

Meetings Industry PULSE Survey

ASIA PACIFIC REGION

New Data

SEPTEMBER 2026

In partnership with
Phocuswright 



Executive Summary: Optimism Holds as APAC Planners Confront Rising Hotel Costs and Expanding AI Use

BOOKINGS AND SOURCING ARE BACK IN LINE WITH 2024 LEVELS, BUT HOTEL AND VENUE COSTS ARE THE TOP CONCERNS

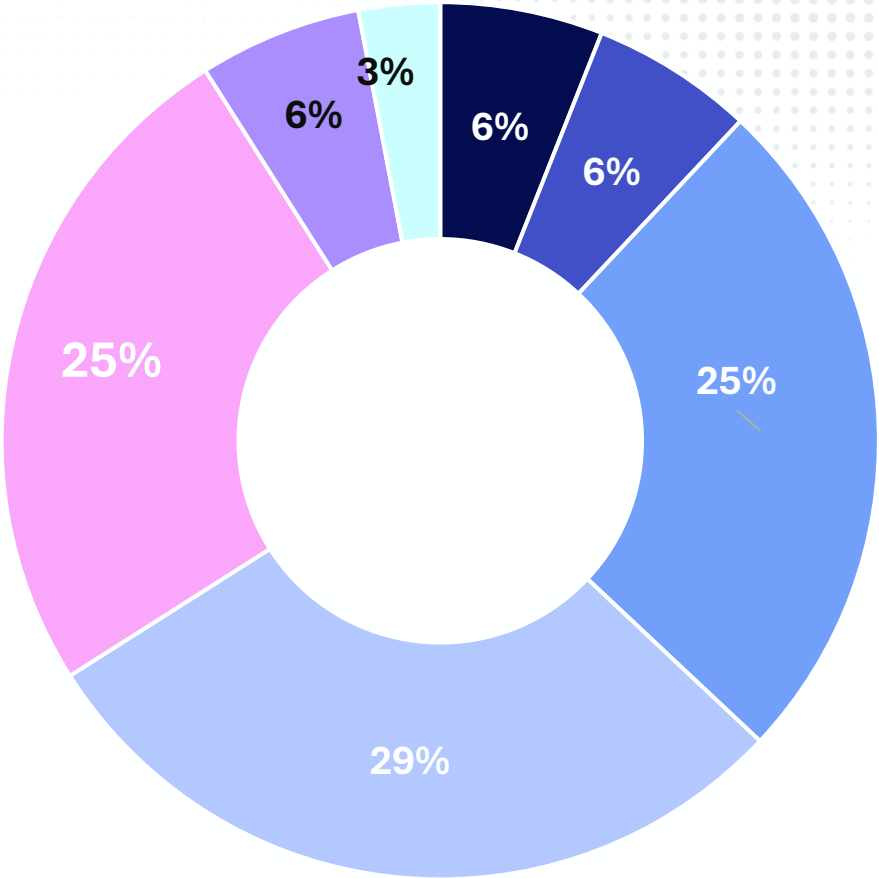
- Booking and sourcing activity has rebounded after last year's dip. Twenty-five percent of planners are now booking new business and 42% are actively sourcing, both up from September 2025 and back in line with September 2024 figures.
- APAC planners remain an optimistic lot but the outlook has dipped slightly from last year's peak: 62% of planners are more optimistic than two months ago, picking up from the geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty earlier this year, but still a notch lower than 70% in September 2025.
- Face-to-face meetings remain valuable, with 92% say in-person events are more valuable to their organization than a year ago, and none reported a decline in value. Looking ahead, 54% expect to produce more meetings next year, and 44% expect attendance to exceed 2026 levels, up from just 28% a year ago.
- Southeast Asia (88%) and Europe (63%) remain the top sourcing destinations. North America is the only region to lose ground year-over-year, falling to 28% from 32%. Within Asia, interest is broadening quickly with Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam posting the largest gains, while the Philippines was the only destination in the region to decline.
- Hotel and venue friction is intensifying. Higher accommodation rates (72%), F&B costs (60%) and AV costs (54%) are the most-cited difficulties, up from 2025 and, in most cases, from 2024 as well.
- Cost containment jumped to become planners' highest-rated priority for future events (4.03 of 5, up from 3.51) — the largest increase of any factor tracked, ahead of CSR, ROI and health and safety.
- RFP response time remain a key point of disconnect between planners and suppliers. While 70% of planners would prefer to receive RFP responses within 2 days, nearly 70% of current responses take between 3-4 days or longer, highlighting a gap between expectation and reality.

65 Planner Responses

August 18 - September 18, 2026

Primary Business

- Association/Nonprofit Organization or Association Management Company
- Third Party/Independent Planner
- Corporate
- Travel Agency
- Professional/Conference Organizer
- Other
- Government



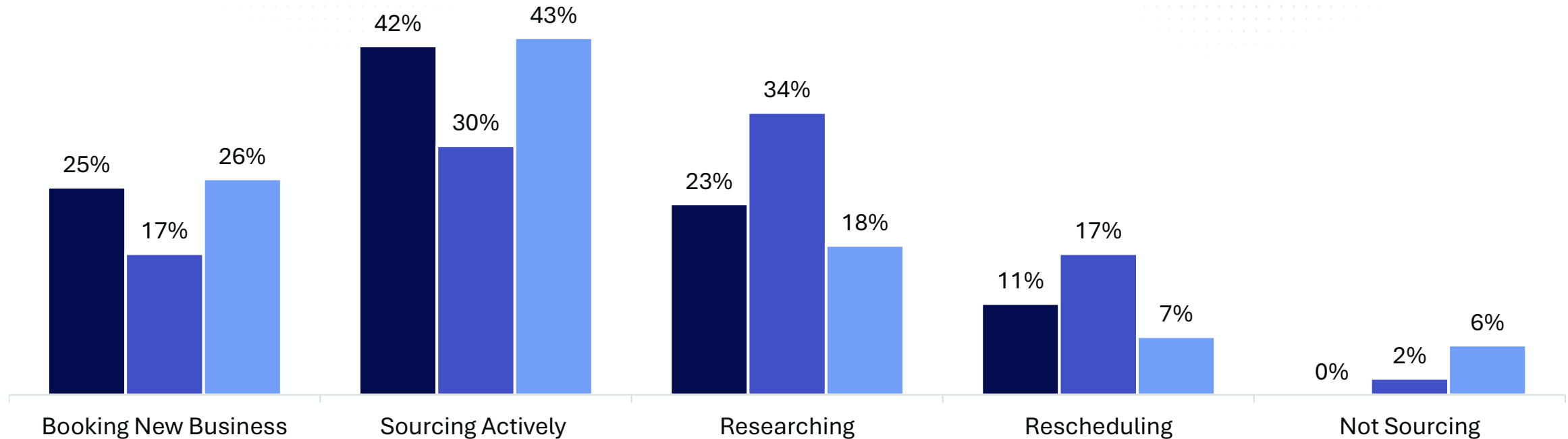
Question: What is your organization's primary business?
Base: Total respondents (N=65)
Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

New Bookings Regained Ground

YEAR-OVER-YEAR BOOKING AND ACTIVE SOURCING ARE BOTH UP AND IN LINE WITH 2024 FIGURES.

Primary Focus for Live, In-person Events

■ September '26 ■ September '25 ■ September '24



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

Base: Total planners (N=65)

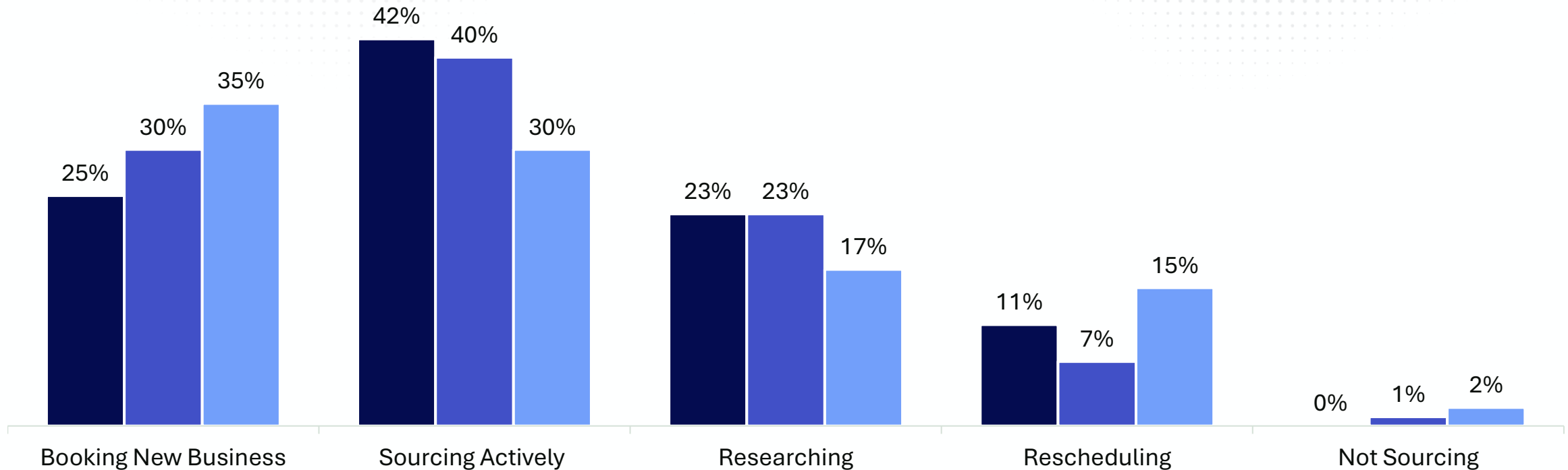
Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

APAC IS PRIMARILY SOURCING; EMEA IS BOOKING

APAC AND NORTH AMERICA ARE SOURCING MORE-SO THAN BOOKING NEW BUSINESS.

Primary Focus for Live, In-person Events

■ APAC ■ NA ■ EMEA



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

Base: Total planners (N=65)

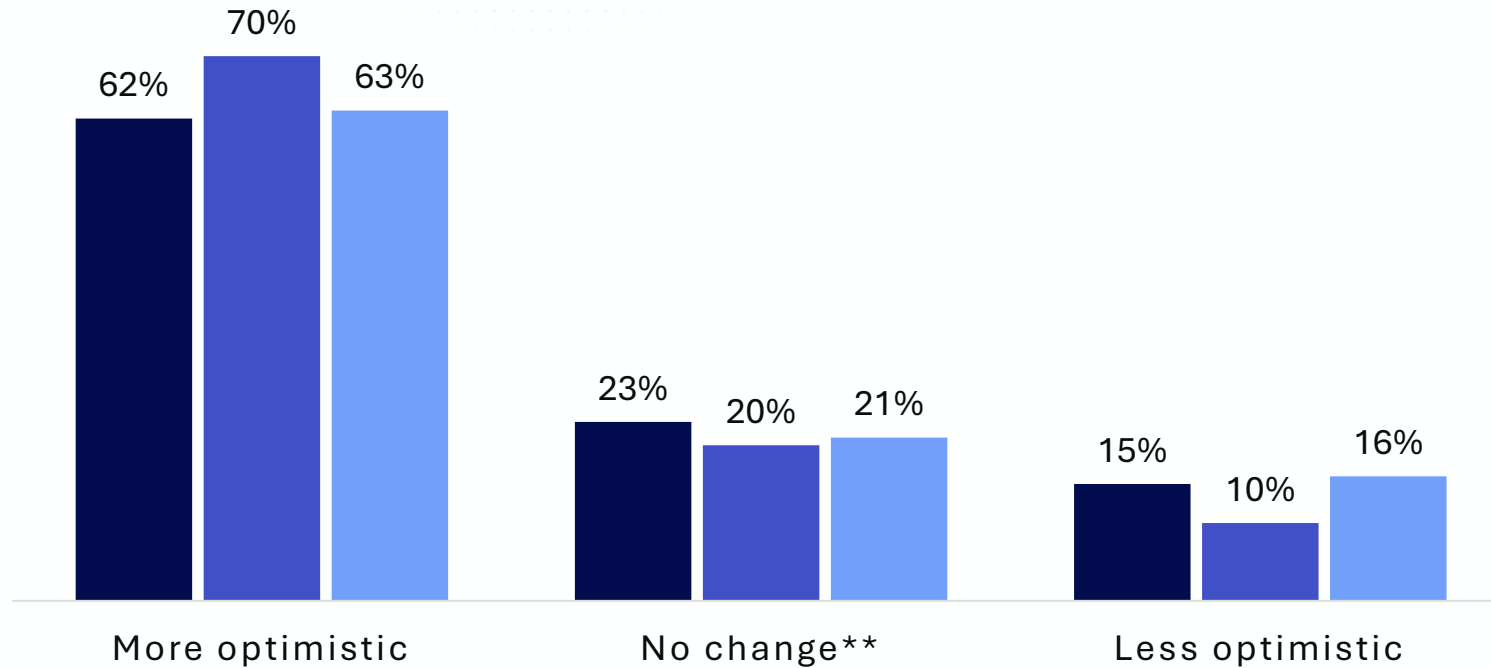
Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

Increased Optimism Slips Slightly

62% OF PLANNERS ARE OPTIMISTIC, DOWN FROM 70% IN 2025.

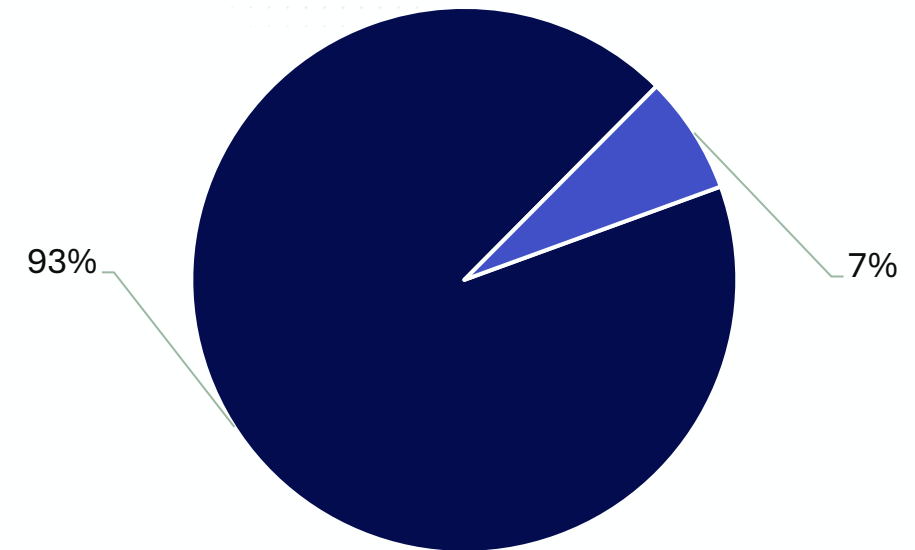
Change in Outlook for Meetings/Events Over Past Two Months

■ September '26 ■ September '25 ■ September '24



**Continued Optimism vs Pessimism

■ Continued optimism ■ Continued pessimism



Question: How has your outlook for the meetings and events changed over the past two months?; Has your outlook remained unchanged due to continued optimism or continued pessimism?

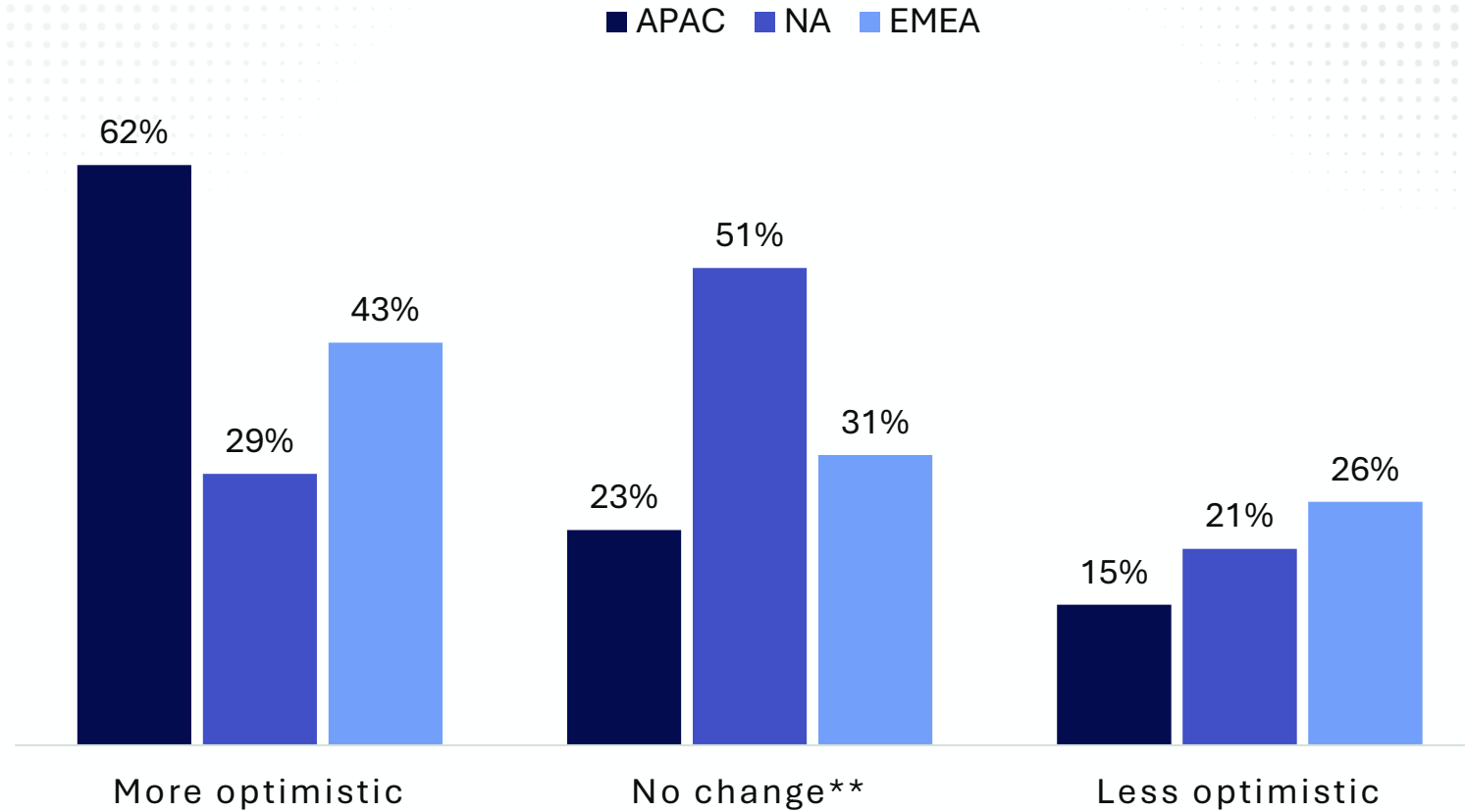
Base: Total respondents (N=65); No change in outlook (N=15)

Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

OPTIMISM IS HIGHEST IN APAC

NORTH AMERICA MAY BE STABILIZING WITH THE LARGEST SHARE INDICATING NO CHANGE.

Change in Outlook for Meetings/Events Over Past Two Months



Question: How has your outlook for the meetings and events changed over the past two months?; Has your outlook remained unchanged due to continued optimism or continued pessimism?

Base: Total respondents (N=65); No change in outlook (N=15)

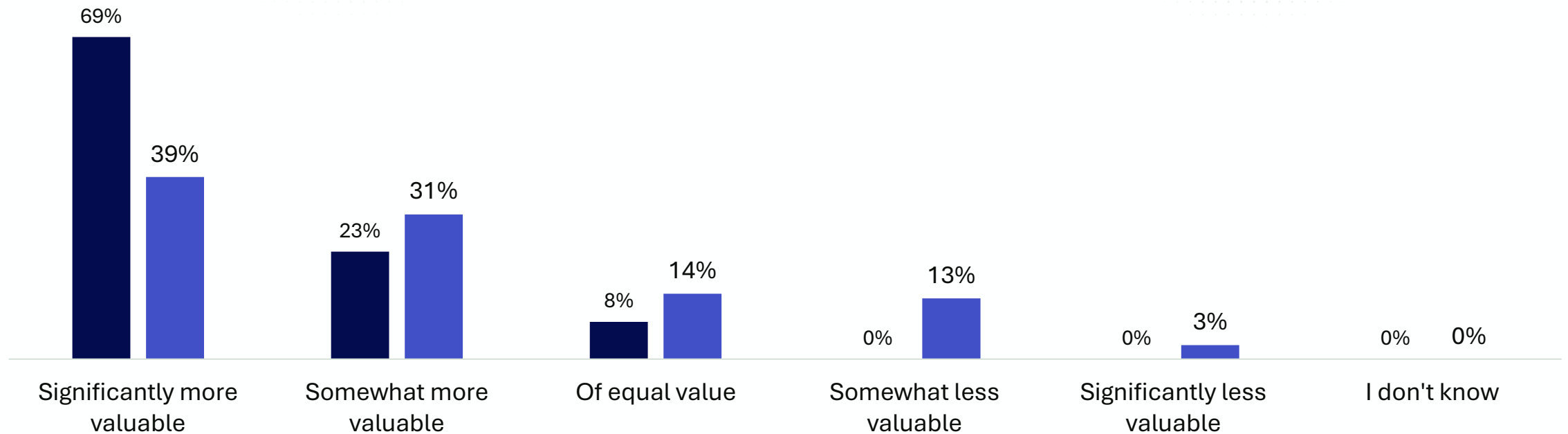
Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

Value of Face-to-Face Meetings Has Increased

NONE OF THE PLANNERS INDICATED FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS WERE LESS VALUABLE THAN THEY WERE LAST YEAR.

Perceived Value of Face-to-Face Meetings Relative to Other Initiatives

■ Sep-26 ■ Sep-25



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

Base: Total respondents (N=65)

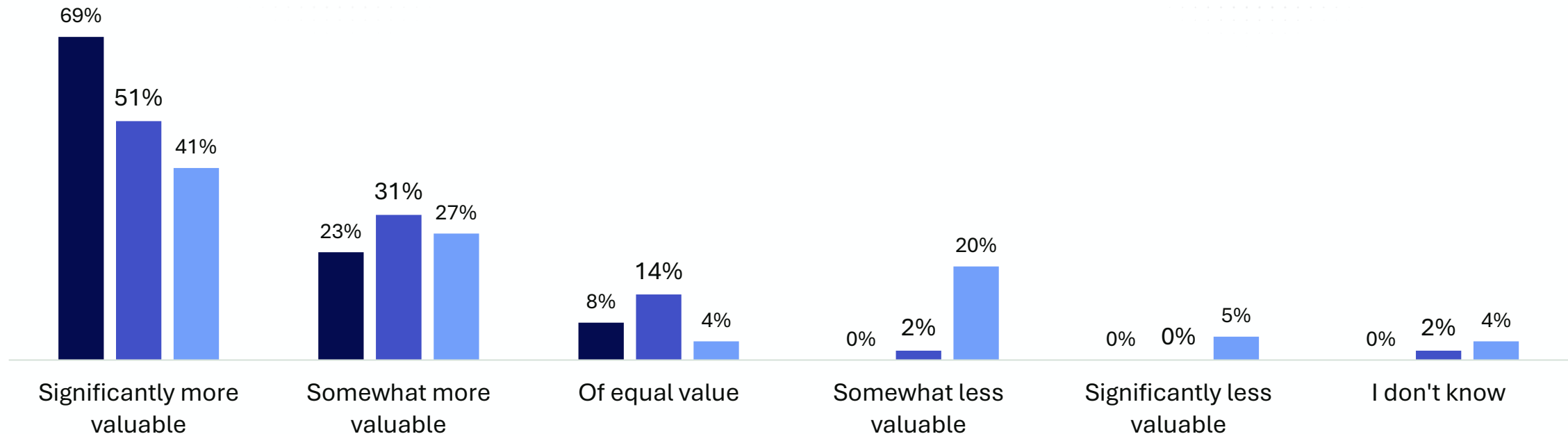
Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

Face-to-Face Perceived Highest Among APAC Planners

EMEA IS STRUGGLING WITH A SIGNIFICANT SHARE INDICATING MEETINGS ARE SOMEWHAT LESS VALUABLE.

Value Perception of Face-to-Face Meetings Relative to Other Initiatives

■ APAC ■ NA ■ EMEA



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

Base: Total respondents (N=65)

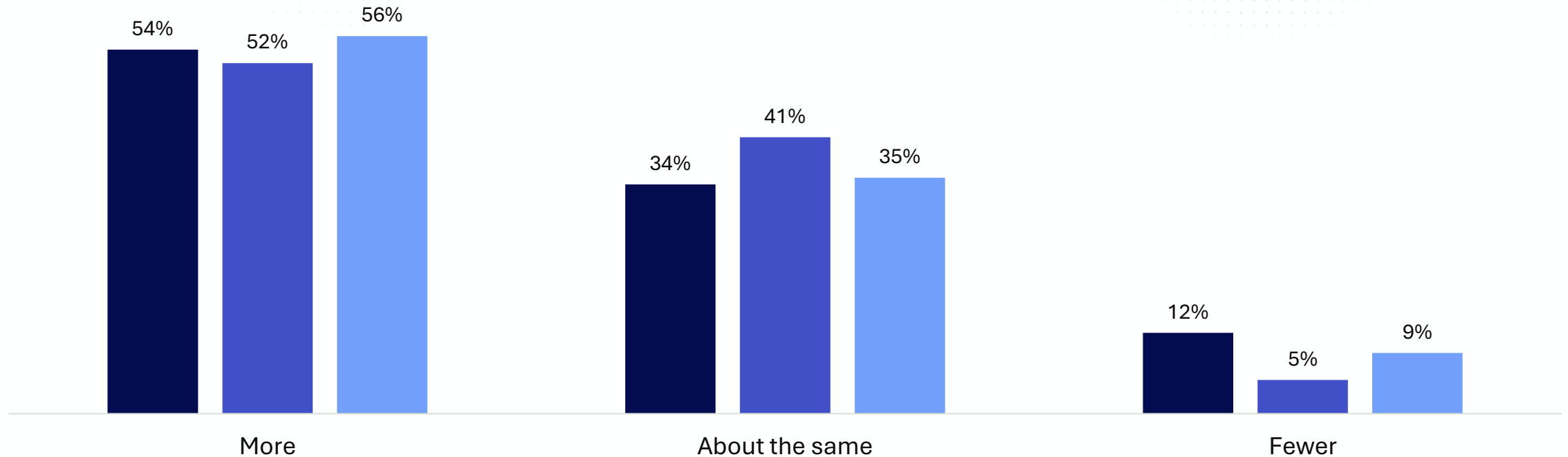
Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

More Planners Expect to Produce Fewer Meetings in 2027

PLANNERS WHO ARE EXPECTING TO PRODUCE MORE MEETINGS STAYED RELATIVELY FLAT AND THOSE EXPECTING THE SAME DECLINED.

Meeting Expectations for 2027 compared to 2026

■ September '26 ■ September '25 ■ September '24



Question: Do you (or your organisation) expect to produce more or fewer meetings in 2027 than you will produce in 2026?

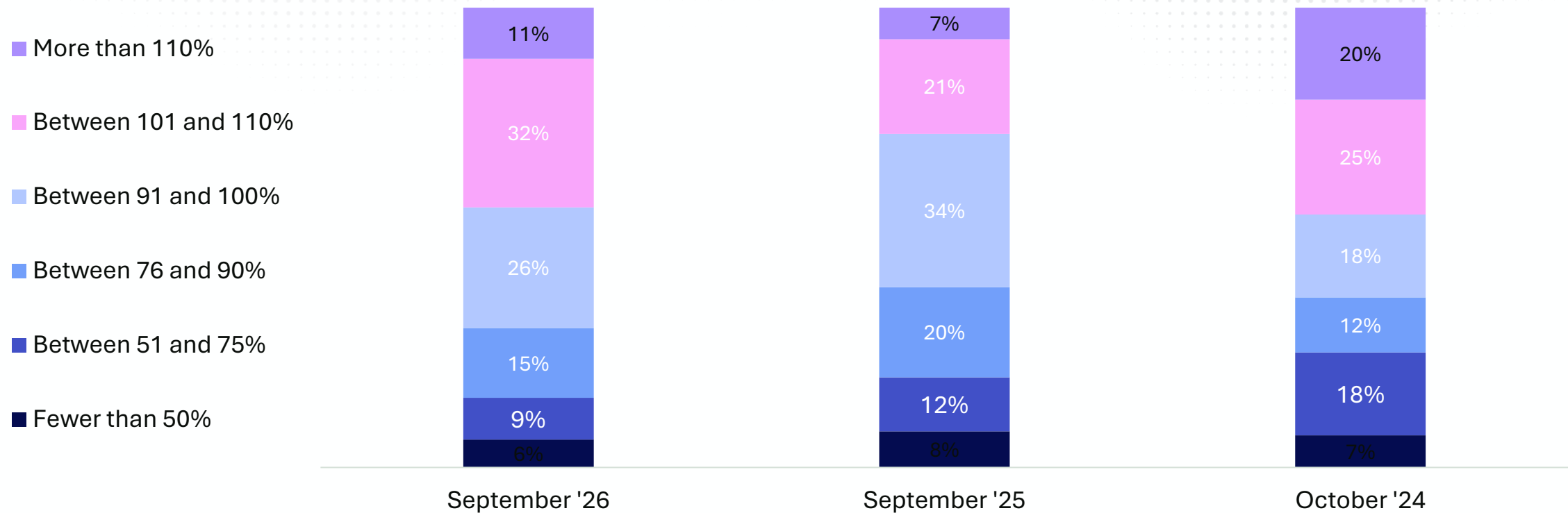
Base: Total respondents (N=65)

Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

Planners Expect Attendance to Increase in 2027

44% OF PLANNERS EXPECT ATTENDANCE IN 2027 TO EXCEED 2026, UP FROM ONLY 28% IN 2025.

Attendance 2027 Expectations vs. 2026 Attendee Estimated Results



Question: How many in-person attendees do you expect in 2027 for your typical meetings vs. your 2026 results?

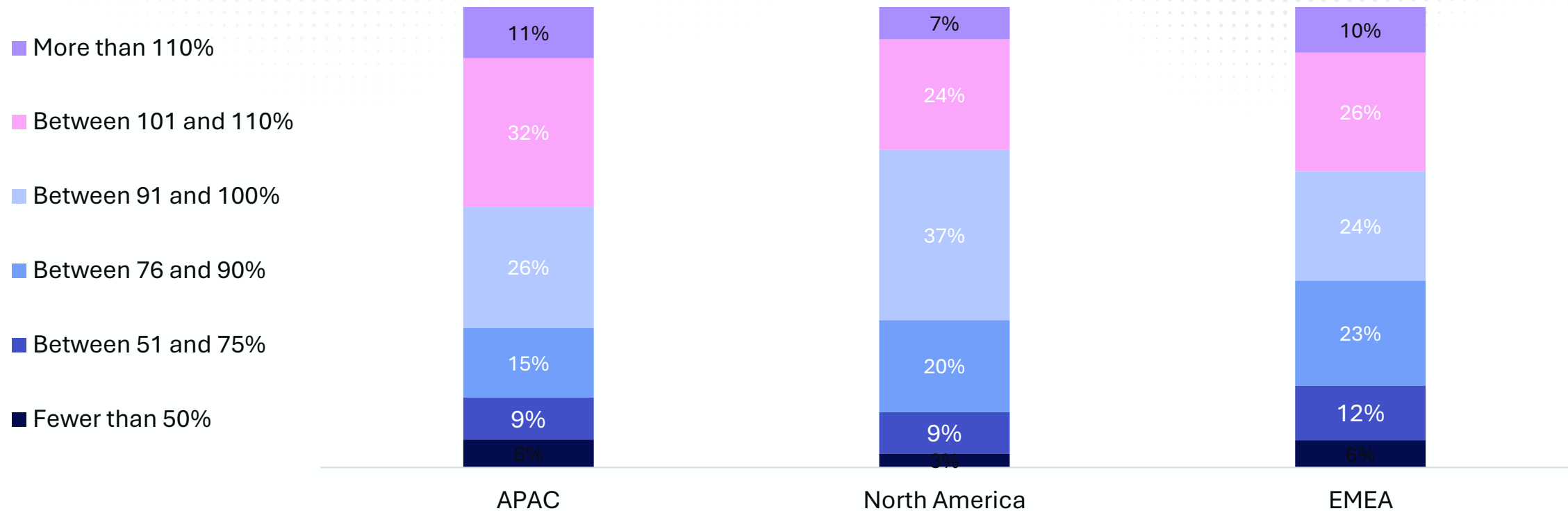
Base: Total respondents (N=65)

Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

APAC Has the Greatest Growth Expectations

NORTH AMERICA IS THE WEAKEST WITH ONLY 31% VS. 43% IN APAC AND 36% IN EMEA.

Attendance 2027 Expectations vs. 2026 Estimated Results



Question: How many in-person attendees do you expect in 2027 for your typical meetings vs. your 2026 results?

Base: Total respondents (N=65)

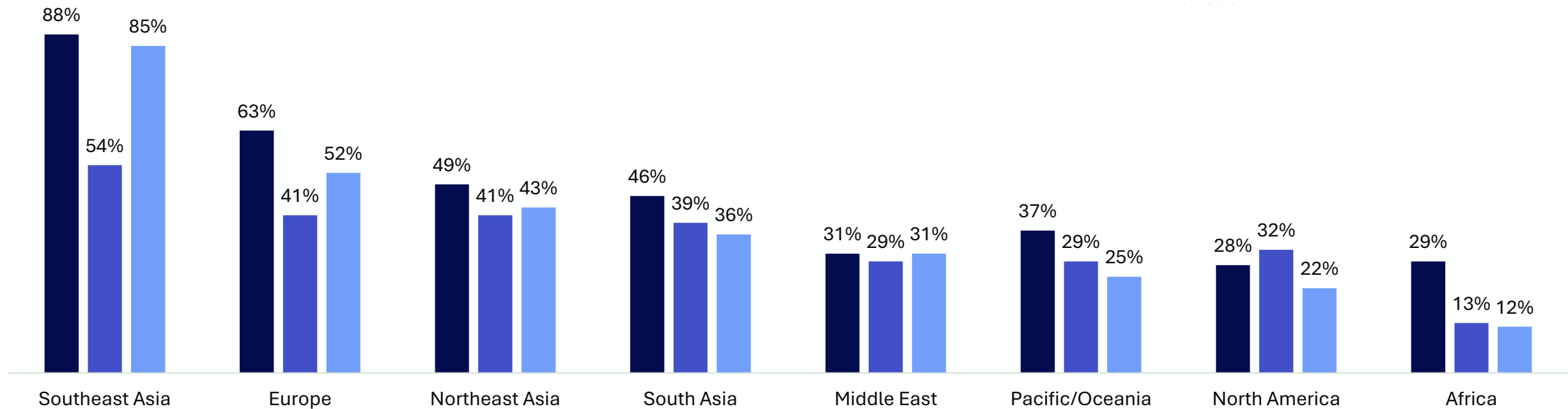
Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

Europe and Southeast Asia Are Top Choices for Meetings

NORTH AMERICA WAS THE ONLY REGION TO DECLINE OVER THE PRIOR YEAR.

Regions in Which Events Are Being Planned

■ September '26 ■ September '25 ■ September '24



Question: Where are you currently planning, sourcing or researching international meetings, events and/or incentive travel programs (requiring cross-border travel)? Select all that apply.

Base: Total planners (N=65)

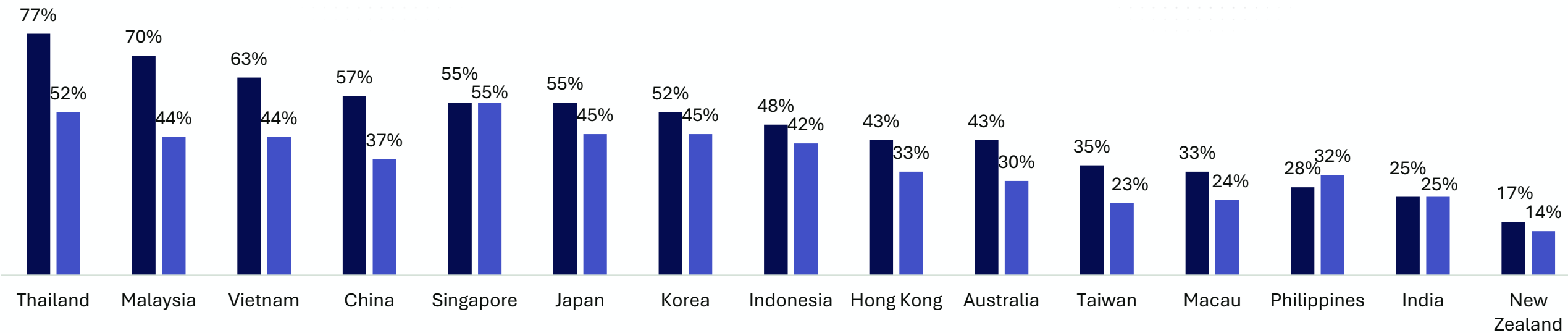
Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

Planners Have Expanded Options in the Asian Regions

INTEREST IN MOST ASIAN COUNTRIES HAS INCREASED SINCE 2025.

Asian Regions in Which Events Are Being Planned

■ September '26 ■ September '25



Question: In which Asian countries/destinations are you currently planning new events? Select all that apply.

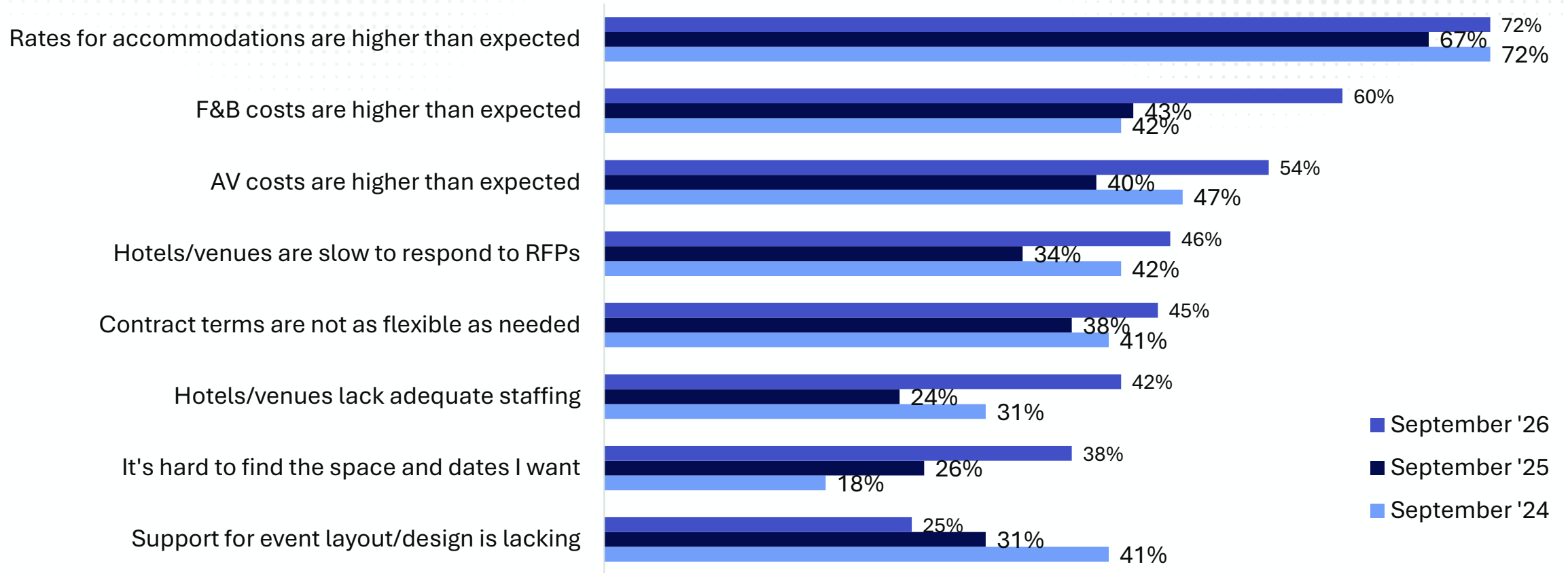
Base: Planners researching events in Asia (N=65)

Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

Costs Continue to Be Biggest Challenges With Hotels

DIFFICULTIES WITH F&B, AV AND STAFFING EXCEED 2025 AND IN MOST CASES 2024 HIGHER LEVELS.

Difficulties Working with Hotels and Venues for Future Meetings/Events



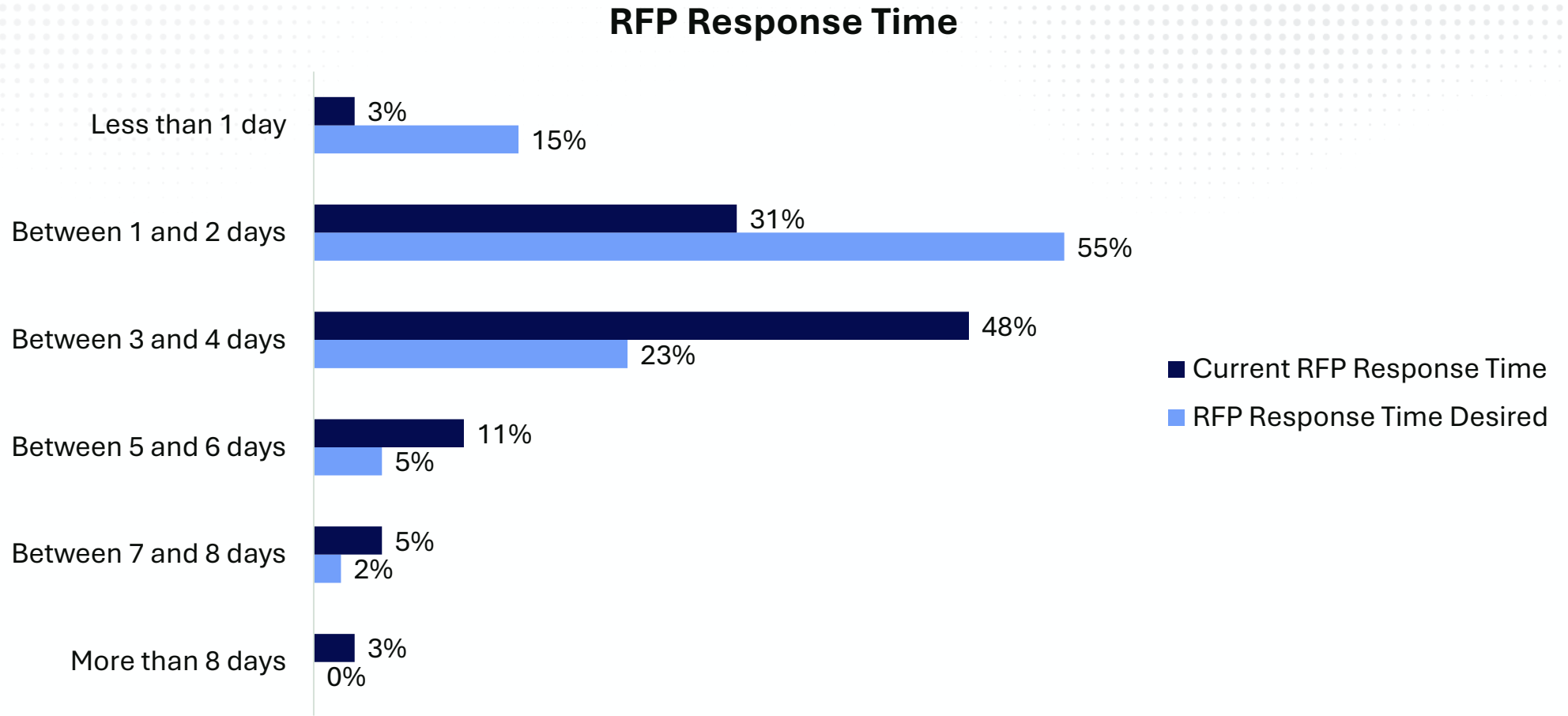
Question: If you are working with hotels and venues for future meetings or events, are you experiencing any of the following difficulties? Select all that apply.

Base: Total planners (N=65)

Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

RFP Response Times Still Falling Short of Expectations

THE TWO SIDES AREN'T FAR APART: PLANNERS MOST OFTEN WISH FOR RESPONSES 1 TO 2 DAYS FASTER.



Question: How quickly are hotels and venues responding to your RFPs?; Generally, how quickly do you want hotels and venues to respond to your RFPs?

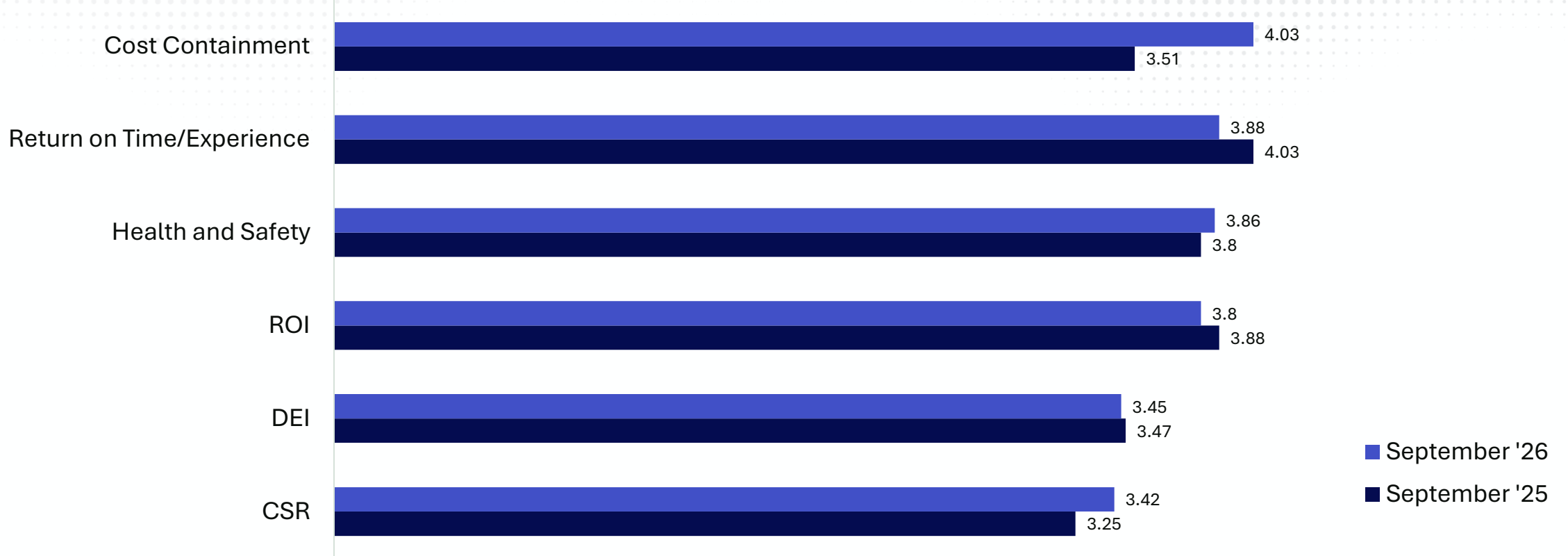
Base: Total planners (N=65)

Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

Cost Containment is Most Important for Future Events

COST CONTAINMENT AND CSR HAVE INCREASED IN IMPORTANCE WHILE OTHERS REMAINED THE SAME OR SLIGHTLY LESS.

Importance for Future In-person and Hybrid Events on a Scale of 1 to 5



Question: Using a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being "extremely important" and 1 being "not at all important," please rate the relative importance of the following factors for in-person and hybrid events that you are now planning.

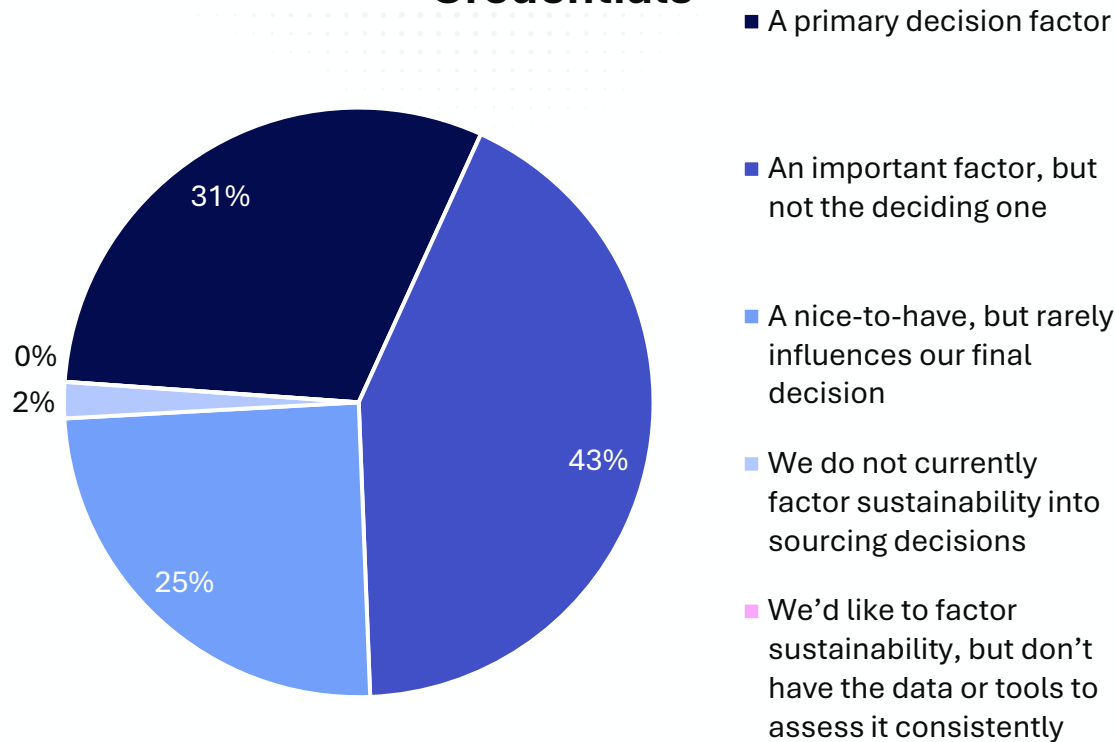
Base: Total planners (N=65)

Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

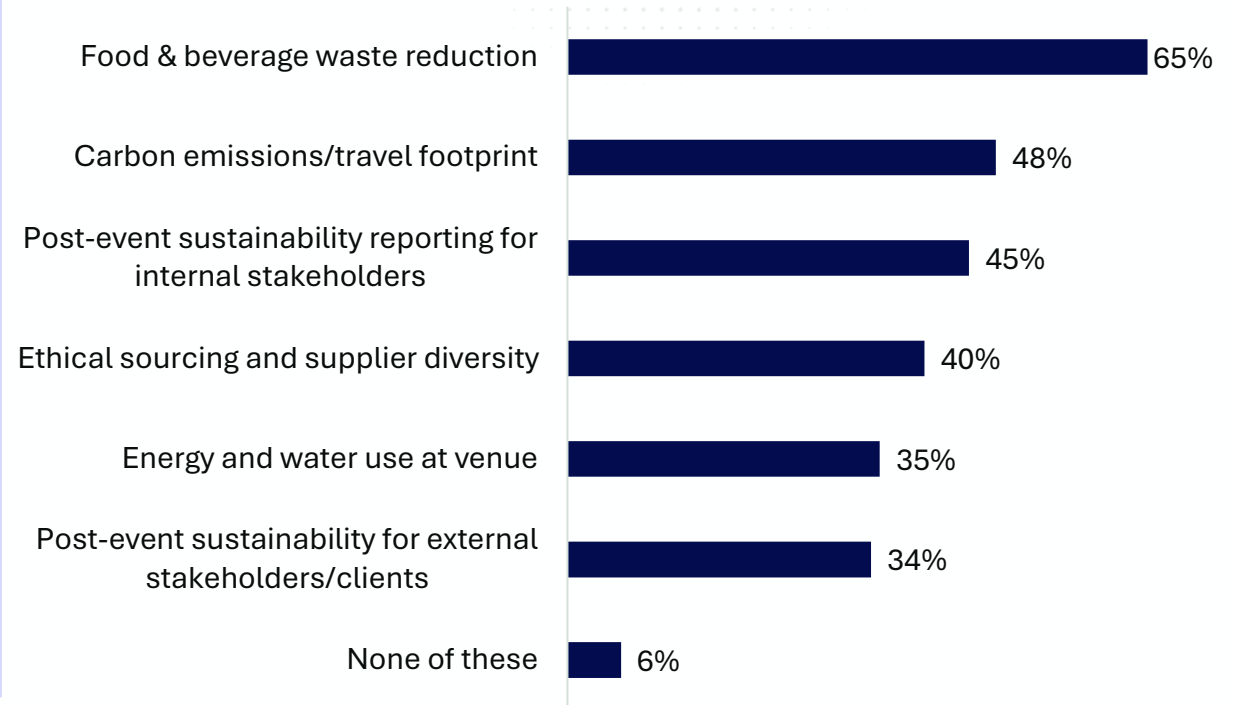
Sustainability is an Important Sourcing Decision Criteria

F&B WASTE IS TRACKED AND/OR REPORTED MORE THAN OTHER SUSTAINABILITY ORIENTED METRICS.

Importance of Sustainability Credentials



Areas Tracking/Reporting Sustainability Performance of Events



Question: When making sourcing decisions, how important is a venue's or destination's sustainability credentials?; In which of the following areas are you actively tracking or reporting sustainability performance for your events? Select all that apply.

Base: Total planners (N=65)

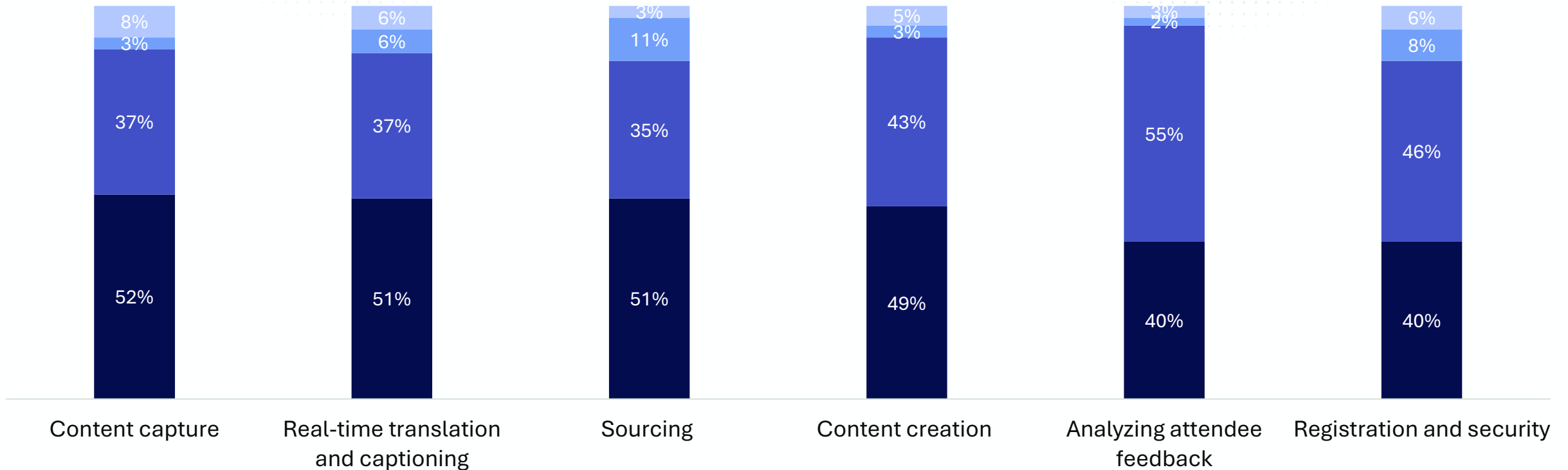
Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

AI is Being Used Throughout the Planner Workflow

MORE THAN HALF OF PLANNERS USE AI STARTING WITH SOURCING, REAL-TIME TRANSLATIONS AND CAPTURING CONTENT.

AI Use (1 of 2)

■ Currently using ■ Plan to use ■ Don't plan to use ■ Unsure



Question: In what ways are you currently using or do you plan to use AI tools to support your meetings and events?

Base: Total planners (N=65)

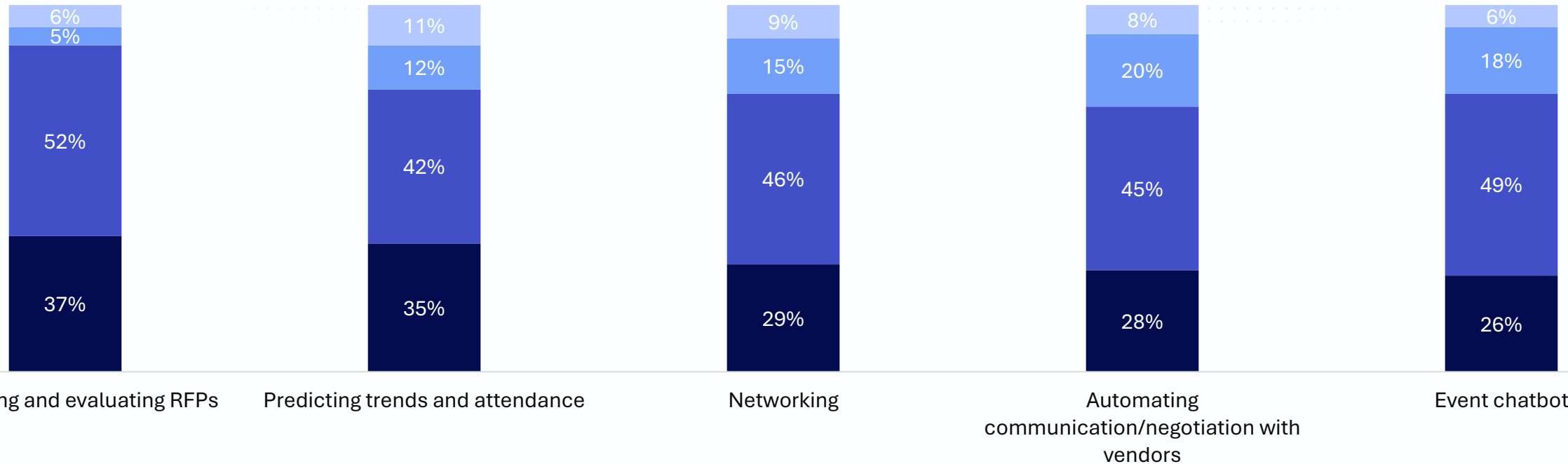
Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

Planners Less Inclined to Use AI as an Event Chatbot

INTENTION IS HIGHEST FOR ANALYZING FEEDBACK (PREVIOUS SLIDE) AND EVALUATING RFPS.

AI Use (2 of 2)

■ Currently using ■ Plan to use ■ Don't plan to use ■ Unsure



Question: In what ways are you currently using or do you plan to use AI tools to support your meetings and events?

Base: Total planners (N=65)

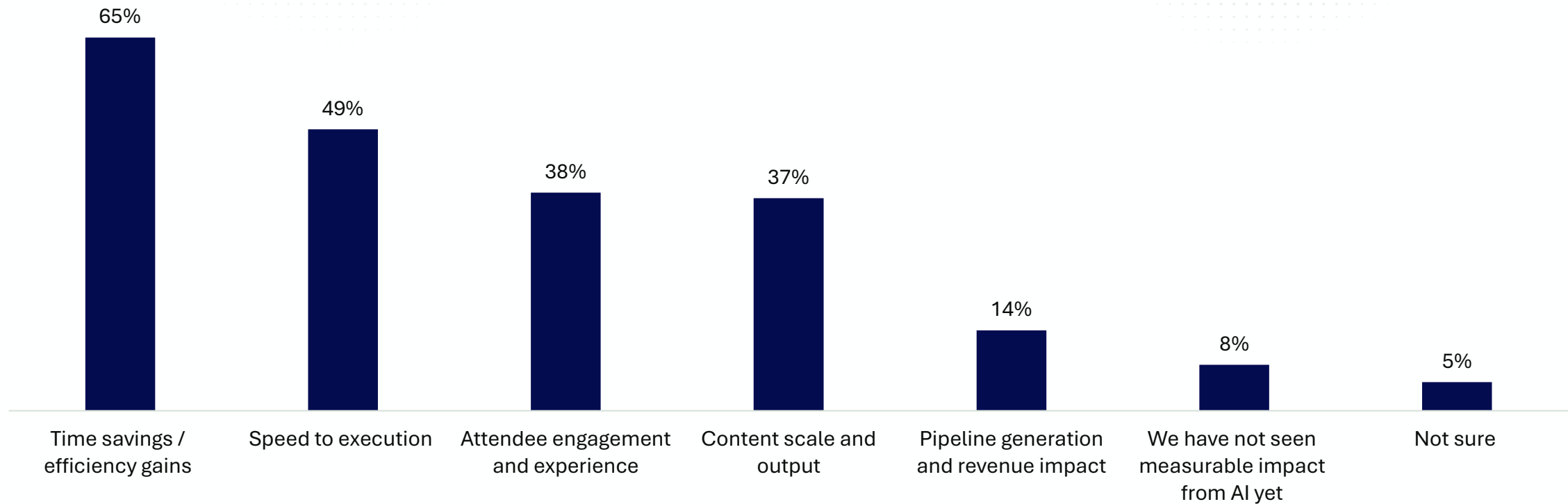
Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

AI is Proving Itself as a Time-Saving Tool

FEW PLANNERS DON'T FIND ANY MEASURABLE IMPACT OF AI.

Areas AI Has Driven Measurable Impact

■ September '26



Question: In which areas, if any, has AI already driven measurable impact for your meetings and events programme? Please select up to three.

Base: Total planners (N=65)

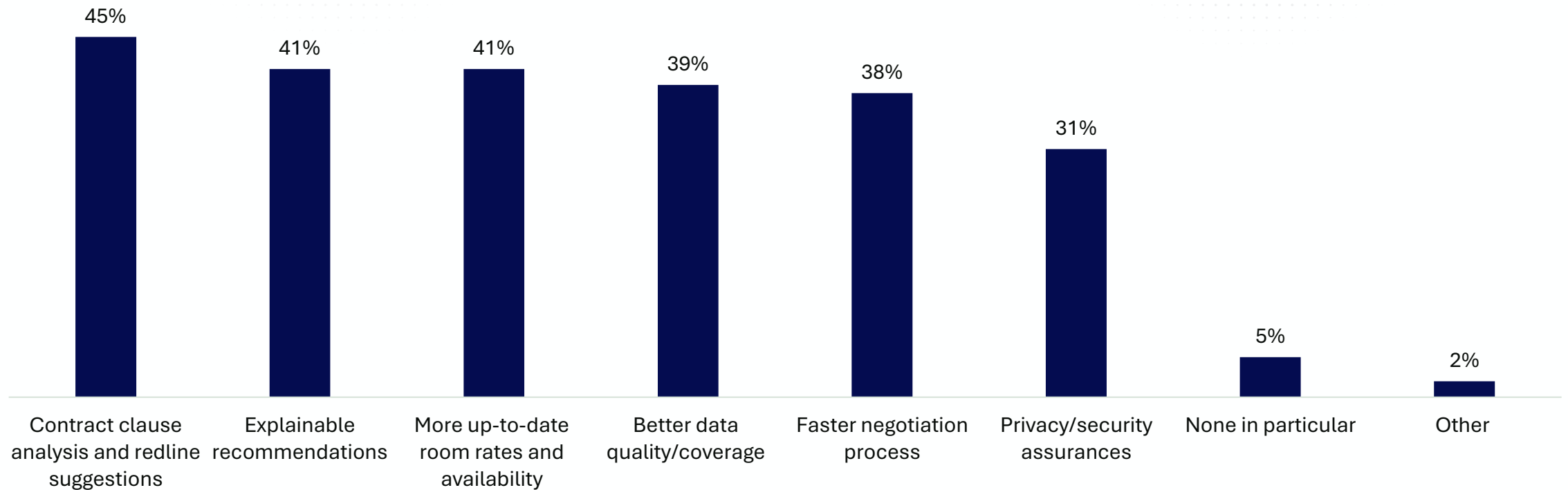
Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

Planners Are Hopeful AI Will be More Helpful

FEW PLANNERS DON'T BELIEVE AI CAN BETTER ASSIST THEM.

Areas AI Could Better Assist

■ September '26



Question: In which areas could AI better assist your event management process? Please select up to three.

Base: Total planners (N=65)

Source: Meetings Industry PULSE Survey APAC 2026

Select Planner Verbatim Comments

Planners are cautiously optimistic but wary. They are open to AI for practical tasks, but resistant to it replacing human judgement or personal touch.

- AI need to design or digital promotion or report after event but not for negotiation.
- As we continue our AI and sustainability journey, it is important to assess users' readiness and adaptability. This will help us move forward more effectively, especially since many conference attendees come from older generations who may not be as digitally savvy. To ensure inclusivity, we should consider providing both digital and traditional support methods, bridging the needs of past, present, and future generations.
- Business dynamics are changing over years but what never changes in Hospitality and Tourism industry is 'Human Touch.' And we always rely on that. We request industry to focus on personal touch rather than believing on AI and gadgets.
- Cost Compression vs. Experience Demands: We as planners are facing a dynamic where corporate clients expect higher levels of personalization and digital integration while expecting total costs to stay tightly.
- Events to be guided keeping in mind what Gen Z and Millennials would react.
- The RFP response-rate questions would benefit from including a field to provide the rationale behind the selected response time. Expectations can vary significantly by booking type and lead time. For example, a short-lead, last-minute corporate event may reasonably be expected to receive a hotel response within 1–2 days, whereas a three-day annual corporate conference taking place a year in advance may have a response expectation of more than 7 days. Capturing the reason for the selected response time would provide useful context and make the survey results more meaningful.