Case Study

Improving RFP Accuracy and Scale with Governed AI

Customer Profile

A global, publicly listed enterprise software company providing AI-powered customer experience and automation solutions. The organisation employs several thousand staff worldwide and regularly responds to complex RFPs and vendor security assessments from large enterprise and regulated customers.

The Challenge

As the company grew into larger and more regulated enterprise deals, the volume and complexity of RFPs and security questionnaires increased significantly. Teams faced several recurring challenges:

- Hundreds of repetitive questions across RFPs and vendor security assessments
- Heavy reliance on subject-matter experts (SMEs) for first-draft responses
- Inconsistent answers caused by fragmented documentation and manual reuse
- Manual and bespoke bid management processes with heavy reliance on spreadsheets
- High review effort to validate accuracy, completeness, and compliance
- Growing pressure on sales engineering and security teams, leading to fatigue and burnout

With a reliance on disorganized knowledge and spreadsheet-based workflows, the company could not scale to meet demand while maintaining answer quality and consistency.

The Approach

The company worked with the architects behind Cognaire Respond and implemented an AI-powered RFP and questionnaire answering platform built around a **governed, hierarchical knowledge content corpus** rather than the manual, labor-intensive processes that were in place.

Key elements of the solution included:

- A **hierarchical content corpus** containing approved internal documents
- A **retrieval-augmented generation (RAG)** engine that sourced answers exclusively from this governed content
- A **two-stage AI answering process**:
    1. Initial answer generation grounded in retrieved corpus content
    2. A second refinement step to improve clarity, structure, and consistency
- Strict controls to prevent the AI from guessing or using public data
- Human review focused on validation and refinement, not first drafting

The system was designed to generate high-quality, accurate responses to previously unseen questions without having to rely on the burdensome question-and-answer pairs often seen in legacy proposal automation platforms.

Results

When applied to RFPs and security questionnaires, the organisation observed significant improvements:

- **~90% reduction in manual response effort** for RFPs and security questionnaires
- **~30% increase in RFP win rate** where the AI-assisted approach was used
- More consistent, accurate answers across submissions
- Faster turnaround times on large, complex questionnaires
- Substantially reduced SME workload, pressure, and burnout
- Higher employee satisfaction due to fewer repetitive drafting tasks

SMEs shifted from writing answers from scratch to validating and refining AI-generated responses, allowing them to focus on higher-value work.

Why It Matters

This case demonstrates how a governed AI answer engine—grounded in approved internal content and combined with a multi-stage review process—can dramatically improve both the efficiency and quality of RFP and security questionnaire responses.

The same architectural principles underpin **Cognaire Respond**, bringing these proven capabilities into a dedicated, purpose-built platform with enterprise-grade workflows, collaboration, and governance.
