

The State of Corporate Travel & Expense 2026



Optimizing T&E programs to
maximize growth opportunities

Skift | **NAVAN**

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A Message from Navan



— **Kim Hamer**

CHIEF TRAVEL ADVISORY OFFICER,
NAVAN



Business Growth. Now.

This is a goal I've been hearing a lot lately from customers, prospects, and business executives. They know that in-person meetings are key for reaching their objectives, and they're investing accordingly.

Here's the problem: Too many T&E management solutions aren't evolving quickly enough to support this goal.

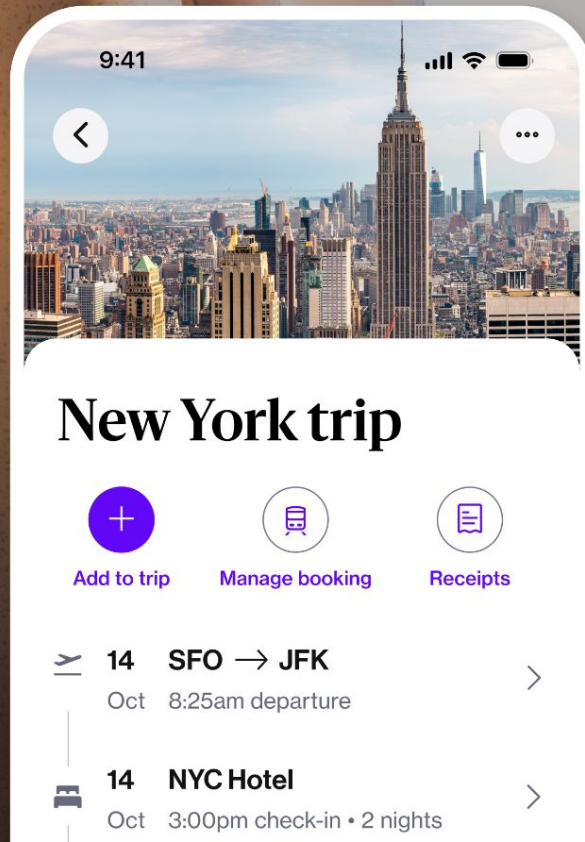
At Navan, we use AI and other innovations to streamline everything from traveler support to expense reconciliation, helping thousands of companies reduce costs and scale their business.

Doing that effectively begins with understanding current sentiment around T&E, which is why we conduct this survey every year. We hope the resulting insights will help you reach your goals — both now and in the future.

Upgrade to first-class travel and expense.

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Key Themes



Business travel bullishness is back, and recognition of travel's importance is at an all-time high.



Frustration with current T&E solutions remains high, as **companies still struggle** with issues like low compliance.



Deal-making has reemerged as one of the top three reasons that employees are traveling for work.



Hesitancy remains to alter or upgrade T&E tools; cost is this year's No. 1 reason for not switching.



T&E managers recognize the power of **real-time solutions** for features like expense reporting and data analysis.



Companies could realize significant benefits by **thinking more holistically** about their T&E ecosystems.



Trends

Driving Growth Through Travel

Trend #1

Business Travel Continues Its Ascent

The importance of corporate travel reached its highest level ever in the 7 years Skift and Navan have been conducting their annual T&E survey.

According to business travelers:

90%

said business travel is an essential investment or necessary cost, **up 8 percentage points from last year's report.**

84%

agreed that **meeting in person is *always* more effective** than meeting virtually, up 2 percentage points from last year's report.

48%

took six or more trips in the past 12 months, **up from 40%** the previous two years.

Trend #2

Deal-Making Is Back as a Reason to Travel

Since 2020, business travelers have said their virtual meeting rooms were good enough when it came to getting clients to sign on the dotted line. But as road warriors have returned, "closing a deal" has reappeared as one of the most important reasons to travel.

Top 5 reasons employees are traveling in 2025-26

1.  Essential client-related travel
2.  Close a deal
3.  Establish new business relationships
4.  Attend conferences/events as a group/team
5.  Foster established business relationships

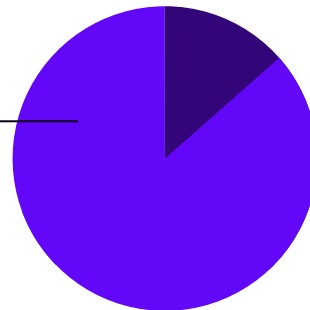
Group Travel: More Than Team Bonding

Trend #3

It's about learning and networking together...

86%

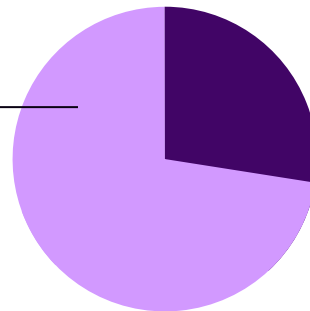
of business travelers said they will travel more as a group this year, up from 73% last year.



...and gathering distributed workforces for strategic planning sessions

72%

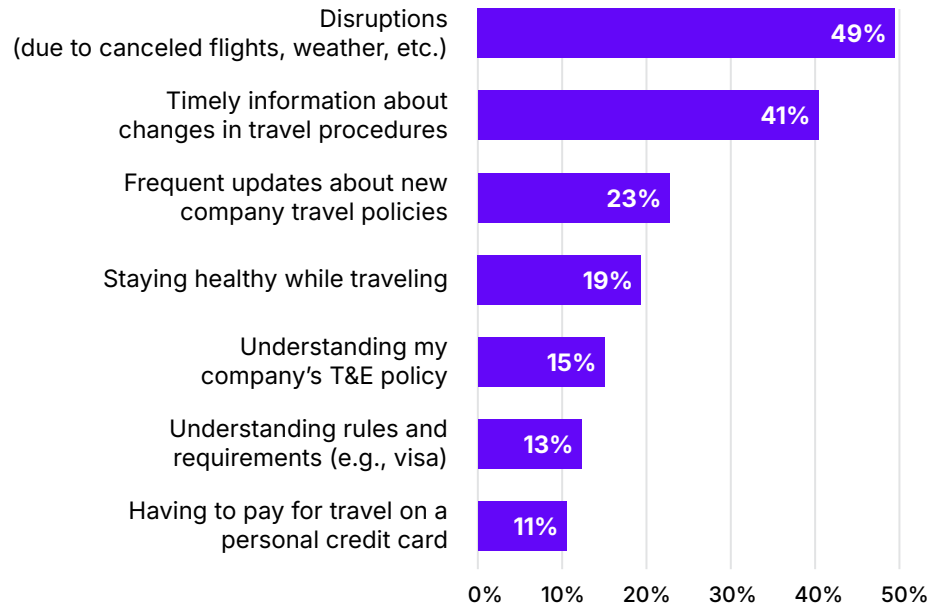
of travelers said they would attend at least two offsites in the coming year; one in six said they'd attend at least four.



Trend #4

Today's Top Corporate Travel Concerns

Travelers and T&E managers can't control the weather, but T&E programs can have a direct impact in overcoming some other common business-travel stressors.



“

T&E is rapidly changing.

A solution that doesn't anticipate shifts and actively reinvent itself leaves programs at risk and vulnerable to being frozen in time.



— **Kim Hamer**

CHIEF TRAVEL ADVISORY OFFICER, NAVAN



Obstacles

Aligning T&E With Bullish Business Goals

Obstacle #1

Policy Compliance Decline Hasn't Reversed Course

After 6 years of decreases, managers say that the percentage of policy-abiding travelers has leveled out.

Why?

- **80% of travelers said they book off-platform sometimes**; when they do, it's usually because they feel like they can find better prices or more convenient options elsewhere.
- **72% of travelers said they would book cheaper hotels** if they received financial incentives to do so.

The Bottom Line

Most employees want to do the right thing. Low policy compliance is often the result when travel programs don't offer the right options in the right place at the right time.

Obstacle #2

Manual Group Travel Booking Lowers the ROI Potential

Group travel is more popular than ever...

74%

of managers said their employees will travel more as a group to meetings and events this year.

...yet managing team trips is often very manual:

57%

of managers said they coordinate group travel through a staff member, **up from 30% in 2024.**

19%

use an offline service to book and manage group travel.

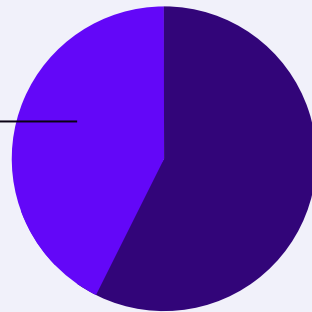
Obstacle #3

Traveler/Customer Support Has Room to Improve

Just

43%

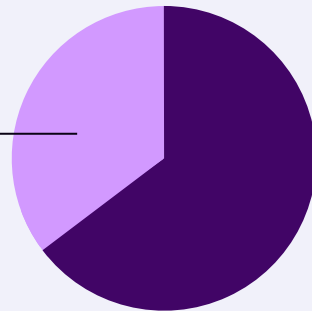
of travelers said they were “very satisfied” with the support they received for their last issue.



Only

36%

of T&E managers said that the speed and helpfulness of their travel provider was “excellent.”



Obstacle #4

Inefficient & Ineffective Expense Processes

71%

of travelers said they spend **30 minutes or more** filing an expense report; half of those (36%) said it takes them **more than 1 hour**.

29%

of T&E managers said their expense processing is manual, **up from 23% last year**.

77%

of T&E managers agreed that their **expense management platform doesn't support their needs**, though they were satisfied with their corporate card solution, **up from 71% last year**.



Obstacle #5

T&E Data Is Underutilized...

...and less accessible than most managers believe.

80%

said they were confident in their ability to access corporate travel data.

40%

said they have full, self-service access to all travel data in real time.

<40%

said they analyze key data that could offer program-improving insights.

The Belief

The Reality



Travel programs struggle with disparate issues, **but most revolve around the same problem:** wasting time and money.

No company can afford these inefficiencies, but many keep using the legacy T&E solutions that created them.

Navan has focused on **easing or eliminating the pain points of corporate T&E** to help companies more easily reach their goals.



— **Kim Hamer**

CHIEF TRAVEL ADVISORY OFFICER, NAVAN



Solutions

Maximizing Artificial & Human Intelligence

Using AI + NDC for Faster Trip Booking

Trip booking can be time-consuming; employees who lose patience or are constrained by limited inventory are more likely to book out of policy.

But AI that matches a traveler's past bookings with publicly available information can **help surface more relevant hotel matches first, saving travelers valuable hours.**

AI can also supercharge New Distribution Capability (NDC) — and **88% of T&E managers said NDC connections offer better booking options and save them money.** Here's the rub: Only 57% of them said their current solution offers NDC.



Supercharged Customer Service

Trust in AI is increasing; **76% of business travelers said they trusted AI for straightforward T&E tasks**, up from 59% in the 2024 report.

But AI features don't always deliver. Only 24% of travelers said their chatbot "always" resolved employee issues quickly and accurately, which could be why **only 33% of travelers said that in-app chat was their go-to for issues**. Most still rely on phone (60%) and email (52%) for support, likely spending more time than necessary to resolve issues.

Seek out platforms whose chatbots have high scores for handling support issues accurately — the [CSAT for Navan's Ava is 78](#) — as well as [AI agents](#) that monitor itineraries and can call hotels to help resolve issues or alert a human support agent for assistance.



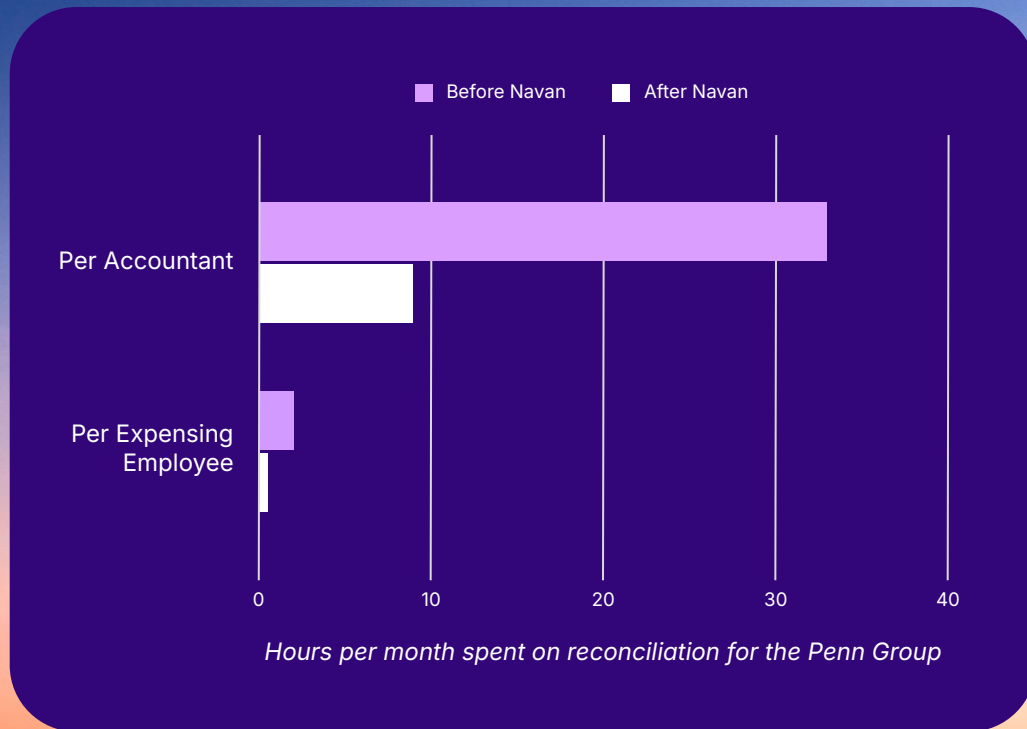
Solution #3

Automated Expense Management

For the past three years, **using automation for processing expenses has plateaued at around 35%**, said travel and finance managers. It's a big miss.

*The
Penn Group
saw a...*

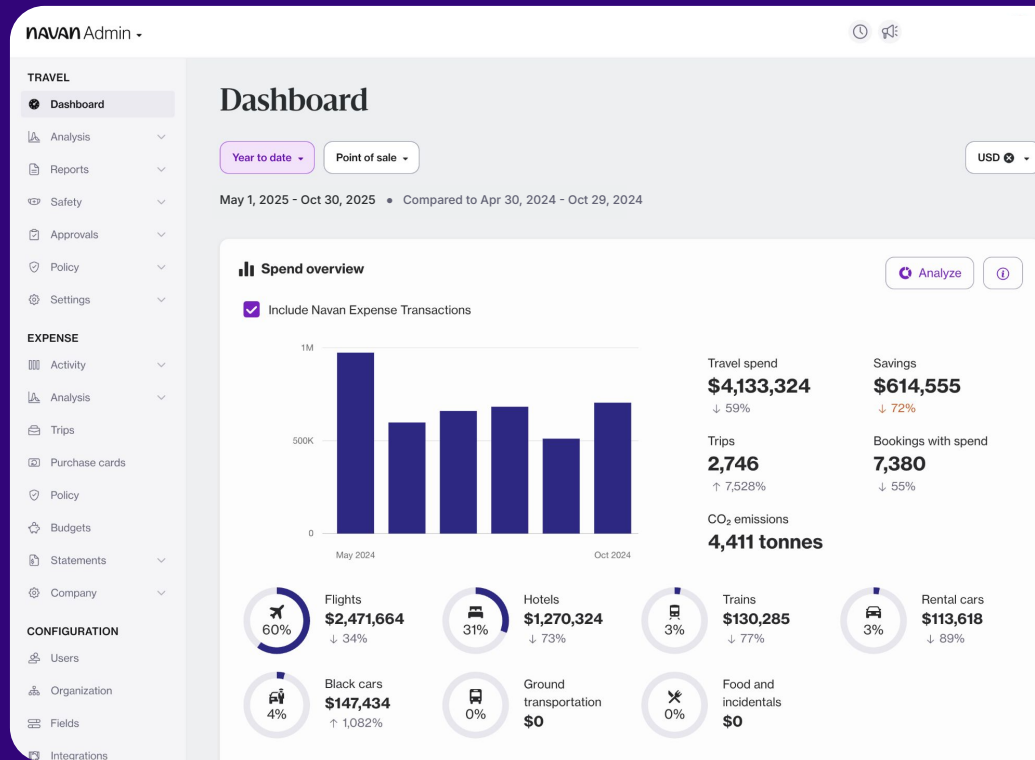
73% reduction in reconciliation time, thanks to automation with Navan Expense.



Analytics-Driven Spend Control

Data without context is useless. Analyzing and cross-referencing different data sources like total spending, spend by category, inventory savings (NDC, OTA, etc.), and out-of-policy bookings is essential for providing a holistic view of travel and expenses across an organization.

Data should and can work much harder when T&E solutions feature powerful analytics platforms; Navan's for example, can turn **100+ complex travel data points into actionable insights** — all in real time.



“

AI-driven solutions are creating cost- and time-saving efficiencies in exciting ways across the T&E ecosystem.

But make no mistake: As one of a company's most complex and nuanced processes, **T&E management would be nowhere without human experts.**

Success requires the deep industry knowledge they possess and the relationships they create — with their travelers, suppliers, and peers.

AI can improve processes, but it takes humans to elevate industries.



— **Kim Hamer**

CHIEF TRAVEL ADVISORY OFFICER, NAVAN

Solution in Action

Canva's T&E Transformation With Navan



? The Problem

On its way to becoming a design software powerhouse, Canva struggled with a **travel program that was heavily manual and largely unmanaged**.

✓ The Solution

With Navan, Canva achieved a **higher level of travel policy compliance** and an **increase in travel-related cost savings**, while real-time reporting helped create more accurate forecasting to support the company's desire for **global scale**.



The value Navan brings to me and my organization is hard to quantify — **it gives us freedom**. It's incredibly **self-serve** and **simple**.

— **Rudy Batts**
HEAD OF GLOBAL SPEND, CANVA

Source: [Navan and Canva case study](#)



Next Steps

Optimizing T&E for Business Growth

Next Steps

The Cost of Disconnected T&E Platforms

Having access to technology is meaningless without a concrete plan to bring processes and systems together.

Every company has to ask itself:

Are technologies being used to their full capacity to solve problems for humans today?

Are we getting quantifiable results?

Does our company have a vision for what comes next?



Next Steps

Bridging the Success Gap

More managers recognize the solution

77%

of managers said they were interested in an all-in-one T&E solution, **up from 66% in the 2024 report.**

An all-in-one T&E solution can tie together dynamic policies, easy group bookings, automatic expense submission, data reporting, reconciliation, and more.

Here's why they're hesitating

48%

of managers said cost is holding them back from switching, **up from 40% in each of the three previous years.**

By focusing on hard costs in the short term, companies are ignoring the opportunity costs of not switching: cost-saving features, time-saving efficiencies, and future-proofing from an adaptable, tech-forward, all-in-one T&E solution.

Next Steps

Key Takeaways

1

Business travel is stronger than ever. Corporate travel frequency, perceived value, and the desire for personal interaction are at historic peaks — and poised to keep growing.

2

Platform pain points remain prevalent. Travelers and T&E managers still struggle with their travel and expense solutions, due in part to a lack of inventory, manual expense reporting, unsatisfactory customer support responses, and reporting data that's delayed and/or difficult to access.

3

Companies can't afford to compromise on T&E solutions. To maximize the value of employees' time and the ROI of corporate travel, companies should seek all-in-one solutions that provide integration of modernized travel and expense tools, as well as advanced data, AI, and automation functionality.

Survey Methodology

About Navan

Navan is the leading all-in-one business travel, payments, and expense management platform that makes travel easy for frequent travelers. From finding flights and hotels to automating expense reconciliation, with 24/7 support along the way, Navan delivers an intuitive experience travelers love and finance teams rely on. See how Navan customers benefit and learn more at navan.com.

Navan has commissioned Skift to conduct global surveys of business travelers and travel and finance managers in each of the past seven years. This year's edition of the Skift and Navan survey garnered 1,798 total responses in August 2025, including 869 corporate travel and finance managers and 929 business travelers.

Roughly 40% of the respondents in both groups were based in the U.S., with the remaining 60% distributed evenly across France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Respondents spanned 20 industry sectors — with the highest concentrations in IT/software, financial services, construction, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, and electronics — and reported using a wide range of T&E solutions.

Comparisons across the years form the foundation for this report's analysis and insights. Unless otherwise noted, the data cited and visualized throughout the report are from the preceding seven years of Skift and Navan's research. Data points are rounded to whole numbers.

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