

The loyalty experience

The power of feeling valued

Central to loyalty is satisfying the personal need to feel understood, appreciated and – ultimately – valued. If you think of the relationships you have with your own favorite brands, the strongest are likely to be those which know you and what you like and, importantly, demonstrate that through smart, targeted promotions.

Conversely, brands with which you've had a fleeting interaction, but which spam you with irrelevant offers rapidly become an irritation – reputational damage it's hard to claw back from.

The psychological aspects of loyalty are only one side of the coin of course. Loyalty is nothing without the 'what's in it for me?' aspect of a brand relationship. Money off, special offers, exclusive access – something which brings a tangible return increases the affection held for a brand. It's part of human nature to want something in return for loyalty.



“Accenture’s own research, [Consumer Pulse Survey 2025](#) ↗, says 86% of travelers now want to shape their own experiences, with 93% of active gen AI users saying this is important to the personal connection they feel with the brand. With AI agents now in the mix, the industry can further assist travelers by reducing the time and effort required to scour for the best options and prices. These AI agents can monitor price changes in real time, integrate loyalty points, and offer assistance when plans change, even to the point of making or changing bookings.”

Emily Weiss

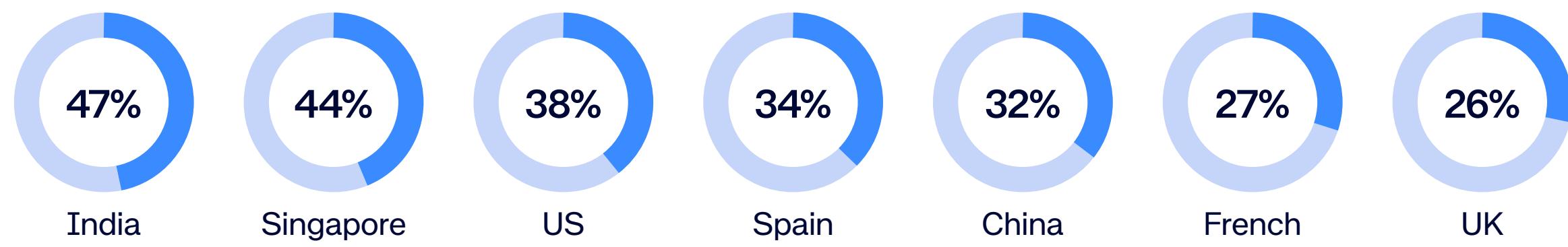
Senior Managing Director – Global Industry Sector Lead, Travel,
Accenture

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Proof is in the data

The evidence of the power of loyalty is clear when we look at the data from Amadeus traveler research in 2025. Nearly two fifths (38%) of global respondents admit that subscribing to loyalty programs encouraged them to book activities/experiences offered by the scheme outside of their primary need when traveling abroad.

A similar proportion (37%) agreed that being part of a loyalty program encouraged them to travel for leisure more frequently – although there were interesting market dynamics involved, with Indian travelers ranking highest at 47% agreeing and Singapore just behind at 44%. This compares to 38% in the US, 34% Spain, 32% China, with the French and UK markets significantly lower at just 27% and 26% respectively.



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Cultural differences are clearly key, and for international operators it’s essential that such nuances are understood; there’s no such thing as the ‘standard global traveler.’

This doesn’t just apply to leisure: business travelers also want specific returns for their loyalty. Key expected benefits understandably include speed and prioritization. Of those surveyed, 32% expect priority boarding and/or check-in; 31% want both priority customer assistance if difficulties are encountered and fast-track security lanes.

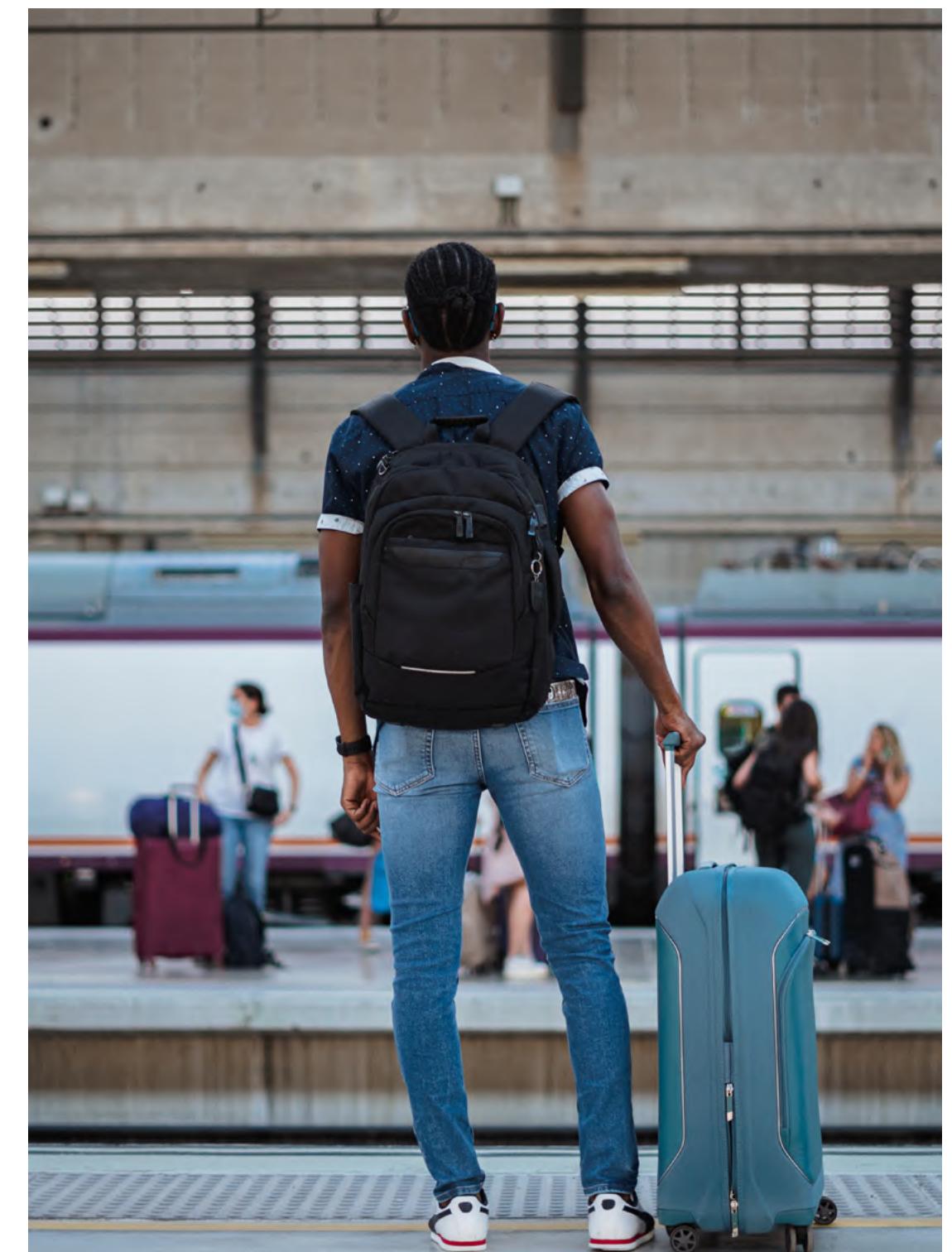
AI at the core

Central to the success of personalization is the sophistication of analytics and subsequent understanding of an individual traveler. There's naturally a tension here when compared to other industries – global retail giants experience more frequent interactions with their customers and so are able to build a more granular profile of each of them. Understandably, individuals don't tend to travel as often as they make online purchases. As a result, there's a need to make the most out of the data you do have and to tailor it accordingly.

Amadeus has partnered with Adobe for nearly twenty years, working together to pioneer cloud-native AI-powered personalization via the 'Traveler DNA' solution. Linked to the Adobe Experience Platform, this enables airlines to segment members by loyalty tier, purchase history, and intent—automating personalized loyalty offers, upsells, and re-engagement across channels.

“Let’s say you’re an airline and you have one customer who is a frequent business traveler, they never check a bag, but they love pre-selecting their meal. It wouldn’t make sense to push them through the same marketing or booking flow as a family with two kids, several bags, and an interest in booking in-destination content like a rental car or family activities. Hyper-personalization allows travel marketers to segment their customers in an easy-to-use online platform so they can better target their advertising and tweak their booking flow to match travelers’ personal interests and expectations.”

Jose Garrido
Retail and Travel Lead,
Adobe



“By coming together to enhance the traveler experience, we can develop tailored solutions that meet evolving traveler needs and preferences, fostering loyalty and driving repeat business.

“Through working together in this way, the Amadeus partner ecosystem helps us create a better-connected travel industry. We can foster innovation in search of an improved traveler experience, while an enhanced partner ecosystem can significantly develop the traveler journey, from booking right through to post-trip.”

Simon Akeroyd
Vice President,
Strategic Projects and Alliances,
Amadeus

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Strength through partnerships

‘Traveler DNA’ is a prime example of the power the travel and hospitality networks can drive through collective insight. Instead of sitting in siloes, customer data (with the appropriate permissions) can be shared to build increasingly accurate profiles of the traveler.

Tapping into external customer data

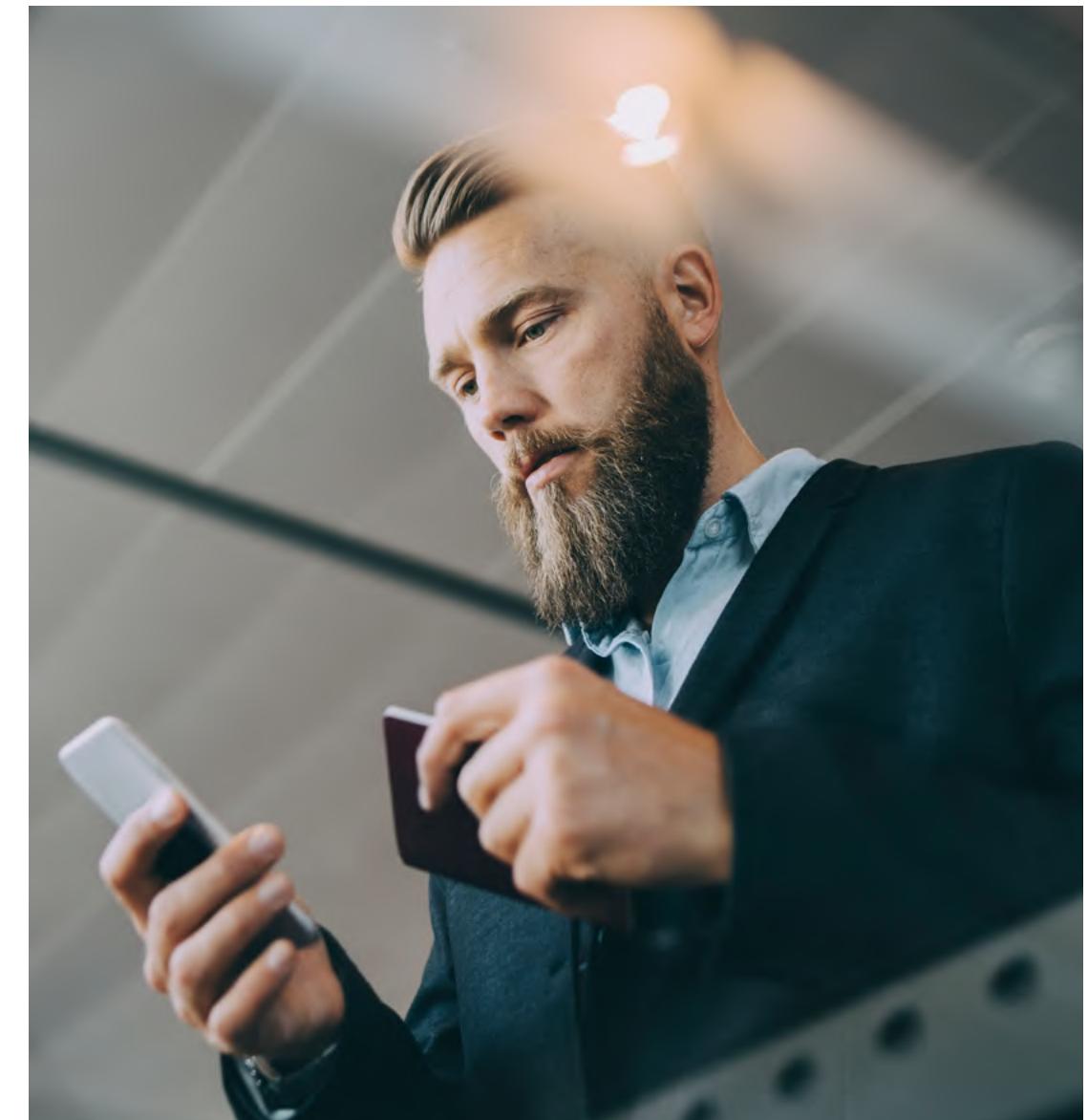
The benefits of partnerships demand an extension beyond the travel and hospitality industries. Through integrating retail brands into loyalty schemes, the understanding of each customer can be increased, adding more data into the pool to be analyzed and strengthening relationships.

Airline customer loyalty programs have long been pioneers here, with partnerships including Uber, IHG and other global megabrands. Travel insights can inform such strategic partnerships and investment decisions – if a hotel chain is opening up a new destination near a skiing hotspot, then partnering with appropriate clothing and equipment brands can provide a highly focused, persona-centric proposition that can stand out from the competition.

Loyalty in the pocket

The advent of digital wallets must be considered another route into driving loyalty. As the ‘connected trip’ model becomes a reality, a unified profile can store multiple program points and currencies, allowing for conversion across brands dynamically. Through activating promotions, a positive feedback loop is created.

The very nature of digital wallets means that highly targeted, dynamic offers can be made in real-time once in the airport. Geofencing and location data can push time-limited duty-free offers to passengers when airside, for example, aligned to their destination or holiday type, or simply in line with insight from other retail brands and purchase history.



36%

of global respondents confirm that subscribing to loyalty programs has encouraged them to upgrade to a more premium service or experience in the past – although appetite varies significantly across markets.

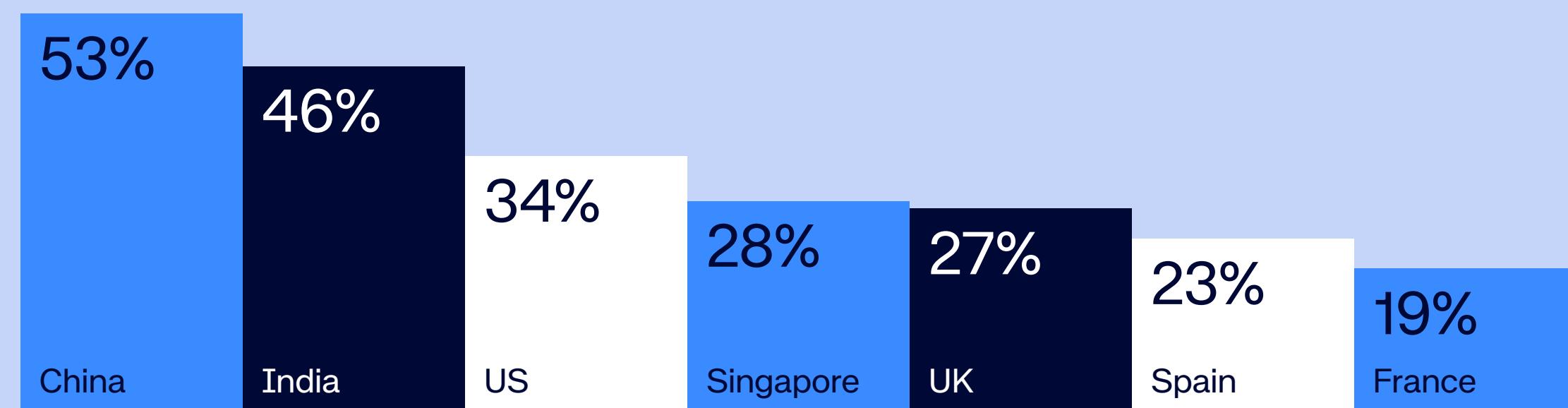
Sustainability as a loyalty driver

Increasing awareness of the environmental impact of travel alongside public desire to bring their carbon footprint down can become a loyalty driver when handled smartly. This can be through pushing targeted trips with lower emissions and rewarding acceptance accordingly. For the eco-conscious traveler, having a sustainability concierge is likely to be well received, especially if there's something in return.

This can be built on further, with loyalty tiers aligned to a passenger's carbon footprint, for example, allowing premium or exclusive access. At a corporate level, this brings the potential for impact, with regulations increasingly looking at reduction, rather than offsetting, to comply with sustainability targets.

Ultimately, people want something in return for their repeat custom. But it demands an understanding of the traveler to be effective – be it based on owned and third-party data, or through highly focused persona creation. Establishing loyalty and repeat business is the foundation of a successful operation, and the power of the travel and hospitality network has to be harnessed for everyone to benefit.

The importance of knowing your local customer is key!



More than a third (35%) of global respondents – with a relatively consistent level across markets – admit that **subscribing to a loyalty programme means they tend to book with one particular operator. This is true for:**

- 39% Hotel loyalty programmes
- 38% Frequent flyer programmes
- 43% Car rental loyalty schemes

38%

Travel credit card rewards

40%

Airport lounge memberships

42%

Tour operator rewards

39%

Online travel agency loyalty programmes

42%

Travel insurance loyalty discount