

# TRAVELER SURVEY: **RAIL TRAVEL**

BY BCD TRAVEL RESEARCH & INTELLIGENCE

March 2025



# About the survey

In this survey, we explore the topic of rail travel for business and look at traveler behavior, the challenges faced when traveling by rail and satisfaction with rail policy and suppliers.

The results are based on an online survey of 681 business travelers in Europe and Asia Pacific who took a train when traveling for business at least once in the past 12 months. The survey was conducted from Jan. 27 to Feb.14, 2025.

[\*\*Respondent profile\*\*](#)

[\*\*Travel by rail: Overview\*\*](#)

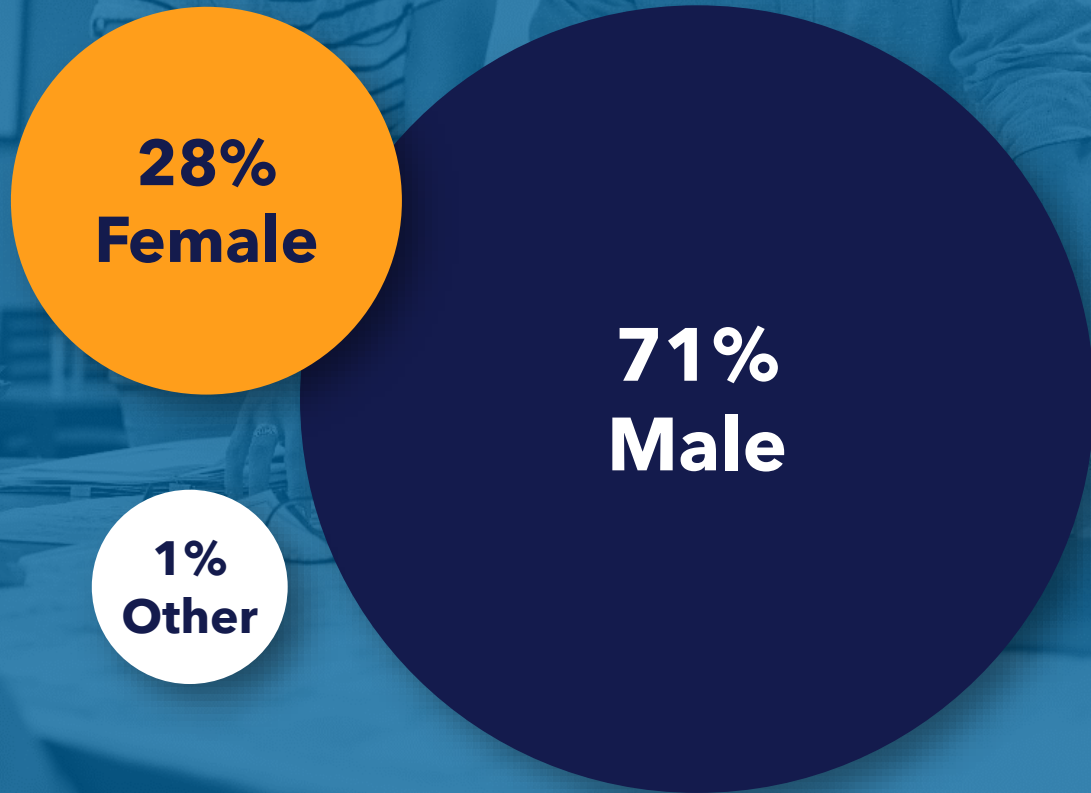
[\*\*Traveler behavior\*\*](#)

[\*\*Rail policies and suppliers\*\*](#)

[\*\*How BCD Travel can help\*\*](#)

## Respondent profile

### Gender



### Geography

**60%**  
Europe



**40%**  
APAC

### Top-three industries

**25%**  
Life Sciences

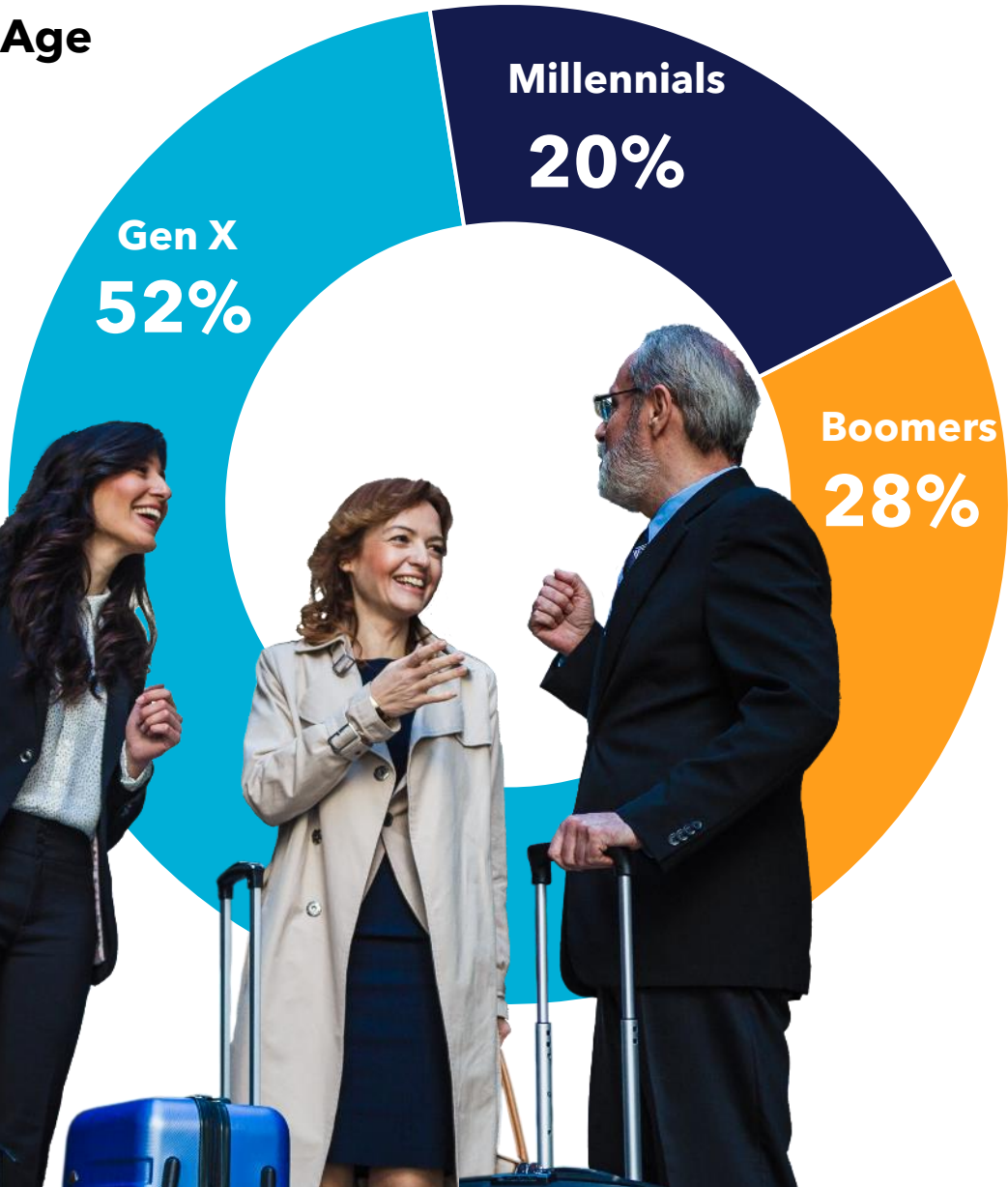
**16%**  
Manufacturing

**8%**  
Financial  
services

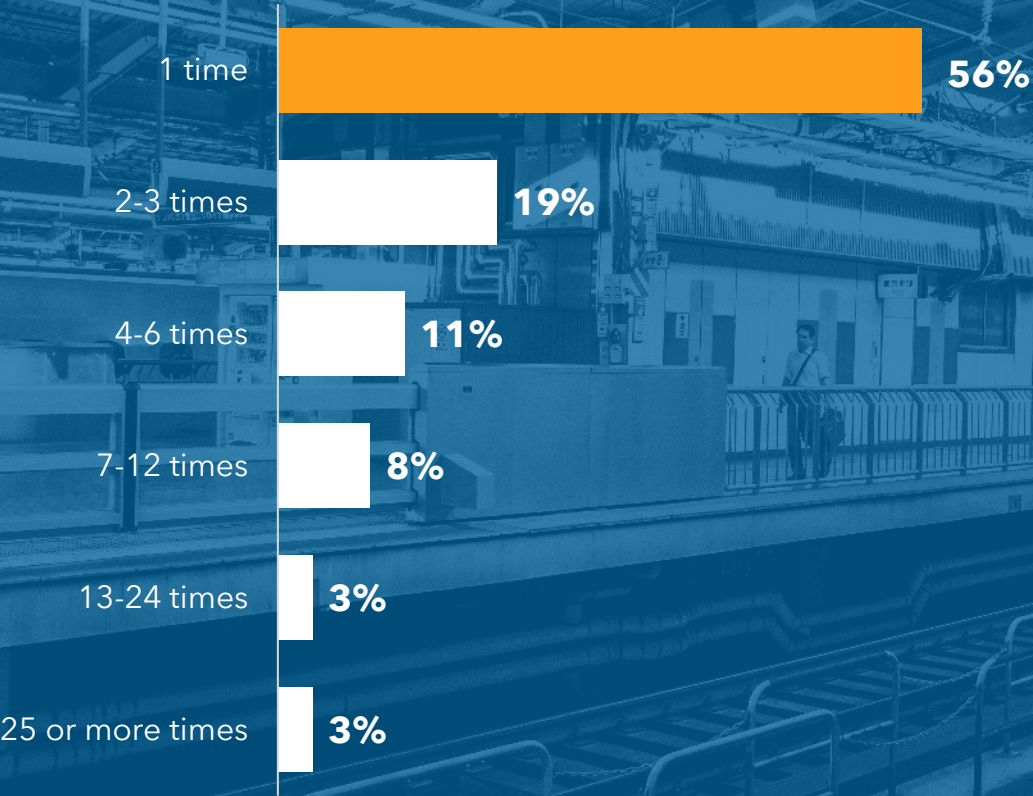


# Respondent profile

Age



## Traveling by rail in the past 12 months





# Travel by rail: Overview

[Type and purpose of trip](#)

[Type and class of rail travel](#)

[Length of trip and maximum trip duration](#)

[Travel by rail in 2025](#)

[Train or plane](#)

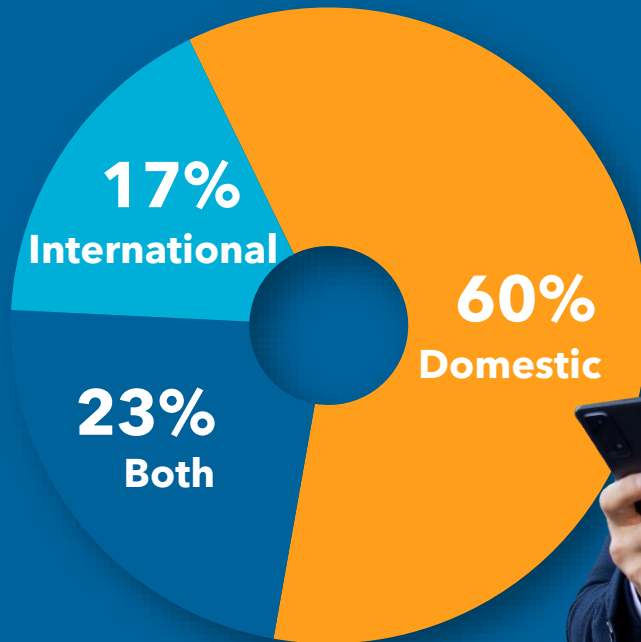
[Rail in a multi-modal itinerary](#)

[Airport rail service and commuting by rail](#)



## Type of trip

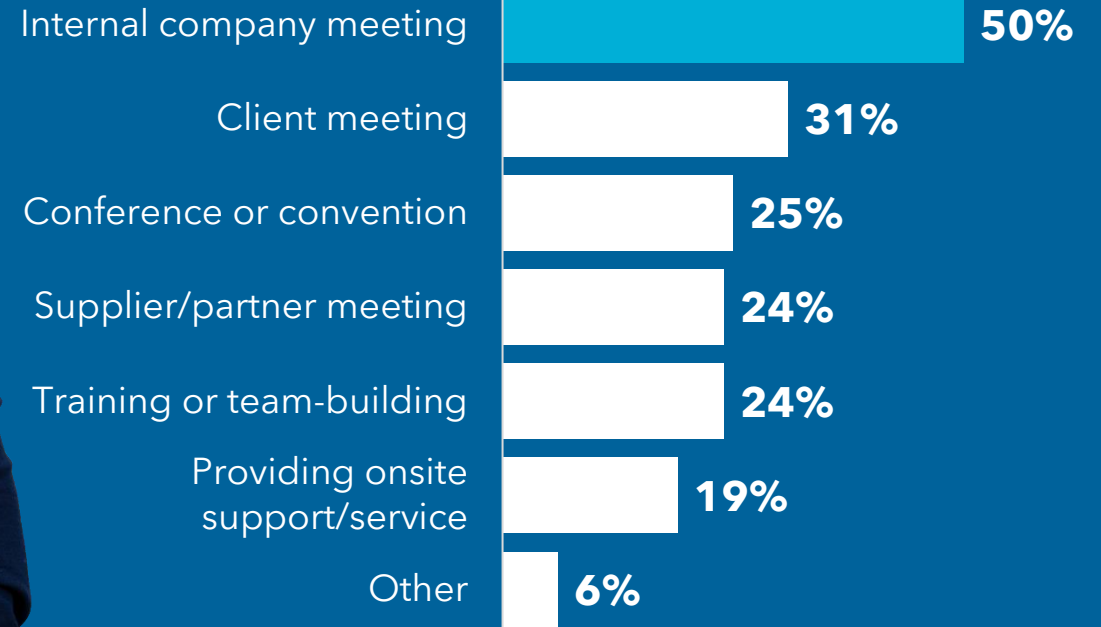
Most business travelers use rail on domestic routes only.



Q: Do you travel by rail on domestic or international routes?

## Trip purpose

Attending internal company meetings is the most common reason for traveling by rail: Half of respondents agree.



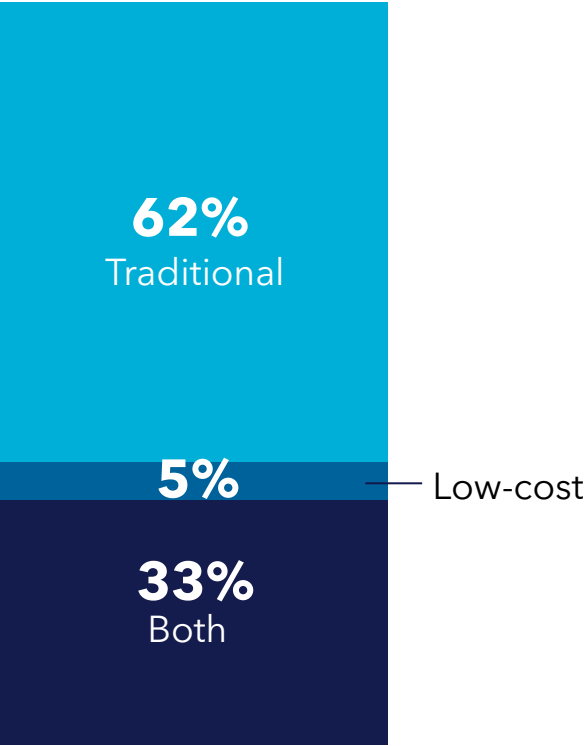
Q: When traveling by rail, what's typically the purpose of your business trip? Select all that apply.



# Type and class of rail travel

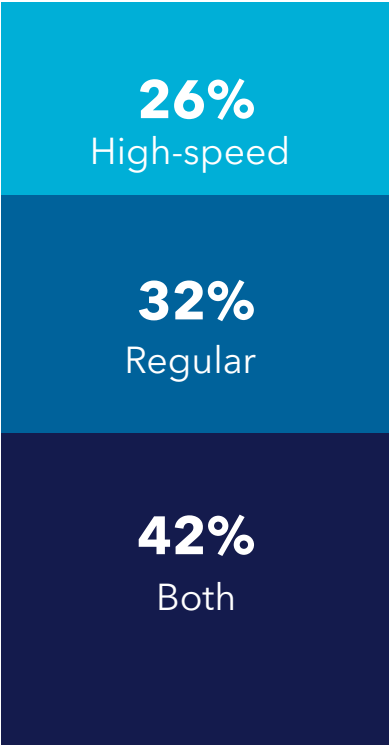
Travelers use traditional rail suppliers more often than their low-cost competitors. Regular and high-speed trains are equally popular. Economy class is utilized more than business.

Type of supplier



Q: What type of rail suppliers do you use on business trips?

Type of rail



Q: What type of rail do you use on business trips?

Class of rail

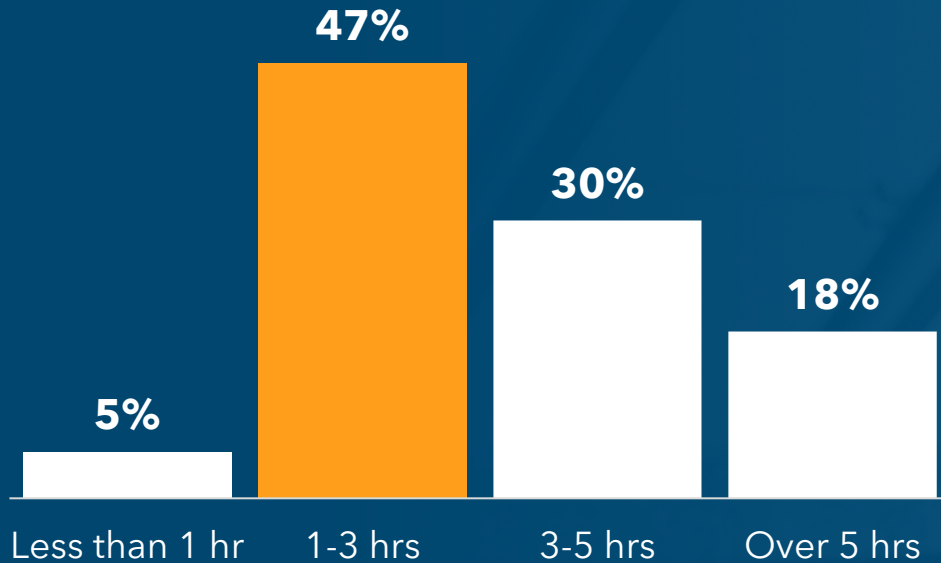


Q: What class of travel do you normally take when traveling by train?



## Length of trip

Travelers typically spend less than three hours on rail journeys.



Q: What is your typical journey duration by rail?

## Maximum trip duration

On average, survey respondents consider five hours to be the maximum duration for a train journey.



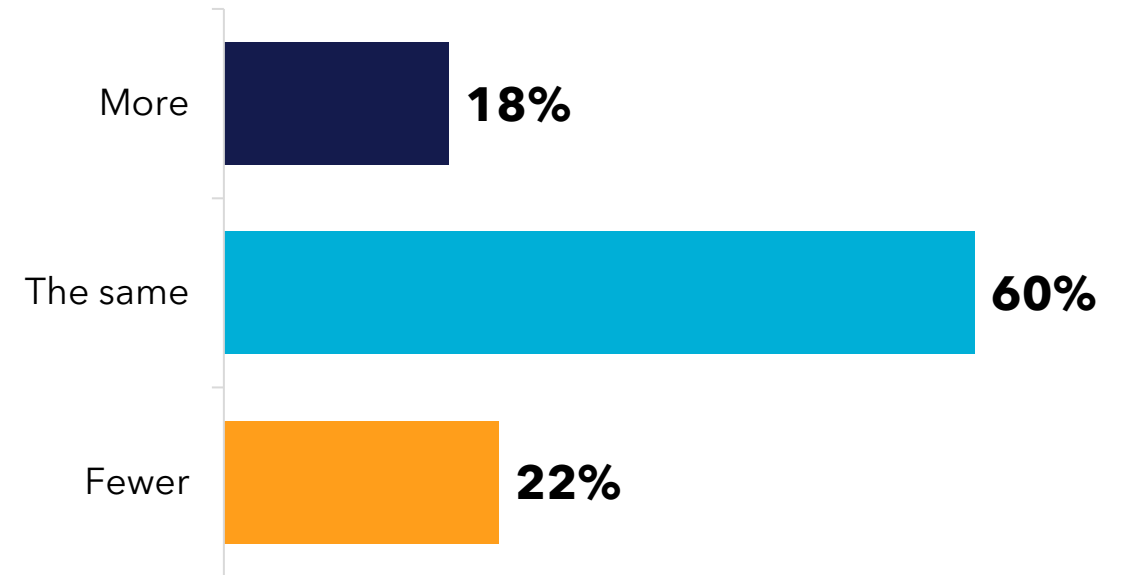
Q: What's the maximum trip duration you'd consider taking train for?





## Travel by rail in 2025

Travelers expect to take the same amount of trips by rail this year as they did last year.

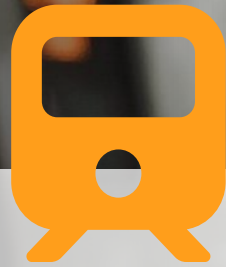


*Q: In 2025, how many business trips by rail do you expect to take, compared to last year?*



## Train or plane

On routes where both rail and plane are viable options, two-thirds of travelers would choose rail, if the cost and time of travel are similar.



**65%**  
Train

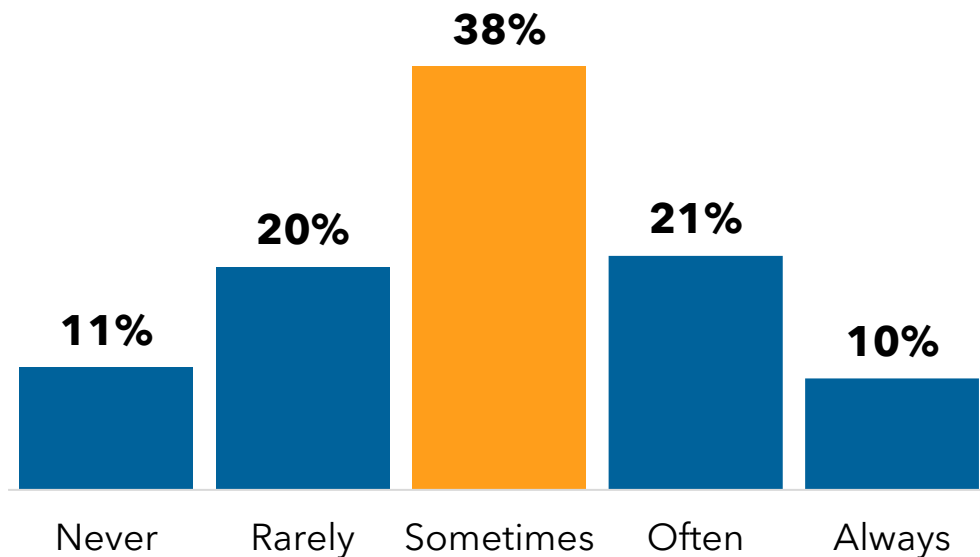
**35%**  
Plane



*Q: On the routes where both rail and plane are viable travel options, which one would you typically choose, if the cost and time of travel are similar?*

## Rail combined with other transportation modes

Most travelers combine rail with other modes of transportation.

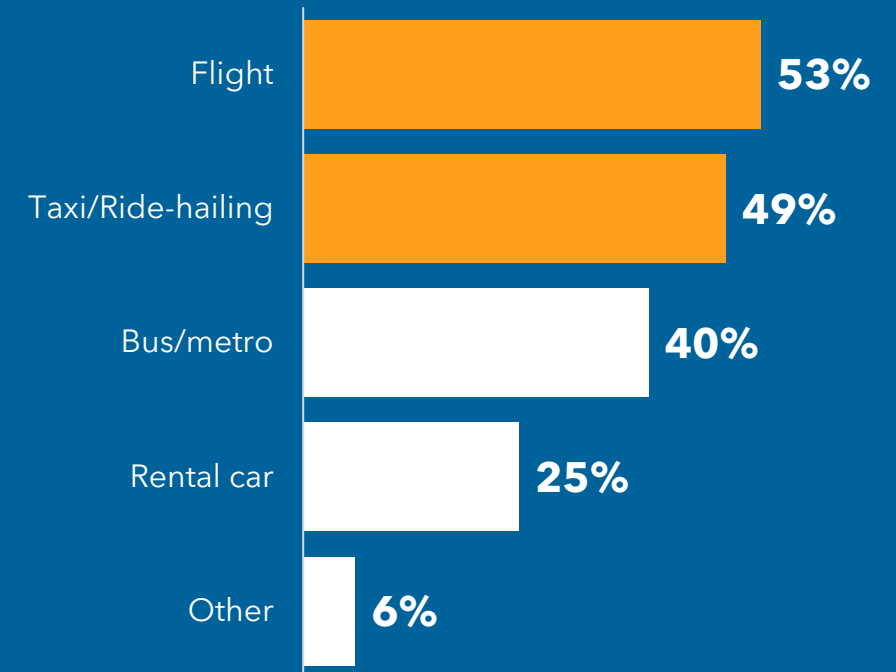


Q: How often do you combine rail travel with other modes of transportation on business trips?



## Modes of transportation used with rail

Half use air along with rail, and a similar share combine rail travel with taxi or ride-hailing options.

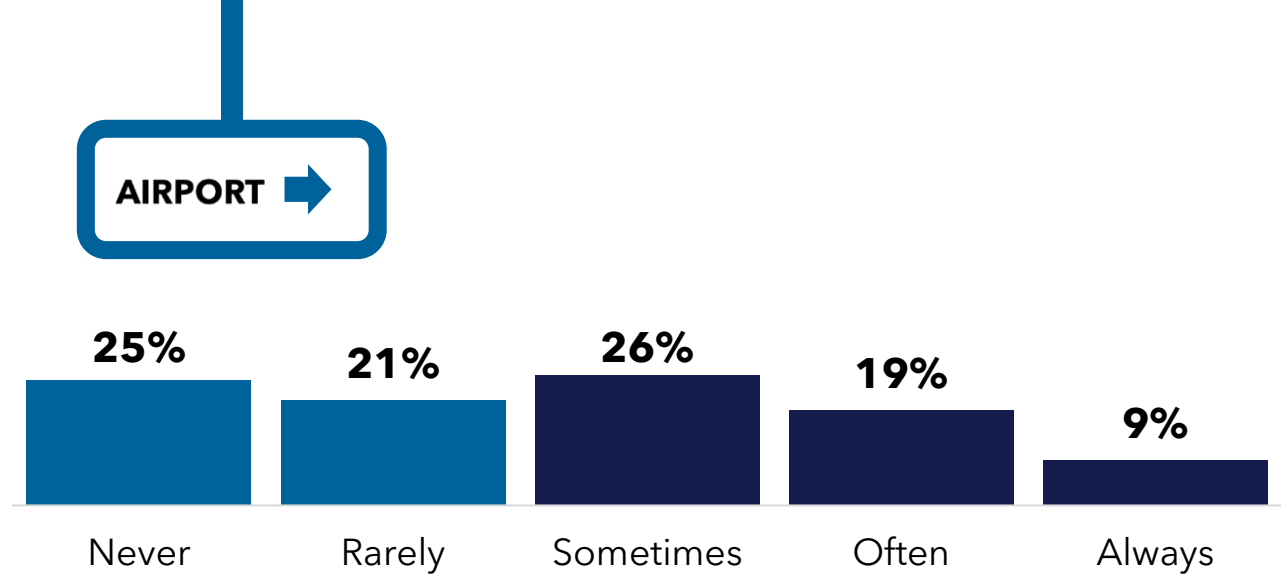


Q: What modes of transport do you combine rail with? Select all that apply.



## Airport rail service

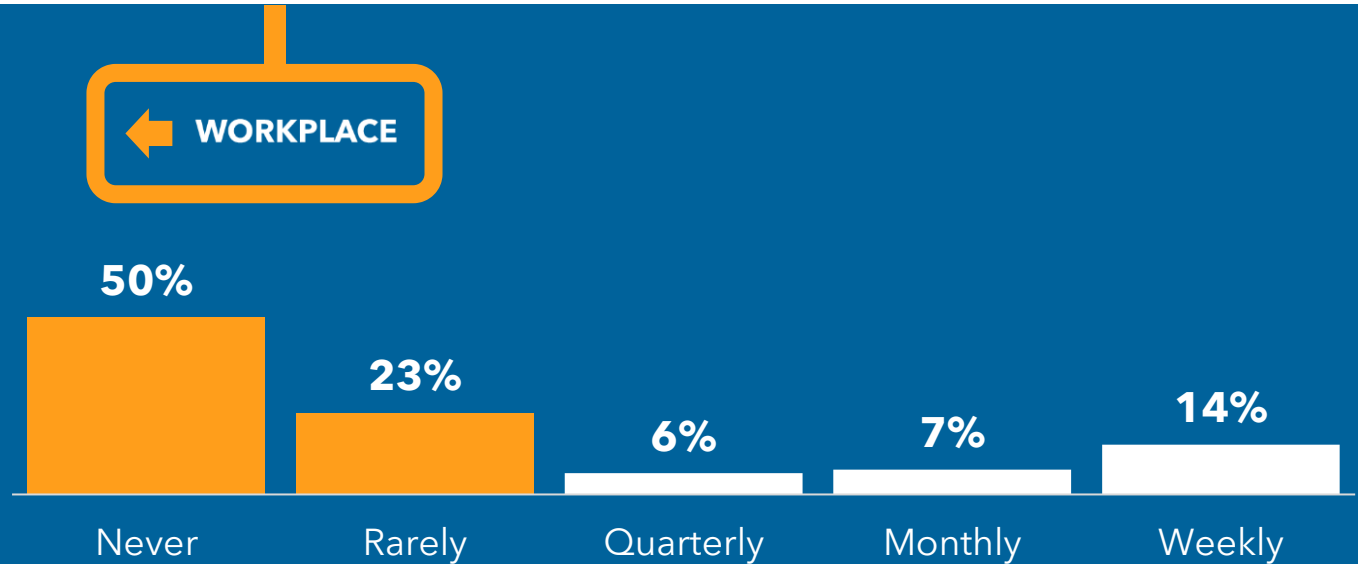
Three quarters of travelers use rail to get to/from the airport, over a quarter doing so frequently.



Q: How often do you use rail to get to/from the airport on business trips?

## Commuting by rail

Nearly half use rail to commute to their work locations. One-fifth do so regularly.



Q: How often do you commute by rail to your office or the location of your work?

# Traveler behavior

[Reasons to travel by rail](#)

[Booking and paying for rail](#)

[Loyalty programs and discount cards](#)

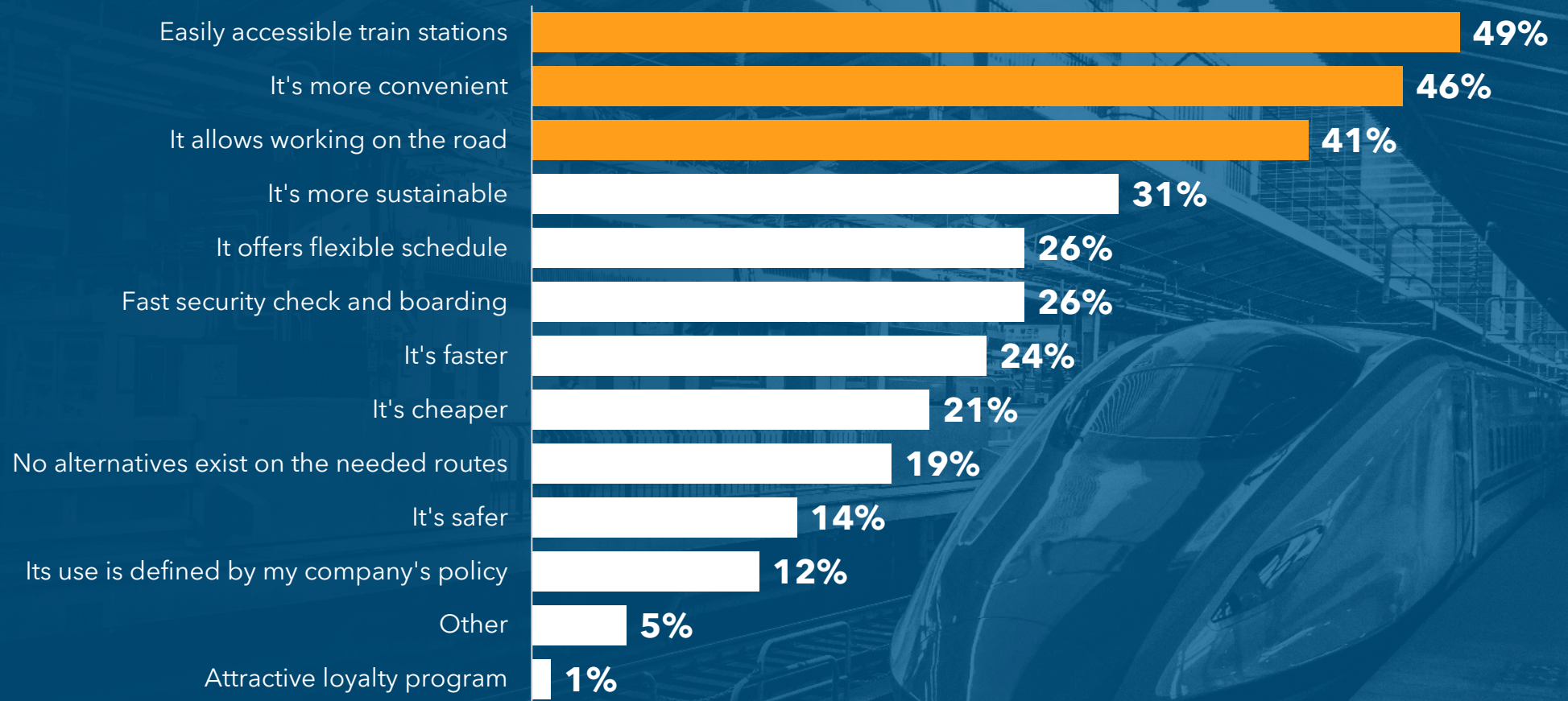
[Environmental considerations](#)

[Time on-board and amenities used](#)



# Reasons to travel by rail

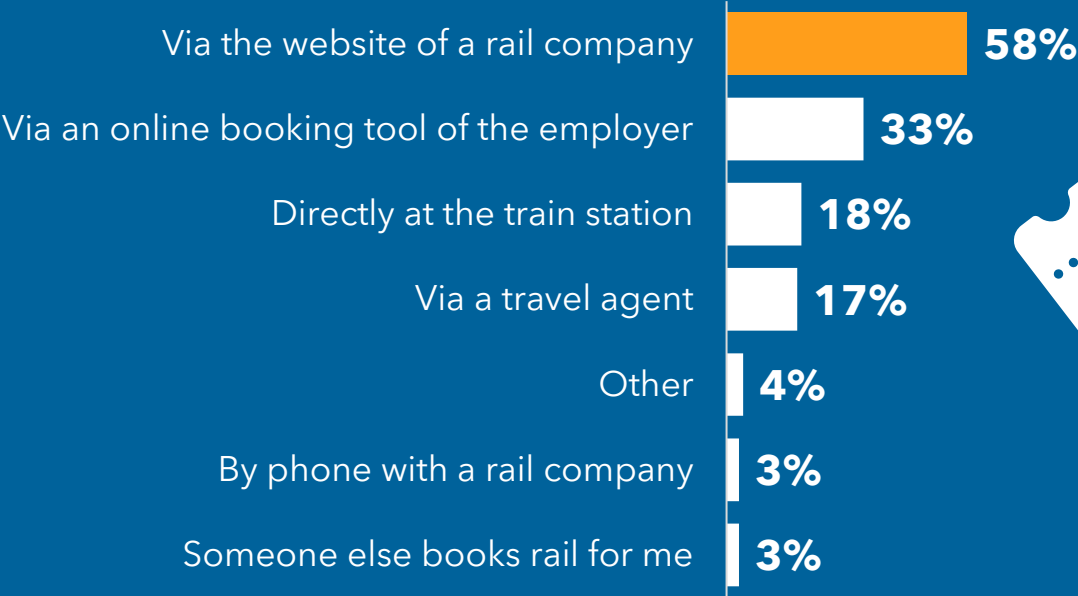
Travelers prefer rail because of the central location of train stations, convenience, and the ability to work while on the road.



Q: Why do you use rail instead of other means of transportation on business trips? Select the top three.

# Booking rail

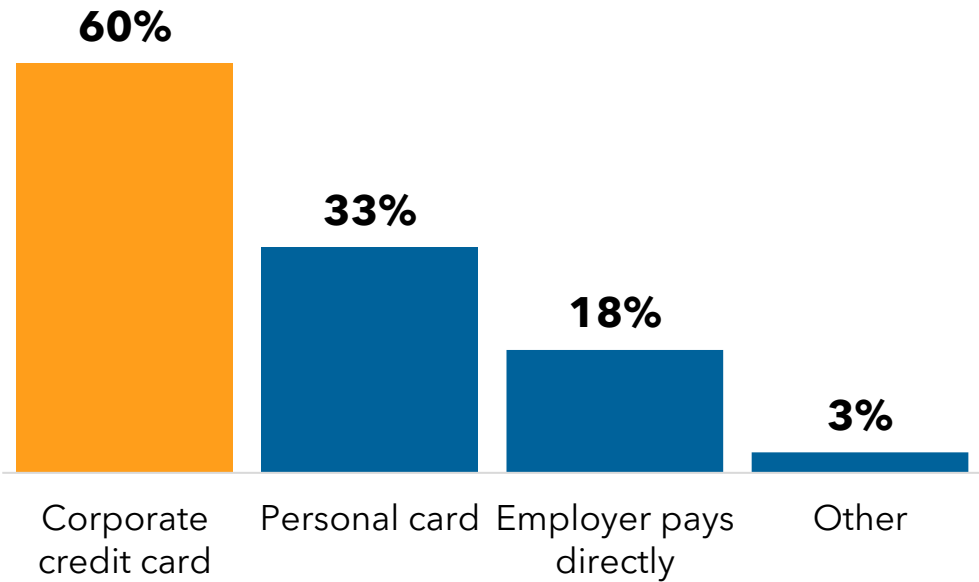
Six out of 10 book rail tickets on supplier websites, while a third use the employer’s online booking tool.



Q: How do you typically book rail for a business trip? Select all that apply.

# Paying for rail

Corporate credit card is the most popular payment method followed by personal card.



Q: How do you pay for rail tickets on a business trip? Select all that apply.



## Loyalty programs and discount cards

Less than a quarter of travelers using rail participate in loyalty programs. A similar share have a rail discount card available in some markets.

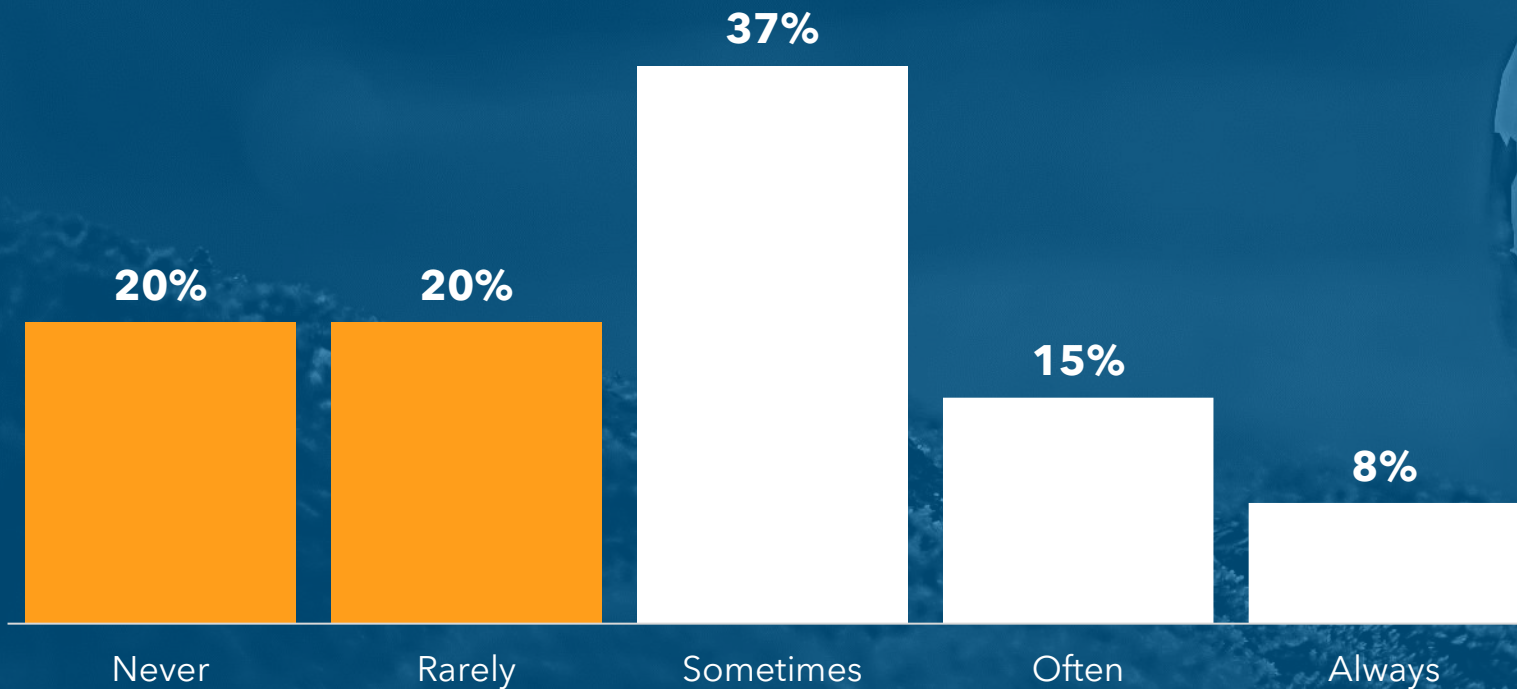
**23%**  
**YES**

**77%**  
**NO**

*Q: Are you a member of any rail loyalty program or have a rail discount card?*

## Environmental considerations

Two travelers out of five never or rarely take into account environmental considerations when making a choice between rail and air, while a quarter frequently do so.

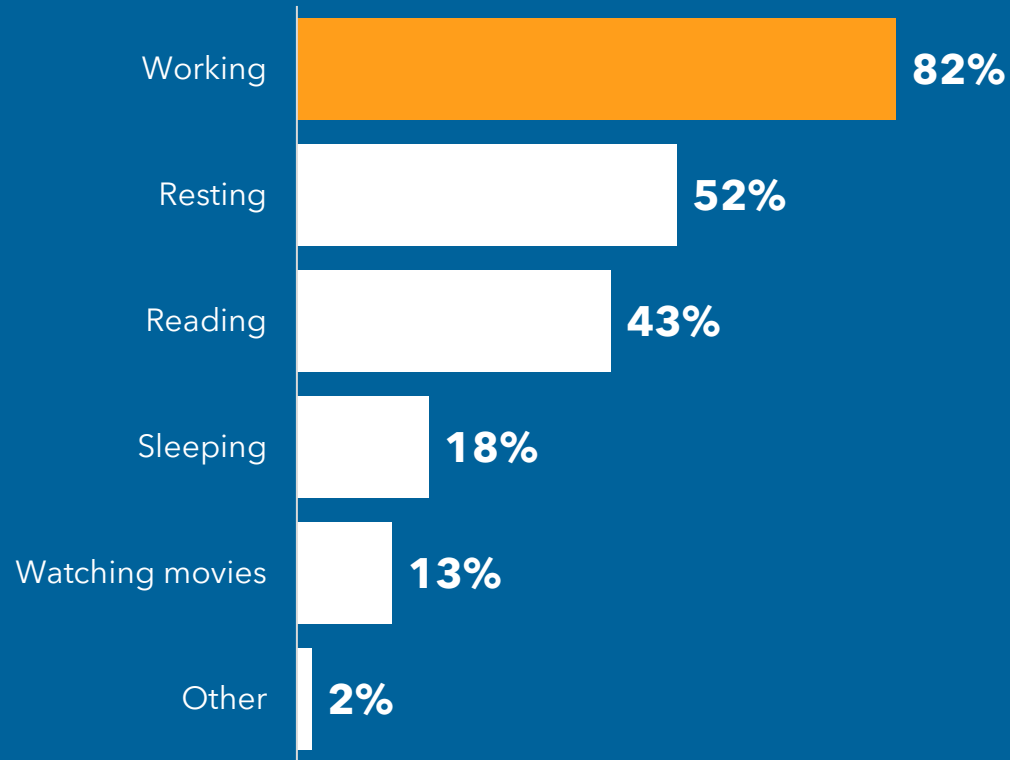


Q: How often do environmental considerations impact your rail vs. plane selection on business trips?



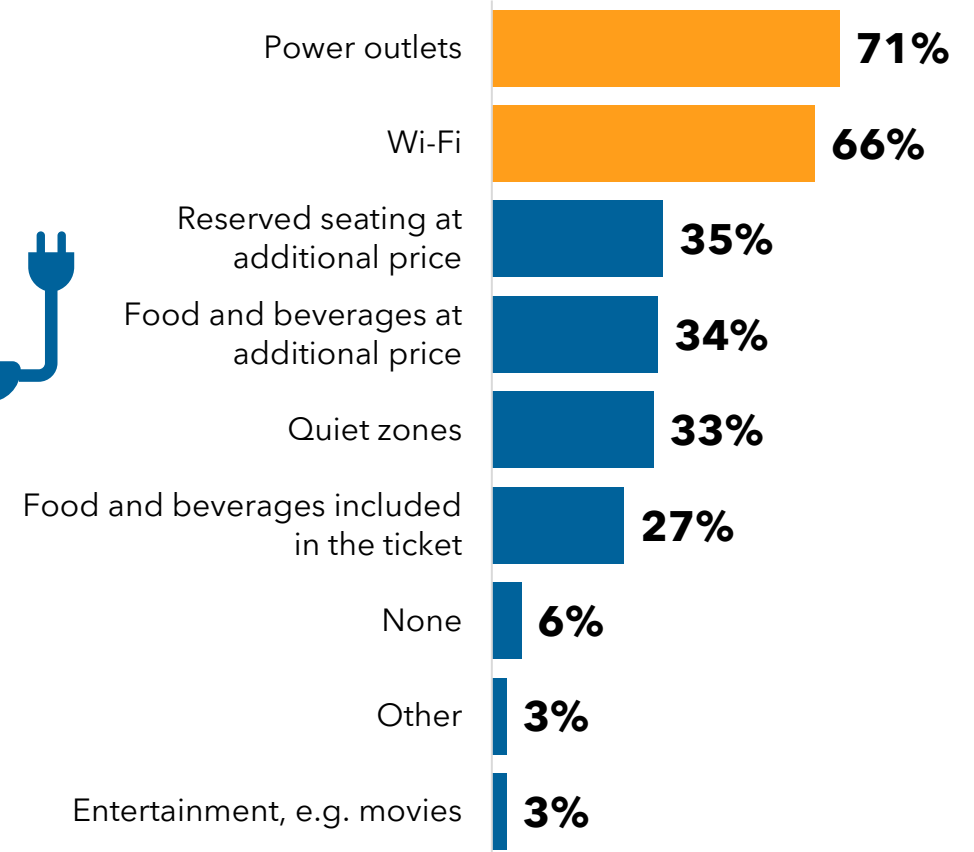
## Time on-board

When traveling by train, over eight business travelers out of 10 work on-board and around half use this time to rest.



## Amenities used

Since most business travelers work on a train, power outlets and Wi-Fi are the top-two amenities utilized by many.



Q: How do you spend your time on-board when traveling by rail for business?

Q: What on-board amenities do you use when traveling by rail? Select all that apply.

# Rail policies and suppliers

[Satisfaction with rail policy](#)

[Employer's rail policy](#)

[Corporate rates and discounts](#)

[Business class policy](#)

[Traveler challenges with rail policies](#)

[Satisfaction with rail suppliers](#)

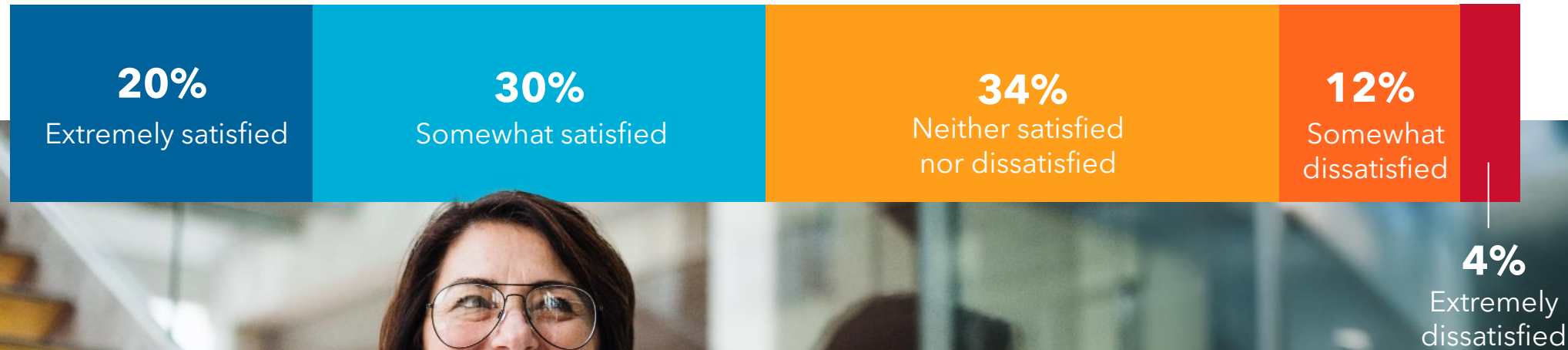
[Traveler challenges with rail suppliers](#)

[Friction](#)



## Satisfaction with rail policy

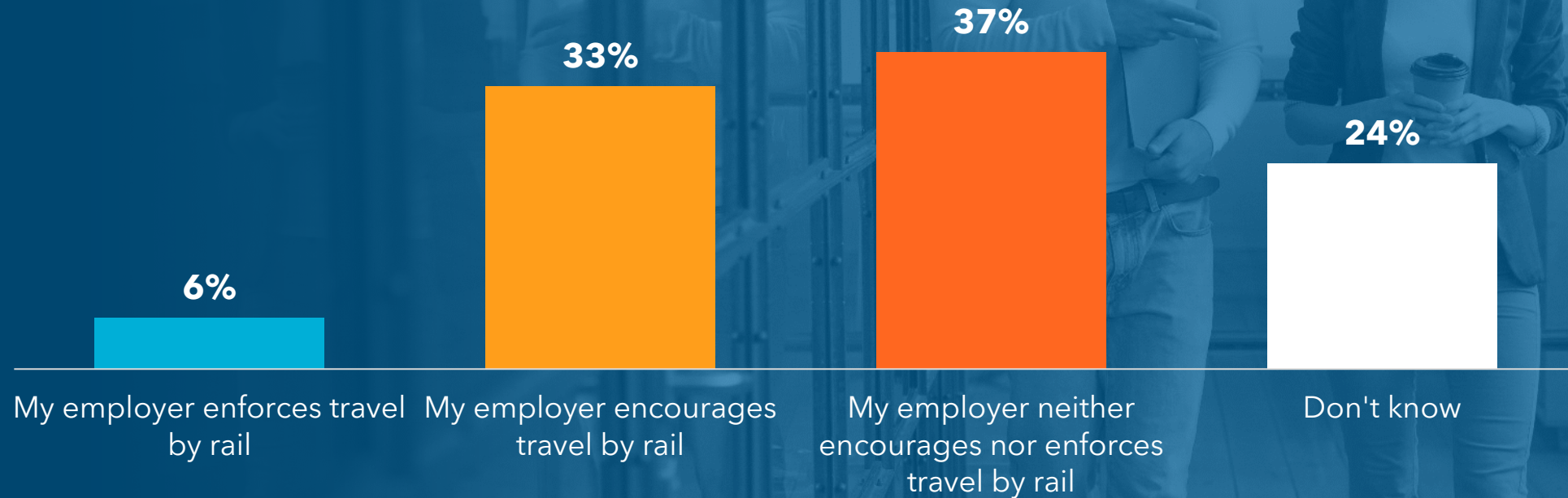
Half of travelers are “extremely” or “somewhat” satisfied with their company’s rail policy.



Q: How satisfied are you with your employer's rail policy?

## Employer's rail policy

According to a third of respondents, their employer's policy encourages them to travel by train. Six out of 10 have no policy that would either enforce or encourage rail travel or are not aware of such.

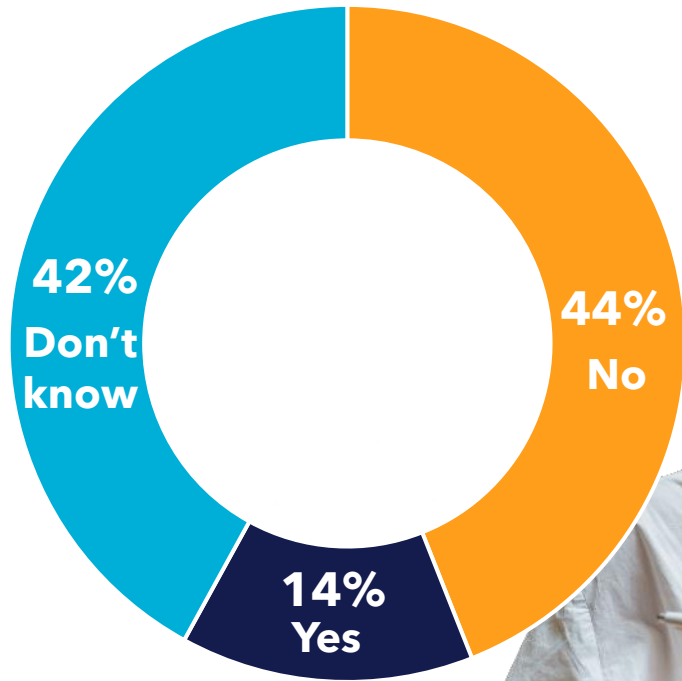


Q: Does your employer encourage travel by rail instead of plane on short distances? Select one.



## Corporate rates and discounts

One out of seven say their employer offers corporate rates for rail tickets.



Q: Does your employer offer you corporate rates/rates with a discount for rail tickets?

## Business class policy

Half of travelers are allowed to use business class on trains, at least on some occasions.

**24%**  
**YES,**  
**always**

**27%**  
**YES,**  
**sometimes**

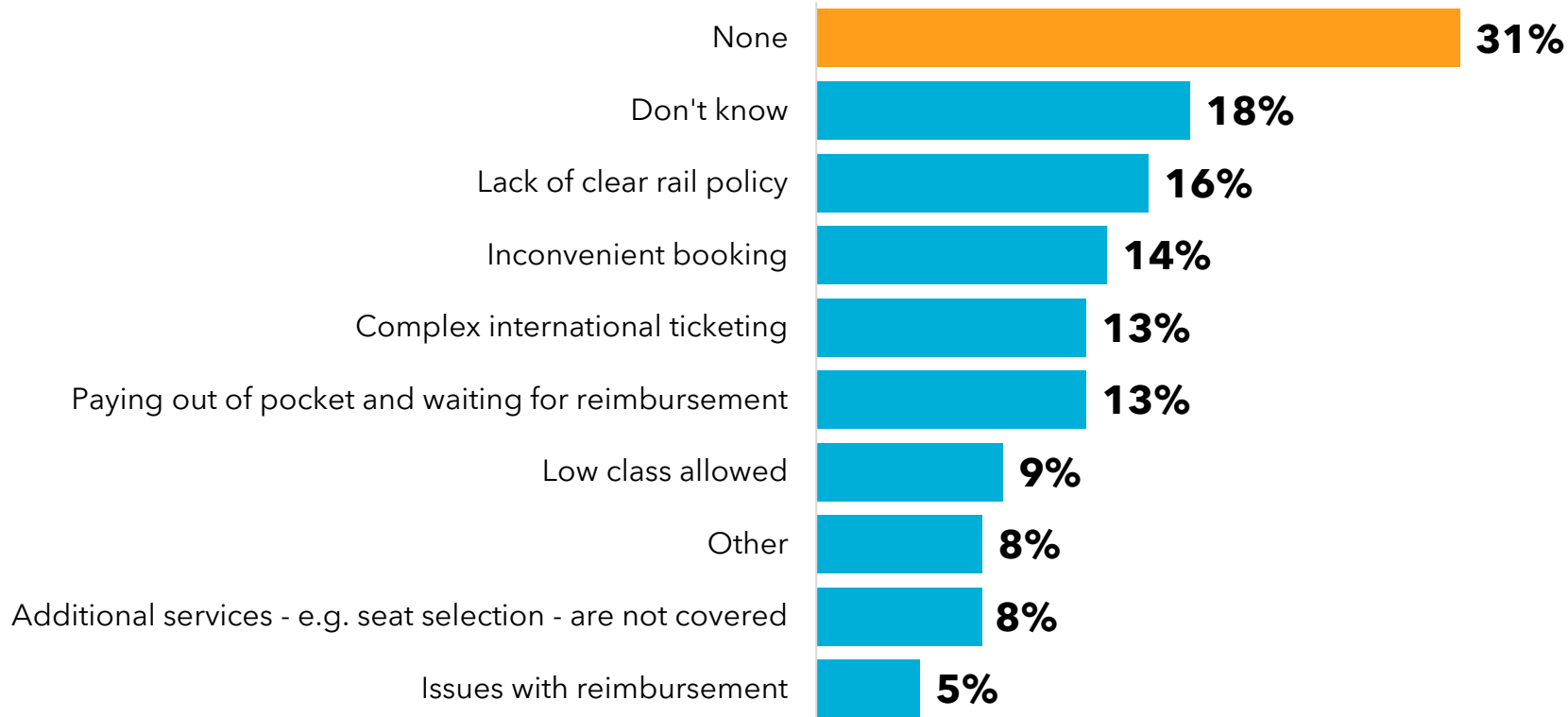
**24%**  
**NO**

**25%**  
**Don't know**

Q: Does your employer allow business class when traveling by rail?

# Traveler challenges with rail policies

Almost a third report no challenges related to their corporate rail policies. Lack of clear rail policy, as well as inconvenient booking or payment are among the issues frequently shared by the rest.



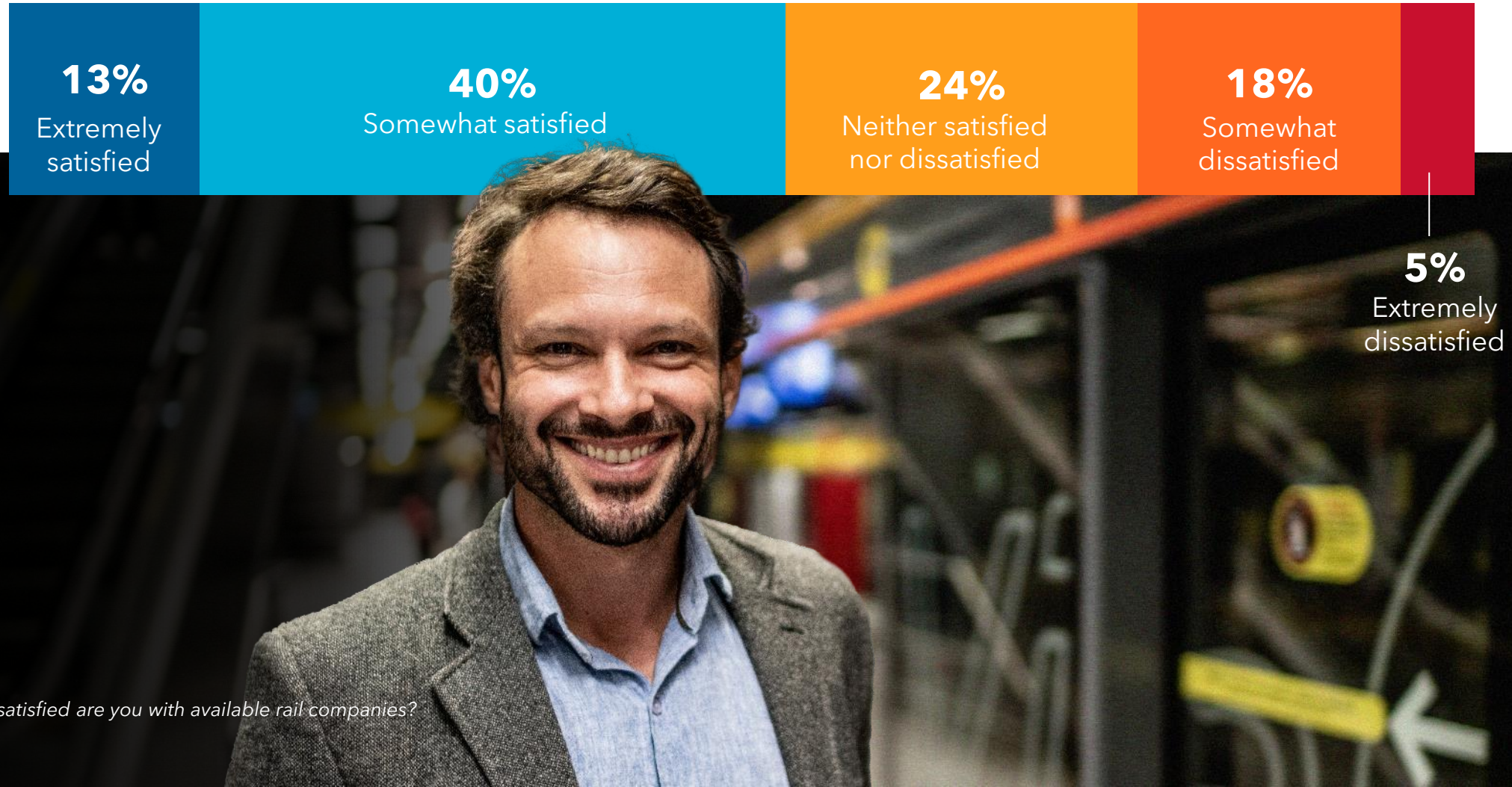
Q: When it comes to your employer's rail policies and processes, what challenges do you encounter? Select all that apply.





## Satisfaction with rail suppliers

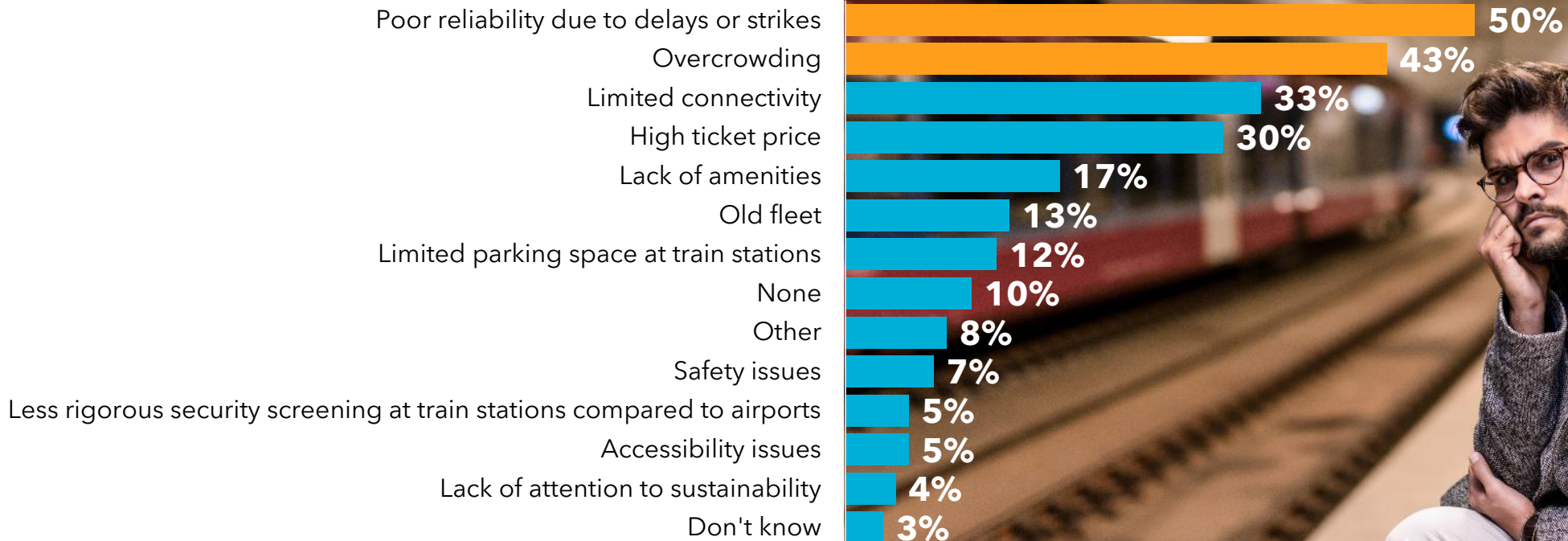
While over half of travelers are happy with the rail companies they use, nearly a quarter report low satisfaction levels.





# Traveler challenges with rail suppliers

Poor reliability, overcrowding, as well as limited connectivity and high prices are frequently mentioned among the encountered supplier challenges.

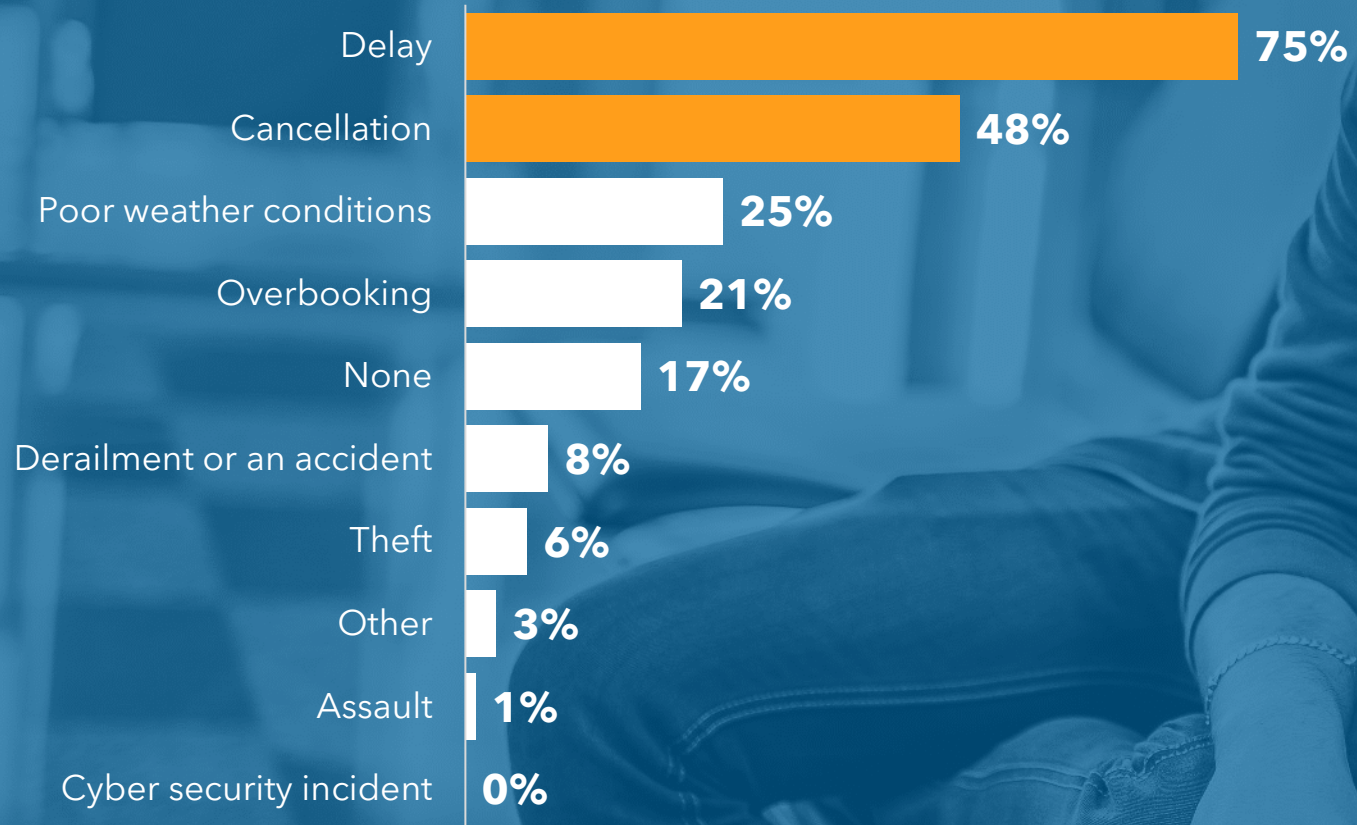


Q: What challenges do you experience when traveling by rail for business? Select all that apply.



# Friction

Three quarters of the respondents have experienced delays and half faced cancellations. These are the top-two disruptive situations mentioned by business travelers.



Q: Which of the following situations have you experienced while traveling by rail? Select all that apply.

# How BCD Travel can help

We understand the power of flexible and efficient business travel and are committed to offering a fully integrated rail booking option in TripSource, our trip management and self-service booking solution.

We're expanding our regional presence and continue to add more carriers, giving travelers greater flexibility to book their trips their way. With TripSource, rail travelers have the following options:



**Seat and  
cabin  
selection**



**Discount and  
loyalty cards**



**E-tickets**



**Travel via  
select  
stations**



**Travel  
arranger  
functionality**



**Available  
via web or  
app**





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