



September 2025

Industry Trends



Data Plus ‘So What’

We’re passionate about data. Actually, let’s rephrase that: **We’re passionate about the power of data to drive better decisions.**

Data is everywhere in our ecosystem – from contracted hotel rates to registration behavior to on-site engagement.

This edition is chock full of data on a variety of topics. But the real power lies in the ‘so what.’ Our goal is to make data easy to understand and act on whether you aced statistics or prefer never to think about math again.

We hope you’ll take away a few insights you can put into action.

Industry Trends At-A-Glance

- Hotel outlook and latest inflation rates;
See slides 4-12
- Our latest registration data;
See slides 13-15
- Large corporate events benchmarking;
See slides 16-21
- The shifting payment technology landscape;
See slides 22-24
- Idea Spotlight: Fostering better conversations with Braindate;
See slides 25-28



Hotel Outlook

**Locking in a multi-year
agreement vs. sourcing
year-to-year**

Lock In Rates or Wait?

It's a question clients ask with some regularity: 'Should we contract hotels several years out, or are we better off waiting since rates may come down?'

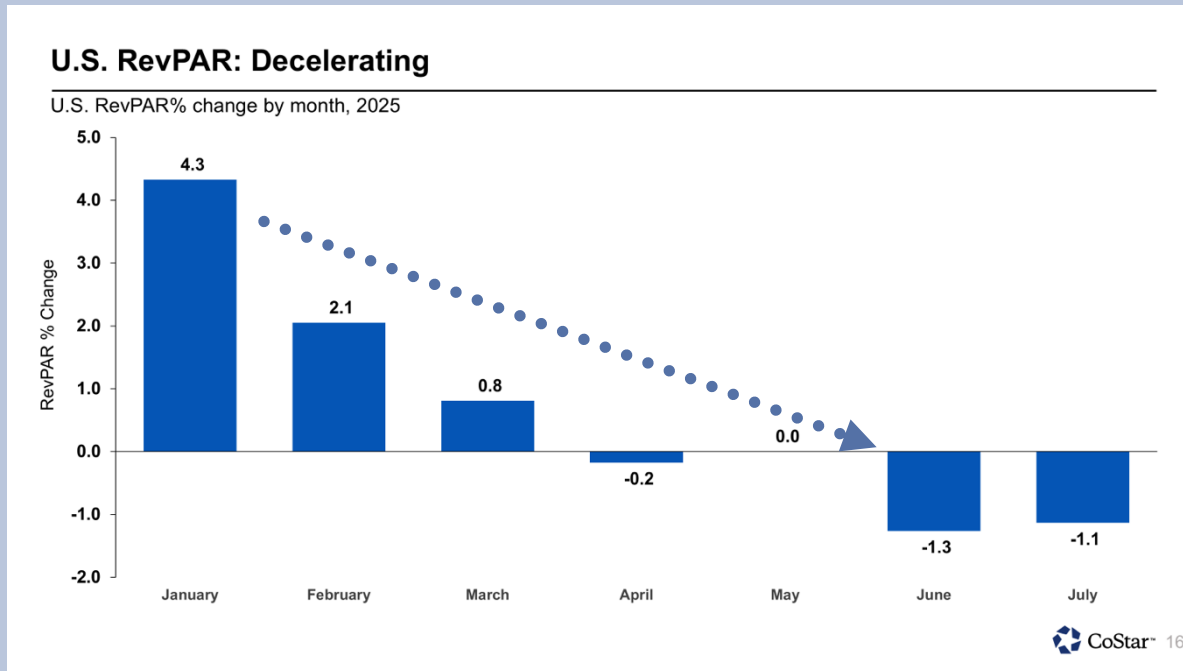
In this section, we'll share data and perspective to inform this decision. In short, while it is impossible to predict future rates and market conditions with certainty,* **current information leads us to favor locking in rates now versus waiting.** This is especially advantageous when signing multi-year agreements within the same hotel brand.

*Guidance is based on available data and perspectives. Please note that Maritz cannot guarantee how hotel rates will perform in the future, and it is possible rates will decline.



Weakened Hotel Performance

Lately, the U.S. hotel industry is awash in disappointing results. After several blockbuster years of surging travel demand and strong pricing power, things have softened, leading some to wonder if the seller's market is ending and rates will come down in the future.



RevPAR ('Revenue per Available Room'), hoteliers' widely used measure of performance, has declined in 2025 and is projected to be flat in 2026.

Driven by:

- Weakening leisure demand and consumer confidence
- Soft group demand as companies try to cut/manage controllable costs
- Reduced U.S. travel volume as Americans and internationals are choosing to go elsewhere

WEAKENING HOTEL PERFORMANCE

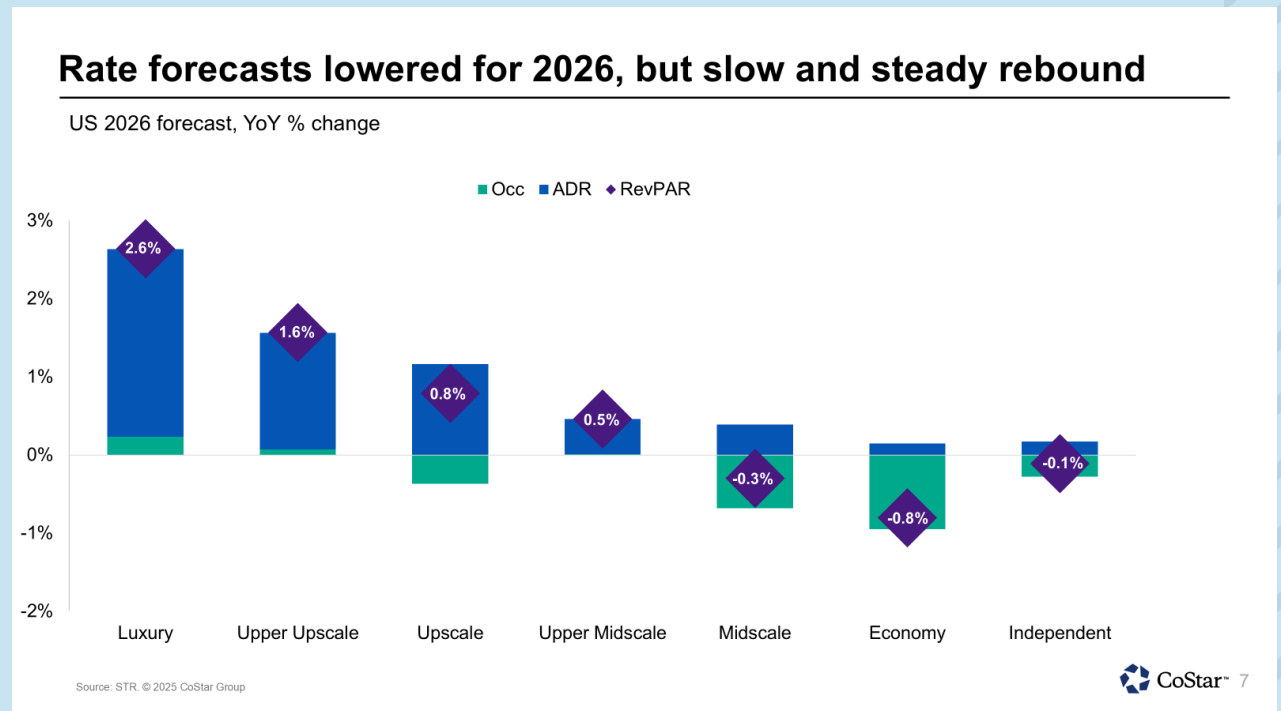
Why It Won't Necessarily Mean Lower Rates

Experts caution that weakening hotel performance won't necessarily translate to lower rates for business groups. The chart on the right helps to explain why.

'Bifurcation' Notice that the bars on the left are higher than the bars on the right. This is because upper-end hotel chains — the ones that tend to be used by business groups and affluent consumers — are sustaining performance better than economy chains. The word 'bifurcation' is often used to describe this phenomenon.

Hotels' pricing strategy Notice that within each bar, the blue part shows a more positive trend than the green part. This is because the blue (average daily rate) is projected to hold firm or increase slightly even if the green (occupancy level) is lower. This reflects hoteliers' strategy to rely on rates to sustain performance even if fewer rooms are filled.

We'll share some recent remarks that speak to these two trends on the following slide.



EXPERTS EXPLAIN

Why Business Groups May Not See Lower Rates

“

Hotelier Perspective

There is often a reflexive response to chase occupancy at the expense of rate. Our teams are really working hard to maintain rate even in those chain scales that are challenged from a demand perspective.”

Anthony Capuano
CEO, Marriott

Maritz Perspective

“In the past when there was economic weakness or uncertainty, you would see hotel rates go on sale because hotel owners just wanted to fill rooms. We are absolutely not seeing this now. If anything, hoteliers will go in with lower occupancy while still maintaining a higher average room rate per night.”

Meg Pisani
Vice President, Supplier Relations, Maritz

”

Industry Perspective

“The second quarter painted a tale of two hotel industries, with luxury properties commanding premium rates from affluent travelers even as budget and midscale hotels grappled with declining demand and razor-thin margins.”

Sean O'Neill
Senior Hospitality Editor, Skift

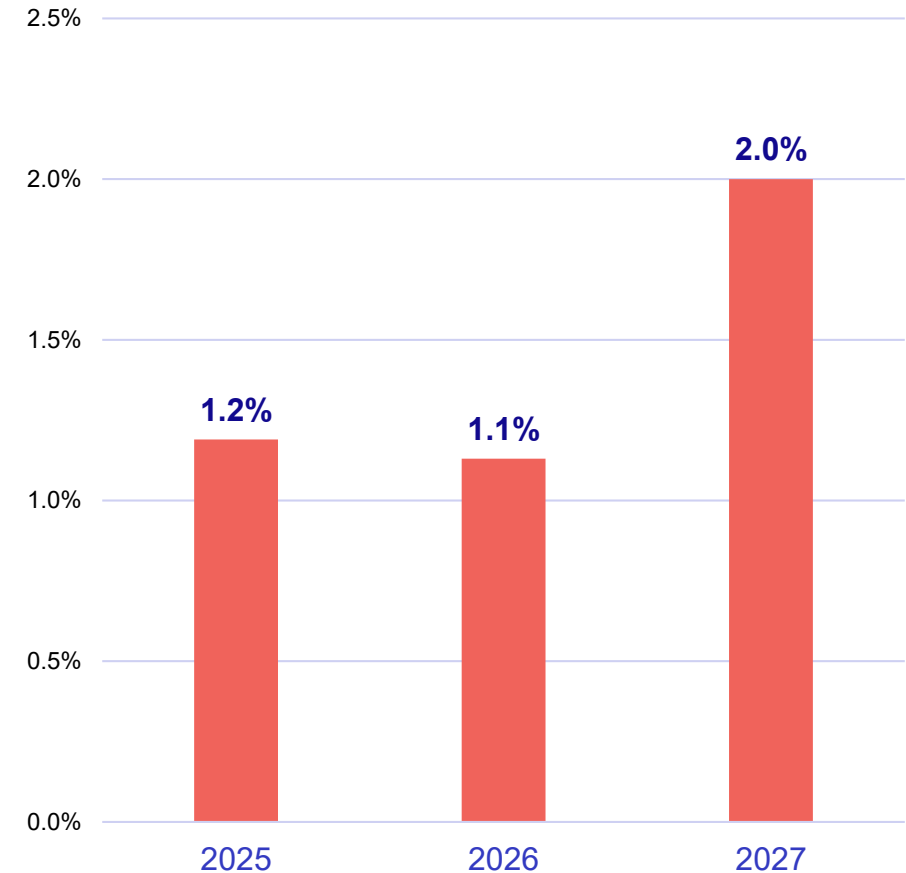
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Hotel Rate Forecast 2025-2027

For upper end chains,
forecasts indicate **slight
yearly rate increases**
through 2027.

CoStar/STR, July 2025 – chain scales including Luxury,
Upper Upscale, Upscale, and Upper Midscale

U.S. Hotel Average Daily Rate (ADR)
Forecast 2025-2027
**Upper end chain scales*



Benefits of Multi-Year Agreements in Today's Climate

Rate favorability

With rising costs (hotel, air, transportation, F&B), multi-year agreements can offer cost savings. Guidance from hoteliers indicates rates will hold firm or increase despite economic softening and reduced occupancy.

Concessions

In most cases there are booking incentives or additional cost saving concessions for signing multiple years at once. These customized concession packages are based on the unique needs of the organization.

Availability

While overall occupancy has declined from post-pandemic highs, large groups continue to see strong demand and limited availability for function space. Locking in dates in advance helps avoid availability issues for larger events.

Example: we are currently working on a large self-contained group for January of 2028 with a major hotel brand and options are very limited.

Predictability

Multi-year agreements offer stability in a volatile market, especially when it comes to budgeting. It is helpful to be able to establish a budget years in advance because rates and F&B are locked in.

Process Efficiency

Multi-year deals cut down the need for annual sourcing/RFP process, giving clients more time to focus on program strategy, program improvements, and success factors.

Stronger Partnerships

Signing with the same brand over multiple years helps build deeper relationships, which usually means better rates, extra concessions, elevated service, and (if booked early), more options in high-demand spots. Both parties are more invested with a long-term relationship/commitment.

Improved Continuity

Improved continuity by working with the same partners for multiple years makes the planning and event process more efficient/successful. Rotational programs with the same brand allow for better sharing and collaboration of historic information and learnings for the following years of the contract.

“Sourcing from year to year will not guarantee large groups will find the function space needed for their event. It will force them to be more flexible with program planning – piecemealing together smaller spaces – which usually necessitates higher audiovisual and production costs.”

Meg Pisani

Vice President, Supplier Relations, Maritz



OVERALL EVENTS INFLATION OUTLOOK

Modest Price Increases

Meetings and events prices are expected to stabilize after the high volatility of the last several years.

Forecasts point to modest (low-single-digit) price increases through 2026 that are more in line with overall inflation rates and economic conditions.



A good rule of thumb is that events costs will increase 2-4% annually through 2026.

	2025 Prices	2026 Prices
Hotels	Up 1-2% <small>*Estimate reflects hotel chain scales typically used by business groups</small>	Up 1-3% <small>*Estimate reflects hotel chain scales typically used by business groups</small>
Air	Down 2%	Up 0-1%
Food & Beverage	Up 4%	Up 3-6%
Wages for Event Staff	Up 3-4%	Up 3-4%
Meetings & Events	Up 3.7%	Up 2.4%

*Sources: CoStar/STR; 2026 Global Business Travel Forecast – CWT/GBTA; USDA ERS August 2025 Forecast; World at Work and PayScale August 2025 report



The Latest Registration Data

How Maritz client registration
volume is trending

Our Latest Registration Data

We've shared a lot recently about how geopolitical changes are affecting events. To understand how this is impacting attendance, we analyzed our clients' data for events occurring between March (when disruption started) and August 2025, comparing registration volume to the same set of shows in 2024.

Data



Context

Overall registrations were down **3%** on average

Overall registrations

Registrations were slightly down on average, but with a lot of variation by event. Some saw declines of 40% or more and others saw increases of the same magnitude.

Among events seeing decreases, **11%** was the average decrease

Those seeing decreases

If we exclude events seeing growth and only look at those with decreased registrations, the average decrease was 11%.

International registrations were down **13%**

International

International attendance at U.S. events was down due to a variety of geopolitical factors, with international registrations falling 13%. The decline jumped to 20-25% when we looked at just those events seeing decreases.

“Consistent with industry data, our client’s data reveals a somewhat negative trend in registration volume. We will have a better read on things as the fall show season progresses.”

Emily Laufgraben
Sr. Manager, Market Insights,
Maritz

Answering Pertinent Questions

Which events are included in this registration data?

Maritz client events in the association and trade show market that took place between March and August 2025 for which we have registration data for the same show in 2024. This timeframe was chosen based on when we started to see disruption in the environment. Both regular attendees and exhibitor attendees are included if applicable.

What are some cautions about this data?

The data should be considered preliminary and directional in nature. There is high variability across events, with some seeing large decreases in attendance and others seeing significant increases. Most importantly, fall show data (representing peak show season) is not yet available.

How is the data trending for my specific industry?

There isn't enough data yet to draw conclusions by industry, particularly once we drill down to international attendees specifically. We will continue to monitor the data as the fall show season progresses.

How does Maritz's data compare to industry-wide data?

Similarly, both in terms of the slightly negative trend, and the high degree of variability between shows. Industry data shows that about one quarter of trade shows are seeing attendance growth; one quarter are seeing significant declines; and the middle 50% are seeing flat or modest declines. Think of a bell curve that skews somewhat negative.





Market Focus:
**Large Corporate
Events**

A look at client trends for major
corporate events and
conferences

Definitions and Level Set

In this section, we'll do a deep dive into a specific market segment that we're calling large corporate events – a broad term that can range from a tech user conference to a franchisee or dealer event to a sales kickoff to a financial advisor meeting.

Since this is a pretty broad umbrella, here's the criteria we used to determine what is considered a large corporate event.



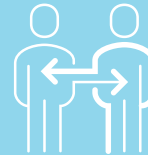
**2,000+
attendees**



**5,000+
room nights**



**2018-
2030**



**In-person
(or hybrid)**

External vs. internal, defined

- External events are for the sponsoring company's customers, channel partners, or non-direct sales force
- Internal events are for the sponsoring company's own employees or direct salesforce

**Note: Events that include both audiences are classified as external due to their more similar characteristics*

External Events At-A-Glance

Here’s the average profile of corporate client events with an external audience – the sponsoring company’s customers, channel partners or non-direct sales force.

Top sectors

1. Tech
2. Financial
3. Automotive
4. Pharmaceutical

The remainder are comprised of other sectors

Attendees **5,500**

Hotels per program* **7**

Length (days) **3.3**

Booking window (Months hotel signed date to start date) **23**


*Number of hotels varies significantly by destination. For example, an event in Las Vegas that only needs 1-2 hotels may need 15-20 in another city. Case in point: When we remove Las Vegas from the data, average number of hotels per program increases to 9.

11%

 **Winter**

December
January
February

28%

Spring 

March
April
May

 **Fall**

33%

September
October
November

Summer 

27%

June
July
August

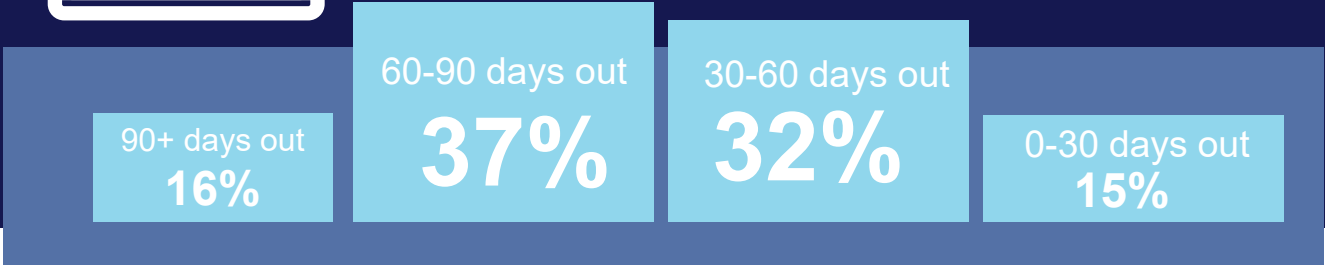
Time of Year

September and April are most popular, corresponding with peak conference season. Interestingly, some spring volume has shifted to summer compared to our last analysis, possibly due to better availability and/or rates outside of peak conference season.



When people register

2023-2025 data

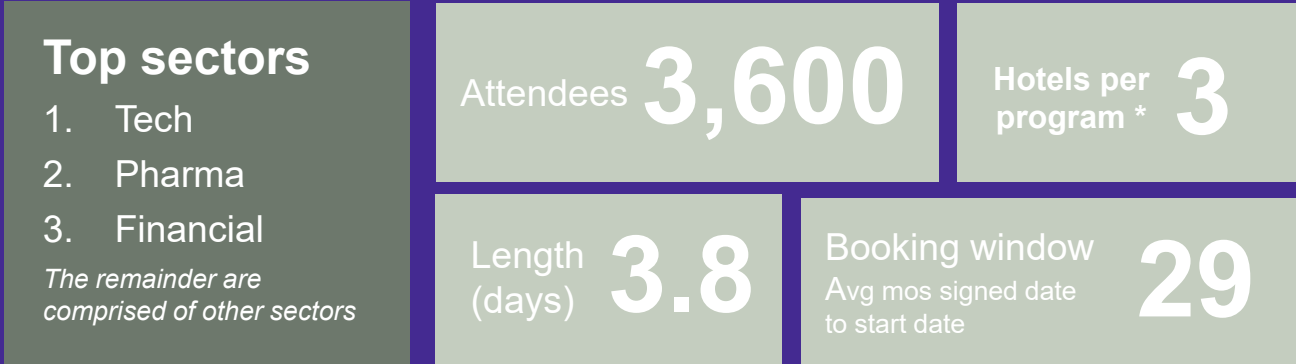


Registration patterns

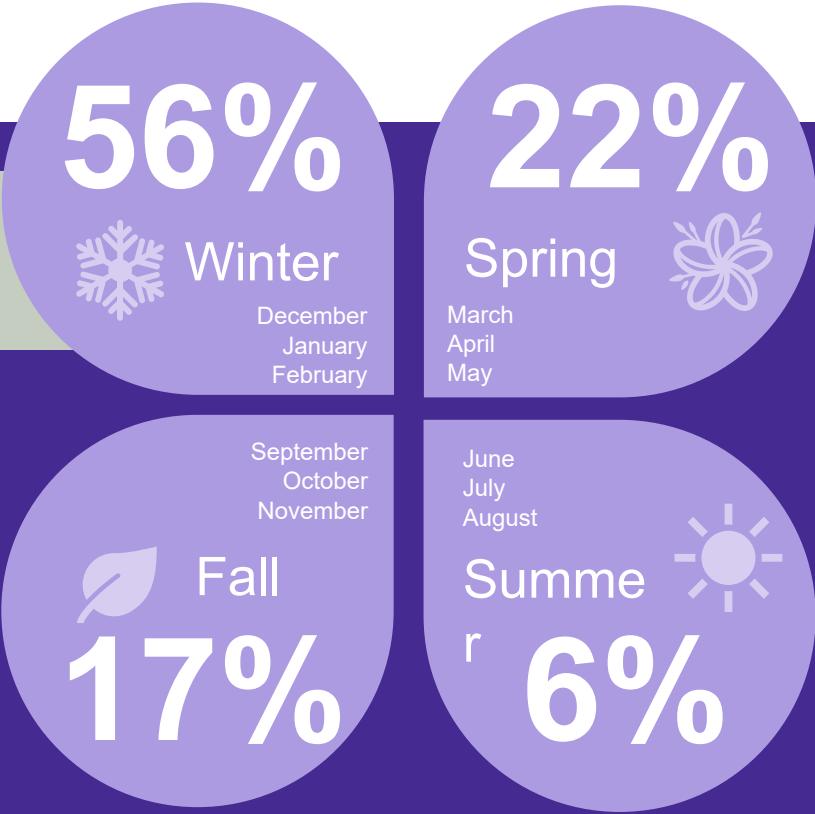
The bulk of attendees register in the 30-90 day window before the event. Notably, this is different than association and tradeshow events, which see much more last-minute decision making – likely because attendance of the latter is seen as more ‘elective.’

Internal Events At-A-Glance

Here's the average profile of corporate client events with an internal audience – the sponsoring company's own employees or direct salesforce.



*Number of hotels varies significantly by destination. For example, an event in Las Vegas that only needs 1-2 hotels may need 15-20 in another city. Case in point: When we remove Las Vegas from the data, average number of hotels per program increases to 5.



Time of Year

The Jan/Feb timeframe is most common, as many companies hold kickoffs to start the year

Registration patterns

Since these are employees of the company holding the event, they register earlier on average compared to the customer and channel events shown on the previous slide. Presumably their leaders expect them to attend and register in a timely fashion.

Use of Maritz Services

Over 1/2 of our clients use these services:

- Sourcing
- Event management/operations
- Registration
- Housing (room block management & optimization)
- Guest customer service
- Invoicing and accounting

1/3 of our clients also use these services

- Guest air booking
- Creative communications
- On-site technology
- Mobile app
- Post-event attendee surveys

Tips for Launching a New Event

Thinking about launching a user conference or customer event for the first time? Our team members share tips and common pitfalls from their experience.



Agenda

First-timers have a tendency to overshoot with too many sessions out of the gate. We recommend starting small, focusing on your company's hot topics. (Maritz can provide a sample agenda with which elements tend to work best.)

Budget

Avoid throwing out a random number without due diligence — and being way off. We're here to help you build a sample budget to get executive/internal approval.

Pricing Strategy

Some clients choose not to charge attendees in year one to build credibility first. If you do charge, you may need to charge well under typical market prices in the first year (or offer discounts or comps) until you build the conference brand.

Dates

Check all industry shows against dates for overlap, or trade show events your customers or prospects might attend. You do not want to compete.

Location

Choosing a good location is key. The first time you do the event, it can be helpful having it close to headquarters to make it accessible and keep costs down. Check air lift, know where your customers are coming from and pick a destination that's appealing and will attract people.

Content Strategy

Be sure you have agreement internally on who will build the content and deliver it at the conference. For a customer or user conference, if it's not being built by your marketing department, they need to be engaged.

Production

This may be a large expense at first, but choosing the right partner that can grow with you versus choosing the cheapest option is critical.



Shifting Payment Tech Landscape

Embracing the next frontier of
payment technology

Shifting Landscape

How we purchase things as consumers is evolving, and with it, how we pay for things at events will evolve, too.

Over time, physical forms of payment like credit cards will be replaced with contactless and digital payment methods (think tapping your phone or scanning a QR code). Further, our devices will increasingly be tied to digital wallets that “hide” our credit card information through a mechanism called tokenization.

At least two factors are driving this: improved consumer convenience (being able to pay with the devices we already use and avoiding mishaps due to lost or stolen cards); and enhanced security (reducing the need for merchants and suppliers to store credit card information where it can be stolen by bad actors).

Examples of how it could look in events

QR codes for registration

Instead of needing to pull out a physical credit card at the registration desk, attendees can use a QR code on their mobile device to confirm their registration and receive their badge.

Tokenized payments

Rather than a supplier like Maritz needing to store and protect credit card numbers, wallets like Venmo, PayPal and Zelle obscure account information behind a ‘token’ so they can’t be stolen in the event of a cyberattack..

Hotel loyalty apps

Storing credit card information through the hotel loyalty programs the attendee is already enrolled in avoids the need for Maritz to store their credit card information to hold their hotel room.



HOW TO PREPARE

What Maritz is Doing

To adapt to these changes, Maritz has established several focus areas as part of our roadmap:

- Bringing contactless payment options to market to reduce the need for physical cards
- Developing tokenized payment mechanisms to mitigate the need to store and manage credit cards for hotels on our clients' behalf
- Exploring options to store attendee payment methods through hotel loyalty apps vs. through Maritz

What You Can Do

Be aware

The payment tech landscape is changing rapidly. Your Finance teams will want to monitor these developments.

Look holistically

The landscape varies by geography so if you have international attendees, it's important to look at what payment methods are commonly used in different regions.

For example, in APAC, apps like WeChat and AliPay are well entrenched.



Contact us

Your Maritz Account Rep can connect you with our IT teams for further discussion.

Idea Spotlight

You asked – we answered.
By client request, each month
we'll share an idea or
story that caught our eye.

Fostering Better Conversations

Today's attendees crave meaningful ways to connect. Rather than enduring a long parade of keynotes, breakouts and cocktail receptions, they want an active role, having real conversations with peers who have similar needs, challenges and interests.

Enter Braindate,

a platform that enables attendees to initiate small group discussions on topics or questions of mutual interest — all crowdsourced. **This woman-led business was named one of *Fast Company's* 'World's Most Innovative Companies' in 2025.** We introduced Braindate to our guests at Elevate, a Maritz's client-focused event.

Our attendees connected around a range of topics – from AI to ROI to our personal favorite: the life and works of the band Sugar Ray's singer Mark McGrath, who jammed and snapped selfies with adoring fans at one of the evening events. (The latter group persists to this day in the form of a group chat).

This is the networking we're here for.



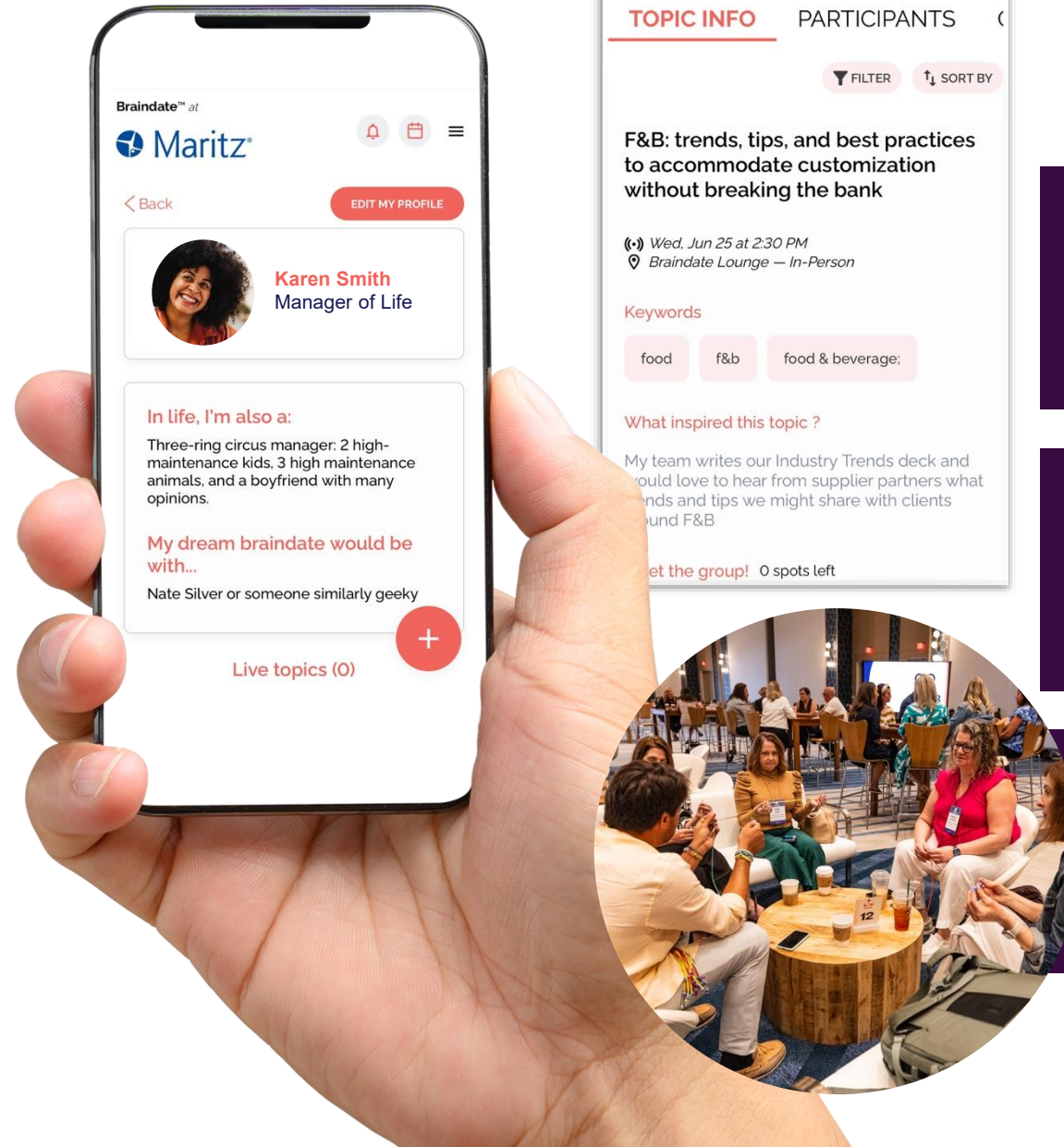
How it Works

Before the event

Attendees are prompted to answer a few (often fun!) questions about themselves through the Braindate app. From there, they're served up AI-driven topic suggestions, or they can post their own topic. Fellow attendees can then sign up to join their Braindate, or any others that pique their interest.

On site

On site, there is a dedicated space where Braindates occur and Braindate staff act as concierges, greeting guests and offering assistance. Our Braindate Lounge offered a range of seating options — from casual couches and comfy lounge chairs to high-top tables with space for those who prefer to stand.



1 Post Topic

Spark conversations of interest to you.

2 Book Topic

Find and connect with like minded people.

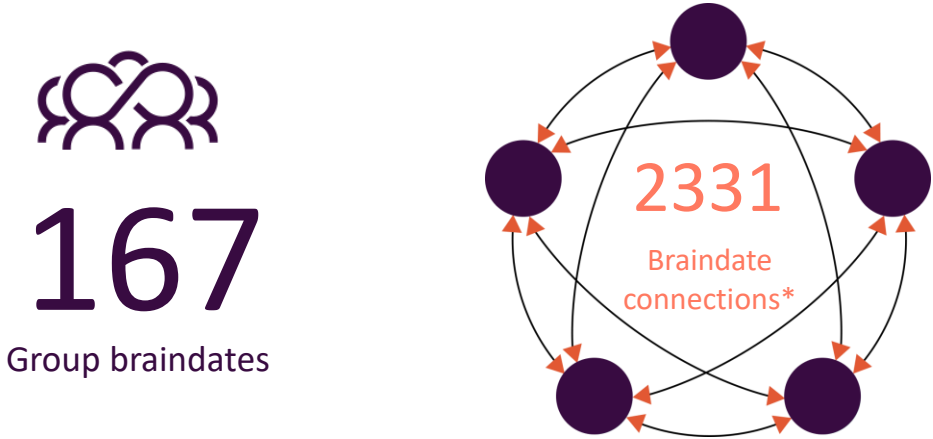
3 Discuss Topic

Meet in person or virtually on the platform.







The Result

Braindates were well received, earning high ratings in our post-attendee survey. They were particularly effective at elevating new voices and making new connections amongst our audience, a mix of Maritz team members, supplier partners and clients.

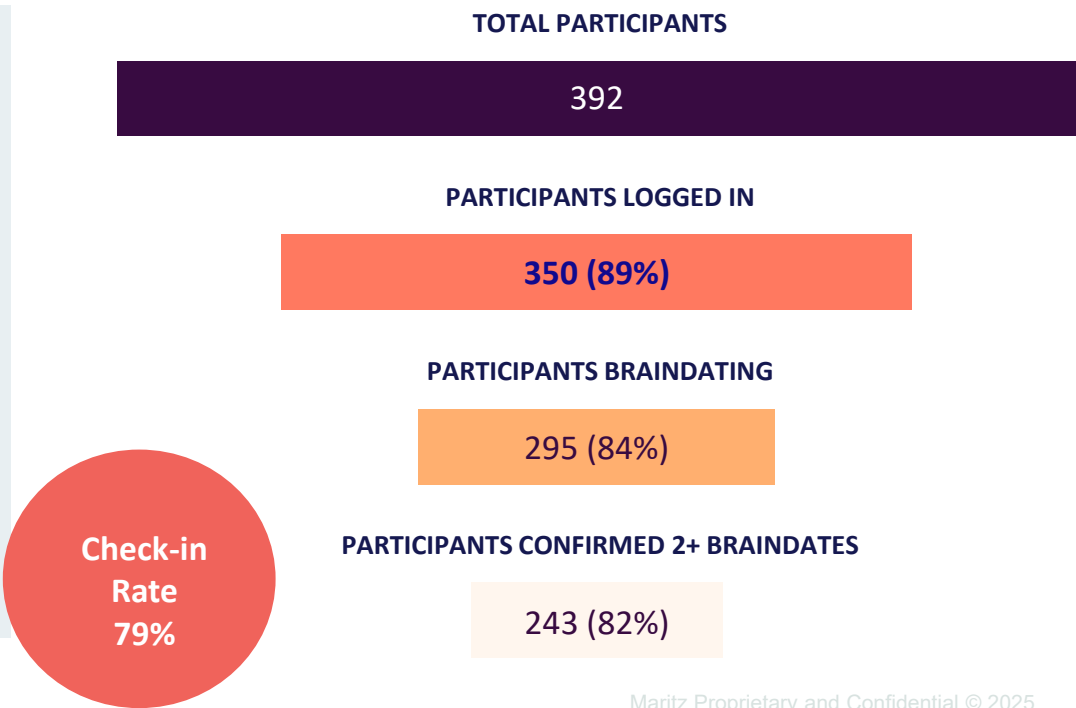
The added bonus? A report with tons of data analytics on the impact and topics that got the most traction. Great intel for future content planning!



Popular Group Braindate Topics

<p>Customer Advisory Board connect (Maritz CAB members - by invitation)</p> <p> Emily Laufgraben Market Insights Manager at Maritz</p> <p>67 views</p>	<p>AI that works like you do: fast, focused, no BS. Real results for real professionals.</p> <p> Sam Stanton Founder at redbutton.ai - AI for Professionals & Events</p> <p>56 views</p>	<p>Singing Your Way to a Healthier Work-Life Balance</p> <p> Serena Melancon Vice President Global Sales at Hosts Global</p> <p>54 views</p>
<p>Striking the Balance: Optimizing Productivity and Wellbeing in a Multifaceted Life</p> <p> Sinead Landers Global Director at Hyatt Hotels Corporation</p> <p>54 views</p>	<p>Data-driven event design: Translating event data into insights and action</p> <p> Dave Minnelli Sr. Director, Event Analytics at Maritz</p> <p>53 views</p>	<p>The Power of Surprise and Delight: Changing Mindsets with Small Gestures</p> <p> Halle Weinberg General Manager, Destination Engagement at Maritz</p> <p>53 views</p>

COMMITMENT FUNNEL



Our teams are ready to lead some timely conversations – from data-driven insights to the future of exhibitor success to using brand archetypes to design your event. We feel certain you'll leave with some new ideas!

MEET US IN **BOOTH D3305**

AT IMEX AMERICA

A decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping circles. The larger circle is light blue with a thick, hand-drawn green border. The smaller circle is solid red and overlaps the bottom-left of the blue circle.

**SCHEDULE
TIME WITH US**



www.maritz.com