

## Part 2

# The end-to-end journey

42	The booking experience
47	The corporate travel booking experience
53	The check-in experience
59	The security experience
63	The pre-boarding experience
67	The in-flight experience
71	The baggage experience
75	The disruption experience
81	The hotel experience
86	The loyalty experience
91	The payment experience
96	The transfer experience



## The ‘connected trip’

In establishing such unity, we push ahead toward the end goal of the AI-driven ‘connected trip’. What we mean by this is the opportunity to become a proactive guide – a concierge as it were – who can predict and pre-empt what’s next throughout a journey.

As an example, for a couple who may be heading away for a week in the sun, a system which can push suggestions for trending places to eat (and subsequently book a hard-to-get table for two) a fortnight before travel makes a very attractive proposition.

Equally, reminding travelers about booking a ride to the airport (and a transfer to the accommodation at the other end) will avoid panic the night before and most likely save money – something, from a business perspective, that procurement departments will certainly welcome!

Every element within this eases stress about what might or might not be forgotten and makes trips memorable and hassle-free.

Finnair is a pioneer in this regard. It’s the first airline globally to create a full “Native Order” model with Amadeus, where all customer interactions and services will be unified under a single order record. This will allow for a seamless, personalized experience across all touchpoints.

## Putting this into practice

Customer-centricity might not be a revolutionary mentality for public-facing industries, but it’s one that is easier said than done. With so many individual systems and legacy technologies, the global travel and hospitality sectors demand seamless integration to make any trip, be it business or leisure, as enjoyable and stress free as possible.

This is an important consideration before we dive into each individual part of the traveler journey, from the act of booking through to hotel check-in. Because while we’re looking at these as discrete parts of a trip, we can’t think of them as siloed parts of the industry. An underlying infrastructure is key to creating a unified experience – an ‘operating system’ as it were, upon which travel happens. This is something Amadeus has decades of expertise and market leadership on and is paramount to transforming travel today.

“We are on a journey to become a true retailer. Our ‘Native Order’ approach will allow customers to have better control and understanding to manage all flight related services in a single digital record, simplifying the entire journey. However, retailing is also more than the ‘Native Order’. It is about understanding the customer needs and managing the entire sales funnel from marketing to conversion to sales, as well as the end-to-end customer journey with data. In the future, our customers will be able to enjoy their own preferred way of travel.”

**Antti Kleemola**  
Chief Digital Officer,  
Finnair

**FINNAIR**

In making such an investment, operators can harness the personalization opportunity – something we know to be critical to travelers.

**Our recent survey identified the opportunity in sharing the right offers** with the quarter (23%) of travelers who have a ritual of always grabbing a drink at the airport bar pre-flight, or the third (36%) who always like to eat at the same airport restaurant or cafe as part of their journey.

# 23%

of travelers who have a ritual of always grabbing a drink at the airport bar pre-flight

# 36%

who always like to eat at the same airport restaurant or cafe as part of their journey

## The data-first traveler

This ‘connected trip’ strategy relies upon the industry working together as an ecosystem to improve the entire journey, and in adopting a traveler-first approach to data analysis and prediction modelling.

This can only be possible through tackling siloed systems, products, or solutions and sharing data (without compromising regulations, security, or integrity). The whole process must be seamless from booking to baggage collection, through to transfer to the hotel and the traveler dumping their bags on the floor.

“As we move into the era of data intelligence and AI agents, we are seeing an increased emphasis on automation to create more compelling, personalized experiences while boosting operational efficiency. This is driving a greater emphasis on data-driven collaboration between players in the industry, allowing these organizations to deliver more complete end-to-end experiences for their customers and coordinate activities for frictionless customer engagement between destinations.”

**Amar Kadamalakunte**  
Strategic Account Director,  
Databricks



## Addressing friction

In unifying elements of the trip – indeed, potentially the whole of it in due course – the travel and hospitality industries can tackle the key points of friction that are identified by travelers. Regardless of whether the concern is real or imagined, by understanding traveler pain points and worries, all players in the industry can work together to smooth the journey.

**Our own data brings this to the fore starkly, with 90% of air travelers experiencing some sort of anxiety on their trip.**

→  
See breakdown  
on the right

**We asked travelers: Thinking about when you travel by plane abroad for a leisure trip, at which points of the journey, if ever, do you feel anxious?**



## The changing face of business travel

The ultimate ambition for bringing a more connected traveler journey is customer loyalty, be it the leisure or business traveler. The travel management sector for the latter is going to be a big beneficiary in this new era of connectivity, where client efficiency and becoming an extension of the procurement team is paramount.

A holistic approach to clients' travel needs means that more time can be spent by business travel consultants on adhering to company policies and maintaining a watch on potential breaches, which can quickly undermine a travel program and the benefits of negotiated rates. Equally, it can free up time for identification of efficiencies.

Such external support can elevate to the boardroom too. Using experience and deep sector expertise, travel management specialists can identify where sustainability targets can be improved to help align with corporate policies. This is in addition to the obvious opportunities for cost-saving at a micro level that collectively has a significant impact when laddered up to be considered at a macro level.

## Device-centricity

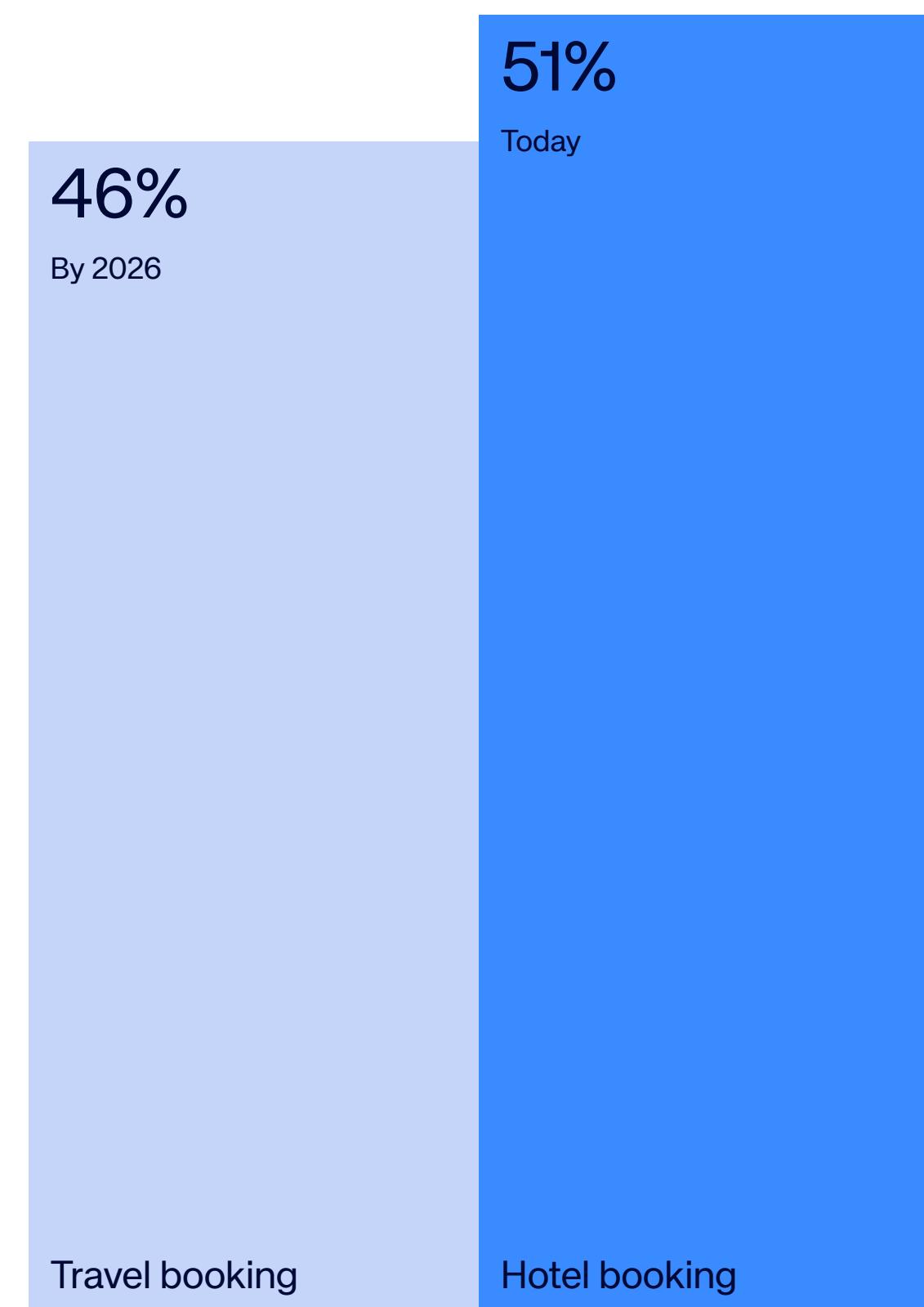
At the core of the developments and progress toward 'the connected trip', we need to acknowledge how the Smartphone is the epicenter of how travel works today. According to [Phocuswright](#) ↗, it's projected to surpass the desktop as the main mode of travel bookings by 2026, with an estimated 46% of online travel bookings made on the mobile today. This growth is evident in the hospitality sector too where mobile has recently become the dominant channel (51%) for hotel bookings.

Speed and functionality are a key factor behind this growth, but the sheer convenience and always-there element of the mobile makes it a primary focus for the connected trip. Equally, the ability to push vouchers and special offers straight to the traveler's pocket makes the mobile essential.

It also acts as the information hub for a more unified journey and a consistent platform upon which to develop and establish interoperable solutions. Such a hub helps ensure quality and consistency of data, as well as the ultimate means to personalize experiences. It's a single source of truth.

This shift isn't straightforward of course – in another recent Amadeus survey, **57% of respondents said they'd rather print their boarding pass than rely on a mobile app**. So, while the device is front and center, not everyone wants everything stored on it: 'low battery anxiety' is a well-known phenomenon, and perhaps explains why having a paper trail, for example, provides reassurance.

**Smartphone is the epicenter of how travel works today**





## Customer-first

This is another indicator that when looking at transforming how travel works, we need to consider traveler sentiment. But this simply reinforces the need for connections. A single record of the customer will allow for such nuances and preferences to remain consistent throughout a journey. Knowledge of whether they're using mobile apps or not will ensure that notifications and updates are tailored accordingly.

The opportunity for the sector through this 'connected trip' solution is huge. We can't lose sight of the goal to make travel better for everyone. Each customer has their own expectations, and we must retain flexibility and agility throughout to satisfy these needs and remove friction at every stage. At the end of the day, travelers want to feel special and understood – the 'connected trip' is the industry's chance to do exactly that.

## IATA's 'One ID' ambition

Announced as a concept in 2017, IATA's 'One ID' global initiative aims to create a seamless, paperless, and contactless travel experience using biometrics at the center of identity verification.

It will allow travelers to move through airports from off-airport check-in to boarding with a single biometric token (mostly using facial recognition) stored on a device or in-app, as a secure digital key to the passenger's credentials. Once implemented it will do away with repeated showing of physical documentation which can cause delays and increase the risk of losing key entry authorization and identification papers. With consent controlled by the traveler, it provides the security required while giving passengers more control over their personal data, in a decentralized approach, starting from the comfort of their home.

One ID guidelines and recommendations support interoperability across airlines, airports, and border control agencies, aligning with global standards like ICAO's Digital Travel Credential.

Industry analysts estimate widespread adoption for 'One ID' across airports and airlines by the end of 2027, delivering frictionless, secure experiences for travelers, with the extended end-to-end model expected to see similar adoption timescales.

# The booking experience

## Making the booking experience less stressful

It could be argued that there's no more emotive stage of any trip than the booking experience. Regardless of whether it's for work or leisure, there are set criteria the traveler is searching for with the anticipation that the results offered match their hopes and ambitions.

For families, wallet constraints are more personal rather than policy based. They'll want the best experience possible for the kids while giving mum and dad some downtime in the evenings (a hotel with babysitter services is a must). The honeymooning couple will need somewhere that makes the ultimate memory (and great Instagram content).

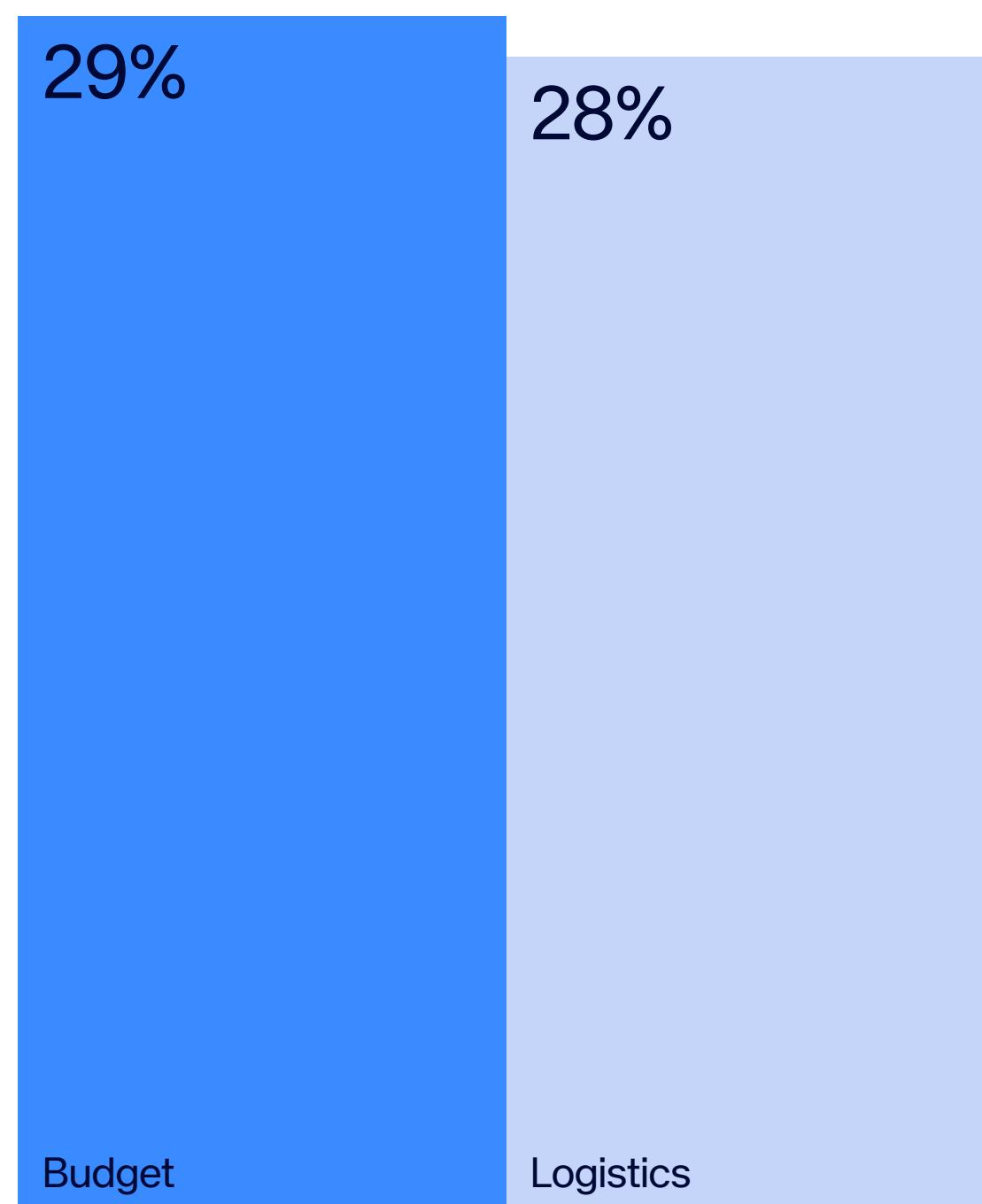


## Transforming to deliver on traveler aspirations

But with such ambitions and hopes come the apprehensions that they might not be realistic or that insurmountable barriers stand in the way. This is especially true when it comes to budget and logistics – indeed, research from Amadeus identified these as the two highest anxieties at 29% and 28% respectively.

While the travel and hospitality industries can't promise to fulfil every demand and ambition, they have to ensure that every relevant and exciting option is made visible. This is where transforming how travel works through technology comes into its own. It's a mindset that has driven the industry on for decades and continually delivers amazing experiences for millions of travelers. But it's not easy.

**Apprehensions that ambitions and hopes might not be realistic or that insurmountable barriers stand in the way**



“The pace of change in the travel industry is daunting, to be sure. For example, between now and 2030, many aspects of travel retail and channel distribution will evolve substantially. Travel providers will adopt new technology platforms and new ways of working, and customers will react with new demands, and higher expectations.

“But none of this is new. The travel industry has endured changes of this magnitude at least twice in the past 30 years.”

**Dr. Dee K. Waddell**  
Global Head of Consumer,  
Travel & Transportation Industries,  
IBM



## Traveler-first Generative AI

This theme of constant evolution and adaptation to traveler demand and expectation is central to the transformation journey the industry is currently on. You only need to look at the rapid advances in generative AI (Gen AI) to see how the landscape is changing – both externally in terms of how it's improving the whole booking experience, as well as internally within the industry to identify trends and emerging habits in customer demand.

Taking this first point, the traveler booking experience has perhaps never been better balanced. Gen AI-powered chatbots can answer basic, structured (and, increasingly, unstructured) inquiries from customers in real-time. This is freeing up human customer service operatives to handle those calls and queries which demand more analysis, are more complex, or which involve regulatory or compliance needs. Equally, they're able to act as the in-person support that many travelers want; not everyone wants to speak to an AI-generated chatbot, for example.

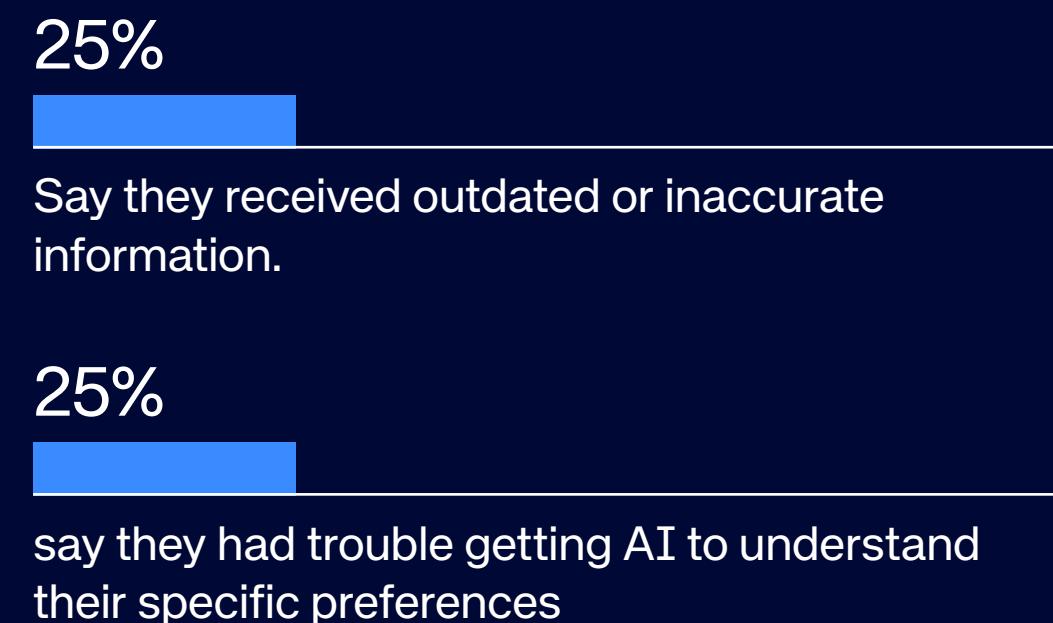
The use of Generative AI tools for travel research has risen by a significant factor over the last twelve months:



Of those who use AI to plan a trip, **key benefits** cited include:



On the other hand, some encountered **negative experiences**.



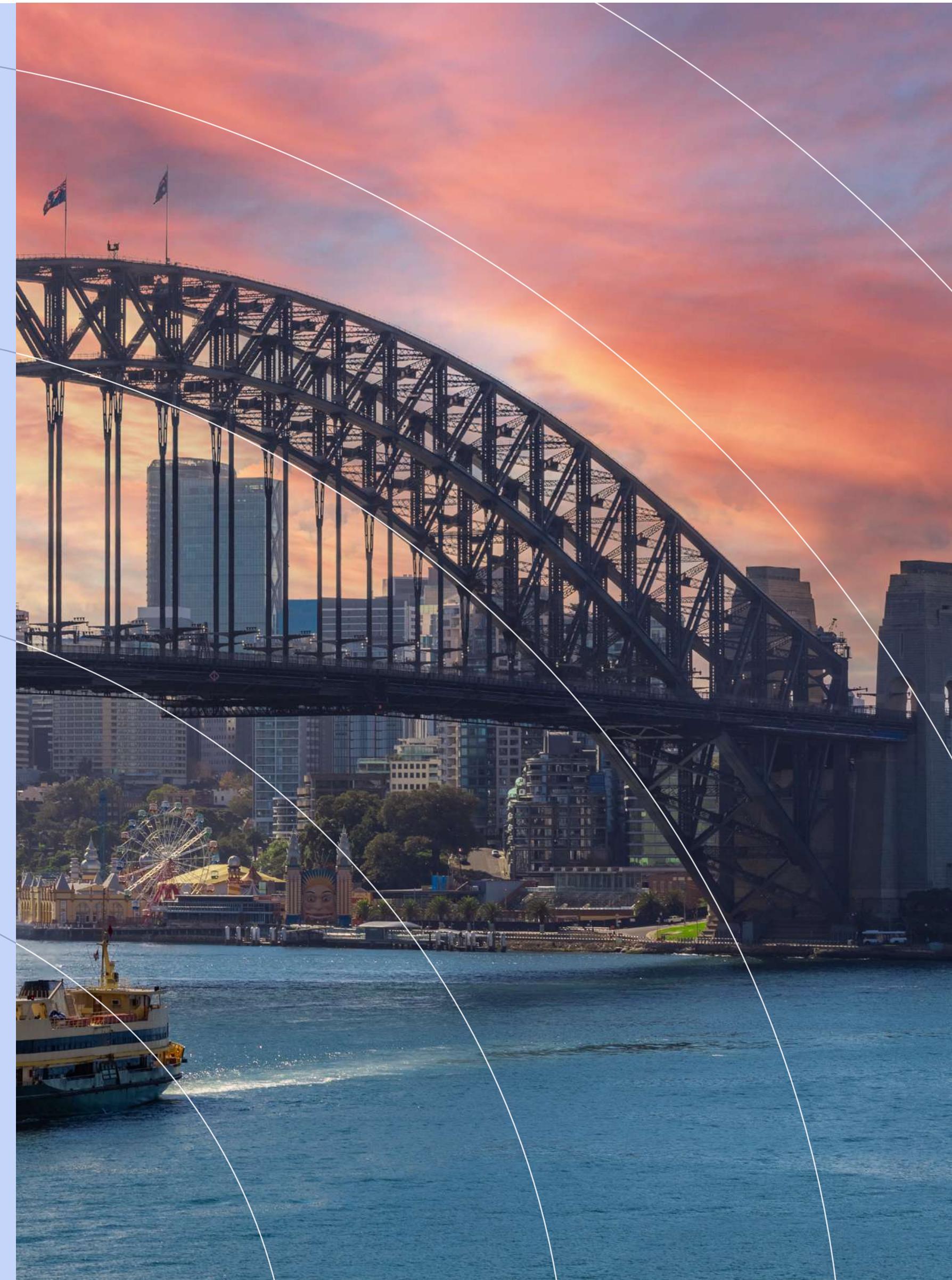
“Travelers are as diverse in their anxieties as they are in their expectations. While some customer segments are pushing travel companies to innovate by embracing new applications and ways of engaging, others are intent on maintaining their established patterns of interaction.”

This is a key point to remember throughout any strategic transformation program – the industry is here to serve one person: the traveler.

“Travel companies must learn to innovate in ways that serve the needs of all customer communities because standing still is never a viable option in a domain as dynamic as the travel industry.”

**Steve Peterson**

Travel & Transportation Global Industry Lead,  
IBM



## Data-driven strategic insight

The insights taken from the millions of bookings made by the industry each year are also being used to great effect. Through understanding trends and behaviors in booking, travel operators and the hospitality industry can develop new propositions and enhance those already on offer.

Nowhere is this better demonstrated than with the rise in entertainment-related tourism. As an example, when the announcement of a worldwide tour from Taylor Swift was made, Agoda saw search traffic for the destinations involved increase by a staggering 500%.



“The global success of ‘White Lotus’ – a HBO TV show based on the exploits of guests and staff within a luxury hotel saw travel enquiries surge season-upon-season. To piggyback on the success, we’ve seen hotels host ‘White Lotus’ themed experiences such as weekend afternoon tea and bar pop-ups bringing the show experience to life.

“Our investment in technology is allowing our partners to take advantage of the opportunities from this growth in ‘live tourism’, but it’s also highlighting macro cultural travel trends.”

**Andrew Smith**  
Senior Vice President,  
Agoda

agoda  
●●●●●

## Macro trend insight

These are of course global cultural examples, but sharing more specific data pays dividends across the board.

It’s in this regard that the booking information supplied by B2C platforms such as Agoda can share market intelligence throughout the travel and hospitality sectors and allow everyone to adapt and ultimately benefit from it.

## A virtuous circle

The advances in Gen AI for everything from booking and fine-tuning results to directing inquiries to the right operator (be it human or AI) is bringing unprecedented amounts of data back into the industry. This data delivers previously unimaginably granular insight into traveler demand and expectation.

The smartest companies in the travel and hospitality industries will turn this to their (and the travelers’) advantage and use the findings to improve their own offerings and solutions. Iterative improvements naturally follow, reflecting the needs and demands of every journey.

This cycle, one fueled by transforming how travel works through technology, means the industry as a whole is able to fulfill its promise to deliver on the hopes and expectations of every traveler. It’s an opportunity that can’t be ignored.

# The corporate travel booking experience

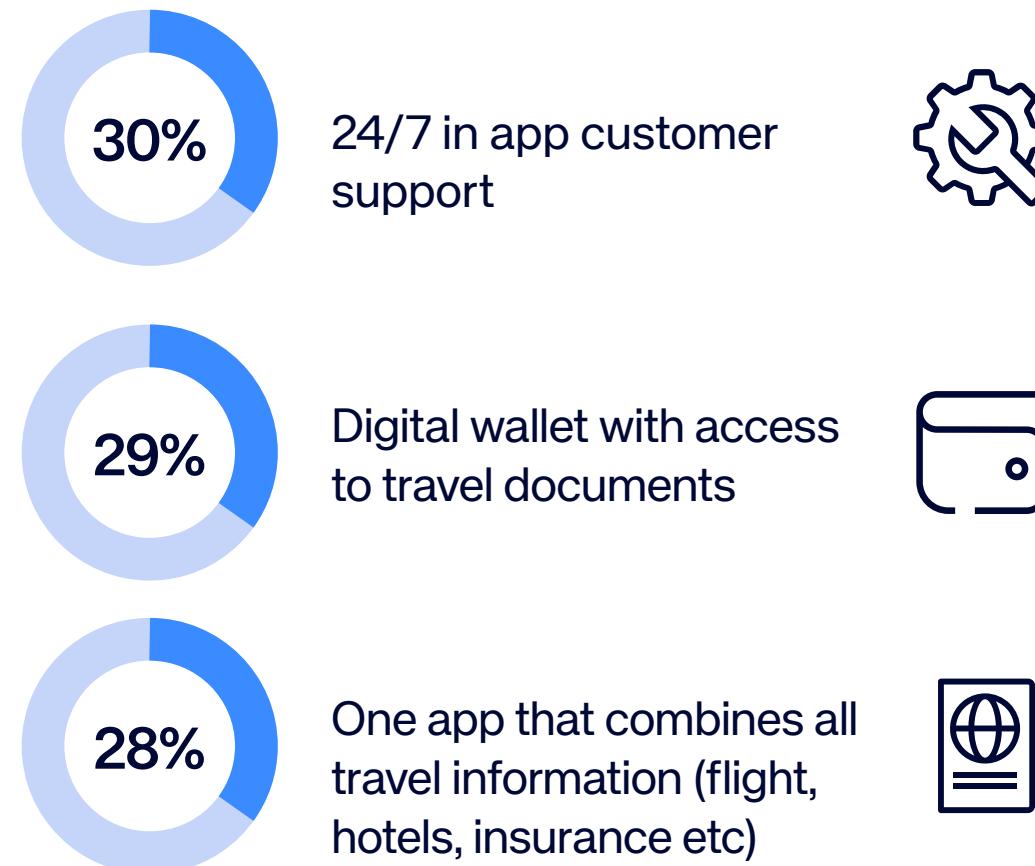
## Priorities in business travel

It's not just the leisure traveler who needs to be considered when looking at the booking landscape, the business traveler also has their own aspirations and pain points when it comes to their travel and booking needs. Understandably, flight delays or cancellations based on circumstances outside of their control are the number one source of anxiety, followed by a fear that misplaced baggage might affect their professional appearance according to Amadeus research commissioned for this report.



This same research conducted in June 2025 demonstrates clearly that technology is crucial for easing the concerns of business travelers. Top solutions include 24/7 in app customer support (30%) followed by a digital wallet with access to travel documents (29%), and one app that combines all travel information (flight, hotels, insurance, etc.) (28%).

**Technology is crucial for easing the concerns of business travelers. Top solutions include:**



Any discussion on corporate travel must include the buyer, which typically includes input from the procurement and finance teams. Successful managed travel programs ensure that travelers have the confidence they can reach business meetings comfortably and on time, all while remaining compliant with their company's travel policies.



## The changing role of the travel consultant

The transformation in technology solutions is creating a fundamental shift in the role of corporate travel consultants. Previously, this group primarily looked at booking the travel, focusing on the itinerary. Now, the role has evolved into managing travel, often as a natural extension of internal procurement functions, while supporting the financial department through reducing costs and increasing efficiencies.

This comes from 'did you know?' insights as Steve Banks, CEO, Travel Division for The Human Network

(parent company of Beyond Business Travel) calls it: "Analyzing corporate travel data can reveal previously hidden trends and behaviors of those booking their own travel. It's not uncommon to find individuals wanting to book their own flights to increase their loyalty points, for example, which could compromise policies," he added. Amadeus research reveals that business travelers tend to subscribe to more loyalty programs than leisure-only travelers. 41% of business travelers participate in a hotel loyalty program for instance, compared to 31% of leisure travelers.

Relevant information is also helpful in reducing costs. Understanding who might be booking flights late (and therefore at a potential premium), can allow teams client-side to speak to individuals to plan their itineraries farther in advance and make savings.



**41%**



of business travelers have a hotel loyalty programme

**31%**

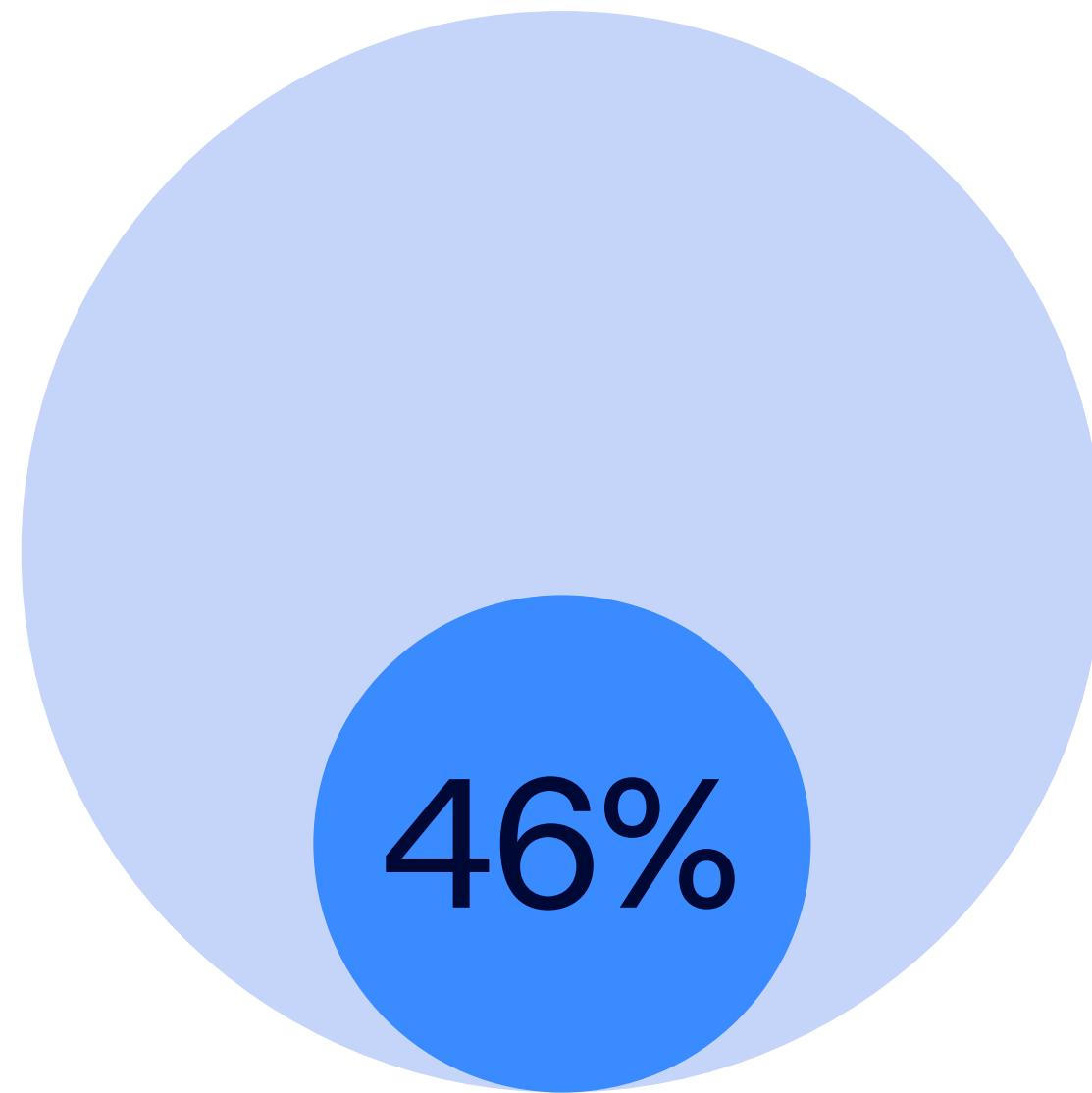


of leisure only travelers have a hotel loyalty programme

## From policy to regulation

The role of travel management comes into its own when it comes to shifting regulatory demands, not least those related to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) and Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) mandates.

A previous Amadeus [survey](#) on this topic with ESG senior decision makers showed that 46% of respondents anticipated investing more in ESG in 2024 than they did the year before.



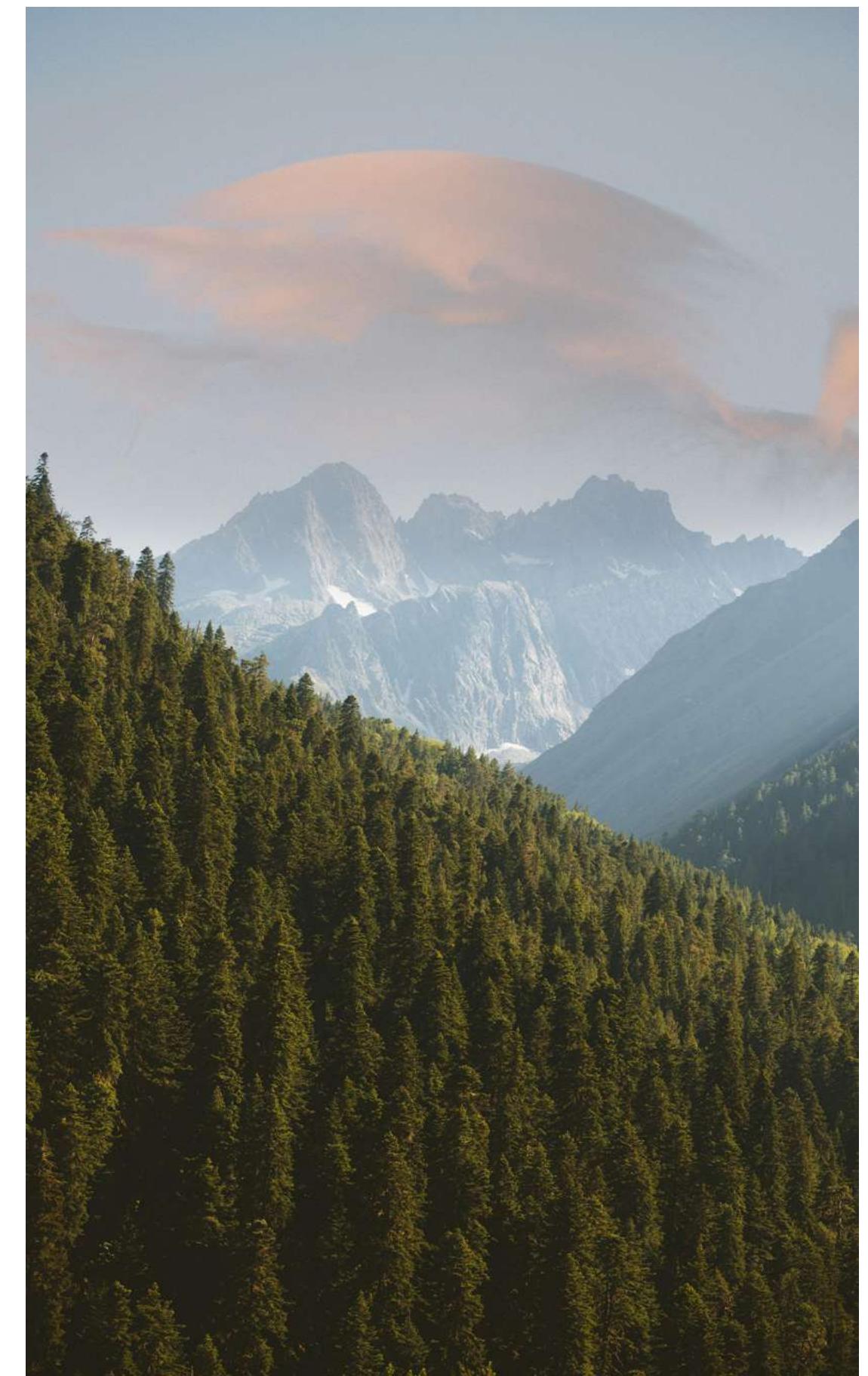
of respondents anticipated investing more in ESG in 2024 than they did the year before.

Here, specialist corporate teams can share detailed insights into a variety of factors which will impact financial and sustainability reporting, including understanding the carbon impact of every trip and having the ability to scale this up across the entire business.

With Amadeus Cytric, the online travel and expense management platform, natively integrated in Microsoft Teams, travel managers gain science-based CO2 reporting to follow up on company business travel targets and compliance. Cytric enables travel managers to encourage travelers to select more sustainable options with carbon calculations display, flights and rail side by side comparison, as well as the [HRS Green Stay](#) label for certified hotels.

With Amadeus Cytric travelers can identify opportunities for ride sharing when arriving at the same destination with other colleagues, reducing costs for the company and minimizing the impact on the environment. It also helps with carbon emissions reporting, while supporting compliance with the corporation's sustainability agenda, and helps devise a carbon emissions budget to control the travel program's sustainability impact.

Similarly to the leisure traveler, these insights can also be shared within the hospitality industry where managing hundreds of bookings can identify new trends and demands from the corporate arena. There could be a surge in searches for hotels with in-house gyms or wellness facilities, for example.



“Central to the role of third-party corporate travel agencies is trust and thus becoming an extension of their corporate responsibilities.

“Clients need to rely on TMCs to book travel in line with their internal policies and restrictions, with objective stacking a key example here. Travel consultants have the opportunity to plan complex trips using AI tools to refine itineraries that deliver what the employee needs without compromising company values, culture and compliance.”

**Steve Banks**

CEO,  
Travel Division for The Human Network



## The rise of ‘objective stacking’

Equally, there are evergreen demands of the business traveler that can be relayed or reasons why bookings are trending upwards or downwards. On-site working spaces will naturally make a destination more attractive for the traveler who needs to work abroad for a few days – the hotel which offers this at the right price will naturally get the bookings.

For the business traveler, being away for a period rather than single meeting trips is driving the ‘Objective Stacking’ trend. This is about employees arranging trips to fulfil multiple goals. This trend is also driven by the need to derive maximum value from each trip, balancing fiscal and environmental responsibilities.

The Amadeus Cytric AI Assistant is an innovative example of how generative AI can support corporate travelers and travel managers. Travelers can chat naturally through Microsoft Teams for assistance with trip planning and booking. This new tool helps reduce booking time by selecting optimal hotel and flight options based on company policies and user preferences - such as automatically selecting the departure city and (soon) factoring in trip context and history, including preferred flight times or frequent company destinations.

As a next step the Amadeus Cytric AI Assistant will also aim to enhance employee collaboration by proactively suggesting complementary bookings to complete the trip booking and notifying employees when transfers can be coordinated.

This last point must be understood as business critical in the corporate travel arena, but it can't compromise the ultimate customer – the enterprise itself. Like their leisure equivalent, the business traveler has anxieties and needs them addressed. However, the procurement and financial teams' needs and demands must be considered the priority.



“Travel management companies are transforming into hybrid organizations - we are becoming technology developers, data analysts, business consultants, and service providers all rolled into one. The traditional booking model is obsolete. Today’s successful TMCs are adept at pivoting and evolving, developing proprietary tech solutions, analyzing travel patterns for strategic insights, and delivering comprehensive business intelligence. We are no longer just managing travel - we are architecting data-driven travel ecosystems that power modern enterprise decision-making.”

Clive Wratten  
CEO,  
Business Travel Association

**BTA** | BUSINESS TRAVEL  
ASSOCIATION

# The check-in experience

## The curb-to-gate journey

Arriving at the airport is undoubtedly one of the most important moments of a trip away. It's when the traveler knows (hopefully), they're on time for their flight and at the right terminal. The need for such confidence cannot be underestimated; our research revealed that more than a quarter (27%) of travelers feel anxious about traffic preventing them from getting to the airport, and 23% worry about arriving at the wrong terminal.

### Top concerns for travelers

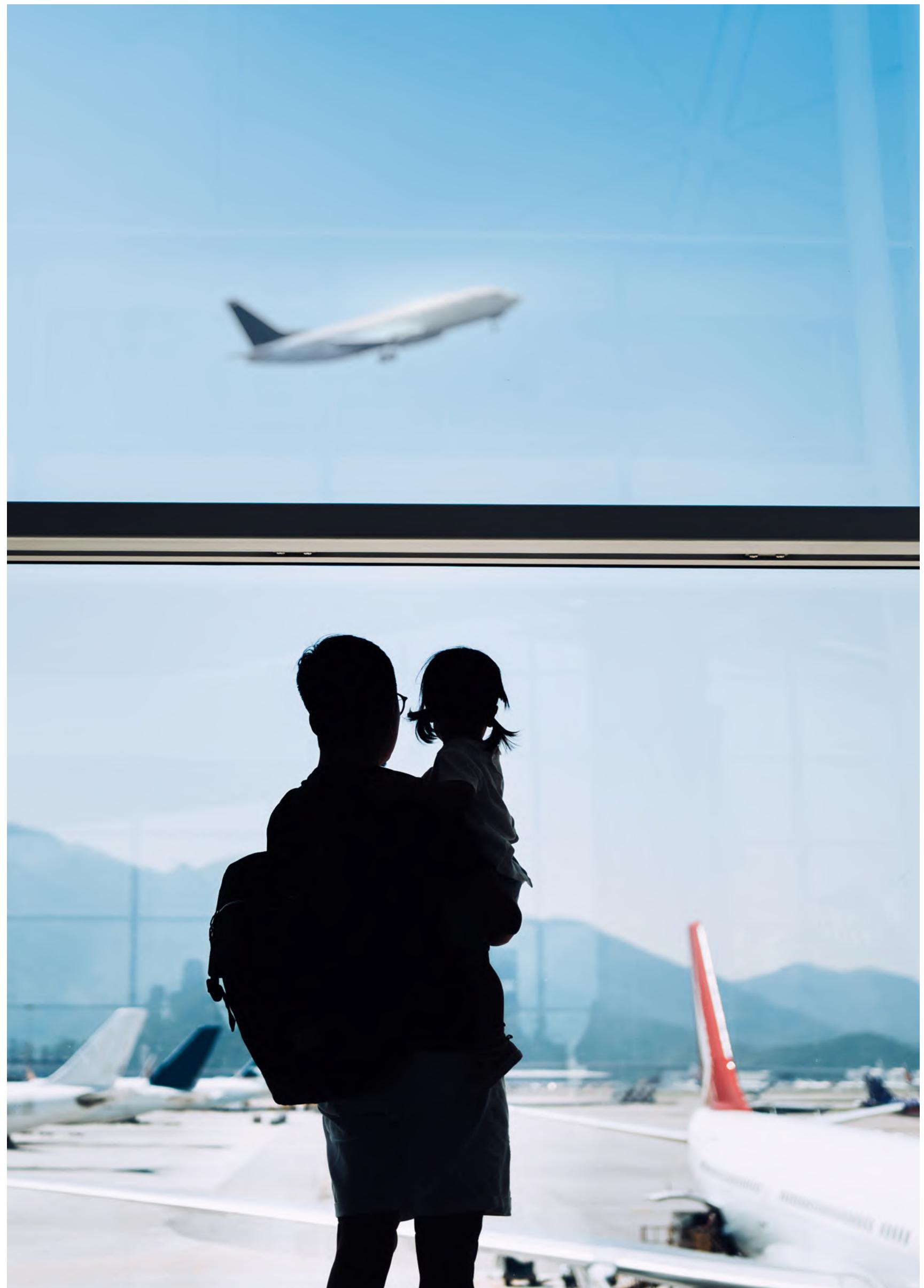
27%

23%

of travelers feel anxious about traffic preventing them from getting to the airport

of travelers feel worry about arriving at the wrong terminal





This latter statistic demonstrates the need to prepare the traveler before they leave their house – the trip to the airport starts before the front door closes. There can't be a mismatch between what companies think travelers already know and what they *actually* know. This can easily be rectified by a more proactive sharing of information or developing knowledgeable, travel friendly chatbots on the passenger's device or on the booking website.

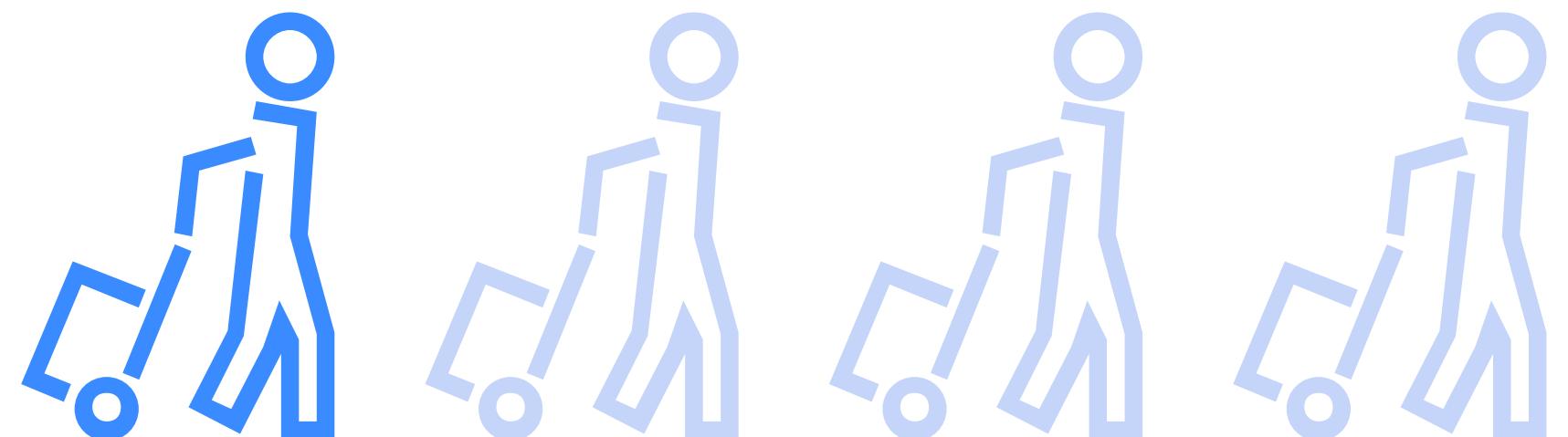
Once at the airport, smooth, fast check-in is critical in ensuring a seamless next step in the curb-to-gate journey.

As a result, it's an area that has seen a significant amount of investment and innovation to drive the transformative change necessary. Again, research proves this need, with

# 26%

of travelers citing long queues for check-in as a point of anxiety during a journey. Dissipating these nerves brings a significant amount of relief.

Thanks to new, transformational technologies, we are likely to see the traditional check-in disappear altogether in many places.



## Biometrics reign supreme

Arguably the most critical part of the infrastructure transforming the airport experience is the evolution of biometric solutions. These focus on identity verification through physical traits such as fingerprints, facial recognition or iris scans – traits which are very difficult to hack, and mostly connected to government issued electronic travel documents.

The use of biometrics accelerates check-in and acts as a foundation for movement and access throughout the airport, including security, border control and boarding. It enhances safety, reduces manual document checks, and streamlines passenger flows,

creating a faster, more secure and convenient journey for the traveler.

In mid-2024, Curaçao Airport launched the world's first pre-flight biometric digital ID verification - the Curaçao Express Pass - for contactless border crossing. It's powered by Airside, an Entrust company, that specialize in privacy-based digital identity sharing in combination with Amadeus' Identity and Border Management Platform and eGates at the border. The initiative allows travelers prior to their journey, to share government trusted and verified ID with immigration authorities at the destination.

This means that on disembarking the plane on their way to immigration, the passenger's passport and biometric data were already shared with the immigration system, using the traveler's smartphone. They can then access a separate enhanced immigration lane where facial-matching technology allows travelers to simply walk through immigration with back-end clearance from the authorities.



## Passenger-first experience

Self-service solutions and the application of biometrics are expected to revolutionize the airport experience. In fact, at JFK International Airport Terminal 4, the check-in process has already been reduced to just over a minute, and bag drop even less. This significant cut to wait times has been achieved following the installation of kiosks and self-service bag drops as part of a major transformation project with Amadeus.

This drastic reduction is bringing a new dimension to the airport experience.

With more travelers using self-service options, this frees up agents to focus on supporting passengers who require special assistance or have specific requests, offering a differentiated experience.

In this regard, the solutions act as a filter to help those who need it, rather than everyone struggling to align with the identical processes involved with manual check-in. By offering passengers the choice to use automation or traditional agent-led servicing, terminal infrastructure can be fully optimized. This results in more pleasant terminals designed around leisure activities, where agents can roam and serve passengers from a tablet device.

**“We’ve created an open floor concept where passengers are free to come in, do their transaction and leave at their own pace.”**

**Joshua Diamond**

Manager, Capacity and Automation (Operations), JFKIAT

**“They check-in, drop their bags and off they go on the rest of their journey without really having to stop.”**

**Susana Desa**

VP, Operations, JFKIAT

**“We’re more efficient operationally, and this brings a lot of smiles to our customers.”**

**Edmund Quintana**

Senior Project Manager (Terminal Redevelopment), JFKIAT



## Scaling biometrics for seamless travel

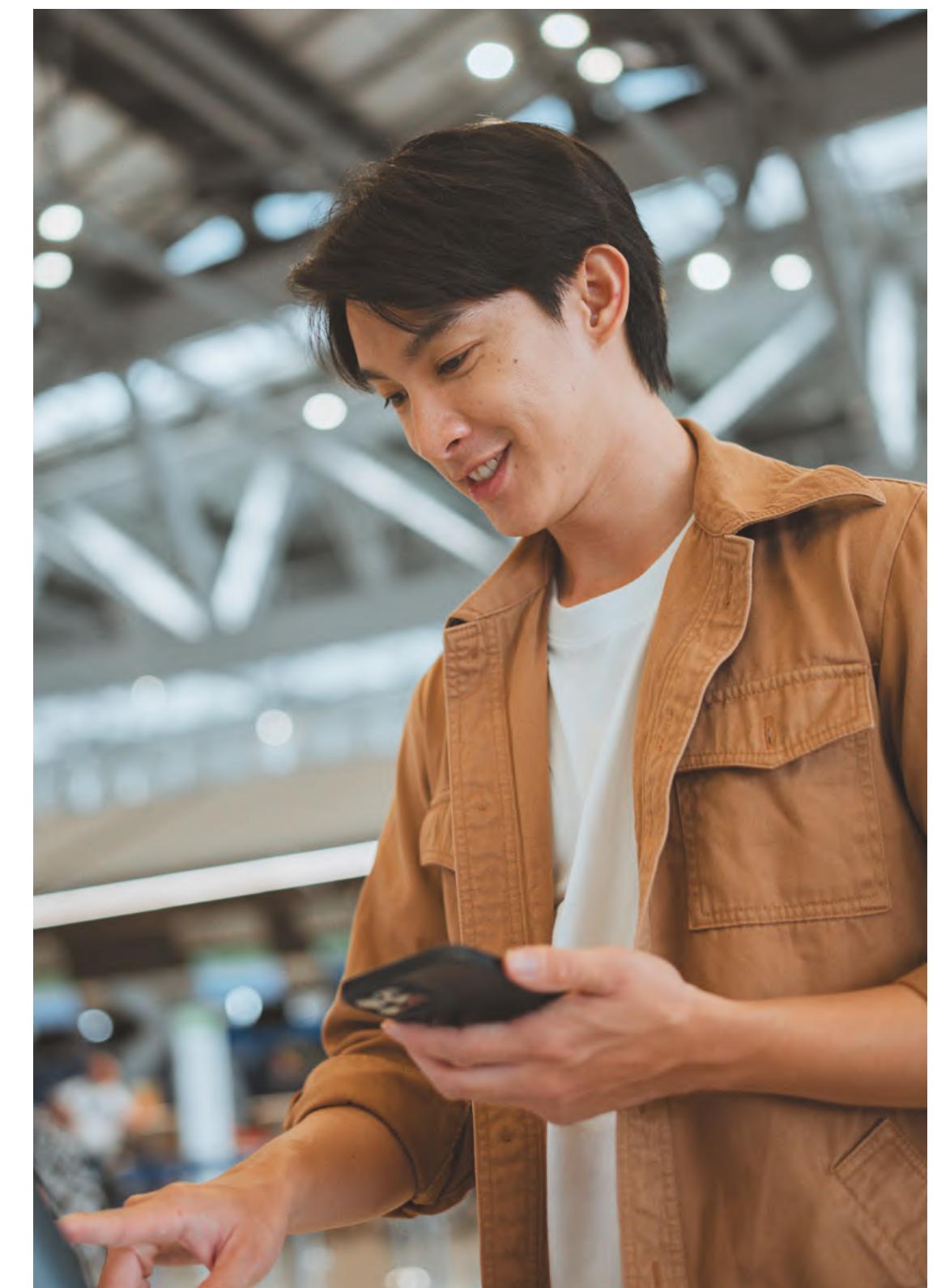
Dubai International Airport offers a compelling example of how biometric and self-service solutions can be scaled to support a seamless curb-to-gate experience. This is a result of over a decade's worth of investment in the technology as part of the city's ambition to become one of the top three tourism destinations by 2030.

This target simply can't be achieved without a cutting-edge airport through which to welcome visitors. As a mark of the progress toward this goal, the airport became the world's busiest in 2024 with over 92 million international passengers – a figure achieved while concurrently investing in innovation and building future-proof technology solutions.

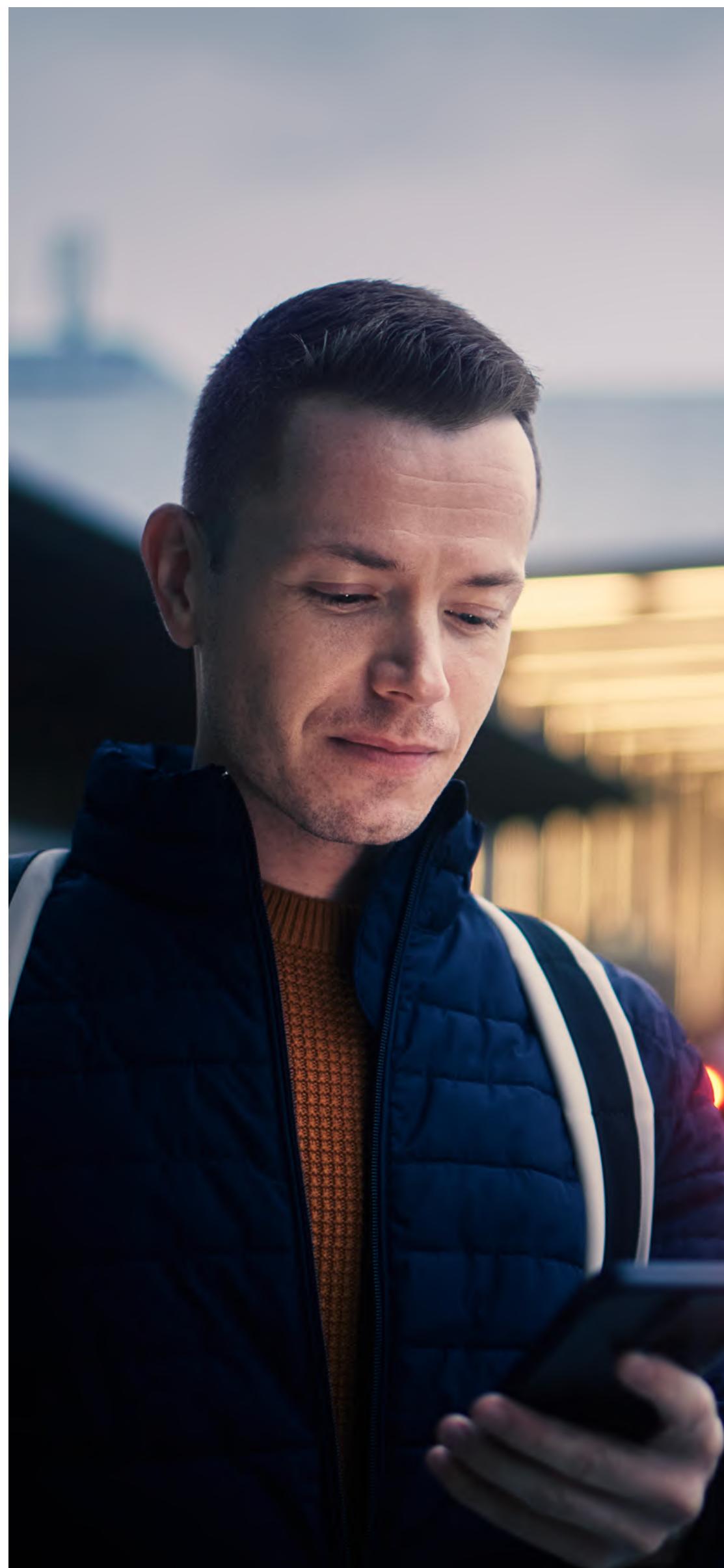
The solutions that enable this growth come through a collaboration with Amadeus, and forms the center point in a collaborative ecosystem spanning the airport, Emirates and the Dubai government. Across

the stakeholders, the airport provides more than 300 biometric touchpoints, including Automated Border Control gates, and a wide range of self-service kiosks, bag drops and boarding gates. The result is a more efficient and streamlined experience for the thousands of passengers passing through the terminal every day.

The shared focus on innovation and operational efficiency has allowed Dubai to integrate biometric systems in a way that supports both scalability and passenger satisfaction. As the airport continues to expand its capabilities, it provides a useful reference point for other hubs exploring similar digital transformation strategies.



**Across the stakeholders, Dubai airport provides more than 300 biometric touchpoints, including Automated Border Control gates, and a wide range of self-service kiosks, bag drops and boarding gates.**



## Scaling self-service for efficiency and accessibility

Heathrow Airport, the UK's busiest aviation hub, has undergone a significant transformation in recent years by embracing self-service technologies to streamline passenger processing. With nearly 85 million passengers passing through in 2024, the airport faced mounting pressure to improve operational efficiency and enhance the traveler experience.

Managing this significant growth in passengers has been eased through self-service check-ins and bag drop – without compromising existing quality of service and uptime.

Since its initial pilot of Auto Bag Drop units in 2012, more than 260 self-service bag drop units have been deployed across Terminals 2, 3, 4, and 5, supported by over 250 check-in kiosks. This is facilitating faster movement around the terminal (in July 2025 alone, Heathrow recorded approximately 1.4 million combined kiosk transactions and bag drops).

At peak times, Heathrow's bag-drop units have processed up to 1.5 bags per second, demonstrating the scalability and reliability of the system. These touchpoints, powered by Amadeus, handled over 13 million passengers in 2024, contributing to smoother flows and reduced congestion across terminals.

The shift to automation has not only improved throughput but also allowed airport staff to focus on assisting passengers who require more personalized support. This human touch element of technology is critical when looking at the impact of solutions; here, staff can spend more time with those who need it while others breeze through. It's effectively optimizing customer engagement.

Heathrow's journey reflects a broader industry trend toward self-service and automation as enablers of transformation. By investing in scalable, inclusive technologies, the airport has positioned itself as a leader in modern passenger processing - balancing efficiency with accessibility and setting a strong example for other global hubs navigating similar challenges.

# The security experience

## Game-changing biometrics

Arguably, when considering how in-airport security has been improved over recent years, the advancement in biometrics sophistication and subsequent deployment has been the ultimate catalyst. It's fundamentally transforming journeys for travelers, making the airport experience frictionless and more enjoyable without compromising the integrity of security processes.

It's removed the need for multiple verification checks throughout the terminal journey which has made passage smoother, faster, and fundamentally more secure – eliminating the need to carry around physical identity properties (tickets, passports) so they're less likely to be lost, misplaced, or stolen.



## One-time registration

The key to the success of biometrics (from operational and security perspectives alike) resides in its simplicity to establish traveler identity digitally linked to a government trusted document or an airline issued boarding pass. A single point of authentication at the outset means that the subsequent verification points are instantaneous and contactless.

This happens predominantly between check-in (at home or at the airport) and bag-drop. The passengers register their biometric data - mostly through facial recognition solutions - in combination with their travel document authentication. This is done at automated, self-service kiosks and stored on the traveler's mobile device and relevant app.

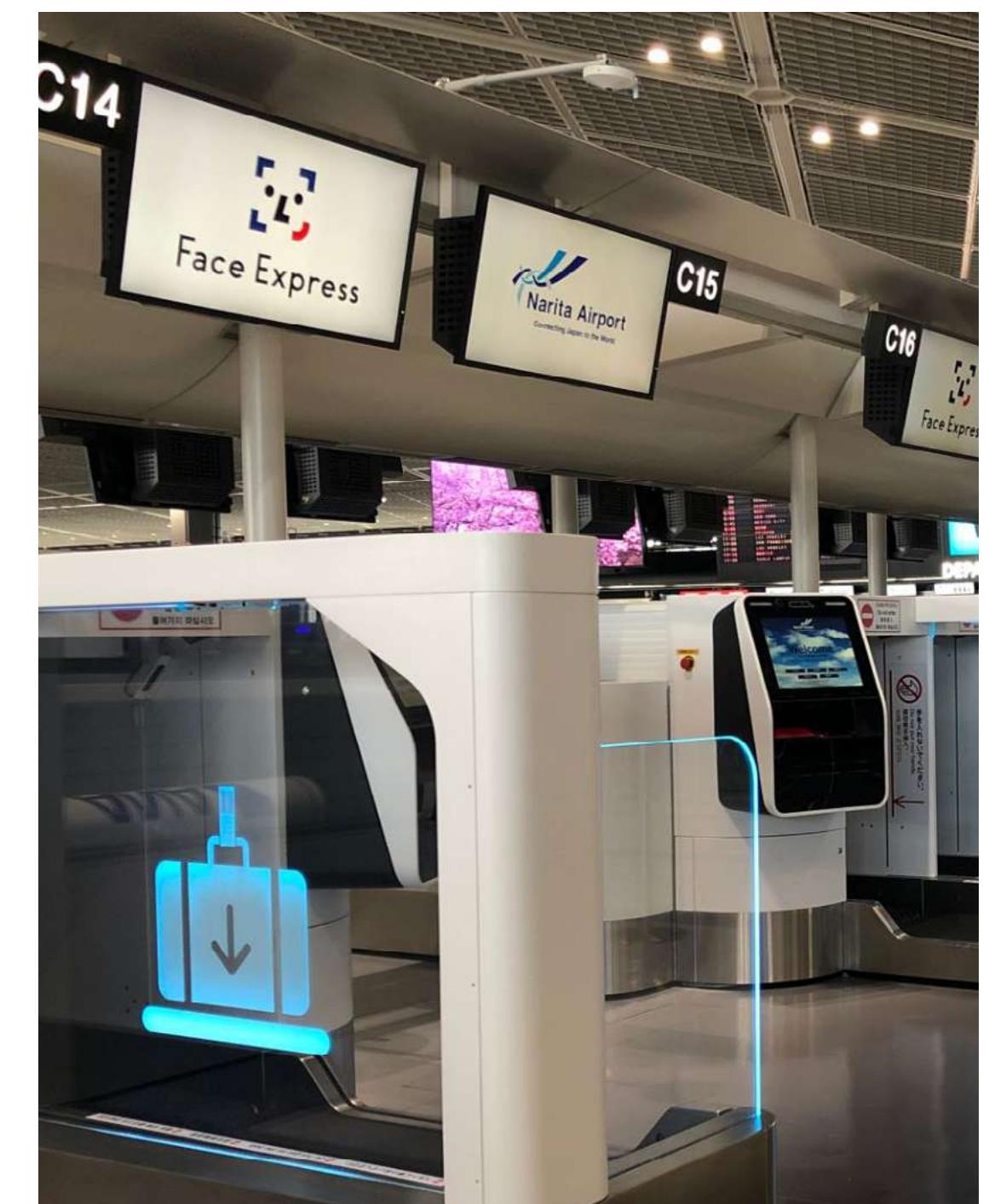
As the passenger makes their journey through the terminal, this biometric data is then shared on a need-to-know basis with the relevant security and access control actors throughout. Importantly, verification can be done without physical checks - it's all handled through facial recognition devices sustained by a scalable software called an Identity Management Platform (IMP).

## 'Ready to Fly'

As biometric solutions become increasingly sophisticated, the 'ready to fly' model for travel will become more normalized. These solutions involve regulatory governmental, and police checks well ahead of arriving at the airport, meaning that the traveler only needs to arrive at the terminal and walk straight through. Visa controls, e-passports, and security clearance are pre-approved ahead of time, removing any friction.

The Amadeus Seamless Corridor and free flow technology is at the cutting-edge of what can be achieved. This innovation replaces 'stop-start' and 'one-at-a-time' gates with wide corridors hosting sophisticated AI-enabled processing. It's capable of identifying multiple passengers while in motion by verifying ID with mobile apps or biometric wallets.

The corridors, currently being tested in production at several pilot airports, are demonstrating previously unimaginable levels of convenience and speed. Results demonstrate the ability to clear an individual in under ten seconds - even within groups of people walking together.



## Opening up new possibilities

### The importance of decentralization

Fundamental to the success and security of biometric technology is its use of decentralized proof of identity. Here, all information is stored on digital wallets or in-app, with verification handled locally and temporarily, using encrypted, consent-based data sharing. This boosts privacy, control, and security, as travelers decide when and where to share their information.

Beyond Amadeus' digital ID and biometric wallet, the technology is also interwoven within IATA's 'One ID' initiative, equally interoperable with the recently enhanced Apple and Google ID wallets. This means the model can deliver truly global, interoperable identity across multiple stakeholders (airlines, airports, governments). This is key when it comes to moving beyond the terminal and into other areas within the travel journey, and even into the holiday or business trip once underway.

The nature of biometrics means that it can reach far beyond the airport terminal through the ability for hardware or software providers to integrate their own solutions into the ecosystem. When we consider the door-to-door journey, there are obvious points of adoption. For example, car rental firms could use facial technology to confirm hiring criteria or hotels can use it for contactless check-in or in-house services and facilities access.

However, the technology can also apply once the holiday or business trip is underway. Biometric authentication can revolutionize the ability to integrate entertainment services with on-the-ground suppliers, with tickets purchased in advance and validated on arrival. This could even extend into insurance industries where potentially risky activities are covered once underway and ad hoc, without the need to go through lengthy online or paper-based checks and forms.



When asked whether they would consider **using biometric gateways so there's no need to stop and show a passport or even a mobile phone** (i.e. using face or fingerprint scanners to let you pass through airport security), an average of **69% of global travelers said they would**.

## Payment solutions

Contactless payments have long since been the norm for payments both locally and internationally. The days of queuing at the Bureau de Change for foreign currency have almost disappeared. But carrying a physical wallet still brings risk. This is where fingerprint authentication also delivers the potential to hugely reduce fraud and theft, especially in tourist hotspots. The potential to spend an entire day sightseeing or traveling between meetings without having a physical wallet or ID reduces the potential for crime.

Ultimately, the use of biometric security can be applied throughout the journey and eventually undertaken well in advance. This brings the opportunity to make the truly contactless, seamless travel experience a reality. This is a move which can benefit the entire travel and hospitality industries, not least in extending ease of booking into many other areas, establishing the 'connected trip' in the process.

# 69%

Interestingly, while this differs only slightly across generations, to a factor of no more than 10%, there are clear cultural divides with 88% of Chinese travelers agreeing that they would, but as few as 54% of French passengers taking this stance.

### Generational

74%

Millennials

68%

Gen X

67%

Silent Generation

66%

Boomers

63%

Gen Z

### Regional

88%

China

79%

Singapore

74%

India

70%

UK

63%

Spain

61%

USA

54%

France

# The pre-boarding experience

## Taking calm for granted

Now airside, the traveler sips their coffee, eats their croissant and waits for news of their departure – hopefully on time, and hopefully at a gate that isn't too far away (our research found that 18% of travelers get anxious about having to walk a long distance).

18%

Of travelers get anxious about a too far away gate

Travelers are so used to the airport experience that there's no conscious consideration of the huge game of Tetris which goes on behind the scenes. There isn't an acknowledgement of how complex it is to ensure that the right plane is at the right gate, at the right time, with the right crew, and with the right amount of catering. And this is just one aspect of the operational puzzle.



## Silo-avoidance

Airlines and airports work well when they're operating as a unified entity – using something which Pierre-Olivier Bandet, CIO, Air France-KLM, calls 'a common currency'.

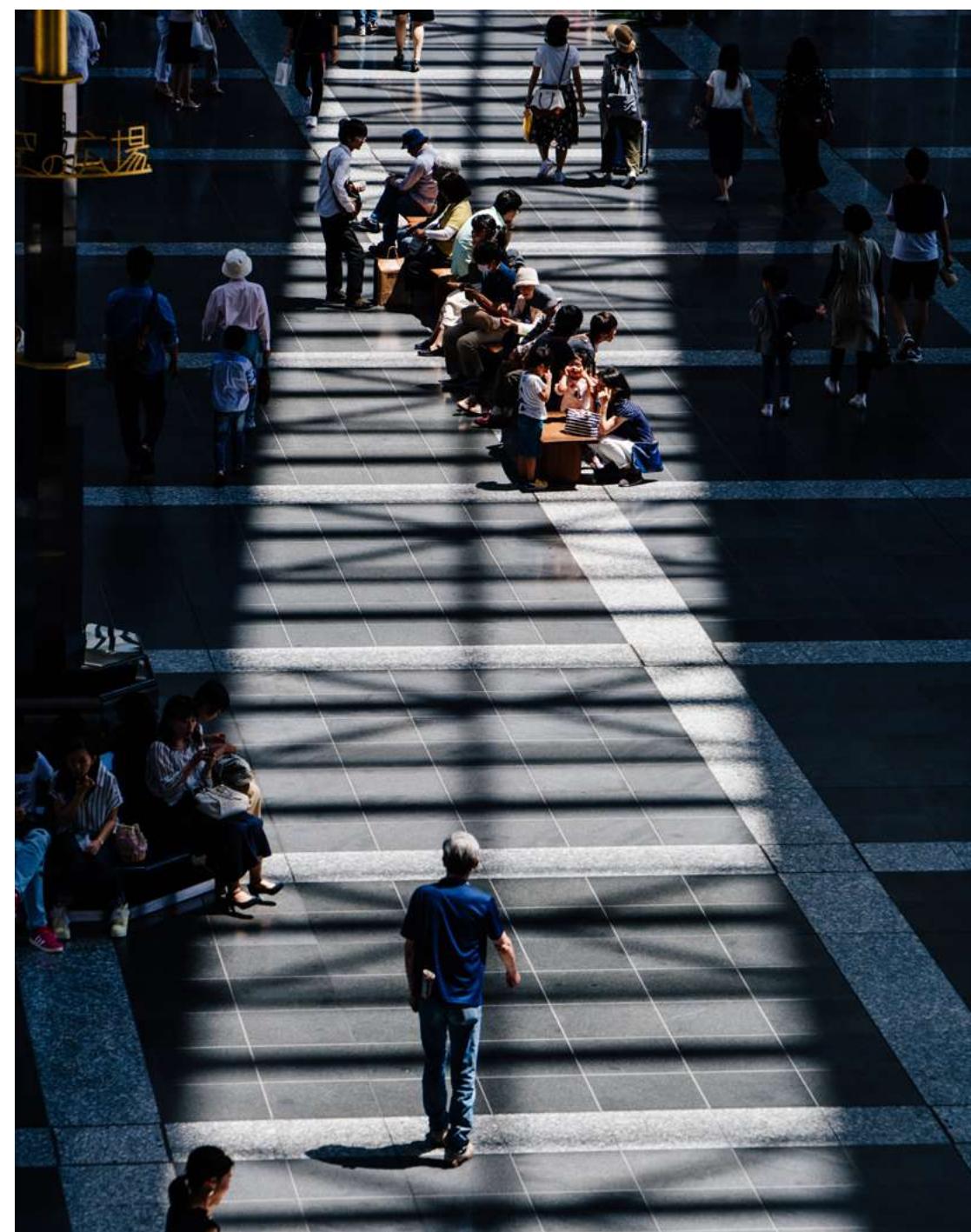
The effect of this unified approach can be witnessed at JFK International Airport too, where its use of Amadeus' cloud-based ACUS solution ensures that the single view of the customer remains true and consistent throughout over 140 touchpoints in Terminal 4.

This approach is echoed through Amadeus' Virtual Airport Operations Center (APOC), a pioneering approach built in partnership with Microsoft and its expertise in cloud technologies. It acts as a centralized hub bringing together data from across the airport ecosystem to give an unrivalled view into operations for all those responsible for planning and service delivery.



## Planning for all eventualities

Successful unification requires continuity. Interruptions to the process of bringing all pieces of the puzzle together risk slowing it down or throwing it off course entirely. As such, scenario planning is crucial to run through all possible eventualities and prepare accordingly. This removes the risk of operational downtime should disruption happen. This preparation doesn't only inform response approaches from an operational perspective, it can also prepare the communications structure for passengers, airport staff, and crew alike.



“Operations within the travel sector often deal with unplanned events and their impact, which places a high value on information timeliness and accuracy. This is hindered, however, through an inability to view real-time or near real-time operational data due to information that is contained in many disparate systems.

“The adoption of platforms that unify across siloed data estates enable holistic views of business operations, resulting in more optimized forecasting and planning systems.”

**Julie Shainock**  
Global Travel and Transportation  
Industry Leader,  
Microsoft



## Holistic agility

A core critical approach to improving the passenger experience today relies on replacing Departure Control Systems (DCSs) with more modern Delivery Management systems (DMS). These sit at the epicenter of airline operations and extend control and visibility beyond passengers to the entire airline operations including real-time dynamic gate allocation and on-the-ground resource management, ensuring buses, aircraft tugs, and boarding stairs are where they need to be. This agility is made possible through cloud-enabled connectivity allowing for real-time analysis.

This data-driven insight uses machine learning capabilities to subsequently allow operational teams to make informed, confident decisions that optimize operations and processes – including anticipation of traveler needs and appropriate proactive responses. It helps create the great experience expected throughout any journey.

## Removing anxiety through insight

A multi-touchpoint understanding of every traveler can enable personalization to deliver tailored offers throughout the journey and in doing so, create a foundational, unified, traveler profile. When it comes to driving loyalty, this is crucial – as humans we all want to feel recognized, understood, and valued.

Not knowing what's happening is unnerving in any journey, but presenting options and up-to-date information across all airline touchpoints ensures the traveler remains informed. The insight also allows the airline to pre-empt issues; and either ensure they're stopped before they happen or are resolved swiftly, subsequently reducing their impact.

Delivering this when travelling (which is embedded in scenarios where hope for a smooth experience sits side-by-side with varying levels of anxiety), makes for an enjoyable, stress-free journey.

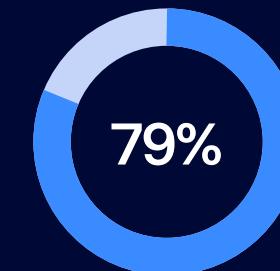
### Creatures of airside habit

It turns out that leisure travelers love a routine. Amadeus research uncovered several touchpoints airside where passengers have developed specific habits while waiting for their gate – they've become a core part of any holiday!

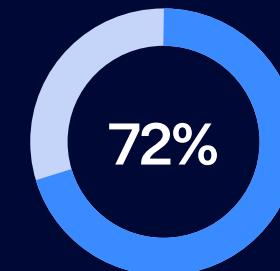
Indeed, when asked whether they 'follow a ritual' at the airport, 81% of those on a family trip or a trip with a partner agreed – dropping only slightly to 79% of those on a trip with friends or 72% of those travelers on a solo trip.



Family trip or with a partner



Trip with friends



Solo trip

### In terms of what these rituals are:

34%

Of travelers on a trip with friends will have a drink at the airport bar

29%

on a family trip will buy travel essentials in the airport (e.g., suncream, shower gel, etc.)

27%

on a family trip will buy entertainment for the journey (e.g., magazine, crosswords, etc.)

36%

of those on a family trip or a trip with a partner will go shopping in duty free

36%

Family trip

35%

Trip with a partner

32%

Trip with friends

Will eat at the same restaurant or cafe

# The in-flight experience

## Maintaining the personal touch

It's been over twenty years since Lufthansa began offering in-flight WiFi, first offering device connectivity, and subsequently ushering in a new era in entertainment in the process with the increased bandwidth and functionalities this technology brought. Today, video and catch-up services are an expected and intrinsic part of any trip.

The in-flight experience actually starts with trip inspiration and booking. The whole process from pre-trip to in-trip continues to evolve with a focus on technology that enables highly personalized journeys. Based on IATA's Offers and Orders shift from legacy architectures and processes to a more modern retailing environment, pioneering Finnair became the first global airline in 2025 to create a native order. The airline says this new approach will ultimately benefit customers at every touchpoint and enable it to deliver frictionless experiences.

This transformative shift in airline retailing is opening up a breadth of opportunities through highly targeted promotional and upgrade offers. And through the use of a unified record in an order, it's also extending the reach of customer support through both Agentic AI systems and dedicated agents.



## End-to-end orchestration

Personalization is only possible through a unified approach throughout the order chain – one which now extends into the air. Retailers are able to receive and process a service request from the traveler and, in turn, agree this transaction with the supplier in order to confirm inventory.

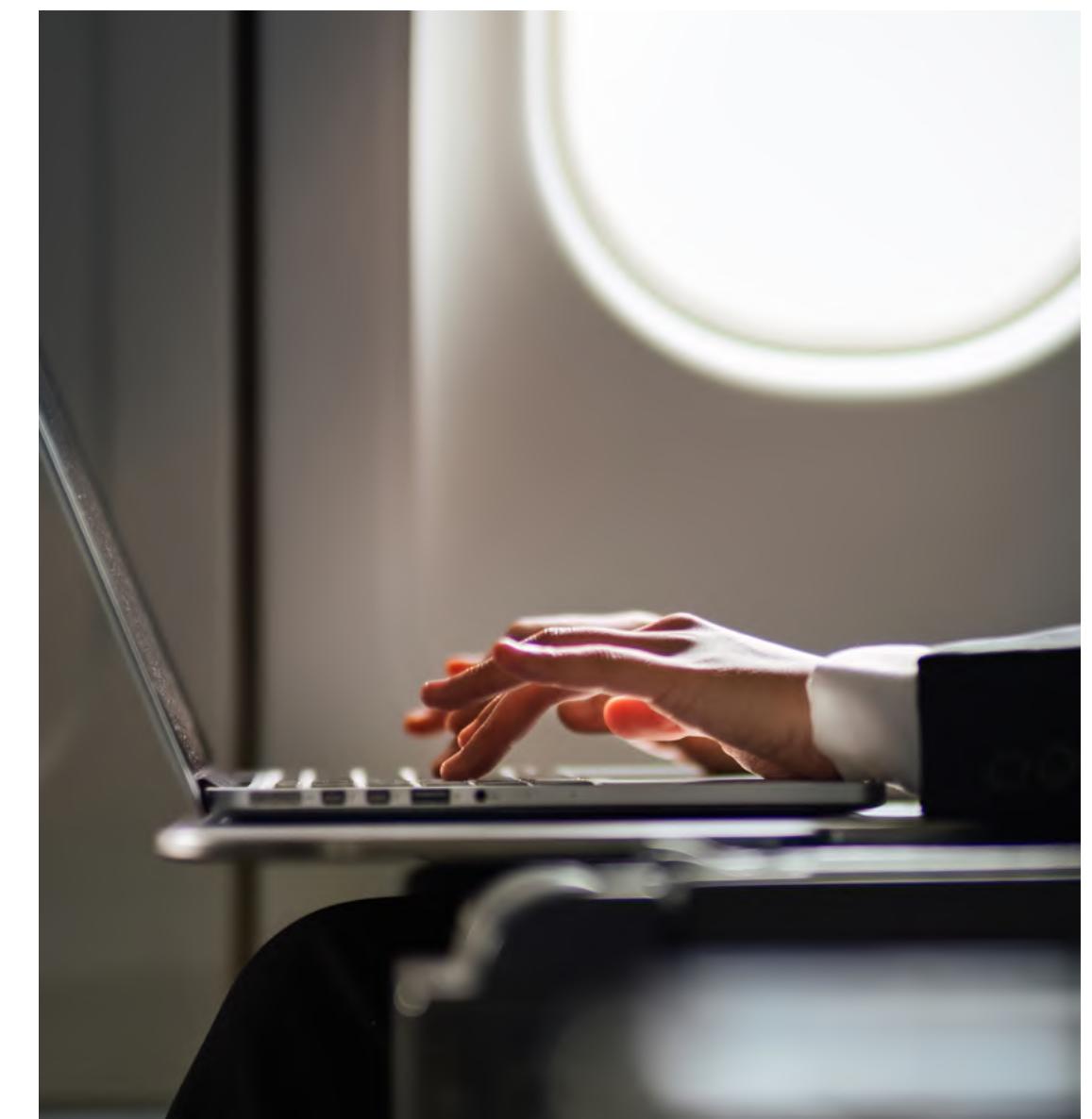
This could include a hotel upgrade or transfer on arrival at the airport alongside strategic commercial partners in leisure, entertainment and corporate services. This gives ultimate flexibility (and control) to the passenger – decisions don't all have to be made ahead of the flight and can be adapted to suit circumstances. As an example, in the event of flight delays, travelers can update their ground transport accordingly without having to placate a very fed-up taxi driver who's been waiting an hour.

Journey orchestration means travelers no longer need to update all suppliers when their order changes, this will happen automatically, with the retailer keeping an up-to-date view of which services have been delivered to the traveler.

## Enhancing the in-flight experience

These services rely on modern airline retailing solutions such as Amadeus Nevio – a modular, AI-powered platform that enables airlines to craft personalized, context-aware offers during the journey. It enables one-click payments tied to the traveler's profile, allowing upsells like seat upgrades, lounge access or baggage offers in real-time, and even post-disruption.

Payment flexibility is changing traditional in-flight operations. Whereas midair meals would likely be agreed in advance as part of the booking, the opportunities now exist to be able to offer more of an 'a la carte' solution. Air France-KLM is one airline looking at enhanced options for premium flyers with the option of Michelin-starred chefs being trialed on some routes.



## Next-generation entertainment

Many in-flight catch-up TV and film offerings currently rely heavily on pre-installed content stored onboard, which are downloaded and stored on the aircraft's media server before take-off. This approach offers full stability in playback and access, although has obvious limitations in terms of content.

However, advances in connectivity are changing the status quo significantly – not least through the Starlink satellite network and emerging 5G-to-plane technology. By taking advantage of these solutions, airlines are able to stream live sports and TV as well as access to personal subscription platforms such as Netflix, Disney and Spotify.

Some airlines have also been testing LiFi connectivity – a light-based approach to network connectivity which offers 100x faster speeds and improved data security. Importantly, from an operational perspective, this also includes reduced electromagnetic interference. This kind of experimentation is evidence of transformational thinking and an open mindset.

Where big opportunities lie ahead are in a hybrid approach to manage bandwidth while ensuring no-one has to compromise on what they want from their entertainment offering. Pre-installed material gives the stable experience for those happy to watch from fixed catalogues, while those looking to live or personal content can equally watch without interruption.

Additionally, the innovations brought to the table through AI can enhance the traveler experience. Airlines are using AI to offer personalized entertainment options that align with passengers' viewing histories and interests. [Thales FlytEdge](#) is one such initiative, which is making "intelligent" recommendations to elevate the in flight experience and enhance the passenger experience.

Investment in AI and data analytics will be the catalyst to hyper-personalized solutions. These will boost loyalty and drive brand differentiation, which together can be the decisive factor in the traveler's choice of operator.

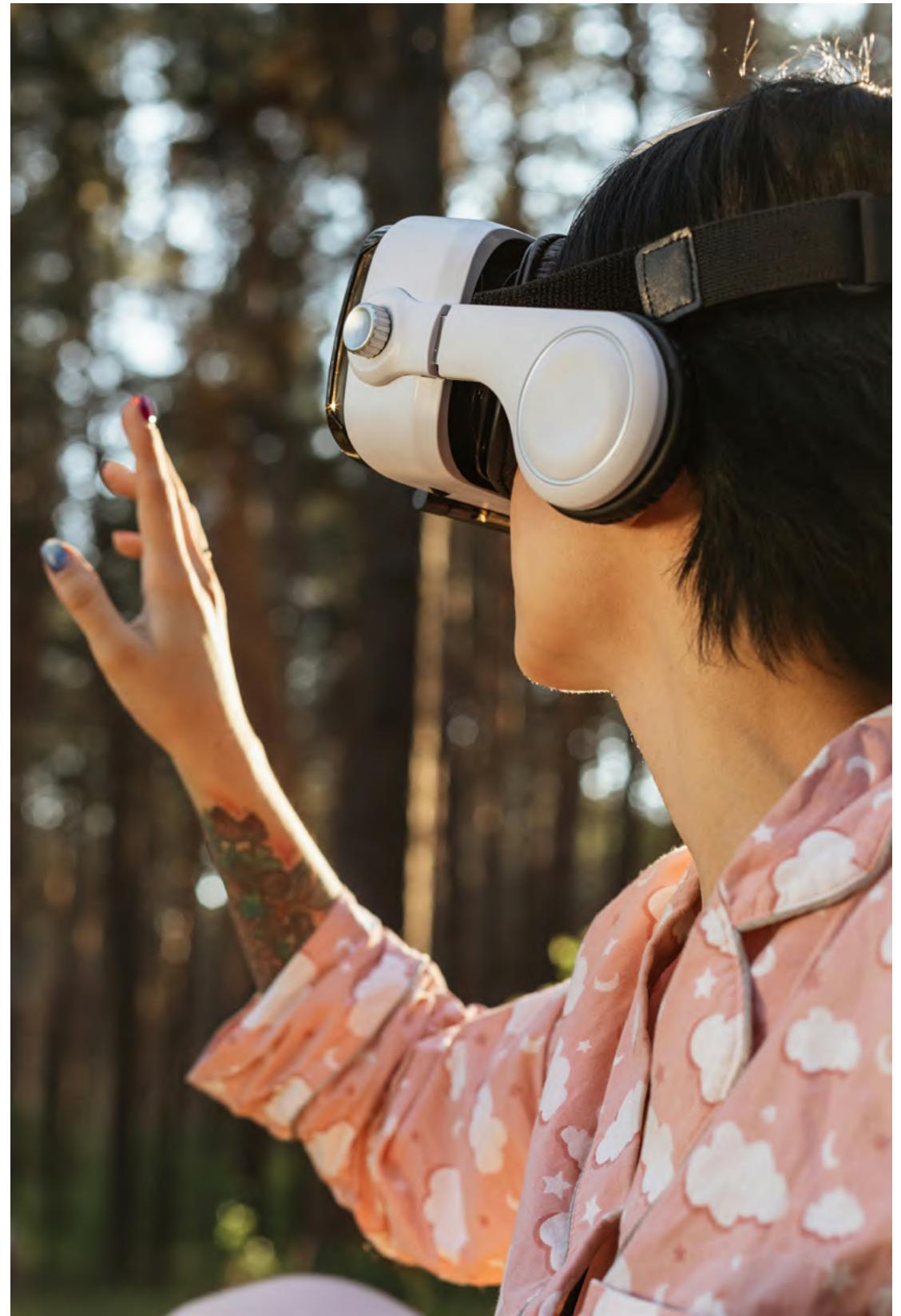


## An immersive future?

Outside of connectivity, advances in hardware are bringing game-changing developments to the in-flight experience. OLED manufacturers are already creating transparent overlays for airplane windows, bringing the promise of augmented reality (AR) immersion.

In this instance, a passenger can look out of the window and get an insight into landmarks or an update on exactly where they might be on their trip – with increasing accuracy as the tech develops. (An exciting development for those who stare out of the window near arrival trying to see their house).

In time, this can go beyond signposting – imagine the potential for parents to educate their children on their destination and point out geographical points of interest throughout a flight or be able to demonstrate how clouds form as they fly over them.



## Shortening time perception

In addition to augmented reality, immersion through *virtual reality* (VR) has significant potential, not just in enhancing solutions but at a bigger level in reducing how flight time is perceived. While a two-hour film will pass the time, it's still a small screen with distracting peripheral vision. The opportunity VR brings through full immersion – be it gaming or video – can isolate the passenger from the whole cabin, making time pass quicker and the flight perceptively shorten. Boredom can be a thing of the past.

Adoption won't be straightforward, however. Beyond the connectivity demands when used at scale by dozens of passengers, the cost of implementation and maintenance has to be justified to drive mass adoption.

## Knock-on benefits

Interestingly, these also bring potential environmental and operational efficiencies, with the slim glass used for OLEDs a viable, equally robust alternative to traditional (thick) aircraft windows. While there's no question of compromising structural integrity for the sake of AR, as shown by the likes of Boeing and Airbus considering how to integrate next generation solutions, fresh approaches to hardware will arise.

Beyond AR, both Boeing and Airbus are looking at how technology solutions can improve operations, especially when it comes to maintenance and inefficiencies. These have a significant knock-on effect to the traveler in reducing downtime, improving service quality, and identifying issues ahead of time.

Both operators are looking at digital twin ecosystems which can predict and diagnose technical issues in advance – increasing the speed of resolution. Optimization of fuel usage can be understood through real-time analysis of weather conditions, and other influences on consumption.

In the longer-term, automated taxiing, take-off, and landing solutions through VR and AI analysis can minimize pilot workload and allow focus to be centered on where human control is most required.

# The baggage experience

“Breakfast in London, dinner in Rome, luggage in Honolulu.” – anonymous

Once checked in, it's taken for granted that your baggage will be waiting for you at the end of your journey, often without a true appreciation of the sheer scale of the operations involved. IATA's data puts the total number of bags carried each year by air at over *four billion*, with 99.57% arriving on time and in the right place – a herculean feat. Despite this low error rate, anxiety about bags going missing remains disproportionately high among travelers, with 29% of respondents to an Amadeus survey citing the mere possibility of losing baggage as worrying.

29%

of travelers citing the possibility of losing baggage as a source of anxiety

99.57%

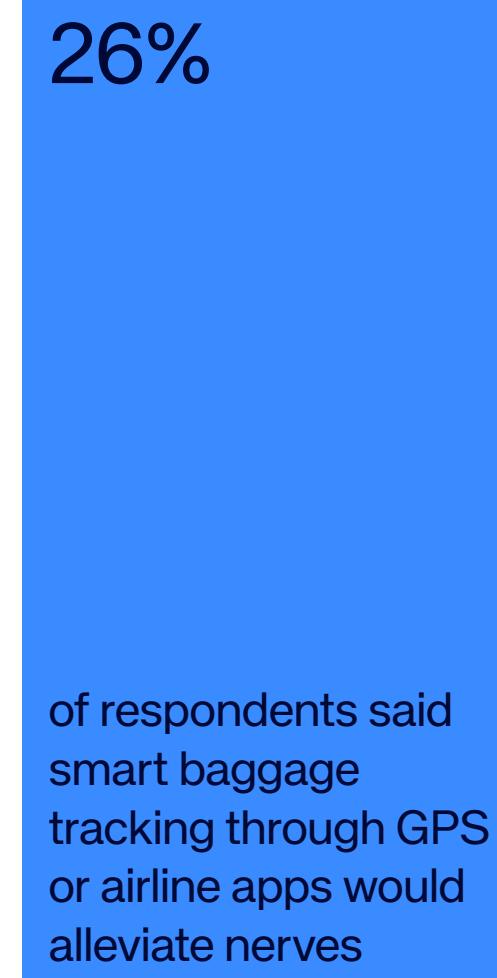
of bags arriving on time and in the right place

Source: [iata.org](http://iata.org)



This explains why some travelers have taken to placing Apple AirTags in their luggage to do their own tracking. Seeing this grassroots development, some 30 airlines are also on board with Apple's 'share item location' feature.

Baggage handling is also being addressed through increasingly smart technology - a development which echoes passenger appetite for such solutions. Of those surveyed, 26% of respondents said smart baggage tracking through GPS or airline apps would alleviate nerves, with 23% agreeing that clear, in-app updates on baggage rules and security requirements would do the same.



## Data-driven insight for tackling bottlenecks

The implementation of AI is enhancing the ability to predict pinch points and address them in advance, as well as react to, and resolve operational issues in real-time to minimize delays.

An example of this is where disruption arising from a weather event may lead to a plane carrying a passenger's luggage arriving late at its destination and the connecting flight departs without the bags. By noting this in advance, AI-driven analysis can understand where to reroute the baggage to and ensure any delay in arrival at the traveler's destination is reduced and inconvenience curtailed.

Rerouting operations staff to handle changes in schedules can also tackle disruption, through addressing peak arrival and departure times, prioritizing handling appropriately to ensure backlogs don't occur. This also ensures that delays with baggage carousel collection are minimized, meaning travelers' journeys through the airport are smoother and congestion can be addressed head on. This has the knock-on effect of avoiding any delays for others traveling through the terminal.

## Future technologies

AI is already making significant improvements to tracking luggage and creating smart, reliable predictive modelling for baggage handling, as well as streamlining reactive demands. But there are many additional solutions, and many in early stages of experimentation and implementation.

As well as tracking and recovery, these can allow optimization in logistics, aligning priorities with loyalty and premium memberships, or to passenger movements. One example of the latter is when a flight departs without a passenger's bag, the destination airport receives immediate notification. This enables the airport to proactively inform passengers upon arrival that their bag didn't make the connection, along with confirmation that it will be delivered directly to their address. This approach reduces passenger anxiety, minimizes frustration, and creates a significantly better overall passenger experience.

## Handling solutions

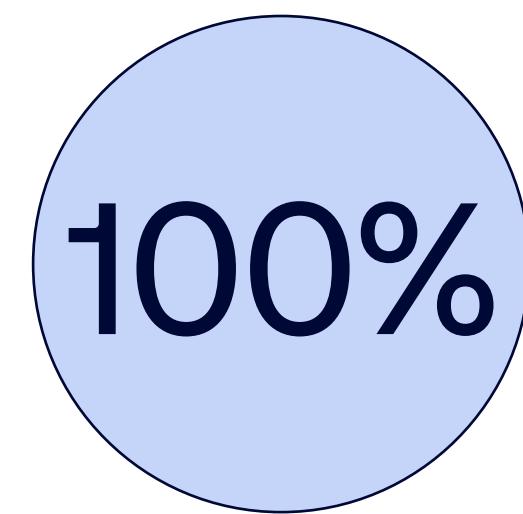
It's possible to look at baggage through two different lenses when we consider how technology is going to optimize systems. Firstly, there's the handling itself – moving the bag from A to B. Secondly, there's the tracking and maintenance – making sure the bag follows the path intended (and finding it if it diverts from this path).

When looking at the handling itself, advances in robotics will see increased efficiencies when it comes to getting items on the right flight and back off the other end. It's possible to pick up baggage from drop-off (self-service kiosks, naturally), take them to the right plane and disembark the bags. Upon arrival, robotics help ensure the bags are deposited at the right carousel having undergone the appropriate checks.

Digital Twins will also play a role here in terms of mapping the workflows and predicting potential pinch points. Here, a real-time digital replica simulates the airline's operations and identifies problems in advance, based on previous experience and scenarios. This iterative learning approach will continually optimize operations.

## Tracking technologies

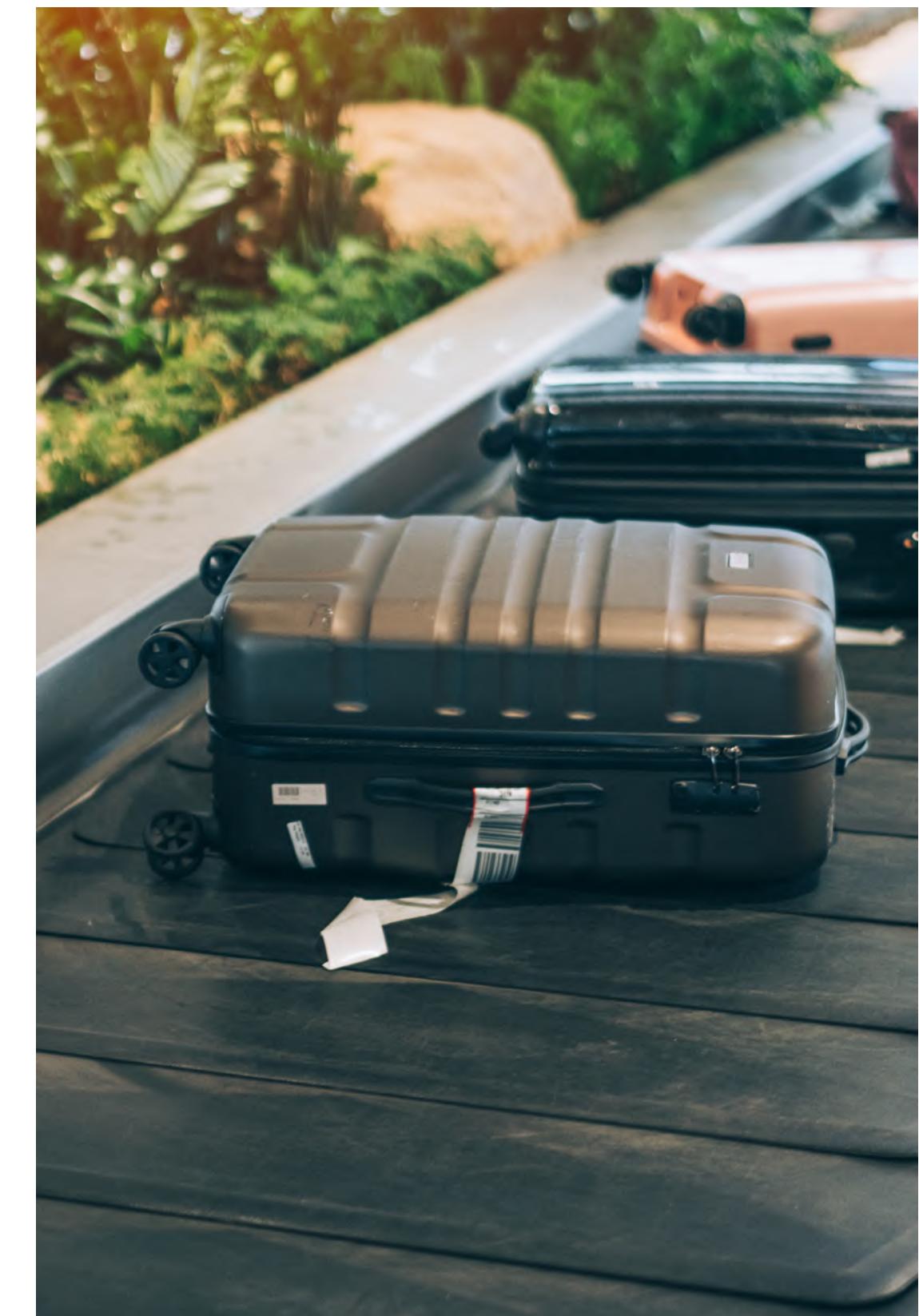
IATA has put in place a target for 100% of baggage to have some form of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) in place by 2030. RFID uses radio waves to automatically identify and track tags – in this instance, those attached to luggage. By putting this in place, airlines will be able to pinpoint exactly where a bag is and reroute it accordingly. It will also directly address traveler unease related to not knowing where baggage is and allow for the in-app alerts and updates that are evidently hoped for.



### IATA target:

of baggage to have some form of RFID will be put in place by 2030

Blockchain technology could also provide robust (indeed, immutable) understanding of where an item is at any given time. At every stage of the journey a record of where the bag has passed will be registered on a blockchain – an act which is impossible to alter, even by those with admin rights or by third-party bad actors. The approach aims to create total trust and transparency when it comes to where a bag has been, who it has been handled by, and where it currently stands in its own journey.



## Security and safety

Beyond the logistics of an item, ensuring ownership remains a critical factor – not least when it comes to safety and security. The use of biometrics here is key through linking the bag to secure information captured ahead of the journey or at bag drop, where automated check-in kiosks are capturing facial and fingerprint recognition data.

Combined with capturing bag images during check-in and leveraging AI-powered computer vision technology, specific bag characteristics can be identified and catalogued and linked to passenger biometrics. These bag images and their detailed descriptions serve as valuable data points for tracking luggage throughout its journey, enabling bags to be mapped across all end-to-end touchpoints in the travel process. These capabilities in particular will speed up the process of identifying bags for ground handlers, either to identify misplaced luggage for travelers, or to off-load a bag in a scenario where a bag has been checked in, but the passenger has not boarded – a standard procedure to prevent smuggling. This needs to be executed as quickly as possible to prevent delays.

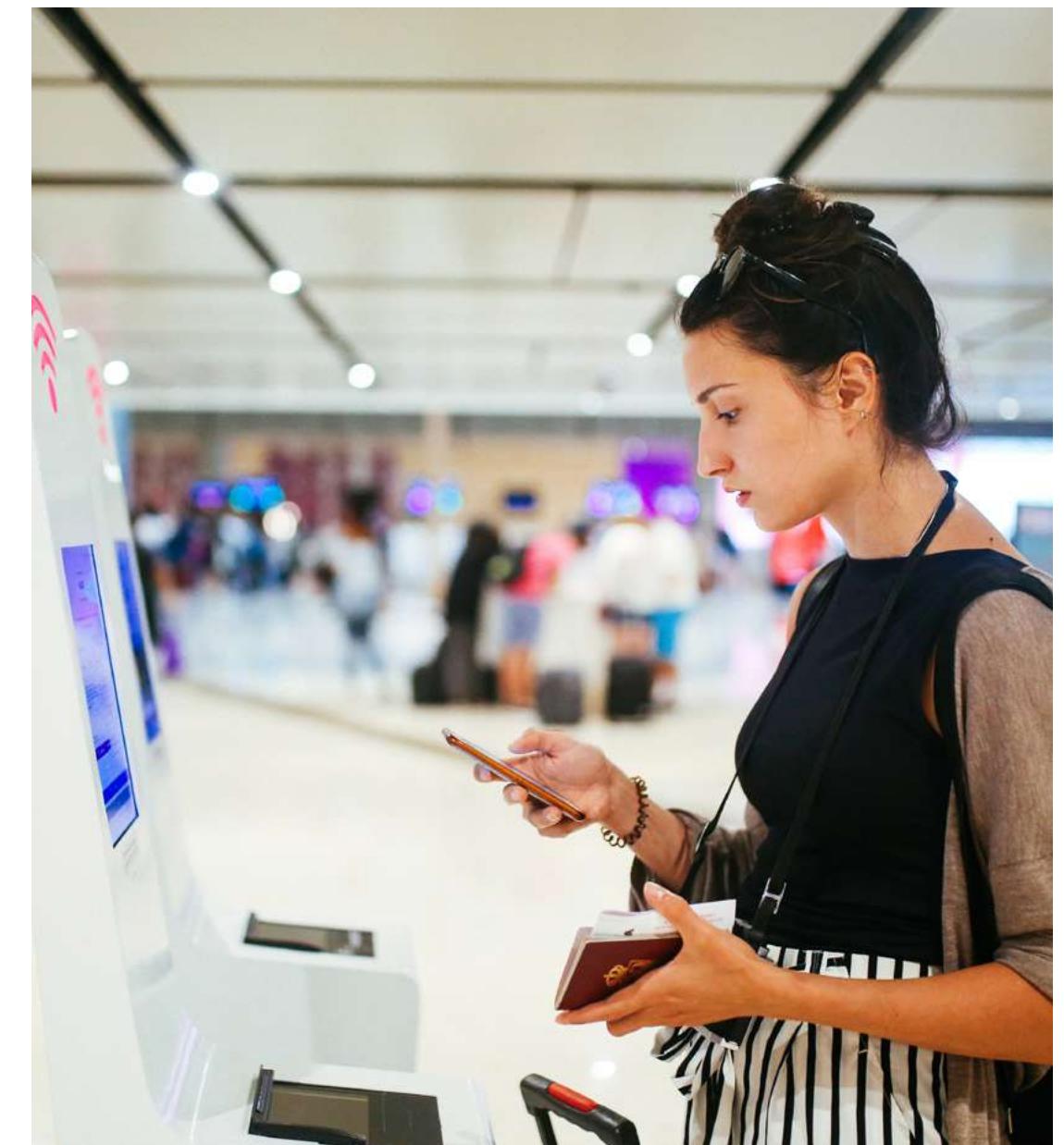
## Constant improvement

While the solutions above won't entirely remove challenges when it comes to baggage in transit, they can improve them. Known challenges (and, in the instance of crime, loopholes), can be overcome and the overall passenger experience can be constantly improved.

In doing so, any anxiety about bags going missing can be reduced. And, in the event of any unforeseen issues, technology facilitates a swifter identification of where an item is, alongside the AI-driven sophistication of how to get the bag delivered to where it needs to be. And all this done faster than has even been possible before.

The speed and quality of the resolution can become, like mitigating friction elsewhere in the journey, potentially a loyalty and reputational driver.

As an instance of this, airlines are delivering fast authorization of emergency shopping trips to travelers to get what's needed to survive the first night while baggage is being tracked down. When communicated



quickly and clearly, this has the potential to significantly de-escalate a stressful situation.

The adage that you only notice when something goes wrong applies to the baggage aspect of travel – it's successful most of the time (99.57%), but when a bag doesn't turn up it has a significant impact on your trip. In reducing the potential for loss, the percentage of successfully delivered luggage will increase, while the speed of resolution will also improve.

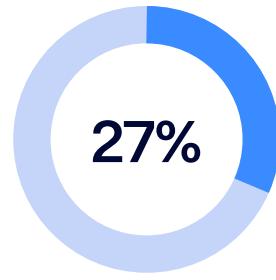
When factoring the ability to reduce crime also, it's clear to see how some of the most transformative technologies we're witnessing today are changing the game when it comes to the four billion bags winging their way around the globe each year.

# The disruption experience

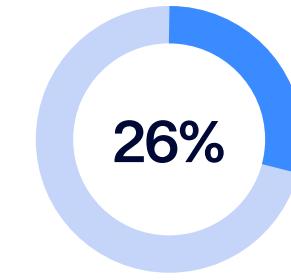
## A true time of need

In the first section of the report we talked about managing disruption from an industry and technology perspective. Here, we look at it through the lens of traveler experience.

Given the nature of any journey – be it leisure or business – the potential for disruption is a source of anxiety for many travelers. Amadeus' own research identified flight delays, cancellations or airport closure based on unforeseen circumstances (such as weather events) as one of the biggest sources of anxiety for leisure (27%) and business travelers (26%) alike.



Leisure travelers



Business travelers





However, effectively managing such disruption for the traveler can be boiled down to three core tenets:

- ① **Reassurance: removing the unknown and giving confidence for a resolution through information sharing**
- ② **Insight: knowing what this resolution (or an alternative) might be**
- ③ **Action: knowing when this resolution might take place**

## Action as a loyalty-driver

Importantly, successfully solving the issues caused by disruption can become a loyalty driver when it comes to circumstances outside the control of the relevant operator, be it the airline, airport, or travel agent. It's a key marker of the importance of putting the customer experience first.

When asked about the impact of how an organisation handles disruption, three quarters (75%) of travelers said they could see the true quality of a provider in such an instance. In fact, 74% would likely book again if their provider handled the disruption well by offering proactive solutions (which could include next available flight rebooking, overnight accommodation, ground transfers, or food and beverage vouchers), and 72% say they can forgive their provider if they can see they are doing their best to help.

75%

Could see the true quality of a provider in such an instance

74%

Would likely book again if their provider handled the disruption well by offering proactive solutions

72%

Can forgive their provider if they can see they are doing their best to help

## The importance of communication

The unknowns and ‘what ifs?’ during disruption are primary drivers behind anxiety – a combination which must be resolved (as much as is possible in the circumstances) through reassurance. This might be the resolution of the problem, or it can simply be an update that the fix is being investigated. When it comes to reassurance, one thing is key: communication. Travelers need to know what’s happening so they can understand how long to wait or arrange alternative plans with the support of the operator.

Amadeus has partnered with 15below since 2019, with more than 30 airlines worldwide supported by automated, personalized passenger (and airline or airport staff) communications ensuring the passenger is always in the loop. Innovation priorities are building on this through looking at adaptable, scalable solutions for disruption management through airline integration systems.

“By prioritizing real-time communication and being proactive with their service recovery, airlines are able to reassure their passengers, empower them throughout their journey, and build loyalty at a time when passenger trust is harder to earn than ever.”

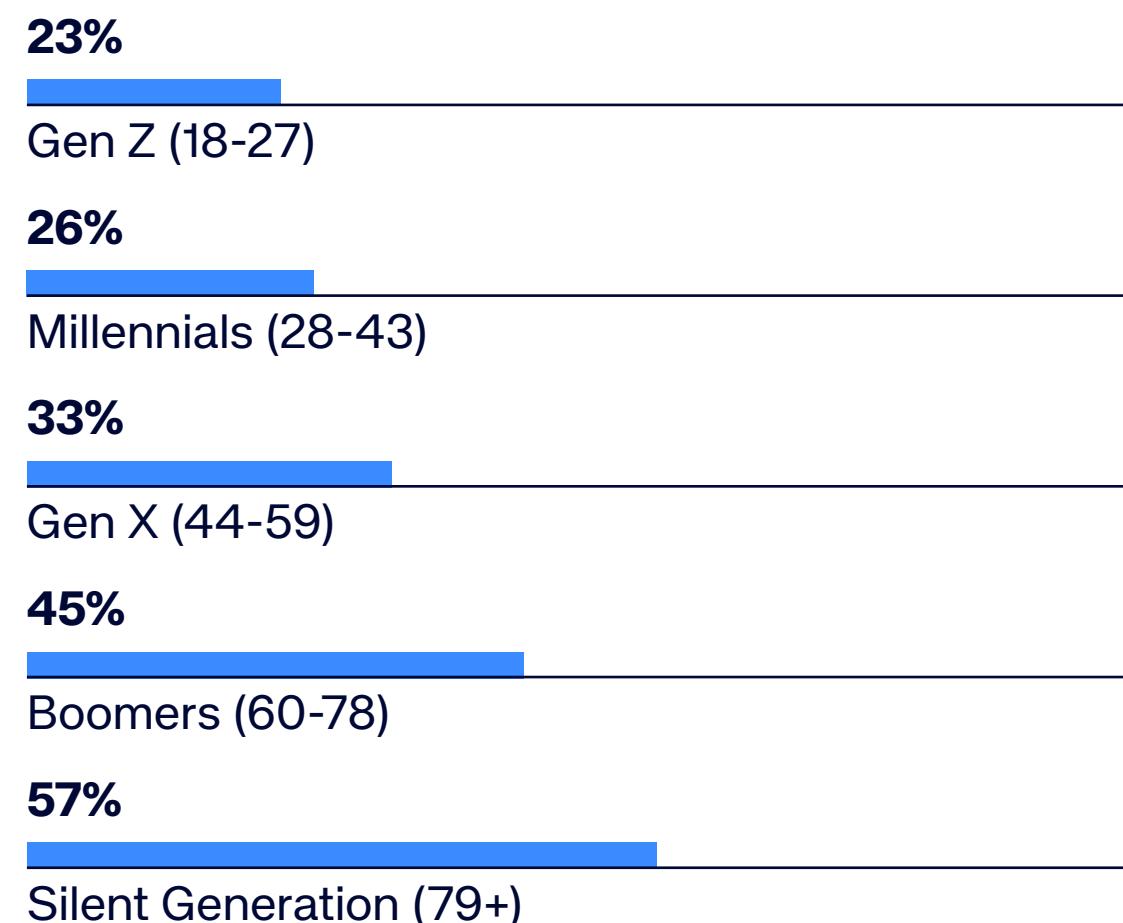
**Mathieu Beynel**  
Product Manager for Disruption Management,  
Amadeus

**AMADEUS**

## The need for empathy

The need for empathy is undoubtedly heightened during disruption and this is where the travel and hospitality industries must recognize the importance of delivering support to suit different preferences. While the use of chatbots and AI agents has become standardized in many customer service realms, during disruption a sizeable number of passengers still prefer to speak to a real human. Indeed, in an Amadeus survey, the human touch came out top at 29% in terms of what travelers would want most to feel reassured during travel disruption.

This has an interesting dynamic however when it comes to demographic and age groups – with older passengers significantly more demanding. Indeed, the percentage of those wanting to speak to a human agent correlates directly with age – the older the traveler or guest, the higher the appetite:



This is a clear example of where the industry needs to meet the traveler on the latter’s terms depending on the situation.

## Building trust in AI solutions

Demand for a 'hybrid' approach to customer support, as it were, will always exist. It's human nature to want to talk to someone in person. But huge opportunities exist on the agentic side around resolution where scenarios can be played out across multiple AI solutions to manage (and resolve) disruptions sooner.

It is worth mentioning that AI support is still fairly nascent, so personal preferences are naturally going to change based on customer experiences of its use and application over time. Beyond early adopters, much of the public are relatively neophobic when it comes to new technology – especially where sensitive data is concerned, or where it significantly differs from trusted, known solutions.

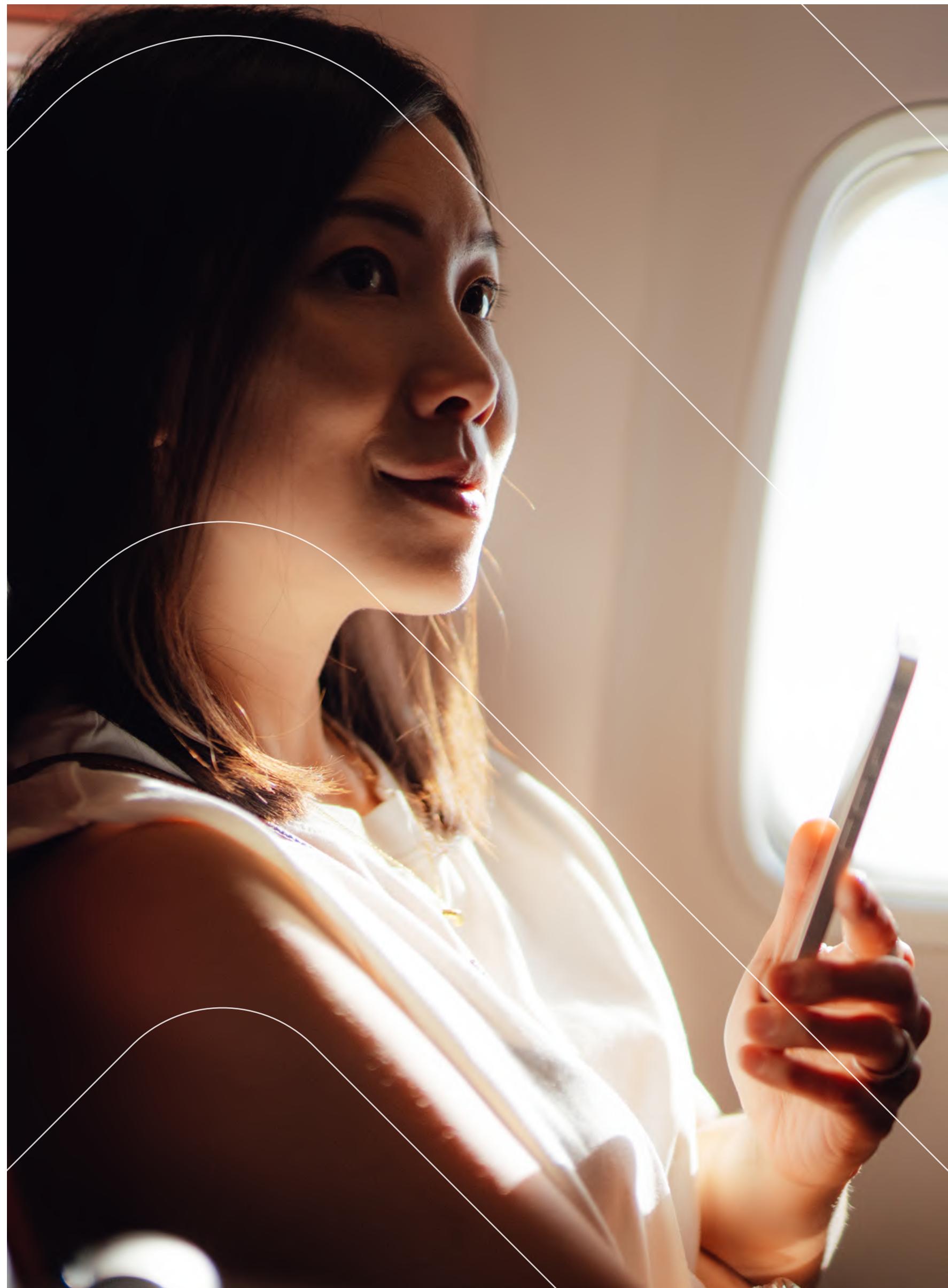
The travel and hospitality industries have arguably seen the same with biometrics. At first people were skeptical, but smartphones gave us the convenience of unlocking devices and confirming payments just by looking at them using fingerprint and facial biometric data. This then becomes a door opener to using this same technology in other areas of life.

### Enhancing support through AI

In the case of disruption to flights, we envisage that AI support would be three-fold (and more use cases are likely to develop as operational experience using these solutions grow):

Cumulatively, the experience must echo the advances seen in other industries when it comes to what the customer expects from service providers. And the increased use of AI will see time freed up for in-person support for those travelers who need it.

- ① **Anticipate any upcoming disruptions based on real-time and multi-source data (an improvement over traditionally reactive and often siloed responses using the different impacted systems).**
- ② **Orchestrate and engage with the various personnel involved in the recovery decision-making process (including the crew, maintenance teams, airport slot assigners, etc.) to provide a fast, robust and comprehensive solution that will address customer needs.**
- ③ **From the traveler perspective, AI could propose a solution that is more likely to suit the individual passenger's needs and preferences (a more personalized response), which gets the passenger's travel back on track.**



“Technology solutions need to evolve alongside changing traveler expectations. We’ve been progressing a lot in operational notifications, with the ultimate goal being to meet the changing needs of customers and extend notification capabilities to the wider travel ecosystem.”

**Mathieu Beynel**

Product Manager for Disruption Management,  
Amadeus

**AMADEUS**

The themes of reassurance, insight, and action are shown clearly in the results of Amadeus research into traveler priorities and anxieties.

## Resolving issues quickly



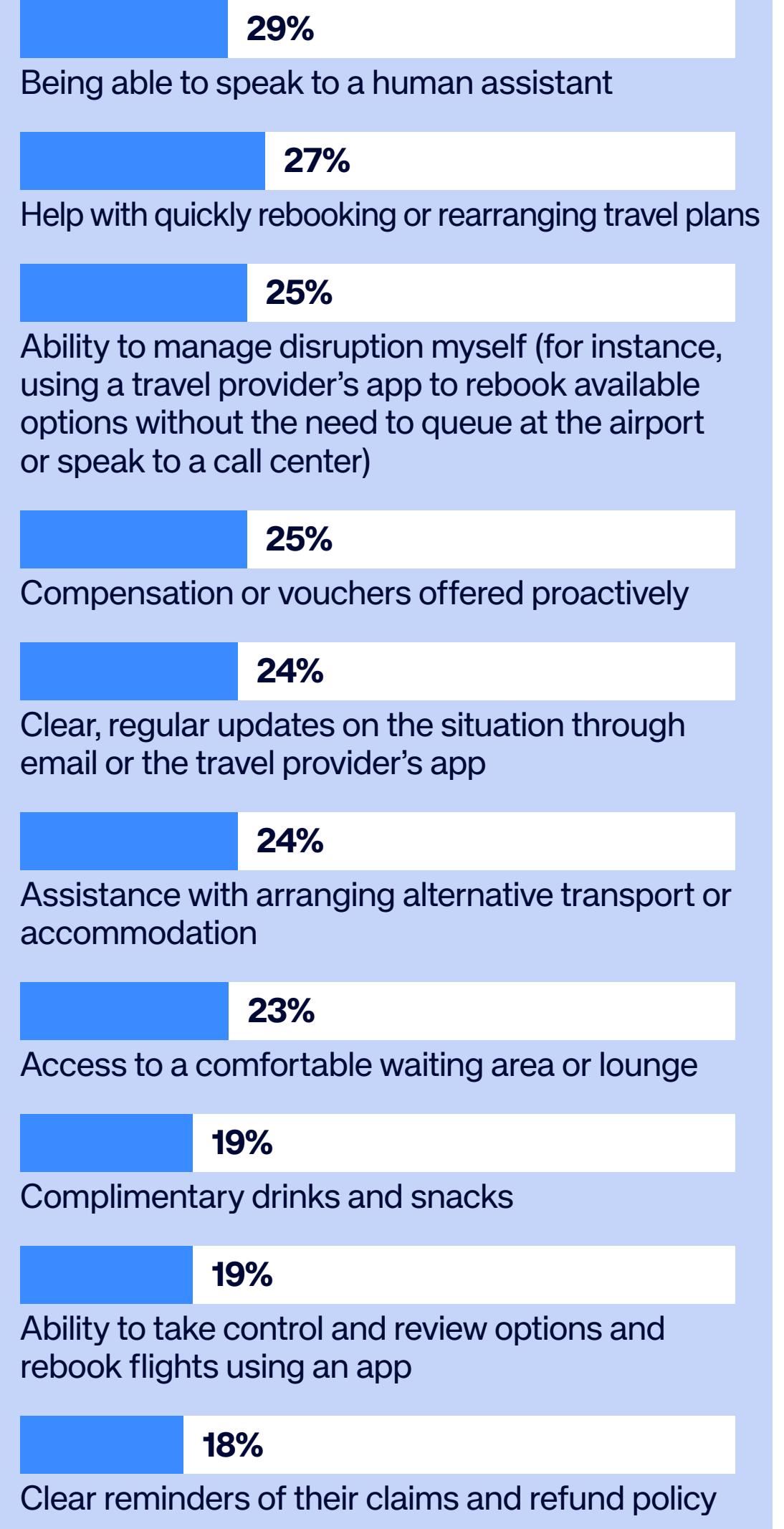
No-one likes being left in limbo, so it's crucial that as soon as a resolution is in place, the traveler is made aware of it immediately and can make a decision on whether to move ahead with it. This involves passengers receiving a notification direct to their app or mobile device that explains the airline's or travel seller's recommended alternative travel option, with the ability to accept or reject it digitally from their device – or even be able to edit the recommendation to match their specific needs.

Recovery options will factor in the entire journey leading to better outcomes for travelers while ensuring the needs of each passenger and their entitlements are understood across partner airlines and other suppliers. This model also means that the individual feels empowered despite things not going as planned - something which can add further reassurance as the situation gets resolved.

At the end of the day, the unknown is a core factor in anxieties being heightened - but building processes and systems that adopt a fully integrated approach throughout the travel ecosystem, means not only can every part of the system work together to resolve the issue, but they can drive positive reputation for handling disruption. Through implementing the right technology solutions to identifying how to resolve an issue, alongside the means to keep the traveler in the loop, anxieties are lessened.



**During a travel disruption when travelling abroad for leisure, which of the following could a travel provider do to help you feel most reassured?**

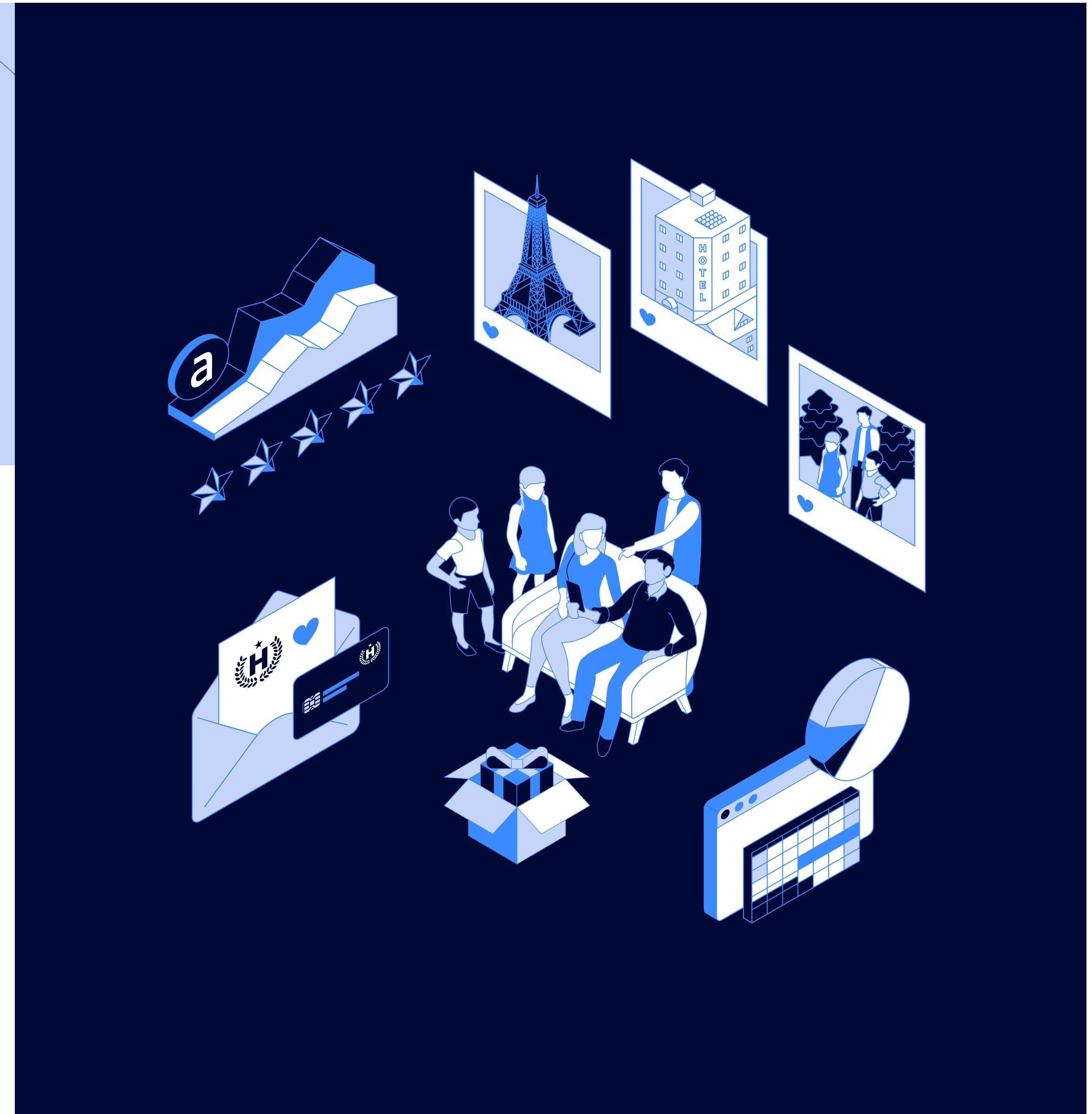


# The hotel experience

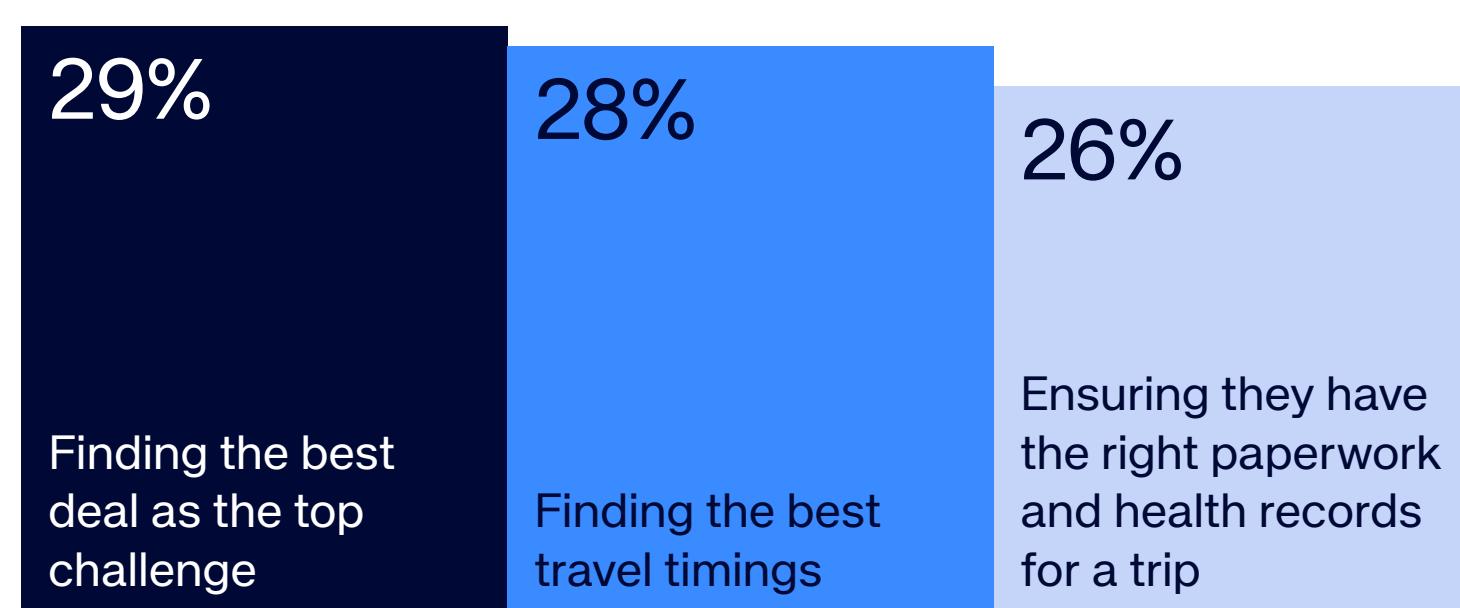
## The subjective booking experience

There are (and always have been) a variety of core factors which inform travelers' decisions when it comes to choosing a hotel.

There is the 'hard', fixed factor in terms of location – is it close to amenities, venues and the experiences that are the reasons for travel? Are tourist attractions within easy reach? What are transport links like? And for business travelers, is the meeting or conference venue easily accessible?



Price (and here we're talking about cost), is also relatively 'hard' in terms of it being an objective aspect of a booking. Its importance in the overall travel planning process is reflected in it being the biggest priority to get right for travelers (29% of respondents in research commissioned for this report, cited finding the best deal as the top challenge – above 28% finding the best travel timings and 26% ensuring they have the right paperwork and health records for a trip).



A business traveler may simply want somewhere to put their head down prior to a meeting, whereas a family may need a week's base without breaking the bank. Every demographic has a different budget for a different purpose.

Finally, there are benefits and add-ons. A spa; swimming pool; on-site gym; restaurant; workspaces; communal areas for meetups, family areas – all are 'fixed' in terms of being present or not.

So, while these all inform decisions, they're not subjective influences, and when we look at the more emotive needs of travelers we must look at the softer side of hospitality. This is where true personalization becomes the secret to success.

## Me, me, me

Ultimately, guests want the experience that matches their hopes and aspirations for the stay. This means that, as well as delivering on the practical, hotels must increasingly focus on the emotional needs of guests to stand out.

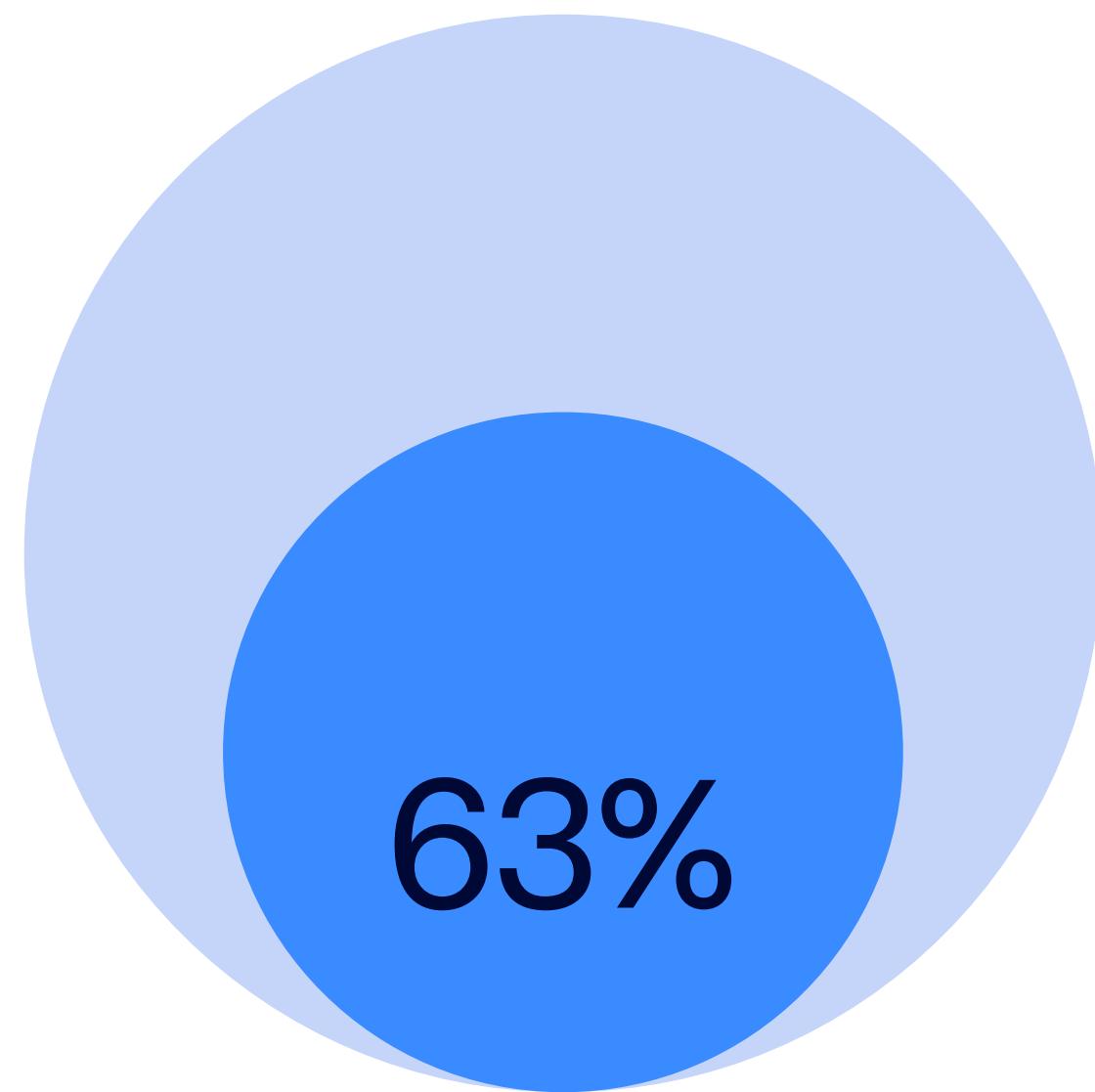
If we look at the current norm, guests can book a certain room type with standardized facilities. Essentially this is down to the size and number of beds – taking aside the suite option – and where possible a choice of view.

It's relatively formulaic and constricted, and historically, there's rarely the option to book a room with specific facilities apart from a category (e.g. executive room with a tea and coffee maker). And if hoteliers only allow fixed options, then we're not looking at all the routes to fulfilling guests' hopes and delivering an experience.



## Personalization through attribute-based selling

When it comes to differentiation (and the brand loyalty it brings), we fundamentally have to look at true personalization. This demands a shift to attribution-based selling experiences, as demonstrated by [recent research from Amadeus](#) ↗ which found that 63% of global travelers are willing to pay significant sums for room attributes on top of their standard average daily rates.



of global travelers are willing to pay significant sums for room attributes.

“When you go onto a website, travelers want to be able to say, ‘I want a room with a bath, with a view, that’s near the lift, and has a king bed’ and the booking system will create that offering for you.

“Sometimes it’s the simple things which prove the need best. My husband is over 6 feet tall for example, so there is no way he’s sleeping in a queen-size bed. He just doesn’t fit, his feet hang over at about his knee, but try confirming a king bed during a booking. It’s not happening unless you go to a five-star hotel and even then, they might call it a double, when it’s a queen and not a king.”

**Maria Taylor**

Senior Vice President of Marketing,  
Partnerships & Commercial  
Operations, Hospitality,  
Amadeus

**AMADEUS**

## Paying for extras

Importantly, personalization can be transitional – simply adding options can be a natural first step to building more accurate data-based personas and guest records.

Hotels need not see the opportunity as binary. The shift from persona-based profiling to a hyper-personalized, attribution-based, and ultimately guest-centric one is big, but a tailored approach can be adopted and rolled-out gradually. The same research demonstrated this clearly:

**17%**

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of business travelers from the U.S. say they would be prepared to pay up to 20% more to have business services like printing as part of their room package.

**12%**

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of Gen Z (18–27-year-olds) say they would pay up to 25% more on top of their room rate to have an Xbox or premium TV channels.

If we look at the cost of an Xbox, this 25% increase could repay itself within just a few bookings, an incredible return on the investment. (This goes beyond the gamer. If you’re a parent away with your teenager, knowing they can keep themselves busy and not complain about being bored is worth the additional room fee.)

## Making the move from PMS to CRS

Critical to the success of attribute-based selling is the shift from a data-siloed PMS system to a more connected solution, which is where the Central Reservation System (CRS) comes to the fore. This acts a single source of truth, bringing data and insight from a variety of channels to give a single view of the customer and operations alike, and to ensure that the ability to tailor individual stays can become a reality.

Customer-centric PMS technology is in its relative infancy however, although this should simply be an imperative to act sooner rather than later. Better to be an early adopter than customer-chasing laggard, and Amadeus is already working with many PMS companies to pioneer such solutions.

Initial deployments of attribute-based selling are already happening with some large-scale hotel chains ↗ on board for this transformative technology ↗, and once this widens out it will start to become a guest differentiator ↗. Importantly, this needs to be a consideration for OTAs as well – hospitality brands will take the march through hyper-personalization and potentially own the customer if the approach isn't adopted at a wider scale.

### A two-way street

The personalization opportunity in hospitality champions a view on the customer that hasn't previously been possible and yet is one which can underpin longer-term adaptation and evolution to match guest demand.

In knowing – through search and booking data, as well as post-stay insight – the changes that modern guests want from their experience, hotels can start to upsell more offers and services. This becomes a significant customer convenience aspect of any stay – something key to driving loyalty and brand preference.

Data provides this window into expectations but if personalized booking options are limited, then hotels can't know what customers want if they don't see what's actually in demand. Limitations in choice bring limitations in customer insight.

“As attribute-based selling rolls out, hoteliers will start changing their physical offerings based on how many people are selecting which attributes. It's very hard to tell with traditional room type selling what customers actually want, because you don't find out about it. So, it will give the hoteliers a lot more information about what the customers value and what a customer looks for in a resort is very different than what they want in a city hotel.”

#### Maria Taylor

Senior Vice President of Marketing,  
Partnerships & Commercial  
Operations, Hospitality,  
Amadeus

**AMADEUS**

## Explore to expand

In order to keep innovating and differentiating the guest's stay, hotels can explore add-ons and additional services as proof of concepts. This can be done without expensive leaps of faith – taking a beta-test approach to new initiatives can become a major driver of commercial growth.

Under this model, hotels can offer a benefit or bespoke booking preference in a handful of rooms within a property and if the uptake is strong, they can start to roll it out wider without undue risk.

This is how it's possible to see the hospitality industry truly transforming as it builds out the options hotels can offer which, in turn, deliver more insight into specific guest hopes and expectations. If parents book children into onsite kids' clubs (while they enjoy the spa), then bundling these into a package becomes a differentiating benefit.

Imagine your own recent business trip and what you may have asked reception for support with – a taxi booking for example to HQ or a customer's office – or you made the request when you went down to breakfast. Now consider that the next time you book that property, you have a table reserved during your regular breakfast slot and an email from reception ahead of your visit asking when you'd like them to book a cab.

It can also become an upsell in the event of a change to a guest's travel plans. If the destination is aware of a flight delay for their guests, then it can offer these perks free of charge when they arrive or give them a voucher for a dinner or spa trip. The insight gleaned from attribute-based selling means that benefits become more than simply value-add, they become points of differentiation.



## Winning the battle for share of wallet

Understanding the guest demands a data-first approach, with attribution-based selling among the first steps in making such personalization a reality. The importance of this can't be overstated – return bookings (and the associated word-of-mouth recommendation) are the lifeblood of any hotel.

The move from objective, functional booking to fulfilling hopes through more subjective, emotive experiences is a big opportunity for the hospitality industry. The details may seem in isolation, relatively minor, but once laddered up to the macro demographic level and individual guest habit, they can become significant sources of growth and loyalty.

# 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**

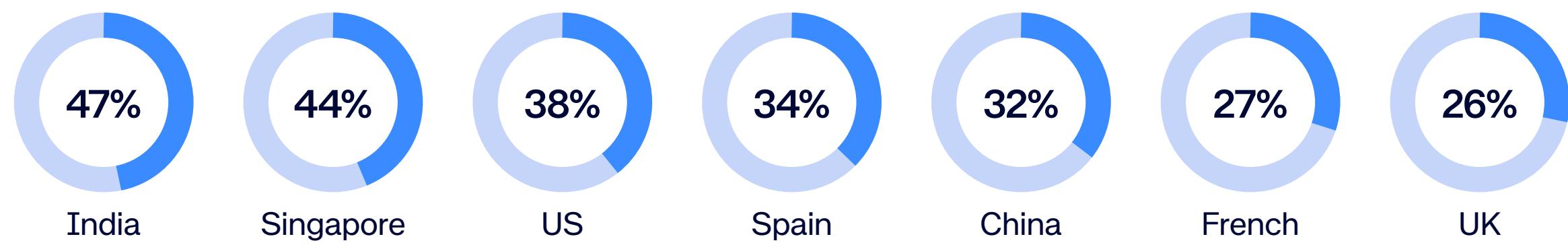
Senior Managing Director – Global Industry Sector Lead, Travel, Accenture

**accenture**

## 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.



**38%**

admit that loyalty programs encouraged them to book activities/experiences offered by the scheme

**37%**

agreed that being part of a loyalty program encouraged them to travel for leisure more frequently

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.

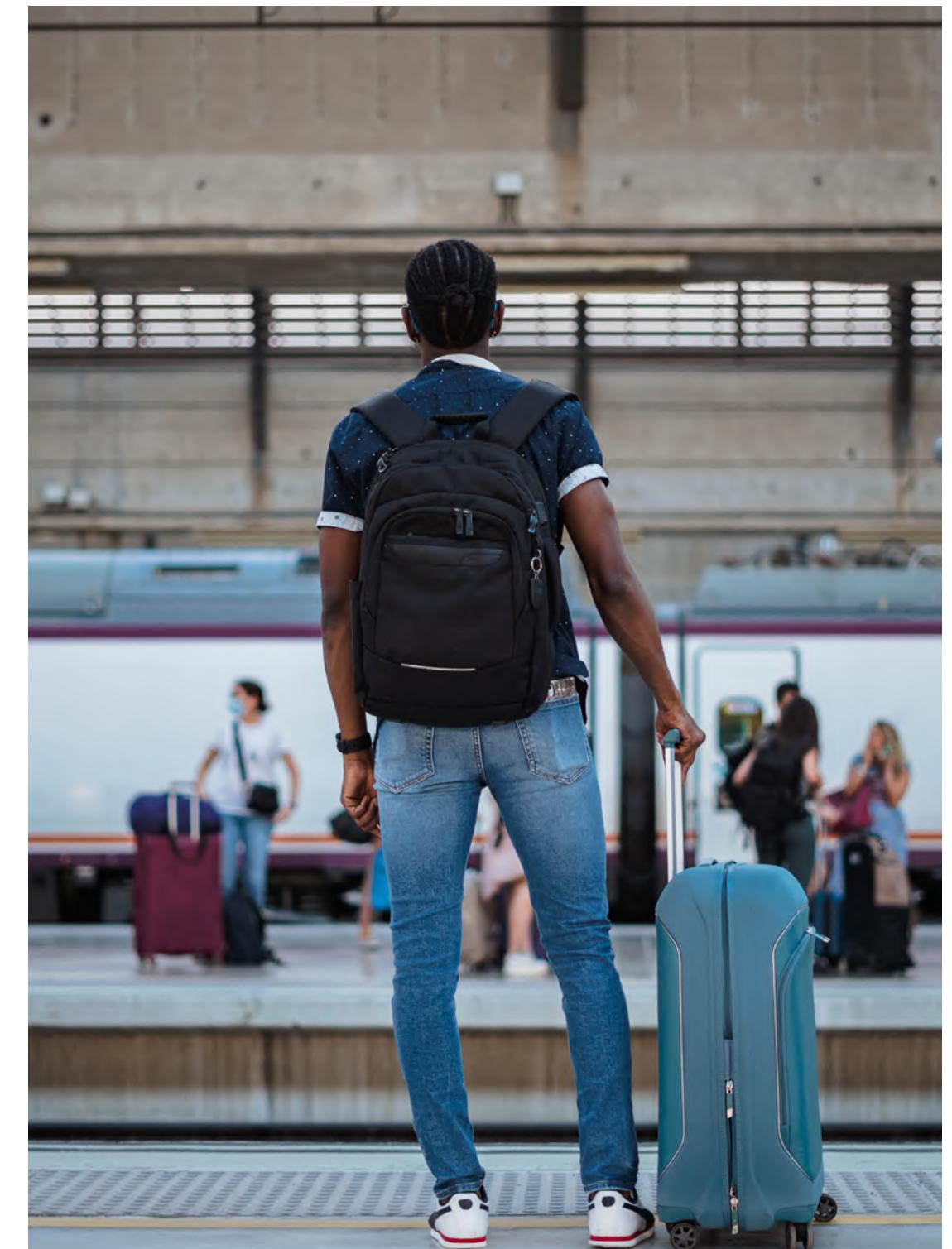
## AI at the core

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

**AMADEUS**

## 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

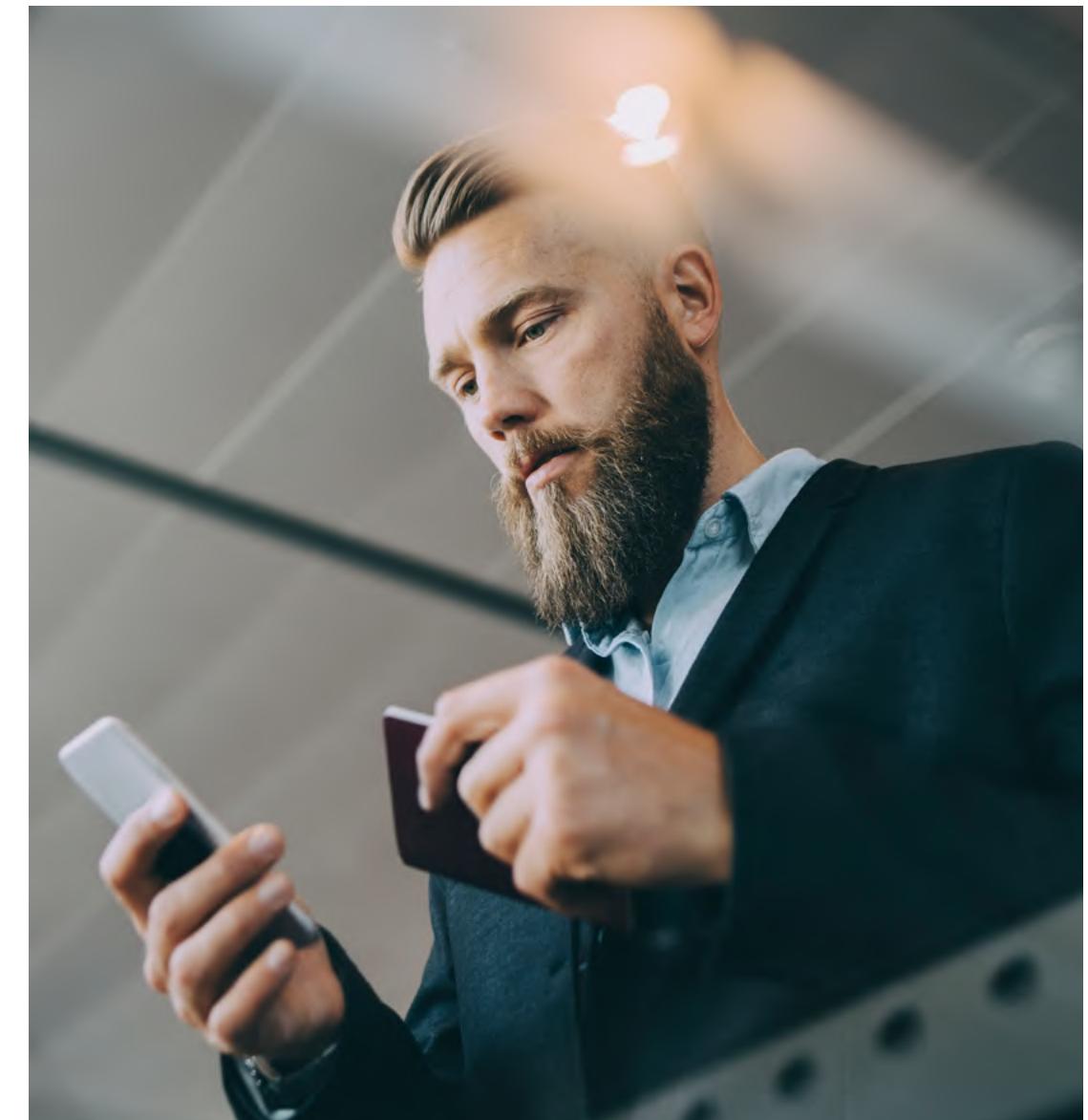
The benefits of partnerships demand an extension beyond the travel and hospitality industries. Through integrating retail brands into loyalty schemes, the understanding of each customer can be increased, adding more data into the pool to be analyzed and strengthening relationships.

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.

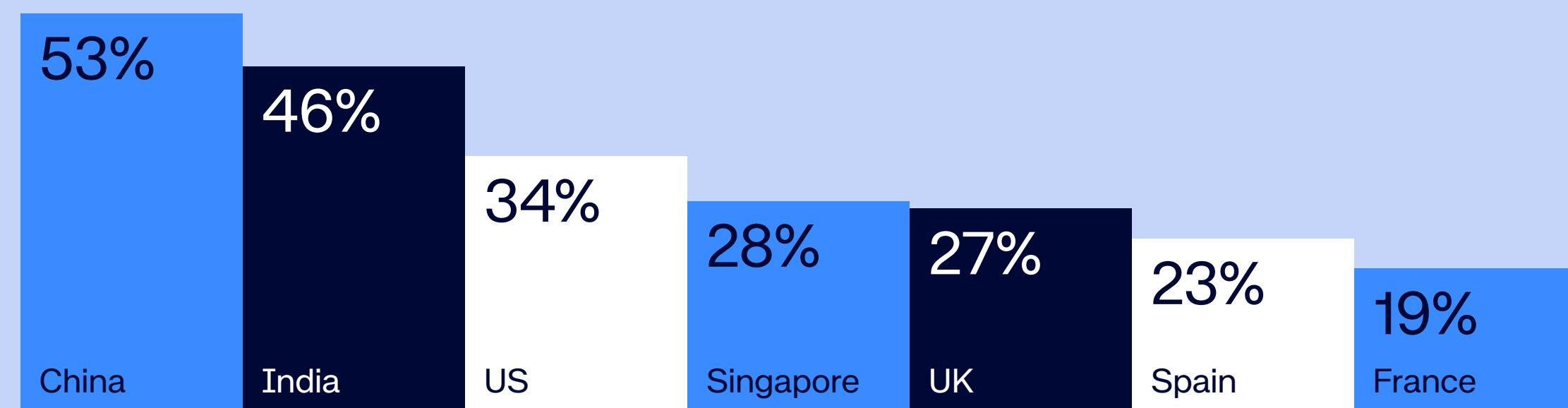
## Sustainability as a loyalty driver

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

# The payments experience

## A seamless catalyst to travel

Payments solutions are, fundamentally, integral to the entire travel experience. It's obvious, but without the ability to take money – from online booking through to a credit card deposit for any extras incurred during a hotel stay – nothing can take place. Journeys don't exist.

But we often take payment for granted without truly realizing its role as a catalyst to making travel happen, for everyone, not least because for most of the time it's seamless and unintrusive.

This ease of use is key. Travelers need reassurance that their monies have gone through safely, and securely – a payment is convenient when you only enter your details once. This sentiment was echoed in recent Amadeus research for this report with over a fifth (21%) citing that ensuring the payment goes through smoothly is something they worry about when booking a leisure trip abroad.



### Top five challenges for travelers when making payments abroad:

28%

Poor internet with no access to mobile banking

24%

Unclear exchange rates

23%

Card declined

21%

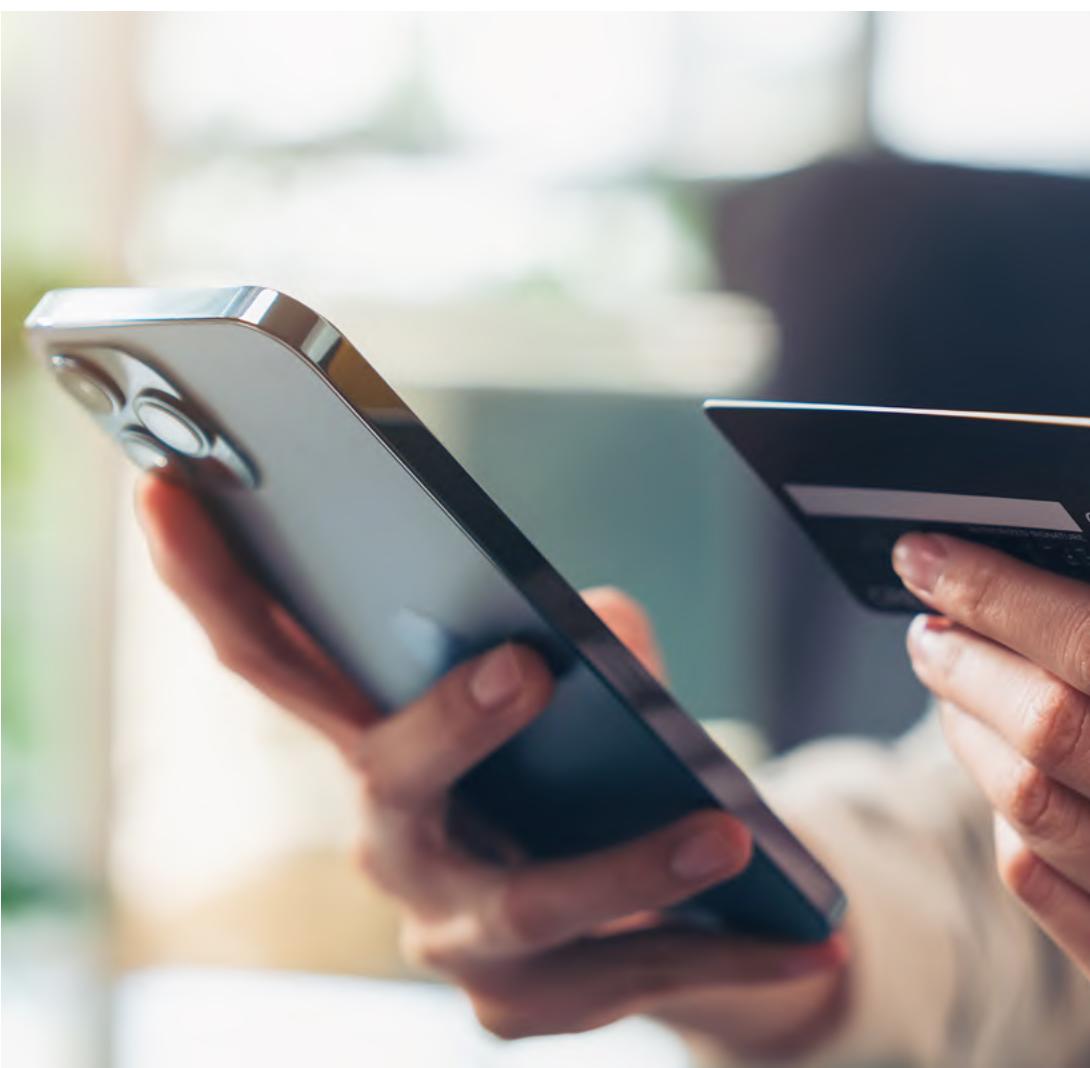
Unable to use contactless payments

18%

Card blocked for use

17%

Experienced card fraud or theft



### Technology infrastructure

When looking at payment solutions, we need go no further than Outpayce, a financial technology specialist owned by Amadeus, bringing together travel and fintech expertise. It's the open API infrastructure upon which payments happen in the travel space, streamlining foreign exchange, fraud management, chargebacks, and in-person airport/mobile payments.

These solutions underpin every aspect of travel and open doors beyond just handling money and making transactions simpler throughout a journey (this can't be underestimated, however). It's allowing for the evolution of modern travel retail and creating new revenue solutions through loyalty applications and integration with industries outside of travel and hospitality.

### Modern retailing

Airlines are adopting new standards and technology for Offers and Orders that are akin to those used by digital retailers such as Amazon. Offers will include dynamically packaged and intelligently priced product bundles that are more attractive to travelers, making choice simpler and opening up new possibilities through being served a variety of relevant options.

Rather than receiving a ticket plus several EMDs (Electronic Miscellaneous Documents) for ancillary services in a booking, an order will provide a single source of all purchases. This gradual transformation of airline technology will simplify the traveler experience while allowing for personalized retailing.

Essentially, the work being done by Outpayce alongside payments partners is bringing the retailing experience travelers have grown to expect from other industries to travel and tourism. This is key when we consider the ultimate ambition of the 'connected trip' or single button purchase model for travel, and how personalization will work in practice, rather than theory.

## Profiling versus personalization

By pricing and packaging air and non-air products and selling them consistently across all channels, the industry can ensure the right offers are targeted appropriately to travelers at the right time in the purchase process.

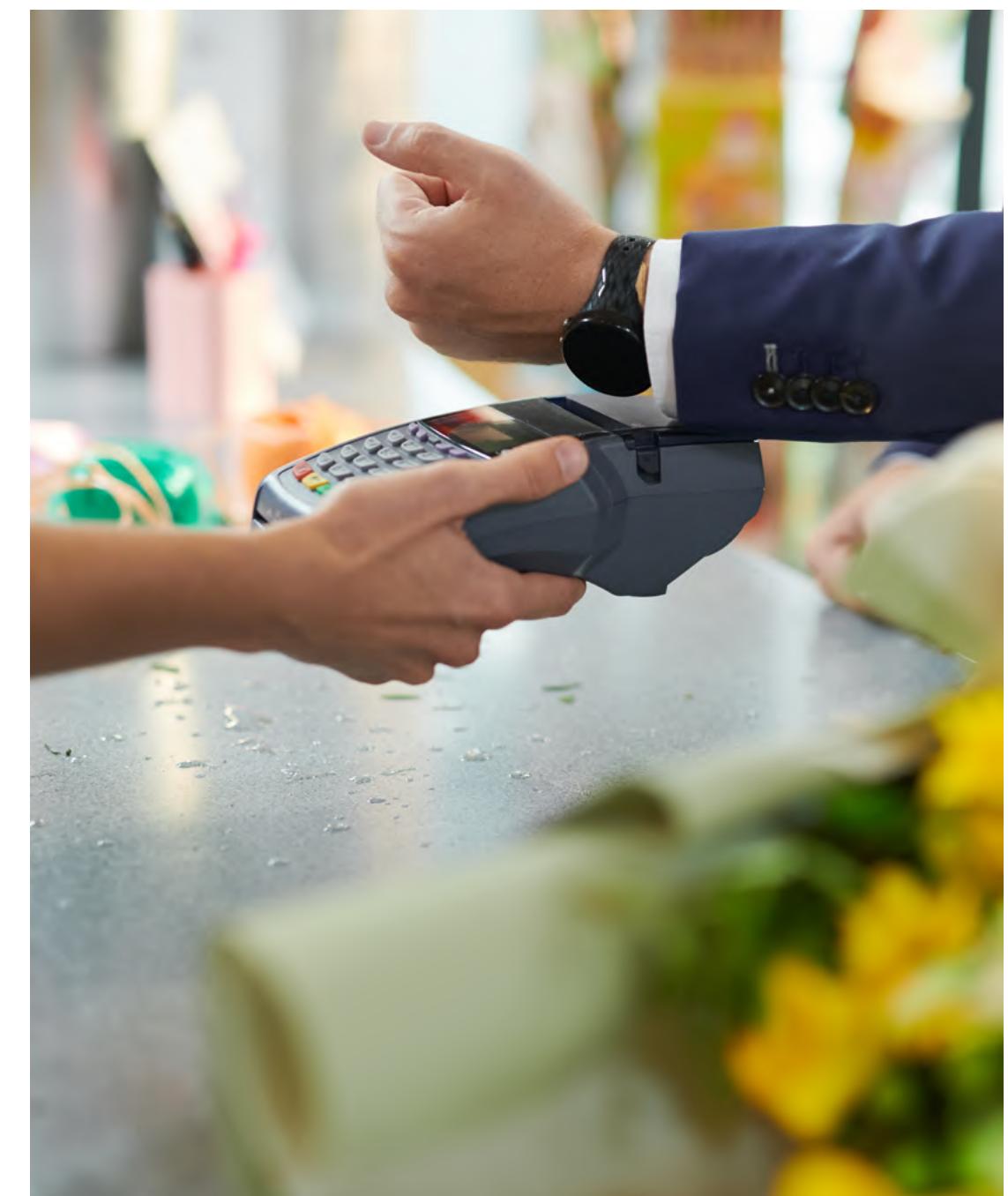
What this tackles is the imbalance between the data held on a specific individual and the ability to parse this data into a truly personalized experience. We can't ignore the fact that if we bring back the Amazon analogy, frequent customers have dozens of shopping transactions a year through the platform. Yet these numbers don't translate to travel - purchasing holidays are nowhere near as frequent.

By bringing together data on the traveler throughout the journey, combined with payments data, the ability exists to create detailed pen-portraits of a customer, target them accordingly, and ensure each transaction can be routed in the most appropriate way. And, of course, where there is a specific search made, future targeting can be adjusted. But the single-customer view the travel and hospitality sectors can lay claim to will always be less granular than the consumer retail equivalent.

“With the increasingly sophisticated AI solutions we’re adopting and deploying, the ability to refine personalization will ultimately improve. But we can’t ignore the fact that we don’t have the scale of data points per customer that major retailers have and there’s always going to be some personification necessary.”

**Suzanna Chiu**  
Head of Amadeus Ventures,  
Amadeus

**AMADEUS**



## Expanding into other sectors

Payments solutions are also facilitating expansion beyond the travel sector, through integration with financial services and retail industries. Cultural and socioeconomic change can be a major driver behind such opportunities, alongside shifting consumer behaviors and comfort levels in sharing personal data and information.

As an example, we need only look toward Agoda, where it has taken advantage of the boom in India in alternative and online payments. Previously low-level, India now has one of the biggest markets for such services in the world.

## App-driven loyalty

The API-driven ability to integrate mobile apps truly enhances the traveler experience and can be a gateway to increasing revenue and driving loyalty. This can apply to every company throughout the travel and hospitality industries, from hotels looking to offer last minute upgrades to airlines looking to fill flights and upsell premium seats.

As an example, let's consider a traveler arriving at the airport early for their flight. An interconnected, open, agile technology framework understands this because the passenger consented to share their location through the airline's app.

This then informs the offer system of the passenger's early arrival by sending an 'event', which then draws on a detailed profile of the traveler. In this instance, it could be a business traveler who has arrived early, and so with a real-time view of flight and seat availability the airline sends a 'pop-up' offer to upgrade to business on an earlier flight to the traveler's phone.

The passenger's order would be automatically updated once the customer accepts it and payment is taken. Information about the earlier flight would then be shared with other suppliers involved in the journey – for example the hotel which can proactively offer an early check-in or room upgrade if available sooner (without having to re-enter any payment details).

## Payments made easy

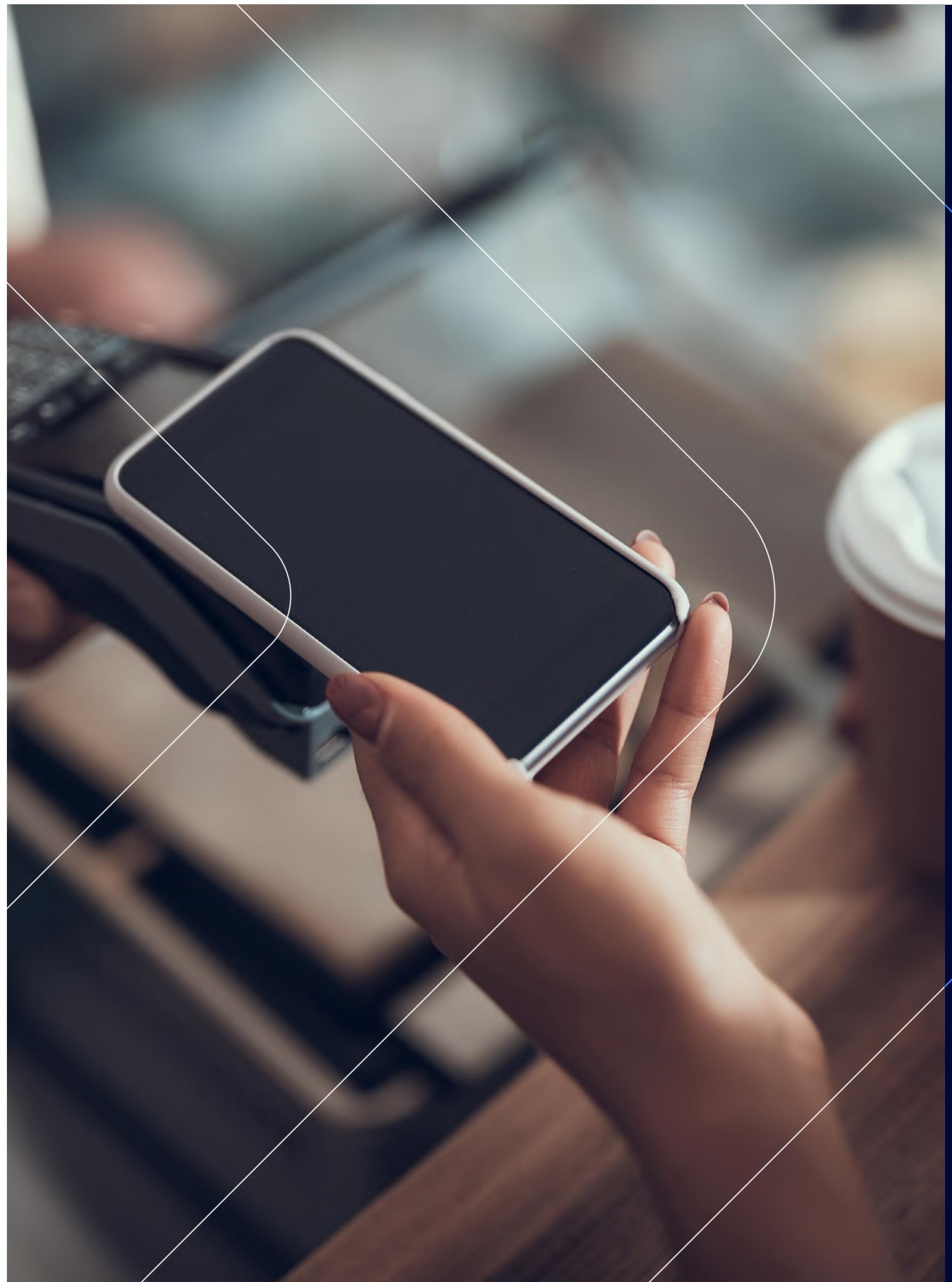
There is a plethora of research across industries which shows that when a payment is automated or built into an overall journey, customers are significantly more likely to accept upsells (e.g., better seats), spend more per transaction, and convert at higher rates. For example, research by Outpayce partner Stripe found that 71% of businesses agreed that seamless payments integration has become a competitive advantage due to rising customer expectations. The same report revealed that three-quarters of customers are more likely to complete a purchase when one-click checkout is available. The ability for payments infrastructure to make this so seamless is key to delivering a great experience and driving loyalty through personalization.

Ultimately, the traveler wants the best experience. If, along the way, it can be improved through extra legroom seats, earlier flights, or targeted loyalty rewards, then this can only improve the whole journey.

This starts of course with the booking process through smart, sophisticated dynamic pricing, where the ability to deliver the best options that match the traveler's expectations can ensure that excitement builds from the very start.

When we consider the emotive element of travel, giving the traveler the results they want at the outset starts the process for a frictionless experience. They can get the journey they want and need and, along the way, it can be improved seamlessly and effortlessly. In this regard, payments become far more than simply solutions – it's integral to creating a highly personalized trip.





“In the evolving landscape of travel, payments are a strategic enabler of seamless, personalized journeys. Whether booking a flight, upgrading a hotel room, or navigating airport services, travelers expect payment to be fast, secure, and invisible.

“Outpayce from Amadeus is at the forefront of this transformation. Our open API platform powers everything from B2B virtual cards and fraud prevention solutions to mobile and in-airport payments, ensuring that transactions are not just processed but optimized for experience. This infrastructure underpins the shift toward modern travel retailing, where dynamic offers and unified orders simplify the journey and unlock new revenue streams.

“As travelers demand more personalization and reassurance, payments become a moment of truth. In our own research, we discovered that over 70% of travelers now choose providers based on secure commerce reputation, the ability to deliver frictionless, trusted transactions is a competitive differentiator. By embedding payments into the core of the connected trip, we’re not just enabling travel - we’re elevating it.”

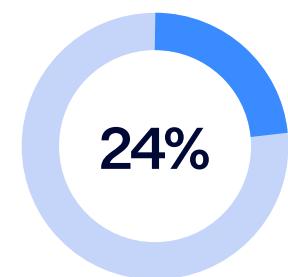
**Sam Abdou**  
CEO,  
Outpayce

**outpayce**  
from AMADEUS

# The transfer experience

## Door-to-door approach

The first and last miles of a traveler journey – home to airport, airport to hotel – can be fraught with worry, with 24% of respondents in our survey identifying the wait for their train, coach or taxi to the airport to arrive as being a point of anxiety. According to an in-depth [Amadeus report on mobility](#) ↗ some of the reasons behind this anxiety include unfamiliarity with local currency, language barriers, heightened safety concerns and trip fatigue. Having landed, the urgency with which people want to get to the hotel, dump their bags in their room, and get to the beach or business meeting is high. They've finally arrived.



of respondents identify waiting for their train, coach or taxi to the airport to arrive is a point of anxiety

As such, the role of ground transport within the holistic door-to-door approach to travel is as critical as any – be it a taxi, rental car hire, a pre-arranged transfer, or the use of public transport. Integrating such services is nothing new; Amadeus has long-term partnerships with transfer companies and global car hire brands such as Hertz, Enterprise, Avis, Europcar, and Sixt, as well as smaller, local operators.





As part of its broader strategic vision, Amadeus is now also making access to rail express services seamlessly available via its transfer solution. In April this year, Heathrow Express, carrying around 16,000 travelers a day between London's Heathrow Airport and central London, was the first to be implemented. But this is just the beginning. Thanks to a partnership with Distribusion, a global ground transportation distribution company with an impressive portfolio of airport express operators worldwide, Amadeus will continue to integrate more intercity and airport express services as part of the company's ground transfers solution.

## Backbone of operations

With these door-to-door services integrated into the Amadeus Travel Platform, the options open up for better service recovery in case of disruption. For example, airlines are not only limited to their own or partner airlines' services, but can offer rebooking of multi-modal journeys using train, taxi, rail and ground transport alternatives to provide the optimal choice for the traveler, taking the stress away from the traveler themselves needing to do so. The goal is that when disruption occurs, passengers can receive a single notification quickly that explains the travel provider's recommended alternative option, with the ability to accept or reject it digitally from their phone. From an emotive perspective, this acts as significant reassurance. It tells the passenger that despite the disruption, everything is under control. It also demonstrates an understanding of each passenger and their needs.

These kinds of solutions also need to take into account entitlements across partner airlines during disruptive events – meaning rebooking or, where necessary, the suggestion of 'multi-modal' options, using rail and ground transport to provide the optimal choice for the traveler.

## Next-generation transfers

While transfer booking has previously appeared as a list of options based on offered criteria – budget, duration, model, location – the increasingly sophisticated use of AI is making recommendations proactively and fine-tuning options. This might include only serving options for SUVs to families or electric run-arounds to those on a city break.

In addition to AI-inspired recommendation, having transfer options within an Integrated Mobility App was cited as a very useful addition to the booking process by 66% of respondents to an Amadeus survey. This appetite for a one-stop-shop app that consolidates various mobility services is something the transfer sector needs to respond to. It is an indication of a future trend toward integrated digital solutions that simplify travel planning and execution.



## Supporting environmental goals

Sustainability considerations and goals of both the industry and travelers will also drive the need to display potential carbon impact into the booking options, with the eco-conscious traveler wanting to be in control of their journey's carbon footprint (and reduce it wherever possible). This is particularly important when looking at corporate travel where the need to comply with policies is key – policies which are intrinsically aligned with sustainability goals and compliance demands including emissions reduction.

## Growing Electric Vehicle adoption

A prime demand within more sustainable car rental is the use of electric vehicles (EVs), and here we can see another example of how travel booking solutions can share leisure and business traveler trends with third parties to inform their own strategies.

Through demonstrating an increase in EV searches at booking stage, airlines and travel sellers can communicate this demand to car rental operations, demonstrating that the need for investment in EV

fleets is justified. When considering the cost of doing so, having the empirical data to show demand is essential to taking the plunge.

Furthermore, forward-looking booking data can highlight where pockets of demand are high or low, allowing operators to over- or under-index accordingly.

# amADEUS

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