



June 2026

Industry Trends

Industry Trends At-A-Glance

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Let's Ground Ourselves

Our last edition of this publication hit inboxes in early March, just over one week after the war in Iran began. As you've likely gathered from reading headlines (or filling your tank or taking a trip), things have been less than ideal when it comes to the business of moving people and things around the globe.

We'll share the latest data on travel costs, attendance and sentiment.

But can we make a pact, first?

This is not COVID 2.0. The fundamentals are strong. People are meeting. Maybe differently. Maybe smaller. But events are happening successfully, continuously and into the future. The data speaks to some pullback and adjusting, but very little drop-off.

Forgive us for needing to say it but we've heard that pesky comparison creeping its way into dialogues and we want to nip it in the bud.

Agreed? Okay. **Let's dive in.**



Airfares & Attendance

Rising Airfares

Flight costs have risen substantially since the start of the Iran war due to high jet fuel costs, causing airlines to increase prices, reduce flight schedules and charge higher ancillary fees.



Domestic

Average domestic airfare is **up 19%** from a year ago*

\$604



International

Average international airfare* is **up 27%** from a year ago*

\$1,177



Overall

U.S. Travel reports April airfares rose the fastest since post-pandemic

Up 21%



Europe to Asia increased most

Long-haul routes between Europe and East Asia are seeing the highest increases due to airspace restrictions forcing longer routes, as well as loss of capacity among Gulf carriers

*Maritz-ticketed airfares comparing tickets booked in Q2 2026 to Q2 2025. Rates do not include service fees, transaction fees or seat and baggage fees. Flights booked within 7 days of departure are excluded from the data set.



More Rough Air

More upcharges

Airlines are charging more ancillary fees to recoup high jet fuel costs (think: checked bags, seat changes and service fees).

More cancellations

Carriers are reducing flight schedules on less popular routes or quietly cancelling flights that are no longer profitable.

Likely to persist

Experts say high airfares will persist even if the Iran war resolves, particularly if travel demand remains strong (and so far it has).

We're Here For You

This isn't the first time airfares have been volatile over the years and it won't be the last. Here's how we help clients navigate price fluctuations with confidence and flexibility in cases where we manage guest air booking.



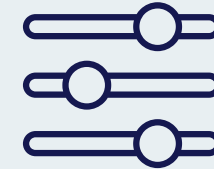
Data-Driven Approach

Maritz-provided air quotes are intentionally built with market realism in mind, typically incorporating a 10% year-over-year airfare increase to help clients plan with greater confidence.



Negotiated Agreements

Maritz maintains proprietary airline contracts and negotiated agreements which help offset market fluctuations and cost volatility.



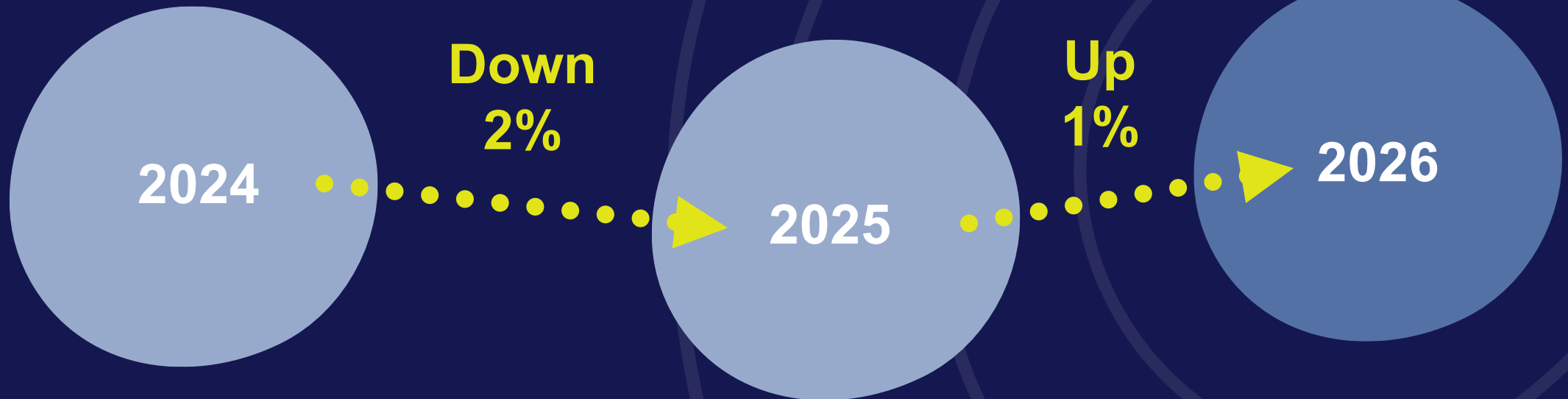
Flexibility

Our event teams work with clients as needed to shift budgets around in ways that still achieve event objectives when one component of the ecosystem becomes more expensive.

ATTENDANCE IMPACT

Overall Attendance Holds Firm

Domestic attendance has held strong, bolstering trade show performance and helping to explain why overall attendance has remained steady over time.



*Source: Maritz client data comparing verified on-site attendance at trade shows taking place in April and May 2026 to the same set of events in previous years.

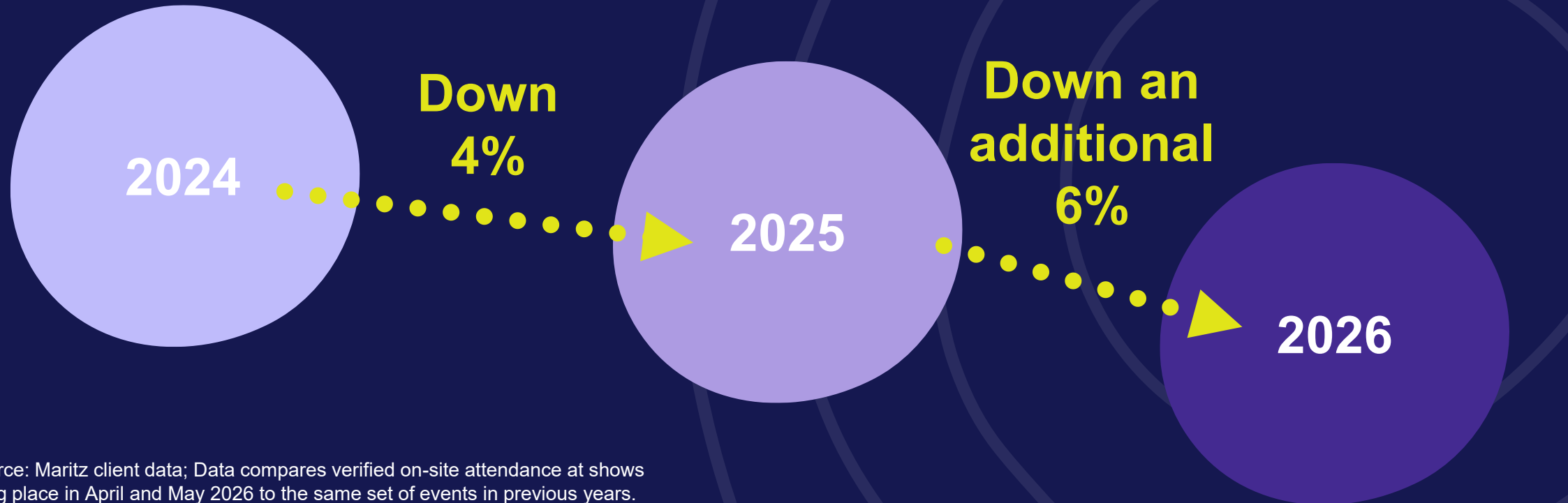
ATTENDANCE IMPACT

International Struggles

International attendance has seen further erosion since the start of the war in Iran, continuing to decline since 2025. Overall, **international attendance is down 10%** compared to two years ago — and by some estimates closer to 15%.

Understanding the Issues

The trend toward softer international attendance at U.S. events reflects broader dynamics in visitation to the U.S. since 2025. Additional information can be found [here](#).



*Source: Maritz client data; Data compares verified on-site attendance at shows taking place in April and May 2026 to the same set of events in previous years.

Inflation Outlook



UPDATED

Inflation Outlook

Event costs have increased substantially since our last update, driven primarily by airfares. Previously in the low single digits, airfares are now up 21% according to U.S. Travel data, and closer to 30% for international flights.

Additionally (and not captured in the data), service charges are increasingly prevalent across the ecosystem, from airlines and hotels to catering and transportation.



Previous data suggested budgets would need to increase 2-4% to achieve the same program YOY.



Current data suggests budgets would need to increase 8-10% and more in some cases.

	2025 Prices	2026 Prices
Hotels *Estimates reflect hotel chain scales typically used by business groups	Up 2-4%	Up 4-6%
Air	Down 2%	Up 21%
Food & Beverage	Up 4%	Up 4%
Industry Staff Wages	Up 3-4%	Up 3%
Travel Prices Overall	Up 3.7%	Up 8-10%

*Sources: CoStar/STR U.S. ADR % Change, April 2026; U.S. Travel Association Travel Price Index – April 2026; Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Cost Index – March 2026

UPDATED:

Hotel Rate Forecast

Higher end hotel tiers are seeing the highest acceleration in rates, consistent with longer term trends that show a widening gap between the have's and have-not's of the hotel world.

What's new in 2026: average daily rates are increasing for all but the most budget-oriented chain scales.

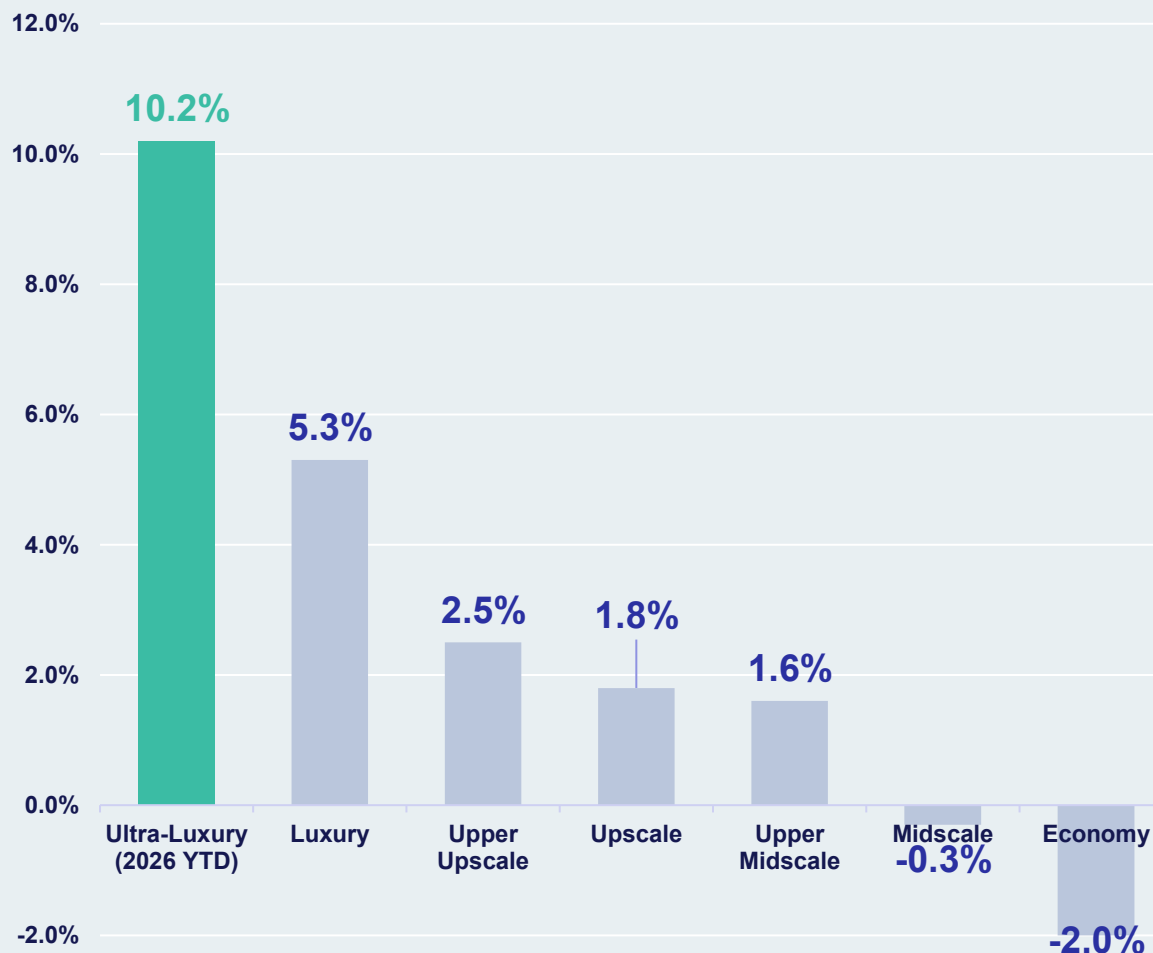
Experts agree: rates aren't likely to come down.

Even if it means accepting some empty rooms (lower occupancy), hotel owners are relying on higher rates to drive growth.

And at the risk of boring you ...

Hoteliers now have sophisticated yield management models to evaluate how much money your group will generate to them all-in (rooms, catering, etc.) compared to other groups and leisure travelers competing for the space. The historic metric known as RevPAR ("Revenue Per Available Room") has now shifted to TRevPar ("TOTAL Revenue Per Available Room"). It's very similar to what airlines have been doing for years.

2026 U.S. Hotel Rate Forecast by Chain Scale YoY % Change



*Source: CoStar/STR April 2026 results; Ultra-Luxury is a Maritz classification.

Budgeting for 2026-2028

As we've shared in the past, events are not created equal when it comes to costs. If your program meets any of the following characteristics, cost benchmarks have trended higher than industry averages:



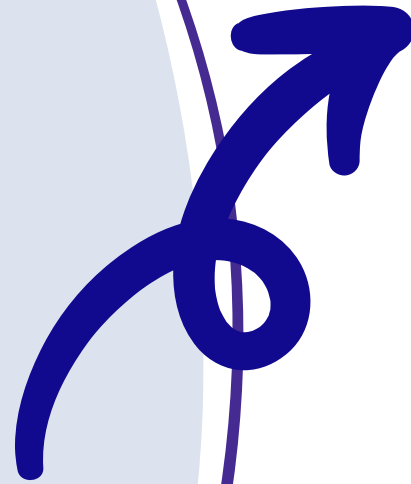
In popular locations or held overseas (vacation hotspots and tier 1 cities)



At peak times of year for that location (consider both conferences and tourism)



Luxury oriented (e.g. high-end hotels, premium airfares)



If your program meets these characteristics, a 10%+ yearly budget increase is likely needed to achieve the same program experience





Client Landscape

Uncertain Environment Impacting Clients

Your Environment

More scrutiny on discretionary spend

Heightened focus on risk

Shift toward high-ROI programs

How It's Showing Up

Budgetary tradeoffs

Modifying program scope (e.g. number of days, hotel tier, locations) or shifting budgets around to accommodate inflation of airfares, rooms, F&B, etc.

Decisions and approvals take longer

More legal involvement and more scrutiny around data ownership, privacy and security

Focus on ROI, data and measurement

Desire for real-time data and measurable outcomes

Client behavior points to commitment to in-person events but constrained environment

It's impacting how B2B customers buy ...
(our customers, and maybe yours, too)

“While clients are demonstrating great urgency during the RFP process, momentum typically slows once they have selected Maritz. There is often extended time to sign contracts, driven by heightened legal scrutiny and increasingly complex negotiations around data ownership, privacy and security.

Maritz Sales Leader





Global Update

Things On Our Radar

Seeking more assurance

Clients are seeking more assurance and guidance from destinations — from the location's safety to customs and entry requirements to financial incentives and sponsorships available to organizers.

DMO and DMC: more critical than ever

With increased global complexity, destination bureaus and DMCs have become invaluable partners for local expertise.

Location pivots

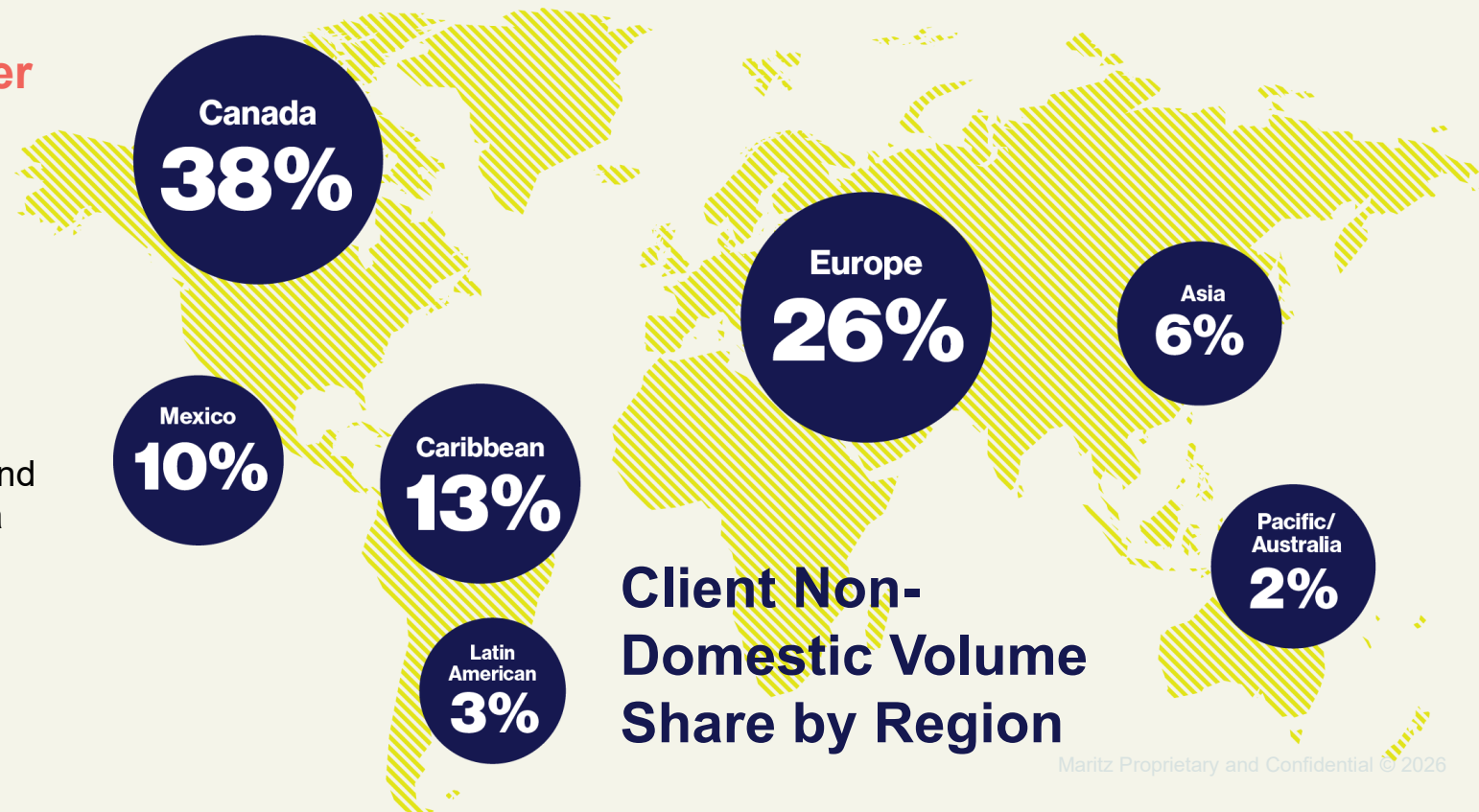
Some clients are changing rotation patterns or postponing events in the Middle East and U.S. in light of geopolitical factors. The result is high demand and compression in major cities in Europe, Canada and Latin America.

High airfares driving budget pivots

With international airfares up 20-30% from a year ago, clients are needing to find cost savings elsewhere in the program or seek internal approvals in cases where flights are over budget.

Flight changes

Increased flight cancellations and changes are forcing re-routings, adding time and complexity to the guest air booking process.



EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa)

What to know

- **Demand** is high, especially for ultra luxury hotels. Relocation of groups (and leisure business) from the Middle East is creating near-term compression.
- **Prices** are high and expected to increase substantially in coming months. *Date flexibility and willingness to book off peak season can make a meaningful difference in rates.*
- Major investment in **infrastructure, venues,** and **high-end hotels** in key cities and premium leisure destinations across Europe.
- **Middle East** locations like Dubai and Abu Dhabi are expectedly seeing some postponements due to the war in Iran, though services remain fully functional and optimism remains for future years.
- **Africa** is seeing continued interest from clients, though the region has been negatively impacted by higher fares and the Middle East being its largest air connection hub.

Highlight: Don't rule out locations beyond the major cities in western Europe. Locations like Croatia, Switzerland and Vienna/Budapest/Prague offer unique experiences and a high level of safety.

Top booked by
Maritz clients:

#1 – London

#2 – Barcelona

#3 – Paris

#4 – Lisbon,
Dublin, Nice



SPOTLIGHT: APAC (Asia-Pacific)

What to know

- Asia is seeing **positive demand** from North American clients for meetings, conferences and incentives, though high flight prices (and re-routings to avoid Middle East air space) are deterring some.
- Top picks for incentives include **Thailand, Vietnam, and Bali** while **Singapore, Thailand** and **Japan** are popular for meetings and conferences.
- **Japan** continues to experience strong demand, with Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and Yokohama most requested. Prioritizing weekday patterns vs. weekends can offer more favorable hotel rates.
- While distance and air costs deter some clients from booking **Australia** and **New Zealand**, ground costs are more affordable than many realize, and the U.S. dollar goes far with today's exchange rate.

Highlight: Early planning, date flexibility and shoulder seasons can make a meaningful difference in availability and pricing.

Top booked by
Maritz clients:

#1 - Singapore

#2 – Sydney

#3 - Tokyo

#4 - Bangkok

SPOTLIGHT:

LATAM (Latin America) & Caribbean

What to know

- Latin America has been in a **growth phase** for business events and luxury travel since the pandemic, driven by investments in infrastructure and luxury hotels and resorts.
- More recently, the region has benefitted from being insulated from the Middle East conflict as well as being geographically and economically aligned with the Americas as a whole. Cities in **Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, and Mexico** in particular are seeing increased demand.
- **Mexico**, the **Caribbean Islands** and **Costa Rica** remain favorites for incentives, boasting plentiful luxury hotels and experienced DMCs.

Highlight: Don't overlook Central America for conferences in addition to incentive/award trips. It offers the benefit of being close to the U.S./Canada while still providing an international experience. In some markets like Panama, financial incentives are available to clients and participants. The country also functions as a geographical, logistic, and strategic bridge between North and South America.

Top booked by
Maritz clients:

#1 – Los Cabos

#2 – Cancun

#3 – Nassau

#4 – Puerto Rico



SPOTLIGHT: Canada

What to know

- Popular for both meetings and incentives, Canada comprises **3 of the top 5 international locations** booked by Maritz clients.
- Cities like Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver are popular for groups seeking alternatives to the U.S. – especially U.S. **associations** hosting conferences and citywides.
- While some cities are seeing softening compared to last year due to general economic conditions, the country overall continues to be seen as a **low risk and reliable** destination for clients.

Highlight: The exchange rate continues to be favorable for U.S. clients, with \$1.00 U.S. currently equivalent to \$1.40 Canadian dollars.

Top booked by
Maritz clients:

#1 - Toronto

#2 - Calgary

#3 - Vancouver

#4 - Montreal



Sustainability Update



Sustainability as Decision Driver

You asked: **Is sustainability still a priority in 2026? What are other organizations doing?**

The broader context

Corporations are required to comply with environmental regulations at the U.S. and state levels as well as overseas, meaning all large companies have maintained longstanding ESG and compliance departments charged with meeting requirements.

What varies is the extent to which a company's policies filter down to travel and events, specifically.

Varying rigor

The majority of corporate clients ask about sustainability in some form in RFPs, but only a smaller subset (an estimated 10-20%) use it as a serious requirement when selecting locations, venues and service providers.

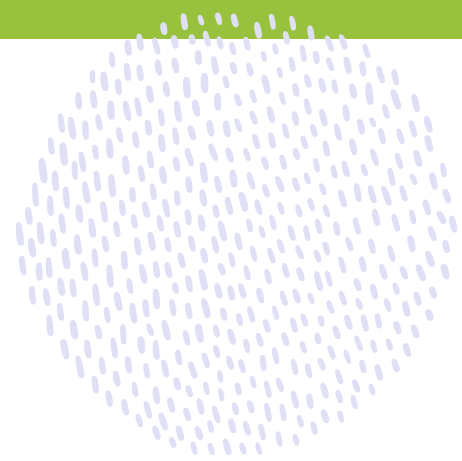


How it shows up

Those with stringent sustainability requirements require suppliers like Maritz to achieve specific metrics such as:

- Disclosing scores and meeting targets set by environmental reporting agencies (most often CDP & EcoVadis)
- Measuring and reducing our own carbon emissions year over year

10-20% of corporate clients require suppliers to meet specific sustainability metrics.



Change Over Time

Has momentum slowed?

Sustainability hasn't gone away, but there's some evidence momentum has plateaued in recent years due to competing pressures.

- Anecdotally, Maritz teams aren't seeing RFP questions with the same depth or frequency as in 2023-2024.
- Industry literature suggests sustainability has become more of a secondary consideration as planners are under more pressure related to costs and other factors.



Why our foot is still on the gas (electric? solar?) pedal

Sustainability may have taken a temporary backseat to other priorities, but it's not going away.

Increased regulations around the globe and in states like California mean companies with operations there (essentially all large companies) must comply.

But more importantly, **environmental consciousness is becoming a more prominent societal value, especially among younger generations.** With increased attention and backlash against AI-driven data centers now making headlines, it will likely continue to be a priority for attendees and stakeholders.

What Do I Need to Pay Attention to?

Get ahead of it. Even if you're not being asked to measure the carbon footprint of your events today, it may be coming so it's important to start thinking about how you can reduce that footprint. **Engage your ESG or Legal department** to understand the future landscape.

Your audience is watching. More than ever, audiences (especially younger generations) are watching what companies do – not just what they say. Attendees are highly attuned to what you do at your events and are choosing to align with those who walk the walk.

You're not alone. The industry as a whole has been working to address these issues for many years. The Events Industry Council (EIC) offers guidance, standards and certification for event professionals. The EIC also offers a robust event-specific certification program that our team is experienced in and can guide you through.



Whether you need help getting started, full support measuring your event carbon footprint or progressing to certify your event, our Sustainability team is here to help. **Your Maritz rep can get you in touch.**



Idea Spotlight

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



A Less Blah Reg Experience

We've talked before about how event registration should feel a lot more like the experiences we have as consumers today, and guests are seeking – and expecting – personalized event experiences.

At our recent signature event, **Elevate**, we put the "show me you know me" concept into action.

During online registration, guests were asked questions like "Where do you feel most alive?" and "What joy anchors your week?"

We used their answers to shape the experience from the very start. (Read on!)



A Tailored Experience

Upon arrival, guests were greeted not by a traditional registration counter, but a Maritz team member who welcomed and guided them to one of six unique lounge environments designed by our design sponsor **Hello! Destination Management** to reflect different preferences and personalities. Nature lovers were ensconced in outdoor-inspired spaces, while those who feel most alive at home relaxed in a cozy lounge with soft music and warm, inviting details.

While guests chatted with Maritz hosts and learned more about the space, behind the scenes (literally) our registration team was printing name badges, which were seamlessly delivered to guests as they relaxed.

The name badges in turn contained more details gleaned from registration, offering a peek into each person's personality, and providing opportunities for connection among guests.

And that was just the beginning! Throughout the event, these insights were also used to facilitate more intentional networking and experiences.

Gen Z Vibe Check

What does our oura ring say about the next gen event-goer? Check out the latest research and recommendations to capture the up-and-coming attendee in our new report:

‘NextGen- Proofing Your Event.’





www.maritz.com