



3 steps for improving the quality of your RFP responses

Quickly responding to RFPs poses a challenge for 70% of our customers. Here's how companies can build a winning process for successful RFP response.



Want to Improve the Quality of Your RFP Responses? Start With These 3 Steps

Successful RFP responses are the lifeblood of modern companies in a wide range of industries — a fact that has never been truer in light of remote work and an emphasis on strong first impressions. More than ever, requests for proposals act as your company's sales calls. As such, they need to effectively replace all of the intangibles that used to be accomplished during an in-person meeting: RFPs need to show how organized, thoughtful, beautiful, and captivating your company and its content can be.

Yet within many of those same companies, the mere prospect of putting together an adequate bid or response can induce feelings of nausea, anxiety, and general career dissatisfaction among even the most optimistic employees. When an RFP is officially released and the proposal team starts firing off emails, those feelings can evolve into full-blown existential dread. As the proposal takes shape, these firms might experience an uptick in "off-the-record" conversations about legacy software, vacationing co-workers, and even the management team.

If this scenario sounds familiar to you, you're not alone. Also, we want to help.

Qorus recently partnered with Portland-based MDC Research to find out exactly where our customers were running into hurdles during the business capture life cycle. The insights provided point to the same obstacles that countless tech companies, law firms, ad agencies, and organizations of all kinds face when attempting to win new business. Fortunately, these obstacles can be overcome.

The Need for Speed

The breakneck pace of modern business requires companies to move fast. Whether bringing new products to market, fulfilling customer requests, or responding to RFPs, speed is critical to success. Thus, it's not surprising that 70% of our customers cited "responding to RFPs in a timely manner" as one of the top business challenges.

Proposals that stand out and win business must be tailored to address the specific objectives outlined by the RFP issuer and **require collaboration among business units that are often dispersed** — geographically, ideologically, or both. When sales reps, marketing teams, legal departments, and other business units operate



largely in silos, putting together a thoughtful, strategic response with input and support from across your organization is a tall order. In fact, 70% of our customers indicated that simply organizing the content to be included in proposals was also a top business challenge, and the same number believed that a centralized content solution was vital to overcoming it.

Without such a solution, content bottlenecks are practically inevitable. When they occur, it's typically because there's not enough content to meet the proposal's demands or because the available content is just ... meh. Sometimes, high-quality content does exist (somewhere) but can't be found when it's needed.

Every salesperson knows that time kills deals. It also kills great RFP responses. When proposal teams have to go searching for assets or send out urgent requests for new content, precious hours disappear and workers who should be focused on crafting a compelling response or pursuing other important business goals are diverted from those objectives. As a result, the response suffers.

The Definition of Insanity

For many companies, it's often a struggle to get even a mediocre response out the door. These proposals are often poorly branded, which is especially common when the responding firm is a national or global enterprise. They could be highly disorganized and perhaps even difficult to read. They might be missing mandatory content or contain irrelevant or outdated content.

Both of these issues convey a lack of attention to detail and could be symptomatic of deeper interdepartmental communication problems. Losing responses might also contain visual inconsistencies that take away from the proposal narrative — or a narrative that doesn't accurately address the prospect's pain points.

Maybe all of the above.

The hallmarks of a less-than-stellar RFP response are evidence of a broken business capture process. No one wants to devote countless hours and untold energy to crafting one losing bid after another, but without the right tools and processes in place, individual responses will continue to suffer. Ultimately, so will your business — and your employees. The time, effort, and money lost on losing bids adds up to a negative experience for everyone involved.

All of this needless suffering will eventually take a toll, and your top talent won't tolerate it. If employees find themselves constantly fighting against your technology, they're likelier to be drawn to competitors who might have the sophisticated tools and automated processes that can **make their jobs easier.**



So how do you prevent RFP responses from becoming a never-ending nightmare for your business? Luckily, processes can be fixed, and proposal management tools within the right sales enablement software can help you (yes, we'd love to talk more about that). Start by taking these three steps:

1. Improve collaboration between sales, marketing, and your proposal team

Sales and marketing might be the corporate world's most notorious frenemies. In many companies, they work together ... separately, with as little interaction as possible. It's just as ineffective – and exhausting – as it sounds. During an RFP response, the proposal team is often the primary casualty of a lack of communication between these departments.

The content you include in your proposal reflects the quality of your product or service, so you want it to be good and to be tailored to your prospect's needs. While your marketing team might possess the tools and creativity to make jaw-dropping content, they'll need input from your sales team to ensure that it's relevant. Likewise, if the sales team has used certain content in the past without much success, the marketing team should know so that they can make the proper adjustments. The proposal team needs to know, too, so they can account for the time it will take to modify assets or create entirely new content when assigning responsibilities and deadlines.

(Coincidentally, Qorus offers a tool that makes it easy to create powerful, personalized content in just a few minutes – [check it out here!](#))

Data from HubSpot shows that when sales and marketing teams are working together, companies see significant boosts to sales win rates and customer retention. During an RFP response, the relationship between sales and marketing will either be a boon or a burden. If you make regular collaboration between the two a company mandate, they'll impress you – and your prospects – when you need them the most.

Ultimately, Qorus stands out above the crowd because of our native integration with Microsoft Office tools, which are pervasive in sales and marketing teams. You can work from anywhere in your favorite apps (Office, Dynamics, Teams, and Salesforce, just to name a few) – which is particularly valuable toward promoting collaboration between parties when you consider the mobile and remote workforce of today.

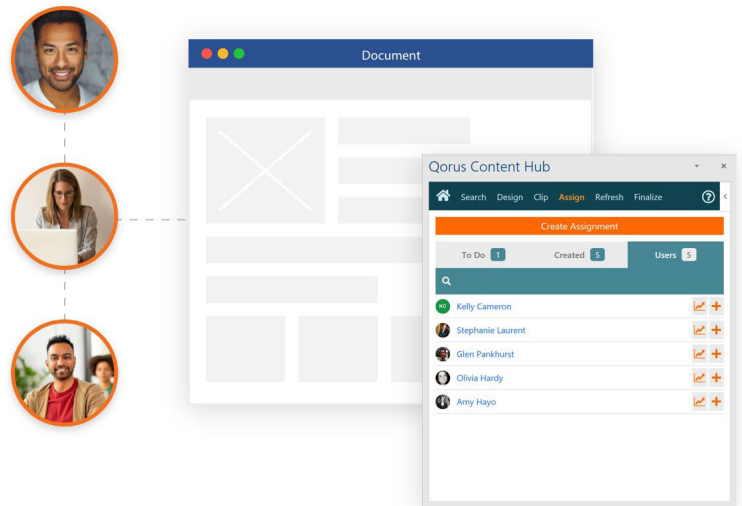


2. Store content in a single source of truth

If your proposal team is essentially starting from scratch every time an RFP comes in, they might just go crazy. Alternatively, by keeping templates with approved content handy in a single interface, they can get a head start on each response. Of course, you don't want every proposal you've ever created or thousands of versions of the same piece of content sitting in this library. Your templates should ideally be based on successful bids, and your content should be written by subject matter experts and regularly updated to match product specs or your company's evolving capabilities.

While developing an **organized virtual library** will go a long way toward improving the overall quality of your RFP responses, there's no reason it should be proprietary to the proposal team. Open it up to sales and **empower them to close more deals**. Sales reps need quick access to high-quality content every day when interacting with prospects. If they can't find it in just a few minutes, they'll miss out on opportunities to move prospects down the sales funnel. Similarly, if marketing teams don't know whether a certain piece of content already exists, they're bound to waste time recreating assets when they could be developing new collateral.

In case you were wondering, the **Qorus Content Hub** makes it easy to upload and manage a robust content library for RFP responses and day-to-day sales activities. In fact, nearly 75% of our customers cite the ability to quickly assemble content for customer-facing collateral as a primary reason for using our technology.



3. Measure success and make incremental improvements

It's the 21st century, and plenty of technology is available to modern businesses seeking how to make workflows more efficient. Sophisticated sales enablement platforms support alignment between sales and marketing and even allow you to see how prospects are engaging with your content. This valuable source of insight can help your proposal team understand which content is most impactful and lets marketing teams better plan and prioritize content creation.

When you use a tool like Qorus' sales enablement and proposal management software, your content library won't just grow and stay organized — it will also get more effective over time. As you learn more about the types of content that clients and prospects value, you can adjust your

sales and marketing strategies accordingly and create more winning content. With Qorus' new **Share and Track feature**, you can see what your prospects are focusing on as they review your proposal, giving you a better sense of what information is important to them and where they're losing interest. Best of all, our software makes it easy to facilitate collaboration and input from subject-matter experts across the company.

Leave room for honest assessment and don't get discouraged if certain content or tactics aren't having the impact you thought they would. As long as you keep collecting insights and use those to inform the direction of future strategic initiatives and content creation efforts, you can be confident that your results will inevitably improve.

Commit to Winning

Developing winning business capture processes takes time and a commitment to change, but it's a goal that's absolutely worth pursuing. Most companies can't afford to redirect significant resources away from serving existing clients in order to focus on an RFP response. This means that proposal teams are often working overtime to craft a customized response that meets the RFP requirements and highlights innovative solutions. More often than not, this formula leads to stressed-out employees and missed opportunities. Ignoring the problem can be detrimental to your company culture and your bottom line. Getting proposals right, however, saves the company precious time and money.

We created our sales enablement and proposal management software to help you get back valuable time during the RFP response process. Our technology allows you to easily find and manage content so that you can focus on crafting responses that fully reflect everything your company has to offer and set you apart from the competition.

Bring your best minds and content together to create proposals that win with Qorus. Your sales team must have every tool available to respond to each new sales opportunity and win more business. With Qorus, you'll deliver customized

proposals in minutes instead of hours, using pre-approved content to gain valuable insights and create smart follow-up.

Use Qorus' powerful recommendations engine to locate the perfect attachment in seconds without endlessly browsing through files. Search multiple content sources at once and use our filters to enable your team to find the most up-to-date and relevant components, even as your content library continues to expand. Built on Microsoft Azure, you'll create secure, professional, and engaging proposals up to five times faster, all from within your familiar Microsoft Office environment or CRM system. Empower your salesforce with Qorus — designed to close more deals faster.

Want to learn more about what makes Qorus the best proposal management software in the world? **Request a demo** today and see our dynamic solutions in action.

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