

REPORT

Response Management Benchmarks & 2020 Trends

How organizations are levelling up the RFP response process to drive revenue and sales efficiency.

Research Conducted by Loopio



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Introduction: Why We Created This Report

There's an oft-forgotten team (or person) in many organizations toiling away on time-sensitive sales projects. They don't carry a quota, and they don't ring a bell when they win a deal. But they can generate significant revenue for their business—if the right tools and systems are in place.

Of course, we're talking about the people handling Requests For Proposals (RFPs).

Whether you have a formal RFP management team, or a more ad hoc approach, your organization stands to gain a lot from improving the RFP process. But doing so is easier said than done. With evaluation processes becoming more complex, it's getting harder to juggle increasingly robust RFP requirements with tight timelines and resource constraints.

The report's purpose was to uncover what top performers are doing to win more RFPs and provide performance benchmarks for gauging success. To do this, we surveyed 500 people involved in the RFP process—including Proposal Managers, Solutions Engineers, and Sales and Marketing Executives. Based on their answers, this report will reveal:

- Benchmarks for RFP win rates, submission timelines, and more
- Top challenges facing organizations when responding to RFPs
- How technology impacts RFP management for the better
- The disconnects between executives and those managing proposals
- Best practices for improving the RFP process, response quality, and more



About the Authors

Loopio is an RFP software platform that helps companies supercharge their response process. With Loopio, companies can respond faster, improve response quality, and ultimately win more business. Loopio is recognized as a leader in our space by G2, and our services team has won a Stevie Award for outstanding customer care.

Who We Surveyed

Fig 1.1 | **RESPONDENT INDUSTRIES**

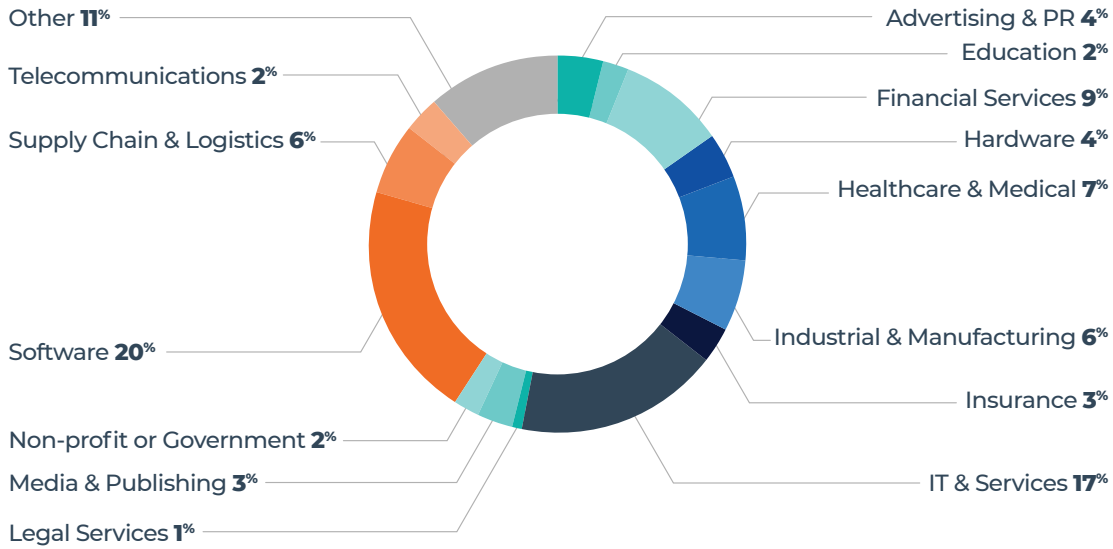


Fig 1.2 | **RESPONDENT FUNCTIONAL AREAS**

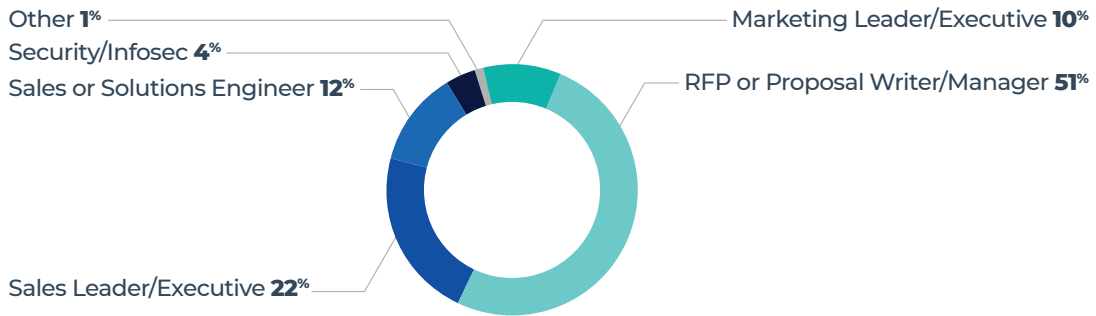
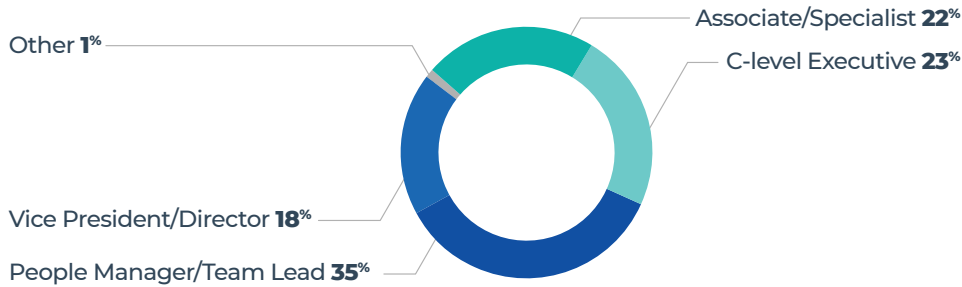


Fig 1.3 | **RESPONDENT ROLE LEVELS**





Key Findings

1. Benchmarks often fluctuate with company size.

This report found the following averages for metrics related to the RFP process in 2019:

- RFPs submitted annually: **147**
- People involved in completing a response: **7.3**
- Percentage of sales revenue sourced from RFPs: **41%**
- Win rate: **53%**
- Response rate to RFPs received: **69%**
- Time it takes to create and submit an RFP: **10.5 days**
- Hours spent writing a single response: **23.8 hours**

It's worth noting that these benchmarks often increase or decrease based on company size—or, in a few isolated cases, industry.

2. Top performers have time, tracking, and teammates on their side.

Respondents with higher win rates and more efficient processes are likelier to have:

- More people involved in the response process.
- Longer timelines for responding to RFPs.
- Solid metrics tracking and team-wide transparency.
- A dedicated proposal individual or team owning the response process.

3. The biggest RFP challenges revolved around process and tools—but teams don't agree on how to solve those problems.

The top RFP challenges center on how easily and quickly teams can find the best answers to questions. However, not everyone agrees on the best way to improve their process. Proposal managers are more likely to see better training as the solution, while other teams think tools, improving processes, or hiring more staff will do the trick. Organizations need to carefully examine their challenges—and their biases—so they can improve their process effectively.



4. Dedicated RFP technology makes a difference.

Those using RFP software respond to nearly 50 more RFPs a year than those without. Those not using RFP software tend to involve fewer people in their RFP process and are less likely to rate their tools as effective as those with a dedicated solution.

5. Satisfaction with the RFP process derives from submission numbers and win rates—but those numbers don't tell the whole story.

Those with higher win rates and submission rates tend to feel more satisfied with their process. However, less than a third of respondents are tracking baseline metrics like number of submissions made, response timelines, and employee sentiment—all of which this report has correlated with better outcomes. This means that most companies could improve their topline RFP revenue if they start analyzing some more granular metrics.

6. Executives and associates need to better align over RFP metrics.

Company leaders are likelier to say that their company tracks more metrics than lower-level employees. They also have more optimistic answers to questions around submission and win rates. This could mean they have access to data their employees don't—or that they're wearing rose-colored glasses when it comes to their team's performance. Since job satisfaction is tied to transparency around metrics, companies should do a better job of sharing data at every level of the organization. It could help bridge the gap between perceptions and reality for these groups.

7. Should you submit more RFPs in 2020? Yes!

Those who submit more RFPs tend to have higher win rates. RFP revenue is almost equally sourced from acquisition and renewals—meaning RFPs help retain revenue as much as they generate new business. The average RFP win rate is 53%—which is a higher conversion rate than many other sales and marketing channels.

Looking ahead, 63% of respondents say they plan to increase the number of RFPs they'll respond to in 2020. Many also plan to invest in more staff, technology, or training. If your company isn't seeing enough success to justify investing more time or resources into RFPs, consider finding ways to streamline the process so you can submit more.

Submission and Win Rate Benchmarks

Annual RFP Response Submission Rates

On average, organizations respond to 147 RFPs per year—34% respond to 51–250 RFPs, 31% submit 10–50 RFPs a year, and 19% submit over 250.

Organizations submitting the highest number of RFPs have the following traits in common:

- **They have a dedicated owner.** Those with a dedicated Proposal Manager or team respond to 174 RFPs per year on average—the highest of any other ownership style. Those without a designated owner are 30% more likely to complete less than 10 RFPs per year.
- **They have an RFP tool.** Those with RFP software respond to an average of 152 RFPs annually, while those without respond to only 103 RFPs on average.
- **They are larger than average.** As you might expect, larger companies respond to the most RFPs: 39% of companies with 10,000+ employees respond to over 500 RFPs per year. Comparatively, just 2% of those with under 100 employees respond to over 500 RFPs.

Fig 1.4 | **AVERAGE ANNUAL RFP SUBMISSIONS BY INDUSTRY**

Industry	Advertising & PR	Education	Financial Services	Hardware	Healthcare & Medical	Industrial & Manufacturing	Insurance	IT & Services	Legal Services	Media & Publishing	Non-profit/Government	Software	Supply Chain & Logistics	Telecommunications
Average Annual RFP Submissions (%)	118.0	94.5	157.4	191.5	99.0	177.5	184.5	135.7	93.3	38.2	211.1	156.2	103.5	162.2

Fig 1.5 | AVERAGE ANNUAL RFP SUBMISSIONS BY COMPANY SIZE

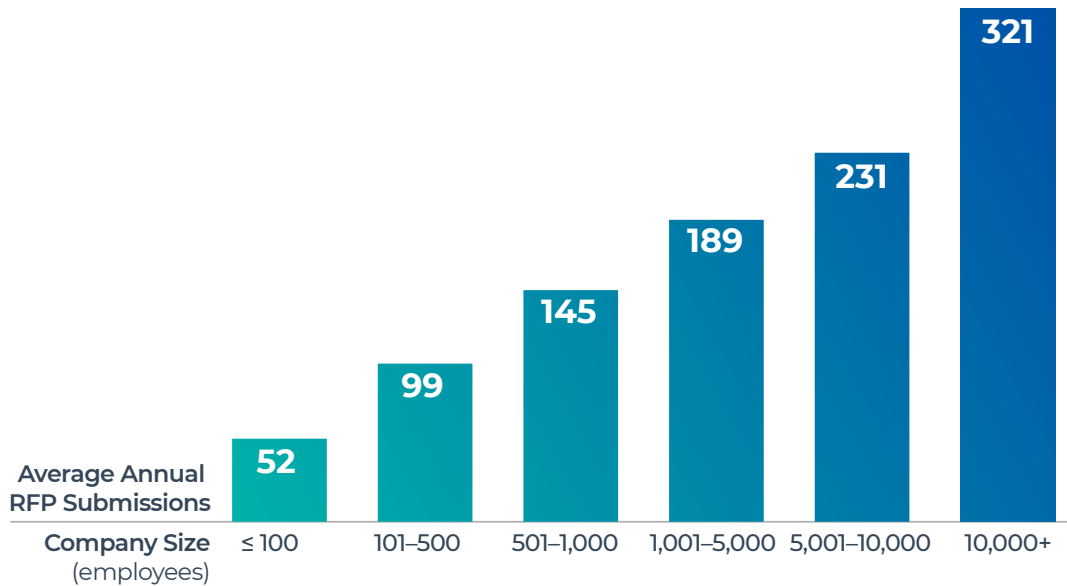
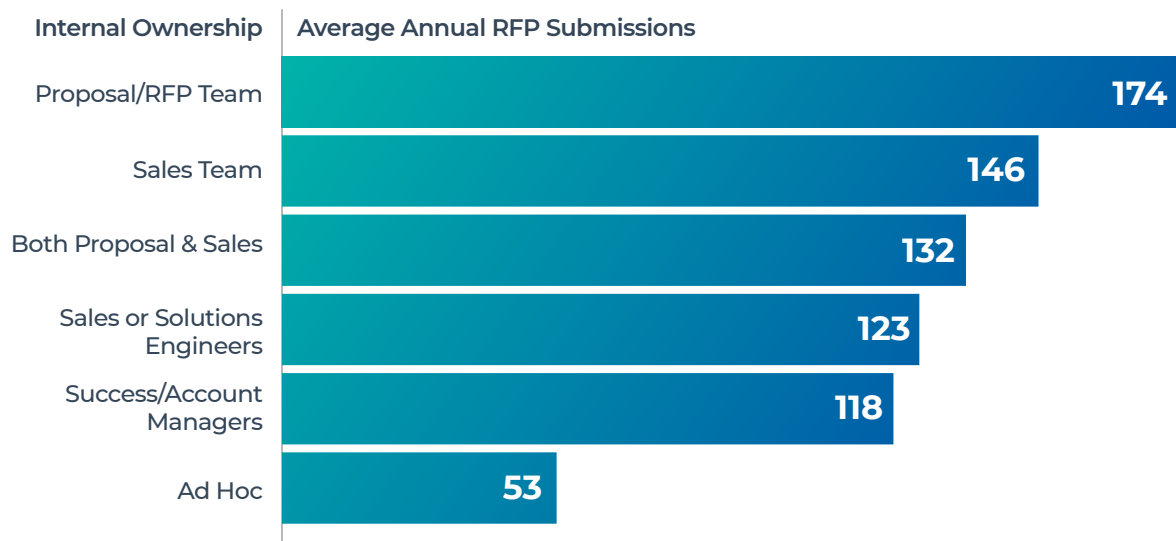


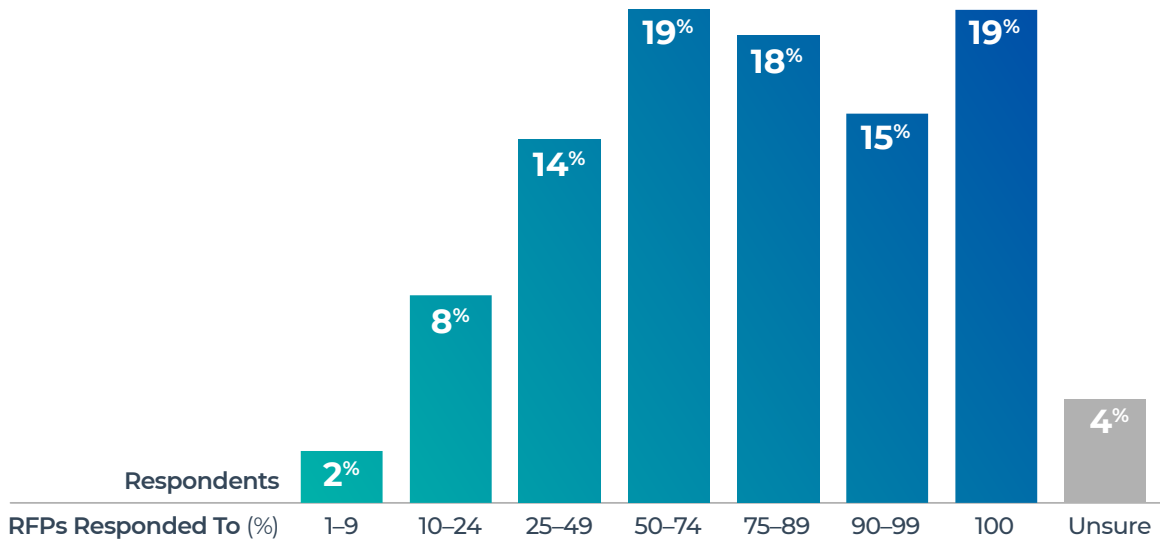
Fig 1.6 | AVERAGE ANNUAL RFP SUBMISSIONS BY INTERNAL OWNERSHIP



Percentage of RFPs That Organizations Respond To

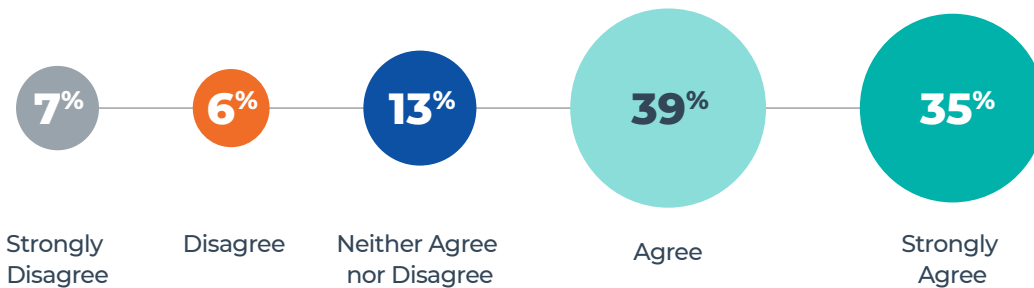
On average, organizations respond to 69% of the RFPs they receive—meaning most organizations deem nearly two-thirds of the RFPs they receive to be worth their time to answer.

Fig 1.7 | **PERCENTAGE OF RECEIVED RFPs THAT COMPANIES RESPOND TO**



When asked how they feel about their response rate, nearly three-quarters of respondents say they're able to respond to most of the RFP submissions on which they should be bidding.

Fig 1.8 | **SATISFACTION WITH ABILITY TO RESPOND TO RECEIVED RFPs**



Respondents are 20–30% more likely to be satisfied with their response rate when they:

- Have a clear and straightforward RFP process.
- Involve more than 15 people in the RFP process.
- 'Strongly Agree' they have the tools and resources needed to do their job effectively.
- Are 'Very Satisfied' with the time it takes to respond to an RFP.

Those with ad hoc RFP ownership are 30% less likely to feel satisfied with their response rate.

Average Win Rates for RFPs

On average, **organizations win 53% of the RFPs they bid on**—37% win less than 50% of RFP bids, 28% win between 50–69%, and 27% win 70% or more.

Fig 1.9 | **AVERAGE ANNUAL RFP WIN RATE**

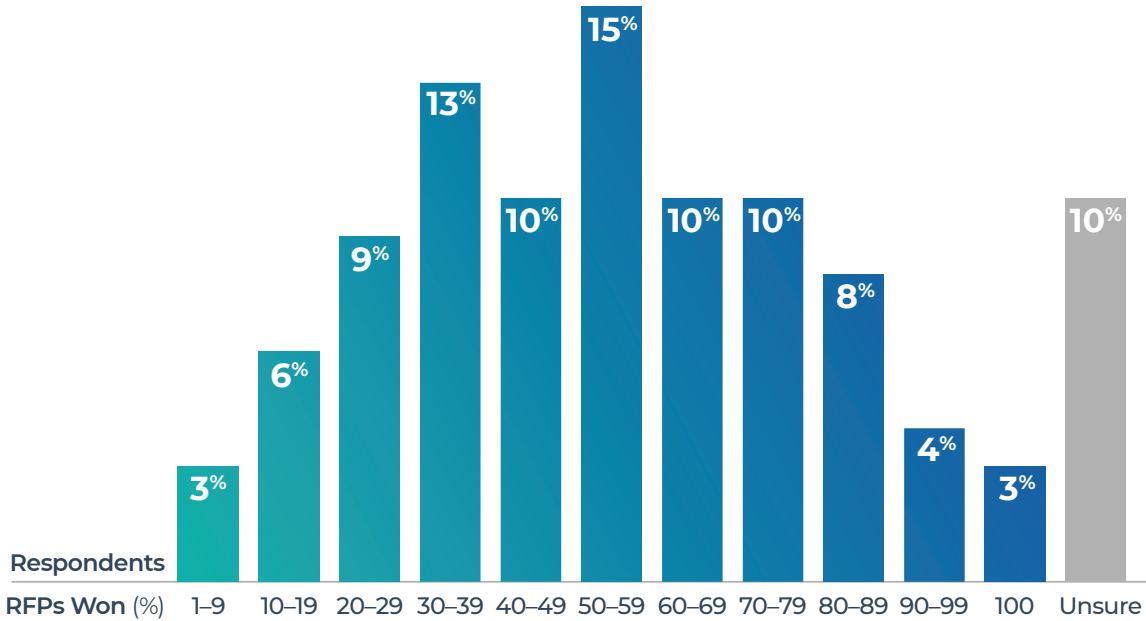
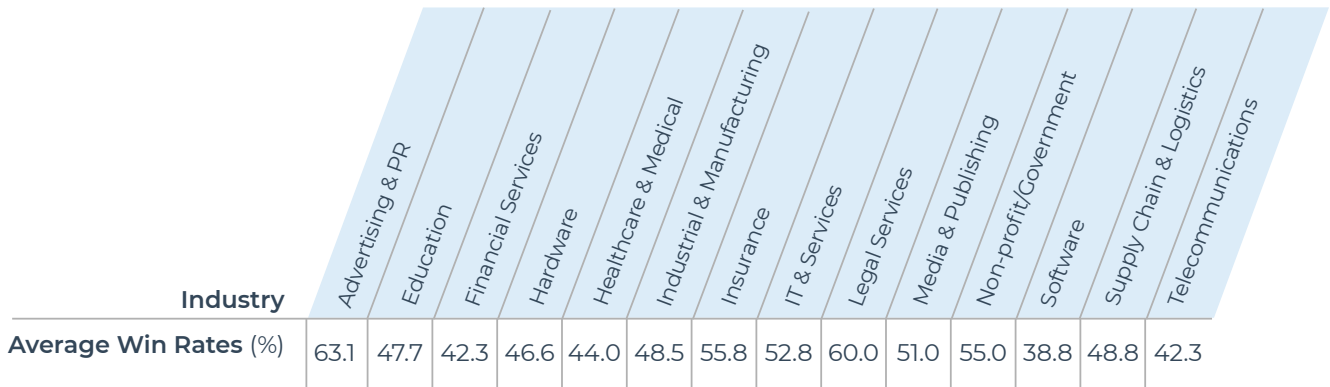
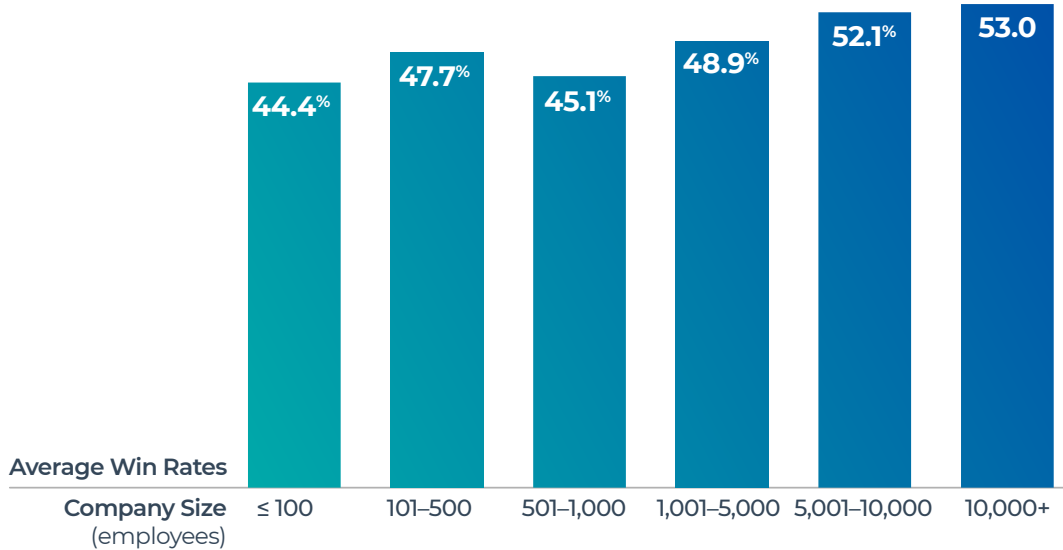


Fig 1.10 | **AVERAGE WIN RATES BY INDUSTRY**



On average, the industries that win the highest percentage of RFP bids are Advertising & PR (63%), Legal Services (60%), and Insurance (56%). Those in Software win the smallest percentage (39%).

Fig 1.11 | AVERAGE WIN RATES BY COMPANY SIZE



Those with the highest win rates have the following things in common:

- **They have a straightforward process.** Those who 'Strongly Agree' that they have a clear process have an average win rate of 55%. Those who 'Strongly Disagree' that they have a clear response process have an average win rate of 38%.
- **They involve more people.** Those with processes that involve 15+ people are 8% more likely than average to have win rates in the 70–79%, and 9% more likely than average to have win rates in the 80–89% range. While more people may slow down a process, the ability to quickly access knowledge from the right people in your organization likely improves answer quality—thus impacting win rates.
- **Their teams have the resources they need.** Those who 'Strongly Agree' that they have the resources they need to do their job effectively have an average win rate of 55%. Those who 'Strongly Disagree' have a 42% win rate.
- **They respond to more RFPs.** Those answering 250+ RFPs a year are 14–21%+ more likely to report win rates in the 80%+ range.



Key Insight: Is Answering More RFPs Better? Yes!

While there needs to be a balance between volume and quality, the ability to answer more RFPs seems to translate to more successful outcomes overall.

Average Sales Revenue Generated from RFPs

On average, RFPs help to generate 41% of sales revenue among survey respondents. Likewise, 40% of respondents attribute less than 50% of their revenue to RFPs, 23% source 50–69% of their sales revenue from RFPs, while only 19% source 70% or more of their revenue from RFPs.

Fig 1.12 | **PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SALES REVENUE SOURCED FROM RFPs**

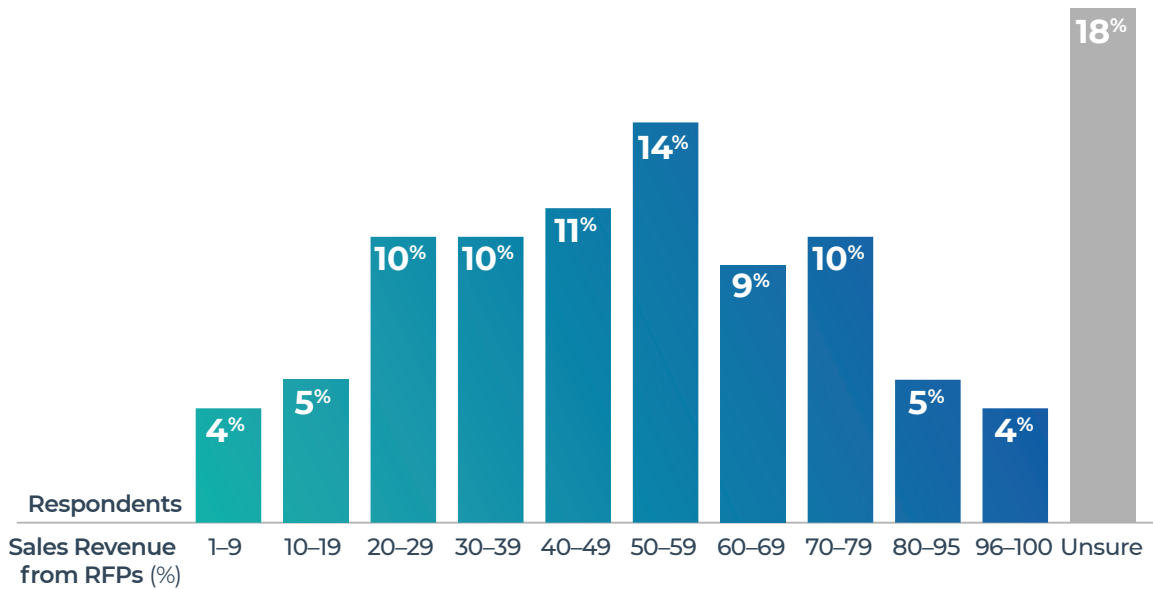
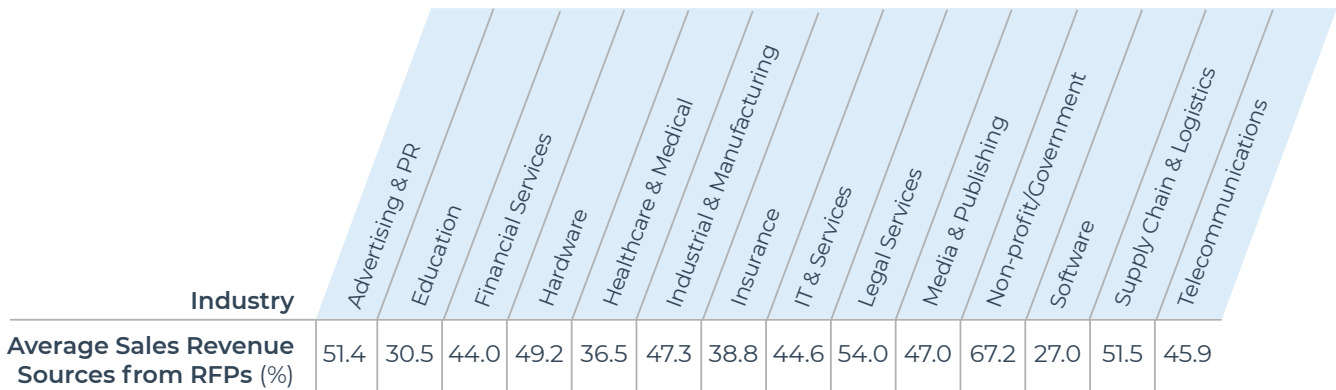
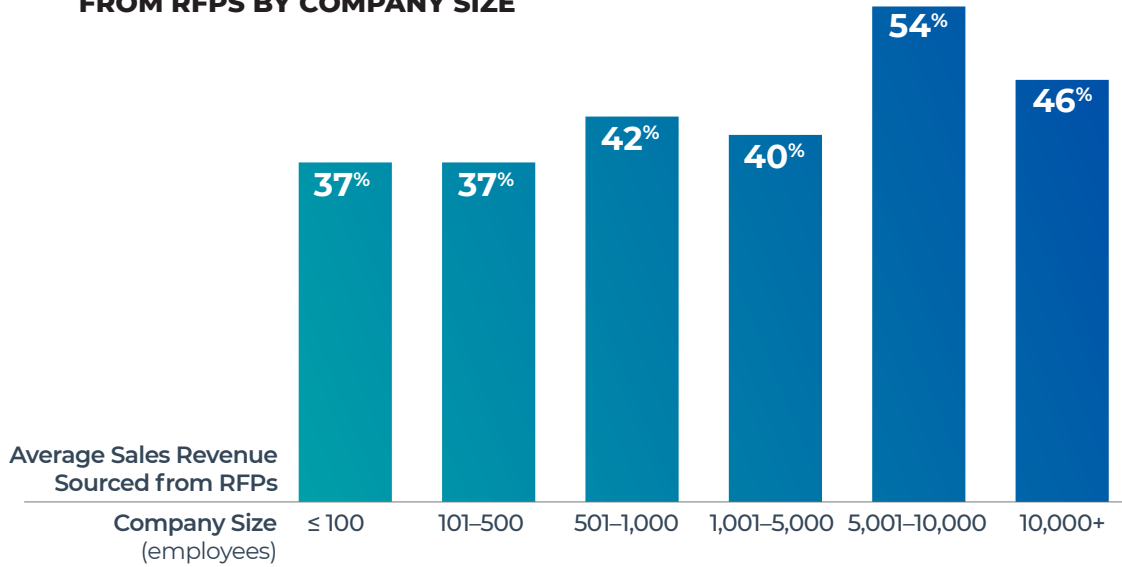


Fig 1.13 | **PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SALES REVENUE SOURCED FROM RFPs BY INDUSTRY**



On average, the industries which generate the highest percentage of their revenue from RFPs are Non-profit/Government (67%), Legal Services (54%), and Supply Chain & Logistics (52%). Those in Software generate the smallest percentage (27%).

Fig 1.14 | **PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SALES REVENUE SOURCED FROM RFPs BY COMPANY SIZE**



Larger companies are more likely than smaller ones to generate a higher average percentage of sales revenue from RFPs. These organizations likely involve more people in the RFP process and submit more responses—so they often invest more time and resources into the process than smaller companies.

New Business vs. Retained Revenue Sourced from RFPs

RFPs contribute as much to winning new business as they do to retaining customers—generating an average of 40% of an organizations' RFP revenue from net new acquisition, and 39% of an organizations' RFP revenue from customer retention and/or RFPs they've previously won.

Fig 1.15 | **RFP REVENUE SOURCED FROM NEW BUSINESS ACQUISITION**

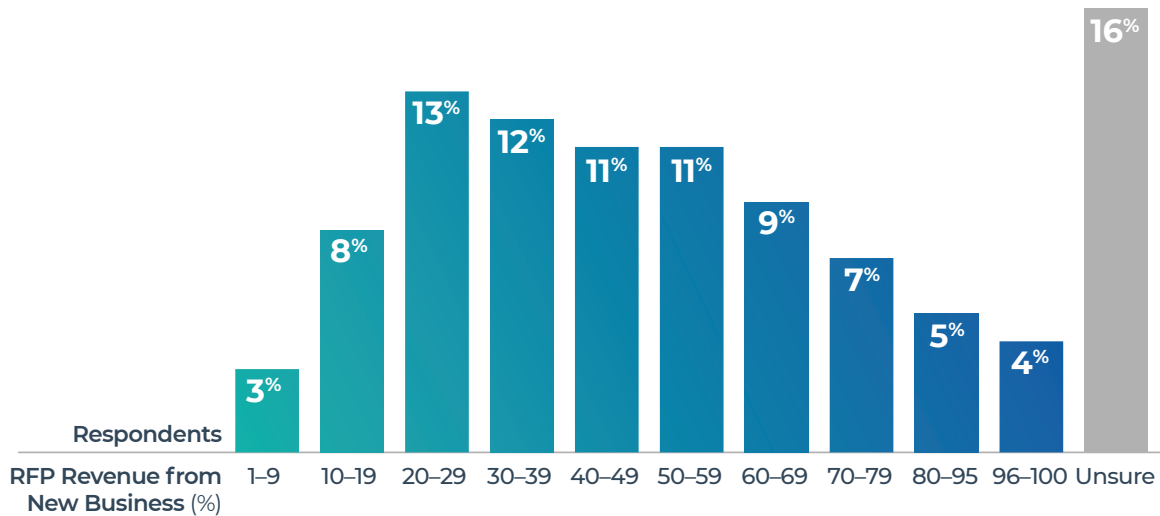
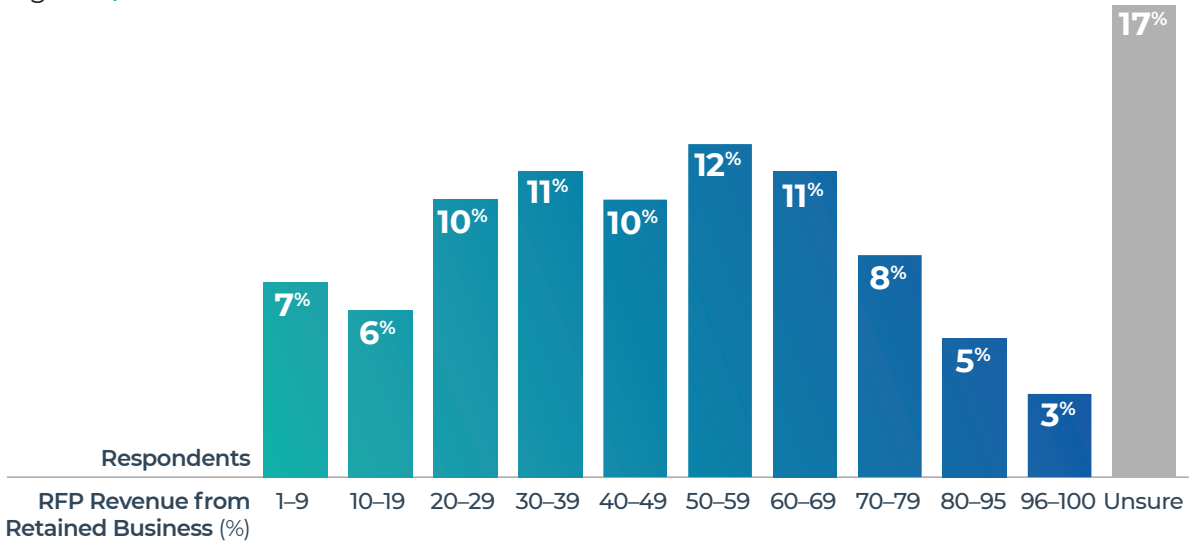


Fig 1.16 | RFP REVENUE SOURCED FROM RETAINED BUSINESS



How Industry Impacts RFP Revenue Percentage by Source

The industries that generate the most revenue from new business acquisition are Non-profit/Government (55%), Legal Services (50%), and Hardware (49%). The industries that generate the most from retained business are Legal Services (58%), Telecommunications (56%), and Media & Publishing (51%).

Fig 1.17 | NEW BUSINESS SOURCED THROUGH RFPs BY INDUSTRY

Industry	New Business Revenue from RFPs (%)
Advertising & PR	47.5
Education	29.1
Financial Services	39.2
Hardware	48.7
Healthcare & Medical	39.7
Industrial & Manufacturing	41.5
Insurance	44.2
IT & Services	43.4
Legal Services	50.0
Media & Publishing	43.7
Non-profit/Government	55.0
Software	37.9
Supply Chain & Logistics	39.7
Telecommunications	43.2

Fig 1.18 | RETAINED BUSINESS SOURCED THROUGH RFPs BY INDUSTRY

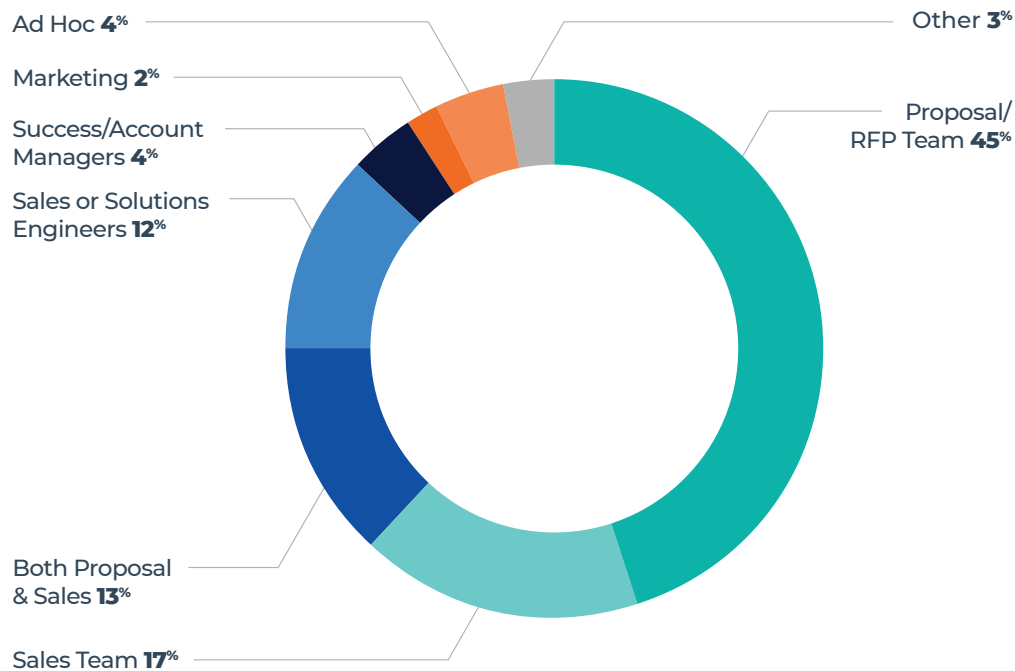
Industry	Retained Business Revenue from RFPs (%)
Advertising & PR	50.6
Education	28.6
Financial Services	43.9
Hardware	41.1
Healthcare & Medical	40.6
Industrial & Manufacturing	42.7
Insurance	45.0
IT & Services	41.4
Legal Services	58.0
Media & Publishing	51.3
Non-profit/Government	48.3
Software	21.3
Supply Chain & Logistics	43.8
Telecommunications	56.4

Process Insights and Benchmarks

Who Owns the RFP Process

Most respondents (45%) dedicate a person or team to managing RFPs. If there isn't a proposal team, the next largest group of RFP owners is Sales. The third most common RFP ownership is a mix of Proposal team and Sales team members. While Solutions Engineers, Customer Success, Account Managers, and Marketing may also own the process, few organizations don't have a specific team or person owning responses.

Fig 2.1 | **TEAM OR INDIVIDUAL PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING RFPS**

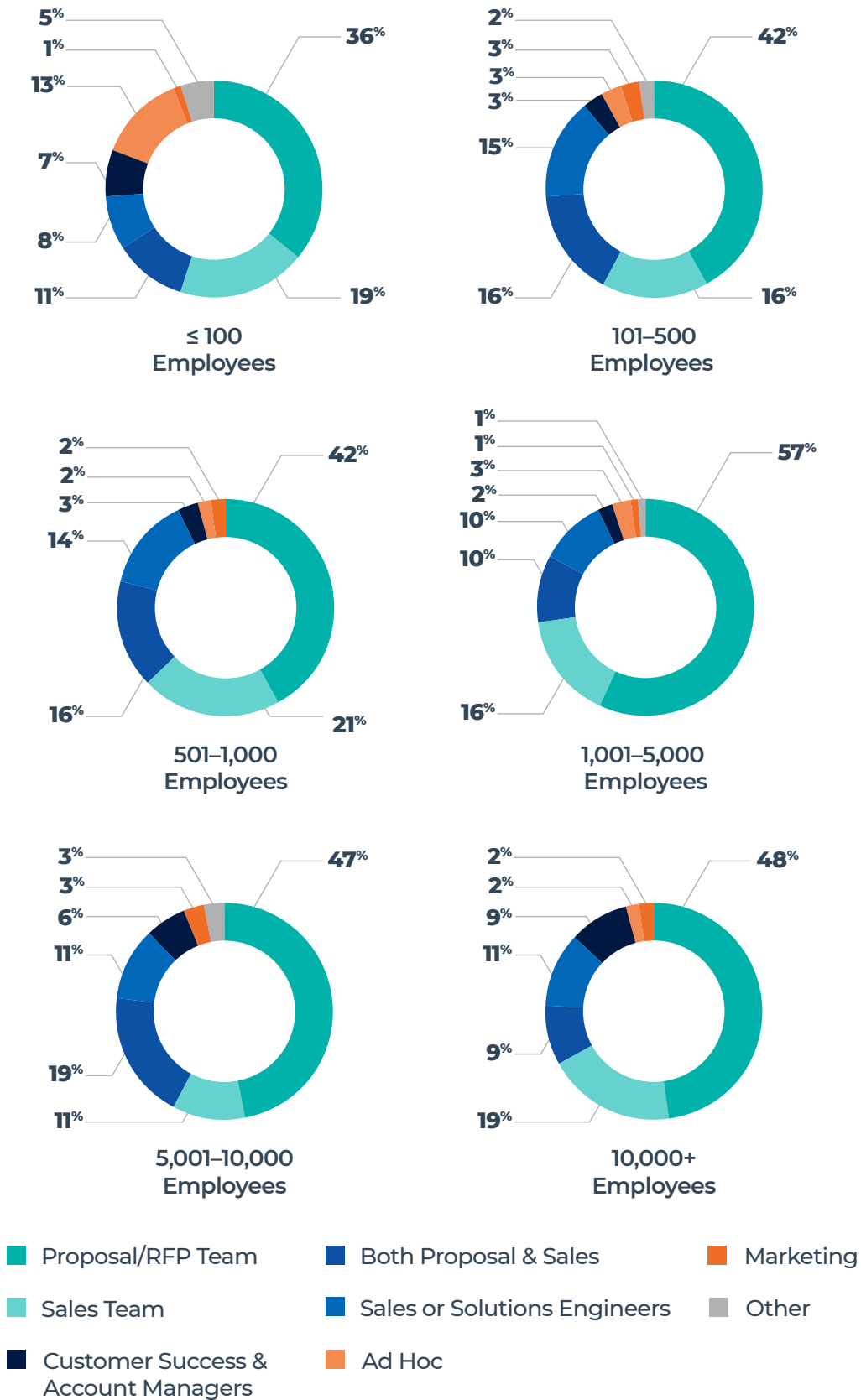


How Company Size and Submission Number Impacts RFP Ownership

Companies with less than 100 employees are 13% more likely to have an ad hoc process with no clear owner.

Companies that do less than 50 RFPs a year are also more likely to have ad hoc ownership of the RFP process—suggesting the threshold for having a dedicated Proposal team or manager sits at around 50 responses annually.

Fig 2.2 | RFP PROCESS OWNERSHIP BY COMPANY SIZE



How Industry Impacts Ownership

Financial Services, Hardware, and Software industries are 10–22% more likely to have a dedicated Proposal Manager or team than average. However, Supply Chain & Logistics companies are 13% more likely than average to have no clear owner.

Fig 2.3 | **DEDICATED RFP TEAM OR INDIVIDUAL BY INDUSTRY**

Industry	Advertising & PR	Education	Financial Services	Hardware	Healthcare & Medical	Industrial & Manufacturing	Insurance	IT & Services	Legal Services	Media & Publishing	Non-profit/Government	Software	Supply Chain & Logistics	Telecommunications
Dedicated RFP/Individuals (%)	39	27	67	63	42	48	38	51	3	27	33	55	17	27



Key Insight: Dedicated Proposal Individuals or Teams Perform Better

Our research shows that organizations with a dedicated Proposal individual or team are:

- 9% more likely to feel their process is efficient.
- 5% more likely to complete more RFPs.
- 5% more likely to be planning to complete more RFPs in 2019.
- 10–14% more likely to rate their tools as 'Very Effective' to 'Extremely Effective'.
- 9% more likely to be 'Satisfied' with the time it takes them to complete RFPs.
- 8% more likely to be 'Very Satisfied' with the quality of their RFPs.

Average Number of People Involved in the RFP Process

On average, companies involve 7.3 people in completing a single RFP response—39% of respondents involve between 8-10 people, 36% involve 11 people or more, and 25% involve fewer than five people.

Fig 2.4 | **AVERAGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE RESPONSE PROCESS**

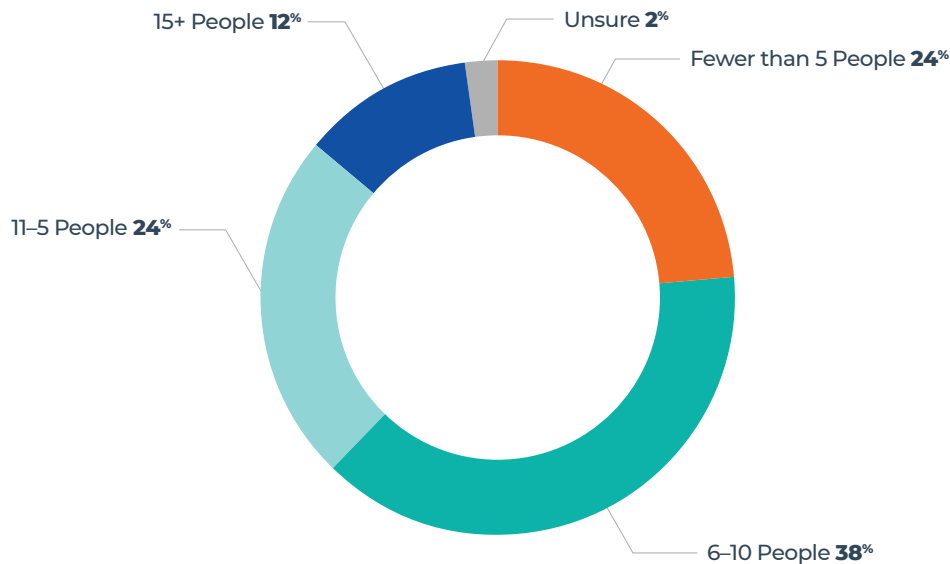
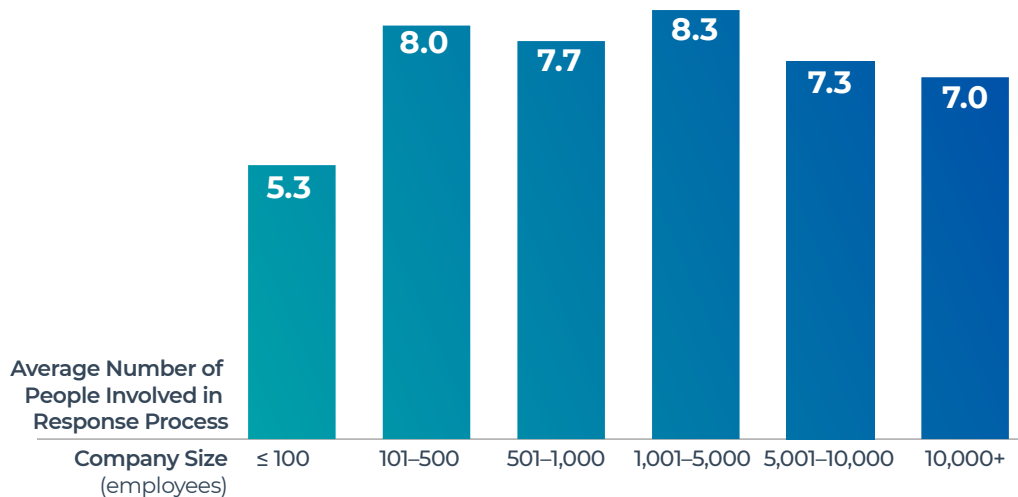


Fig 2.5 | **NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED BY COMPANY SIZE**



How Company Size Impacts the Number of People Involved in the RFP Process

Unsurprisingly, the smaller the company, the fewer the people involved in the RFP writing process—and vice-versa.



Key Insight: More People Means Better Outcomes

Organizations that involve more people in the RFP process tend to have higher win rates. This could be because more expertise is put into responses from different areas of the business.

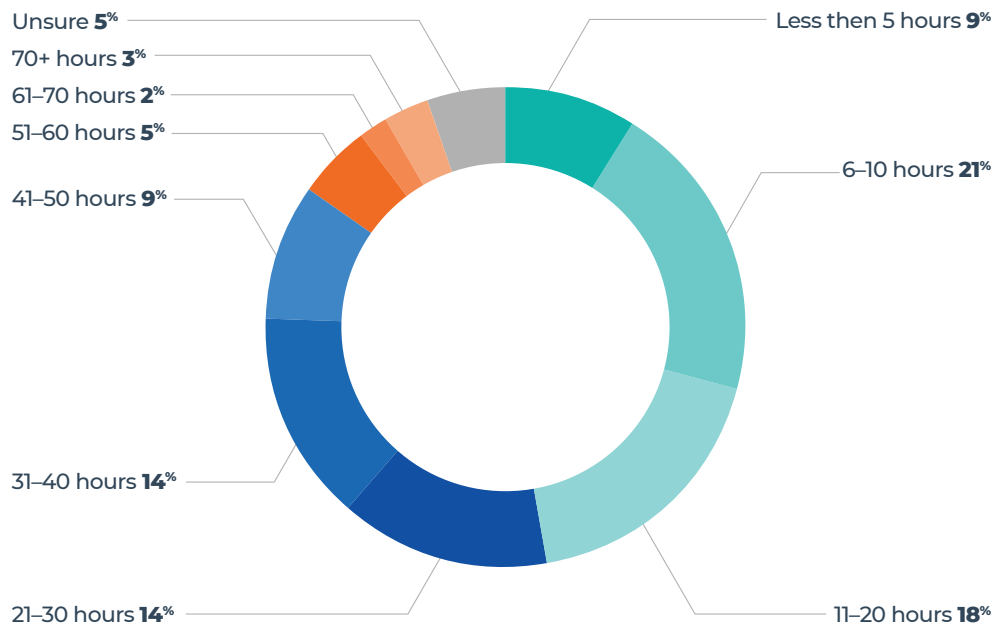
Interestingly, those who feel their process is less efficient are 29% more likely to involve fewer than five people in the RFP process. Therefore, a lack of internal support from other team members likely causes more roadblocks, even if it takes less time.

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How Long It Takes to Write RFP Responses

When asked how many hours it takes to write a single RFP, the average response is 23.8 hours. Overall, 33% of respondents spend 31+ hours writing a single RFP, 32% spend between 11–30 hours, and 29% spend 10 hours or less.

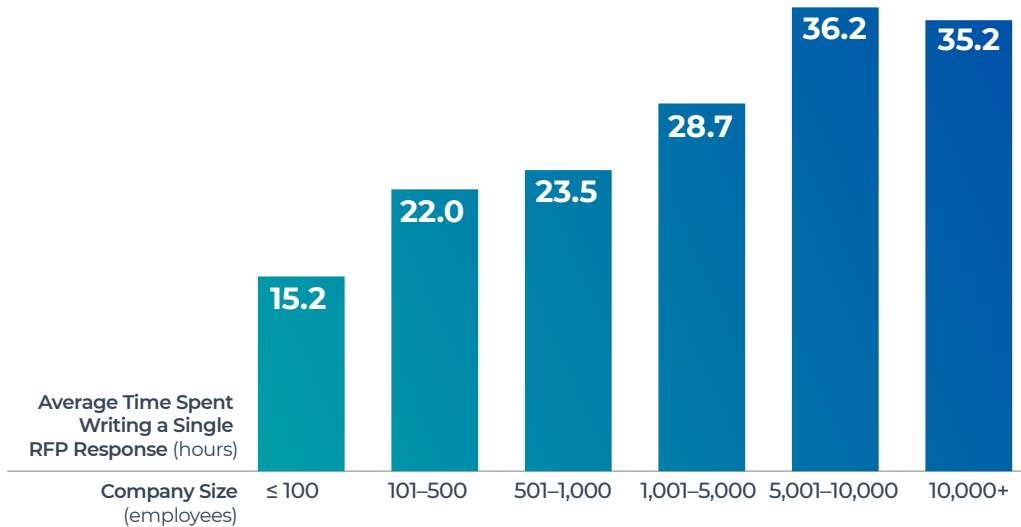
Fig 2.6 | **AVERAGE TIME SPENT WRITING A SINGLE RFP**



How Company Size Impacts Average RFP Timelines

Companies with less than 100 employees are 21% more likely to take less than five hours to complete an RFP than average, likely due to resource and bandwidth constraints that prevent them from spending more time on responses. Meanwhile, companies with 5,000+ employees are 7% more likely to take 61–70 hours per RFP compared to the average.

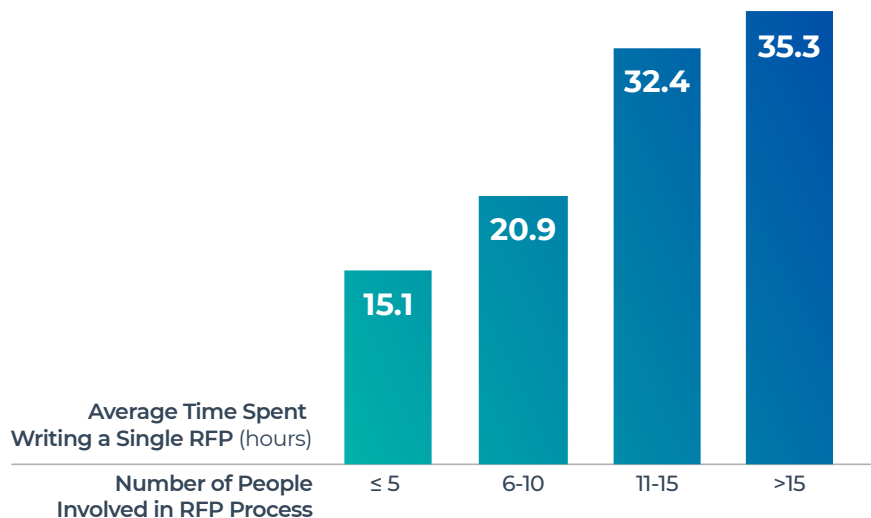
Fig 2.7 | **AVERAGE HOURS TO WRITE A SINGLE RFP RESPONSE BY COMPANY SIZE**



How the Number of People Involved in the RFP Process Impacts Writing Time

The more people involved in the process, the longer the RFP writing process takes. But that doesn't mean involving less people is better, since this report already establishes that involving more people positively impacts RFP outcomes like win rates.

Fig 2.8 | **TIME SPENT WRITING AN RFP VS. NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED**





Key Insight: More Writing Time Means Better Outcomes

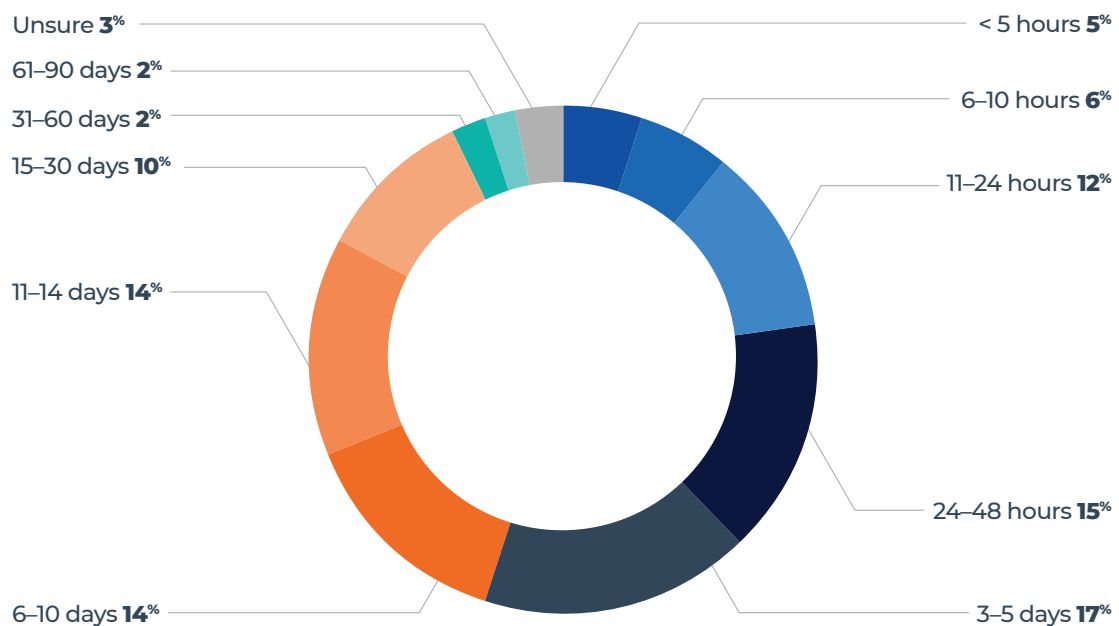
Those who spend more time writing responses tend to achieve higher win rates. Companies with 80–99% win rates are 6% more likely to spend 61+ hours, on average, writing RFPs. Several groups that report having a higher percentage of their overall sales revenue coming from RFPs are also 7%+ more likely to spend 41 hours or more per RFP.

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Average Timeline for Submitting an RFP

Most organizations indicate they take between a few days to a few weeks to complete and submit an RFP once they receive it. The average is 252 hours (or 10.5 days); the most frequent timeline for submitting an RFP is 3–5 days (17%). Meanwhile, 15% submit RFPs slightly faster (24–48 hours) and 14% submit slightly slower (6–10 days).

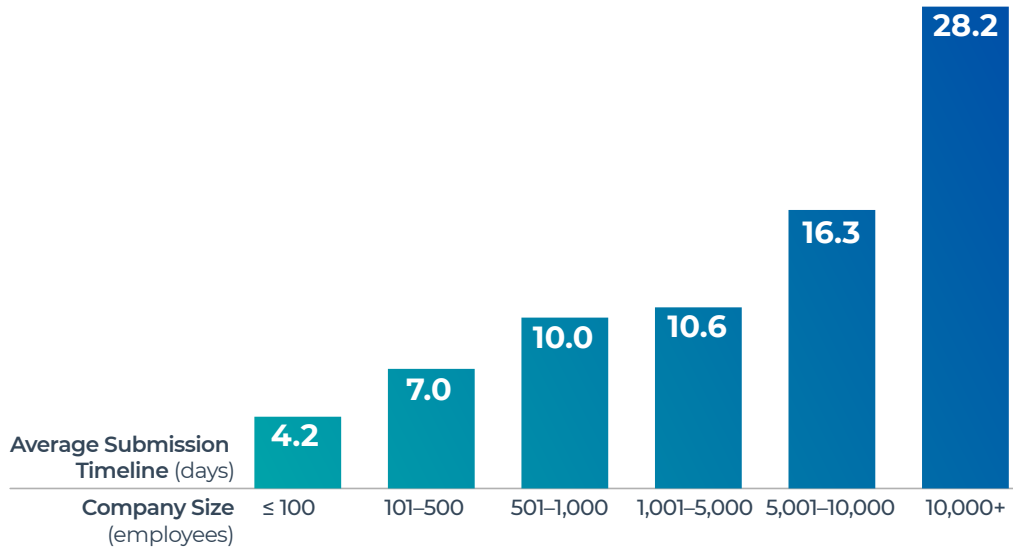
Fig 2.9 | **AVERAGE TIMELINE (FROM START TO FINISH) FOR COMPLETING A SINGLE RFP**



Company Size vs. Average Timeline to Submission

The larger the company size, the longer it takes respondents to submit an RFP. On average, companies with less than 100 employees take 4.2 days, while those with 10,000+ employees take 28.2 days. This is likely due to the number of people involved in the writing and approval process, which isn't a factor at smaller companies.

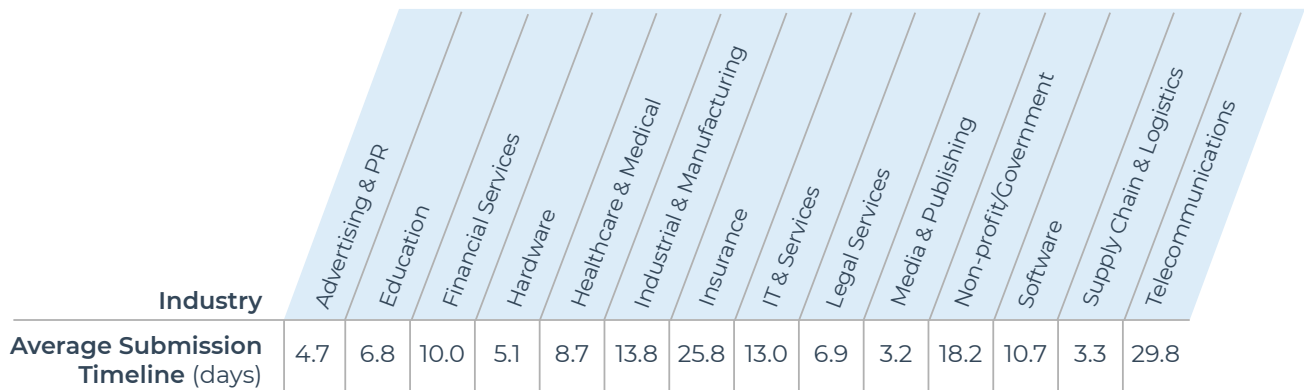
Fig 2.10 | **AVERAGE SUBMISSION TIMELINE BY COMPANY SIZE**



How the Average Submission Timeline is Impacted by Industry

The industries which submit RFPs the quickest are Media & Publishing (3.1 days), Supply Chain & Logistics (3.3 days), and Advertising & PR (4.7 days). Those in Telecommunications take the longest (29.8 days).

Fig 2.11 | **AVERAGE SUBMISSION TIMELINE (IN DAYS) BY INDUSTRY**

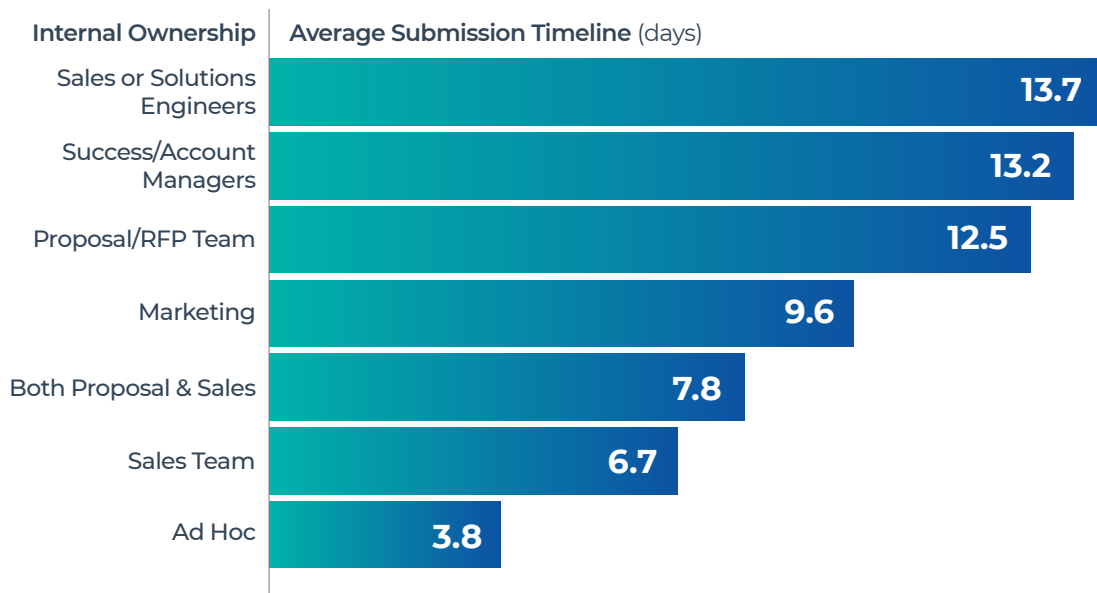


How RFP Process Ownership Impacts Submission Timelines

The average submission timeline is shortest for organizations that manage processes on an ad hoc basis (3.8 days). This is likely because there is a less formal process overall, so there are fewer approvals or reviewers involved.

The process tends to take the longest when managed by Sales or Solutions Engineers (13.7 days). Since this report already established there is a correlation between taking more time to write RFPs and having higher win rates, it's likely not detrimental for organizations to have these teams own the process, even if they do take longer.

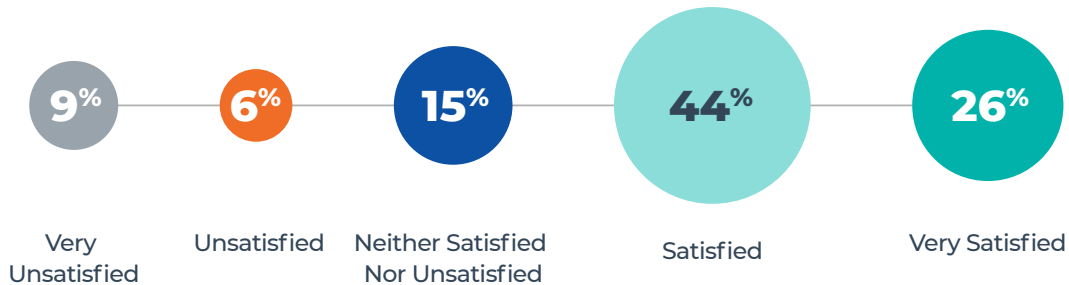
Fig 2.12 | **AVERAGE SUBMISSION TIMELINE BY PROCESS OWNER**



Satisfaction with Time to Respond to RFPs

Nearly two-thirds of respondents are 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with the time it takes to complete RFPs. However, 31% (nearly a third) are less than 'Satisfied' with the time it takes to submit an RFP.

Fig 2.13 | **SATISFACTION WITH THE TIME IT TAKES TO COMPLETE AN RFP**



There are a few interesting factors that impact sentiment around the time it takes to submit an RFP:

- **Internal ownership.** Organizations with a Proposal Manager or team leading the RFP response process are 9% more likely to be 'Satisfied' with their submission timelines. Those with ad hoc ownership are less likely to be 'Very Satisfied' with their response speed—even though they take less time to submit RFPs than other owners.
- **Process clarity.** Those who don't feel their organization has a clear process for responding to RFPs are 58% more likely to be 'Very Unsatisfied' with the time it takes to complete RFPs, while those who feel their organization does have a clear process are 30% more likely to be 'Satisfied' with the time it takes to complete RFPs.
- **Number of RFP responses submitted.** Those who feel they're not submitting responses for all the RFPs they could be responding to are 51% more likely to be 'Very Unsatisfied' with the time it takes to complete an RFP.
- **Win rates.** Those with 95%+ win rates are 30% more likely to be 'Very Satisfied' with the time it takes to complete RFPs.



Key Insight: Longer Timelines Don't Impact Process Satisfaction

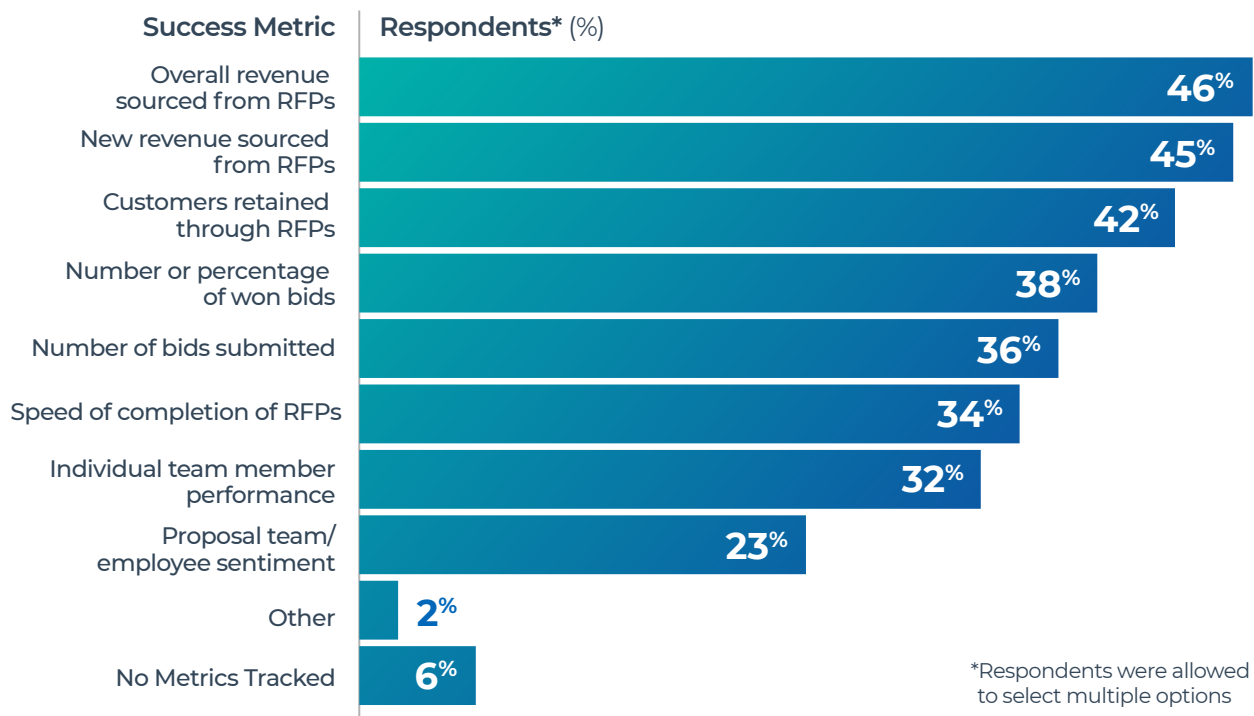
How satisfied companies are with their RFP submission times has little to do with the actual time it takes to complete responses. Those who take more than 50+ hours to write a single RFP response are 24% more likely to be 'Very Satisfied' with the time it takes to complete an RFP, and those with 61–90 day timelines (one of the longest in this report) are 60% more likely to be 'Satisfied' with the time it takes than average. What really impacts satisfaction with timelines is perceptions around process efficiency and outcomes like total number of submissions and win rates.

Tools and Reporting

Success Metrics Tracking

Almost half of all respondents track the success of the RFP process by looking at overall revenue sourced from RFPs. Additionally, 45% get so granular as to look at new revenue sourced from RFPs, and another 42% look at customers retained through RFPs.

Fig 3.1 | **TOP SUCCESS METRICS TRACKED**



There is a positive relationship between tracking revenue metrics and the percentage of RFPs won—68% of those who win 70% or more of the RFPs they bid on track overall revenue, compared to 36% of those who win less than 40% of their bids. Similarly, 64% of those who win 70% or more of the RFPs they bid on track new revenue from RFPs, compared to 43% of those who win less than 40% of their bids.

Team Ownership's Impact on Metrics Tracking

Companies with dedicated Proposal teams or individuals are more likely than other groups to track submission numbers, win rates, and overall revenue metrics. When Sales teams own the process, those metrics are less likely to be tracked. Companies that have no clear owner are much more likely to be unsure of their win rates. Therefore, having a dedicated RFP owner means metrics tracking is more likely to occur.



Key Insight: Organizations Need to Track More Baseline Metrics

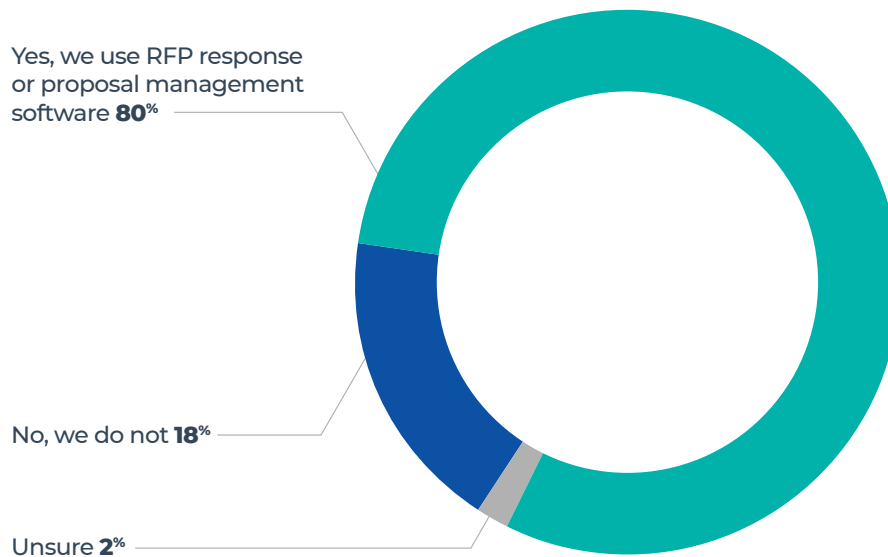
Organizations are more likely to track RFP revenue metrics than baseline metrics like response timelines, submission rates, or employee sentiment. However, increasing all of these baseline metrics is correlated with higher win rates throughout this report. So, while companies may know the value RFPs drive, they aren't tracking some of the key levers that can help them improve outcomes.

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RFP Tools and Software

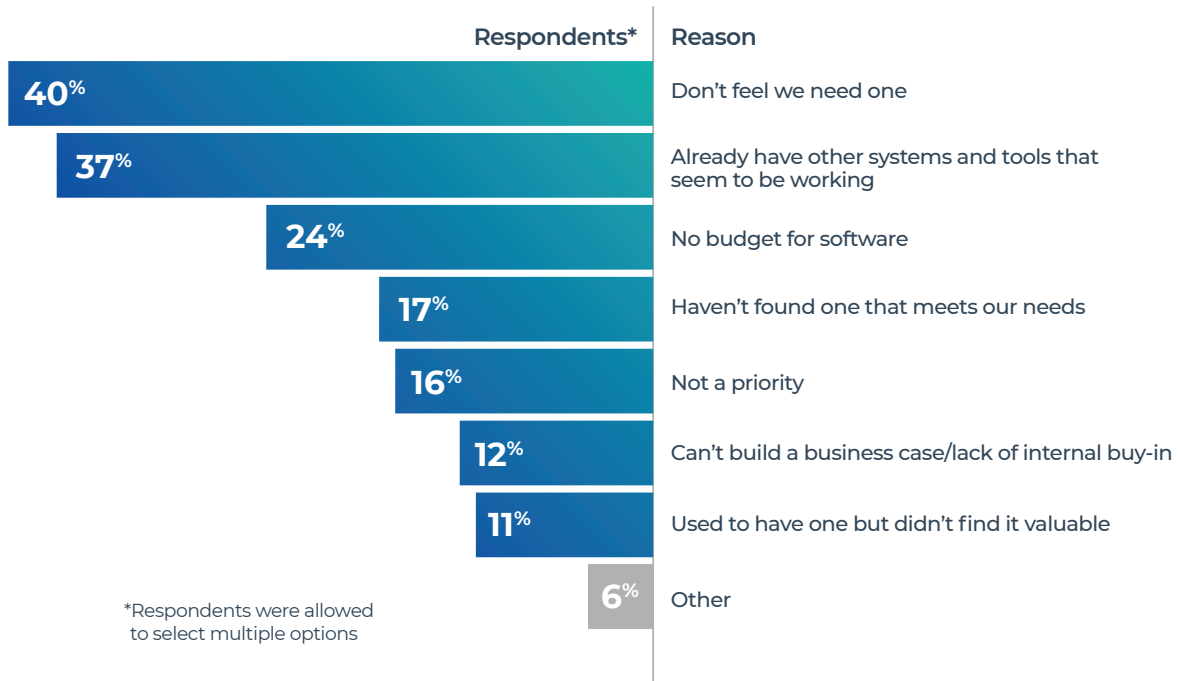
When asked about the tools they use to manage RFP responses, the majority (80%) of respondents use RFP response or proposal management software.

Fig 3.2 | **ORGANIZATIONAL ADOPTION OF RFP SOFTWARE**



For the respondents that don't use an RFP response solution, the top reasons were due to a lack of budget or a belief that their current tools are working adequately. Smaller organizations are less likely to adopt RFP software, as are teams with ad hoc ownership of the process.

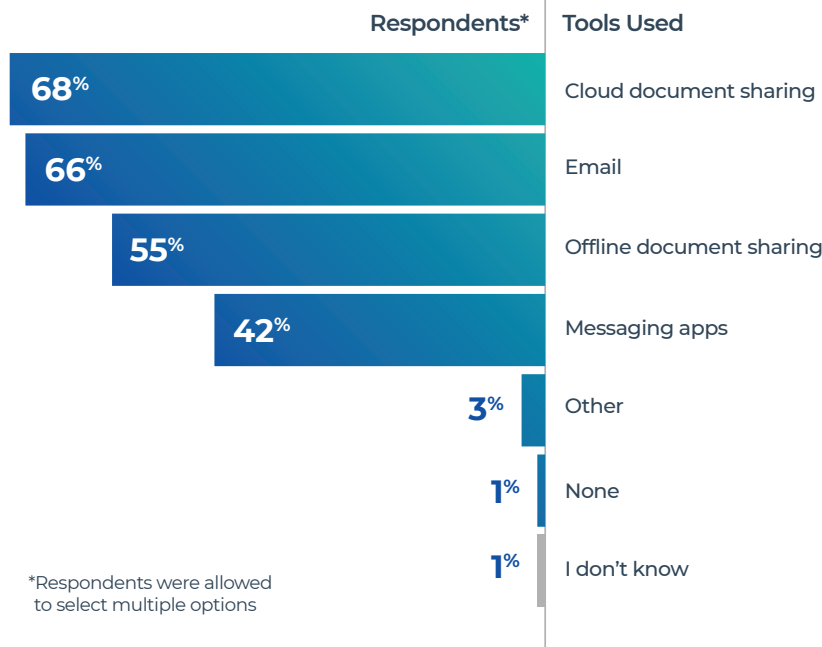
Fig 3.3 | REASONS FOR NOT INVESTING IN RFP MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE



Supporting Systems and Tools

The other most common tools or systems used to collaborate on and manage RFP projects are cloud document sharing (68%), email (66%), and offline document sharing (55%).

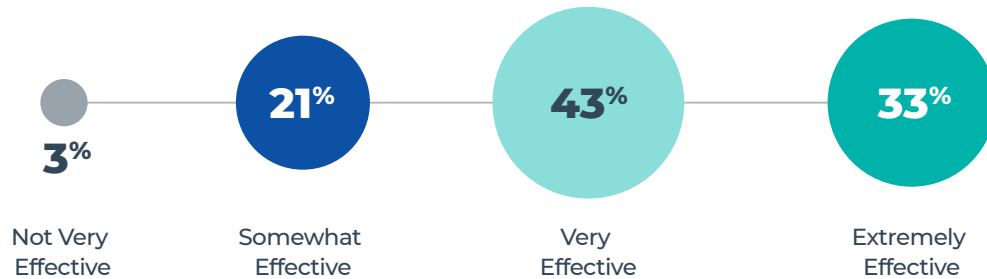
Fig 3.4 | OTHER TOOLS USED FOR MANAGING RFPS



Effectiveness of Existing Tools

Three-quarters (76%) of respondents consider the tools their organization uses for RFP projects to be 'Very Effective' or 'Extremely Effective.'

Fig 3.5 | **EFFECTIVENESS RATING OF OTHERS TOOLS USED TO MANAGE RFPS**



Key Insight: The Top Benefits of RFP Software Adoption

- More effective than other tools.** Those who don't use RFP software are 17% less likely to rate their tools as 'Extremely Effective.' Those who rate their tools as 'Extremely Effective' are 10% more likely to use RFP software.
- Increased submissions.** Those using RFP software respond to an average of 152 RFPs annually, while those without respond to only 103 RFPs. They're also more likely to be increasing the number of responses they'll submit next year compared to those that don't use a dedicated platform.
- Better collaboration.** Those who rate their tools as 'Extremely Effective' are 8% more likely than average to involve 15+ people in their RFP process. Since those who rate their tools as 'Extremely Effective' are slightly more likely to use RFP software, it's possible to correlate having an RFP platform with better collaboration. Since this report has already tied involving more people in the response process to improved outcomes, it's in every organization's best interest to adopt tools that make collaboration easier.

Sentiment Around RFP Management

Perceived Efficiency and Clarity of the RFP Process

Nearly 80% of respondents feel they have a clear and straightforward process for managing RFPs.

Fig 4.1 | PERCEPTION THAT ORGANIZATION HAS A CLEAR RFP PROCESS

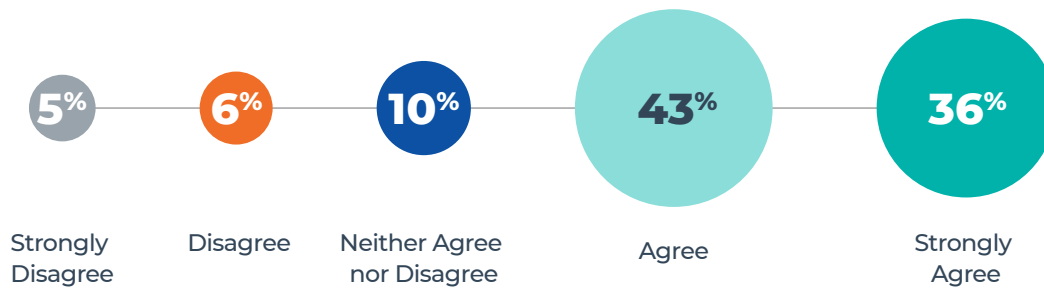
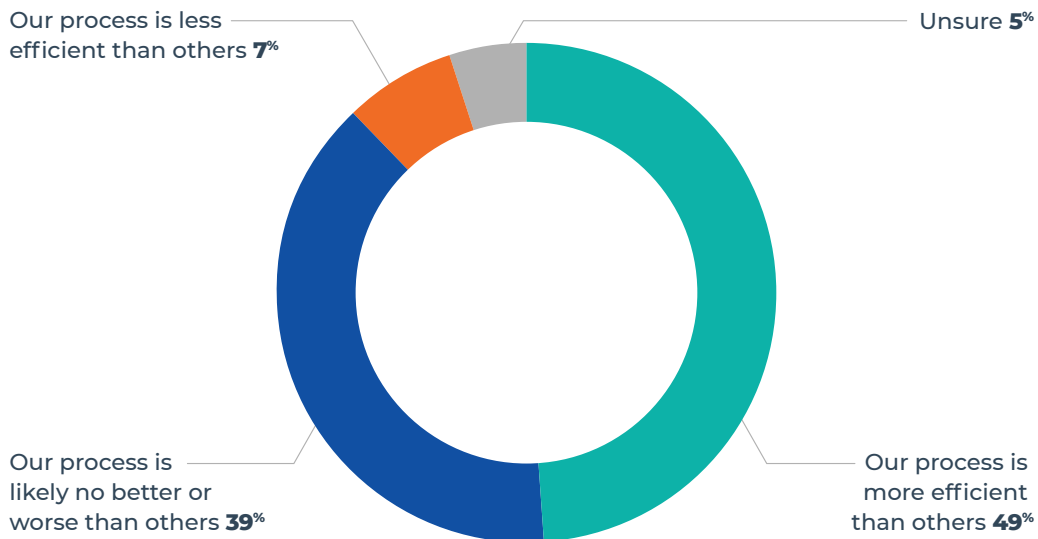


Fig 4.2 | HOW RESPONDENTS FEEL THEIR RFP PROCESS COMPARES TO OTHERS



Nearly half of respondents believe their RFP process is more efficient than others. Additionally, 39% believe their process is likely no better or worse than others, while only 12% believe it is less efficient or are unsure.

Unsurprisingly, those who feel they have a clear and straightforward process are 21% more likely to rate their process as more efficient than others.

The biggest factors that positively impact perceptions of process efficiency are:

- Higher submission and win rates
- Having a dedicated proposal manager or team
- Being 'Very Satisfied' with the quality of RFPs



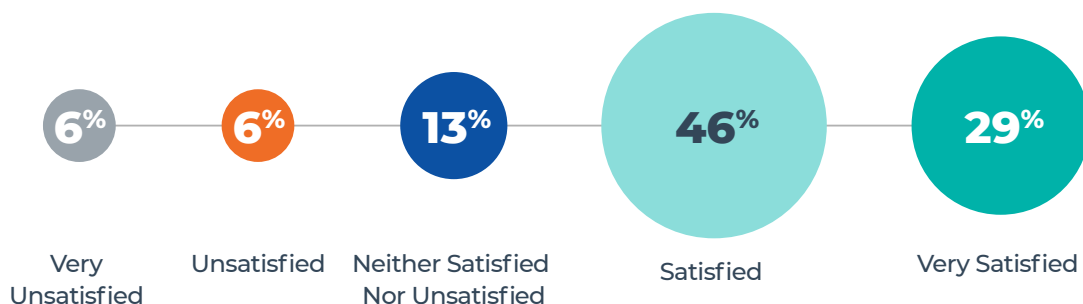
Key Insight: Efficient RFP Processes Still Have Room For Improvement

Successful RFP outcomes make people feel their process is more efficient. However, some factors associated with better processes and outcomes are also reported as top challenges by respondents. For instance, involving more people in the RFP process has a positive impact on RFP win rates and perceptions of efficiency. Yet, coordinating with subject matter experts across the organization is the second biggest challenge respondents say they face—so there's still room for process improvements.

Satisfaction with RFP Quality

Three-quarters (75%) of respondents are 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with the overall quality of the RFPs their organizations submit.

Fig 4.3 | **SATISFACTION WITH RFP RESPONSE QUALITY**



Factors that impact RFP quality satisfaction levels are:

- **Process ownership.** Those with a dedicated RFP individual or team heading up the RFP process are 8% more likely to be 'Very Satisfied' with the quality of their RFP.
- **Number of people involved in the response process.** Those involving fewer people are 11% less likely to be 'Very Satisfied' with their RFP quality.
- **Process clarity.** Those who feel they have a clear process for creating RFP responses are 27% more likely to be 'Very Satisfied' with the RFP quality.
- **Effective tools.** Those who rate their RFP tools as 'Extremely Effective' are 24% more likely to be 'Very Satisfied' with their RFP quality.

Key Challenges in the Response Process

Respondents were asked to select their top five largest challenges in the RFP process. The most common issues identified are finding the best and most accurate answers to questions, collaborating with others, and dealing with delays and tight deadlines.

Fig 4.4 | TOP CHALLENGES IN THE RFP PROCESS



How Company Size Impacts Top Challenges

The larger the company, the larger the challenge to collaborate with subject matter experts across an organization: 50% of companies with 10,000+ employees consider this one of their biggest challenges compared to 30% of companies with fewer than 100 employees.

Since this report already establishes that involving more people in the RFP response process improves outcomes, it's imperative companies improve how they tap into subject matter experts to help respond to RFPs.



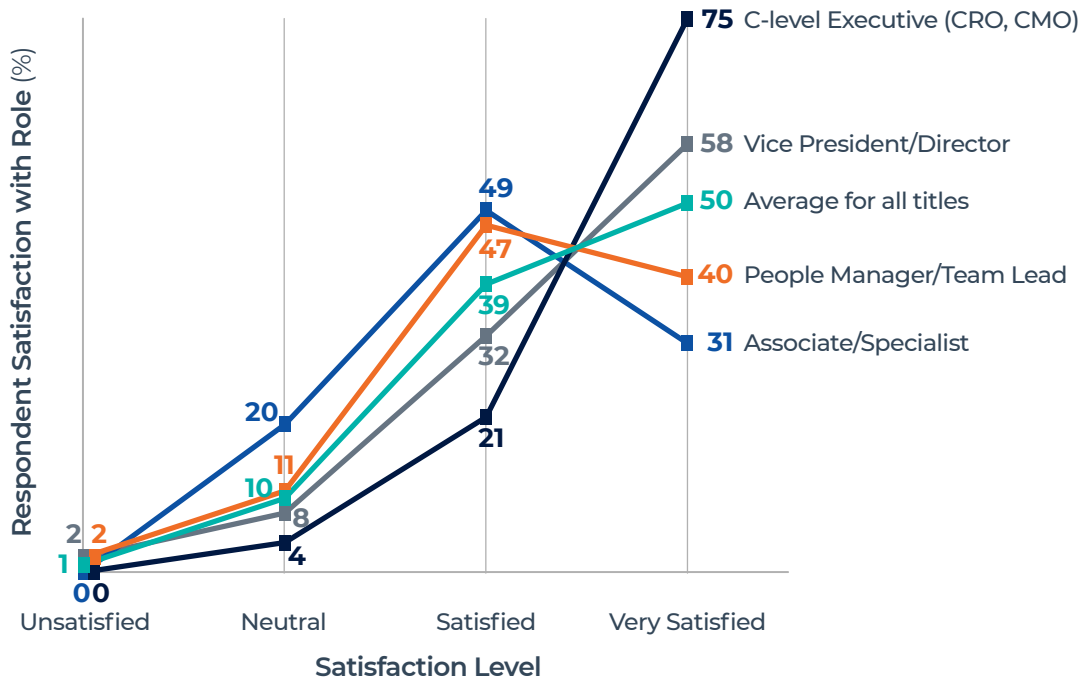
Key Insight: Access to Information and Internal Experts are the Biggest RFP Challenges

Interestingly, the top RFP process challenges relate to how easily and quickly people can find the best and most accurate answers to RFPs. Focusing on tools and processes that will improve collaboration and RFP content management will have the greatest impact on improving the RFP process.

Employee Satisfaction Levels

The answer to how respondents feel about their role varies across role type. On average, 50% of respondents are 'Very Satisfied,' while 40% are 'Satisfied.' Only 11% are 'Neutral' or 'Unsatisfied.'

However, a respondent's level within their organization significantly impacts responses. Executives are much more likely to be 'More Satisfied' compared to Manager and Associate levels.

Fig 4.5 | **SATISFACTION WITH ROLE BY LEVEL WITHIN ORGANIZATION**

It's worth noting that those with higher satisfaction levels with their role tend to report higher win rates, higher satisfaction with RFP quality, and higher submission rates. Those feeling 'Neutral' or 'Unsatisfied' about their role are significantly more likely to feel 'Neutral' or negatively about their internal process.



Key Insight: Employee Satisfaction Tracking = Big Blindspot for Organizations

Since levels of dissatisfaction are low, many companies may not feel worried about tracking employee sentiment. However, it's important to note that those who are 'Very Satisfied' with their role are 21% more likely to be 'Very Satisfied' with response quality—meaning their attitudes directly impact response quality. And, since only 23% of organizations track RFP team member sentiment, executives don't have real insight into whether their employees' attitudes could be impacting RFP outcomes.

Executive Insights and Disconnections from the RFP Process

Throughout this survey, there are significant differences between the answers of those in Executive-level roles and those in Associate or Manager-level roles.

- **Response rates.** Executives are 10% more likely than average to say that their team responds to all of the RFPs they receive—meaning they may believe it's happening when it isn't.
- **Response time satisfaction.** 40% of Executives are 'Very Satisfied' with the time it takes to complete an RFP, while only 12% of Associates are.
- **Response quality.** 80% of Executives feel 'Very Satisfied' with the quality of their RFPs, while only 16% of Associates feel this way.
- **Tools satisfaction.** 49% of Executives rank their tools as 'Extremely Effective,' while only 17% of Associates do.
- **Process efficiency.** 65% of Executives feel their response process is more efficient than others, while only 40% of Associates and Managers feel this way.
- **Metrics tracking.** Associates are less likely to say their company is tracking revenue metrics, and they are more likely to be unsure of their win and response rates. Executives are more likely to say their organization is tracking revenue metrics, and they are more likely to know revenue and win rates.
- **Win rates.** Executives are more likely to report higher win rates than Associates and Managers.



Key Insight: Better Reporting Can Keep Organizations Aligned and Motivated

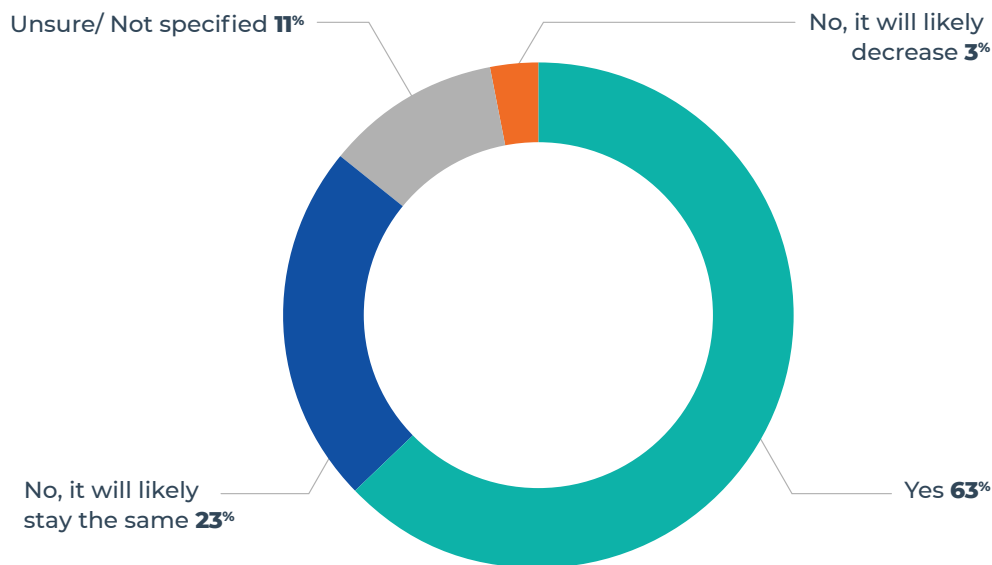
Executives and Associates are disconnected when it comes to RFP process metrics. It could be that leaders have access to data that employees don't—or that they don't know the day-to-day metrics as well as they think they do. It's worth noting that respondents who are 'Very Satisfied' in their role are 15% more likely to report that their company is tracking revenue and team performance metrics. And, since higher employee satisfaction was linked to better RFP quality in this report, it's in every Executive's best interest to improve metrics tracking and sharing with their employees.

Looking Ahead to 2020

RFP Submission Targets for 2020

Roughly two-thirds (63%) of respondents say their company plans to increase the number of RFPs to which they respond in 2020—23% anticipate this number will stay the same, while just 3% think it will decrease.

Fig 5.1 | **COMPANY'S INTENT TO SUBMIT MORE RFPs IN 2020**

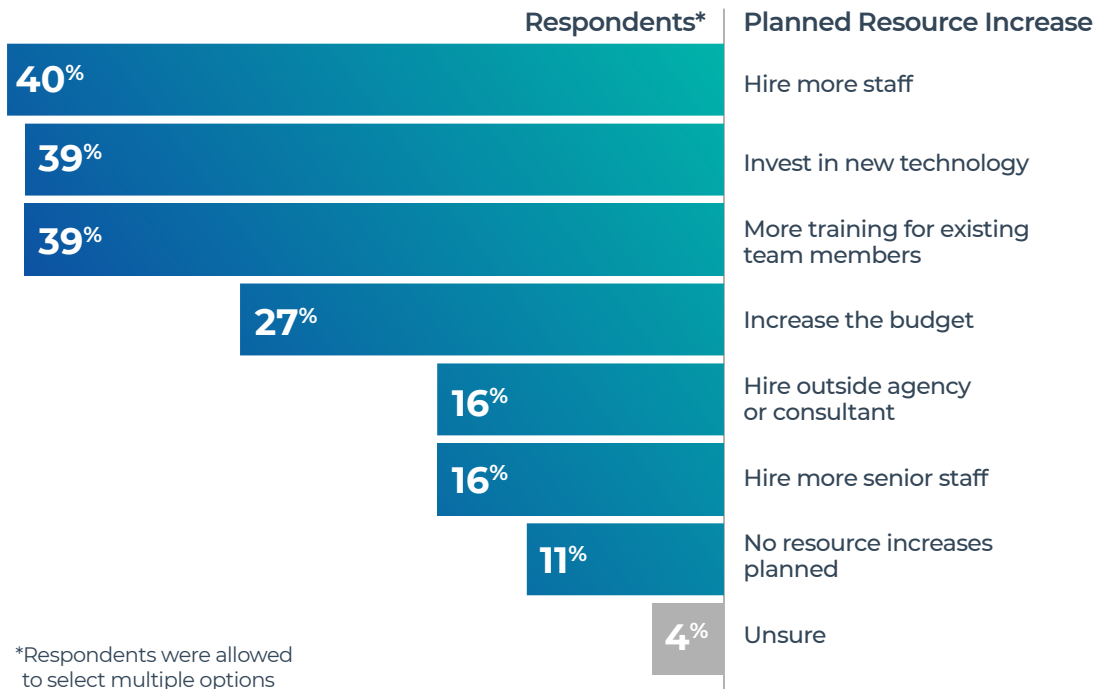


Those who have higher win rates and consider their process to be efficient are more likely to increase the amount of RFPs they submit in 2020, while those who achieve less success are less likely. Additionally, those who responded to more RFPs this year versus last year are 13% more likely to be planning to respond to more next year.

Resource Investments for 2020

To increase resources for their RFP process next year, 40% of respondents plan to hire more staff. Likewise, 39% plan to invest in new technology, another 39% are planning more training for existing team members, and 27% intend to increase budgets.

Fig 5.2 | RFP RESOURCE INVESTMENTS FOR 2020 BY SPEND CATEGORY



Some factors that impact resource investments for 2020 are:

- Team ownership.** Companies where a Proposal-focused team or individual owns the process are most likely to say they plan to hire more staff (46%) and offer more training for existing team members (42%). Meanwhile, those in Marketing/Sales roles are most likely to plan to invest in new technology (46%) for their RFP team and process.
- Submission rates.** Those submitting fewer than 100 RFPs annually are 9% less likely to invest more in the RFP process in 2020. Those submitting over 500 RFPs a year are 17% more likely to be hiring more senior staff in 2020.
- Win rates.** Those with 90–99% win rates are 36% more likely to be hiring more staff.
- Biggest challenges.** Those who feel their organization's challenges include meeting timelines, formatting documents, and being strategic about which RFPs they answer see technology as their biggest area for investment. Those who cite collaboration and quality of answers as challenges are more likely to invest in help from an outside agency or hire more staff.

RFP Process Improvement Recommendations

When asked what actions their company should take to win more RFPs in 2020, the top actions respondents chose focus on staff training and process improvements—including how data is stored, maintained, and deployed for RFPs. However, when we break respondents down by job function, answers change.

- Those who work as **RFP or Proposal Writers/Managers** are most likely to say training more staff to respond to RFPs better (36%) is an action their companies should take—meaning their focus is likely on improving the quality of their responses.
- Those in **Marketing/Sales** roles are most likely to say hiring more staff (27%) is an action their companies should take—meaning their focus is on using people to help manage volume, output, and quality.
- Those who work in **Sales/Solutions Engineers and Security/Infosec** roles are most likely to consider finding a better way to manage, search, and maintain their questionnaire answers/content (37%), as well as implementing a better process internally (35%) as the most important action their companies should take. This means they feel the pain of having to find and repeatedly share the same information the most strongly.

Fig 5.3 | **ACTIONS COMPANIES SHOULD TAKE TO IMPROVE THEIR RFP PROCESS**

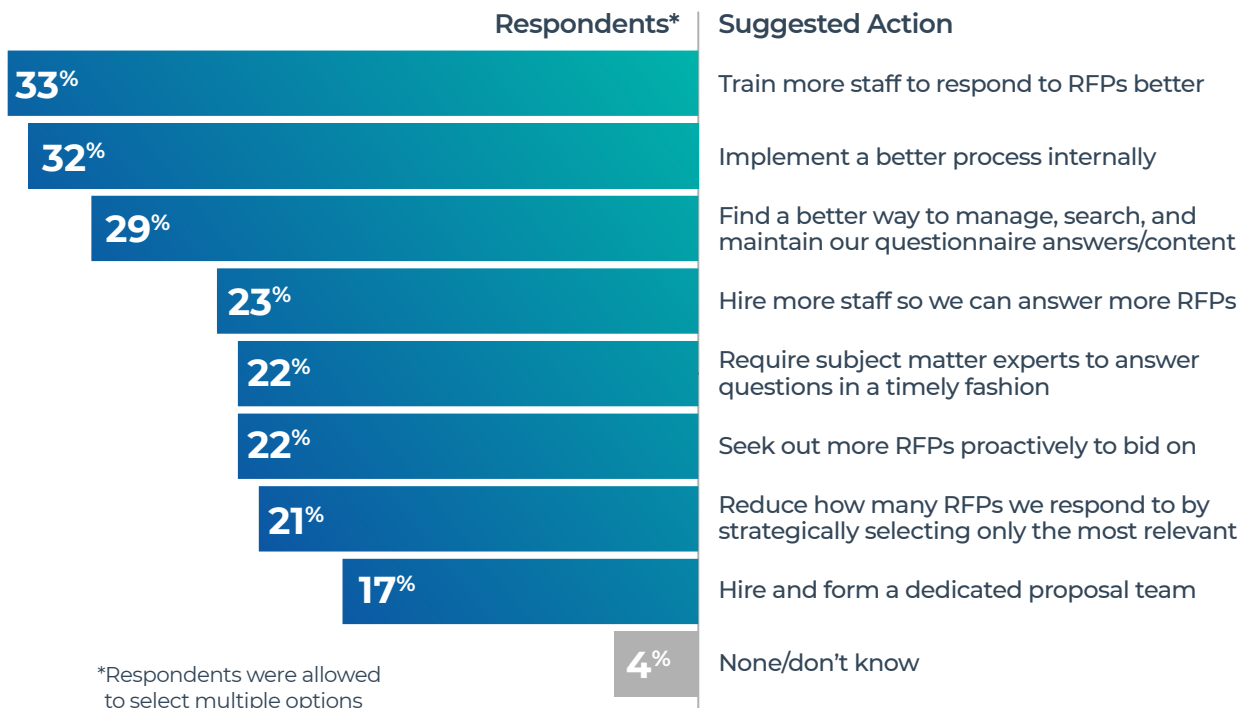
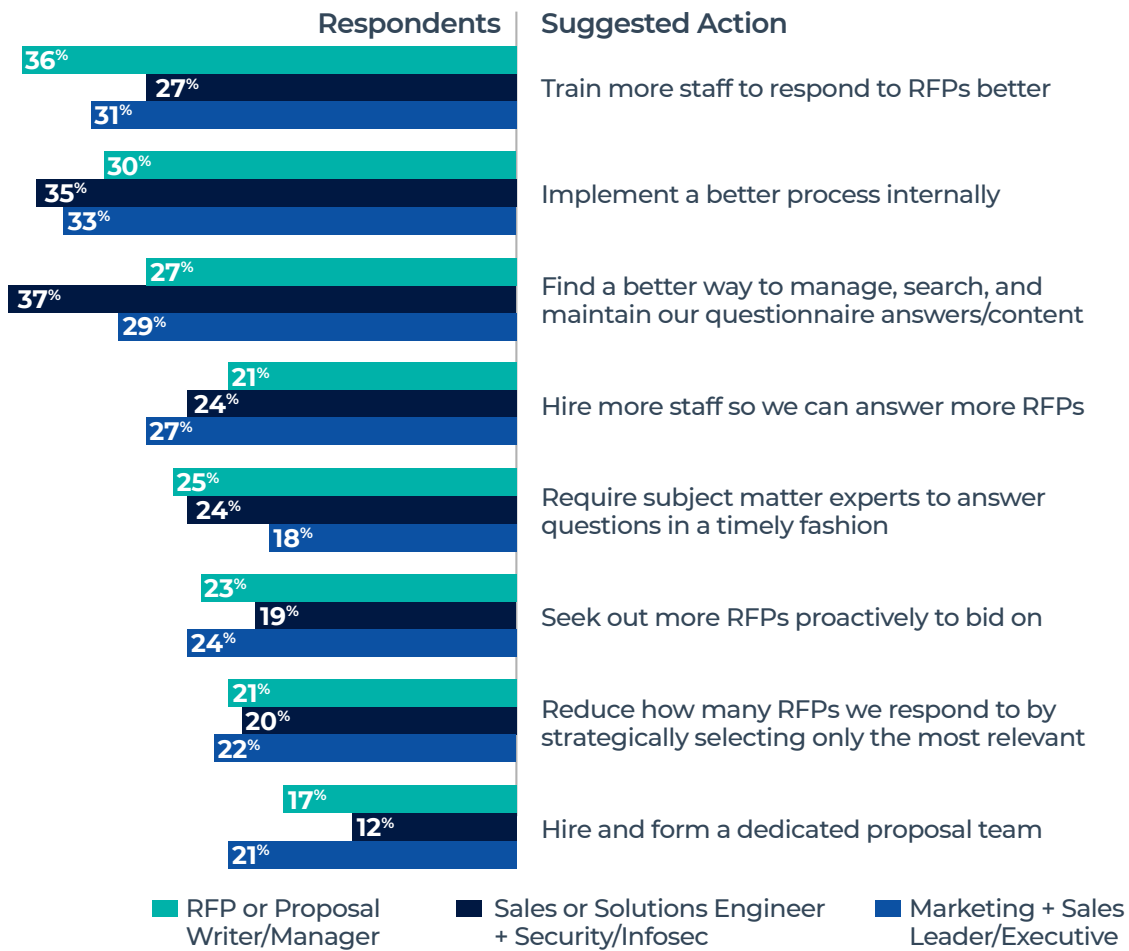


Fig 5.4 | SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS FOR 2020 BY ROLE TYPE



Key Insight: Role-based Biases in the RFP Process Exist

Proposal Managers/Writers are more likely to see training as a key area for investment, compared to Sales, Security, or Marketing team members, who see technology or hiring as more important. Therefore, teams that touch RFPs need to align on their organization’s true challenges so they can pick the best path forward.

Conclusion: How to Use This Report in Your Organization

Three ways you can immediately use this report are:

- **Objectively assess your organization's performance.** If your organization seems to be performing well, use the benchmarks and key insights in this report to start a conversation around where to gain efficiencies.
- **Align around the next steps for RFP process improvements.** Share this report with everyone involved in the RFP process, from Executives to subject matter experts, so you can check your biases and align on what's impacting your response process.
- **Upgrade your current RFP tools.** Are your tools giving you a way to clearly find, store, and maintain accurate, up-to-date RFP content and collaborate effectively with team members? If not, RFP software can help. It's been shown to increase submission rates, support large teams, and more. Consider sharing relevant stats from this report to gain buy-in for a solution.



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