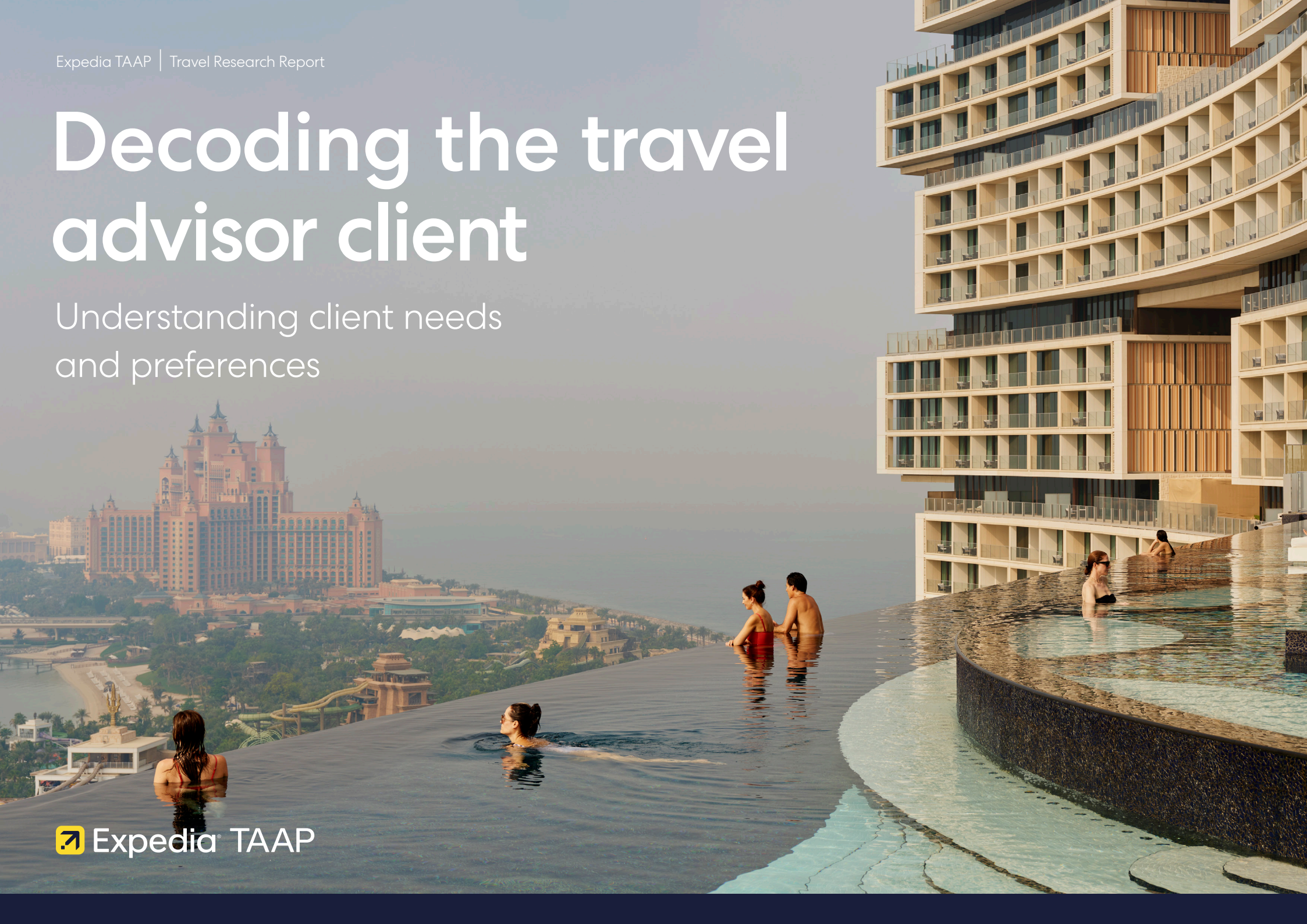


# Decoding the travel advisor client

Understanding client needs and preferences





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## Overview

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As a travel advisor, understanding your clients is foundational to creating personalised trips that delight them at every step of their journey.

However, there is limited data and insights on this audience, making it harder to recognise their distinct needs, wants and behaviours.

To deepen our knowledge of these travellers, we developed custom research on travel advisor clients around the world. The aim of the research was to understand the habits and preferences of travellers who use travel agencies, what they are looking for from advisors and the factors that determine loyalty and retention.

## Methodology

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We conducted a custom online survey with Wakefield Research across 10 markets: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Italy, Mexico, Spain, the

UK and the US.

The survey included 5,000 respondents who used a travel advisor for a leisure trip in the last 18 months.





## Key findings

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1. **Expert advice and time savings** are the top reasons to use travel advisors.
2. Travellers use advisors to provide **stress-free experiences**, often using them for complex trips like international travel or multi-destination trips.
3. Travellers want help with travel-related **services beyond booking hotels and flights**, including activities, insurance and car hire.
4. **Finding the best deals** is an essential area of support that travellers are looking for.
5. Travellers remain **loyal to advisors that provide strong customer service and communication**, but will switch if service quality, pricing or value falls short of their expectations.
6. Recommendations from family and friends are the most popular way to find a travel agent, but **online search and social media are more popular with younger generations**.

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This research provides a deep look into who travel advisor clients are and follows their decision-making journey, from how they select an advisor to why they stay with or leave an advisor.

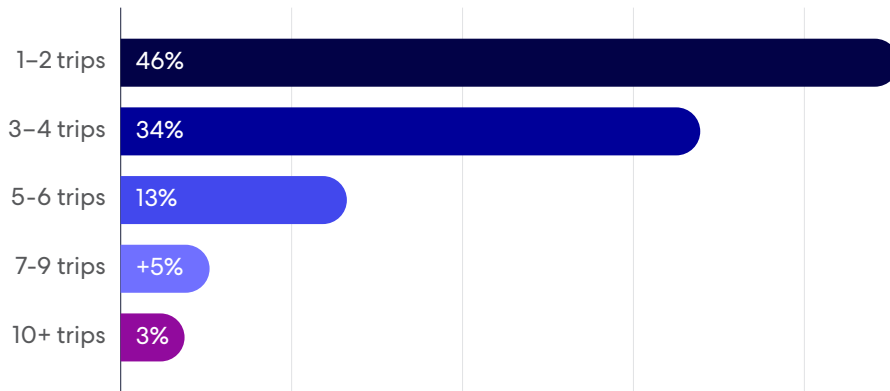
Tips and recommendations for how travel advisors can take action based on our findings are included in the report to help set up your business for success.

## Trip behaviour of the travel advisor client

The first step in creating exceptional experiences for your clients is understanding their travel patterns and behaviours.

Most respondents took one to four trips in the past year, with **46% taking only one to two trips**. This indicates they want to get the most value out of their time away, so they turn to travel advisors for personalised guidance.

Number of trips taken in the past 12 months



Younger generations are taking more trips than average. In the past 12 months:



20%

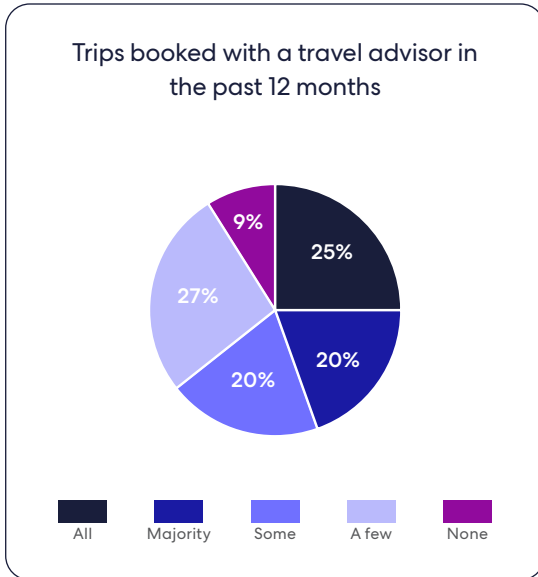
Of Gen Z travellers took five or more trips.



28%

Of millennials took five or more trips.

But are they using travel advisors to book every trip or only a few? In the past 12 months, **45% of respondents used a travel advisor to book most or all** of their trips.



Digging deeper into trips booked with a travel advisor, most are less than one week long. Nearly one-third of travellers used an advisor to book a trip that was four days or shorter, illustrating that **many travellers use advisors for quicker getaways** and not only for long trips or special occasions.



In addition to taking more trips, younger generations are also taking shorter trips. For 66% of Gen Z and 61% of millennials, their last trip booked with a travel advisor was less than one week long, while 65% of boomers tapped an advisor to book a trip that was longer than one week. Travellers from Mexico, India, Brazil and the US are also more likely to use a travel advisor to book shorter trips.

## Length of last trips booked with a travel advisor

1-2 days — 9%

3-4 days — 22%

5-6 days — 25%

7-9 days — 22%

10-14 days — 14%

15+ days — 9%

## Why travellers use advisors

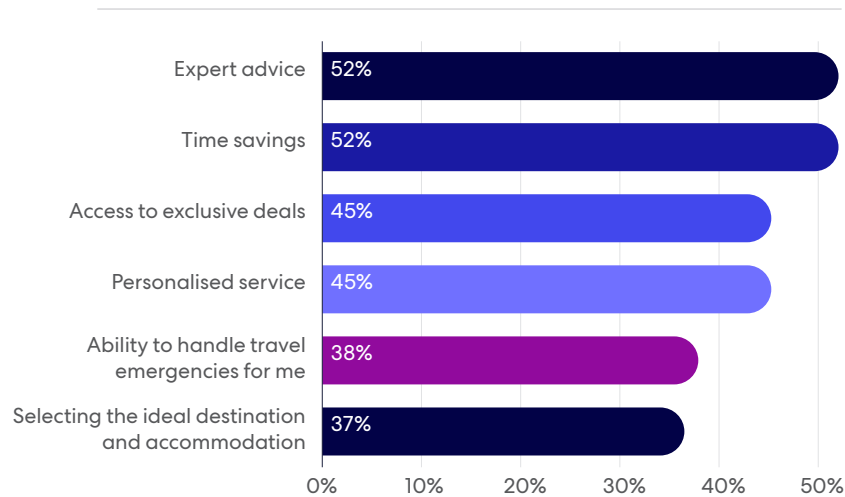
To help travel advisors better understand their clients, we uncovered why travellers use advisors, specifically, their **primary drivers and what they care about most**.

Most respondents said that expert advice and time savings were top reasons for using a travel advisor. Travellers also believe that **travel advisors are better**

**at finding the best deals**, handling unexpected issues and ensuring a stress-free and enjoyable experience compared to booking a trip on their own.

### Top reasons to use a travel advisor

Multi-select question



# 50%+

Of respondents said expert advice and time savings are why they prefer using an advisor.



### TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

Set yourself apart as an advisor and hone your expertise by understanding what travellers value, how they behave and what they're looking for in their travel experiences. Check out our [research and insights](#).

## Types of trips booked through an advisor

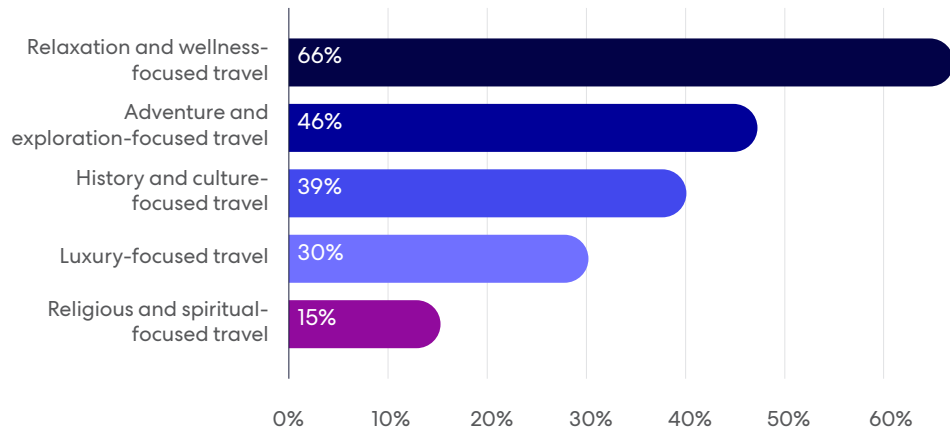
Beyond understanding the foundational details of their trips and why they use advisors, we also wanted to uncover the specific types of trips that travellers turn to travel advisors for.

**Travellers typically use advisors to book relaxation and wellness-focused travel,** which underscores travellers' desire for a stress-free experience. Adventure

and exploration-focused travel was the second most popular type of holiday booked through an advisor. Travellers take advantage of an advisor's expertise and ability to help with itinerary building and activity planning.

Kinds of trips typically booked through a travel advisor

Multi-select question



Trip types booked with an advisor vary by country:

**52%** Of Spanish travellers book culture-focused travel.

**43%** Of Indian travellers book religious travel.

**41%** Of UK travellers book luxury-focused travel.



### TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

One way to help provide your clients with a stress-free holiday is to recommend all-inclusive options, which are growing in popularity, especially with younger travellers. Our **Unpack '25** data revealed a 60% year-over-year increase in usage of the 'all-inclusive' filter on Hotels.com.





When travellers are asked about the specific types of trips that are most important to use a travel advisor for, it's clear that **the more complex the trip, the more likely travellers are to use an advisor.**

International (50%) and multi-destination (41%) trips are considered travel advisor territory and **34% of respondents said it's important to engage an advisor for themed holidays** like a culinary trip, theme-park adventure or historical tour.



Using a travel advisor for large family or group trips is important to travellers from India (55%), Mexico (55%) and Brazil (49%), while those in Canada (58%) and the UK (57%) look to advisors for international trips.

## Engaging a travel advisor

Travellers are most likely to engage an advisor early in the trip-planning process, but most do destination research ahead of any conversation.

However, **37% engage travel advisors at the very beginning**, providing an opportunity for advisors to suggest travel plans and influence destination decisions earlier.

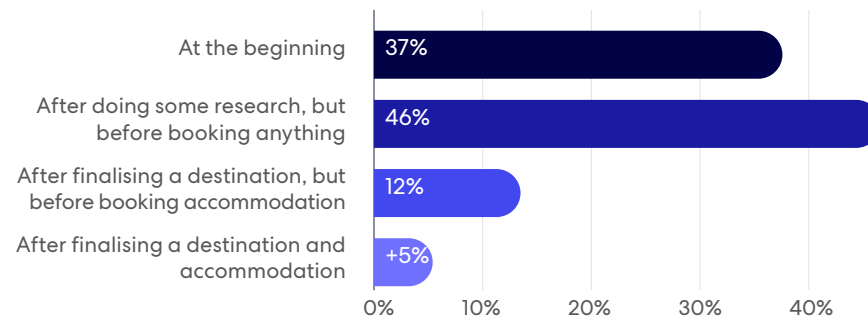
Regardless of when an advisor is brought

in for trip planning, the types of services and trip elements travellers typically have their advisors book are wide-ranging.

Most travellers have their advisors book hotels and flights, but many also look to the experts to book tours and activities, car hire and travel insurance policies.

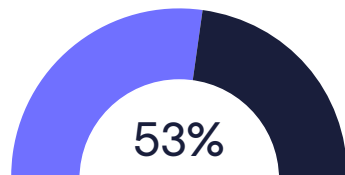
### When travellers contact an advisor during the planning process

Multi-select question

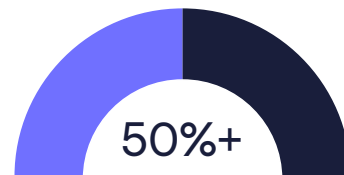


## Which travel-related services do you typically use a travel advisor for?

Multi-select question



Of travellers from **India** have travel advisors book car hire.



Of travellers from **Brazil, India, Mexico** and the **US** have travel advisors book tours, activities or excursions.



## TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

Traveller needs and preferences for booking assistance often go beyond typical hotel and airline reservations. Help set yourself and your clients up for success by providing **end-to-end trip support** and services.

Further differentiate yourself by creating recommendations for activities and tours, curated for their specific needs and travel style. Go the extra mile by ensuring every part of the trip is planned, from car hire and train tickets to assistance with passports or visas. And **ensure your travellers are prepared** for the unexpected by facilitating trip insurance policies.

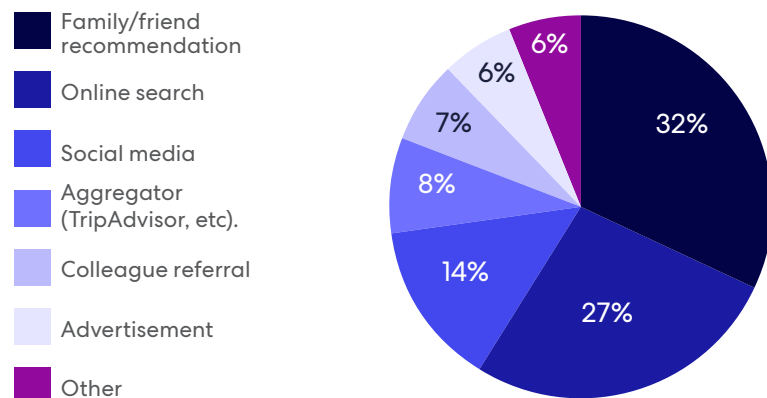
## How travellers select an advisor

Building trust and a lasting relationship with your clients is essential. While **44% of respondents only used a single travel agency** in the past two years, **25% used three or more**. This shows that travellers are exploring their options, highlighting the need for travel advisors to stand out and create meaningful connections.

And **28% of respondents said they made**

**enquiries with three or more agencies** for the last trip they booked. But how do they find their travel advisors? And what are the top influences when selecting an advisor? Nearly half (49%) found their most recent travel agency through online search, social media or an aggregator.

How did you find your most recent travel agency?



Shopping around is evident in younger generations, as one-third of millennials used three or more agencies in the past two years. Conversely, 68% of boomers, 54% of Gen X and 55% of travellers with children only used one travel advisor in the past two years.



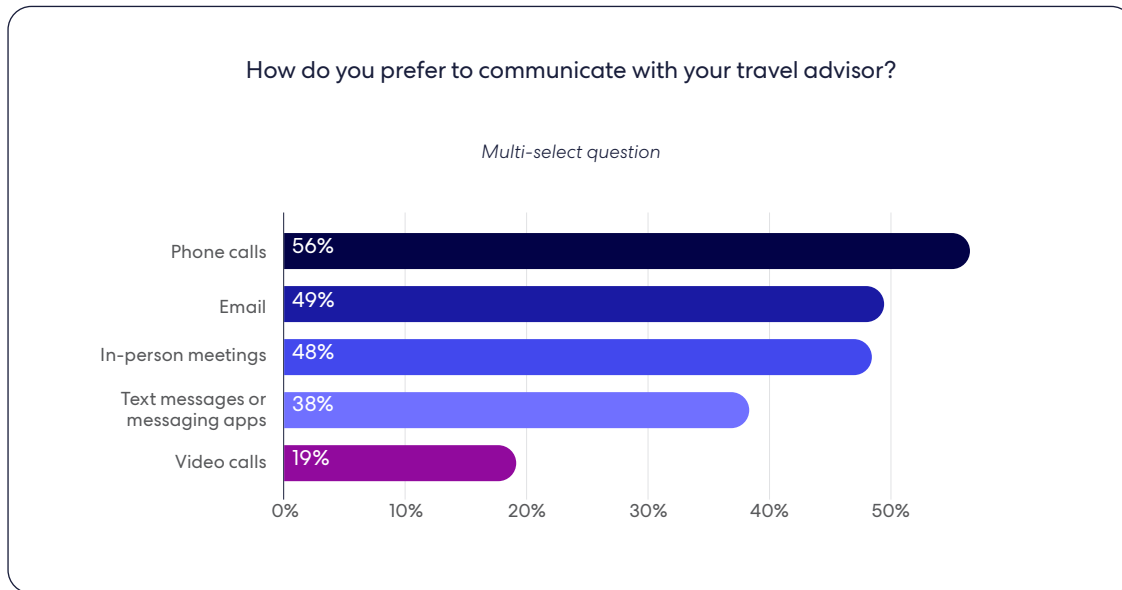
## TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

Recommendations from friends, family and colleagues have a strong influence when it comes to finding a travel advisor. Tap into the power of word of mouth by trialling a referral programme with your existing clients and offering incentives for referring a new client.

You can also stand out from the crowd by updating your online presence to highlight your expertise and specialisation. Are you an expert in family-friendly adventure travel? Spotlight this across your website and social channels and bring it to life through photos, client reviews and personal anecdotes.

While travellers use a variety of channels to communicate with their advisor, phone calls and emails are most preferred, followed by in-person meetings. This speaks to the importance of personal connections and relationship building between advisors and clients.

The findings indicate that most travellers like to communicate with their advisor in multiple ways, depending on the situation and timing.



When it comes to how travellers choose between advisors, expertise again emerges as an important aspect, but so does price.

### Top influences when selecting a travel advisor

- 1 Expertise or specialisation
- 2 Price for services
- 3 Special offers or incentives
- 4 Flexible payment options
- 5 Reviews or recommendations

## Support travellers look for in a travel advisor

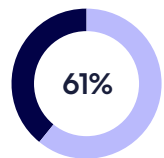
Beyond valuing their expertise, travellers are eager for their advisor to get them a great deal in the booking process.

Other priority areas include destination

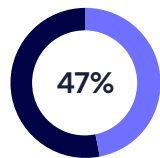
and activity recommendations and support for things like last-minute changes and trip preparation.

### Most helpful support areas when booking travel

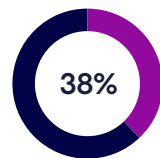
Multi-select question



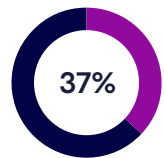
Finding the best deals



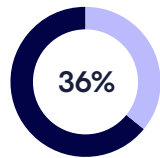
Destination and activity recommendations



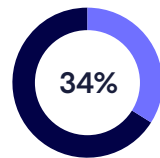
Last-minute changes



Itinerary coordination



Unexpected events and emergencies



Travel insurance policy selection



Travellers from Brazil (68%), India (62%) and the US (47%) are more open to texting with their advisor, while travellers from Germany (57%), Australia (55%) and Spain (53%) are more likely to opt for in-person meetings.



## 6 in 10

Travellers said it would be most helpful to have additional help from travel agents in finding the best deals.



## TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

Communication is essential when it comes to planning a trip – for you and your clients. Ask them about their communication preferences from the start and set their expectations on update frequency and response times to ensure that you are meeting their needs.

Given how much travellers prioritise a great deal, it's critical that travel advisors find the best deals and offer competitive pricing. **More than half (51%) of respondents said they compare the prices their travel advisor provides with what they find online.** These travellers don't inherently trust the quotes they receive are the best price, so it's important to provide them with the best deals for their trip.



**91%**

Believe travel advisors have the best access to deals and promotions.



**57%**

Of US travellers trust travel advisors are getting the best deals, while those in Mexico (59%) and Spain (56%) often compare prices online.



## TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

When presenting travel options to your clients, be transparent about the research you did, including explaining the deal you're offering and pricing you saw elsewhere. This will help instil confidence so your clients don't feel like they have to search for deals and discounts on their own.





## How travellers become loyal to their advisors

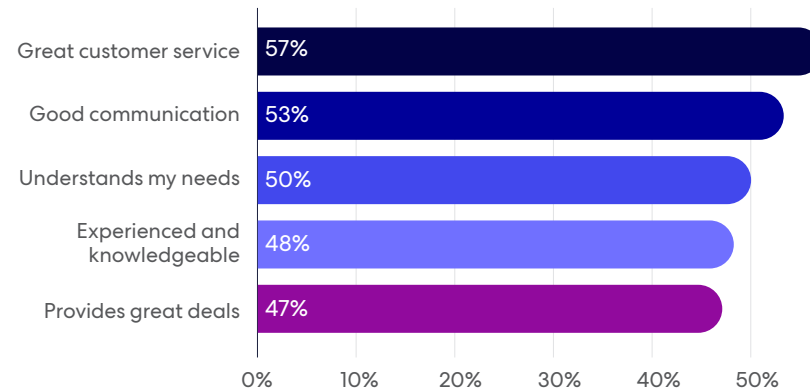
**Client retention** is important to any successful business strategy, so creating positive experiences and building loyalty is key.

So, **what makes a traveller stay with their advisor** or why do they change agents?

Great customer service and good communication are the leading reasons travellers stay with an advisor, along with expertise and great deals. Those who changed advisors in the past five years did so due to limited offerings, lack of deals and poor value.

### Top reasons for staying with a travel advisor

Multi-select question

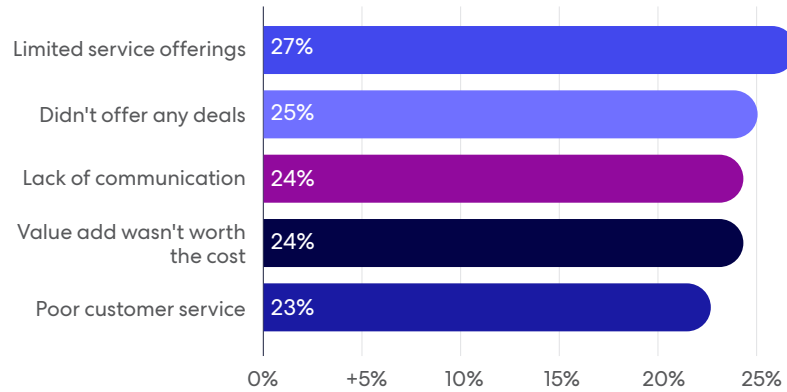


Boomers are much more loyal to their travel advisor, with 61% staying with the same advisor for the past five years. Similarly, 50% of Canadians and 44% of travellers from Italy and the US have worked with the same travel advisor for the past five years.



### Top reasons for changing travel advisors

Multi-select question



# 62%

Of travellers have changed their travel advisor in the past five years, while 38% have stayed loyal to one travel advisor.



# 78%

Are extremely or very satisfied with services provided by a travel advisor for their most recent trip.



## TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

To keep your business top of mind with existing clients, create an automated system to follow up with those who haven't booked with you in six months or more.

And keep communication open after a trip. Ask your clients for feedback to understand where you are meeting or exceeding expectations and where you may be falling short.



## The bottom line

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The research confirms travel advisor clients have unique needs and preferences that vary based on their trip type, age and geographic location.

Understanding these nuances will help you expand your expertise and develop more targeted recommendations for your clients.

## 5 key recommendations for travel advisors

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### 1. Display your expertise

Specialist knowledge is a main factor for why travellers use agencies and how they select an advisor. Communicate your years of experience, specialisation and successful trips to potential and existing clients.

### 2. Foster a stress-free experience

Travellers want an advisor to save them time and limit stress. Make sure that you are thinking through what your clients need before the trip as well as planning for anything that may go wrong.

### 3. Provide end-to-end support

Travellers are looking for support beyond hotel and flight bookings. Make sure that you understand the elements that your travellers

want to make the perfect trip, from activities and destination transportation to visa and passport support.

### 4. Focus on strong communication

Customer service and communication build loyalty with customers. Ensure that you understand your travellers' communication preferences and keep them up-to-date throughout the planning process.

### 5. Leverage deals

Discounts are the top area travellers want support with. Make sure that you are providing clients with competitive rates by leveraging [Expedia TAAP](#).

# Discover the Expedia TAAP advantage

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The findings of this report, combined with Expedia TAAP's powerful features, will let you to offer your clients an exceptional experience at every stage of their trip—from planning and booking to managing—all while deepening your relationship with them and providing robust support.

## Easy booking platform built for advisors

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Expedia TAAP offers flexible cancellation policies and features that empower you to provide seamless traveller service directly in the booking platform:

- Modify online reservations in less than one minute with the **self-service Booking Manager**.
- Create and send traveller vouchers in under 20 seconds with the **Itinerary Builder**.
- Reserve a trip now and pay later with **deferred payments**. This helps ensure your clients can use flexible payment options without needing to sacrifice your cash flow.



## Broad inventory

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By using these findings across multiple types of travel, competitive rates and last-minute availability, you can provide the right trip options to your clients at the best prices.

**Expedia TAAP travel supply includes:**



**3M+**

Accommodation in 200+ countries/territories



**35+**

Types of accommodation, including holiday rentals



**120+**

car hire companies in 3,000+ locations



**220K+**

tours, activities, attractions and adventures



**500+**

airlines, covering 6,500+ airports





## Trustworthy reviews and product listings

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Property ratings and reviews are essential to understanding other travellers' experiences with a hotel, holiday rental property, transportation provider or activity. They're ideal for helping you make informed recommendations for your travellers.

- Our **58 million user-generated reviews** give you insider context and insight that can help you decide whether a property is the right match for your traveller.
- Our **property detail pages** include rich content, expansive photo galleries and cancellation policy details to ensure that you find the right match for your client.
- **More than 20 sort and filter features** allow you to surface the most relevant search results for the unique needs of your clients, like EV charging stations, accessibility, LGBTQ+-friendly, family-friendly, payment options and more.

## Deals and discounts

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Our global team works with supply partners to negotiate and secure B2B rates that are available exclusively through Expedia TAAP, so you can be confident you're giving your clients the competitive rates.

With Expedia TAAP, you have access to more than 650,000 promotional rates and competitive package rates that are, on average, 20% less than rates on consumer sites.

## Grow your travel business

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As an advisor, you know your time is valuable and should be spent focusing on your clients and understanding their needs to build their ideal trip. Using a simple platform that **sets your business up for success** is essential, which is why we built Expedia TAAP.

### The platform provides:

- Instant access to **accurate, real-time reporting** that improves your operational efficiency.
- **Easy onboarding** to get started as quickly as possible, with step-by-step guides and helpful tutorials, all housed in our Expedia TAAP Academy.
- A library of **ready-made marketing campaigns** to help boost revenue.
- **Account manager support** for Gold and Platinum partners to help develop a customised growth strategy and optimise your business.
- **Flexible payment options**, including deferred payments. With deferred payments, payments aren't due until closer to the travel date. That means you can book in advance without sacrificing cash flow.

Join Expedia TAAP today

Already an Expedia TAAP member? [Log in](#) to your account.





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#### Methodology

This consumer survey was conducted by Wakefield Research among 5,000 travellers who have used a travel agent in the last 18 months, excluding those who use a travel agent primarily or only for business travel. The survey included 500 respondents per market in Canada, Germany, Spain, Italy, Australia, India, Mexico, Brazil and the UK and the US. The survey was fielded between 19 Sep–13 Oct 2024, using an email invitation and an online survey.