



**GBTA** Global Business  
Travel Association

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# GBTA Business Travel Industry Outlook Poll

January 31, 2024



# Methodology

**An online poll was conducted of GBTA members and non-members worldwide, including corporate travel managers and travel suppliers**

- Data collection from January 9 through January 22, 2024
- An email invitation was sent to 17,108 business travel professionals including current and inactive members of GBTA; a link to the survey was also included in GBTA's Daily News Brief sent to travel professionals worldwide
- In total, 707 business travel professionals responded
- Note: Some totals might not add to 100% because of rounding; each percentage is rounded to the nearest whole number





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# A Look Back – and a Look Ahead



# The **Travel Buyer's** Perspective

## How Did Your Company's Business Travel Volume Change Last Year? *travel managers only*

6%

say their company's volume decreased



1%

Significantly decreased



1%

Moderately decreased



4%

Slightly decreased

**Note: 1% say don't know/Not applicable**

83%

say their company's volume increased



15%

Slightly increased



37%

Moderately increased



31%

Significantly increased



9%

About the same/no change

At the start of last year, **economic uncertainty clouded the outlook for business travel**. However, a widely anticipated recession never happened – and business travel continued to grow.

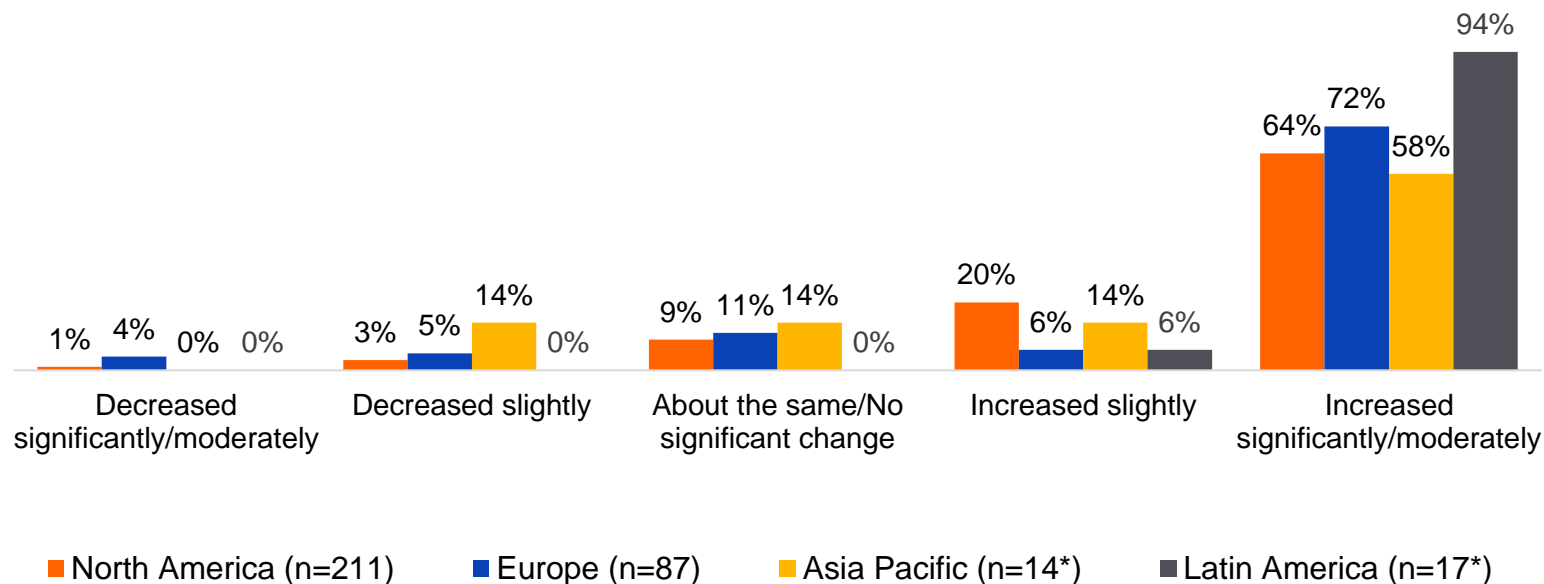
More than four in five travel managers (83%) worldwide say their company's business travel volume increased last year. This includes almost one-third (31%) who say it increased significantly.



# The **Travel Buyer's** Perspective

## Business Travel Volume Increases in North America and Europe

How Did Your Company's Business Travel Volume Change Last Year?  
*by region*



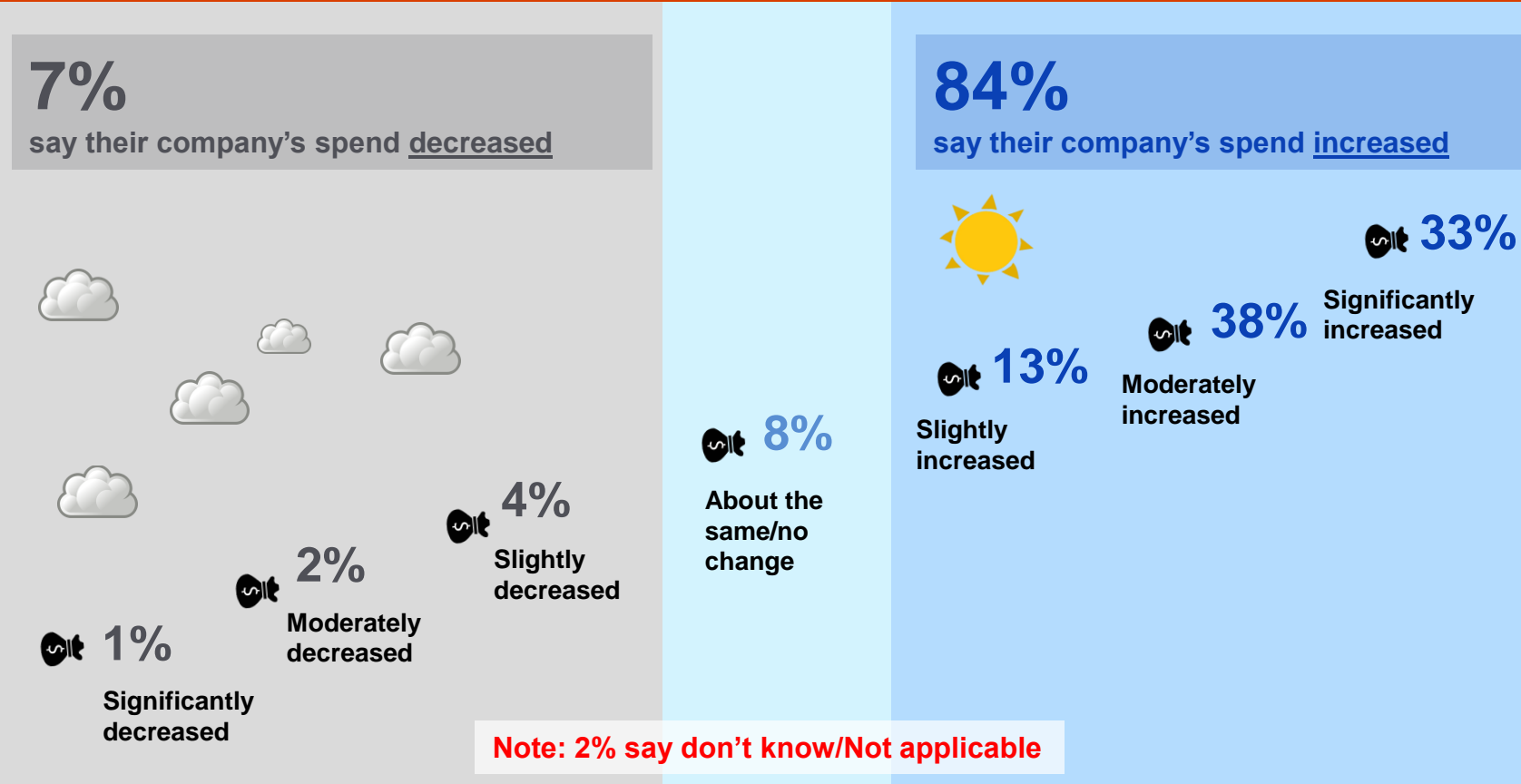
Q. Thinking about your company's 2023 overall global business travel bookings versus 2022, how would you say they compare? Your best estimate is fine. **Note: Question only displayed to travel managers/procurement professionals**  
**\*indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America-based travel managers**

**Companies worldwide –and especially in Europe – are trying to reduce carbon emissions from business travel.** Some have committed to specific emission reduction targets. These companies are reluctant to return to pre-COVID business travel volumes in the near-term.

Nonetheless, most companies—even in Europe — saw travel volumes increase last year. Almost three-quarters of Europe-based travel managers (72%) say their company's business travel volume increased significantly or moderately last year.

# The **Travel Buyer's** Perspective

## How Did Your Company's Business Travel Spend Change Last Year? *travel managers only*

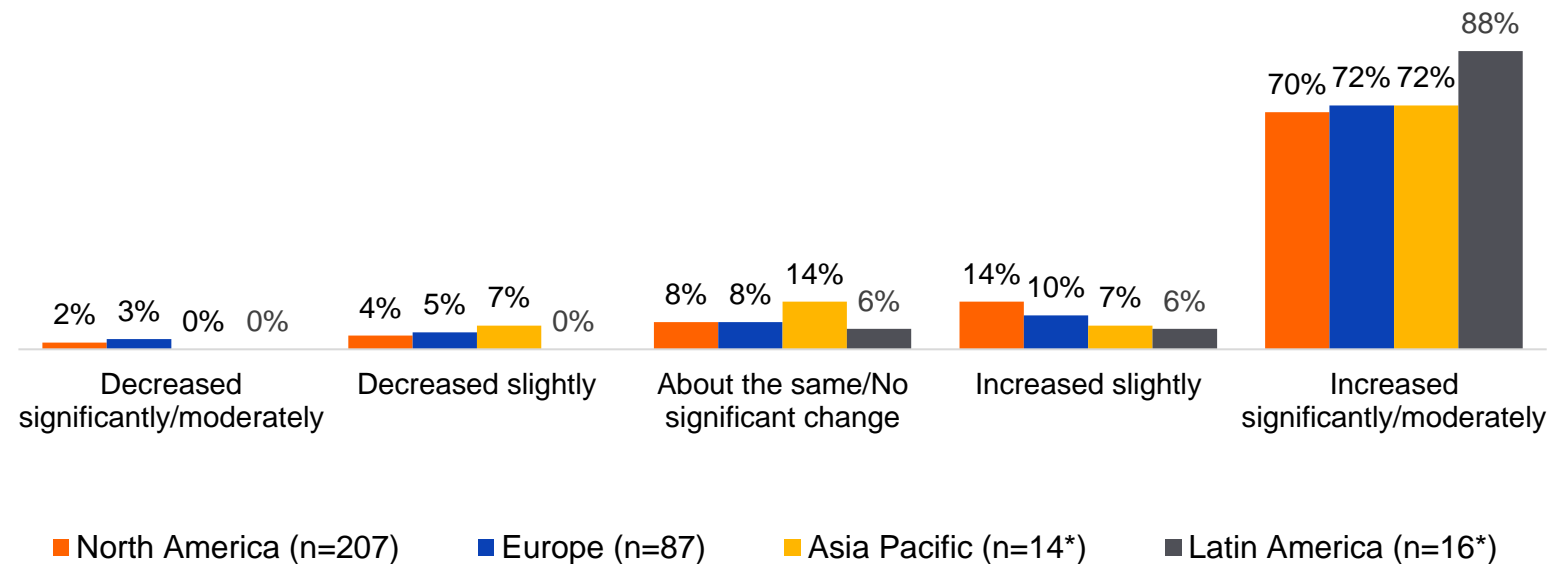


Last year (2023), travel prices largely stabilized after skyrocketing the year prior (2022). This might explain why travel *spend* increases appear commensurate with *volume* increases. For instance, 33% of buyers say their company's business travel spend *significantly* increased which is similar to the share who say their volume significantly increased. In addition, 38% say their spend *moderately* increased which is similar to the share who say their volume moderately increased.

# The **Travel Buyer's** Perspective

## In 2023, Spending Increases Were Fairly Similar Across Regions

How Did Your Company's Business Travel Volume Change Last Year?  
*by region*

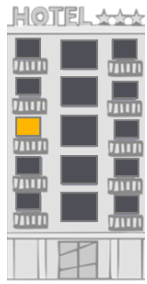


**Spend increases were comparable across the world in 2023.** Regardless of region, at least seven in 10 travel buyers say their company's business travel spend increased significantly or moderately last year.

Q. Thinking about your company's 2023 overall global business travel bookings versus 2022, how would you say they compare? **Your best estimate is fine. Note: Question only displayed to travel managers/procurement professionals**  
**\*indicates small sample size in Asia Pacific and Latin America (n<30)**

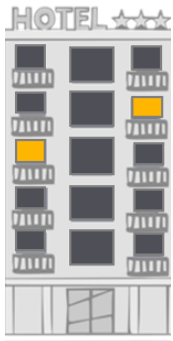
# The Travel Buyer's Perspective

Do you expect your company will engage in more or less business travel than it did in 2023?  
*travel buyers only*



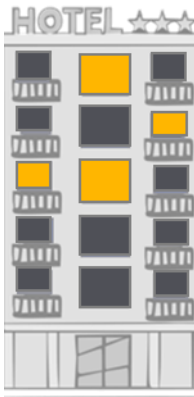
1%

We will take a **lot fewer** business trips (more than 20% fewer business trips compared to 2023)



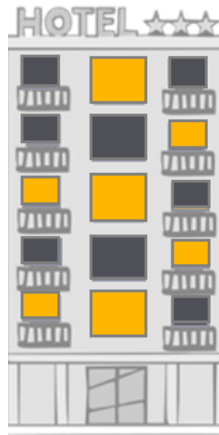
10%

We will take **fewer** business trips (1-20% fewer business trips compared to 2023)



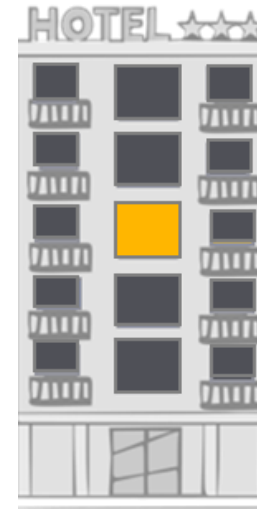
28%

We will take **about the same amount** of business trips



50%

We will take **more** business trips (1-20% additional business trips compared to 2023)



9%

We will take a **lot more** business trips (more than 20% additional business trips compared to 2023)

59%

**expect their company will take more business trips this year**

**Note: 3% indicate "not sure"**

Q. Thinking about the anticipated VOLUME of business travel (i.e. number of trips) at your company for 2024, do you expect your company will engage in more or less business travel than it did in 2023? **SELECT ONE.**

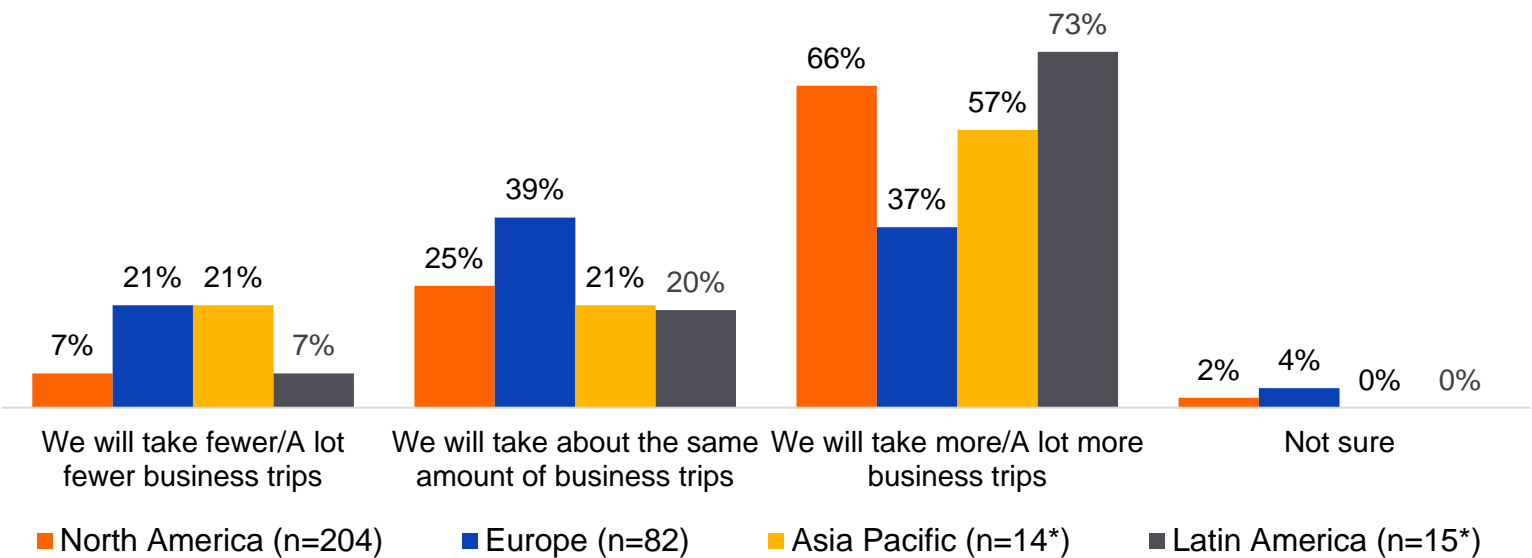
**Note: Question only displayed to travel managers/procurement professionals (n=319)**

Almost three in five travel buyers (59%) expect their company will take more business trips this year than it did last year. One-quarter (28%) expect their company will take about the same number of trips and one in 10 (12%) expect it will take fewer trips.



## Americas-Based Travel Managers Are More Likely to Expect More Business Travel in 2024

How do you expect your company's spending on business travel will change in 2024 compared to last year (2023)?  
*travel buyers by region*



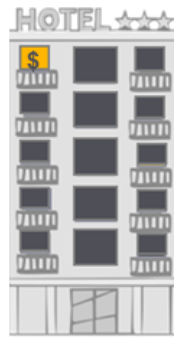
A large majority of buyers in North America (66%) and Latin America (73%) expect employees at their company will take more business trips. This is higher than the share of Europe-based buyers (37%) who expect the same. This would represent a reversal from last year – when volume increased more in Europe (see page 5).

Q. Thinking about the anticipated VOLUME of business travel (i.e. number of trips) at your company for 2024, do you expect your company will engage in more or less business travel than it did in 2023? **SELECT ONE.**  
**Note: Question only displayed to travel managers/procurement professionals**  
**\*indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America (n<30)**

# The Travel Buyer's Perspective

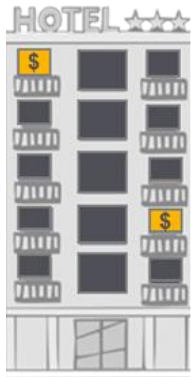
How do you expect your company's spending on business travel will change in 2024 compared to last year (2023)?

*travel buyers only*



**2%**

**Much lower**  
than last year  
(more than a  
20% decline  
compared to  
2023)



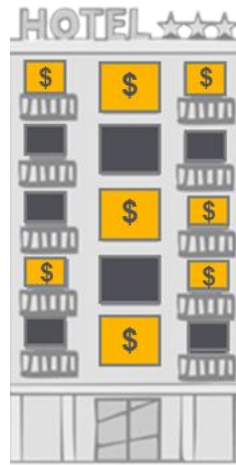
**10%**

**Somewhat lower**  
than last year (a  
1%-20% decline  
compared to  
2023)



**21%**

**About the same**  
as it was in 2023



**55%**

**Somewhat higher**  
than last  
year (a 1-20%  
increase  
compared to  
2023)



**11%**

**Much higher**  
than last year  
(more than a 20%  
increase  
compared to  
2023)

**67%**

**expect their company's  
business travel spend will  
be higher this year**

**Note: 3% say "don't know"**

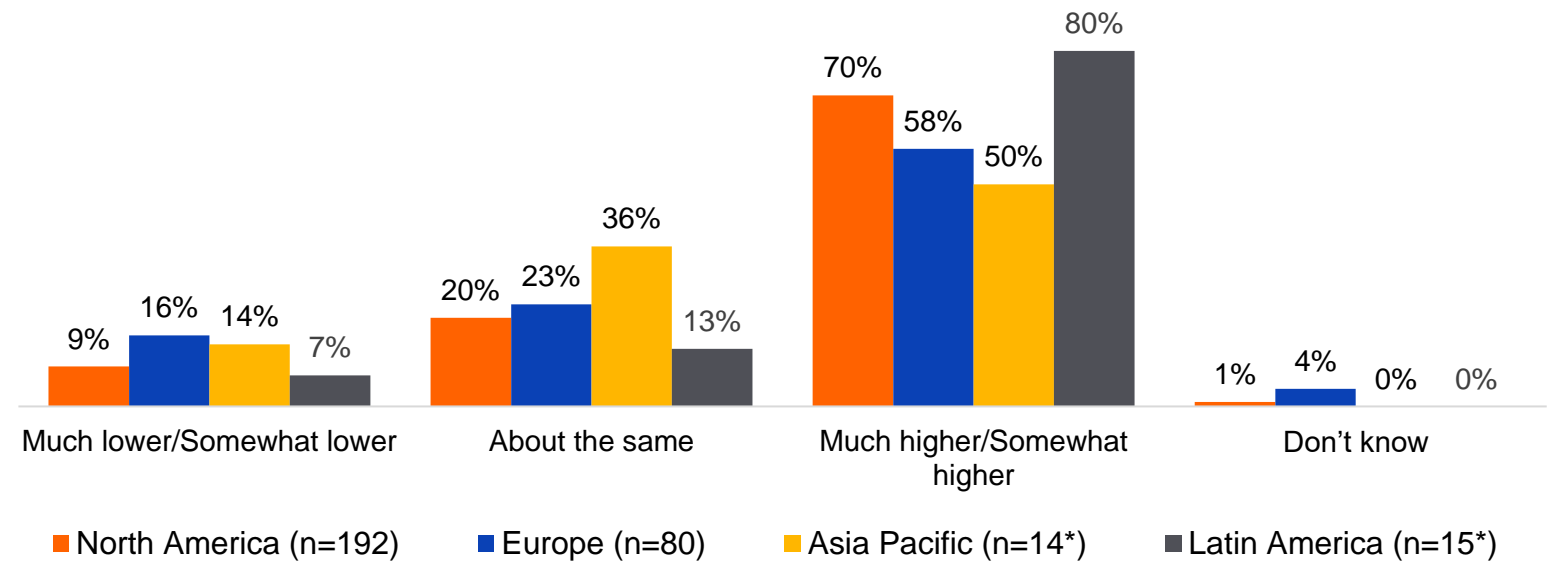
Q. Thinking about anticipated business travel SPEND at your company for 2024, do you expect your company will spend more or less on business travel than it did in 2023? SELECT ONE

**Note: Question only displayed to travel managers/procurement professionals**

**Travel programs expect to spend more on business travel.** Two-thirds of travel buyers (67%) expect their company's business travel spend will increase this year. However, these increases could be modest. A larger number expect their spend will be somewhat higher (55%) than much higher (11%).

## Americas-Based Travel Managers Are More Likely to Expect Higher Spend in 2024

How do you expect your company's spending on business travel will change in 2024 compared to last year (2023)?  
*travel buyers by region*

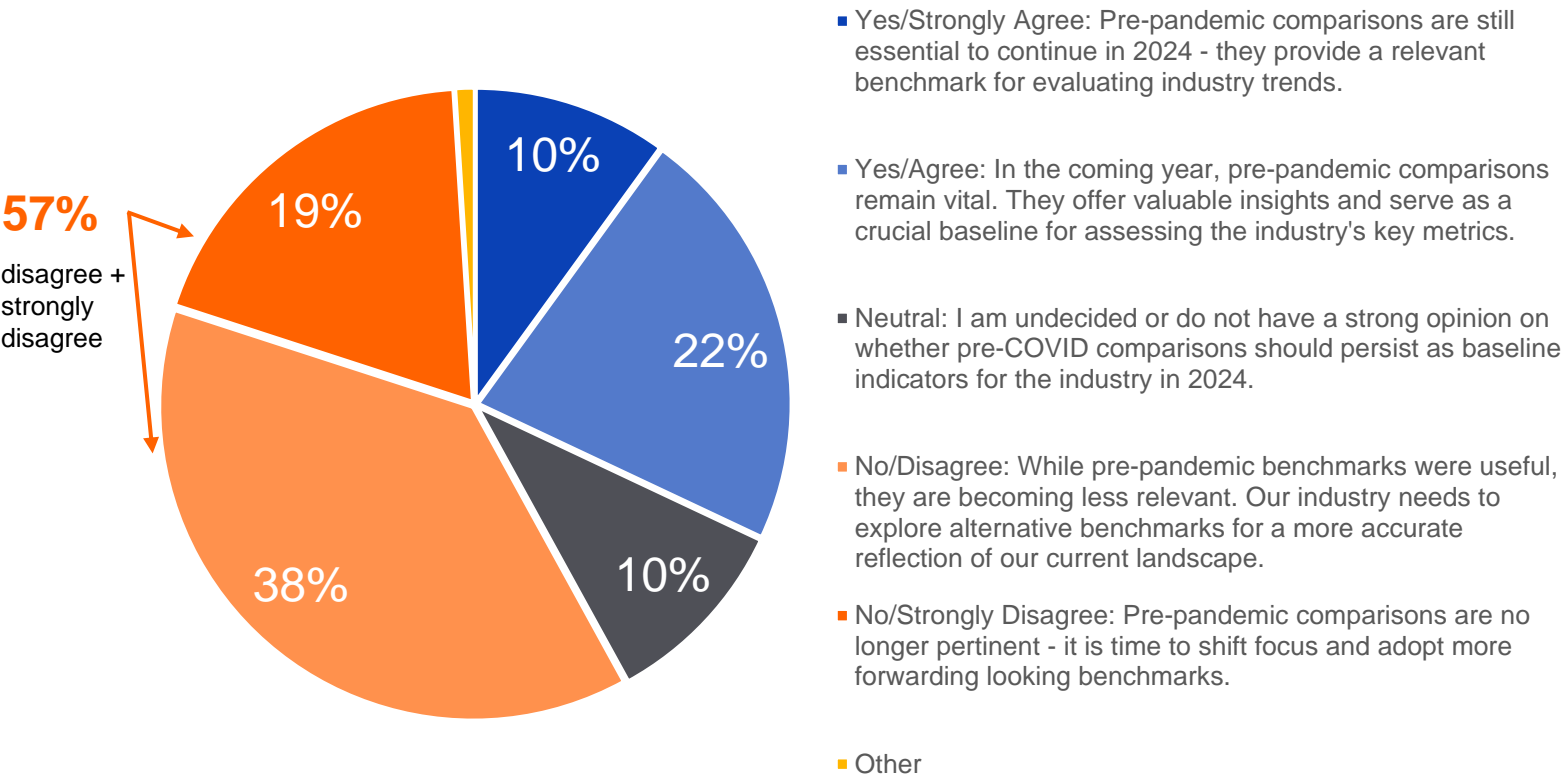


A large majority of travel buyers in North America (70%) and Latin America (80%) expect their company's business travel spend will increase this year. This is higher than the share of Europe-based buyers (58%) who think so.

Q. Thinking about anticipated business travel SPEND at your company for 2024, do you expect your company will spend more or less on business travel than it did in 2023? SELECT ONE  
**Note: Question only displayed to travel managers/procurement professionals**  
**\*indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America-based travel managers (n<30)**

# Pre-Pandemic Benchmarks/Baselines Losing Relevance

Do you agree that pre-pandemic comparisons should continue to be used in the year ahead?



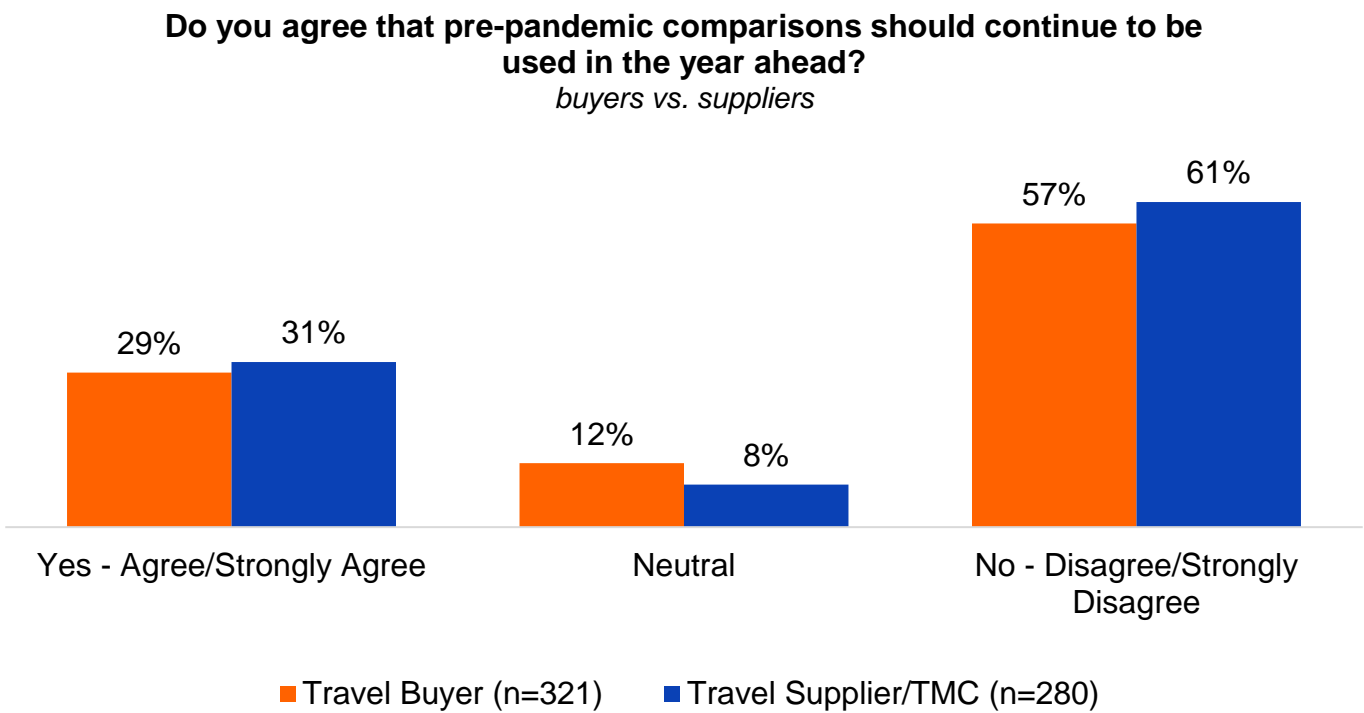
Q. For the global business travel industry, what is the relevance of continuing to compare and report performance in 2024 against pre-COVID levels of 2019? Do you believe pre-pandemic comparisons should continue to be used as indicators for the industry in the year ahead? **SELECT ONE (n=652)**

The COVID-19 pandemic delivered an unprecedented blow to the business travel industry. More than four years after the pandemic began, the industry continues to compare business travel volumes and spend against pre-pandemic baselines. The idea is to compare business travel levels today against “normal” levels seen in the past.

However, the pandemic prompted a re-examination of what a “normal” level of business travel actually should be. This is driven by a number of factors. These include (1) the growing imperative to reduce carbon emissions, (2) greater acceptance of virtual meeting technologies, and (3) continued economic growth even with less business travel.

As a result, it is not clear if pre-pandemic benchmarks are still a useful barometer. Most business travel professionals (57%) say pre-pandemic benchmarks are becoming less relevant (38%) or are no longer relevant at all (19%) in 2024.

# Buyers *and* Suppliers Question Value of Pre-Pandemic Tracking Benchmarks

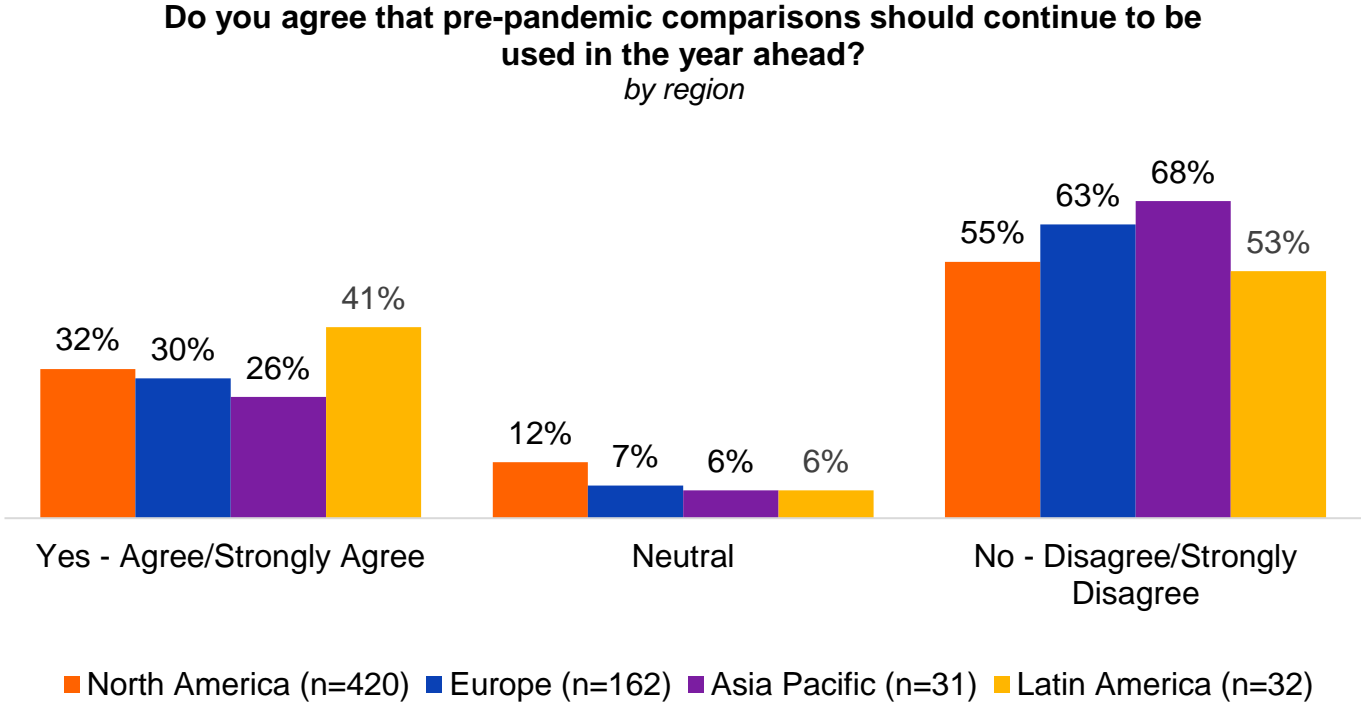


Q. For the global business travel industry, what is the relevance of continuing to compare and report performance in 2024 against pre-COVID levels of 2019? Do you believe pre-pandemic comparisons should continue to be used as indicators for the industry in the year ahead? **SELECT ONE.**

A similar share of buyers (57%) and suppliers (61%) feel pre-pandemic benchmarks have limited relevance today.



# Regardless of Region, Business Travel Professionals Question Value of Pre-Pandemic Benchmarks



Regardless of region, business travel professionals question the value of pre-pandemic benchmarks. In all four regions surveyed, a majority of respondents disagree with using pre-pandemic benchmarks in the year ahead.

Q. For the global business travel industry, what is the relevance of continuing to compare and report performance in 2024 against pre-COVID levels of 2019? Do you believe pre-pandemic comparisons should continue to be used as indicators for the industry in the year ahead? **SELECT ONE.**

# The **Travel Buyer's** Perspective

## Sales and Account Management Trips Remain the Largest Category




Approximately what percentage of travel spend will be allocated to each of the following types of trips in 2024?  
*Averages calculated from open-end responses*

 **32%**  
Sales/account management meetings with current or prospective customers

 **20%**  
Internal company meetings with colleagues

 **15%**  
External Conferences, trade shows, or industry events

 **12%**  
Service trips (such as repairs, training or equipment installation) with current customers

 **8%**  
Employee training or development

 **7%**  
Supplier meetings

**Other 6%**

The **COVID-19 pandemic** not only impacted the *amount* of business travel. It also impacted the *reasons* why employees travel. With growing acceptance of remote and hybrid work, companies were expected to rely on internal meetings to foster collaboration among an increasingly dispersed employee base.

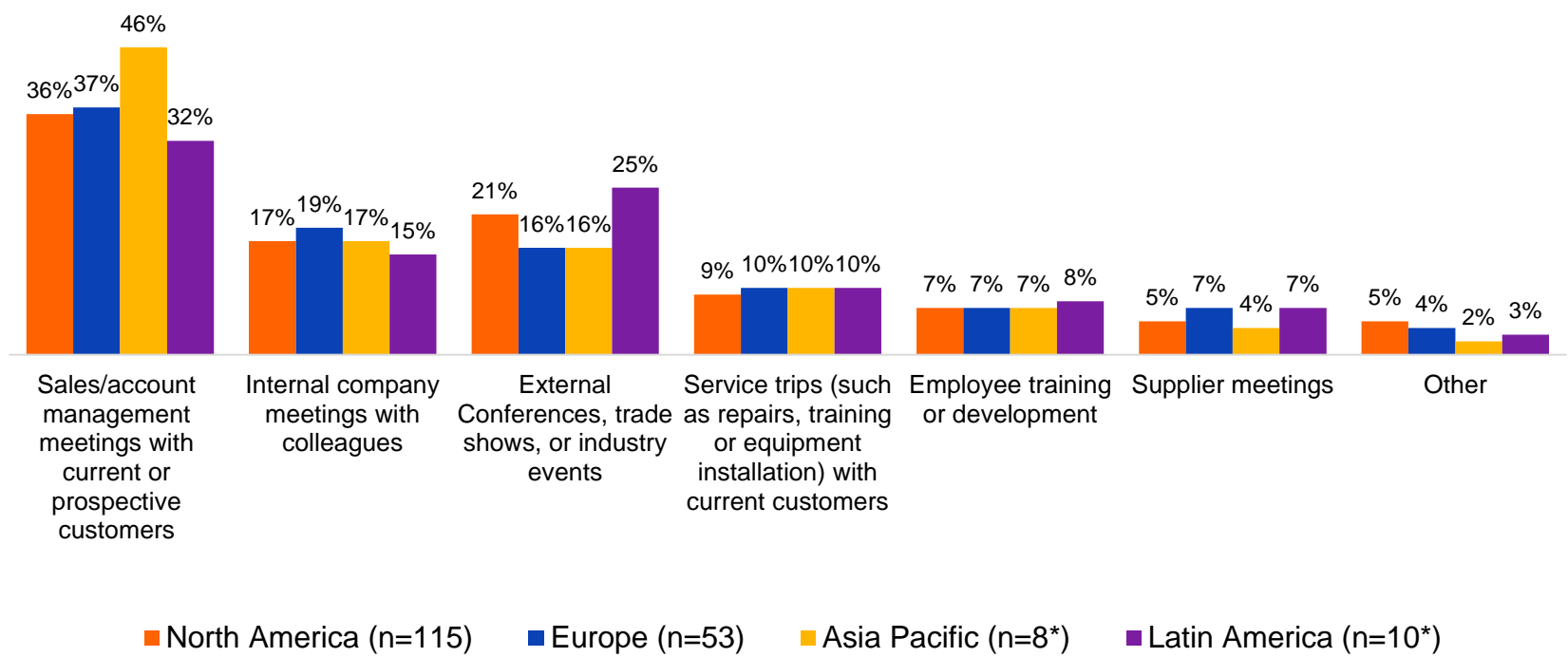
While these trends have occurred to some degree, they have not dramatically altered the overall makeup of business trips. Sales and account management trips still represent the largest category – and buyers expect this will continue in the future. On average, buyers estimate these trips will account for 32% of their company’s business trips this year. This is substantially higher than the estimate for internal meetings (20%).

Q. Approximately what percentage of travel spend will be allocated to each of the following types of trips in 2024?  
For each box, please enter a percentage. Your best estimate is fine. If you don't know, please enter "DK" or "don't know"  
Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=188)

# The **Travel Buyer's** Perspective

## Across the World, Sales/Account Management Trips Are Most Common

Approximately what percentage of travel spend will be allocated to each of the following types of trips in 2024?  
*averages by region*



In all regions surveyed, sales/account management trips are expected to predominate. In each region, these trips are expected to happen more often than any other type this year.

Q. Approximately what percentage of travel spend will be allocated to each of the following types of trips in 2024?  
For each box, please enter a percentage. Your best estimate is fine. If you don't know, please enter "DK" or "don't know"  
Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals

## What do you predict will be the most significant issues faced by business travel in 2024?

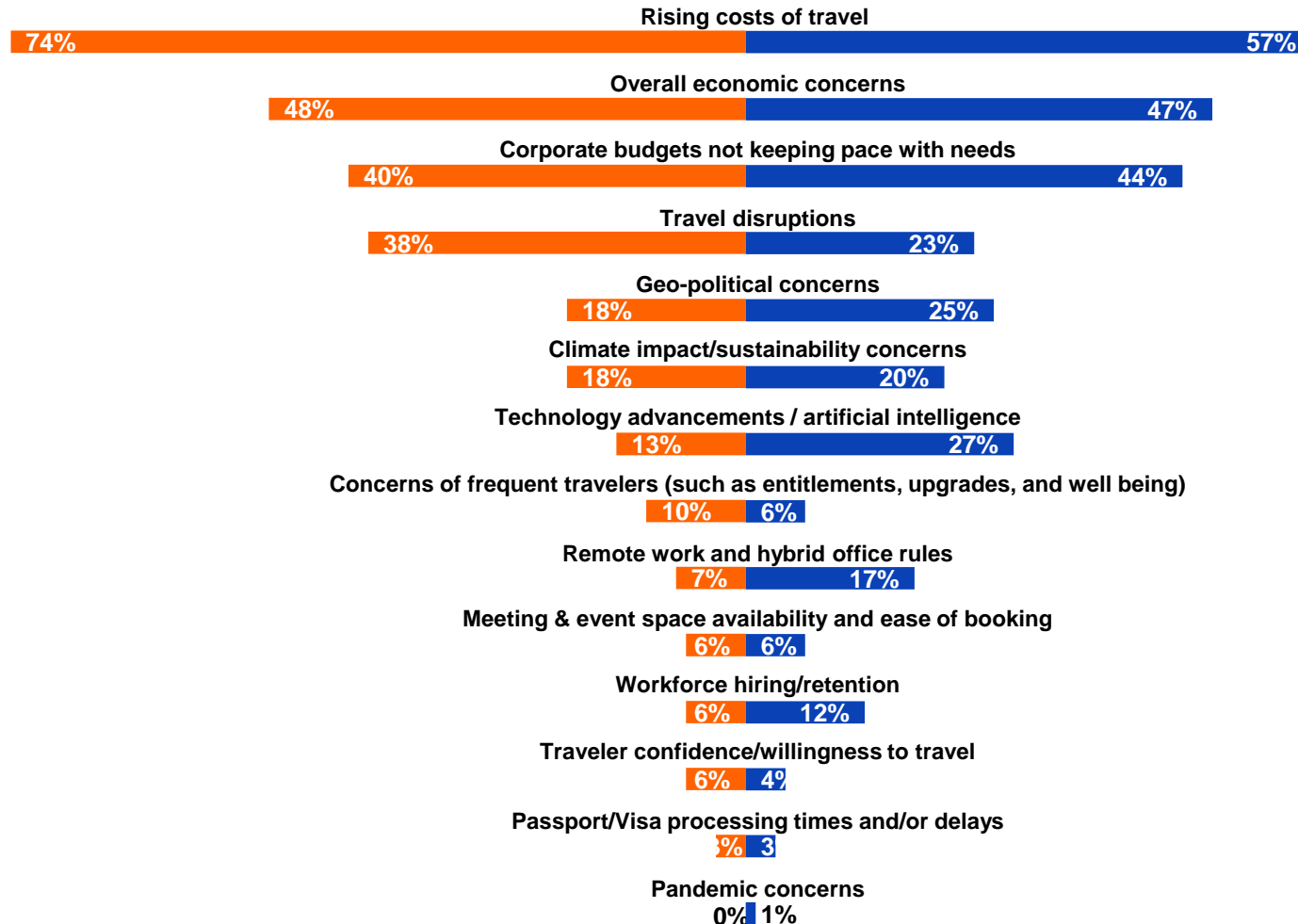
% included in top 3 (out of 14 possible)



travel buyers  
(n=230)



travel suppliers/TMCs  
(n=242)



Despite an improving economic outlook, falling inflation, and receding fears about a possible recession, **financial concerns remain top of mind for business travel professionals in 2024.**

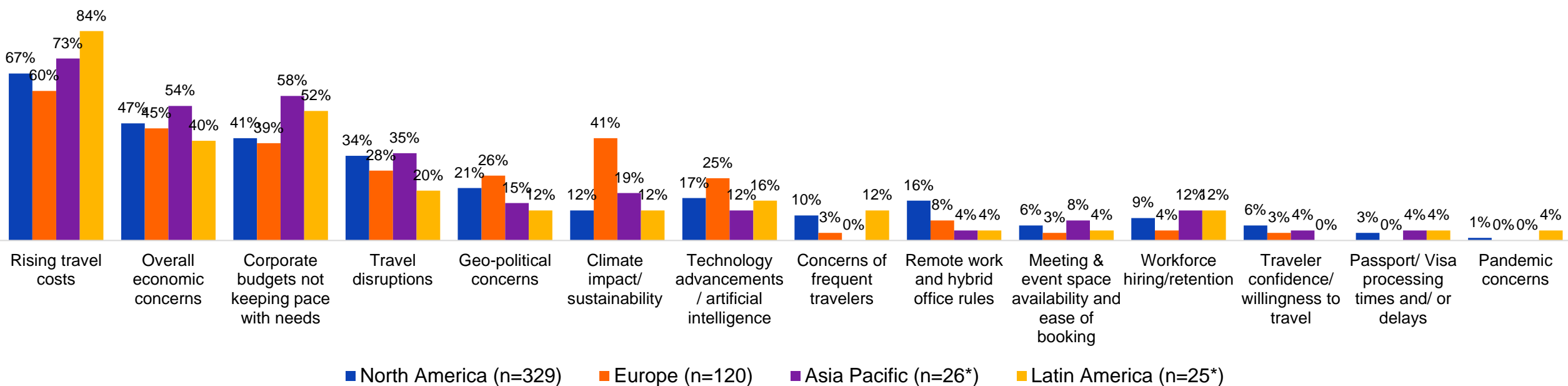
Asked to pick the three most significant issues facing the industry this year, buyers and suppliers commonly pick rising costs of travel and overall economic concerns.

Buyers are more likely than suppliers to pick rising costs and travel disruptions. Suppliers are more likely to pick technology advancements and remote work and hybrid office rules.

# Across the World, Business Travel Professionals Have Fairly Similar Perceptions of the Issues Facing the Industry in 2024

What do you predict will be the most significant issues faced by business travel in 2024?

% included in top 3 by region



Q. What do you predict will be the most significant issues faced by business travel in 2024? **SELECT AND RANK YOUR TOP 3**

**\*indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America**

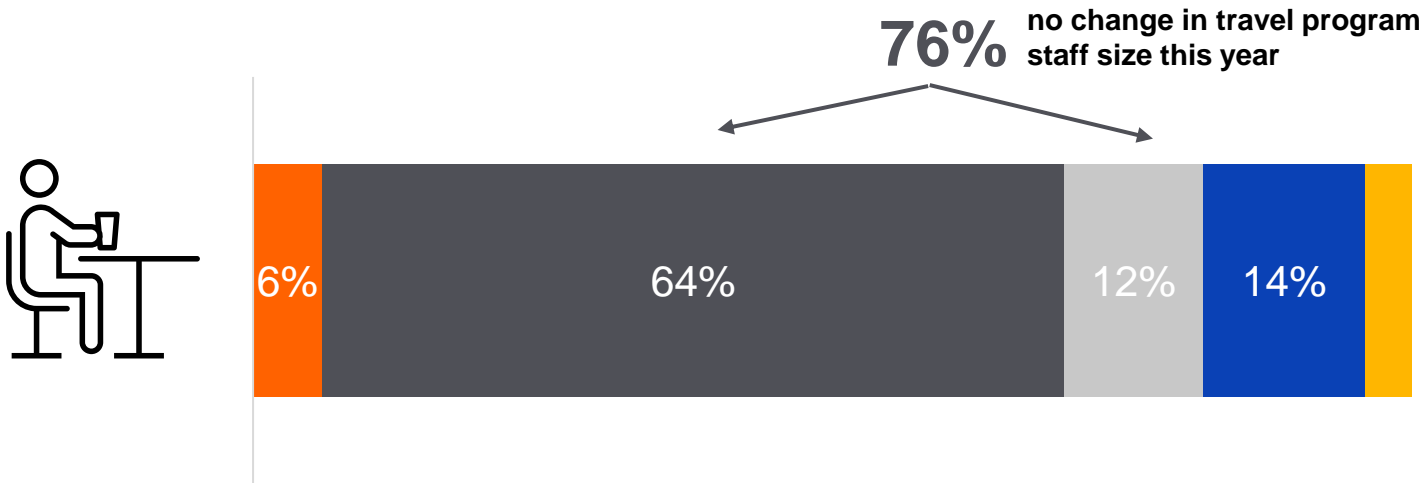


# The **Travel Buyer's** Perspective

## Few Travel Programs Expect to Add Staff This Year

Do you expect the staffing level of your internal travel program team to increase in 2024?

- I expect staffing level to decrease
- I expect no change
- No change on my team, but we are partnering more with internal teams
- I expect staffing level to increase
- Don't know/Not applicable



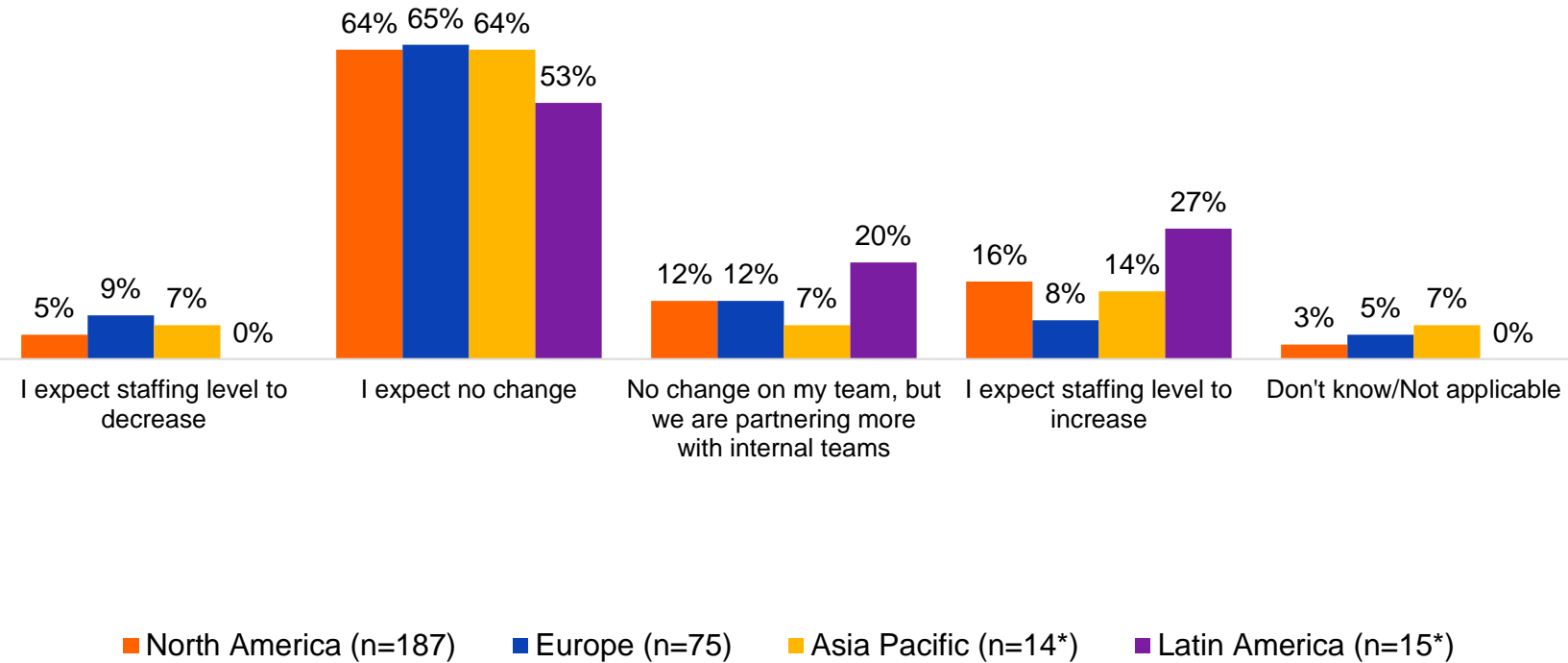
**Corporate travel management is as complex than ever.** However, few travel programs expect to add additional staff to help manage the complexity. Three-quarters of buyers (76%) expect their travel team's staff will not change this year. Only 14% expect their team will add staff.

Q. Do you expect the staffing level of your internal travel program team to increase in 2024?  
**Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=295)**

# The **Travel Buyer's** Perspective

## Regardless of Region, Most Travel Programs Do Not Expect to Add Staff

Do you expect the staffing level of your internal travel program team to increase in 2024?  
*by region*



Regardless of region, most travel programs do not expect to add staff. In each region surveyed, a majority of travel buyers expect their program's staff size will not change this year.

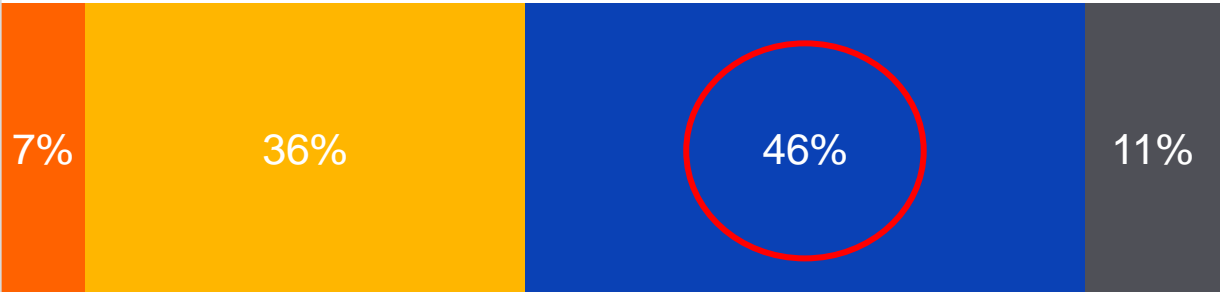
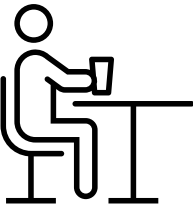
Q. Do you expect the staffing level of your internal travel program team to increase in 2024?  
**Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals**  
**\*indicates small sample size (n<30) in Asia Pacific and Latin America**

# The **Travel Supplier's** Perspective

## Travel Suppliers Continue to Re-Staff

Do you expect the staffing level of your overall company to increase in 2024?

■ I expect staffing level to decrease   ■ I expect no change   ■ I expect staffing level to increase   ■ Don't know/Not applicable



Q. Do you expect the staffing level of your company overall company to increase in 2024?

**Note: Question only displayed to travel suppliers/TMC professionals (n=236)**

While *travel program* staffing is expected to remain flat, many **suppliers expect to grow**. At the height of the pandemic, travel suppliers – such as airlines, hotels, and travel agencies—were forced to reduce staff. Even as travel has bounced back, these companies have had difficulty re-staffing in a tight labor market with low unemployment and rising wages.

These companies continue to add staff. Of the *travel suppliers* who responded to the survey, almost half (46%) expect their company will add staff this year. Only 7% expect their company will cut staff.

# Salaries Are Expected to Remain Top Staffing Barrier– But Less So Than in the Past

What are the biggest barriers that the global business travel industry faces in achieving a robust, diverse, and sustainable workforce?  
*% included in top 5*



travel buyers  
(n=230)



travel suppliers/TMCs  
(n=196)



The business travel industry continues to face staffing barriers.

Most buyers (51%) and suppliers (56%) say unattractive salaries and benefits will be a staffing barrier this year. While the most commonly indicated barrier, these figures are down from April 2023 when two-thirds of buyers (66%-- ) and almost three-quarters of suppliers (72%-- ) indicated it was a barrier.

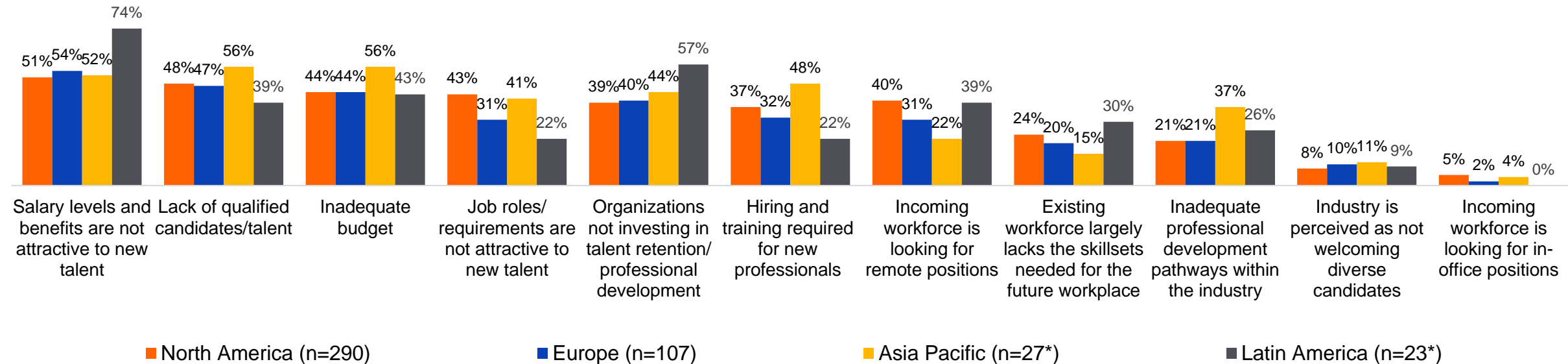
While this barrier has eased, others have not. The share of respondents who say lack of qualified candidates is a barrier remains unchanged from April. Training and professional development programs are needed to prepare a new generation of business travel leaders.

Q. In your view, what will be the biggest barriers that the global business travel industry will face in 2024 toward achieving a robust, diverse, and sustainable workforce? **SELECT YOUR TOP 5 AND RANK IN ORDER, WITH ONE BEING THE GREATEST BARRIER.**

Source: GBTA Business Travel Recovery Poll  
Results, April 2023

# Industry Staffing Barriers Are Fairly Similar Across the World

What are the biggest barriers that the global business travel industry faces in achieving a robust, diverse, and sustainable workforce?  
*% included in top 5 by region*



Q. In your view, what will be the biggest barriers that the global business travel industry will face in 2024 toward achieving a robust, diverse, and sustainable workforce?  
**SELECT YOUR TOP 5 AND RANK IN ORDER, WITH ONE BEING THE GREATEST BARRIER.**





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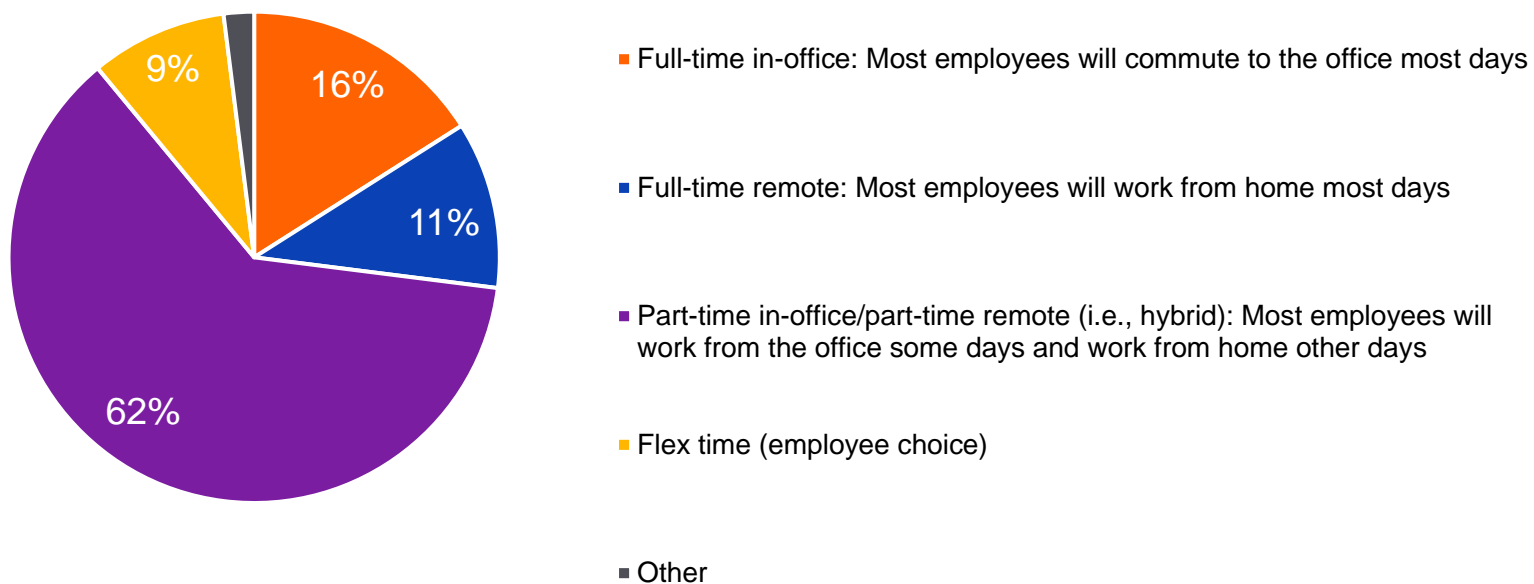
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# Changing Work Norms, Changing Travel Programs?



# Hybrid Work Remains Common in the Travel Industry

Which of the following best describes your company's permanent return to office/work-from-home policy in 2024?



**Most business travel professionals (62%) say their company has a hybrid work policy.** They are expected to work at an office some days but are allowed to work from home other days.

Q. Which of the following best describes your company's permanent return to office/work-from-home policy in 2024?

# Does the Travel Industry Offer Less WFH Flexibility?

Which of the following best describes your company's permanent return to office/work-from-home policy in 2024?



Travel Buyers (n=282)

11% Full-time in-office

7% Full-time remote

68% Hybrid

11% Flex time (employee choice)



Travel Suppliers/TMCs (n=225)

23% Full-time in-office

15% Full-time remote

54% Hybrid

7% Flex time (employee choice)

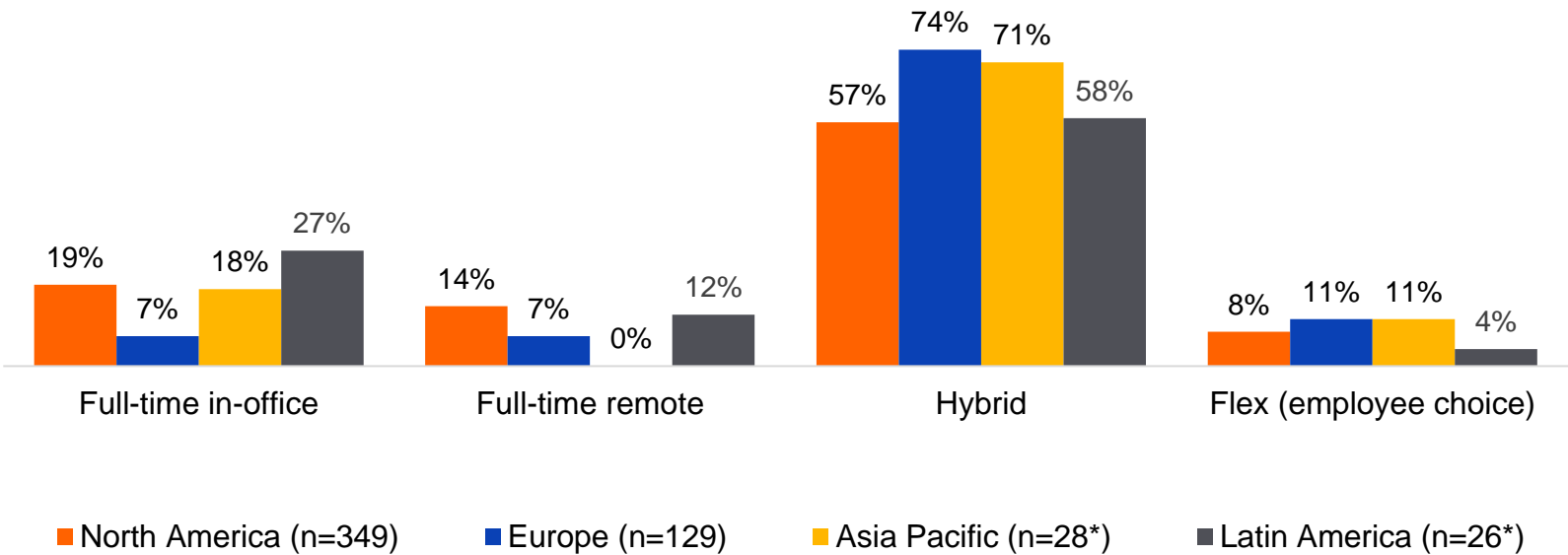
Travel companies appear to offer less work-from-home flexibility. One-quarter of respondents who work for a *travel supplier/TMC* (23%) say their company has a full-time **in-office** policy. This is considerably higher than the share among *buyers* (11%) who work across a broad range of industries.

Certain employees—such aircraft mechanics and hotel concierges—*have* to work from a particular location. These employees make up a large share of the workforce. Travel companies might have a consistent policy that applies equally to *all* employees -- even those who *could* work from home in theory but this might put them at a disadvantage. As shown on page 22, two in five suppliers (39%) say work-from-office requirements will be a barrier to staffing this year.

Q. Which of the following best describes your company's permanent return to office/work-from-home policy in 2024?  
SELECT ONE

# Hybrid Work Policies Are More Common in Europe and APAC

Which of the following best describes your company's permanent return to office/work-from-home policy in 2024?



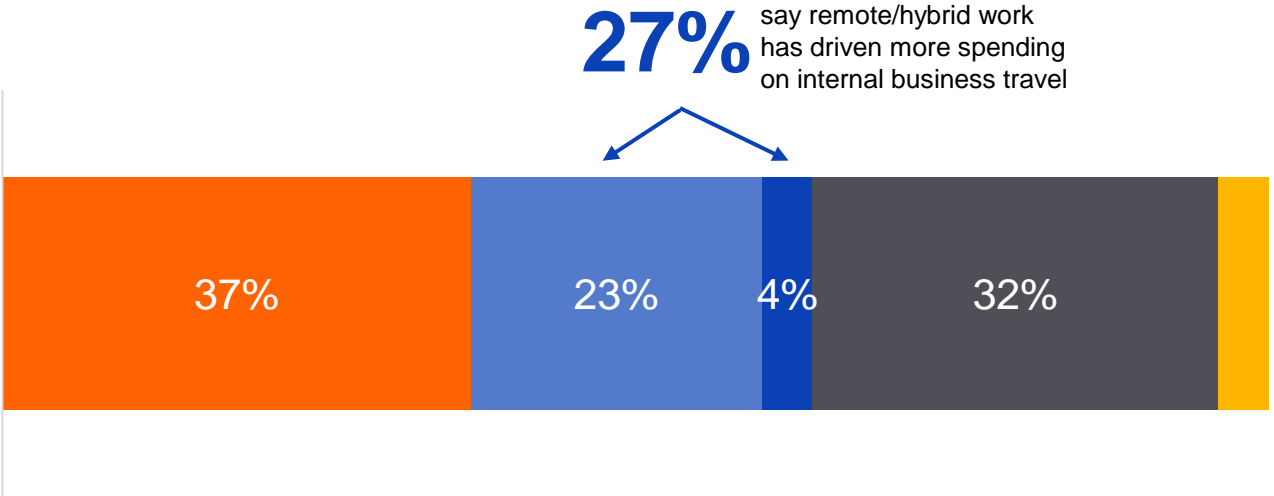
Q. Which of the following best describes your company's permanent return to office/work-from-home policy in 2024?  
SELECT ONE

For business travel professionals worldwide, hybrid work is the most common scenario. However, it is more common in Europe (74%) and Asia Pacific (71%) than in North America (57%) and Latin America (58%).

# Only One-Quarter of Respondents Say Their Company Has Seen More Spending on “Internal Meeting” Business Travel as a Result of Remote/Hybrid Work

Has remote/hybrid work driven more spending on “internal meeting” business travel?

- Our employee travel expenses are about the same. We haven’t seen much change
- Our employee travel expenses are now somewhat higher as a result
- Our employee travel expenses are now significantly higher as a result
- Not applicable/this isn’t an issue for our company
- Other



**Remote work was expected to drive internal business travel.** With an increasingly dispersed workforce, companies were expected to approve more “internal meeting” business travel to bring employees together and foster collaboration.

However, it is not clear if this has happened. Of the business travel professionals who say their company has a remote/hybrid work policy, only one-quarter (27%) have seen more spending on “internal meeting” business travel as a result.

One possible reason is that **full-time remote** work policies are rather uncommon (see page 25). Companies are more likely to have hybrid policies under which employees are expected to report to the office some days. As a result, employees can collaborate on a regular basis without needing to take business trips in order to do so.

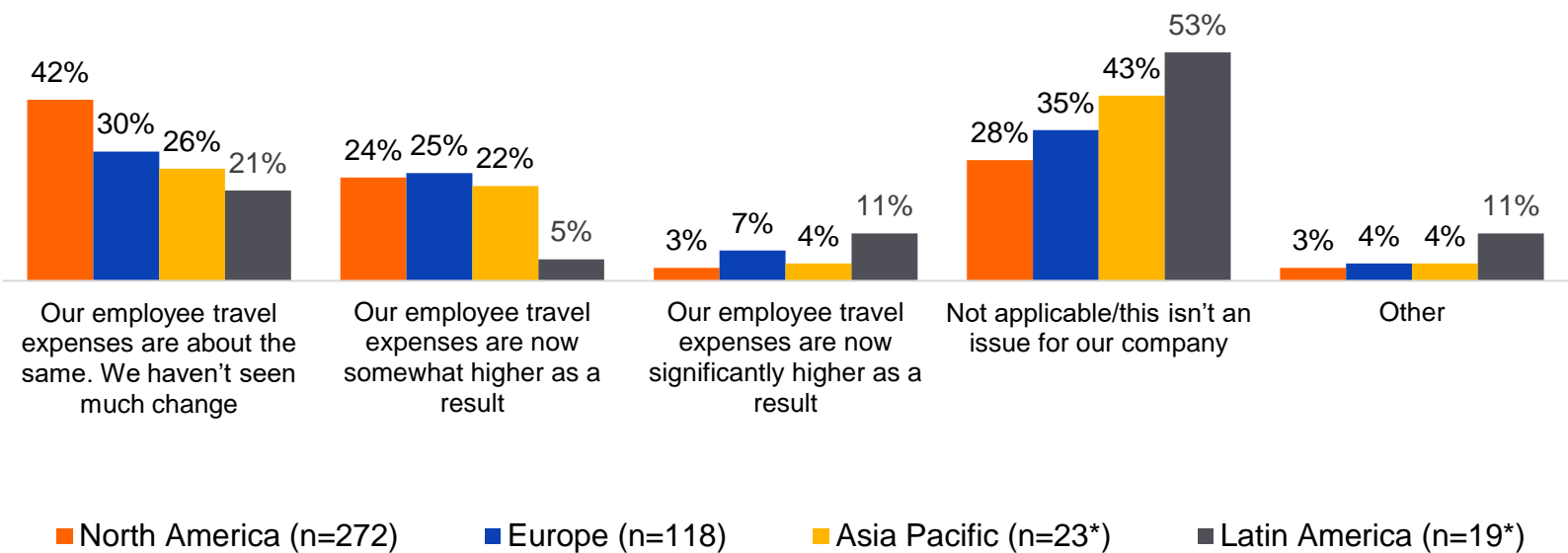
Q. To what degree has your company experienced an increase in “internal meeting” business travel spending to accommodate employees who are now commuting into a company office location from out of town because of a remote or hybrid work model? **SELECT ONE**

**Note: Question only displayed to respondents who say their company has a remote or hybrid work policy (n=435)**



# Regardless of Region, Remote/Hybrid Work Generally Has Not Driven More “Internal Meeting” Travel

Has remote/hybrid work driven more spending on “internal meeting” business travel?  
by region



In each region surveyed, only about one-quarter of respondents say their company has seen more spending on “internal meeting” travel as a result of remote/hybrid work.

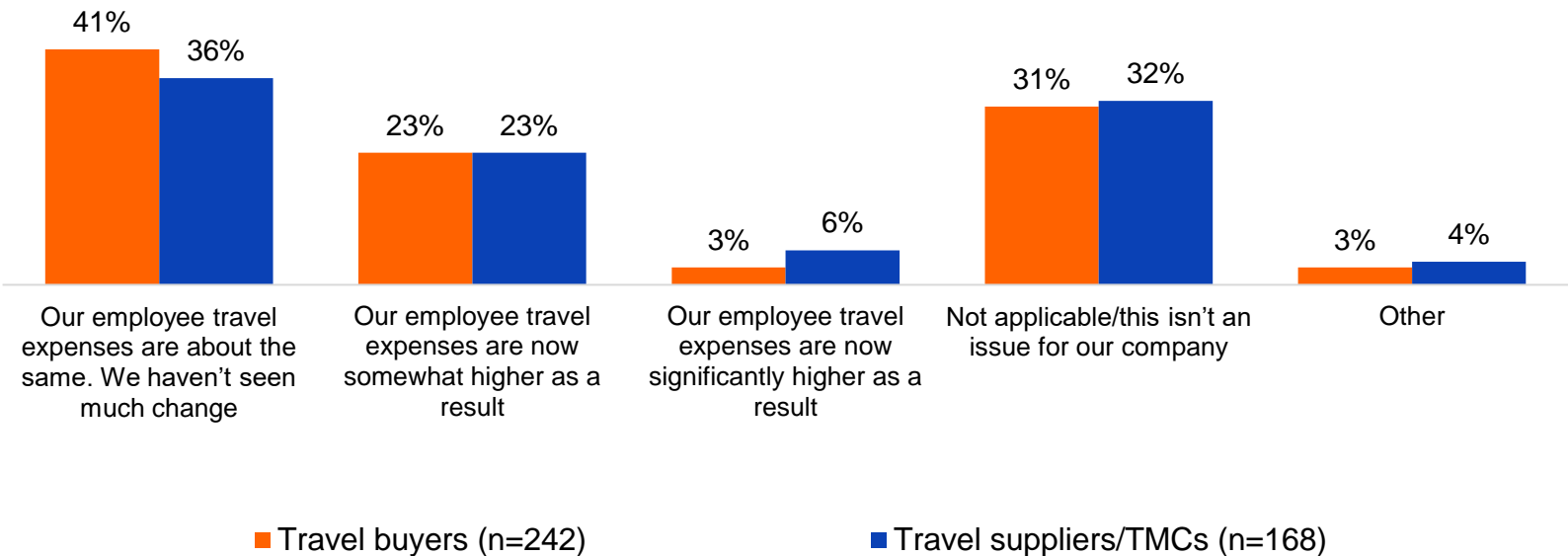
Q. To what degree has your company experienced an increase in “internal meeting” business travel spending to accommodate employees who are now commuting into a company office location from out of town because of a remote or hybrid work model? **SELECT ONE**

**Note: Question only displayed to respondents who say their company has a remote or hybrid work policy**

**\*indicates small sample size in Asia Pacific and Latin America**

# Buyers Are More Likely Than Suppliers to Say Their Company's Spending on "Internal Meeting" Business Travel Hasn't Changed

Has remote/hybrid work driven more spending on "internal meeting" business travel?  
*by respondent type*

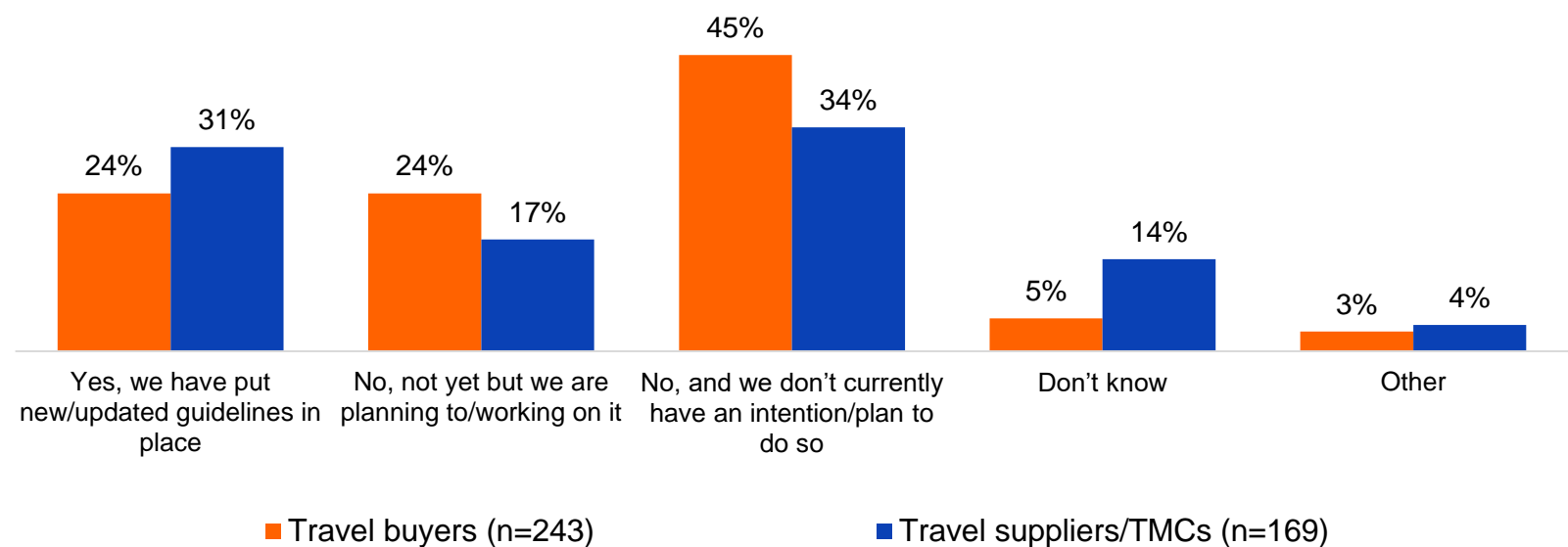


Buyers (41%) are slightly more likely than suppliers (36%) to say their company's spending on "internal meeting" business travel has not changed as a result of remote/hybrid work.

Q. To what degree has your company experienced an increase in "internal meeting" business travel spending to accommodate employees who are now commuting into a company office location from out of town because of a remote or hybrid work model? **SELECT ONE**  
**Note: Question only displayed to respondents who say their company has a remote or hybrid work policy**

# Remote/Hybrid Workplace Approaches Prompt Half of Travel Buyers and Suppliers to Update Their Company Travel Policy

Has your company revised its travel policy/program to account for remote/hybrid work?  
*by respondent type*



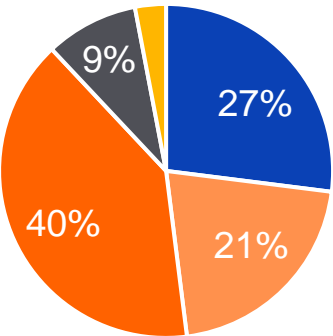
Given changing norms in workplace, half of buyers (48%) – and an identical number of suppliers (48%)—say their company has either updated travel policies to account for remote/hybrid work or intend to do so.

Q. Has your company added or revised its business travel policy/program as a result of your hybrid/remote work environment?  
**Note: Question only displayed to respondents who indicated their company has a remote/hybrid work policy**

# Permissible Travel and Expense Reimbursement Tops the List for Remote/Hybrid-Focused Policy Revisions

Has your company revised its travel policy/program to account for remote/hybrid work?

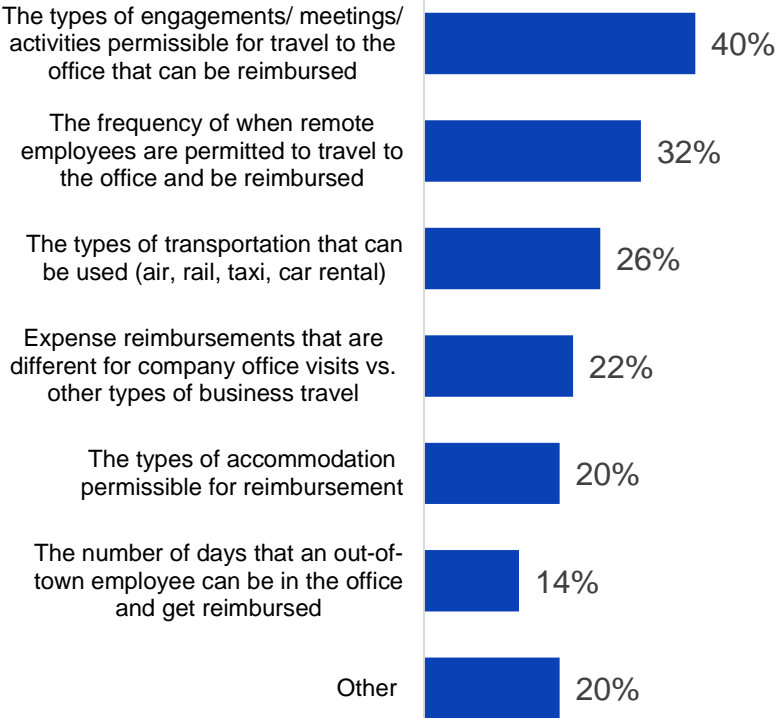
Total buyers & suppliers



- Yes, we have put new/updated guidelines in place
- No, not yet but we are planning to/working on it
- No, and we don't currently have an intention/plan to do so
- Don't know
- Other



What have policy revisions covered?



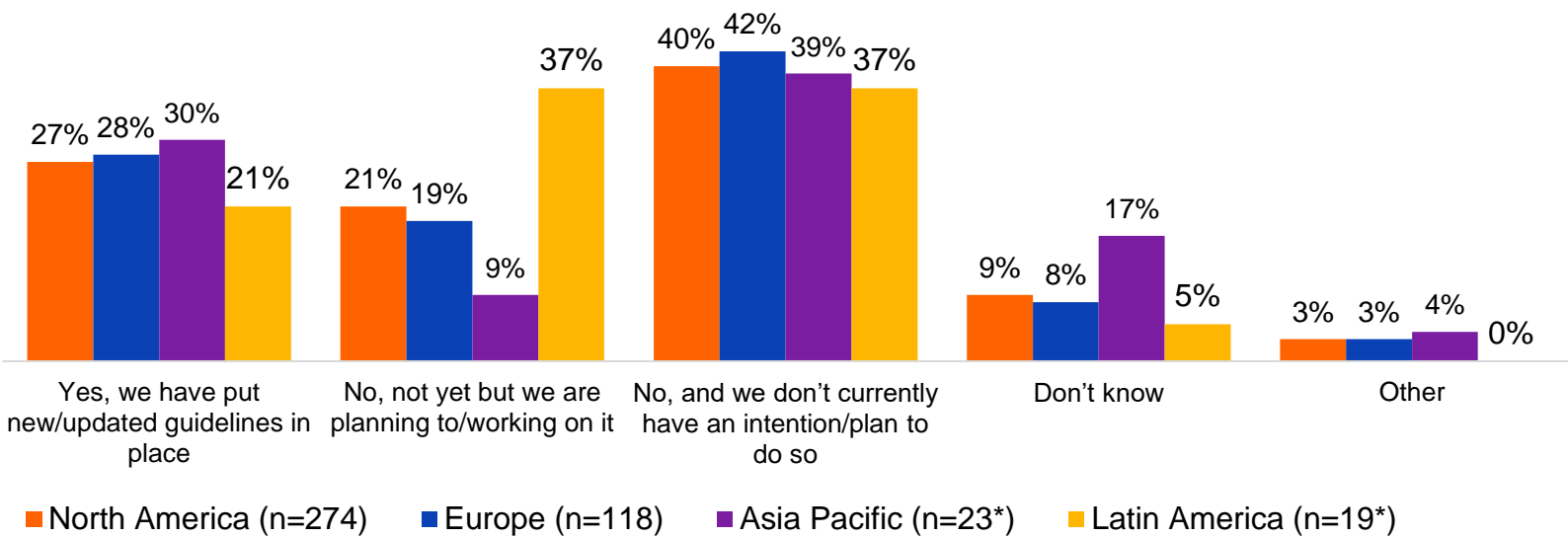
Q. Has your company added or revised its business travel policy/program as a result of your hybrid/remote work environment?  
**Note: Question only displayed to respondents who indicated their company has a remote/hybrid work policy (n=437)**

Q. If you have implemented or are considering changes to your travel policy or program, what do/or do you plan for the revisions to cover for remote/hybrid employees for coming into the office? SELECT ONE.  
**Note: Question only displayed to respondents who indicated their company has updated its travel program/policies to account for remote work**

Almost half of respondents say their company has revised its travel policy to account for remote/hybrid work (27%) or say their company plans to do so (21%). When companies have revised policies, these revisions have focused on the types of meetings for which employees can travel to the office (40%) and how often remote employees can travel to the office (32%).

# A Regional Look at Travel Policies Being Revised to Accommodate Remote/Hybrid Work

Has your company revised its travel policy/program to account for remote/hybrid work?  
*by respondent type*



In each region surveyed, fewer than one-third of respondents say their company has updated its travel policies as a result of remote/hybrid work.

Q. Has your company added or revised its business travel policy/program as a result of your hybrid/remote work environment?  
**Note: Question only displayed to respondents who indicated their company has a remote/hybrid work policy**



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