



Enhancing objectivity and results with better RFP management

About the customer

Piper Jordan is a benefits consulting and administration brokerage firm.

Introduction

Piper Jordan takes great pride in helping their clients navigate the complicated benefits administration ecosystem.

“We’re very passionate about helping businesses develop a healthy organization and healthy employees,” said Kelly Ellis, Director of Administration and Operational Excellence at Piper Jordan. “Everything we do is from the heart, and we do it in the best interest of those we’re serving.” After making his recommendations, the sales team as a whole decides which opportunities to pursue.

So, when they realized their time-consuming request for proposal (RFP) process was preventing them from focusing on tasks that better served their clients’ and vendors’ needs, they knew they needed to make a change.

“Our RFP process was very cumbersome,” Kelly said. “We had lots of text to review, and there was a great deal of manual intervention when it came to aggregating data. It just wasn’t the best use of our time.”

Solution

To improve their RFP process, Piper Jordan began searching for an RFP management solution.

“We wanted our RFP process to be thorough, yet quick and objective,” Kelly said. “We needed a better way to weigh our data, and we needed a scoring system that didn’t allow one person’s opinion to sway another’s — which can be a problem when everyone is scoring vendors in the same spreadsheet.”

Once they saw RFP360 in action, they knew they found the solution they were looking for.

“The demo speaks for itself,” Kelly said.



Industry:
Employee benefits



Solution:
RFP360 for request management



Volume:
65 RFPs per year



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Impact to the client

Since implementing RFP360, Piper Jordan has enjoyed a more streamlined RFP process.

“It’s been life-changing,” Kelly said. “The amount of time we’re saving by having access to data at our fingertips and not having to run in-depth calculations has been amazing.”

That time-savings allows Piper Jordan to redirect 40 hours of work per week toward tasks that better serve their clients and vendors.

“When you think about overhead just in terms of aggregating and analyzing data ... that’s a full-time job,” Kelly explained. “So, we’re a lot more efficient now because the tool is automating that process.”

RFP360 also helps Piper Jordan objectively select the vendors that best address their clients’ needs.

“We’re feeling more confident in the selections,” Kelly noted. “The scoring is much less subjective. It’s very black-and-white now, providing us with quantitative metrics we can point to.”

Kelly was particularly impressed with RFP360’s weighted scoring capabilities.

“I love that feature,” she said. “It allows you to default to yes or no questions that have a particular score — yes is one number, no is another. You can change the weight by sections or by questions. So, if one section is really important and another isn’t as critical, we’ll weigh the more important section more heavily. And then, we can tailor the individual questions, as well.”

And RFP360 presents vendor scoring data in an easy-to-understand format that demonstrates exactly which vendors are most qualified and why.

“It has what I call the heat map,” Kelly explained. “It shows you question by question and section by section how the scoring matches up. We actually use that in our presentation decks because it gives the client a great way to see where vendors scored well and where they came up short.”

Clients that choose to use RFP360 themselves have an even greater view into vendor scores and the logic behind those scores.

“I think it helps put them at ease and makes them a bit more comfortable,” Kelly said. “They can see what we’re doing — that it’s very objective and very clinical. They don’t have to worry about opinions being biased because they can see the scores, they can see the progress, and they have complete visibility into who was invited, who responded, and who didn’t.”

RFP360 also makes it easier to manage interactions with vendors, as they can communicate directly within the context of the RFP.

“It’s much easier to go back and forth with questions,” Kelly said. “Before, we didn’t have the ability to have those conversations in one location. We might have 25 emails back and forth with a vendor to get clarification, and then we’d have to dig up their responses and copy and paste them into an Excel spreadsheet. Now, all of the correspondence is in one place.”



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The increased transparency also helps her ensure everyone sticks to the timeline.

"I can see if someone opened and read the RFP," Kelly said. "I can say, 'Here's exactly when I sent it to you. Here's when you looked at it.' That's really helpful."

Clients enjoy the transparency around vendor responsiveness, as well.

"This has given us the ability to show the client the numbers. They can see the time and day each vendor submitted," Kelly said. "They can see who responded on time, who was late, who asked for an extension ... all of that reporting is readily available."

Of course, innovative technology is only useful if you can get users to adopt it. Fortunately, RFP360's ease of use encourages new users to quickly take advantage of its features and functionality.

"The usability is great," Kelly said. "Once new users get in the tool, it's been very easy for them to go in and modify the questions and then turn those into new templates we can use later."

And behind that easy-to-use technology is a customer service team that's backed the solution since day one.

"Implementation was wonderful," Kelly said. "I gave my rep probably the most complicated RFP he'd ever seen in his life, and he built it out without any issue."

That level of customer service continues to this day.

"I couldn't ask for a better partner," Kelly said. "We use a lot of technology, and RFP360 is at the top when it comes to responsiveness and attention. Anytime we have a question, we get a quick response. Even before we have a question, sometimes they'll reach out and say, 'I'm noticing you're doing X, Y, and Z. We have this tool that can help you.'"

Overall, Kelly recommends all organizations who wish to develop a strategic, objective RFP process consider RFP360.

"If you already know who you're going to select, RFP360 probably isn't the tool for you. But if you actually want to make an informed and objective decision, you need something to help you analyze vendors from a quantitative perspective," Kelly said. "RFP360 is the right choice and partner."



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