

Travel buyer insights:

# Online Booking Tools

by BCD Travel Research & Intelligence



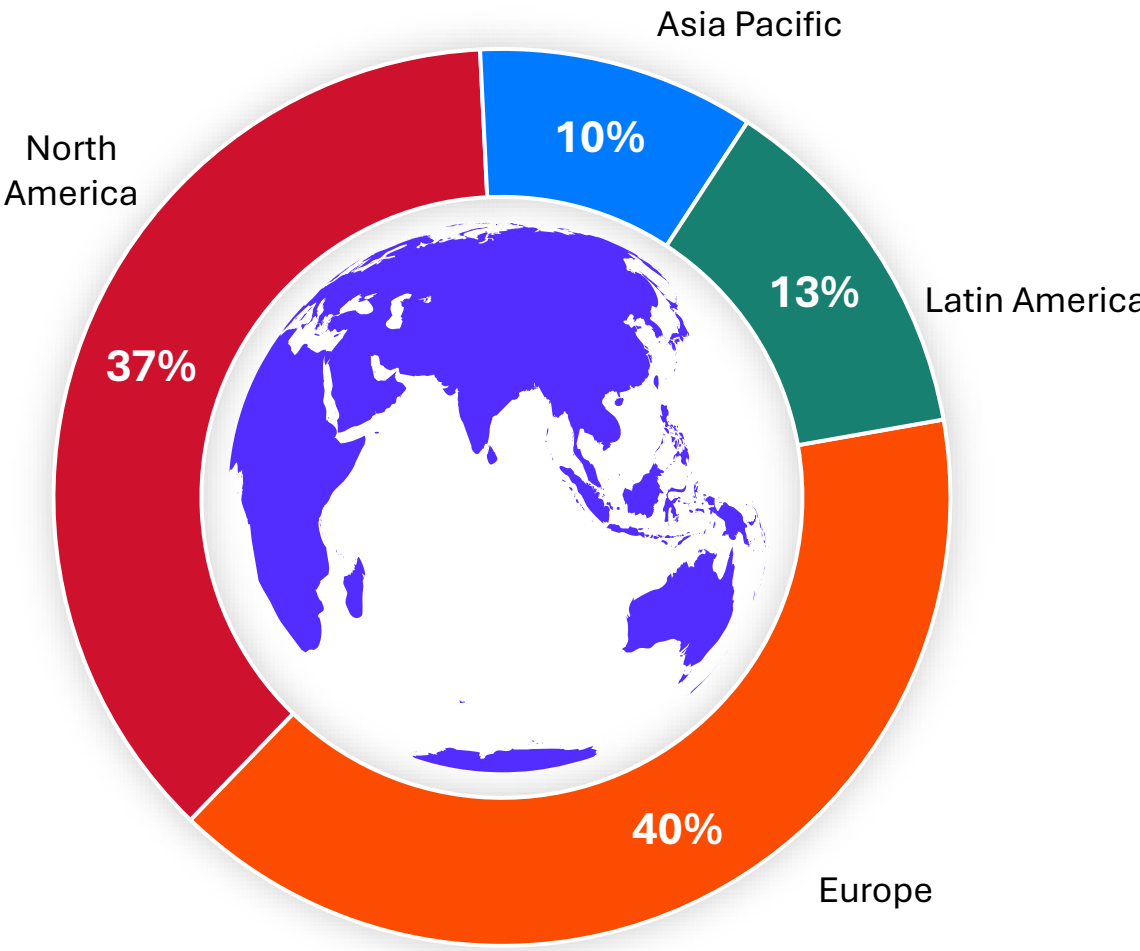
## About the survey

In this survey, we explore the role of online booking tools (OBTs) today: How well they support traveler experience and program goals, and what travel buyers need from an OBT going forward.

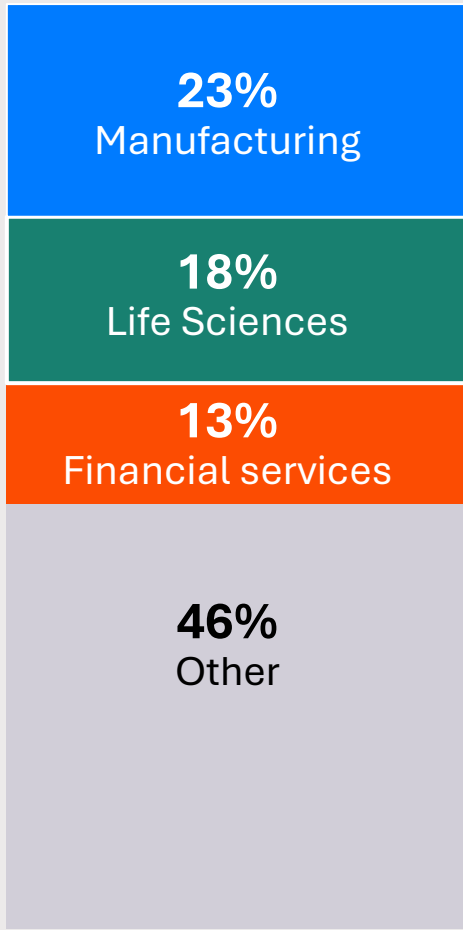
The results are based on an online survey of 154 travel buyers conducted in April 2026.

# Who we surveyed

## Where they're based

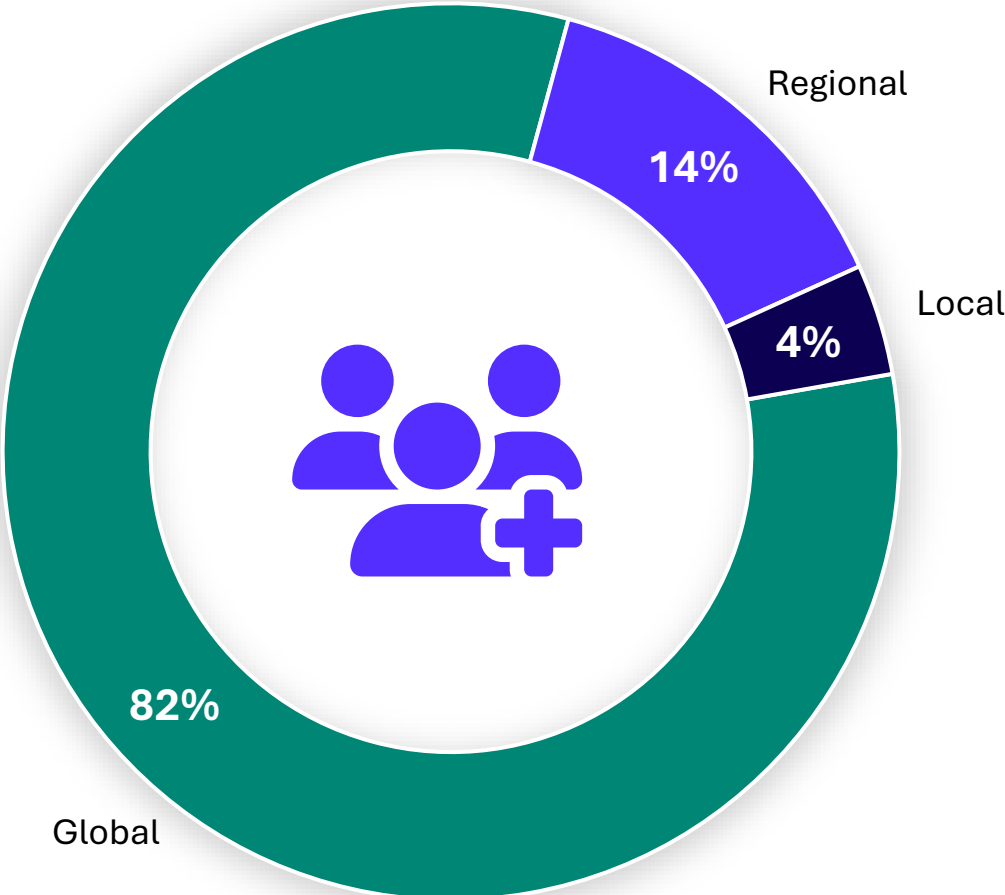


## Industries

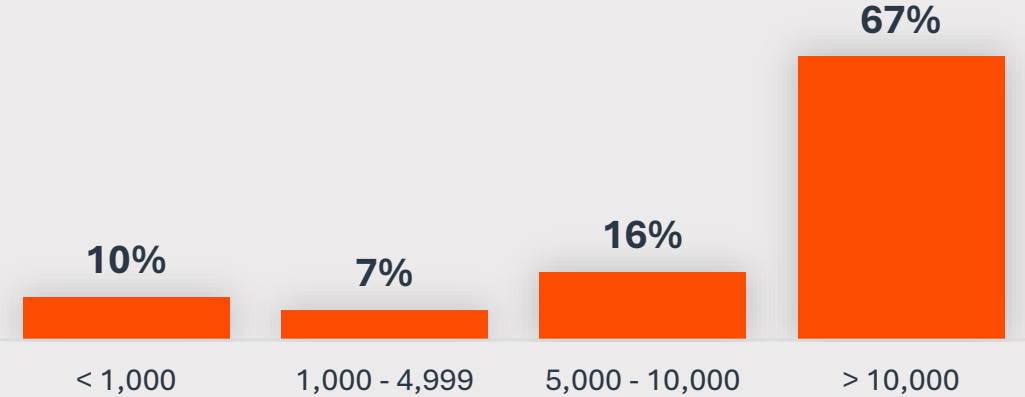


# Who we surveyed

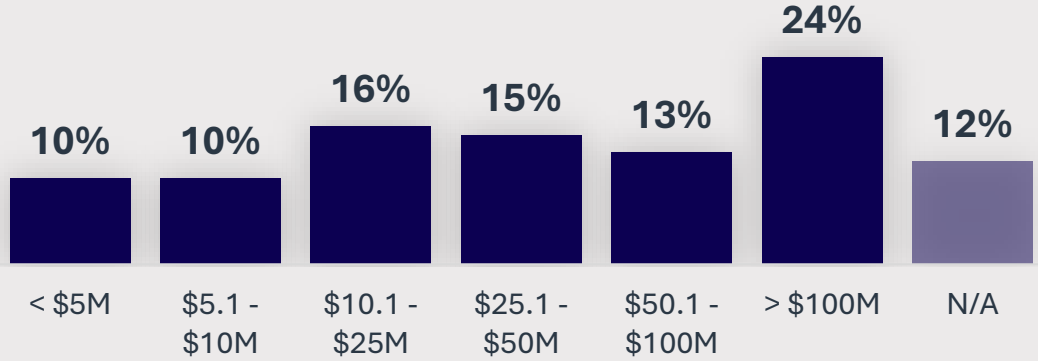
## Travel program scope



## Company size

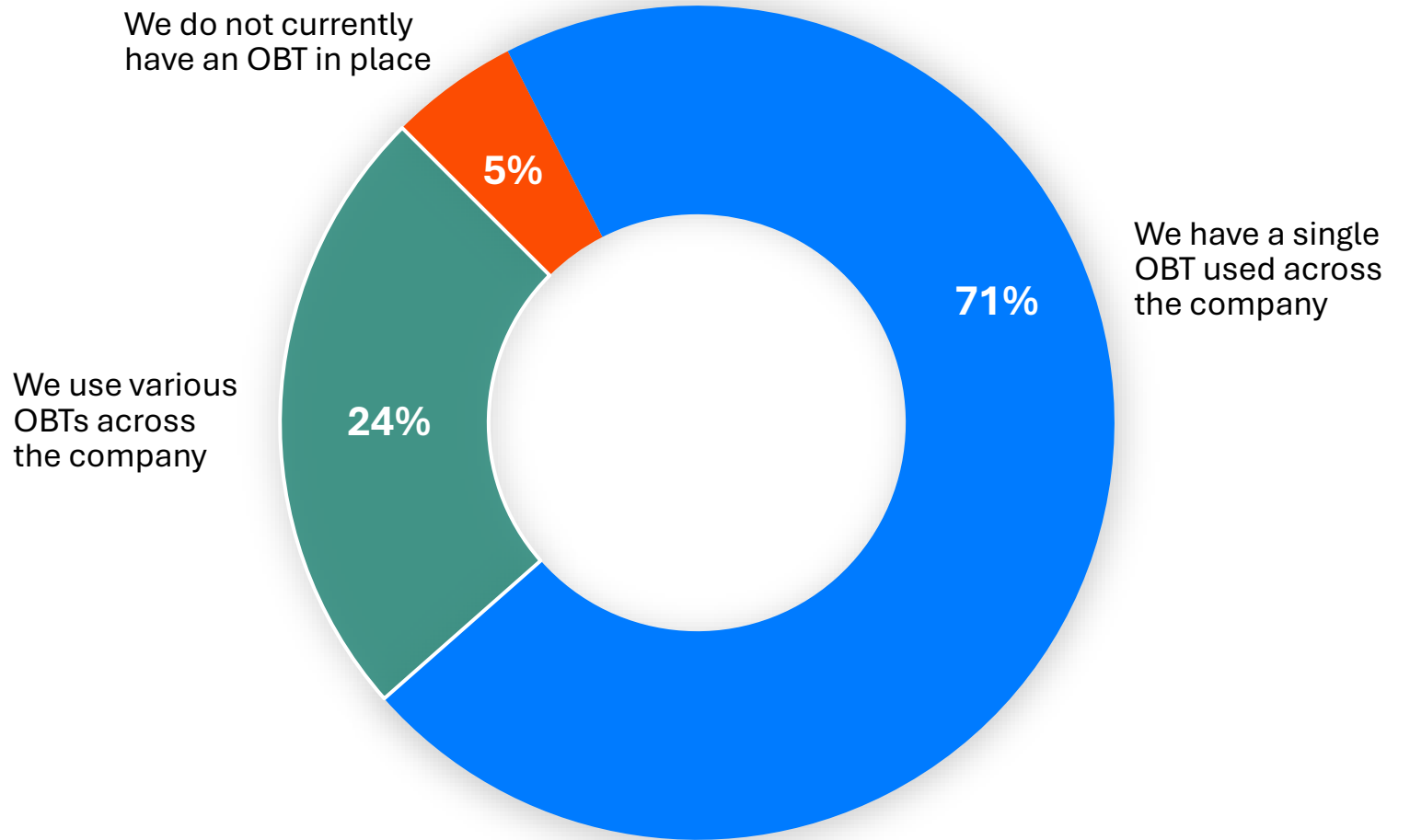


## Travel spend



## OBT availability across companies

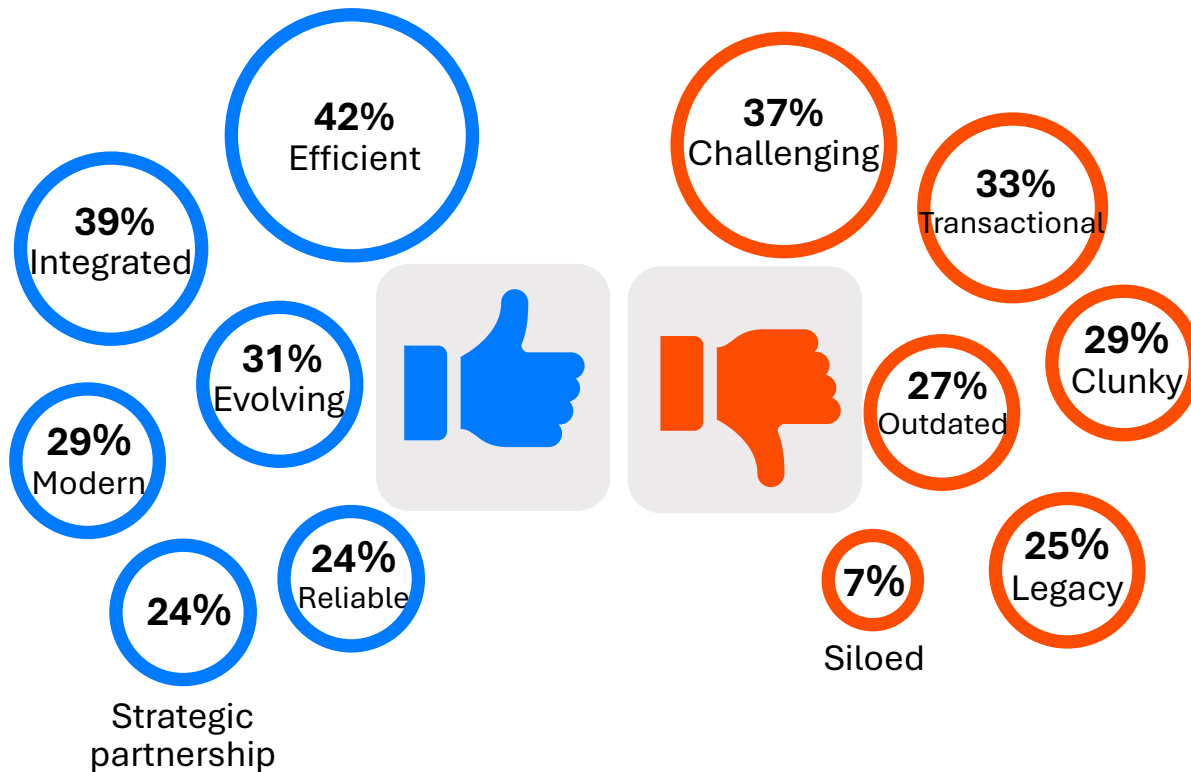
The vast majority of travel buyers (95%) have OBTs in place, with a quarter using more than one tool across their organization.



Q: Which option best describes your organization's use of online booking tools (OBTs)?

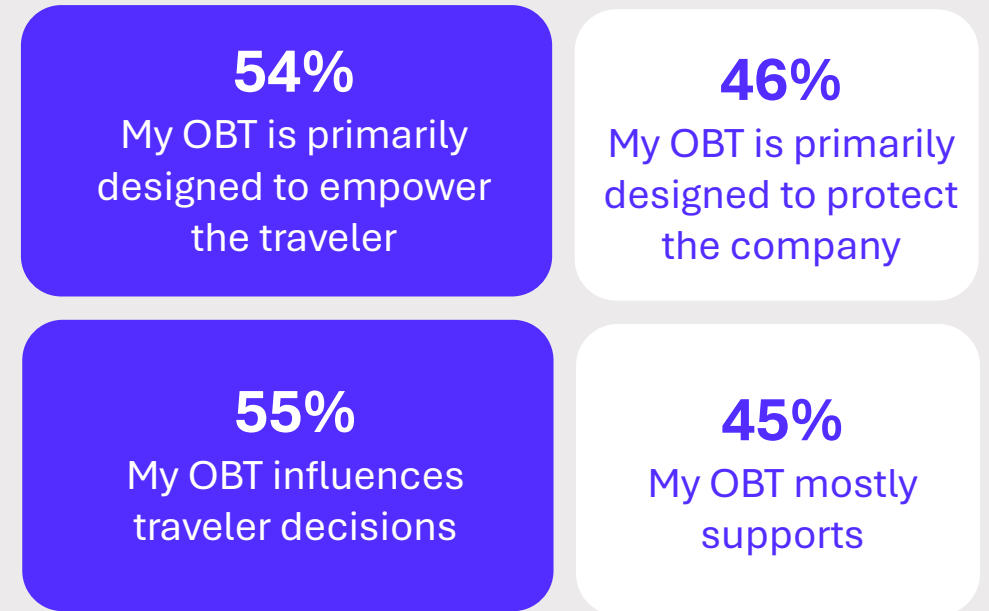
# Description of OBTs

While four in 10 travel buyers describe current OBTs as efficient and integrated, over three in 10 use such adjectives as challenging or transactional.



Q: When you think of the term online booking tool, which words come to mind? Select all that apply.

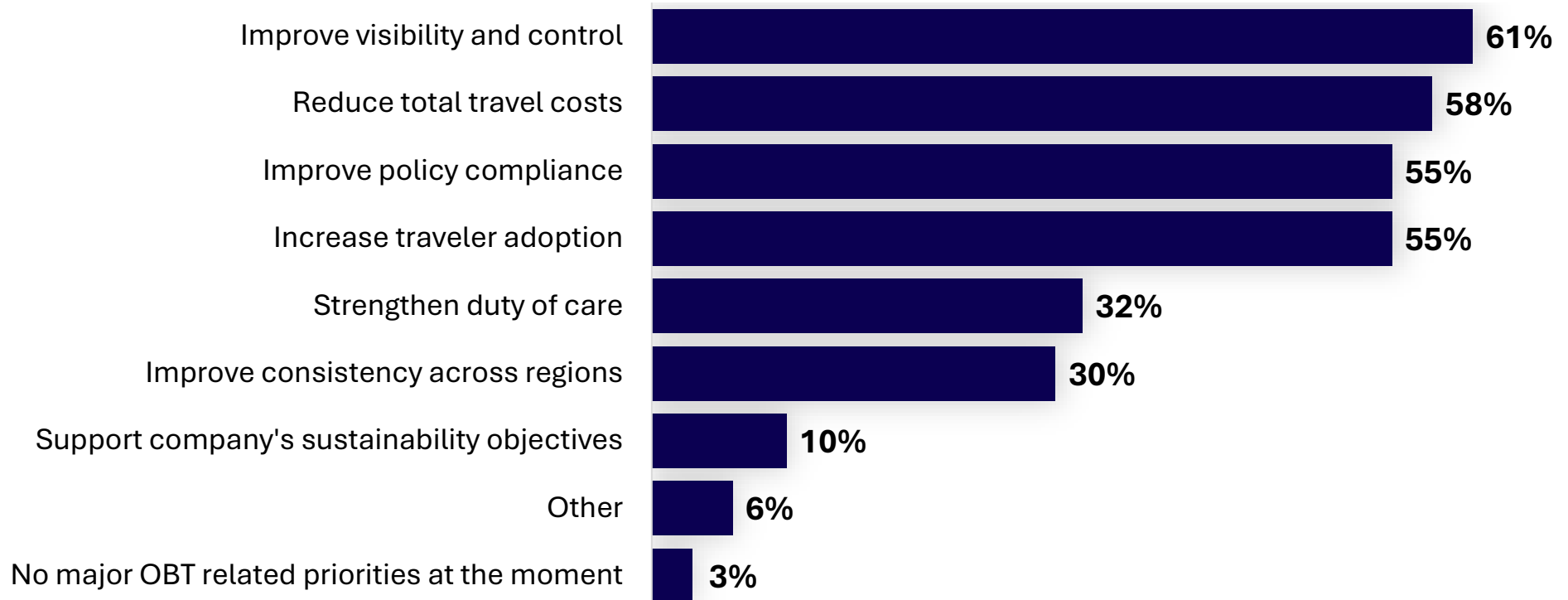
While slightly over half (54%) say their OBT is primarily designed to empower travelers, 46% view the main role of booking tools as protecting the company.



Q: Which statement best describes your current primary OBT? For each pair, select the option that applies.

# OBT priorities

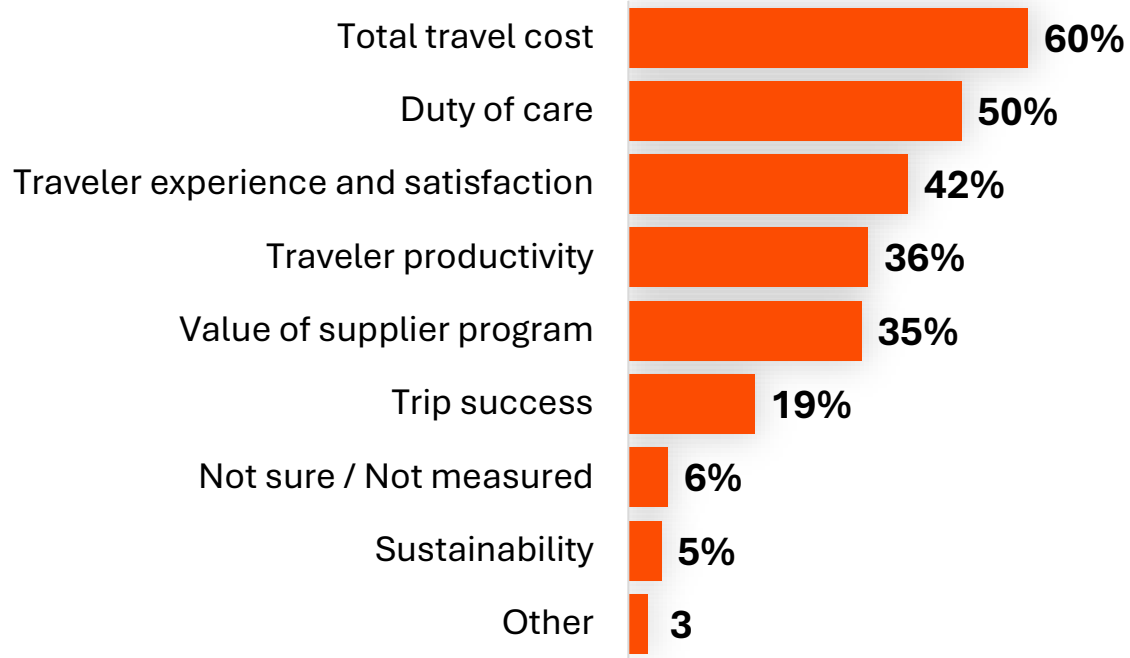
Travel buyers identify several key objectives related to OBTs, with improving visibility and control as the top priority mentioned by six in 10. Sustainability ranks lowest, prioritized by just one in 10.



Q: What are your current strategic priorities related to the OBT? Select up to three.

## Outcomes influenced by OBTs

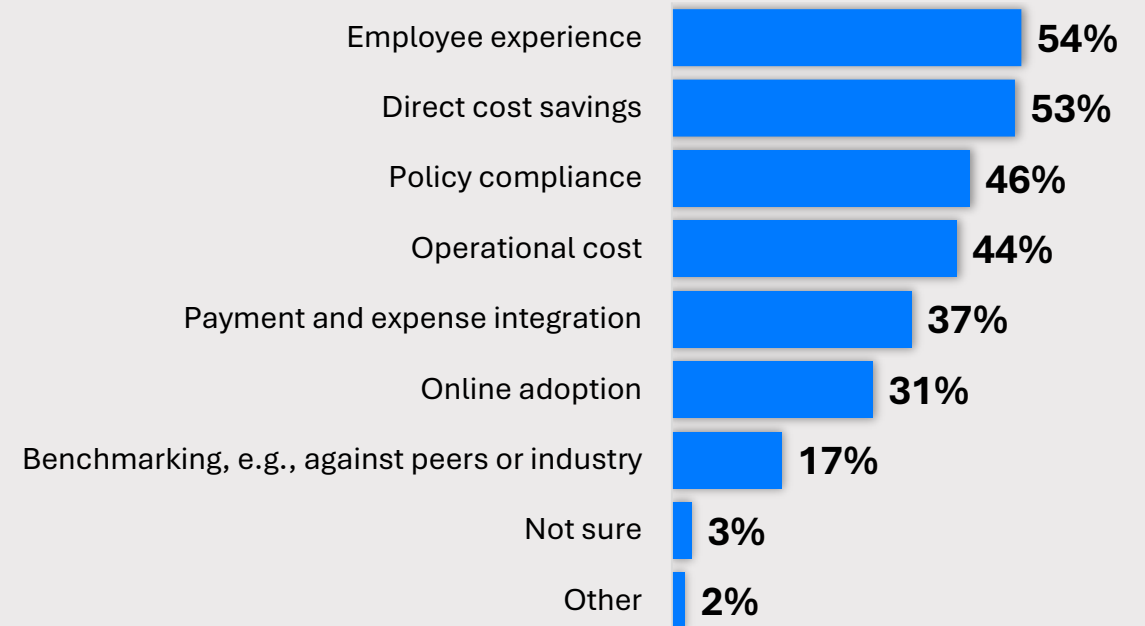
OBTs influence several core travel-program outcomes, with the strongest impact on total travel costs, duty of care and traveler experience.



Q: Which outcomes does your OBT influence most in your organization today? Select up to three.

## Metrics showing OBT value

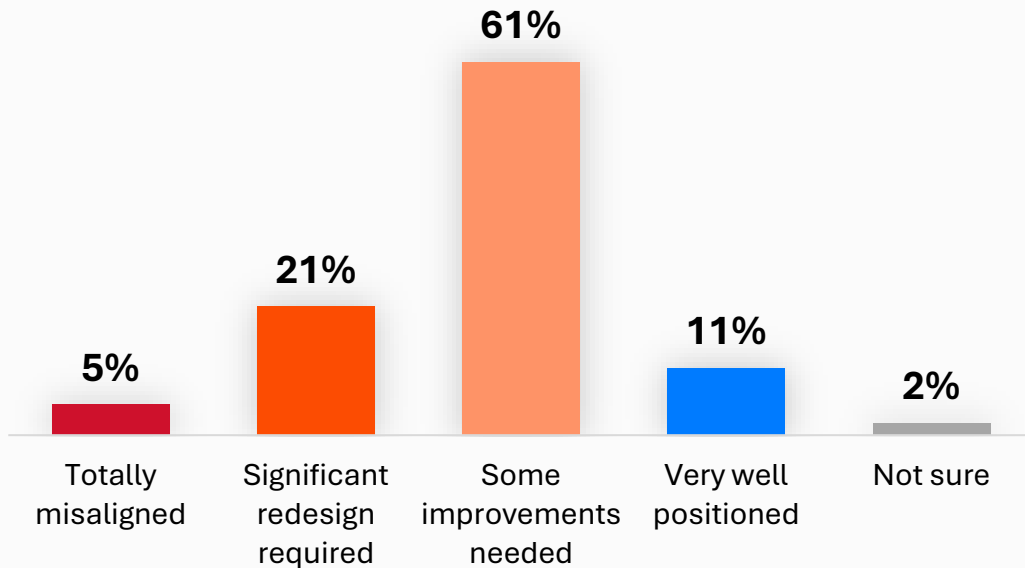
Employee experience and cost savings are the top indicators of OBT value for executives when deciding whether to retain or change the tool.



Q: When deciding whether to keep or change your current OBT, which indicators best demonstrate its value to your executives? Select up to three.

## How OBTs meet traveler expectations

While one in 10 travel buyers say their OBT meets traveler expectations, eight in 10 believe improvements are needed.



Q: How well is your OBT positioned for the booking experience travelers expect?

## OBTs and traveler engagement

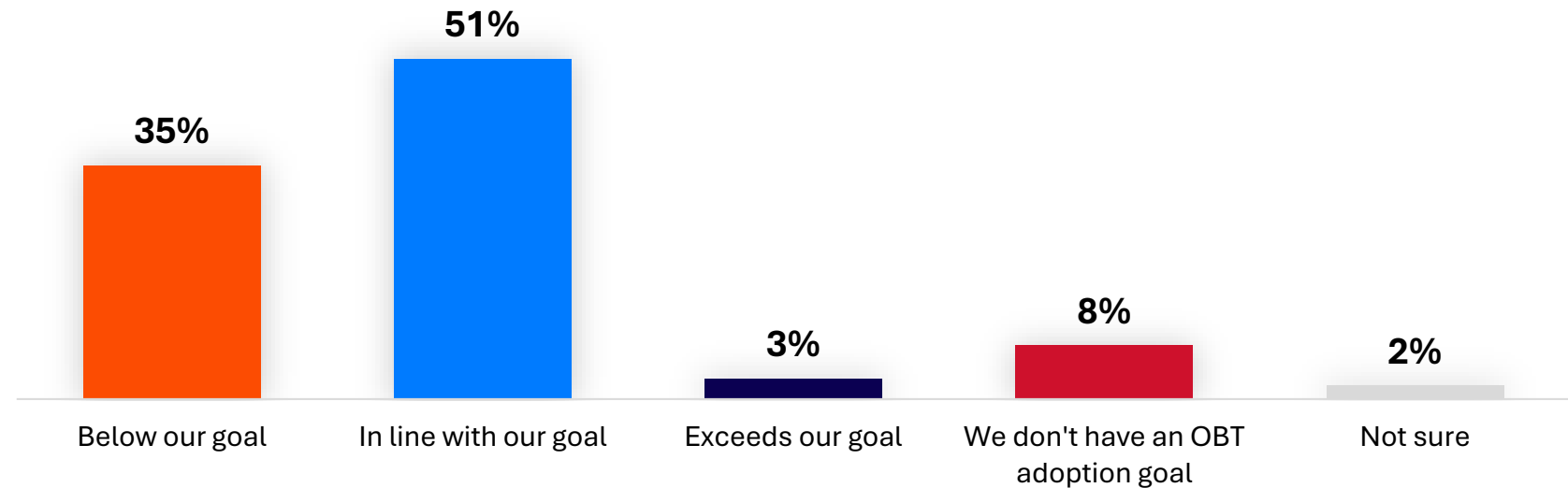
When it comes to OBTs, travel buyers mainly define traveler engagement as policy compliance, followed by traveler experience.



Q: How do you define traveler engagement when it comes to your OBT? Rank from the most (1) to the least (4) relevant.

## OBT adoption

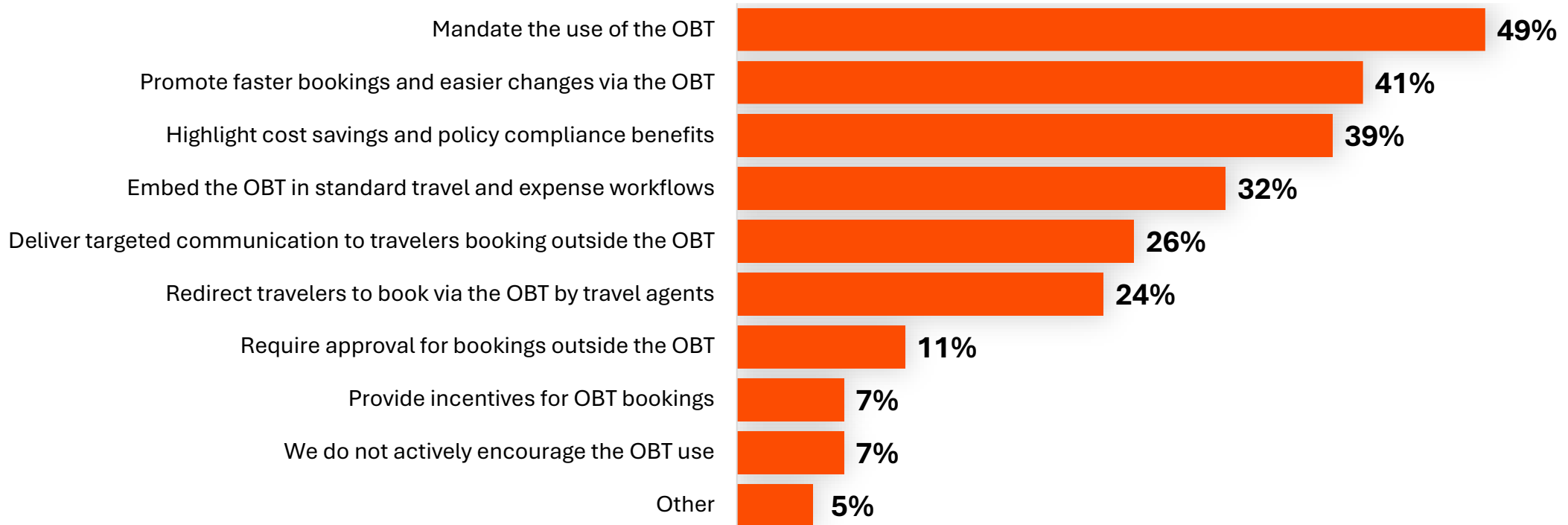
While half of travel buyers report that OBT adoption by travelers is in line with their program goals, more than a third say it falls short of their expectations.



Q: How does your current OBT adoption compare to your goal?

# Methods for increasing OBT adoption

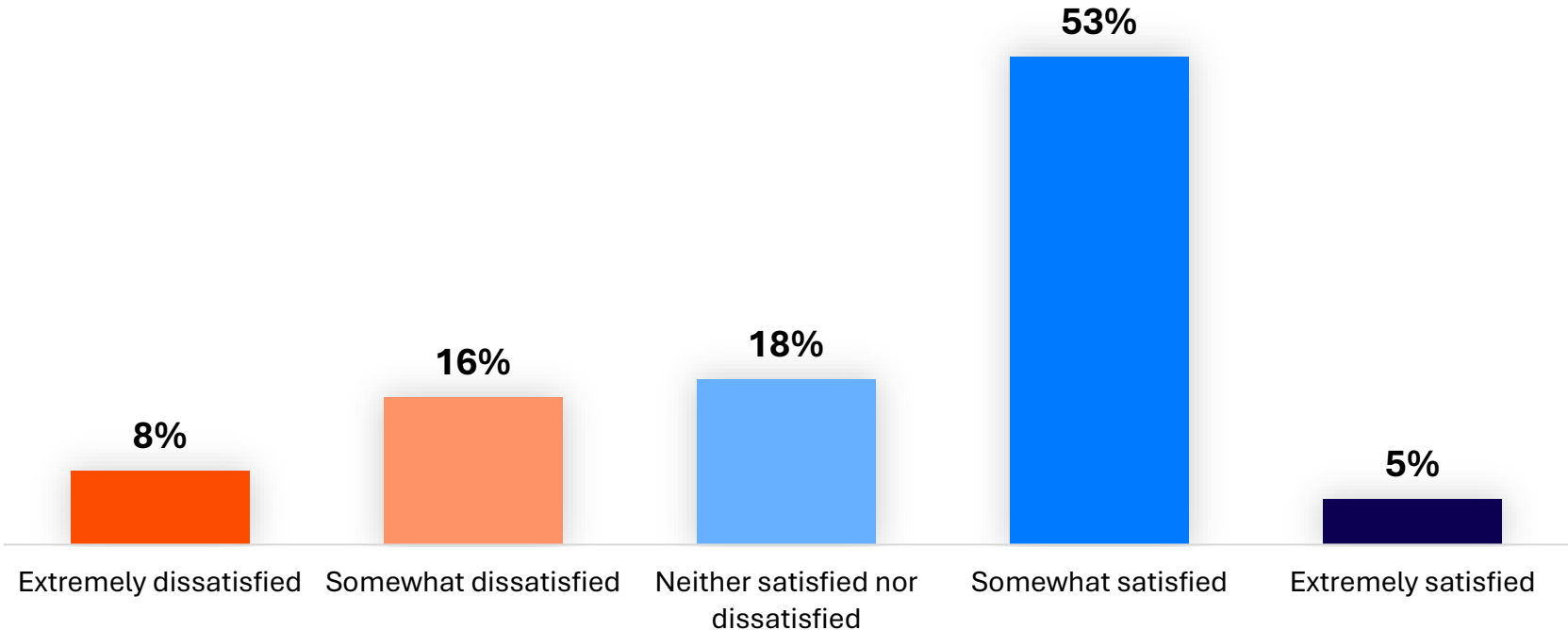
Nearly half of travel buyers report that their companies mandate OBT use, making it the most widespread approach to increase adoption. Nearly four in 10 promote the benefits of OBTs, including easier booking and changes, cost savings and improved compliance.



Q: How do you encourage travelers to use your OBT? Select all that apply.

# Satisfaction with OBTs

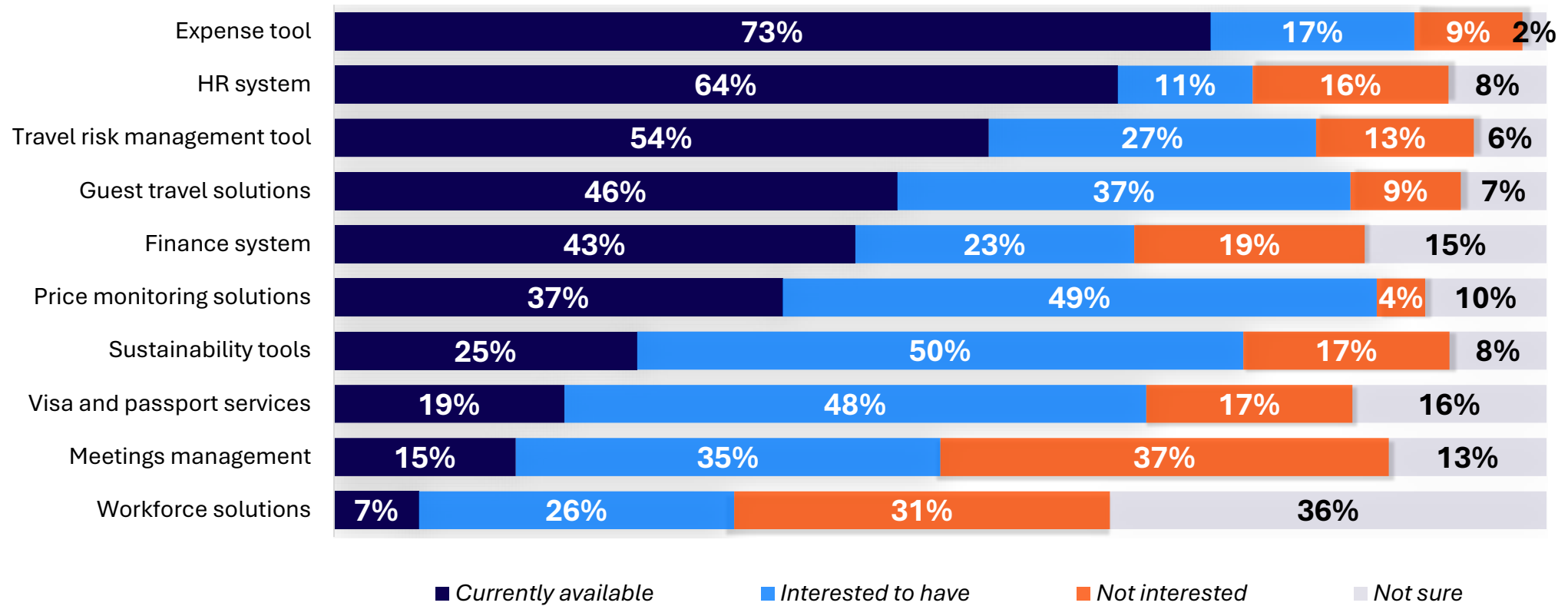
While over half of travel buyers report being somewhat or extremely satisfied, nearly a quarter express dissatisfaction.



Q: How satisfied are you with your current OBT? If you use more than one OBT, refer to your primary tool here and in the questions below.

# OBT integrations

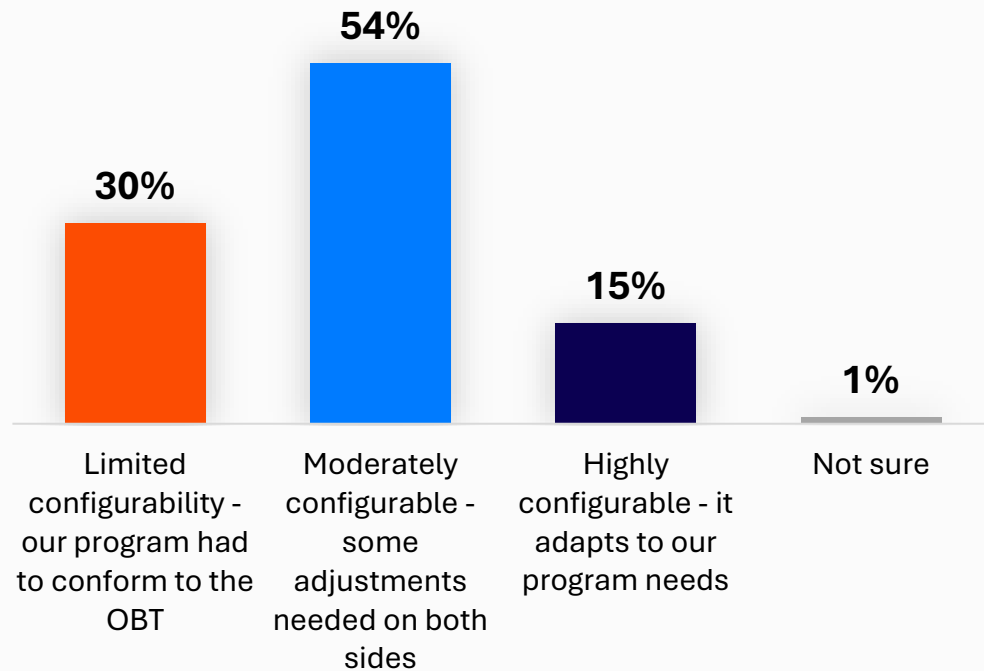
Current OBT integrations focus on core operational tools, such as expense, HR or risk management systems. Meanwhile, future demand centers on solutions that reduce cost, support sustainability and improve traveler experience.



Q: What integrations with third-party providers does your OBT currently support, and which would you like to add? Select what applies.

## OBT configurability

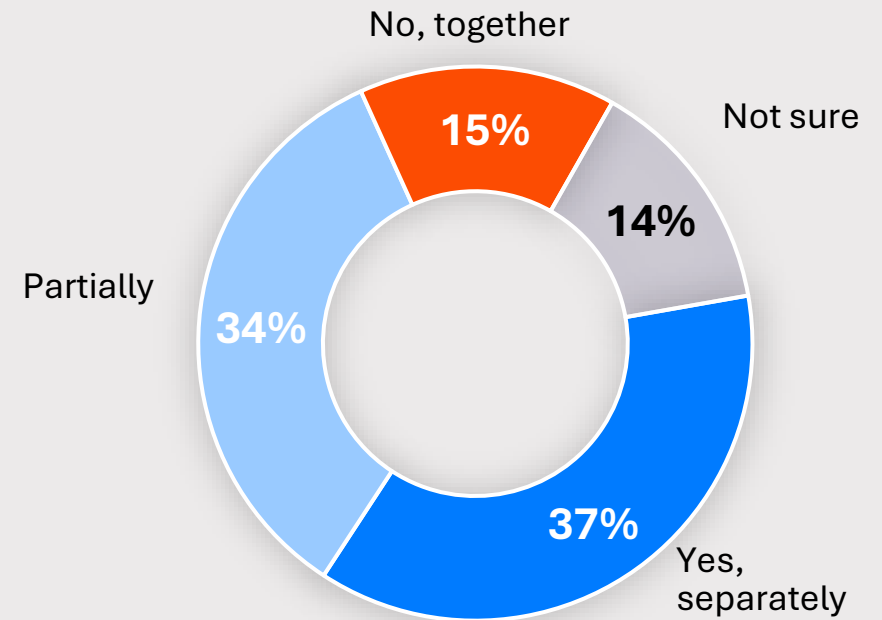
Seven in 10 travel buyers describe their OBTs as highly or moderately configurable to meet program needs.



Q: Thinking about your travel program needs, how configurable is your current OBT?

## Change in OBT vs. agent-facing apps

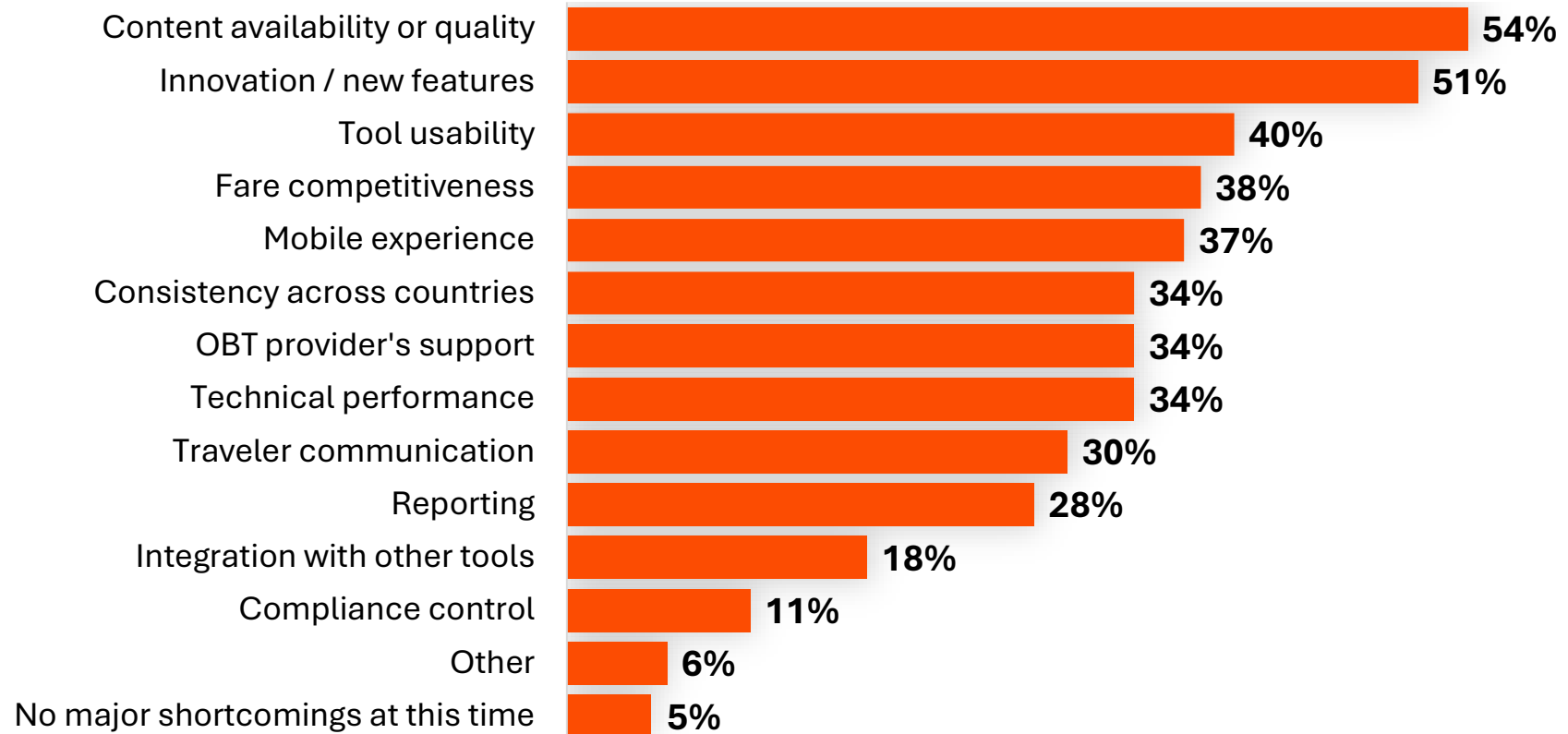
Over two-thirds of travel buyers manage at least some program changes separately for OBT and agent-facing tools.



Q: Do you need to manage program changes separately for your OBT and agent-facing tools?

# Gaps in OBT capabilities

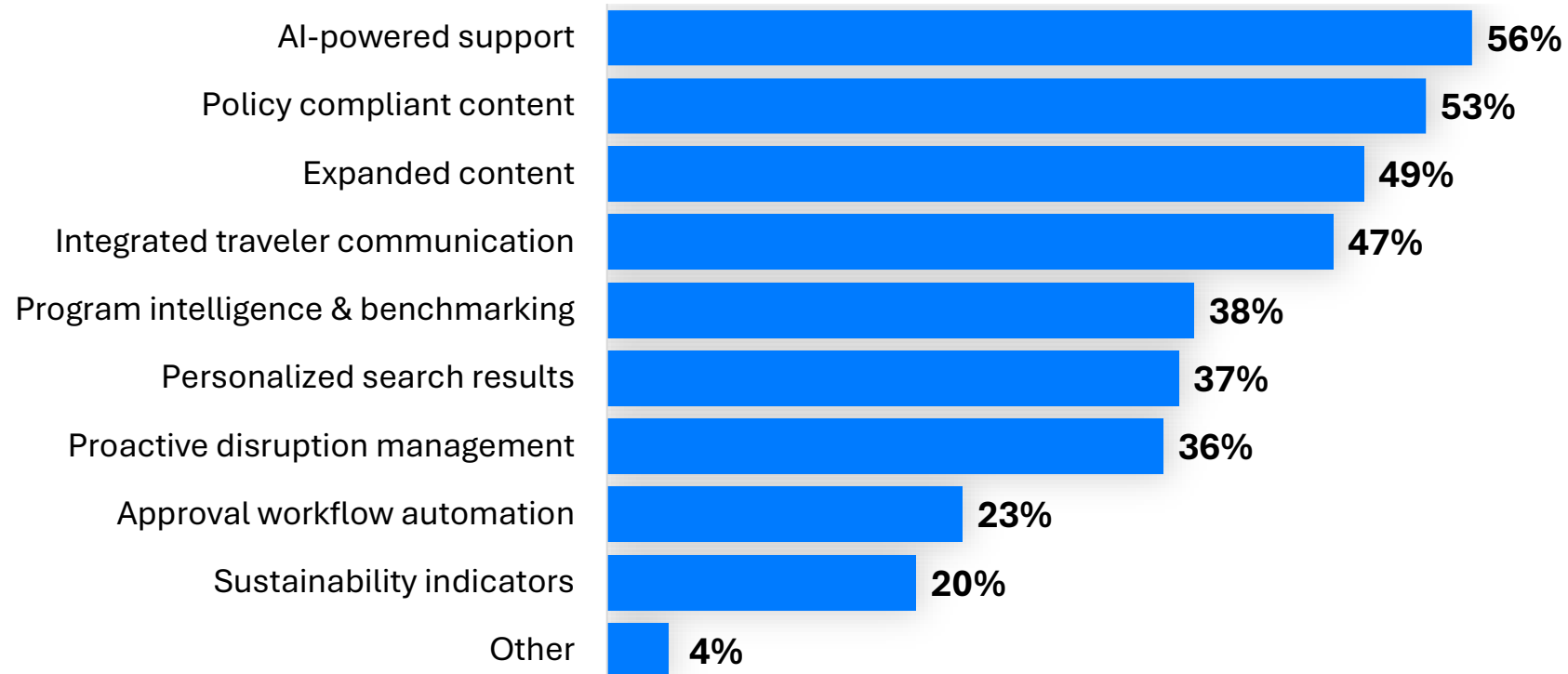
The most common OBT shortcomings relate to content availability and quality, as well as the pace of innovation and introduction of new features, each cited by over half of travel buyers.



Q: In which areas does your OBT not meet your requirements? Select all that apply.

# Important OBT features

AI-powered support and policy-compliant content are the top two OBT capabilities important to travel buyers, followed by expanded content and traveler communication.



Q: Thinking about both your current gaps and future needs, what OBT features and capabilities are important to you? Select up to three.

# OBT improvements

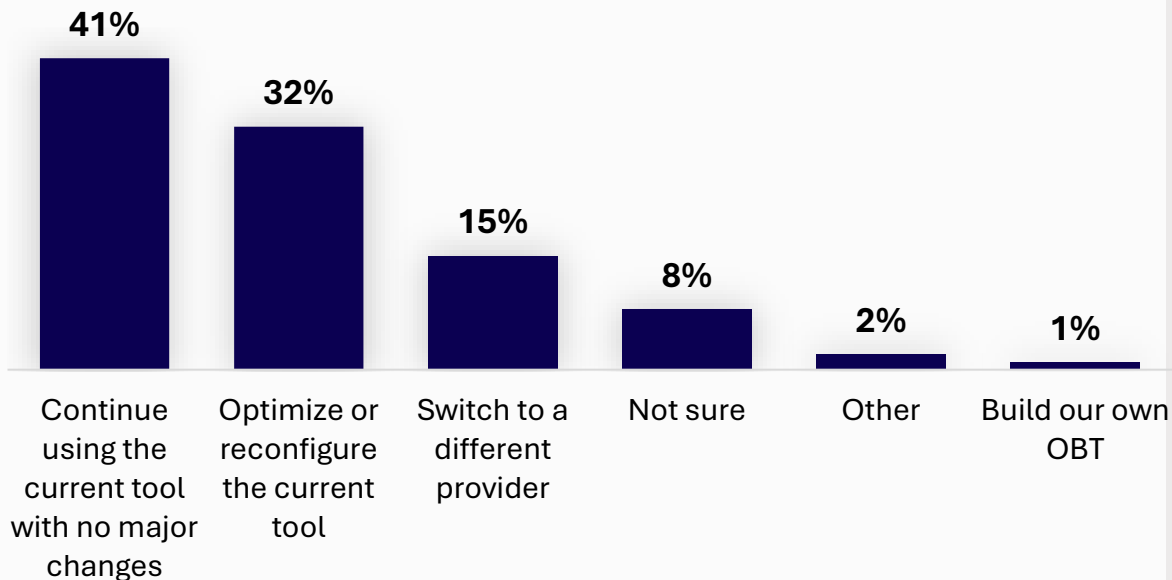
Travel managers most often call for AI-driven personalization, richer in-tool content and a simpler booking flow supported by better fare competitiveness.

- Smarter assistance (AI + personalization)
- Broader, high-quality content
- A simpler, consumer-like user experience
- Fare competitiveness and price visibility
- Servicing improvements, e.g., changes or cancellations
- Reliability / fewer errors
- Integration of rail and ground transportation
- Payment and expense integration
- Traveler communication

Q: What OBT improvement would have the greatest impact on your travelers' booking experience?

# OBT plans

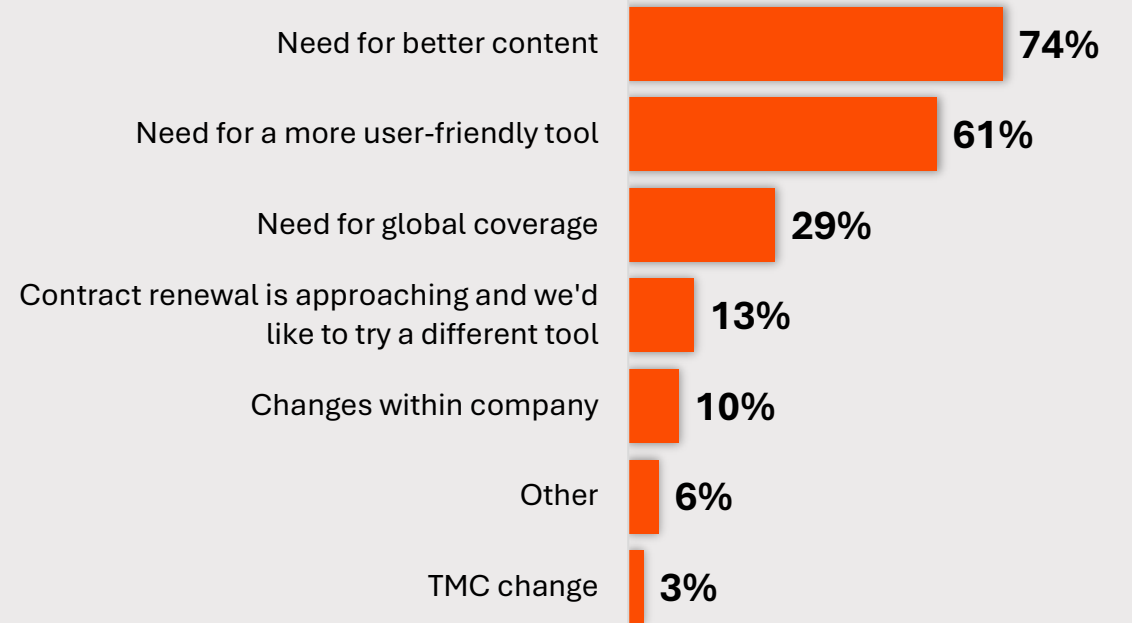
Seven in 10 travel buyers expect to continue using their current OBT, with or without reconfiguration. 15% plan to switch to a different OBT.



Q: What best describes your company's plans regarding your OBT for the next 12-24 months?

# Reasons to change the OBT

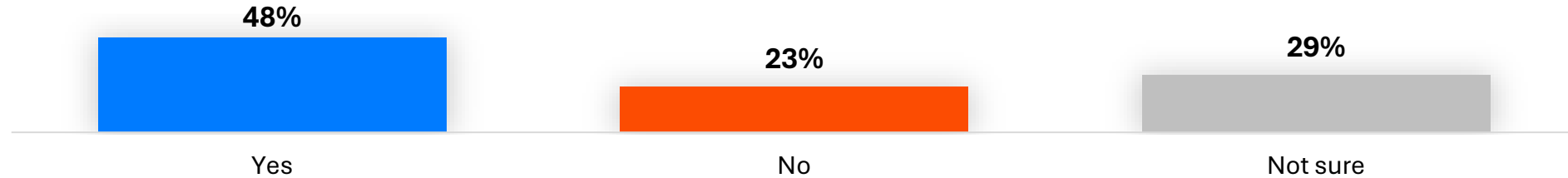
The primary drivers of OBT change or update are the need for better content and user-friendly experience, each cited by over six in 10 of buyers.



Q: What are the reasons for the planned changes? Select all that apply.

# Traditional vs. modern OBTs

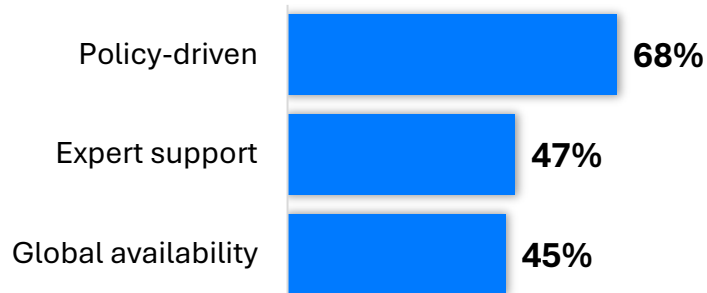
Almost half of travel buyers differentiate between traditional and modern OBTs.



Q: Do you differentiate between traditional and modern OBTs?

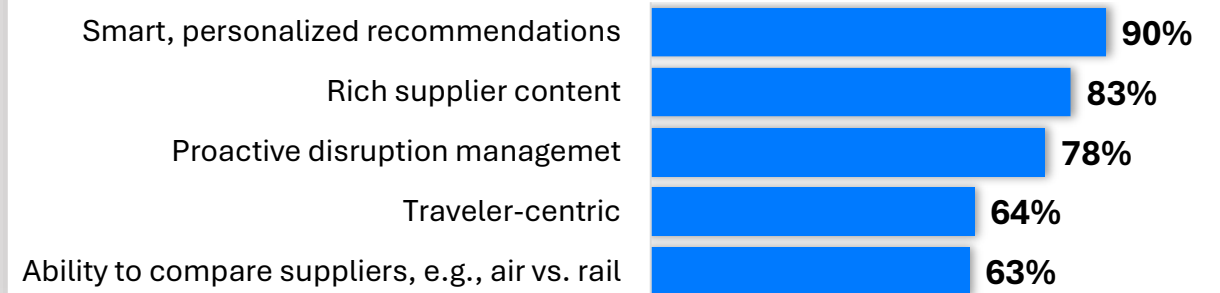
## Traditional OBTs

Traditional tools are often seen as policy-driven, globally available and with expert support.



## Modern OBTs

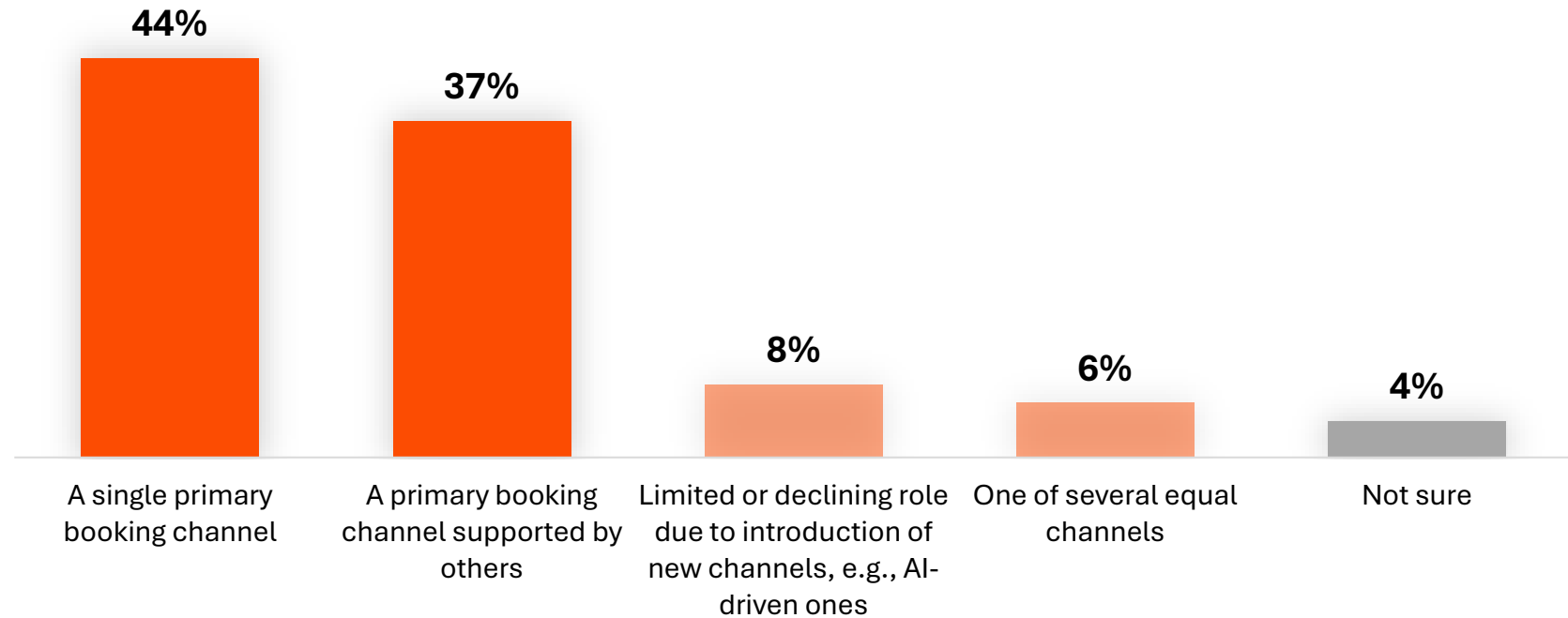
Modern tools provide smart recommendations, offer rich content and proactive disruption management.



Q: How do you differentiate between traditional and modern OBTs? Drag and drop each characteristic into the box where you think it fits best.

## Future role of an OBT

Travel buyers are split in their outlook: 44% expect OBTs to become a single primary booking channel, while a comparable share (37%) see them as the main booking channel but supported by others.



Q: Looking ahead, what role do you expect the OBT to play in your travel program?

# How BCD can help

Our AI-powered Tripsource platform offers a connected ecosystem of trip management capabilities, designed to help you drive adoption, control costs.



## Shopping & booking

An intelligent booking and trip management experience for you and your travelers.



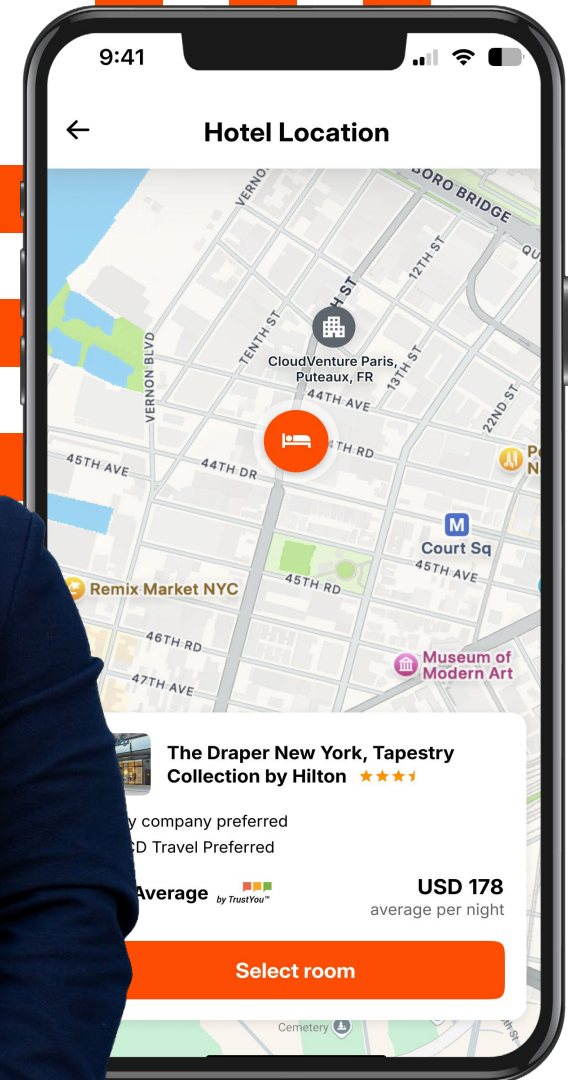
## Integrated service & support

Simple tasks self-managed in seconds with integrated agent service for more complex needs.



## Real-time communication & engagement

Tailored messaging guides decisions as they happen - before, during and after the trip, driving confidence, compliance and reducing spend.



# How is Tripsource different?

Tripsource is not a traditional OBT. It's a modern booking and trip management solution that bridges your program to the larger travel management ecosystem.



## Control, choice and clarity

A booking and trip management solution based on priorities, your policy and your goals, with space to innovate freely.



## Gap-proof travel content

Multi-source content via the GDS, direct connects, global and regional aggregators that serve a truly global program.



## A truly connected experience

Content, service and engagement together in a single, award-winning traveler experience that drives loyalty.



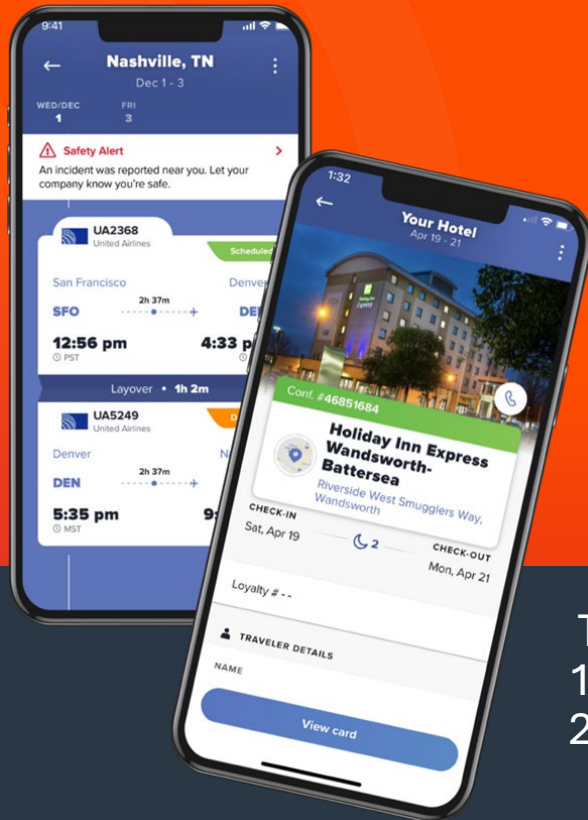
## AI-driven. Human-centric

Benefit from the efficiencies and accuracy of AI with the personal touch of agents and advisors.

# We know what you're thinking.

And we have the answers.

See Tripsource in action →



**Tripsource sounds great, but there's no way I can switch my OBТ without major disruption for my travelers and my program.**

You'd be surprised how seamless a switch can be with Tripsource. BCD does the heavy lifting, from platform configuration to supporting every step of rollout with travelers and arrangers, driving adoption even before launch.

**My program is complex. I need a truly global solution that accommodates different policies for different regions, and even specific providers.**

Tripsource was developed with this complexity in mind. Flexibility and openness are foundational to our model. We support some of the largest and most complex programs in the world with a 97% retention rate.

**Content is too important to me to risk a change.**

The Tripsource content cloud delivers multi-source content through direct connects, the GDS, global and regional aggregators, low-cost carriers, and a robust rail program. You control the shopping experience.

**I don't want to create more complexity for my internal teams.**

Tripsource brings booking, payment, duty of care, program intelligence and back-office spend management into a single connected AI-powered experience that reduces cost, saves time and increases transparency across the organization.

**Change just feels risky right now.**

Totally understandable. But not changing can pose a risk as well. 60% of employees consider the quality of travel experiences—and the strictness of the policy—when assessing their overall job.

There are **two options** to try Tripsource with minimal risk.

1. Implement Tripsource in markets without an OBТ today
2. Try the hub approach, integrating your OBТ into Tripsource to take advantage of trip management features.



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### **About BCD Travel**

BCD Travel creates connections that move people and ideas forward. Through open technology and trusted human expertise, we help companies and people navigate change, simplify complexity and make confident decisions about how and when they travel. Our intuitive digital experiences for every stakeholder power journeys that fuel success and drive progress. With 15,000+ dedicated team members serving clients in 170+ countries, BCD is shaping a more sustainable future for business travel. Industry-leading meetings and events management and a global consultancy complete our suite of solutions and services. In 2025, BCD achieved \$24.4 billion in sales. For more information, visit [www.bcdtravel.com](http://www.bcdtravel.com).

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