



GBTA Global Business
Travel Association

Many Voices. One Purpose.

GBTA Business Travel Industry Outlook Poll

October 30, 2023



Methodology

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

- Data collection from October 11 through October 19, 2023
- An email invitation was sent to 17,286 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, 865 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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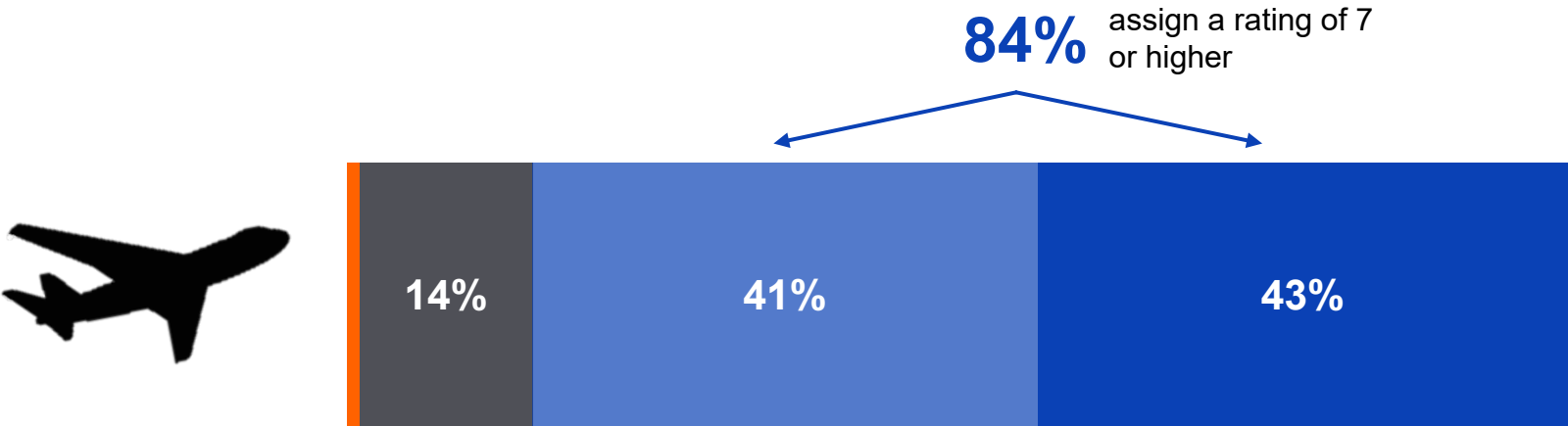
A Look Back at 2023, A Look Ahead to 2024



Business Travel Has Mostly – But Not Fully – Recovered

How would you rate the current state of your company’s business travel recovery in 2023 (compared to 2019 levels)?

1-3: Not recovered 4-6: Moderately recovered 7-8: Mostly recovered 9-10: Largely recovered/Fully recovered



Q. How would you rate the current state of your company’s business travel recovery in 2023 (compared to 2019 levels)? (n=818)

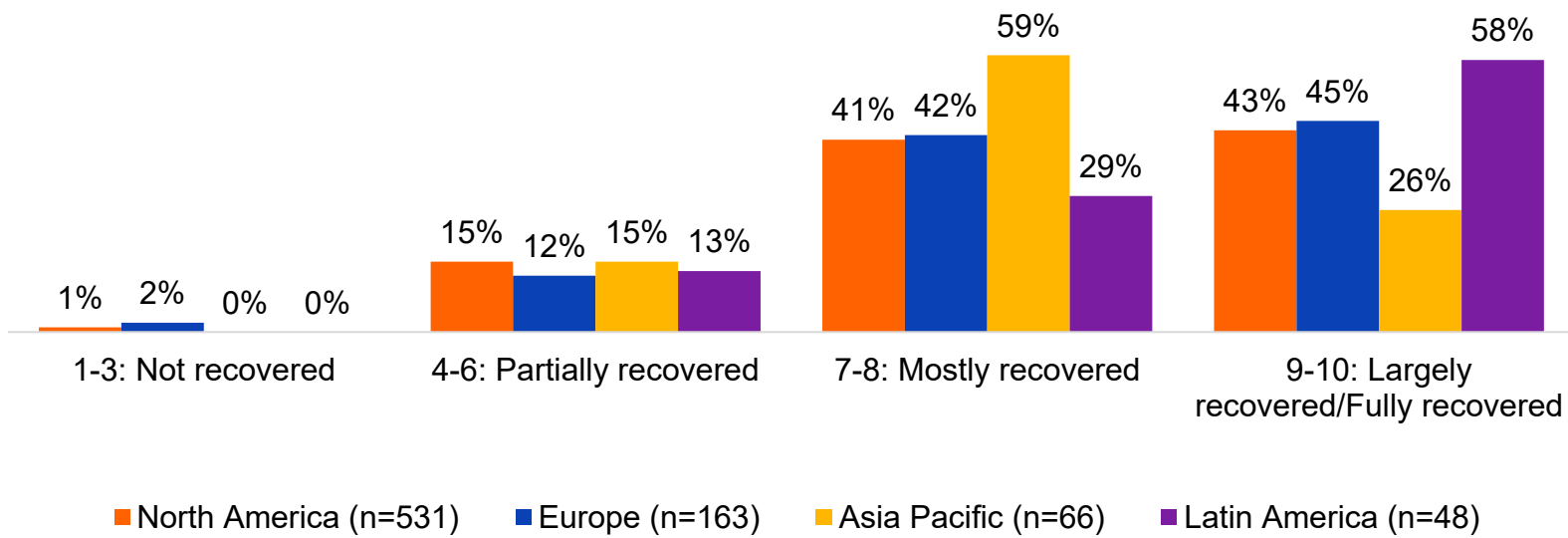
Business travel nears full recovery. Business travel professionals were asked to rate the “current state of [their] company’s business travel recovery” compared to pre-COVID (2019). They were shown a 10-point scale where 10 indicates full recovery.

More than four in five (84%) assign a rating of seven or higher—indicating their company’s business travel has mostly recovered—including a decent number (43%) who assign a rating of a nine or ten.

Across the World, Business Travel Recovers



How would you rate the current state of your company's business travel recovery in 2023 (compared to 2019 levels)?
by region

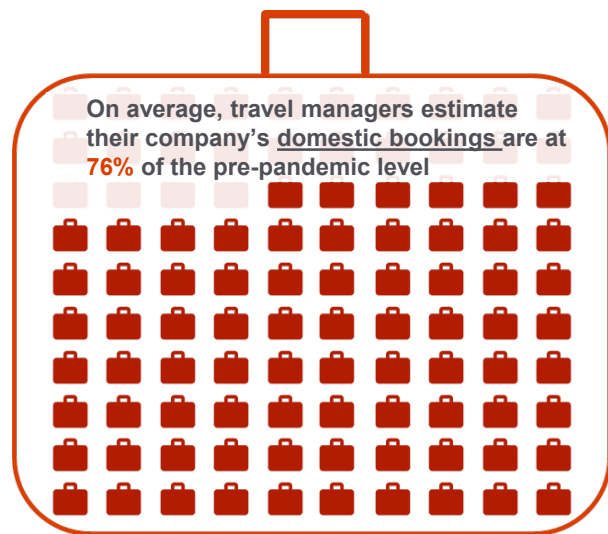


Across the world, business travel recovers. In each region, when asked to rate their company's business travel recovery, at least four in five respondents assign a rating of seven or higher.

Q. How would you rate the current state of your company's business travel recovery in 2023 (compared to 2019 levels)? (n=818)

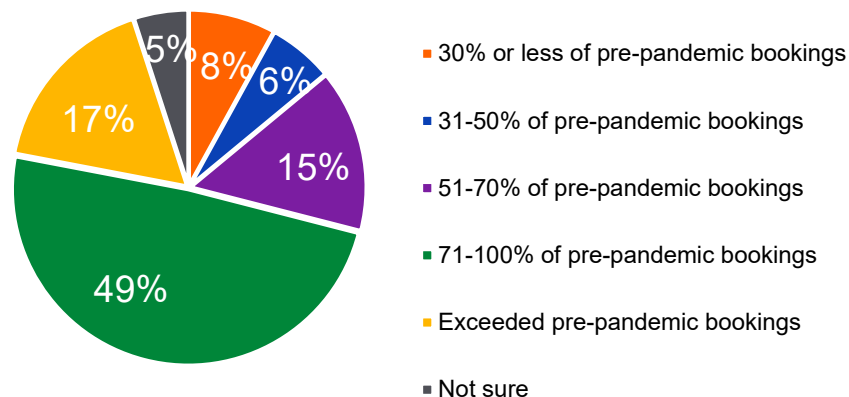
The Travel Buyer's Perspective

The State of Domestic Business Travel



Note: This average is an estimate. Respondents were given ranges in 10-point intervals and the average was calculated using the midpoints of these ranges

Thinking about domestic bookings, are travel programs currently at...?



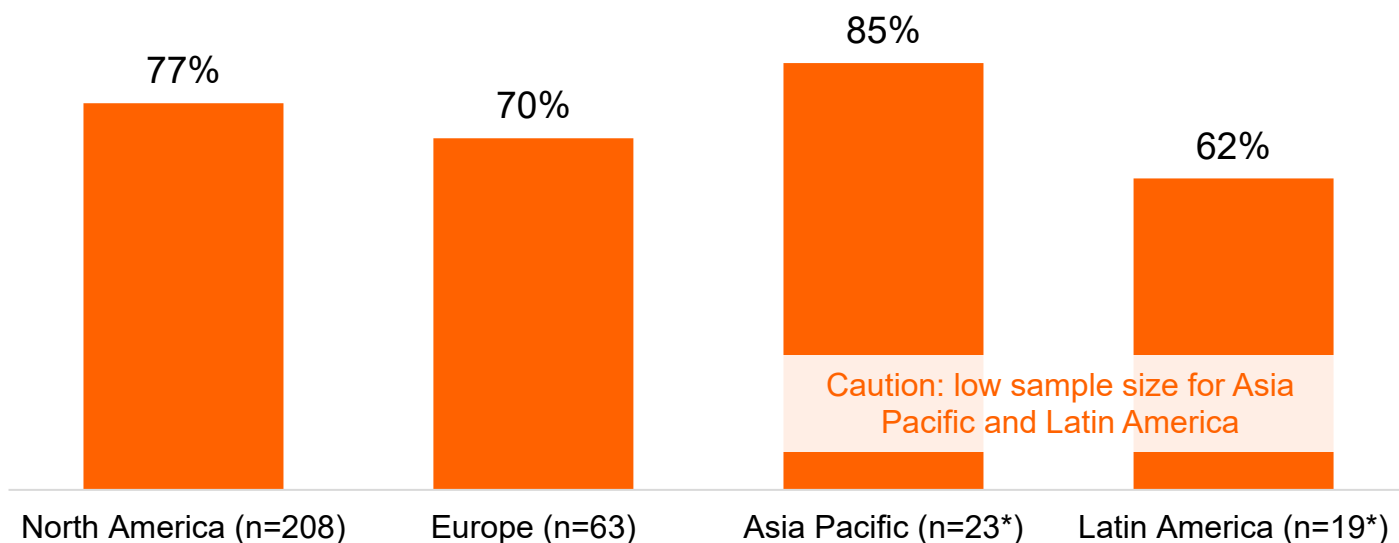
Q. Thinking about your company's current domestic business travel bookings, how do they compare to the pre-pandemic (2019) level? Would you say your company is currently at...? **Your best estimate is fine. Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=316).**

Has the domestic business travel recovery stalled? On average, travel managers estimate their company's domestic bookings are at 76% of the pre-pandemic level. This is only up slightly from April's GBTA Business Travel Outlook Poll (72%). Nonetheless, business travel is largely back. Almost one in five travel buyers (17%) say their company's domestic volume has already *exceeded* the pre-COVID level. In addition, half of buyers say their company's domestic volume has recovered to more than 70% of the pre-COVID level.

The State of Domestic Business Travel (Cont.)

Thinking about domestic bookings, are travel programs currently at...?

estimated averages by region



Q. Thinking about your company's current domestic business travel bookings, how do they compare to the pre-pandemic (2019) level? Would you say your company is currently at...? Your best estimate is fine.

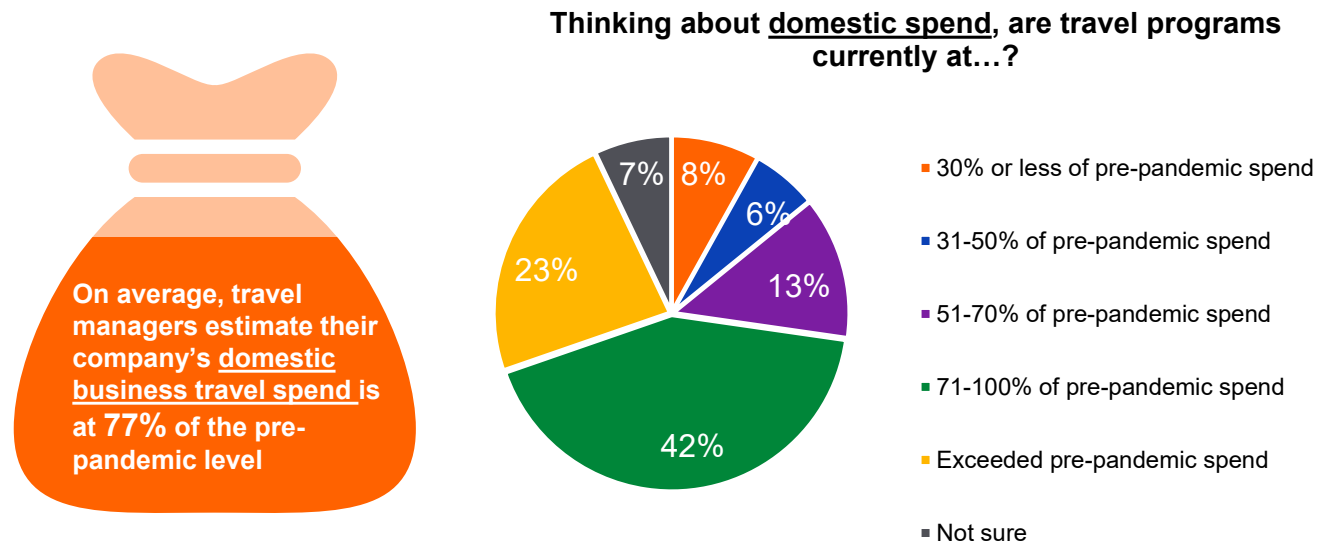
Note: Question only displayed to travel managers/procurement professionals

***indicates small sample size for travel buyers in Asia Pacific and Latin America**

Europe's domestic recovery makes up ground. On average, Europe-based travel managers estimate their company's domestic business travel bookings have recovered to 70% of the pre-pandemic level. This continues to lag the recovery in North America. However, the gap has narrowed slightly from the 10 percentage points seen in April's GBTA poll.

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

The State of Domestic Business Travel (Cont.)



Note: This average is an estimate. Respondents were given ranges in 10-point intervals and the average was calculated using the midpoints of these ranges

Q. Thinking about your company's current domestic business travel spend, how does it compare to the pre-pandemic (2019) level? Would you say your company is currently at...? **Your best estimate is fine.** Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=305).

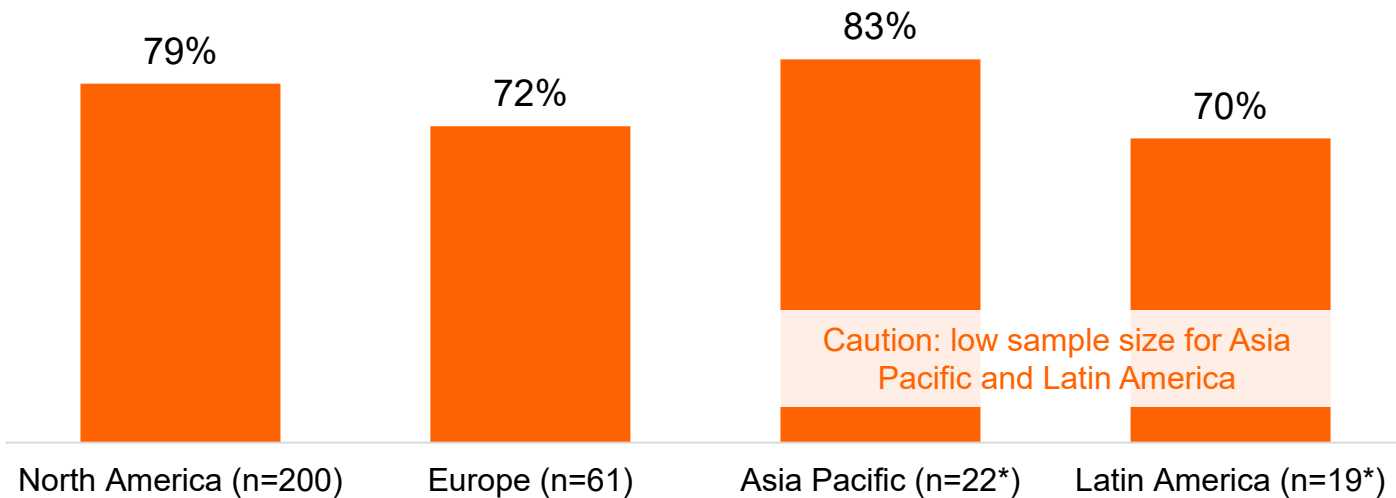
Business travel spending growth holds steady. On average, travel managers estimate their company's domestic business travel spend is at 77% of the pre-COVID level.

This is largely unchanged from April's poll (74%). This could reflect (1) slowing business travel growth and (2) slower travel price increases compared to last year.

The State of Domestic Business Travel (Cont.)

Thinking about domestic spend, are travel programs currently at...?

estimated averages by region

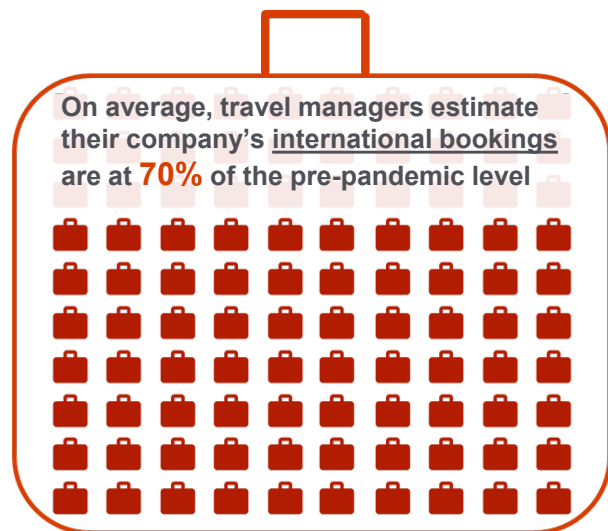


Q. Thinking about your company's current domestic business travel spend, how does it compare to the pre-pandemic (2019) level? Would you say your company is currently at...? **Your best estimate is fine.** Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals.

Domestic spend recovery remains consistent across regions. On average, respondents in each region say their domestic spend has recovered to at least 70% of the pre-COVID level.

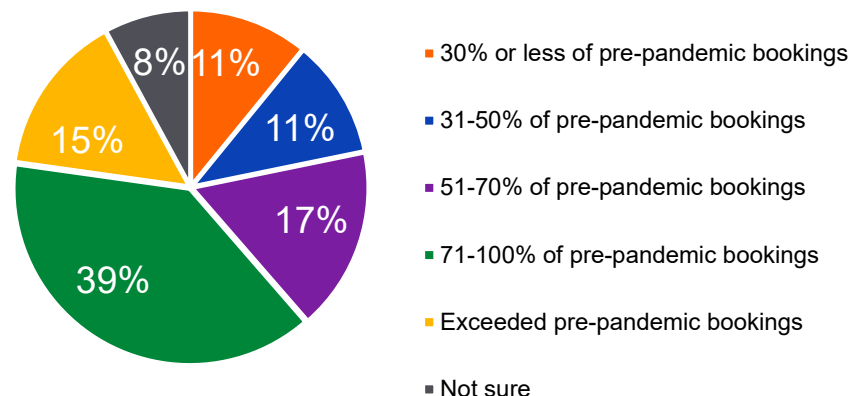
The Travel Buyer's Perspective

The State of International Business Travel



Note: This average is an estimate. Respondents were given ranges in 10-point intervals and the average was calculated using the midpoints of these ranges

Thinking about international bookings, are travel programs currently at...?



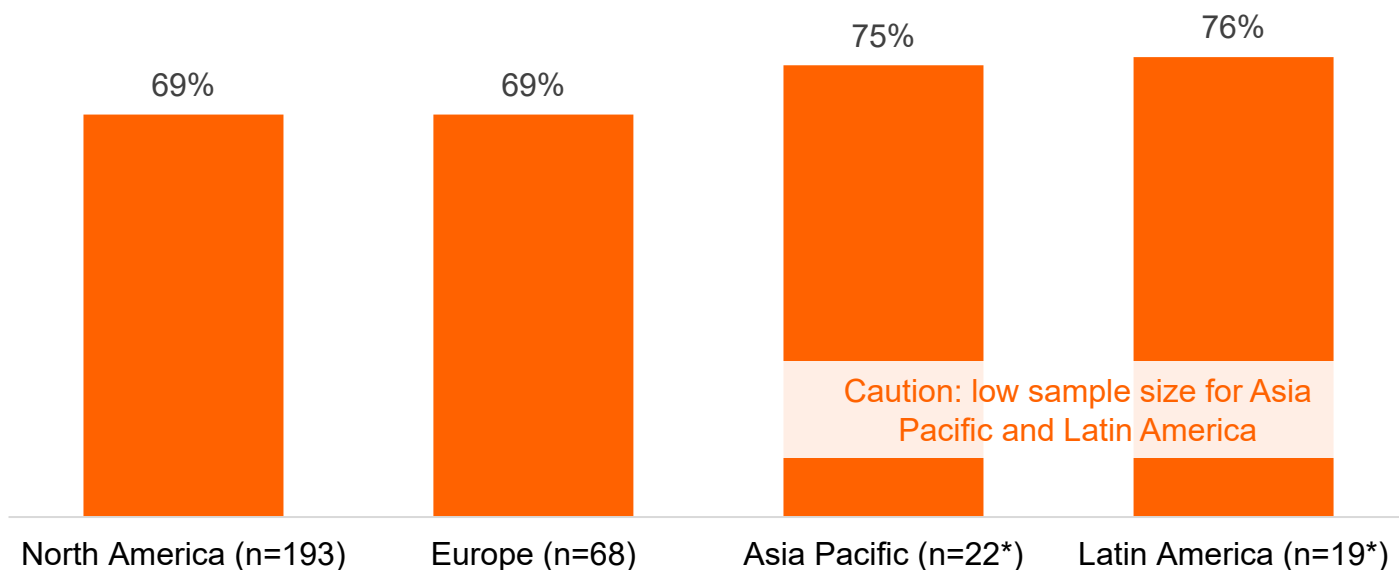
Q. Thinking about your company's current international business travel bookings, how do they compare to the pre-pandemic (2019) level? Would you say your company is currently at...? **Your best estimate is fine.** Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=248).

International business travel continues to make up ground. On average, travel managers estimate their company's international bookings have recovered to 70% of the pre-pandemic level, up from 63% in April 2023. In addition, 15% percent of travel buyers say their international bookings *exceed* the pre-COVID level.

While the 7-point gain suggests slowing growth, it still outpaces the 4-point gain in domestic bookings.

The State of International Business Travel (Cont.)

Thinking about international bookings, are travel programs currently at...?
estimated averages by region



Q. Thinking about your company's current international business travel bookings, how do they compare to the pre-pandemic (2019) level? Would you say your company is currently at...? Your best estimate is fine.

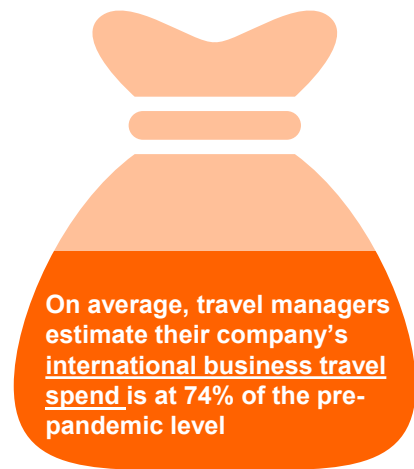
Note: Question only displayed to travel managers/procurement professionals

***indicates small sample size for travel buyers in Asia Pacific and Latin America**

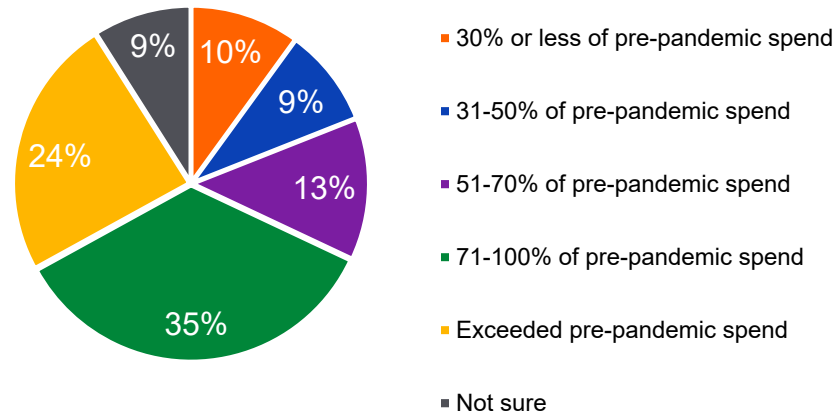
The international recovery is consistent across the world. In every region, international bookings have recovered to at least two-thirds of the pre-COVID level.

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

The State of International Business Travel (Cont.)



Thinking about international spend, are travel programs currently at...?



Note: This average is an estimate. Respondents were given ranges in 10-point intervals and the average was calculated using the midpoints of these ranges

Q. Thinking about your company's current international business travel spend, how does it compare to the pre-pandemic (2019) level? Would you say your company is currently at...? **Your best estimate is fine.** Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=299).

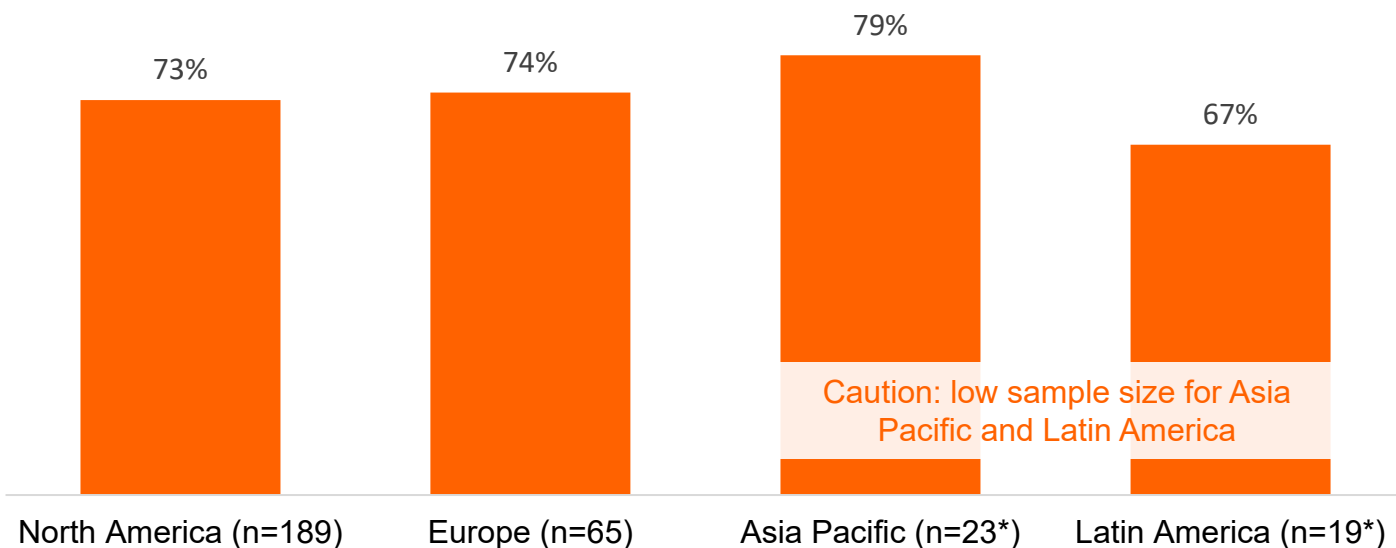
On average, travel managers estimate their company's international business travel spend has recovered to 74% of the pre-COVID level.

This is up from 66% in April's GBTA poll.

The State of International Business Travel (Cont.)

Thinking about international spend, are travel programs currently at...?

estimated averages by region



Q. Thinking about your company's current international business travel spend, how does it compare to the pre-pandemic (2019) level? Would you say your company is currently at...? Your best estimate is fine.

Note: Question only displayed to travel managers/procurement professionals

***indicates small sample size for travel buyers in Asia Pacific and Latin America (n<30)**

There are only minor regional differences when it comes to the recovery of international spend. Most above 70% and nearing 80%.

Overall, Economic and Budget Concerns Perceived as Biggest Business Travel Barriers

What do you perceive as the most significant barriers faced by business travel in 2023?

multiple answers allowed



69%

Corporate budgets not keeping pace with rising costs of travel



63%

Inflation/recession concerns



44%

Geopolitical events



38%

Travel disruptions



28%

Workforce hiring/retention



22%

Climate impact concerns



15%

Travel confidence/
willingness to travel



6%

Pandemic concerns

Other

7%

At the start of 2023, economists widely predicted a recession.

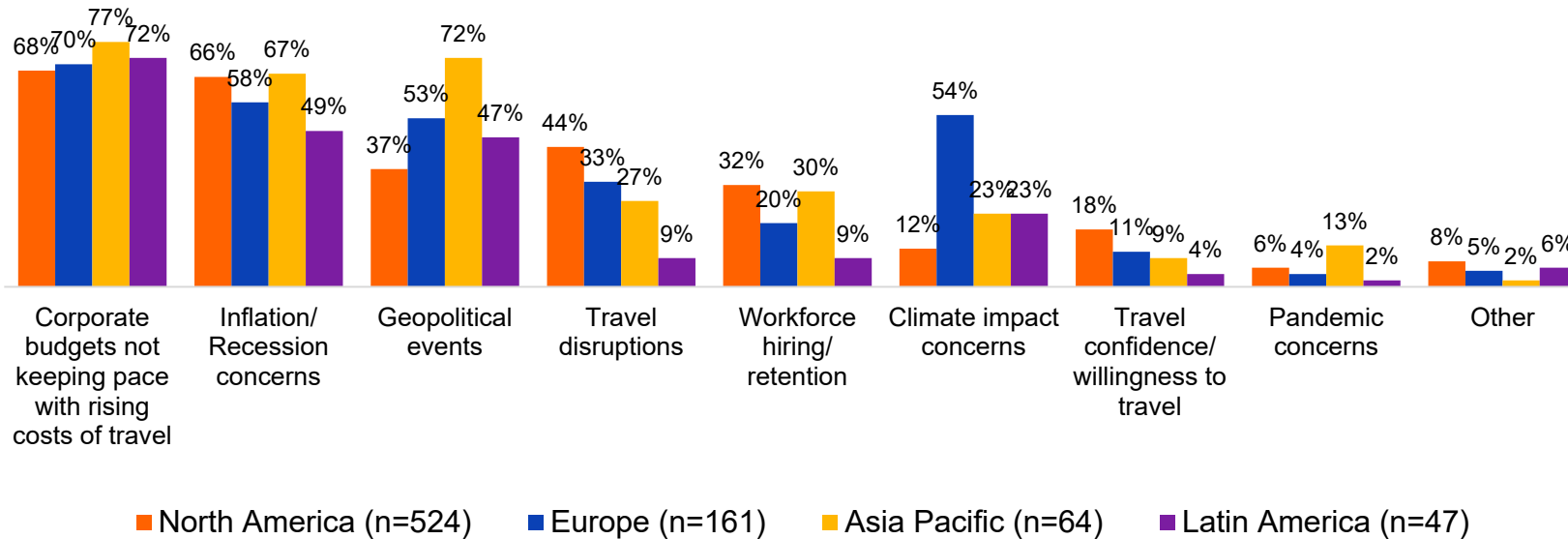
While these fears never materialized, they still weighed on business travel. Some companies preemptively slashed budgets or limited travel in anticipation of a recession.

When asked about barriers faced by business travel in 2023, seven in 10 respondents (69%) indicate concerns about corporate budgets not keeping pace with rising costs of travel. Nearly as many (63%) indicate inflation/recession concerns.

Q. What do you perceive as the most significant barriers faced by business travel in 2023? Please select all that apply (n=805),

Regional Differences: Climate Concerns Are More Often a Barrier in Europe, While Travel Disruptions Are More Often a Barrier in North America

What do you perceive as the most significant barriers faced by business travel in 2023?
by region



Q. What do you perceive as the most significant barriers faced by business travel in 2023? **Please select all that apply (n=805).**

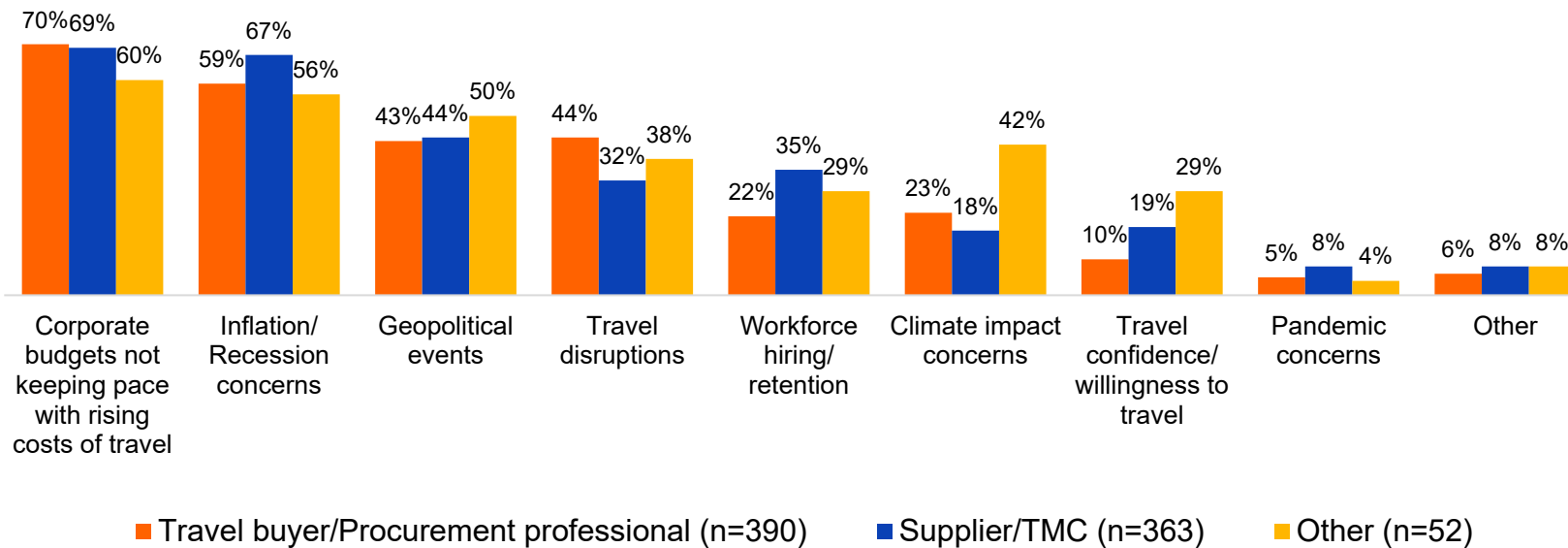
There are regional differences when it comes to barriers.

More than half of Europe-based respondents (54%) say climate concerns are a barrier to business travel. This is significantly higher than the share of respondents in other regions.

North America-based respondents are most likely to say travel disruptions—such as delayed or canceled flights—are a significant barrier.

Suppliers Are More Likely to Perceive Economic and Staffing Issues as Barriers to Business Travel

What do you perceive as the most significant barriers faced by business travel in 2023?
by respondent type



Q. What do you perceive as the most significant barriers faced by business travel in 2023? **Please select all that apply (n=805).**

Staffing issues can hurt business travel. Travelers can face longer wait times when calling for support. Flights can be canceled or delayed because of crew shortages.

These issues can reduce willingness to travel. A larger number of suppliers (35%) than buyers (22%) perceive workforce hiring/retention as a barrier to business travel.

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

Despite Economic Concerns, Most Travel Programs Do Not Currently Plan to Limit Business Travel

Looking ahead to 2024 in terms of economic considerations, which of the following best describes your likely approach?
Travel managers/procurement professionals only

14%

We are already implementing a plan to limit business travel because of economic concerns

25%

We are considering limiting business travel because of economic concerns but have not made any decision yet

32%

We are taking a wait-and-see approach but are not seriously considering limiting business travel because of economic concerns

25%

We are unlikely to limit business travel because of economic concerns

Note: 4% of travel managers indicate “not sure” (not shown)

Q Looking ahead to 2024 in terms of economic considerations, which of the following best describes your likely approach? **Note: Question only displayed to travel managers/procurement professionals (n=346).**

Even as recession fears ease, companies remain cautious about business travel.

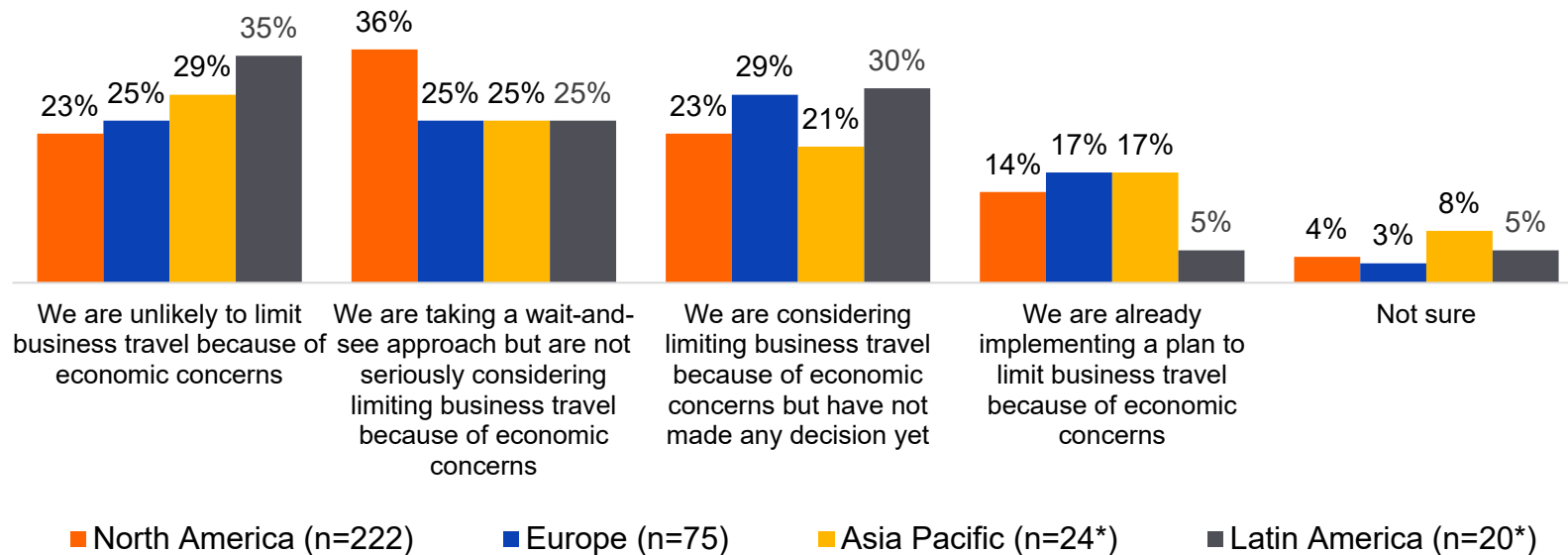
One-quarter are unlikely to limit and one-third (32%) are taking a wait-and-see approach but are not seriously considering limiting business travel and because of economic concerns.

Almost two in five travel managers (39%) say their company is already limiting (14%)– or has considered limiting (25%)– business travel because of economic concerns.

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

Regardless of Region, Travel Programs Are Not Limiting Travel Because of Economic Concerns

Looking ahead to 2024 in terms of economic considerations, which of the following best describes your likely approach?
travel buyers by region



The share of travel programs that are limiting—or have considered limiting—business travel is fairly consistent across the four regions.

Q Looking ahead to 2024 in terms of economic considerations, which of the following best describes your likely approach? **Note: Question only displayed to travel managers/procurement professionals**

***indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America (n<30)**



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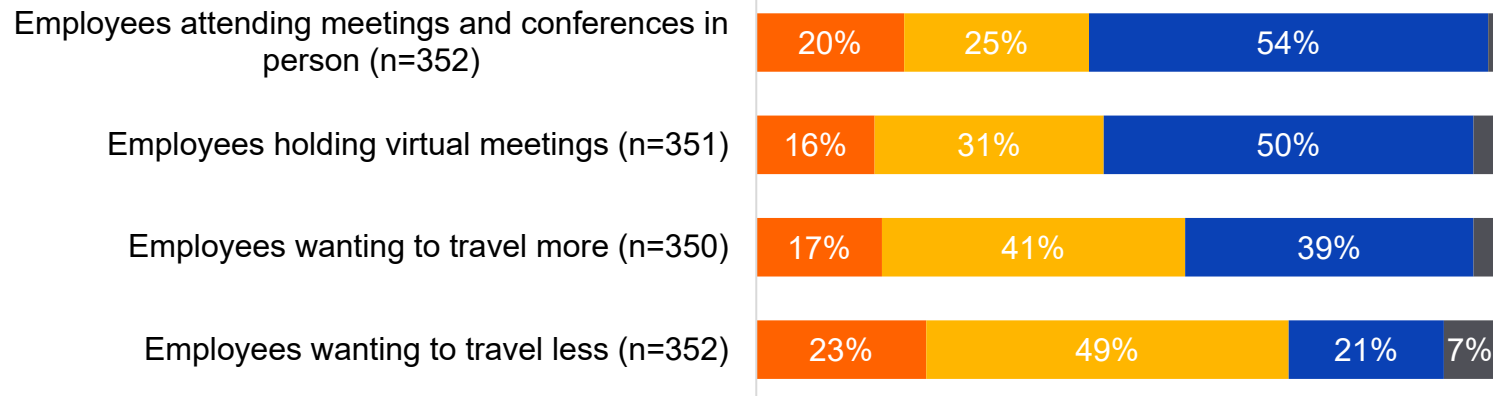
Industry Ways of Working, Ways of Traveling for Business



Both In-Person and Virtual Meetings Grow

To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers?

- We are seeing a lot less/Somewhat less than a year ago
- We are seeing the same amount
- We are seeing a lot more/Somewhat more than a year ago
- Not sure



Q. To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers? **Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals**

In-person meetings bounce back – but virtual meetings remain part of the mix.

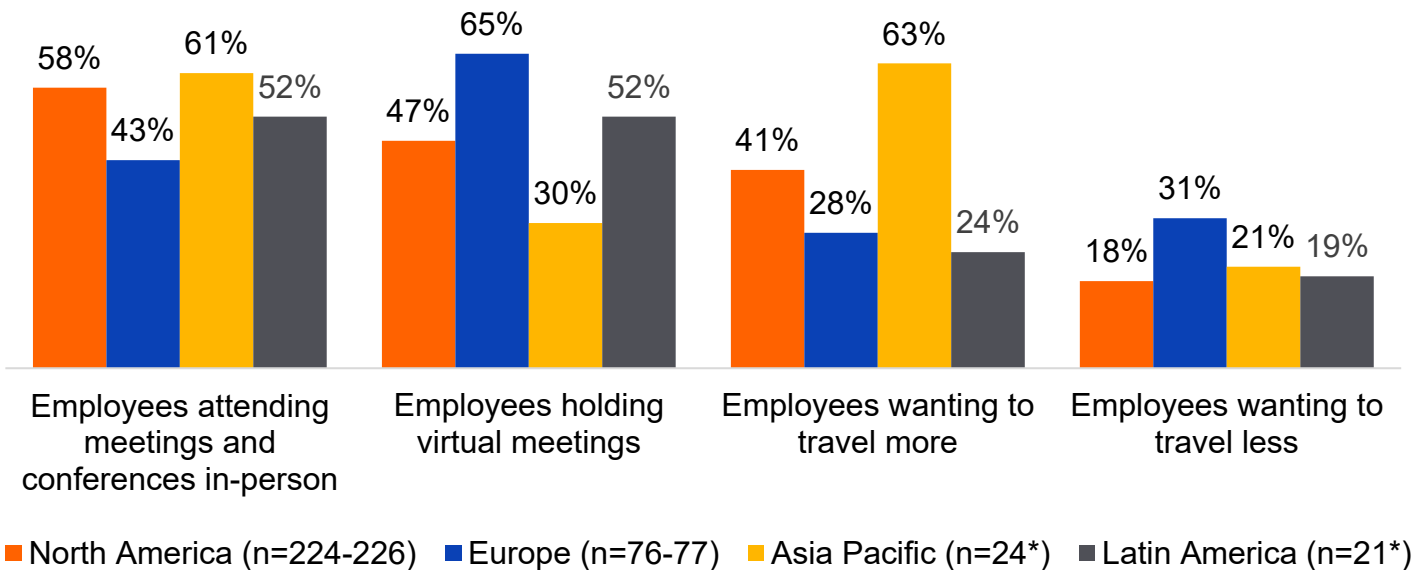
Buyers say in-person *and* virtual meetings grew in the past year. Half of buyers (54%) say their company's employees are attending more in-person meetings and conferences today than they did a year ago. A similar number (50%) say employees are holding more virtual meetings.

In addition, employees increasingly *want* to travel for work. Two in five buyers (39%) see their company's employees wanting to travel more today than they did a year ago. One in five see (21%) see employees wanting to travel less.

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

In Europe, Less Desire for Travel?

To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers?
% seeing "somewhat more" or "a lot more" by region



Q. To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers? **Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals**

Europe is the only region where employee willingness to travel has not increased.

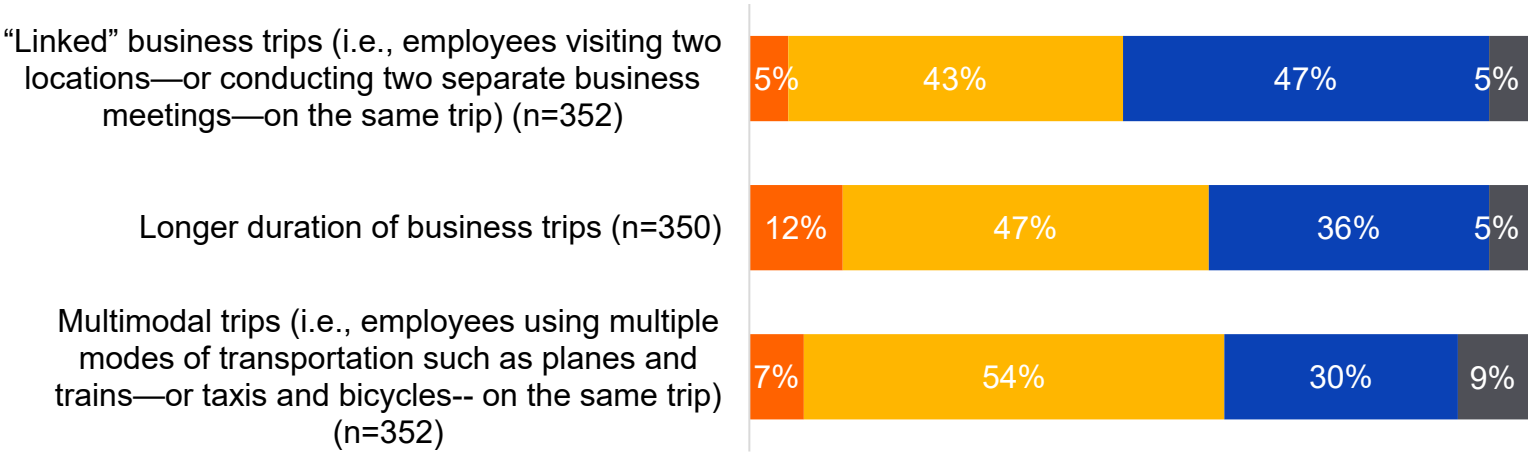
Almost one-third of European buyers (31%) see employees wanting to travel less today than they did a year ago.

This compares to roughly one-quarter (28%) who see employees wanting to travel more. In every other region, the share of buyers who say employees want to travel more is larger than the share who say employees want to travel less.

Multi-Purpose Business Trips Continue to Grow

To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers?

- We are seeing a lot less/Somewhat less than a year ago
- We are seeing the same amount
- We are seeing a lot more/Somewhat more than a year ago
- Not sure



Q. To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers? **Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals**

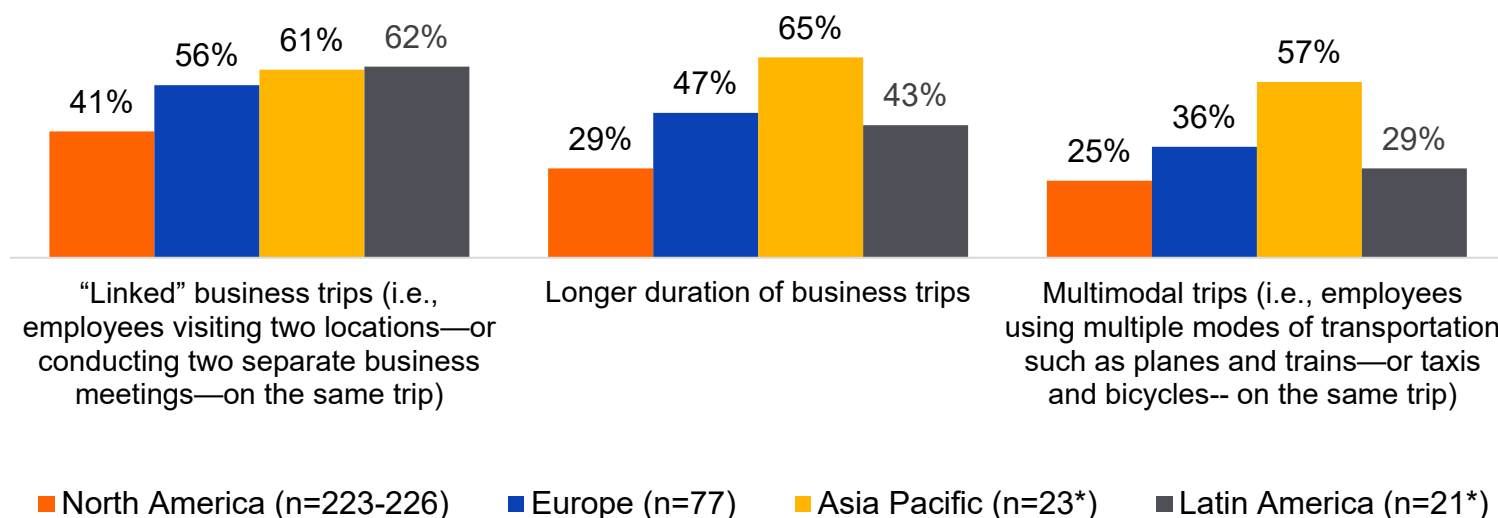
"Linked" business trips involve bundling multiple stops or meetings as part of the same trip.

This can save money and reduce emissions while decreasing employee stress or burnout. Linked trips continue to gain traction. Almost half of travel managers (47%) say their company's employees have taken more linked trips over the past year. Only 5% have seen employees take fewer linked trips.

The growth of linked trips can help explain why over a third of travel managers (36%) have seen a longer duration of business trips at their company in the past year.

Linked Trips See the Most Growth Outside of North America

To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers?
% seeing "somewhat more" or "a lot more" by region



Q. To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers? **Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals**

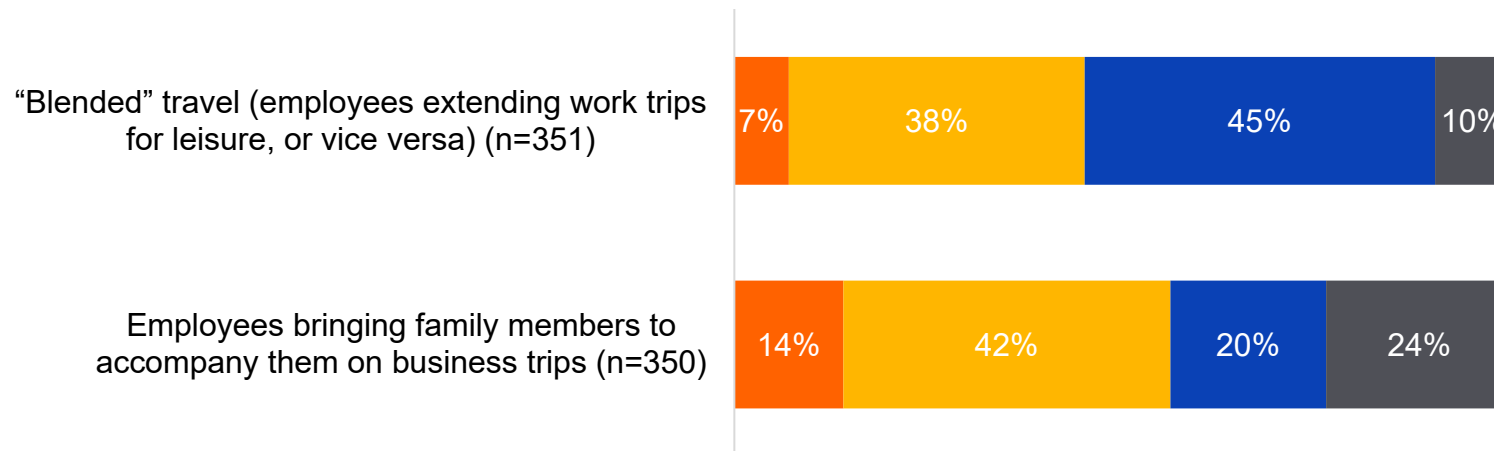
***indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America-based travel managers (n<30)**

Linked business trips see the most growth outside of North America. Two in five North America-based travel managers (41%) say their company's employees are taking more linked trips than they did a year ago. This is lower than the share in Europe (56%), Asia Pacific (61%), and Latin America (62%).

“Blended” Travel Appears to Have Staying Power

To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers?

- We are seeing a lot less/Somewhat less than a year ago
- We are seeing the same amount
- We are seeing a lot more/Somewhat more than a year ago
- Not sure



Q. To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers? **Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals**

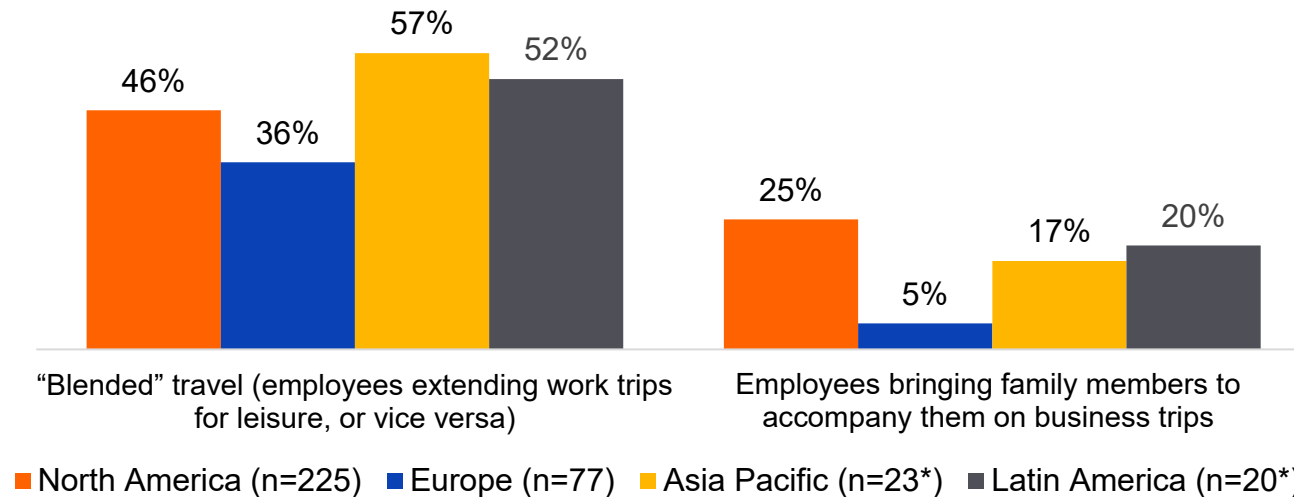
“Blended” trips combine business and leisure.

An employee extends a work trip for vacation. These trips received significant interest following the COVID-19 pandemic. Many employees were eager to travel following government lockdowns and restrictions. However, “blended” travel was not a temporary fad.

These trips have continued to grow. Almost half (45%) of travel buyers have seen their company's employees take more blended trips in the past year. Only 7% have seen employees take fewer blended trips.

Blended Trips Grow in All Regions

To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers?
% seeing "somewhat more" or "a lot more" by region



Q. To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers? **Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals**

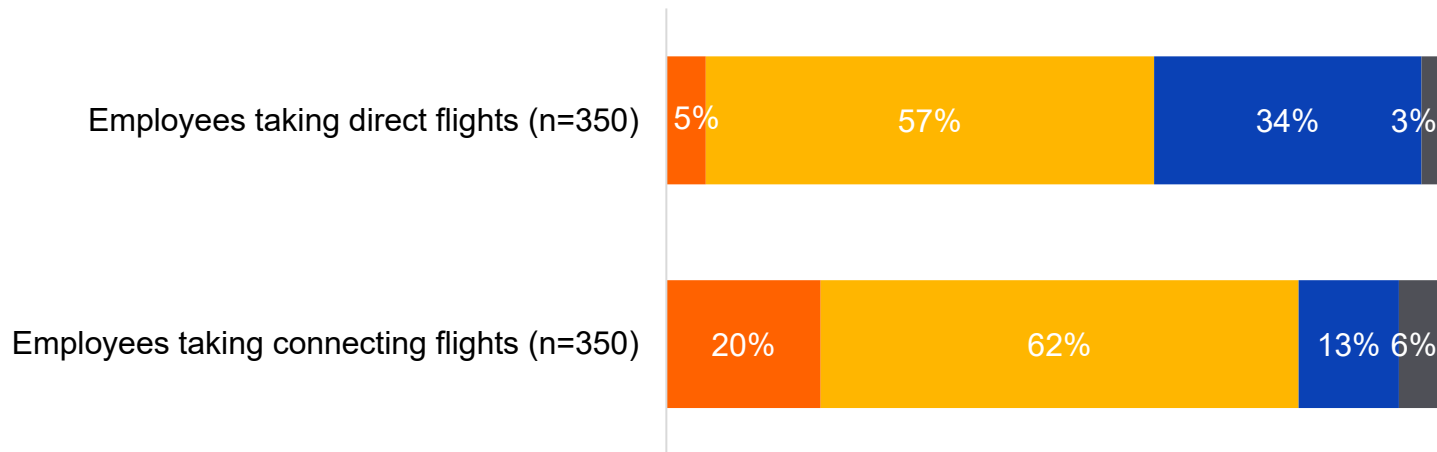
***indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America-based travel managers (n<30)**

Blended trips see the slowest growth in Europe. More than one-third of Europe-based buyers (36%) see their company's employees taking more blended trips in the past year. This is somewhat lower than the share in the other three regions but still significant.

More Direct Flights, Fewer Connections

To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers?

- We are seeing a lot less/Somewhat less than a year ago
- We are seeing the same amount
- We are seeing a lot more/Somewhat more than a year ago
- Not sure



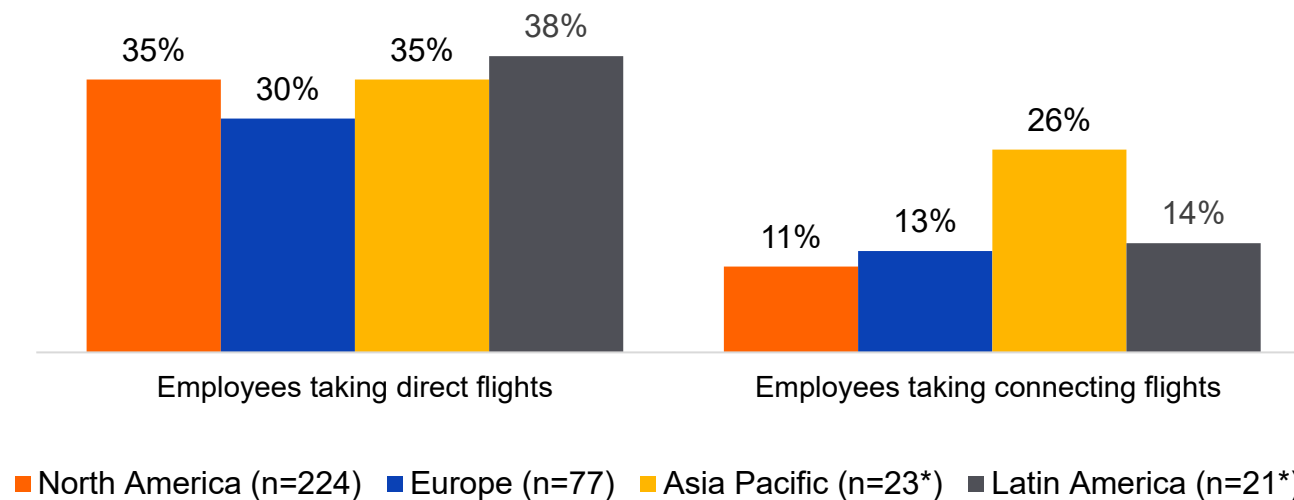
Q. To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers? **Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals**

Buyers see more direct flights and fewer connections. One-third of travel buyers (34%) have seen employees taking more direct flights in the past year. By the same token, a decent number (20%) have seen employees taking fewer connecting flights. While it is unclear why, two explanations seem plausible.

Travel programs continue to prioritize sustainability and direct flights have a lower carbon footprint. In addition, the commercial airline industry has seen an elevated number of delayed and canceled flights. Companies might want to minimize the risk that employees miss connections or become stuck at an airport for an extended period.

Direct Flights Grow at Similar Rates Across Regions

To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers?
% seeing "somewhat more" or "a lot more" by region



Q. To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers? **Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals**

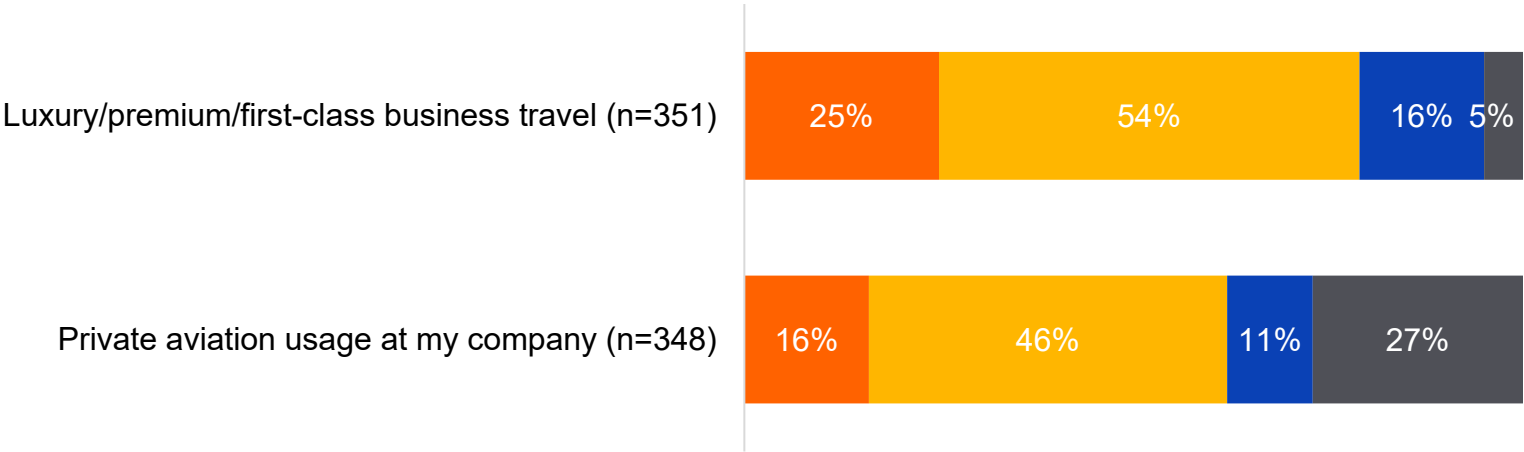
***indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America-based travel managers (n<30)**

Direct flights grow at similar rates worldwide. In all four regions surveyed, roughly one-third of travel managers have seen employees take more direct flights in the past year.

Premium Travel Steady, but Waning at More Companies than Where It's Growing

To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers?

- We are seeing a lot less/Somewhat less than a year ago
- We are seeing the same amount
- We are seeing a lot more/Somewhat more than a year ago
- Not sure



Q. To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers? **Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals**

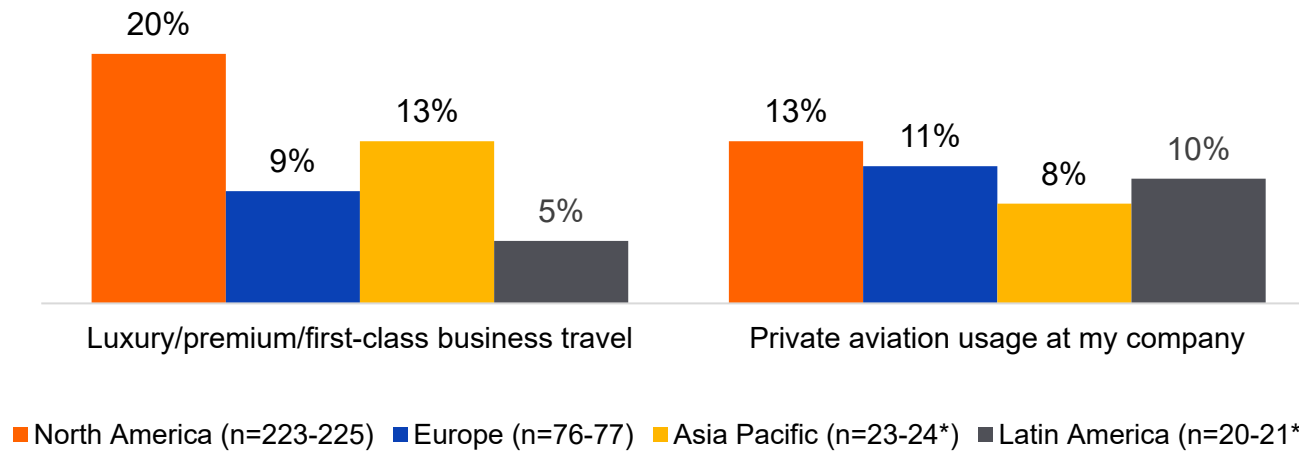
Over half of companies (54%) are seeing the same rate of premium cabin business travel.

But with those seeing changes, more companies see less premium travel (25%) than those with more (16%). This could reflect continued pressure to contain costs (see page 36).

Similarly, slightly more companies see less private aviation usage (16%) than more (11%).

Premium Travel Grows More in North America Than Other Regions

To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers?
% seeing "somewhat more" or "a lot more" by region



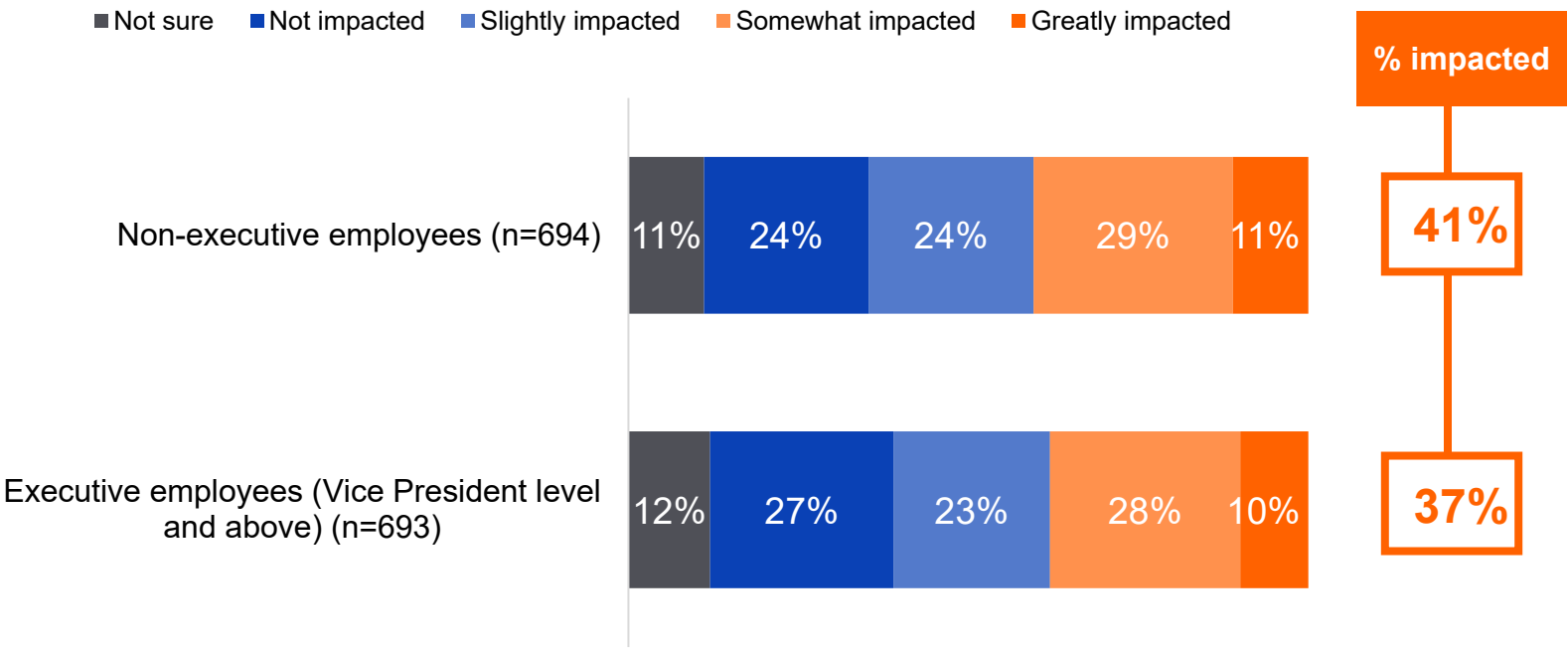
Q. To what degree have you seen the following new patterns or preferences emerge over the past year among your company's business travelers? **Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals**

***indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America-based travel managers (n<30)**

One in five North America-based buyers (20%) are seeing more premium travel at their company today than they did a year ago. This is higher than the share in every other region.

Travel Disruptions Have a Slight to Moderate Impact On Employee Willingness to Travel

To what extent did experiencing travel delays and disruptions in prior months affect the willingness of the following types of employees at your organization to travel for work?

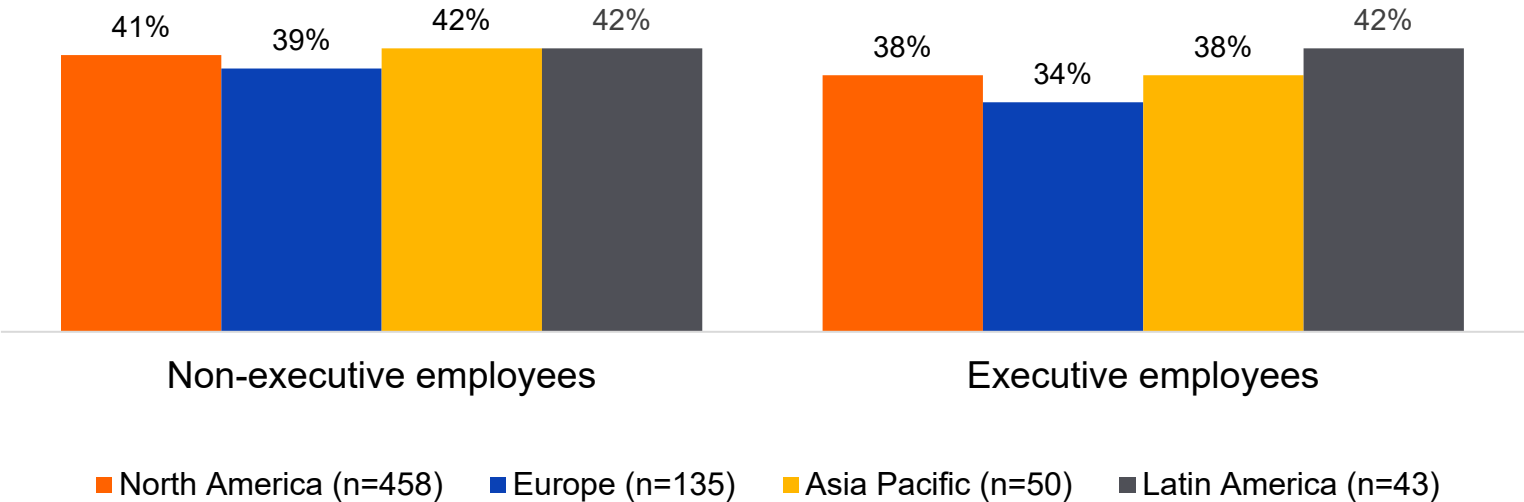


Q. To what extent did experiencing travel delays and disruptions in prior months affect the willingness of the following types of employees at your organization to travel for work? **Your best estimate is fine.**

Recent years have seen an elevated number of travel disruptions -- including canceled or delayed flights. These are a headache and hurt productivity. However, it is not clear if they *actually reduce* business travel. While some business travel professionals feel disruptions have an impact, it is not a major impact. Only one in 10 say disruptions have *greatly* impacted employee willingness to travel for work. More than one-quarter say disruptions have somewhat impacted willingness to travel. However, a larger number—roughly half — say disruptions have had a slight impact or no impact.

Regardless of Region, Travel Disruptions Have a Similar Moderate Impact on Willingness to Travel

To what extent did experiencing travel delays and disruptions in prior months affect the willingness of the following types of employees at your organization to travel for work?
% “somewhat impacted” or “greatly impacted” by region

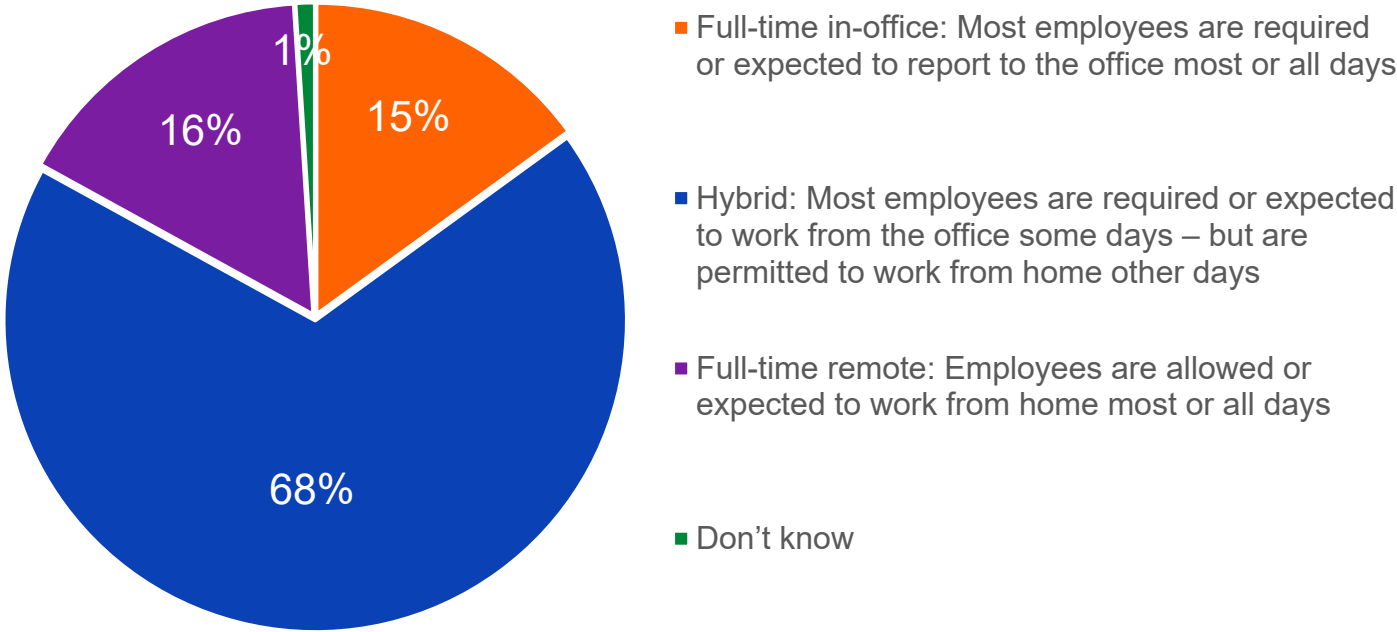


In each region, a similar number of respondents say travel disruptions have impacted employee willingness travel at their company.

Q. To what extent did experiencing travel delays and disruptions in prior months affect the willingness of the following types of employees at your organization to travel for work? **Your best estimate is fine.**

Hybrid Work Is the Industry's New Norm

Which of the following best describes your company's current in-office/work-from home policy?



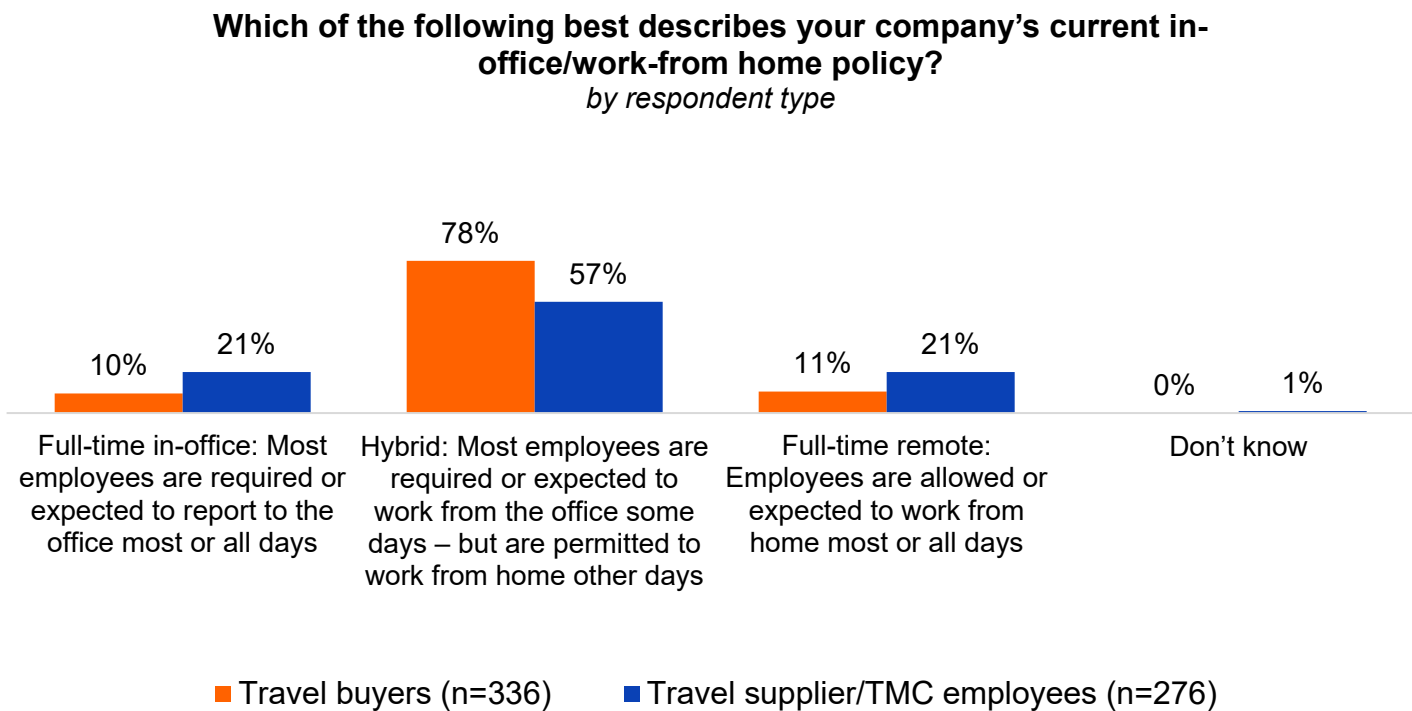
Q. Which of the following best describes your company's current in-office/work-from home policy? (n=650)

Hybrid work is the new norm in the business travel sector.

Two-thirds of respondents (68%) say their organization has a hybrid work policy where most employees are expected to work from an office some days – but are permitted to work from home other days.

Hybrid work appears to have staying power. The share of companies that have a hybrid work policy is identical to that obtained one year ago (68%), in the October 2022 GBTA Business Travel Outlook Poll.

Are Industry Suppliers Less Likely to Embrace “Hybrid” Work?



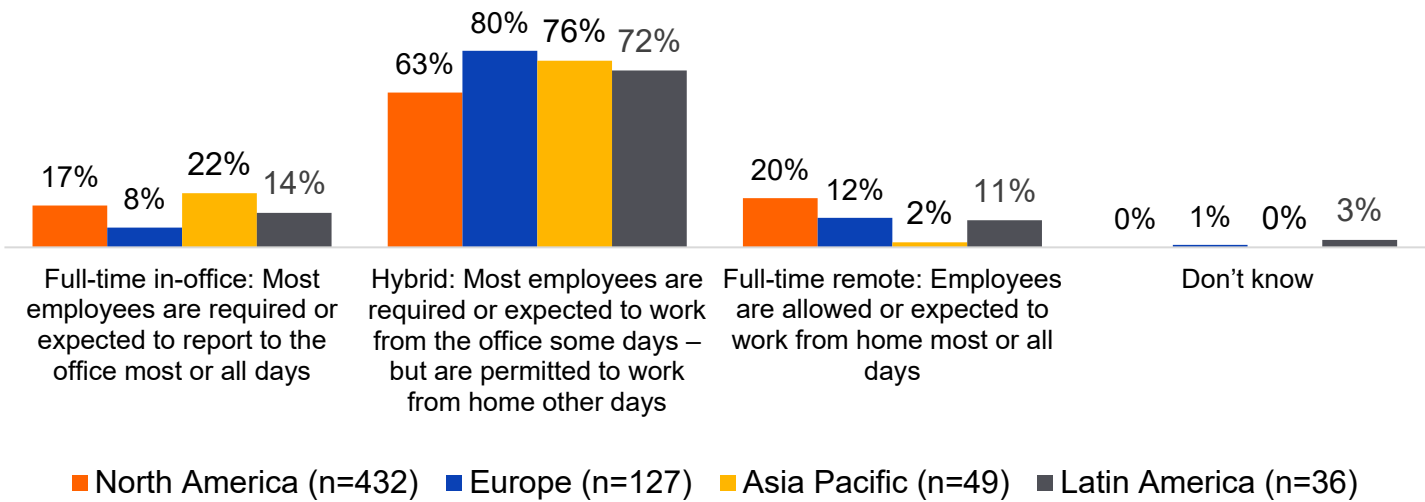
Q. Which of the following best describes your company’s current in-office/work-from home policy? (n=650)

Is the travel industry less likely to embrace hybrid work? A large majority of buyers (78%) —who typically work for large companies in a broad range of industries—say their company has a hybrid work policy. This compares to fewer suppliers (57%).

By contrast, suppliers—who work almost exclusively in the travel industry—are more likely to say their company has a full-time in-office or a full-time remote policy. Some travel professionals might work on-site at a hotel, TMC, or similar company. Others might work remotely for travel startup or consultancy.

Hybrid Work Takes Hold Across Regions

Which of the following best describes your company's current in-office/work-from home policy?
by region



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

Hybrid work is common across the world. In all regions surveyed, a fairly substantial majority of respondents say their company has a hybrid work policy. However, hybrid work policies are less common in North America (63%) than in Europe (80%), Asia Pacific (76%), and Latin America (72%).



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Strategies and Priorities for 2024



The Travel Buyer's Perspective

Cost and Risk Management Are The Two Biggest Priorities for Travel Programs in 2024

What do you anticipate will be the top strategic priorities for your organization in the context of your business travel program for 2024?
up to three answers allowed



68%

Cost management



39%

Sustainability



17%

Expanding into new markets



54%

Traveler safety and security



36%

Traveler experience/well-being



39%

Productivity/ROI of travel



20%

Digital transformation

Other 3%

Travel programs have a number of priorities for next year. Asked to pick up to three, buyers most commonly pick cost management (68%) and traveler safety and security (54%). These priorities are always paramount.

However, two other priorities are particularly interesting. A decent number of travel managers (39%) indicate the productivity/ROI of travel is one of their top three priorities. Companies increasingly think about the “value” of business travel and not only the cost. An expensive trip can be worthwhile if it generates enough revenue to justify the cost. On the other hand, an inexpensive trip can hurt the bottom line if it is not productive.

In addition, a decent number of travel managers (39%) say sustainability is a top priority for 2024. As companies set carbon reduction targets—and track progress against these targets—business travel can be an important part of the equation.

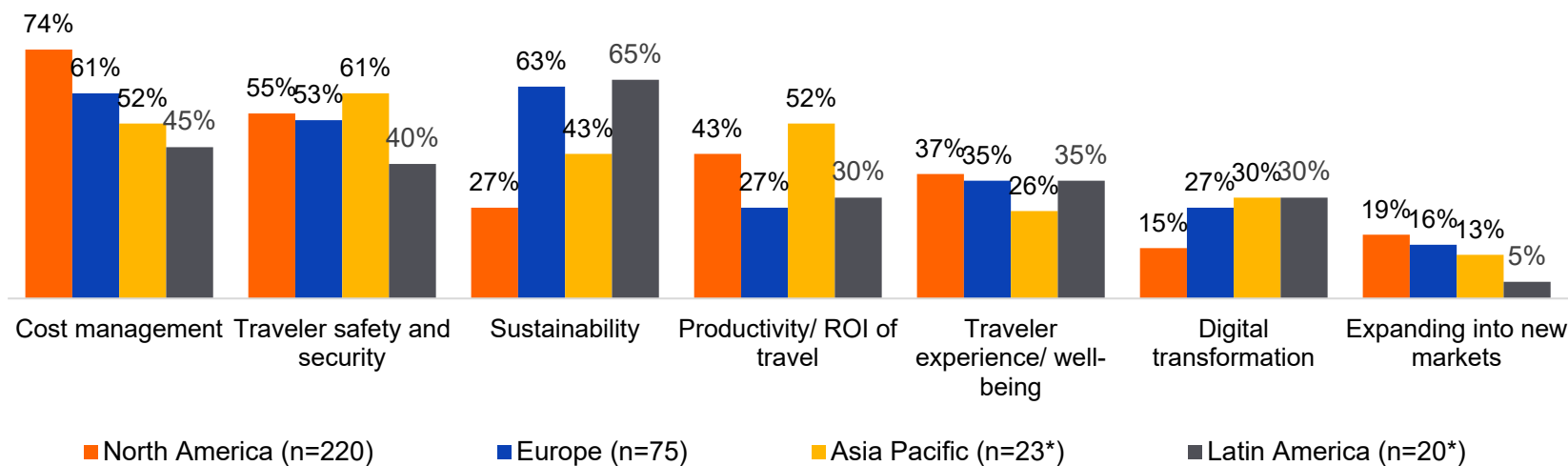
Q. What do you anticipate will be the top strategic priorities for your organization in the context of your business travel program for 2024? Please select up to three

Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=343).

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

European and Latin American Travel Programs More Focused on Sustainability, North America Focused on Cost

What do you anticipate will be the top strategic priorities for your organization in the context of your business travel program for 2024?
% chosen in top three by region



Q. What do you anticipate will be the top strategic priorities for your organization in the context of your business travel program for 2024? Please select up to three. **Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals**
***indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America-based travel managers (n<30)**

Sustainability is a higher priority in Europe and Latin America. Two-thirds of travel buyers in Europe (63%) and Latin America (65%) say sustainability is one of the top three priorities for their travel program next year. This compares to 43% in APAC and only 27% in North America.

Cost management is the top priorities in North America (74%) above all other priorities (and regions).

Buyers and Suppliers Have Similar Investment Priorities for 2024

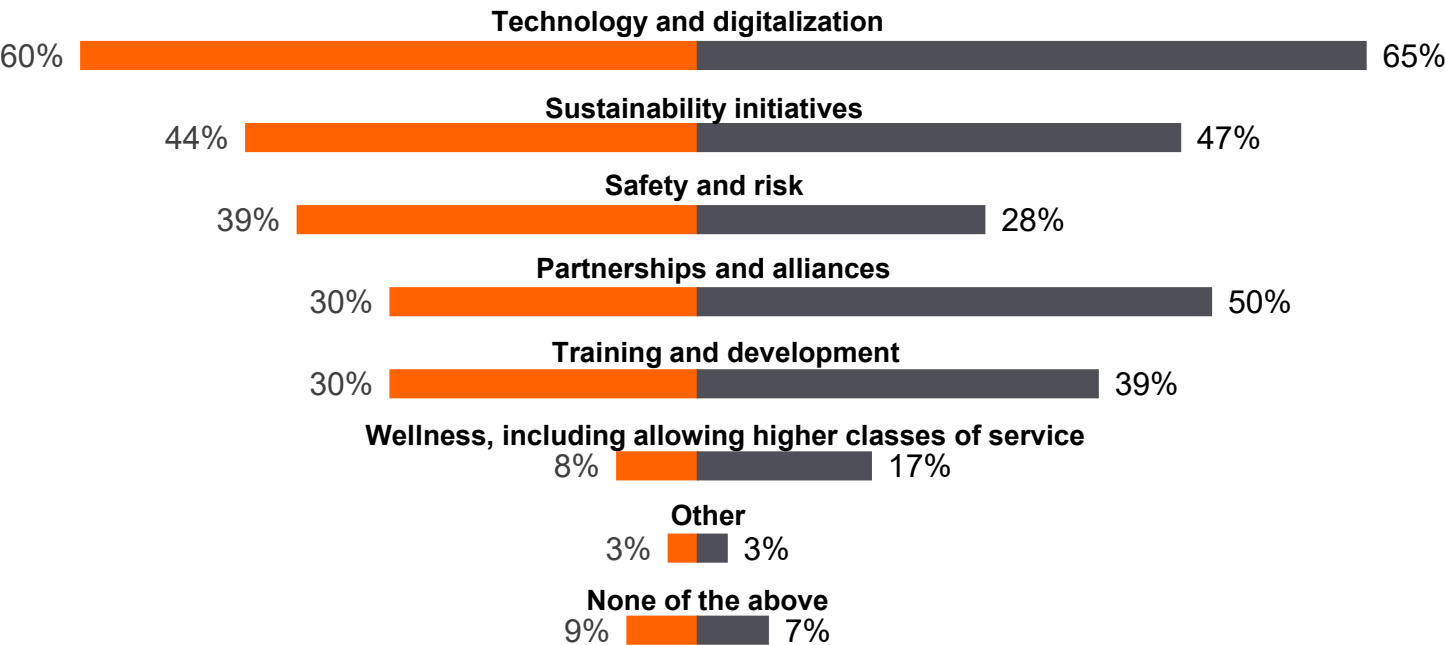
In which areas do you anticipate your organization will plan to increase investment to enhance business travel in 2024?
multiple answers allowed



travel buyers
(n=341)



travel suppliers/TMCs
(n=288)

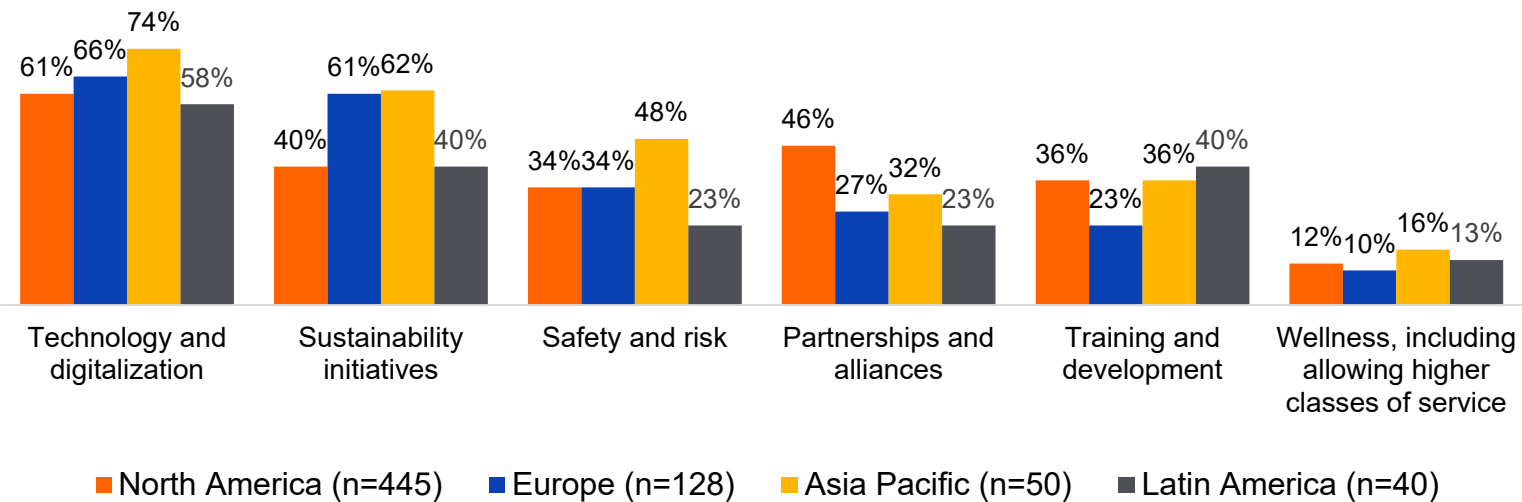


Buyers and suppliers have similar investment priorities for 2024.

Three out of five buyers (60%)—and a similar number of suppliers (65%)—expect their organization will increase investment in technology and digitalization next year. In addition, a similar number of buyers (44%) and suppliers (47%) expect their organization will increase investment in sustainability initiatives.

Tech Is a Priority Everywhere. Sustainability Is a Higher Investment Priority in Europe and Asia-Pacific

In which areas do you anticipate your organization will plan to increase investment to enhance business travel in 2024?
by region



Q. In which areas do you anticipate your organization will plan to increase investment to enhance business travel in 2024? **Please select all that apply.**

Tech is a priority for all regions.

Sustainability is a higher investment priority in Europe and Asia-Pacific. Three out of five business travel professionals in these regions expect their organization will increase investment in sustainability initiatives next year. This compares to two out of five in North America and Latin America.

Compliance, Travel Comms and Airline Distribution Are the Top Risk-Related Priorities for 2024

Which business travel risk mitigation strategy do you anticipate will be most prioritized in your organization in 2024?
only one answer allowed



Travel buyers have different risk-related priorities for next year. Asked to pick their top priority (out of seven possible), almost half (46%) focus on the booking process. One-quarter (24%) pick addressing non-compliant bookings as their top priority. A similar number (22%) pick connecting to NDC channels. In other words, NDC is not only a technology issue, it's also a risk issue.

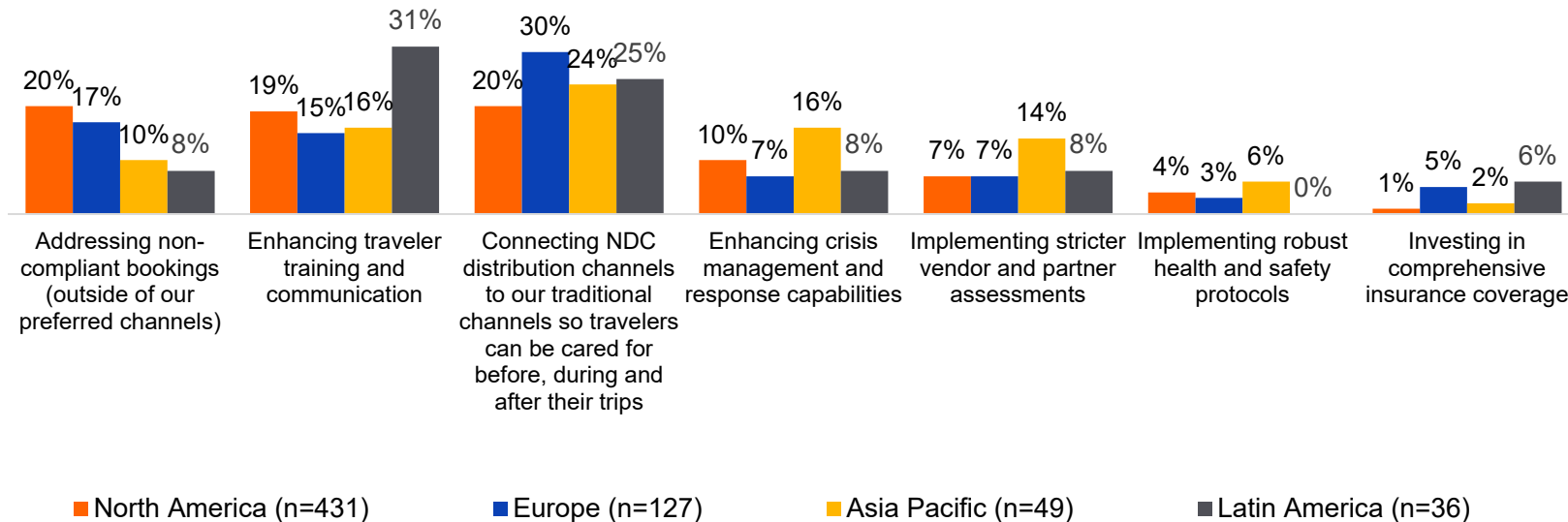
Some airlines have removed certain fares from traditional EDIFACT-based distribution channels that intermediaries and third-parties—such as travel agencies (TMCs), Global Distribution Systems (GDSs), and online booking tools (OBTs)—have traditionally used to access them. These fares are still available to intermediaries using different technology. They are available through New Distribution Capability (NDC) APIs that feed directly from airline systems. However, if intermediaries do not support NDC, they cannot access these fares. As a result, employees might book these flights outside of the travel program. This can make it difficult for travel programs to locate and communicate with them in an emergency.

Q. Which business travel risk mitigation strategy do you anticipate will be most prioritized in your organization in 2024?
Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=337).

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

There Are Some Regional Differences When It Comes to Risk-Related Priorities for Next Year

Which business travel risk mitigation strategy do you anticipate will be most prioritized in your organization in 2024?
by region



Europe more concerned about NDC/air distribution than other regions.

North America more concerned about compliance than other regions.

Latin America more concerned about traveler communication than other regions.

Q. Which business travel risk mitigation strategy do you anticipate will be most prioritized in your organization in 2024?

Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals

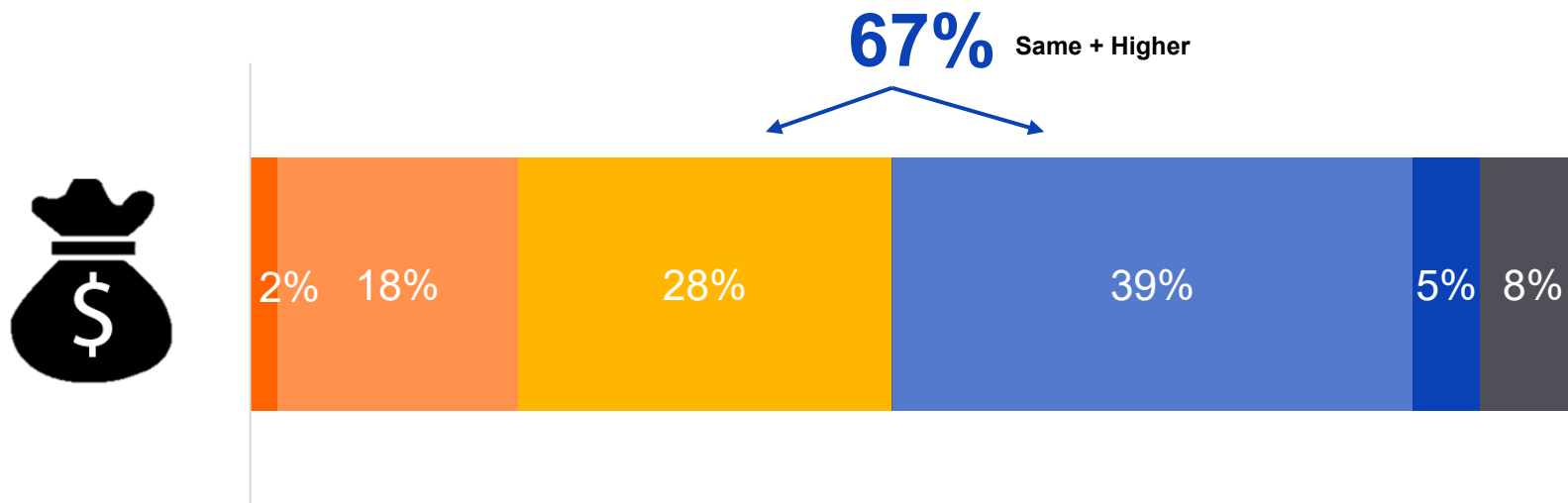
***indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America-based travel managers (n<30)**

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

Most Buyers Expect Travel Budgets to Increase – or Remain the Same – Next Year

How does your company's 2024 travel budget compare (or is likely to compare) to the 2023 travel budget?

■ Significantly lower (decrease of 25%+) ■ Lower ■ The same ■ Higher ■ Significantly higher (increase of 25%+) ■ Don't know



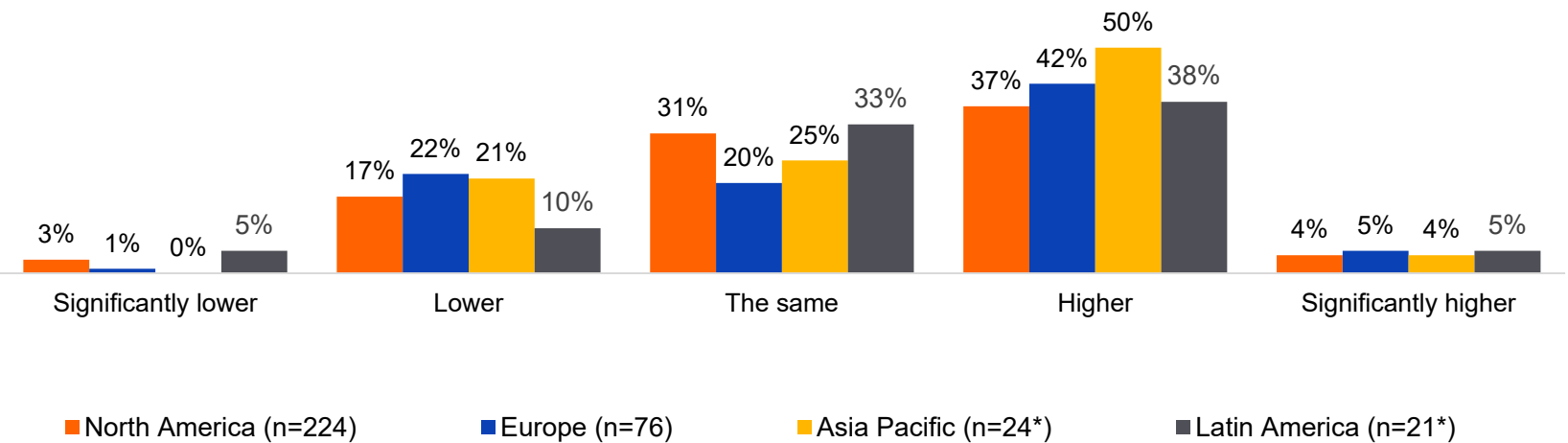
Q. How does your company's 2024 travel budget compare (or is likely to compare) to the 2023 travel budget?

Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=350).

Travel budgets are largely expected to increase—or remain the same—next year. Buyers (67%) expect their company's travel budget will increase (39%) or remain the same (28%) next year, with some expecting a significant increase (5%). However, one in five (20%) expect their company's travel budget will decrease.

Across the World, Similar Expectations for Travel Budgets Next Year

How does your company's 2024 travel budget compare (or is likely to compare) to the 2023 travel budget?
travel buyers by region



Q. Thinking about travel program related expenses such as travel manager salaries, consultants, travel management company (TMC) fees, technology and other expenses needed to manage the travel program, how does your company's 2024 budget compare to 2023? . **Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals**
***indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America-based travel managers (n<30)**

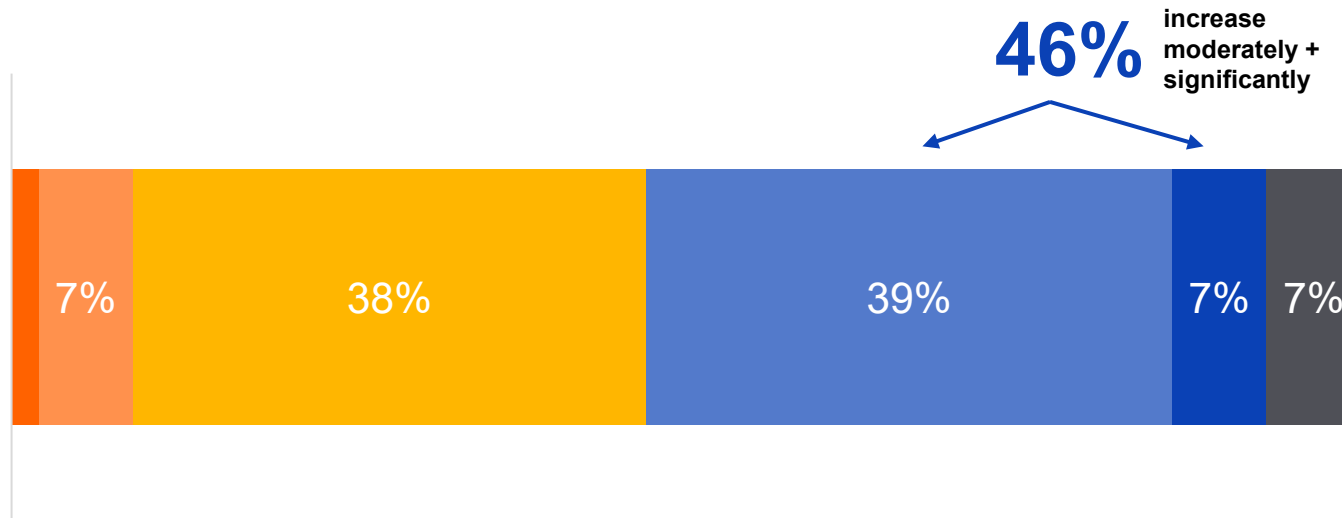
Across the world, buyers have fairly similar expectations about travel budgets next year.

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

Travel Program Operating Budgets in 2024

Thinking about travel program related expenses such as travel manager salaries, consultants, travel management company (TMC) fees, technology and other expenses needed to manage the travel program, how does your company's 2024 budget compare to 2023?

■ Decrease significantly (>10%) ■ Decrease moderately ■ Remain the same ■ Increase moderately ■ Increase significantly (>10%) ■ Don't know



Q. Thinking about travel program related expenses such as travel manager salaries, consultants, travel management company (TMC) fees, technology and other expenses needed to manage the travel program, how does your company's 2024 budget compare to 2023?

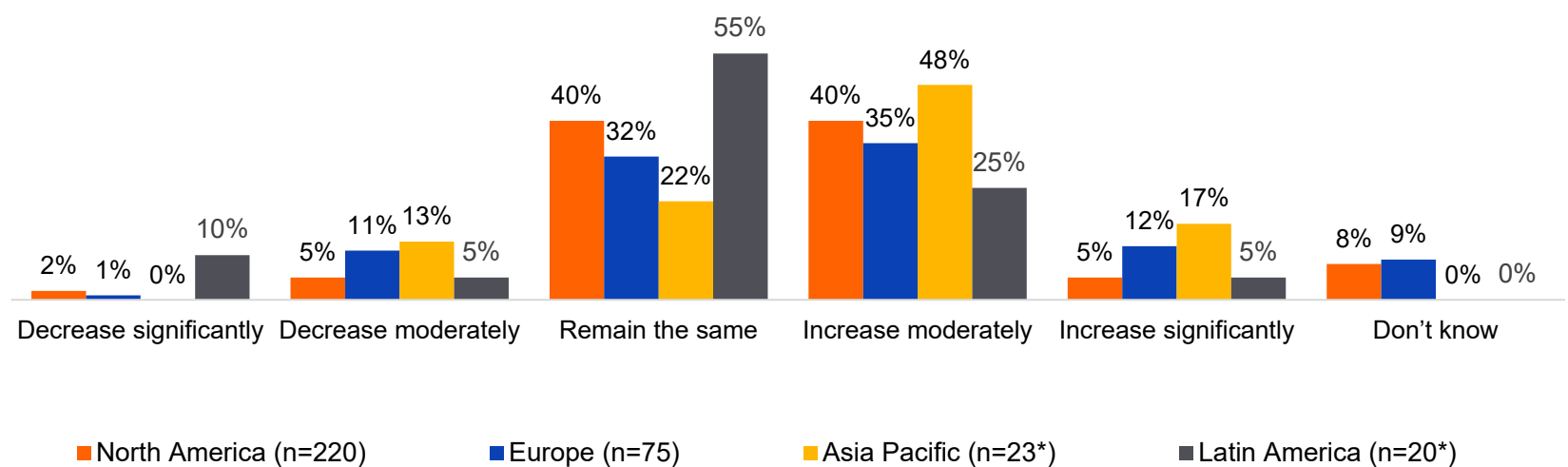
Note: Results filtered to only show travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=343).

Travel programs commonly have operating budgets. These cover travel manager salaries, consulting fees, and technology among other things.

In general, travel buyers expect next year's budgets will be in line with this year's. Almost four in five (77%) expect their travel program's operating budget will remain the same (38%) or see a moderate (less than 10%) increase (39%).

Will Operating Budgets Increase More in Europe and Asia Pacific?

Thinking about travel program related expenses such as travel manager salaries, consultants, travel management company (TMC) fees, technology and other expenses needed to manage the travel program, how does your company's 2024 budget compare to 2023?
trav



Q. : Thinking about travel program related expenses such as travel manager salaries, consultants, travel management company (TMC) fees, technology and other expenses needed to manage the travel program, how does your company's 2024 budget compare to 2023?

Will operating budgets increase more in Europe and Asia Pacific? More than one in 10 buyers in Europe (12%) and Asia Pacific (17%) expect a significant increase in their travel program's operating budget next year. This compares to 5% in North America and Latin America.



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New Distribution Capability (NDC)



New Distribution Capability (NDC)

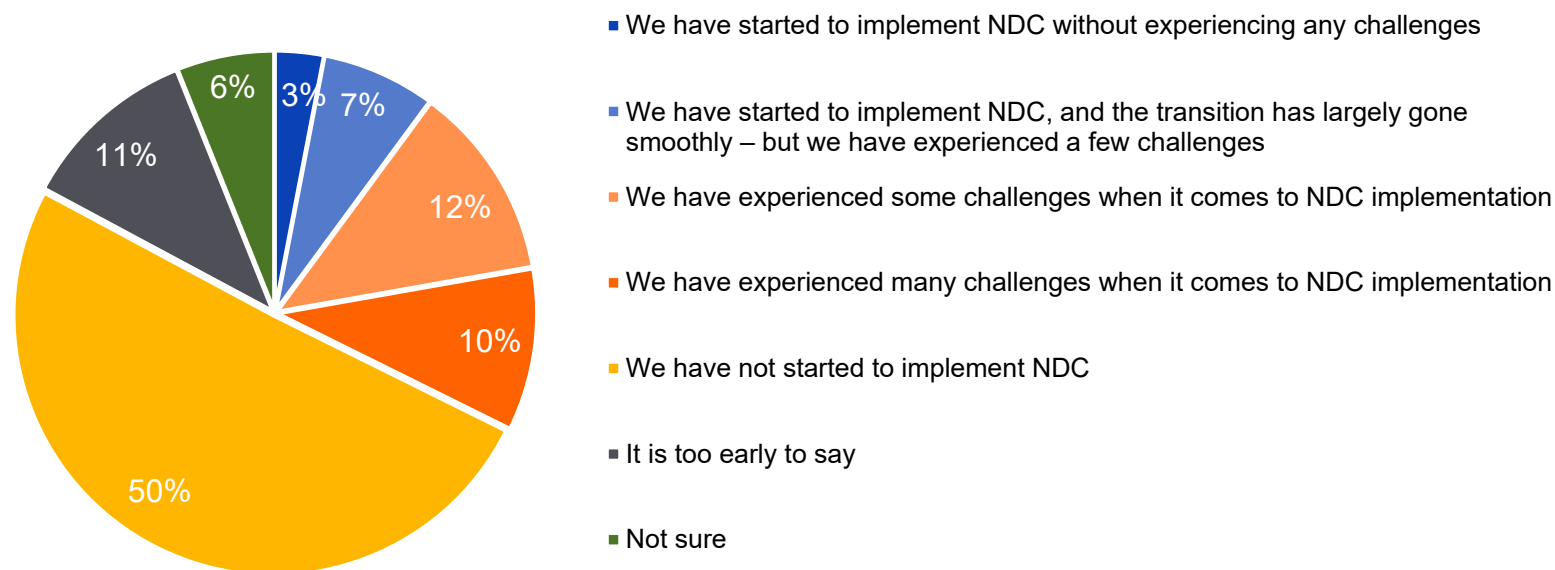
Travel intermediaries allow “indirect” airline bookings. In other words, instead of booking on an airline’s website, business travelers can book flights through a travel agency (TMC), corporate online booking tool (OBT), or retail online travel agency (OTA). Typically, these intermediaries have relied on technology called EDIFACT to access and book fares. EDIFACT continues to play an important role today.

However, airlines are increasingly making fares available outside of EDIFACT: through direct-connect application programming interfaces (APIs) that feed to intermediaries directly from their systems. While these direct-connect feeds have existed for years, they are currently being developed according to an airline-supported standard format called New Distribution Capability (NDC). The NDC standard is expected to drive much greater adoption and use of direct-connect airline APIs. In some cases, airlines are encouraging intermediaries to use NDC APIs to access fares. Some airlines have removed certain fares from traditional EDIFACT channels. The next nine slides focus on NDC.



For Travel Buyers, the Jury Is Still Out on NDC Implementation

Thinking about your travel program's implementation of NDC, which statement best represents your experience?
travel buyers only



Q. Thinking about your travel program's implementation of NDC, which statement best represents your experience?

Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=334)

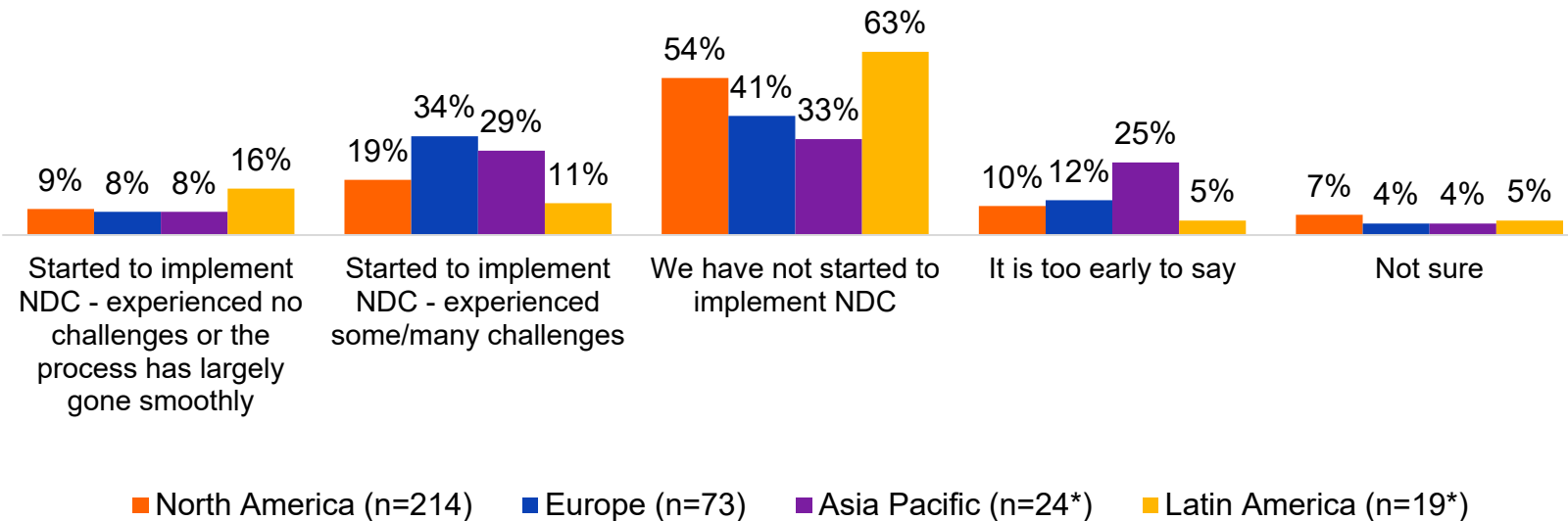
Travel programs make little progress with NDC roll-out. Half of travel buyers (50%) say their program has not started to implement NDC. This is relatively unchanged from the last poll, conducted in April, when a similar number said they had not started to implement NDC (48%). However, it is possible that some travel programs have access to NDC fares without realizing it.

Nonetheless, some travel programs *have* started to roll-out NDC. A larger number say they have experienced challenges with the roll-out (22%) than say the transition has gone smoothly (10%).

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

North American Travel Programs Are Less Likely to Have Started to Implement NDC

Thinking about your travel program's implementation of NDC, which statement best represents your experience?
travel buyers only by region



Q. Thinking about your travel program's implementation of NDC, which statement best represents your experience?

Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals

***indicates small sample size for buyers in Asia Pacific and Latin America (n<30)**

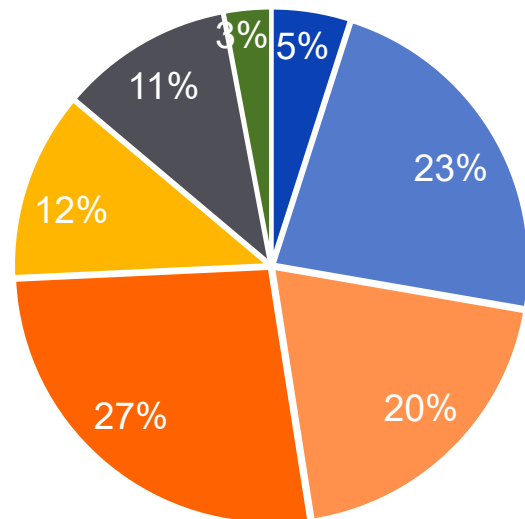
North American travel programs are less likely to have started to roll out NDC. Half of North America-based travel buyers (54%) say their program has not started to implement NDC. This is higher than the share of Europe (41%) and Asia Pacific-based travel managers (33%) who have not started to roll out NDC.

The Travel Intermediary's Perspective

Nearly Half of Intermediaries Say They Have Faced Challenges With NDC Implementation

Thinking about your company's ability to distribute NDC content to your corporate clients, which statement best represents your experience?

intermediaries only



- It has gone smoothly - we have made NDC content available to clients without experiencing any challenges
- It has mostly gone smoothly - we have made NDC content available to clients and the transition has largely gone smoothly – but we have experienced a few challenges
- We have experienced some challenges when it comes to NDC content distribution
- We have experienced many challenges when it comes to NDC content distribution
- We have largely not made NDC content available to corporate clients
- It is too early to say
- Not sure

Q. Thinking about your company's ability to distribute NDC content to your corporate clients, which statement best represents your experience?

Note: Question only displayed to respondents who work at a TMC, GDS, or OBT (n=66)

Intermediaries continue to do technical work needed to make NDC content available to corporate clients. They remain split when evaluating how the process has gone. More than one-quarter (28%) say the process has largely gone smoothly. A larger number (47%) have experienced some challenges.

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

Less Than Half of Travel Buyers Say Airlines Are Moving Too Fast to Roll Out NDC

Thinking about the overall roll-out of NDC in the industry,
which of the following best describes your view?

buyers only



45%

Airlines are moving too fast: Some airlines are trying to roll out NDC bookings too quickly and have not given third-party intermediaries--such as GDSs, TMCs, OBTs, and back-office technology providers--enough time to develop the technology and processes needed to efficiently handle and service these bookings



36%

Intermediaries should be ready: Third-party intermediaries have had enough time to work on NDC and should be ready to efficiently handle and service NDC bookings

19%

**Don't know/
Not sure/
Other**

Q. Thinking about the overall roll-out of NDC in the industry, which of the following best describes your view?

Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=332)

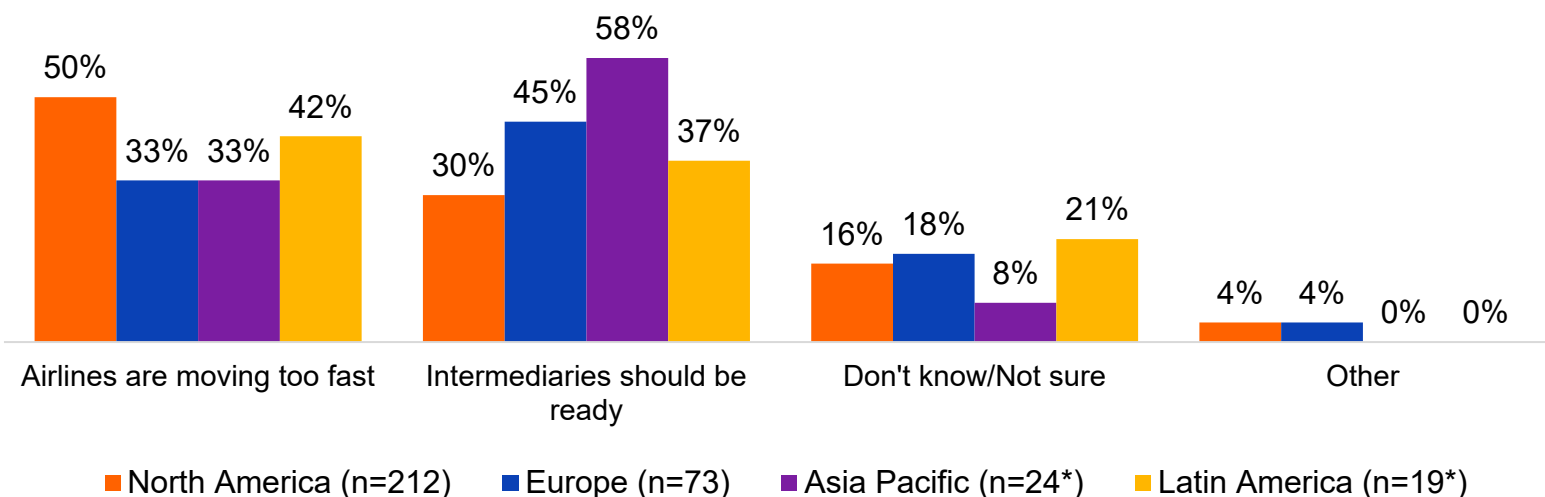
While many buyers still believe airlines are moving too fast with NDC, this sentiment has softened. Fewer than half of travel buyers (45%) think airlines are moving too fast to roll out NDC and have not left intermediaries enough time to prepare. While still the most common view, this is down from April when more than half of buyers (53%) said airlines were moving too fast.

More than one-third of buyers (36%) say intermediaries have had enough time and should be ready for NDC. This is up from 29% in April.

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

North American Travel Buyers Are Most Likely to Feel Airlines Are Moving Too Fast With NDC

Thinking about your travel program's implementation of NDC, which statement best represents your experience?
travel buyers only by region



Q. Thinking about your company's ability to distribute NDC content to your corporate clients, which statement best represents your experience?

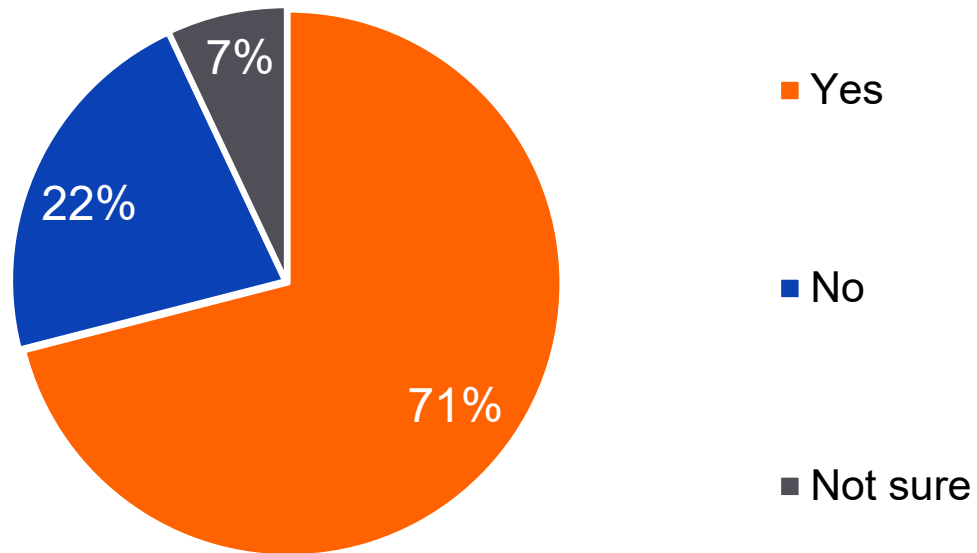
Note: Question only displayed to respondents who work at a TMC, GDS, or OBT

North American travel managers are most likely to say intermediaries are moving too quickly to roll out NDC. This was also seen in the previous poll conducted in April.

The **Travel Buyer's** Perspective

There Is Still a Need for Information About NDC

In general, do you feel you need more information or education about NDC/airline retailing/ distribution?
buyers only



Q. Thinking about your travel program's implementation of NDC, which statement best represents your experience?

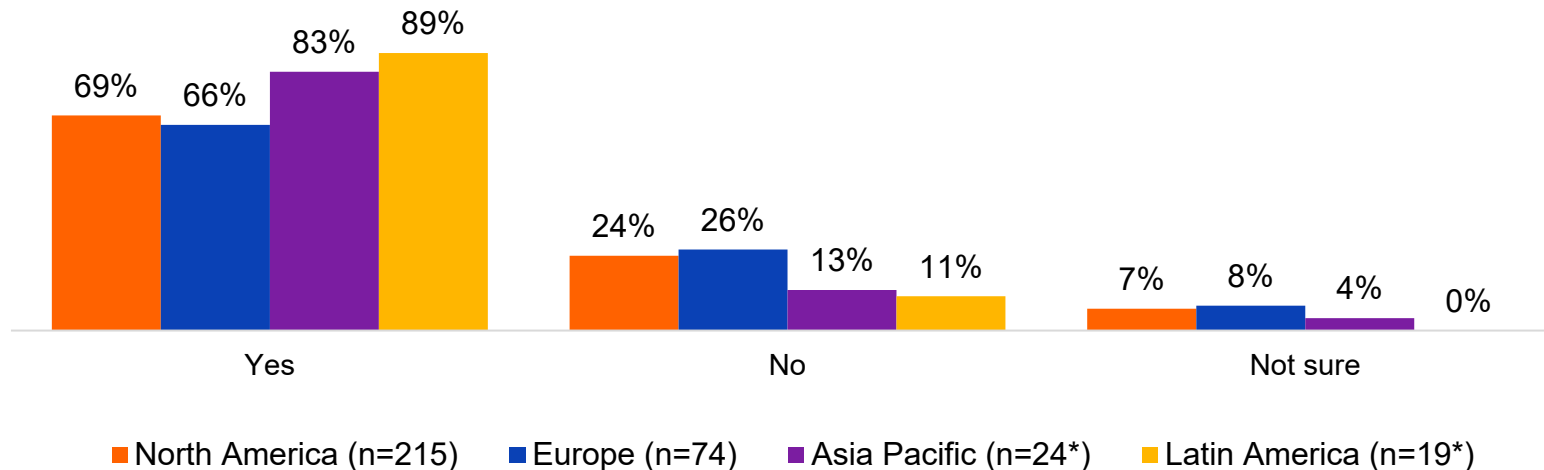
Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=336)

***indicates small sample size for buyers in Asia Pacific and Latin America (n<30)**

Despite the recent focus on NDC, buyers still need more information. Four in five travel buyers (71%) need more information and education about NDC. This is only down slightly from the previous poll (81%) conducted in April.

Regardless of Region, Buyers Feel They Need More Information and Education About NDC

In general, do you feel you need more information or education about NDC/airline retailing/ distribution?
travel buyers only by region



Q. In general, do you feel you need more information or education about NDC / airline retailing / distribution?

Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals

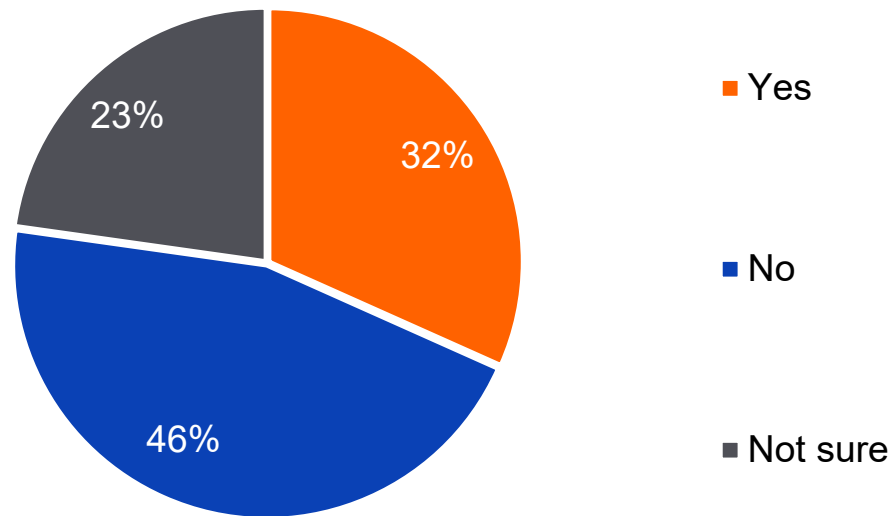
***indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America-based travel buyers**

Regardless of region, travel buyers feel they need more information and education about NDC. This is especially true in Asia-Pacific and Latin America.

The **Travel Buyer's** Perspective

Travel Buyers Also Don't Feel Their TMC Has Sufficient Information About NDC

Do you feel your TMC has sufficient information on NDC and is sharing with you their plans including potential mitigation?
buyers only



Q. Do you feel your TMC has sufficient information on NDC and is sharing with you their plans including potential mitigation?

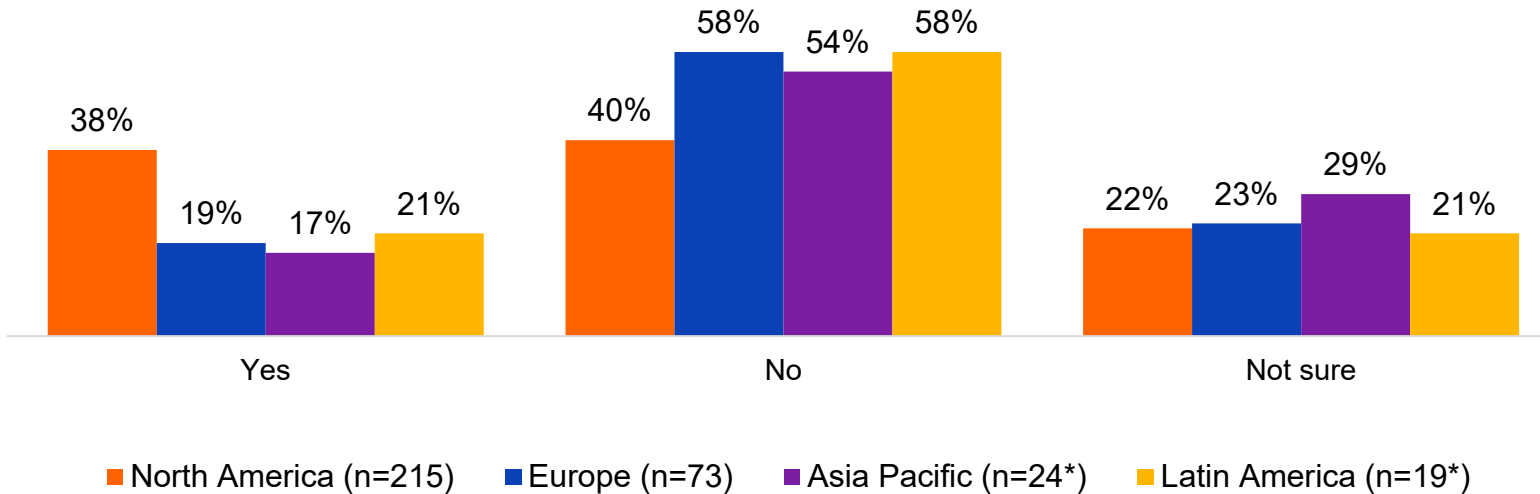
Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals (n=335)

Only one-third of travel managers (32%) say their TMC has enough information on NDC and is communicating plans including potential mitigation. This is unchanged from the last poll – suggesting significant room for improvement.

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

North American Travel Buyers Are Most Likely to Say Their TMC Has Enough Info About NDC

Do you feel your TMC has sufficient information on NDC and is sharing with you their plans including potential mitigation?
travel buyers only by region



Q. Do you feel your TMC has sufficient information on NDC and is sharing with you their plans including potential mitigation?

Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals

***indicates small sample size in Asia Pacific and Latin America (n<30)**

North America-based travel buyers are most likely to say their TMC has enough information about NDC and is sharing NDC-related plans. Two in five North America-based buyers (38%) feel this way compared to less than one in five in every other region.



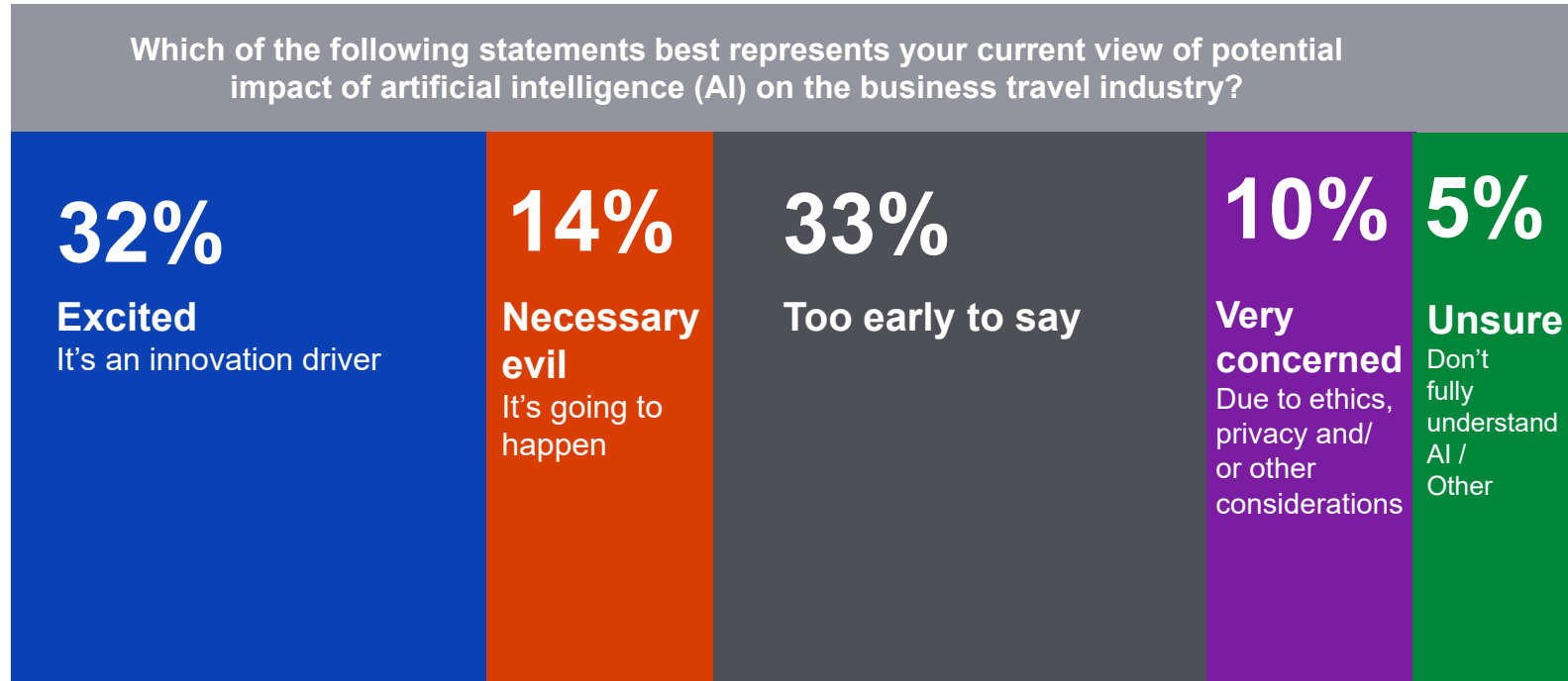
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Artificial Intelligence (AI)



Business Travel Professionals Have Differing Opinions About Artificial Intelligence (AI)

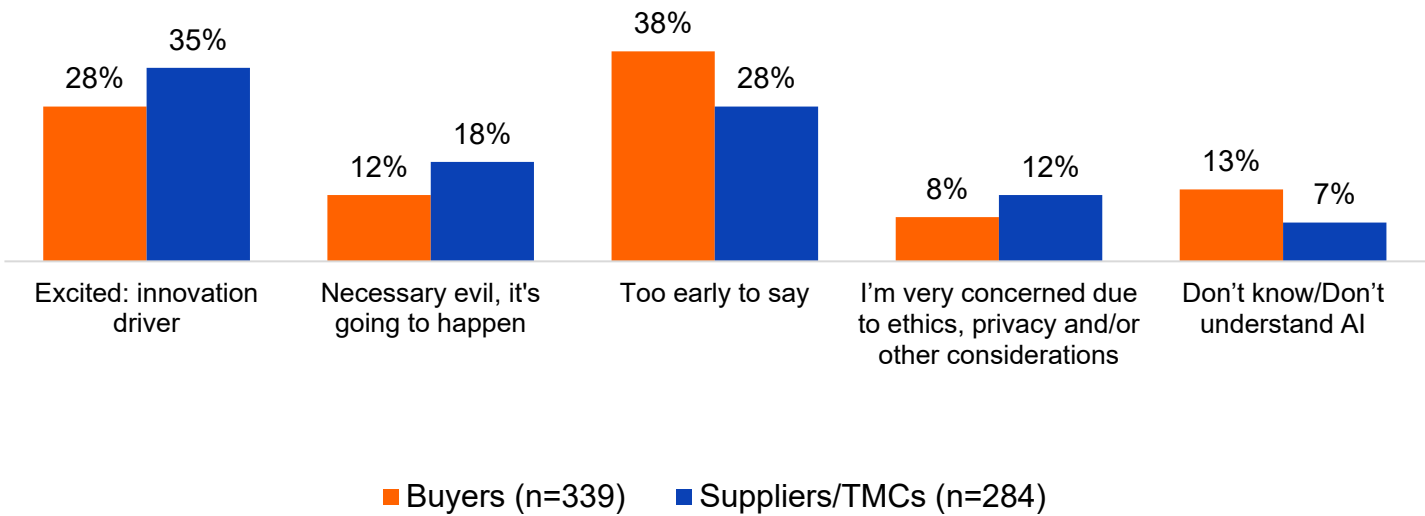


Q Which of the following statements best represents your current view of potential impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the business travel industry? (n=662)

Business travel professionals have differing opinions about AI and its potential impact on the industry. One-third (33%) say it's too early to say what the impact will be. While another one-third (32%) are excited, a decent number (24%) have a negative outlook – saying they see AI as a necessary evil (14%) or are very concerned due to ethics, privacy and/or other considerations (10%).

Buyers Are More Likely to Reserve Judgment About the Potential Impact of AI

Which of the following statements best represents your current view of potential impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the business travel industry?
by respondent type

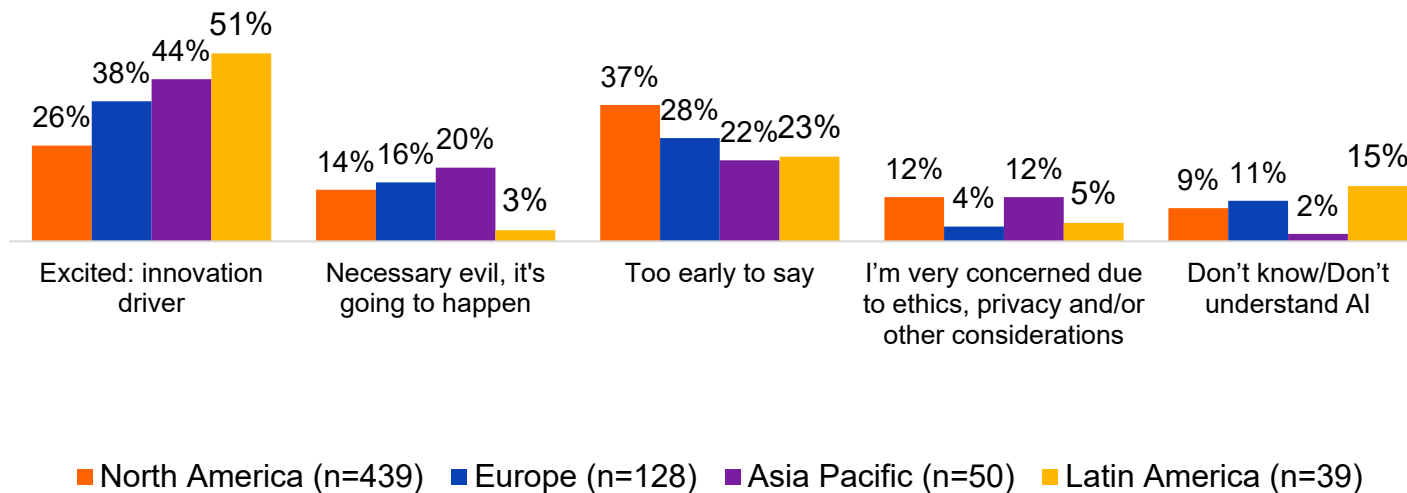


Suppliers are more excited about AI – and buyers are more likely to reserve judgment. One-third of travel suppliers (38%) are excited about AI—and view it as an innovation driver—compared to one-quarter of buyers (28%). This does not mean buyers have a negative outlook on AI. They are more likely than suppliers to say it is too early to say what will happen (38% vs. 28%).

Q. Which of the following best describes your company's current in-office/work-from home policy? (n=650)

There Are Regional Differences in How Industry Professionals View the Potential Impact of AI

Which of the following statements best represents your current view of potential impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the business travel industry?
by region

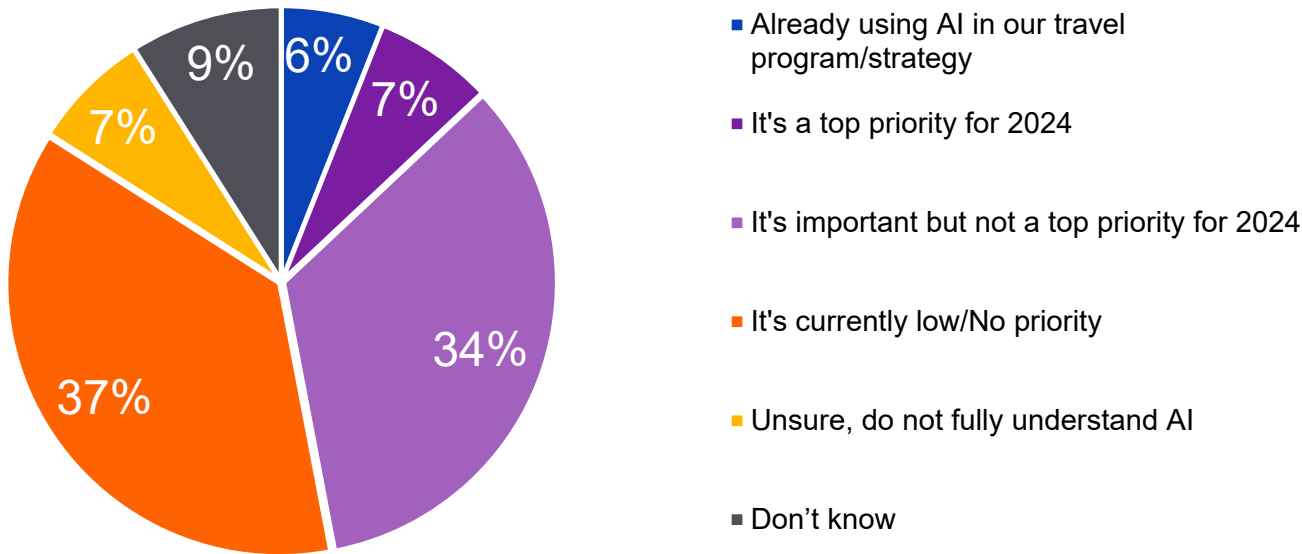


Q. Which of the following best describes your company's current in-office/work-from home policy? (n=650)

There are regional differences when it comes to how business travel professionals view the potential impact of AI. Latin America and Asia Pacific-based respondents are more likely to feel excited. North America-based respondents are more likely to say it is too early to say. Europeans are split between the two.

Travel Programs Largely Have Not Incorporated AI

Are you considering implementing artificial intelligence (AI) applications/tools in your corporate business travel program in 2024?
buyers only



Q. Are you considering implementing artificial intelligence (AI) applications/tools in your corporate business travel program in 2024? (n=339)

Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals

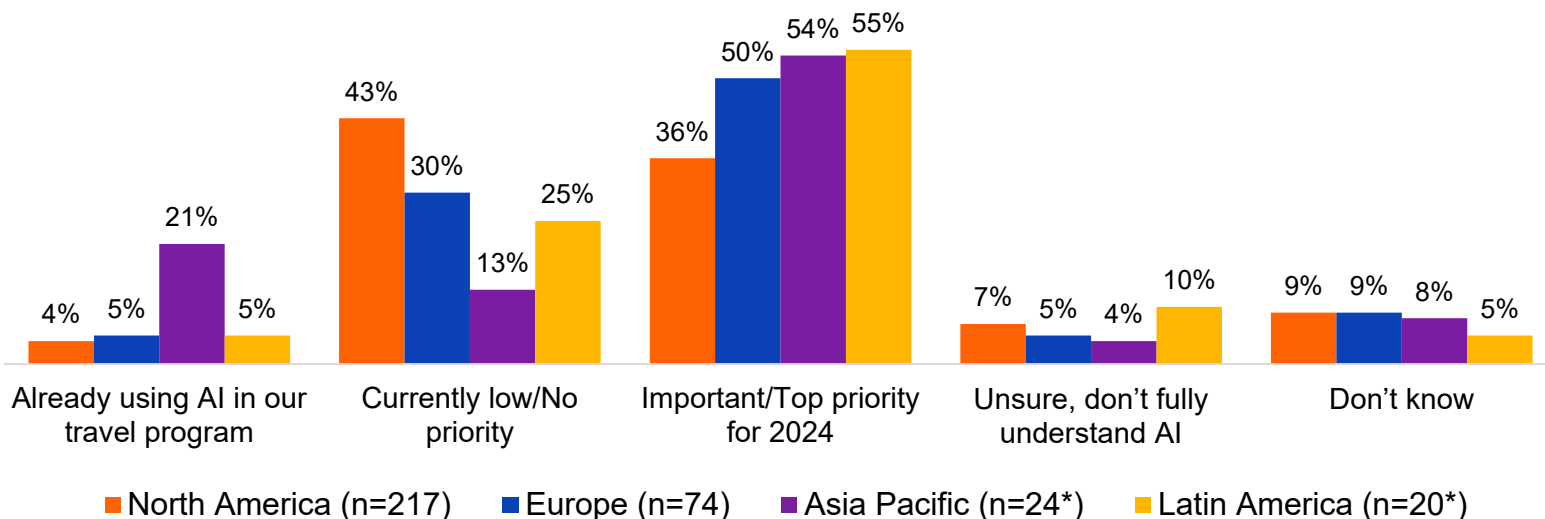
Travel programs have largely not incorporated AI – and are not prioritizing doing so in 2024. Only 6% of travel buyers say they are already using AI in their travel program/strategy. Only 7% say incorporating AI is a top priority for 2024. One-third (34%) say it is important—but not a top priority—and more than one-third (37%) say it is a low priority/no priority.

The Travel Buyer's Perspective

Incorporating AI Is a Lower Priority for North American Travel Programs

Are you considering implementing artificial intelligence (AI) applications/tools in your corporate business travel program in 2024?

travel buyers only by region



Q. Are you considering implementing artificial intelligence (AI) applications/tools in your corporate business travel program in 2024?

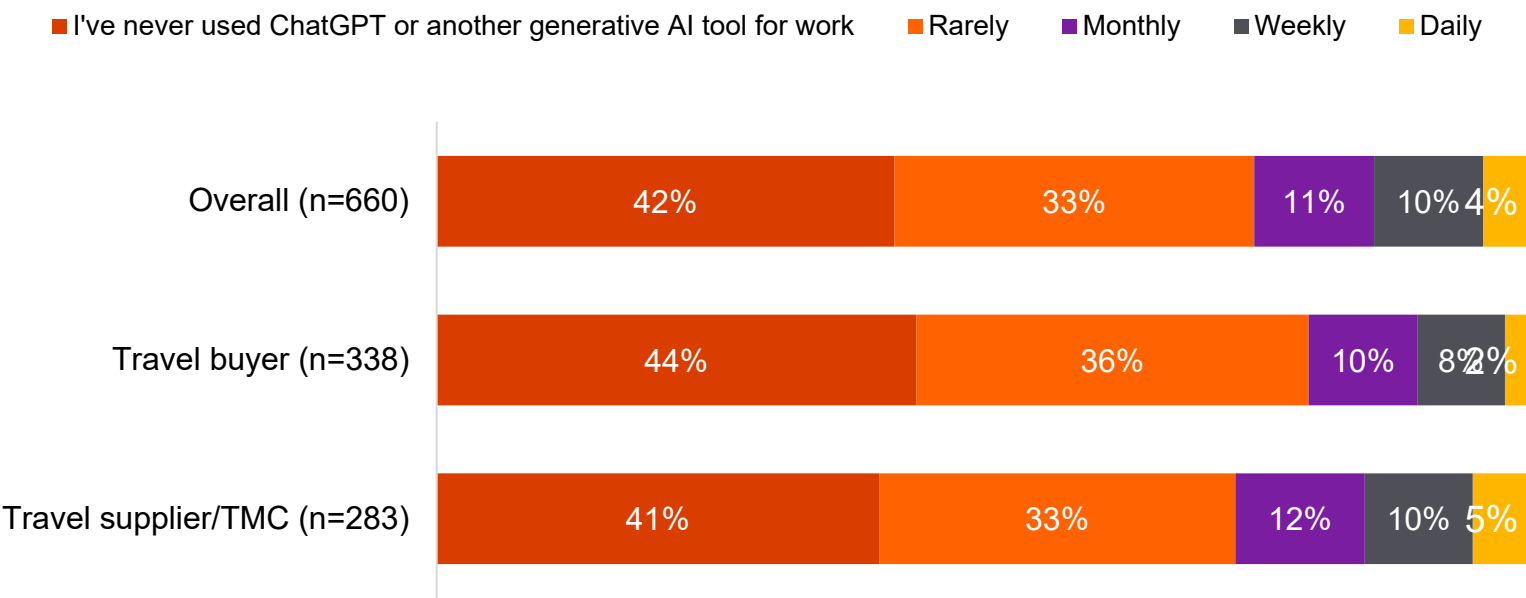
Note: Question only displayed to travel buyers/procurement professionals

***indicates small sample size for Asia Pacific and Latin America-based buyers**

Incorporating AI is a lower priority for North American travel programs. Only one-third (36%) of North America-based travel buyers say incorporating AI is an important/top priority for their program in 2024. This compares to at least half of buyers in each other region.

Business Travel Professionals Currently Rarely Use AI Tools in Their Work

How frequently do you use ChatGPT or another generative AI tool in your own role/work?



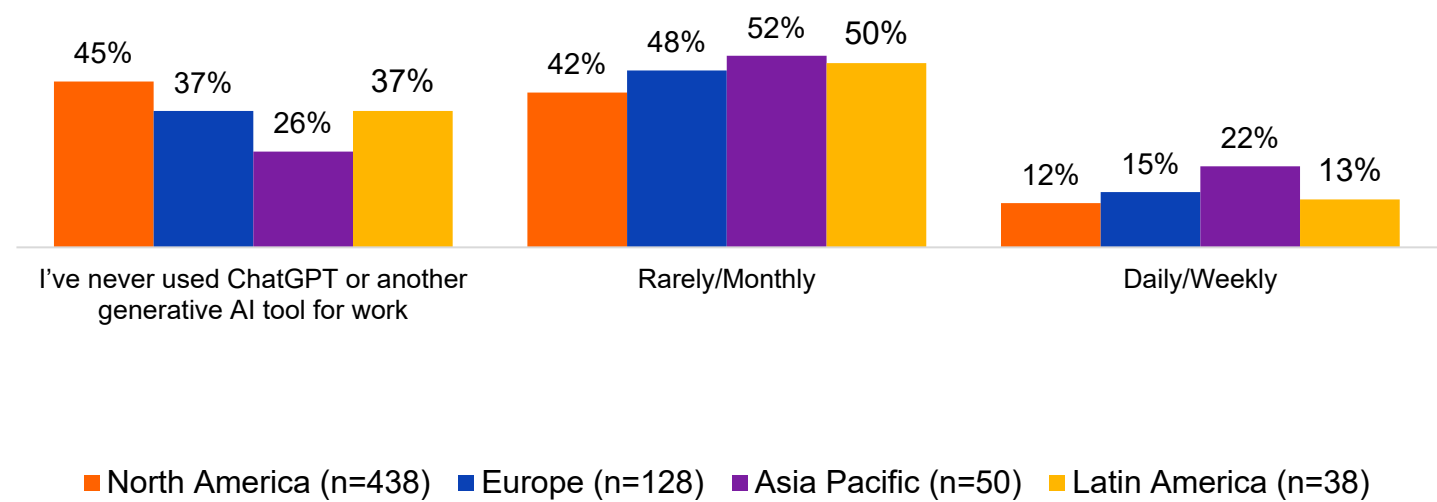
Natural language processing AI models such ChatGPT can write text, conduct research, and troubleshoot problems. When combined with human intelligence, these tools can be a powerful tool to maximize productivity, perform everyday tasks, conduct research, and solve problems. Business travel professionals can use them in different ways at work. Travel buyers might use them to draft sections of their travel policy or emails to travelers. Travel suppliers might use them to answer user-defined questions in RFPs. However, there might be ethical– and practical— implications with using AI in these ways.

Today, most business travel professionals rarely or never use these tools in their everyday job. Four in five buyers (80%) – and a similar number of suppliers (76%)— rarely or never use ChatGPT or another generative AI tool for work.

Q. How frequently do you use ChatGPT or another generative AI tool in your own role/work?

Industry Professionals Are Less Likely to Use Tools Such as ChatGPT in North America

How frequently do you use ChatGPT or another generative AI tool in your own role/work?
by region



Q. How frequently do you use ChatGPT or another generative AI tool in your own role/work?

Business travel professionals are less likely to use tools such as ChatGPT in North America. Almost half of North America-based respondents (45%) have never used ChatGPT or a similar tool for work. This is higher than the share in any other region.

In all four regions, fewer than one-quarter of business travel professionals use one of these tools on a daily or weekly basis at work.



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