



RFP Response Trends & Benchmarks Report

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About This Report: This report was created by Loopio, a market-leading software that helps companies streamline their response process for RFPs, DDQs, and security questionnaires. This research surveyed 1500+ companies around the globe, in partnership with the Association of Proposal Management Professionals (APMP), with data analyzed by Qualtrics.

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

In this sixth annual report, we delve deep into the trends and insights that matter to teams that respond to requests for proposals (RFPs). Featuring insights from 1500+ proposal professionals and backed by six years' worth of data, we explore key performance benchmarks for win rates, revenue, writing time, and so much more. Plus, level up your skills with data-informed tips for winning more in the year ahead.

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



1544

participants



153

average RFPs completed annually



\$256M

average revenue influenced

With six years of data behind us, we can clearly see that RFPs consistently generate more than a third of revenue for organizations, making them one of the most important revenue engines out there. But what continues to change is how companies respond to RFPs—and what strategies are most effective in this rapidly changing landscape.

This year, as the economy rebounded, we saw teams gain new support and resources—most notably in the form of software tools and AI. Proposal teams have had to adapt quickly to unprecedented technological advancements, finding the right balance between leveraging AI's massive benefits while maintaining necessary human oversight to mitigate risk.

We've already seen the industry begin realizing the upsides of these technologies, including process efficiencies, increased time savings, and a reduction in stress. We are seeing teams re-evaluate their processes more deeply and make positive changes that will impact their long-term success—which they didn't have the space to focus on in recent years.

In this report, we go deeper into these trends, and share data-driven tips your team can use to win more business in 2025. A big thank you to everyone who participated—your insights are at the heart of this annual report, and we are grateful for your support!



Sincerely,
Zak Hemraj
Loopio CEO and Co-Founder

The *2025 RFP Response Trends & Benchmarks Report* provides a wealth of knowledge for bids and proposal professionals, allowing them to benchmark their team's performance, find areas for improvement, and fight for the resources they need to succeed. APMP is proud to partner with Loopio on the annual report the industry is waiting for.

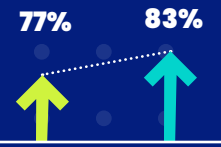
Bringing together responses from APMP members worldwide, this year's report delves into the trends you need to know. From economic shifts to the rise of AI, you'll find industry-leading insights to help spark productive conversations with your team, manager, or organization.

We hope this research helps your team continue to work smarter and win more.



Sincerely,
Rick Harris
APMP CEO

Top Trends & Benchmarks for 2025



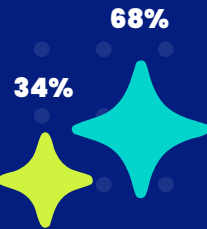
Teams Grow More Selective

83% use a go/no process, compared to **77%** last year.



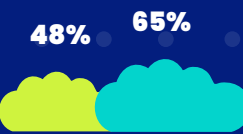
Writing Time Decreases

Teams spend **25 hrs** per RFP, compared to **30** last year.



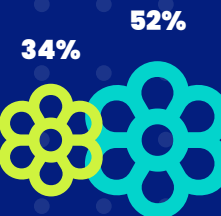
AI Becomes Mainstream

68% now use AI, double last year's number, and **70%** use it at least weekly.



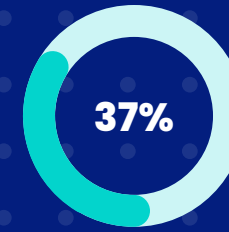
Software Sees Widespread Adoption

65% of teams now use RFP response software, up from **48%** last year.



Resources Rebound

52% said they gained new resources vs. **34%** last year.



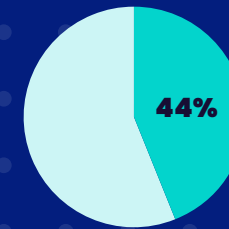
RFPs Influence More Than a Third of Company Revenue

RFPs influenced an average of **37%** of company revenue, continuing a trend we've seen for the past 6 years.



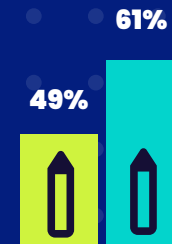
Win Rates Improve Slightly

Teams report an average win rate of **45%** up from **43%** last year.



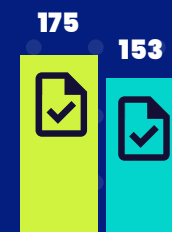
Teams Bet on Tech and Training

44% plan to invest in new technology and training for existing team members.



Teams Intend to Increase Responses

61% plan to increase the number of RFPs they respond to in 2025, up from **49%** last year.



RFP Volume Decreases

Teams submit an average of **153 RFPs** compared to **175** last year.



OVERVIEW

Participant Distribution & Demographics

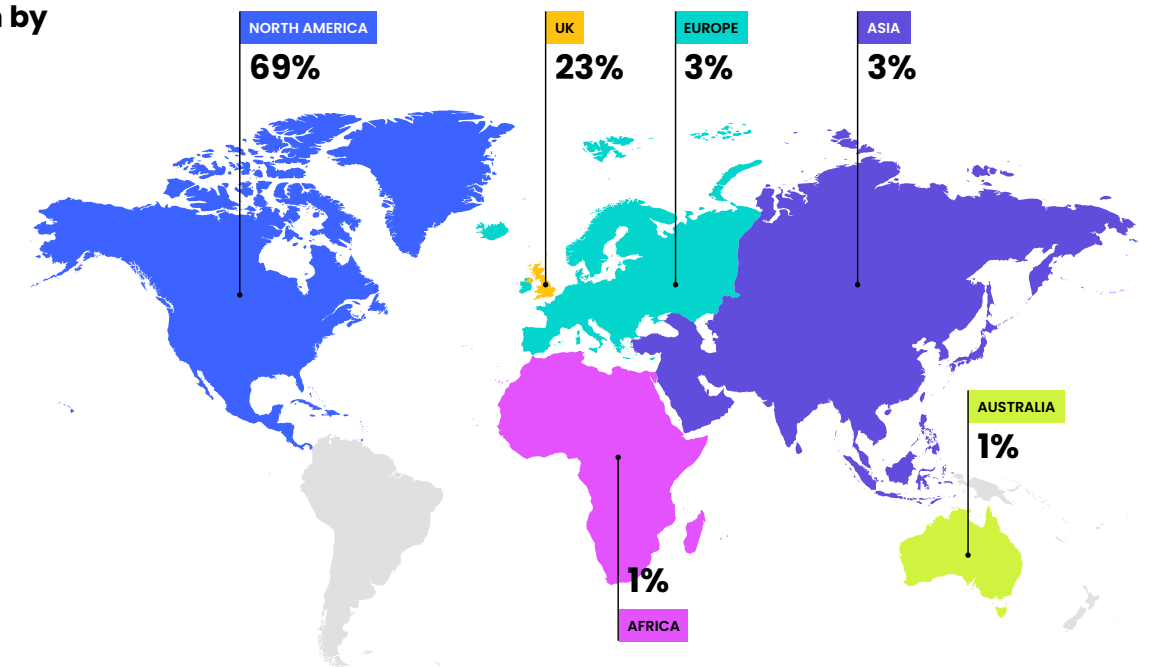
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OVERVIEW

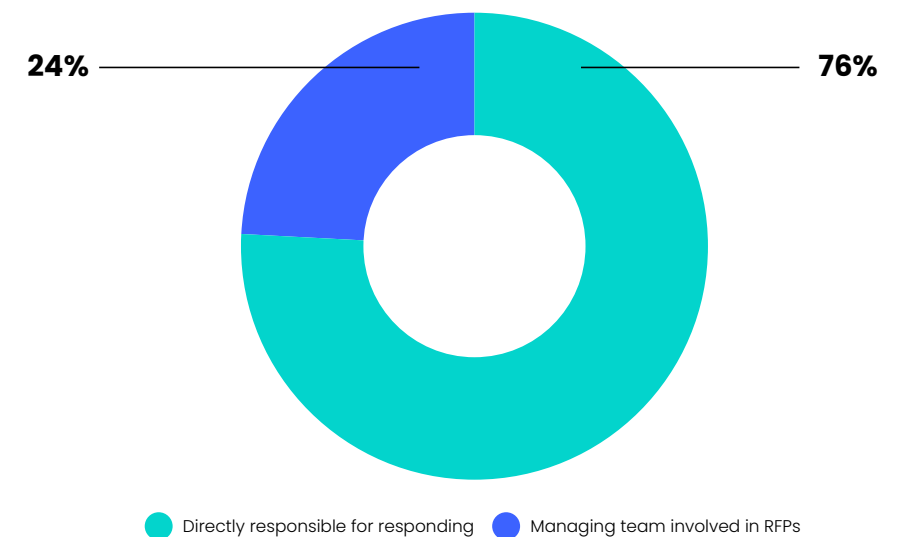
Who We Surveyed

We surveyed 1544 people from around the world, who are involved in responding to RFPs. All participants are either involved in the process directly, or are involved indirectly through managing a team that responds to RFPs.

Distribution by Geography

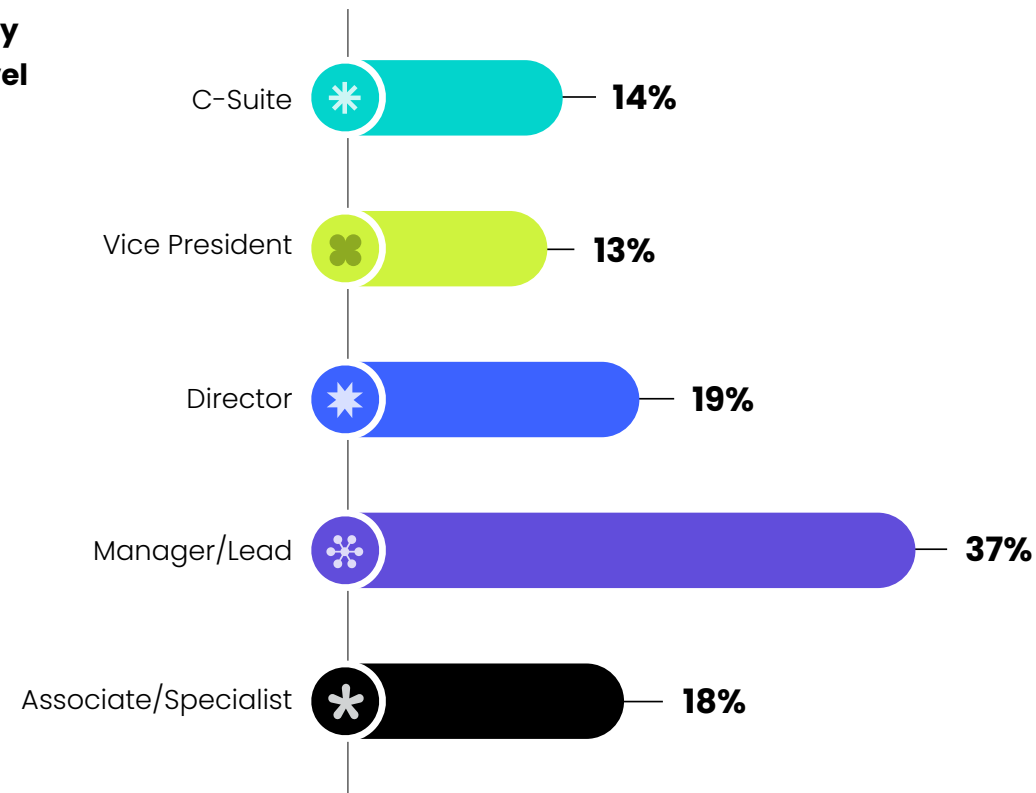


Involvement in the RFP Process



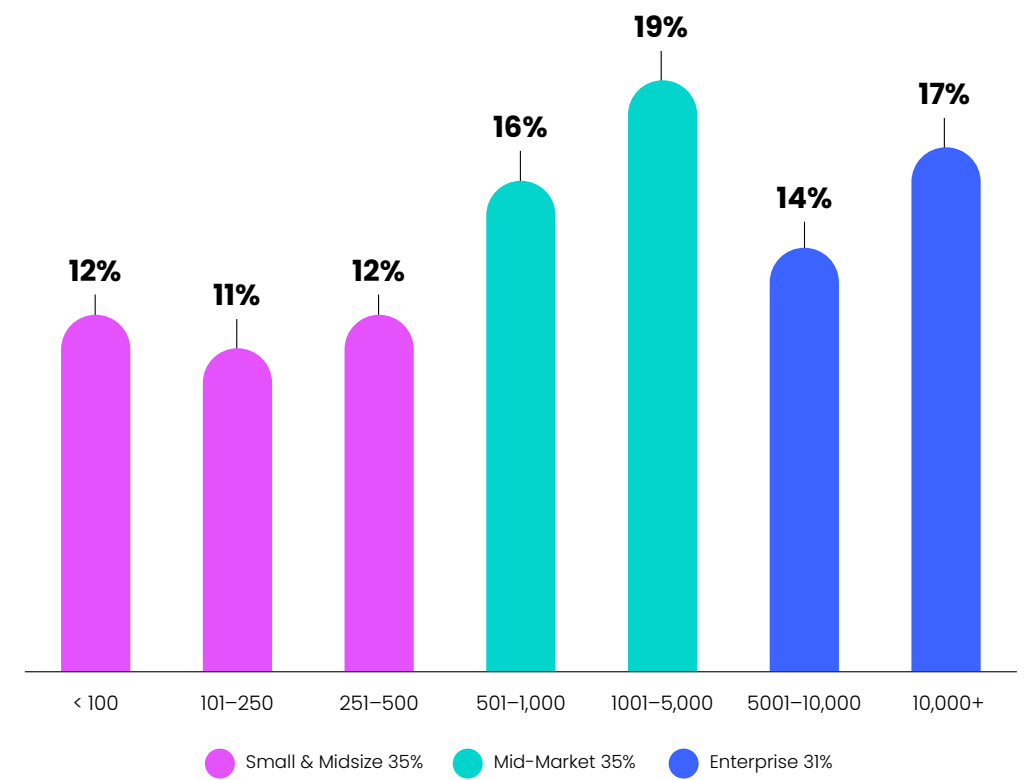
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Distribution by Employee Level

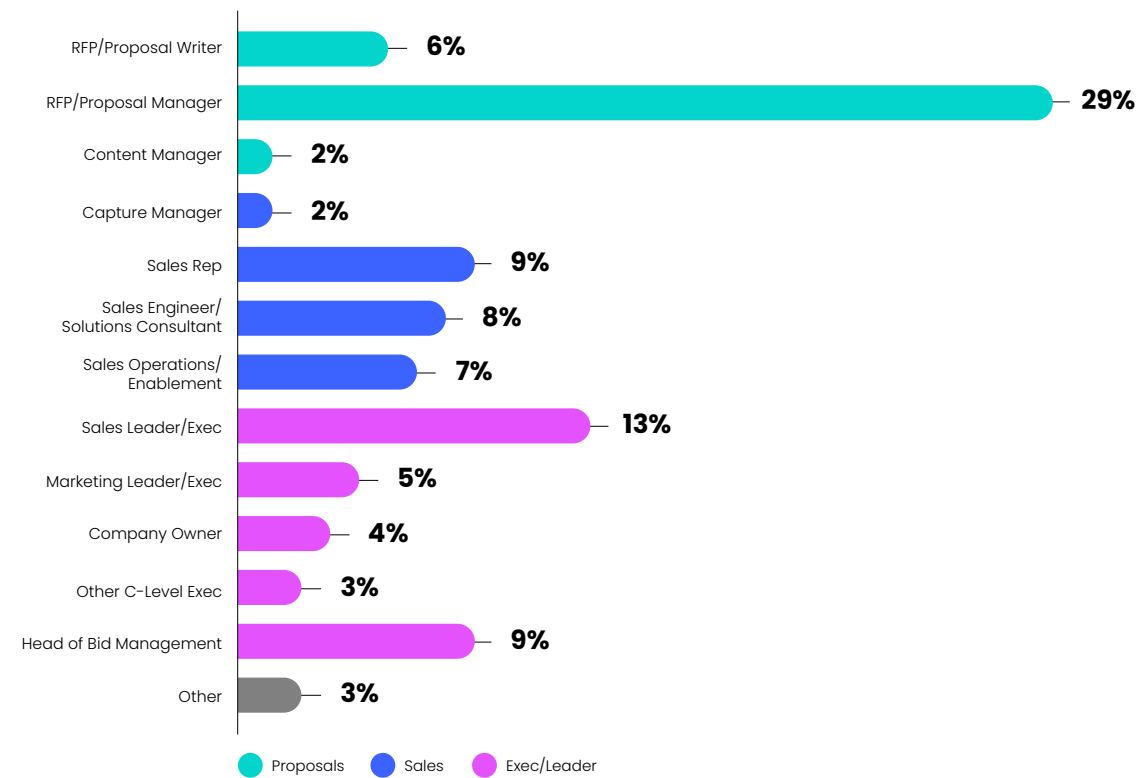


OVERVIEW

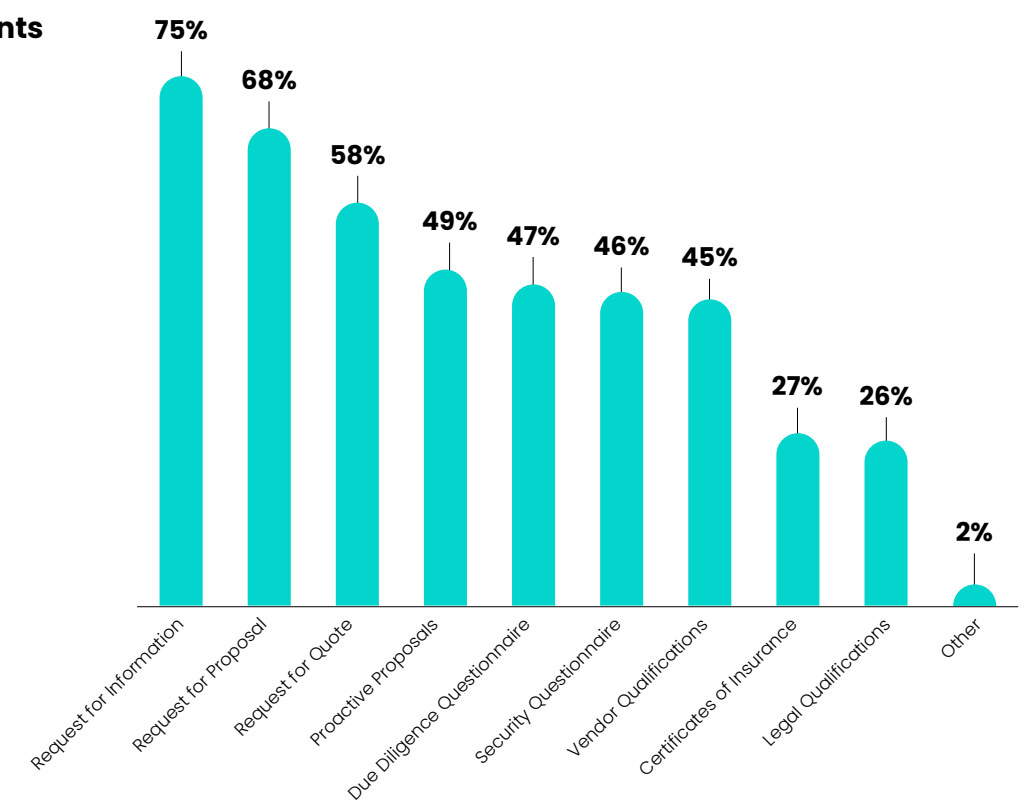
Distribution by Company Size



Distribution by Role Type



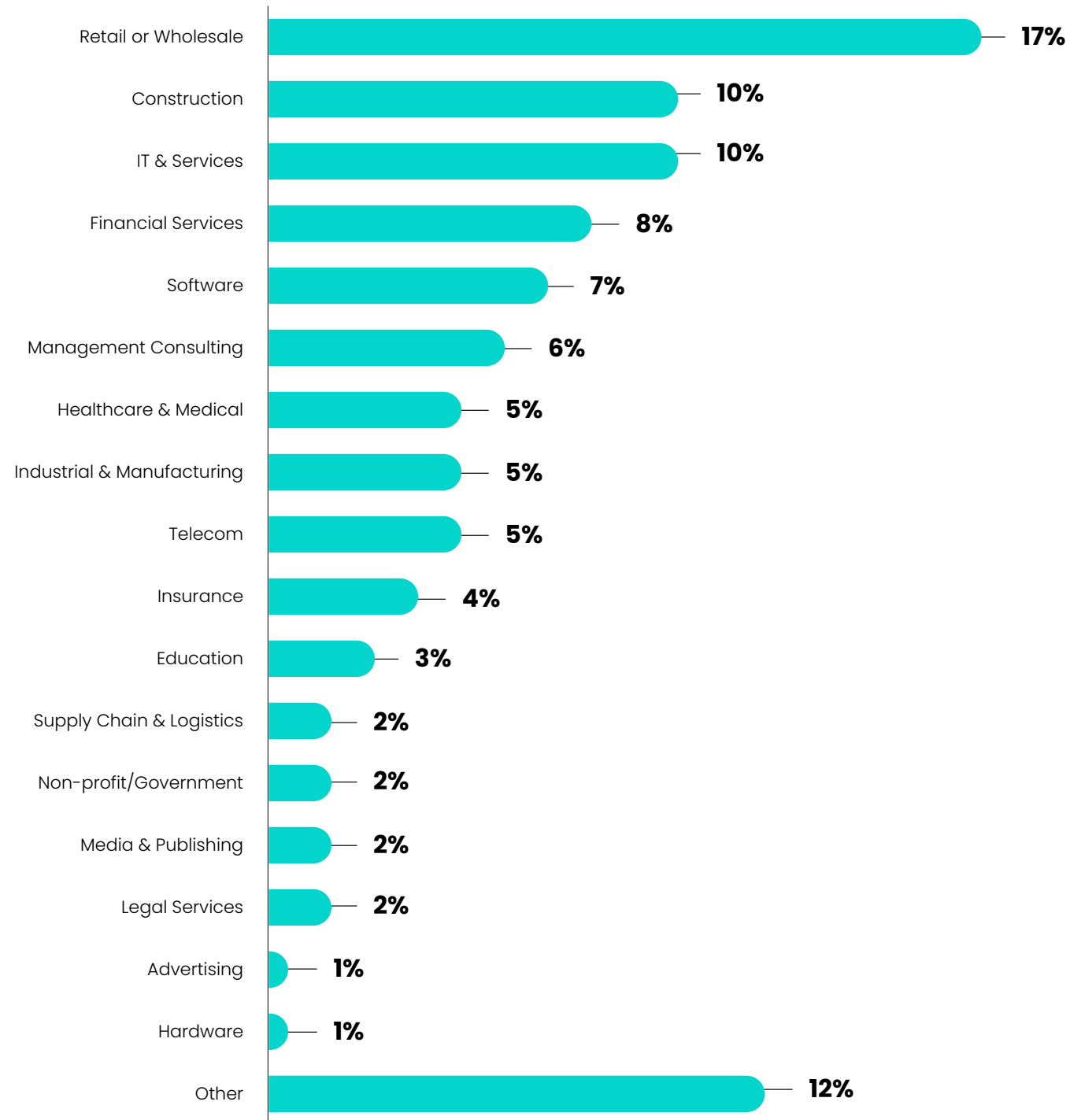
Types of Documents Responded to





OVERVIEW

Distribution by Industry



CHAPTER 1: RFP VOLUME

Teams Become More Selective as Economic Pressure Lightens

Submission Volume 14

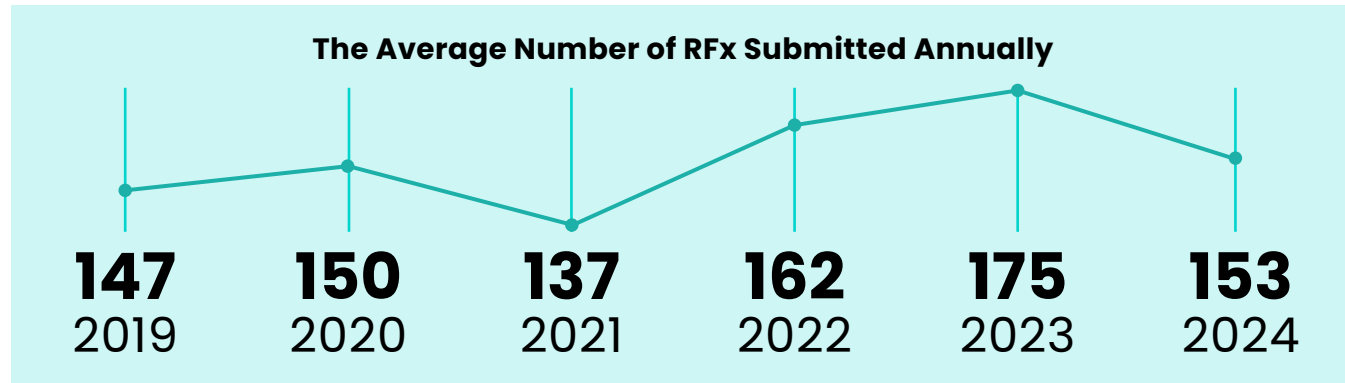
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Average Annual RFP Submissions Decrease as Teams Become More Selective

But More Than Half of Teams Are Responding to More RFPs

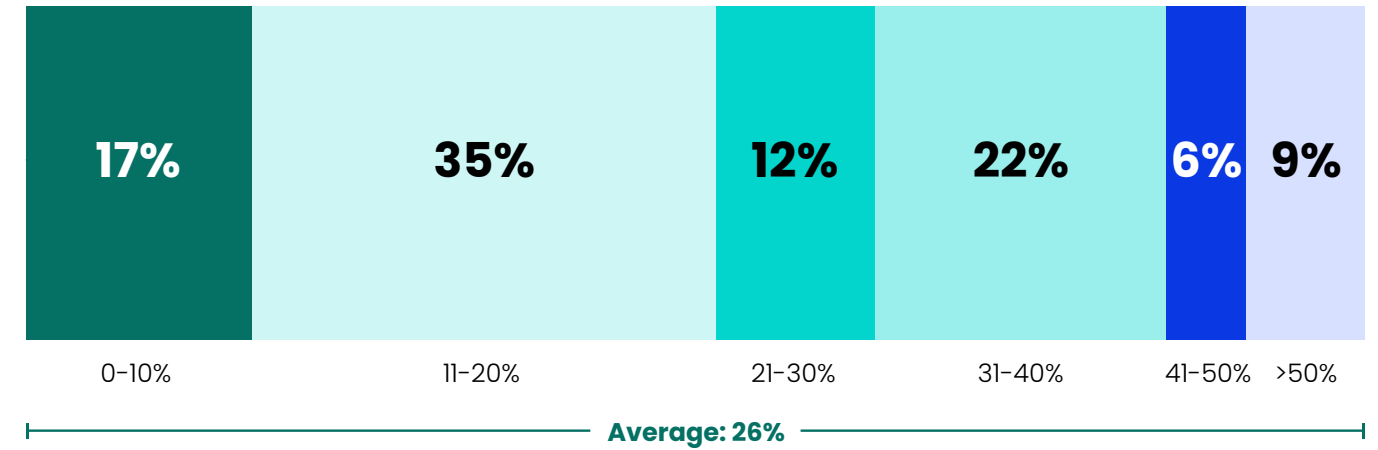
The average number of RFPs submitted was 153, down from 175 last year.



This average, however, doesn't tell the whole story. While the average has decreased, most teams actually report responding to more RFPs this year. What's the reason for this discrepancy? Looking at the data, we can see most teams are experiencing a small increase in their submission numbers, but those who are reporting a decrease are experiencing a more significant drop, which is impacting the average.

Of those who have reduced the number of RFPs they respond to (which represents a small share of the total sample), the average decrease is 26%, although half have done so by 20% or less.

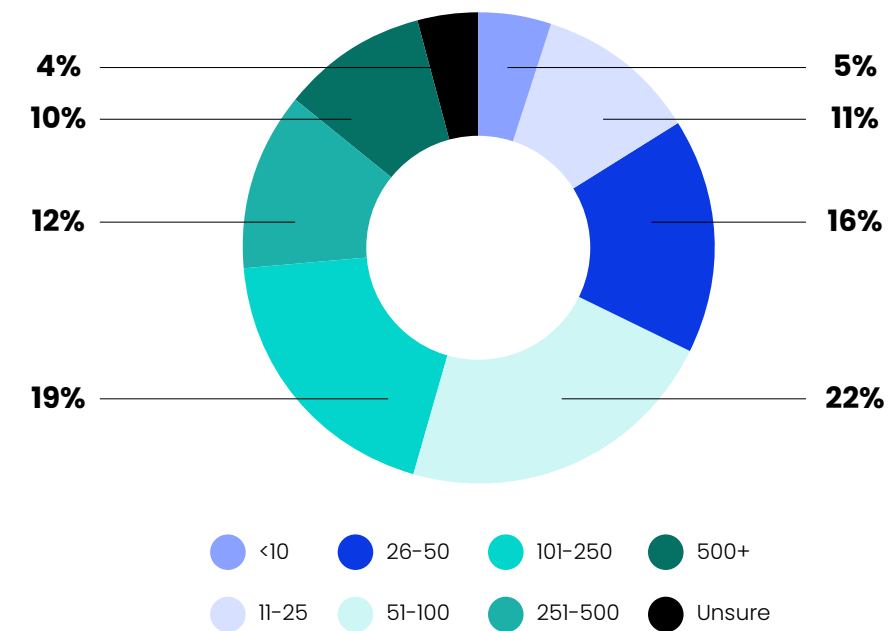
Percentage Decrease in the Number of RFPs Responded to in 2024



For those who are responding to fewer RFPs, their primary reasons include: receiving fewer RFPs (64%), being more selective about the RFPs they respond to (50%), or not receiving RFPs that are relevant to them (23%).

Notably, a lower average submission number is often a positive economic sign because it means that teams can afford to be more choosy and are not feeling the pressure to respond to every RFP that comes their way. This is also supported by our process data, with more teams than ever using a go/no-go process—more on that later in this chapter.

Average Annual Submissions Distribution



 If you submit more than 500 RFPs in a year, you're among the **busiest 10%** of responders

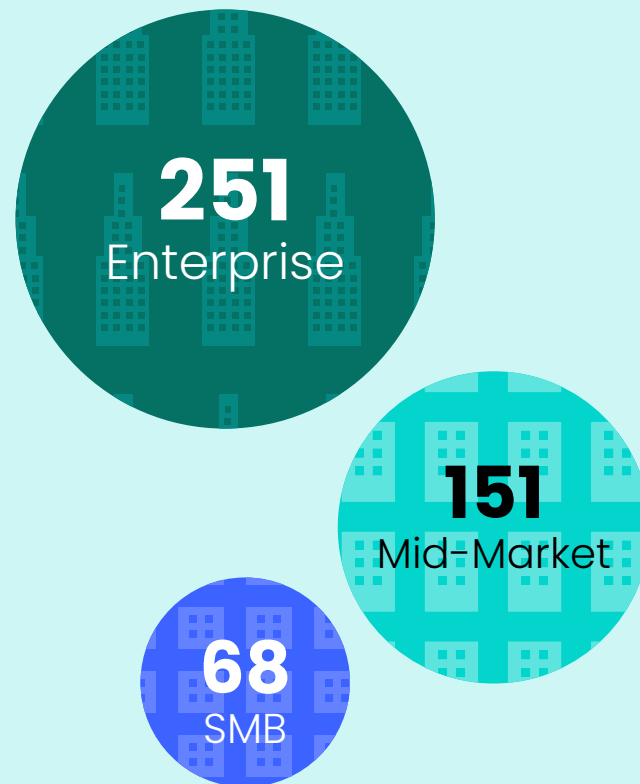


Key Insight: The Submissions Gap Between Enterprise Companies and SMBs is Growing

This year, enterprise companies submitted 3.7x more RFPs than small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs). This isn't hugely surprising, since larger companies tend to have more formalized sales cycles, but it's interesting to note that the gap between the number of RFPs submitted by the smallest and largest companies does seem to be growing over time.

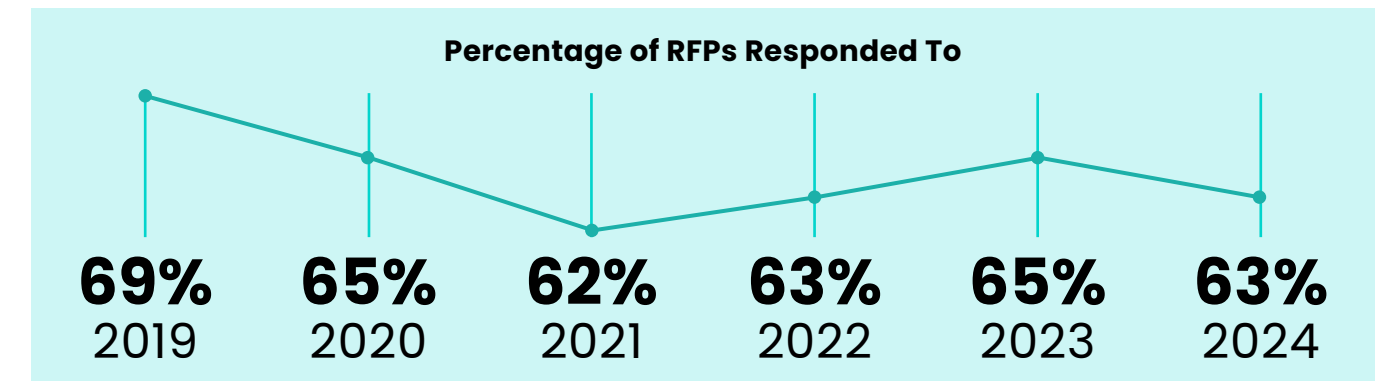
As noted above, companies of all sizes have experienced a drop in the average number of RFPs they're submitting, but it's proportionally bigger for SMBs, whose average has decreased by 15% compared to 9% for enterprise companies. Even accounting for this decrease, enterprise companies are still submitting an RFP for almost every working day in the calendar year.

Average Annual Submissions by Company Size

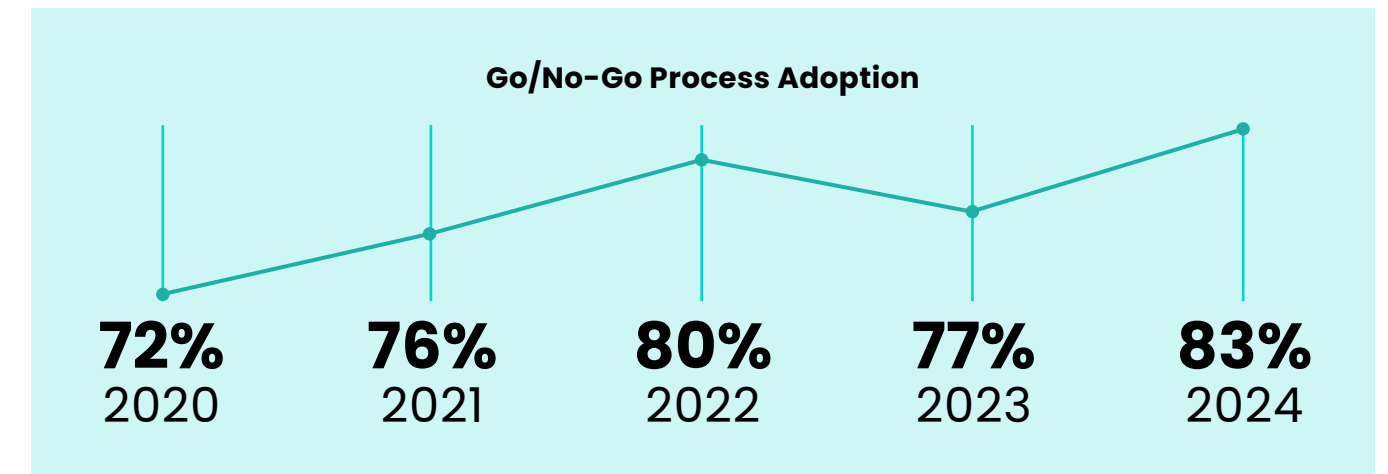


Selectivity Returns After Last Year's Disruption

In last year's report, we saw submissions *increase* and selectivity *decrease* as teams scrambled to respond to any RFPs they could get their hands on. This year teams became slightly more selective, responding to 63% of the RFPs they received.



On a related note, 83% of teams now use a go/no-go matrix (up from 77% last year), marking the highest proportion we've seen since this survey began.



This could be a sign that things are stabilizing again after a period of economic disruption where teams were going after anything they could get—now they can afford to be a bit more picky. And despite some ups and downs related to the economic upheaval of the past few years, this seems in line with the overall trend we've observed of teams becoming more selective over time.



Industry Insight: Who Responds to the Most RFPs?

In terms of the raw numbers, insurance retains its top spot, with advertising and financial services in second and third place respectively. These three industries have dominated the top three positions since our survey began, showing just how critical RFPs are in these fields.

Compared with last year's data, however, nearly every industry experienced a slight dip—with the notable exceptions of the public sector and software industries. The public sector's average is exactly the same as last year, perhaps demonstrating how consistent this industry tends to be. Software, on the other hand, got a bit of a boost—returning it to its 2022 submission levels. As we discussed in last year's report, the software industry has experienced some turbulent times over the past few years. This may indicate a return to normalcy after a period of economic disruption.

Average Number of RFPs Submitted Annually, by Industry, 2023 vs. 2024

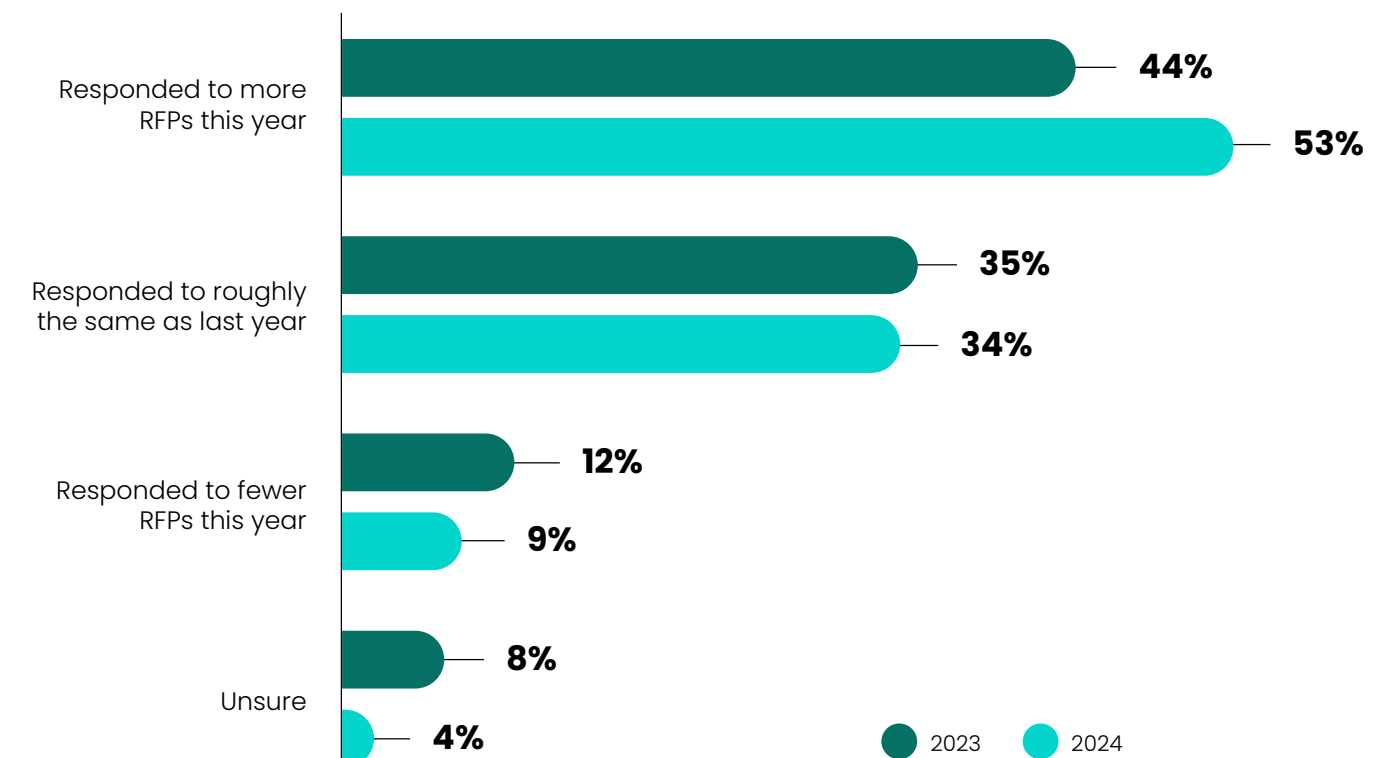


53% of Teams Say They've Responded to More RFPs This Year

The majority—87% of respondents—say they've responded to the same or more RFPs than last year. Of that group, just over half (53%) have responded to more and about a third (34%) have stayed pretty consistent. Only 9% have responded to fewer RFPs this year.

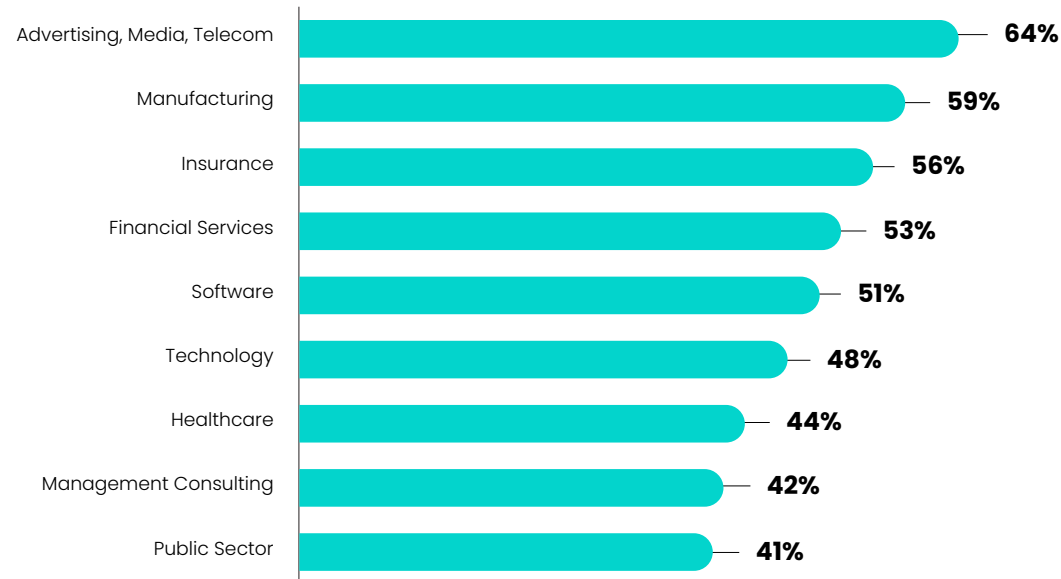
This is a marked difference from last year's numbers, with almost 10% more teams saying they responded to more RFPs this year. About the same number as last year are handling the same volume and slightly less are responding to fewer (but, as we discussed earlier in this chapter, the impact of this group on the average number of RFPs submitted is profound).

Difference in Submissions, Year-Over-Year

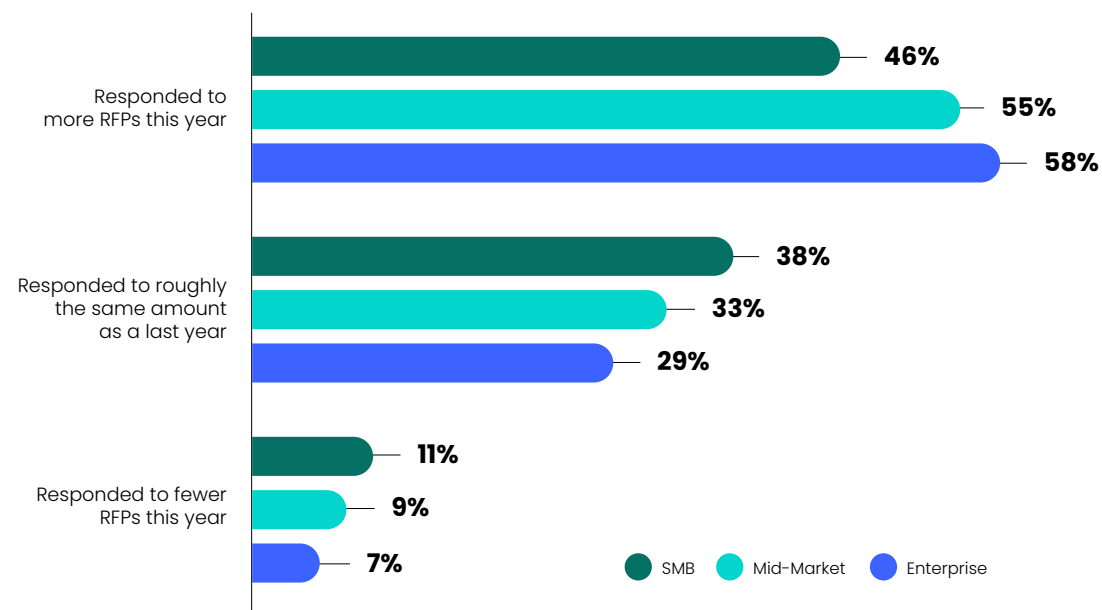


When looking at industries, advertising was most likely to say they responded to more RFPs this year, followed by manufacturing. Across industries, around half (40–60%) of respondents said they responded to more RFPs this year—this was also the most popular response across the board. Overall, teams seem to be increasing their submissions by a small but noticeable amount.

Submissions Breakdown by Industry



Submissions Breakdown by Company Size

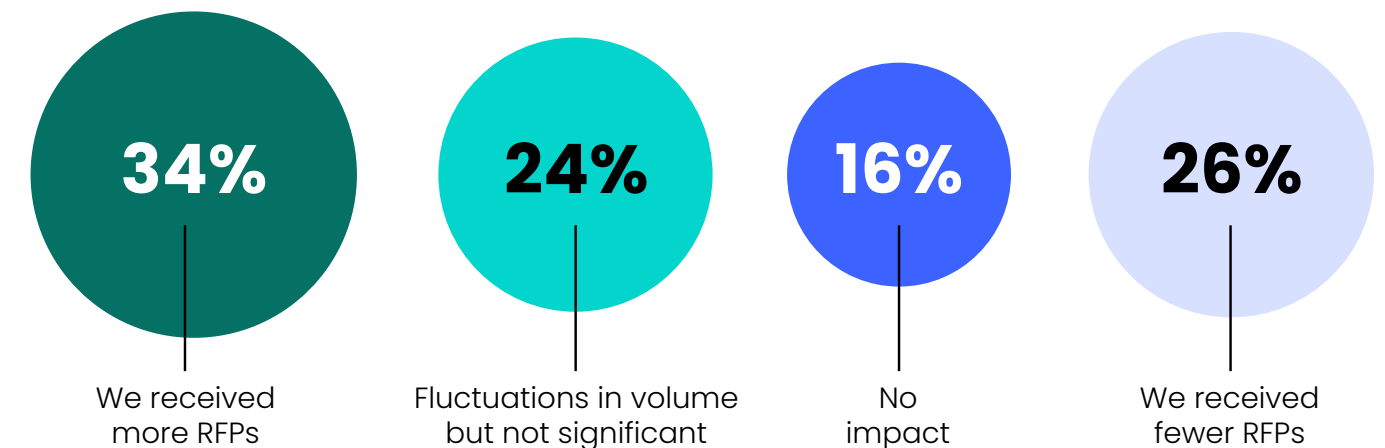


Overall RFP Volume Remains Consistent, But More Polarized

The largest share of our survey (40%) haven't experienced a noticeable change in the overall volume of RFPs they're receiving. Interestingly, however, the two extremes of the spectrum—the groups receiving more and fewer RFPs this year, respectively—have each grown as compared to last year's data. This year, 34% say they have received more RFPs, a bump from last year's 30%, and 26% say they have received fewer, up from 21% last year.

Nearly a quarter (24%) of respondents said they experienced 'fluctuations in volume but not significant,' leaving this portion of the data open to interpretation.

Number of RFPs Received 2024





Key Insight: Top Performers are the Most Selective

Despite what your parents may have told you, being picky can be a good thing—at least where RFPs are concerned. According to our data, a whopping 87% percent of top performers (aka those who win 50%+ of the RFPs they participate in) use some kind of evaluation or go/no-go process. Same with 87% of teams that influence a “high” proportion of their company’s revenue through RFPs.

The correlation seems clear: greater selectivity = better win rates and revenue. Top performers go after the RFPs they have the greatest chance of winning, focusing their efforts on crafting the highest quality responses for each.

Chapter Summary: Submissions Slow as Economic Tension Loosens



On average, teams have responded to fewer RFPs this year. But this average hides an important variation—while it’s true that a small proportion of teams have decreased their number of responses (by a substantial amount), the majority of respondents actually slightly increased or maintained their submission numbers.

Those who are responding to fewer RFPs cite lower volume numbers and, critically, more selectivity—which is in line with overall trends we’re seeing towards teams becoming more selective about the RFPs they choose to respond to.

While more selectivity is typically a good thing, as teams that take this approach tend to achieve higher win rates, it also isn’t necessarily a bad thing that other teams are responding to more RFPs. As we’ll see in later chapters, the adoption of time-saving tools like RFP software and AI may be contributing to efficiency gains that allow teams to submit more.

Up next: As the economy recovered, teams got a lot more choosy about what RFPs they responded to. How has that impacted win rates and revenue?



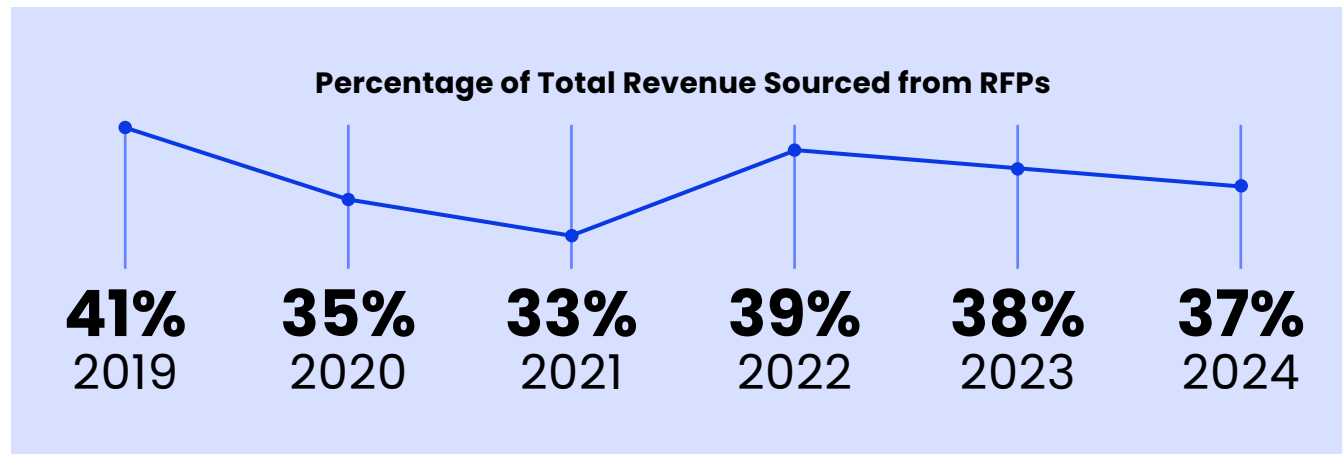
CHAPTER 2: REVENUE & WIN RATES

The Relationship Between RFPs and Revenue

Revenue Influence	24
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Reasons for Loss	35

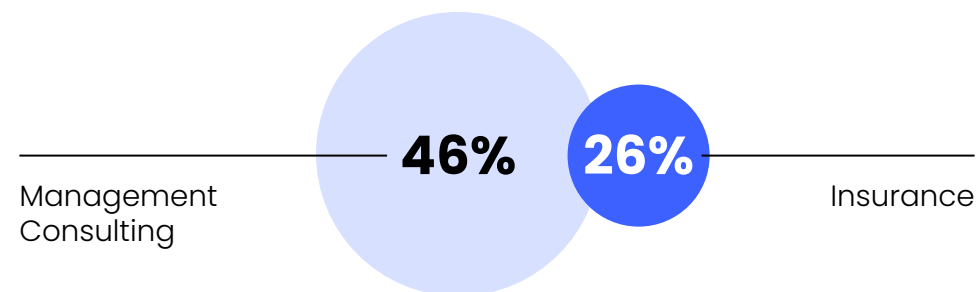
RFPs Influence More Than a Third of Company Revenue for 6 Years Running

This year, companies sourced more than a third (37%) of their revenue from RFPs, basically on par with last year's report. Looking at the data, we can see that over the past six years, RFPs have influenced no less than 33% of company revenue at any time.



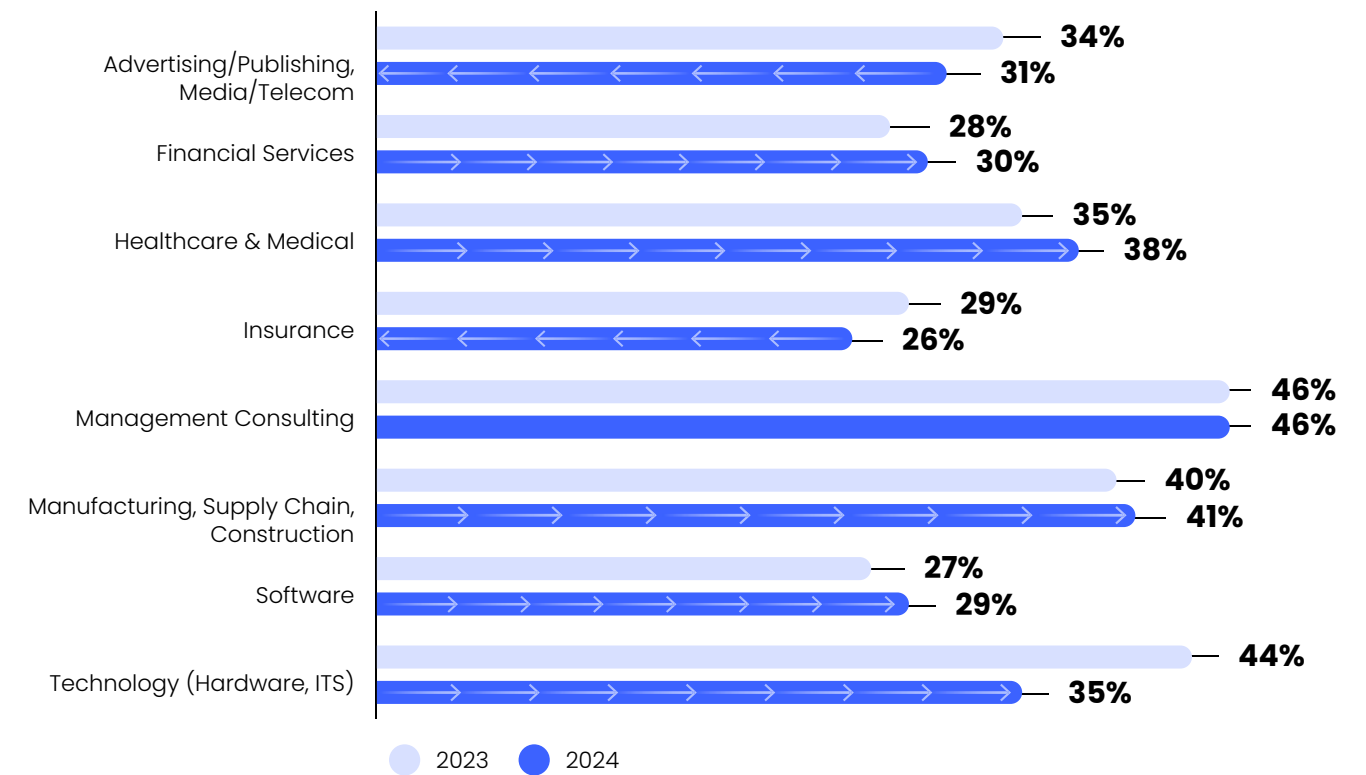
Despite the many changes of the past few years, including economic disruption and the rise of AI, the importance of RFPs has remained steady through it all. This underlines just how essential RFPs are to companies' bottom lines—a fact that seems unlikely to change anytime soon.

The Industries That Are Most and Least Reliant on RFPs



The percentage of revenue influenced by RFPs varies by industry from 26-46%, but the majority of industries report that RFPs influenced 30-40% of revenue. For instance, management consulting gets almost half their revenue from RFPs, while insurance takes in just over a quarter.

Percentage of Company Revenue Influenced by RFPs, by Industry



The past year saw some notable shifts in how much revenue different industries attributed to RFPs. For instance, technology (hardware/ITS) experienced an almost 10-point drop since last year. Notably, they also decreased their RFP team size by the largest amount of any industry this year, which may be related. This suggests that they're either choosing to invest less in RFPs, or being forced to due to resource cuts. While technology decreased its percentage of RFP revenue, its counterpart in software got a small-but-noticeable boost—an interesting shift for an industry that's historically been more RFP-shy.

APMP membership correlates with above-average revenue influenced



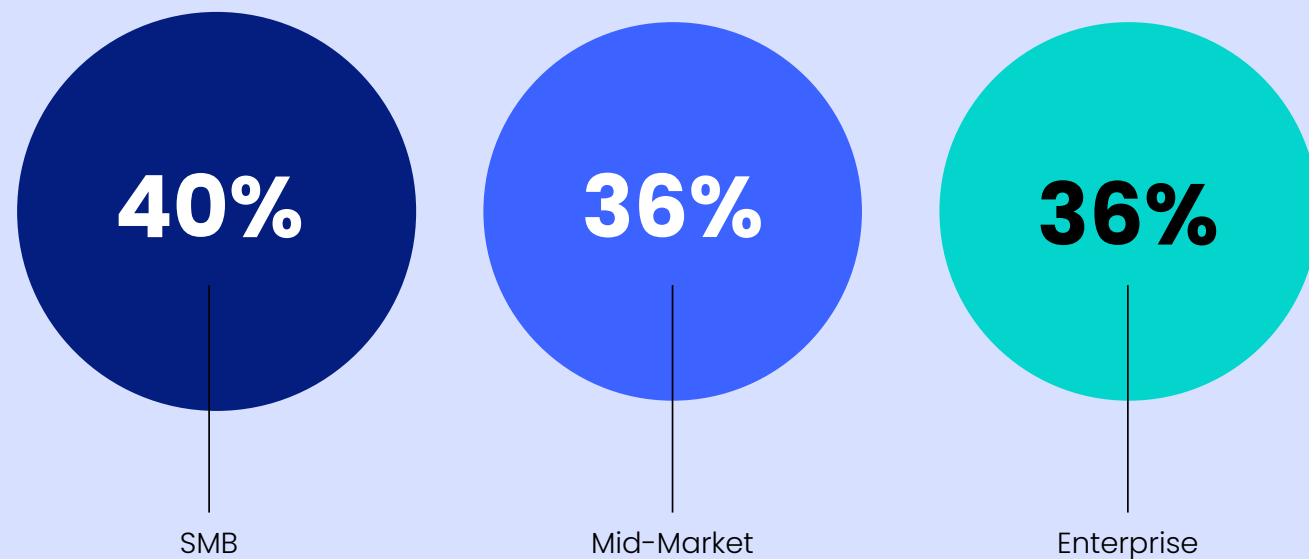
Members of APMP influence 39% of their companies' revenue through RFPs, as opposed to the overall average of 37%

Other industries experienced small fluctuations in the percentage of revenue generated by RFPs: insurance, the public sector, and advertising are down slightly since last year, while healthcare and manufacturing have slightly increased their reliance. Management consulting is the most consistent—the only industry not to report a change (they’re also the most reliant on RFPs for their revenue).

Key Insight: SMBs Hustle the Hardest



Percentage of Company Revenue Influenced by RFPs, by Company Size



SMBs seem to rely on RFPs the most for their revenue, which is especially notable because their RFP win rates tend to lag behind mid-market and enterprise companies. Since their deals are seemingly harder to win, this percentage share is all the more impressive—and speaks to the hustle mentality of these small businesses.

RFPs Bring in an Average of \$256 Million Dollars Annually

In the last year, RFPs influenced an average of \$256 million dollars of company revenue, a significant decrease from last year’s average of \$317 million. This may be related to the lower overall submission numbers that we’re seeing this year. While win rates are up (thanks to greater selectivity), the total number of RFPs submitted may simply not be enough to reach the revenue numbers we’ve seen in previous years.

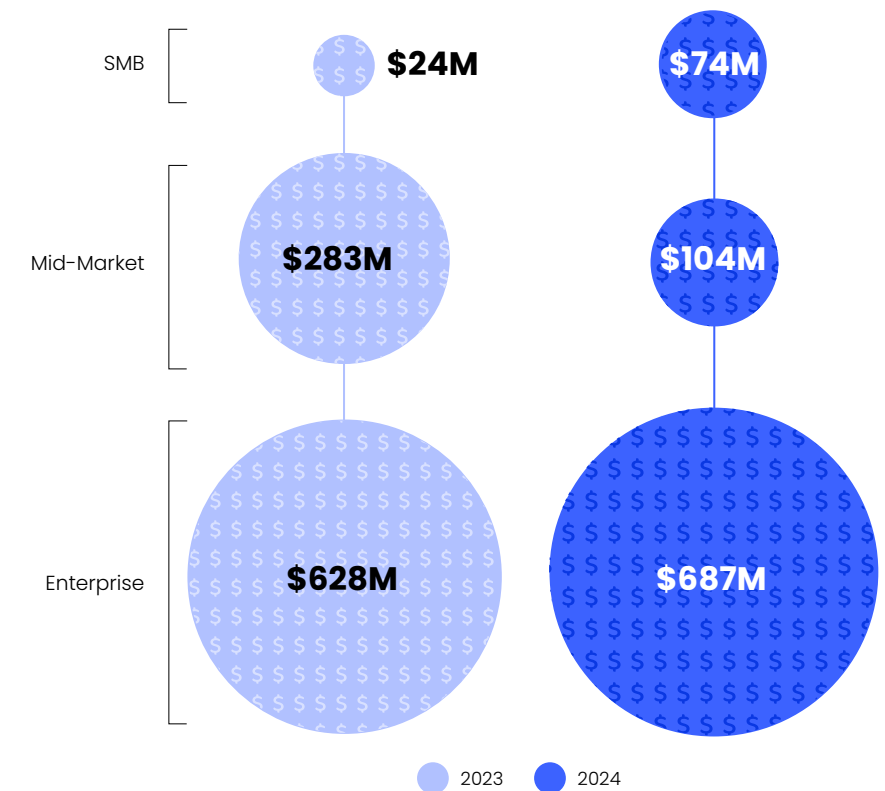
Unsurprisingly, the average dollar value generated from RFPs varies by company size. But this breakdown reveals some surprising insights.

While SMBs and enterprise companies have both generated significantly more revenue since last year (to the tune of \$50M or more), mid-market companies experienced a sharp drop of almost \$180M in their RFP revenue. What could cause this discrepancy?

Blame it on the unique circumstances of being “in the middle.”

Boston Consulting Group [reports](#) that mid-market firms have it especially tough right now. This is at least in part because they had to borrow money at much worse rates than larger firms to get through the last few years of economic strife. Even though the

Total RFP Revenue Generated by Company Size, 2023 vs. 2024



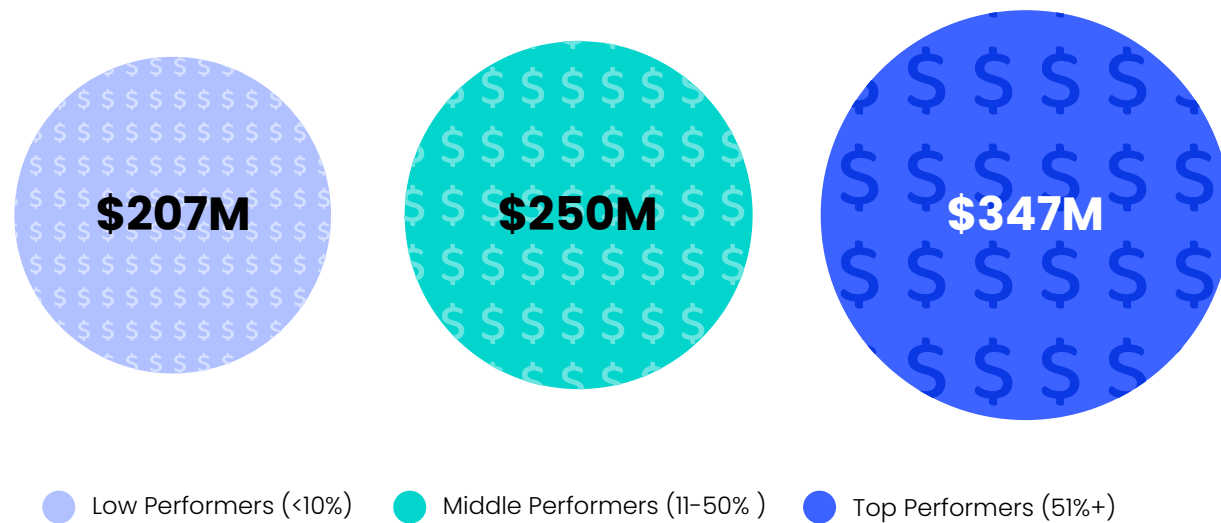
CHAPTER 2

economy is recovering, mid-market companies are a lot slower to bounce back because they're mired in high-interest-rate debt, making their financial health look particularly lackluster to investors (nearly two-thirds of mid-market companies now have non-investment-grade credit ratings). This means their resources are tighter or may have even been cut, making it more difficult to win RFPs.

Enterprise companies, on the other hand, tend to be more resilient (access to cheaper capital helps) and smaller firms more nimble—which might explain why the revenue numbers look so different for the smallest and largest companies versus the middle.

Interestingly, the differences between low-, middle-, and top-performing companies were smaller this year than in previous years, when top performers outperformed their peers by as much as 35x. For the purposes of this report, we define low performers as those who win 10% or less of the RFPs they submit, middle performers as those who win 11-50%, and top performers as those who win more than 50%.

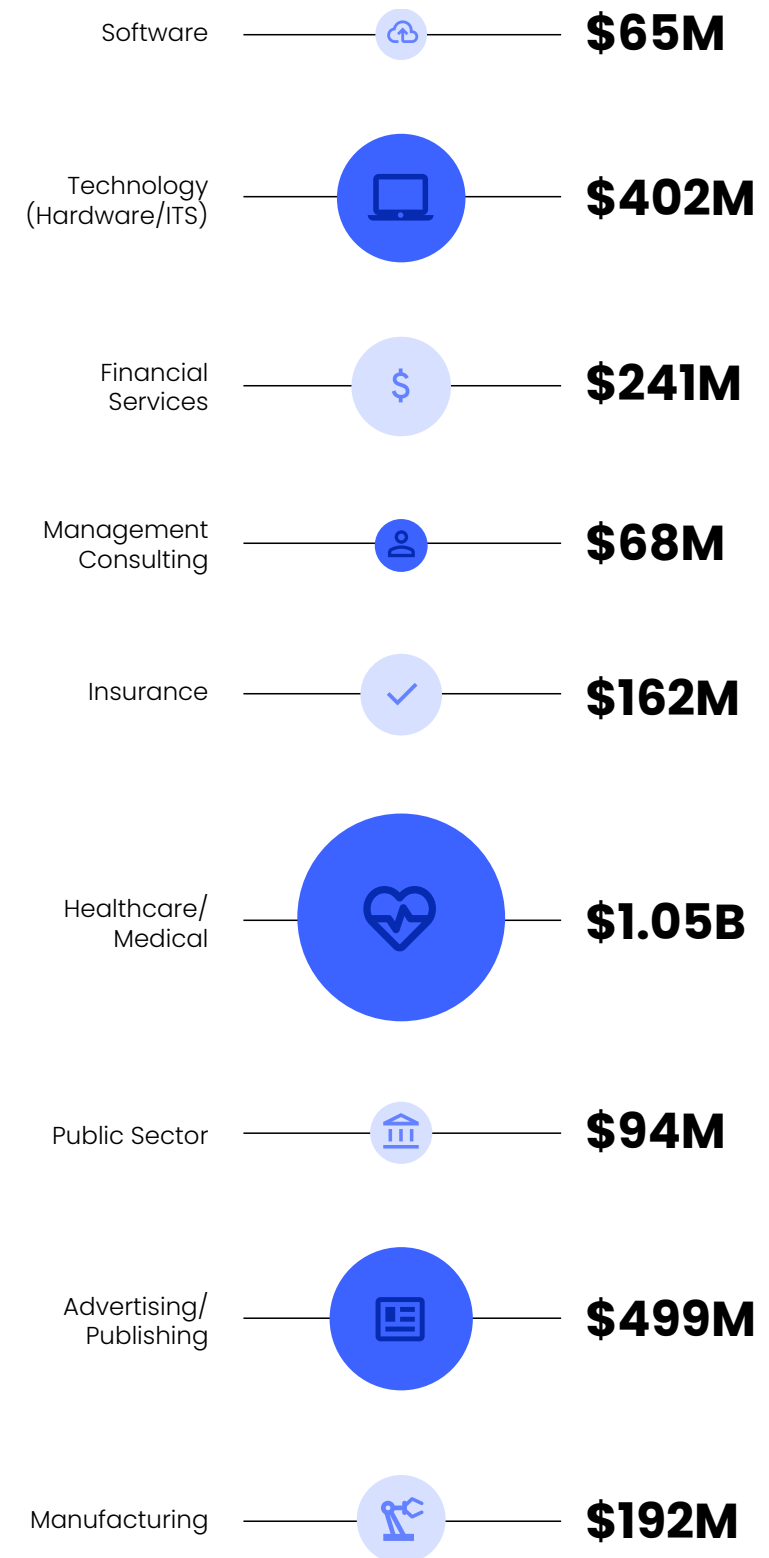
\$ of Company Revenue Influenced by RFPs



Even though management consulting generates the largest percentage of revenue through RFPs, healthcare comes out on top in terms of dollar amount. This may be due to the scale and complexity of projects in this highly regulated space.

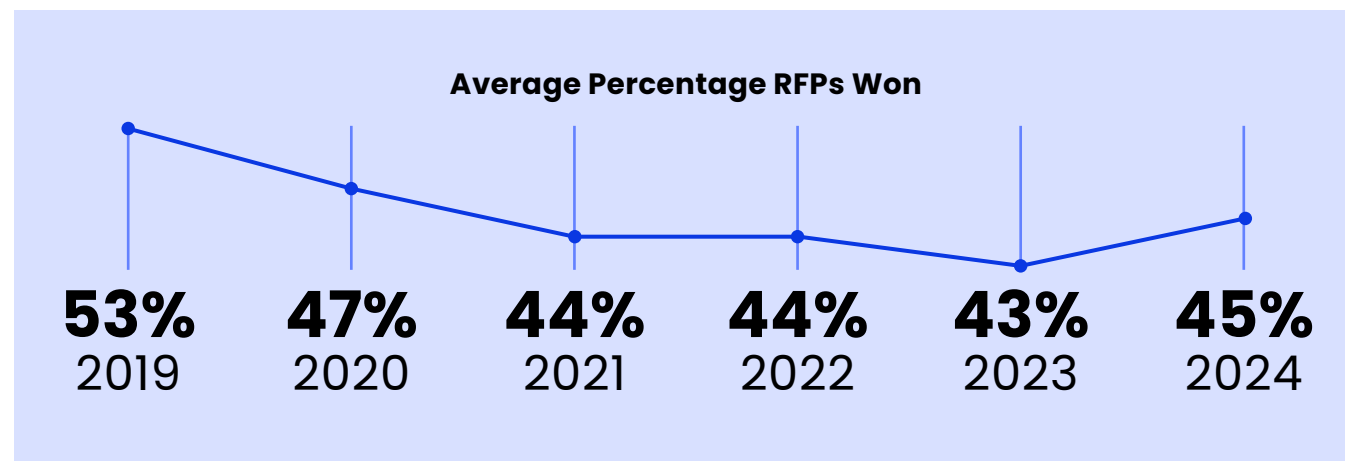
CHAPTER 2

Dollar Value of RFP Revenue, By Industry



Win Rates Increase Slightly

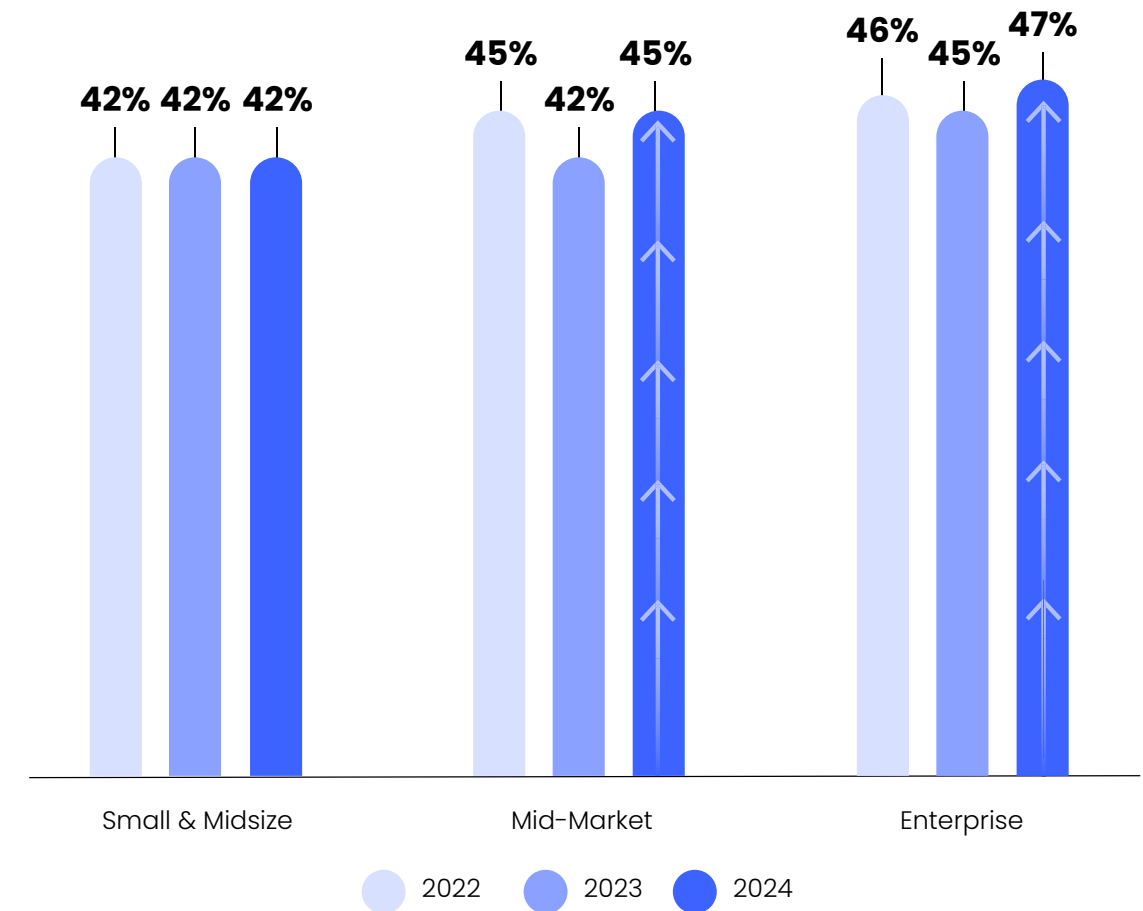
This year, companies experienced a slight uptick in their win rates—the highest they’ve been since 2021. While this is a small increase, it speaks to the rise we’ve observed this year in go/no-go process use. Teams who are more choosy about the RFPs they respond to are not only able to choose the best-fit RFPs, but are also able to put more time and effort into each one.



A perplexing observation: Although win rates are up this year, overall revenue is down. While this may at first appear to be a contradiction, there are a few different ways to explain this reality. It may be that while teams are winning more, the fact they’re submitting less is leading to a revenue shortfall—and this small boost in win rates isn’t able to make up the difference.

Digging deeper into the data, we can see that win rates correlate with company size, with enterprise companies winning close to half of the RFPs they participate in, slightly less for mid-market companies, and less still for SMBs.

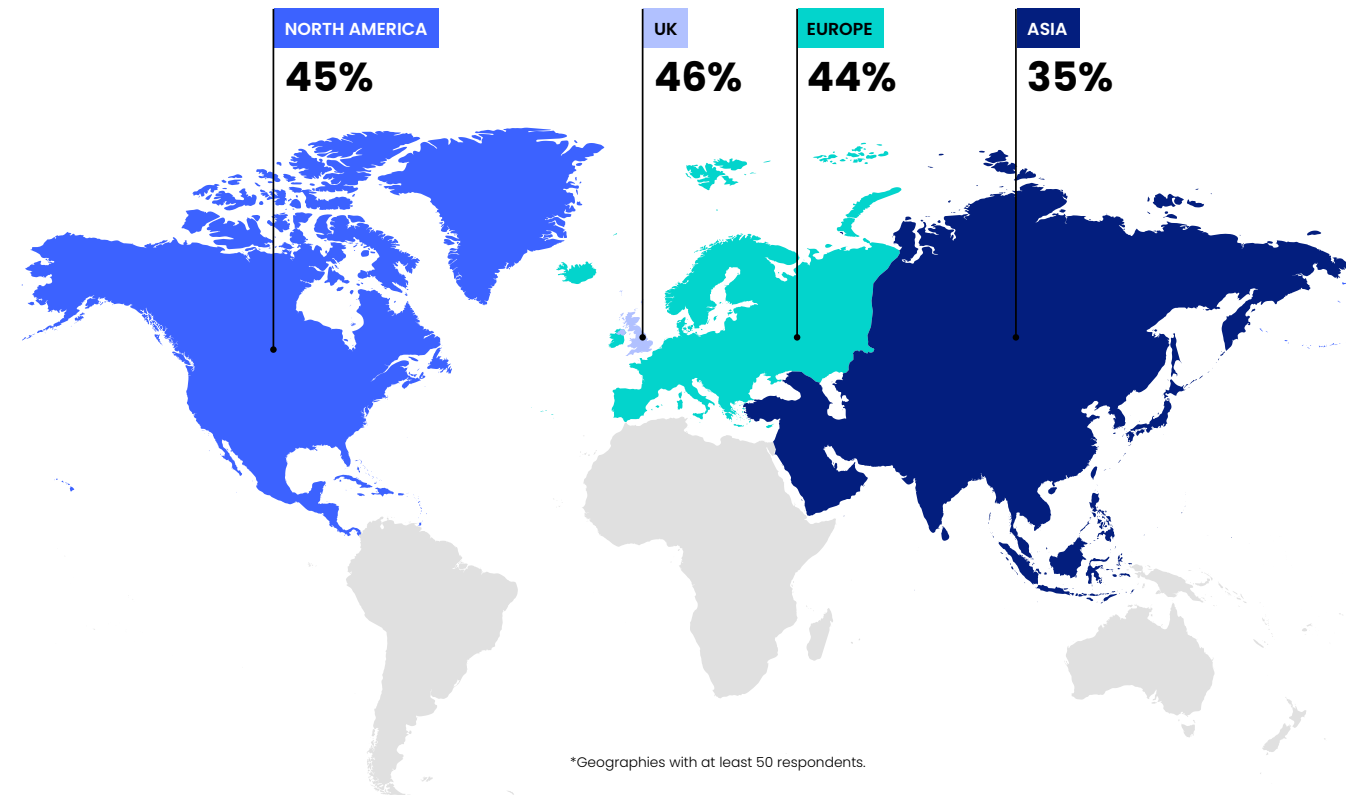
Win Rates by Company Size, 2022–2024



Looking year-over-year, we can see that mid-market and enterprise companies are both winning more (after experiencing a dip last year). SMBs, however, have remained consistent. This means the gap between enterprise companies and SMBs is widening once more, with enterprise firms now seeing a five-point edge over SMB win rates, compared to last year’s three points.

Taking a global view, we can see that the UK has the highest win rates—a position they've maintained for the last few years. That said, North America and Europe are not far behind. Interestingly, UK respondents also had the smallest advancement gap, with just an eight-point delta between deals where they made the shortlist, vs. winning the bid.

Win Rates by Geography*

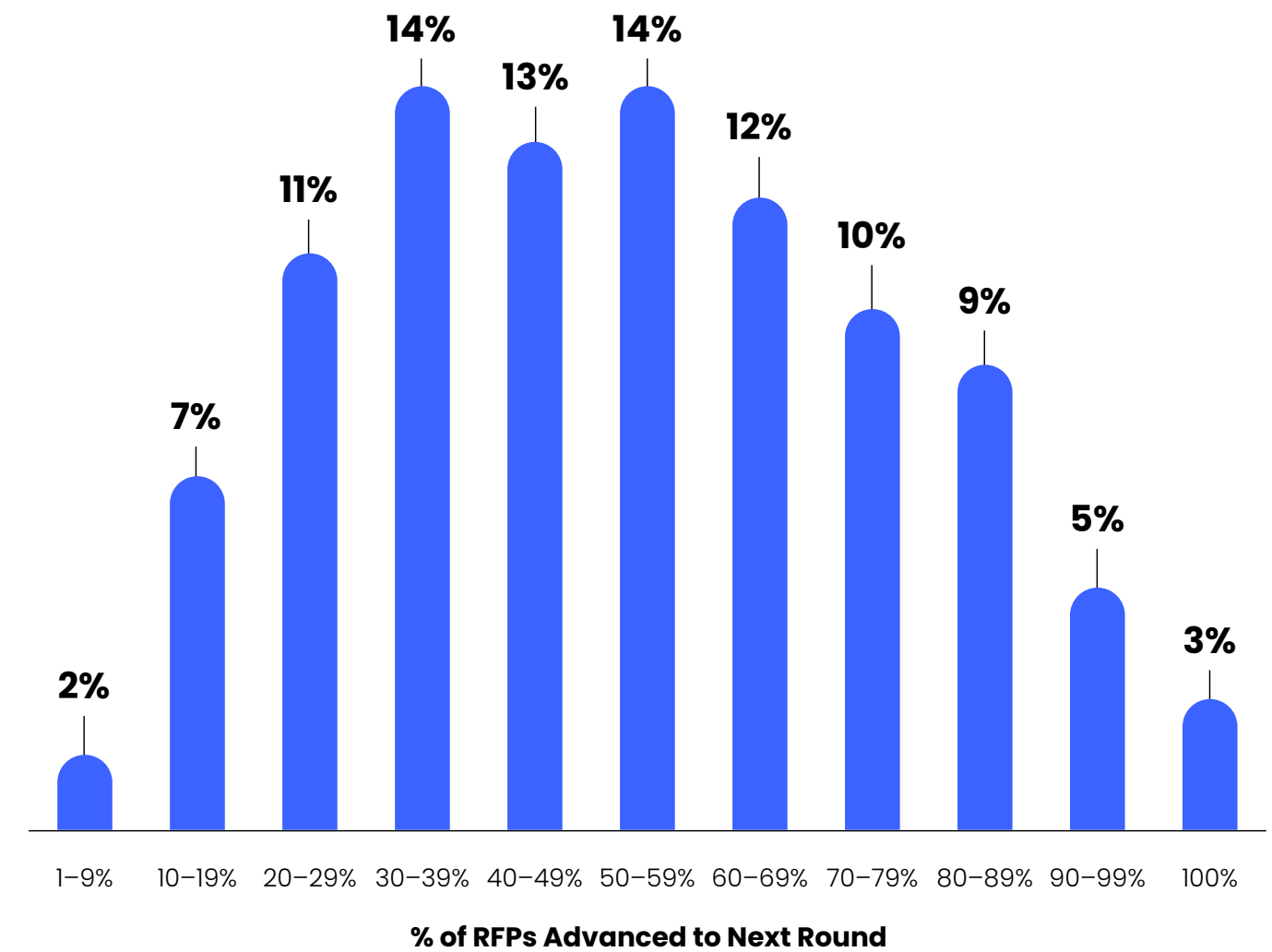


Advancement Rates Drop Slightly to 54%

Advancement rates—the percentage of RFPs that are shortlisted for the next round—have actually decreased slightly from last year's 56%, even as win rates have increased. The overall trend, however, has held steady between 54-56% for the past three years.

Advancement rate = Shortlist rate

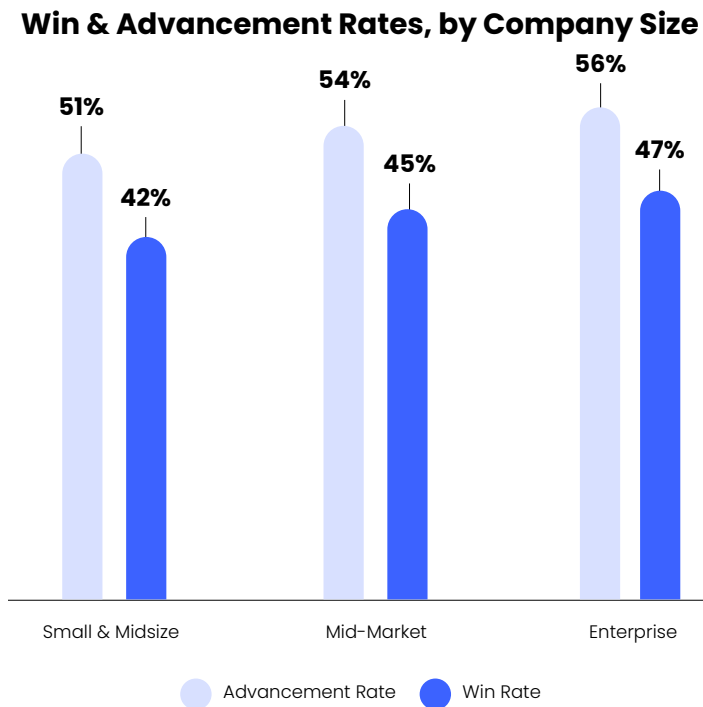
Average Advancement Rate



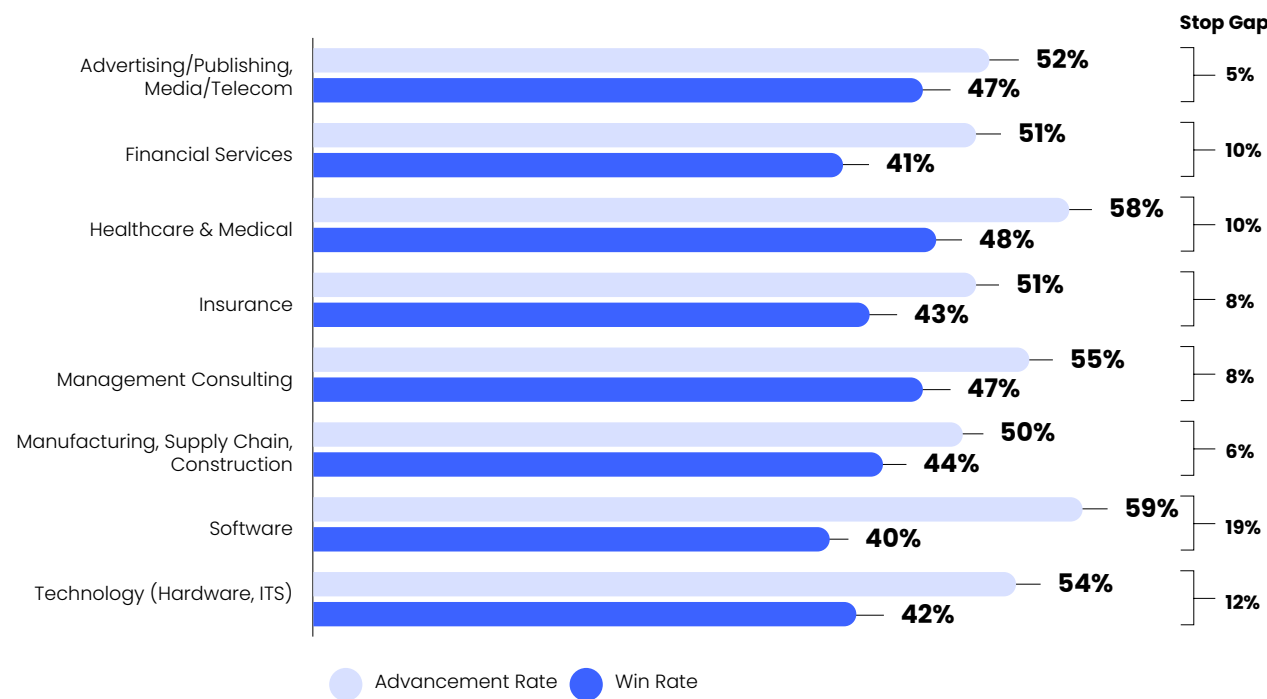
Interestingly, the gap between advancing on a deal and winning it is the same across company sizes. This marks a change from last year, where enterprise and mid-market companies faced a 13-point delta between advancing on and winning a deal, compared to nine points for SMBs. This year, companies of all sizes face a nine-point delta, meaning that larger companies are closing the gap.

Across industries, advertising and manufacturing are the most consistent—if they advance on a deal, chances are pretty high that they'll win it.

Software, on the other hand, faces the biggest gap (19 points) between the RFPs they're shortlisted on and the ones they win. They also have the lowest win rate of any industry, suggesting that this may be a particularly competitive field.



Win & Advancement Rates, by Industry



Teams Less Likely to Blame Price for Losing

“Price” has always been a convenient scapegoat for losing a bid, holding the top spot since 2021. However, this year, not only has the number of respondents choosing “price” as their top answer dropped from 67% to 61%, but “price” is now tied with “losing to a competitor/incumbent.”

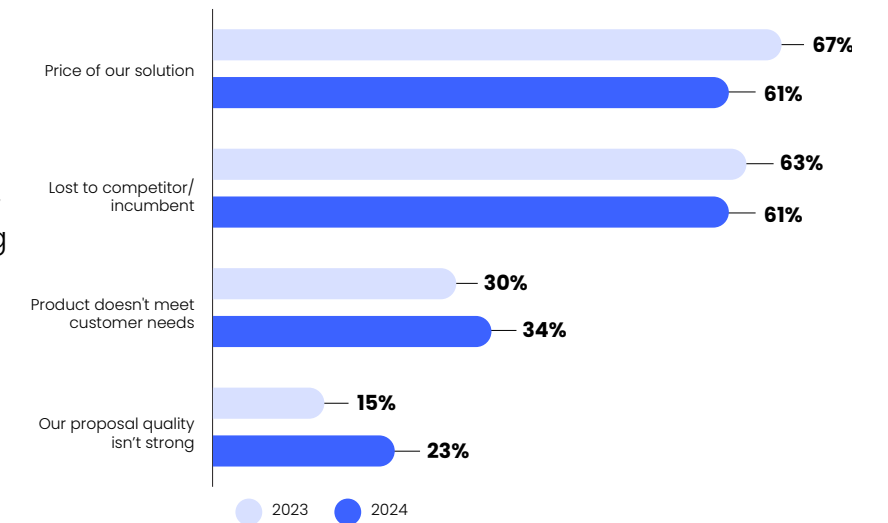
At the same time, there seems to be a growing awareness of the customer and what they're looking for when evaluating the proposal. Responders were more likely to choose “our product/offering didn't meet the needs of the customer” and “our proposal quality isn't strong” than last year.

While companies of all sizes are less hung up on price than last year, enterprise firms are still most likely to cite price as a reason for losing.

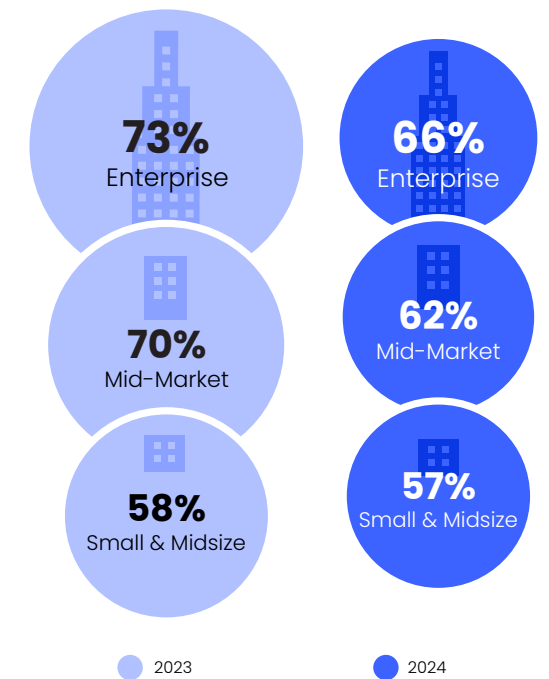
SMBs, on the other hand, are most likely to attribute losing to a competitor (62%). Mid-market companies take a middle-of-the-road position and are just as likely to cite price as their competition. This likely speaks to the greater competition that SMBs face as compared to their larger counterparts.

Top Reasons for Losing Bids, 2023 vs. 2024

Respondents could choose multiple answers



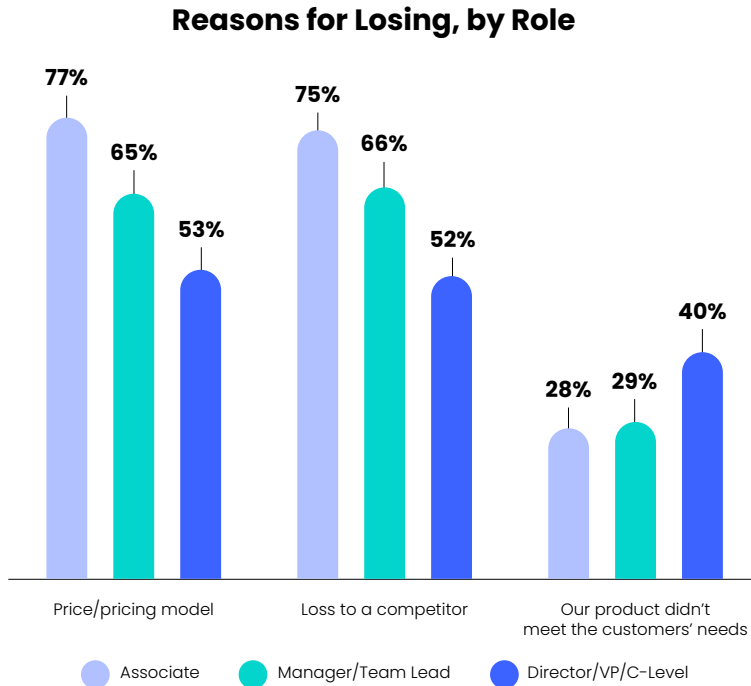
Losing on Price, by Company Size



Why Different Roles Believe They Lose

There’s a noticeable gap between why upper management and associates think they lose. Associates are more likely to point to price, while directors and up are more likely to pin the blame on the product.

It’s interesting to note that this gap in opinions is widening. There was more agreement on price as a lever over the last few years—likely due to the economic disruption sweeping through the market. Now that the economy has stabilized, upper management seems more convinced than ever that the product is the sticking point, not the price tag.



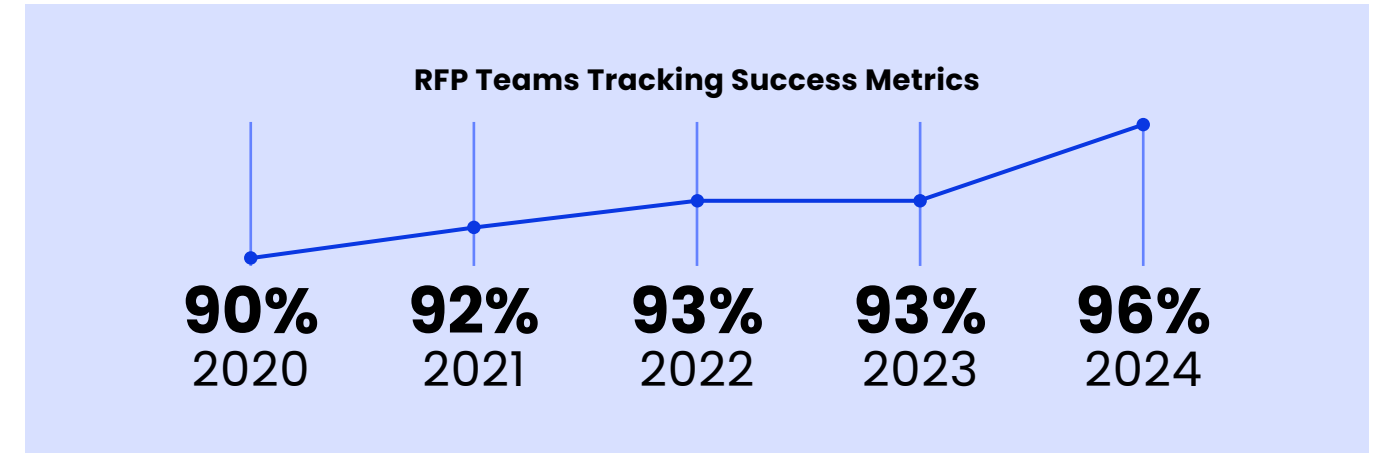
Key Insight: Top Performers Drill Down to Efficiency Metrics



Top performers (those who win 50% or more of the RFPs they participate in) track metrics a little differently than their peers. For instance, they’re more likely to track granular efficiency metrics like their advancement rate (42%), speed of completion (39%), cost per bid (29%), team member performance (28%), and capture rate (27%). Focusing on these kinds of metrics may give them an edge when it comes to optimizing their performance. Instead of trying to improve based on their win rate alone, they have concrete data on how they’re responding which can help inform their approach.

Success Metric Tracking is On the Rise

Almost all teams (96%) tracked at least some success metrics, a noticeable increase over last year (93%). This trend may also be related to increased RFP software use (which we’ll explore in Chapter 5), as these kinds of tools make it easier to track metrics.

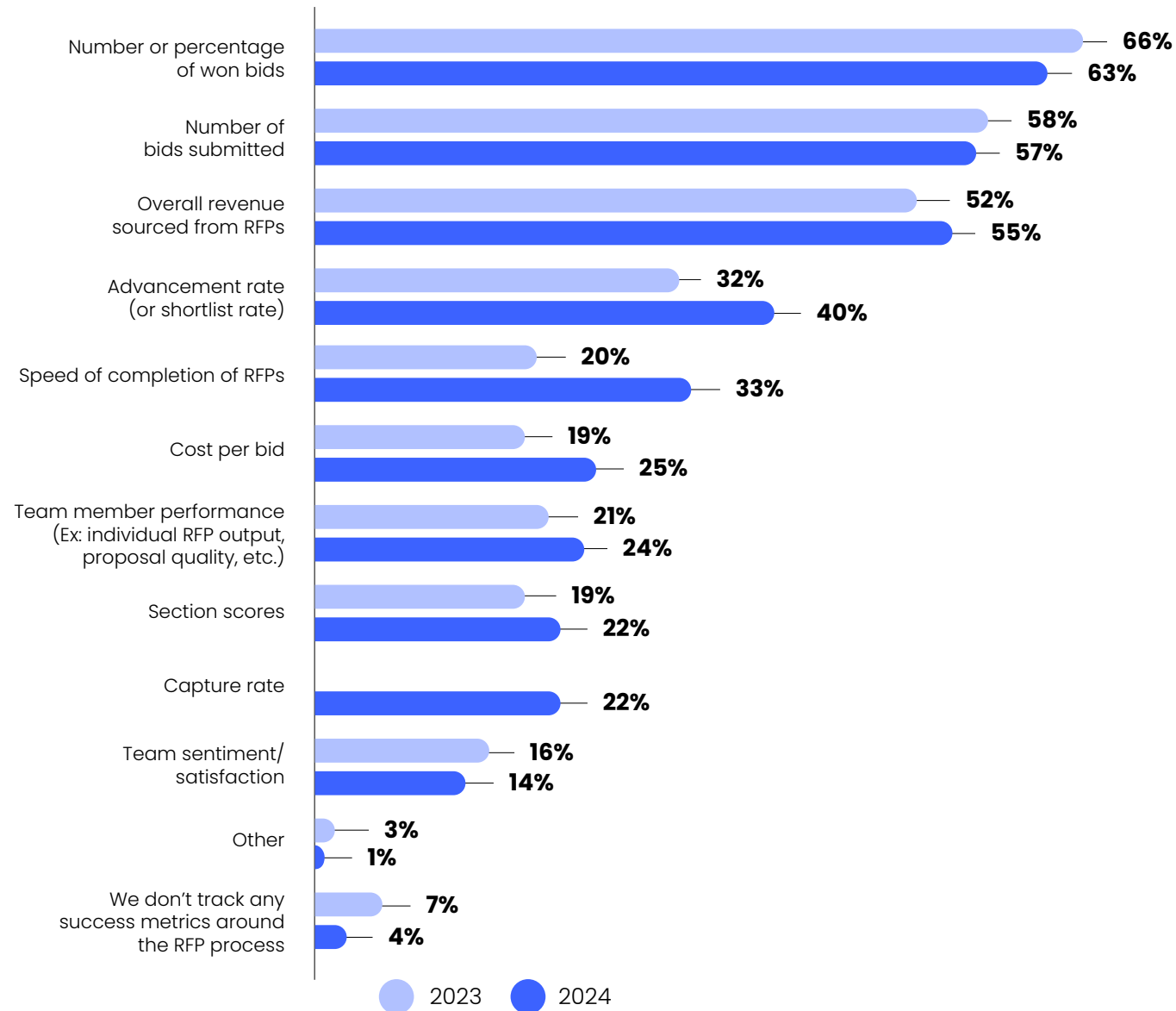


This is a positive sign that more teams are collecting data on what’s working and where they can continue to improve (and it’s paying off, in terms of higher win rates). Having real data to point to is also key for advocating successfully for more resources—something teams may have learned in the past few leaner economic years.

When it comes to the types of metrics tracked, win rates are the most popular, followed by the number of bids submitted—which is consistent with previous years. But there’s a noticeable increase in teams tracking more granular metrics like advancement rate, speed of completion of RFPs, cost per bid, and team member performance.

That said, team sentiment could perhaps use more attention as a metric, especially considering the tight link between stress and poor RFP performance (which we’ll break down in Chapter 4).

Success Metrics Tracked, 2023 vs. 2024



Chapter Summary: RFPs Remain Critically Important to the Bottom Line—But There’s Opportunity To Boost Revenue Numbers

Even though the total dollar amount generated by RFPs may have decreased this year, the overall revenue impact of RFPs has not wavered. RFPs continue to generate more than a third (37%) of company revenue—a fact that’s remained true for the past six years we’ve run this survey. Despite economic and technological shifts, RFPs are not going away any time soon.

As teams became more selective (and the economy less stressed) this year, win rates also went up. While these increased win rates were not able to make up for the dip in volume in terms of pure revenue numbers, if teams continue to focus on quality while staying efficient, they’ll likely see their revenue improve next year.

Teams already have a head start on improving their processes by tracking success metrics—something that the overwhelming majority are already doing. That said, the kind of success metrics you track matters. Our data shows that top performers look past basic metrics like win rates, and focus more on granular efficiency metrics that will help them optimize their approach.

Up next: Teams are spending a lot less time on writing (thanks, largely, to generative AI). But what impact is that having on quality?



CHAPTER 3: WRITING PROCESS

The Tricky Balance Between Quality and Efficiency

Writing Speed 41

Response Time 43

Non-Writing Tasks 45

CHAPTER 3

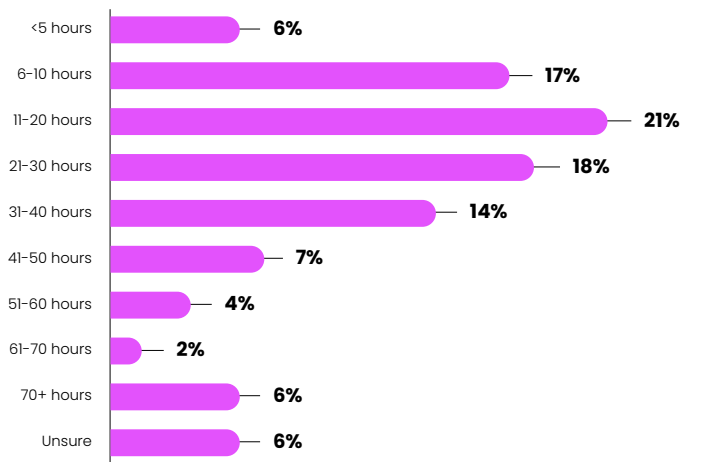
Average Writing Time Drops to 25 Hours Per Bid

This year saw a significant dip in time spent responding to an RFP. Last year, it took 30 hours on average, in comparison to 25 hours this year—that’s a significant time savings of five hours per RFP.

What accounts for this sharp decrease? There are a few possibilities. First, the majority of teams are submitting slightly more RFPs, which means they have less time to work on each one. But this alone doesn’t account for such a large drop. Last year, we saw a much greater surge in the number of RFPs being submitted, but the time per RFP only decreased by two hours.

There’s one other factor worth noting: a huge increase in the adoption of RFP software and generative AI. This year, 65% of teams say they use some kind of RFP software, up from 48% last year. Plus, 68% are now using generative AI—double last year’s number. The combined time-saving power of these two tools likely accounts for a large part of the drop we’re now observing.

Average Time Spent Writing a Single RFP



Key Insight: The Average Team Spends 3825 Hours Writing RFPs Annually

Some quick math: If a bid requires 25 hours of writing time and teams submit an average of 153 RFPs per year, that means the average team spends 3825 hours writing RFPs each year (a significant drop from last year’s 5250).

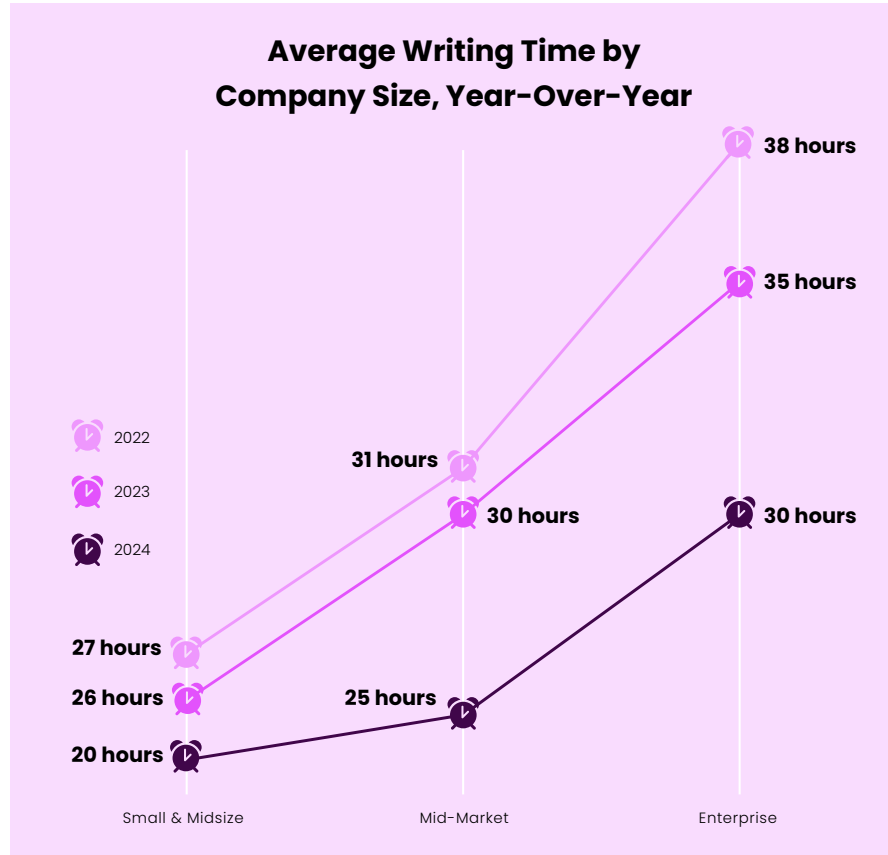
If, as our research suggests, this is due to the impact of software and AI, this is a huge point in favor of both for improving efficiency. It’s important to remember, however, that *spending less time writing is only a good thing if teams can maintain a high standard of quality while they’re doing it.*



Small and Agile Wins the Race

You'd be forgiven for thinking that larger companies—with all their additional staff and resources—would be the fastest at writing proposals. In reality, the smallest and leanest teams are the speediest.

Our data shows that SMBs spend the least time writing, at 20 hours per RFP. That's a whole 10 hours less than enterprise companies, who clock 30 hours on average. Mid-market companies, true to their name, are smack-dab in the middle at 25 hours.



Of course, having more people involved in the response process typically means more opinions, discussions, and revisions, which could all contribute to this longer writing time for larger companies. But it's also possible that the kinds of RFPs that larger companies are dealing with are simply bigger and more complex than the kinds that smaller companies take on. Plus, as we've noted above, speed isn't everything. While it's good to be efficient, it's more important to take enough time to produce a quality response that will increase your chances of winning the bid.

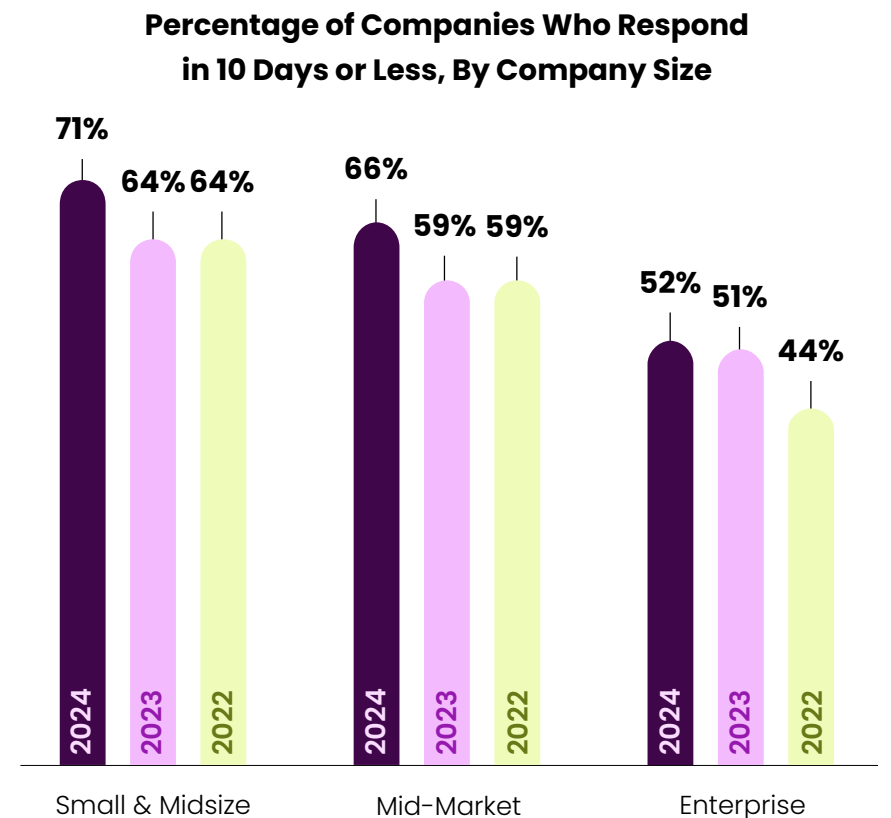
Companies of all sizes are making serious strides towards being more efficient, continuing a trend we've observed over the last few years. Though enterprise companies are still spending the most time on their responses, they've saved five hours per RFP in 2024 compared to 2023, and eight hours per RFP compared to time spent on each response in 2022.

Average Turnaround Time Speeds Up, With the Smallest Companies Seeing the Biggest Impact

Across all respondents, 64% are answering bids in 10 days or less, on average. That's somewhat faster than the average turnaround from last year (59% responded in 10 or fewer business days). Overall, this lines up with the trend toward decreased writing time on each RFP.

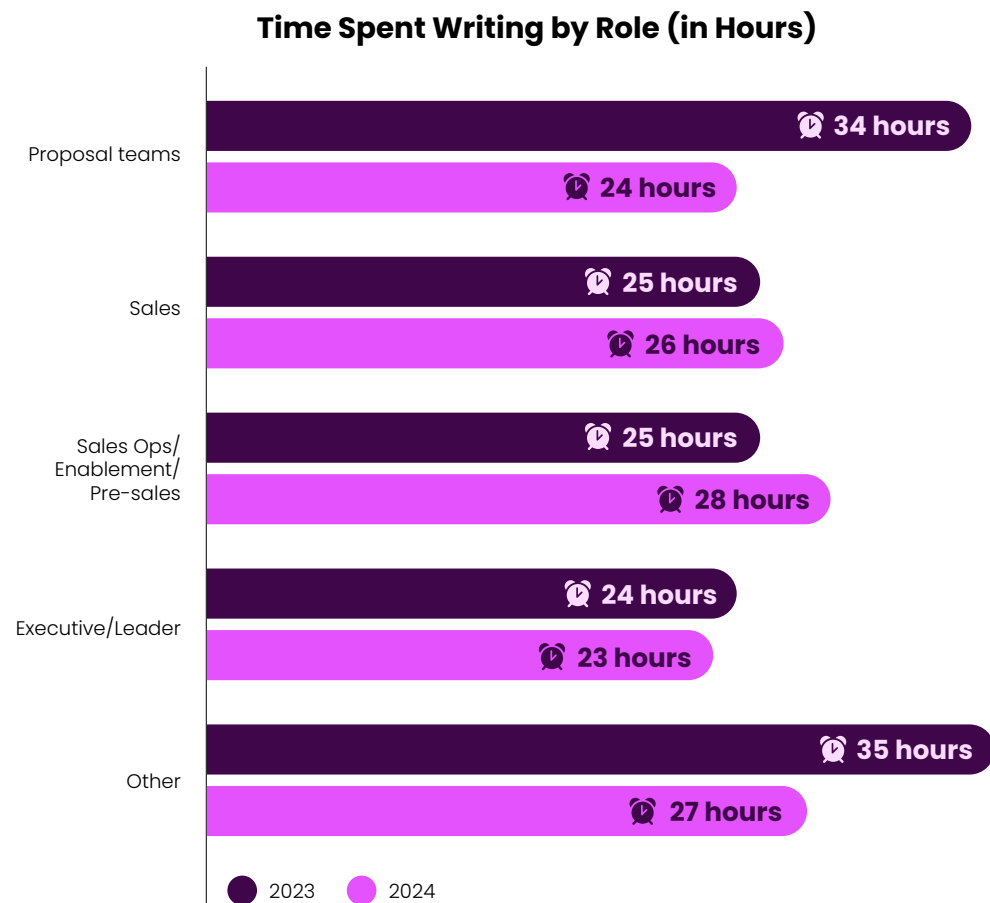
Perhaps unsurprisingly, the smallest companies make up the biggest share of those responding in this time frame. Case in point: 71% of SMBs turn their responses around in less than two workweeks.

An interesting change this year, however, is that SMBs and mid-market companies are making the biggest efficiency gains. This marks a difference from last year, when enterprise companies showed the biggest improvement, while SMBs and mid-market companies remained consistent. Larger companies can take more time to adopt new processes and systems, while smaller companies tend to be more nimble, which may account for this difference.



Proposal Teams Now Spend Significantly Fewer Hours Writing

When we break down writing time by team, we can see that proposal teams spend an average of 24 hours writing each bid—that’s 10 hours less than last year and two hours less than their counterparts in sales.



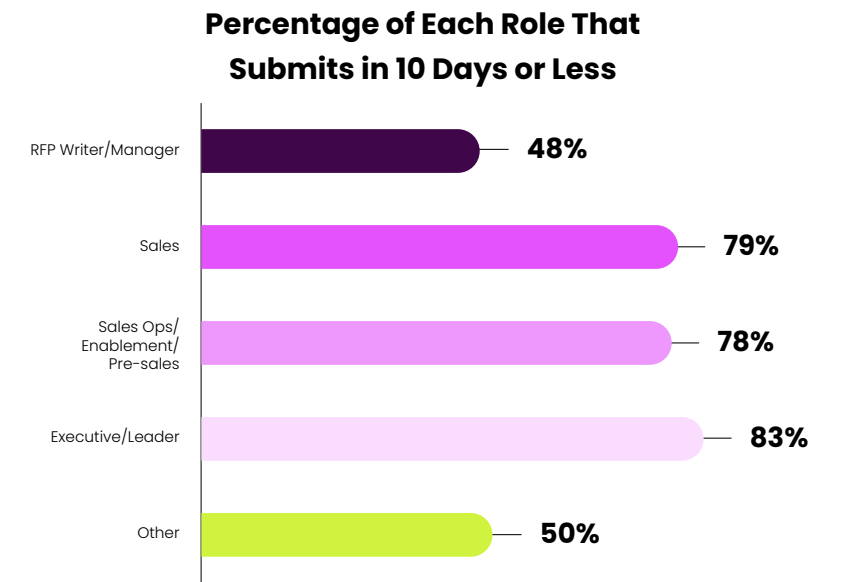
The factors we’ve already discussed—responding to a greater volume of RFPs as well as using software and AI to save time—likely play a part. While all roles saw higher adoption of software and AI this year, it’s plausible that proposal teams saw the biggest impact of these time-saving technologies on their work, since so much of their jobs revolve around writing.

Getting Bugged Down in Non-Writing Tasks May Prevent Proposal Teams from Submitting as Quickly as Other Roles

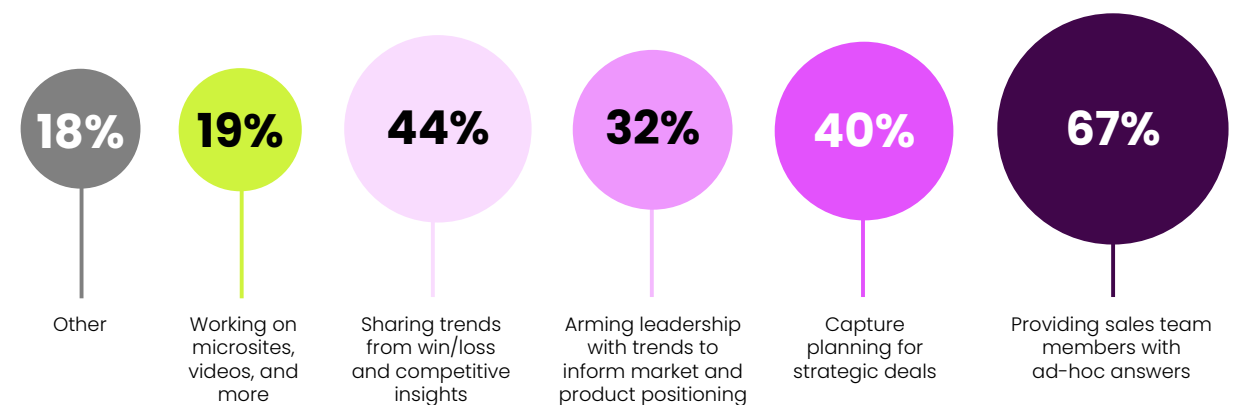
While proposal managers spend fewer hours writing each RFP, they are less likely than other roles to submit in 10 days or less.

While this might not be such a bad thing if teams are taking the extra time to come back to their proposals with fresh eyes or run them through an extra round of reviews, our data suggests that non-writing-related distractions might be getting in the way.

One possible reason for this delay is all the work that proposal teams have to do outside of getting the proposal together. For instance, according to our survey results, two-thirds (67%) of proposal managers spend at least part of their time “providing sales team members with ad hoc answers.” Over time, this extra labor adds up.



Percentage of Proposal Managers Who Report Spending Their Time On Each Task





Key Insight: Top-Performing Teams Spend an Extra 4 Hours Per RFP

Speed is good—but quality is better. Teams who win 50% or more of the RFPs they respond to spend an average of 29 hours per RFP, compared to the overall average of 25 hours. It seems that these extra few hours polishing proposals may give them the edge.

Of course, the amount of time spent per RFP matters a lot less than how teams are spending that time. Spending an extra four hours due to inefficiencies (like tracking down old answers, coordinating difficult-to-reach SMEs, or unravelling long email threads) is a lot less beneficial than taking the time to personalize responses to the specific bid.

Teams should also keep in mind the value of the contract they're trying to win and whether dedicating the extra time will be worth the return on investment.

Chapter Summary: Writing Speed Increases as Teams Leverage Tech and AI



Writing time dropped significantly this year, thanks at least in part to the efficiency boost of RFP software and generative AI. While the time-saving benefits of these tools are immense, teams should still be mindful of double-checking any work created by generative AI in case of hallucinations or inaccuracies.

Even though proposal managers are spending less time writing than ever before, they're actually less likely than their sales counterparts to submit in 10 days or less. Part of this may be due to the fact that—as keepers of their organizations' RFP information—there can be a lot of other demands on their knowledge and time.

That said, those teams that are able to spend a little extra time writing tend to do a little better than those who rush to the finish. Top performers spend an extra four hours polishing and personalizing their RFP responses compared to the average (but beyond the 50-hour mark, we don't see much benefit).

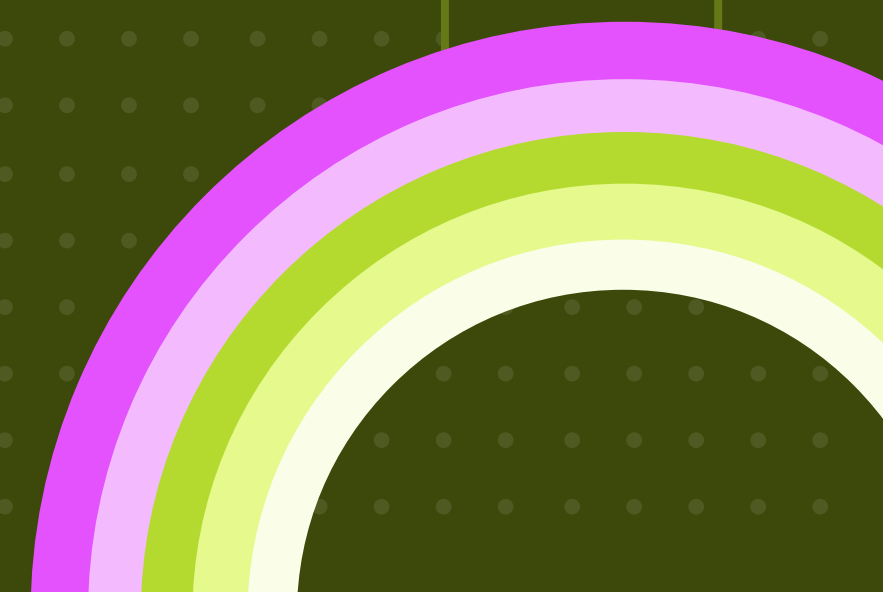
Up Next: Teams face numerous challenges when it comes to the RFP process. How is it impacting their stress levels?



CHAPTER 4: TEAM CHALLENGES

Teams Feel Optimistic, Despite Challenges

Top Challenges	48
Process Ownership	50
Reporting Structure	51
Stress Levels	53
Team Size	54



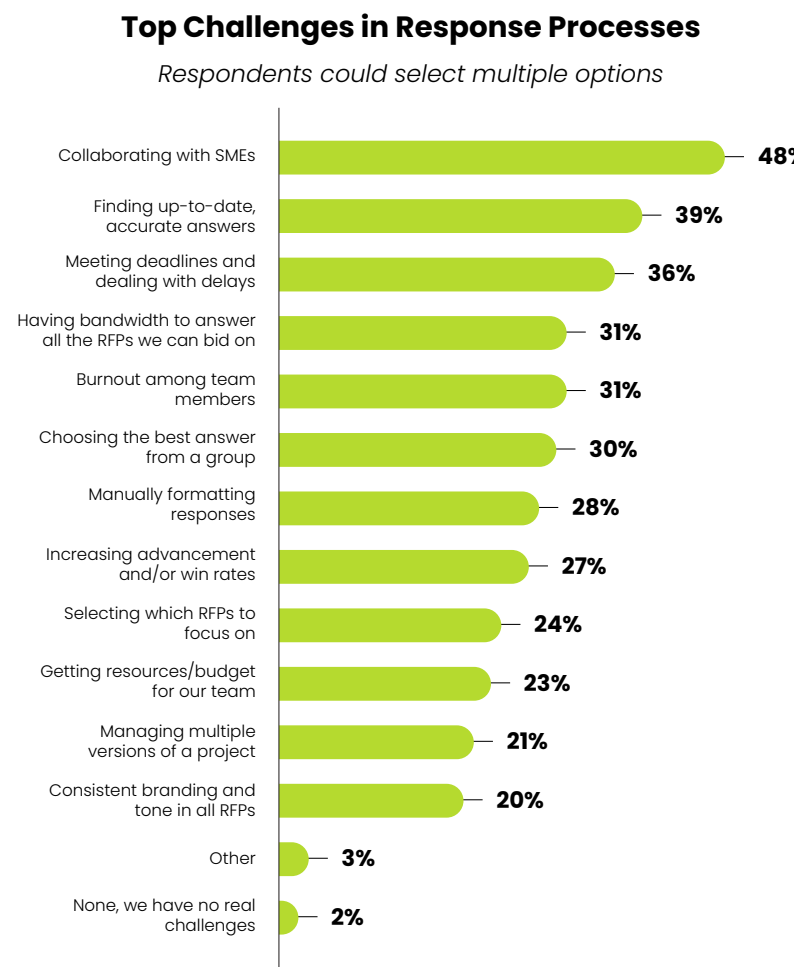
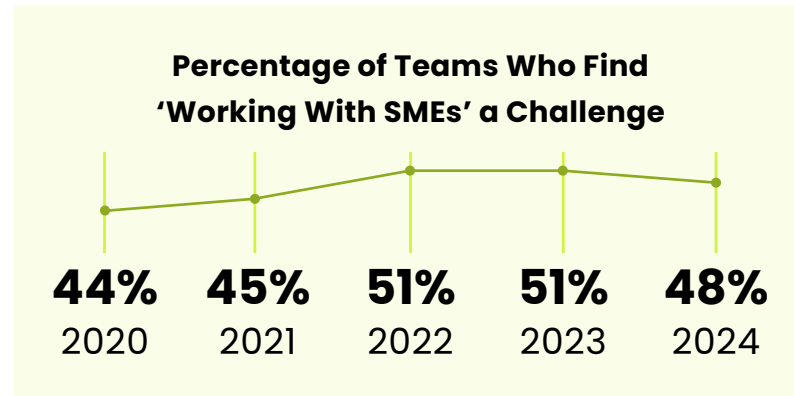
Collaboration with SMEs Remains the Top Challenge for the Fifth Year Running

Since 2020, one major challenge has topped the lists for responders: collaborating with SMEs.

Other top trends have remained relatively consistent year-over-year. For instance, “finding answers” and “meeting deadlines” have held steady in second and third place, respectively.

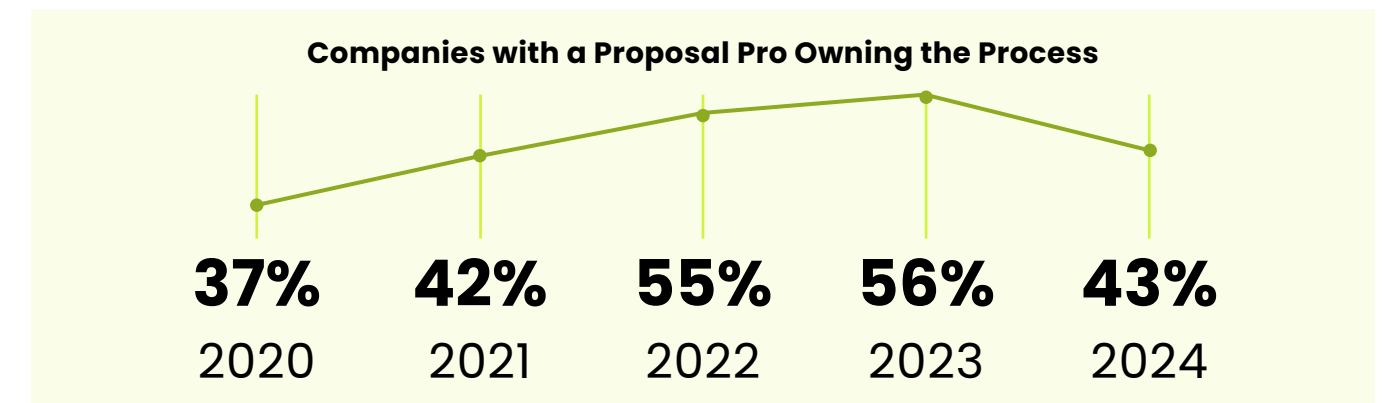
Interestingly, “selecting which RFPs to focus on” has decreased noticeably as a challenge (down from 29% last year). This is likely due to increased use of go/no-go processes. Getting resources and budget also seems to be less of a concern at 23% compared to 27% last year, perhaps indicating that purse strings are loosening again after a lean few years.

Finally, 2% claim to have to have “no real challenges.” If that’s you, please tell us your secrets!



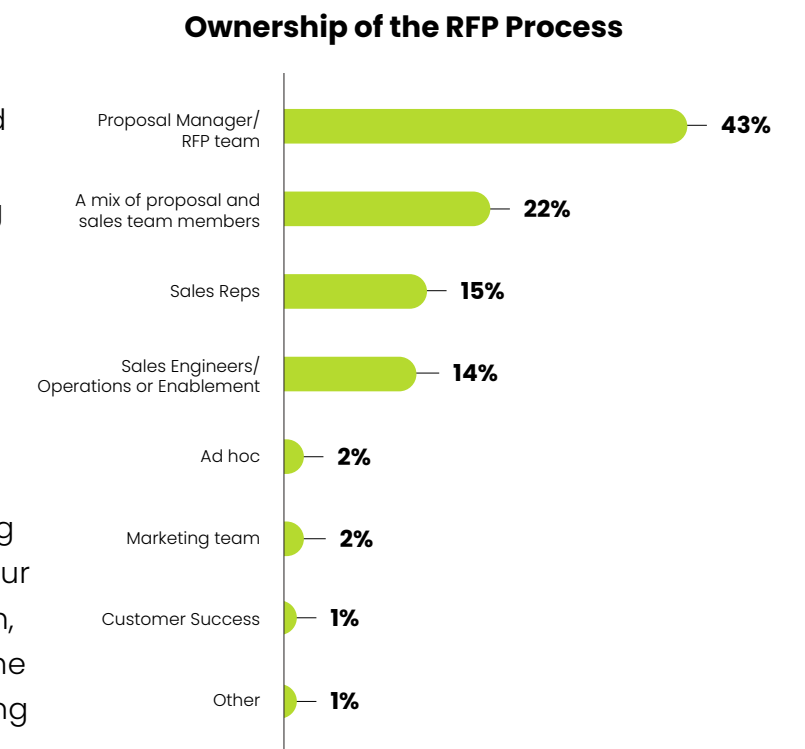
Dedicated RFP Resources Decreased in 2024

In 2023, 56% of respondents had a dedicated team or writer owning the RFP process. In 2024, it was just 43%—a full 13-point decrease. This marks a major reversal of a trend we’ve observed for the past few years as RFP teams tended to get more specialized. Now, it seems, the reverse is happening.



This decrease may be related to the high number of layoffs and restructurings that have taken place in the last year. As companies suffered under economic strain, it may have become more difficult to justify having a function dedicated exclusively to RFPs. Given how critical RFPs are to generating revenue, however, this may ultimately prove to be a short-sighted move.

So if it’s not proposal teams overseeing the process, then who? According to our data, it’s increasingly sales roles, which, when tallied up, now make up 51% of the folks primarily responsible for managing the RFP process.



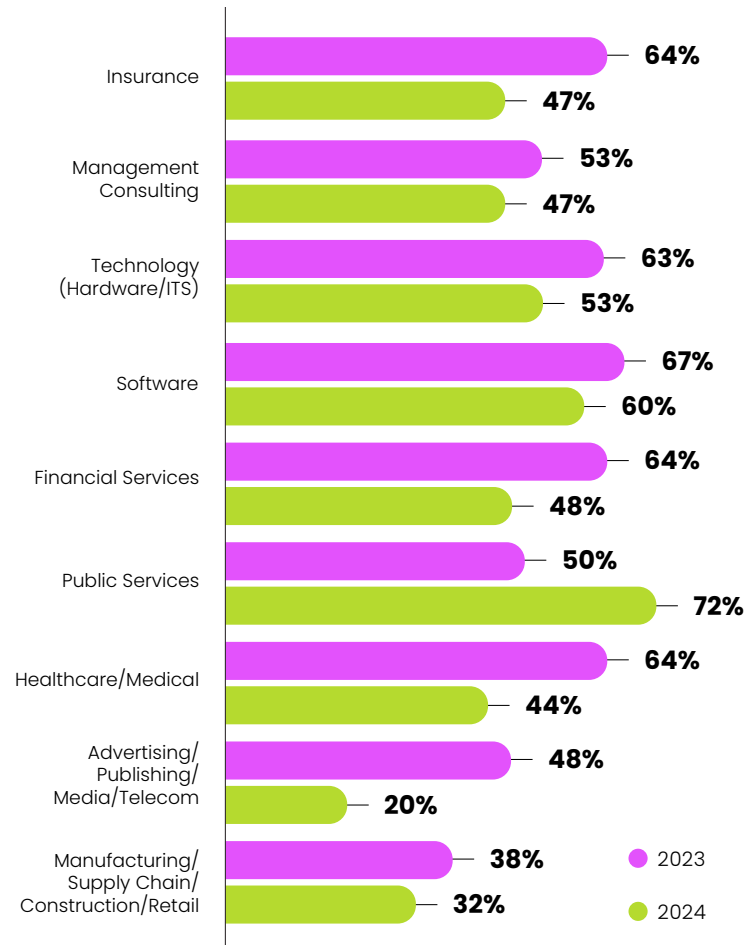
Ownership of the RFP Process Varies by Industry

Despite the overall pattern we're noticing of teams becoming less specialized around their RFP process, this trend varies a lot by industry.

Most industries experienced at least some decrease in dedicated RFP teams. For some industries, like software, this was a small dip and the majority of companies (60%) still report having a dedicated RFP function. For others, like advertising, the change was a lot more extreme—about half of teams in this industry reported having a dedicated team last year, compared to just 20% this year, a full 28-point drop. This may indicate the extents to which different industries have been affected by economic currents, leading to changes in the management of RFPs.

The public sector is an interesting outlier. While other industries were moving away from having a dedicated RFP team, this segment doubled down. Last year, half of this industry reported having a dedicated RFP team—now, it's nearly three-quarters (72%).

Industries with Dedicated RFP Teams, 2023 vs. 2024



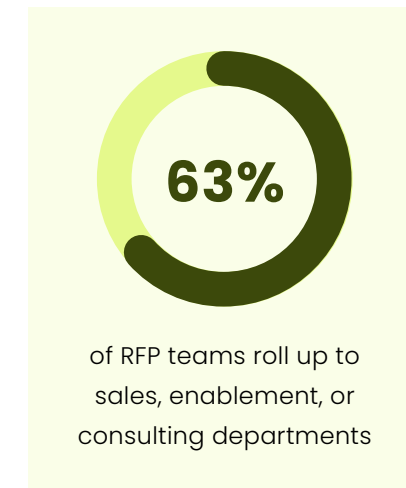
+22 percentage points

The growth of public sector organizations with a dedicated RFP manager or team owning the response process

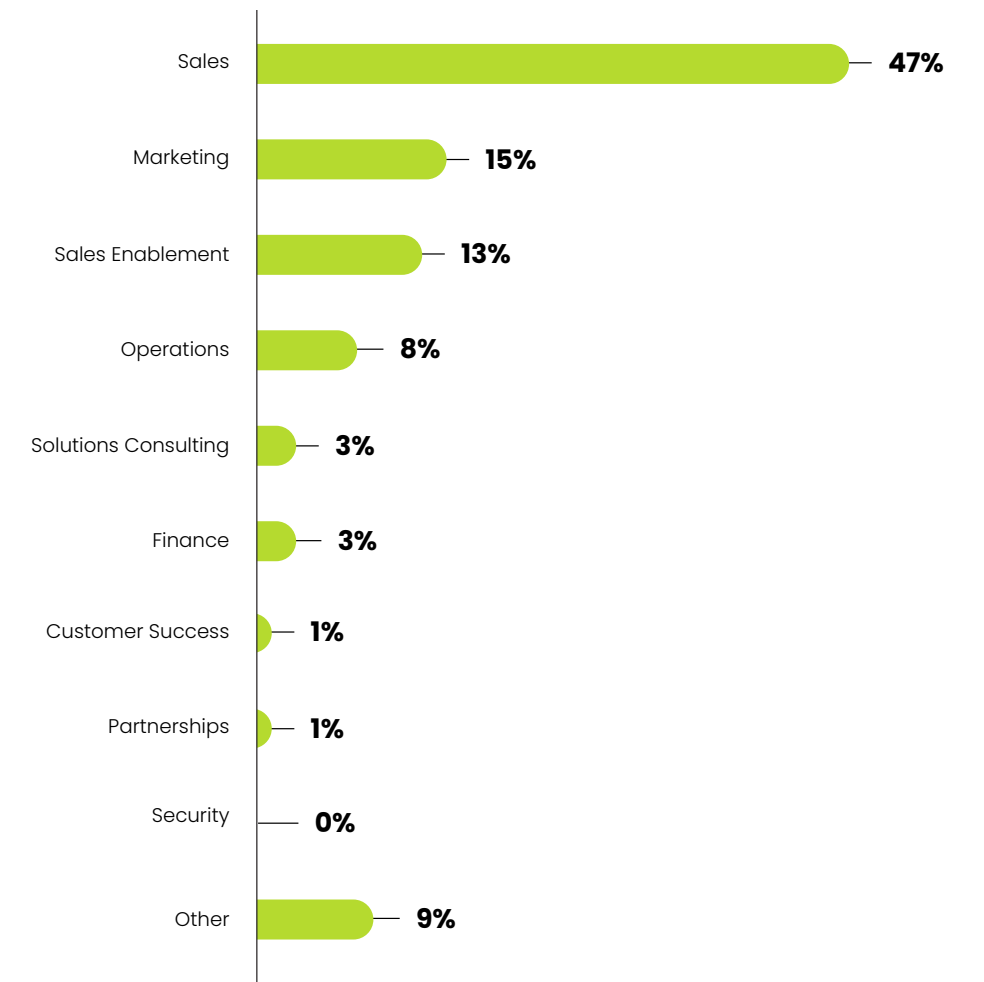
Proposal Teams Most Commonly Report to Sales

For businesses with a proposal team of their own, nearly half report to sales, followed distantly by marketing.

This is more than a 10-point increase over last year's data (35%). However, it seems to be in line with the increase of sales involvement we're seeing more generally.



Departments That Proposal Teams Report To



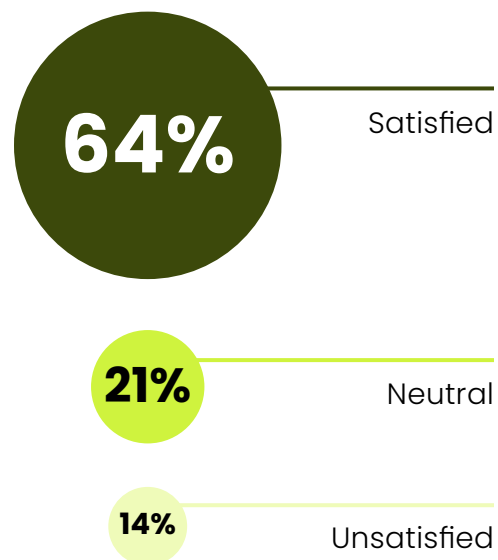
Overall, Teams Feel Satisfied With Their RFP Process

This year, nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) said they were satisfied with their RFP process—a significant leap from last year’s 39%.

A few factors might be contributing to this sentiment turnaround. First, the market seems to have stabilized after a few difficult and uncertain years, which might be impacting how optimistic teams are feeling overall.

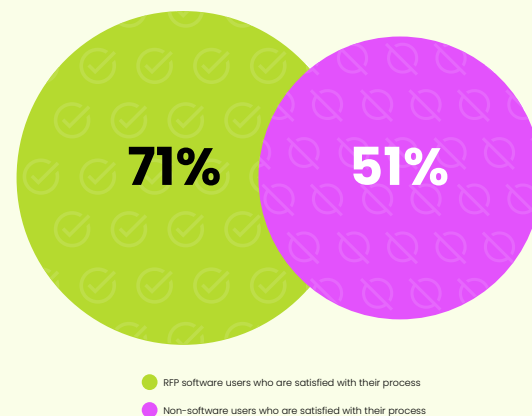
Moreover, when it comes to running their RFP processes, teams have made a few notable improvements this year, including better go/no-go process use, increased reliance on RFP software, and more usage of generative AI. All of these might be contributing to a smoother process and a happier team.

Overall Process Satisfaction



Key Insight: RFP Software Users Report Higher Process Satisfaction and Lower Stress Levels

71% of associates and managers who use RFP software are satisfied with their RFP process, compared with 52% of non-users. Plus, 68% of RFP software users say their stress levels at work are almost always manageable—more than 10 points better than non-users, at 57%. Sounds like a win-win.



● RFP software users who are satisfied with their process
● Non-software users who are satisfied with their process

Despite Efficiency Gains, Stress Levels Haven’t Decreased

Thanks to the adoption of RFP software and AI, responders were able to save time and reduce manual effort in their processes this year. However, we’re not yet seeing the impact of these tools on stress levels, which remain the same as last year.



Though stress is sometimes an unavoidable part of the fast-paced RFP process, chronic stress can lead to overwork and burnout. Teams may think they’re pushing themselves to succeed, but the data shows that stressed-out teams are actually less effective than their non-stressed peers. Stressed teams spend 10 hours longer per RFP than those with manageable stress levels, and have a lower win rate.

Additionally, stress can impact long-term employee retention: One quarter (25%) of those who intend to leave the RFP field for a different career list stress as a reason why.

How Stress Levels Impact Success Rates

28

Hours per RFP for non-stressed teams

34

Hours per RFP for stressed teams

46%

Win rate of non-stressed teams

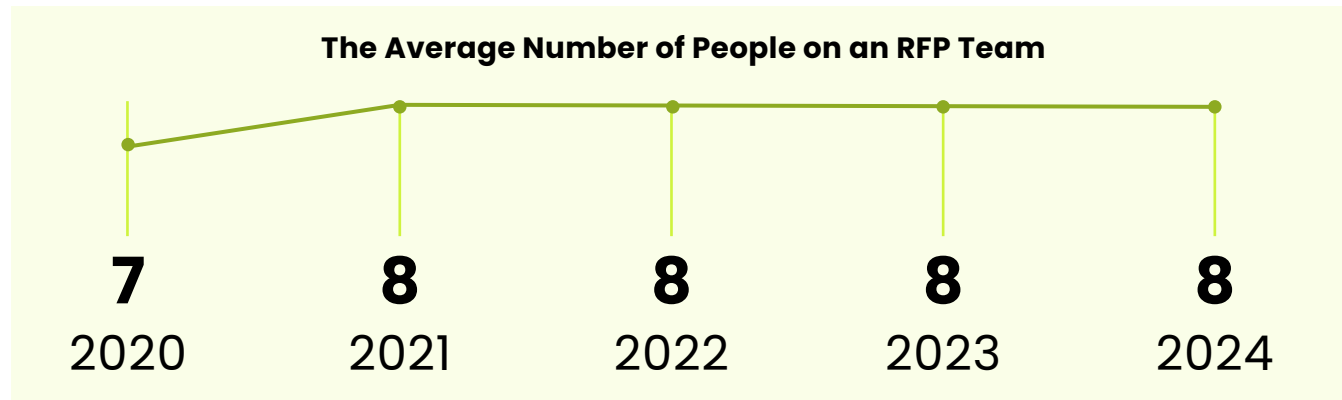
41%

Win rate of stressed teams

What causes teams to feel overwhelmed by their stress? A few interesting correlations show up in our data. For one, teams with unmanageable stress levels respond to more RFPs per year than those with manageable stress—which suggests they may not be as selective as they could be.

Stressed-out teams also tend to involve fewer people in their response process, which may mean their responsibilities are being spread too thin. With many organizations moving away from having a dedicated RFP team, it’s more critical than ever to ensure that those who take part in the process are not getting too overwhelmed, especially if they’re balancing RFPs alongside other responsibilities.

Average Team Size Has Not Changed Since 2021

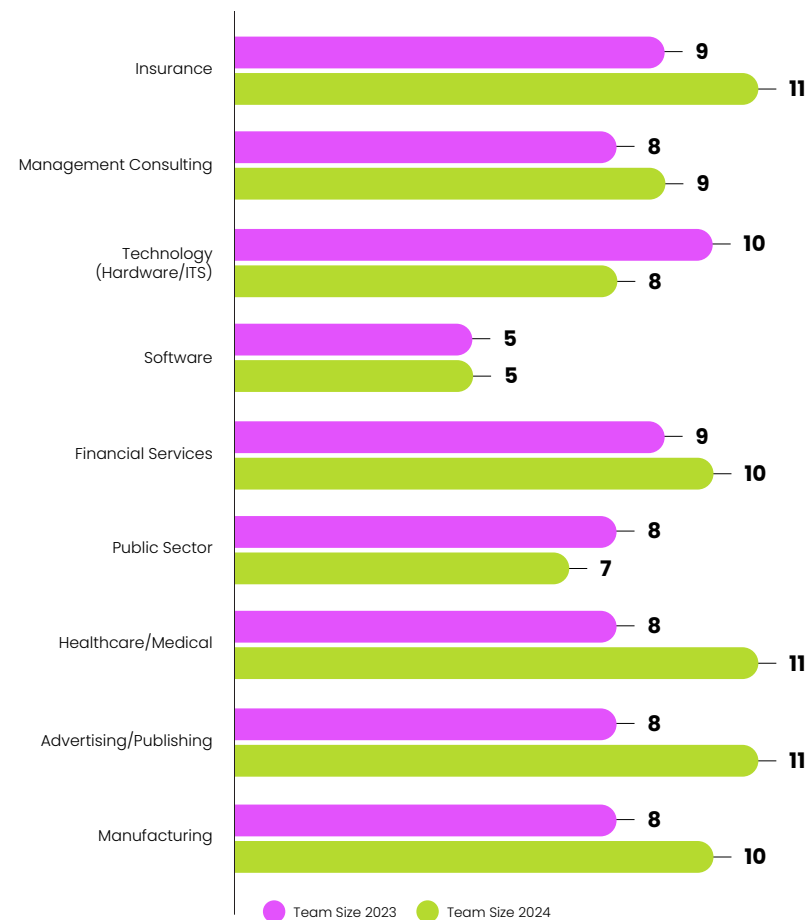


Despite the upheaval of the past few years, the average RFP team size has remained consistent.

However, this average hides some notable shifts. Over the course of the past year, most teams have actually grown slightly, with only technology and the public sector shrinking. Software has remained consistent year-over-year.

In terms of overall rankings, insurance, healthcare, and advertising all clock in with the largest team sizes—a stark difference from last year when technology took the lead.

Response Team Size by Industry (2023 vs. 2024)

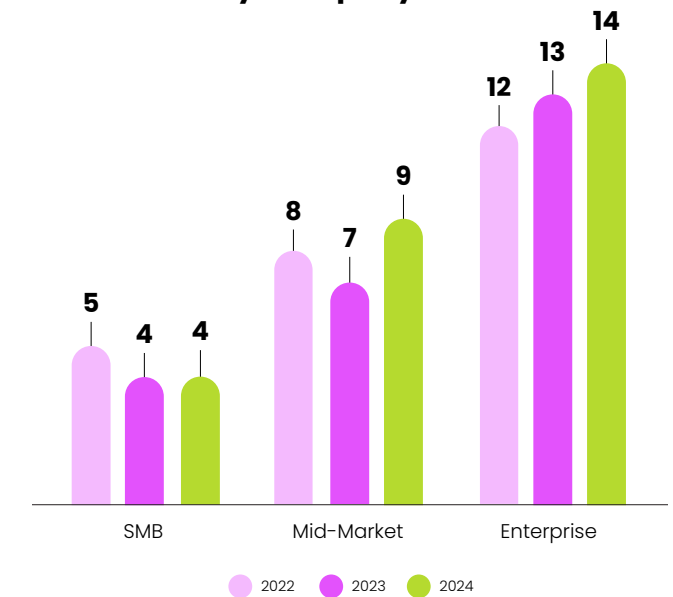


Gap Between the Smallest and Largest Teams Continues to Widen

Perhaps unsurprisingly, SMBs tend to have the smallest dedicated RFP teams and enterprise companies the largest—and this gap is growing. Now, there’s a 10-person difference between enterprise RFP teams and SMBs (up from a seven-person gap in 2022).

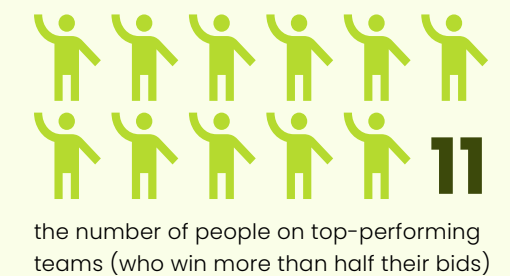
While SMBs’ team size remained consistent this year, enterprise companies gained a team member, contributing to this rift. But that’s not actually the biggest change. Mid-market companies have grown their teams the most, with two people on average joining this year.

People on Dedicated RFP Teams, by Company Size



Key Insight: Top-Performing Teams Are Larger—To a Point

Top performers—or those who win half or more of the RFPs they participate in—have an average of 11 people on their RFP team. On the other hand, smaller teams—especially those with only 1-2 people—are much more likely to be in the low-performer categories. Beyond 25 people, however, there doesn’t appear to be much of an advantage, possibly because teams of this size are a lot harder to coordinate.



The Average Number of Contributors Holds Steady at Nine People

The RFP process involves a whole range of contributors, from subject matter experts (SMEs), to legal staff, to technical teams, and more. Our research shows that nine people on average contribute to a proposal, which is in line with our data from the past four years. Digging a little deeper into the numbers, we can see that most teams report that they involve between 6-15 people in their RFP process, with the median increasing slightly since last year. This slight increase may be accounted for by the fact that fewer companies report having a dedicated RFP team this year—so these contributors may be more involved in the process to make up for this gap.

Chapter Summary: Challenges Persist But Teams Feel More Equipped to Meet Them



Like any big collaborative team project, the RFP response process involves a certain number of unavoidable challenges and headaches. One that has remained consistent year-over-year is the struggle of coordinating with busy SMEs—a challenge that even the now-widespread adoption of AI has not been able to solve.

Old challenges, like dealing with unmanageable levels of stress, still remain present, and new ones, like RFP teams being subsumed into other parts of the organization, are starting to appear. The impacts of these challenges are very real, and the negative effect of stress on both a team's mental health and their ability to make a positive impact on the business cannot be overstated.

Still, teams are overall feeling much more optimistic about their process than in previous years—likely thanks to better resourcing, support in the forms of technology and AI tools, and better use of go/no-go processes. Let's hope this trend continues its upward trajectory.

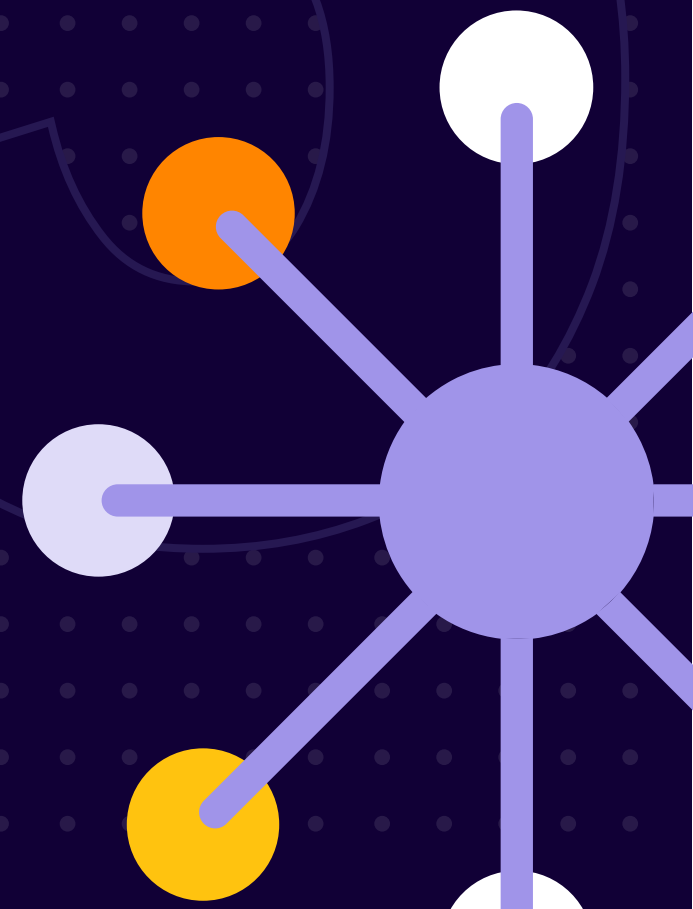
Up next: In last year's report, teams were excited about AI but hadn't really started using it. What's changed since we last checked in?



CHAPTER 5: SOFTWARE & AI

The Impact of Technology on RFP Productivity

Use of AI	58
Software Adoption Rates	62
Benefits of Using RFP Software	63
Satisfaction Rates	64
Time to ROI for Software	66



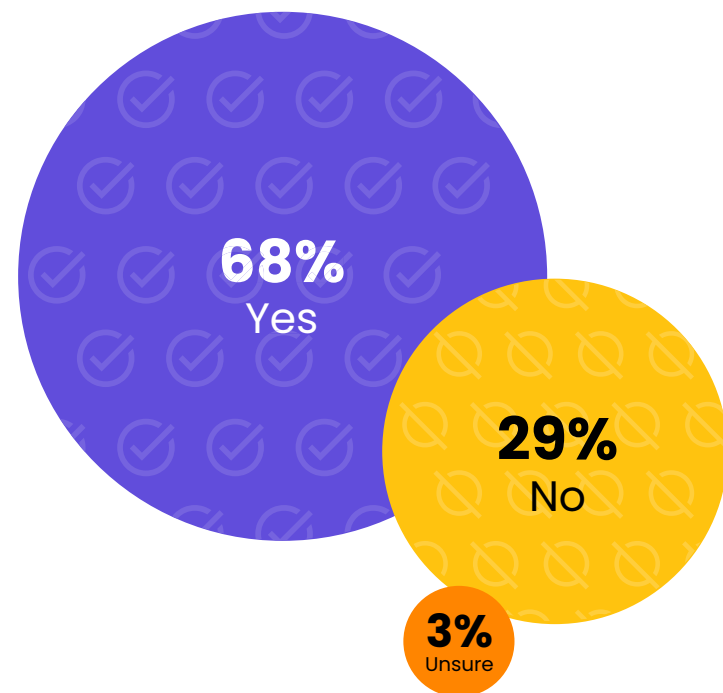
More Than Two-Thirds of RFP Teams Used Generative AI in 2024

While 2023 saw some initial curiosity around generative AI, RFP teams were not yet using it heavily in their workflows. This past year, teams went from being AI-curious to avid users. According to our survey, 68% of teams have now used generative AI—double last year’s number (34%).

The frequency at which they use it is growing too: 38% of generative AI users are using it on a weekly basis, and 32% use it daily.



Have Used AI as Part of the RFP Process in the Past 12 Months



Today, the hype around AI has died down somewhat, but more teams than ever are adopting it as a key tool in their response processes. As [Amara’s Law](#) states, “We tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate the effect in the long run.” These long-term impacts remain to be seen, but it appears that when it comes to AI and RFPs, we’re just getting started.

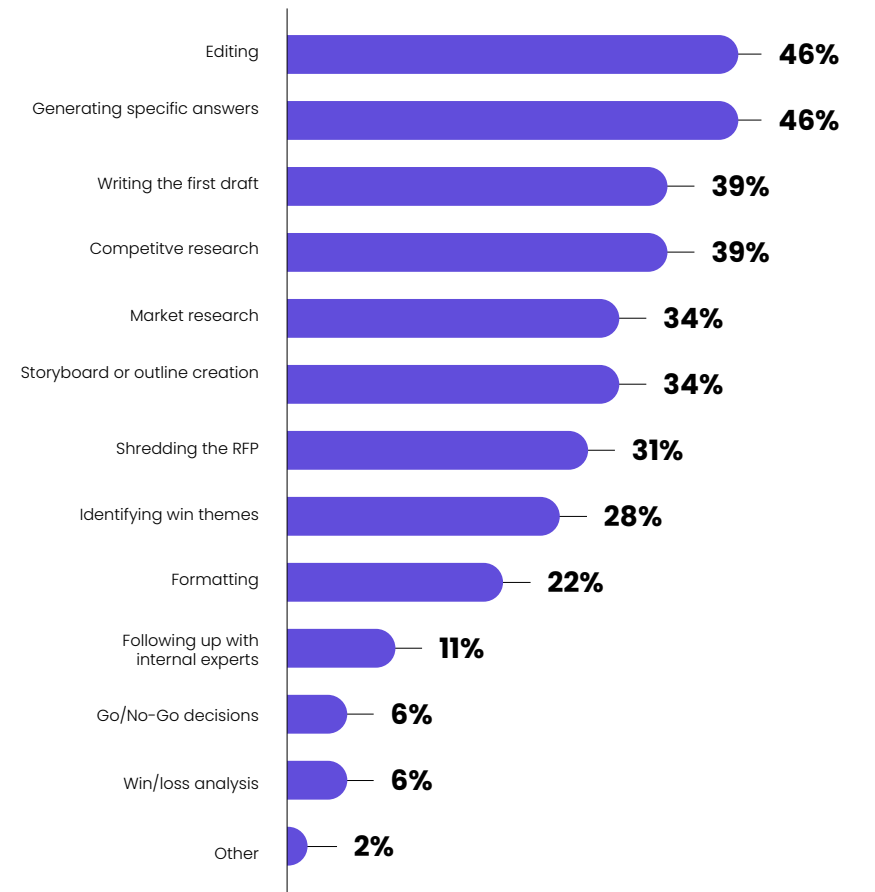
Teams Primarily Use AI for Generating Answers and Editing

Nearly half (46%) of teams are using AI to generate specific answers and to edit their responses. Other top use cases include writing the first draft, competitive research, market research, and storyboarding.

The fact that “generating specific answers” is so high is indicative of the value that AI can offer by saving time in response writing—but should also raise some alarm bells when it comes to the type of AI teams are using to get these answers.

According to our survey, only about 33% of generative AI users are making use of dedicated response software with secure, integrated AI functionality. The majority (65%) are using ChatGPT to generate responses. ChatGPT and other open-source tools may be the most accessible options, but they are also far riskier. Not only are answers more likely to be generated from out of date information, but there are very real security concerns that companies and their employees need to be aware of. While some AI tools now have a “private mode” so that other users can’t access any confidential data you may share, AI models often do not differentiate between public and private data for learning purposes. That means any confidential data you feed into the tool may still be used to train the software—even in private mode—putting this data at risk.

How Teams Are Using AI in Their Response Processes



AI Sentiment Turns Overwhelmingly Positive

This year, positive AI sentiment surged to 67%—a huge leap from 46% last year.

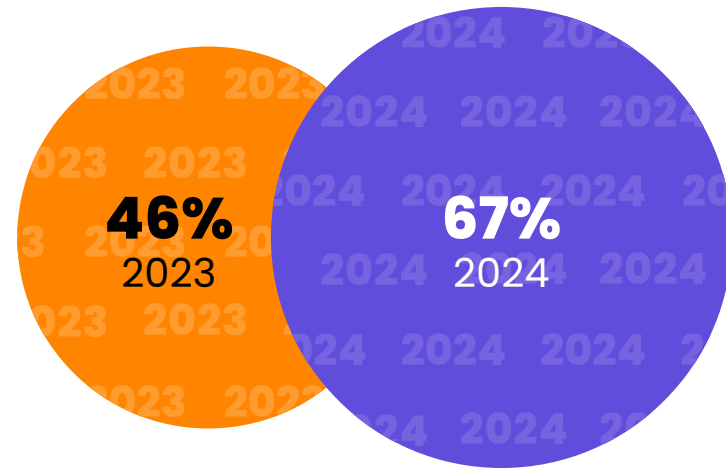
The reason for such a huge change in attitude? It may be that teams are actually using AI tools now and seeing the benefits. Last year, only about a third of teams had used AI at the time of our survey. This year, it's the majority. Hardly any responders feel negative towards AI: Only 5% of respondents chose this answer on our survey. About a third (28%) are neutral—perhaps this group needs more time to experiment with the tools before they can make up their minds.



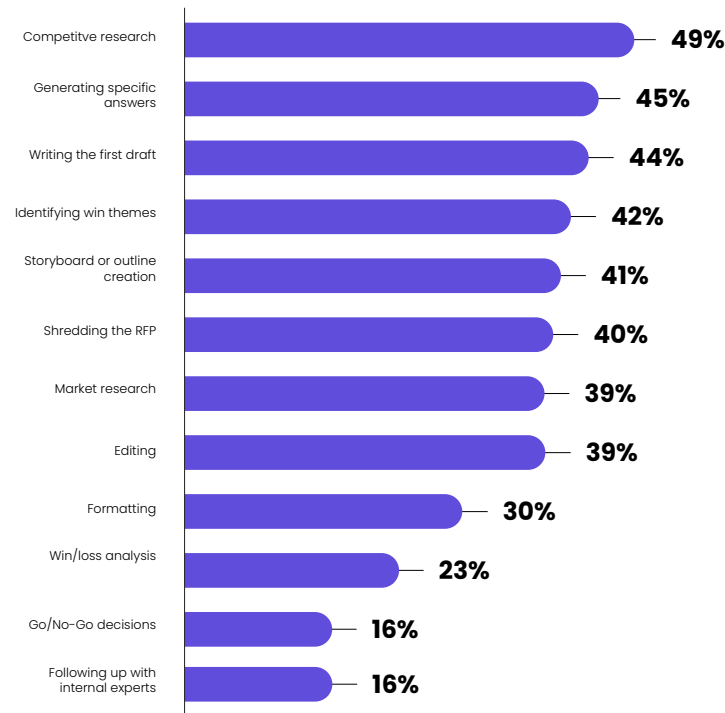
Only **5%** of responders feel negative toward AI

When teams talk about how they would consider using AI in the future, they put a greater emphasis on analysis and strategy compared to how they're using it now (i.e. primarily for generating answers, writing the first draft, and editing). Things like “competitive research” and “identifying win themes” rank higher as areas where they'd like AI's support in the future.

Percentage of Teams Who Feel Positive Toward AI, 2023 vs. 2024



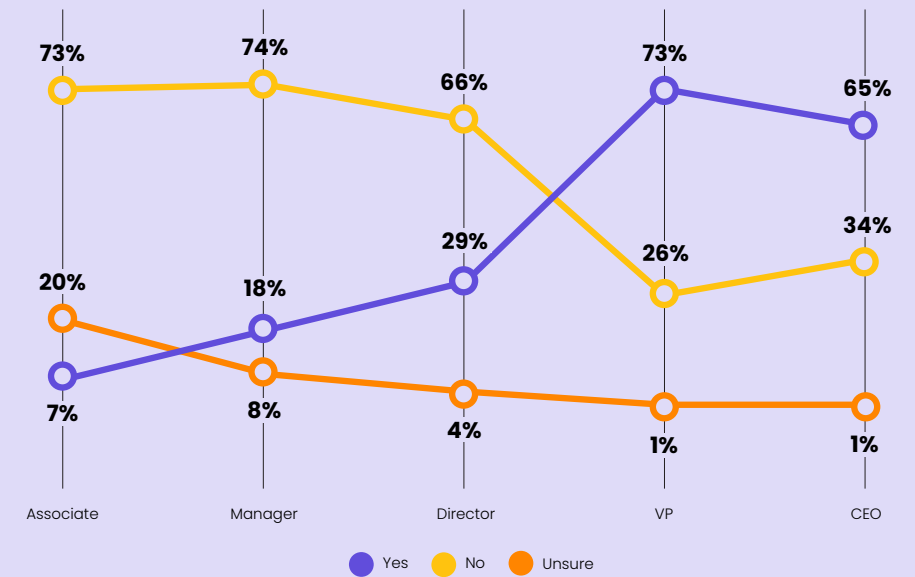
Ways Teams Would Consider Using AI in the Future



Key Insight: The More Senior You Are, the More Likely You Are to Consider Replacing Staff with AI—to a Point

Last year, when we asked teams whether they would consider replacing staff with AI, 75%–82% of people from associate to VP level gave a resounding “no.” Now, with a year more of AI use under their belts, they're less certain, especially as you get to the more senior levels.

In the last 12 months, have you considered replacing any internal or external people resources with AI?

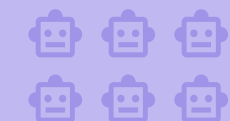


All levels are more likely to consider replacing people with AI than last year but the biggest jumps are at the VP (from 12% last year to 73% this year) and C-suite levels (from 43% to 65%). While it's not surprising that execs are looking for efficiencies—especially after a difficult few years economically—proposal professionals could make the case that this approach may not be fully aligned with broader strategic goals. The influence of RFPs on revenue is significant, making the risk associated with outsourcing their completion equally significant. Even though AI can be a helpful tool, there's still so much of the RFP process that requires human oversight and expertise, and that's not likely to change anytime soon.

73% of VPs

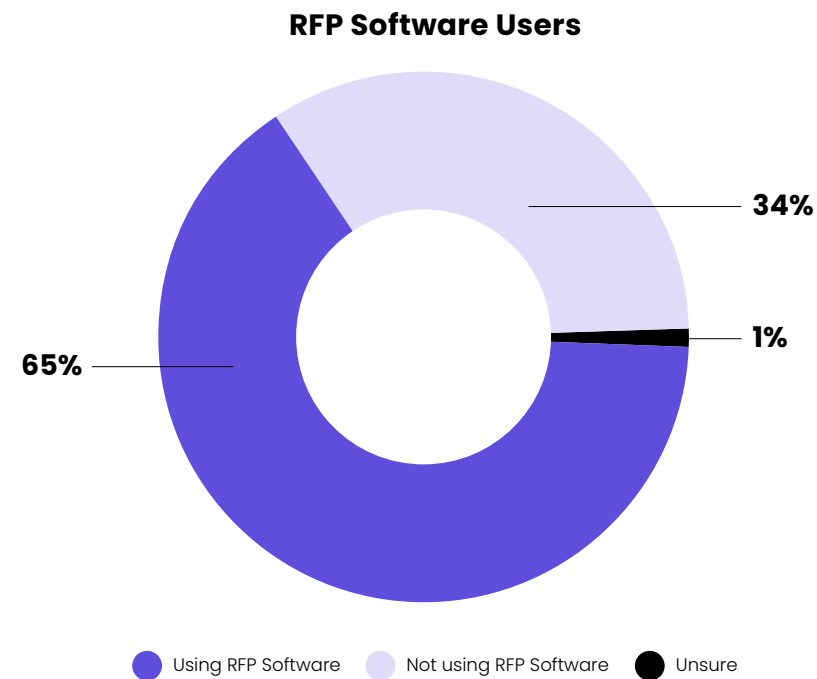
65% of CEOs

say they would consider replacing people resources with AI



RFP Software Use Hits Critical Mass

The majority of respondents (65%) now use RFP software. This is a huge increase from the 48% who were using it last year.



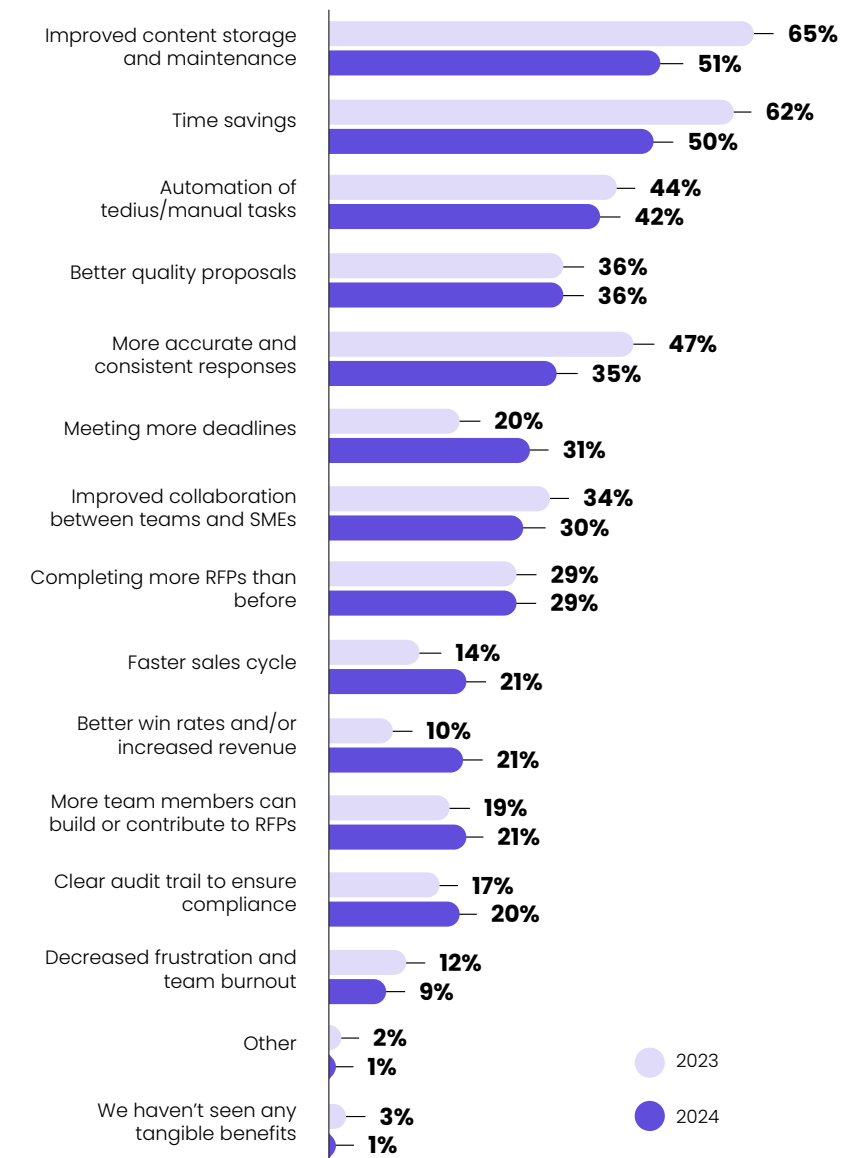
It's interesting that teams are increasing their use of RFP software alongside AI technology. The reason we might be seeing both increase in tandem is that almost all modern RFP software providers now have built-in AI functionality. Teams may be purchasing RFP response software in order to use AI in a safe and secure manner—and those who are already using software might be more inclined to experiment with AI, since it's right in front of them and easy to leverage within their existing response process.

It may also be that teams are recognizing that while ChatGPT and other AI tools are useful in generating content, they lack the structured project management and approval workflows, version control, and collaboration features that RFP software provides. Instead of choosing one tool over the other, it's very possible many teams are leveraging both tools in different contexts.

Content Storage and Time Savings Rated the Top Benefits of Software

The top-rated benefits of using software have remained fairly consistent year-over-year, with "improved content storage" and "time savings" consistently occupying the #1 and #2 spots, respectively. Notably, teams are more likely to claim "faster sales cycle" and "better win rates" as benefits this year than in previous years.

Benefits of Using RFP Software, 2023 vs. 2024



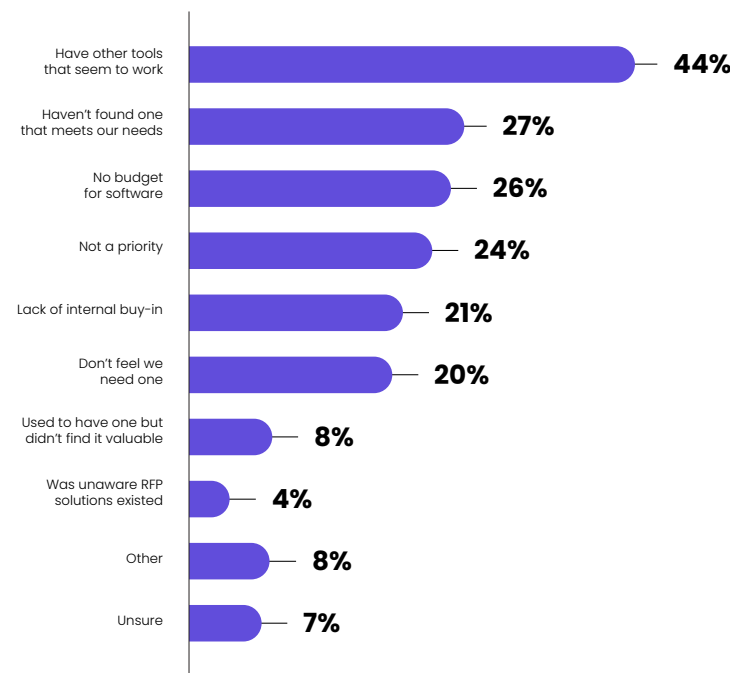
Software Skeptics Rely on Alternatives That Meet Their Needs (For Now)

For the minority of teams who are not yet using software, 44% say their reason is that they have other tools that seem to be working. The most popular alternative tools include cloud document sharing, such as Google or Microsoft (69%), email (66%), and collaboration tools like Slack and Microsoft Teams (66%).

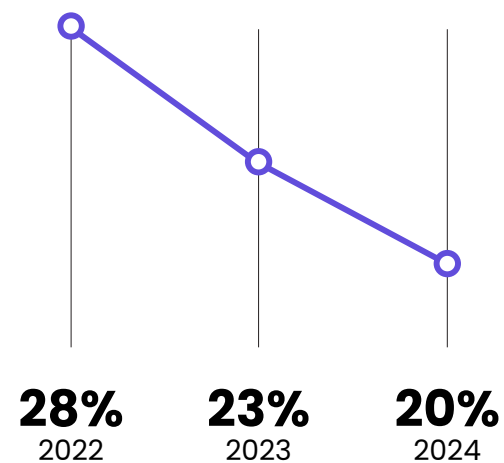
Budget still remains a barrier, with more than a quarter (26%) of teams flagging this as the reason they haven't invested. This is in spite of the fact that 52% of teams said they gained new resources this year, including software.

Interestingly, nearly a third (27%) cite not being able to find a software that meets their team's needs—an increase from last year's 20%. It's possible that this group would be interested in using software if they were able to find the right combination of features for their use case. As further evidence, the percentage of teams who said they didn't think they need software has decreased, continuing a year-over-year decline we've been observing. Maybe the software skeptics are slowly becoming converts—particularly as the benefits of software coupled with AI become harder to ignore.

Reasons for Not Using RFP Software



Percentage of Teams Who Say They Don't Need Software, Year-Over-Year

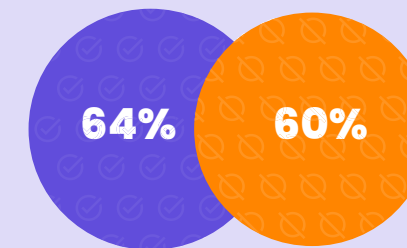


Key Insight: Teams Using RFP Software Respond More and Win More

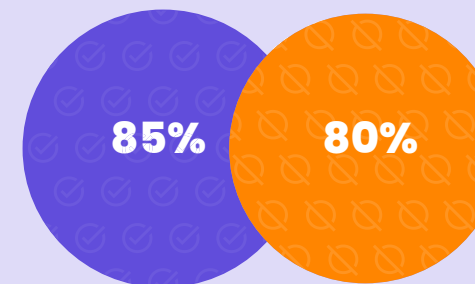
Software Users vs. Non-Users

171 120

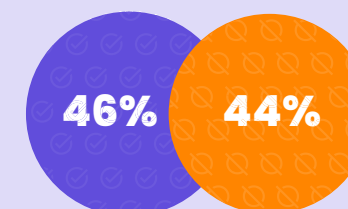
PARTICIPATION RATE



GO/NO-GO USE



WIN RATE



● Software Users ● Non-Users

RFP software users submit 171 RFP responses per year, more than the overall average of 153, and significantly more than non-software users who only submit 120. They also have a higher participation rate, responding to 64% of the RFPs they receive, as compared to 60% of non-software users.

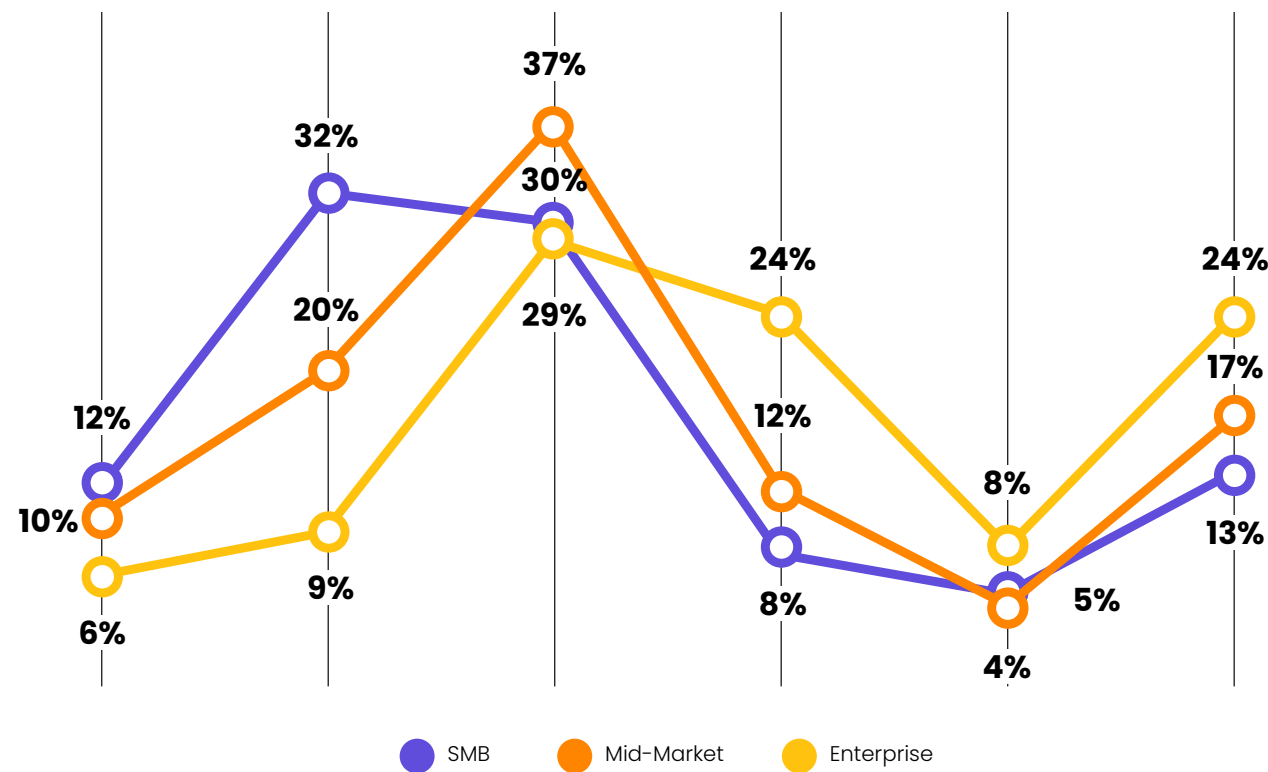
While *more is not always more*, software users do achieve slightly higher win rates than non-users (46% compared to 44% for non-software users). This may be because software users are actually more selective than the average when it comes to the RFPs they choose to respond to (85% of software users use a go/no-go matrix, compared to 80% of non-software users).

RFP software seems to provide an efficiency boost for teams, allowing them to respond more while maintaining high standards of quality.

Majority of Software Users (61%) See ROI Within One Year

This year, more than half of respondents report seeing a return on investment from using RFP software within the first twelve months—a sizable increase over last year’s 50%.

Average Time to ROI for RFP Software

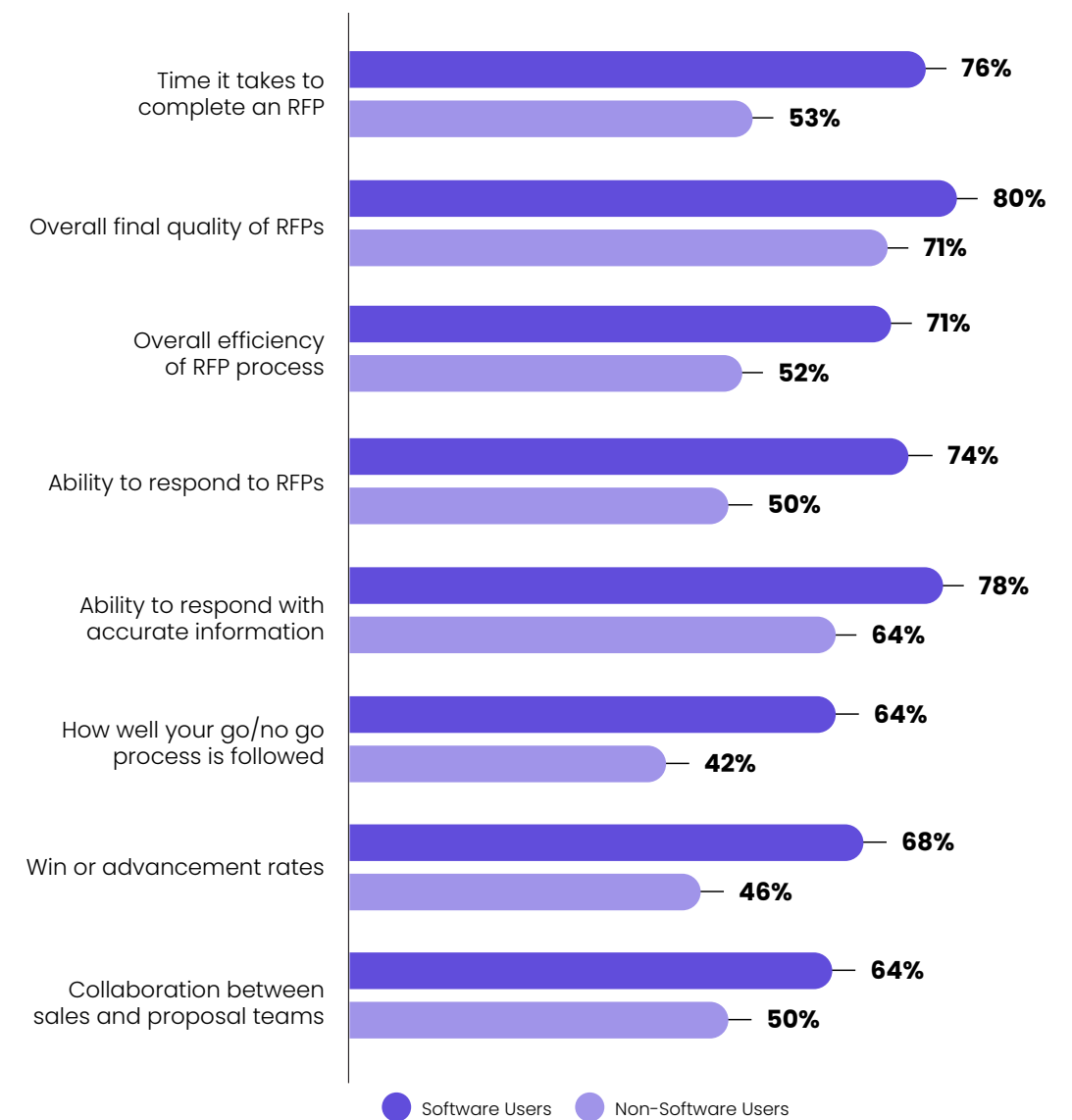


Interestingly, time to ROI seems to increase with company size. While almost three-quarters (74%) of SMBs see ROI in less than a year, that number falls to 67% for mid-market companies and only 44% for enterprise firms. This may point to the fact that enterprise rollouts are more complex and larger companies often take a phased approach, starting with pilot projects in specific departments or regions to ensure a smoother, but more delayed adoption process.

The Impact of Software on Employee Satisfaction, Sentiment, and Stress

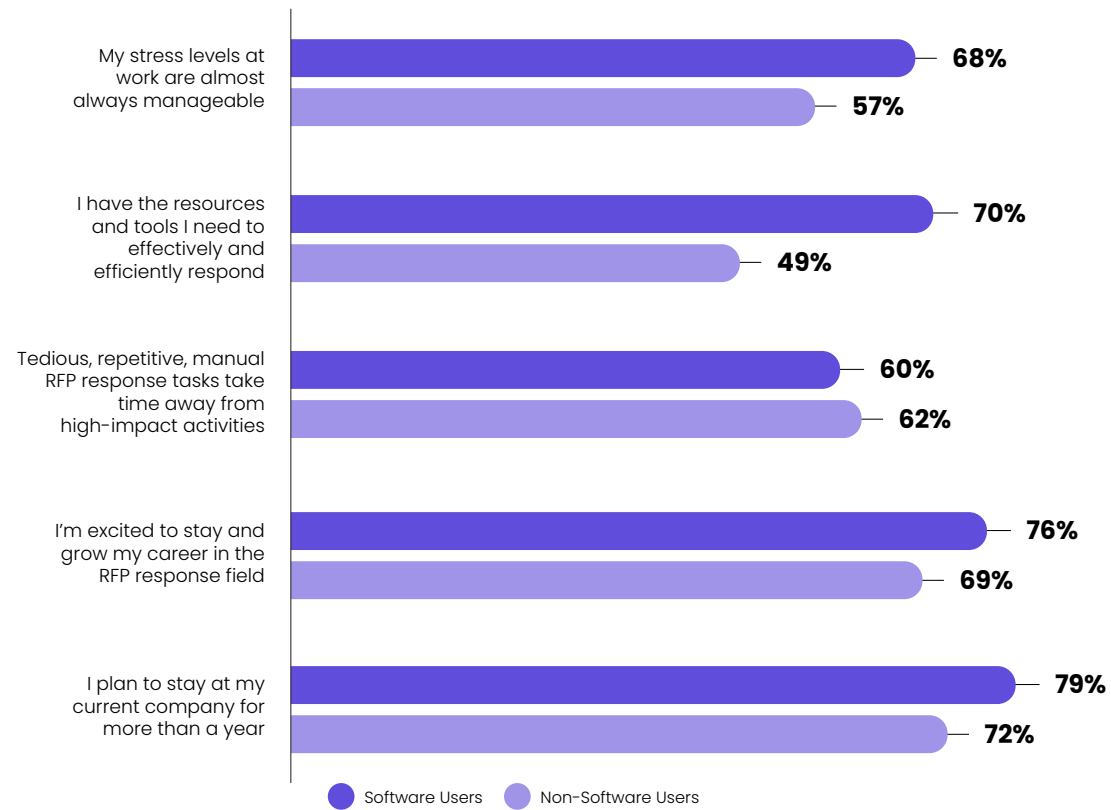
Teams using RFP software are more satisfied with their process by almost every measure. The efficiencies provided by RFP software—content resurfacing, time savings, and ease of collaboration—may help responders feel more confident in their processes and their ability to respond well within time constraints.

Satisfaction of Software Users vs. Non-Users



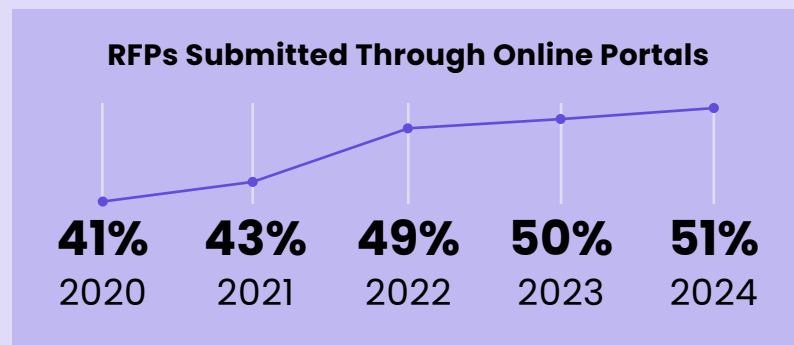
Not only that, but employees using RFP software feel less stressed, more equipped to do their work effectively, and more excited to grow their career in the RFP response field.

Employee Sentiment (Software Users vs. Non-Users)



Key Insight: 51% of RFPs Are Submitted Through Portals

This year, 51% of RFPs were submitted through online portals, remaining stable with the rates from last year and the year before. Public sector, management consulting, and technology industries see the highest volume of RFPs submitted through portals.



Chapter Summary: Software and AI Use Skyrockets as Teams Pursue Efficiency Gains

This year saw a huge rise in both the use of generative AI and dedicated RFP software. Teams are turning to both to help make their processes more efficient. Having spent the last year becoming more familiar with AI and its capabilities, teams are feeling overwhelmingly positive about what AI can do for them.

While this enthusiasm is great, teams should be mindful of security and accuracy concerns when using generative AI. This is especially true when leveraging tools like ChatGPT on the open web rather than secure AI within a dedicated RFP software solution. And although many senior execs are contemplating whether AI can replace people resources, the role of RFP professionals remains critical. AI is a valuable tool, but achieving optimal results requires the combination of technology and skilled human oversight. After all, many of the AI capabilities we have today are comparable to an enthusiastic intern—dedicated and productive, but still in need of a lot of supervision and guidance.

Since software use rose alongside AI use, these technologies seem to be complementary. Beyond offering more mature and secure applications of AI, teams who use RFP software report a whole host of benefits, from submitting a higher volume of responses to winning more to having a happier and less-stressed team. The best results may come to teams who embrace both AI and RFP software in tandem.

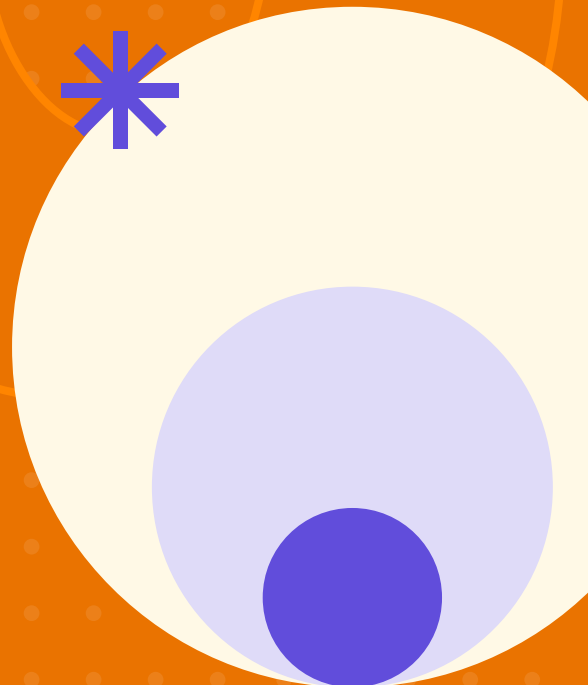
Up next: After a few lean years, the economy is finally recovering. Will RFP teams see the benefits in their resourcing?



CHAPTER 6: RESOURCING

RFP Resource Predictions for 2025

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CHAPTER 6

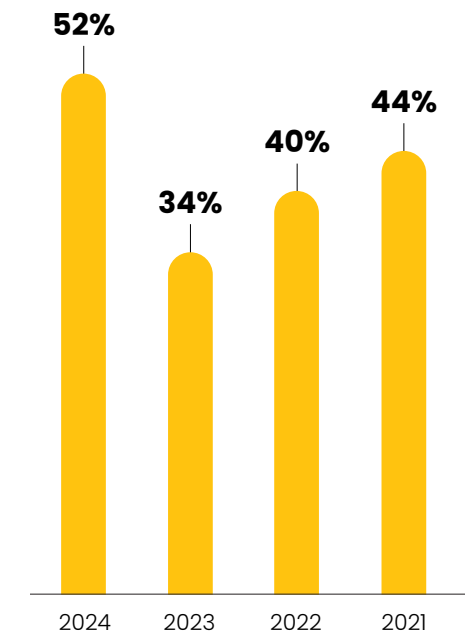
More Than Half of Teams Gained New Resources in 2024

Over half (52%) of respondents claim they gained new resources such as headcount, budget, or software in the past year, a significant increase from last year (34%).

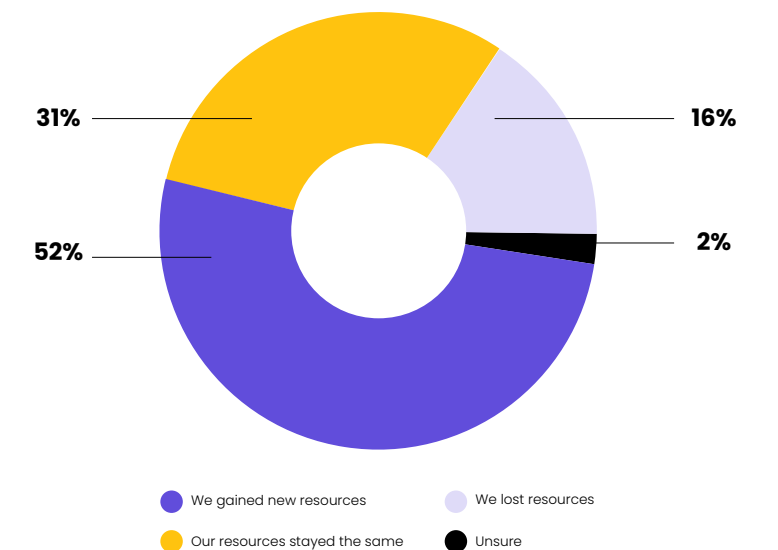
This reverses a downward trend we've observed over the past few years, where fewer and fewer teams were gaining new resources. Last year, the largest proportion of teams (43%) said their resources stayed the same.

As the economy has rebounded, it's likely that companies are comfortable to invest in their RFP resources again. With the high adoption of AI and software, we can see that technology is a core area of investment. Interestingly, this was one prediction from last year that was spot-on: More than a third (38%) of teams said that in 2024, they planned to invest in new technology.

Changes in Dedicated RFP Resources, Year-Over-Year

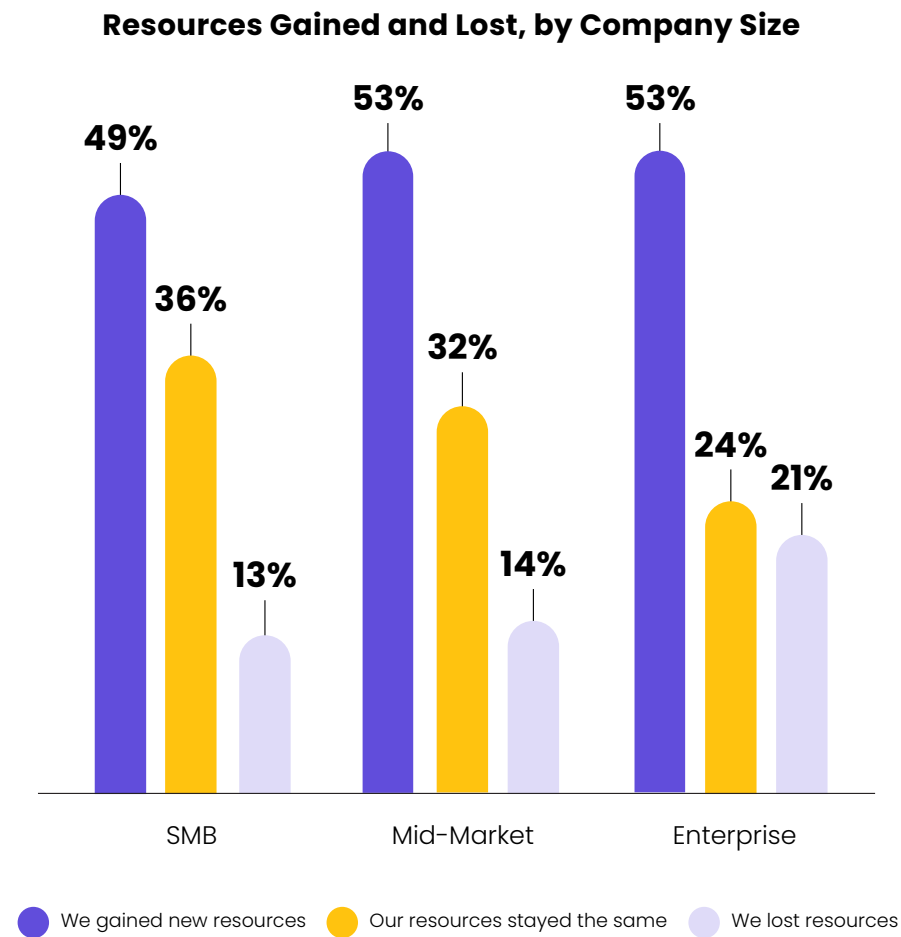


Changes in Dedicated RFP Resources

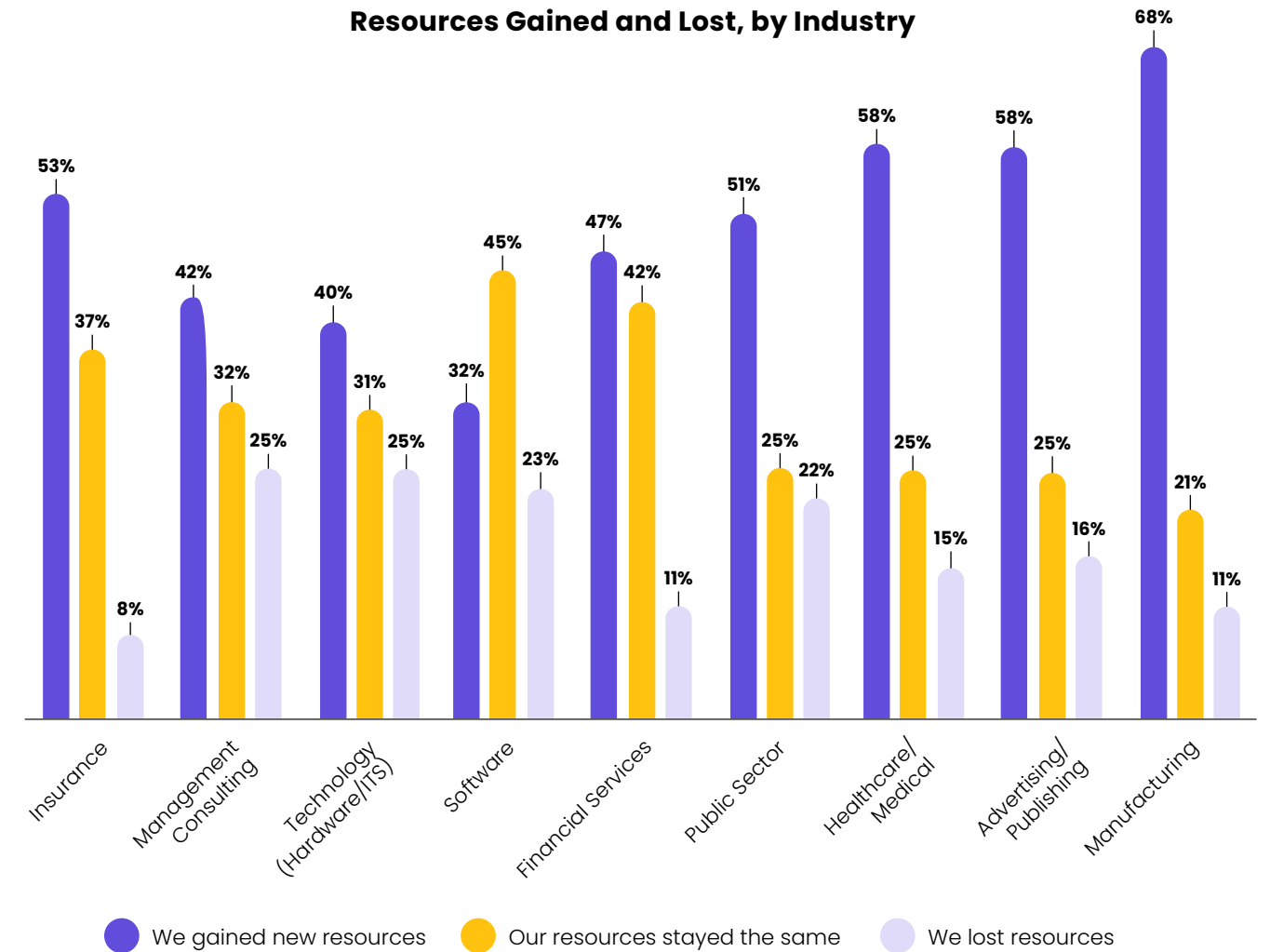


When we break down last year's resources by company size, we can see that mid-market and enterprise companies were most likely to have gained new resources.

Small businesses were the most consistent—they were the least likely to lose or gain resources, and most likely to say their resources stayed about the same. On the other hand, enterprise companies had the most turbulent experience. While the majority in this group have gained or maintained their resources, they were also the most likely group to lose resources this year.



When comparing industry groups, manufacturing was the most likely to have gained resources, while management consulting and technology were most likely to have lost resources. This is interesting because technology was the most likely to have gained resources last year—perhaps they over-invested and are now course-correcting.





Key Insight: Top Performers Even More Likely to Have Gained New Resources This Year

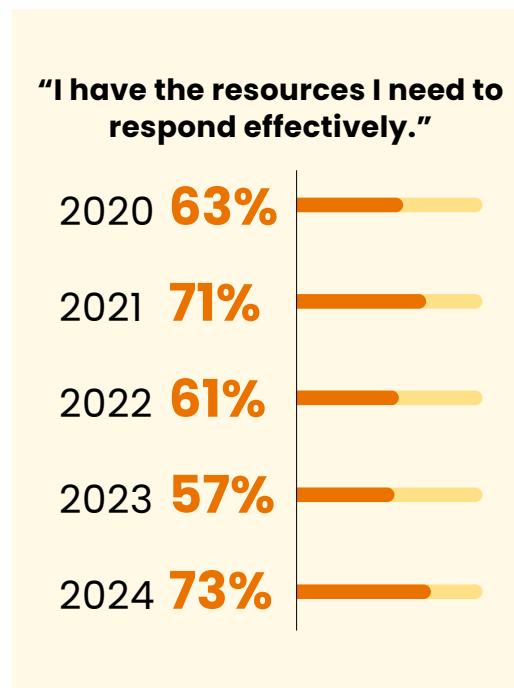
More than half (60%) of top performers (those who win 50%+ of the RFPs they participate in) said they gained more resources this year, higher than our average of 52%. This is a noteworthy correlation, but it's difficult to say whether teams are winning more because they're already better resourced, or that teams who win more are more likely to be rewarded with more resources by management. These circumstances may also vary between high-performing teams.



Teams Feel Newly Optimistic in Their Resources

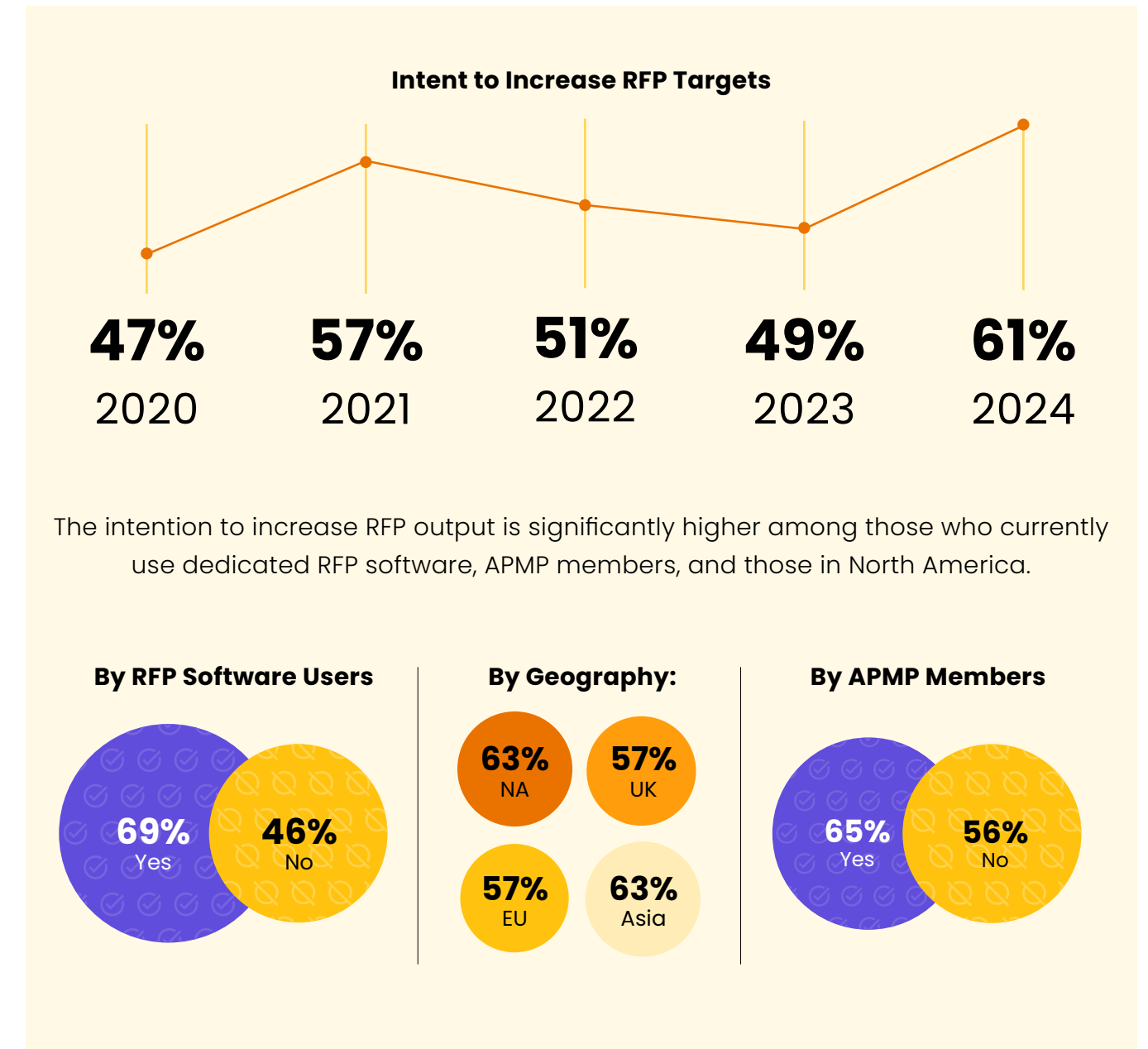
This year, 73% of teams agree or strongly agree with the statement: "My team has the resources and tools it needs to efficiently and effectively respond to the RFPs we pursue." This is a significant increase from last year's 57%—and the highest level of confidence that we've ever seen in this survey.

This newfound optimism indicates a few things. For one, this likely reflects the big increases in software usage and AI over the past year and the benefits that teams are reaping from using these tools in their response processes. Additionally, budgets for new resources have expanded as the economy rebounded—leaving teams feeling good overall about the support they have in place.



Submission Expectations Increase for 2025

Buoyed by the confidence they feel in their resources, over 60% of respondents plan to increase the number of RFPs they respond to in 2025, a more than 10-point increase over last year.



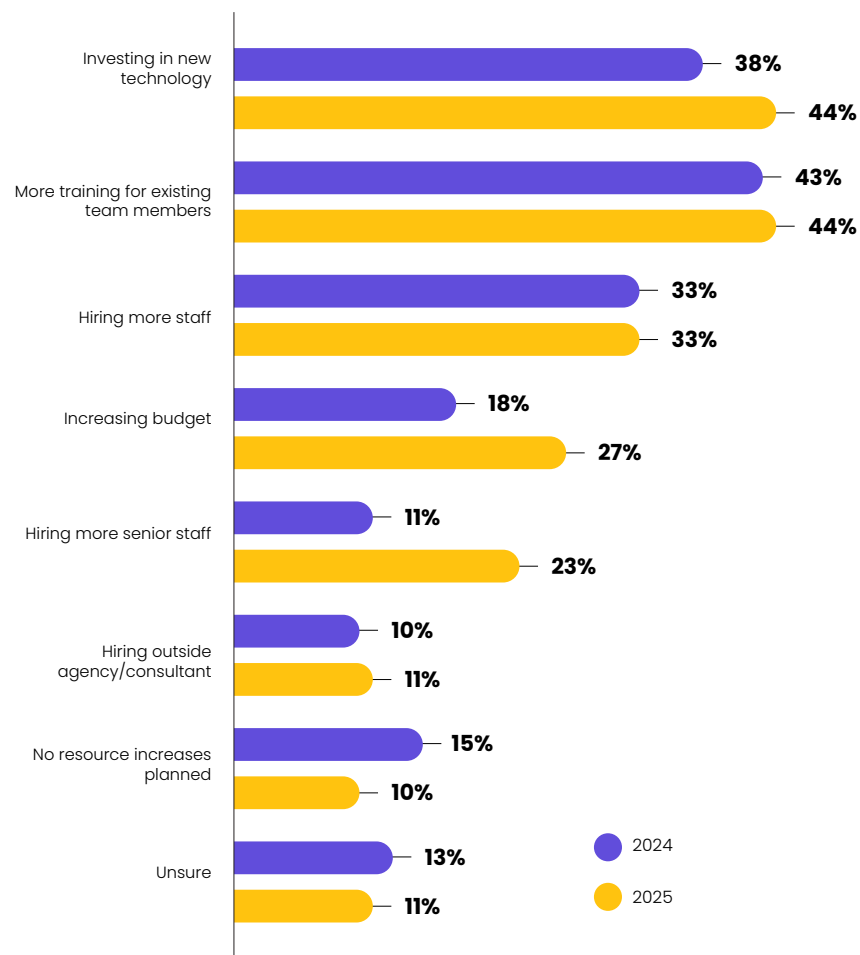
Teams Plan to Invest Even More in Technology Next Year

New technology is one of the top resources teams plan to invest in, with almost half of teams (44%) expecting to get new resources in this category this year (up from 38% last year). This is likely related to other trends we're seeing, like growing excitement around AI and increased adoption of software.

More training for existing team members also ties for the #1 spot, which could potentially be related to learning these new tech tools. Also noteworthy, 27% of teams are getting a bigger budget (up from 18% last year), showing that teams are loosening up after a few belt-tightening years.

Finally, the number of teams looking to hire more senior staff is up 12 percentage points from last year. This is an interesting counterpoint to the fact that teams are considering potentially outsourcing work to AI when it's clear there's still demand (and perhaps even more demand) for higher-order work. This further cements the idea of AI as an eager intern who can help with the workload, but still needs a lot of supervision from more experienced staff.

Resource Investments for 2024 vs. 2025



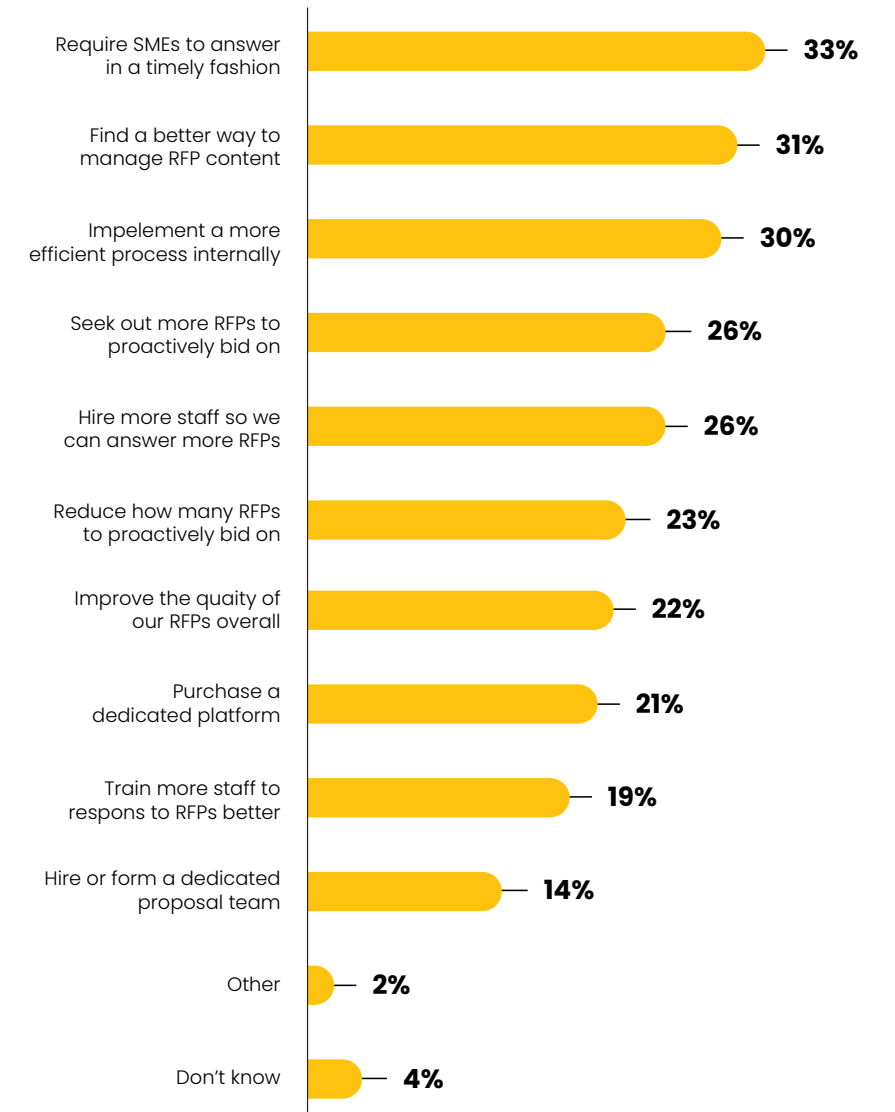
How Teams Are Planning to Win More

Timelier SME responses remain at the top of teams' wishlists, as it has in previous years. Maybe this is unsurprising, since teams rated "collaborating with SMEs" as a top challenge for the fifth year running. Perhaps it's time for RFP teams to (politely) set some boundaries around what they need from their collaborators to be able to submit successfully.

Other top recommendations include "finding a better way to manage RFP content" and "implementing a more efficient process internally"—both things that RFP software can help with (which 21% are hoping to purchase this year).

Interestingly, hiring or forming a dedicated proposal team is up 10% from last year, in line with the budget recovery that we're seeing and the growing interest in hiring more senior staff.

Recommendations for Winning More in 2025





Key Insight: Associates and Executives Disagree on How to Win More

Only 21% of associates rank “seeking out more RFPs to proactively bid on” as one of their top actions to win more RFPs next year. For executives, it’s 30%—a nearly 10-point gap. This suggests there may be some volume pressure coming from above, whereas associates are more concerned with improving their process (31%) and increasing quality of RFPs overall (29%).

Interestingly, only 16% of executives see “improving the quality of our RFPs overall” as a key goal. This suggests that executives see winning RFPs as a numbers game, whereas associates want to focus on improving the quality of each RFP.

Chapter Summary: As Resources Rebound, Teams Grow More Ambitious



As the economy rebounded, this year saw a surge in resource investments, with more than half of teams getting more resources and more teams than ever feeling confident in their ability to respond. It helps that budgets are likely increasing again after a lean few years—plus, the widespread adoption of software and AI means that teams also have the tools to support their workloads.

This newfound optimism is inspiring teams of all types to increase the volume of submissions next year, which is especially true for software users, APMP members, and proposal professionals based in North America.

But volume isn’t the only area teams want to improve in 2025. Teams are also focused on bettering their collaboration with SMEs, improving their content management, and finding process efficiencies. And they’ll use investments in technology, training, and staff to make it happen.

Up next: Everyone wants to be a “top performer.” But what does this elite group do that sets them apart? Read on to find out.



CHAPTER 7: TOP PERFORMERS PROFILE

What Top Performers Do Differently



Definition of a “Top Performer”

There are many success metrics you can examine when determining the health of an RFP program: shortlist rate, win rate, and the amount of revenue influenced, to name a few.



While these core metrics should be assessed together to truly understand your company’s success in RFPs, for the purpose of this next chapter, we focus solely on the behaviors of teams with win rates of 50–100%.



50 to 100% Win Rate

For the purposes of this report, we define “top performers” as responders who win half or more of the RFPs they participate in

Ten Ways Top Performers Stand Out

Here are some of the key ways top performers stand out from our sample—shining a light on how they’re able to work more effectively and win more.



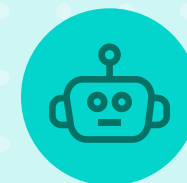
1. They Use a Go/No-Go Process

Being picky can be a good thing: 86% (or 6 out of 7) of top performers use a go/no-go process, which is slightly more than their peers at 83%. They’re also more satisfied with how well their process is followed, with 63% saying that they’re satisfied compared to 58% of low or middle performers. Having ironclad decision criteria can help teams improve their focus and reduce pressure to a level that feels motivating, not debilitating.



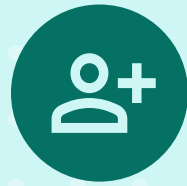
2. They Leverage RFP Software

More than two-thirds (69%) of top performers use RFP response software, slightly higher than the average of 65%. Considering the many efficiency benefits, it’s not a surprise that top performers are using this tool to help them win more. For instance, RFP software can help teams simplify and maintain their content libraries, automatically generate answers to RFP questions, easily coordinate reviews across contributors and SMEs with automatic reminders, and more.



3. They’re Enthusiastic About AI

Top performers are among the most enthusiastic adopters of AI. Seventy-two percent in this group have used AI in the past year, compared to the average of 68%. Almost three-quarters (74%) feel positive about AI as a tool in the RFP response process, compared to 70% of the average. Top performers may just be more willing to experiment with AI—or, it’s possible that those using AI are more likely to be top performers. Whether it’s the chicken or the egg, the correlation is undeniable.



4. They Have More People Support

While the average RFP team has eight people on it, top performers clock in with a whopping 11. That's three extra people to help chase down SMEs, write thoughtful responses, and personalize the proposal. In the fast-paced world of RFPs, every person can make a difference—and top performers reap the benefits of this extra support.



5. They Spend More Time Writing

Those with higher win rates spend four hours longer per RFP than the average (29 hours compared to 25). While efficiency is great, spending a little extra time may mean that top-performing teams can go the extra mile to personalize their proposals and cinch the deal. And since this group tends to have larger teams they can, at least theoretically, afford to spend the extra time without holding up other important work.



6. They Have the Resources They Need to Succeed

Top-performing associates, managers, and execs are all more likely to say “I have the resources and tools I need to effectively and efficiently respond to RFPs” than their peers. Sixty-seven percent of top-performing associates/managers agree with this statement, compared to 60% of their peers (for executives, it's 80% of top performers, compared to 68% of low and middle performers). Since top performers tend to have bigger teams and are more likely to use software and AI, their resources likely come in the form of staff, training, or tech.



7. They Feel More Relaxed

Across all role levels, top performers are less stressed and more confident in their ability to take on the challenging work of responding to RFPs. More than two-thirds (68%) of top-performing managers/associates say “my and my team’s stress levels at work are almost always manageable,” compared to 62% for all others. When you get to the executive level, it's even higher—80% of top performers say their stress levels are almost always manageable, compared to 76% of low and middle performers.



8. They Measure Their Work Granularly

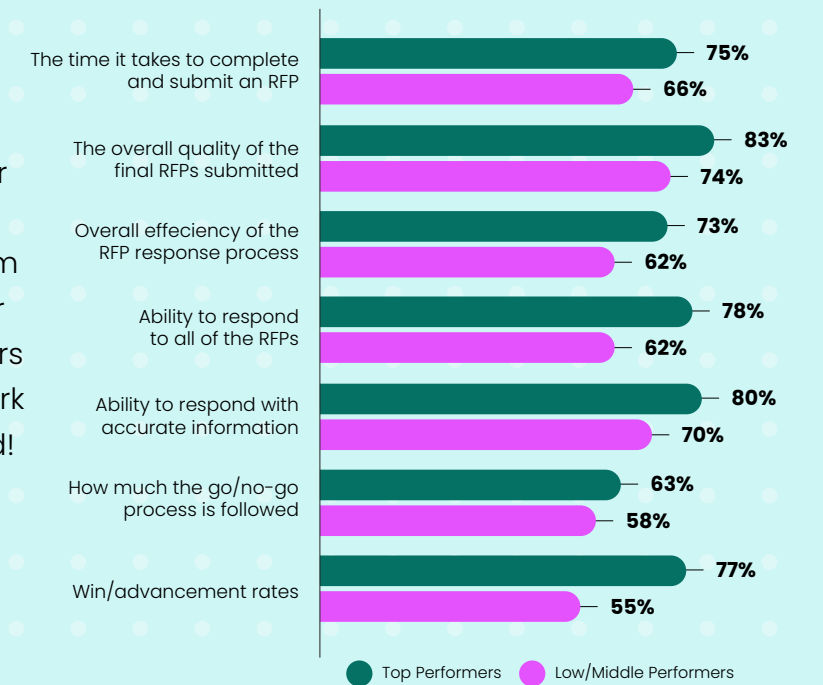
While the majority of all responders (96%) are tracking some kind of success metrics, the types of metrics that top performers choose to focus on vary from the norm. Notably, a higher-than-average number of top performers track their advancement rate (42%), speed of completion (39%), cost per bid (29%), team member performance (28%), and capture rate (27%). Drilling down to these deeper metrics may give them a better idea on how to improve their process than simply tracking their submission numbers or win rate.



9. They Take Pride in Their Work

Across every metric, top performers are more satisfied with their process than low and middle performers. From speed to quality to their win rates, top performers feel good about the work they do—as they should! They've earned it.

Percentage Satisfied with RFP Process



10. They're Excited About Growing Their Careers in the RFP Space

An overwhelming majority of top performers—80% of top-performing associates/managers and 86% of top-performing executives—agree with the statement, “I'm excited to stay and grow my career in the RFP response field.” This is compared to just 71% of all other associates/managers and 78% of all other executives, giving top performers about a +10 point boost for their career growth and longevity.



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