

loopio

RFP RESPONSE TRENDS & BENCHMARKS

2023 Report

In partnership with 

What's Inside



Introduction & Overview

A closer look at the demographics that shaped this year's results. Includes company size, roles, industry, geography, and more.



Top Trends for 2023

The macro level of what to expect from this year's trends—peer into the overarching patterns and insights of this report.



Chapter 1: Economic Impact on Volume & Submissions

Submission volume grows despite an uncertain year. Qualification trends continue to rise.



Chapter 5: Impact of Software on Satisfaction & Spend

Teams using software submit more RFPs, report less stress, and earn more revenue.



Chapter 6: Salary & Career Comparisons

Almost a third of teams received a promotion last year, career growth is looking up.



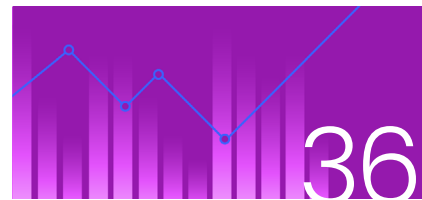
Chapter 7: RFP Resource Predictions for 2023

Resources remain steady, yet teams adjust expectations of what's needed to hit targets for the year ahead.



Chapter 2: Stabilization of Revenue & Win Rates

RFX revenue remains steady despite fluctuating markets, influencing between 30–40% of a company's revenue growth.



Chapter 3: The Elusive Balance of Writing Quality & Speed

Writing time is up overall, but may have diminishing returns. Some struggle to strike the balance between excellent vs. efficient.



Chapter 4: Team Configuration & Collaboration Challenges

RFP teams became more formalized this year, leading to higher team satisfaction. But collaboration challenges remain.



Chapter 8: What Top Teams Do Differently to Win More RFPs

Understand the habits of top performing teams, learn how they win more bids (and how you can, too).

About This Report

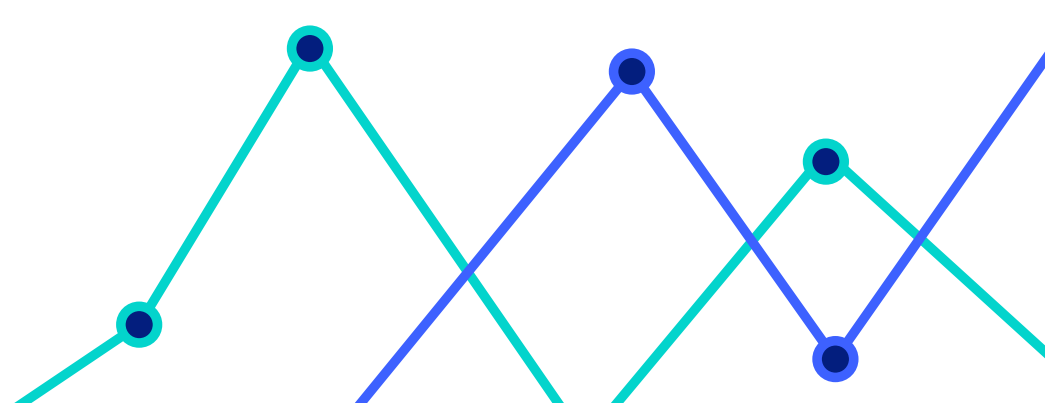
Research conducted by Loopio of 1,500 companies that respond to RFPs. Data analysis by Qualtrics. Developed in partnership with the Association of Proposal Management Professionals (APMP).

Anyone who responds to RFPs knows it's competitive by nature. But how do you know if you're ahead of the curve?

This fourth annual report shares dozens of trends and insights from 1,500 teams that manage requests for proposals (RFPs).

In it, you'll learn about performance benchmarks for win rate, revenue, team size, and much more. While this research focuses on RFPs, participating teams respond to all types of RFX in the sales process. You can use this report to understand industry trends and standard benchmarks. Plus, see how you stack up against the competition.

Whether you're a writer or rep, in pre-sales or proposals—this report is for you.



Over the past four years, RFPs have consistently influenced 30–40% of a company's revenue. It's clear that despite economic peaks and valleys, RFPs are a critical part of an organization's growth and competitive strategy.

That's why we believe it's important to provide access to industry benchmarks that highlight the strategic value of RFPs, and the best practices of industry leaders. This year, we're especially excited to partner with the Association of Proposal Management Professionals (APMP) to extend the reach of this research. Together, we heard from 1,500 teams, half of which are APMP members, influencing some interesting shifts in this year's trends.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's research (and to all reading this report). We hope these insights continue to amplify the importance of your work.



Sincerely,
Zak Hemraj,
Loopio CEO and Co-Founder

As longtime supporters of Loopio's annual trends report, we couldn't be more excited to collaborate on this year's research.

Bringing together responses from APMP members worldwide, this year's report brings data-driven insights and a depth of information for all sized RFP teams. Inside, you'll find 80 pages of pure research that you can leverage in conversations with your team, manager, or organization as a whole.

Whether you participated in this year's survey or are just curious to hear from other professionals in the field, we hope these insights help your team continue to work smarter and win more.



Sincerely,
Rick Harris,
APMP CEO

Who We Surveyed

1,500

total number of people surveyed

702

global APMP members

72%

directly responsible for responding to RFPs

28%

manage the team responsible for RFPs

1 in 5

say their stress levels are unmanageable

Fast Facts

242,322

Number of collective RFPs completed by this year's survey respondents

162 bids

Average number of RFX submitted this year

32 hours

Average time spent writing a single RFP response

77 questions

Average number of questions in an RFP



9 people

contribute to a single RFP on average

55%

of organizations have a dedicated RFP owner

51%

say collaborating with subject matter experts (SMEs) is their top challenge

80%

of organizations use a go/no-go matrix

Benchmarks

44%

average win rate



percentage of company revenue influenced by RFX

About the Author

Loopio's market-leading software helps companies streamline their response process for RFPs, DDQs, and security questionnaires.

OVERVIEW

Participant Distribution & Demographics

Skip to distribution for:

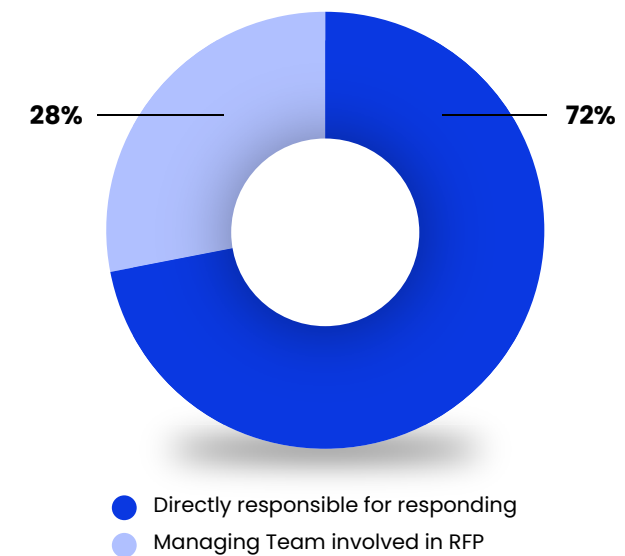
- Role type pg. 9
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OVERVIEW

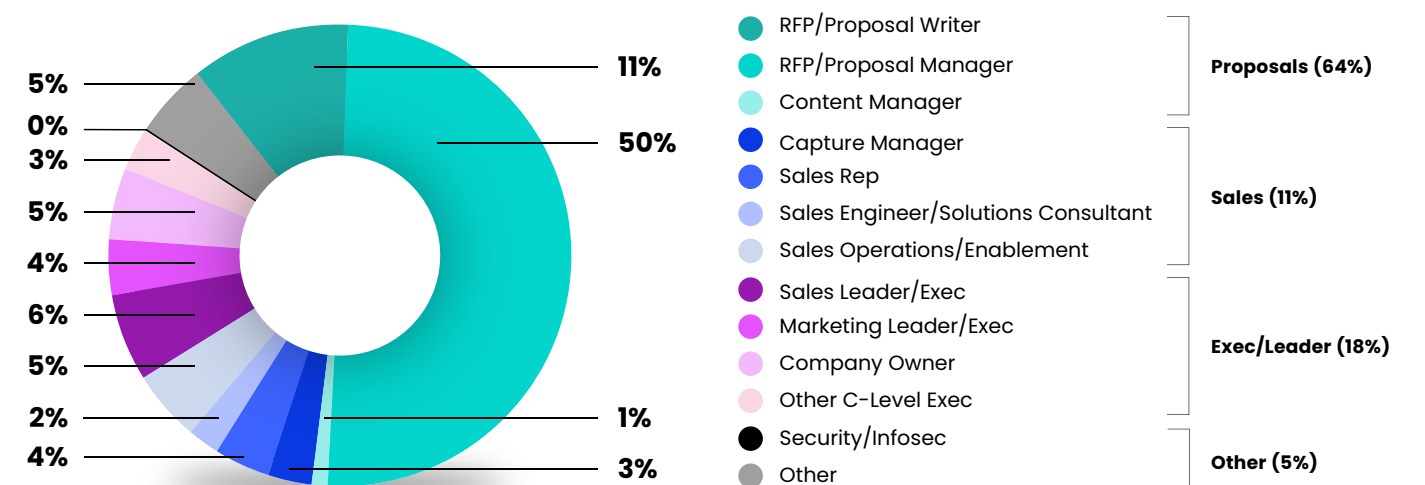
Who We Surveyed

We surveyed 1,500 people worldwide who are involved in responding to RFPs. All participants are either involved directly in the response process or indirectly through managing an RFP response team.

Involvement in RFP Process

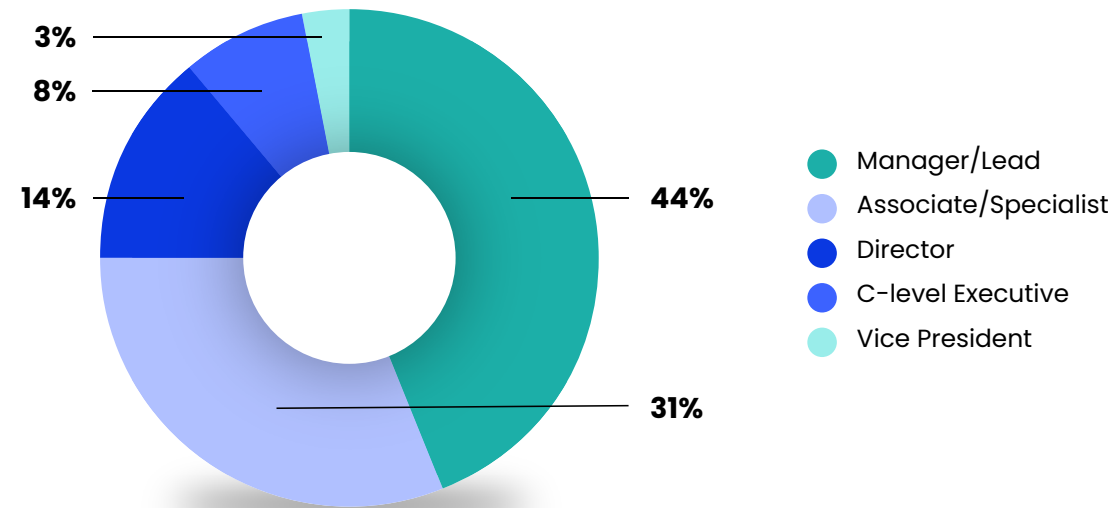


Distribution By Role Type



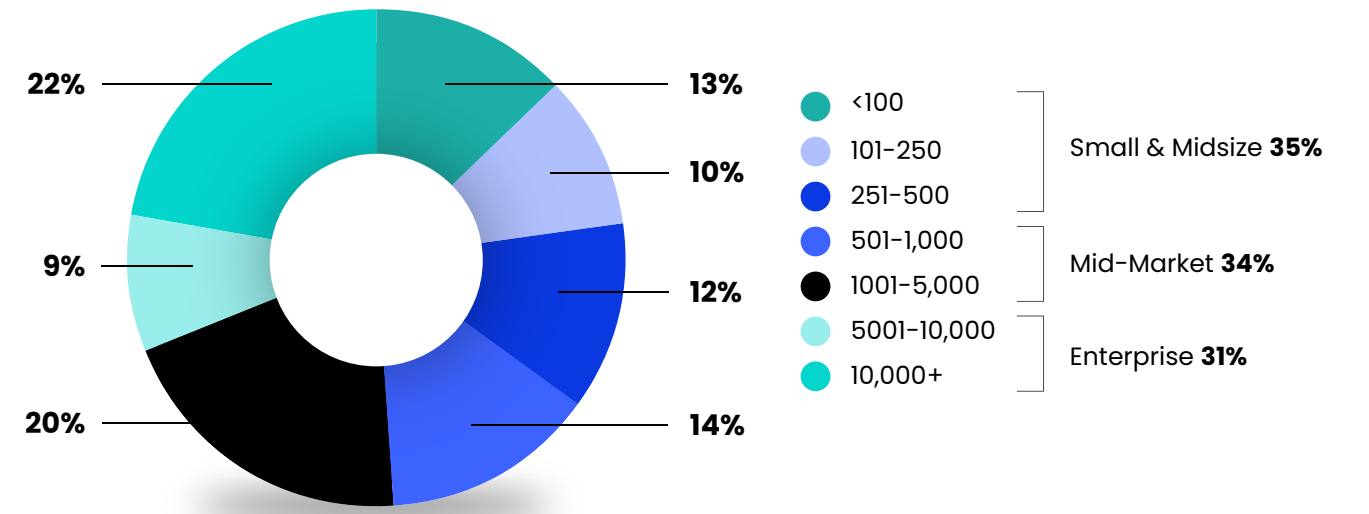
OVERVIEW

Distribution By Employee Level



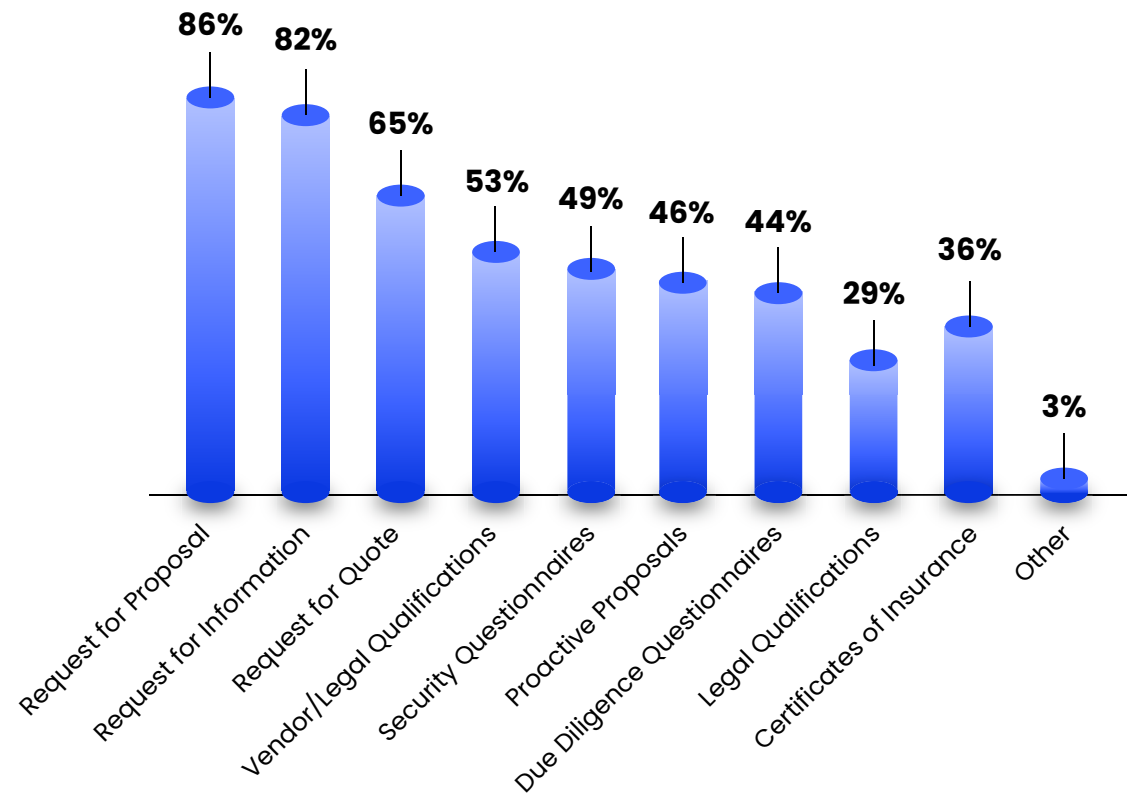
OVERVIEW

Distribution By Company Size

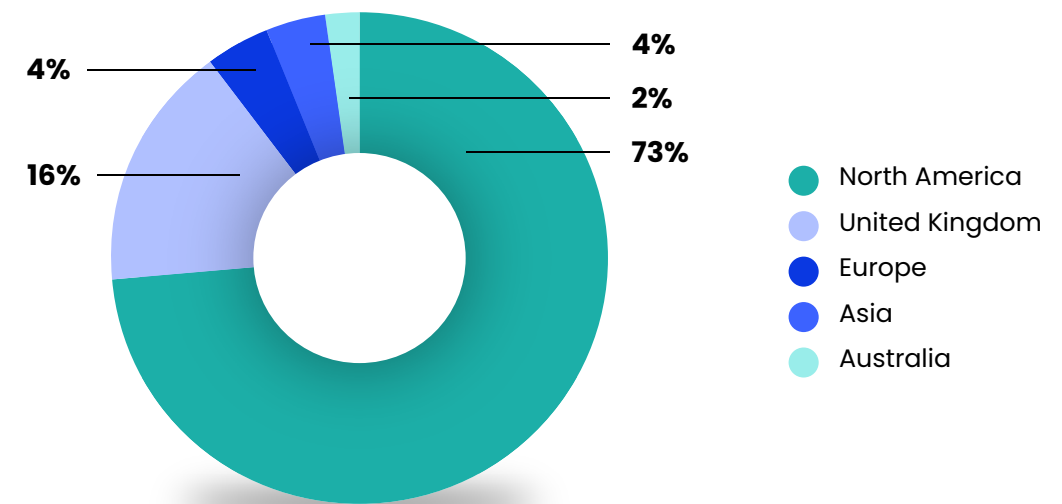


Types of Documents Responded to

Respondents could choose multiple answers.

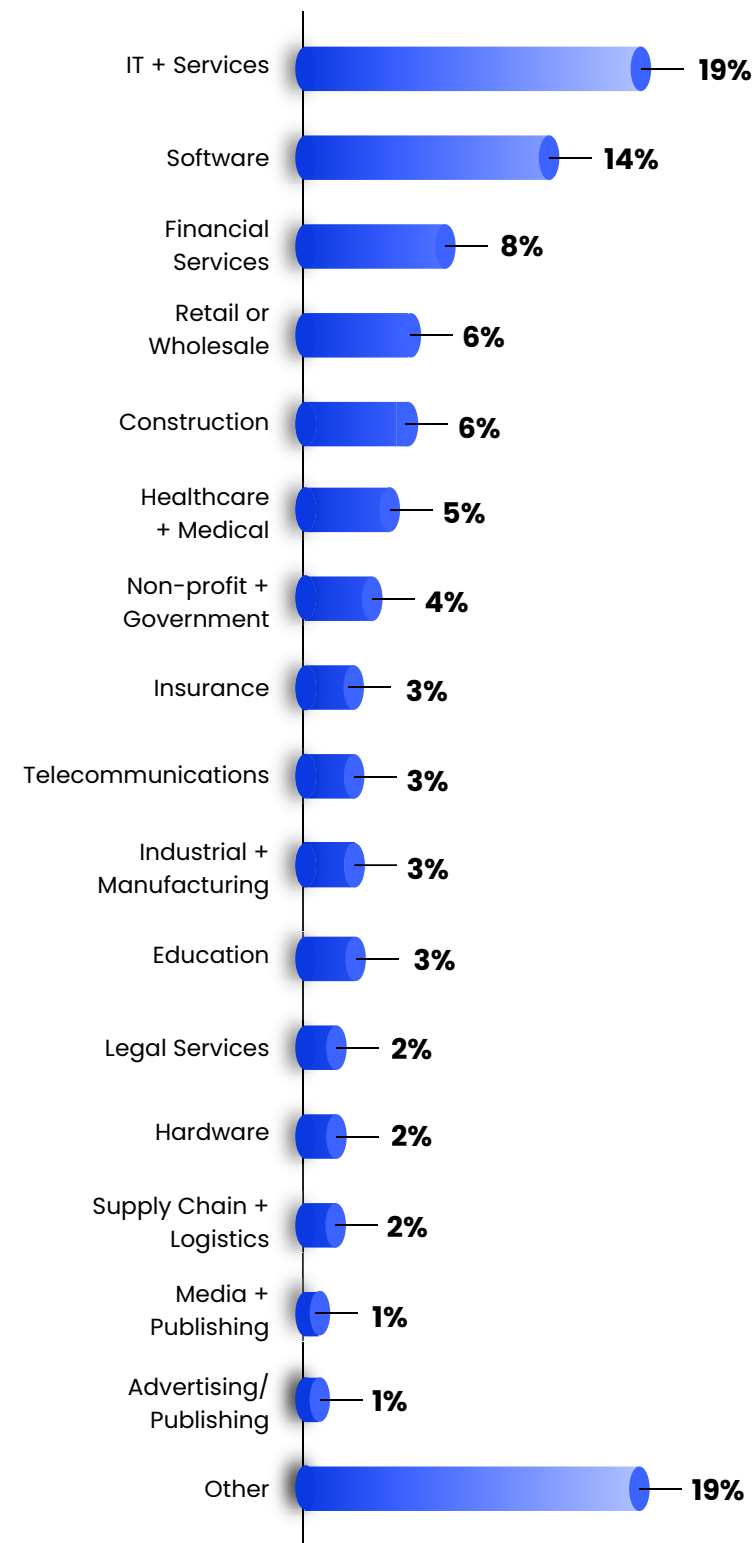


Distribution By Geography



OVERVIEW

Distribution By Industry

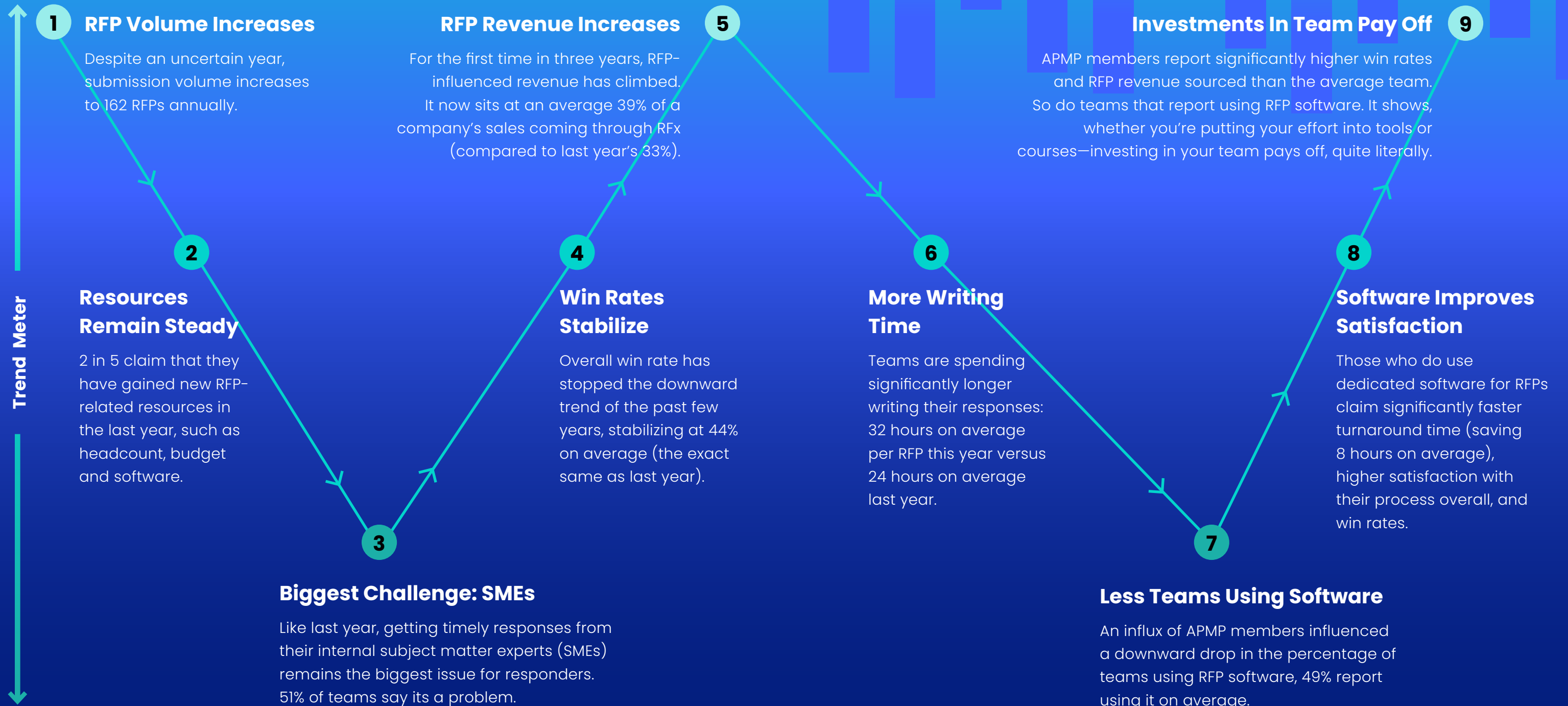


INSIGHT SUMMARY

Top Benchmarks & Trends for 2023

At A Glance: Top Trends For 2023

The peaks and valleys of RFP trends for this year.



CHAPTER 1

Economic Impact On RFP Volume & Submissions

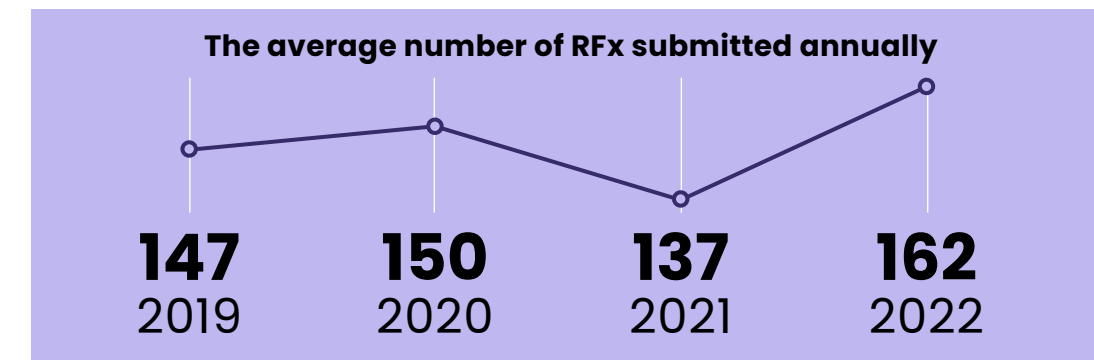
Skip to benchmarks and trends for:

- Submission Volume pg. 17
- Participation Rates pg. 21
- Go/no-go Process pg. 22

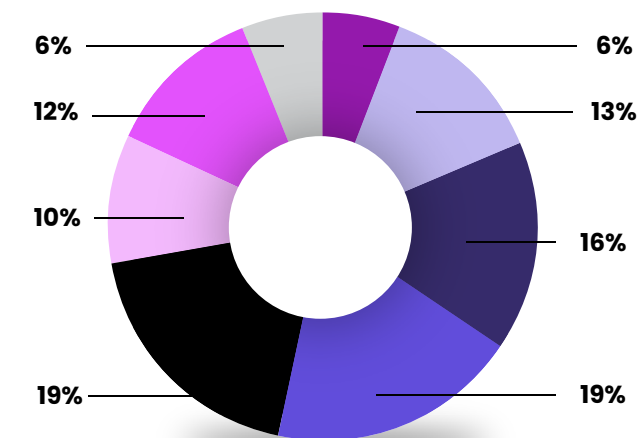
CHAPTER 1

RFP Submission Numbers Up to 162 Annually

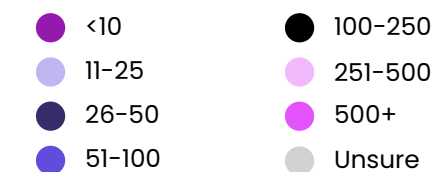
Companies replied to an average of 162 RFPs this year, much more than last year's average of 137. The top 20% of teams submit 250+ bids annually, while the lowest 20% submit less than 25.



Average Annual Submissions



Average Annual RFP Submissions



Although the overall average this year is significantly higher than the year before, this is likely due to the above average volume of bids submitted by APMP members (who made up 50% of this year's sample).

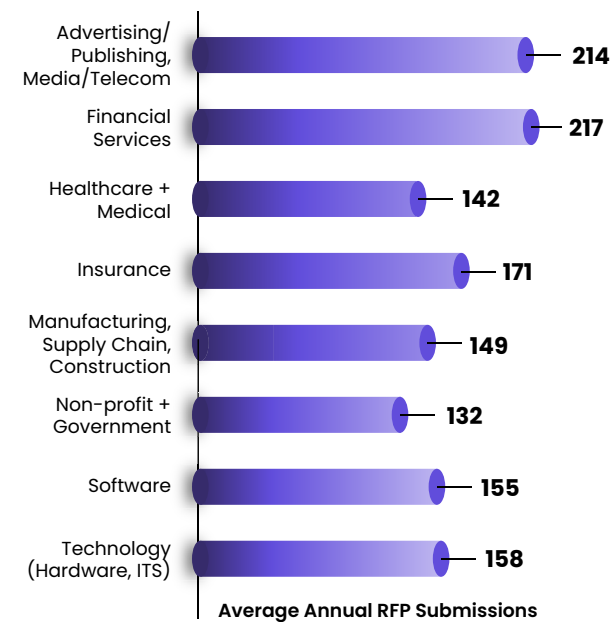
The average number of RFP submitted by APMP members vs. non-members



Industry Insight: Financial Services Respond To The Most RFX

Annual submissions do vary widely by industry. Financial Services respond to the highest volume (217) out of all groups, while Non-profit and Government respond to the least (132).

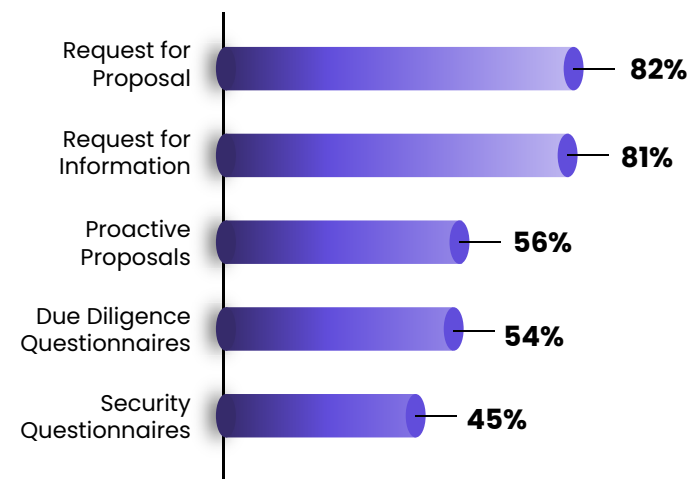
Average number of RFX submitted annually, by industry



It's important to note, especially in the Financial Services industry, there's a wide variety of complex documents they respond to. While RFPs take the top spot, RFIs closely follow, as well as proactive proposals.

Types of documents that people in Financial Services respond to

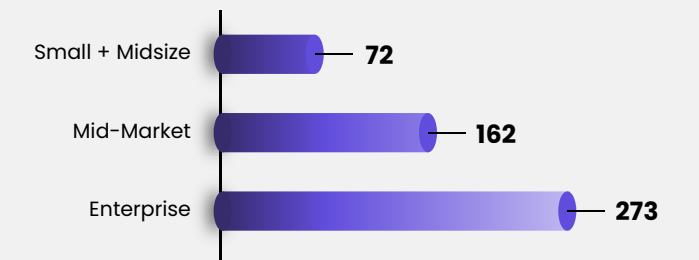
Respondents could choose multiple answers.



Enterprise Companies Respond To 3.8x More RFPs

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Enterprise companies submit nearly 4x the number of RFPs (and other complex documents) as Small & Midsize organizations. This is likely because larger companies are more likely to have RFPs as part of their sales cycle, since Enterprise companies tend to sell to big, complex organizations that require more standardized, formal processes.

Average number of RFX submitted annually, by company size

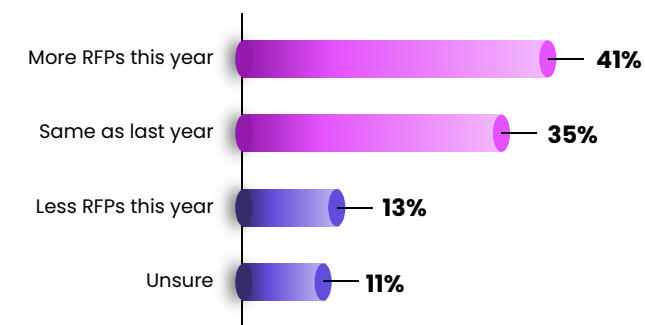


Economic Impact On RFPs: 76% of Teams See No Dip in Volume

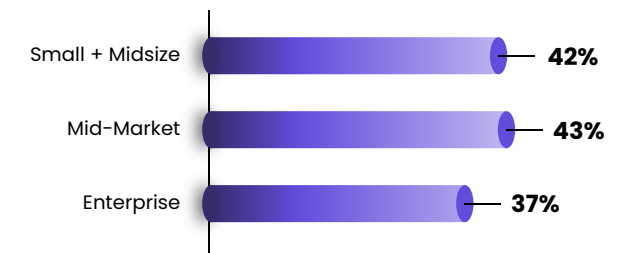
Despite the economic peaks and valleys of the past year, the majority of teams (76%) have submitted the same or more RFPs as they did the year before.

Out of the teams that submitted more, Enterprise companies were the least likely to submit more RFPs this year, perhaps because their existing submission rates are already so high. Mid-Market and Small & Midsize firms were almost equally as likely to respond to more RFPs this year.

2022 vs 2021 Submission Rate

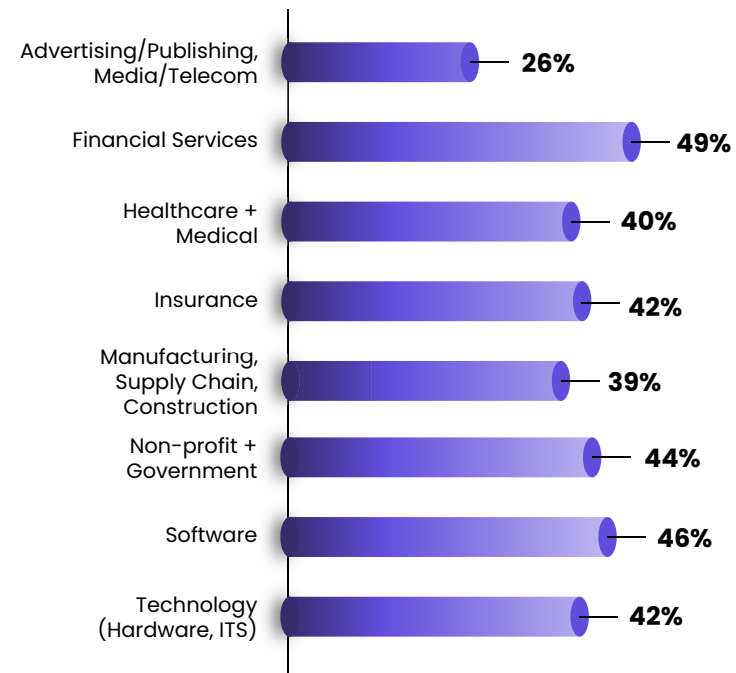


Teams Who Responded To More RFPs This Year, By Company Size



When looking at industries, Financial Services was the most likely to say they responded to more RFPs this year, followed by Software in second place. Advertising was the least likely to say they had responded to more RFPs this year—perhaps because advertising budgets tend to be one of the first things cut in a downturn.

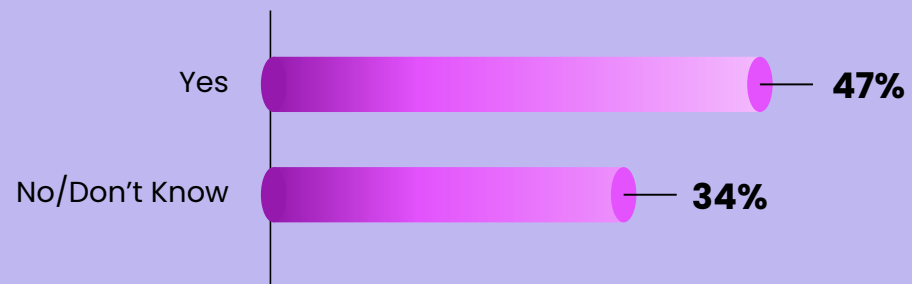
Teams Who Responded To More RFPs This Year, By Industry



Key Insight: RFP Software Users Responded to More Bids This Year

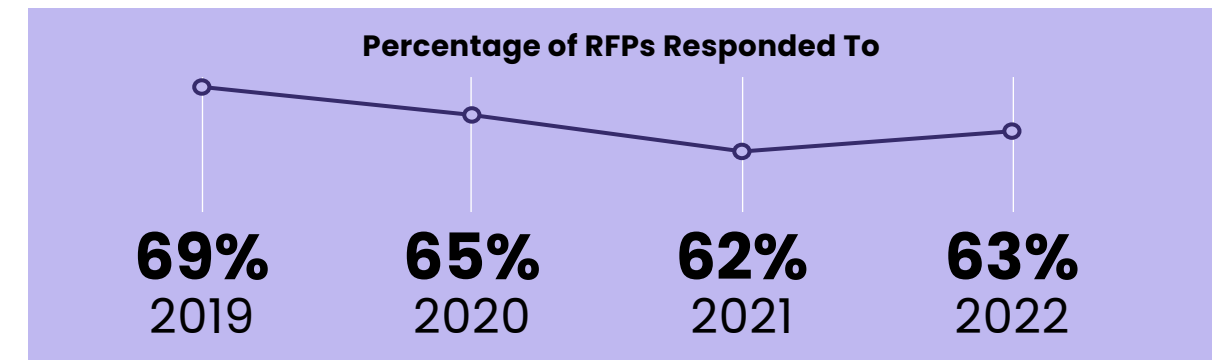
Forty-seven percent of software users report submitting an increased number of RFPs this year, compared to just 34% of non-software users. This likely reflects the efficiency benefits that RFP software provides, affording time for more submissions.

Teams Who Responded To More RFPs This Year, By RFP Software Use



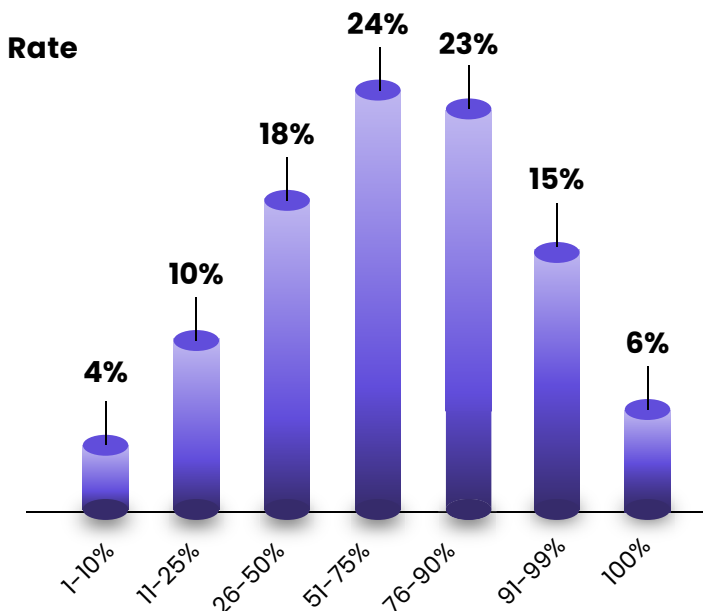
Percentage of RFPs Responded to Holds Steady at 63%

Just because you're invited to participate in an RFP does not mean you should. It could be a blind bid, poor customer fit, or your team could simply be pressed for time. That's why this benchmark focuses on participation rate—meaning, how many bids you actually participate in, out of those you're invited to.



In 2022, teams responded to 63% of the RFPs they received—on par with last year's participation rate of 62%. But it's also the first time that participation rate has remained flat, after years of teams trending downward, which may indicate teams have hit a plateau for selectivity.

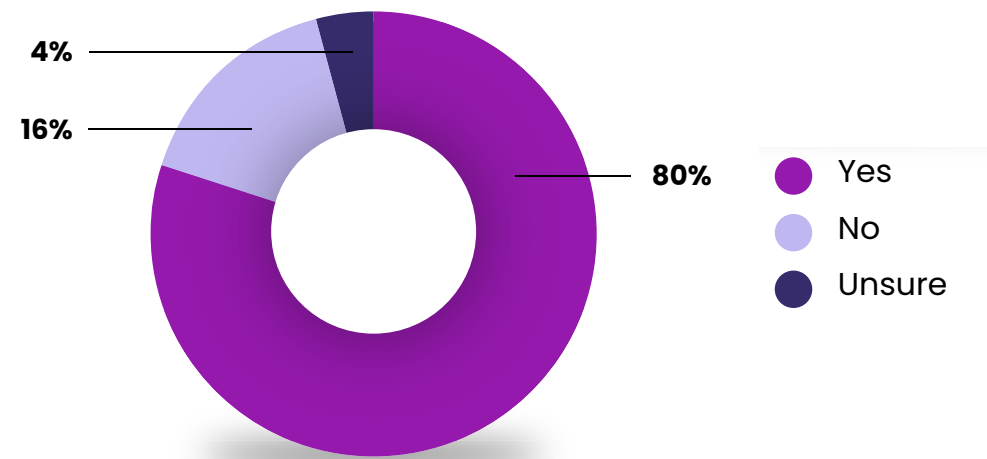
RFP Participation Rate



Rise of Go/No-Go Continues, Adopted by 80% on Average

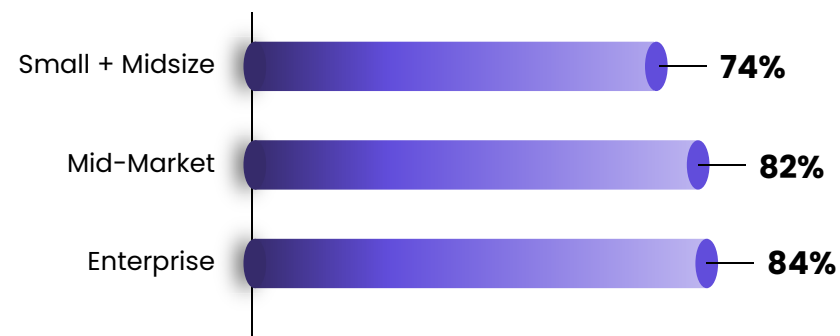
The past few years have seen qualification trends continue for RFPs. Most responders use a go/no-go process to decide which bids to pursue—now 80%, up from 76% last year, and 72% the year before.

Go/No-Go Process Adoption



Despite most respondents using a go/no-go process—more than a quarter (28%) of respondents said “strategically selecting which RFPs to focus on and ignore” was a challenge, marking a 5% increase over last year. Less than half of responders (45%) report being satisfied with how their go/no-go process is being followed by their team.

Go/No-Go Process Adoption, By Company Size



Key Insight: Enterprises Least Satisfied With Go/No-Go Adoption

At 84% adoption, Enterprise companies are the most likely to have implemented a go/no-go process, but also the least likely to be satisfied with it. Enterprise firms rate their team’s adherence to a go/no-go at 3.1 out of 5 (essentially, neutral). Larger team sizes may have something to do with this lack of satisfaction—the more people involved, the more difficult it is to get everyone on the same page.

Chapter Summary: Submission Growth Increases, Alongside Qualification Trends

Overall, companies have submitted more RFPs this year. Plus, more have seen growth versus decline in terms of submission volume. Despite economic factors, teams still seem heavily focused on qualifying RFP opportunities before participating, as go/no-go trends are also on the rise.

That said, even though the vast majority of companies now use some kind of go/no-go process, the majority are feeling neutral about how well it is followed. Clearly, it’s not just enough to implement a go/no-go process—you have to get your team to use it, too.

→ **Up next: In spite of economic turbulence, win rates have remained constant—and RFP revenue has increased.**

CHAPTER 2

Stabilization Of Revenue & Win Rates

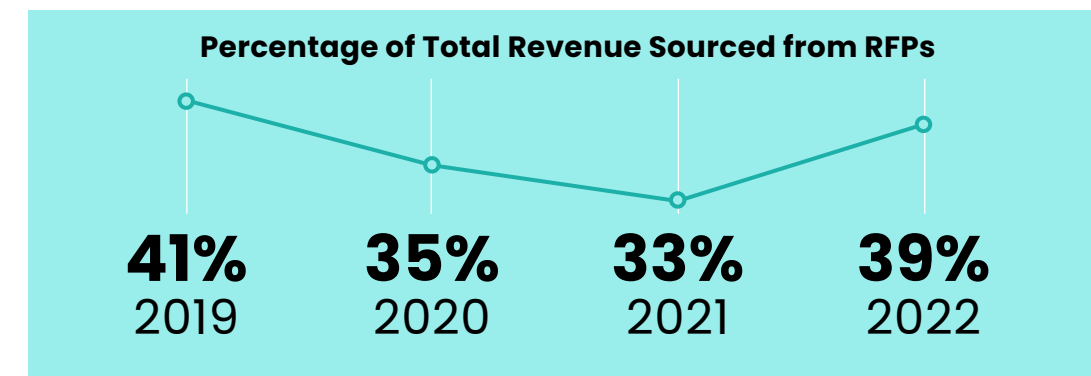
Skip to benchmarks and trends for:

- Revenue Influence pg. 25
- Win Rates pg. 29
- Advancement Rates pg. 30
- Reasons for Loss pg. 32

CHAPTER 2

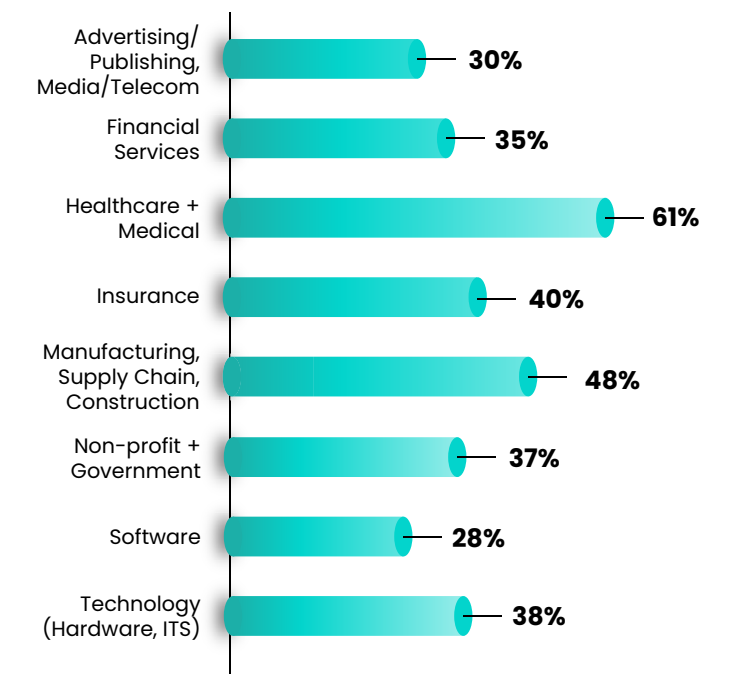
RFX Consistently Influence More Than a Third of Company Revenue

This year, companies sourced more than a third (39%) of their revenue from RFPs—a slight rise from last year's dip. Over the past four years, we've seen a consistent trend despite economic ups and downs: RFX influence 30-40% of company revenue.



Despite this consistent average, there's a great deal of variation across industries. For example, Healthcare companies generate a significantly higher portion of revenue from RFPs than the average—likely due to the scale and complexity of projects in this highly regulated space.

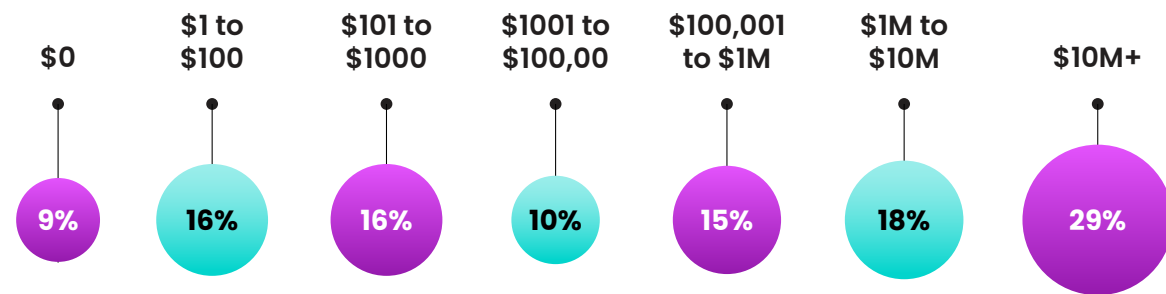
Revenue Sourced By Industry



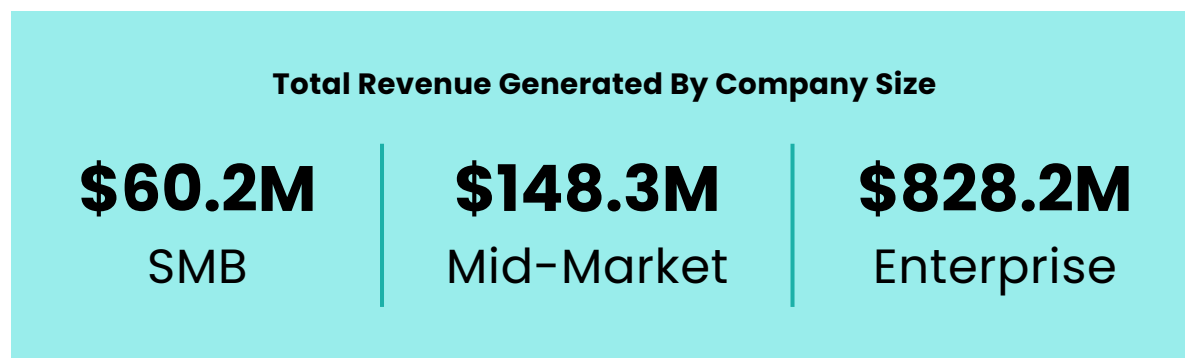
RFX Bring in Average of \$325 Million Annually

In the last year, RFPs influenced an average of \$325.4 million dollars of company revenue.

Dollar Value Of Revenue Influence By RFX In The Past Year

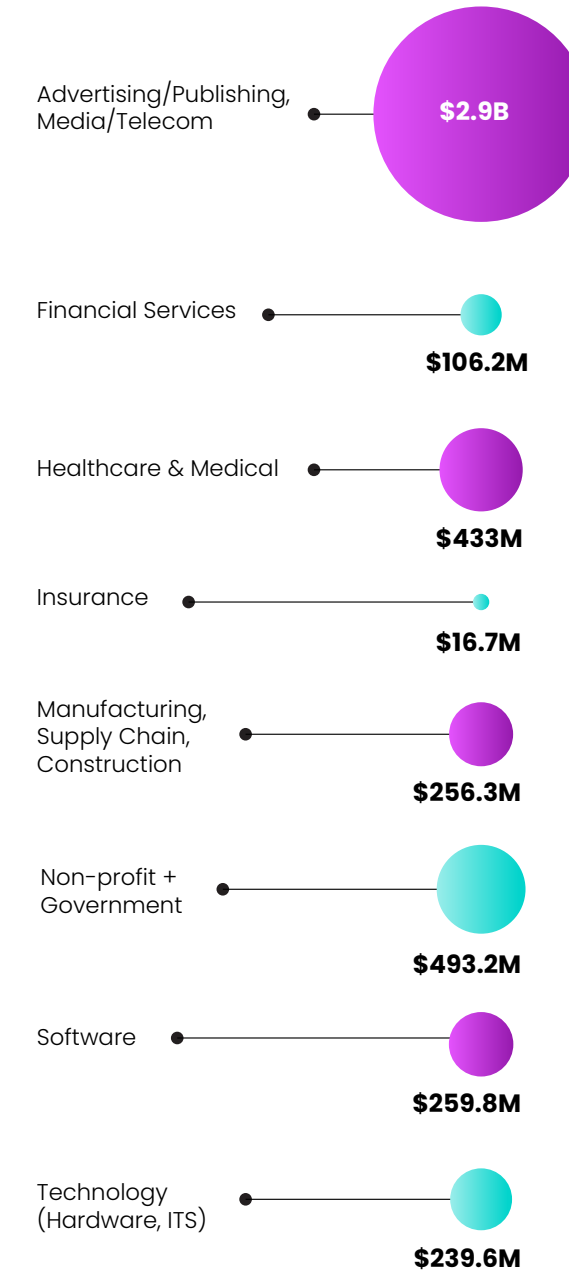


Unsurprisingly, the average dollar value of company revenue varies widely by company size. Enterprise organizations were significantly above average in terms of the dollar value they generated from RFPs—generating \$828.2M, or \$532.8 above the average.

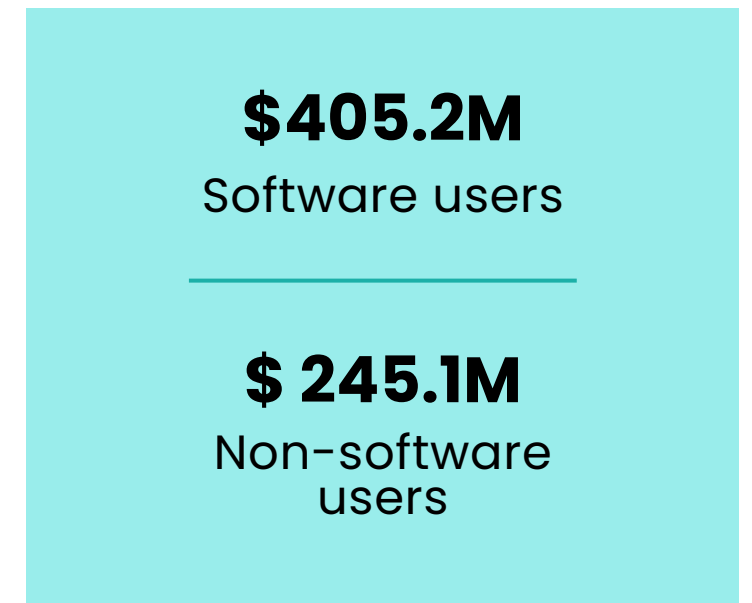


Even though Healthcare may generate a greater proportion of their revenue from RFPs—Advertising companies come out on top in terms of dollars. This is especially impressive, given that they respond to the fewest RFPs of any industry (indicative of higher average deal sizes).

Dollar Value Of Revenue Generated By Industry



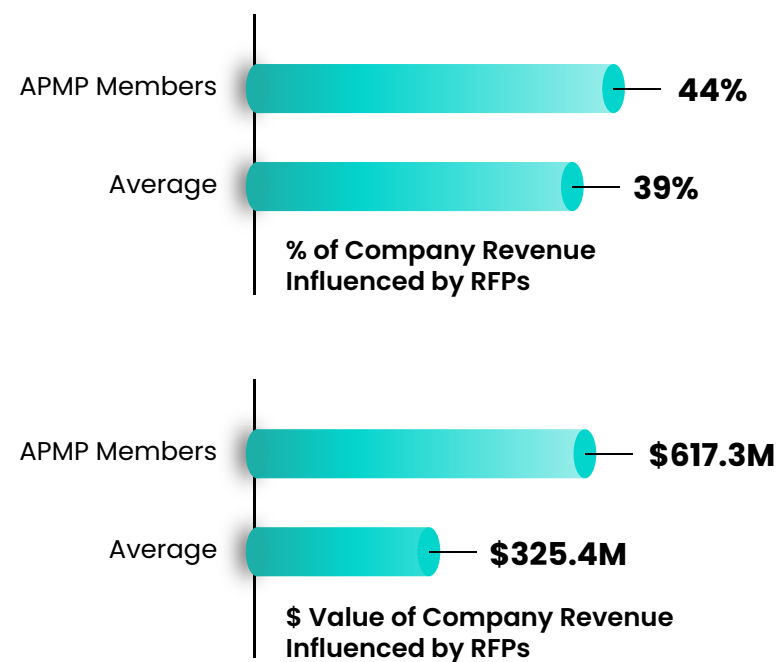
APMP members and RFP software users also tend to bring in a greater dollar value from RFPs than their peers. The correlation here: investing in your team (either through learning opportunities or tools) pays off—literally.



Key Insight: APMP Membership Correlates With A Higher Proportion Of Revenue—And A Greater Dollar Value—Influenced By RFPs

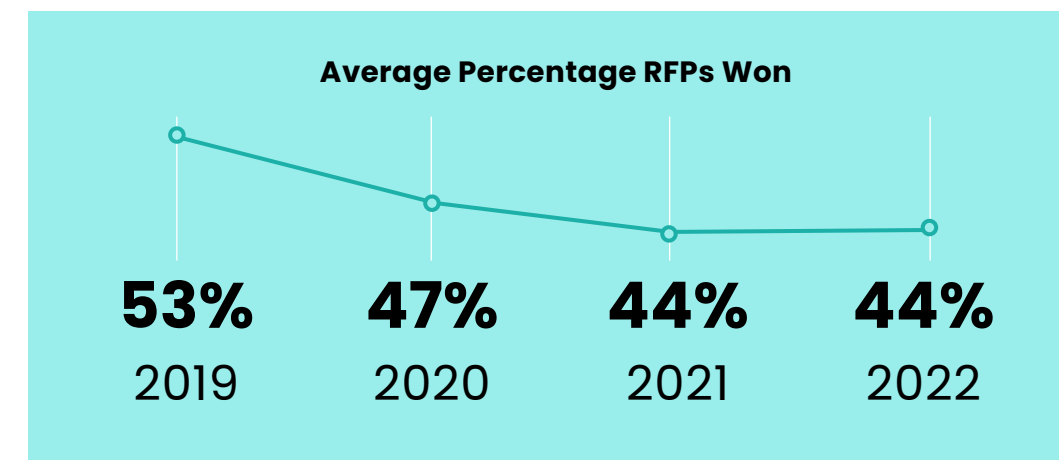
APMP members influence a higher proportion of revenue from RFPs than their peers: 44% as compared to the average of 39%. They also influence a higher dollar value of revenue through their RFPs, at \$617M. This isn't to say that membership alone confers benefits. APMP members are also more likely to be in a dedicated proposal role, so it's probable they have more experience and resources to support high quality bids. It's also possible that top performers are more likely to be masters of their craft, and seek to participate in organizations like APMP.

Revenue Sourced By APMP Members



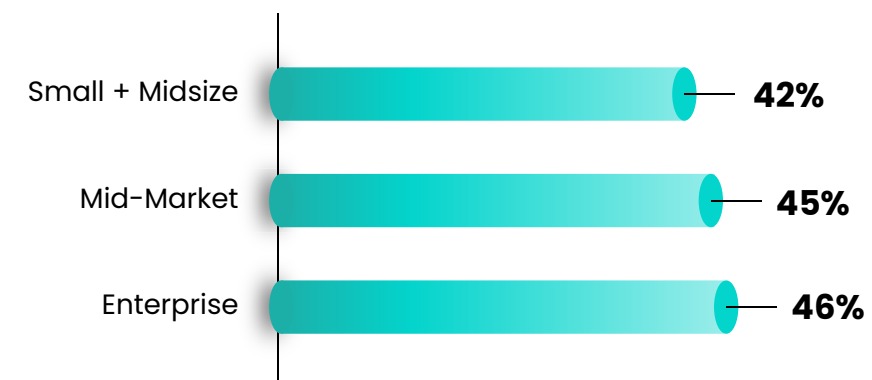
Win Rates Stabilize At 44%

This year, win rates stabilized at 44%—the first time in four years that they've remained the same.



Unsurprisingly, win rates are highest among Enterprise and Mid-Market companies, but small businesses are closing the gap. Just like last year, Mid-Market companies are only 1% behind Enterprise companies. Small businesses are gaining ground—jumping from a win rate of 38% last year to 42% this year.

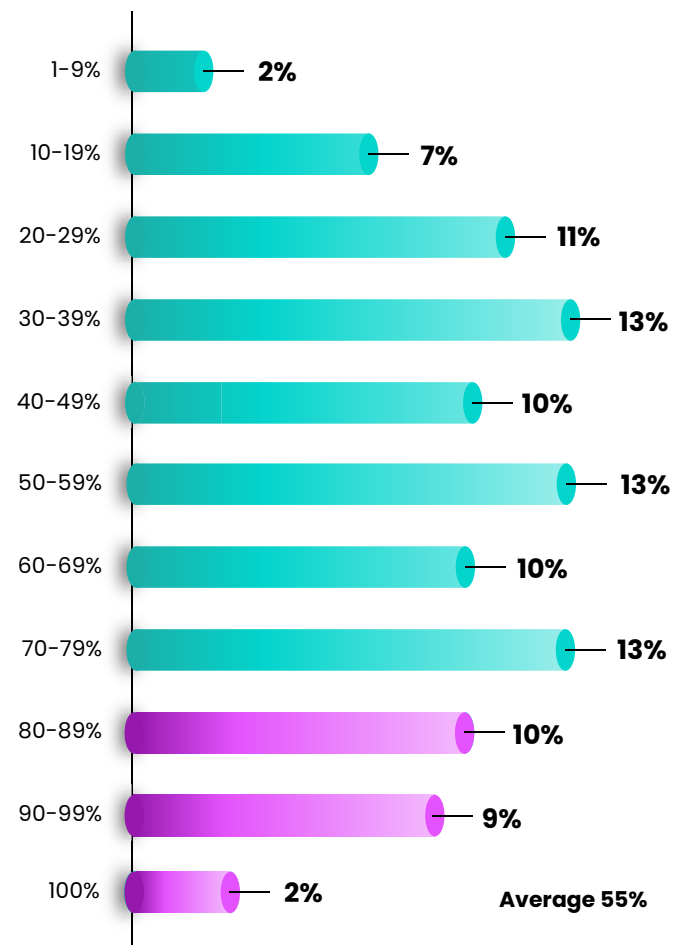
Win rates by company size



Advancement Rates Rise to 55%

Advancement rates—the percentage of RFPs that advance to the next round—are only marginally better than win rates on average. This year, they held relatively steady at 55%, compared to 53% last year. Overall, small businesses have made great strides in advancing and winning more RFPs.

Average Advancement Rate

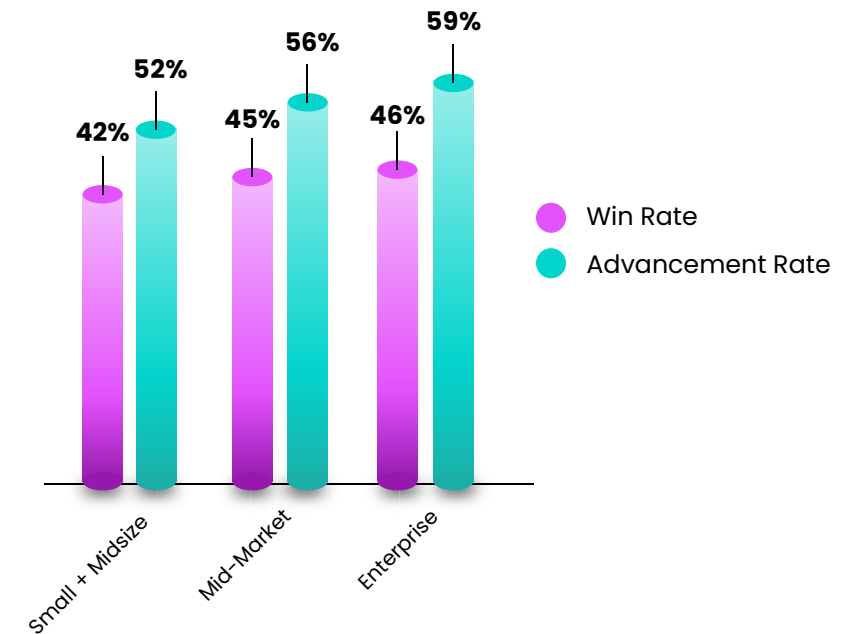


Last year, SMBs fell 7-9% behind other companies in terms of their advancement rate, and this year that gap narrowed slightly to just 4-7%. Similarly, SMBs have also had a modest improvement in their win rate—from 38% last year to 42% this year.

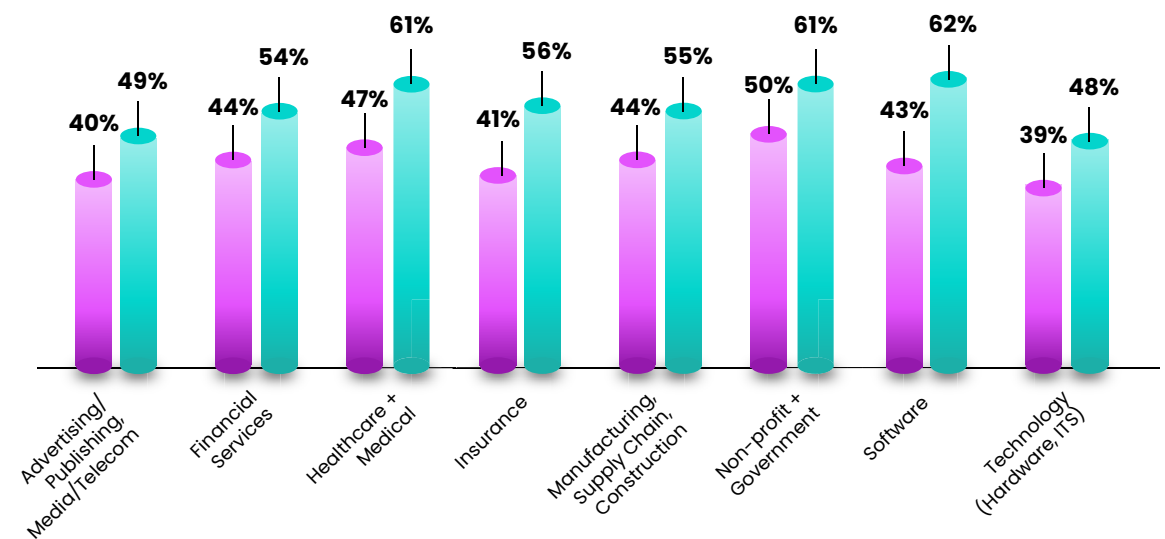
All sizes of companies experience a gap of around 10 percentage points between RFPs they advance on and ones they win—meaning teams tend to win about 90% of the RFPs they advance on.

↑ 11% APMP members advance more than non-APMP members.

Win & Advancement Rates By Company Size



Win & Advancement Rates By Industry



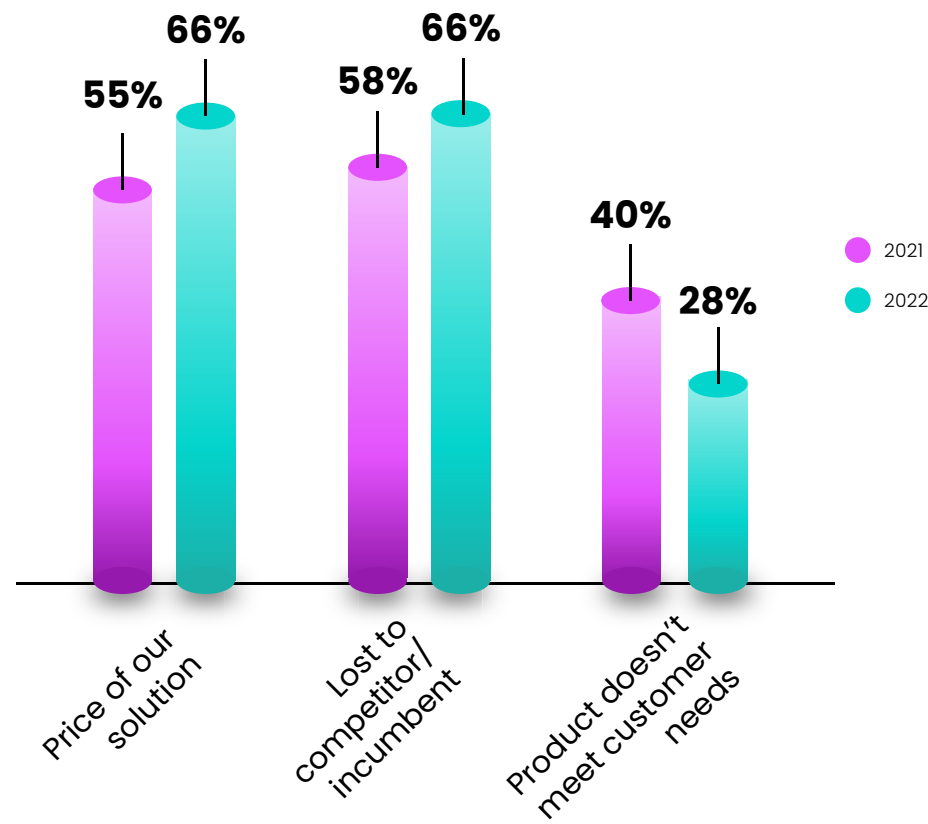
Advertising, Media, Telecom is tied with Technology (Hardware/ITS) for the most consistent industry: If these teams advance, they're more likely than any other company to win the deal. On the flipside, the Software industry has the hardest time closing the deal. They have a 19-point delta between advancement and win rates, indicating that they may be participating in more competitive deals.

Price Rises to #1 Reason for Loss

Overall price, closely followed by “losing to the incumbent” was selected as the top reason for losing bids this year. While it’s not surprising that price remains in the top few reasons, it’s important to consider that these reasons are selected by proposal and sales teams directly—not their customers—so there may be more nuance to why the bid did not proceed.

Top Reasons For Losing Bids, 2021 vs. 2022

Respondents could choose multiple answers.

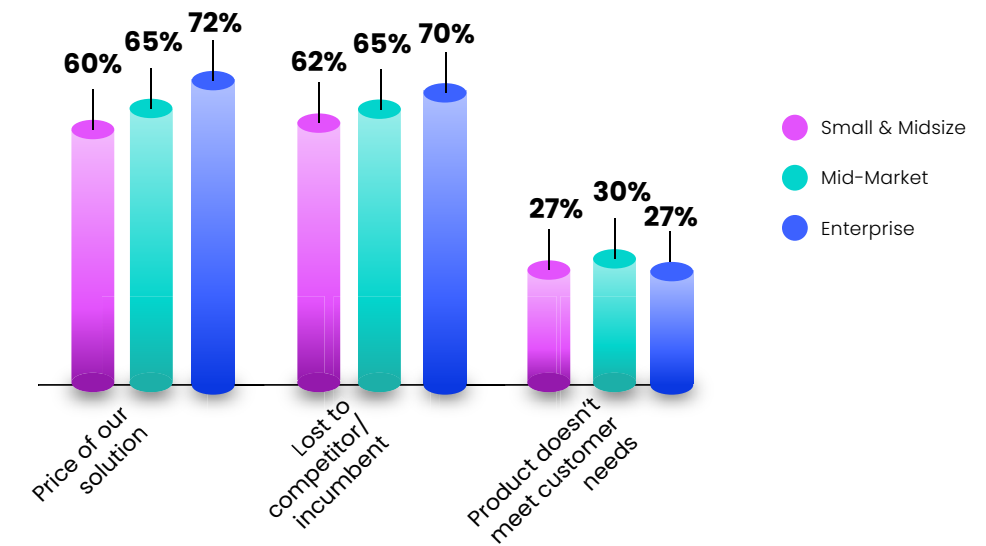


That said, it’s interesting to see price becoming a bigger issue since last year. It is very possible that teams are feeling a bit more of a crunch on price due to their customers scaling back budgets.

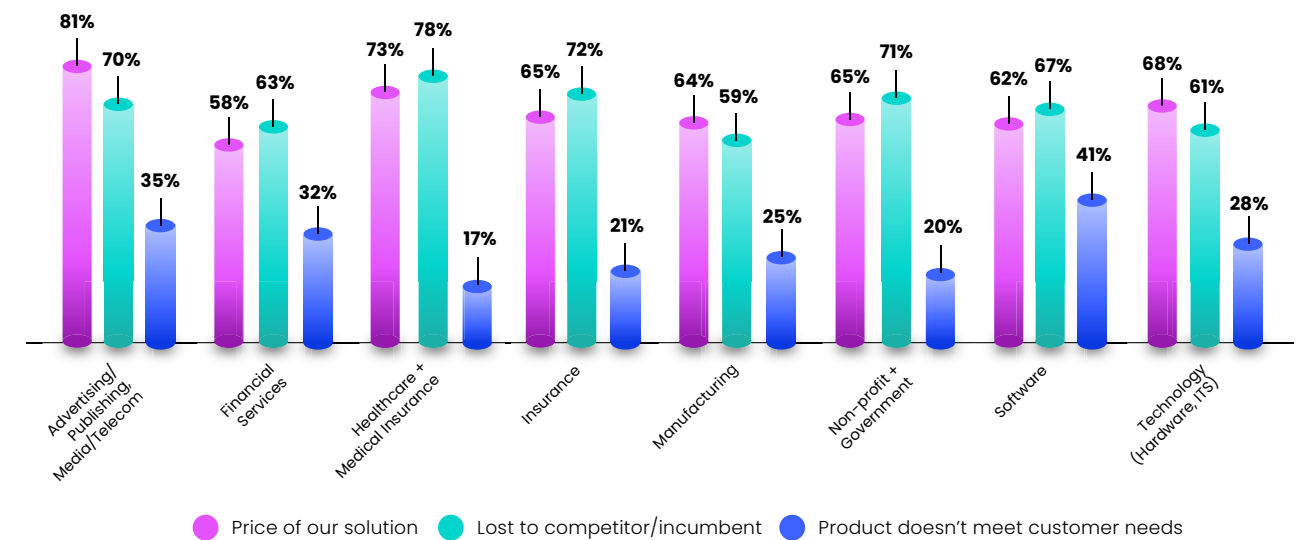
Price is becoming particularly contentious for Enterprise companies (72%), those in the Advertising Industry (81%), and Non-profit/Government organizations (73%). Interestingly, these groups are among those who earn the largest proportion of their revenue from RFPs, so they might be feeling the pain of battling on price most acutely.

Top Reasons For Losing Bids, By Company Size

Respondents could choose multiple answers.



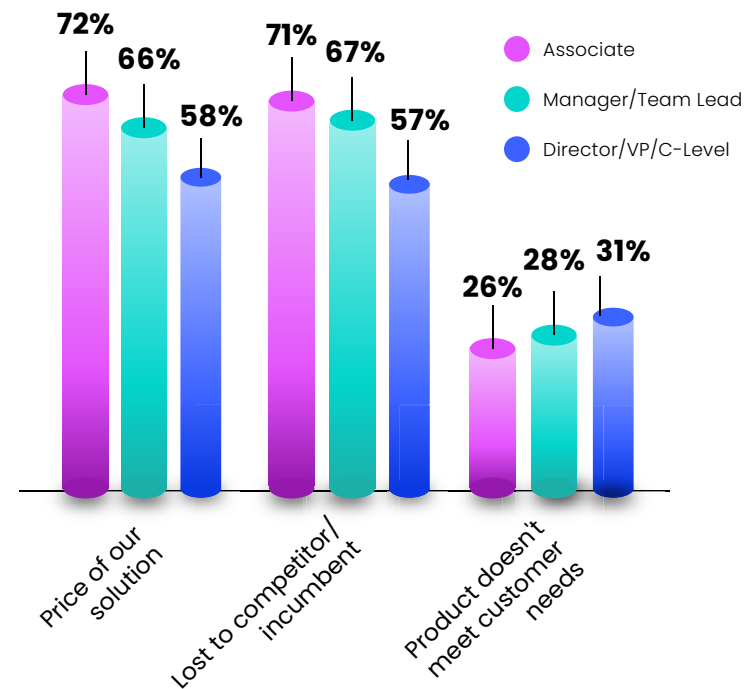
Top Reasons For Losing Bids, By Industry



Associates And Executives Still Disagree on Why They Lose (But The Gap is Narrowing)

If we look at responses by role, there is some disagreement between executives and associates. Executives are more likely than others to say the issue is with the product (31%), though all roles listed price as their top reason this year.

Why Team Members Believe They Lose



This is consistent with previous years' data: Less senior individuals are more likely to blame price as their reason for losing.

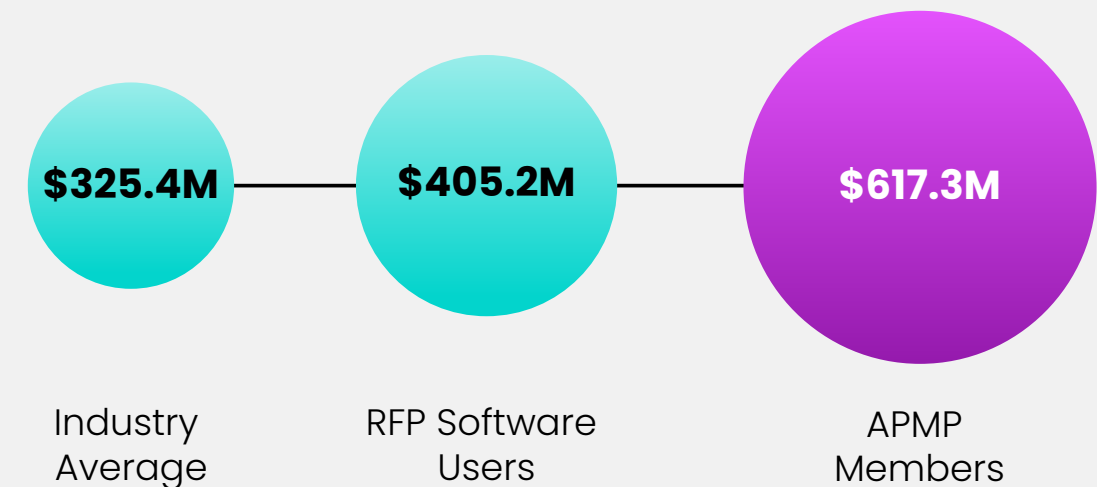
While price can often be treated as a catchall for "We're not actually sure," in the context of budgets tightening this past year, it's unsurprising that RFP teams are getting more pushback on price. And executives, for once, seem to agree.

Chapter Summary: RFPs Remain A Significant Driver Of Revenue, Despite Economic Hurdles

Driving more than a third of a company's annual revenue (39%), it's no question that RFPs remain a key resource for companies to rely on, even in times of economic uncertainty. Despite lacking the resources of larger organizations, small businesses have made important gains to their RFP advancement and win rates. While all teams are experiencing more pushback than normal on price—there is a silver lining. Investing in professional development appears to pay off (literally) as APMP members earn almost double the average \$ in revenue through RFPs.

Above Average RFP Revenue Influence

Group Avg Value of RFP Revenue Influence



→ **Up next: Companies are spending more time writing. But are they seeing the benefits?**

CHAPTER 3

The Elusive Balance Of Writing Quality & Speed

Skip to benchmarks and trends for:

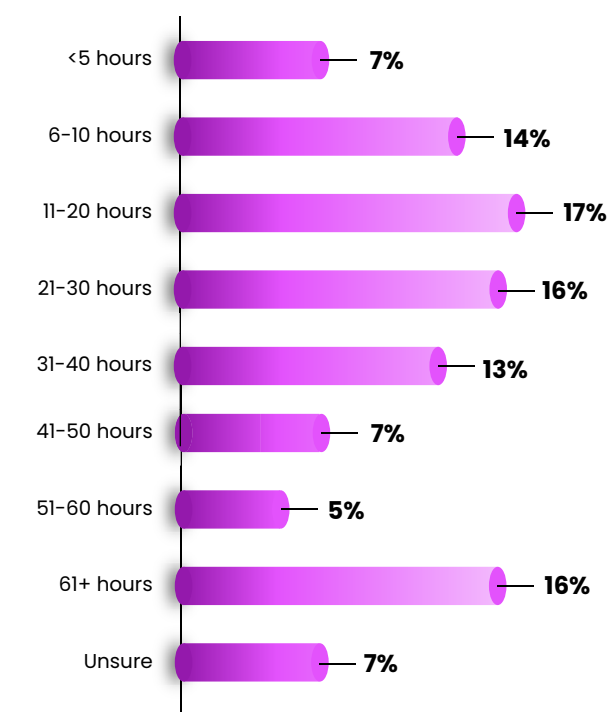
- Writing Time pg. 37
- Turnaround Rates pg. 40
- Number of RFP Questions pg. 42

CHAPTER 3

Average Writing Time Rises to 32+ Hours Per Bid

This year saw a leap in the number of average hours that teams spend writing. At first blush, our new writing average—32 hours—seems like a huge jump over last year's 24 hours.

Average Response Writing Time



But the average conceals an interesting variance. The difference? That writing time varies greatly between APMP members and non-members:

- APMP members spend an average of 39 hours per response
- Non-APMP members spend an average of 25 hours per response

If we exclude APMP members from the picture, the average of 25 hours still reflects the small, but consistent rise we've seen in writing time over the last few years.

Key Insight: The Average Team Spends 5,184 Hours Writing RFPs Annually

If a bid requires 32 hours of time and there's 162 RFPs to respond to per year, that means the average team spends 5,184 hours writing responses to RFPs. Considering there's only 2,080 working hours (260 working days, with 8 hours each) in a year—you'd need a team (not single person) to meet these average numbers—or you're at serious risk for burnout.

More Time Writing Correlates With Higher Win Rates—But There Can Be Diminishing Returns

In past years, more time spent writing correlated with higher win rates, and that held true this year—to a point. Top performers (which we define as any team with a win rate of 50%+) spent an average of 33 hours per RFP. Looking at the data holistically, top performers don't diverge from the average in terms of hours spent until the 41+ hour mark, but the differences appear to be minor. Although more writing does seem to correlate with higher win rates, it should be carefully considered against the number of hours that a team is putting into the bid (and whether that contract will be worth the return on investment).

Hours spent writing a single bid	% of Average Teams	% of Top Performers
Less than 5 hours	7%	7%
6-10 hours	14%	13%
11-20 hours	17%	16%
21-30 hours	16%	14%
31-40 hours	13%	12%
41-50 hours	7%	8%
51-60 hours	5%	5%
61-70 hours	2%	3%
70+ hours	14%	16%
Unsure	7%	5%

Key Insight: Those Using Dedicated RFP Software Write Faster

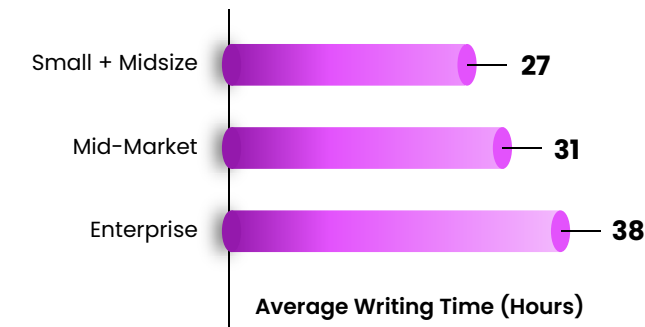
Interestingly, those using dedicated RFP software spend less time writing: an average of 28 hours per RFP vs. 36 hours for non-users. They also claim to have significantly faster turnaround time and were able to respond to more RFPs in the past year (an increase of 27% on average). This increase in response volume is likely due to the time savings 60% of users say is the main benefit of using the software. The efficiency gains likely free them up to spend more time in thoughtfully approaching their responses.

Average Writing Time Grows With Company Size

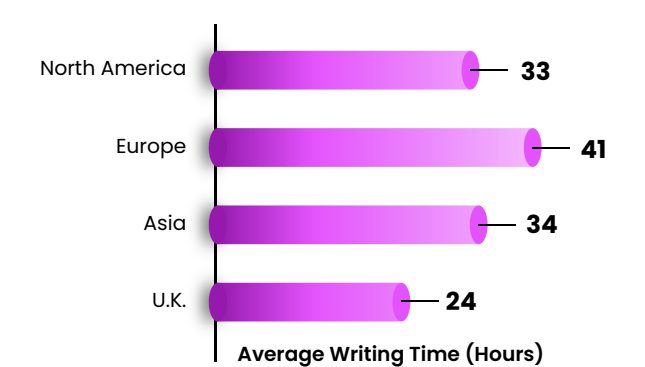
Unsurprisingly, Enterprise continues to spend more time writing than small businesses. A general rule of thumb: the larger the company, the more time spent writing per RFP.

Larger companies also tend to have the highest win rates: Enterprise and Mid-Market sized companies have win rates of 46% and 45%, respectively, while Small & Midsize win 42% of the time. This supports the correlation between writing time and winning. That said, there are many factors at play, including the fact that Enterprises are also more likely to have more people involved in each RFP (11 people, versus 10 for Mid-Market and eight for Small & Midsize).

Writing Time By Company Size (Hours)



Writing Time By Region (Hours)



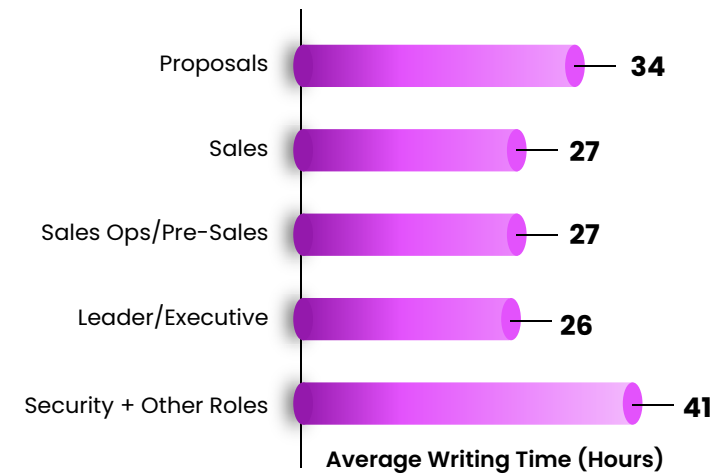
Key Insight: Brits Spend The Least Time Writing Of Any Geography

Out of all geographies, British respondents spend the least amount of hours writing: just 24 hours per RFP. They also appear to be the speediest to submit as 74% respond in less than 10 business days (from receiving the request to submission). Interestingly, they're also more likely to have bigger response teams (9 people on average), have lower win rates, and say one of their biggest challenges is missing deadlines (*clearly speed doesn't solve everything*).

Proposal Teams Spend 7 Hours More Writing Than Sales Groups

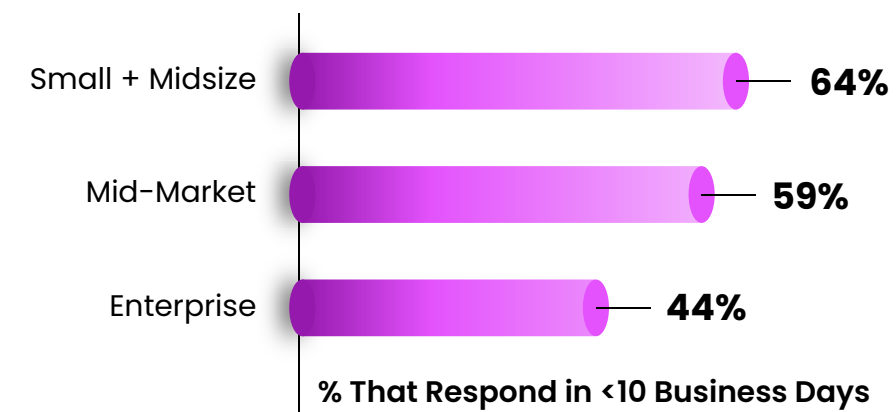
Proposal teams spend an average of 34 hours writing each bid, in comparison to their sales counterparts who spend an average of 27 hours. Interestingly, of all groups, those that selected 'other' as their role reported spending the most amount of time writing bids (41 hours total, 9 more than the average of 32). It is likely this group doesn't have as much experience writing bids, which leads them to spend more time on the process, without the efficiencies that their peers in proposals or sales have learned.

Writing Time By Role (Hours)



Looking granularly, we can see some interesting trends. Small and Mid-Market companies are more likely to submit more quickly than their Enterprise peers, but are only a few points behind in terms of win rates. Larger organizations tend to move slower, likely because they involve more people in the process.

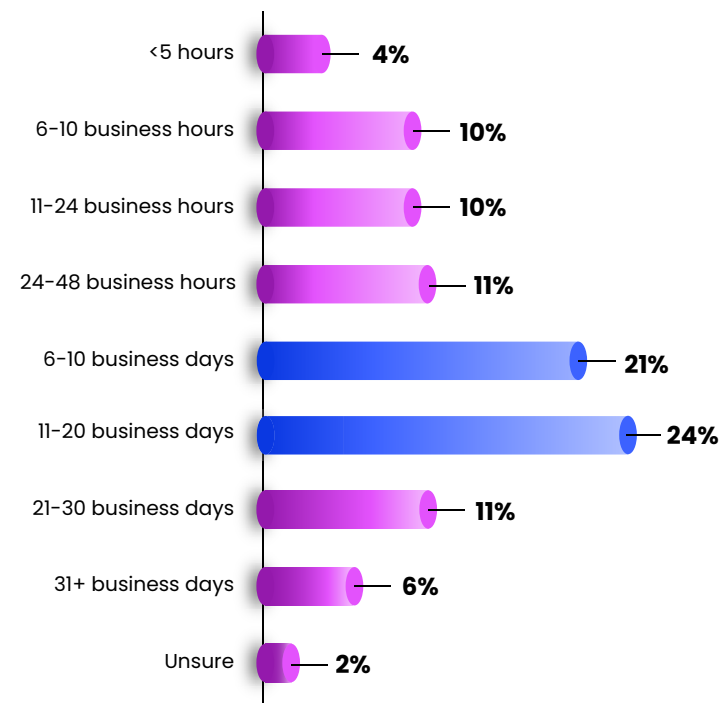
Percentage Of Companies That Respond In Ten Days or Less



RFP Turnaround Time Increases, In Line With Overall Trend

The majority of respondents are now taking between 6-20 days to respond to an RFP (up from last year's <2 business days). This is in line with the greater amount of time spent on RFPs overall.

RFP Response Turnaround Time



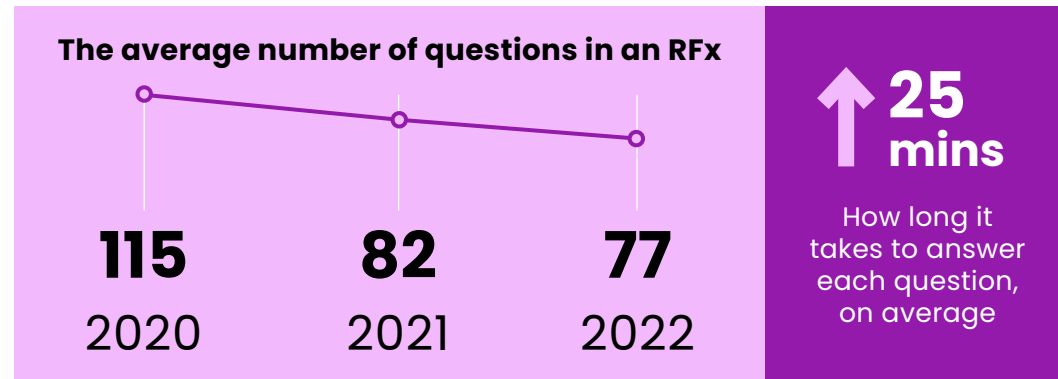
Key Insight: Prioritizing Speed Can Backfire

Three-quarters of sales respondents (74%) submit in 10 business days or less, but have the lowest win rate of any role.

Like we've already discussed, how you spend the time is what matters most. Efficiency is only valuable if you're strategically reducing low-value tasks so you can exert more energy on high-value ones. In this case, salespeople are likely rushing, leading to lower quality responses. So don't let your need for speed cause you to compromise on quality of your responses, or skip opportunities for customized proposals.

Average Number Of Questions Continues To Drop

The average number of questions has been trending downwards since 2020. Since the average time per RFP response has increased, this shows that companies are actually spending more time on each RFP question.



Chapter Summary: Companies Are Spending More Time Writing, But It Doesn't Always Translate To More Wins

This year saw a continuation of the steady upwards trend of increased writing time. Data indicates that many top performing groups may be spending more time than needed on response writing, but there's also a group of people responding to RFPs (those who selected 'Other' roles) that are spending more time writing, with diminishing returns. The takeaway? That it's not about spending more time overall, it's about spending quality time. Ultimately, you need to have the right people, equipped with the right support, tools, and resources working on your bids.

→ **Up next:** More teams are being led by a dedicated proposal manager. But that doesn't seem to make wrangling SMEs any easier.

CHAPTER 4

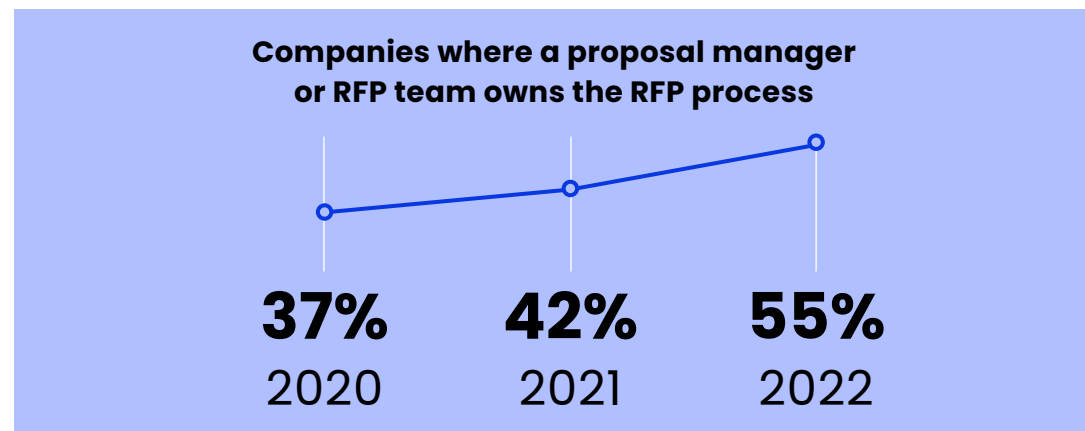
RFP Team Configuration & Collaboration Challenges

Skip to benchmarks and trends for:

- Process Ownership pg. 44
- Team Size pg. 46
- Number of Contributors pg. 48
- Top Collaboration Challenges pg. 50

55% of Companies Have a Dedicated RFP Person or Team

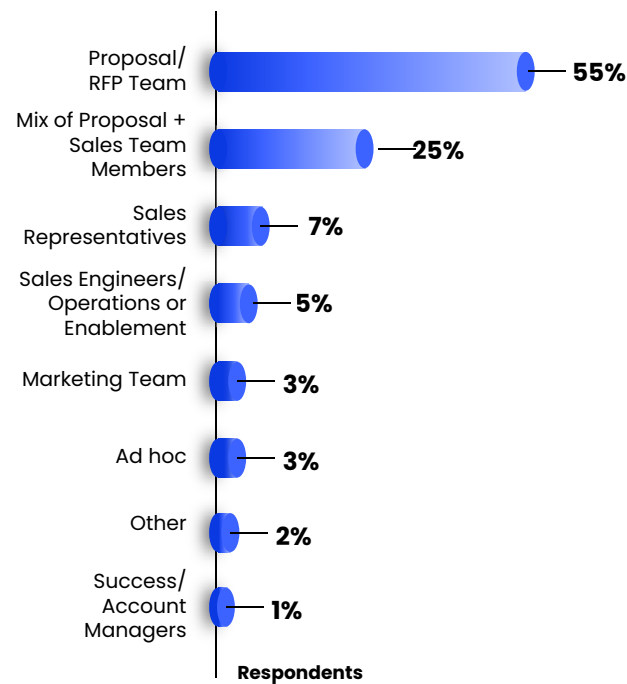
This year, more than half of respondents (55%) report having a dedicated proposal manager or RFP team as the primary owner of their RFP process, continuing an upward trend we've been observing for the past few years.



This increase indicates a formalization of ownership for the proposal process. Notably, APMP members have a greater baseline of formalization (62% have a dedicated proposal manager or team at the helm). But still, this increase is seen among non-members too (48% report that a dedicated RFP manager or team runs their process). People, broadly, are coming to appreciate the value of specialization.

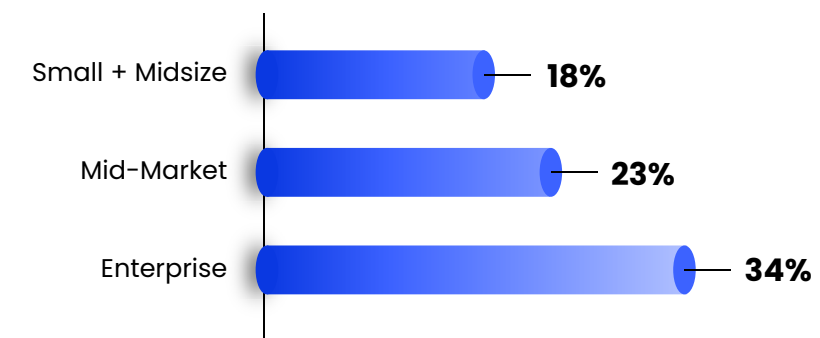
13% increase in RFP teams running the proposal process.

Ownership of the RFP Process



After a dedicated team, the second most common configuration is a mix of proposal and sales team members. Enterprise companies are most likely of any company size to use this setup—likely because folks on Enterprise teams require specialization in both proposal and sales departments, especially when dealing with RFPs of extremely large value.

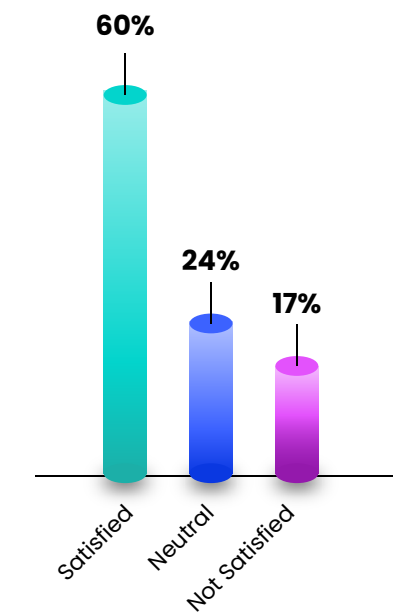
Companies Where A Mix Of Proposal Team And Sales Team Members Take Ownership Of The Process



Satisfaction With The RFP Process On the Rise

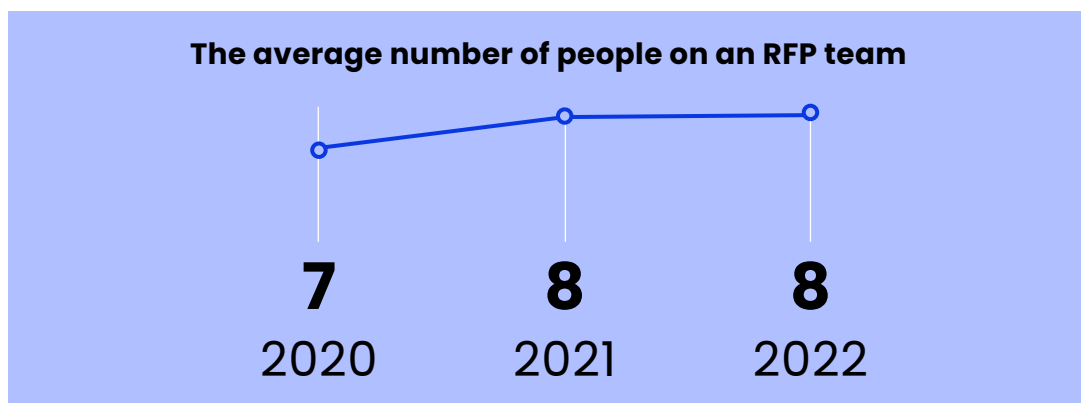
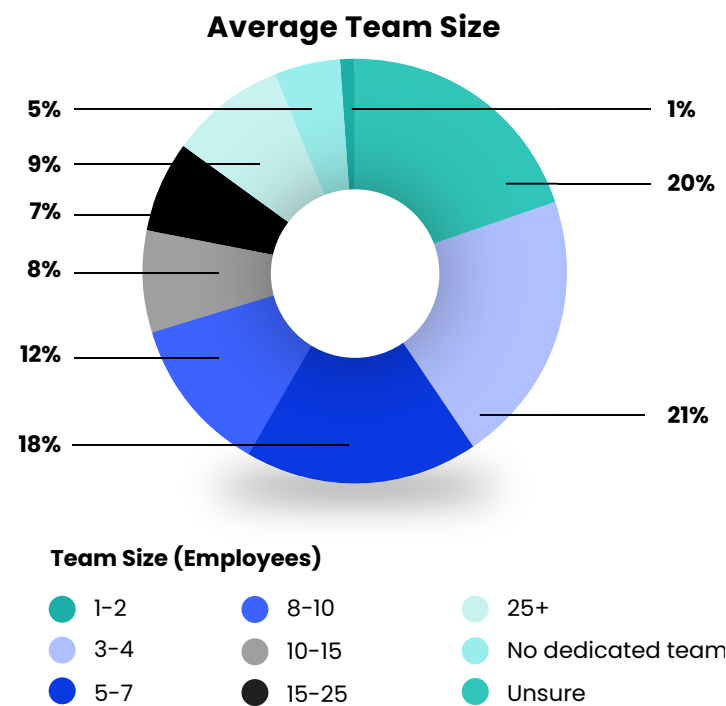
Three in five respondents (60%) are overall satisfied with their RFP process, which is higher than last year. This could indicate a possible correlation between a dedicated RFP person or team leading the process and satisfaction with the process overall. Having a dedicated RFP person at the helm means there's someone to plan ahead (and not ask their SMEs to contribute at the last second), hold others accountable, and remember the little details.

Overall Satisfaction



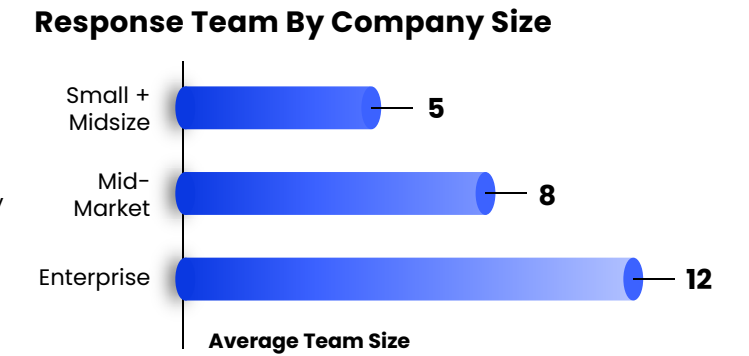
RFP Team Size Holds Steady At 8 People

Similar to last year, respondents report an average of 8 people on their dedicated RFP response teams. Digging into that average, however, we can see that many teams are trending towards the smaller side: 59% of teams are now made up of 7 people or less—compared to 49% last year.

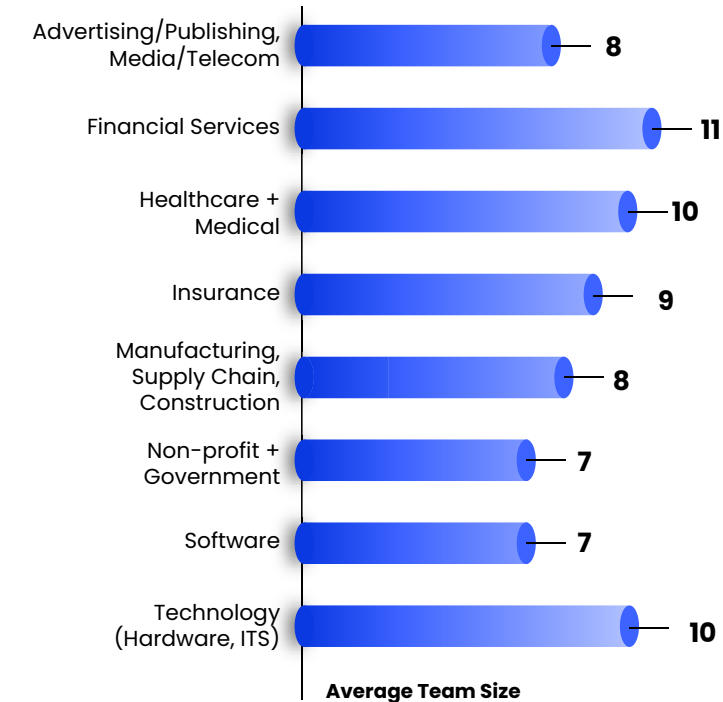


RFP Teams Grow With Company Size

Unsurprisingly, SMB companies tend to have the smallest dedicated RFP teams, as well as the lowest win rates. Although team size may impact a company's chance of winning overall, it's not the only contributing cause. Smaller companies tend to lack the name recognition of larger brands—and sometimes, in a competitive landscape, size does matter.



Response Team By Industry

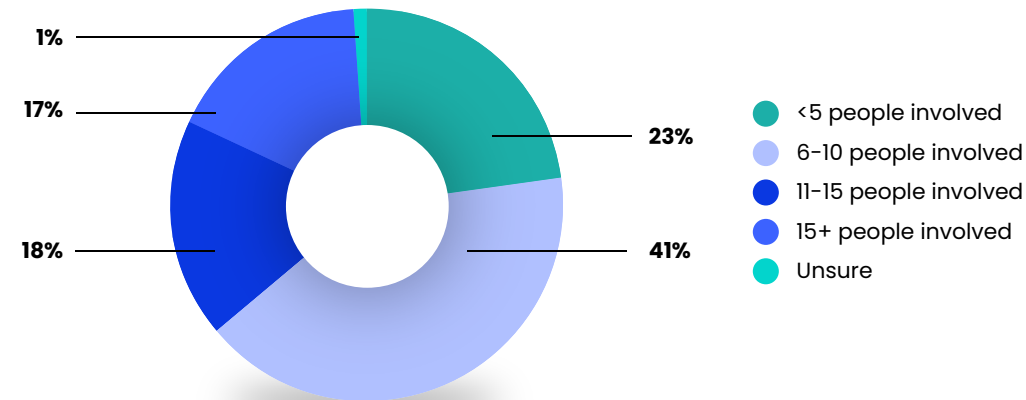


When it comes to team size by industry, Financial Services has the largest number of people on a dedicated RFP team at 11 members, an increase from last year's 9. This may be related to the tight regulations this industry operates within—it's possible they simply need more staff to ensure accuracy amid a rapidly changing economic climate. Software, ever lean and efficient, remains one of the smallest team sizes, tied with Non-profit and Government.

Average Number of Contributors Holds Strong at 9 People

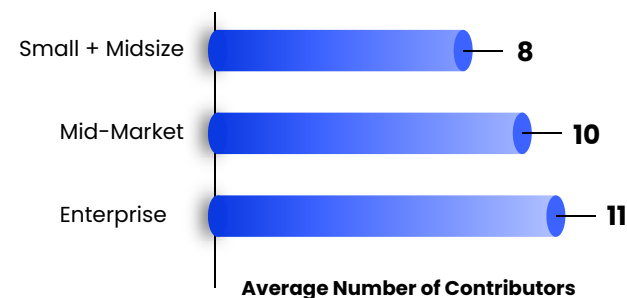
This year, respondents reported that 9 people contribute to an RFP response on average, in line with our 2021 and 2020 data. Still, we can observe a slight trend towards growth. As with last year, most teams involved between 6-15 people in their process; however, the share of teams involving 15+ contributors grew while teams reporting less than 5 contributors shrank.

Average Number of Contributors To A Single RFP



Interestingly, Small & Midsize companies appear to punch far above their weight in terms of involving contributors. Their core RFP teams may be small (just five people), but they seem to call in favors to involve almost as many contributors as their larger counterparts—perhaps people are more willing to chip in on projects like an RFP at smaller companies.

Number Of Contributors By Company Size

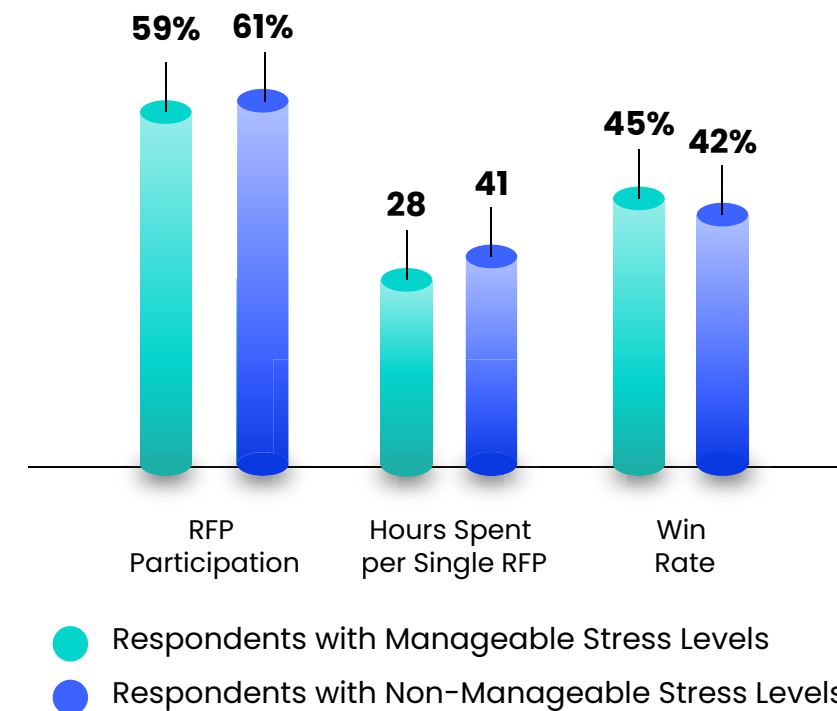


Stressed Teams Spend 13 Hours Longer on RFPs

Among those at associate or manager level, 1 in 5 (20%) say their stress levels aren't manageable. This is bad news because stressed teams spend way longer on RFPs and don't see the rewards.

On average, stressed teams spend 13 hours longer per RFP than teams with manageable stress—but their win rate is 3% worse than their non-stressed peers.

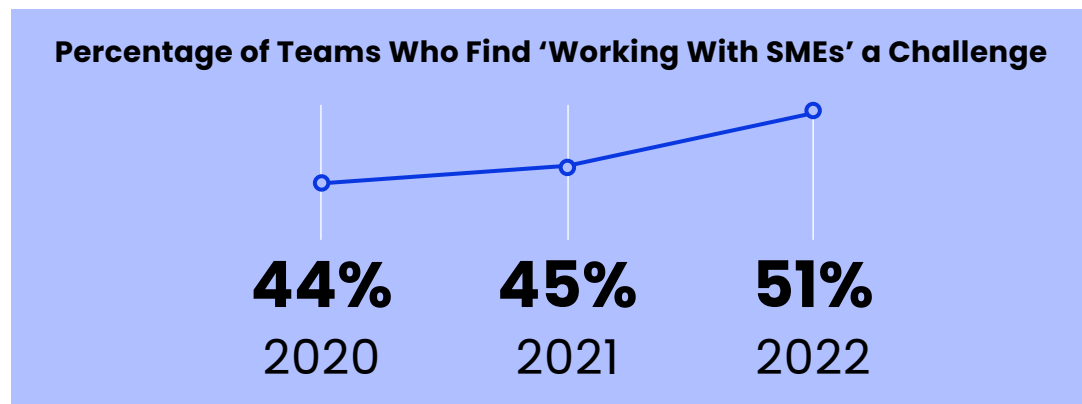
How Stress Levels Impact Success Rates



Interestingly, non-stressed teams have a slightly lower RFP participation rate, suggesting that they might be slightly more selective than stressed teams on which bids they participate in.

Collaboration With SMEs Remains #1 Challenge

The number one reported challenge this year was “Collaborating with subject matter experts (SMEs) across your organization”—continuing a trend we’ve seen since the beginning of the pandemic. For the past three years, almost half of RFP teams have cited collaboration with SMEs as a top challenge.



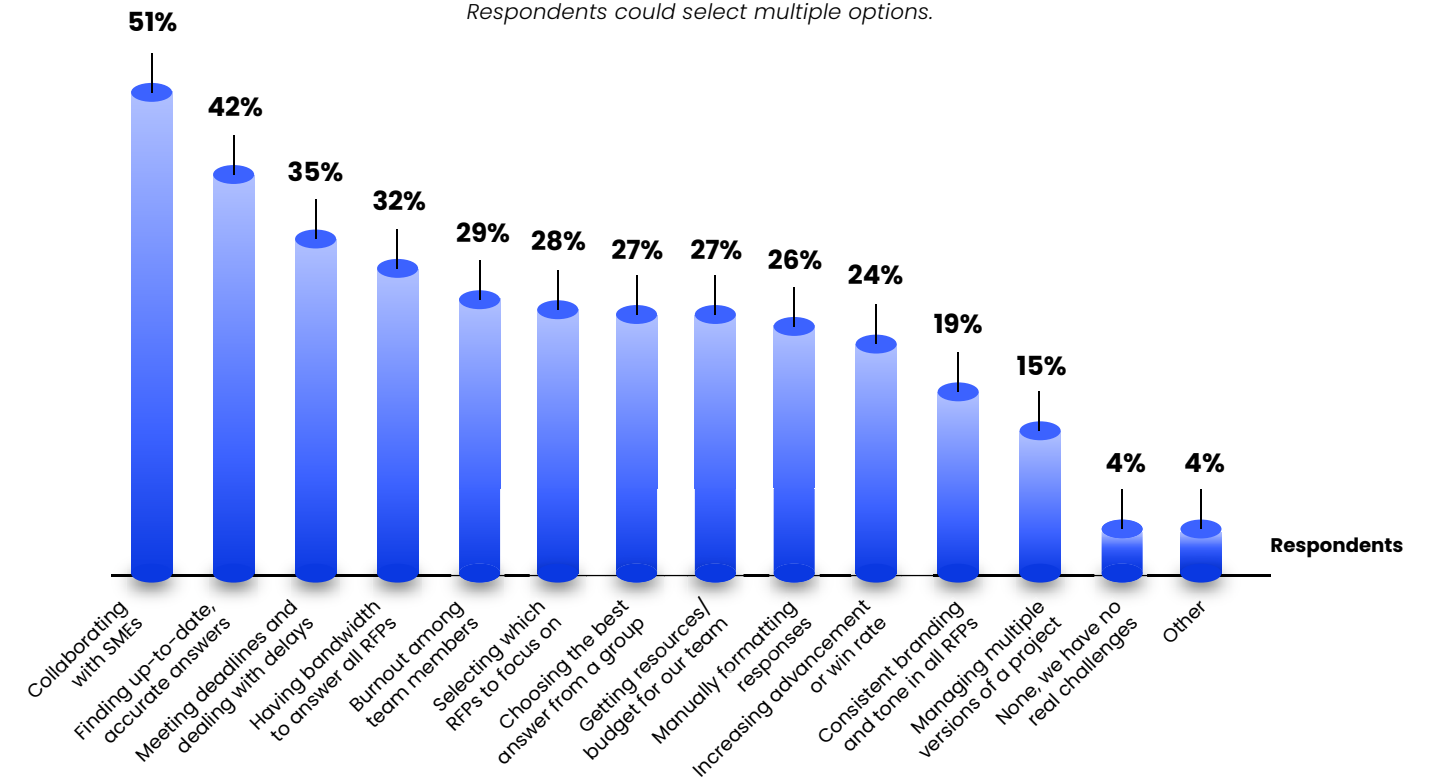
In the number two spot, “finding answers” is another repeated challenge, while “meeting deadlines and dealing with delays” has jumped to number three (up from #5) over the past year. Interestingly, 4% of respondents claim to have no challenges. (If you’re among them, please write to us so we can learn your secrets.)

Key Insight: RFP Tools Decrease Stress by Average of 14%

Associates and managers who use RFP software are more likely to say that their stress levels at work are almost always manageable. Notably, 68% of RFP software users are confident that they have the resources and tools they need to effectively respond, as compared to just 54% of those who don’t use RFP software. They’re also happier in their jobs and more likely to stay at their current company.

The Biggest Challenges In The RFP Response Process

Respondents could select multiple options.



Chapter Summary: Proposal Specialization & Satisfaction Trend Upward, Yet SME Challenges Remain

More than half of the companies we surveyed now report that they have a dedicated proposal manager or RFP team owning their process. So even as team size remains stagnant (average of 8 people), teams are reporting higher levels of satisfaction with their RFP process. Still, collaboration with SMEs remains a top challenge over the past three years, rising to a problem for the majority (51%) of teams this year. While proposal specialization is helping to raise satisfaction levels, it has not yet alleviated the biggest hurdle in the proposal process.

→ **Up next: RFP software seems to help alleviate stress and improve satisfaction.**

CHAPTER 5

The Impact Of Software On Stress, Satisfaction & Spend

Skip to benchmarks and trends for:

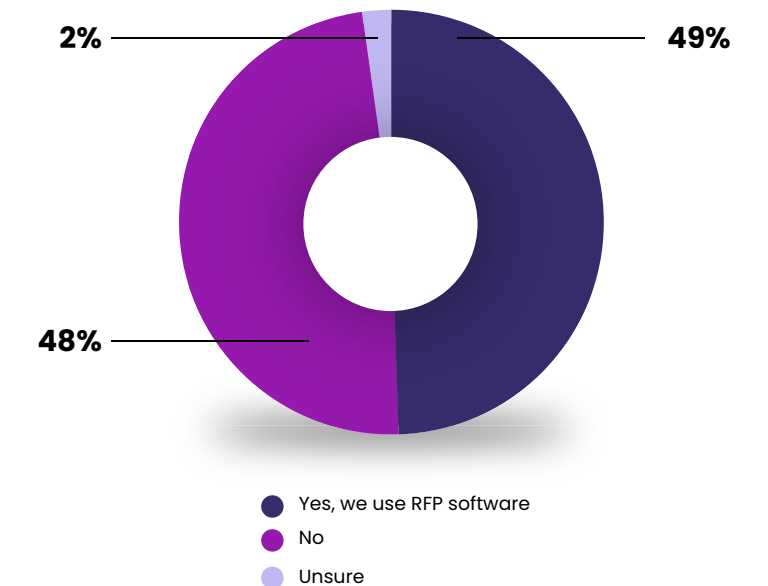
- Software Adoption Rates pg. 53
- Benefits of Using RFP Software pg. 54
- Satisfaction Rates pg. 55
- Time to ROI pg. 58

CHAPTER 5

Even Split of Teams, Divided on RFP Software Use

The percentage of total respondents claiming to use RFP software is lower than it has been in previous years—just 49% in comparison to 69%. This drop is due to half of the sample being APMP members, who are much less likely to be using an RFP tool. On average, just 32% of APMP members use RFP software.

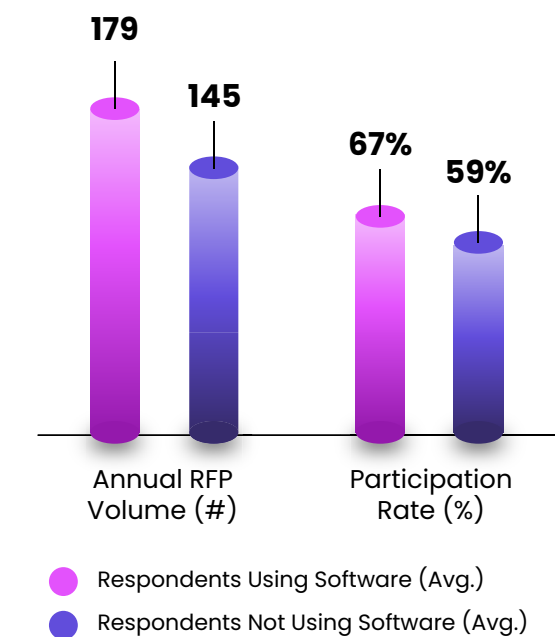
RFP Software Users



Those Using Software Submit 34 More RFPs Annually, on Average

Despite the division, using a dedicated RFP response software offers a few distinct advantages. Teams who use it are able to involve more contributors—an average of 9 people vs. 7. With software, teams can also take on a greater volume of bids, participating in 67% of the RFPs they receive on average, submitting 179 proposals per year vs. 145.

Performance of Software Users vs. Non-Users



Software Users Influence 65% More Revenue, on Average

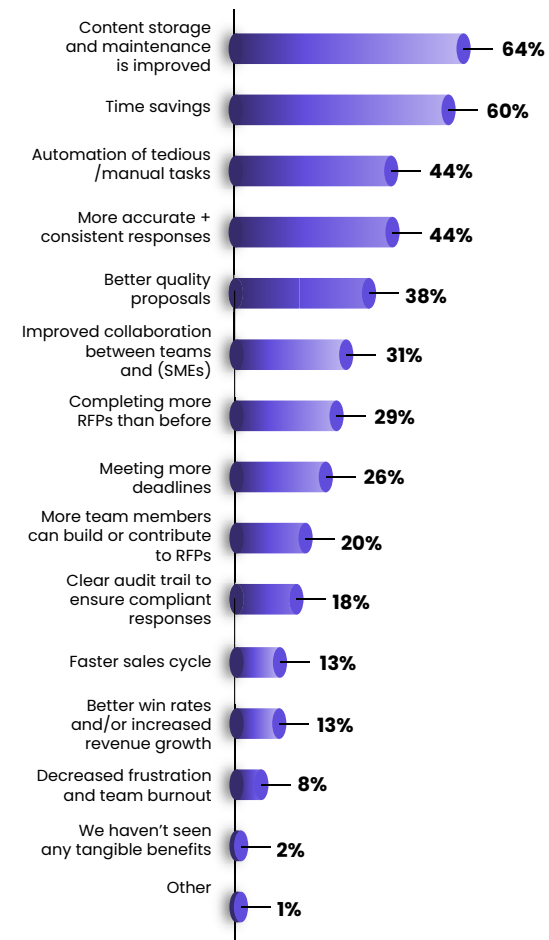
RFP software users influence an average of \$405.2M annually vs. non-software users who only influence \$245.1M annually—that’s an average increase of 65%.



When asked what it is about RFP response software that’s so helpful, the number one response was that it helps companies store and maintain content, followed by general time savings. This makes sense when you consider how the top alternative is digging through emails or cloud storage—which aren’t ideal for organizing and resurfacing content.

79% of RFP software users say they have increased the accuracy and consistency of their responses with software.

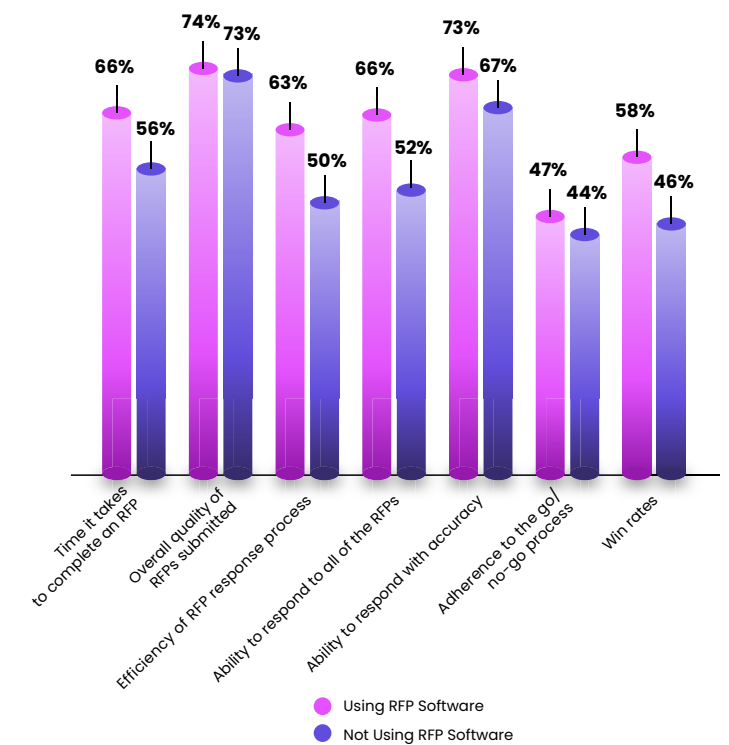
Benefits of Using RFP Response Software



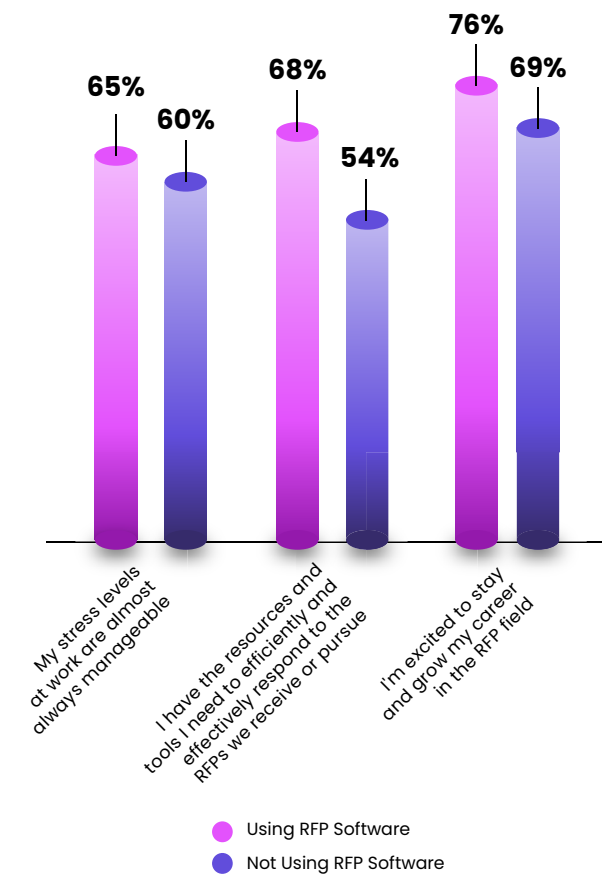
RFP Software Users More Satisfied With Their Process (And Less Stressed)

Teams using a dedicated RFP response software are more satisfied with their RFP response process by every measure.

Satisfaction Levels of Software Users vs. Non-Users



Employee Sentiment (Software Users vs. Non-Users)



Teams that use software are also much more likely to say their stress levels at work are “almost always manageable.”

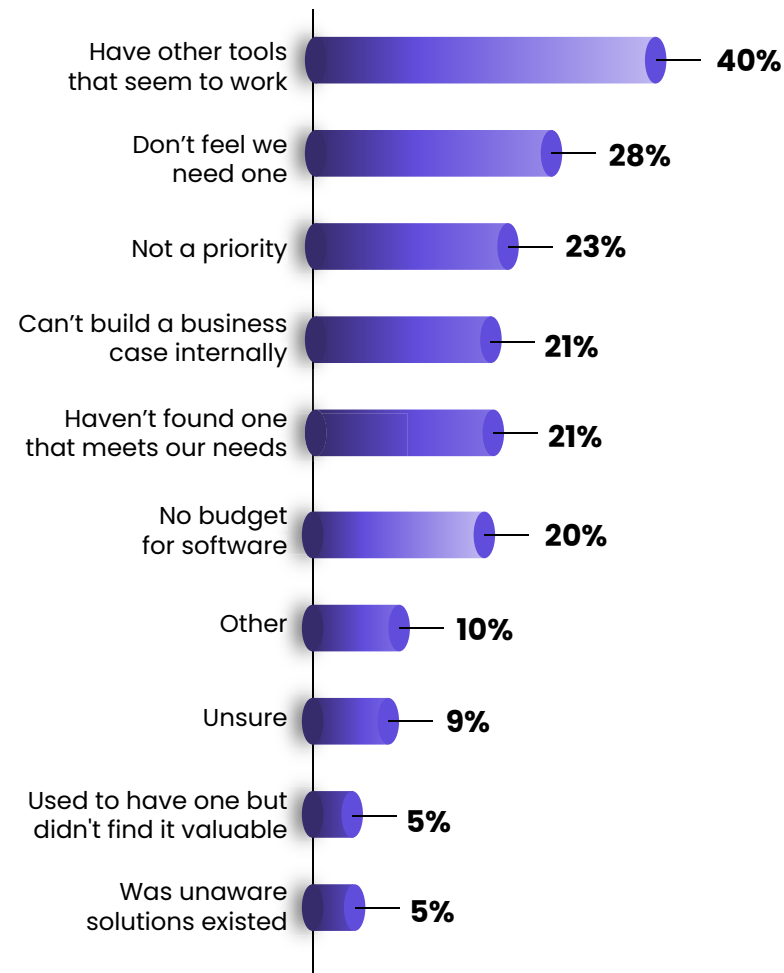
The Biggest Competition for Software: The Status Quo

The biggest reason respondents say they're not using RFP software? 40% say it's because they're relying on existing systems that seem to be working, notably email or cloud storage systems.

Interestingly, another 28% of teams said they "don't feel we need one" while another 23% said its "not a priority". Despite this sentiment, the research shows that teams who don't use software spend an average of eight hours longer—a full workday—writing each bid.

Budget doesn't seem to be as big of a roadblock, with only 20% reporting that they don't have the money for software.

Reasons for Not Using RFP Software



8 hours

How much extra time teams who don't use RFP software spend writing each bid.

Most Popular Alternatives to RFP Software: SharePoint and Email

Which other systems are teams using? The top choices are cloud document options (like SharePoint or Google Documents), closely followed by email and messaging applications.

Other Tools for Managing RFPs

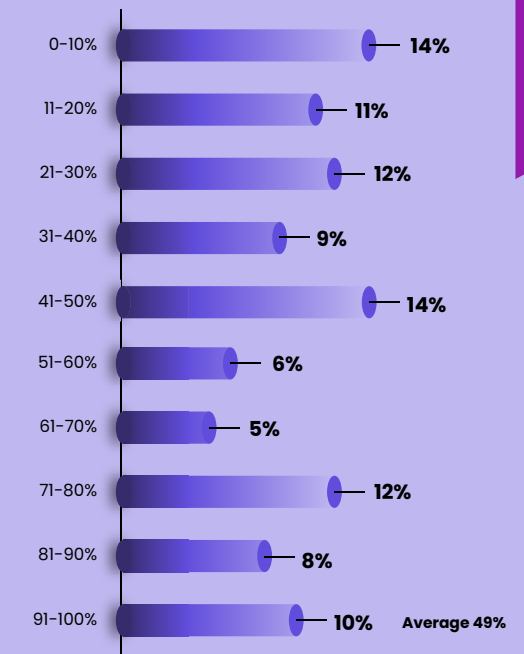
Respondents could choose multiple answers.



Key Insight: 49% of RFPs Submitted Through Portals

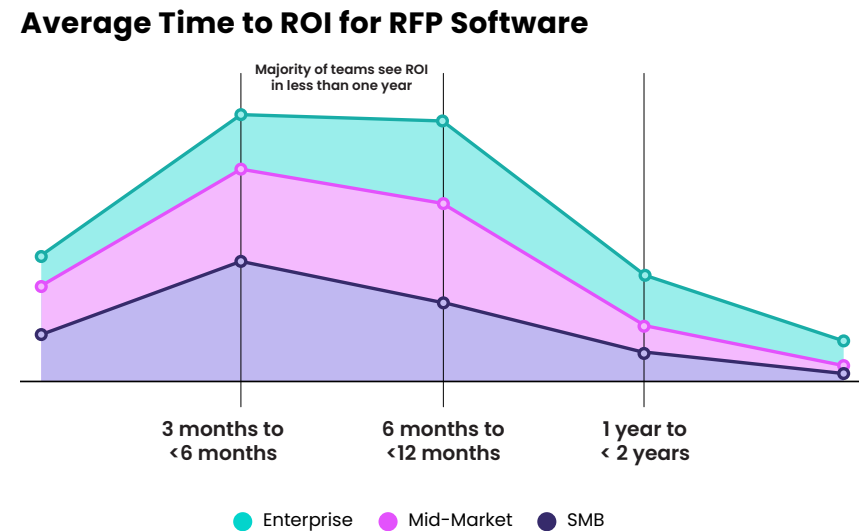
This year, 49% of RFPs were submitted through an online portal, up from 43% last year (and 41% the year before). An increase in work-from-home has likely influenced the increase in portal use, opening up more competition across borders.

RFPs Submitted Through Online Portals



Majority of Companies See Return on Investment (ROI) in < One Year

Small and Mid-Market companies are more likely to see a return on investment (ROI) with RFP software within the first year compared to larger firms. That said, Enterprise organizations likely take longer because they have bigger teams and take longer to complete bids, but they also see a much higher payout from RFP revenue. Overall, the majority of teams see ROI in less than one year.



Chapter Summary: Software Helps Teams Increase Revenue & Satisfaction at Work

Teams who use software report feeling less stressed and more satisfied with their process. They respond to 34 more bids every year and bring in a reported 65% more revenue on average for their companies. Interestingly, 54% of those who don't use RFP software report feeling that they do have the resources and tools they need to respond effectively—despite spending an average 8 hours more per bid.

→ **Up next: Which new resources teams expect next year—and confidence level in hitting RFP targets.**

CHAPTER 6

Salary & Career Comparisons

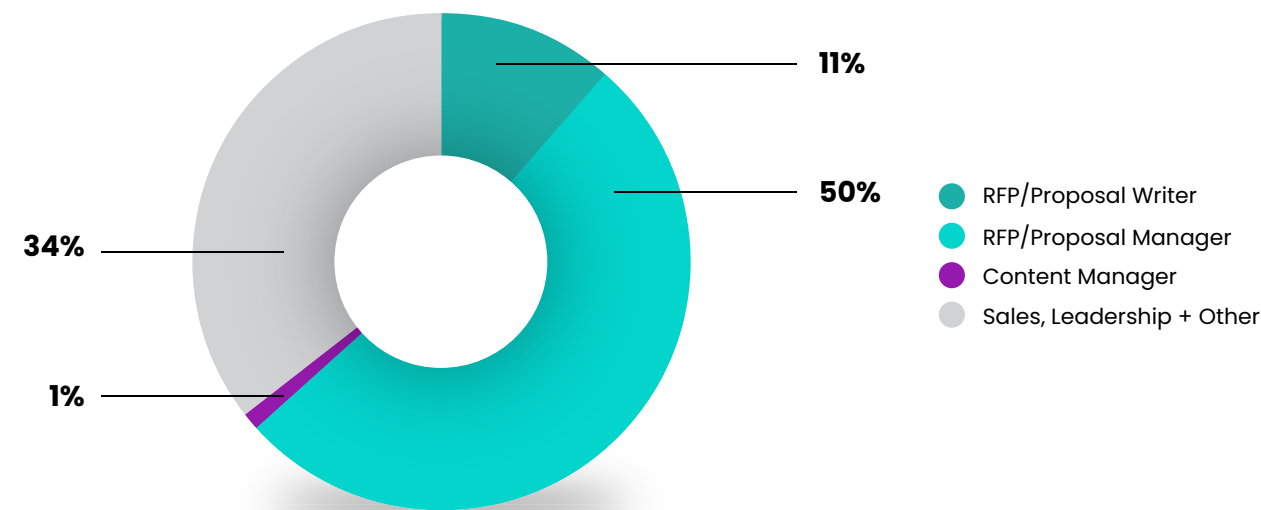
Skip to benchmarks and trends for:

- Demographics pg. 60
- Core duties pg. 64
- Salaries pg. 65
- Career outlook pg. 66

Examining Career Demographics, Salary, and Outlook in RFX

This section is exclusively for those who contribute to RFPs in a full-time role. (We're looking at you: proposal managers, RFP writers, content managers, and capture managers.) Our hope is to empower those in the field to understand their roles, salaries, and career prospects. In addition to helping companies understand what key skills they need to build and retain mature proposal functions.

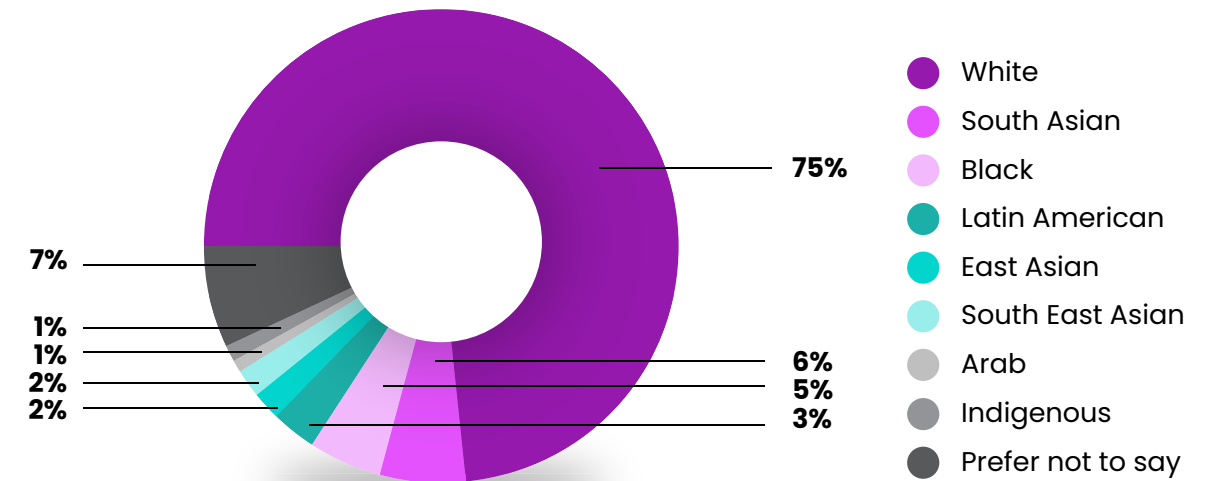
Distribution By Role Type



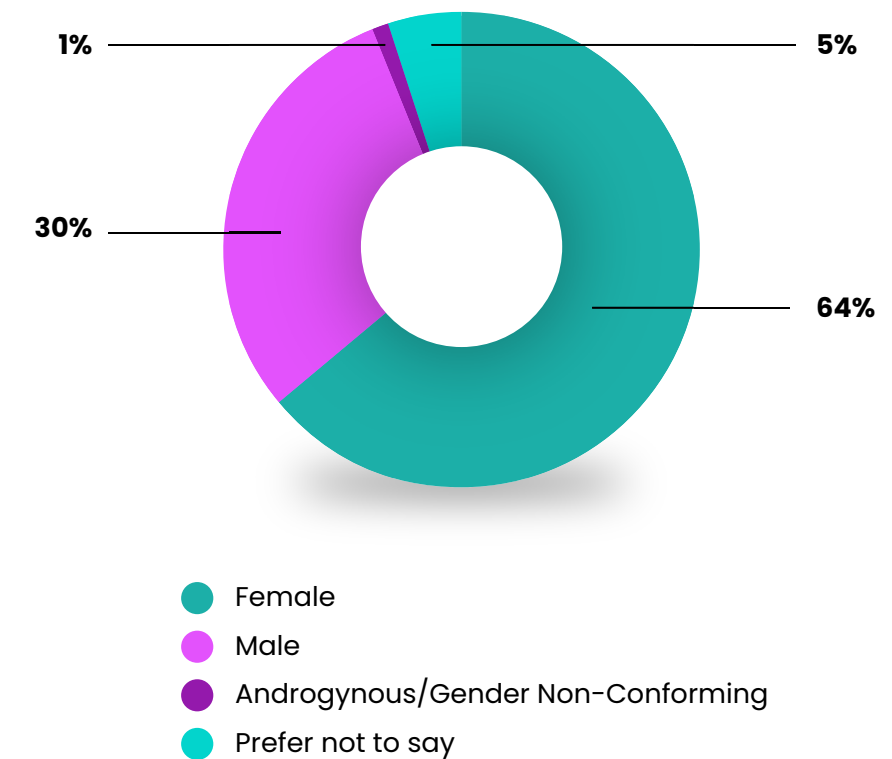
Demographics Skew Majority White and Female

Three-quarters of proposal professionals surveyed are white (74%), and 64% identify as female. While the gender representation is tipping towards a more balanced scale year-over-year (dropping from 71% female last year), a pretty significant racial imbalance remains, putting the proposal profession on par with majority-white vocations such as [airline pilots](#).

Ethnicity of Proposal Professionals

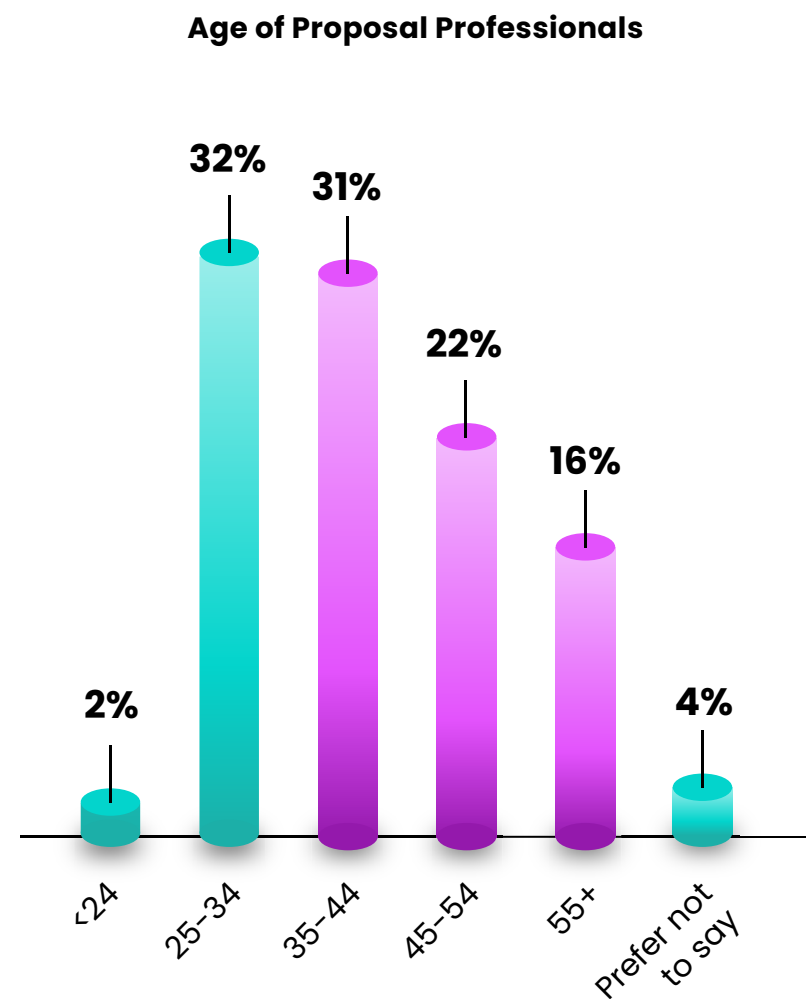


Gender Identity of Proposal Professionals



70% of Proposal Professionals Older Than 35

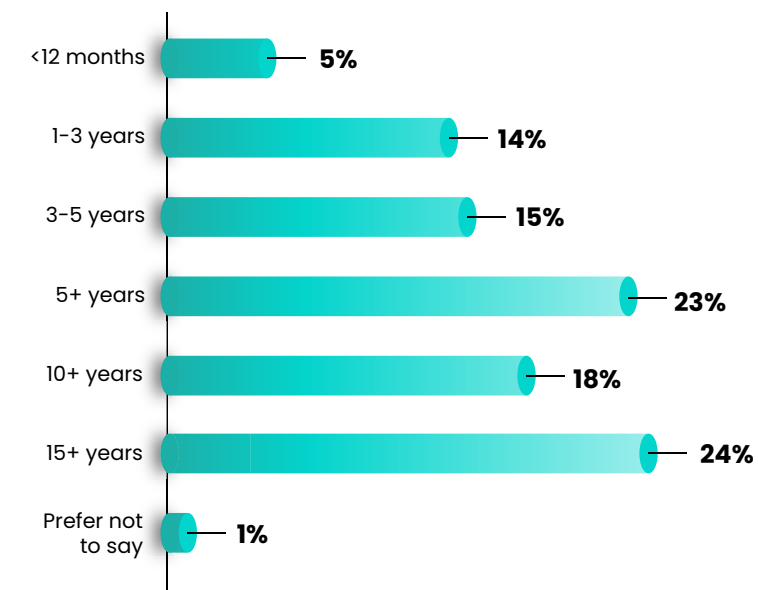
The majority of proposal professionals surveyed fell into age groups that are 35 years or older. This includes 35-44 (32%), 45-54 (22%) and 55+ (16%). Overall this trend is extremely similar to last year, with the biggest difference being the 55+ category, which has increased.



Tenure: Majority Have 5+ Years Of Experience

Nearly two-thirds of proposal writers or managers have been in an RFP-related role for more than 5 years. Almost a quarter of professionals have been in the field for more than 15+ years.

Tenure Breakdown of Proposal Professionals



Key Insight: More Experience = More Discontent

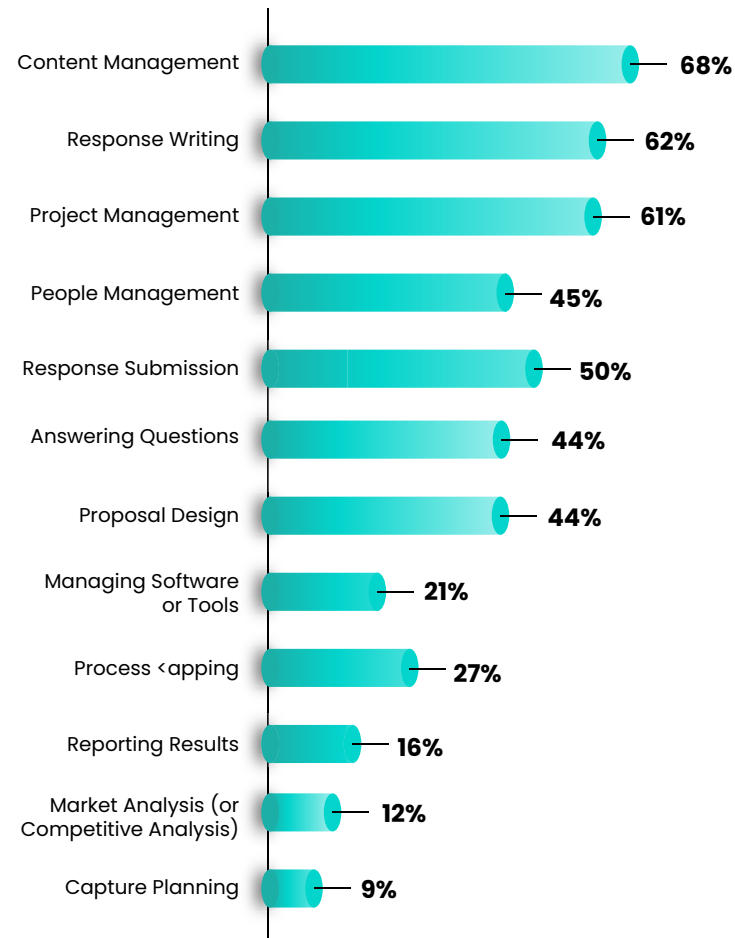
As with last year, employees with 15+ years of experience were more likely to be unsatisfied or have neutral feelings towards their process, compared to those early in their career. More than a quarter (26%) of this group say they're unsatisfied across seven categories tied to the proposal process. Note to companies: Keep an eye on your more tenured professional's satisfaction levels if you don't want to lose them.

Core Duties: Content First, Project Management Second

Similar to last year, proposal professionals see their top duties as content management and response writing, followed by project management. Somewhat surprisingly, competitive analysis sits at the bottom of the list, in spite of its impact on overall success.

Core Duties Of A Proposal Professional

Respondents could select multiple options.



Key Insight: How Role Impacts Core Duties

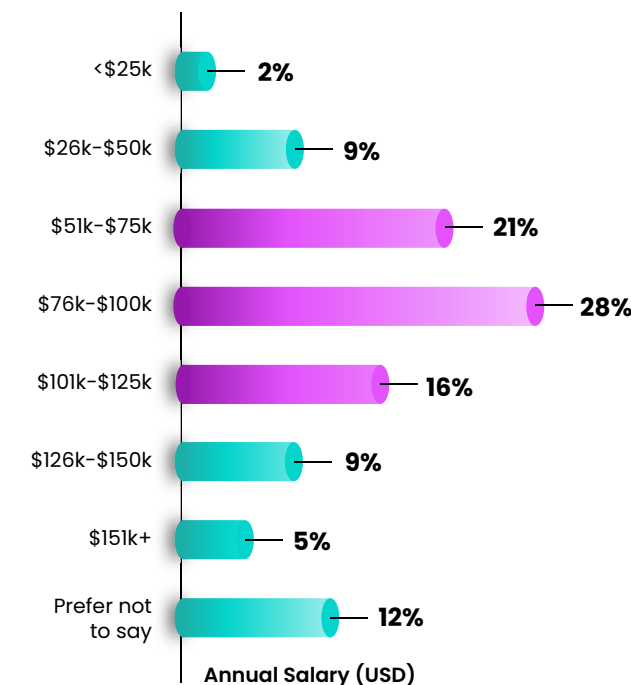
- 1. Associates** are more likely to list their core duties as response writing, content management, response submission, answering questions, and managing software.
- 2. Managers / Team Leads** are more likely to focus on content management, project management, people management, response writing, and process mapping.
- 3. Director-level roles and upwards** were more likely to be responsible for people management, capture planning, competitive analysis, and reporting results over any other group.

Average Salary Rises to \$89,800 USD

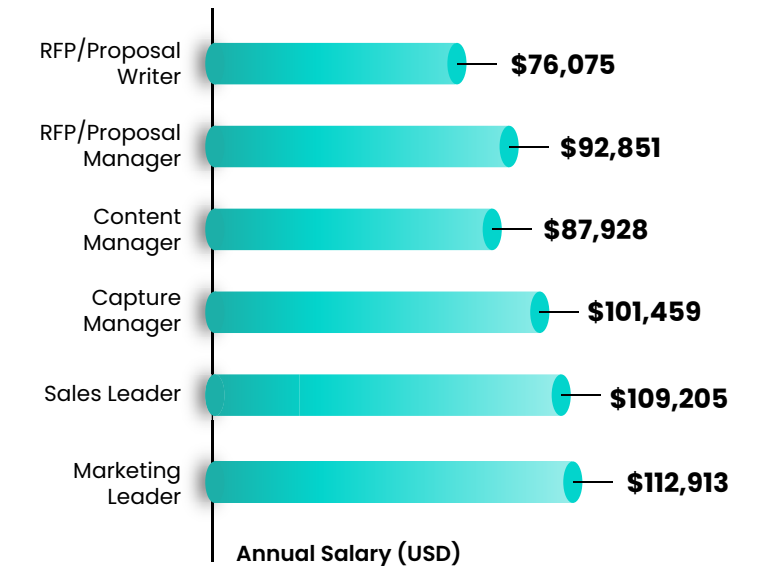
On average, proposal professionals make \$89,800 annually, up from last year's \$87,000. That's a 3% increase, less than half the increase of U.S. inflation rates in 2022.

Twelve percent of respondents chose not to respond to the salary question, down from last year's 18%. While some hesitancy around discussing salary remains, it appears that this year's participants were more open to sharing information about salary.

Average Salary Distribution For Proposal Professionals



Average Salary Distribution For Proposal Professionals by Level



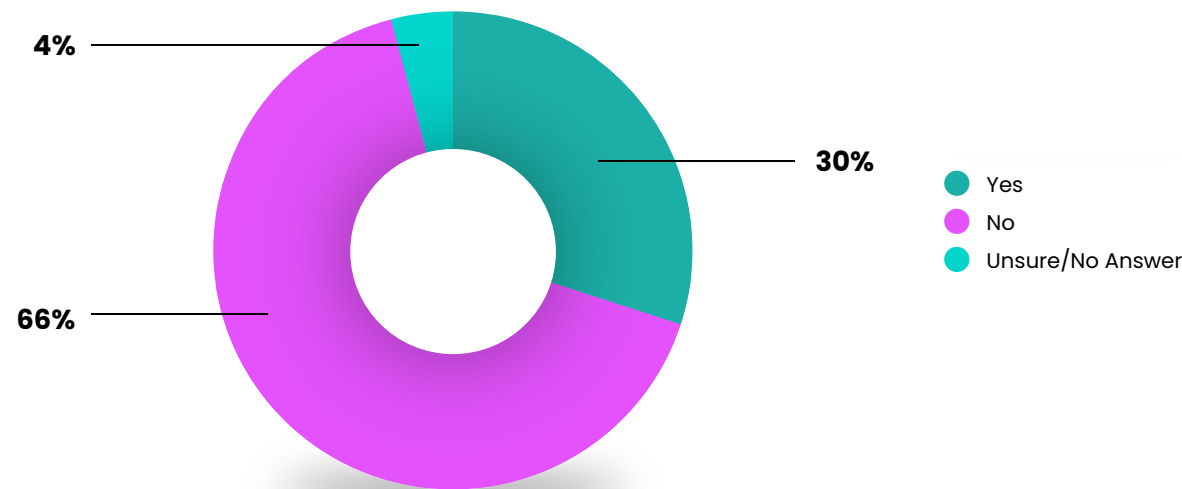
The majority of proposal professionals earn between \$51k to \$125k annually, with salaries noticeably increasing at the leadership level.

Interested in learning more about proposal salary breakdowns? Subscribe to Loopio's [blog updates](#), we'll be releasing **more detailed breakdowns on proposal salaries** in spring 2023.

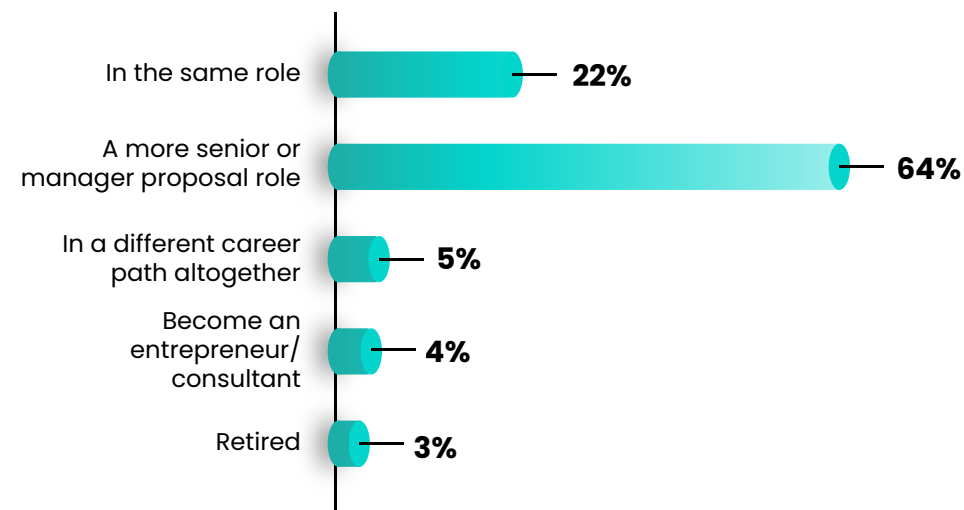
Nearly 9 in 10 Plan To Stay On This Career Path

An overwhelming 86% of RFP professionals plan to stay on this career path. Nearly two-thirds (64%) expect to be in a more senior proposal role within the next five years, and it appears they have a pretty good reason to believe: 30% received a promotion within the last 12 months.

Promoted In The Last 12 Months



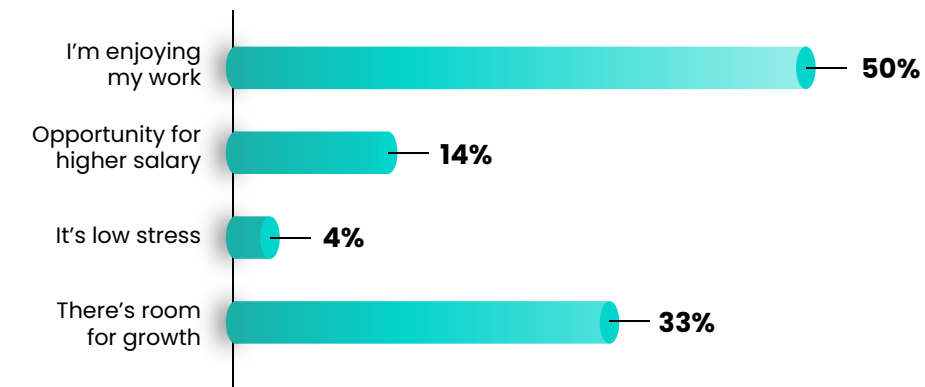
Career Expectations In The Next Five Years



RFP Pros Love Their Work And Want To Grow In The Field

People plan to stay in this career for a variety of reasons, primarily because they enjoy the work and see room for growth. Only 6%, however, say it's low stress.

Reasons For Staying In The RFP Industry



Chapter Summary: RFP Career Futures Are Bright—But Challenges Remain

Overall, RFP professionals love their work and want to continue growing in the field. But there are still challenges. Demographically, the field remains unbalanced, and some pay inequities remain—made more difficult by inflation over the past year. While the majority of people in the field have at least five years of experience, more experience is also correlated with greater dissatisfaction—meaning that teams have to be careful not to let their more experienced members become dissatisfied as their tenure continues.

➔ **Up next:** What resources teams expect next year—and their confidence level in hitting RFP targets.

CHAPTER 7

Resource Predictions For 2023

Skip to benchmarks and trends for:

- Resource Investments pg. 69
- Tracking Metrics pg. 72
- Submission Expectations pg. 73
- Top Actions to Win More Bids pg. 75

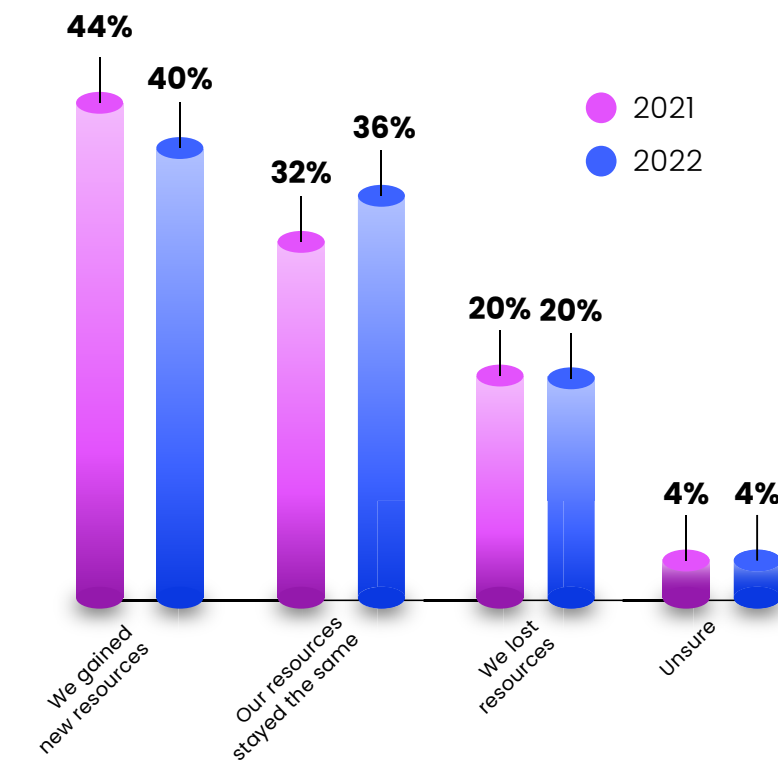
CHAPTER 7

76% Of Teams Gained or Maintained Resources In 2022

Two in five respondents (40%) claim that they gained new resources, including headcount, budget, and software in the past year. Just over a third (36%) said their resources stayed the same.

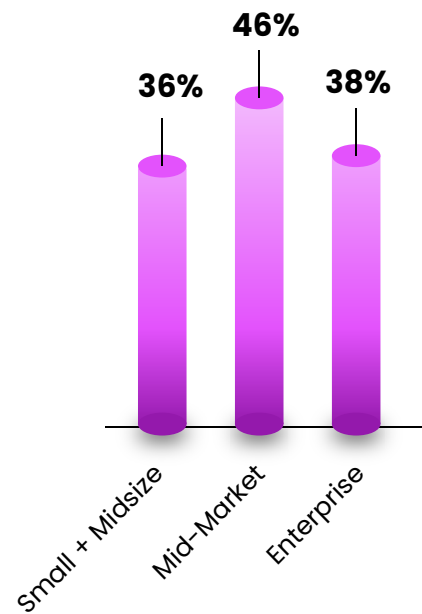
Interestingly, this breakdown is pretty consistent with last year's numbers, with just a slight drop in the number of teams that have gained resources. Three quarters (76%) have gained or maintained resources—yet teams seem to have less confidence in their ability to accomplish their goals with the resources they have, as demonstrated by their lowest confidence score yet. We'll explore why this could be in the next section.

Changes In Dedicated RFP Resources Over The Past Year

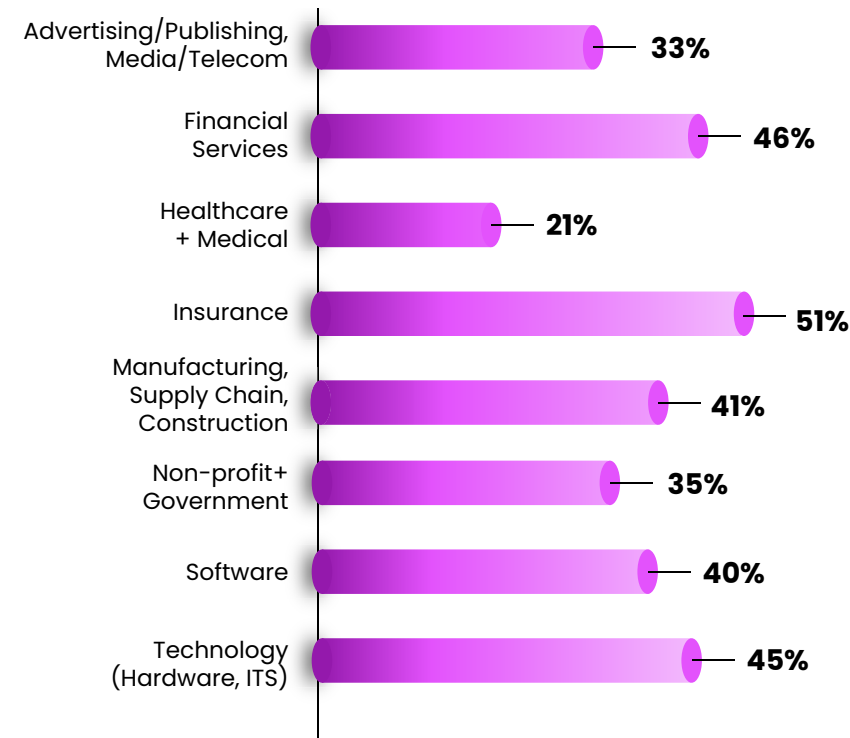


Those in Mid-Market companies are significantly more likely to have gained new resources. So are certain industries, such as Insurance, Financial Services, and Technology.

New Resources Gained by Company Size



New Resources Gained by Industry



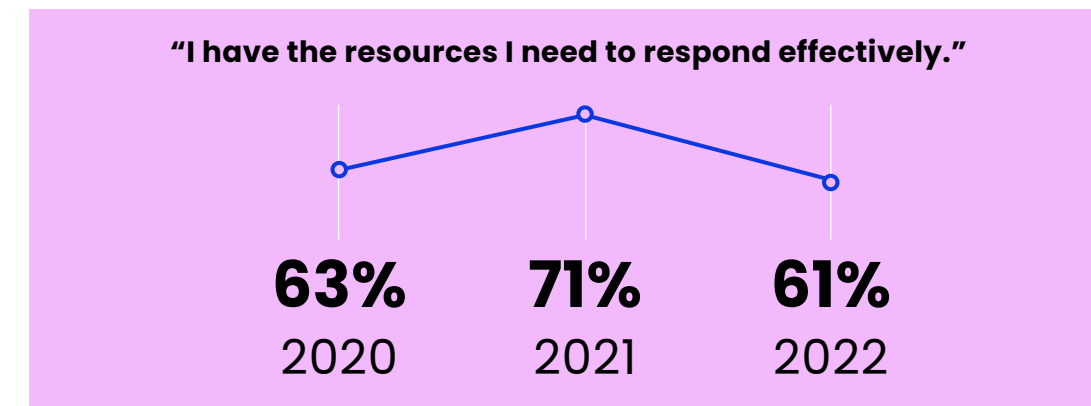
Key Insight: Top Performers More Likely To Gain More Resources



Those who influence more than half of their company's revenue via RFPs were the most likely to have gained new resources (42%). This correlation is unsurprising because high-performing teams are often rewarded with more resources—plus better-resourced teams may be more likely to be top performers in the first place.

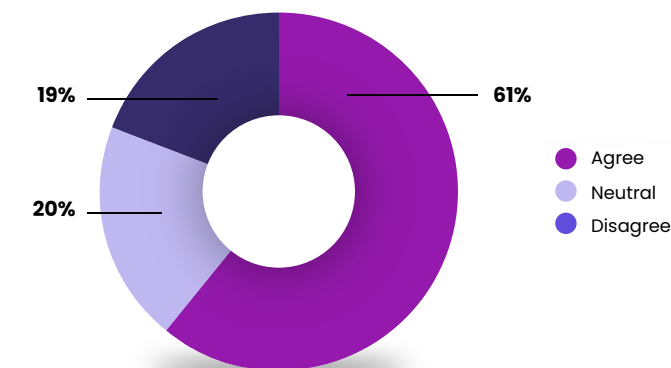
Diminished Confidence In Ability To Hit Goals With Current Resources

Just 61% of managers and associates say that they have the resources they needed to respond effectively to RFPs, 10% less than last year. In fact, this is lower than even 2020's numbers, when just 63% of respondents said they had the resources they needed.



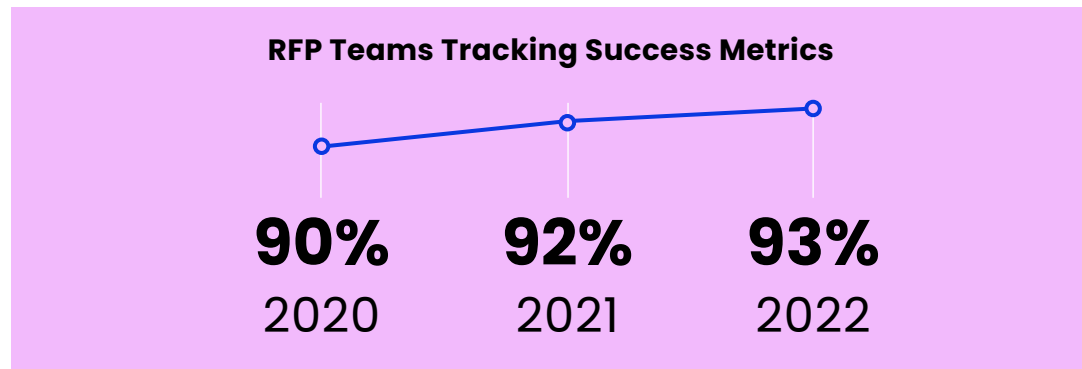
But if resources are relatively consistent, why are teams feeling so unsure? This dip might be related to some of the larger economic challenges that teams are facing. A third of teams are receiving more RFPs than normal while most teams remain the same size (or are even shrinking) as companies prepare for a possible recession.

Teams With The Resources To Effectively Respond To RFPs



Almost All Teams Tracking Success Metrics for RFPs

93% of respondents tracked RFP success metrics this year, continuing a small but upward trajectory since 2020. This is positive because tracking metrics is critical for teams advocating to leadership for more resources to respond effectively.



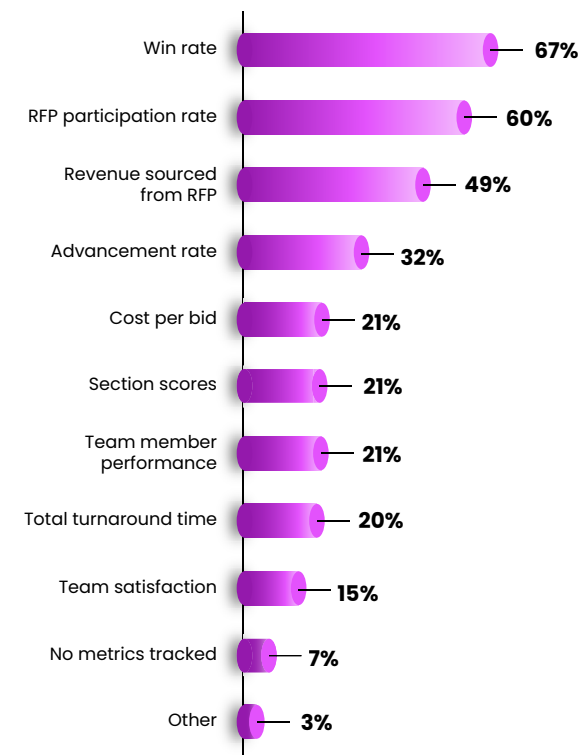
Win rate is the most frequently examined metric, being tracked by more than two-thirds of teams (67%)—while advancement rate (also known as shortlist rate) is only tracked at half that frequency (32%).

While the types of metrics being tracked have remained relatively consistent year-over-year, one interesting change from last year’s data is that speed has been deprioritized as a metric. Last year, 34% of teams were tracking their RFP completion speed, compared to just 20% of teams this year.

Not sure which RFP metrics you should be tracking? Check out the [Insider’s Guide to RFP Metrics That Matter](#) to make smarter decisions about your process, win more RFPs, and ultimately, measure the value of your work.

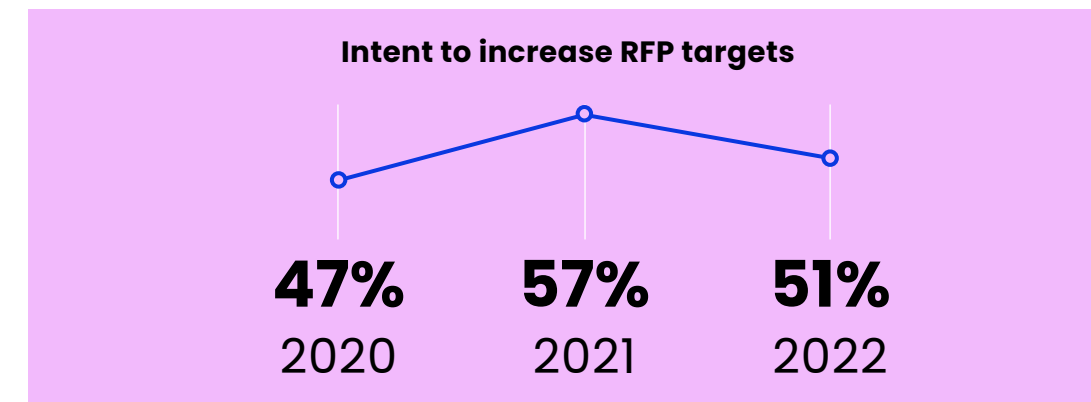
RFP Teams Tracking Success Metrics

Respondents could choose multiple answers.



Submission Expectations Level off for 2023

Just over half of participants plan to increase the number of RFPs they respond to in 2023, noticeably lower than last year’s study—only 51% this year compared to 57%.



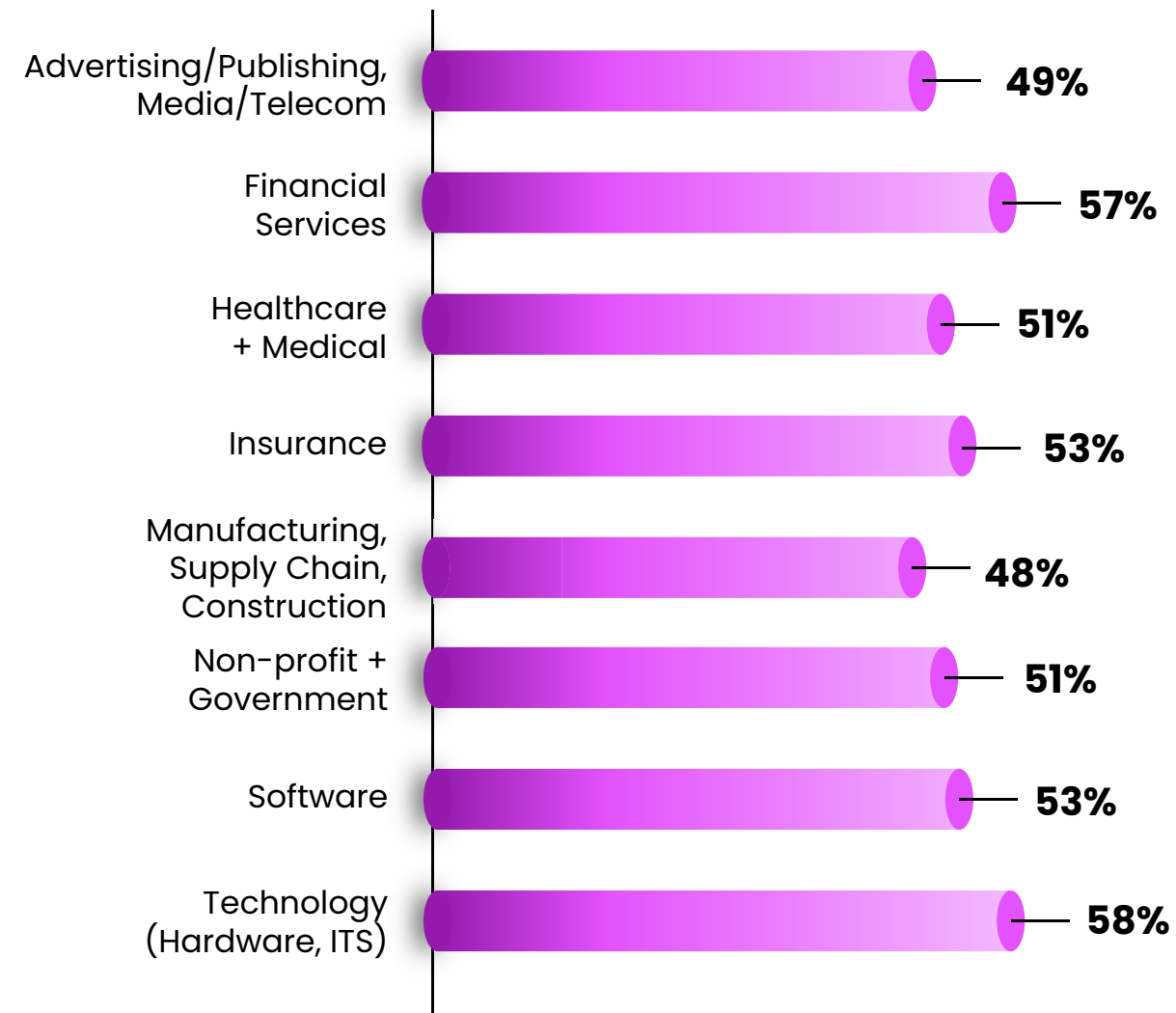
Enterprise companies are the least likely to want to increase the number of RFPs they respond to. They’re also the company size that generates the most revenue from their RFPs and spends the longest time writing them—so they may not have the need nor capacity to increase.

Intent To Increase RFP Targets, By Company Size



Out of all industries, Technology/Hardware/ITS are most likely to want to plan on increasing their RFP targets, while Manufacturing and Advertising are the least likely.

Intent To Increase RFP Targets, By Industry



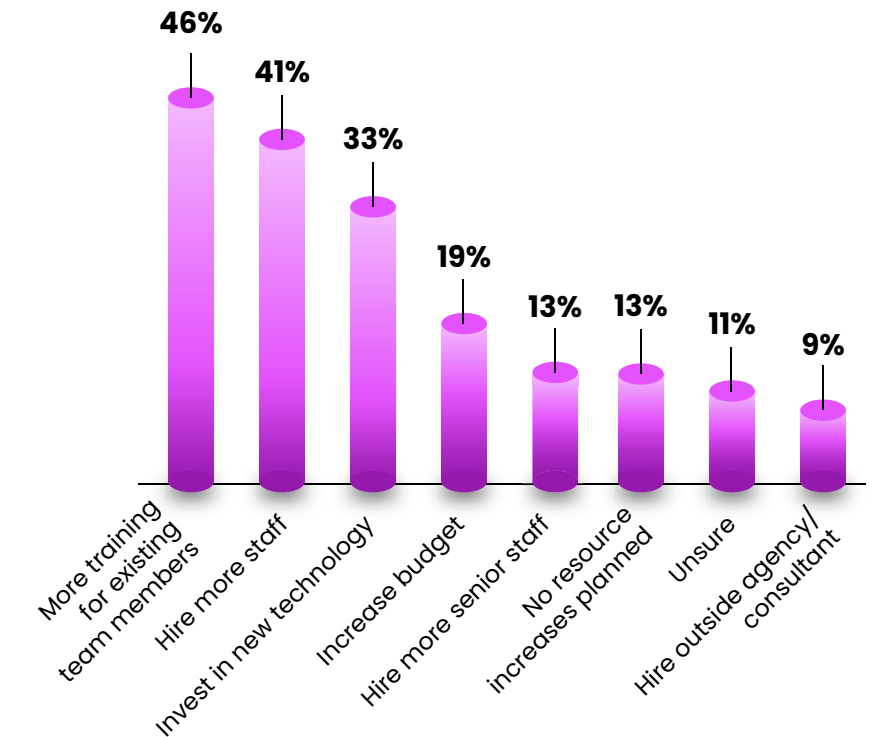
Resources Stabilize Alongside Submission Targets

Seventy-six percent of companies say they're planning on increasing resources next year—a slight, but not huge drop from last year's 80%. Interestingly, the most common investments are identical to last year: better training, hiring more staff, and buying new technology, in that order.

If you examine resource investments by industry, there are some notable differences. Healthcare (51%) and Financial Services (48%) are especially likely to have plans for more staff, while Insurance (58%) is focused on more training for their existing staff.

Resource Investments For 2022 vs. 2023

Respondents selected top three options.

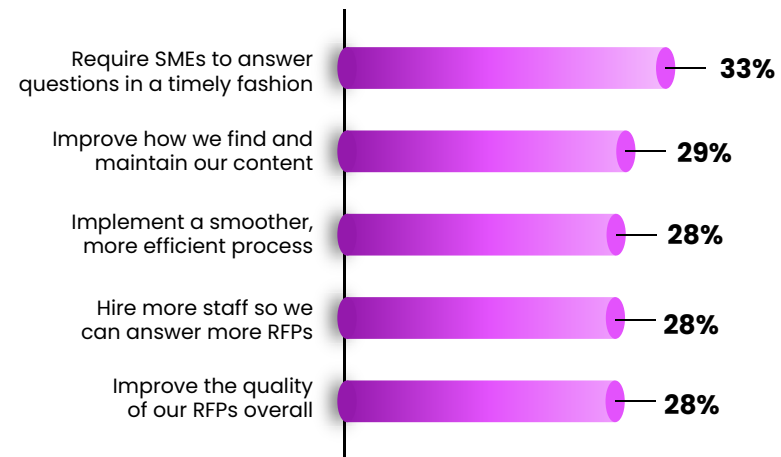


Recommended Actions to Win More in 2023: Timelier SME Responses

Like last year, the number one way RFP responders say they can improve win rates is by cracking down (politely) on SME response times. This is unsurprising since they also rated collaborating with SMEs as their top challenge.

Recommendations for Winning More in 2023

Respondents could select multiple options.



Interestingly, figuring out a better way to manage, search, and maintain content has jumped up to 2nd place this year (up from 4th last year). This may be related to the economic turbulence of the last few years. As companies deal with the great resignation and staff turnover, having a centralized place to store historical knowledge in a way that anyone on the team can easily access is becoming more important.

Opinions also differed by role. Associates are most concerned about getting timely responses out of their SMEs (38%) and reducing the number of responses to improve overall quality (28%). Managers are most likely to want to increase team size to increase their impact (30%), while execs are most concerned about seeking out RFPs to proactively bid on (27%).

Chapter Summary: Resources Remain Steady While Teams Adjust Expectations

Submission expectations decreased this year and teams are less confident in the ability to accomplish their goals with the resources they have—even though overall resources haven't changed that much. Tracking metrics continues to trend upwards, which will be key to helping teams acquire the resources they need to achieve their goals. Top priorities among them? Timelier SME responses and better content management.

→ **Up next: What top teams do differently to win.**

CHAPTER 8

What Top Teams Do Differently To Win

Skip to benchmarks and trends for:

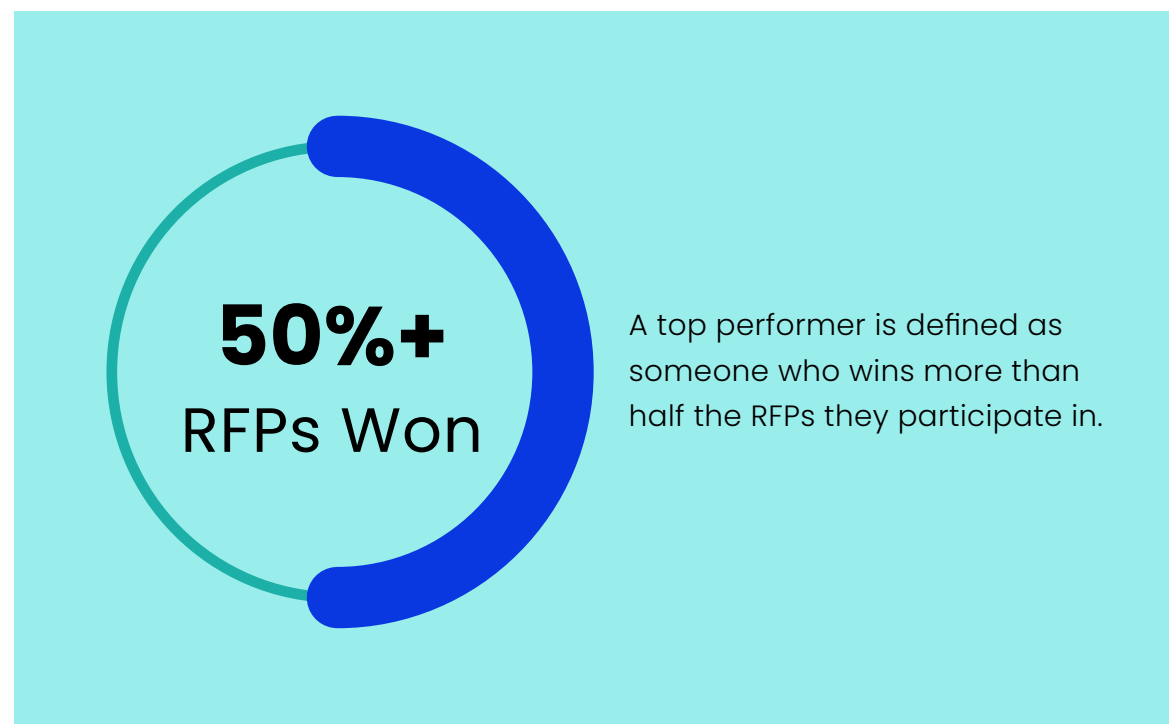
- The Top Performer Profile pg. 78
- 10 Habits to Win More pg. 79

Defining Top Teams

How do you define a top performer in the world of RFPs?

There are many success metrics to examine when holistically determining the health of an RFP program—advancement rate or shortlist (*measuring the success of a proposal getting to the next round*), win rate (*measuring the success of your company winning business*) and of course, top line revenue influence (*measuring the return on investment for your team's efforts*).

So while there are many metrics you *can* examine, for the purpose of this next chapter, we're focused on win rate alone to define what makes a top-performing team. In the next few pages, you'll learn what top teams do differently to win more bids.



10 Habits To Win More RFPs



1. Put A Dedicated Proposal Person in Charge

Fifty-six percent of top performing companies have a dedicated person or team owning the proposal process. These teams also have considerably higher win rates, winning an average of 54% of the proposals they participate in. Their job title could be anything from “Proposal Manager,” to “Rfx Lead,” or even “Sales Response Manager”. Whatever you call it, putting a specialized expert in charge leads to better, more consistent RFP results.



2. Create a Balanced Roster of Experts

Top teams have an average of 10 contributors (slightly above the average of 9 for everyone else). While it's likely that bigger companies are pulling up this average, it also illustrates an important truth: more brains mean more access to company-wide intelligence. Like the making of a great recipe, you'll want to include a variety of ingredients. In the case of proposals, those key ingredients include insights from teams like Marketing, Sales, Engineering, Security, and more. The trick is harnessing those people's wisdom productively (which is easier to do when there's a dedicated project manager in play).



3. Integrate Your Go/No-Go Process

Having a process allows you to focus your efforts on the RFPs you're most likely to win. Eighty percent of companies now use a go/no-go process, including 85% of top-performing teams. But it's not just enough to create a process—you also have to ensure it's executed correctly. Fifty-eight percent of top-performing teams are satisfied with how well their go/no-go process is followed, as compared to just 45% of average teams. The most successful teams don't just set and forget their new process. They'll integrate it into their team's existing workflows—like building a clearly defined intake process for RFPs in Salesforce, which connects directly to your go/no-go system.



4. Balance Volume with Quality

While top performers have been shown to submit more RFPs as a whole, they're also less stressed, with 67% reporting that their stress levels at work are almost always manageable. They're experts at working smarter, not harder. They know that increasing volume isn't a fail-safe solution for winning more—you also need to be able to maintain a high level of quality.



5. Use Software to Increase Capacity

As mentioned above, top teams tend to submit more bids. But how can you do that if your team is stretched for capacity? Well, teams with software are able to respond to more proposals—34 more, per year on average. But perhaps more importantly, they're also less likely to feel unmanageable stress, likely because they spend 8 hours less per bid on average.



6. Study Competitor Messaging

"Losing to a competitor / incumbent" became the 2nd highest reason for losing an RFP this year. Top performers were slightly more likely to list this as a reason for loss than their peers, indicating that they may be more aware of who their competitors are for each RFP (and who the bid is written in favor of). To stay ahead of your competition in the new year, consider refreshing or launching a competitive insights program, and updating your stored RFP answers to proactively compete against their best value propositions.



7. Make Effort To Save Your SMEs' Time

Collaborating with SMEs continues to rank as the top challenge for all teams. While top performers do slightly better than the average team in this area (48% cite as a challenge vs. 51%) it's still their #1 problem in the RFP process. This may mean that if you can conquer this barrier in 2023, you'll be able to achieve something that almost half of top teams have not, which could provide a competitive edge.



8. Be Selective When You Can

A higher or lower participation rate isn't inherently good or bad—what matters is your team capacity, and how it impacts advancement and win rates. Teams with manageable stress are more selective, they respond to only 59% of the RFPs they receive—slightly less than the average team. It's possible that being selective with their bids is what's giving them the winning edge.



9. Track a Broad Range of Revenue & Process Metrics

Ninety-four percent of top performers are tracking success metrics. Tracking a combination of revenue and process metrics provides the most balanced view of changes you should make to win in your proposal process. Revenue metrics could be the overall dollar value sourced from RFPs, while process metrics may focus on timelines. Understanding where your team lies with both is critical for success, so you can set-up the systems you need to succeed.



10. Invest In Your Team, It Pays Off (Literally)

APMP members report significantly higher win rates and RFP revenue than the average team. So do teams that report using RFP software. Top performers were more likely to belong to one or both of these groups. This shows, whether you're putting your effort into tools or courses, investing in your team pays off (quite literally).

Chapter Summary: Win More With Less Effort

RFP team performance isn't just about winning more—it's also about improving advancement and revenue. Still, there are plenty of habits you can adopt to improve your win rates, including building a strong team, being selective about the RFPs you do choose to pursue, investing in process improvements so you can write better quality RFPs with less effort, and tracking metrics and insights to help you improve in 2023.



Win More RFPs in 2023

- Collaborate seamlessly across teams
- Automate your RFP responses
- Centralize your best RFP content

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