

The hotel program wake-up call

02.18.26

Hotel landscape in 2026

Hotel programs may be back in volume, but without automation and expert guidance, they remain administratively heavy, leaving measurable savings unrealized and strategic capacity untapped.

By the numbers:
Hotel programs under pressure

Industry benchmarks echo our survey findings, showing a hotel sector where recovery has outpaced modernization, leaving programs to manage rising spend with outdated methods.

77%

77% of buyers expect 2025 hotel spend to meet or exceed 2024 levels (GBTA 2025).

61%

61% rarely or never audit rates, leaving negotiated value unverified (GBTA 2025).

86%

86% rank cost control as the top sourcing priority (BCD 2025).

52%

52% say negotiating/managing contracts is most time-consuming (BCD 2025).

67%

67% feel their role is undervalued despite expanding responsibilities (SAP Concur 2025).



8 key findings of today's hotel programs

Key finding #1: Travel managers are drowning in manual work.

- Administrative work consumes most of a travel manager's day. With automation and expert support, programs reclaim time for strategy, protect savings and elevate supplier performance.
- Automation turns routine checks (rate accuracy, expirations, booking visibility) into always-on safeguards. Expert support adds human leverage: applying market intelligence, engaging brand-level contacts when issues arise, assertively negotiating on behalf of clients, and driving outcomes that tools alone can't deliver.

Top three pain points of hotel program management



67%
Reservation
changes



65%
Accounting
issues



39%
Contract
management

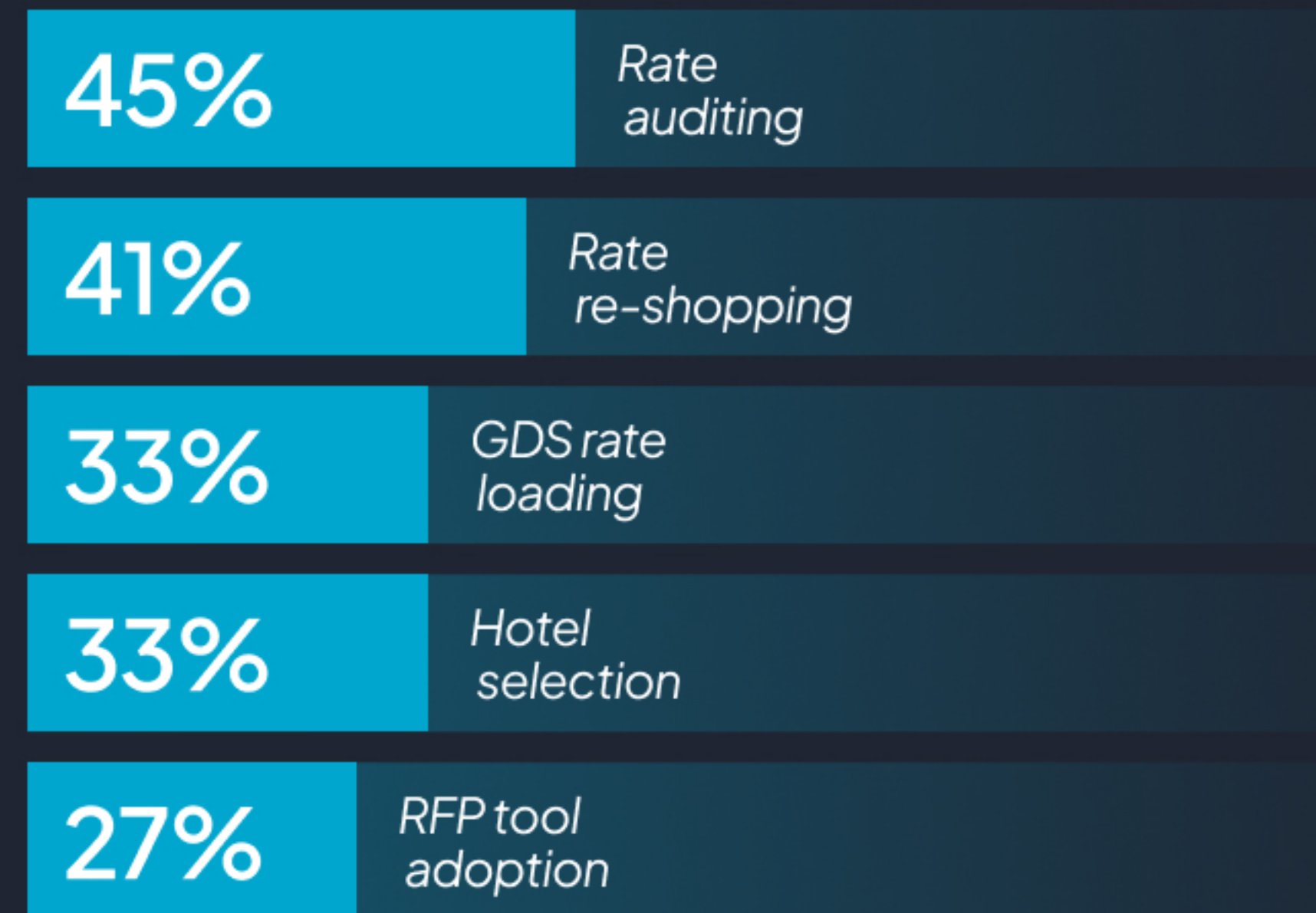


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Key finding #2: Critical gaps persist in hotel program execution.

- Savings aren't secured when contracts are signed. They're earned through continuous validation and diligent follow-through.
- Research shows that the greatest obstacles aren't in negotiating rates—they're in maintaining, auditing, and optimizing them. Respondents most frequently cited rate auditing (45%) and rate re-shopping (41%) as areas where they need the most help, followed closely by GDS rate loading (33%), hotel selection (33%), and RFP tool adoption (27%).

In which areas of hotel sourcing could you use the most assistance?

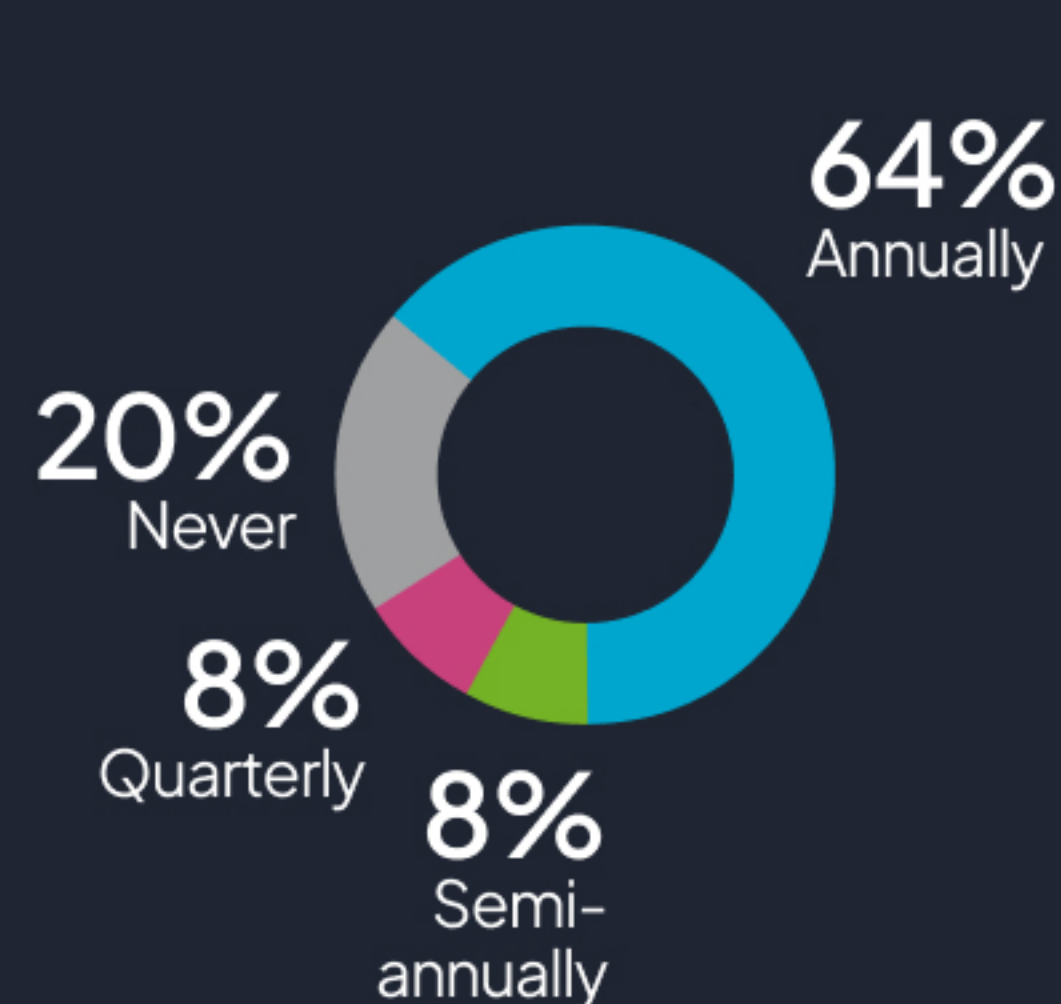


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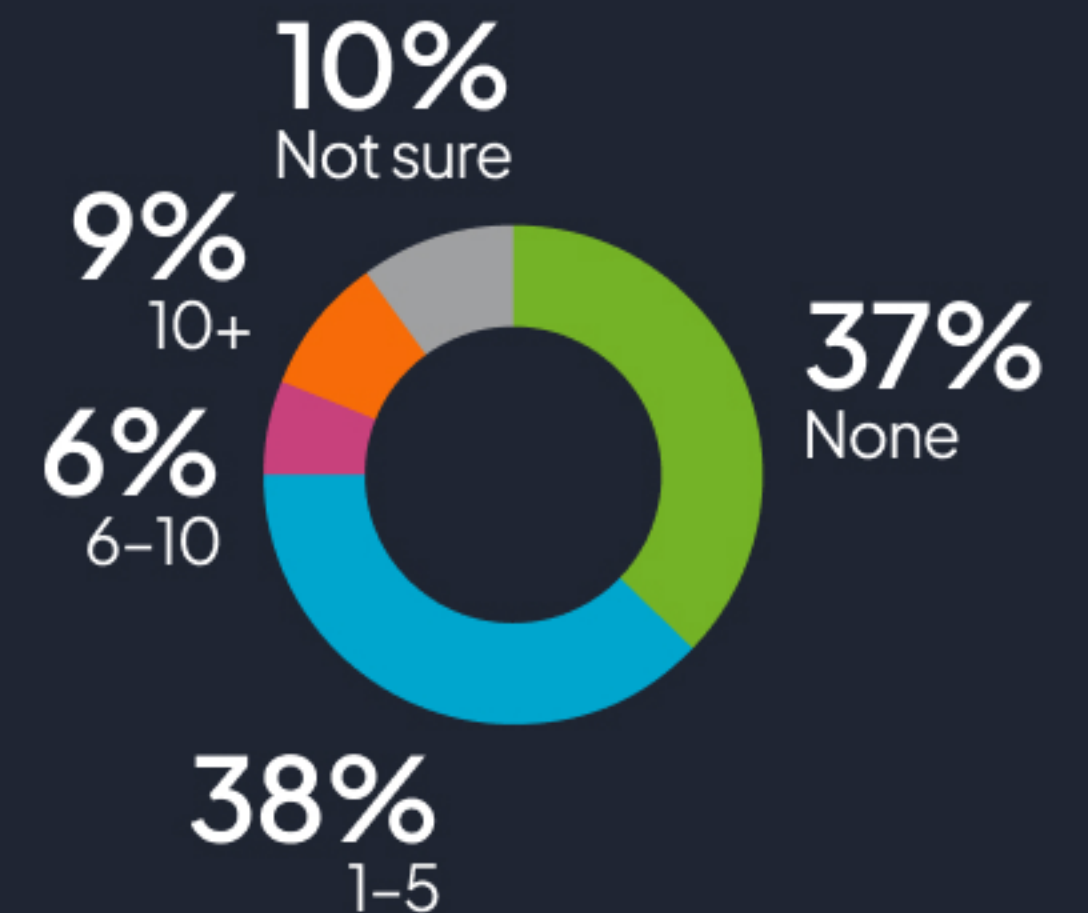
Key finding #3: Hotel agreements are often neglected.

- In many programs, hotel contracts are signed, filed, and forgotten until renewal or a rate issue forces attention.
- 37% of organizations have no active hotel agreements at all, meaning more than a third operates on unmanaged or market rates, trading away savings, coverage, and negotiating leverage from the start.
- More than 1 in 3 programs have no active hotel agreements, and 1 in 5 never review the ones they have.

How often do you review your hotel agreements?



How many active hotel agreements does your organization have in place?

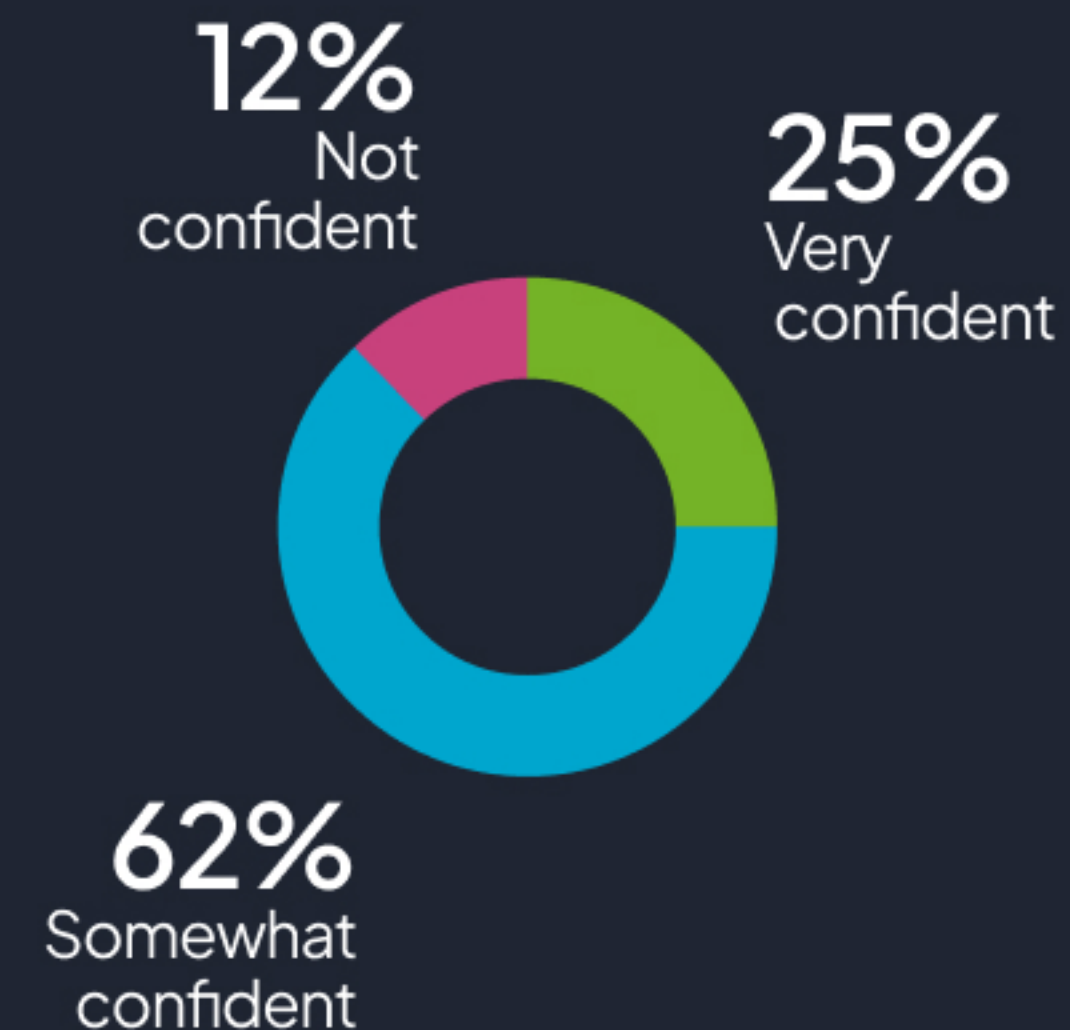


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Key finding #4: Confidence in hotel negotiation is low.

- 82% of Travel Managers participate in hotel sourcing, but only 25% describe themselves as "very confident" negotiators
- Benchmarking, routine rate audits, and utilization tracking transform negotiation from guess work to evidence

How confident are you in your hotel contract negotiation skills?

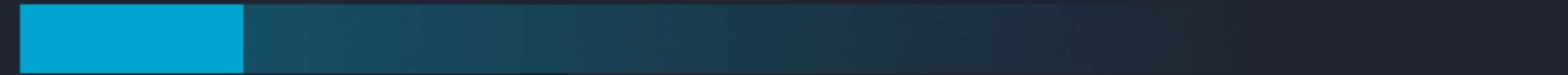


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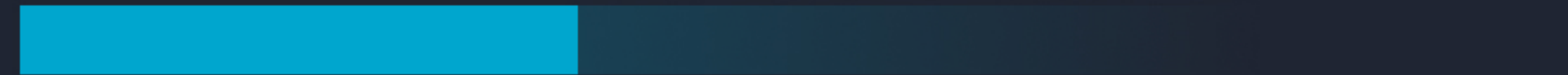
Key finding #5: Hotel sourcing tools remain the exception, not the rule.

- Most hotel sourcing still runs on spreadsheets, email, and manual follow-ups
- Only 1 in 6 travel programs uses an RFP tool today, despite clear links to savings, rate visibility and compliance gains

17%
of organizations currently use an RFP tool



49%
would adopt one if offered by their TMC

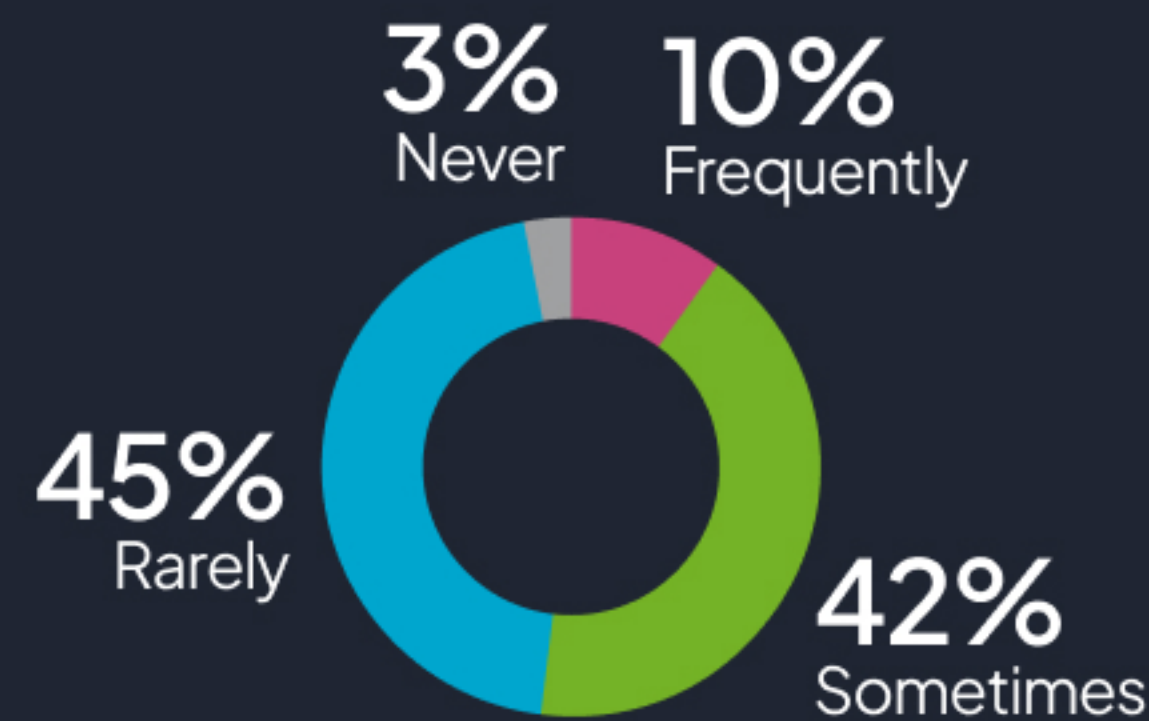


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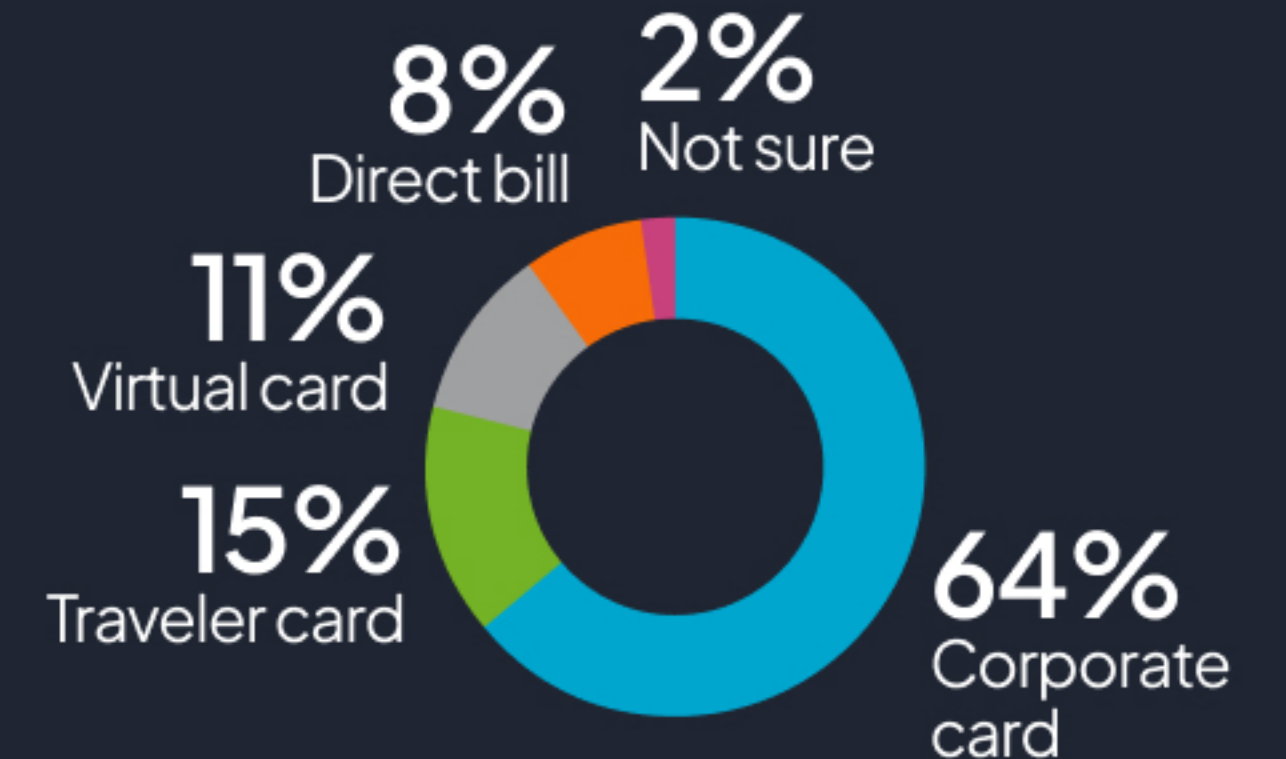
Key finding #6: Payment friction and accounting issues persist.

- 2/3 of survey respondents stated that accounting/reconciliation is a top frustration
- Manual processes force finance and travel teams to stitch together receipts, folios, and rate confirmations trip by trip
- Single-use virtual cards eliminate friction, strengthen duty of care, and simplify reconciliation

How frequently do your travelers experience payment-related issues with hotel bookings?



What is your organization's preferred method of payment for hotel bookings?



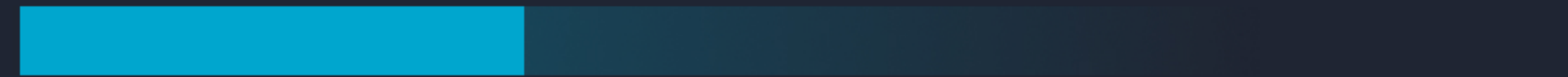
8 key findings of today's hotel programs

Key finding #7: Policy adherence and traveler visibility remain weak points.

- When travelers can't easily find the right hotels or understand which properties are preferred, compliance feels like a burden instead of a benefit
- Travelers who book outside approved channels create the inability for a travel manager to see where they are staying, how much they are spending, and whether negotiated rates are being utilized
- With clearer insight into traveler behavior and preferences, managers can refine policies, so compliance feels natural and not enforced

37%

of travel managers report difficulty with travelers adhering to policy



33%

struggle with knowing traveler preferences



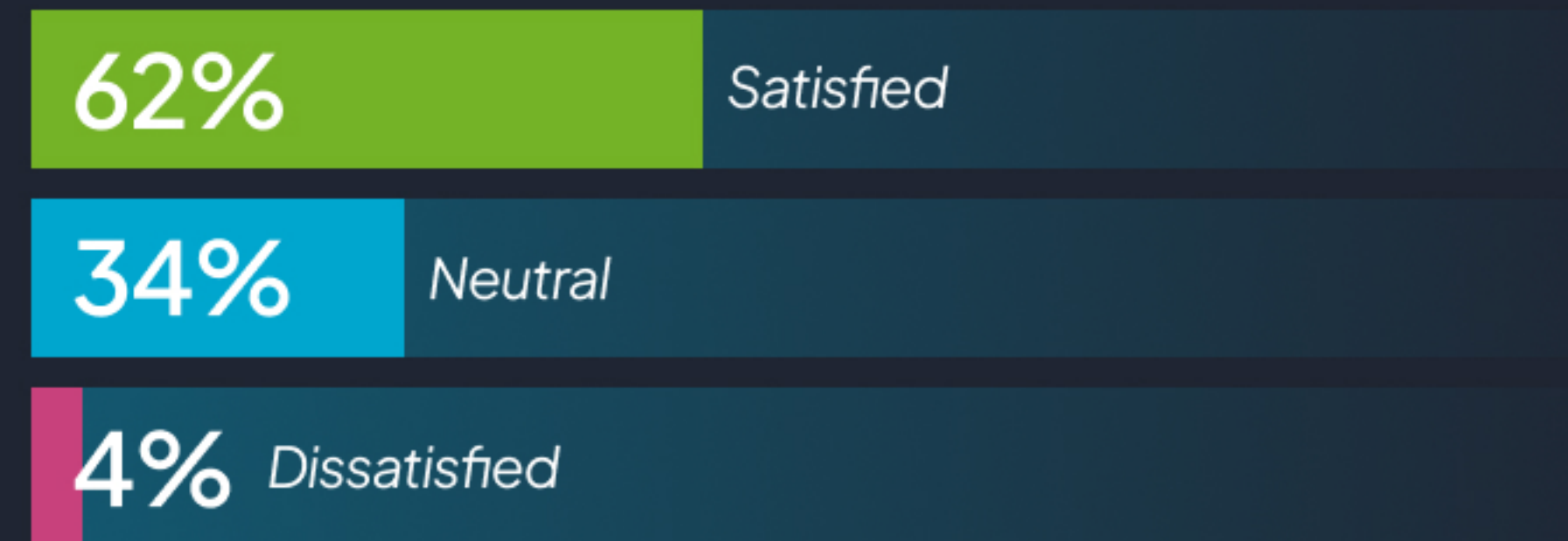
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Key finding #8: Program satisfaction is uneven between service and savings.

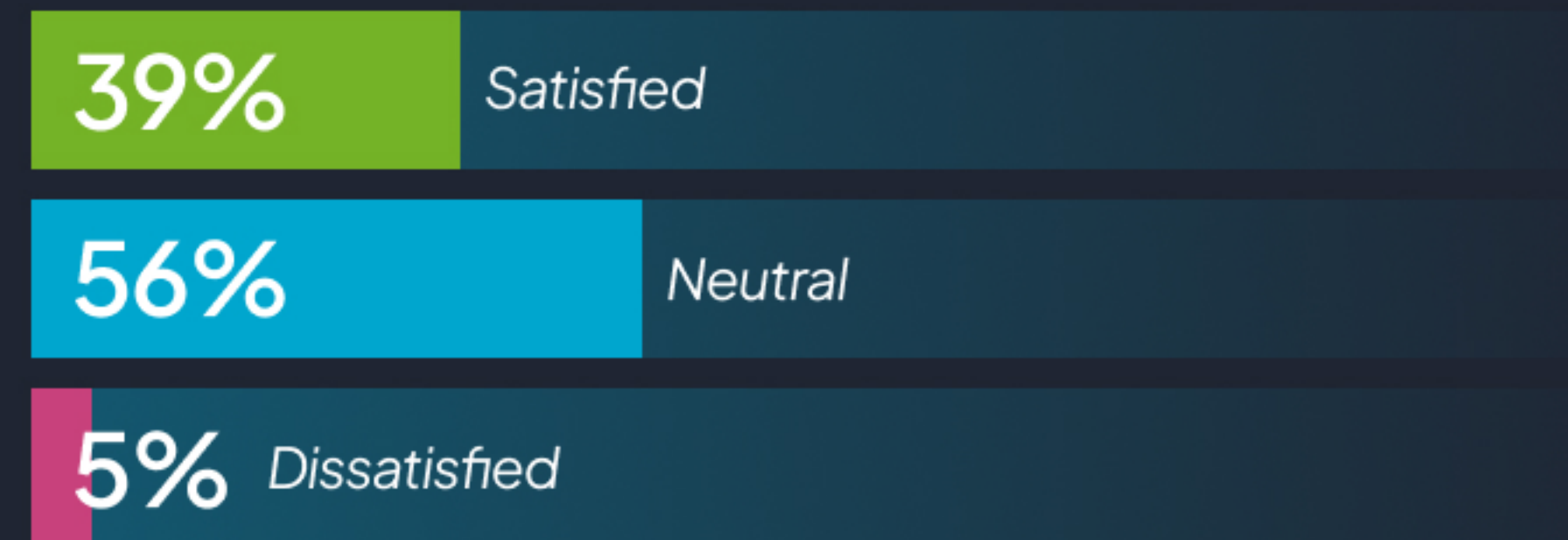
- While travel managers feel good about their hotel program as it pertains to service and support, they are less enthusiastic about their rate discount
- Without consistent rate audits, or spend analysis, rate performance often remains anecdotal rather than evidence based
- Real gains come from verifying rate integrity and proving savings

Satisfaction levels by category

Service:



Rate discounts:



BCD Great Rates Hotel Program

Over 54,000 properties

Coverage in 190 countries

Last room availability

Maximum cancel policy of 72 hours or less with 99% of properties

Hotels can be highlighted as preferred properties within the program

Great for programs with little or no formal contracts



BCD Great Rates Hotel Program—benefits and brands



A collection of hotel brand logos displayed on a white rounded rectangular background. The logos are arranged in two rows. The top row includes Marriott International, IHG Hotels & Resorts, Accor, and Sonesta. The bottom row includes Hilton For The Stay, World of Hyatt, and Radisson Hotels.



Hotel sourcing solution

Automated, customized, data-driven RFPs

Continuous sourcing with property selection driven by real booking data and program objectives.

Reduced admin effort + measurable savings

Less manual effort and stronger program oversight, resulting in both hard and soft savings.

Dedicated, experienced supplier relations

Continuous sourcing with property selection driven by real booking data and program objectives.

End-to-end and beyond

Full lifecycle support—solicitations, negotiations, rate-loading, auditing, renegotiations, and renewals.



We're catching things as they're happening, rather than discovering missed opportunities a year later.

— Emily Pickell, Nielsen

Christopherson's hotel sourcing program always exceeds expectations. There is true care with the work done, and it has never disappointed.

— David Quenneville, Forefront



Unsure where to start?

Detailed consulting services*

- Hotel spend analysis
- Recommendations
- Sourcing support
- Negotiation assistance
- Configuration setup
- System testing
- Strategic year end review

* Value add service



Thank you