



2025 RFP Careers & Salaries Report

Welcome to the 2025 RFP Careers & Salaries Report

When it comes to your career journey in the RFP field, we believe that knowledge is power.

Knowing where you stack up in terms of salary and other benefits can empower you to negotiate fair compensation. Understanding market trends can help you prepare for what's next. And being aware of qualitative factors—like typical job satisfaction, stress levels, and core duties—can help you decide when and how to make your next career move.

Like our [RFP Trends and Benchmarks Report](#), this study draws from six years of data, spanning 1,500+ proposal professionals across a wide range of roles, industries, and career stages. Inside, you'll find key trends on all your most pressing career questions—from demographics to job satisfaction to (everyone's favorite) salary benchmarks. Plus, this year for the first time, we include key insights on what top earners do differently and what you can do to emulate them.

Ready to make this your best career year yet? Let's dive in.



Promotions are up as resources rebound



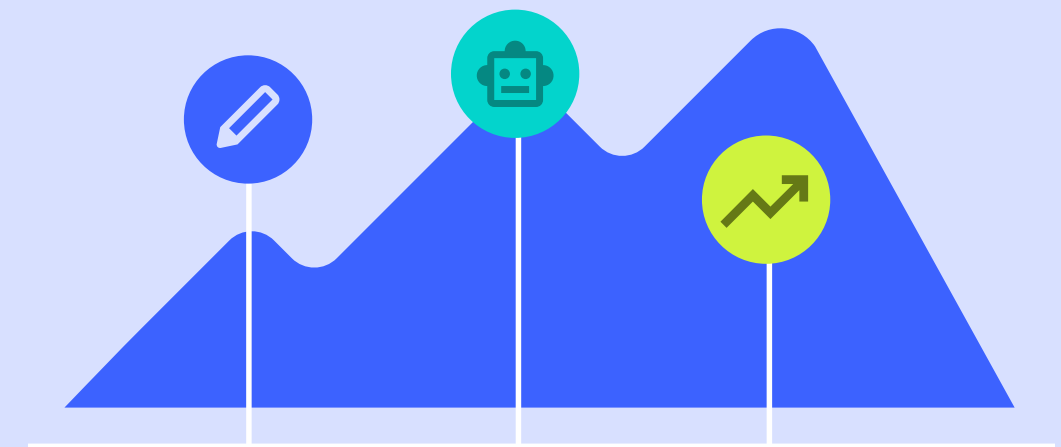
Mid-career professionals have the highest job satisfaction



Overwhelming majority plan to stay in the RFP field

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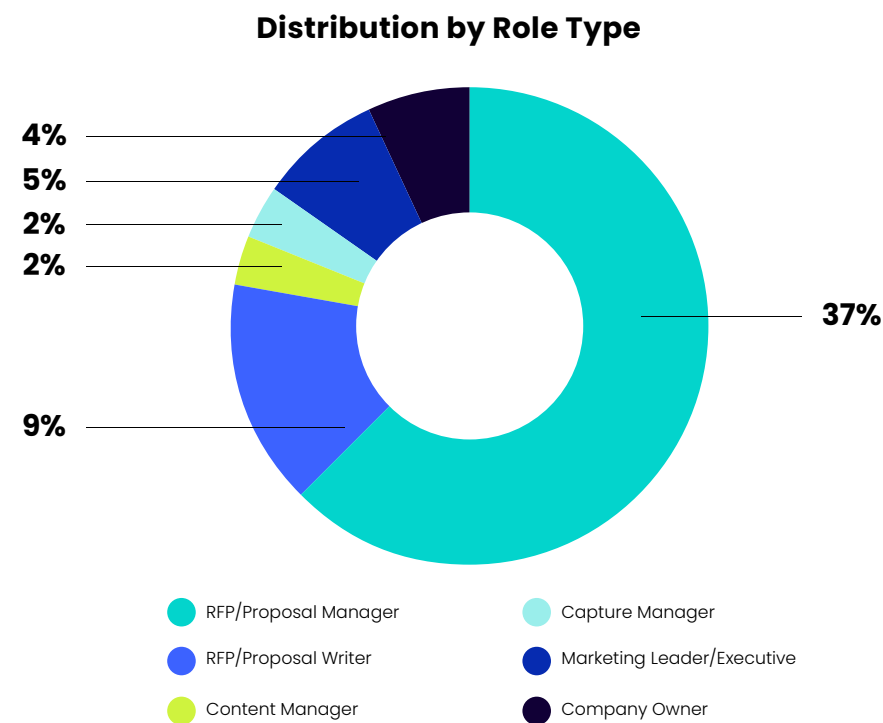


Chapter 1: Responder Demographics

Demographic Overview

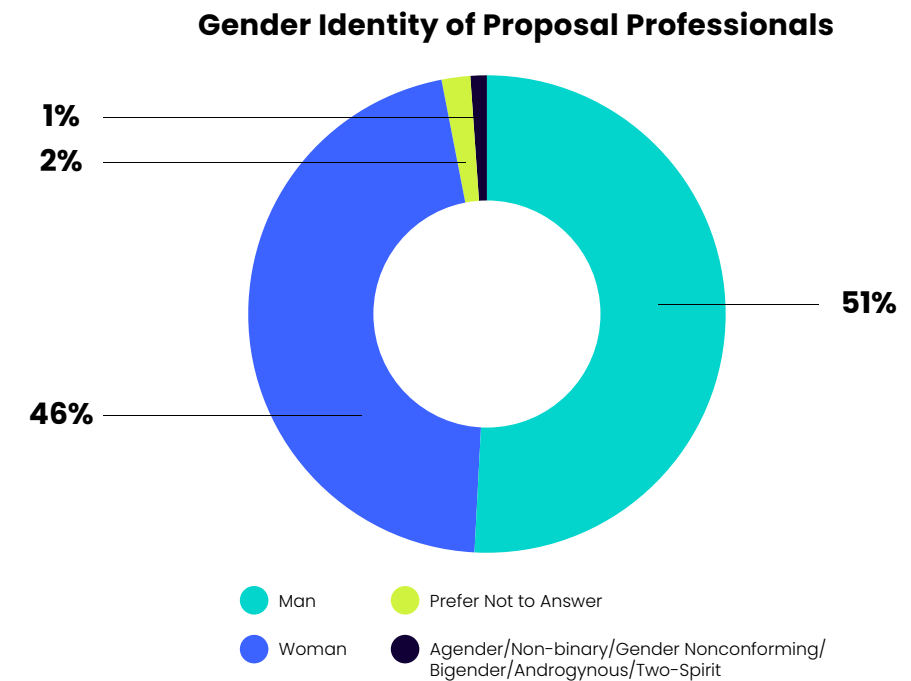
Some key context before we dive into the numbers: this report looks primarily at those who contribute to RFPs in a full-time role (we're looking at you, proposal managers, RFP writers, content managers, and capture managers). Unless otherwise stated, this report looks just at the data for folks in those roles—you can see the breakdown of the different roles out of our overall sample of respondents in the graph below, accounting for 59% of our total sample. The remaining 41% are largely sales roles, which we've excluded from this report.

Our hope is to empower those in the field to understand their roles, salaries, and career prospects. Plus, these numbers should help companies understand what key skills they need to build and retain proposal functions.



The RFP Field As a Whole Appears to Be Growing *Less* Diverse

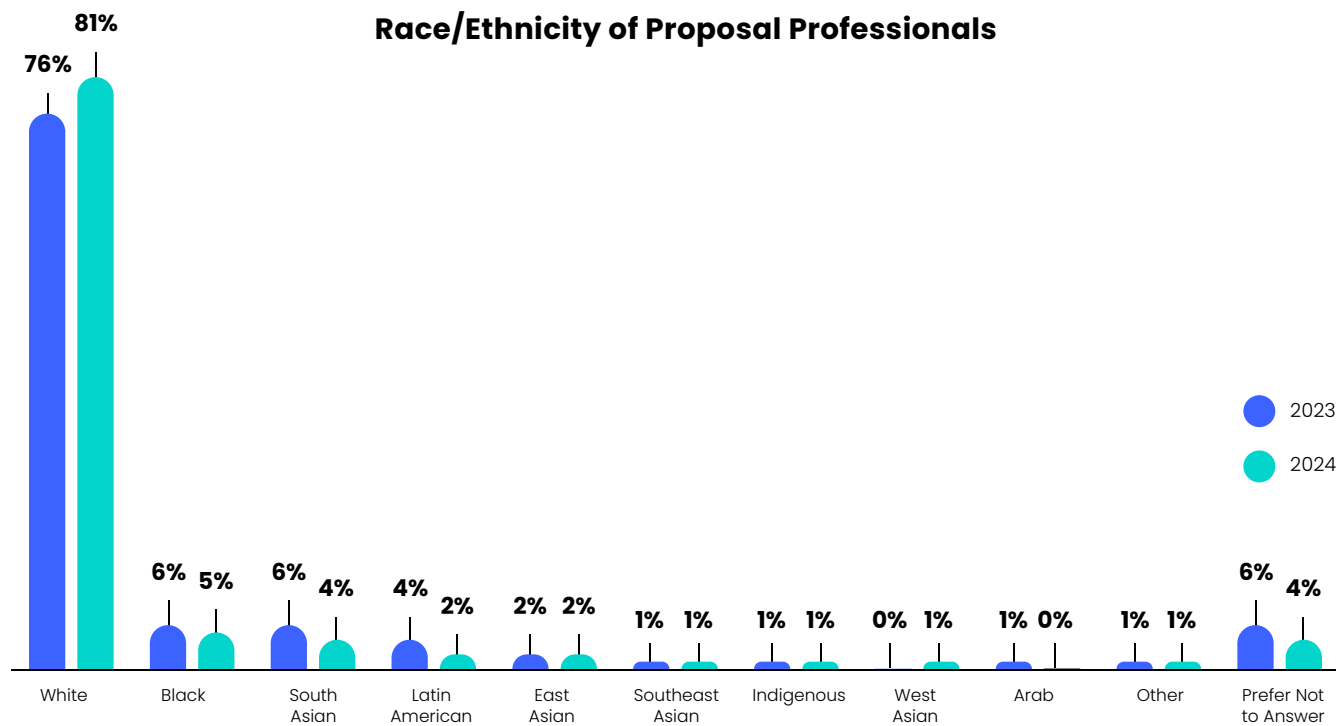
This year, the number of respondents who identified as men and women are about equal, while those who identify as non-binary or gender non-conforming make up only 1%. This marks a big change from last year, where 66% of respondents self-identified as women.



While it's a positive sign that representation between men and women is about equal in the response field, the dip in representation among women does ring some alarm bells. One reason for this change may be that women tend to be disproportionately affected by caregiving responsibilities, which in turn impacts their ability to work full time, especially in a field as fast-paced and hectic as the RFP industry. For instance, according to our survey data, only about a third (32%) of respondents currently get parental leave as part of their benefits package.

Policies that allow workers to balance their caregiving and work responsibilities—like paid parental leave, flexible working hours, and the ability to work from home at least some days each week—can help enable women to stay in the workforce and bring their valuable contributions to the RFP field.

Similarly, the RFP field has always been fairly racially homogenous, but it's only become more so. More than 80% of response professionals are white—a number that's only increased since last year's survey. This puts it on par with [majority-white professions](#) like chemical engineers and chiropractors.



Research has shown time and again that diverse teams are [smarter decision-makers](#) and produce better [financial returns](#). The good news is that there are strategies we can implement to help create a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

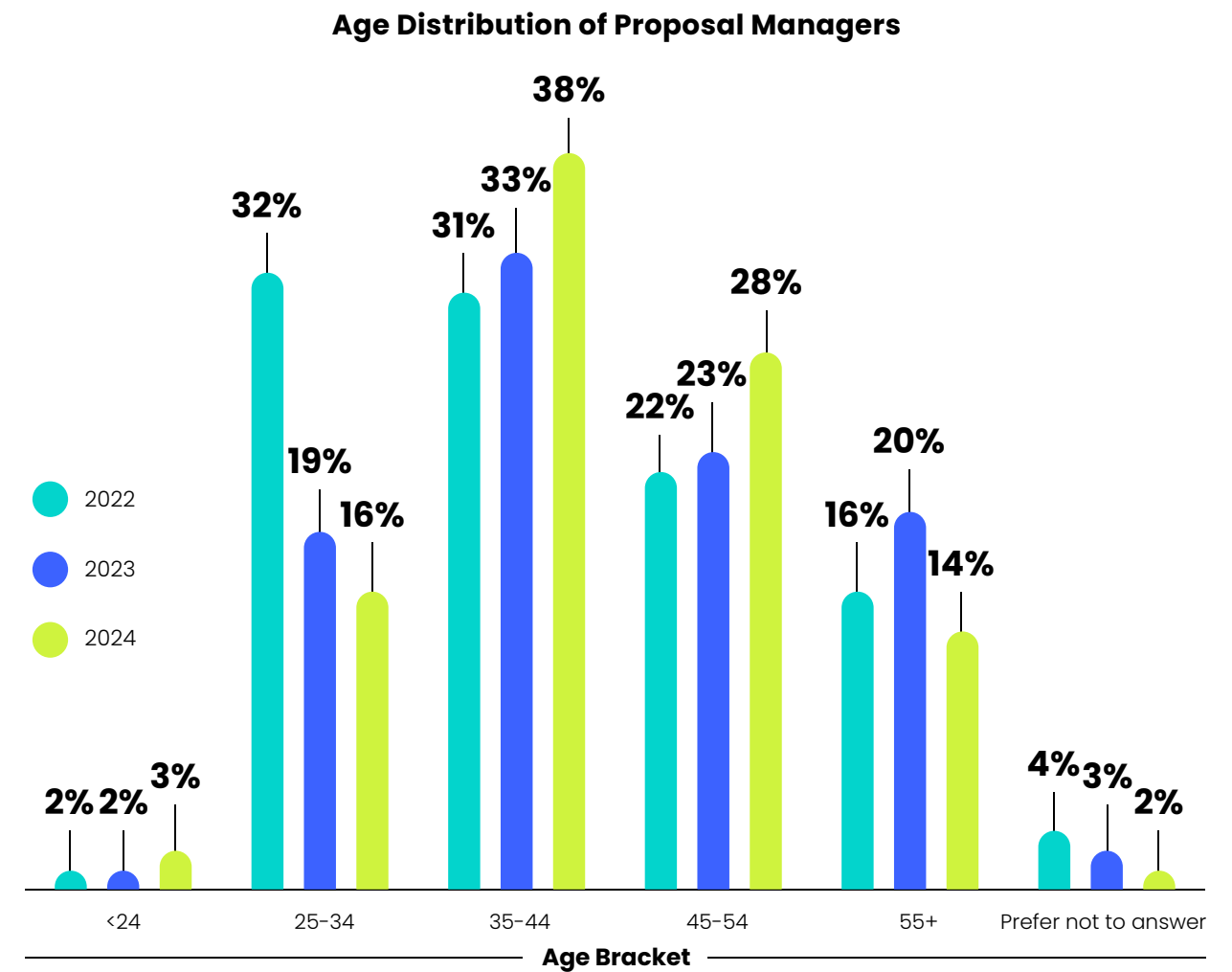
Many organizations unknowingly perpetuate racial biases through elusive concepts like “cultural fit,” resulting in a team that looks and thinks very similarly to the people who hired them. To counteract this, companies can try implementing strategies like:

- Reviewing hiring policies for unconscious bias and, as much as possible, removing the nebulous idea of “fit” (focusing instead on a candidate’s measurable skills and track record)
- Ensuring performance review policies focus on clear metrics of job success, not on workplace cultural norms

- Conducting regular pay equity audits to ensure folks are being paid fairly for their work
- Providing training around inclusivity, harassment, and unconscious bias to help promote a safe and respectful working environment for everyone

Average Proposal Manager Age Is Increasing

The average age of proposal managers is rising, a trend we’ve observed over the last few years of this survey. More than 80% of proposal managers are now over age 35, a 3% increase over 2023 and a 9% increase over 2022.



The 25–34 group has shrunk a little this year, but experienced the most precipitous drop from 2022–2023, when it fell from 32% to 19%. Teams should be somewhat wary of losing too many junior staff members—they will need a pipeline of qualified proposal managers to handle the RFPs of the future. Perhaps it’s time to consider how to encourage more young people to enter this field.



At the other end of the spectrum, just 14% of responders are aged 55+, a six-point drop compared to last year, which may indicate that more professionals are choosing to retire earlier.

Key Insight: What aspects of the RFP process have become easier or more challenging as you’ve gained experience?



“I’ve learned to spot a losing bid from a mile away. The challenge? Convincing leadership to walk away. Experience makes the warning signs obvious—an RFP wired for a competitor, misaligned scope, a client that sees us as just another number. But the hardest part isn’t recognizing it—it’s getting leadership to accept that sometimes the smartest move is not to bid. Saying no feels counterintuitive, but chasing the wrong opportunities drains resources, demoralizes teams, and takes focus away from the bids we should be winning.”

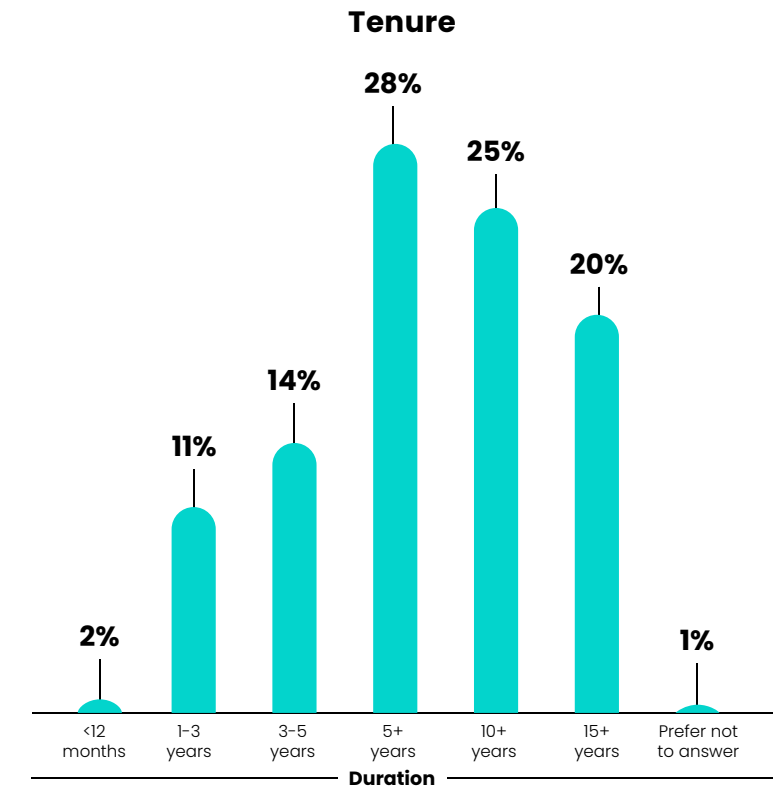


CERI MESCALL, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CANADA @ STRATEGIC PROPOSALS

Chapter 2: Tenure & Work Satisfaction

Tenure: Overwhelming Majority Have 5+ Years of Experience

RFP responders are a well-tenured group. Almost three-quarters (73%) of proposal writers or managers have been in an RFP-related role for more than five years, up from 69% last year. A fifth (20%) have been in the field for more than fifteen years. This also lines up with our age demographics—younger workers have not had the time to accrue as much experience in the field, which may explain why the majority of responders are aged 35+.



Key Insight: Hiring Skews More Senior as AI Takes Off

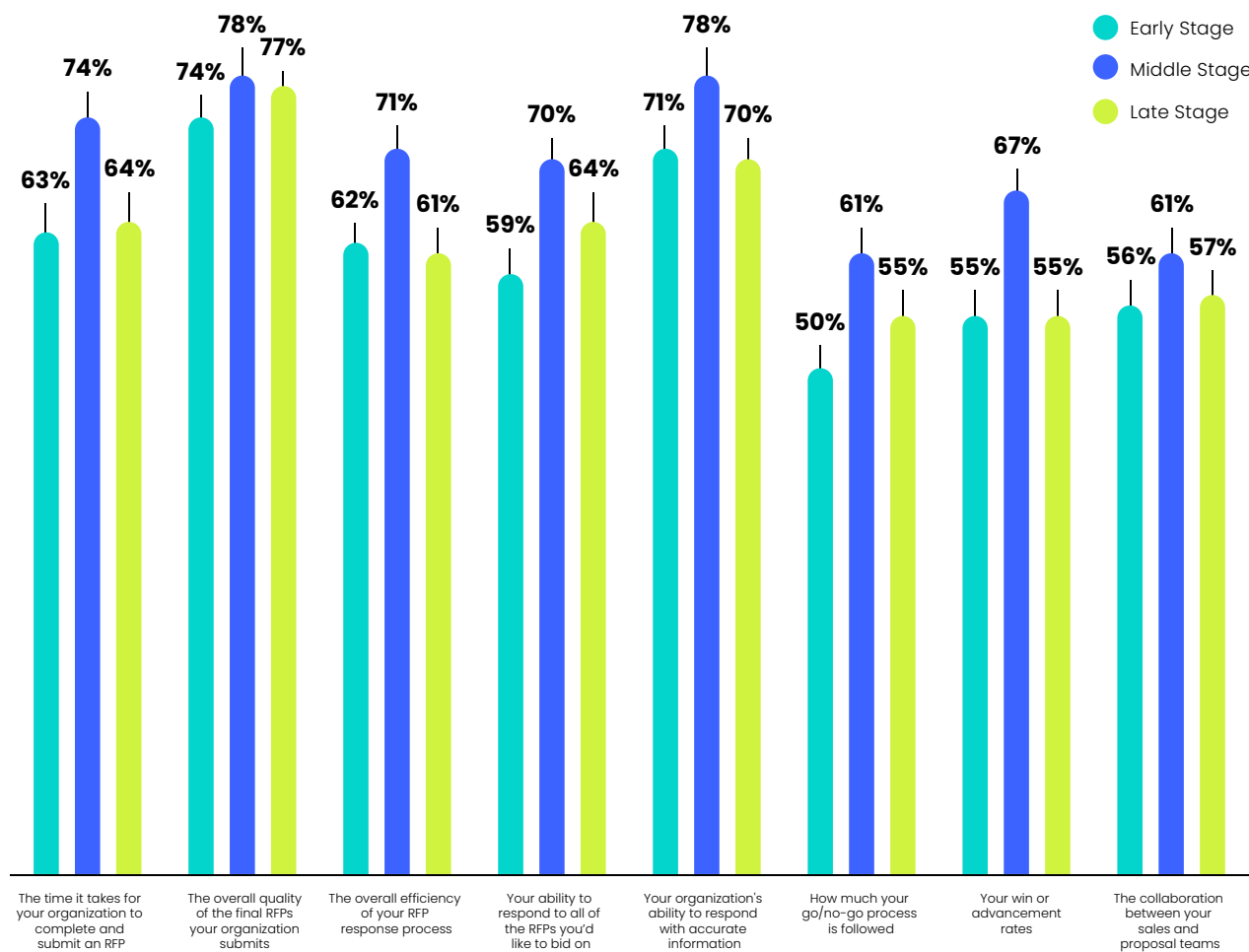


The number of companies looking to hire more senior staff is up 12 points from last year (which is great news if you’re an experienced responder). As we’ve written in the [2025 RFP Trends and Benchmarks Report](#), this may be related to the fact that so many more companies have adopted AI and RFP software this year. While these tools can provide an enormous boost in efficiency, AI in particular still requires a lot of senior strategic oversight. One question this raises, however, is if fewer entry-level employees are being hired into the response industry, how will the next generation of RFP responders be able to break into the field? While the need for entry-level talent may not be what it once was, it’s critical that there are still pathways for young people to join the field so they can eventually grow into these senior roles.

Satisfaction Peaks Between 3-9 Years in Proposals

Proposal professionals identified as “mid-stage” (those who have been in a proposals role between 3–9 years) have the highest satisfaction across seven categories tied to the proposal process. After that point, satisfaction drops across all categories. This is consistent with last year’s data, which also showed that middle-stage professionals had the highest satisfaction.

Satisfaction by Tenure



If we break this trend down further by age, satisfaction tends to peak at age 25–34, and very gradually decreases from there. This seems to align with the idea that “mid-stage” folks are the most satisfied, though it depends on when exactly people begin their careers in proposals (and these respondents tend to fall on the younger end of “mid-stage”).

This marks a deviation from last year’s data which showed that 45–54-year-olds were the most satisfied group. This is likely a reflection of the rapidly changing RFP and technological landscape, which may be requiring them to rethink the ways they’ve been working for the past decade or more.

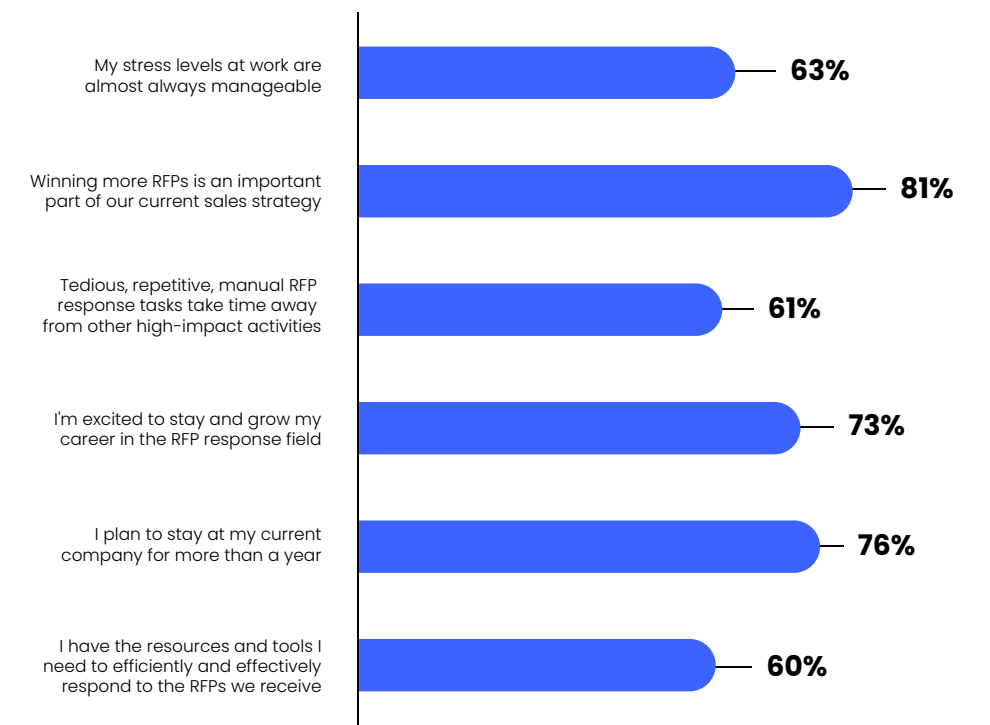
Satisfaction also depends a great deal on the exact area responders are asked about: for instance, when it comes to final submission quality, those aged 54+ are just as satisfied as those aged 25–34, and it’s the middle-age brackets that have lower satisfaction.

As an overall takeaway, it’s worth checking in on your more junior team members to ensure they’re getting the support they need. And don’t forget that your more senior members have valuable perspectives drawn from long experience. Make sure their ideas and points are being heard.

Balancing Stress, Resources, and Productivity

How stressed out responders feel and what resources they have to draw on (including the resource of uninterrupted time) has a large impact on how effective they can be. According to [our research](#), stressed teams spend 10 hours longer per RFP than those with manageable stress levels, and have a lower win rate. The less stressed responders are, the more satisfied—and productive—they can be.

Overall Stress Levels



Currently, 1 in 5 respondents to our survey report grappling with unmanageable stress, a trend that’s remained fairly consistent year-over-year. A similar number of RFP responders think that tedious and manual tasks take their focus away from their most important work (notably, this number is lower for those who use RFP software). Less than two-thirds feel that they have all the resources they need to do their best work.

While a certain amount of stress is inherent to the fast-paced RFP process, ensuring teams have enough resources—tools, people, and time—to get their work done is critical to keeping up morale and preventing burnout. If it’s possible, try to intersperse busy periods with slow(er) ones so teams can stop to take a breath and regroup. It’s also vitally important that teams feel supported and encouraged to take their vacation time so they can recharge.

ADVICE FROM APMP

Don’t wait for burnout to happen to start caring for yourself. If you begin to notice constant fatigue, loss of motivation, declining performance, or detachment, you may be headed for burnout. Taking some time off when you feel burnout creeping in is important, but it won’t solve the underlying issues if you return to the same stressors. Avoiding burnout is just as much about *how* you work as it is about how much you work.

TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF BURNOUT:

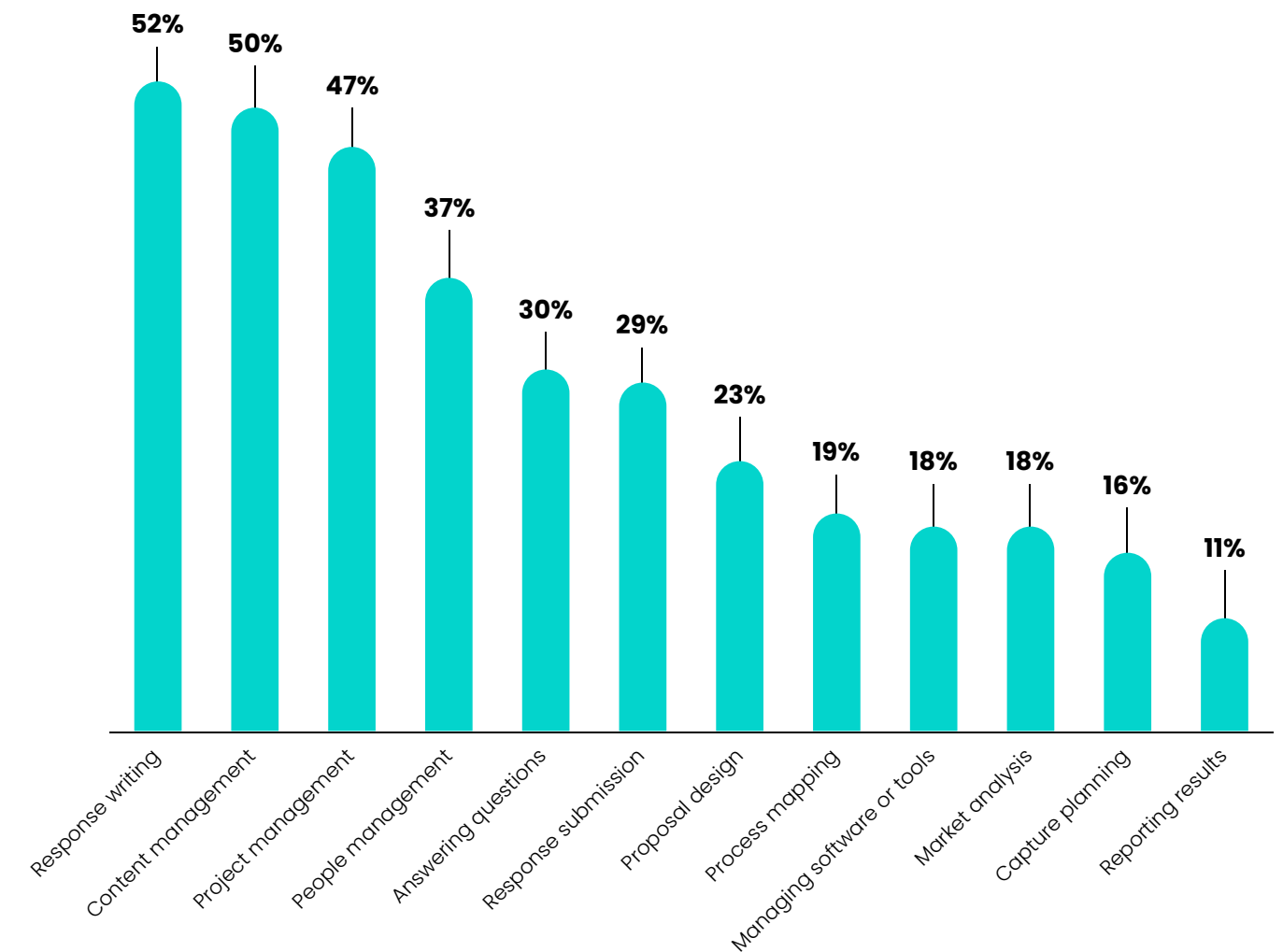
- Start by conducting an audit of how you work, identifying your regular bottlenecks and biggest stressors so you can develop a plan to mitigate them. Map out your internal patterns to understand when you’re naturally most productive and when you tend to slump—maybe you work best in the mornings and slump in the afternoon, or vice versa.
- Be strategic with your to-do list by prioritizing tasks based on complexity and the energy they demand, as well as their importance; this can help you slot more complex tasks into your most productive hours while saving simpler tasks or communications for your slumps.
- Look through your regular tasks and see if there are any repetitive or ‘mindless’ ones you can automate with AI, software, or templates to save you some time.
- Collaborate closely with your team and keep the communication flowing so you can share tasks based on strengths and capacity, and don’t forget a light-hearted chat now and then to lift your spirits. Be honest with yourself and your team about how full your plate is and whether you’re hitting any roadblocks. If you don’t have the bandwidth for additional tasks, remember that it’s okay to push back or negotiate deadlines (a lot of things aren’t as urgent as they first seem).
- Separate your personal and professional space as much as possible so you have a place to relax without work intruding—this might mean avoiding bringing tasks home from the office or designating specific rooms in your home for work and others for recharging.

Chapter 3: Core Responsibilities

Core Duties: Writing and Content Management Reign Supreme Once More

The majority (52%) see response writing and content management (50%) as their top duty—a change from last year when project management occupied the top spot, but more in line with our historical trend. All three duties have fallen in prominence this year.

Core Duties of a Proposal Professional





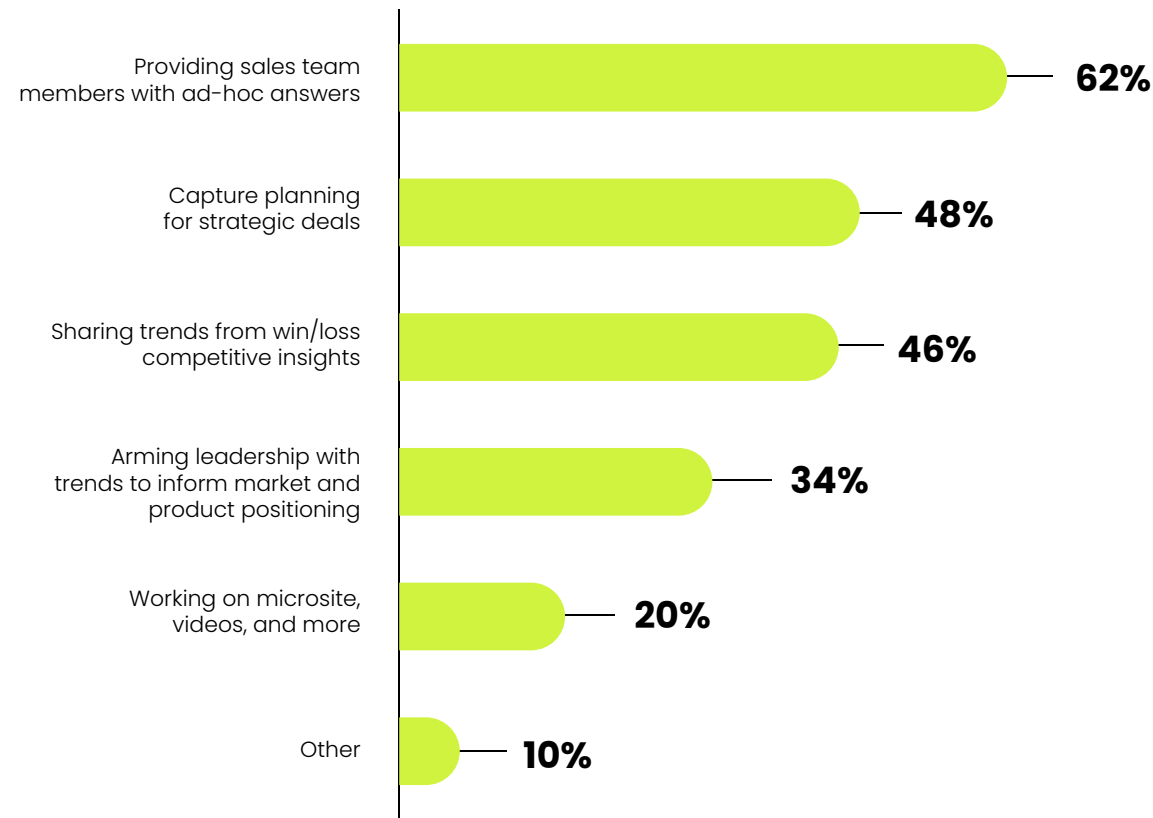
“The proposal field is unique in that it offers the opportunity to learn so much about so many different fields. In my career, I’ve learned so much about information security, product development, and engineering—all things that I never would have had exposure to otherwise—all from collaborating on proposals. The value and opportunity that comes from that is immeasurable.”



MAGGIE GARRATT, SALES RESPONSE MANAGER @ LOOPIO

This change may be related to the huge surge of software and AI use this year. Despite AI being frequently used to assist in response writing, proposal pros still see this as a very important part of their role.

Duties Outside of Responding to RFPs, RFIs, and Questionnaires



Proposal people are also being kept busy by responsibilities that may be outside of their official job description but are also critical to closing deals—the most common is giving ad hoc answers to sales. While it’s great to be helpful, if you find that supporting your sales team is taking a lot of time from your work, consider setting up a centralized content library (like those offered by RFP software tools) where sales can find vetted answers without interrupting your workflow.



Balancing core RFP responsibilities while fielding questions from sales, procurement, and leadership requires discipline and strategic prioritization. Here’s how I manage it:

- **SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES AND PROCESSES:** A robust process ensures that RFP tasks stay on track. Establish clear go/no-go criteria, proposal timelines, and review checkpoints. This structure reduces ad hoc disruptions.
- **STREAMLINE COMMUNICATION:** Regular touchpoints with sales, technical, financial, and procurement teams preempt last-minute requests. I also rely on tools like project plans, content plans, templates, compliance matrices, and content libraries to drive clarity and efficiency.
- **PRIORITIZE HIGH-IMPACT ACTIVITIES:** Not all demands carry equal weight. I focus on activities that directly influence win probability like refining win themes, sharpening value propositions, and ensuring alignment between sales promises and proposal delivery.
- **LEVERAGE THE POWER OF ‘NO’:** Sometimes, the best way to stay focused is to diplomatically decline tasks that don’t align with core objectives. Saying no when necessary ensures that the proposal’s strategic direction isn’t compromised.



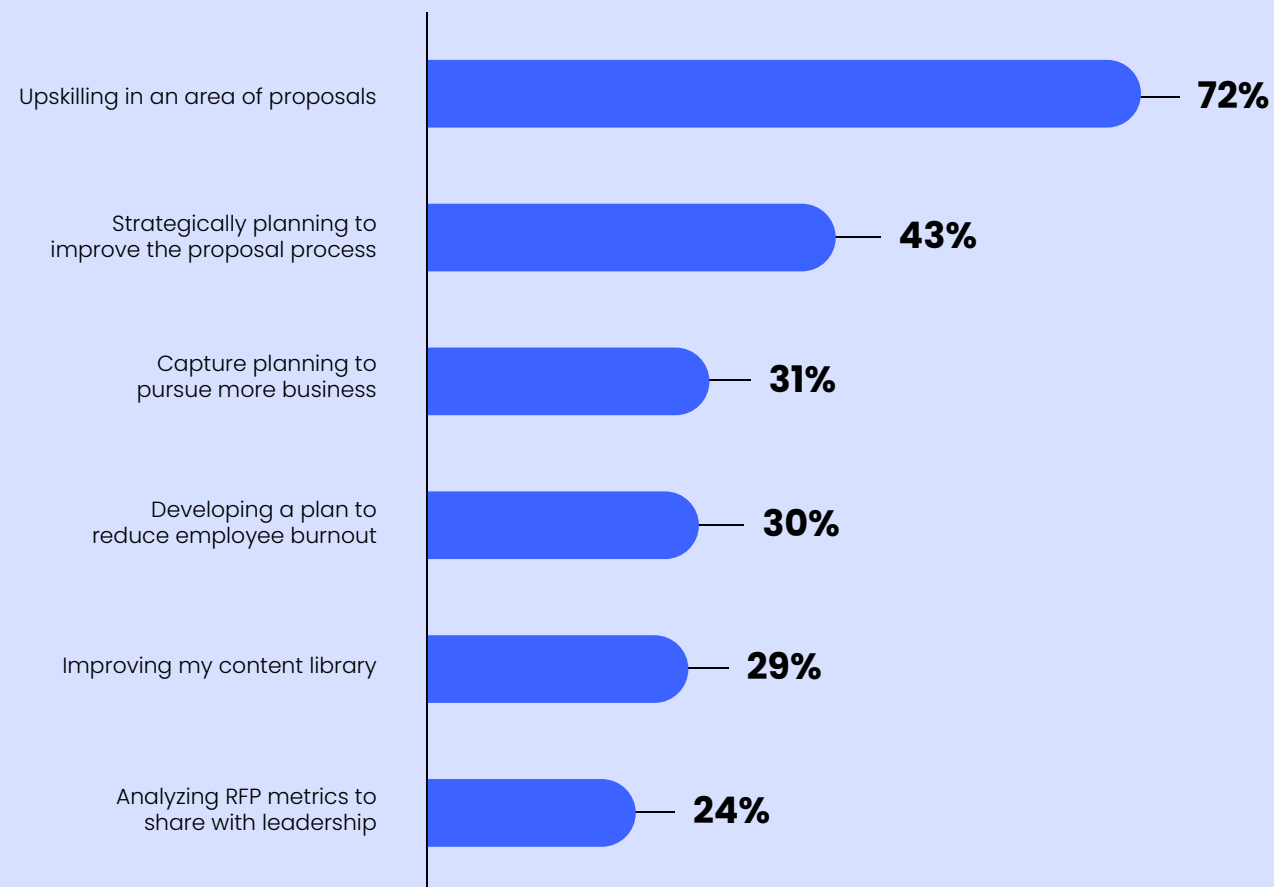
LARISSA CORNELIUS,
CHIEF WIN STRATEGIST @ NFOLD AND DIRECTOR @ APMP SA



Key Insight: Strategy and Upskilling Top Proposal Pros' Wishlists

If proposal managers got some elusive “free time” (*what even is that?*), they know exactly how they'd spend it: focusing on strategy and building their proposal skills.

If You Had A Spare Few Hours in Your Work Week, How Would You Prefer to Spend It?



ADVICE FROM APMP

Those who work in strategic response management are often the only people in an organization to touch every single phase of the business development lifecycle in a meaningful way. Naturally for a role with that kind of scope, balancing multiple responsibilities is a central challenge. On one hand, you have to master the technical demands—analyzing opportunities, formulating strategy, and creating persuasive, best practice-driven proposal content. On the other hand, you need to excel at relationship management—coordinating teams, collaborating with diverse stakeholders, and guiding SMEs.

Although these two areas may seem distinct, the same set of skills underpins success in both: listening, empathy, understanding, and positive influence. These capabilities, when woven into your written proposals, elevate your customer focus and help position you as a trusted partner—often the deciding factor in winning a bid. At the same time, these very skills enable you to build credibility and rapport within your own organization, ensuring buy-in from SMEs and cross-functional teams.

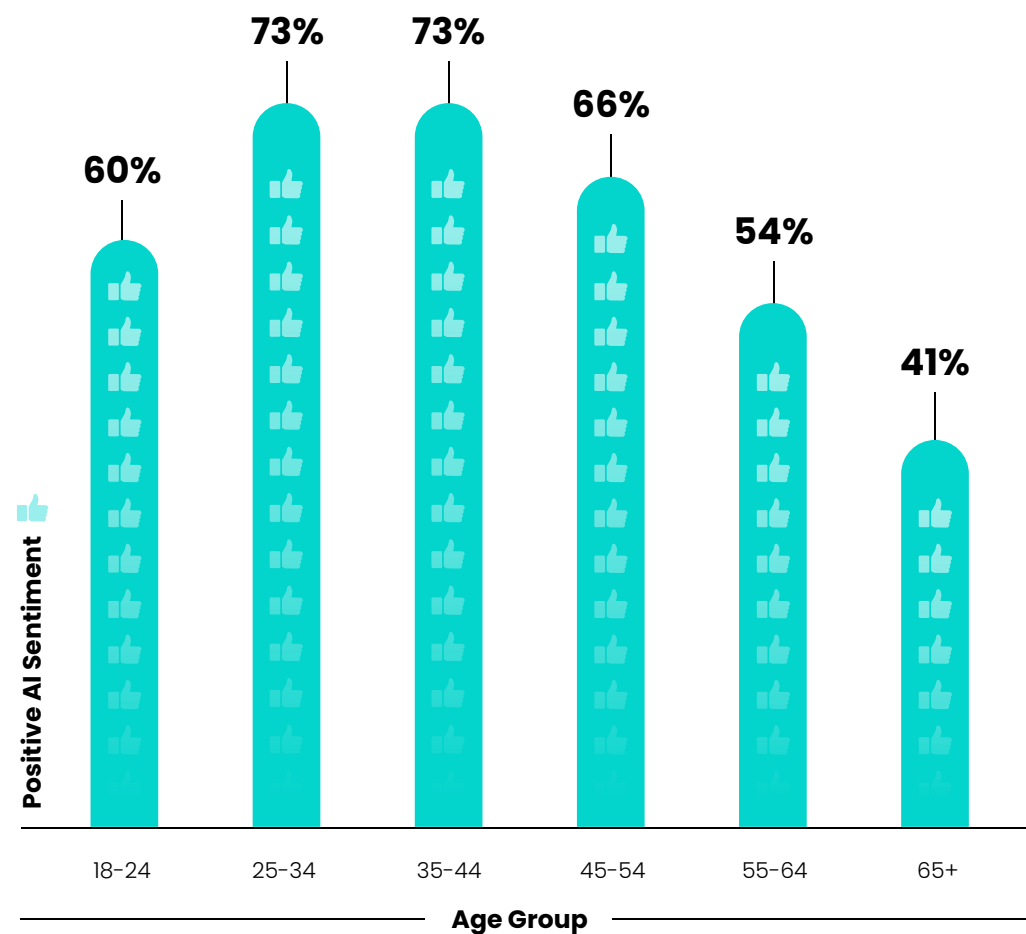
As you advance in the field, intentionally strengthen these foundational skills. They are what drive enthusiastic participation, whether it's an SME's deeper engagement in the creation process, an internal team aligning seamlessly with your proposal strategy, or a customer deciding your proposal is the clear winner.

Chapter 4: The Impact of AI

AI Sentiment Varies With Age

AI optimism is correlated with age, to a point. Younger folks tend to be more positive about the technology, while enthusiasm tends to taper off with age. Less than half of responders aged 65+ feel positive about AI. However, one interesting blip is that the most enthusiastic about AI are those in the 25-44 age range—and those under 25 have measurably lower sentiment.

What's your overall sentiment towards using generative AI in your role?

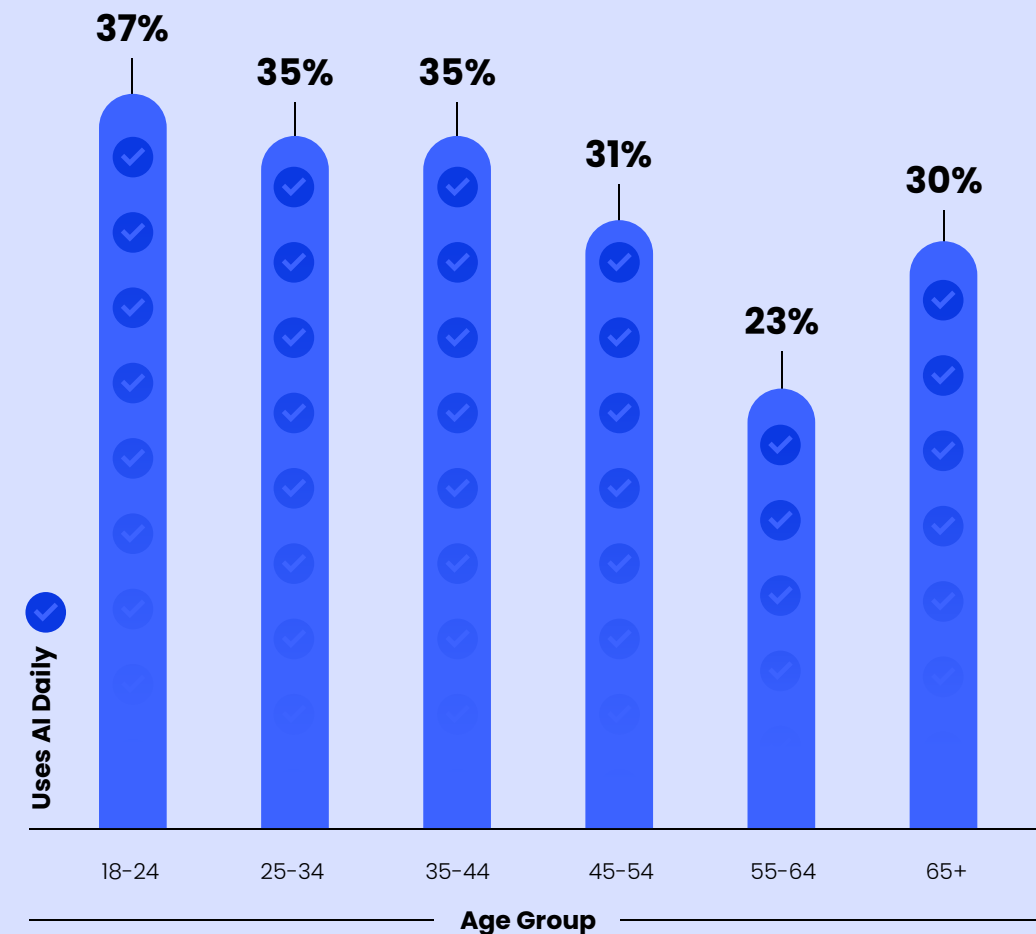


One possible explanation could be that those in the 18-24 year range may see AI as their direct competition for entry-level jobs. Those who are in the 25-44 age group, on the other hand, are more likely to be established in their careers and feel less threatened by this technology.

About a third of responders use AI every day

About a third (32%) of responders use AI on a daily basis, though frequency of usage varies with age. While 18-24-year-olds may feel less positively about AI, they use the tool with the greatest frequency.

How often are you using AI in your RFP process?

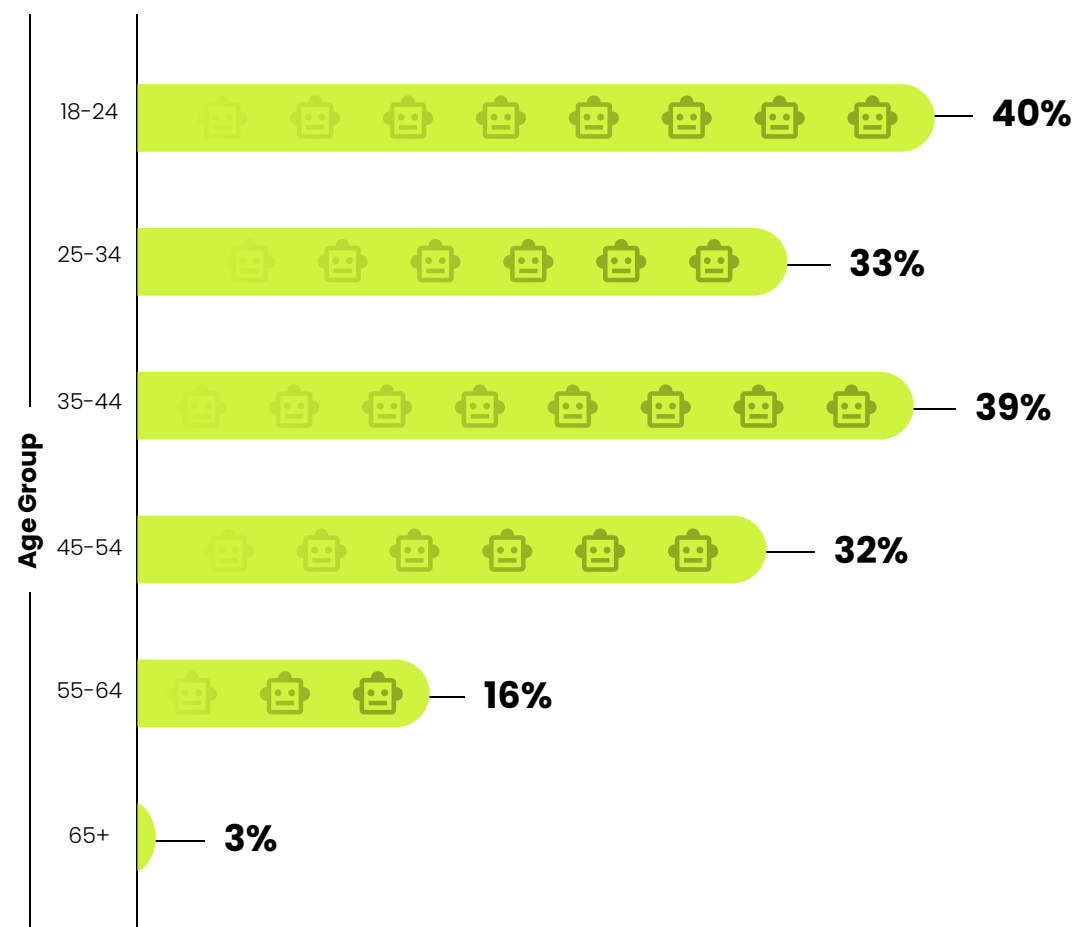


So, Will AI Replace RFP Jobs? (Unlikely—At Least For Now)

Alongside the huge increase in teams using AI this year, more responders are considering using it to replace staff. When asked whether they've considered replacing people resources with AI, almost a third (32%) of RFP responders admitted that they had. Though this is up from last year's number (15%), opinions are divided among age groups.

Certain age demographics, including Gen Z and elder Millennials, are especially enthusiastic about replacing staff with AI. However, older (and therefore, likely more senior) people are less likely to be considering it, with those aged 65+ the least keen of all, at 3%.

Would Consider Replacing People Resources with AI



The group that feels keen on replacing jobs with AI is also the youngest: 18-24-year-olds. That said, they likely don't yet have the kind of work experience that would show them how critical it is to balance AI use with strategic oversight. They are also the least likely (for now) to have a say in these decisions, given their tenure.



"Teams should not be afraid of being replaced by AI—it's a tool, just like the typewriter was replaced by the word processor. It will create new opportunities as well, such as people with prompt-writing skills. Don't forget that human beings have creativity and nuances in their communication that AI cannot match."



FRANK MARZARI, SR. PROPOSAL MANAGER @ BMO FINANCIAL GROUP

Following closely behind them, almost the same number (39%) of those in the 35-44 age bracket would consider replacing people resources with AI. These folks are more tenured—likely in the kind of middle-management positions where they would be concerned about finding efficiencies. This is to be expected: our [prior research](#) shows that folks in more senior roles are more likely to consider replacing people resources with AI. But it is worth mentioning that *considering* replacing people resources with AI is not the same as actually doing it. And, at least for the time being, there's still quite a lot of RFP work that only a human can do.



"To thrive in this new era, RFP professionals will need to embrace new skills. Data analysis will become a core competency, as will the ability to manage and interpret AI tools. The human touch—crafting compelling narratives, building relationships, and understanding nuanced client needs—will remain irreplaceable, but it will be enhanced by AI's capabilities."



DANICA NELSON, PROPOSAL AND MARKETING COORDINATOR @ WGM GROUP

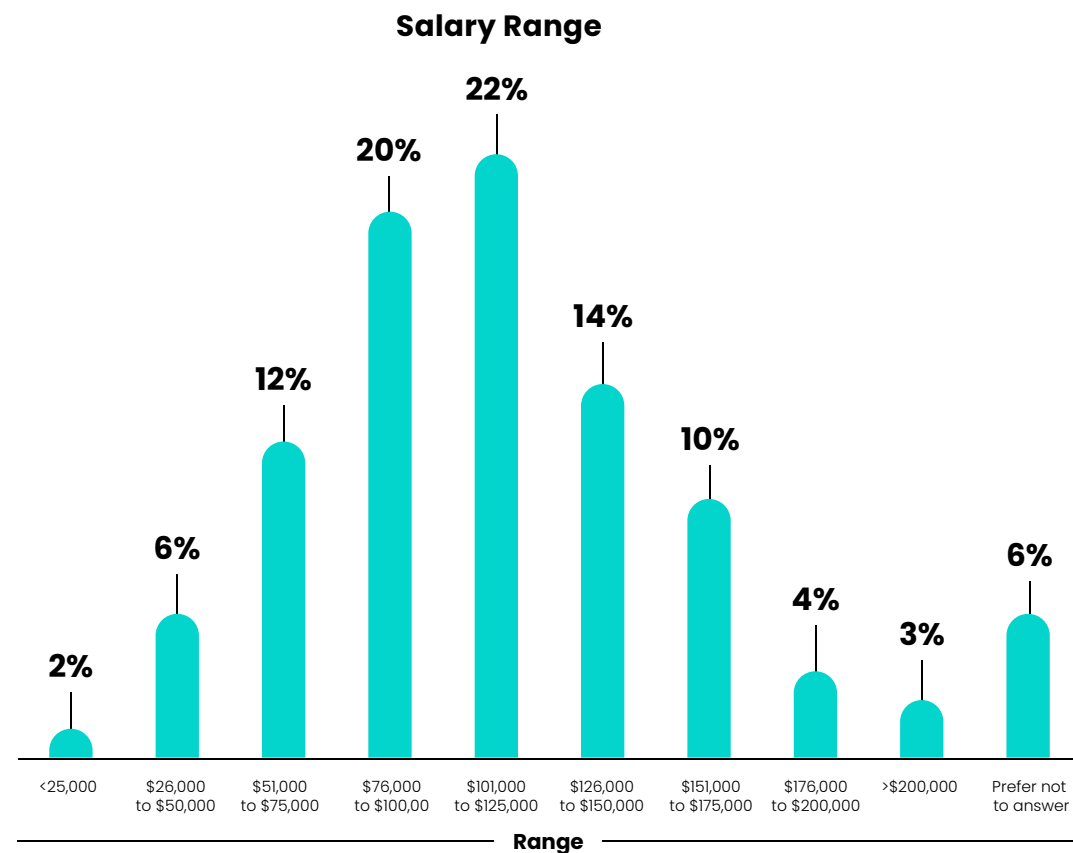
Chapter 5: Salary & Promotions

Average Salary Increases

Looking at all the respondents of this year's survey, the average salary across our sample is now \$103,319 USD, up more than \$5,000 from last year (this includes titles like VP, exec leadership, and those not in proposal-specific roles). This boost is congruent with the fact that proposal managers are growing more tenured and that so many are being promoted (as we'll see below). The majority also receive some kind of benefits—in the form of health coverage, bonuses, paid parental leave, or other perks—in addition to their salary.

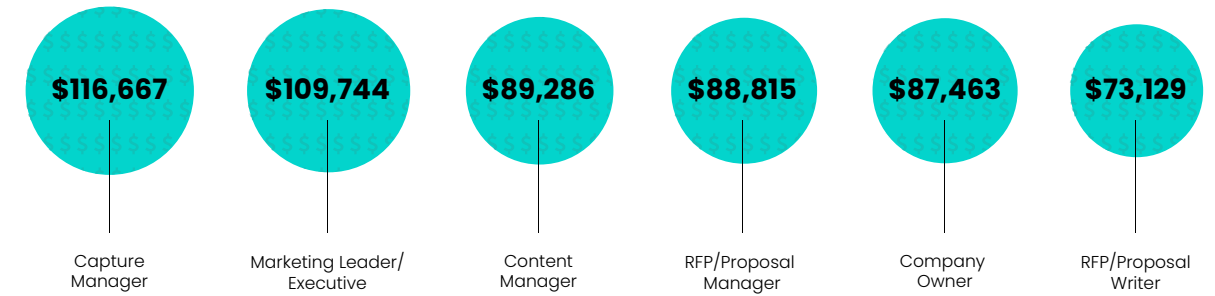
\$94,184
The average salary for people in proposal-specific roles

There is, of course, variance depending on role, tenure, and industry. If you isolate this average salary to just RFP-specific roles, like the ones we're focusing on in this section, the average salary is \$94,184.

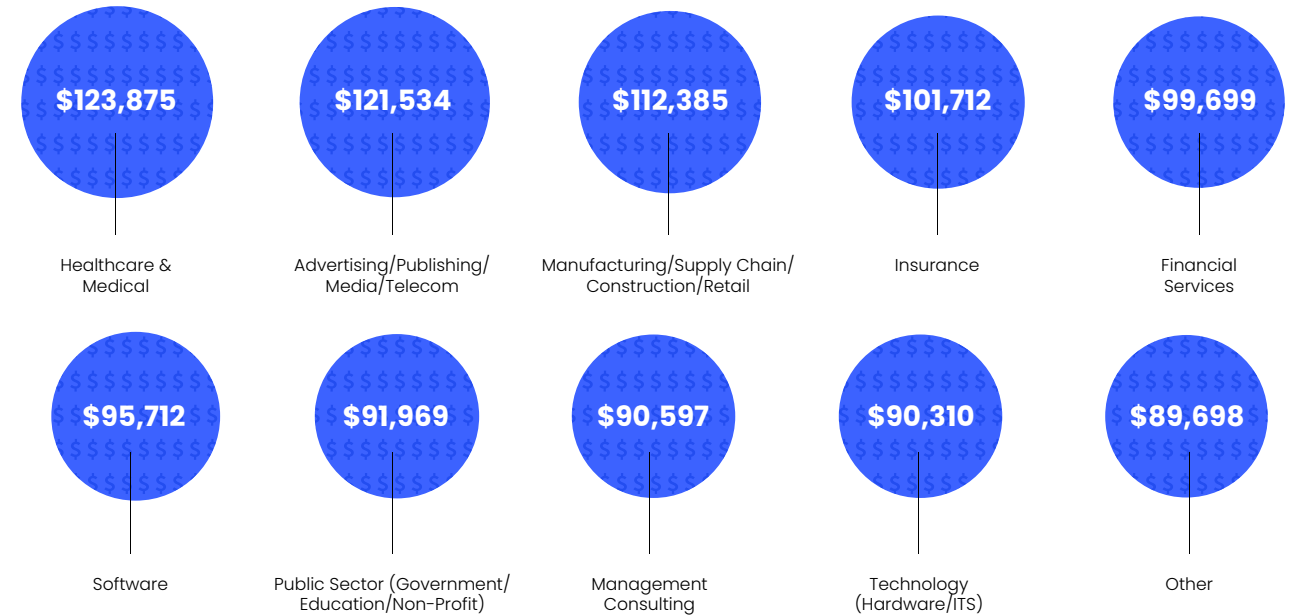


The majority of proposal professionals (76%) earn between \$76k to \$150k annually. Below, we break down these salary bands by type of role, as well as leadership level.

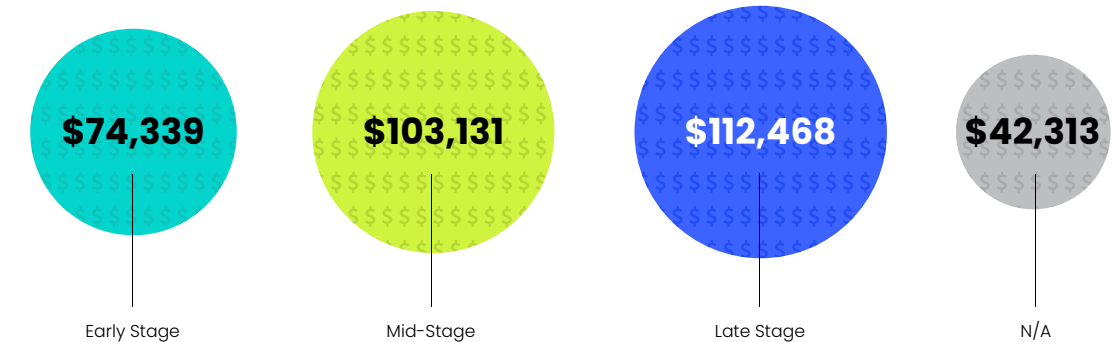
Salary Range: Breakdown by Job Title



Salary Range: Breakdown by Industry



Salary Range: Breakdown by Tenure

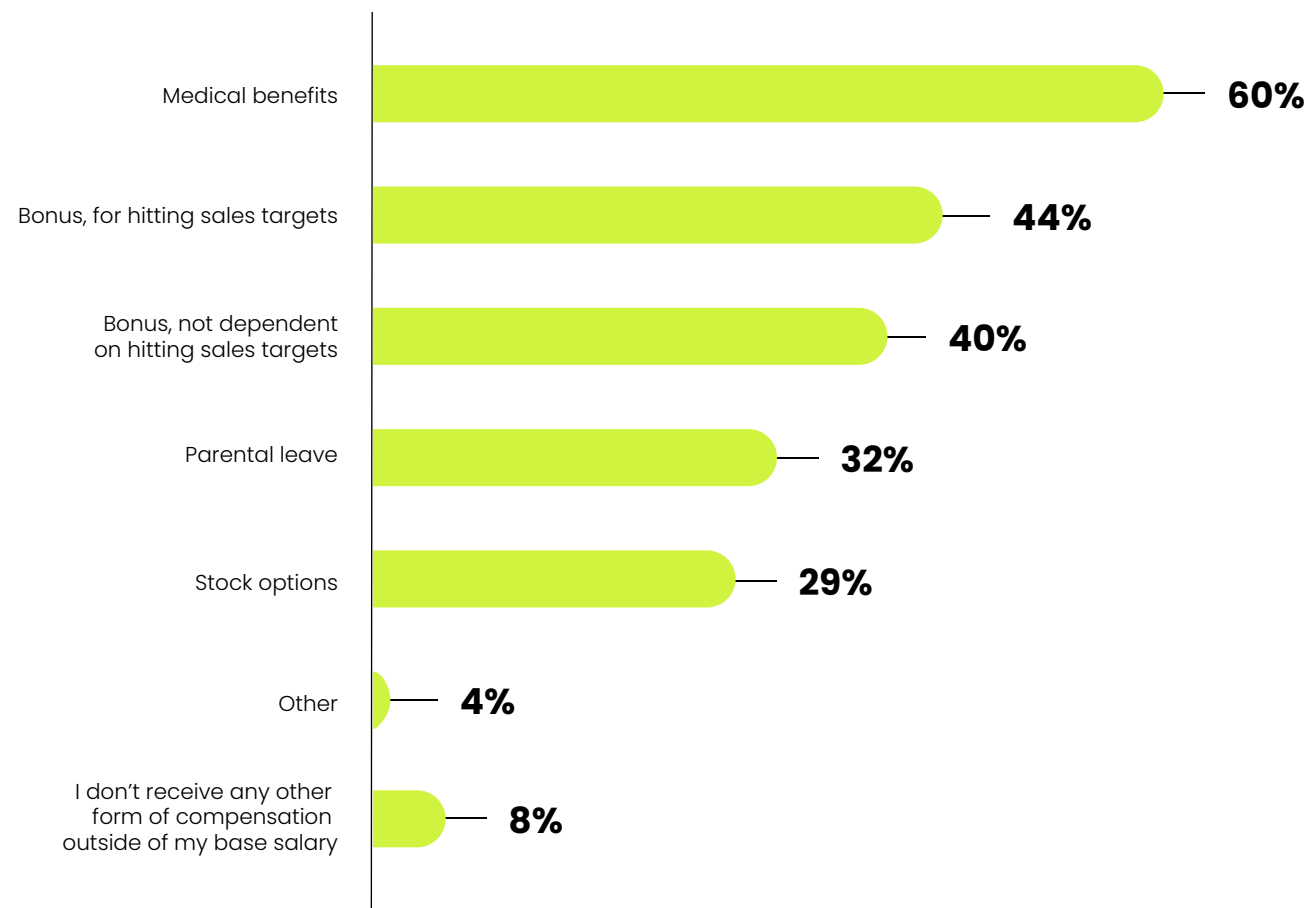


Only 6% of respondents chose not to answer the salary question this year as opposed to 11% last year, suggesting a continued trend toward openness around compensation. This is a positive sign as sharing salary data can help professionals enter into salary conversations with more information, helping them advocate for better compensation and improve pay discrepancies.

Nearly all (92%) of respondents receive some kind of benefits outside of their base salary. The top benefits include medical benefits, bonuses (both those tied to sales targets and those that aren't), and paid parental leave.

Additional Compensation Beyond Base Salary

Respondents could choose multiple answers



Key Insight: Advice on How to Negotiate a Higher Salary

“When making a case for a compensation increase, I focus on tangible process improvements that I have initiated, followed through on, and successfully implemented. I back my case with industry research, comparing average salaries for my skill level, years of experience, location, and title to ensure my expectations are aligned with market standards. Additionally, I highlight key performance metrics such as improvements in win rates, reductions in the average hours spent per proposal, and workflow efficiencies I’ve introduced.”



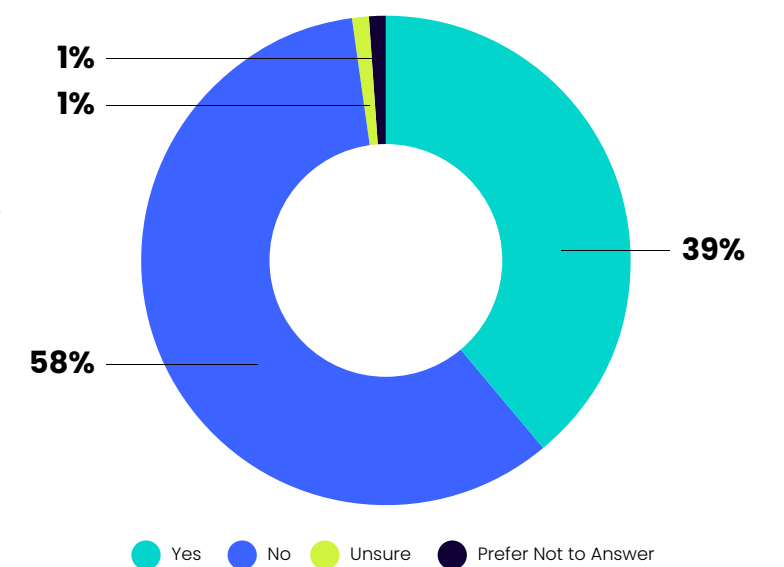
YOLANDE KERR, MANAGER, PROPOSALS @ CLARK BUILDERS

Loopio Tip: Download our [2025 RFP Trends & Benchmarks Report](#) to compare your performance metrics to benchmarks in your industry.

Promotions Increase as Resources Rebound

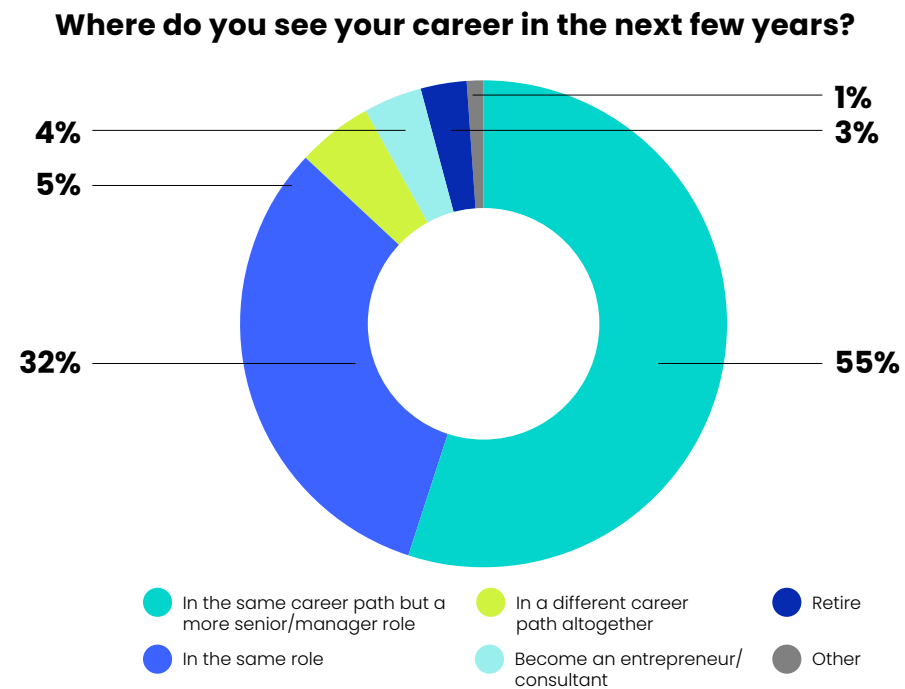
Almost two-fifths (39%) of responders were promoted in the last 12 months, an increase from previous years (27% in 2023 and 30% in 2022). This may be related to the fact that more than half (52%) of teams gained new resources this past year, reversing a resource drought we’ve been observing since the pandemic. There might have been a backlog of folks ready for promotion, with teams just waiting to have the resources to be able to make it happen (or RFP professionals have just been having a really productive year). It’ll be interesting to see if promotion rates return to baseline next year, or whether this is an upward trend that will continue.

Promoted in the Last 12 Months

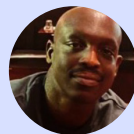


Almost 90% Intend to Stay in the RFP Field

An overwhelming majority (87%) of RFP professionals plan to stay on this career path. Over half of proposal professionals (55%) expect to be in a more senior proposal role in the next five years.



“With RFPs contributing to, on average, a third of an organization’s revenue, I feel that RFP professionals are in great demand. Who wouldn’t want to stay in a field where you’re in great demand?”



GERARD GYEDU, BID MANAGER @ PEOPLESCOUT LIMITED

When asked why they want to stay, nearly half (46%) say because they enjoy their work and a third (34%) think there’s room for growth. Fourteen percent of respondents think there’s an opportunity for a higher salary. And finally, in perhaps the realest response to this survey, only 6% say the career path they’ve chosen is low stress.



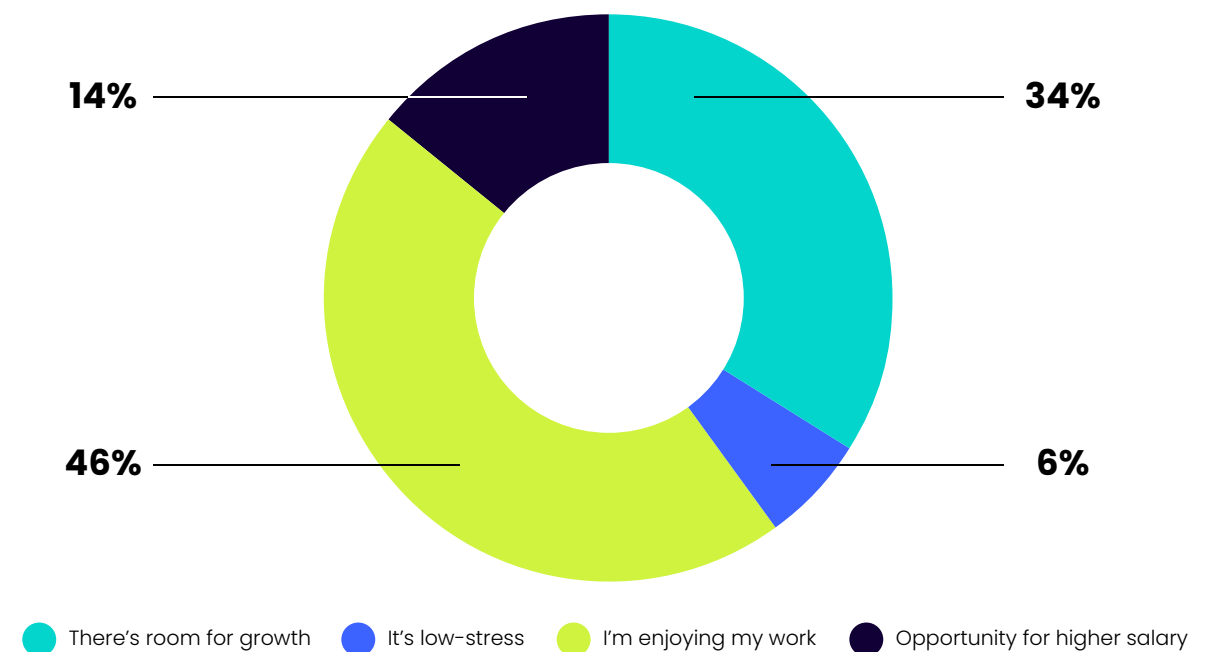
Key Insight: On Becoming an RFP Entrepreneur

“Building my own business has definitely been a challenge, but it’s also been incredibly fulfilling. I’ve had to stretch myself in ways I never expected, and while it hasn’t always been easy, the rewards of running my own firm and doing things my way have made it all worth it. I will not tell you it’s easy, because it’s not, but one thing I will tell you is that in anything we do, we need to pick our “hard.” For some people, being self-employed is their “hard” whereas for others, being employed by another organization is their “hard.” You need to select what’s in most alignment with who you are, and who you want to be.”



OLIVIA BAHRAMI, FOUNDER AND OWNER @THE RFP HOUSE

Why do you plan to stay on this career path?



Chapter 6: Profile of a Top Earner

What Sets Top Earners Apart

When we look at top earners—those who make over \$150k USD in a year—they take certain actions that help them stand out from the crowd. In this section, we'll cover what they do differently and how you can steal their strategy to help boost your career this year.

Lest you think it's just managers and executives who are able to achieve these kinds of salaries: 75% of top earners in our survey said they were directly responsible for responding to RFPs, while only 25% said they managed a team who responded.

Of course, it takes time to build up these skills and earning potential. The majority of respondents in the top earner bucket (58%) have worked in the RFP field for at least ten years. But even if you haven't been in the field nearly as long, implementing these practices today will help you steer your career trajectory in a positive direction—and reap the rewards of recognition, promotions, and salary increases in the long run.



1. They invest in their growth and education

It might not come as a surprise that the overwhelming majority (81%) of top earners are APMP members (and 16% belong to a different proposal management association). Of the APMP members, 54% have attained the Bid/Proposal Foundation Certification and 48% hold additional certifications. Only 15% are members who have not yet achieved any certifications.

Participating in industry groups like APMP allows these responders to stay on top of trends and continuously enhance their skills, while making valuable connections with other professionals in the field. Is it any wonder then that 47% of top earners were promoted in the last year, compared to the average of 39%?



2. They leverage RFP software

Almost three-quarters (73%) of top earners use some kind of RFP response software, more than any other earning group. Using RFP software comes with a number of benefits, including time savings, improved content organization, and ease of collaboration. In our [2025 RFP Trends and Benchmark Report](#), we reported that software users are not only able to submit and win more RFPs, but also feel more satisfied with their response process and are less stressed.



3. They use AI in a focused, deliberate way

Top earners are about equally likely to use AI as other groups (68%), however, those who use AI within this group are much more committed to the tool. Three-quarters (75%) are using it weekly and over a third (35%) use it every single day—more frequently than any other earnings group. AI can help save valuable time in your response process, provided you're using it strategically. It's important to make sure that the tool you're using is secure (or, at a minimum, that you're not feeding any potentially sensitive data into it) and check the results over for any inaccuracies.



4. They feel relaxed and happy in their work

While short-term goals like a promotion or a salary boost can be motivating for a period of time, to sustain your career over the long run you need to harness the power of intrinsic motivation. Top earners seem to do this intuitively, reporting the lowest stress levels and the highest work enjoyment of any other earnings group. Almost half (47%) say they want to stay in this career path because they're enjoying it, and 65% say their stress levels at work are almost always manageable.



5. They want to grow in the field

Finally, top earners are committed to this career path. The overwhelming majority (88%) see themselves in the same or a more senior role in a few years' time. When asked why they're interested in staying in the field, beyond enjoying it, almost a third (29%) say there's room for growth. And with their focus on continuous education and skill-building, there's no doubt they'll get there.



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