THE 2025 STATE OF STRATEGIC RESPONSE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Winning Business in the Age of AI

responsive APMP

The ground is shifting beneath the feet of every B2B organization

What worked even two years ago no longer guarantees success. AI, heightened expectations, and prolonged approval processes are driving a new era of scrutiny and complexity in every deal.

Revenue teams — including sales, marketing, and proposal management — are feeling that pressure acutely. They're being asked to respond to more bids, assessments, and one-off buyer requests than ever before. AI is recalibrating the way they work, but it's not a silver bullet. The real opportunity lies in Strategic Response Management (SRM): how people, processes, and technology come together to unlock organizational knowledge for profitable growth.

This year's *State of Strategic Response Management Report* arrives at a pivotal time. The AI mandate is here: It's not a question of if organizations will adopt AI, but rather how fast and how well they can do it. The leading businesses in this year's study are already setting a new standard: embedding AI into daily workflows, investing in their teams to win with greater precision, and elevating SRM as a critical function in their go-to-market strategy.

Based on insights from 726 decision-makers and practitioners around the globe, this report explores how organizations are laying the foundation for a more intelligent, agile, and competitive future — where strategic response becomes a true driver of growth.

Here's what you'll find inside:

- How top-performing companies are harnessing SRM and AI as growth catalysts
- How AI is reshaping roles across the revenue organization
- Tangible ROI from AI investments
- Best practices that differentiate leading organizations

The future of business belongs to those who can navigate complexity with clarity, harness technology with intention, and empower people to do their best work. We hope the insights here give you a clear view of where the market is heading — and what it takes to thrive in the age of AI.

Ganesh Shankar, CEO and Co-founder
responsive

Rick Harris, Chief Executive Officer
APMP

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Winning business in the age of AI

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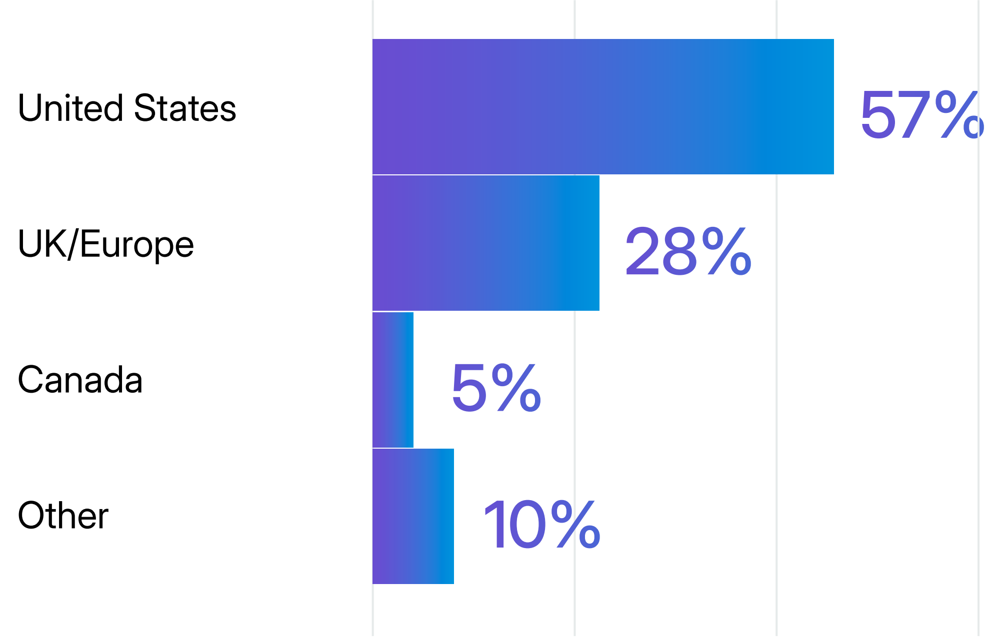
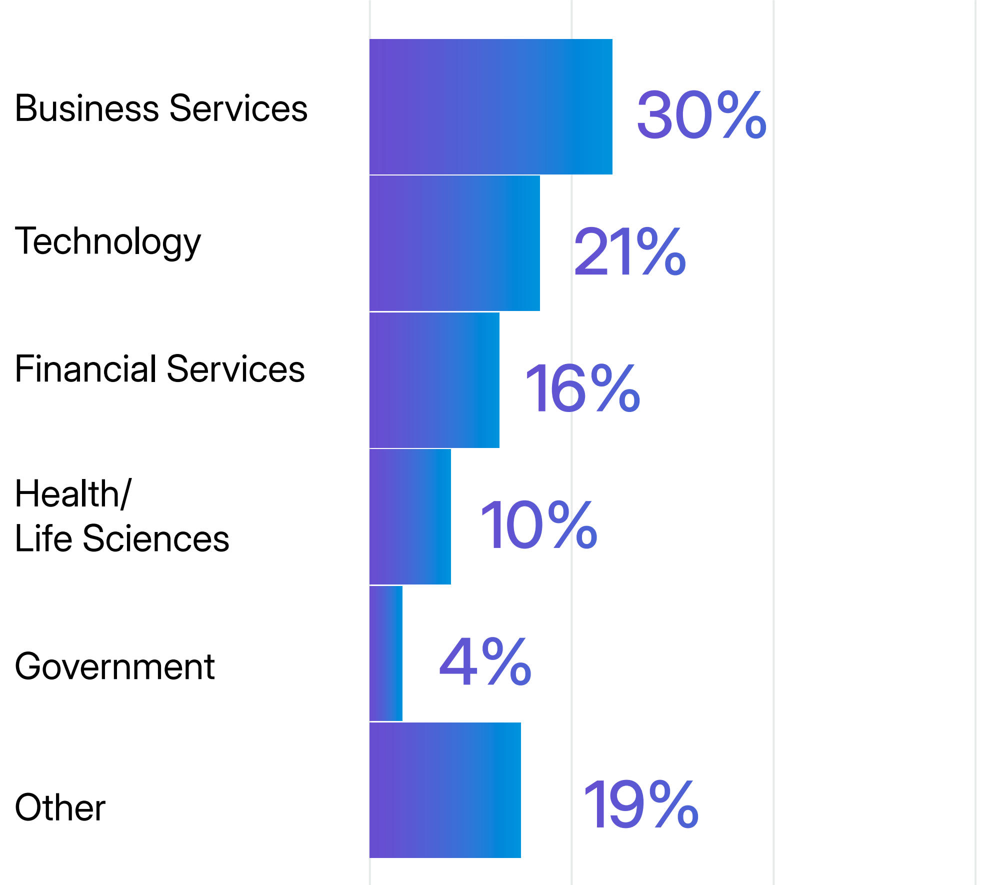
Research methodology

This report is based on a global web-based survey fielded in February 2025. 726 respondents across continents, functions, industries, and business sizes participated, with over 200 sourced from the Association of Proposal Management Professionals (APMP). The survey was designed by Adience[1] and Responsive.

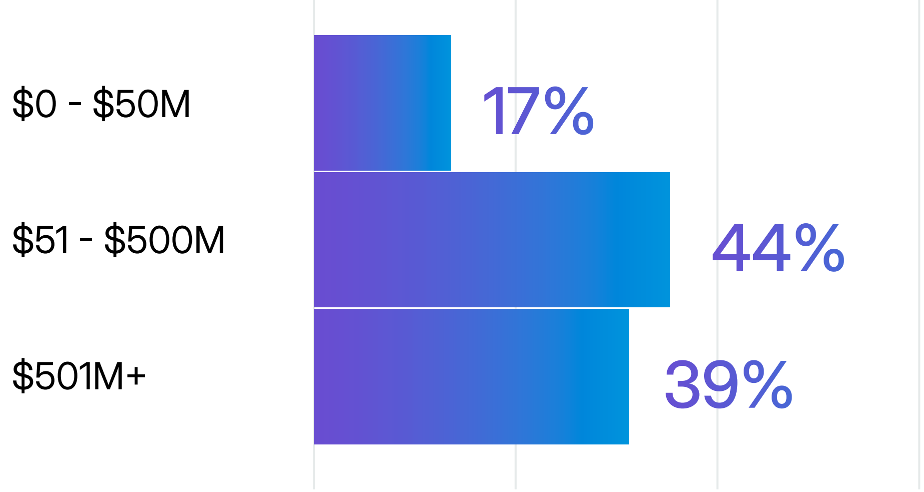
Region



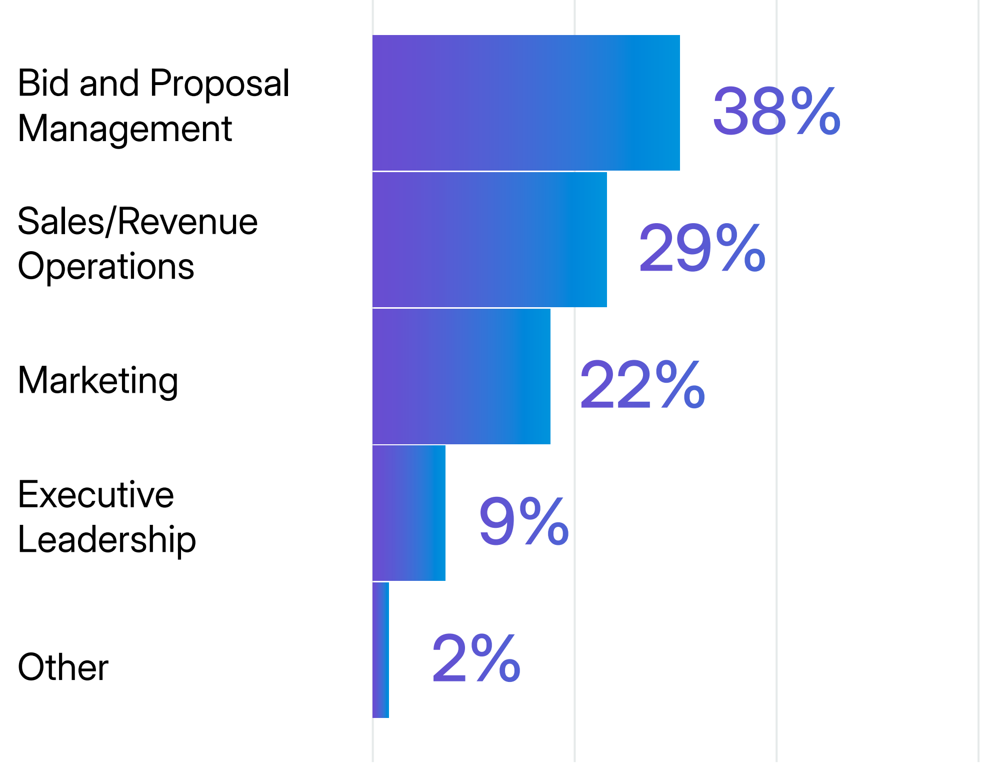
Industry



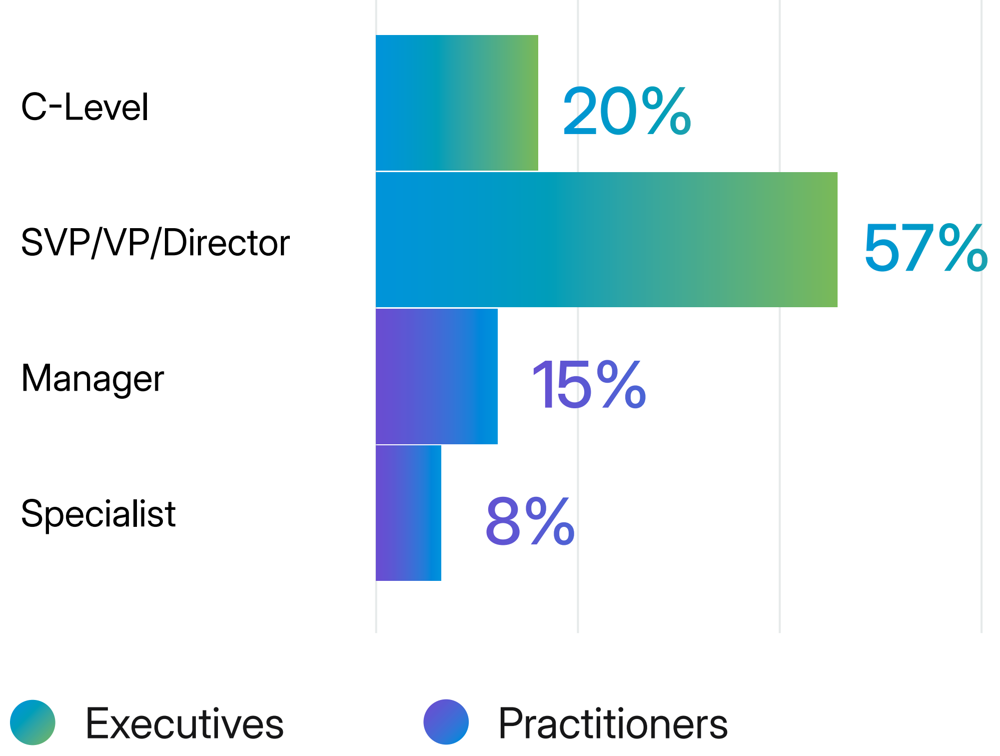
Revenue



Function



Seniority



[1]Adience is a dedicated B2B market research agency that rebels against boring, cookie-cutter traditional research. Drawing on decades of experience across SaaS markets, IT, and other B2B sectors, Adience delivers trusted answers to the questions that matter, so decision-makers can act with confidence.

Leaders vs. Novices

To surface best practices, we looked at what leading companies are doing differently to drive outsized results. For comparison purposes, we've grouped responding organizations into two categories. Respondents had to meet all three criteria to be classified as a Leader or Novice.

- Leaders
- Novices

Leaders

25%+ revenue growth in the past year

25%+ increase in revenue generated directly from RFPs in the last year

>40% RFP win rate

Novices

Static or declining revenue in the past year

Static or declining RFP revenue in the past year

<40% RFP win rate

01

The new rules of buying

01 Smarter buyers, tougher cycles

B2B buying has always been complex, but in 2025, it has reached a new level of speed, scrutiny, and self-sufficiency. Today's buyers aren't just harder to reach — they're harder to influence. And the ripple effects are being felt across the entire revenue organization.

Buyers now expect more information, faster turnaround times, and tailored responses. They're engaging later in the cycle, involving more stakeholders, and delaying decisions until every detail is covered. These aren't isolated signals; rather, they're systemic changes reshaping how organizations compete.

Perennial trends like tighter budgets and compressed timelines have evolved into baseline realities. And nearly half of respondents in this year's survey say these factors are directly affecting their ability to win. Meanwhile, larger, more complex buying committees are introducing new friction across every stage of the pursuit cycle.

Notably, buyers are also beginning to bring their own tools into the evaluation process, using AI to draft RFPs and analyze responses. 59% of respondents have noted this trend, with a quarter already seeing direct impacts on their ability to win business.

Evolution in buyer behaviors and expectations

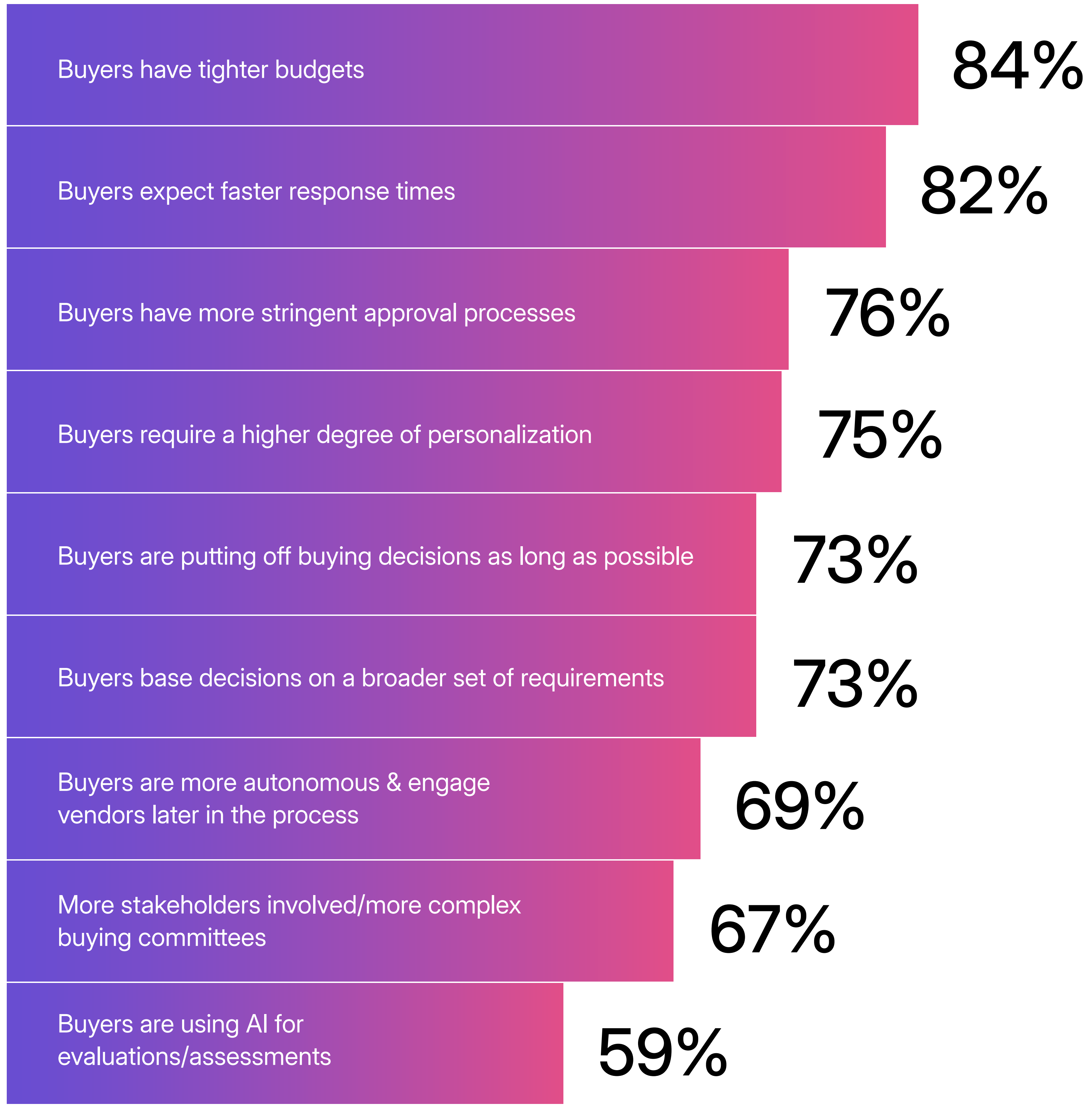


Figure 1

The new face of growth

Top priority for revenue growth in coming years

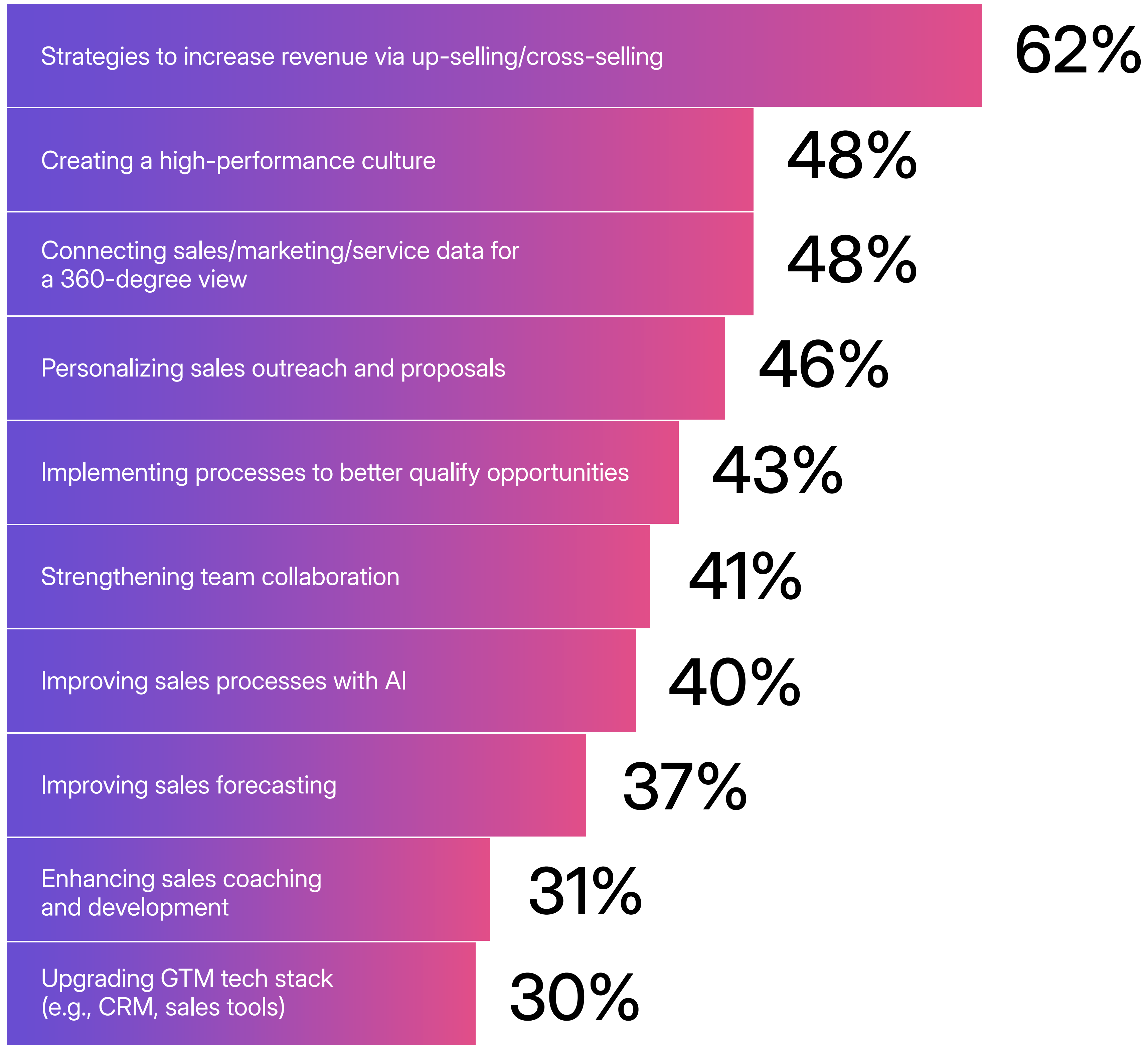


Figure 2

While the external buying environment has grown more complex, internal priorities are shifting just as dramatically. In a world where traditional top-line expansion is harder to come by, companies are focusing on smarter, more sustainable ways to grow.

When asked about their top priorities over the next few years, 62% of companies highlighted upselling and cross-selling as key to unlocking additional revenue. It's a logical response to today's market pressures: with tighter budgets and prolonged buying cycles, growing existing accounts often offers the most immediate and efficient path to revenue.

But tapping into that value requires more than sales motions alone. It demands a stronger internal foundation — one built on high-performance culture (prioritized by 48%), unified customer intelligence (48%), and consistent, high-quality execution across the pursuit lifecycle. These aren't just enablers of upsell strategy; they're the infrastructure for sustainable growth when every deal is harder to win.

Top priorities by seniority level

Executives

Developing strategies to increase revenue from existing customers	59%
Connecting sales/marketing data to provide a 360-degree view	51%
Creating a high-performance culture	50%

Practitioners

Developing strategies to increase revenue from existing customers	70%
Implementing processes to better qualify opportunities	63%
Strengthening collaboration between teams	57%

Interestingly, top priorities shift depending on who you ask. While there's agreement on doubling down on existing relationships, senior leadership is prioritizing a focus on cultural transformation and connected systems. In contrast, frontline managers and specialists are refining execution, prioritizing better qualification, stronger collaboration, and clearer processes.

While these differences are logical, they point to an ongoing challenge: how to bridge strategy with operations. Building that bridge starts with the right people, processes, and technology — the very foundation of Strategic Response Management. That's where we turn next.

NEXT

Industry spotlight

Industry spotlight

Neel Shah

Division Vice President,
Commercial Operations

As DVP of Commercial Operations at ADP, Neel Shah oversees a vast revenue ecosystem supporting over 10,000 sales and marketing professionals. His focus is on driving speed, accuracy, and alignment across the buying cycle — especially as buyers come to the table later, better informed, and with higher expectations. With AI now embedded in his team's workflows, Neel sees a new opportunity to move faster and smarter.

How is buyer behavior changing, and how is it impacting sales operations?

Meeting the buyer where they are — that's the challenge. Buyers already have 70% of the information before they talk to us. They're benchmarking. They've done their research. So for us, it's about how fast we can respond, how relevant we can be, and how well we differentiate. If we're too slow or too generic, we lose.

We've seen a shift in RFPs, too. It's not just about features and functionality anymore. Buyers are looking for more scenario-based answers, and they want to see it — not just read it. That's pushed us to get more aligned internally and tighten how we respond.

What have you done to drive internal alignment and tighten how you respond?

It starts with understanding the end-to-end process. Sales, marketing, proposal teams — we all play a role, but if we're not working from the same playbook, things slow down. We've put a lot of focus on process clarity: Who's doing what? When? How do we keep each other accountable?

AI has helped here, too. With knowledge sharing and standardized content, we're not reinventing the wheel every time. Everyone's pulling from the same source of truth, and that keeps us moving faster with fewer missteps.

AI also helps us respond faster, but more importantly, it frees up our people to focus on what the buyer really cares about. We've been using AI to handle the setup work, and that's taken about 30-40% off our proposal teams' plates. That time is now spent engaging the buyer — following up, clarifying, customizing.

And it's working. We've seen a 7% lift in win rates since using AI this way, and we're responding to more RFPs without adding headcount.

What's next for AI in your organization?

Efficiency, accuracy, and scale. That's what we're excited about. We want to keep improving the associate experience, giving them the tools to be more productive and build new skills. It's a capability builder, not just a time saver. And if we go after more RFPs, win more deals, and get back weeks of work in minutes — that's the kind of growth we want to see.

02

The teams driving growth are built differently

02

The strategic response gap

The business of responding is the business of winning. Last year, we found that nearly half of company revenue is tied to RFPs, bids, tenders, and proposals — and that 70% of companies reported an annual increase in revenue generated from these strategic responses. This figure has remained steady YoY, with 62% of respondents reporting that revenue tied to strategic responses increased again this year. With so much at stake, effective and efficient response processes are vital.

Accepting an RFP isn't a task for one team; it's a commitment from the entire organization. At the center are bid, proposal, and capture teams, curating knowledge and managing inputs across functions to shape how the business shows up in every strategic response. According to these teams, business development (53%) and sales (49%) frequently contribute to strategic responses, followed by executive management (41%) and marketing (32%). Operations, finance, legal, and IT are all part of the extended ecosystem, yet their participation varies widely by organization size, industry, and region, according to the data.

There is one critical disconnect when it comes to perception. Sales and executive leadership often believe they're playing a central role in the response process — 54% of execs say they're regularly involved, and a whopping 90% of sales and revenue professionals report the same — but bid and proposal professionals don't see these teams' participation at the same magnitude. Additionally, these two groups often underestimate the participation of other organizational functions.

This perception gap isn't just a workplace frustration; it's a business risk. When key contributors misunderstand who owns what, collaboration suffers. And high-quality responses that win business become harder to produce.

This misalignment underscores a core challenge in Strategic Response Management: coordination. With so many departments playing a role, seamless collaboration becomes both essential and difficult to achieve. As response volumes grow and stakes rise, organizations need clearer ownership, stronger cross-functional processes, and a shared understanding of the effort involved in every bid, questionnaire, or assessment.

Who's involved in strategic responses? Depends on who you ask.

	Bid/Proposal/ Capture	C-suite/ Executive leadership	Sales and revenue operations
Bid, proposal and capture mgmt.	95%	75%	70%
Business development	53%	22%	24%
Sales	49%	71%	90%
Executive management	41%	54%	28%
Marketing	32%	24%	38%
Finance	39%	22%	26%
Legal/risk/ compliance	39%	11%	11%
Operations	36%	14%	19%
IT/Technology	32%	13%	11%
Product management	26%	14%	8%
Customer success and support	13%	8%	9%
Human resources	17%	2%	5%

Figure 3

A seat at the table, but not in the budget

Bid and proposal teams are getting the recognition they deserve, though not all are feeling it. The good news is that across the board, they're seen as strategic partners and critical contributors to business success. 75% of practitioners[1] and 81% of executives[2] agree that these teams play a direct and significant role in driving revenue.

But there's a growing perception gap when it comes to resourcing and influence. While 79% of executives say proposal teams are strategic business partners, only 66% of practitioners agree. And when it comes to the support needed to operate effectively, the disconnect widens further. 78% of executives believe proposal teams are well resourced, but just 43% of proposal professionals agree. Similarly, 79% of executives report high satisfaction among these teams, yet only 49% of practitioners say they are highly satisfied.

Both satisfaction and perceived resourcing have dropped from last year. In 2024, 52% of practitioners reported high satisfaction, and 46% felt well resourced.

This downturn is a warning signal. Recognition alone is not enough. As responsibilities grow and pressure intensifies, bid and proposal teams need more than just acknowledgment — they need real investment in tools, headcount, and support. Without it, organizations risk burnout, missed opportunities, and losing the people driving a critical revenue stream forward.

[1] Managers and specialists [2] Director-level and above

Perceptions of bid and proposal teams by seniority

Figure 4

When strategy speeds up and reality lags behind

The decline in satisfaction comes at a critical time because pressure is only increasing. Yet not everyone sees the pressure in the same way. While 83% of frontline practitioners[1] say they are under increasing pressure, only 70% of executives[2] agree. The gap may reflect an understandable distance from the day-to-day intensity of strategic response work, but it also underscores the need for more executive awareness and advocacy as responsibilities grow.

When it comes to AI, the perception divide flips. 72% of executives say the role of bid and proposal professionals needs to evolve due to AI, but just 58% of practitioners agree. This could indicate a disconnect in expectations: organizational Leaders may be anticipating faster adoption of new tools and skill sets, while practitioners are still navigating the practical realities of implementation.

It may also signal a communication gap. If AI strategy is being defined at the top without enough visibility into how the work is changing on the ground, misalignment becomes inevitable. Bridging that gap requires clarity around AI competencies, stronger training programs, and a shared vision for how AI will enhance the value of bid and proposal teams.

[1] Managers and specialists [2] Director-level and above

The view from the top vs. the front lines

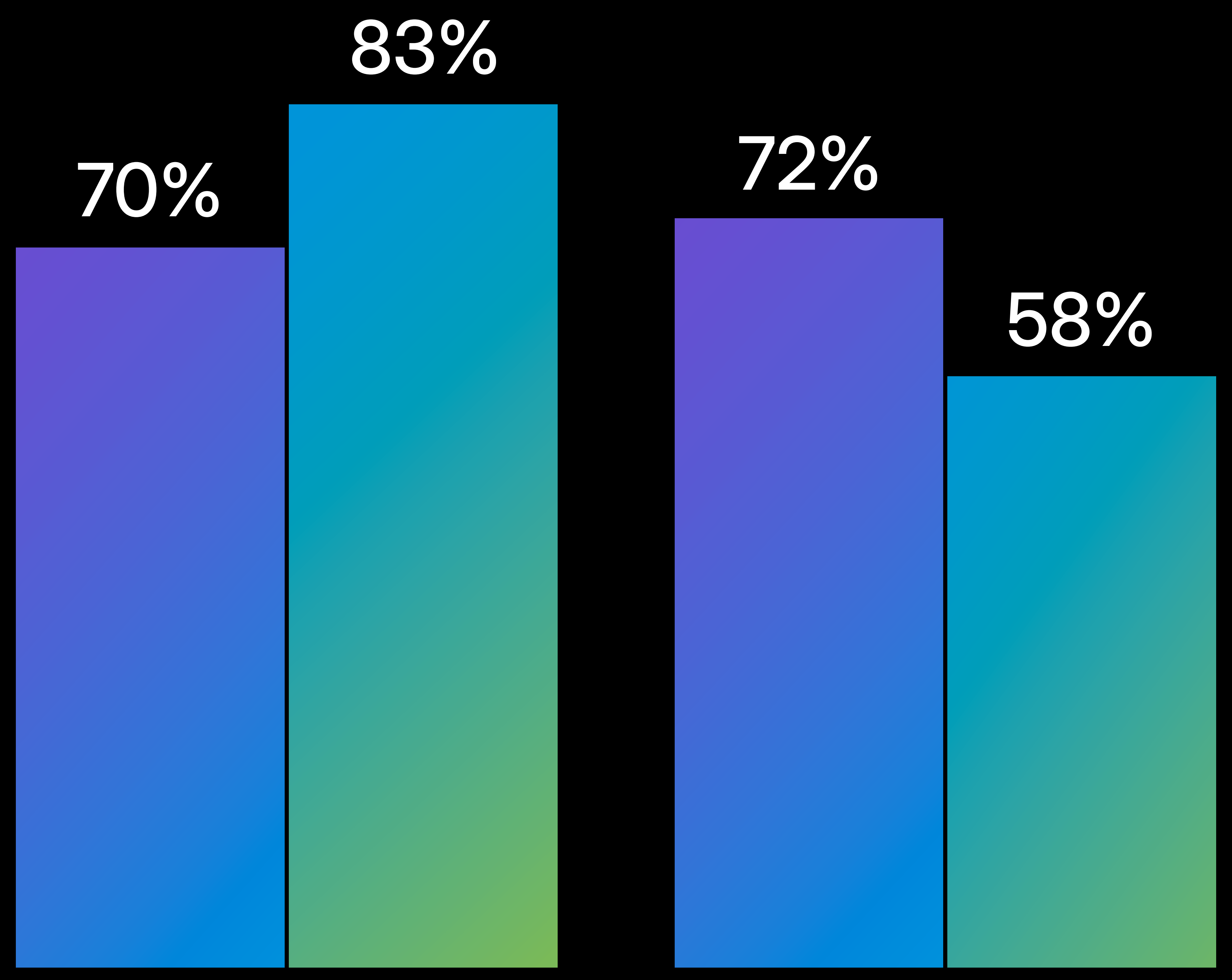


Figure 5

NEXT
Industry spotlight

Industry spotlight

Jon Williams, CPP APMP Fellow

Managing Director

Strategic Proposals

Jon Williams has worked with hundreds of bid and proposal teams around the world as Managing Director of Strategic Proposals, and is recognized as a global thought leader in bid and proposal management. As the pace of change accelerates, he sees a widening gap between those adapting to new expectations — and those being left behind.

Bid and proposal teams are under more pressure than ever. What's changing?

It's not a gentle evolution anymore. The pressure is immense. Everybody wants things faster. Content needs to be more personalized and more relevant. Sales cycles are tightening, and the expectations for what a proposal looks like — how it reads, how tailored it is — have gone up significantly.

But the real problem is that most bidding organizations are just tinkering with AI. They're doing experiments here and there, but they haven't really stepped back and asked, "What's the strategy? What's the goal?" They'll say they've saved X hours with AI. That's great. But have you won more business because of it? That's the bit nobody's answering — and that's where the real prize lies. They're automating without aligning.

What risks do you see for proposal professionals who don't engage with AI?

If you're in bids and proposals and you bury your head in the sand, you're going to suffocate. Harsh? Maybe. But it's true. Your sales colleagues are already using tools like ChatGPT or Copilot. If proposal professionals aren't careful, we're going to get marginalized. Sales will go around us.

That's why I believe proposal teams need to own the knowledge. Own the process. And especially own the quality. What you generate with AI is only as good as the data you give it. If your competitors are using generic prompts on ChatGPT and getting bland, vanilla outputs, and you're curating high-quality reusable content, you're going to win. That's the way forward.

So how should proposal professionals evolve? What does the future of the role look like?

They've got to move fast, but not recklessly. There's an opportunity here to elevate the role — if we get it right. Bid and proposal professionals need to focus less on "writing answers" and more on shaping the overall response: strategy, structure, positioning. Think about where human intelligence adds value. AI can get you a long way, quickly. But unless you've got that human layer – insight, judgment, context — it won't win.

The role is going to become more about helping the business understand what good looks like. That means educating SMEs and sellers on how to use AI responsibly, curating the right inputs, and ensuring every proposal reflects real value and differentiation. In the organizations that get it right, proposal and sales won't drift apart; they'll move closer together, aligned by shared data, strategy, and a commitment to winning smarter.

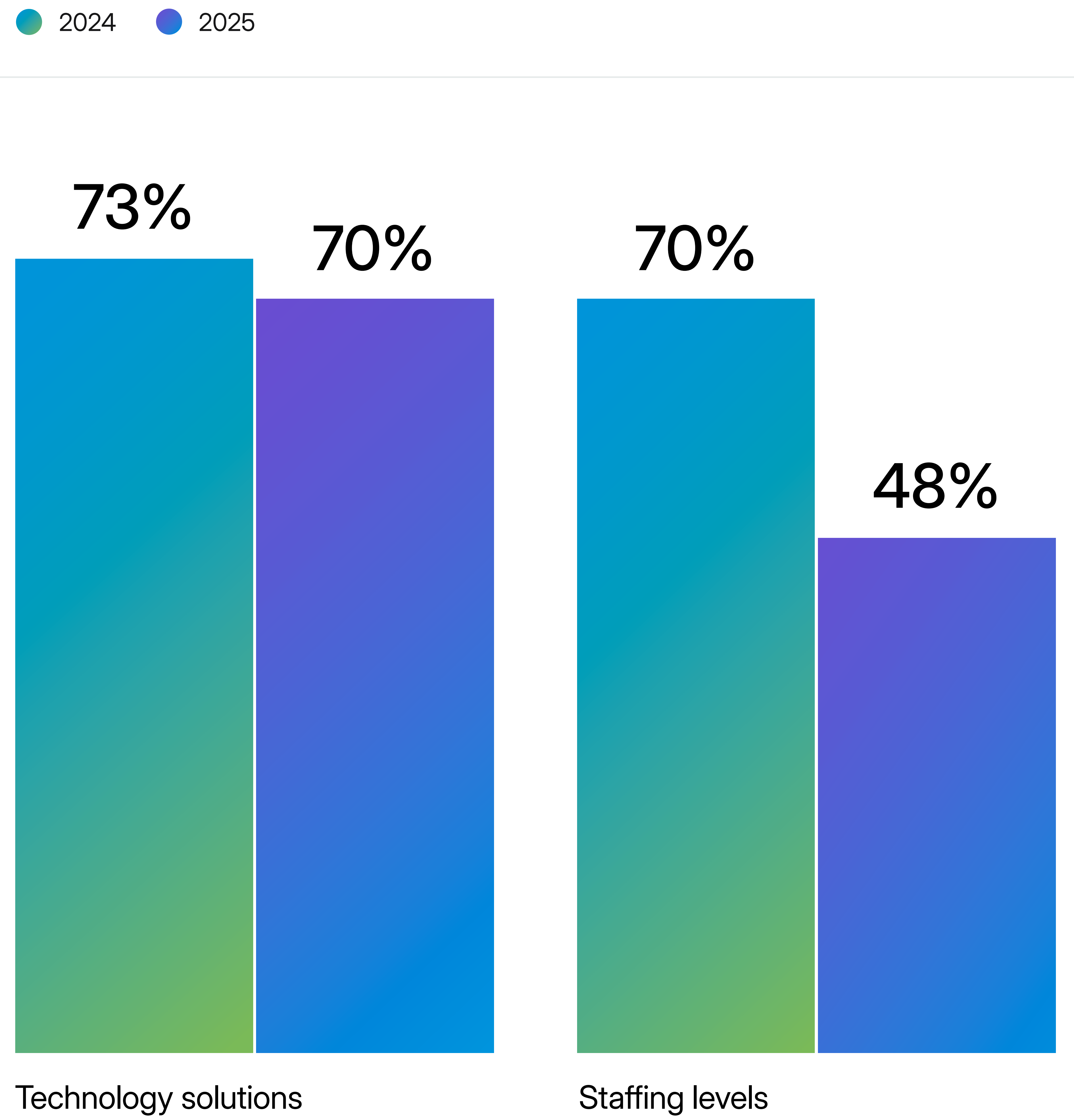
02 Balancing technology with talent

With AI acceleration proceeding at breakneck speed, the instinct to invest in technology is understandable — and widespread. But while technology solutions have remained a consistent area of investment YoY, investment in staffing levels has taken a sharp hit.

Last year, 70% of respondents indicated that they increased bid and proposal staffing in the past year. This year, just 48% said the same.

Change in strategic investments YoY

Figure 6



Balancing technology with talent *(continued)*

However, looking at the data, this impulse to over index on technology is potentially damaging. The organizations seeing higher win rates and that are growing in revenue by more than 25% YoY (Leaders) are not just investing in technology; they're also investing in people.

77% of Leaders report investing in tech, and 69% say they are also investing in staffing. Novices — organizations seeing decreasing or static revenue YoY — are less than half as likely to be growing headcount.

Leading organizations are clearly leveraging AI to accelerate work, not eliminate it. By balancing investment in automation with investment in human resources, they're likely improving not only the quality of bids but also pursuit strategy — translating directly into more revenue won.

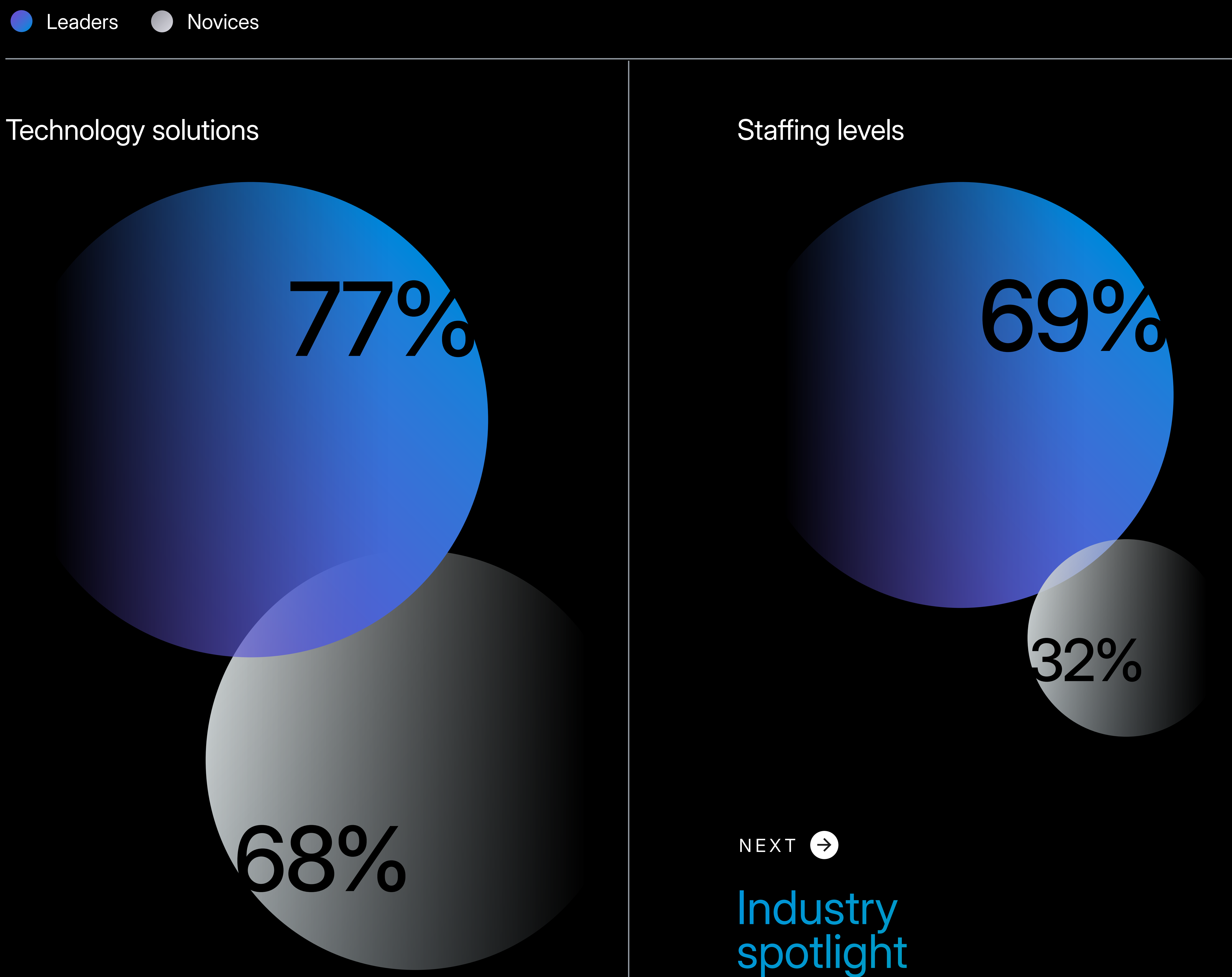
BEST PRACTICE

What Leaders do differently

Balance your investment in technology with an investment in people to scale response quality, improve bid strategy, and drive more revenue.

Increase in investment and support for bid and proposal teams

Figure 7



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Industry spotlight

Industry spotlight

Melinda Bunston, CP CL, APMP

Special Projects Officer

APMP UK

Senior Capture Manager

QINETIQ

Melinda Bunston has spent her career advocating for bid, proposal, and capture professionals — from driving strategic initiatives as CEO of APMP UK to her current role leading special projects. As AI reshapes the way organizations buy and sell, she sees this as a defining moment not just for business, but for the people behind the responses.

How are buyer expectations changing the way bid, proposal, and capture teams work?

The bar is higher, and it's not just about compliance anymore. Buyers expect you to prove you understand their business and show how your solution fits. It's not just, "Have you done this before?" It's, "Do you really get us?"

That shift means proposal professionals need to do more than just respond: they need to communicate their value internally, too. Executives don't always see the complexity behind a proposal or understand the friction teams face. If we want to elevate the profession, we have to advocate for ourselves: share our impact, flag what's broken, and show how we can deliver even more with the right support.

How do you see AI impacting the profession?

AI is reshaping the way we work — and that's a good thing. It's taking repetitive, time-consuming tasks off our plates and giving us more space to think, collaborate, and create. That's the real opportunity: more time to focus on positioning, win strategy, and what the customer actually needs to hear.

It's not just a writing tool. It can help you analyze past bids, generate new ideas, and tighten your messaging. Used well, it doesn't replace judgment. Instead, it makes good judgment easier to apply, faster to deliver, and more consistent across teams. The trick is staying curious and open to experimentation. That's how you learn where it can really make a difference.

What will set bid and proposal professionals apart in an AI-driven future?

The people who will succeed are the ones who know how to collaborate, challenge assumptions, and guide the AI — not just use it. Emotional intelligence, curiosity, and critical thinking — those are the differentiators. And they are uniquely human skills that are rising in importance.

This isn't a threat to the profession. It's a moment of opportunity. AI will replace some work, but not the people who want to grow. If it takes care of the repetition, we get to lean into strategy, storytelling, and influence. Let's not miss the chance to lead that evolution.

02 AI is a growth multiplier

High-growth companies are almost twice as likely as Novices to firmly say that their strategic response teams have high employee satisfaction (Figure 8). These companies aren't using AI to replace people; they're using it to empower them. Rather than automating people out of the process, they're employing AI to elevate the strategic, human elements that actually win deals: critical thinking, storytelling, stakeholder coordination, and nuanced communication.

It's a clear sign that when AI is implemented with intention, it becomes a growth catalyst — not just for business outcomes, but for team capacity, job satisfaction, and professional development. In fact, companies that are actively using AI are significantly more likely to be growing their teams. Among those that increased staffing, more than half of organizations are AI adopters (Figure 9).

As the role of bid and proposal teams continues to evolve, the imperative to upskill becomes clear. Organizations that want to stay competitive will need to invest not only in AI, but also in the people who know how to get the most out of it. The best tech in the world won't win the deal. The team behind it will.

Organizations that completely agree that bid/proposal teams have high employee satisfaction

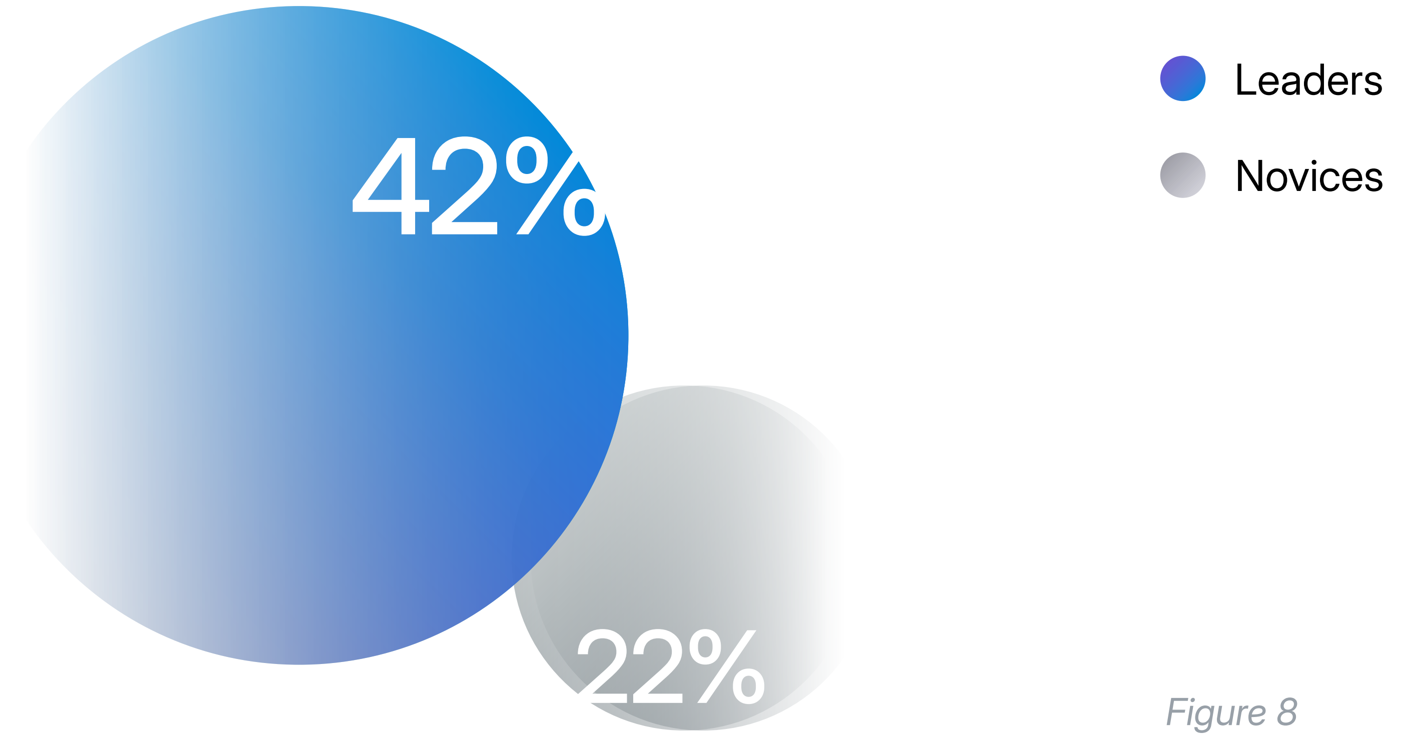


Figure 8

AI adoption at organizations that increased staffing in the last year

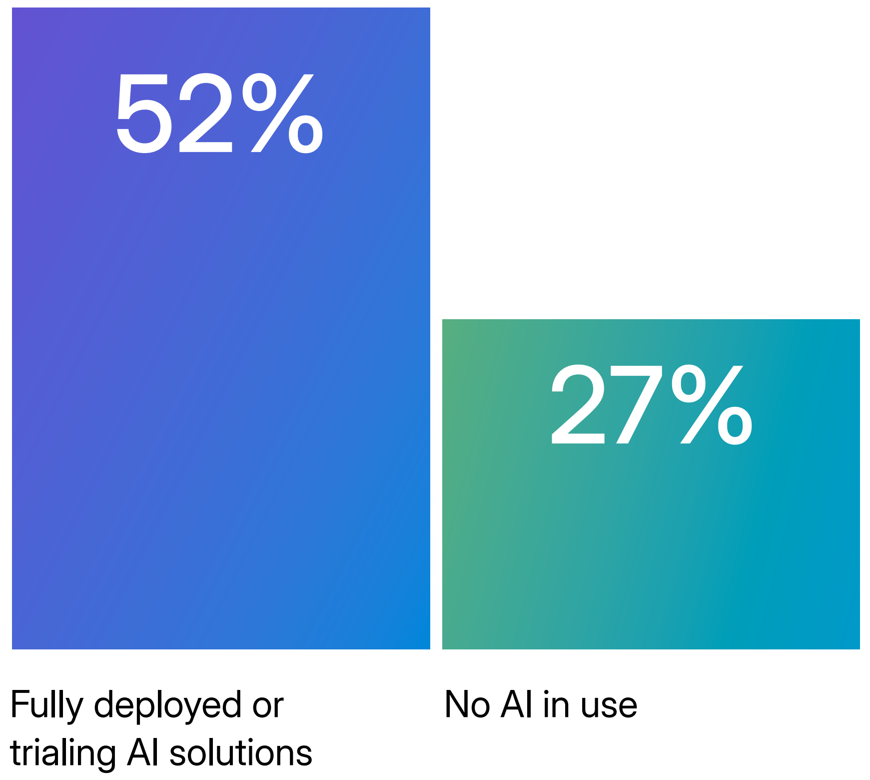


Figure 9

BEST PRACTICE

What Leaders do differently

High-growth organizations are proving that pairing AI with people drives results and keeps teams happier.

NEXT →

Industry spotlight

Industry spotlight

Darrell Woodward, CP APMP

Director, Prosfora Solutions

With over 20 years of experience in bid and proposal management, Darrell Woodward has seen the profession evolve dramatically — and helped shape its future. Eight years ago, he left his in-house role to launch a consulting practice to help bid teams modernize through technology. Today, he's a vocal advocate for a smarter, intentional approach to AI and building more sustainable, scalable response functions.

Where do you see AI delivering the most impact for bid and proposal teams?

I think the biggest, most obvious opportunity is automating the parts of the process that most people don't enjoy. Things like chasing SMEs — those repetitive tasks that don't really add value from the bid professional's perspective. If we can take that away, and let people focus on the thinking and the strategy behind bidding, that's where the real impact is. The role is shifting to be more proactive; we're starting to be more thoughtful about what we chase.

What role does content management play in getting value from AI?

Content management has always been important, but now it's more essential than ever. If you don't have a good content set, you're just setting your AI up to fail. I think a lot of people expect AI to think like a human, and it really doesn't. It won't proactively fix incorrect, outdated, losing content. If anything, it amplifies it.

GenAI is a guessing engine — it's trying to work out the next most likely word based on what came before, your instructions, and the context. If we give it no content or every scrap we've ever written (good or bad, old or new, relevant or not), it's like asking an open-ended question on an exam — you're going to get wild answers. But if we limit it to a narrower set of more trustworthy content, the guesses get more accurate. The way to make AI work well is to make it really clear what the context is.

What separates successful AI adoption from the rest?

I think the biggest success factor is whether teams are thinking about how AI helps people do better work — not just faster work. If we just use that time to bid on more low-quality opportunities, we haven't saved anything. The worst job is working on bids you know you can't win. It's draining. If we use that time to bid better, focus more, put more effort into the things that matter, then we're actually improving the profession.

AI should make the job more enjoyable. It should make your team happier. If you can give people time back and reduce some of the frustration, that's a big win. I think the "hero culture" is fading. We used to brag about how late we stayed up, how many hours we worked — it was a badge of honor. But now, leaders are caring more for their teams, thinking about wellbeing and burnout. And that's a good thing. If AI can help us be more selective, do better work, and avoid burnout, then that's the version of adoption that actually sticks.

WATCH FULL INTERVIEW

03

From information to impact

03

Seeing the big picture from the ground floor

Even as organizations recognize the value of Strategic Response Management (SRM), many still struggle with the mechanics of execution. This year's data show that core operational challenges continue to plague the pursuit process.

The most commonly cited issues in responding to RFPs and other information requests include tight deadlines (45%), difficulty getting input from SMEs (38%), too few resources (33%), and a lack of knowledge centralization (33%).

Top challenges in managing strategic responses*

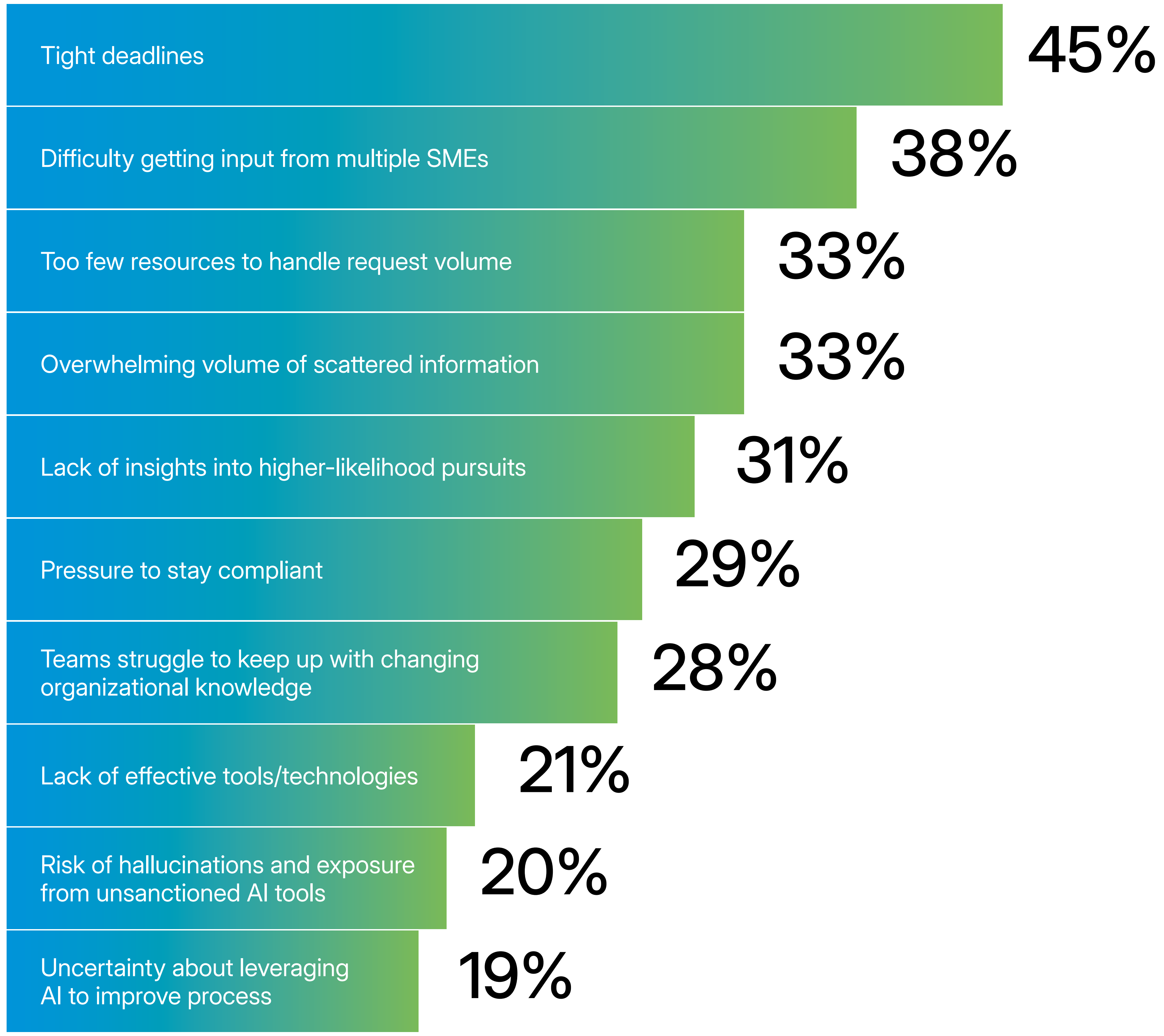


*Figure 10 *Ranked in top 3*

Seeing the big picture from the ground floor

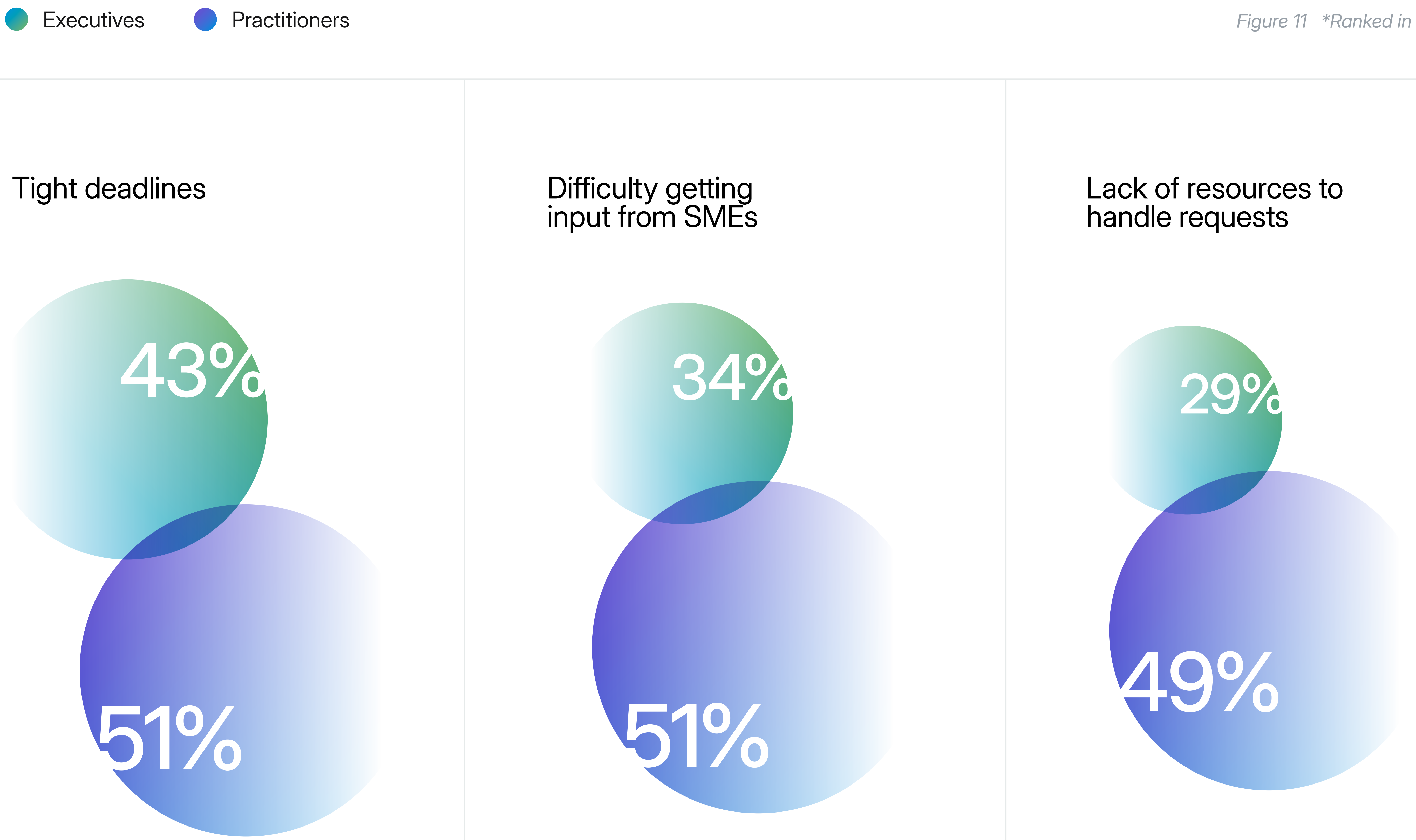
(continued)

Professionals across all levels see similar roadblocks in SRM — chief among them: deadline pressure, getting timely input from SMEs, and lacking sufficient resources to meet growing demand. But while the nature of the challenges is shared, the intensity isn't. Frontline practitioners report these issues at significantly higher rates, suggesting they're feeling the weight of these problems more acutely.

This presents a unique opportunity. For those in more junior roles, this perception gap can be a fast track to career acceleration. By framing day-to-day challenges in terms of their strategic consequences — missed revenue, longer deal cycles, inefficient workflows — emerging leaders can speak the language of the C-suite. Those who can translate execution issues into business outcomes will not only elevate their function, but can elevate their careers.

Strategic response challenges by seniority*

Figure 11 *Ranked in top 3



The missed opportunity in knowledge sharing

Across industries, awareness of best practices in SRM is growing, but consistent execution is still lacking. High-impact strategies like knowledge democratization and clear self-service processes are still underutilized by most organizations. In fact, less than a third report complete adoption in any of these areas.

Adoption of knowledge democratization best practices

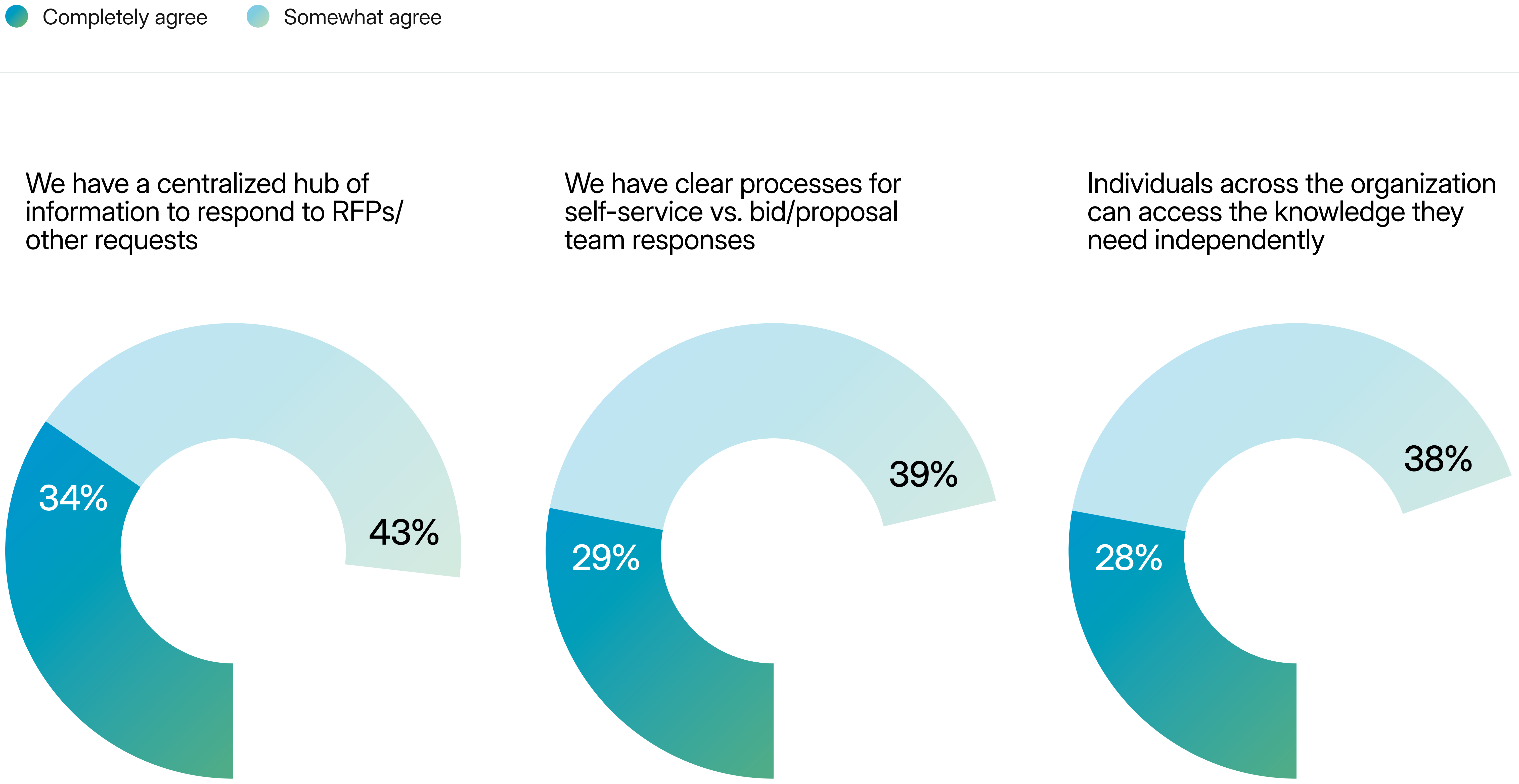


Figure 12

The missed opportunity in knowledge sharing

(continued)

While most organizations clearly agree on the importance of knowledge sharing, few have implemented systems that make institutional knowledge easily accessible to the teams who need it. Too often, content is siloed, outdated, or locked behind manual workflows, forcing strategic response teams to chase answers repeatedly.

That's where Leaders are pulling ahead. According to this year's data, 88% of top-performing organizations say they have at least some level of centralized knowledge management. Among Novices, just 67% say the same.

When field teams can't access accurate, up-to-date information on their own, they often turn to the proposal team for help, clogging workflows with repetitive questions and pulling resources into projects that may fall outside the team's core scope. This results in slower response times, missed revenue, and more friction across the business.

Democratizing knowledge isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a foundational enabler of scale, speed, and consistency. With a well-managed knowledge base and clear content ownership, organizations can empower field teams — and even customers and partners — to self-serve accurate, up-to-date responses. This reduces internal friction, streamlines collaboration, and accelerates deal velocity across the entire revenue engine. Instead of chasing answers, teams can focus on closing deals, driving strategy, and moving the business forward.

BEST PRACTICE

What Leaders do differently

High-growth organizations centralize institutional knowledge in accessible, well-managed hubs to enable faster responses, reduce internal bottlenecks, and empower teams to self-serve with confidence.

Organizations that say they have a centralized knowledge hub

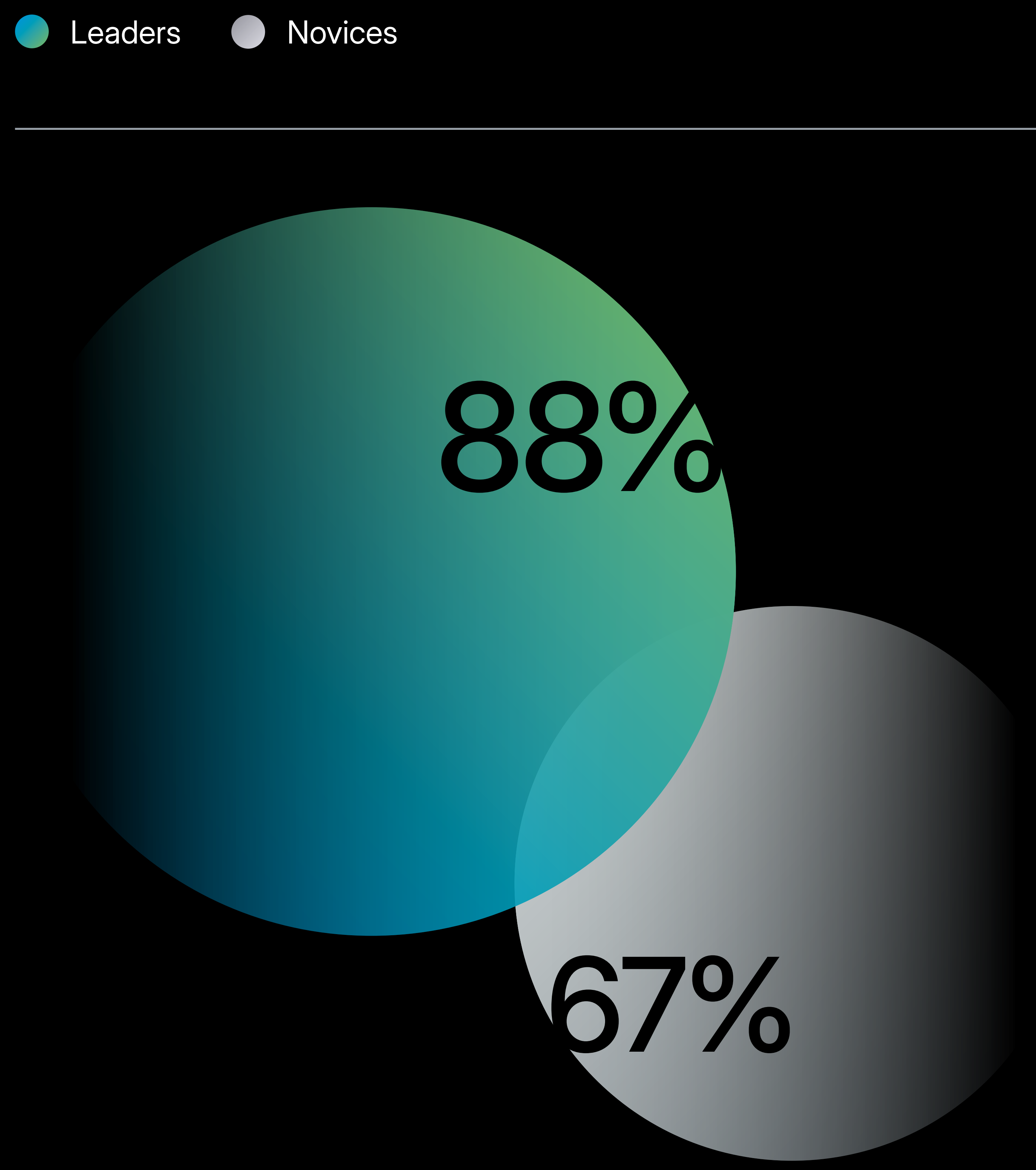


Figure 13

NEXT
Industry spotlight

Industry spotlight

Alexis Hourselt

Interim Director, Proposal Center of Excellence

Microsoft

At Microsoft, Strategic Response Management is undergoing a transformation. Alexis Hourselt, Interim Director of the Proposal Center of Excellence (PCoE), has helped steer the team through rapid change — building one of the world's largest content libraries, introducing new roles and operating models, and embracing AI to accelerate efficiency without compromising quality.

You've made big investments in knowledge democratization at Microsoft. What's worked?

At PCoE, we built the Proposal Resource Library to serve the entire company. Before that, content was distributed across multiple internal resources. If you didn't already know where something was — or who owned it, or what it was called — it was difficult to find. People were searching for answers to the same questions over and over again because they just didn't know where to find the right content.

When PCoE was established, we hired dedicated knowledge managers to maintain the library, which now houses more than 20,000 proposal resources. They optimize content, maintain tagging and metadata, and make sure the right people are responsible for keeping it current. Our team dedicates a lot of time to partnering with SMEs and proactively reviewing product updates to position our library as a single source of truth. That's how you build trust.

Now, everyone within Microsoft can access the library (housed in Responsive) with SSO. People go in, use AI-powered search, and find what they need. The feedback has been incredible — and we're saving an average of 30 minutes per question. That's huge. It means PCoE and our global user base can focus on strategic proposal work and customer engagement instead of searching for proposal content. It's enabled autonomy, it's enabled scale, and it's taken a lot of pressure off the team.

How have you approached AI adoption inside the team?

AI is accelerating at an unprecedented pace, and that can feel overwhelming to even the most innovative proposal teams. So, we gamified the learning experience. Last summer, we created the Copilot Challenge. We encouraged everyone to experiment with real use cases — things like developing win themes, researching a customer, or responding to a security questionnaire. The idea was: just try it. Then come back and tell us what worked, what didn't, or what surprised you.

We found that when people used it, they got excited. They started thinking, "How else can I use this?" We created a library of AI proposal techniques so that we could share knowledge across the team and turned some of those best practices into a resource for our sales teams.

We also created an AI Champions virtual team of early adopters who test the latest technology and help shape the future of AI within PCoE and beyond. That's been a wonderful way to learn and generate excitement about the technology.

How are you measuring the impact of AI?

A lot of the KPIs we discuss in the early adoption phase are around efficiency and time savings, but ultimately, we try to attach impact to everything we do. AI will enable proposal teams to work more efficiently, and the goal is for that to translate to supporting more deals and dedicating more time to strategic proposal activities, thereby generating more revenue.

How is the role of proposal professionals changing?

AI is here to stay, and the most successful proposal professionals will embrace that. People will need to feel just as comfortable prompting an AI as they are writing content. They'll know how to guide the technology as they use it to create efficiencies in their everyday proposal management work.

People who understand how to use AI responsibly and effectively — they're the future leaders of this profession.

See how Microsoft saved $17M while supporting 18K+ sellers.

READ THE FULL STORY

The habits of high-performing teams

While most organizations are still struggling to centralize and share institutional knowledge, high-performing companies are leading the way in building clear, structured systems that enable smarter, more scalable collaboration. Organizations seeing YoY revenue growth (Leaders) are far more likely to have self-service processes in place with up-to-date content that's accessible across teams. This unlocks faster response times, empowers field teams to work independently, and frees bid and proposal teams to focus on strategy and storytelling — not administrative triage.

But Leaders' advantage doesn't stop with process. These high-growth organizations are also far more likely to be using data to guide decisions at every stage of the pursuit cycle. They're tracking performance metrics, identifying which response types yield the greatest returns, and using those insights to prioritize effort and optimize resource allocation. This data-informed approach allows them to say no to low-impact projects and double down where they can win, maximizing ROI across every pursuit.

Some are even going a step further, feeding pursuit data back into go-to-market and product strategies. Win/loss insights are being used to fine-tune messaging, uncover content gaps, and inform solution development. It's a winning cycle: data leads to better decisions, which lead to better results — and more data to build on.

BEST PRACTICE

What Leaders do differently

Pair insight with process. Democratize knowledge to enable self-service, use data to prioritize the right opportunities, define clear response ownership, and measure impact to scale what works.

Organizations employing data-driven best practices

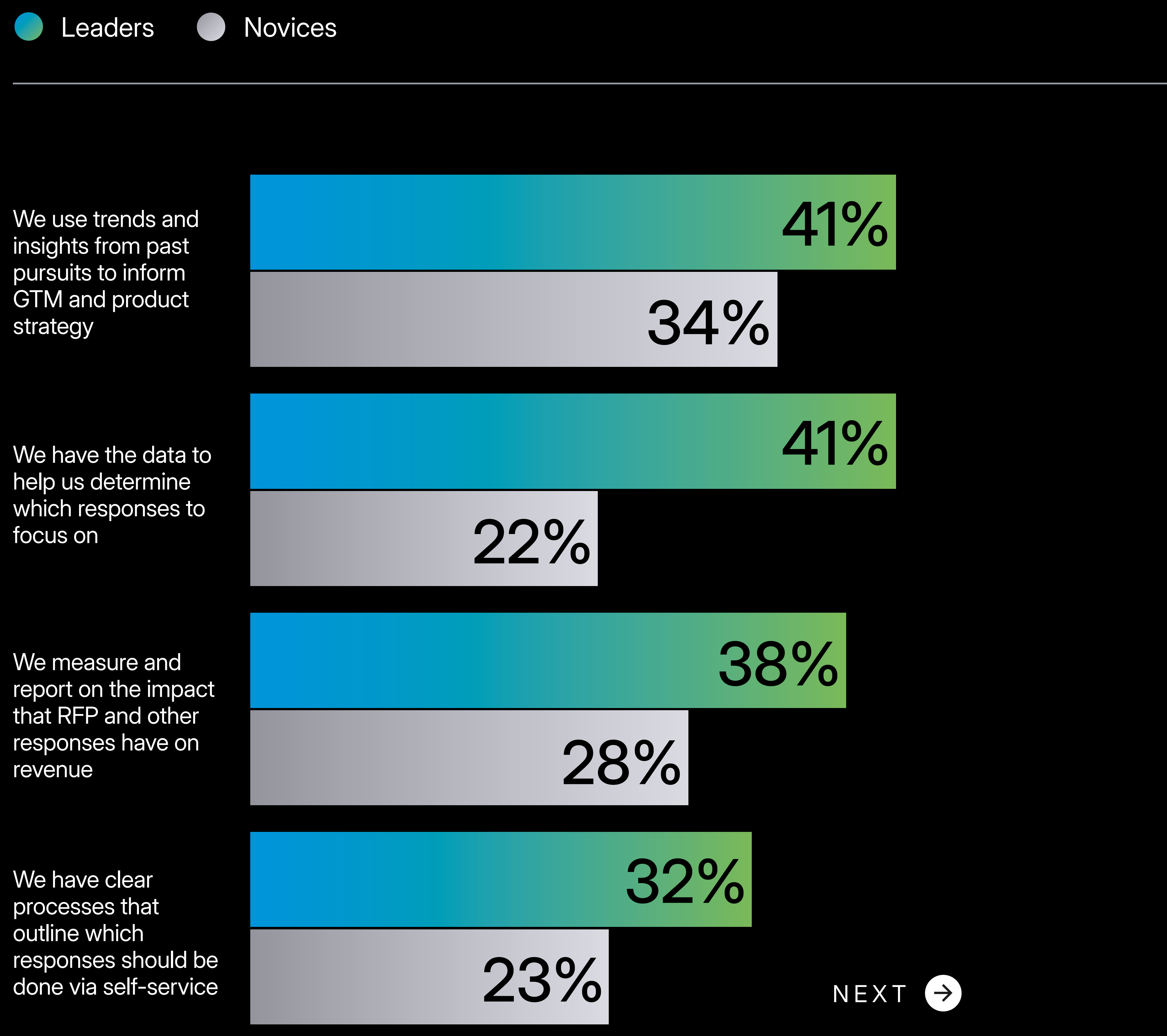


Figure 14

NEXT
Industry spotlight

Industry spotlight

Kristen Carloni, CFA

Head of Aladdin Business
Proposals and Sales Optimization

BlackRock

Kristen Carloni spent over a decade in proposals at BlackRock before moving into a broader revenue operations role. Her journey shows what's possible when proposal professionals use data to tell their story, build trust across functions, and lead with strategic intent.

How has AI-driven Strategic Response Management helped elevate the proposal function at BlackRock?

We touch almost every corner of the business and contribute significantly to the bottom line. Between RFPs for new opportunities and DDQs to retain current clients, the scale is enormous. Through Responsive (our SRM platform), we were able to quantify that 80% of our time goes to current client work — and that insight changed the conversation.

It helped us reframe how we think about value. We're not a cost center; we're a team driving revenue protection at scale. That realization led to a bigger conversation with our COO about how AI could help. We originally positioned AI as something that could "pay for itself in 3 months" based on efficiency alone. But when we showed how it could help us so that we could dramatically impact more revenue, that's what unlocked real momentum.

Defending business is harder to quantify, so it still takes effort to tell that story effectively. It's a struggle many of us share, and one that deserves more attention across the industry.

What advice do you have for proposal professionals who want to lead with greater influence?

Start with the data. We started tracking things like how many proposals we could complete per person and how often we got the deal to the next stage. When we had that, we could really show how our process improvements resulted in time savings and, as a result, how we could grow our contribution to the business. And that changed how we were viewed. Leveraging technology, we could take on an entirely new business line, doubling our output — and doing that successfully helped me move into a broader role. But you can't just say, "We're doing a lot of work." You have to tie it to revenue to show the impact.

And we're in a really cool spot. We touch the client, we touch the sales team, we touch compliance, we touch legal. I can actively contribute to strategic conversations no matter who I'm talking to — just because of how connected we are to every part of the business. That gives us a big opportunity to add value.

What have you learned about driving change and adoption with AI?

Change always comes with resistance. The key is finding your champions. Start small, show the data, and bring your allies in to help tell the story. I've learned that people resist for different reasons: some don't see the value, others just aren't comfortable with the tools. So we go back with real results: time saved, quality maintained, success stories. Over time, even the skeptics come around.

How do you think about career growth in the proposal profession?

I've spent 12 years in the proposal world, and I still love it. But I started to realize that I could add more value if I stepped out a little bit. I didn't come up as a salesperson, and I didn't come up through the strategy team, but I was connected to everything. I was bringing people together, building trust, and using data to make the case for change.

I credit my ability to collect and analyze data trends — and then act on them — as key to my career journey. It got me noticed, and now I get to shape how we operate across the global sales organization. So if you're in proposals and thinking about what's next, don't be afraid to think big. You have the experience; you just have to tell the story in a way the business understands and appreciates.

04

All in on AI

AI is already at work

04

The future of Strategic Response Management (SRM) is taking shape — and AI is at the center of it, driving smarter, faster, and more connected ways to work. The majority of organizations surveyed are somewhere on the AI journey: more than half are using or testing AI to support critical tasks, with another third of organizations considering adoption this year across SRM workflows.

The most common active AI use cases include:

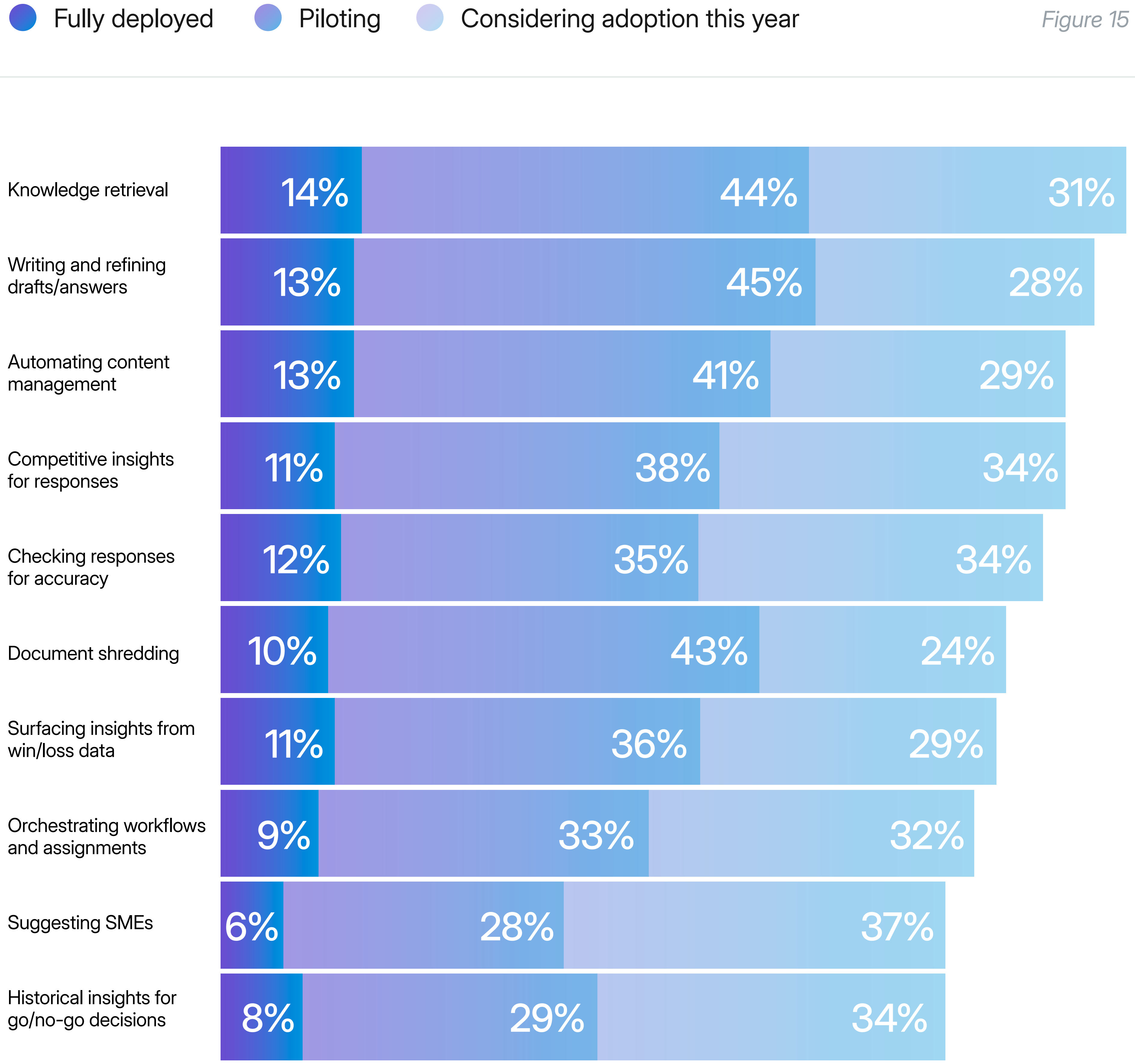
- Retrieving relevant knowledge quickly and accurately
- Document shredding
- Drafting and refining responses at scale
- Tagging, organizing, and cleaning up content libraries

For teams buried under tight deadlines and rising buyer expectations, these applications of AI are easing pressure and reclaiming time. They eliminate repetitive or mundane work, improve consistency, and accelerate response time. Just as important, AI is not being confined to one team or function. It's showing up across the entire SRM ecosystem — used by bid and proposal teams, sales, SMEs, and operations alike.

That said, full deployment is still relatively rare. While many organizations are experimenting or partially rolled out, only a small minority have taken AI all the way across SRM. This gap suggests that while interest and activity are high, full-scale transformation takes time, requiring thoughtful integration, change management, and resourcing to get it right.

AI use cases across Strategic Response Management (SRM)

Figure 15



Turning AI into a strategic advantage

While many organizations are using AI to improve execution, the highest-performing teams are going further, applying AI not just to do the work, but to guide the work.

The most striking differences between high-performing organizations and Novices appear in more strategic applications of AI. Leaders are more than twice as likely as Novices to use AI for orchestrating workflows and assignments (41% vs 17%) and surfacing insights from win/loss data (37% vs. 18%) — and significantly more likely to use it for making go/no-go decisions (37% vs. 26%). These use cases speak to a shift from task automation to decision intelligence, where AI informs strategy and resource allocation, not just execution.

While most organizations are still focused on tactical AI deployment, data from this study show that Leaders are unlocking value through more strategic and holistic integration across SRM. For these high-growth organizations, it's not just about moving faster; it's about working smarter, prioritizing better, and driving more meaningful business outcomes.

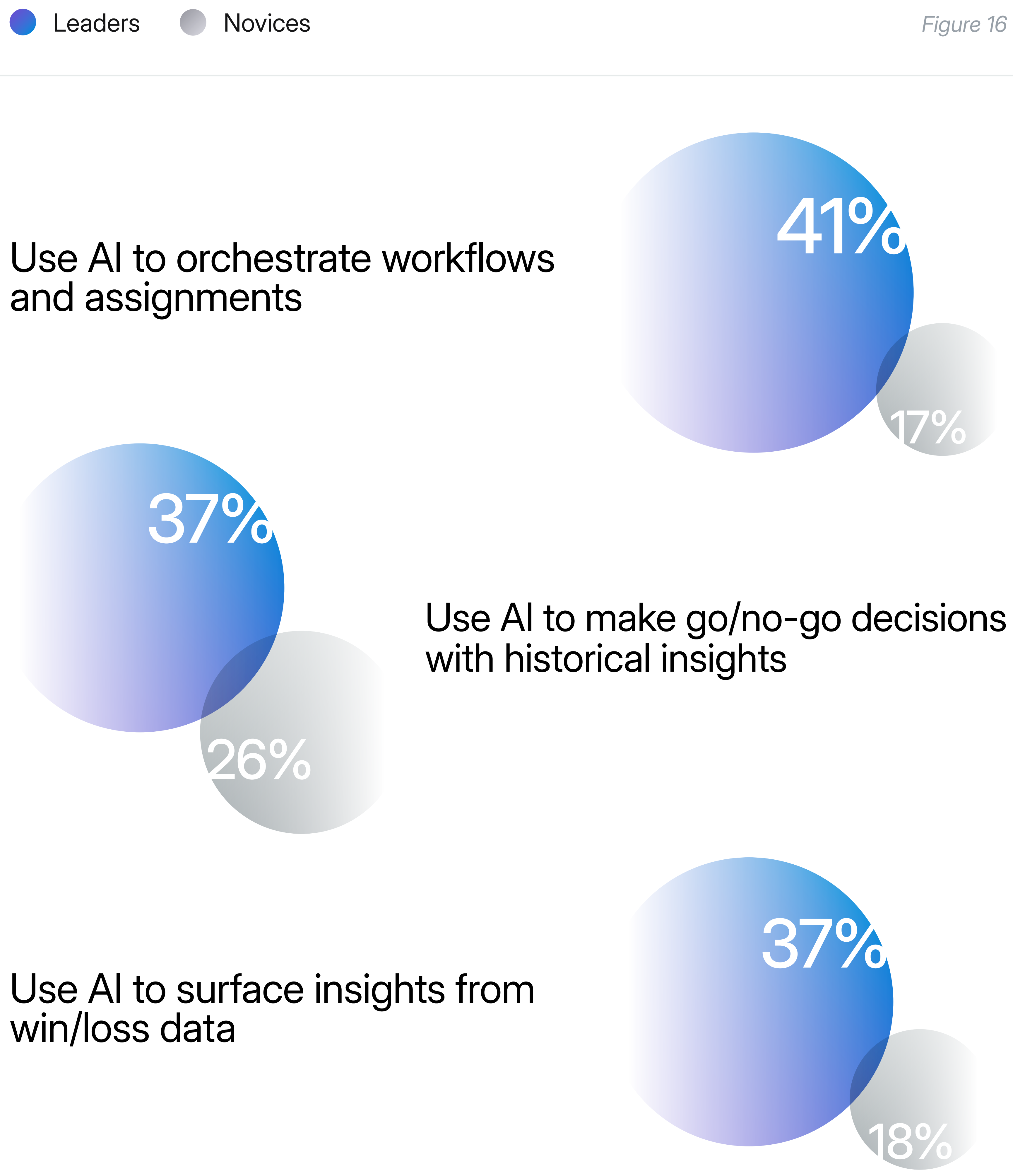
BEST PRACTICE

What Leaders do differently

Go beyond automation and use AI to inform decisions. Leaders deploy AI not just to speed up tasks, but to drive smarter prioritization, resource allocation, and strategy.

Moving from automation to intelligence

Figure 16



As AI adoption accelerates, gaps widen

AI is no longer an emerging trend — it's becoming a cornerstone of modern revenue strategy. Across industries, organizations are steadily moving from curiosity to commitment, especially in commercial functions. According to this year's data, 62% of organizations are either piloting or have fully implemented AI solutions to support revenue-generating activities. Another 28% are considering adoption.

62% **Either piloting or have fully developed AI solutions to support revenue-generating activities**

28% **Considering adopting AI solutions in the next year**

Some are moving faster than others. Among large enterprises ($501M+ in annual revenue), nearly a third (32%) report full AI deployment. Technology companies are also leaders in the AI charge, with 29% reporting full adoption for revenue activities, compared to only 20% of all companies, on average.

When it comes to using AI in Strategic Response Management (SRM) — specifically RFPs and other high-stakes information requests — adoption is also gaining momentum. Over half (54%) of organizations are either trialing or have fully deployed AI within these workflows. Adoption climbs even higher in certain segments:

- 72% of large enterprises
- 67% among organizations with a high volume of RFPs (10+ a month)
- 64% of technology companies

There's a widening gap emerging. While AI is becoming a standard tool set for high-volume, mature, and tech-forward teams, smaller businesses are falling behind. Nearly a third of SMBs say they're not using AI and don't plan to adopt it within the next year — a position that will inevitably create competitive disadvantages as AI becomes table stakes.

Critically, early adopters are already reaping rewards. Data from this report reveal that Leaders are significantly outpacing Novices when it comes to AI deployment. These leading organizations are more than 3x more likely to have fully deployed AI solutions as part of revenue-generating activity, and a whopping 6x more likely to have fully deployed AI agents as part of their go-to-market functions.

The term "AI agents" may be new to some, but this latest technological advancement is already reshaping SRM. We'll explore AI agents next.

BEST PRACTICE

What Leaders do differently

Deploy AI early and holistically. Organizations with outsized revenue growth are 6x more likely to have fully deployed AI agents and 3x more likely to embed AI across revenue-generating functions.

AI deployment is the new growth divide

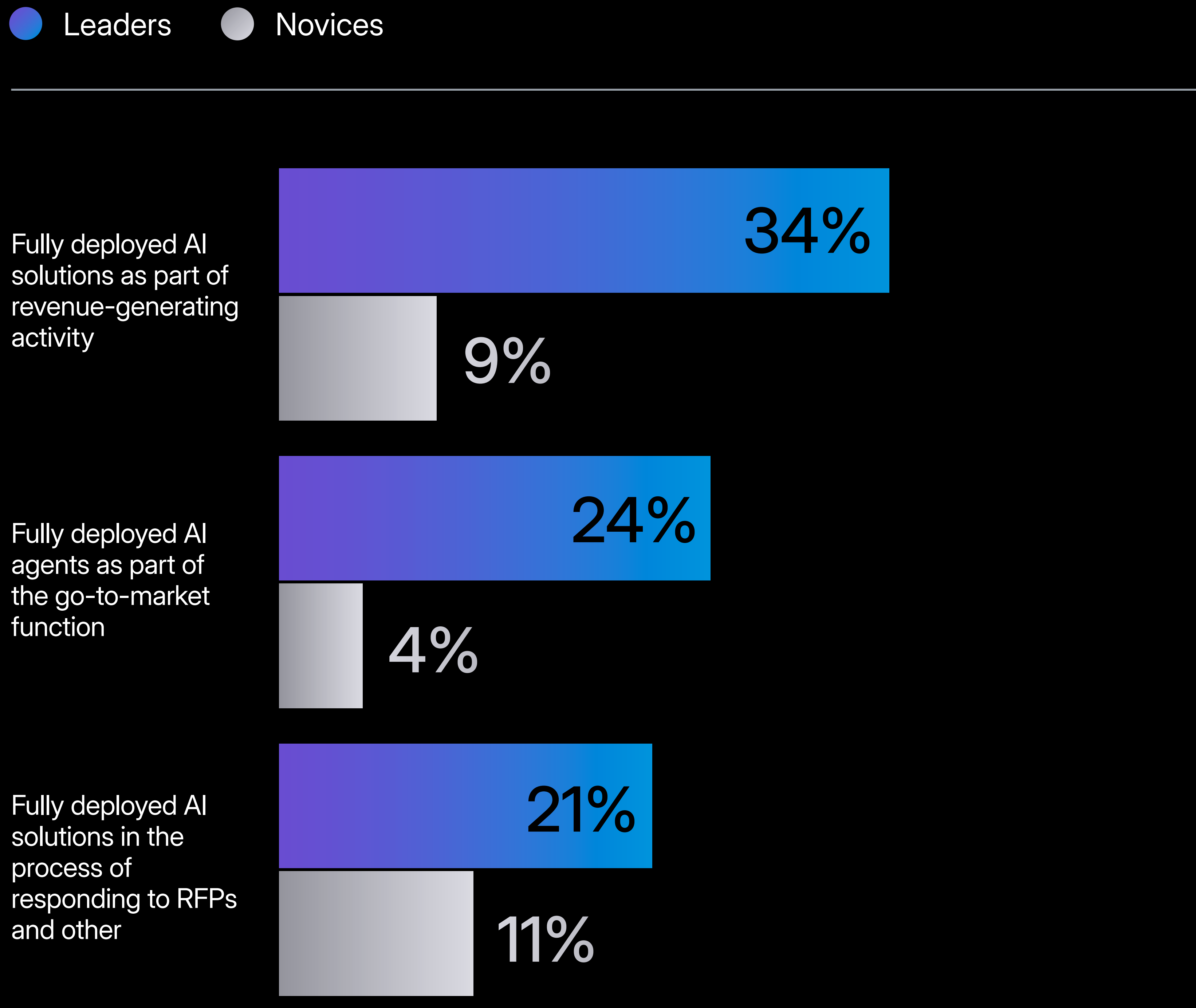


Figure 17

NEXT
Industry Spotlight

Industry spotlight

Michael Mackey

Proposal Quality Analyst/Content Manager/Proposal Writer

aetna

Michael Mackey didn't wait for AI to disrupt his work; he made it his mission to shape how it would evolve his work. As AI Lead on Aetna's Proposal Quality Team, Michael has spent the last two years driving a careful, cross-functional approach to integrating AI into the organization's strategic response workflows.

What sparked your journey into AI?

I was at APMP's Bid & Proposal Conference in Orlando about two years ago, and GenAI was just starting to make waves in our profession. The moment I saw it, I knew it was going to change everything. I came back and told my leadership, "We need to get ahead of this." They were incredibly supportive. That started a two-year journey of investigating solutions, building a strategy, and getting our team ready.

What's been your approach to change management?

It's all about inclusion. From the start, we've made sure the team is part of the journey. Every meeting, every training, we send out a simple survey: How do you feel about using AI? Excited? Cautiously optimistic? Neutral? Terrified? When we started, a lot of people were terrified. Now, most are excited.

We've done a lot to build that comfort. We ran prompt-writing courses, had fun contests, and gave people time to experiment. We even set up a feedback loop — a "technology ticketing system" where anyone can share challenges or wins. The team owns the process. That's how you get real engagement.

How have you managed expectations with leadership?

Managing expectations is huge. A lot of people think GenAI just works out of the box. It doesn't. So I sat down with my leadership team and we defined specific use cases we could focus on first. Things like getting a first draft faster, helping writers prep for SME interviews, and improving editing.

We made it clear: we're not expanding into new use cases until we perfect these. That helped us get quick wins and keep leadership engaged without overpromising. It's about communication: setting boundaries, but also showing results. We have also implemented guardrails as a company for how we use AI technologies and we've worked with our governance team to ensure all of our uses are within those guardrails.

What advice do you have for others?

Start small and focus on one or two things that AI can help you with right now. You don't have to do it all at once. Even just using AI to help with editing or prepping for an SME call can save time. And don't feel like you need a huge budget. There are tools out there you can test and experiment with. The key is to stay curious and keep learning.

Be intentional. AI is not a magic button. It's a partnership. You still need the human in the loop. You still need strategy, judgment, and creativity. But if you use AI in the right way, it gives you back time to do the work that really matters — and that's where the impact is.

04

What are AI agents?

The latest wave of innovation is centered on AI agents: artificial intelligence systems that understand their goals, plan their actions, and autonomously perform multi-step tasks in collaboration with your team. These aren't just passive tools; they're intelligent technological collaborators that can independently handle nuanced, content-rich work.

How AI agents work together

Rather than functioning in isolation, agents can operate together, passing context between one another and coordinating across workflows.

- **Intake agent**
  Reviews incoming information requests, extracts relevant requirements, and routes them to the right team or system for next steps
- **Pursuit qualification agent**
  Assesses whether an RFP or tender aligns with strategic goals, drawing on historical win/loss data, deal size, and resource availability to make go/no-go recommendations
- **Answering agent**
  Retrieves and drafts responses based on curated content
- **Content cleanup agent**
  Ensures that the knowledge base behind those answers stays accurate and usable
- **Workflow orchestration agent**
  Routes the drafted response to the right SME for review or approval
- **Submission agent**
  Ensures the final response is formatted, packaged, and delivered on time

Together, they create a dynamic network of support — lightening the load across teams, eliminating busywork, and accelerating the pursuit cycle at scale.

Human + AI collaboration: The real advantage

The power of this system lies in operational transformation. By offloading the repetitive and mechanical, AI agents allow strategic response professionals, sales teams, and SMEs to focus where they add the most value: strategy, storytelling, and nurturing relationships. The result is better responses, faster turnarounds, and stronger alignment across the business.

"We're entering a new phase of AI — moving from simple task automation to intelligent agents that can understand context, orchestrate workflows, and drive business outcomes. These agents don't just execute; they collaborate and work in collaboration with your team. When embedded across Strategic Response Management, AI agents create real, scalable impact."

Kamal Ahluwalia
CEO, Resilinc & AI Expert

The rise of AI agents and the cost of falling behind

While still in the early stages of adoption, AI agents are gaining traction — and reshaping how revenue teams think about roles, responsibilities, and skill sets. When asked which roles are most likely to be augmented by AI agents, respondents put Strategic Response Management (SRM) functions at the top of the list.

Roles that hold the most promise for significant enhancement

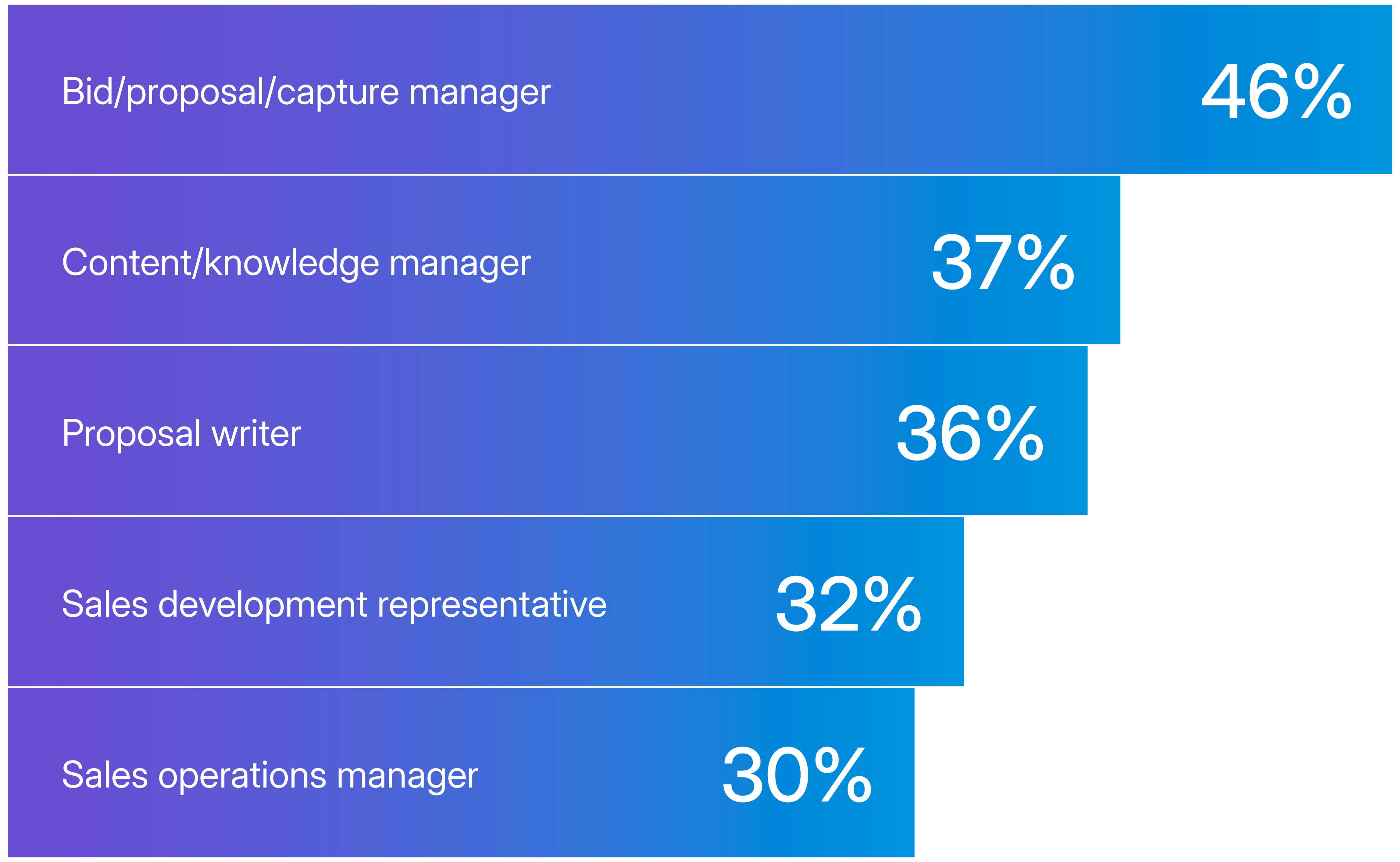


Figure 18

These aren't just the roles AI will touch — they're the roles AI is most likely to improve. From handling repetitive tasks to surfacing better insights and enabling faster decisions, AI agents have the potential to reduce burnout, increase impact, and elevate how this work gets done. At the same time, these changes will usher in new responsibilities and skill sets, from prompting and orchestration to content governance and strategic oversight.

The rise of AI agents and the cost of falling behind

(continued)

And the shift is already underway. 35% of organizations are either piloting or have fully deployed AI agents (Figure 19). Unsurprisingly, large enterprises ($501M+ in annual revenue) are leading the charge: 50% of these companies are already exploring or actively deploying AI agents. Tech companies (44%) and organizations managing 10+ RFPs per month (46%) are also out in front. Even more are preparing to follow suit. Another 40% of large enterprises and 56% of mid-sized businesses ($51M-$500M) say they are actively considering AI agent adoption.

But a notable segment of the market is standing still. More than a tenth of organizations say they are not using AI agents and don't plan to start in the next year. That number rises sharply in smaller businesses: 20% of companies under $50M in revenue and 36% of companies with fewer than 50 employees fall into this "not considering" bucket. Even amongst mid-market organizations, 17-20% of respondents say they're sitting out for now.

In many cases, this may come down to perceived cost, bandwidth constraints, or unclear ROI. But with agentic technology becoming more accessible and embedded in modern workflows, inaction could turn into competitive risk. As the technology matures, the organizations that are early to deploy AI agents and integrate them into SRM workflows are likely to see efficiency gains, quality improvements, and meaningful differentiation in how they vie for opportunities. For organizations waiting on the sidelines, the cost of delay may soon outweigh the cost of entry.

The landscape of agentic AI deployment

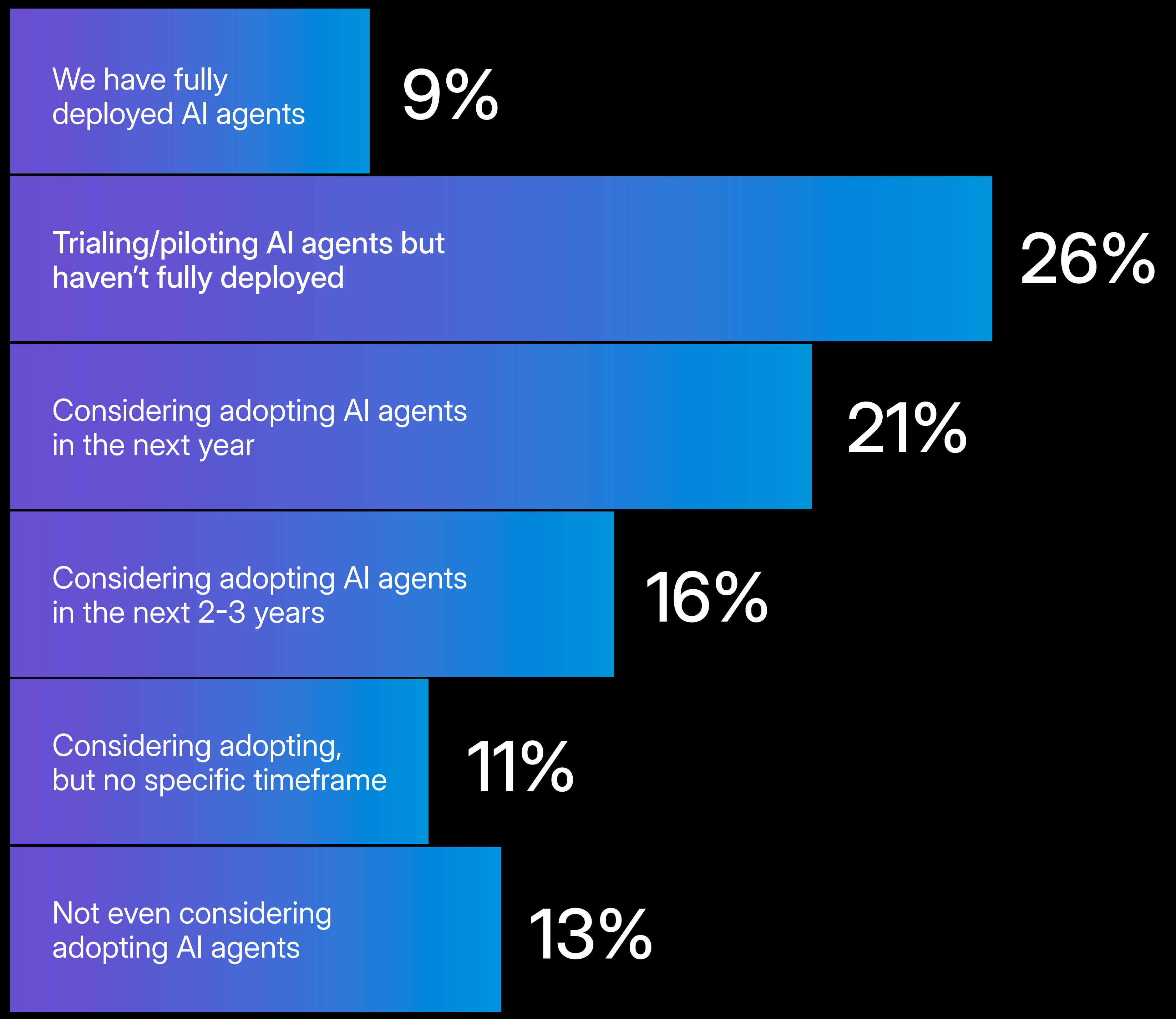


Figure 19

NEXT

Industry spotlight

Industry spotlight

Wolfgang Zimmerman
Director Proposal Management & Operations for Enterprise Customers

Daniel Tscharner
Head of Bid Management

swisscom

At Swisscom, bid management is undergoing a transformation — not just in response to rising volume and regulatory pressures, but as part of a broader shift toward smarter, AI-powered operations. Led by Wolfgang Zimmermann, Director of Proposal Management and Operations, and his manager, Daniel Tscharner, Head of Bid Management, Swisscom's SRM function is redefining how complex, compliance-critical proposals are delivered. The team is rethinking how knowledge is captured, how technology is deployed, and how roles evolve to meet a new standard of speed, accuracy, and quality.

How are operational pressures shifting in your business?

Daniel: We have a rising number of RFPs and tenders, but not more people. This means we must qualify harder. The decision to pursue an RFP costs resources. We pull people out of projects, we pull people away from customer work. If it's the wrong decision, that's expensive. So we use bid/no-bid decisions, we have nomination processes of bid staff, and we define a bid budget upfront. You have to. If we don't focus on the right opportunities, we burn our people out.

Wolfgang: The other change is in the nature of the RFPs and tenders. They're becoming more formal, more regulated — especially in the public sector. Compliance is everything. I'd say 20 to 30% of our time used to go into legal or regulatory topics. Now, it's closer to 50%. One mistake — one missing checkbox — can disqualify you. And at the same time, the deal size is often the same. So the workload is rising, but the revenue impact per bid isn't. That's why smarter tools are so important.

What's your approach to knowledge management and content reuse?

Wolfgang: We're moving away from the template approach. We're creating a library of text blocks with clear ownership. We've defined content owners, and we've started to build a content community inside Swisscom. It's a mindset shift, for sure. It's not just about saving time — it's about trust. If someone from legal knows they own a block, they'll keep it up to date. That makes it reusable. That makes it safe.

Daniel: A big part of this is culture. People still think: if I keep the knowledge in my head, I'm valuable. We have to change that. We need to write things down. That's a leadership job. I say to my experts: think about who's going to do your job in five years. We're going to lose a lot of know-how in the next 10 years to retirement. If we don't make that knowledge usable and accessible, we lose it.

Wolfgang: This is also where AI can help. We want to get to a point where people can ask questions in natural language and get real answers — without needing to know where the content lives or who wrote it. Especially for junior team members, that's a huge advantage. It's not about search. It's about answers.

CONTINUED

Industry spotlight

Wolfgang Zimmerman
Director Proposal Management & Operations for Enterprise Customers

Daniel Tscharner
Head of Bid Management

swisscom

What role will AI agents play in the future of strategic response?

Wolfgang: Today, a bid manager often needs to cover all the ground where subject matter experts excel — or don't. We're the glue holding all the knowledge together, compensating for gaps and trying to pull the right elements into each bid. But I believe that's changing. With AI and the right supporting tools, we can shift from patching together pieces to orchestrating cohesive, higher-quality responses.

That's going to demand new skills. Today, for example, you need to be a Word expert because last-minute formatting errors can derail a submission. But in the future, it won't be about Word — it'll be about prompting. How do you structure a prompt? How do you interpret the AI's answer? The learning curve now is about how to use AI to achieve the high-quality results we're used to, but with more efficiency and less effort.

Daniel: I see the bid manager role evolving into a facilitator, not just of projects, but of the AI environment itself. In the near future, bid managers will prompt effectively — maybe even build a GPT tailored to a specific customer or opportunity. It's like setting up a working environment: you load in the documents, define context, and say, "Okay, this is the AI agent we're going to work with for this bid."

But it won't just be one agent. It will be a system — an ecosystem — of agents working together. You might have a legal agent, a pricing agent, a compliance agent, even a customer tone agent. Each one will bring its own perspective and specialization, and the bid manager will be responsible for orchestrating how they collaborate.

That orchestration is critical. If the legal agent dominates, for example, you might end up with a response that's too rigid and lose the deal. The bid manager's job will be to balance the inputs, interpret the outputs, and guide the agents to deliver something that wins. It's a very different role — but one that's incredibly exciting.

04

What to look for in AI agents

As adoption of AI accelerates, organizations are becoming more sophisticated in how they evaluate solutions. Hype may have driven early experimentation, but sustainable adoption hinges on trust, usability, and business value.

The top priority? Data protection and privacy, selected by 56% of respondents. As AI agents gain access to knowledge bases and high-stakes workflows, organizations are focused on ensuring information is secure, compliant, and properly governed.

Ease of use and ROI tied for second (52%). Teams don't just want powerful technology; they want solutions that are intuitive for end users and deliver clear, measurable value. Closely following in importance is cost (48%), underscoring that while AI is seen as a growth lever, budget considerations remain front and center.

Beyond the fundamentals, savvy buyers are looking for scalable, explainable, and contextually relevant solutions. Nearly 4 in 10 respondents cite the importance of scalability, trusted proprietary data, and explainability — all signals that transparency and data pedigree matter. And for long-term value, organizations are focusing on alignment: vendor reliability, workflow integration, and domain-specific intelligence are top of mind.

AI buyers are undoubtedly raising the bar. They're looking beyond simple tool assessment and are focusing on finding flexible partners that can scale with them, protect their data, and quickly enable collaboration between people and AI.

Most important factors when evaluating AI agents

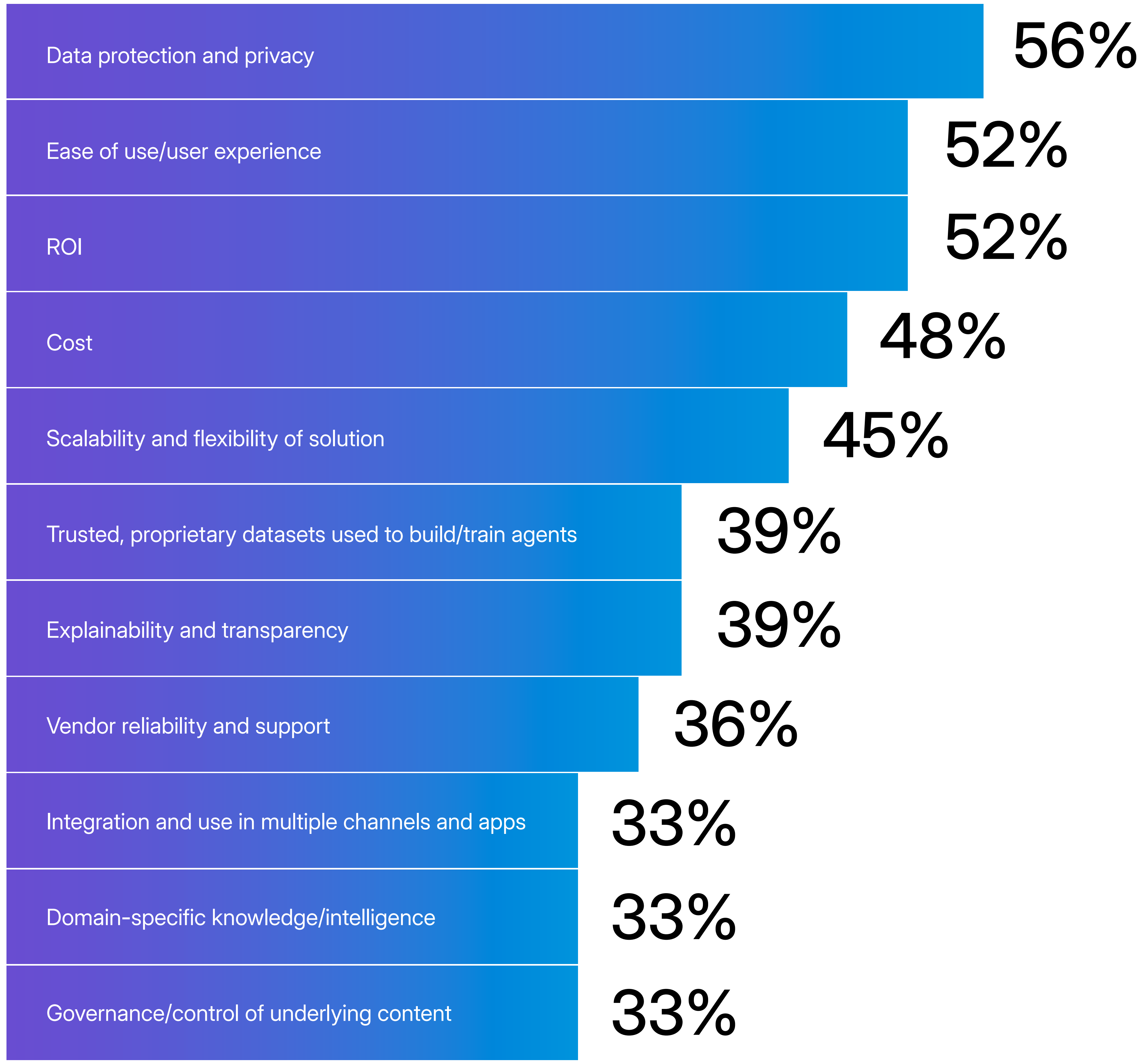


Figure 20

Redefining work, realizing returns

AI isn't just enhancing productivity — it's reshaping how work gets done across the entire pursuit cycle. For bid and proposal professionals in particular, AI is reducing the grind and elevating the craft. Time once spent chasing SMEs, formatting content, or rewriting boilerplate content is now being redirected toward strategic storytelling, quality control, and data-driven decision-making. AI is shifting the focus from doing more to making a bigger impact on critical business outcomes.

Among organizations that have deployed AI across SRM, the most commonly reported benefits include:

- **52%** Better use of staff time
- **42%** More personalized and accurate responses
- **41%** Increased response volume
- **35%** More consistent scalable processes
- **30%** Higher win rates

And the returns don't take long to materialize. The majority of organizations report measurable ROI within the first year of AI deployment, with one in eight (13%) seeing impact in just three months.

AI is transforming workflows and reshaping roles, and all revenue teams are being freed up to operate more proactively and strategically as a result. Bid and proposal professionals are becoming insight curators, quality stewards, and cross-functional connectors. Sales and marketing teams can focus more on customer context and competitive positioning. And SMEs can contribute their expertise without being constantly derailed.

The work is becoming more collaborative, more intelligent, and ultimately more human — driven by technology, but powered by people.

How long it takes to see ROI from AI adoption

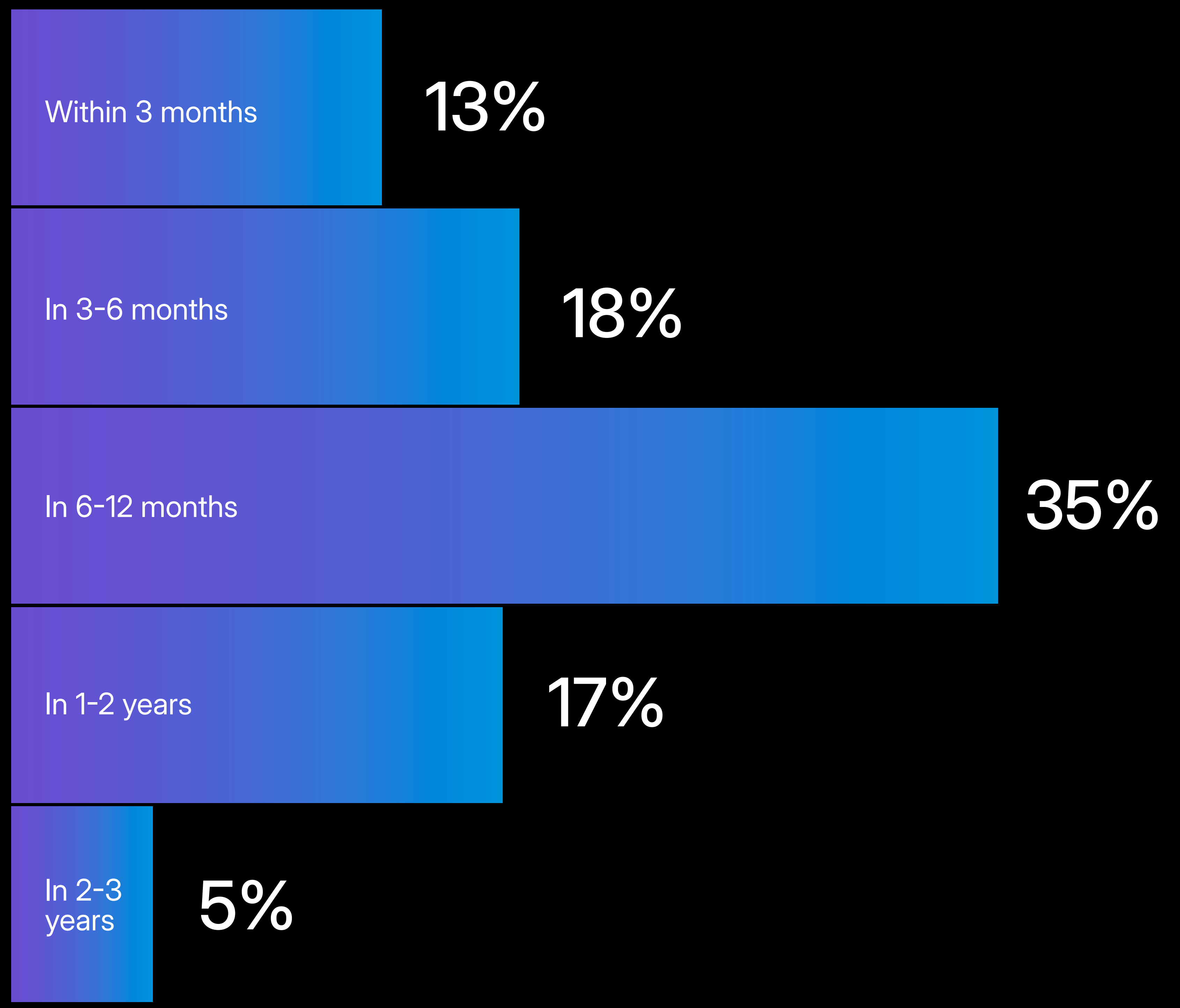


Figure 21

NEXT
Industry spotlight

Industry spotlight

Toby Carrington

Chief Business Officer

Seismic

As Chief Business Officer at Seismic, Toby Carrington brings a sharp executive lens to AI adoption. He's leading with urgency and clarity, setting top-down priorities, evolving how revenue teams work, and tying every initiative back to measurable impact.

How should executives be thinking about AI right now?

You can't afford to wait. There's no room for laggards. You have to lean in. AI is going to be a critical differentiator, and we're treating it that way at Seismic. "AI in everything we do" is one of our actual company OKRs this year.

The way I think about it is: What are the use cases? Where's the impact? How do we make sure everyone sees the value? This has to come from the top. People will look to leadership and ask, "Are they serious about this?" So we have to model that behavior and not just talk about it.

What's been most important in driving AI adoption at Seismic?

Change management. No question. We've asked every employee to define an AI use case and report on it in their one-on-ones. What's working? What are you experimenting with? Where are you stuck?

That accountability is critical. You can't just launch a tool and hope people use it. You've got to make it real for them — show them how it helps them do their job better, not just hit some abstract company goal. That's how you get buy-in.

How do you see roles evolving on revenue teams?

With proposals and RFPs, the historical mindset has been: "Here's a thing, go do it." But that model doesn't work anymore. Teams have to be more strategic. They need to be asking: Is this worth pursuing? What's the win strategy? Who needs to be involved?

You can't just be the person who receives the document and pushes it through. AI is taking out a lot of the admin. What's left is the thinking — and the connecting. Proposal teams are sitting at the intersection of sales, product, and marketing. They're the ones who can see what's resonating, what's missing, and how to shape a better response.

That makes knowledge democratization essential. We need to get the right content in front of the right people, not just the proposal team. Sales, solutions consultants, customer success — everyone should be working from the same trusted set of answers. The more we can align those functions, the faster we move and the sharper our execution becomes. AI is the enabler, but it's cross-functional collaboration that turns it into a competitive edge.

How are you thinking about measuring ROI on AI?

Right now, we're looking at productivity and time savings: How much faster are we doing this work? But longer term, it's going to be about revenue outcomes. Win rates, deal velocity, retention, expansion. It's not just about doing the same things faster. It's about doing more of the right things, and getting better results.

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Winning business in the age of AI

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Winning business in the age of AI

This year's report paints a clear picture: while every organization is feeling the pressure to respond smarter, faster, and with more precision, not all are rising to the challenge in the same way. The gap between Leaders — organizations seeing significant revenue growth — and the rest of the market is widening. And it's not because they're responding to fewer RFPs or dealing with simpler processes. It's because they've taken a fundamentally different approach.

Leaders are building Strategic Response Management (SRM) into the foundation of their revenue strategy. They're not just deploying AI — they're aligning it with better processes, more empowered teams, and clearer decision-making frameworks. They measure what matters, scale what works, and are reimagining the pursuit process.

The winning approach to Strategic Response Management (SRM)

The winning approach to Strategic Response Management (SRM)

Adopt
the right technology with intention

- **Deploy AI and AI agents** across both go-to-market and strategic response functions. Leading organizations are 6x more likely to have fully deployed AI agents and 3x more likely to use AI across revenue functions.
- Pair AI with a centralized, curated **knowledge base** to operate with more efficiency and drive trust, speed, and consistency in every response.
- Leverage AI not just to automate, but to **extract insights from every pursuit**, informing go-to-market plans, product roadmaps, and where to invest team capacity.

Align
people, processes, and knowledge

- **Invest in people alongside AI** to expand capacity, reduce burnout, and elevate quality.
- Give every team access to accurate, up-to-date content through structured libraries and **self-service tools** — reducing bottlenecks, eliminating work, and accelerating cross-functional execution.
- Free up your top talent to focus on the **work AI can't replace**, like crafting strategy, creative storytelling, and positioning to win.

Amplify
results with data-driven strategy

- Define clear ownership, **connect roles to outcomes**, and create visibility across teams to align on what matters most.
- Measure and report on the **full impact of SRM** — from revenue impacted to team efficiency to content effectiveness.
- Build **feedback loops** with pursuit data to continually refine qualification criteria, optimize content and messaging, and improve how SRM is operationalized.

THE 2025 STATE OF STRATEGIC RESPONSE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Winning Business in the Age of AI

responsive

Responsive is the global leader in Strategic Response Management (SRM) software, transforming how organizations share and exchange critical information. The AI-driven Responsive Platform is purpose-built to manage strategic responses at scale, empowering companies worldwide to accelerate growth, mitigate risk, and improve employee experiences.

Over 2000 companies have standardized on Responsive to democratize organizational knowledge and respond to RFPs, RFIs, DDQs, ESGs, security questionnaires, ad hoc information requests, and more. Responsive is registered in Portland, OR, with additional offices in Kansas City, MO, Dallas, TX, and Coimbatore, India. Learn more at responsive.io.

APMP

The Association of Proposal Management Professionals' mission is to be the trusted leader that serves a global community of bid and proposal development life cycle professionals. APMP promotes the professional growth of its members by advancing the arts, sciences, and technologies of winning business. APMP is the worldwide authority for professionals dedicated to the process of winning business through proposals, bids, tenders, and presentations.