

THE LAWS OF ATTRACTION FOR HIGH-VALUE GUESTS

How to appeal to
high-value guests



CANADA*

FT LONGITUDE

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT DESTINATION CANADA'S RESEARCH

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to find out what high-value guests want and highlight opportunities for travel industry professionals to win their business. Canada's reputation among high-value guests is also investigated: their perception of the country, and how Canada can increase its profile.

THE SURVEY

The data in this report is based on a survey commissioned by Destination Canada and conducted by FT Longitude. The 300 respondents were executives working as travel agents, tour operators and meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) operators, whose clients spend at least US\$1,000 per day on travel. Destination Canada conducted the survey across 10 different countries in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific (APAC).

THE EXPERTS

To find out more about the mindsets, habits and decision-making of high-value guests, in-depth interviews were conducted with three high-end travel experts based in each region:

MARION BARRÈRE

Head of Curation, Mr & Mrs Smith (Europe)

JACK EZON

Founder and Managing Partner, EMBARK Beyond (North America)

YVONNE VERSTANDIG

Director, Y Travel (APAC)

The research was conducted in November and December 2022.

HIGH-VALUE GUESTS - GOING BEYOND DOLLARS AND CENTS

Destination Canada's strategy focuses on high-value guests. This means looking at guests from both a 'value' and 'values' perspective.

From a value perspective, Destination Canada is seeking travellers that have a higher-than-average income and travel frequently. An important subset and the focus of this study is the high-end travel market, where travellers are spoilt for choice and have the financial freedom to embark on any travel adventure they desire.

From a values perspective, they offer more than how much they spend.

These travellers immerse themselves in a destination, embrace heritage and culture, and genuinely seek to leave the destination better than they found it. They are conscious about the way they travel and are increasingly aware of their social responsibility and environmental footprint.

To win business in the high-end travel market, which is forecast to be worth US\$2.6 trillion by 2030¹, the travel industry needs to tune into the inner motivations of high-value guests. Travel advisors must find out what is most valuable to them to make their thoughts and desires a reality, and to create trips that are bespoke, exclusive and unforgettable.

¹ <https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2022/10/10/2530851/0/en/Luxury-Travel-Market-Size-Worth-USD-2-61-trillion-by-2030-Growth-Prospects-Investment-Analysis-Increasing-Demand-Outlook-Adroit-Market-Research.html>





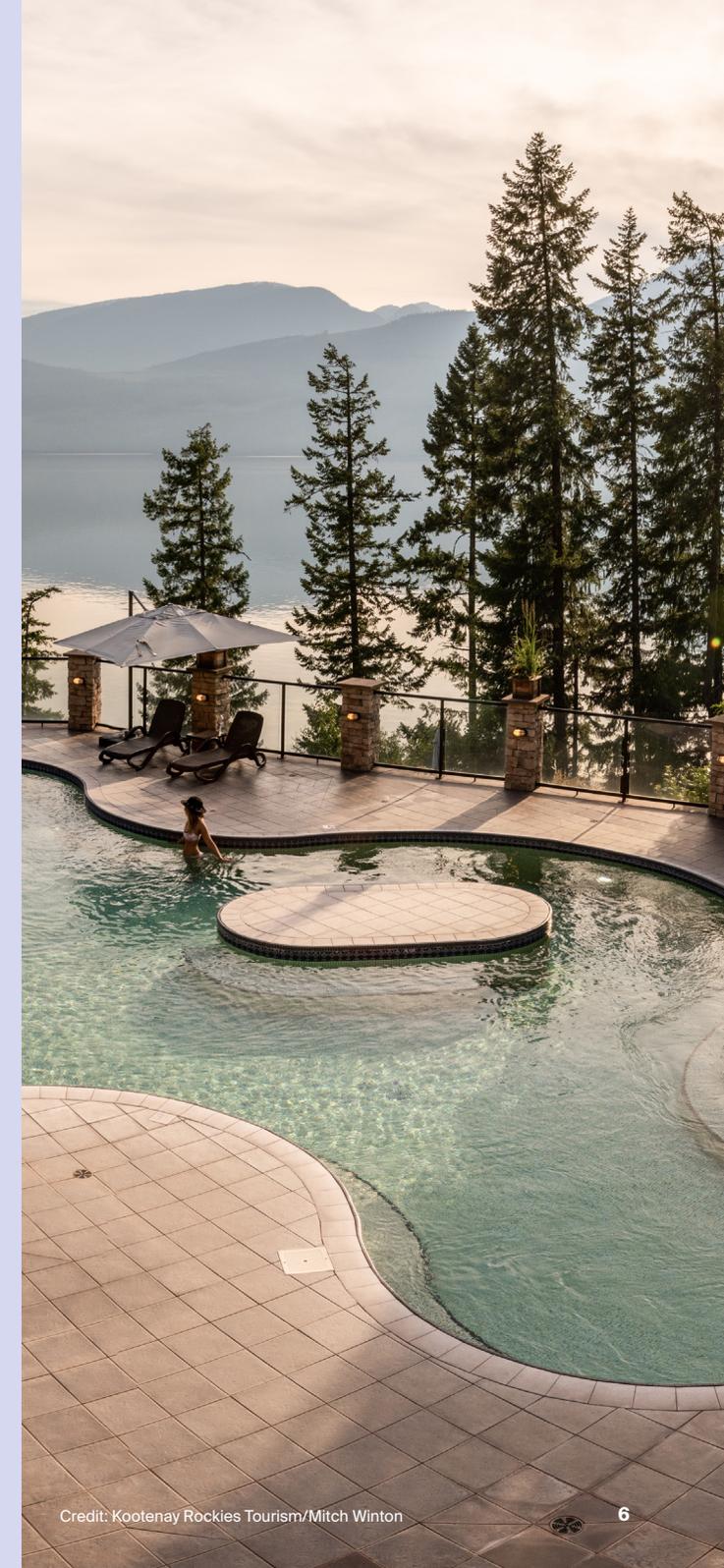
Destination Canada's new research reveals what is shaping high-end travel today:

- In a post-lockdown world, high-value guests want to travel internationally and feel safe doing so.
- They want international trips, new destinations and spur-of-the-moment adventures.
- Minimizing their carbon footprints is increasingly important to them.
- Eliminating friction from customer journeys (i.e., the end-to-end customer experience) and offering exceptional accommodation are key.

The definition of what high-value guests want is shifting. What new motivations, trends and predictions does the travel industry need to know about? And how can it make the most of this market?

The research also takes a localized view of how Canada is perceived in the minds of high-value guests.

The findings reveal three laws of attraction the travel industry should leverage to connect with high-value guests and ensure that every trip is tailored to their needs.





**KNOW
WHAT
MAKES
THEM
TICK**

Macro needs in the high-end travel market

WHAT DO HIGH-VALUE GUESTS DESIRE?



Here are seven factors that have the strongest influence on everything from destination to experience choices, and also help the course of the customer journey to run smoothly.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

When respondents were asked what has the biggest influence on the overall decision-making of high-value guests, safety and security came top of the list. And this is no longer just associated with the pandemic: COVID-19 safety protocols are less of a consideration than they were two years ago and worries about geopolitical unrest have come to the fore.

With the war in Ukraine ongoing and civil unrest in several other countries, this is a trend that is widely predicted to continue in 2023.¹ The travel industry will need to reassure high-value guests during the purchasing process that they will not be affected by this kind of disruption.

¹ <https://www.businesstravelnewseurope.com/Management/Geopolitical-disruption-tops-travel-risks-for-2023/>



53%

of respondents say that geopolitical concerns are shaping the travel decisions of high-value guests more than ever



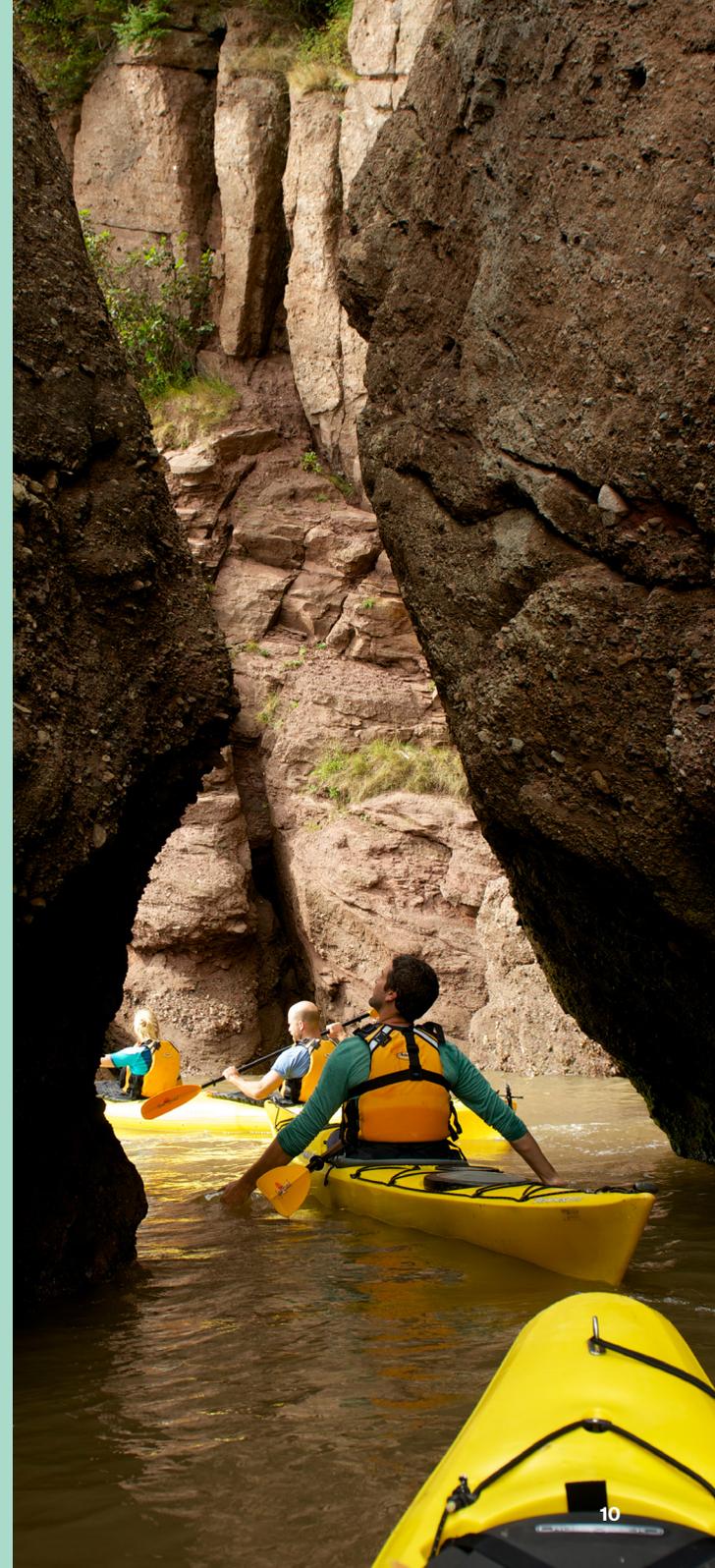
Credit: Ryan Clennett @ryanclennett



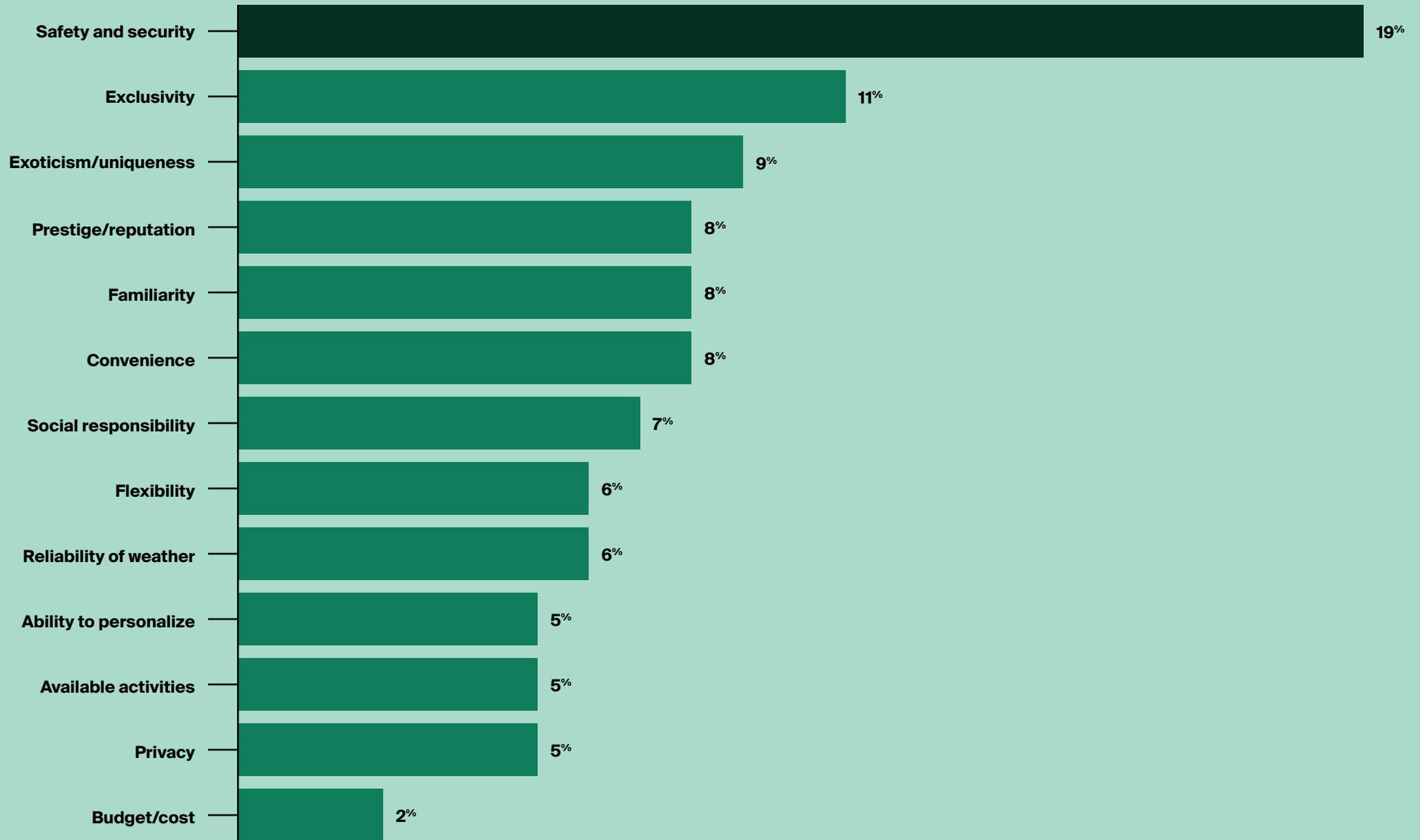
Credit: Andy Best @andy_best

Because of the prominence of geopolitical concerns, safety and security is also an important influence on travellers' choice of destination, and on their decision-making overall. However, high-end accommodation and reputation also have a strong bearing on destination choice.

To make safety and security a top priority, travel advisors can make sure they are fully aware of potential risks and communicate these with complete transparency. To address worries over whether destinations are safe, positive case studies could be used to reassure clients. Travel advisors could also encourage clients to register their travels with their embassy and/or consulate so help can be accessed if needed.



Safety and security has the biggest influence on the travel decisions of high-value guests



Which of the following do you perceive to be the biggest influence on the travel decisions of high-value travellers?

“

Luxury isn't measured by how big your room is anymore – it's a given that it has to be a great room.

It's a given that you need great food and amenities. The measure of luxury is how you make someone feel.

JACK EZON

Founder and Managing Partner
EMBARC Beyond



WORLD-CLASS ACCOMMODATION

For leisure travel, high-end accommodation is the top influence on destination choice. It is seen as more important than a welcoming culture and fine dining options across all regions.

But what constitutes high-end accommodation? Jack Ezon, Founder and Managing Partner of high-end travel experts EMBARK Beyond, explains that it has to have an emotional impact, but this can be difficult to generate. “The ability to deliver emotional impact through travel is more challenging as hotels become more like asset optimization engines and less about hospitality,” he says. “We often have the best success with independent properties because they’re driven by different things.”



More than half of respondents (57%) say that private accommodation is the preferred choice of high-value guests over hotels or resorts. Experience-led amenities, such as hotels offering guests the chance to immerse themselves in the natural landscape, local life or sustainability initiatives, are also becoming increasingly popular.²

This new definition of high-end accommodation marks a shift. In a conventional sense, 'high-end' is measured by exquisite furnishings and extravagant levels of service. However, high-value guests now want a bespoke approach that considers what is important to the individual.

The desire for a bespoke approach is reflected in the fact that 58% of respondents say most high-value guests are open to their advice on travel decisions. North American respondents and meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) operators are more likely than respondents overall to agree that clients value their advice.

² <https://www.traveldailymedia.com/5-key-trends-set-to-shape-the-hospitality-industry-in-2023-cloudbeds/>



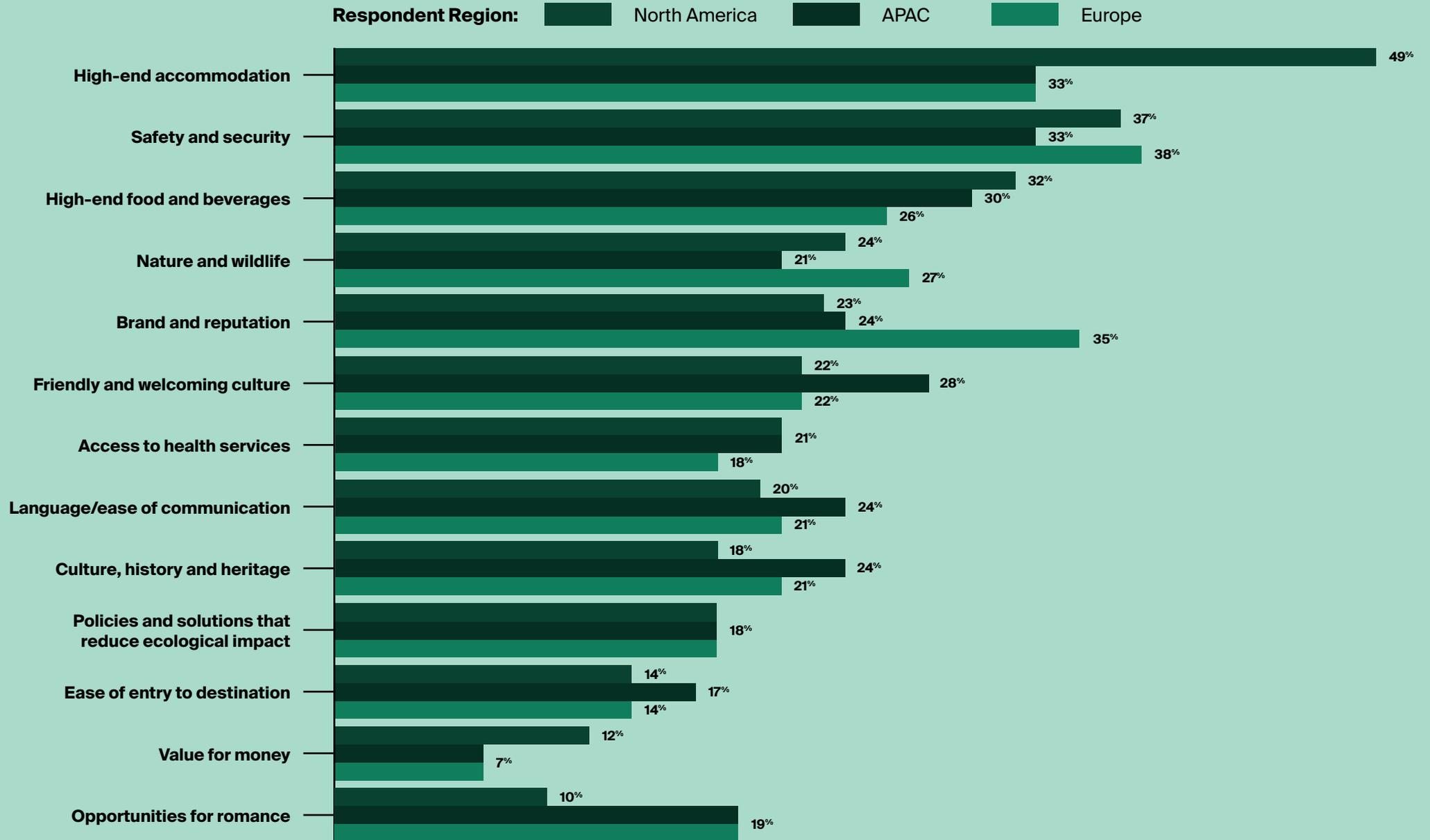


57%

of respondents say that high-value guests prefer private accommodation to hotels or resorts

Travel advisors can use their influence to highlight how accommodation can meet their clients' needs for bespoke and exclusive experiences, while still offering the comforts they expect. By finding out what is important to clients, travel advisors can present accommodation types that will have a memorable and emotional impact.

Accommodation has strong bearing on destination choice, especially for North Americans



Which of the following factors are the most important in driving high-value guests' choice of destination for leisure trips?

EFFORTLESS EXCLUSIVITY

This bespoke approach feeds into the experiences that high-value guests value the most. Results reveal that exclusivity is the second biggest factor to influence the overall decisions of high-value guests (following safety and security), and this is reflected in the services they demand.

At 42%, exclusive/VIP experiences are the most popular service for high-value guests, which shows that trips are increasingly about experiences and experience-led amenities. This rises to 53% for big spenders (those with a daily spend of US\$5,000+). Travellers want their trips to be memorable and are therefore prepared to pay for one-of-a-kind activities that are not available to everyone.³

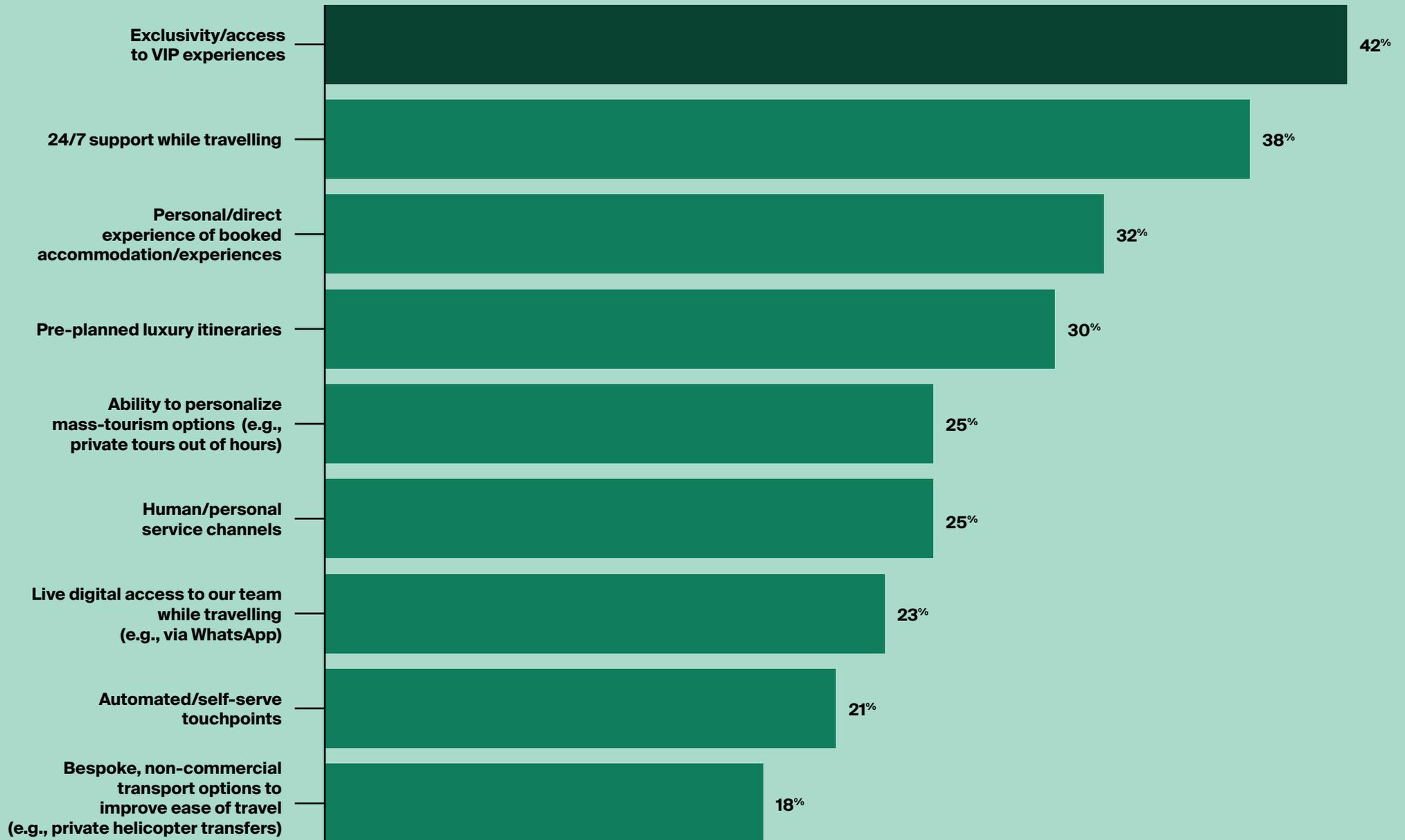
Yvonne Verstandig, Director of high-end travel curator Y Travel, explains that once-in-a-lifetime experiences used to be saved for significant events, but this has changed. “We are seeing a shift towards travellers prioritizing bucket-list experiences. In the past, they may have saved the northern lights, for example, for a milestone event. In the past couple of years, people are saying, ‘I just want to experience it now.’”

This presents an opportunity for travel advisors to think outside the box. What experiences will take the client away from the normal vacation track and fulfil their needs at the same time?

³ https://www.artisansofleisure.com/press_releases/luxury-travel-trends-right-now-according-to-the-experts/



Exclusivity/access to VIP experiences and 24/7 support are favoured by high-value guests



Which of the following are the most popular services/offerings for your high-value customers?



59%

of respondents say that high-value guests will pay more for convenience at any point in the customer journey

PERSONALIZED CONVENIENCE

Convenience is an important influence on the decisions of high-value guests, and 59% of respondents say that high-value guests will pay more for convenience at any point in the customer journey.

Similarly, 57% say that high-value guests will only make travel purchases if they are confident that the services will be highly customized to their needs. Round-the-clock support, meanwhile, is their second most desired service. However, although mobile technology allows travel businesses to provide this kind of on-hand support, 31% of respondents say they don't optimize mobile-friendly systems for high-value guests.

Travel advisors can assess what convenience looks like for their clients. Does it involve more automation in the customer journey, easy ways to communicate with their travel advisor or a central place to store tickets, itineraries and so on? How can convenience be achieved while maintaining a personal touch?

A SEAMLESS CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Providing a smooth, stress-free customer journey is the first step toward convenience. To remove friction, the travel industry needs to understand what parts of that journey cause the most inconvenience.

Just as accommodation is the most important decision driver for high-value guests' choice of destination, it is also the part of travel that generates the most stress and complaints.

Transportation and travel booking/scheduling closely follow as the most stressful touchpoints overall. For APAC and European respondents, transportation is ranked slightly higher than accommodation as the touchpoint that causes the most stress/complaints. Respondents in North America (and the US in particular) rank the booking and scheduling process as more stressful than the transportation.

48%

of North American respondents say that accommodation causes the most stress and complaints



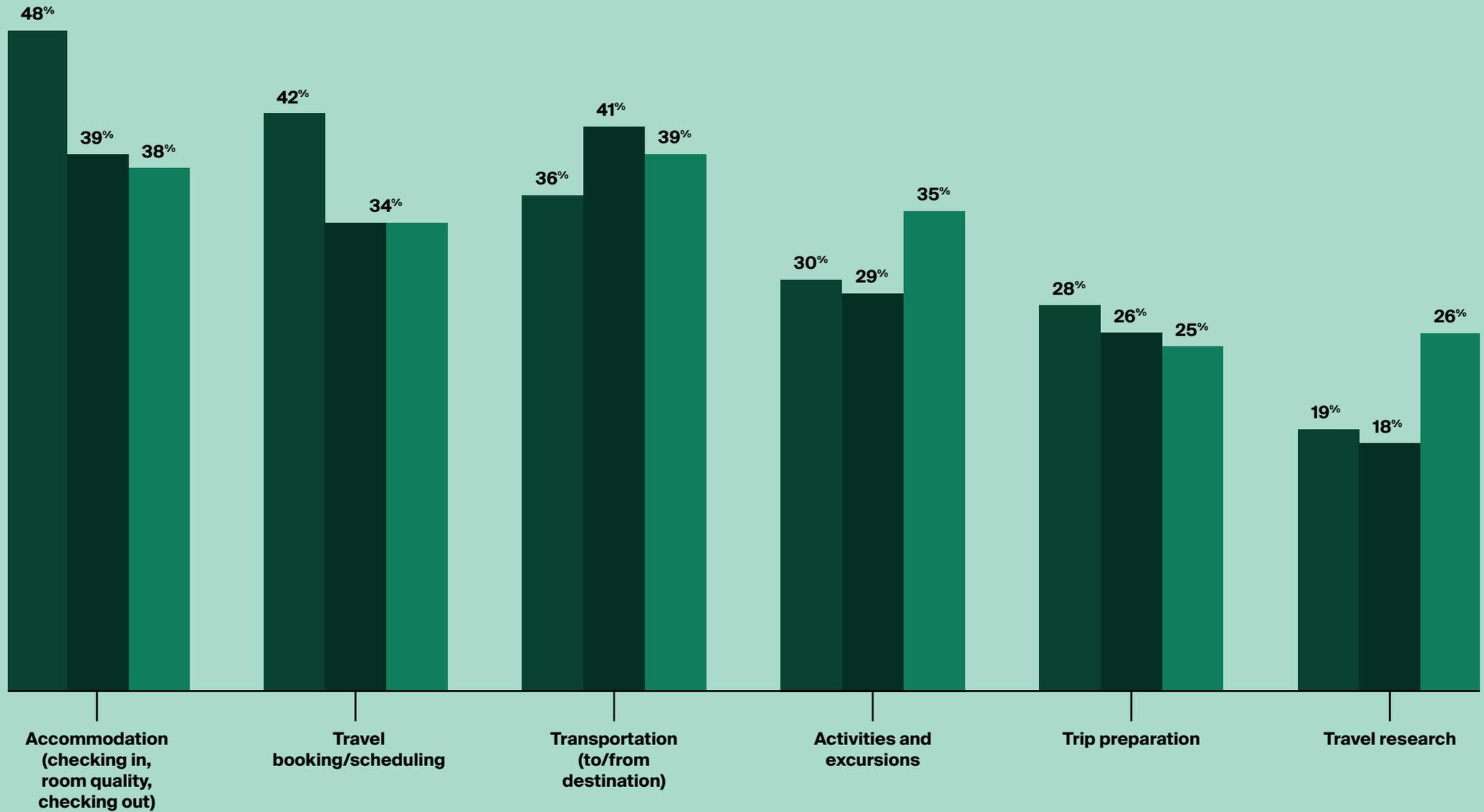
For MICE operators, activities and excursions emerged as the touchpoints most likely to generate stress and complaints (42%) – 10% higher than the industry average.

“The customer experience needs to be a seamless journey,” says Marion Barrère, Head of Curation at boutique hotel provider Mr & Mrs Smith. “Our members are time-short, so they want you to pre-empt their questions, offer flexibility and also have the availability you promise them when you recommend the destination.”



Travel research generates the least stress and the fewest complaints

Respondent Region: North America APAC Europe



Which customer journey touchpoints tend to generate the most stress and complaints for high-value travellers?

INFLUENTIAL REVIEWS

Results show that reviews are persuasive at the booking stage of the customer journey, so these could be a useful tool for travel advisors. Over half (54%) of respondents say that reviews or feedback from other high-value guests can make or break their booking decisions. Among big spenders (those spending over US\$5,000 per day on leisure trips) this is even higher: 60% say that reviews or feedback have a strong influence.

Travel advisors can use reviews strategically to promote their own services, destinations and experiences. Making reviews available via a central database will make it easy for customer-facing employees to access and use them in client conversations. Identifying patterns can determine which experiences to recommend and avoid, reveal the highlights and lowlights of an experience or destination, and even present ways to personalize products and services.⁴

⁴ <https://business.trustpilot.com/guides-reports/browsers-to-buyers/5-unique-review-strategies-to-grow-your-travel-business>



THE POWER OF SOCIAL

Half of respondents say that social media and the role of influencers play a significant role in the decision-making process of high-value guests today, and this is the case regardless of daily spend.

“Social media has become very useful for helping us to access a lot of new clients in recent years,” says Verstandig. “Three years ago, the source of our incoming business was probably 90% referrals and 10% social. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s probably 50/50, which is huge.”

As well as influencing the decisions of high-value guests, social media is a tool that can be used to reach the masses. As Jack Ezon of EMBARK Beyond explains, an image or a video on social media can boost awareness and drive the wider market toward a high-value place or experience.



“Luxury trickles down. When you see something great with a great story that looks cool, that’s what people write about. Those are the images you see on social media, and it drives the rest of anyone else in that market.”

Social media can be used strategically to promote services, destinations and experiences to new and existing clients. Compelling videos and images can be used to ensure a brand reaches a wider audience, can influence existing clients’ decisions and can elevate a relatively unknown or overlooked destination.





MATCH THEIR WISHLISTS

Micro trends in the high-end travel market

WHAT SERVICES, EXPERIENCES AND OFFERINGS DO HIGH-VALUE GUESTS WISH FOR?



Fulfilling the overarching needs of high-value guests is essential, but it is the details that will turn their desires into reality.

HIGH-VALUE GUESTS ARE REDISCOVERING THEMSELVES

The priorities of high-value guests are shifting. Respondents say that, over the past two years, travellers' biggest priorities have been COVID-19 safety protocols, domestic travel and returning to locations they have previously visited. During the next two years, they expect the popularity of international travel, new destinations and minimizing carbon footprint to grow.

Just 19% of respondents say that international travel has been a priority for travellers over the past two years, but 52% say it will become more popular in the next two years. This reflects wider expectations that 2022's international travel surge is set to continue in 2023.⁵

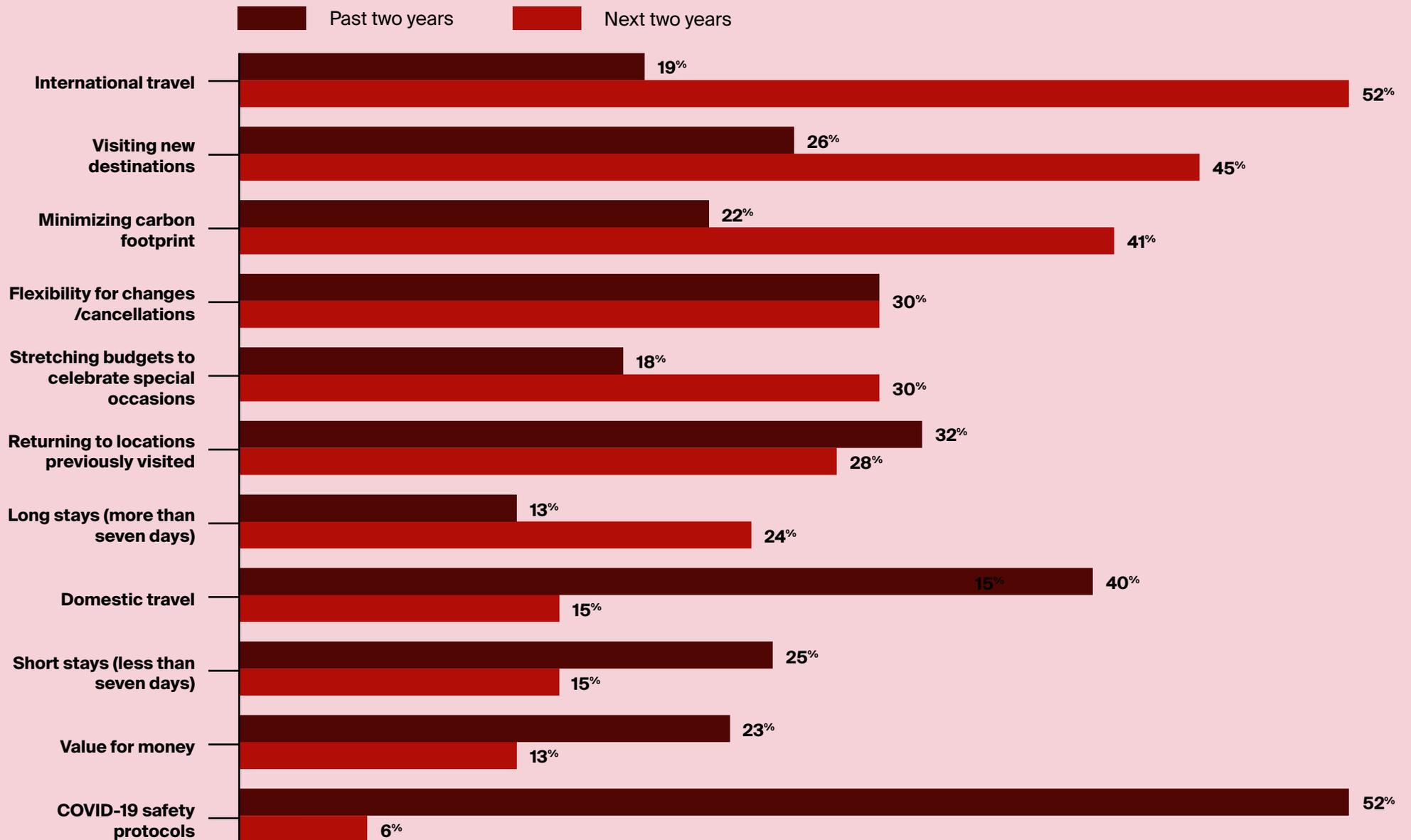
⁵ <https://www.dw.com/en/international-travel-surged-in-2022-un-says/a-64430320>



61%

of respondents say the decisions of high-value guests are mostly made last minute, with limited scope for advance planning

Priorities will shift from domestic travel and COVID-19 protocols to international travel and new destinations



Which travel priorities for high-value travellers have increased over the past two years/do you expect to increase in the next two years?



“

More of the high-net-worth clientele are seeking slower and in-depth travel experiences.

Whether they're afraid of visiting too many destinations because of flight disruptions or they want to spend more time truly immersing themselves in one destination, since the pandemic we have definitely seen a trend for extended trips.

YVONNE VERSTANDIG

Director
Y Travel

LAST-MINUTE BOOKINGS AND EXTENSIONS



The majority (61%) of respondents say that the decisions of high-value guests are mostly made last minute, with limited scope for advance planning. Travel advisors, therefore, should have the flexibility and availability to schedule last-minute trips.

The survey also asked respondents what would prompt high-value guests to extend the length of their stay. High satisfaction rates while on the trip is the most likely factor to persuade high-value guests to stay for longer. Travel advisors need to be able to communicate effectively with their travelling clients and have the agility to respond to last-minute extension requests. The fact that respondents rank 24/7 support as high-value guests' second most desired service supports this.

Reviews advising longer stays is the second most likely factor to persuade high-value guests to extend their trip. This ties in with the finding that reviews or feedback from other high-value guests can make or break a booking decision. 'Quality of available activities' on the trip is also likely to persuade travellers to stay for longer.



30%

of respondents say that flexibility around changes/cancellations will continue to be a priority for high-value guests

A HUMAN TOUCH IS PREFERABLE, BUT AUTOMATION IS AN OPTION



Just as convenience is an important influence on the decisions of high-value guests, flexibility is crucial in meeting their needs – whether to help them extend their trips at the last minute or to make the customer journeys a smooth process.

So, it is no surprise that when it comes to changes and cancellations flexibility will be as important in the coming years as it was during the pandemic. Nearly a third (30%) of respondents say that this has been a priority during the past two years, and the same proportion say that it will continue to be a priority.

MICE respondents were more likely than travel agents and tour operators to agree that flexibility for changes and cancellations has been a priority over the last two years, but less likely to say that it will continue to be over the next two years.

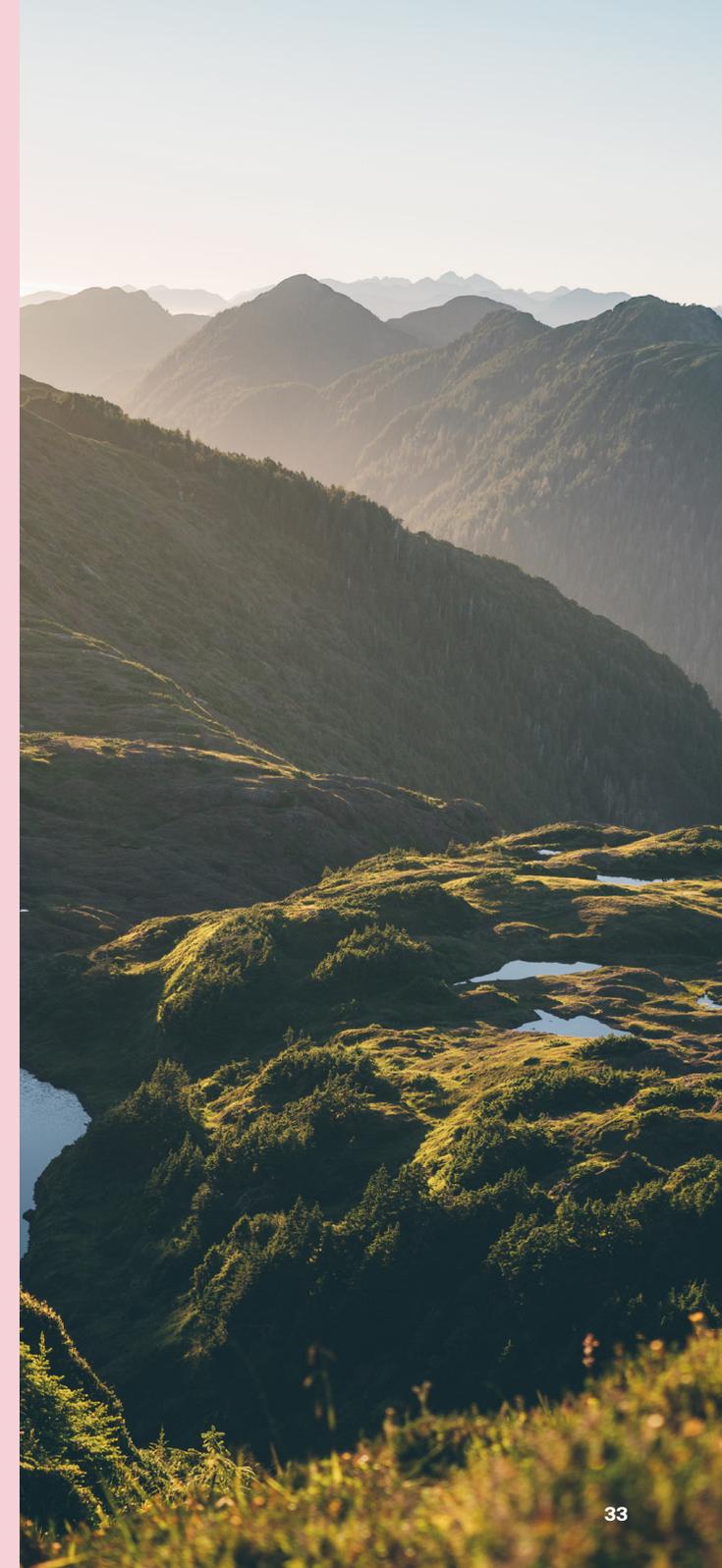


To meet this need for flexibility, travel agents may look into automation and self-service options, which high-value guests are not completely against. Twenty-one percent of respondents say that self-service touchpoints are the most popular service channels for high-value guests.

In Europe and APAC, human service channels are more popular than self-service. However, just 15% of North American respondents say that human/personal service channels are popular, compared with 20% who agree that self-service channels are favoured.

For travel advisors, this presents an efficiency opportunity – especially as 62% say that personal assistants make travel bookings for high-end clients. A similar proportion (61%) say that the decisions of high-value guests are mostly made last minute, with limited scope for advance planning, which raises the question of whether automation could also help with this. Demand for 24/7 support while travelling is another reason why self-service and/or automation could enhance the customer experience.

Travel advisors can consider the touchpoints in the consumer journey that could be automated in a guest-friendly way, while being mindful of which situations and scenarios require a personal touch.



TRIPS NEED TO STRIKE A BALANCE WITH ECO RESPONSIBILITIES

During the next two years, 41% of respondents expect more travellers will want to minimize their carbon footprints. This is almost double the number who saw this as a priority over the past two years.

Results suggest that European high-value guests are already making their carbon footprints a priority: 29% of European respondents say they served clients who prioritized ecological experiences in 2022, compared with just 19% of



North American respondents and 16% of APAC respondents. Europe is also the region where social responsibility has had the biggest influence on travel decisions.

Marion Barrère of Mr & Mrs Smith, who is based in the UK, explains that sustainable travel is a growing concern for clients. “Our customers are becoming more conscious about the way they travel,” she says. “We’ve never had so many taking the Eurostar to Paris and then travelling in Europe via train.”

Considering that high-value guests want to both minimize their carbon footprints and take extended trips, the travel industry will need to consider how to balance or blend the two. They might encourage clients to fly direct if they can, choose alternative transport options such as trains, use tour operators with eco credentials, give back to local communities affected by climate change and eat local.

“

**Our customers
are becoming
more conscious
about the way
they travel.**

MARION BARRÈRE
Head of Curation
Mr & Mrs Smith



WELLNESS IS HAVING A MOMENT

Overall, wellness experiences (35%) have been most prioritized by high-value guests over the past 12 months, followed by cultural exploration (30%), family-friendly experiences (28%) and experiential experiences (28%).

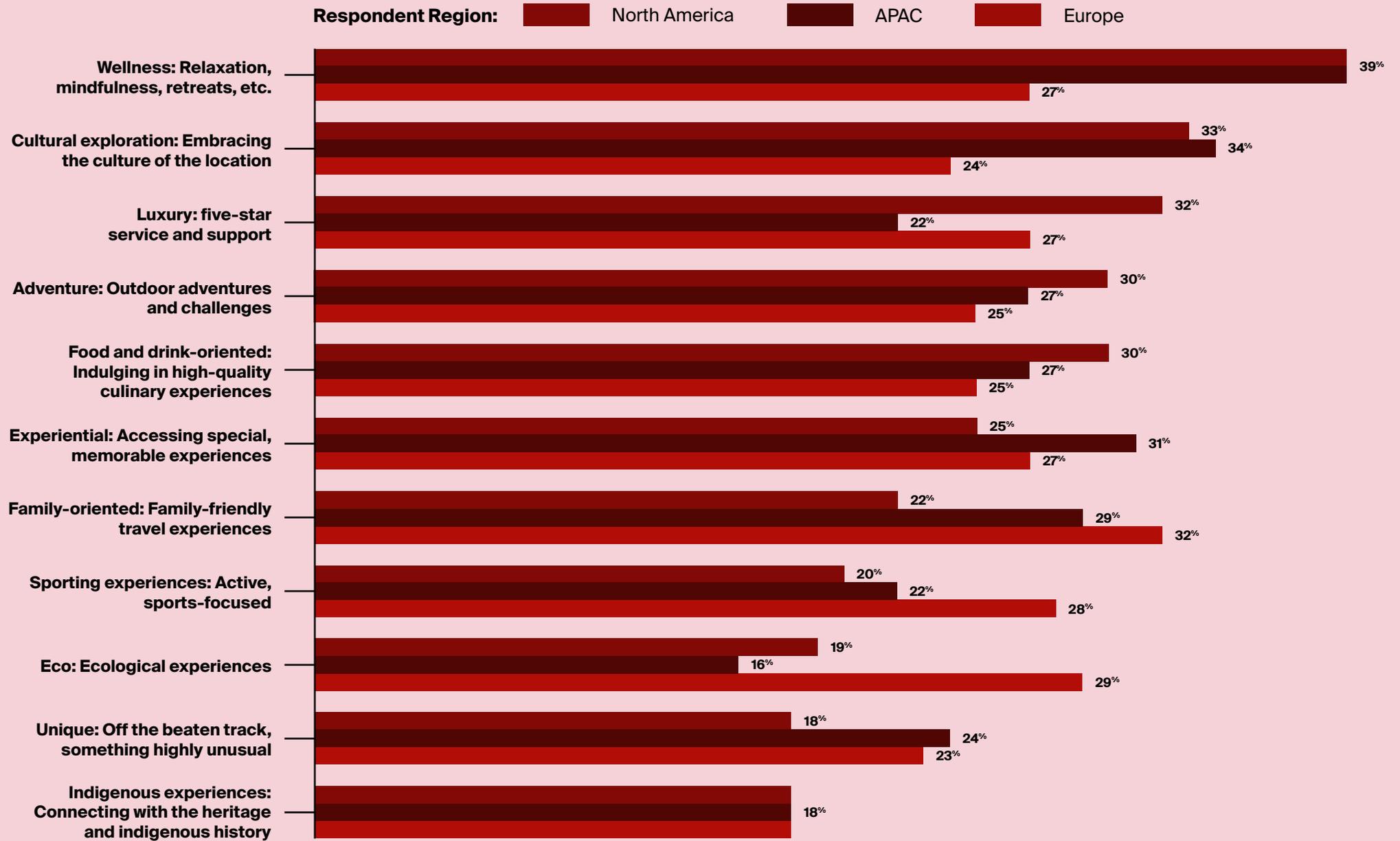
The popularity of wellness tourism is predicted to continue, reflecting a shift in traveller values toward sustainability, mental wellness and a desire to connect with nature.⁶

The regions have different priorities, however. APAC and North American respondents are prioritizing wellness retreats and cultural exploration, but European respondents are favouring family-friendly, ecological and sporting experiences.

Travel advisors can ensure they have wellness factored into their offerings. Outside of products or experiences, this can tie into day-to-day aspects. For example, curate an itinerary that ensures the client is completely removed from their everyday life and has free time to relax, if they wish, and provide on-hand support so issues can be dealt with in a straightforward and stress-free manner.

⁶ <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/wellness-tourism-spas-thermal-mineral-springs-the-global-wellness-economy-looking-beyond-covid/#:~:text=The%20impressive%2021%25%20annual%20growth,demand%20in%202021%20and%202022>

While APAC and North America favour wellness experiences, Europe has different priorities



What types of experiences have your high-value guests been prioritizing this year?

BLENDED TRAVEL ON THE RISE

More than half (55%) of respondents say that traveller demand for combined business and leisure travel ('blended travel') is higher than pre-pandemic. Similarly, 51% of respondents say that high-end travel bookings are typically for groups that include a mix of business travellers and those travelling for leisure. Bigger spenders are more likely to tack on personal travel to business trips.

Blended travel is on the rise across all regions. Half of APAC respondents, 56% of European and 59% of North American respondents agree that demand is higher than pre-pandemic levels, while just 10% overall think that demand is lower than before the pandemic. More than half of US respondents (56%) say that they typically book for groups that include both business and leisure travellers, compared with just 36% of Canadian respondents.



The majority of respondents working for travel agencies (59%) and tour operators (56%) also agreed that blended travel has increased since before the pandemic. Nearly half (49%) of MICE operators agree that demand has risen, compared with just 8% who say it is lower than before the pandemic.

EMBARC Beyond's Jack Ezon says that for his clients, business and leisure are interchangeable. "When our clients travel for business, they have similar requirements when travelling for leisure. And even when travelling for leisure, they still want somewhere to work if they need to."

This supports a growing trend that travellers are not just tacking leisure onto their business trips, they are also planning leisure trips with time for work. This phenomenon has been dubbed 'lisness.'⁷

Travel advisors could offer accommodation that is set up for both business and leisure, with a space to work, a reliable internet connection and plenty of power outlets. Providing accommodation near to amenities and attractions will ensure that business travellers can make the most of their leisure time, as will experiences or activities that can be enjoyed outside the 9 to 5 working day.

⁷ <https://www.cntraveller.com/article/travel-trends>





**SHOW
OFF
YOUR
BEST
ASSETS**

How Canada competes for the high-end travel market

CAN HIGH-VALUE GUESTS ESTABLISH A MEANINGFUL CONNECTION WITH CANADA?



The survey explored where Canada excels and where it needs to manage the message when it comes to high-end travel.

HOW CANADA IS PERCEIVED BY HIGH-VALUE GUESTS

Canada is seen as a family-friendly winter destination with great natural attractions and a welcoming, inclusive culture. Respondents say that high-quality natural attractions are the number one factor that high-value guests associate with Canada (41%), followed by its family-friendliness (31%) and its reputation as a winter destination (29%).



37%

of European respondents say that lack of awareness of Canada's selling points discourages high-value guests from visiting Canada, compared with 32% of APAC respondents and 28% of North American respondents



“For skiing, Whistler is great,” says EMBARK Beyond’s Jack Ezon. “It’s probably the top ski destination in Canada. For nature, Banff National Park is gorgeous. Montreal and Toronto deliver cosmopolitan experiences. Toronto is becoming much cooler. With the art and hotel scene improving, it’s getting more attention.”

Since safety and security is a top priority for high-value guests, Canada’s welcoming, inclusive and family-friendly associations are especially valuable. APAC and European respondents are more likely to say that Canada has a welcoming and inclusive culture than North American respondents.

Canada is predominantly perceived as a winter destination rather than a summer destination across all regions and segments. According to respondents, the abundance of winter activities and its reputation as a winter destination are reasons to recommend Canada to high-value guests.

More than a quarter (27%) of North American respondents say that high-value guests associate Canada with vibrant cities; however, just 13% of APAC respondents agree. In contrast, 27% of APAC say that adventurous activities are associated with Canada, while only around 19% of European and North American respondents say the same.

European respondents, meanwhile, are the most likely to say that high-value guests perceive Canada as a place with outdoor sightseeing.

WHAT DO HIGH-VALUE GUESTS ASSOCIATE WITH CANADA?



01

High-quality
natural attractions

02

Family-friendly destination

03

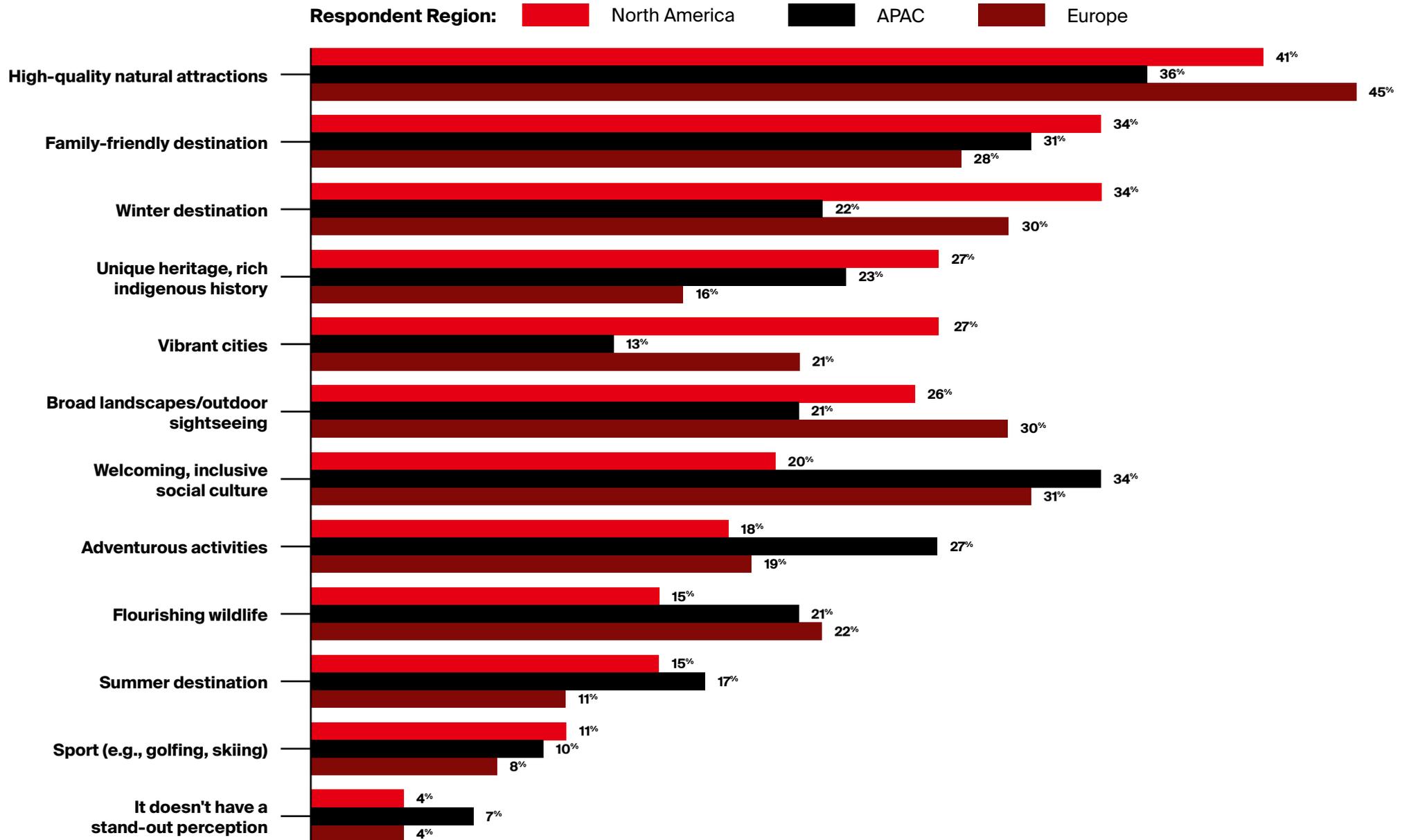
Winter destination

04

Welcoming, inclusive
social culture



High-value guests associate Canada with high-quality natural attractions



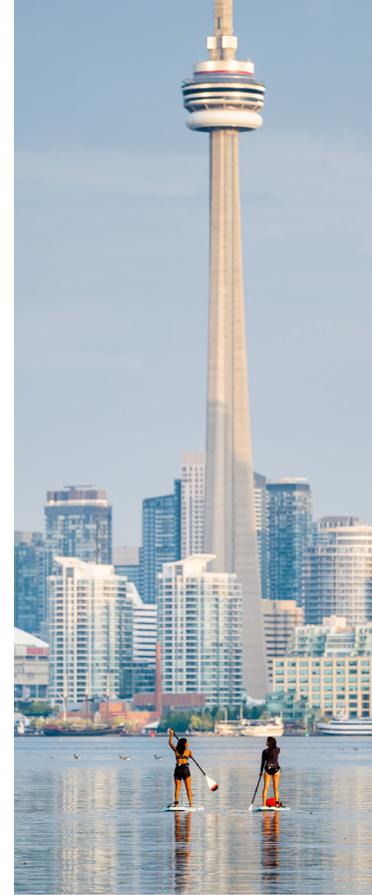
What do you perceive Canada stands for in the minds of high-value travellers today?



MOST ADVISORS WOULD RECOMMEND CANADA

More than half of respondents (52%) say they would suggest that their high-end clients put Canada on their shortlists for the coming year, and an additional 24% would suggest visiting in the next two to three years.

The majority of APAC respondents (54%) and North American respondents (58%) would recommend that clients put Canada on their shortlists for the coming year, but for European respondents it is only 44%.





The Indigenous cultures in Canada were identified by travel advisors as a key reason to recommend a visit to their clients. Canada's natural attractions, winter activities and cultural openness are also top reasons for travel advisors to recommend it. In the US, respondents say that Canada's family-friendly culture is their joint top reason to recommend the country, alongside its natural attractions.

Positive feedback from other travellers would encourage 33% of APAC respondents to recommend Canada to their high-value guests, compared with 20% of North American respondents and only 17% of European respondents.

MICE respondents are more than twice as likely as travel agents and tour operators to say that Canada is a trending destination for their guests.

A quarter (25%) of respondents said that the diverse Indigenous culture and history would be a reason to recommend Canada. This reflects a wider trend of Indigenous experiences becoming one of the most enriching ways for travellers to immerse themselves in culture by sharing traditions, history and stories. Learning about Indigenous culture also feeds into wider themes that appeal to high-value guests, including conscious travel, appreciating the natural landscape and accessing authentic experiences away from the tourist trail.



IN OUR RESPONDENTS' WORDS: REASONS TO RECOMMEND CANADA

“

There are a lot of authentically sophisticated experiences available in Canada for high-net-worth individuals.

The country is safe, culturally well centred, provides world-class hospitality and will deliver sophisticated experiences when given a chance. All of this falls in favour of high-net-worth individuals and their expectations.

The natural beauty in Canada makes it worth recommending to high-net-worth individuals.

It's an ideal place for nature lovers and people wanting to relax, or enjoy the winter.

It's a class apart for those seeking winter experiences.

It's suited for family and business visits, or also when customers want a longer trip to be arranged.

There is a small list of exclusive locations in Canada that are high-net-worth individual-worthy, which is why I would recommend it to them.

There is a lot in Canada that the world doesn't know about and can only be witnessed once you visit.

WHY CANADA SHOULD BE MORE VOCAL ABOUT ITS SELLING POINTS

About 17% of respondents have interacted with a Canadian marketing campaign or business partnership that successfully persuaded them to recommend Canada to high-value guests.

The majority of respondents (67%) at CEO or managing director level say they would recommend visiting Canada in the coming year, compared with 43% of those who work in bookings/customer service. This suggests that customer-facing roles would benefit from education about Canada's unique selling points.

Credit: © Manicouagan (North Shore) / Loïselle, Marc



USING THE LAWS OF ATTRACTION

What this means for high-value guests

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR CONNECTING WITH HIGH-VALUE GUESTS

Satisfying high-value guests is less of a box-ticking exercise and more about understanding the needs and desires of each client. High-end does not necessarily mean extravagance — instead, it is about ‘how you make someone feel.’

The survey findings show ten clear mantras for the travel industry to use these laws of attraction and win business in the high-end travel market.

“

People are particular about what’s valuable to them.

And when you know what’s valuable and what’s meaningful, there’s no price point.

JACK EZON
Founder and Managing Partner
EMBARK Beyond



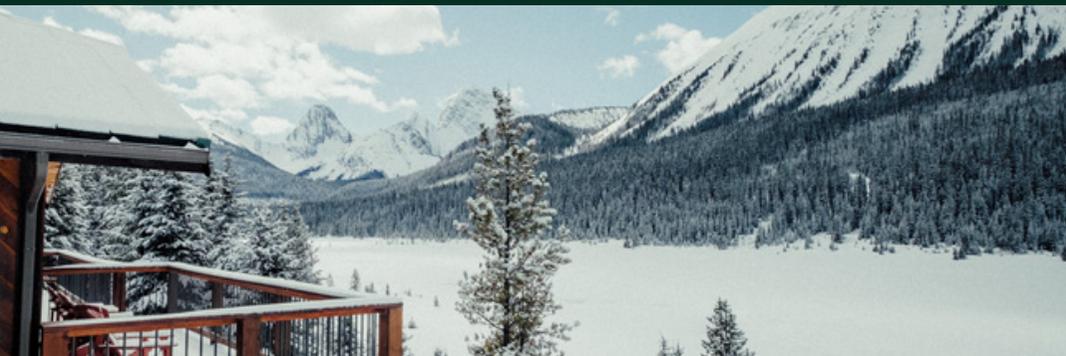
KNOW WHAT MAKES THEM TICK

1. Make safety and security a top priority: While COVID-19-related concerns have abated, geopolitical worries persist. When selling Canadian experiences, reinforce that Canada is a nation of open hearts and minds. That we're proud to be an inclusive and welcoming destination where it's easy to get off the beaten path. Moreover, reinforce that Canada as a nation brand is well-respected and trusted, this can help give travellers confidence in the health and safety information provided.

2. Exclusivity and exoticism drive decisions: Don't be afraid to think outside the box and take your high-value guest away from the normal vacation track. Seek out unique experiences to surprise and excite them. When selling Canada, keep in mind that Indigenous experiences, wildlife viewing, wellness retreats, outdoor adventures, and culinary experiences all provide great opportunities to elevate a guest's experience of Canada. Note that some experiences are full in peak seasons, so consider securing your guests more private and exclusive access by booking the shoulder season!

3. Accommodation is crucial to destination choice: As well as ensuring availability, travel advisors need to understand what makes accommodation 'high value.' It's not necessarily about 5+ star luxury. Perhaps the hotel or property offers a unique experience rather than world-class facilities, for example. Highlight that Canadian cities are right on the edge of nature which means your guests can experience luxury accommodations then head out to explore some of the world's greatest natural attractions.

4. Harness the power of social: Know who your clients are following on social media to find out what kind of travel they are aspiring to. Create a compelling social media strategy to reach new clients and to promote high-value experiences to a wider audience. Think about how you can get your guides and other frontline team members to build a story and create online advocacy. Encourage your guests to post stories about themselves too, before, during, and especially after their trip! And make sure to leverage the #ExploreCanada hashtag when posting about Canadian destinations.





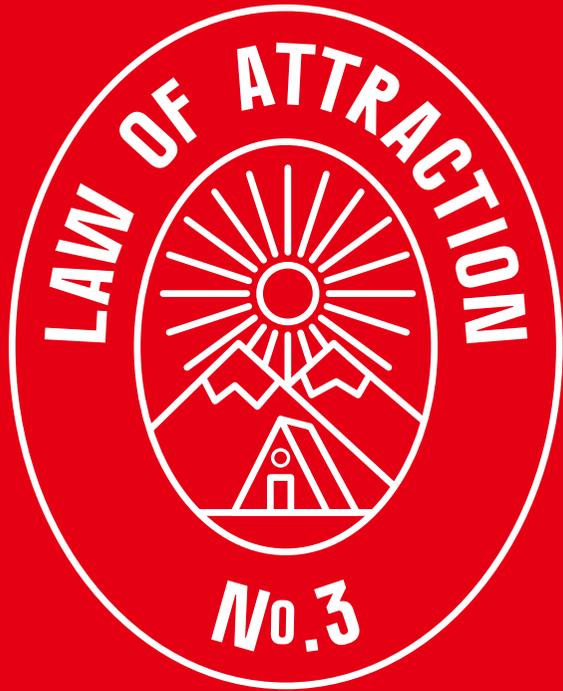
MATCH THEIR WISHLISTS

5. Champion your own expertise: Offering advice and recommendations tailored to the client's needs and wishes will deliver a bespoke, high-value service. Think about the customer journey touchpoints that can be automated in a guest-friendly way, while being mindful of the situations where your expertise should be an email or phone call away. Ensure that guests have a way to feel in control both before and during their trip. Our research shows a critical moment in the customer journey is when someone shows up to their accommodation for the first time, so think about what you can do to elevate this experience to make it feel special.

6. Prepare for last-minute requests: Most high-value guests favour last-minute plans and are likely to extend their stay while on the trip. Ensure you can communicate effectively with your travelling clients and have the flexibility and availability to fulfill their needs at short notice. Strive to provide 24/7 concierge support and timely availability no matter where someone is in the customer journey, but especially during key moments such as at the completion of all intended pre-bookings, when someone first arrives to their accommodation, and nearing the end of their trip.

7. Consider blended travel: Ensure that accommodations have the space and connectivity for travellers to work, while being near to attractions and amenities so they can make the most of leisure time. When promoting specific properties, make sure to highlight the ability to work by referencing the availability of co-working spaces and high-speed internet access.





**SHOW
OFF
YOUR
BEST
ASSETS**



8. Improve knowledge of Canada's selling points: Although most advisors would recommend Canada, education is needed around Canada's selling points. Ensure that customer-facing staff have enough knowledge and resources to show off Canada's best assets. Some key features of Canada include our unique accommodations in stunning landscapes, adventure & wildlife activities, unique cultural and Indigenous experiences, and unbeatable access to the great outdoors.

9. Increase accommodation awareness and supply: In the short term, the travel industry can increase awareness of the high-value accommodation that Canada currently offers and effectively match this with demand. The long-term goal is to build a stronger network of high-end accommodation, for boosting Canada's visibility among high-value guests. If there's full occupancy at a desired property, note that nearly all of Canada's properties have alternative options with similarly fantastic experiences, sometimes just down the road and that most high-value guests are comfortable staying in private accommodation.

10. Consider seasonal availability: Be aware of summer versus winter availability and be sure to focus promotions on the relevant supply, with consideration that global travel trade agents are far more likely to describe Canada as a winter destination. When selling Canada, consider seasonal dispersion to ensure access to exclusive experiences and accommodations. Some unique experiences are only available during a regions' shoulder season such as heli-hiking, attending a winter festival, or experiencing a hot tub in the snow.

CANADA 

 LONGITUDE