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Amadeus Insights

Travel Technology Investment Trends 2024

Business Travel Agencies

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Foreword

Elena Avila

EVP, Travel Distribution
Amadeus



There has been much discussion around the future of business travel over the past few years – with initial concern volumes would never return to pre-COVID-19 levels giving way to more nuanced discussions around what shape the market would take as it recovers.

As the sector returns to its previous heights, Business Travel Agencies (BTAs) have demonstrated a driving ambition to invest to meet the evolving traveler and market needs. Many are looking to spend significantly more in 2024, adding technology and capabilities to build further end-to-end experiences for passengers, drive more value and highlight sustainability criteria.

It continues to be key for Business Travel Agencies to have access to the relevant content to differentiate by offering business travelers personalized yet simpler trips. Also driving revenue through the ability to manage ‘blended travel’ trips, book additional products such as meetings, transfers, cars and rail is a high priority to fully be able to deliver on

the end-to-end experience. In addition, realizing the benefits of NDC (New Distribution Capability) technology continues to be top of mind for many – and this is an area where progress is accelerating.

Business Travel Agencies have also been looking for efficiency gains to help lower costs and impact on the bottom line. This can mean the adoption of automation tools to systemize routine tasks, self-service solutions for travelers or the wider adoption of API aggregation, all of which can help cut demand for time consuming manual processes. There is a growing understanding that deployment of these technologies will be necessary to remain relevant in a fast-moving market.

There is also an expectation from our customers that technologies such as Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI), machine learning, cloud computing and digital payments soon will bring tangible benefits to the day-to-day operations of Business Travel Agencies.

With Amadeus being at the center of the travel ecosystem, we are well-positioned to help travel sellers achieve their goals. We continue to invest in our portfolio of solutions for Business Travel Agencies, from providing relevant content to enabling end-to-end smart retailing capabilities to all our customers no matter the size or location – our travel platform delivers on our promise: we make travel work better.

Exciting times are ahead for the industry with technology as a value-driver for better business travel. I hope you enjoy reading this report – and if you have any questions, we at Amadeus look forward to hearing from you.

Introduct

Travel Technology Investment Trends 2024 is a milestone research project carried out by Amadeus¹, alongside the market insight agency, Opinium Research².

¹ Amadeus.com

² Opinium.com

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This research is designed to take a unique, panoramic view across the entire travel industry, with findings presented in a series of eight reports – addressing sectors including hospitality, aviation, travel sellers and payments. The work investigates the developments that will define the sector over the coming year and beyond.

Findings included in this specific report are based on individual responses from 150 senior leaders from Business Travel Agencies based in ten key countries – Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Mexico, South Korea, UAE, UK and USA. Combined with expertise from Amadeus' executives, each report offers unique insight into technology investment trends across different segments of the travel industry.

This report focuses on Business Travel Agencies.

These businesses help companies organize travel arrangements for employees. This can include assistance with transport, accommodation, local services and helpline support. Business Travel Agencies work to make sure business travel is safe, efficient and cost-effective.

In this case, Business Travel Agencies have been differentiated from Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) and Leisure Travel Agencies (LTAs), both of which are addressed in separate, standalone reports. Each has specific technological needs over the coming year and more.

By asking Business Travel Agency leaders about investment plans, business challenges and priority areas, this report offers a globally

representative understanding of the sector, its priorities and ambitions for 2024 and beyond.

The report is divided into three sections.

The first explores sector-wide investment plans.

The second investigates technology priorities. What is shaping investment trends, which priorities are front-of-mind and what are the challenges Business Travel Agencies are seeking to overcome? Preparations for New Distribution Capability (NDC), content access, merchandising and servicing all come under the spotlight.

The third looks at how investment will support ambitions to build a more sustainable travel industry, before offering some brief conclusions.

01 Investment Plans

Figures¹ from the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) reveal the global business travel industry has rebounded at a more accelerated rate than anticipated just a year ago and is now expected to surpass its pre-pandemic spending level of \$1.4 trillion in 2024 – and grow to nearly \$1.8 trillion by 2027. In 2022, global business travel spending rose 47% to \$1.03 trillion, with strong gains continuing and 32% growth expected in 2023.

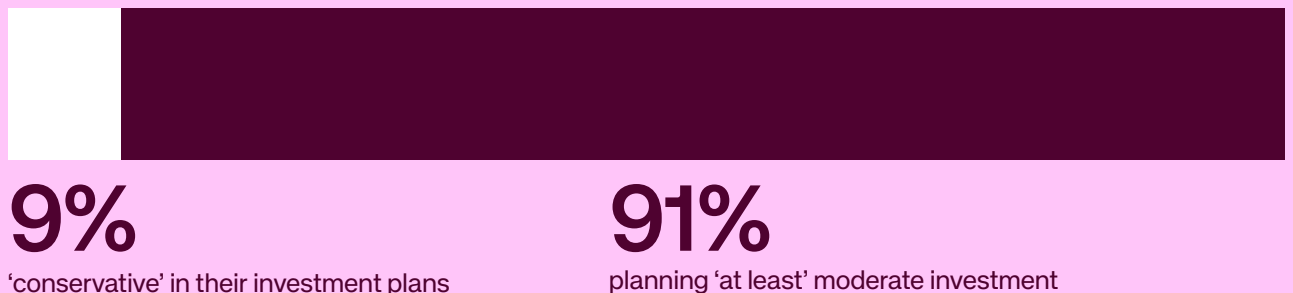
These robust gains were fueled by pent-up demand after the COVID-19 pandemic, more favorable global economic conditions in 2022 and 2023 and recession risks that have yet to materialize.

Against a backdrop of accelerating global recovery, travel expectations continue to evolve. Business travelers today expect end-to-end, personalized experiences and simple journeys which deliver value, every time.

¹ Global Business Travel Association, "Global Business Travel Industry Forecast is for Accelerated Rebound, Spending to Reach \$1.8 Trillion by 2027"
<https://bit.ly/494cXjv>

Strong appetite for technology investment among Business Travel Agencies around the world.

Business Travel Agencies are keen to invest to meet these changing expectations. While only 9% are 'conservative,' in their investment plans, some 91% plan 'at least' moderate investment in their businesses over the coming year. Business Travel Agencies are particularly bullish and investing 'aggressively' in Latin America (59%), Africa (62%) and the Middle East (51%).



Business Travel Agencies plan to increase investment in technology by

13% in the coming 12 months

In total, some 69% of Business Travel Agencies plan to invest more in technology than in the previous 12 months and a further 28% will invest 'about the same'. Only 3% plan to reduce investment in technology over the coming year, suggesting a strong appetite for spending.

On average across the world, Business Travel Agencies plan to increase investment in technology by 13% in the coming twelve months – a figure comparable to that reported by Online Travel Agencies as part of the Travel Technology Investment Trends research. However, Latin America was a notable outlier on the upside, with the planned average investment 16% higher when compared to the previous 12 months.

Variety of new capabilities sought by the industry.

With these ambitious plans for investment established, industry leaders were asked what was driving the boom.

A wide variety of objectives are driving this investment in technology, with relatively equal weighting, including offering an improved user experience (65%), innovation (59%), revenue increases (55%), sustainability (53%) and margin improvement (51%).

Notably, cost reduction was only cited as a driver by 38% of respondents, by far the lowest response option. This again is similar to what was observed in the Online Travel Agency sector.

Business Travel Agencies cited a number of capabilities they sought to drive new revenue streams:

62%

The ability to manage 'blended travel' trips

62%

Book additional products, including meetings, transfers, cars and rail

55%

Offer consulting services on sustainable travel

51%

Implement a digital payments strategy that drives rebates

47%

Allow for the reselling of corporate travel technology

38%

The targeting of previously unmanaged travel



Business travel agencies are seeking a range of new capabilities when it comes to technology investments. The evolving demands of business travelers today requires more sophisticated services and solutions. This means a wider range of products, such as access to meeting facilities, whilst being able to build end-to-end trips with everything from hotel, flight, car rental, other mobility solutions, and even travel protection.

The ambitions to service the 'blended travel' market are also increasingly significant, as travelers are looking to extract maximum value from their journeys. For example, by mixing an element of personal time with professional commitments."

Paul de Villiers

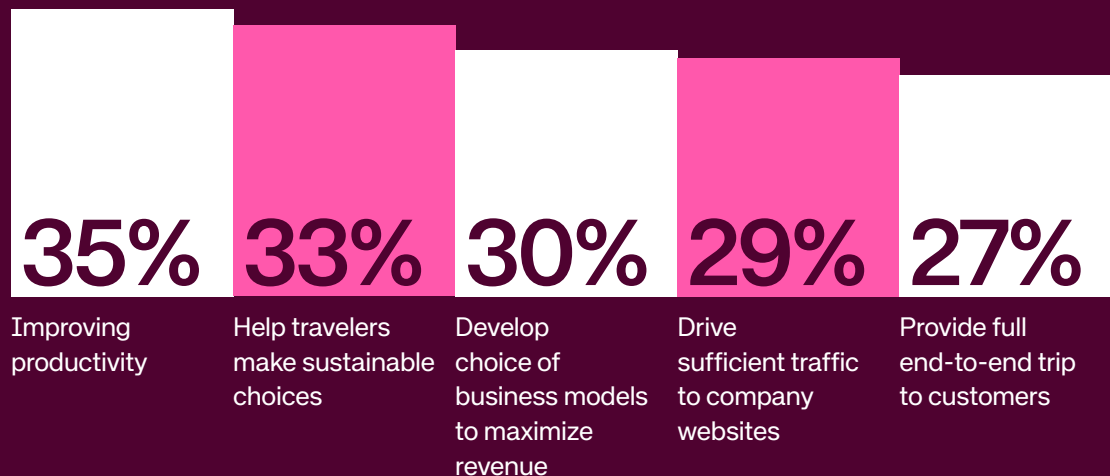
SVP, Global Business Accounts
Amadeus

Improving productivity is a key technology challenge for Business Travel Agencies.

Business Travel Agencies are keen to overcome several challenges through investment in technology, largely focused on improving productivity, which was cited by 35% of respondents.

Gaining access to the right information to help travelers make sustainable choices (33%), developing a choice of business models to maximize revenue (30%), driving sufficient traffic to company websites (29%) and providing a full end-to-end trip to customers (27%) were also key technology challenges to be overcome.

At the same time, merchandising (23%) and preparing for New Distribution Capability (NDC) (27%) were viewed as challenges by fewer Business Travel Agencies, perhaps explaining why they are not highlighted as priority investment areas either.



“

Business Travel Agencies are looking for the technological solutions to help them do more, with less. Amadeus offers a range of solutions designed to optimize performance at every level of an organization and at every stage of the booking life cycle.

However, with only a quarter of Business Travel Agencies respondents citing NDC preparations as a challenge and even less selecting merchandising, it does appear there is more work to do. Last year marked an important milestone in the adoption of NDC as booking volumes have grown significantly compared to 2022. During 2023, more major airlines, like Air Canada and SAS, decided to make their NDC content available via Amadeus. For some airlines, we observe that one in every three bookings made via the Amadeus Travel Platform is now made using NDC. Amadeus is encouraging Business Travel Agencies to be NDC-ready, as airlines are now accelerating their transition to become modern retailers.”

Francesca Benati

SVP, Travel Sellers, Europe, & Country, GM Italy
Amadeus



Investment Priorities

Business Travel Agencies continue to adapt to meet the changing expectations of business travelers. With a focus on value, they are working to offer customized, bespoke itineraries which fulfill specific needs, creating journeys aligned with the ambitions, policy and restrictions of a corporate travel booker.

Drawing on experience to ensure that a trip runs smoothly, effective Business Travel Agencies are working to ensure they utilize the latest solutions to support travelers throughout a trip. Effectively deployed, these tools can act as a valuable differentiator in a competitive market.

To realize these ambitions, Business Travel Agencies are expecting a range of technologies to have an impact over the coming year, all with relatively equal weighting.

Which technology areas do Business Travel Agencies consider the most important in the **next 12 months**?



42%

Machine learning



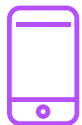
41%

Data analytics



40%

Generative AI



39%

Digital payments



37%

Cloud computing

Looking over a five-year horizon, the picture remains largely consistent, with machine learning and Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI) continuing to top the charts. However, cloud computing and data analytics are replaced in the top five by extended reality (39%) and API driven innovation (38%).

Which technology areas do Business Travel Agencies consider the most important beyond the **five-year horizon**?



49%

Machine learning



41%

Generative AI



39%

Extended reality



38%

API driven innovation



37%

Digital payments

More specifically, improving the customer experience and productivity are short-term technology objectives.

Business Travel Agencies have the following technology and distribution priorities over the coming 12 months:

49%

Enhance the customer experience

41%

Improve productivity

37%

Traffic acquisition

36%

Source more relevant content from suppliers

31%

Improve search functionality

25%

Personalize the offer

“

When it comes to investment in technology, Business Travel Agents have a variety of competing objectives. In the near-term, the value of Generative AI is ripe for realization, with travelers able to find value in the deployment of effective customer service chatbots, especially during times of disruption. At the same time, the technology can create a more intuitive booking process, as evidenced through our own Cytric Easy tool.

Business Travel Agents are also looking to exploit the benefits of enhanced data analytics. With such a fast-paced travel industry, in-depth market analysis is more valuable than ever. The good news is that, thanks to the key benefits provided by travel intelligence and more generally, data, travel providers can go above and beyond to meet their customers' demands.”

Renaud Nicolle

SVP, Travel Sellers – North Asia and Pacific, Global Business Agents APAC Amadeus



Looking further ahead, extended reality will increasingly be on the agenda for Business Travel Agencies.

The new technology will supplement existing booking channels, giving prospective business travelers a taste of what they can experience before they arrive.

For example, it will be possible to let travelers inspect hotel rooms, airline seats and other spaces before booking, even allowing them to try the check-in process.

Investment in these new technologies will allow Business Travel Agencies to meet commercial priorities, including enhancing the customer experience (49%), improving productivity (41%) and driving traffic acquisition (37%).

Of course, as the technology landscape continues to evolve, Business Travel Agencies have been investing to unleash new capabilities, with traffic acquisition a key objective of recent investment.

The most mature 'already implemented' capabilities for Business Travel Agencies are:

55%

First-party
data management
(traffic acquisition)

51%

Front-office end-to-end trip
management and servicing

51%

Cross-sell capabilities
(e.g. car, hotel and insurance)

51%

Merchandising
(e.g. rich content, ancillaries
and fare families)

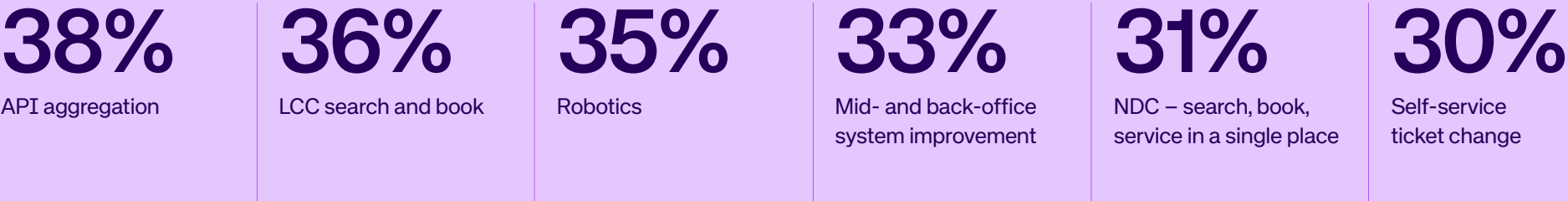
50%

APIs to connect to
multiple data sources

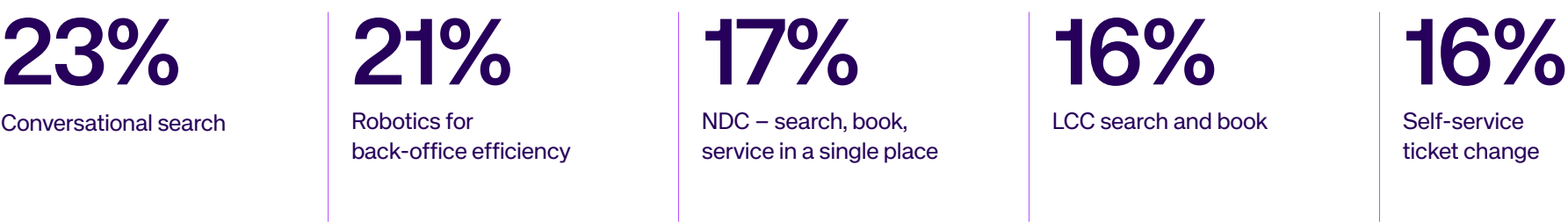


Looking ahead, around a third of Business Travel Agencies are seeking to implement new capabilities, including API aggregation and low-cost carrier (LCC) search and book, as well as robotic process automation. Over the longer-term, the capabilities sought are more varied, with nearly a quarter of Business Travel Agencies looking to deploy conversational search.

Business Travel Agencies are focused on implementing the following capabilities in the **next 12 months**:



Business Travel Agencies are focused on implementing the following capabilities in the **longer-term**:



When successfully deployed, conversational search has the potential to equip Business Travel Agencies with innovative capabilities to address top of the funnel inspiration use cases.

With only 47% of Business Travel Agencies saying they have implemented conversational search right now, there is plenty of room for growth. Similarly, only 43% of Business Travel Agencies say they have a solution in place for LCC search and book at present, 44% have implemented New Distribution Capability (NDC) and 49% allow for self-serve ticket changes. This means there are great opportunities to deploy new technology through effective investment. Indeed, over 90% of Business Travel Agencies already have, or say they will at some point in the future, implement every technology area specified.

“

Conversational search is an area with great potential. This technology can offer business travelers a more intuitive way of interacting with their business travel search, functioning almost like a physical travel agency, and using friendly and intelligent language. The power of conversational search for business travelers lies in its ability to suggest potential itineraries that meet their needs and their company's policies.

Such interactive and exciting features are not only beneficial for business travelers, but also serve as a valuable business tool for corporate travel agencies as they offer a variety of choices and tailored results according to company policies. It could also be a way to better manage additional travel offering (flight ancillaries), as technology could increase the visibility of options for business travelers and reduce friction in the booking and post booking process.”

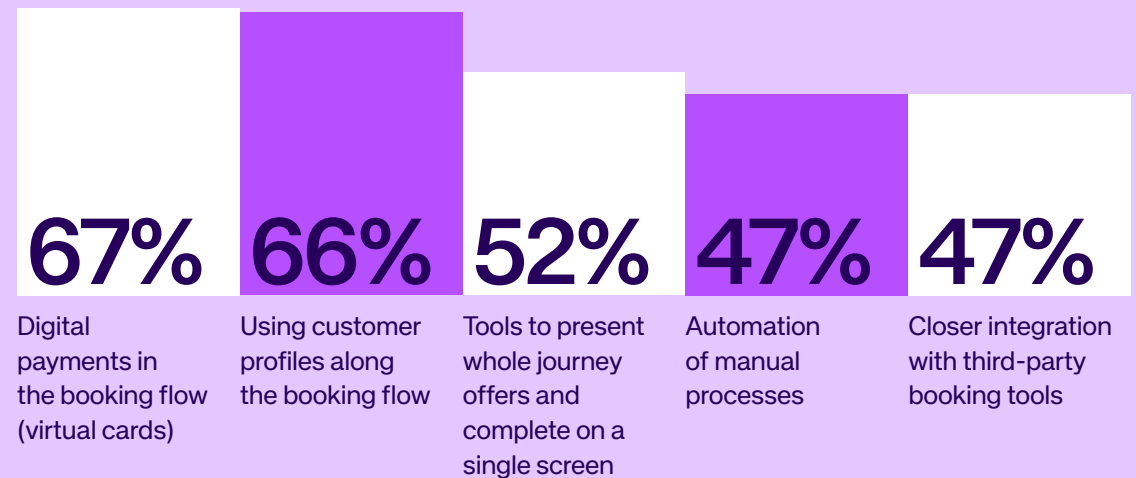
Bénédicte Isnardon

Associate Director, Search & Inspire Product Marketing Management
Amadeus



Priority: Driving productivity with technology

Travel Technology Investment Trends research reveals a majority of Business Travel Agencies are already deploying a number of tech-enabled techniques to drive productivity across their organizations. Notably, the use of virtual cards for payment is becoming widespread.



Virtual cards bring many benefits and are a rapidly growing technology in the corporate travel space. They offer increased convenience, security and fraud protection, while having the capability to set spending limits and expiration dates. Virtual cards also offer a secure and accessible way for corporate travel bookers to monitor expenditure, reducing the need for reconciliation and paper expense processes. Finally, virtual cards can be issued in multiple currencies, reducing foreign exchange costs and helping agents to save money.

Priority: New capabilities from booking tools

Examining the new capabilities Business Travel Agencies are looking for from booking tools, two clear trends emerge: effective integration and improved adherence to travel policies.

Some 92% of Business Travel Agencies respondents said it is at least 'important' that booking tools adhere to the various travel policies of corporate customers when searching and booking. Moreover, some 41% said this was 'very important'.

At the same time, when asked which capabilities are most important in a booking tool, Business Travel Agencies said interaction with the agency's own systems (55%) and access to the most relevant content from the widest range of sources (53%) were front-of-mind. Harmonization of the search, book and servicing flow also scored highly, cited by 49% of respondents.



Effective integration of systems is a must for any successful Business Travel Agency, streamlining agent workflows, reducing IT costs and creating innovative search capabilities. Integrated systems can increase reach by leveraging all possible sales channels, including mobile, and impress customers with personalized and bookable offers and fares.”

Sascha Volders

Head of Product Marketing Management
Amadeus

Priority: Preparation for NDC distribution

New Distribution Capability (NDC) deployment has been accelerating among airlines, with the technology rapidly maturing. The development is all about bringing new retailing capabilities to travel distribution, benefiting all actors in the corporate selling value chain, starting with the corporate traveler themselves. With NDC technology, customization can reach a new level and paves the way for a new type of retailing for travel.

It allows for new ways of bundling offers, which can be tailor-made on contextual information, or be presented to travel sellers or travelers in a richer, more informative way thanks to images, more detailed information and more.

Corporate travel is, however, a complex ecosystem. Searching and selling a flight is only one small piece of the puzzle for Business Travel Agencies.

NDC also needs to fit end-to-end, meaning efficient mid- and back-office integration, automated payment reconciliation and reporting, automation or omnichannel servicing and more. This requires significant preparation; Business Travel Agencies have largely taken the first steps on this journey, but work remains to be done until adoption arrives at scale.

When questioned about preparations for NDC, only one option – ‘Trained our team for NDC and its implications’ – was selected by more than half of Travel Technology Investment Trends respondents. Yet only 1% of Business Travel Agencies said they have taken no action at all on NDC, though this figure rose to 6% in LATAM.



What preparations have agencies made for IATA's NDC?

54%

Trained our team for NDC and its implications

49%

Secured access to a wide range of airline NDC content

48%

Invested to ensure we can operate with both EDIFACT and NDC over the coming years

48%

Ability to fully change and service NDC bookings

43%

Ability to merchandise new NDC offers e.g., display ancillary services

41%

Updated our mid- and back-office systems for NDC

1%

We haven't made any preparations for IATA's NDC



Business Travel Agencies suggest securing access to NDC content (cited by 42% of respondents), working with multiple content formats, such as NDC, EDIFACT and APIs (41%) and managing commercial relationships with airlines (40%) as the biggest challenges related to NDC.

What are the biggest challenges for Business Travel Agencies when preparing for NDC?



42%

Securing access to airline NDC content



41%

Brining NDC content together with other formats like EDIFACT



40%

Managing commercial relationships with airlines around NDC content



35%

Being able to service NDC bookings



35%

Running systems for multiple content formats in parallel



27%

Merchandising NDC content



23%

The back-office implications of NDC



1%

We are not facing any challenges preparing for IATA's NDC



“

Successful utilization of NDC is increasingly vital for Business Travel Agencies. Amadeus' tools allow Business Travel Agencies to shop for flight recommendations, independent of content source or sales channel, with the booking and ticketing process fully integrated into our ecosystem. Servicing – including canceling, voiding, refunding and exchanging – is also supported within our platform.

Business Travel Agencies can tailor the travel experience with a richer offer, thanks to NDC merchandising, including ancillary services, fare families and enhanced descriptive content. NDC offers simplified, and guaranteed, transaction flows, with virtually no Agent Debit Memos (ADMs). Finally, the standard also allows for the integration of more granular travel policies, of particular benefit to corporate bookers.”

Ludo Verheggen

Director, Air Distribution Product Marketing
Amadeus



Amadeus recently unveiled a study with Avianca, demonstrating progress from the airline with NDC since signing an expanded agreement with Amadeus in 2021 to supply the travel agency community with its full range of NDC content.

Not only is the airline seeing double-digit growth in its NDC bookings, but the airline has re-focused its commitment to its agency partners too.

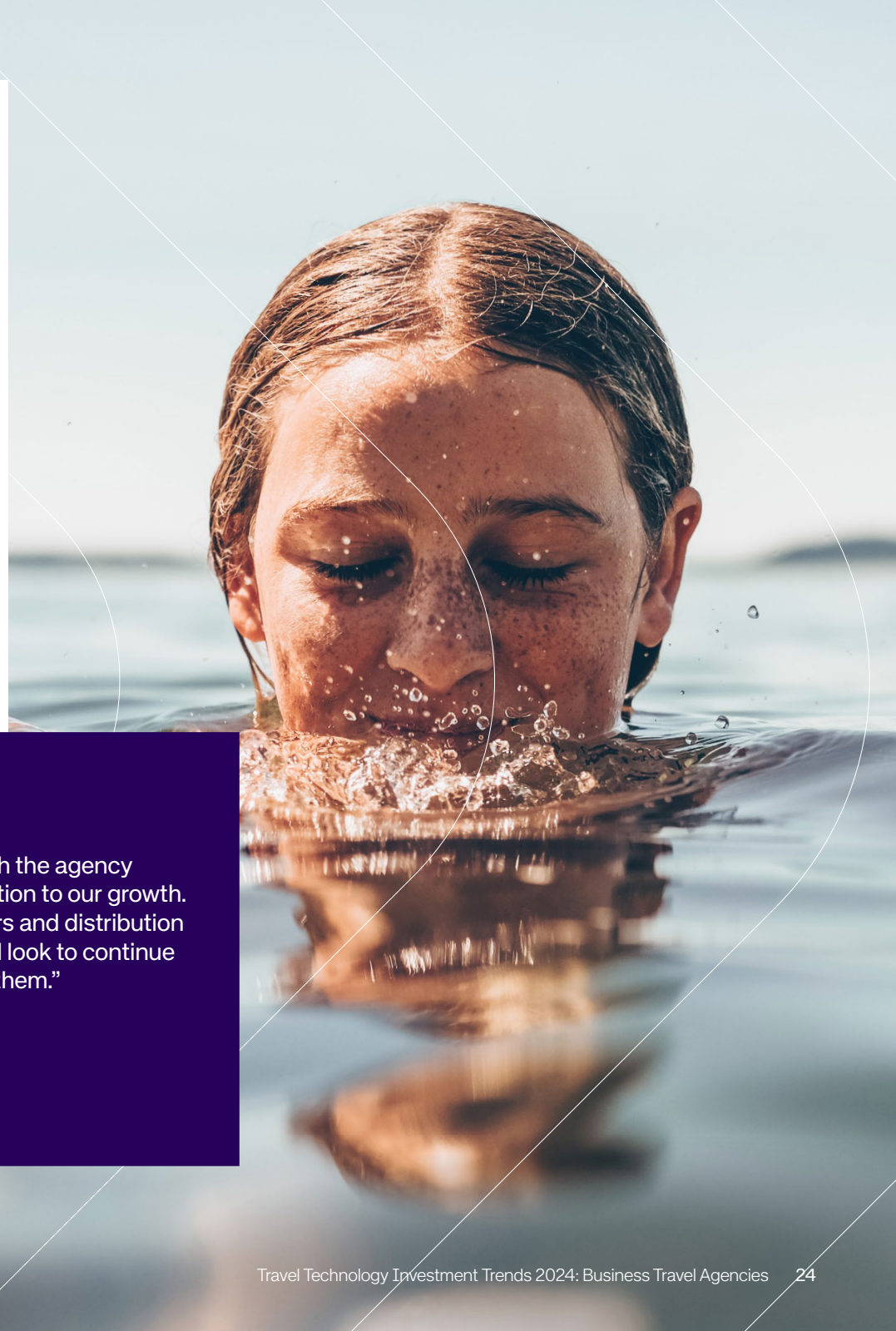
[Find out more](#)



We value our relationships with the agency community and their contribution to our growth. Avianca considers travel sellers and distribution partners as key actors and will look to continue building strong relations with them.”

Catalina Nannig

VP, Sales and Distribution
Avianca



A photograph of two women sitting at a table in a modern office setting. The woman on the left is Black with short, curly blonde hair, wearing a white sleeveless top and red pants. She is holding a blue pen and looking towards the other woman. The woman on the right is Asian with long brown hair, wearing a black sleeveless top. They are both looking at each other and appear to be in a collaborative meeting. In the background, there is a large green living wall.

Priority: Access to content

When it comes to investment, Business Travel Agencies are looking for solutions which allow them to differentiate by offering travelers end-to-end, personalized trips. With this in mind, Business Travel Agencies said they are most focused on sourcing full-service carrier (FSC) content over the next twelve months (50%), followed by hotel (41%) and insurance (40%).

“

At Amadeus we are working to ensure our customers can provide the perfect end-to-end, personalized experience for travelers. For this reason, we source content from multiple providers and make it available in one place. It all comes together, regardless of the type of content, whether this is air, hotel, rail, insurance, attractions, local tours or mobility such as car rental, transfer or ride hailing. We have more than 11 million hotel shopping options and more than two million unique hotel properties. Today, we work with more than 80 mobility brands and 22 travel protection providers.

We believe that it is the content beyond the air ticket, with its appropriate business model, that will make the difference and allow one travel seller to distinguish itself from the rest.”

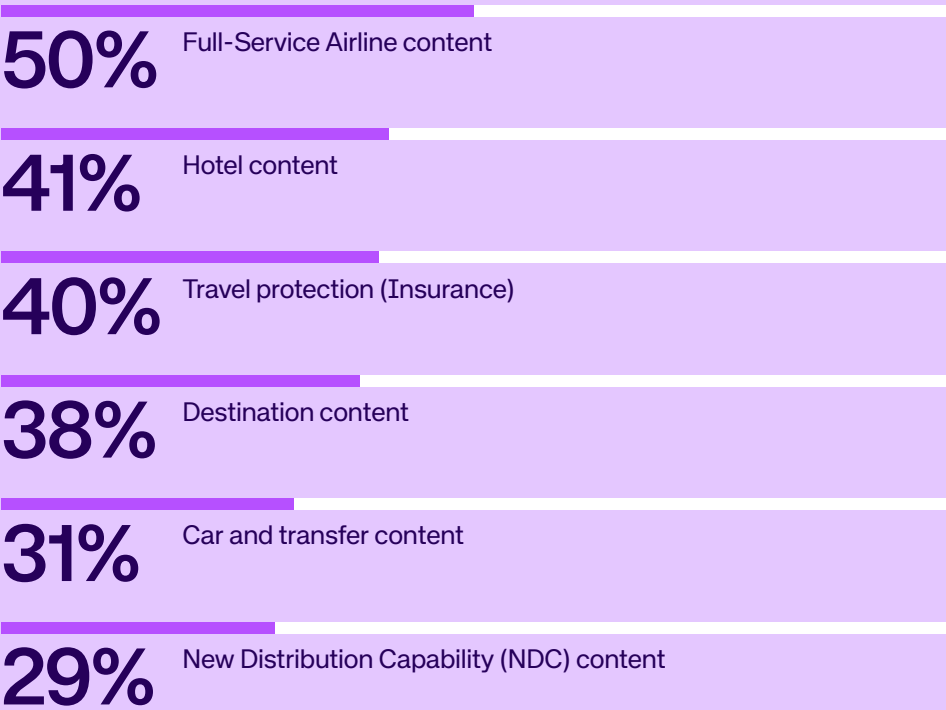
Joerg Schuler

EVP, Media & Distribution, Hospitality
Amadeus

Interestingly, NDC and LCC content were only selected by 29% of respondents

In the short-term, Business Travel Agencies are seeking better access to full-service airline, hotel and insurance content.

Which type of supplier content is most important for Business Travel Agencies to source over the next 12 months?



Access to a wide range of relevant content in a single cloud-based platform allows Business Travel Agencies to enhance revenues, optimize agents' productivity and deliver superior services to customers. At Amadeus we work to offer the solutions agents need to deliver the connected, end-to-end trips that corporate travelers demand."

Jamel Chandoul
SVP, Travel Sellers, Middle East, Turkiye & Central Asia, Africa & EMEA Partner Markets
Amadeus

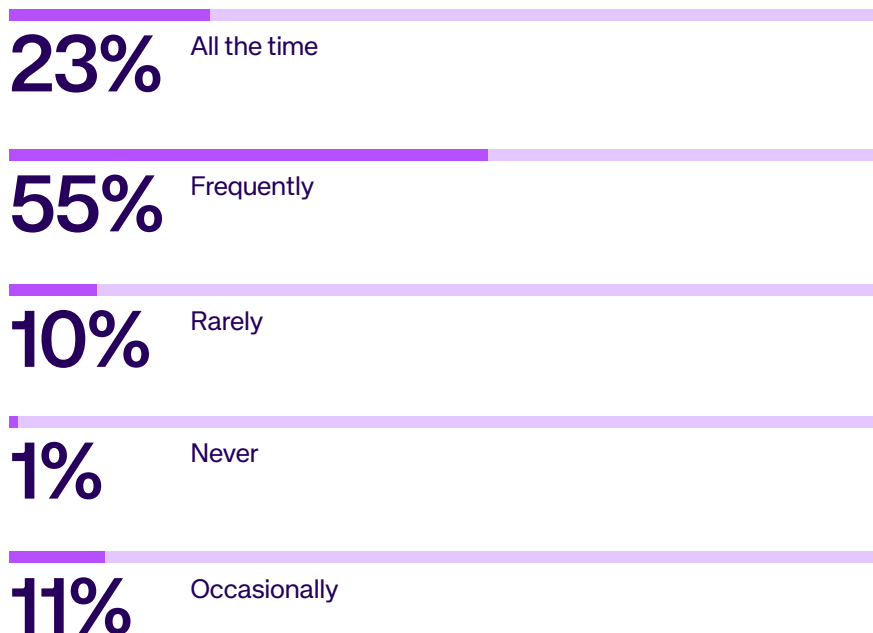


Priority: Merchandising

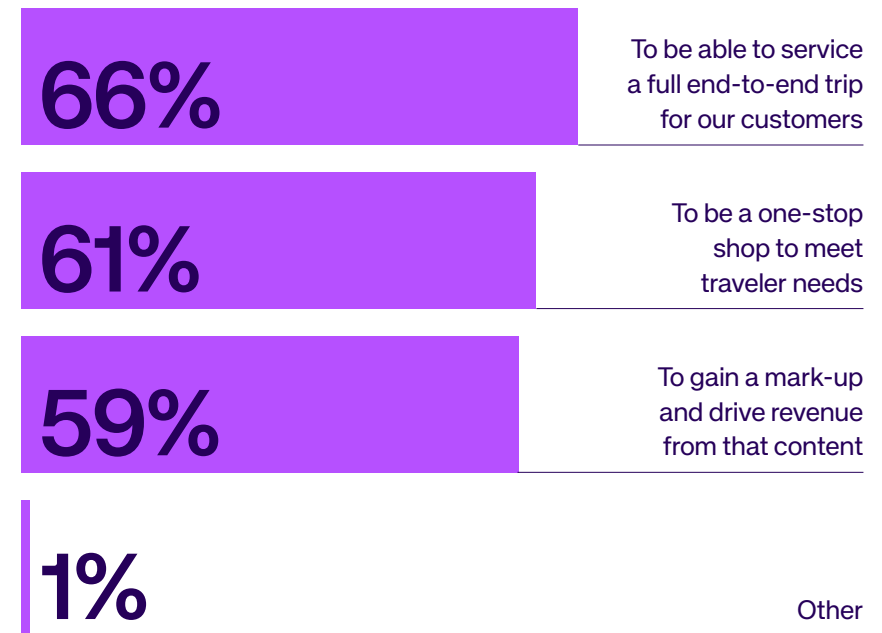
Some 78% of Business Travel Agencies in the ten key countries surveyed said they ‘frequently’ suggest additional add-ons, such as hotels or ground transport, when planning a trip, although 11% of Business Travel Agencies never do so today.

Like Online Travel Agencies, Business Travel Agencies suggest the main reason for offering add-ons is not to drive more revenue for their business. Rather, these companies are seeking to ‘offer the full end-to-end trip to our customers’ (66%) and to better meet the needs of their corporate customers and to remain relevant by ‘being a one-stop-shop’ (61%). Both Online Travel Agencies and Business Travel Agencies are working to become the sole destination for a traveler as they build a trip. This data suggests that for agencies, delivering long-term value to the traveler and being able to provide a full service across the end-to-end trip is more important than short-term revenue gains.

On top of air travel, how often do Business Travel Agencies suggest additional add-ons such as hotels, car rentals, rail, insurance or transfers to your customers?

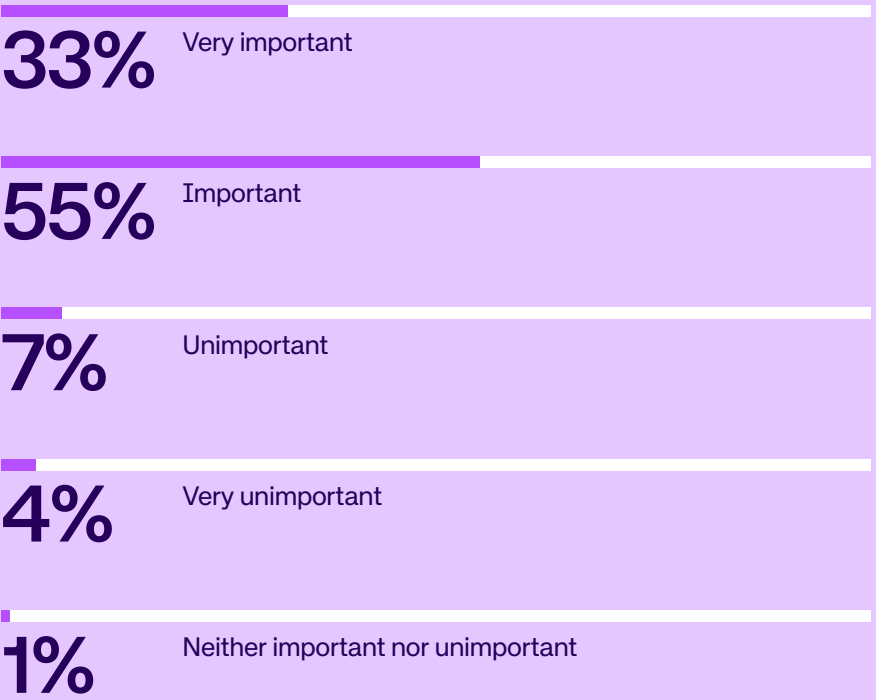


Why do Business Travel Agencies suggest additional add-ons such as hotels, car rentals, rail, insurance, transfers to your customers on top of air travel?



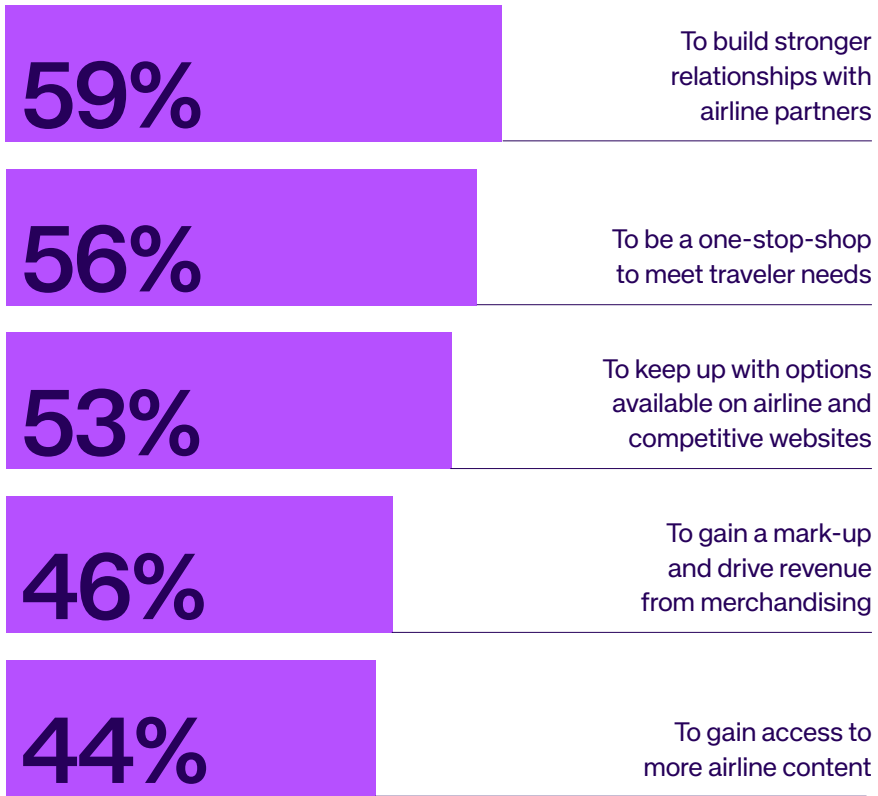
How important or unimportant is it to merchandise airline products currently?

At the same time, some 88% of Business Travel Agency respondents view merchandising airline products as ‘important’ with a third viewing it as ‘very important’.



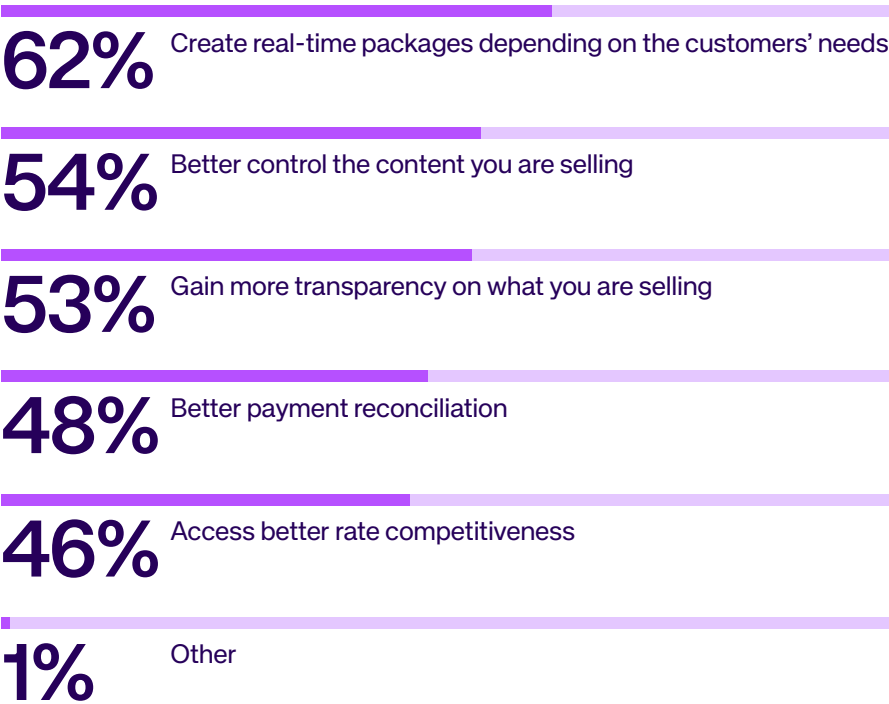
Why is it important for Business Travel Agencies to be able to merchandise airline products well?

For Business Travel Agencies, the top reason for investing in merchandising capabilities is to meet the needs of airlines, followed by meeting the needs of travelers as a ‘one-stop-shop’.



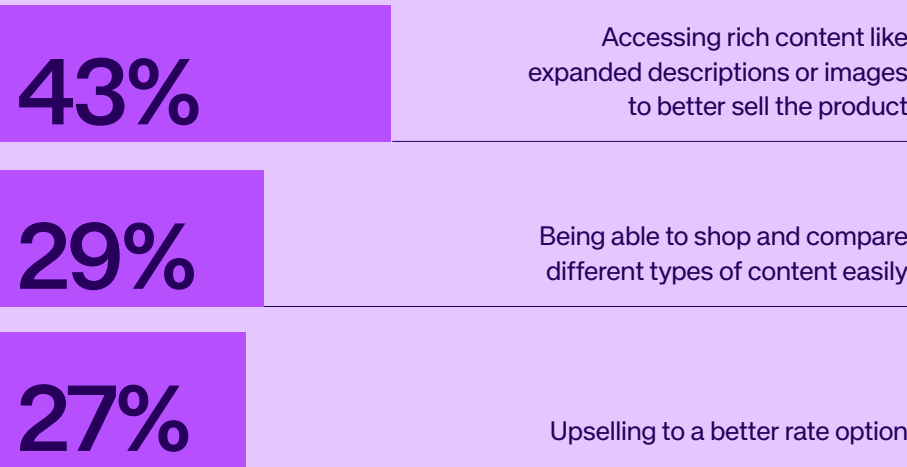
When it comes to selling travel products beyond air travel, such as hotels, car rentals, rail, transfers and insurance, where do Business Travel Agencies think technology can help the most?

Business Travel Agencies are looking to technology providers to assist them in this objective, with respondents planning to invest in technology to create real-time packages and to better control inventory.



When thinking about merchandising the end-to-end trip, what do Business Travel Agencies consider the highest priorities?

Finally, Business Travel Agencies are seeking rich content to support their merchandising drive.



Priority: Servicing and automation

Business Travel Agencies estimated that roughly 11% of bookings involve a voluntary or involuntary ticket change and that this consumes an estimated 11% of their customer service resources. Aware of the benefits of the technology, levels of self-service for ticket changes among Business Travel Agencies are already high. Today, 65% of respondents enable this via the web and 59% using mobile.

However, a significant minority of Business Travel Agencies continue to handle ticket changes manually via the contact center.

Business Travel Agencies estimate they have automated 24% of manual processes using robotics today, although 37% of respondents said they had automated less than 20% of manual processes. One in five respondents said less than 10% of processes have been automated today.



Business Travel Agencies plan to increase the use of robotics soon, with plans to automate a further 27% of their processes on average. This would take the number of automated processes close to 50% for the average Business Travel Agency.

Effective investment in self-service tools for rebooking could lead to automation of time-consuming ticket exchange and refund calculations, potentially saving Business Travel Agencies money by reducing demands on contact centers or agents. Self-service capabilities, available through a fully digitalized ticket exchange and refund experience, can enhance the customer experience, offering a quick, automated and transparent process.

“

The industry is moving to a much more seamless end-to-end journey. With digital IDs, travelers will increasingly be recognized and move more easily through each step of the journey. Self-service is an essential option to maximize the potential of this seamless end-to-end experience. Business Travel Agencies have a big role to play here. They are very often the trusted brand and the first port of call for travelers that need to make a change. Business Travel Agencies have a chance to differentiate by providing self-service options to travelers.”

Rajiv Rajian

EVP and Chief Commercial Officer, Americas
Amadeus

Sustainability

Travel is increasingly focused on sustainability, understanding that the environment, communities and destinations around us matter. The industry is working to make travel a force for social and environmental good. This is a collaborative effort, with many stakeholders sharing a responsibility to protect and improve the people and places impacted by travel, to ensure the industry continues to make a positive contribution to the world.

Business Travel Agencies share this sustainability ambition, with 94% of respondents saying it was 'important' for their customers to understand the environmental impact of each trip.

Perhaps this helps to explain why some 88% of Business Travel Agencies say sustainability objectives are important when prioritizing technology investments.

Business Travel Agents showed a sense of confidence around progress for environmental, social and governance objectives.

82% of Business Travel Agencies are confident they can show tangible steps taken when it comes to 'environmental sustainability,' with the figure rising to 87% when it comes to 'social sustainability'. When it comes to 'governance,' some 83% of Business Travel Agencies are confident they can show concrete steps.

In terms of investment priorities, 24% of Business Travel Agencies are planning to spend on systems to manage transparent data reporting, while 31% are seeking software to weigh the environmental impact of different travel choices. Generative AI interfaces to suggest more sustainable travel options were attractive to a quarter of the Business Travel Agencies surveyed, while intelligent search optimization to promote less popular destinations and reduce overtourism was considered desirable by 31% of respondents.

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Business Travel Agencies are beginning to integrate carbon emissions information into the search experience. By empowering travelers to choose their providers based on carbon impact, agents can play a major role in fostering a more sustainable industry. When travelers have choice, it motivates all players to improve their carbon efficiency. We're also seeing Business Travel Agencies offer carbon offsetting options during the booking flow, with encouraging take-up from travelers. Amadeus aims to make this possible across the industry.”

Olivier Girault

Head of Sustainability Solutions, ESG Office
Amadeus



Conclusion

Business Travel Agencies have a strong appetite for technology investment in 2024, with more than nine in ten planning 'at least' moderate investment in their businesses over the coming year. Enthusiasm is particularly strong in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.

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Money is being spent in search of new competences, such as the ability to manage 'blended travel' trips, as well as to book additional products and offer consulting services on sustainable travel. Business Travel Agencies are seeking to become one-stop-shops, able to meet all the needs of business travelers in a single, digital location.

At the same time, efficiency is a vital driver of investment. Business Travel Agencies are looking to new technologies, such as Generative AI, extended reality and robotics, to be able to deliver an enhanced service, more effectively, with fewer resources. Successful investment in these new technologies will allow Business Travel Agencies to meet distribution priorities, including enhancing the customer experience, improving productivity and driving traffic acquisition.

Looking ahead over the next year, around a third of Business Travel Agencies are seeking to implement new capabilities, including API aggregation, LCC search and book, and robotics. Over the longer-term, conversational search becomes the top priority. With a focus on business travelers, virtual cards offer a great opportunity for innovation, while Business Travel Agencies are also seeking effective integration between technology platforms and solutions which enable improved adherence to travel policies.

When it comes to New Distribution Capability (NDC), results of the study paint a mixed picture. While the vast majority of Business Travel Agencies recognize the importance of the standard and say acting is important to building relationships with airlines and securing content, the data shows that maturity varies across the sector. As the new IATA standards continue

to gain traction, more investment may be required in this area on the part of Business Travel Agencies.

Business Travel Agencies are also planning to increase the use of robotics in the near future, with ambitions to automate a further 27% of their processes on average. Effective investment in self-service tools for rebooking could lead to automation of time-consuming ticket exchange and refund calculations, potentially saving Business Travel Agencies money by reducing demands on contact centers or agents.

Finally, sustainability is a top priority for Business Travel Agencies, with plans to reduce the impact of travel on the environment important to the vast majority of respondents when prioritizing technology investments.

Methodology

This report is informed by a survey with 150 senior leaders from Business Travel Agencies that are involved in technology investment decision-making.

The research was carried out in ten countries to provide a globally representative view. Respondents were drawn from the following countries: Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Mexico, South Korea, UAE, UK and USA.

The survey was conducted by independent market research agency, Opinionium, in quarter four of 2023.

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