RFP 360

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC LEARNING | **CENGAGE**

About the customer

National Geographic Learning | Cengage is an educational content, technology, and services company for the higher education, K-12, professional, and library markets worldwide.

Challenge

When school districts gained the ability to choose their own educational tools, National Geographic Learning |Cengage saw their RFP volume jump to more than 120 RFPs per year. The skyrocketing RFP influx completely overwhelmed the small team,

Industry:
Education

Solution:
RFP360 for response management

Volume:
120 RFPs per year

"We had no RFP response management," said Beverly Blakely Jones, National Geographic Learning |Cengage Supervisor. "If someone happened to remember that they had responded to a similar RFP, we'd go find it and reuse it, but there wasn't any real management process — just long strings of emails. Having multiple versions of several RFPs floating through inboxes was just a mess."

The complexity of their RFPs only made things worse.

"One request often covers multiple subjects and/or products, so one RFP would require four separate responses," Beverly said.

And a lack of visibility into the process made it difficult to keep everything on track.

"We were trying to solve the problem: 'Mark did this, but he's not here. Where do you think he filed it?'" Beverly explained.

Soon, key stakeholders grew frustrated and pushed for change.

"It all came to a head as managers kept getting kickback," Beverly said. "The product SMEs [subject matter experts] and marketing team were tired of answering the same questions over and over. They knew there had to be an easier way to manage our RFP responses. Finally, we started looking for a solution."

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Solution

Once National Geographic Learning | Cengage compared RFP solutions, the best option was obvious.

"We looked into multiple RFP management platforms, but RFP360 just stuck out," Beverly said. "It looked like exactly what we were looking for."

Piloting the solution quickly confirmed their belief.

"We began with a pilot and were hooked," Beverly explained. "We said to ourselves, 'We like this. This works. We can do this.'"

Now, National Geographic Learning | Cengage manages their increased RFP volume with ease.

"It's much more efficient and cleaner than managing RFPs via email," Beverly said. "There's no version confusion, and we can make sure content was updated and approved recently."

The centralized storage of key information ensures institutional knowledge isn't lost and responding to questions is easier than ever.

"We have the security of knowing our knowledge is safe and consistent," Beverly said. "We don't have to worry that we'll lose any SME expertise if someone quits or takes a vacation. We're saving tons of time not having to go back through email strings to find content. We no longer have to print out responses and try to keep track of everything. Not to mention we're saving some trees."

And the ease of use ensures they never skip a beat — even when replacing key system users.

"RFP360 is incredibly easy to use. Whenever we hire a new marketer or product person, we send them our recorded training, quickly walk them through it, and they're onboarded very quickly," Beverly said. "I haven't had any complaints from anyone that uses RFP360."

Impact to the client

Using RFP360 drastically reduced the number of emails in employees' inboxes.

"Our absolute favorite thing is we're no longer getting 100 emails for each RFP," Beverly said.

RFP360 also saves National Geographic Learning | Cengage employees countless hours.

"We're not spending hours hunting down previous answers and trying to figure out who is doing what. Because all the questions and answers are right there in RFP360," Beverly explained. "We're no longer getting two answers to the same question and wondering which version to use. It has cut down on organizing and putting RFPs together like you would not believe."

Overall, National Geographic Learning | Cengage now enjoys a much simpler RFP process.

"I'm amazed by how much easier this is," Beverly said. "Not only for the person putting the RFP together, but for all the people answering the questions."

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