A SUCCESS STORY

WINNING GROWTH STRATEGIES

How KCI Juggles 750 Proposals Annually with a Consistent 25% Hit Rate
KCI Technologies (KCI) is an employee-owned engineering, consulting and construction firm serving clients throughout the United States and internationally. With more than 1,400 employees, KCI has developed a reputation for leadership in the transportation, site/facilities, environmental, construction and communications sectors.

KCI’s staff has doubled in size since 2007, and its stock value has increased more than 4,000% since 1994. Part of that growth can be attributed to the firm’s ability to quickly and accurately submit so many proposals. Deborah Boyd, Vice President, Director of Marketing at KCI Technologies, oversees a staff of about 25 marketing professionals who are tasked with developing these proposals.

Wrangling Proposal Chaos

“We would not be able to submit 750 proposals a year if we couldn’t do them efficiently,” Boyd said. “Without that system and without the expertise of staff, the ability to handle four proposals at one time — no one could do that if you don’t know where the data is. It has to be there quickly.”

In order to continue winning business, KCI needed a platform to integrate data across multiple departments, providing marketers the real-time data access they need, not only to create so many proposals, but also to ensure they’re accurate, informative and competitive.

Adding Cosential to the Mix

Back in 2006, when KCI was much smaller, it was running on a system that simply wasn’t fulfilling the needs of its marketing department.

“We were unhappy with the service,” Boyd explained. “So, I met Dan Cornish (CEO of Cosential) for the first time in our Raleigh office. I liked his vision. I liked the dedication. I liked the focus.”

Looking for a software provider with a focus on its core industries, KCI inked a deal with Cosential, and established an ambitious three-month implementation deadline.

“I remember the integration like it was yesterday,” Boyd said. “I told them, ‘Look, this is how we have to do it.’ Christina was my implementation specialist and we walked through it — we did testing. I had three months to do it. So they helped me succeed.”
Data that Drives Winning Deals

Now fully integrated, Cosential is a fundamental part of KCI’s marketing team.

“I couldn’t imagine doing proposals without it. There’s just...there’s no way,” Boyd said. “Managing 750 proposals without it would be utter chaos. That is, it wouldn’t get done. We would get disqualified all the time, the efficiencies would be down, and I would have people quitting.”

Additionally, when dealing with 16,000 projects and 1,700 people, Boyd said quick access to project information is key for their employees: “Once they start pulling in the data out of Cosential and it’s readily at their fingertips, they’re able to focus more on the message of the proposal.”

Excelling at Reporting

Boyd is able to monitor the team’s success/hit rate, broken down by various key factors.

“Monitoring the hit rate is something that I do in Cosential constantly,” she said. “I will monitor hit rate by client, I will do it by industry, I will do it by practice area. I will do it by state to give our staff — not just my staff — and give the technical folks, as well as our president and CEO, an idea of where we’re falling short.”

“Often, my CEO would ask me, ‘Who’s going to be in trouble next year? Which groups are not going to perform well?’ And I can tell him. I know it because I watch all the hit rates. But I can instantly tell him based on a hit rate and what they’ve submitted if they’re going to struggle, and I’m often very right.”

Being able to pull client histories and previous proposals, KCI is able to improve its win rate by making data-based “go” or “no-go” decisions, avoiding lost time on proposals with little chance of converting.

“We’ve made no-go decisions based on the fact that we’ve submitted 25 proposals in the last three years and won two,” Boyd explained. “We are able to use it to look at our competition. Every contract that we pursue, as soon as we hit that submit button, that contract gets re-entered as a developing lead for the next time. So that history is linked. We get to see who won...the ability to store the descriptions and the resumes and just that history goes into the proposal, which helps us win. So it’s a combination of better decision-making based on the data we have.”

KCI has seen a jump in hit rate since implementing Cosential. Previously in the teens, it’s now up to 25% consistently, jumping even higher at times.

“Managing 750 proposals without Cosential would be utter chaos. I couldn’t imagine doing the job without it.”
Connecting Oracle Financial Data into Cosential

About two years ago, KCI connected financial data from Oracle into Cosential, adding to the depth of information and data available for the team. Hesitant initially, Boyd now wishes the process they'd started sooner. “We recently connected to our financial system; that's very new for us. It was something I didn't want to do for a long time, but now that's the first thing I look at,” Boyd said. “It has been life-changing for me. I thought I knew a lot about KCI and the projects that we were doing, and now all of a sudden, there's so much out there that I didn't know. So part of me is upset that I didn't do it before.”

Making Integration Easier

Integrating platforms and data can be challenging, but Boyd was confident of the outcome thanks to her previous experiences with Cosential. “Every implementation that I've worked with Cosential, I've always felt that, first off, Cosential knows my company,” Boyd added. “They know my history with them. They know what I'm nervous about, what I'm OK with. They know that I'm OK to take risks. They know I trust them.”

Cosential Growth & Relationship Management - A Daily Essential

“All my staff have three screens, and you can guarantee that 99% of the time Cosential is up on one screen,” Boyd said. “Proposal is up on another one, and Outlook is up on the other one. So, it’s constant back and forth. We can't do our jobs without the system.”

As the person responsible for the ultimate success of her team, Boyd is able to constantly monitor their progress in real time. “It’s the first thing I log into in the morning,” she admitted. “I like to watch the dashboard line to see if our number of proposals are increasing. I look at our hit rate every day. I look at how many we’ve submitted every day.”

“My marketing folks are extremely stressed and anxious all the time because of the deadlines,” Boyd added. “Cosential helps me keep them because they can at least trust the data. They can at least know where the data is. They’re not searching for it. So while they’re very stressed about their deadlines, they know they don’t have to be stressed about their data.”

Excelling at the RFP Proposal Process

No firm can win new business with subpar proposals. KCI has put a priority on making sure its marketing team is armed with the tools required to excel at the RFP and proposal process.

“Our firm’s vision is to improve the built and environmental society that surrounds us,” Boyd said. “Cosential is at the forefront of that — of helping us to win the work to do that, the work that we want to do. In our industry, you form relationships with your clients, your consultants, and other team members. Very rarely do you have an intimate relationship with the creator of your software. Yet Cosential is integral in our process.”
MEET COSENTIAL

Cosential enables Architectural, Engineering, and Construction firms to increase revenue while decreasing the cost of winning new business, with Growth and Relationship Management software and services that bring order, control, speed, and efficiency to business development and marketing processes.

As the leader in Growth and Relationship Management software for the Architectural, Engineering, and Construction (AEC) industry, for 20+ years we have helped 1,000+ AEC firms increase annual revenue and increase productivity in key business development processes by up to 50%.

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