

TOP TOPICS

2024 TRAVEL

BVX

CONSUMER & CATEGORY INSIGHTS SHAPING THE YEAR(S) AHEAD

TOP TOPICS 2024

Each year society continues to evolve with key themes rising to the top of the collective consciousness. Salient topics such as virtue-signaling skepticism, self-care, lifestyle reinvention, gender roles, and AI have gained prevalence and are likely to influence consumers and impact businesses for the years ahead. Brands that maintain awareness and mindful integration with these cultural conversations will be better equipped to resonate with their audiences.

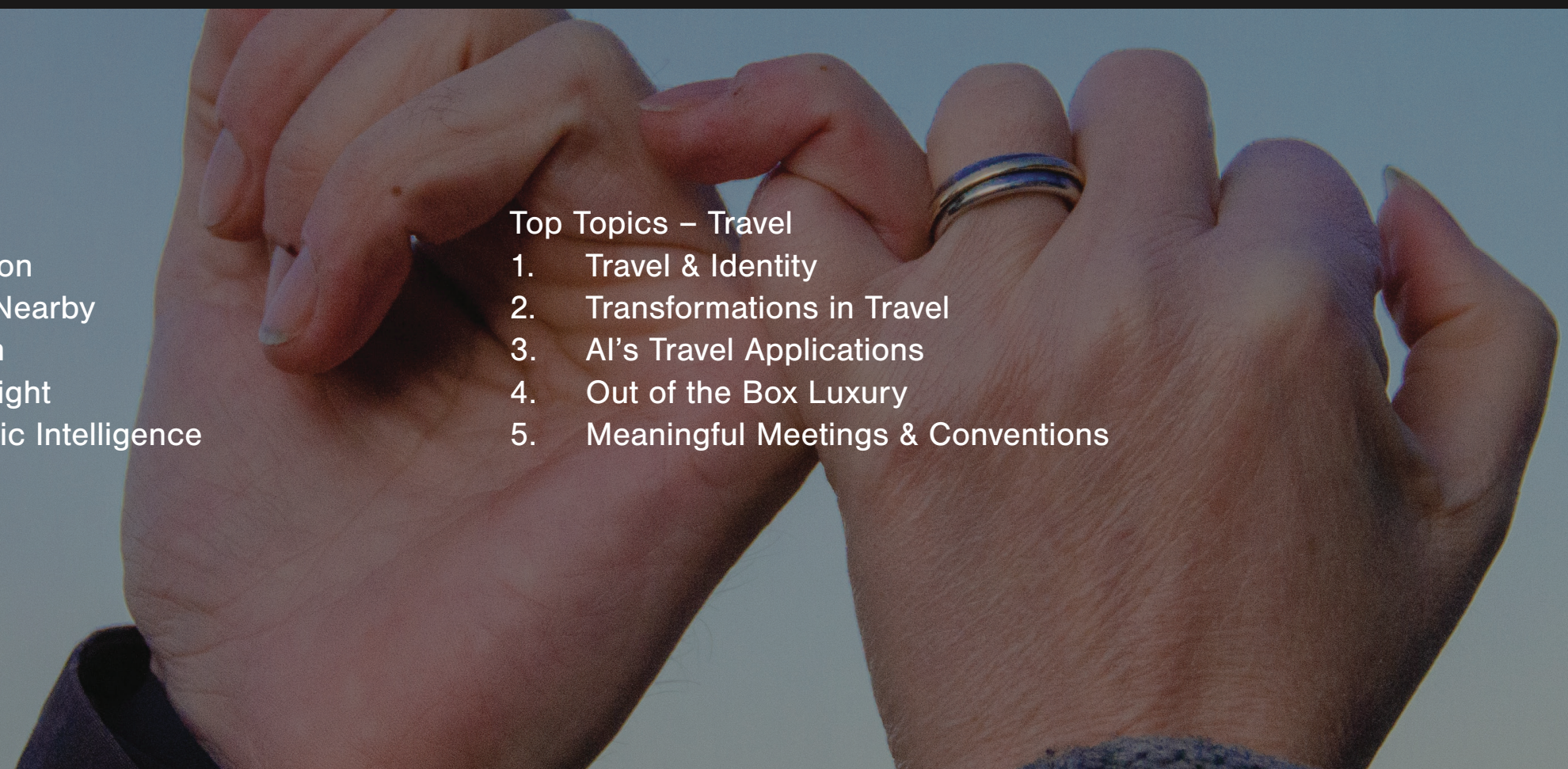
The travel industry faces an unknown economy and changing consumer demands. People increasingly intertwine their identities with their travels and there is a call for transformation in the industry for both travelers and travel brands alike. Luxury travelers seek new takes on the travel experience and AI makes its disruption known. Beyond leisure travel, meetings and convention planners seek meaningful experiences on top of traditional selling points.

Top Topics – General

1. Cause Reprioritization
2. Focusing Inward & Nearby
3. Lifelong Reinvention
4. Gender in the Spotlight
5. Artificial vs. Authentic Intelligence

Top Topics – Travel

1. Travel & Identity
2. Transformations in Travel
3. AI's Travel Applications
4. Out of the Box Luxury
5. Meaningful Meetings & Conventions



TOP TOPICS GENERAL



CAUSE REPRIORITIZATION

After years of pushing brands to speak up about social causes, many consumers have become disillusioned with organizations that insert themselves into these conversations and would prefer brands to be a source of unity rather than division. Consumers are detecting virtue signaling and empty statements from a mile away, feeling that organizations should only be highlighting causes that are true to their brand. While consumers still believe causes are important, decision drivers like price and brand quality remain a top priority beyond social stances.

8/10

81% of Americans agree that “Brands should focus on providing the product/service they are meant to deliver instead of getting involved in social issues.”

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

68%

68% of consumers believe that when a company speaks out today on social issues, it’s a marketing ploy rather than an authentic opinion.

- THE HARRIS POLL

“Management guru Peter Drucker once observed that the most effective brands are not focused on doing things right but, instead, on doing the right things. When brands are built in this way, purpose doesn’t have to be layered in. Do what you promise—indeed, if you don’t, nothing about purpose will be credible anyway.”

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

84%

Over **eight in ten (84%)** Americans agree that companies must have a track record of acting on their values to be taken seriously.

- THE HARRIS POLL

63%

63% of Americans agree that “Brands celebrating what brings us together and emphasizing our common interest would strengthen the social fabric.”

- EDELMAN

72%

While **72%** of Americans think we’re headed for environmental disaster unless we change our habits quickly, only 24% of shoppers see sustainability as a crucial factor when making a purchase, compared to 53% who say the same for affordability and 71% for quality.

- IPSOS

FOCUSING INWARD & NEARBY

After years of pressure to focus on the world and the macro challenges around them, Americans are prioritizing their own well-being first. While on the surface this appears self-serving, it is more aligned with the common flight instruction of “putting on your own oxygen mask before helping others” and includes maintaining real relationships and in-person connections with those closest to them.

95%

95% of U.S. adults say it's important to engage in self-care activities.

- THE HARRIS POLL

85%

85% of Americans describe self-care as a necessity, not a luxury.

- AMERICAN EXPRESS TRAVEL

Gen Z's appreciation for sad music is in pursuit of connection. The No. 1 search term globally for Spotify listeners 18-24 is the word “sad.” Meanwhile, recent research found that subjects prefer emotional expression in music vs. technical proficiency as this made people feel more connected to others.

- THE NEW YORK TIMES

2/3

Two-thirds of Americans engage in self-care by listening to music or watching content (i.e. TV shows and movies), spending time with loved ones, and spending time alone.

- AMERICAN EXPRESS TRAVEL

58%

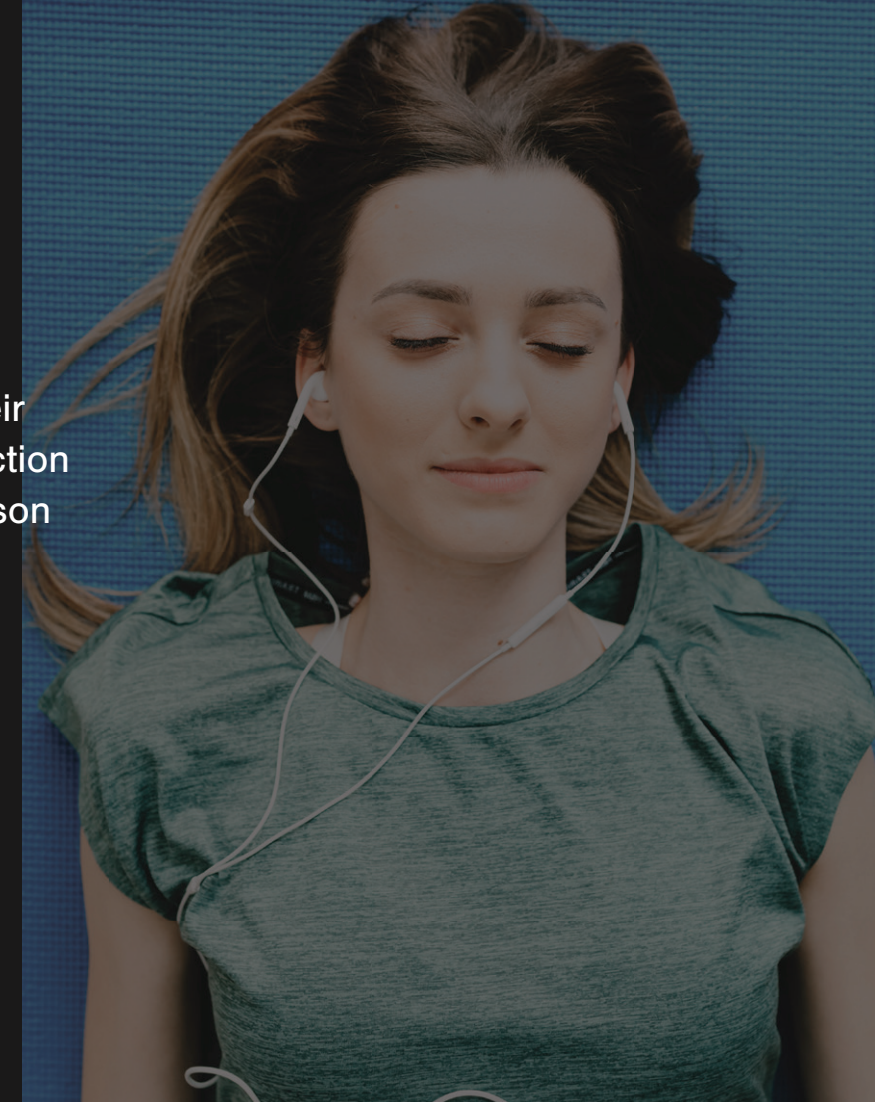
This year's prioritization of self-care has led to more than half (**58%**) of singles surveyed on Bumble reporting being more open about their mental health with friends, family members, and partners.

- BUMBLE

42%

42% of U.S. consumers say they are focused on improving their spiritual wellness in the next 12 months.

- MINTEL



LIFELONG REINVENTION

Americans' lives are becoming less linear, as economic disruptions and shifting outlooks change the traditional life pathways. With people living longer, healthier lives, the ability to explore in professional and personal life is more attainable, and the diverse life stages across age groups allow for broader connections.

12+

The most recent longitudinal data available finds the average American has **greater than 12** job changes between ages 18-56, with this number likely to continue to increase.

- U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

63%

Singles are increasingly open to age diversity in dating as age is no longer a significant factor for **63%** of people, and **59%** of women express a newfound openness to dating someone younger.

- BUMBLE

Pinterest leans into new norms in a spot featuring a young woman being asked typical party questions such as "When are you having kids" or "Are you thinking of buying a house" triggering thought bubbles of her "fur babies" and "wanderlust" Pinterest boards to appear on screen.

- YOUTUBE

69%

According to a Bureau of Labor Statistics Study, **69%** of Baby Boomers are already working past 65.

- ESQUIRE

43% ↑ 7%

More American couples are choosing not to have children or choosing to have them later in life, according to Census data. As of 2022, **43%** of U.S. households were childless, a **7%** increase from 2012.

- MARKET WATCH

LONGEVITY HAS BECOME A MORE COMMON PURSUIT AS SEEN IN "THE MAN WHO THINKS HE CAN LIVE FOREVER" ARTICLE IN TIME MAGAZINE.

- TIME



GENDER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Women and girls seem to run the world with recent cultural and economic influence. While Barbie, Taylor, and Beyonce dominated box offices and stages, the smaller screens in people’s homes reflected a dated story proving there is progress yet to be made in perceptions of gender. As Americans explore gender norms, brands can engage in these fluid conversations with mutual respect for their audiences regardless of gender.

“THE YEAR IS 2023, AND GIRLHOOD IS EVERYWHERE. WE HAVE “GIRL DINNER.” WE HAVE “RAT GIRL SUMMER.” TOMATO GIRL. STRAWBERRY GIRL. HOT GIRL WALK. GIRL’S GIRL.”

- AD AGE

\$5B

Barbie made movie history as the first women-directed film to gross over a billion dollars while Taylor Swift’s tour has a projected **\$5 billion** U.S. consumer spending impact.

- NPR & TIME

1/4

Influenced by movies and pop culture conversations around masculinity and gender roles, **1 in 4** men surveyed say they’ve actively changed their behavior in their romantic connections to be more vulnerable with people they’re dating than ever before.

- BUMBLE

13% ↗ 35%

Women now make up **35%** of workers in the United States’ 10 highest-paying occupations – up from 13% in 1980. They have increased their presence in almost all of these occupations, which include physicians, lawyers and pharmacists.

- PEW RESEARCH CENTER

However, in a recently released analysis of advertisements, men were cast in professional roles **73%** more often than women and **30%** more often in leadership roles. Women were cast **46%** more often in domestic roles and approximately **4%** more often in family settings.

- CREATIVE X

7/10

Roughly **7 in 10** Americans from both political parties agree with Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff’s statement: “We’ve kind of confused what it means to be a man, what it means to be masculine. You’ve got this trope out there that you’ve got to be tough and angry and lash out to be strong. It’s just the opposite. ... Strength is how you show your love for people. ... And how you stick up for other people and [push back] against bullies.”

- IPSOS

ARTIFICIAL VS. AUTHENTIC INTELLIGENCE

Ready or not, AI is advancing across all areas of society. While some sources share optimistic outlooks on the technology's promise, people are still feeling wary. As AI continues to evolve, people will require guardrails and guidelines that help this digital tool be a supplementation to human life rather than a detraction.



\$2.6–\$4.4

McKinsey estimates that generative AI could contribute between **\$2.6 to \$4.4** trillion to the economy each year.

- MCKINSEY & COMPANY

3/4

Three in four Americans across political parties support developing standards, tools, and tests to help ensure AI systems are safe, secure, and trustworthy (**76%**).

- IPSOS

64% VS. 36%

Worry about AI trumps wonder by a nearly 2:1 ratio. **64%** say the possibilities that AI presents fill them with worry vs. **36%** who say wonder.

- IPSOS

When asking experts to prioritize just one dimension of AI regulation, “misinformation” was their top concern (**34%**) followed by “national security” (**20%**), while “job protection” (**5%**) and “elections” (**4%**) came last.

- AXIOS

OVER 6 IN 10

People still generally prefer human-created content to AI-generated including for marketing websites (**62%**), artistic photos (**65%**), journalism articles (**74%**) and illustrations (**74%**).

- IPSOS

55% VS. 36%

Just over half of Americans (**55%**) think AI will be another piece of technology among many, while **36%** think AI will fundamentally change American society.

- IPSOS

TOP TOPICS TRAVEL



TRAVEL & IDENTITY

Travel has become increasingly intertwined with people's identities, both who they see themselves as, and who they want to be (even if only temporarily). From taking a trip as a marker of key life milestones to including travel as a top life goal, travelers are considering a deeper expression of self in their trip-planning decisions. Furthermore, the outcomes from travel, such as permanent body ink or a desire to relocate, influence travelers' identity far after their trip has concluded.

1/10

Nearly **1 in 10** Americans have a tattoo to commemorate, celebrate, or dream about a travel experience.

- FUTURE PARTNERS

40%

Travel is often an inspiration for becoming a resident with nearly **40%** of respondents agreeing that they moved to their local community primarily because they had visited and loved the place.

- FUTURE PARTNERS

38% VS. 31%

38% of Gen Z respondents consider traveling the world very important for them to personally achieve in life vs. only **31%** who say the same about getting married someday.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

75%

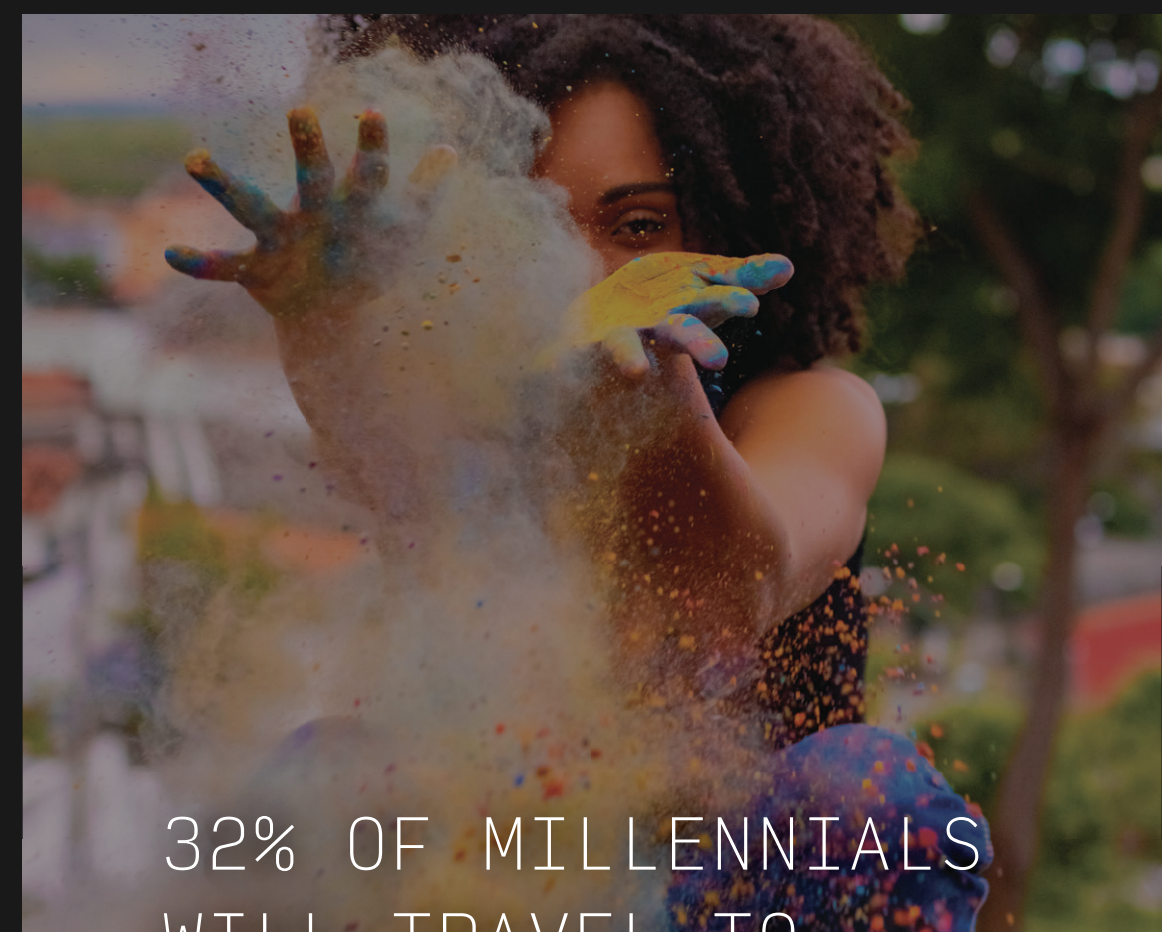
Half of travelers feel more alive on their trips by making up stories about their lives to people they meet. Three-quarters (**75%**) of Americans surveyed feel they are the best version of themselves on vacation, able to shed inhibitions and embrace new aspects of their personalities.

- BOOKING.COM

43%

43% of solo travelers plan a trip to celebrate life milestones such as a promotion or career accomplishment.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR



32% OF MILLENNIALS WILL TRAVEL TO CONNECT WITH THEIR OWN CULTURE.

- HILTON

TRANSFORMATIONS IN TRAVEL

Driven by personal values and the need to evolve, both travelers and the travel industry will seek transformations. People craving a sense of betterment will select experiences where they return renewed, with younger generations likely to fuel this demand. In the face of macro-level threats to the future of the industry, destinations and travel brands will adapt to more regenerative offerings that help travelers, communities, and the planet remain sustainable.

THE RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL COMPANY LAUNCHED A MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR GLOBAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN CALLED "LEAVE BETTER" THAT POSITIONS TRAVEL WITH THEIR PROPERTIES AS ENRICHING, ENLIGHTENING, AND TRANSFORMATIVE.

- MARRIOTT

33M

People are looking for trips that they can leave feeling changed and improved. #wellnessretreat and #spiritualretreat have a combined viewing of over **33 million** on TikTok and over 584,000 posts on Instagram.

- FAST COMPANY

3/4

Over three-fourths of Americans surveyed (76%) expressed that they would welcome more novelty and change in their lives.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

51%

Half of all travelers (51%) revealed that the self-sufficient and simplified lifestyle of agrarian and indigenous communities would appeal to them in 2024, with a focus on achieving a better balance with nature and resetting their day-to-day lives back home.

- BOOKING.COM

"The feedback we have from people who are regularly moved and transformed, so much so that they change their lives, ultimately is at the heart of our purpose of why we exist; to inspire people through remarkable places and experiences." – Co-founder of travel experience company Black Tomato.

- FORBES

"By 2040, the rise of regenerative tourism will see people become more conscientious travelers, who not only seek hospitality that creates positive environmental and social impact, but also connects with human qualities."

- INTREPID TRAVEL

AI'S TRAVEL APPLICATIONS

As AI evolves, so will its use within the travel industry. Currently an area in which Americans are less likely to use the technology compared to other applications, AI as a travel tool will likely gain adoption, particularly in more automated, price-driven aspects of trip planning such as forecasting flights. AI's ability to provide information and streamline processes will likely supplement, but not replace, the more personal-touch aspects of the travel experience.

6/10

Nearly 6-in-10 Americans report having knowingly used AI technologies in areas such as entertainment, e-commerce, smart devices, and work, but less so in travel with only around 14% already using it in this category (up to 36% for millennials).

- THE HARRIS POLL & FUTURE PARTNERS

56%

There is an openness to using it soon as 56% of Americans would trust AI to plan a trip for them. Globally, 30% of baby boomer respondents and 20% of the silent generation are surrendering to AI to assist their travel plans in the year ahead.

- BOOKING.COM

Those who have used AI to plan travel are more likely male, affluent, and frequent travelers with the top tools used including ChatGPT (65%), Trip Planner AI (25%), and TripAdvisor's AI-powered assistant (23%).

- FUTURE PARTNERS

AirBnB's recent acquisition of Gameplanner.AI is a push to update the platform into a smart travel concierge that learns about its users over time for increasingly tailored recommendations.

- STONE MANTEL

71%

71% of US adults would be comfortable using AI to forecast flights. But less than half (48%) would be comfortable using AI to book an approved itinerary on their behalf.

- THE HARRIS POLL

"LAYERING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INTO TRAVEL WILL SEE AI STITCH TOGETHER SUSTAINABLE EXPERIENCES, TAKING THE BURDEN OFF TRAVELERS."
-DEVIN LIDDELL, FUTURE MOBILITY EXPERT

- INTREPID TRAVEL



OUT OF THE BOX LUXURY

New luxury is being defined by alternatives to traditional high-end offerings with trains gaining momentum, outdoor lodging increasing its affluent appeal, and premium cruise bookings picking up speed. As luxury travelers seek these experiences to add to their cultural capital, destinations have an opportunity to showcase out-of-the-box experiences to fulfill this affluent audience’s cravings for uniqueness.

62%

62% of adults say luxury is no longer defined by how much money is spent. Americans are looking for a more tailored, upscale travel experience.

- APPLE VACATIONS

However, on average, adults estimate they will spend \$11,705 per person on their next luxury travel stay in 2024.

- APPLE VACATIONS

Night train operators are gaining popularity by introducing luxurious additions such as cocktail bars, private showers, and restaurant-quality menus.

- LONELY PLANET

The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express will transport passengers in Art-Deco cabins reminiscent of an Agatha Christie novel with marble ensuites and jewel-toned velvet furnishings running for over \$3K.

- LONELY PLANET

The tailor-made travel market is expected to see a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.8% from 2023 to 2029, growing to over \$500 billion in market size by 2029.

- FAST COMPANY

Cartology Travel is a bespoke, luxury travel agency that curates unique global experiences such as learning about conservation alongside researchers in South Africa or a home-based cooking class in Sri Lanka with recipes handed down through the generations.

- FORBES

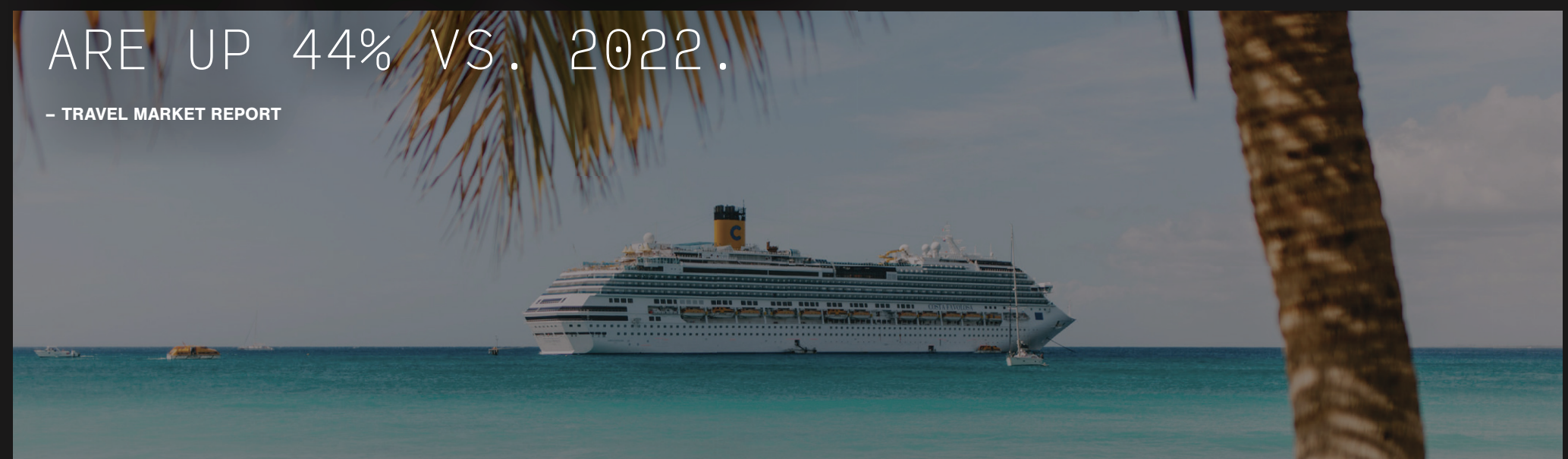
TRAVEL ADVISORS REPORT LUXURY CRUISE BOOKINGS ARE UP 44% VS. 2022.

- TRAVEL MARKET REPORT

\$500-\$600

The outdoors becomes luxury as tents, tented structures and cabin-style tiny houses from Collective Retreats achieve ADRs between \$500 to \$600 per night.

- COSTAR



MEANINGFUL MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

M&C travel gains momentum as planners express optimism for outings in the year ahead. While the accessibility of the destination and value for cost will always be considered, levers that are more closely in destinations' control include offerings for well-being, local impact, and people-focused experiences. Aligning with these features can differentiate a destination for planners seeking partners that appeal to the values of their constituents.

8/10

More than **eight in 10** global meeting and event professionals are optimistic about the health of the meetings and events industry.

- U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

“Travelers are seeking more meaningful group travel experiences that focus on [personalization], flexibility, and cultural immersion,” says Louise Bang, chief sales and marketing officer for Marriott International CALA.

- BIZ BASH

The top 3 most important experiences for group travel include:

- Food & beverage** 44%
- Transportation** 37%
- Cultural & localized experiences** 32%

- MARRIOTT

Luxury outdoor lodging company AutoCamp is leveraging corporate groups as its “bread and butter” business by offering unique non-boardroom experiences through its nature-based amenities.

- COSTAR

The global sports tourism market was valued at \$587B in 2022 and is expected to expand at a CAGR of 17.5% from 2023 to 2030. The global youth sports industry alone is poised to reach \$77.5B by 2026.

- YOUTH LEAGUE AND TEAM SPORTS WINTERGREEN RESEARCH

Group travel planners look to include wellness offerings beyond the spa (52%) - such as kickboxing or mediation; corporate social responsibility (50%) - such as hospital visits or charitable donations; and sustainable experiences (46%) - such as planting trees.

- MARRIOTT



If you found these insights valuable, or would like to discuss them further, we'd welcome the opportunity to speak with you. [Feel free to reach out to victoria.simmons@bvk.com.](mailto:victoria.simmons@bvk.com)



250 w coventry court | milwaukee, wi 53217 | 414.228.1990 | bvk.com