

# Meetings Industry PULSE Survey

**NORTH AMERICAN REGION**

**New Data**

**FEBRUARY 2025**



## Executive Summary: Indicators Are Positive But Concerns Have Grown

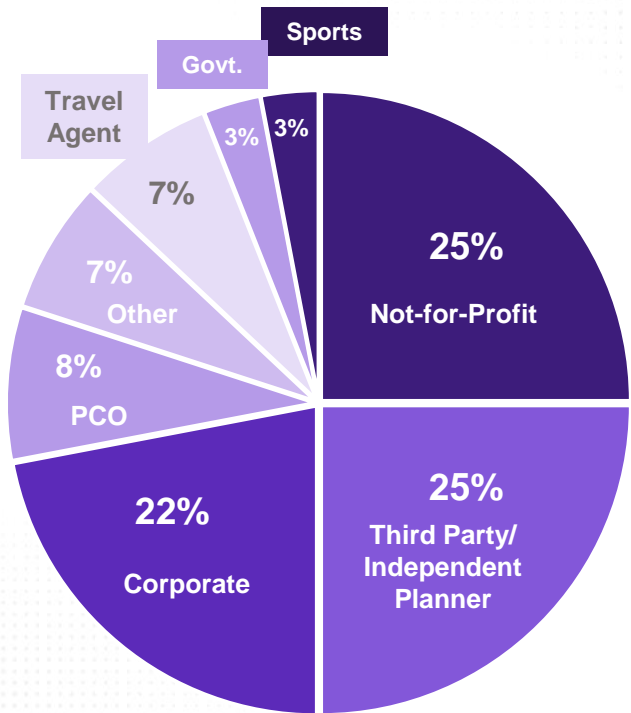
PLANNERS REMAIN RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC AND ARE SOURCING LOTS OF NEW BUSINESS IN THE NEW YEAR.

- Optimism levels have declined from last year, with the ebb most pronounced since the early fall, but they're still generally robust. **Currently 32% of planners report they are more optimistic** now than they were six weeks ago while 23% are less optimistic.
- **The active business pipeline rose slightly since last January:** More than 70% of respondents are either actively booking or sourcing currently.
- **The pace of year-over-year meetings volume growth has slowed, but it's still skewing "net positive."** 52% of planners report they will plan more meetings in 2025 than they did in 2024.
- Just as many planner respondents are currently planning international MICE programs as they were last year. **The number of US inbound programs are up, while Europe remains the outbound destination of choice.**
- All concerns have grown in importance among planners. **While costs and budget constraints continue to rank as planners' biggest concerns, political and social issues jumped in importance year-over-year.**
- Compression and service levels are no longer issues – **planners want help with F&B, room rates and AV.**
- Planners continue to report that their **events are highly valued by their stakeholders**, relative to other marketing and business development initiatives.
- **When choosing a destination, cost and quality are the most important attributes.** The least important, among those factors planners ranked?: Sustainable venue practices.



# 407 Planner Responses

JANUARY 21 – FEBRUARY 4, 2025

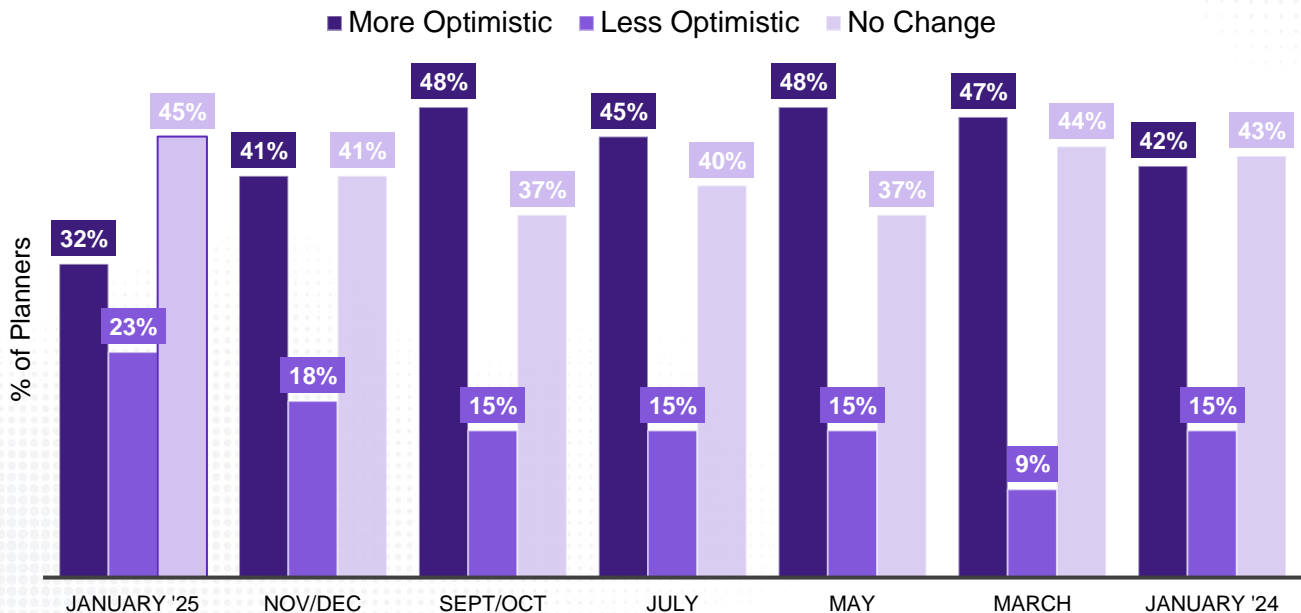




# Planner Optimism Levels Are Down With the New Year

NEVERTHELESS, MORE PLANNERS SKEW POSITIVE THAN NEGATIVE WITH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION.

**How has your outlook for your meetings and events changed over the past six weeks?**



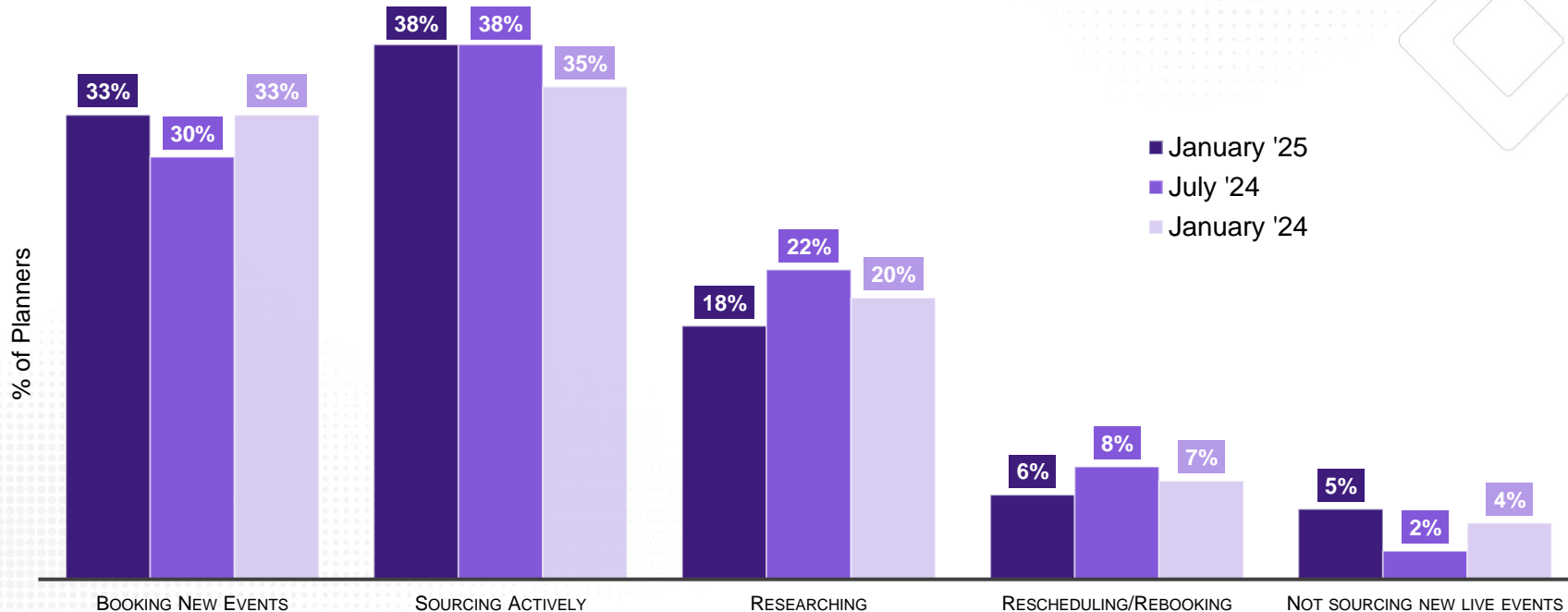
**Optimism levels have declined from one year ago, but the immediate future remains bright, say most planners.**



# Planners Are Booking and Sourcing at a Heady Pace

THERE'S NO EVIDENCE OF A MEETINGS SLOWDOWN, JUDGING BY PLANNERS' CURRENT ACTIVE PIPELINE.

**What is your current primary focus as it pertains to your live, in-person events?**



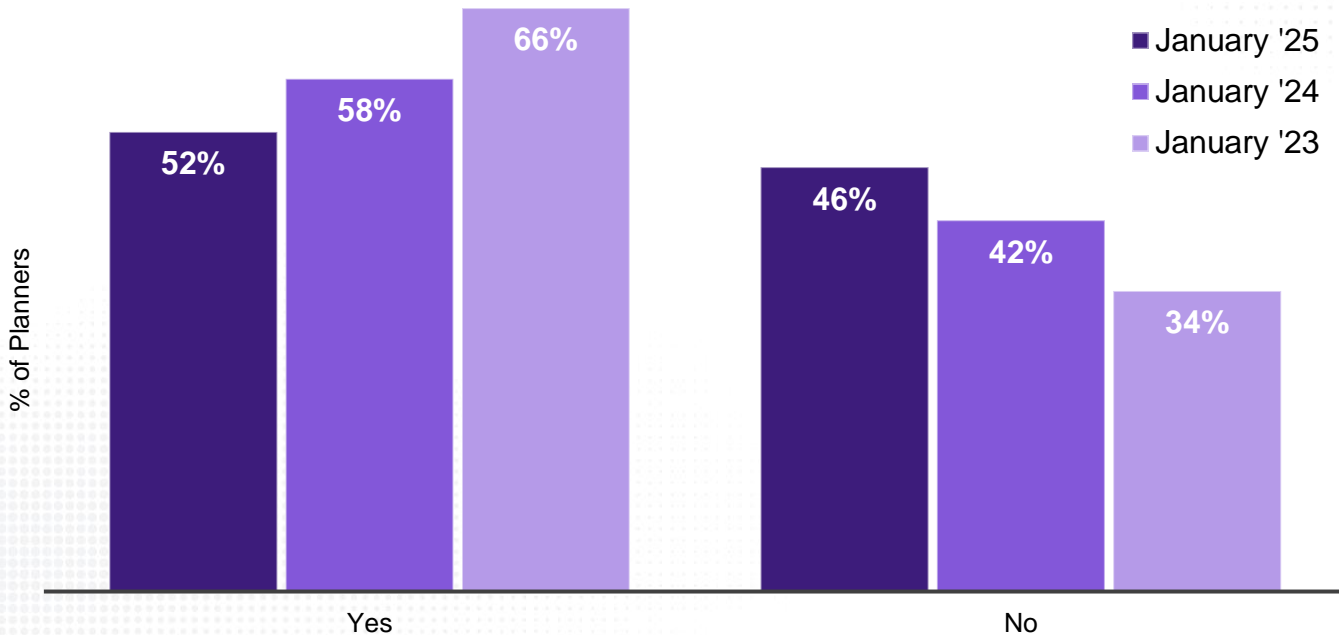




# Meetings Volume Will Grow Again This Year, But at a Lower Rate

MORE PLANNERS WILL PRODUCE MORE MEETINGS NEXT YEAR THAN THOSE WHO WILL PRODUCE FEWER.

**Do you expect to produce more meetings in 2025 than you did in 2024?**



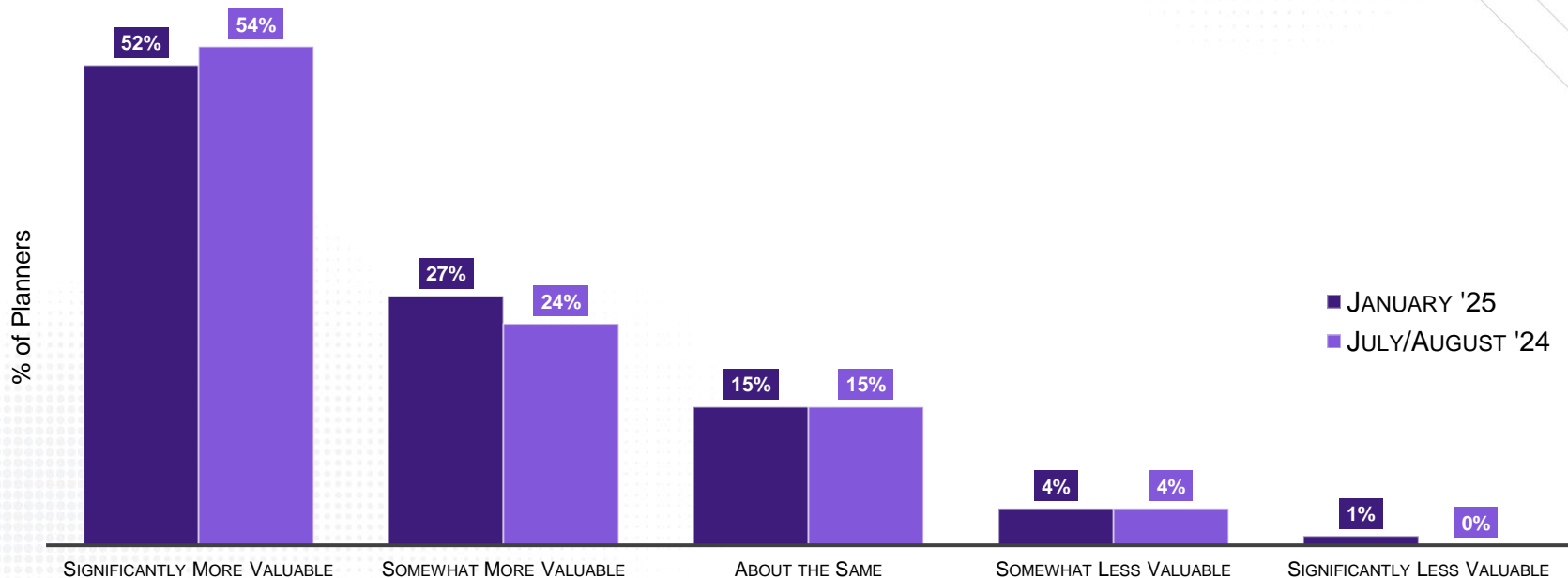
**The pace of new meetings has slowed year-over-year, but most planners still expect to schedule more in 2025.**



# Planner Organizations Place Significant Value on Their Events

THE VAST MAJORITY OF PLANNERS REPORT THEIR EVENTS PROVIDE VALUE RELATIVE TO OTHER INITIATIVES.

**Generally, how does your organization, or your clients' organizations, perceive the value of face-to-face meetings relative to other sales, marketing and/or business development initiatives you are undertaking or considering?**

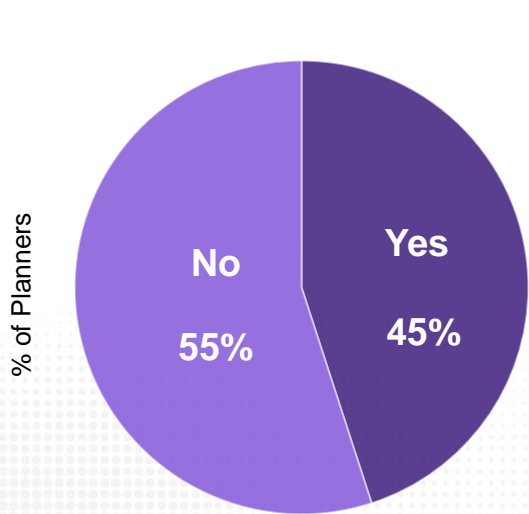




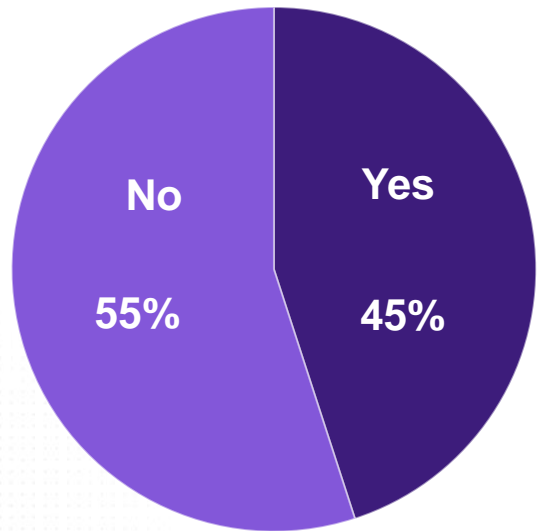
# Cross-Border Planning Shows No Signs of Slowing

LIKE LAST YEAR, NEARLY HALF OF PLANNER RESPONDENTS HAVE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS.

**Are you currently planning, sourcing or researching international meetings, events and/or incentive programs (requiring cross-border travel)?**



January '24



January '25

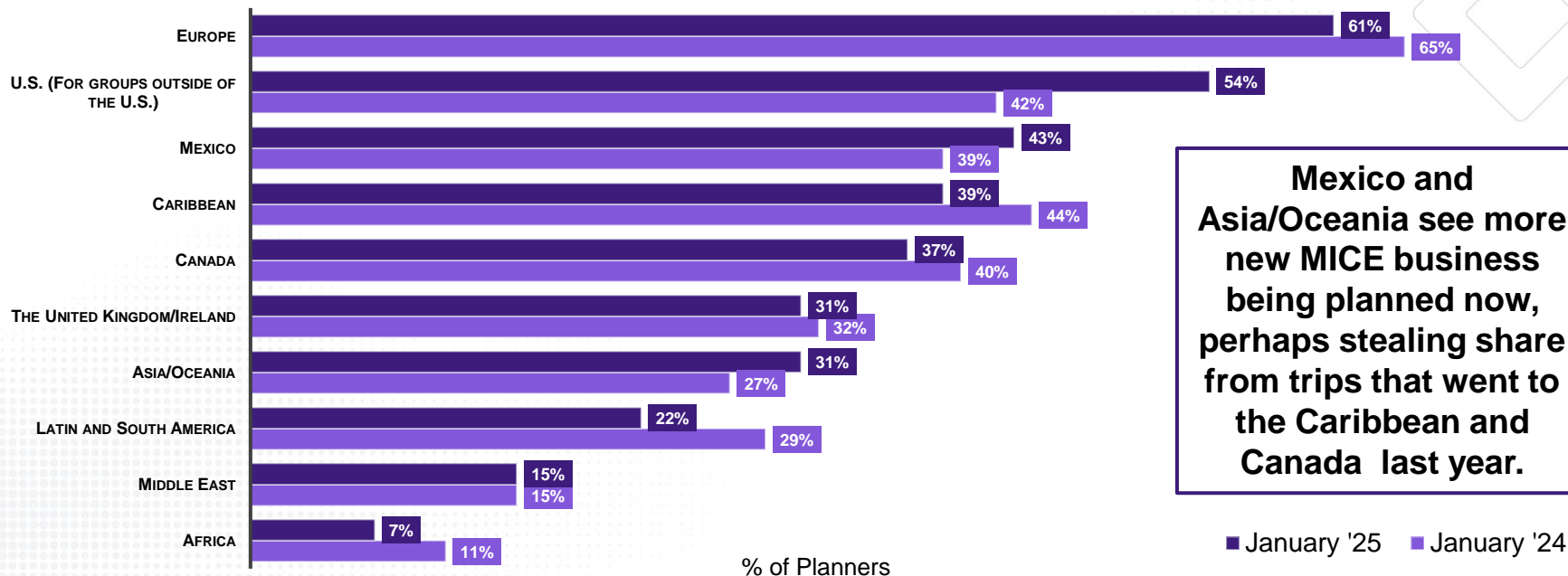
**The increased cost for international travel and the new administration have not impacted planning for cross-border events.**



# Cross-Border Programs Inbound to the US Jump in the New Year

EUROPE REMAINS THE DESTINATION ON MOST PLANNERS' SHORT LIST.

Where are you currently planning, sourcing or researching international meetings, events and/or incentive travel programs (requiring cross-border travel)?



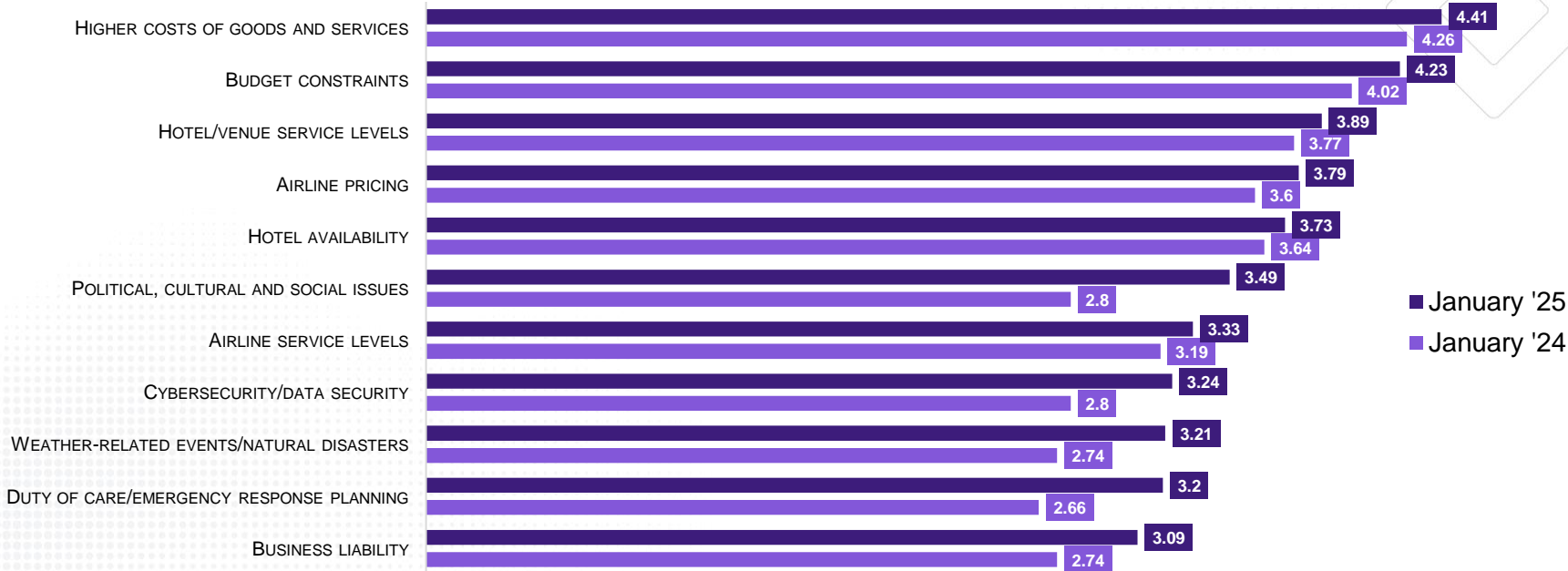
**Mexico and Asia/Oceania see more new MICE business being planned now, perhaps stealing share from trips that went to the Caribbean and Canada last year.**



# Higher Costs Remain the Big Pain Point

WHILE ALL CONCERNS GROW, THE JUMP IN CONCERN FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES STANDS OUT.

**For your future in-person events, how concerned are you about the following? Rate each on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being “not at all concerned” and 5 being “extremely concerned”).**

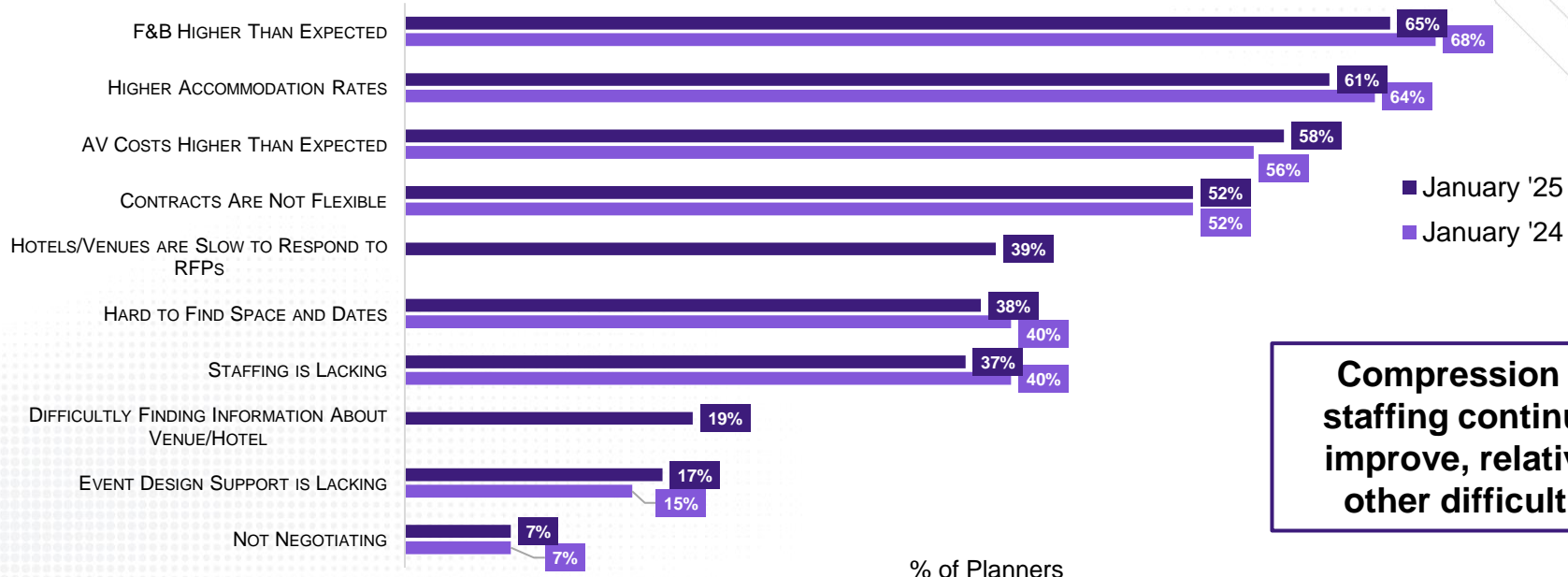




# F&B Costs and Room Rates Top the List of Planner Difficulties

WHILE DIFFICULTIES ABSORBING HIGHER AV COSTS GROW.

**If you are working with hotels and venues for future meetings or events, are you experiencing any of these difficulties? (Select all that apply.)**



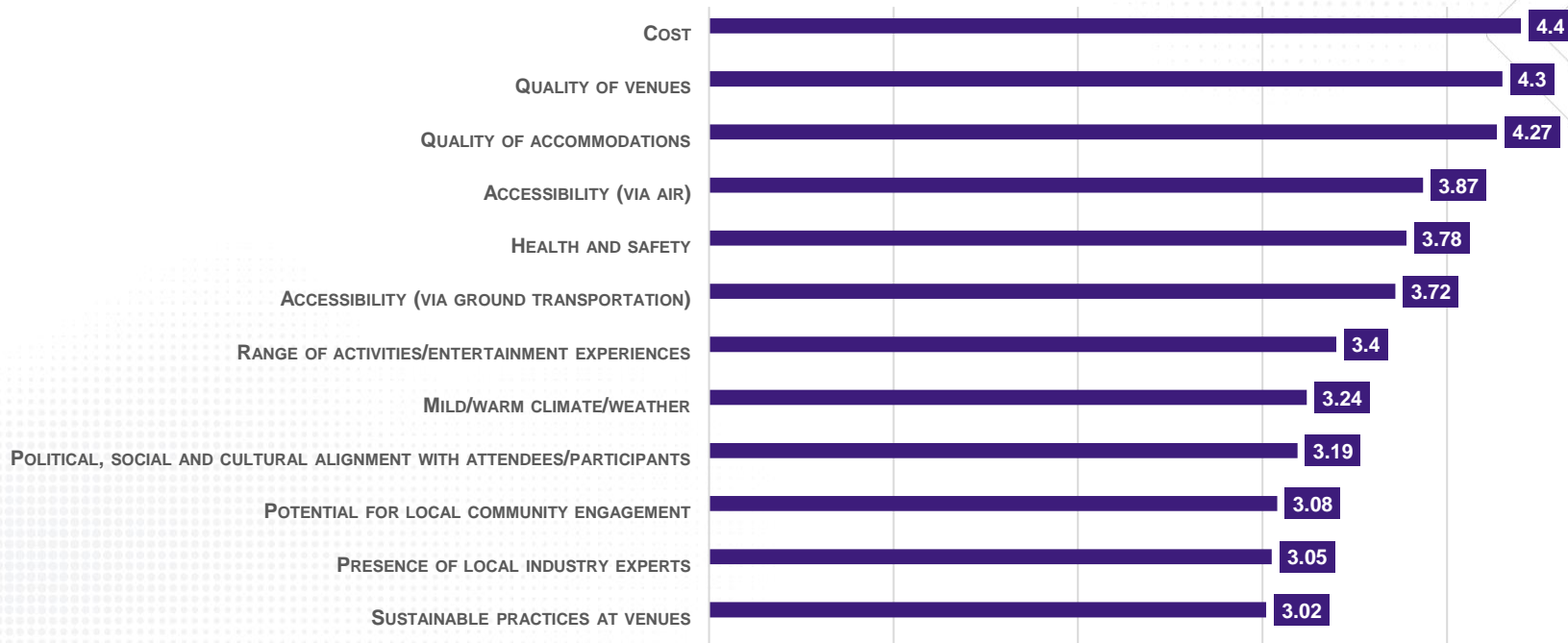
**Compression and staffing continue to improve, relative to other difficulties.**



# Cost and Quality Are the Top Factors When Choosing a Destination

SUSTAINABLE VENUE PRACTICES RANKS AS LEAST IMPORTANT, RELATIVE TO THE OTHER ATTRIBUTES STUDIED.

Please rank the following destination characteristics according to the importance in your current site-selection process (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “not at all important” and 5 being “extremely important”).

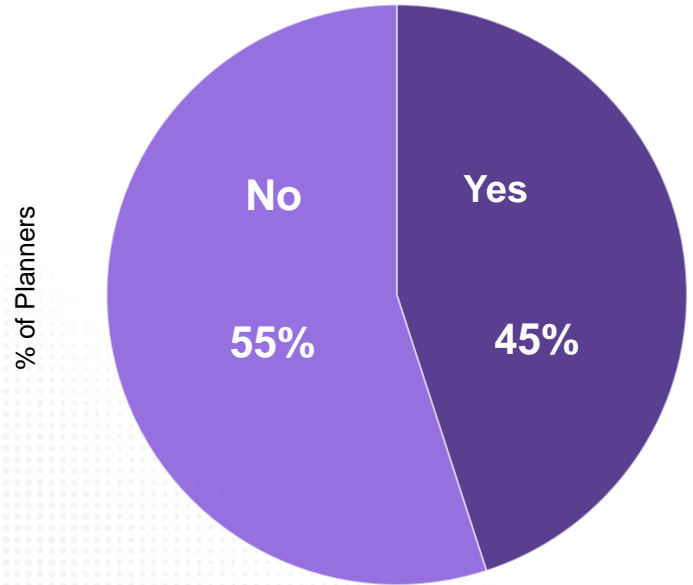




# Event Technology: Budgets for Many Are Growing

NEARLY HALF ARE INCREASING THEIR INVESTMENT IN TECH THIS YEAR TO SUPPORT THEIR EVENTS.

**Do you plan to increase your organization's spending on meetings/event tech and meetings/event tech-support (including registration, but not including AV or AV support) this year compared to last year?**



**Even in a cost-conscious environment, 45% of planners report they are increasing their tech investment in 2025, about the same who reported they were increasing their investment last year.**





# Planner Verbatim Comments

COSTS, DEI AND POLITICAL RHETORIC ARE ON THE MINDS OF RESPONDENTS.

- “Attacks on DEI are impacting my clients’ funding for events. Many corporations are concerned about the policies of the new administration and are tightening their budgets when it comes to DEI dollars.”
- “Consumer confidence (or lack thereof) plays a major role in clients deciding if they feel confident planning for events that involve travel. The current state of our economy and chaotic federal government will cause things to deteriorate quickly if stability is not found.”
- “My biggest challenge with multiple clients has been drafting and managing budgets. Hotels and venues are refusing to lock in menu pricing for F&B and A/V, and costs continue to skyrocket. Service fees and other miscellaneous costs keep getting added and augmented. I work with mostly nonprofits and they’re all looking for alternative venues in 2026 and beyond because these contracts are getting unmanageable.”
- “Hotels currently have the advantage due to high demand, but the balance eventually will shift. Genuine partnerships built on understanding and flexibility are increasingly rare, which is disappointing. For some hotels, revenue seems to be the only priority.”
- “Our company has been merging many of our business units across the country; our events team has grown and brought with them different practices, tools and software experience.”
- “The expertise of some hotel staff members is lacking, resulting in more difficult communication. Getting my local hotel to buy into sustainability efforts is difficult.”
- “Because my clients are of all political parties, they are getting tired of all the rhetoric from all sides about whatever administration is in power and people traveling/meetings/conventions. They want to be safe, and many have expressed not going anywhere where a huge protest might occur.”