcountry organizations. She will guide the overall brand positioning process, lead stakeholder research, and ensure the strategic foundation of the Isle of Palms brand reflects the vision of city leadership and the community.

#### **Nicole Geer — Creative Director & Lead Designer**

Nicole oversees visual identity development for Matchstick Social and serves as a point of contact for all creative direction and design feedback. She will lead the development of the Isle of Palms logo system, city seal, and brand guidelines, and is the primary resource for design-related questions and revisions throughout the project.

### Janine Lewis — Lead Designer & Project Manager

Janine supports visual identity development and template production. She will contribute to logo development, brand asset creation, and the design of communication templates for city departments.

### Katie Kearney — Photography & Video Production

Katie leads photography and video content for Matchstick Social. Her work will support brand launch assets, digital storytelling initiatives, and visual content recommendations included in the three-year brand strategy.

## Understanding the Character of Isle of Palms

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Before developing a visual identity, Matchstick begins by understanding the qualities that define Isle of Palms and shape the experience of the island for both residents and visitors.

Isle of Palms has experienced exponential growth in recent years with an influx of visitors looking to make their primary residences on the island, with landmark real estate sales and attracting premium businesses. However, as locals, we love that the City has worked to preserve the laid back look and feel. It functions as the perfect escape, just around the corner.

Isle of Palms is more than a visitor destination. It is a residential community where everyday life unfolds along the coast. Families ride bikes through quiet neighborhoods, residents gather at the beach at sunrise, and multi-generational visitors return year after year to enjoy familiar traditions. This balance between community and destination is one of the defining qualities of the island.

### Competitive Landscape

The Charleston region includes several barrier island communities, each offering a distinct coastal experience.

#### Sullivan's Island

Known for its historic character and lively dining scene that attracts Charleston locals and visitors alike. Its brand skews toward a sophisticated, locally-rooted audience.

#### Folly Beach

Widely recognized for its surf culture and relaxed beach town atmosphere, appealing to a younger, more casual visitor demographic.

#### Kiawah Island

Positioned as a luxury resort destination centered around golf and private communities, competing in a distinct price tier and targeting a different traveler profile entirely.

**Isle of Palms occupies a differentiated and underutilized position within this landscape.**

The island offers the rare balance of a wide beach, resort amenities at Wild Dunes, and a welcoming residential community atmosphere. Landmarks like The Windjammer and the Front Beach dining district give the island a distinct sense of place that is both accessible and memorable.

Unlike Kiawah's exclusivity or Folly's informality, Isle of Palms offers something neither can: a true family beach vacation destination with the full breadth of the Charleston coastal experience.

This is the positioning opportunity the new brand strategy will develop and communicate clearly across all city platforms.

## Project Approach

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Our process is designed to ensure that the final brand identity reflects the vision of City leadership while also resonating with residents and visitors. The project will move through six structured phases combining research, stakeholder engagement, brand strategy, and visual design.

### Phase 1 | Research and Discovery Estimated Timeline: 2–3 Weeks

The discovery phase establishes the strategic foundation for the project.

**Activities include:**

- Project kickoff meeting
- Stakeholder interviews with City leadership and staff
- Review of existing branding and communications
- Brand audit of City materials and digital platforms
- Research on regional tourism positioning
- Analysis of peer destinations and competitor messaging

**Deliverables include:**

- Executive summary report with research findings and stakeholder insights
- Key insights shaping brand strategy

### Phase 2 | Brand Strategy Development Estimated Timeline: 3–4 Weeks

During this phase the Matchstick team develops the strategic foundation that will guide the creative direction.

**This includes:**

- Definition of brand positioning
- Development of messaging framework
- Tagline exploration
- Brand personality definition
- Strategic brand pillars

**Workshop activities include:**

- Brand Camp workshop with City leadership and staff
- Matchstick will facilitate at minimum one session with Isle of Palms City Council to present research findings, gather feedback on early brand positioning concepts, and ensure alignment before design development begins
- Collaboration with the Charleston Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

### Phase 3 | Creative Development Estimated Timeline: 4–5 Weeks

Matchstick will develop and present multiple brand concepts to key stakeholders based on the strategic direction established during the previous phase.

#### Each concept will include:

- Primary logo concept and logo suite variations
- Official City Seal design
- Color palette
- Suggested typography
- Tagline options

The City will review concepts and provide feedback. The process will include three rounds of revisions to refine the selected concept.

### Phase 4 | Brand System Development Estimated Timeline: 3–4 Weeks

Once the brand concept is finalized, Matchstick will expand the design into a comprehensive brand system.

#### Deliverables include:

- Logo suite
- City seal
- Color palette
- Typography system
- Iconography library
- Graphic patterns and visual elements

Once all brand concept elements are approved by stakeholders, Matchstick will move forward with final comprehensive brand guidelines and template creation.

### Phase 5 | Brand Guidelines and Templates Estimated Timeline: 2 Weeks

Matchstick will produce a comprehensive brand guide to ensure consistency across all City communications.

**The brand guide will include:**

- Logo and city seal usage guidelines
- Typography standards
- Color palette specifications
- Graphic element usage
- Photography direction
- Voice and tone guidance

**Templates will include:**

- Letterhead
- Business cards
- Email signatures
- PowerPoint presentation templates
- Social media templates
- Report cover templates
- Brochure templates
- Signage templates
- Webpage layout recommendations

All templates will be delivered in editable file formats suitable for use across city departments, partner organizations, and digital platforms, consistent with design industry best practices.

**Phase 6 | Brand Launch and Rollout Strategy**

Estimated Timeline: 3–4 Weeks

Matchstick will guide the City in introducing the new brand identity to the community and visitors. This phase includes a coordinated brand launch plan and both short-term and long-term initiatives to guide brand adoption across city departments, community stakeholders, and regional tourism partners.

**This phase includes:**

- Community brand launch event to introduce the new identity to residents, local businesses, and regional partners, supported by coordinated digital and social media campaigns
- Brand launch strategy
- Community engagement recommendations
- Digital campaign concepts
- Public announcement planning
- Communication timeline for rollout

## Three-Year Brand Communication Strategy

To support the long-term success of the new identity, Matchstick will provide guidance for maintaining and strengthening the brand over the first three years following introduction.

### This roadmap will include:

- Short-term launch initiatives
- Annual marketing priorities
- Seasonal tourism messaging campaigns
- Digital storytelling initiatives highlighting Isle of Palms experiences
- Partnership opportunities with regional tourism organizations
- Digital communication strategies
- Guidance for maintaining brand consistency across city departments

## Measuring Success

Matchstick Social will establish baseline benchmarks during the discovery phase and identify measurable indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the new brand.

### Success metrics may include:

- Brand recognition among regional audiences
- Website engagement and time on site
- Social media engagement for city communications
- Resident perception and satisfaction surveys
- Visitor awareness of Isle of Palms as a family beach destination
- Adoption of brand guidelines across city departments and partner organizations

## Project Timeline

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Phase	Description	Timeline
Phase 1	Research and Discovery	Weeks 1–3
Phase 2	Brand Strategy Development	Weeks 3–6
Phase 3	Creative Development	Weeks 6–10
Phase 4	Brand System Development	Weeks 10–13
Phase 5	Brand Guidelines and Templates	Weeks 13–14
Phase 6	Brand Launch and Rollout Strategy	<b>Weeks 14–18</b>

**Estimated total project duration: 18 weeks**

## Project Investment

Phase	Description	Investment
Phase 1	Research and Discovery	\$7,000
Phase 2	Brand Strategy Development	\$8,000
Phase 3	Creative Development	\$11,500
Phase 4	Brand System Development	\$6,500
Phase 5	Brand Guidelines and Templates	\$5,500
Phase 6	Brand Launch and Rollout Strategy	\$5,500
	<b>Total Project Investment</b>	<b>\$44,000</b>

## Client References

### Reference 1

<b>Company</b>	Seabrook Island Real Estate
<b>Contact Name</b>	Ben Schuyler
<b>Title</b>	General Manager & BIC, Seabrook Island Real Estate
<b>Email</b>	bschuyler@seabrookisland.com
<b>Phone</b>	(843) 367-1241
<b>Project Description</b>	Brand Development

### Reference 2

<b>Company</b>	Charleston Regional MLS
<b>Contact Name</b>	Joseph Cullmon
<b>Title</b>	CEO
<b>Email</b>	joseph@chsmls.com
<b>Phone</b>	(843) 760-9400
<b>Project Description</b>	Brand Development + Full Service Marketing

### Reference 3

<b>Company</b>	Charleston Tea Garden
<b>Contact Name</b>	Bryn Riley
<b>Title</b>	General Manager
<b>Email</b>	briley@rcbigelow.com
<b>Phone</b>	(843) 559-0382 x4202
<b>Project Description</b>	Brand Development + Full Service Digital Marketing

## Business License Compliance

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Matchstick Social confirms that we will obtain an Isle of Palms Business License prior to project initiation if awarded the contract.

## Final Thoughts

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Matchstick Social is proud to call Charleston home. Our team understands the character of the coastal communities that make this region special, and we are excited about the opportunity to help Isle of Palms develop a brand identity that reflects its natural beauty, community character, and role as a welcoming family beach vacation destination.

As a Charleston-based firm whose team lives and works in the same coastal region, we understand both the responsibility and the opportunity that comes with shaping the identity of a community like Isle of Palms.

Our goal is to create a brand that residents are proud of, that visitors recognize, and that supports the city's future for years to come.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this proposal and look forward to the possibility of working together.

## Contact Details

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Rachel Davis  
Partner  
Rachel@matchsticksocial.com  
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Our Love Letter  
to Isle of Palms





# Brand Work Samples





# SEABROOK ISLAND



Around the corner,  
a world away.



## Heading Example

Paragraphbodyexample:Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

CTA Button



# HARBOR

## LOGISTICS

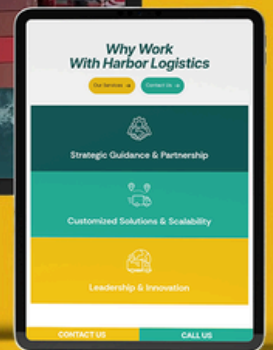
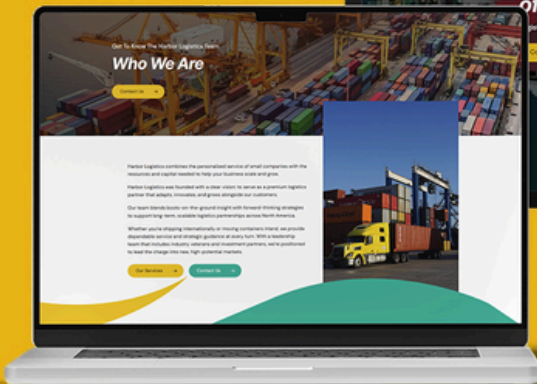
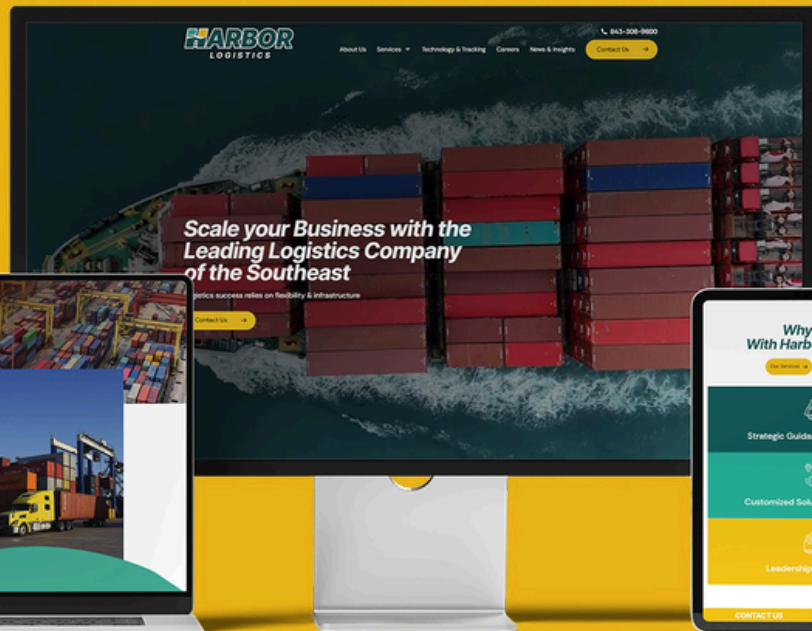
The golden ratio is used to determine height of each logo element to promote visual balance.



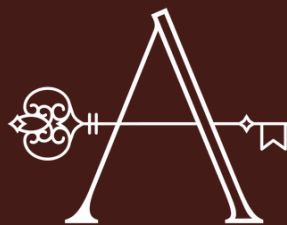
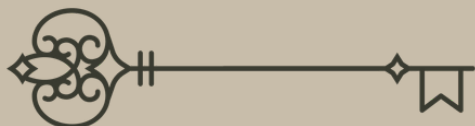
**John Doe**  
JOB TITLE

📍 123 Anywhere St., City, ST, 00000  
📞 (123) 456-7890  
✉️ johndoe@harborlogistics.com

www.HarborLogistics.com



# THE ARCHIVE



## Heading Example

Paragraph: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

CTA BUTTON



# CHARLESTON TEA GARDEN

## CHARLESTON TEA GARDEN

CHARLESTON TEA GARDEN

CHARLESTON TEA GARDEN



### PRIMARY HEADING

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### Accent Type

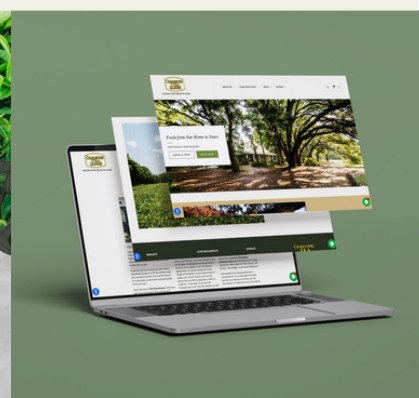
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### SECONDARY HEADING

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Body Text: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

Type: Overpass, Case: Sentence Case, Letter Spacing: 0, Line Spacing: 1.1





Build it right,  
enjoy it for life.

POOL  
WORKS

POOL  WORKS

PW

## Heading Example

Paragraph bodyexample:Loremipsumdolorsitamet,  
consectetur adipiscing elit,seddoeusmodtempor  
incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

CTA BUTTON





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