



How To Save Your Proposal Team Time

...and keep them happy

OMBUD



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Response management is increasingly viewed as a growth strategy, and teams need to find ways to make the process more efficient and cost-effective, while at the same time winning more bids. But with the average number of working hours required to respond to a single RFP clocking in at 80 or more, across all contributing teams, that efficiency seems out of reach.

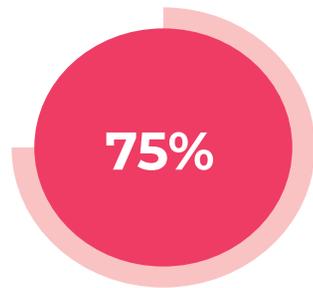
Proposal management professionals report working in excess of 85 hours a week (40 hours spent on RFP responses) and 88% say they faced a work-related mental health problem in 2021.

So how can enterprises reduce churn, improve employee engagement, and win more often? The simple answer is automation, a trend accelerating across all lines of business. According to a study released by Harvard Business Review in cooperation with Oracle, at least 74% of business leaders say that increasing process quality is a key objective, and plan to use automation and other intelligent technologies to meet this goal.

Automation can reduce RFP time-to-response by almost 80% by streamlining workflows and increasing collaboration, while at the same time collecting and curating institutional knowledge to prevent replicating the same content from scratch for every RFP response.

Repetitive Work, Silos, and Burnout: The State of Response Management

There's no question that enterprise revenue teams are winning more deals than ever before. According to a recent APMP U.S. Benchmark Report, proposal-management professionals call the health of their industry "excellent."

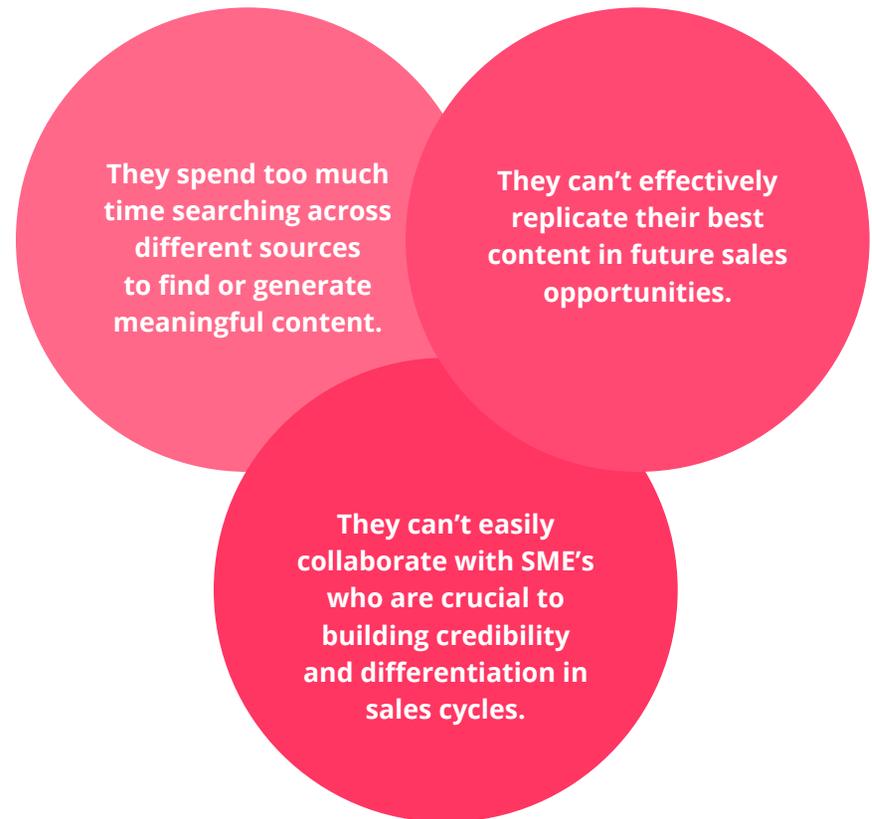


75% of APMP professionals say their win rate is good or excellent.

*Source: APMP US Bid & Proposal Industry Benchmark Report

Even more encouraging is data that points to the embrace of best practices and documented processes and workflows. However, most of these workflows are still highly siloed, manual, and time-consuming—so much so that the ability to map a winning strategy to customer needs is falling by the wayside.

In trying to reach this ideal state, most companies experience at least one of these challenges with respect to sales content:



Enterprise revenue teams spend too much time re-creating the necessary content to respond to RFPs quickly, stymied by siloed content repositories, an inability to retain institutional knowledge due to increased employee turnover, and a lack of a central knowledge center where repetitive and standard content can be easily curated and made searchable.

Meanwhile, RFP targets are rising and teams need to win more, faster, without additional headcount. At the same time, buyers are more proactive in their purchasing journey and expect a personalized experience. More than 80% of their decision-making takes place prior to requesting a proposal, making the quality of the response even more critical—at this last stage, the deal is yours to lose.

With sales and revenue teams bogged down in operational tasks, response management remains largely reactive.

At the same time, a drive for increased speed, agility, collaboration, and personalization is colliding with the increased focus on proposal management as a strategic business function. Despite this leadership imperative, few organizations are structured to enable swift, successful collaboration.

Large enterprises are more than twice as likely to have separate development teams for individual sectors, instead of building a central organization to manage all opportunities. This complexity contributes to the chaos—the worst nightmare of any subject-matter expert is opening their inbox to find 10 emails from 10 different stakeholders, all asking the same question.

It's no wonder that most organizations report submitting fewer than 80 bids per year. Just a handful (14%) say they respond to 100 or more. The ability to shorten response times, prevent reactive, repetitive work, and give your sales and revenue teams more time and attention for strategic activities is a clear competitive advantage. But how to get there?

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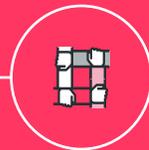
Empowering Revenue Teams: Automate, Curate and Accelerate

While many proposal professionals have some kind of technology resource to support their work, many find the tools as largely ineffective. The majority indicate that these resources require bespoke setup and go largely unmaintained. Worse still, potentially useful tools like templates and content libraries are housed in separate IT silos.

A comprehensive, content-centric approach to response management automation combines people, processes, and technology that can:



Transform your valuable internal expertise into a curated, searchable library of sales content, preventing the loss of institutional knowledge due to employee turnover



Enable seamless collaboration across all teams that contribute to the RFP process, streamlining communication and response creation with new efficient workflows

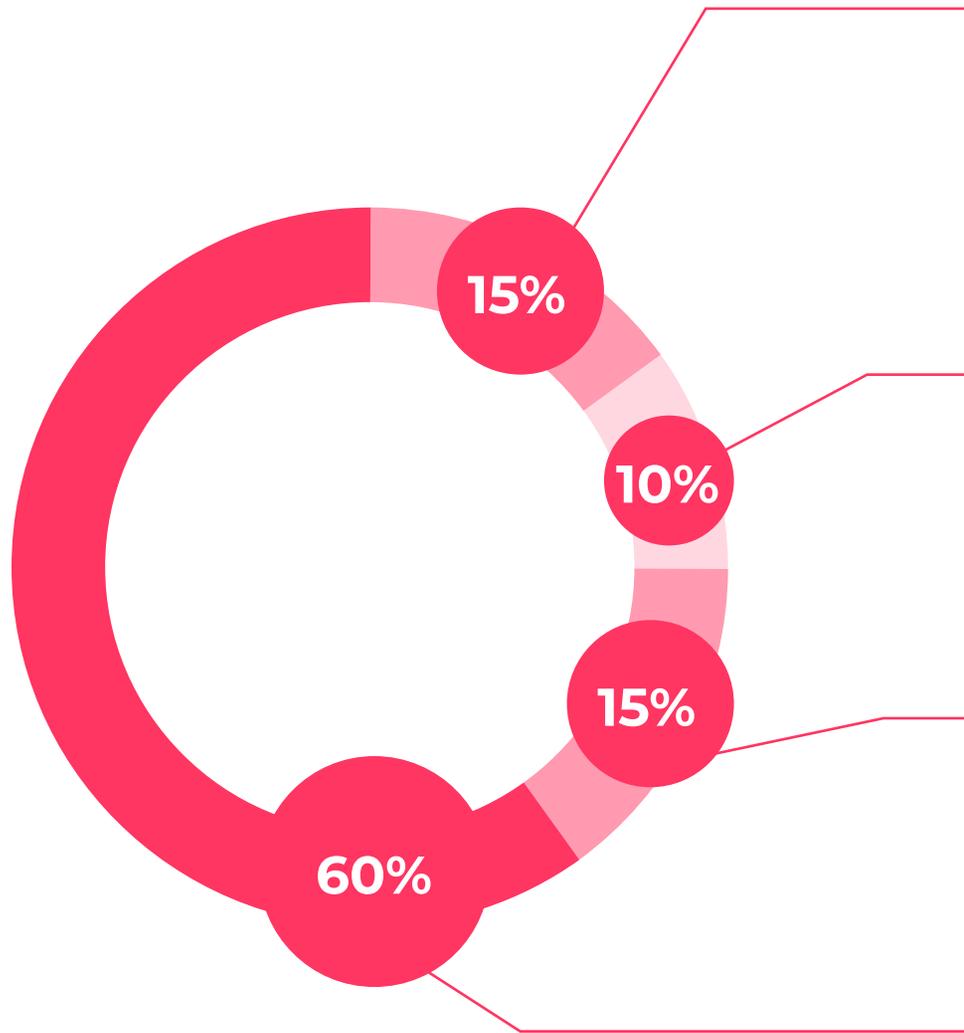


Curate and grow a centralized knowledge database for use when responding to repetitive or standard questions



Automate the production of your RFP responses in the format required by the prospects

Based on an 80-hour request turnaround time



...this is the average time teams spend on each area of a request.

Document Import or Preparation

NOW : 12 hours spent on preparation and format set up
WITH OMBUD : Seconds

Automated import of requests, regardless of file format, document format, or quantity

Process Management

NOW : 8 hours tracking SME responses via email, copy and pasting responses

WITH OMBUD : Efficiency gains from single solutions

Natural language processing, integrated and configurable workflows, and activity analytics.

Export & Publishing

NOW : About 12 fixing formatting and editing writing styles
WITH OMBUD : Seconds

Automated publishing in your customers format, your branded format, or even online portals.

Knowledge Management

NOW : 56 hours spent hunting answers down
WITH OMBUD : 30 hours or less

Native authoring and intelligent content reuse

Automate: Build Once, Use Often

RFPs generally require answers to the same or similar questions and responding to each individual question every time for every RFP is inherently inefficient. Automation supports the elimination of redundancies by automating repetitive tasks and has the added benefit of reducing frustration for your teams.

Intelligent technologies like machine learning and artificial intelligence can be applied to curate a content library, making it easy to access the most up-to-date assets and information, rather than recreating this content for every RFP.

Automated content curation ensures your best content is always available—no more emails, time-zone headaches, or outdated information.

Additional benefits of automation include:

Reducing the time and effort required for each RFP, increasing the speed to submission

Increase and augment the capacity of your teams, making it easier to respond to more RFPs in less time

Centralize technical knowledge to prevent compliance issues

Increase collaboration across teams

Centralized and consistent messaging to drive better results



“Automation supports the elimination of redundancies by automating repetitive tasks...”

Curate: Your Single Source of Truth

Managing the knowledge that is spread out across your organization in silos is a major challenge for most teams. Building an RFP response from scratch each and every time is not only painful from a process standpoint, but it also slows down the speed at which you can win and close. With information sitting inside the heads of employees or on a laptop —or even walking out the door with a resignation letter in hand — means re-investing people hours over and over again.

If this sounds familiar, you're not alone.

Most enterprises struggle with content silos that:



Create communication breakdowns



Enable an “us vs. them” mentality, leading to content gatekeeping



Produce search parties that go from department to department looking for the right SME

With a central repository, your organization can curate the content most often used in your RFP responses, and your content experts can make any necessary updates in a central place, providing universal access to their knowledge.

In turn, it's far easier for others to find the information they need, when they need it, meaning the entire team is working together efficiently, quickly, and with accuracy.

Spending more time wooing customers and less time wrangling content means more wins and bigger bottom lines. Companies that embrace the idea of a single source of truth will better be able to respond quickly and accurately and beat the competition.



Accelerate: Respond Faster with Streamlined Workflows

With a growing number of teams and individuals across complex organizations all contributing to response management, it's easy to get bogged down with delays and miscommunication, causing lag time in a time-sensitive process.

Imagine a world in which the hundreds of emails or IMs your team deals with on a daily basis are replaced with workflows that reduce lost or dropped threads of communication. How often are RFP responses delayed by confusion that spins up when someone is out of the office or a critical action item gets buried in an email thread? If even one person misses a request for approval on just one answer to an RFP, you're not only creating delays but also increasing the risk of errors in the final document.

Automatic triggers and notifications built into streamlined, automated workflows ensure that deadlines, assignments, and critical content updates get done on time, and efficiently. In addition, real-time reporting gives leadership a clear view of every task and document, helping to discover new ways to improve and speed up processes.

Workflows can help organizations build winning RFPs in less time and at scale. Here are just a few examples of the potential benefits:



Push notifications to the right people at the right time



Engage SMEs to create, review or approve content quickly and efficiently



Assign and notify teams about their tasks automatically and transparently



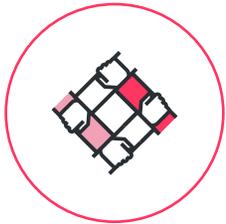
Create expiration dates so content is updated in a timely fashion



Keep track of complex responses at a high level, so everyone can see what's happening and when

Key Take-Aways

RFP response automation is a critical next step in making it easier for your teams to win more often and with less effort across a siloed organization. The math is simple—the more RFPs your team is able to respond to, the more likely it is that the win rate will increase. Automation supports this goal by:



Making it easier to collaborate across complex organizations

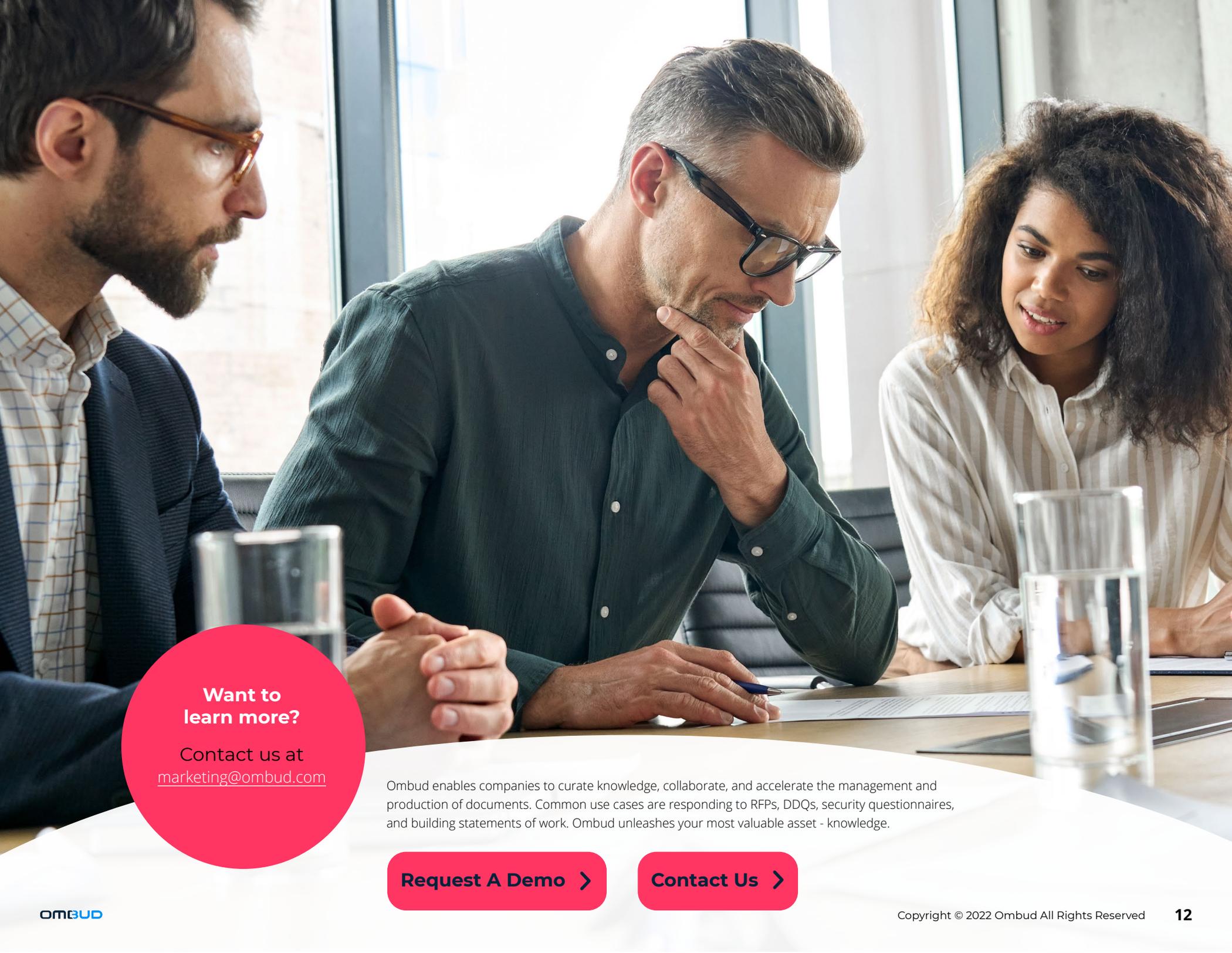


Streamlining and automating repetitive tasks that slow down the process



Curating and centralizing a content library that maintains and builds on institutional knowledge





**Want to
learn more?**

Contact us at
marketing@ombud.com

Ombud enables companies to curate knowledge, collaborate, and accelerate the management and production of documents. Common use cases are responding to RFPs, DDQs, security questionnaires, and building statements of work. Ombud unleashes your most valuable asset - knowledge.

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