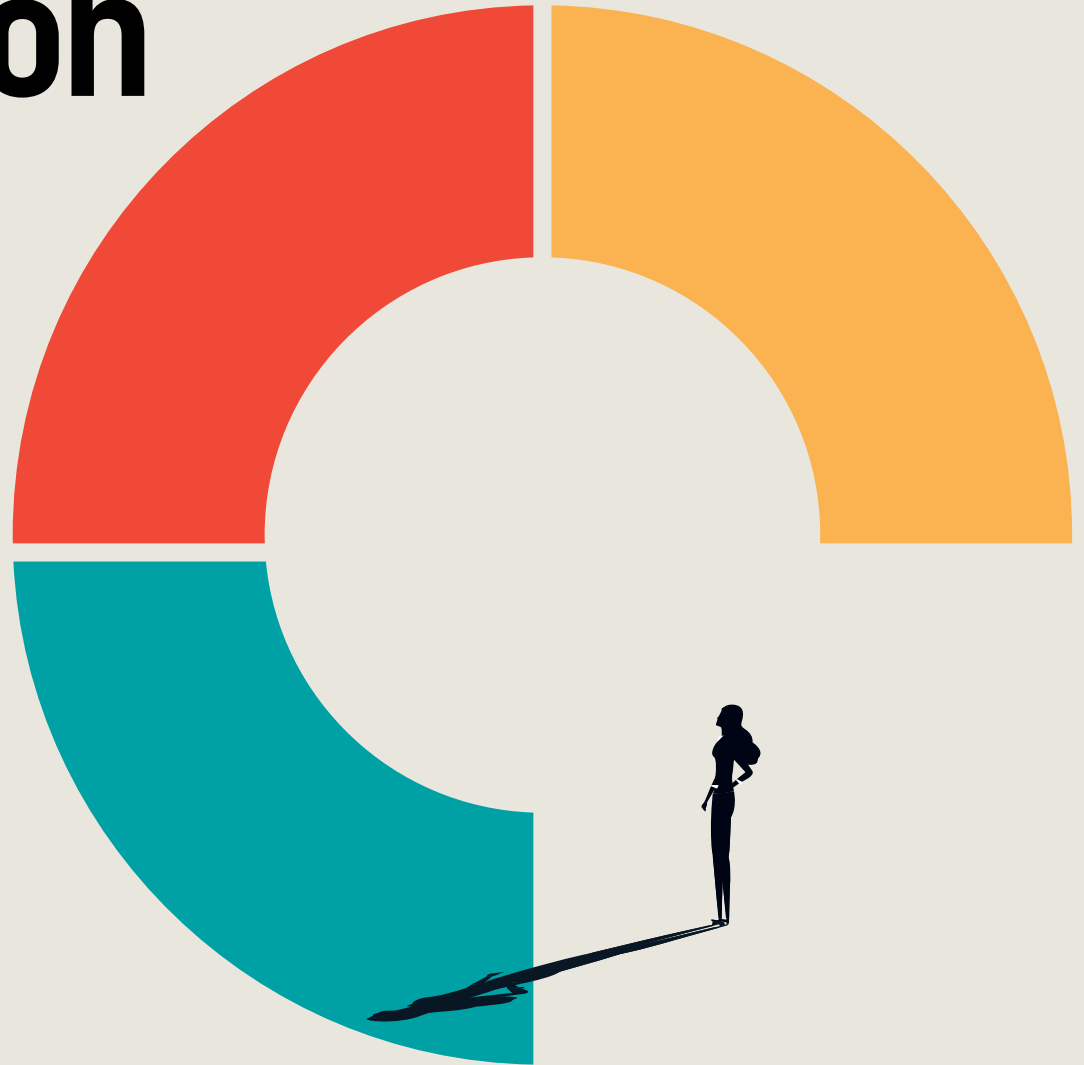


FIRST LOOK:

# Site-Selection Priorities

2024 and Beyond



# INTRODUCTION

What are planners' top considerations when choosing the ideal destinations for their meetings and events? This year, costs are driving decisions more than any other factor. That's just one of many changes revealed in this First Look Research report, "Site-Selection Priorities: 2024 and Beyond," produced by Northstar Meetings Group and sponsored by Visit Orlando. The online survey of professional meeting and event planners was fielded from Feb. 7 to March 7, 2024. Results are based on 408 qualified responses.

A comparison to similar research conducted in 2022 shows a decline in planners' perceptions across all 30 major meetings destinations mentioned in the survey. This aligns with a drop in overall planner sentiment, as revealed in the [Northstar/Cvent Meetings Industry PULSE Survey](#). Planners were more optimistic in 2022 than they are now, according to the latest PULSE Survey data. Two years ago, they were happy to be back to work and finding lower rates and more flexibility in rebooking in-person events. The ensuing two years of negotiating under the challenging conditions of a sellers' market also might be influencing overall destination appeal.

## AMONG OTHER FINDINGS:

- » **PRIOR EXPERIENCE IS COMFORTING.** Relationships and a working history with a destination management company influence site-selection decisions.
- » **DESTINATION APPEAL IS FICKLE.** Almost two-thirds of respondents say their perceptions of certain cities have changed over the past two years. When asked specifically about the current appeal of 30 cities relative to two years earlier, respondents rated 16 destinations as less appealing, 11 as more appealing, and 3 unchanged.
- » **COST IS KING.** Pricing was the only factor that significantly increased in importance relative to two years ago, followed by a small uptick in the importance of attendee experiences. The decline in all other categories underscores the price-driven nature of site-selection decisions today.
- » **LEGISLATION MATTERS TO THE MINORITY.** More than two-thirds of respondents say controversial state legislation has no bearing on their site-selection decisions.

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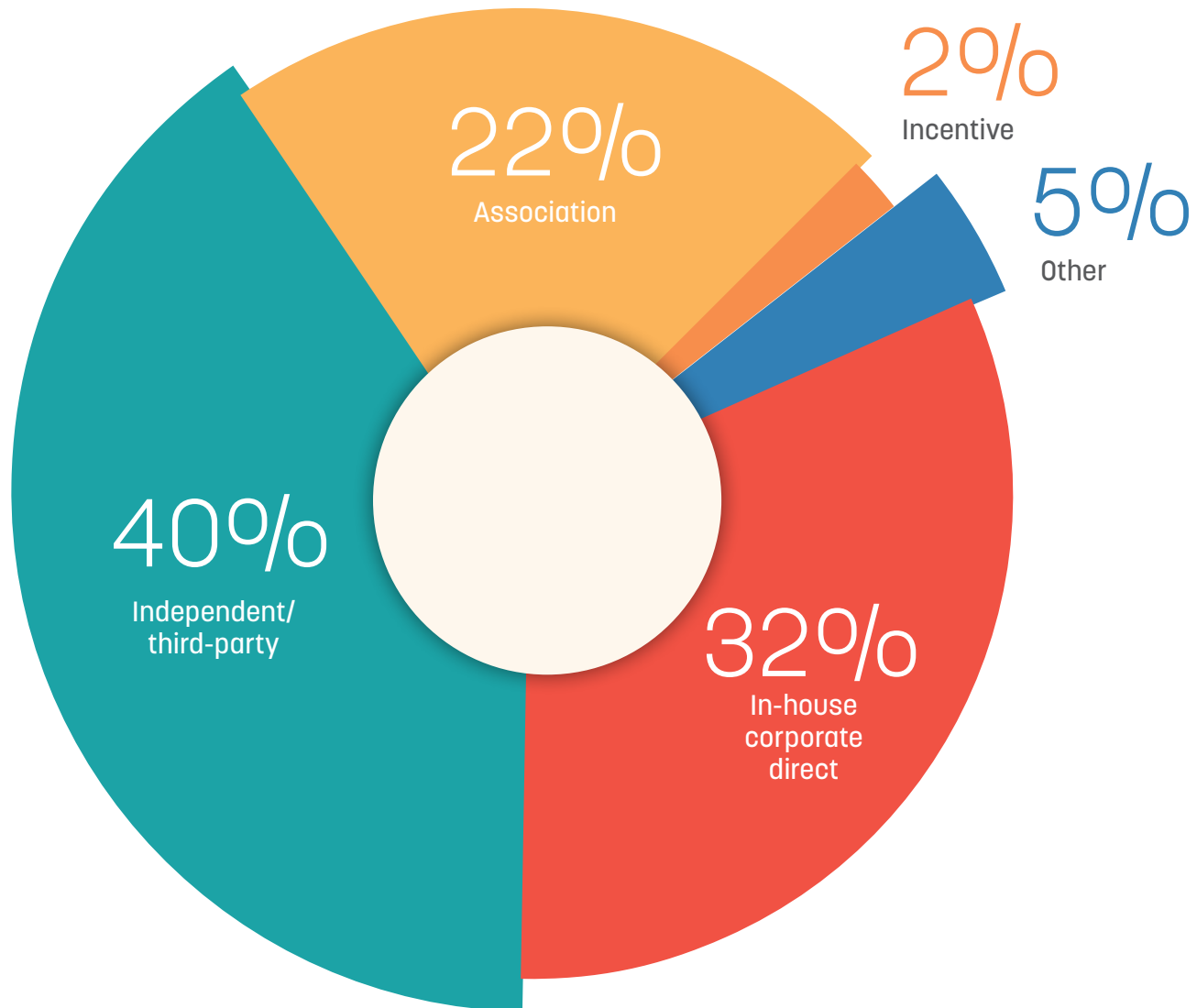
## » OUR TAKE:

The changeable nature of a city's appeal to planners reveals an opportunity for sales and marketing professionals to be clear and consistent in their messaging and to actively address negative perceptions that might influence site-selection decisions.

# WHO WE SURVEYED

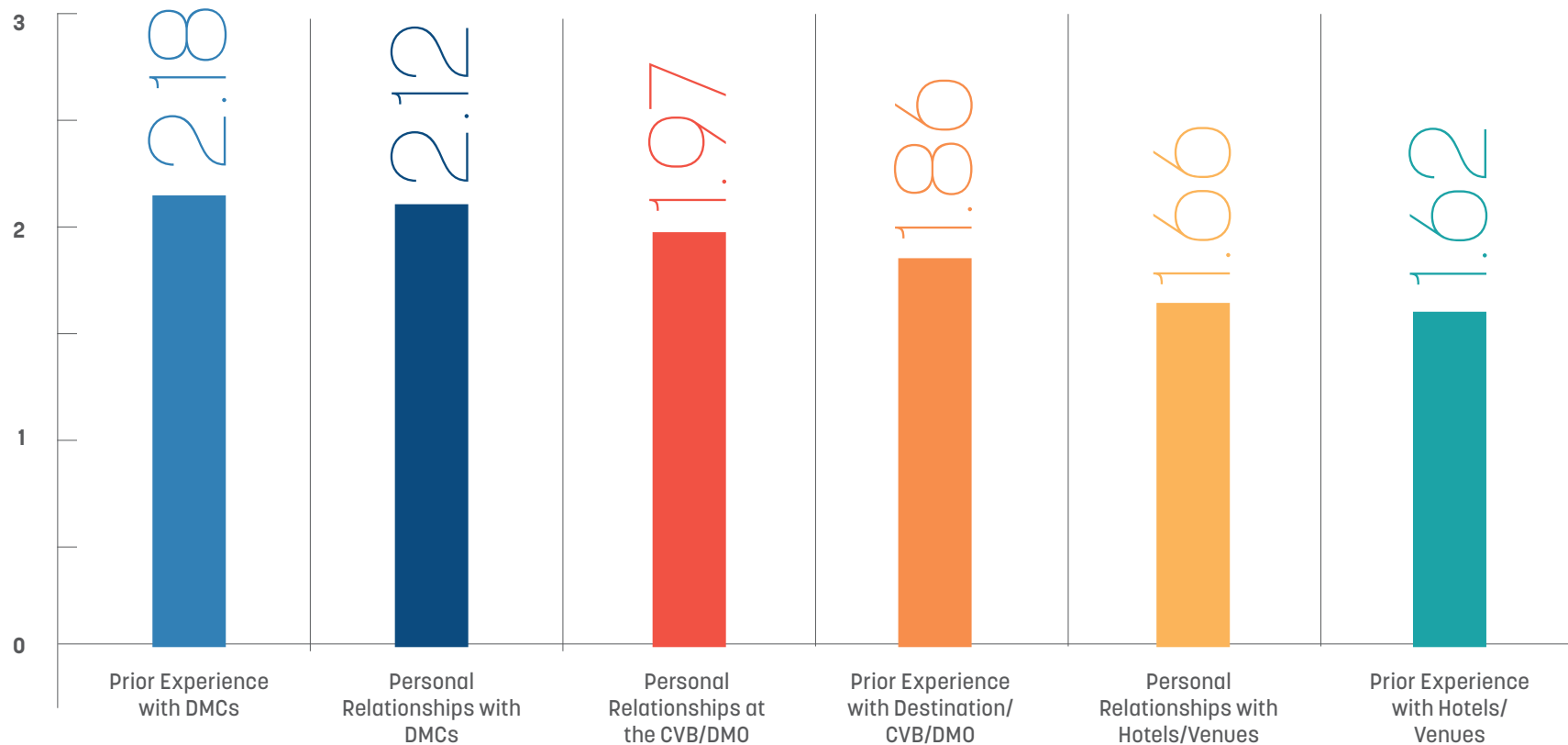
What type of planner are you?

The 408 qualified survey respondents represent a mix of planner types.



# THE ADVANTAGE OF KNOWN PEOPLE AND PLACES

How important are the following factors in your site-selection decisions?  
Weighted averages from a scale in which:  
1= Not important, 2 = Somewhat important, 3 = Very important

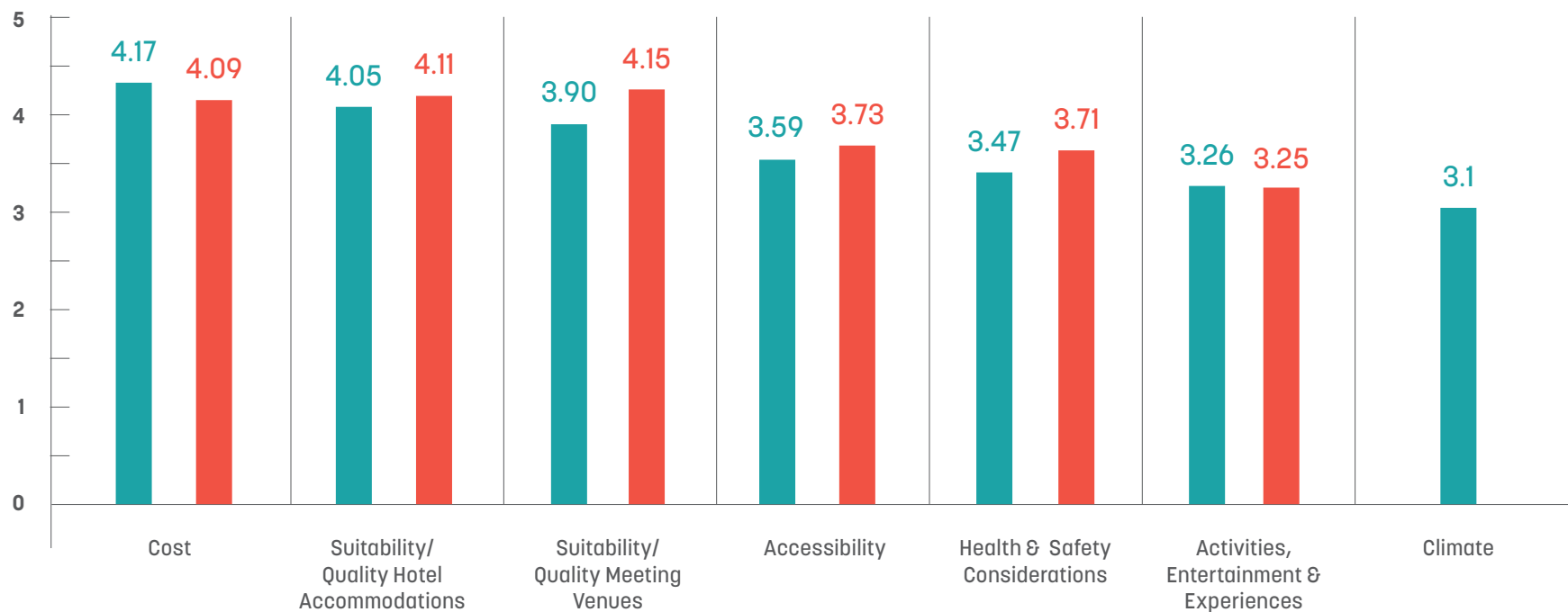


Planners don't like surprises, and thus are likely to go back to tried-and-true suppliers — especially destination management companies (DMCs) with in-market expertise.

# PLANNERS' TOP DESTINATION PRIORITIES

On a scale of 1 to 5, rank the importance of the following destination characteristics in your current site-selection process for your typical meetings, events and/or incentives. (1=least important, 5=most important)

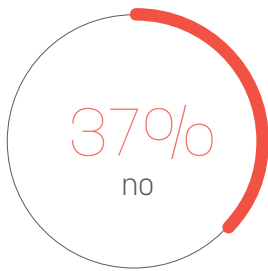
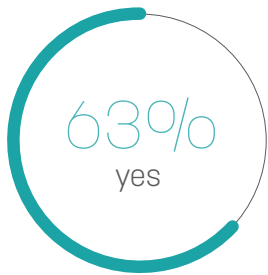
● March 2024 (408 planner responses) ● February 2022 (472 planner responses)



Cost is the most important factor in planners' destination selection process. Desirable hotels and venues are next on the list of priorities. Climate is important, but not as vital as access, safety and experiences. Interestingly, cost was the only factor that significantly increased in importance relative to two years ago, followed by a small uptick in the importance of attendee experiences. The declines in all other categories underscores today's price-driven nature of site-selection decisions.

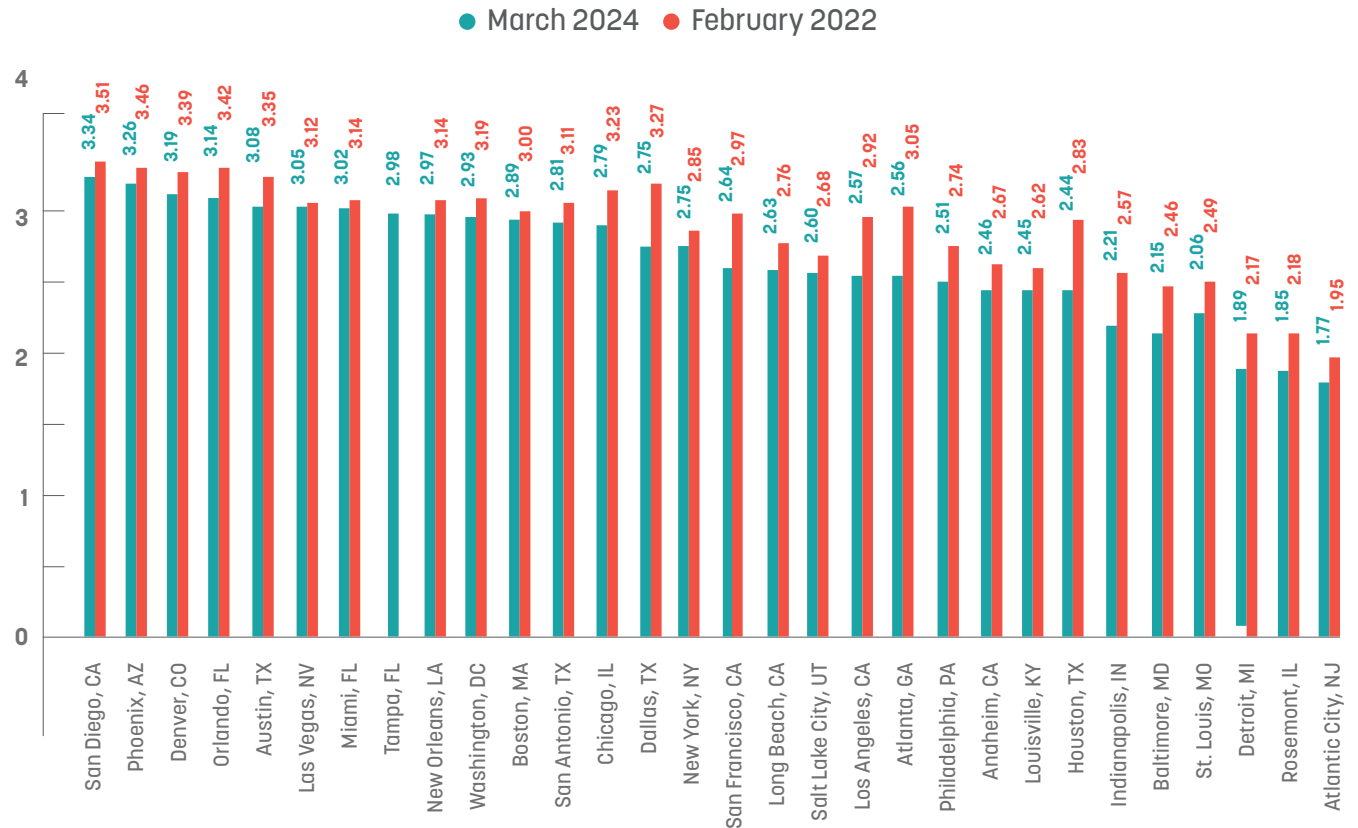
# HOW PLANNERS RANK DESIRABLE DESTINATIONS

Has the relative appeal of some destinations for your meetings, events and incentive travel programs changed over the past two years?



Planners' perceptions about destinations can change over a relatively brief span of time. Nearly two-thirds have changed their minds about the appeal of certain cities in just two years.

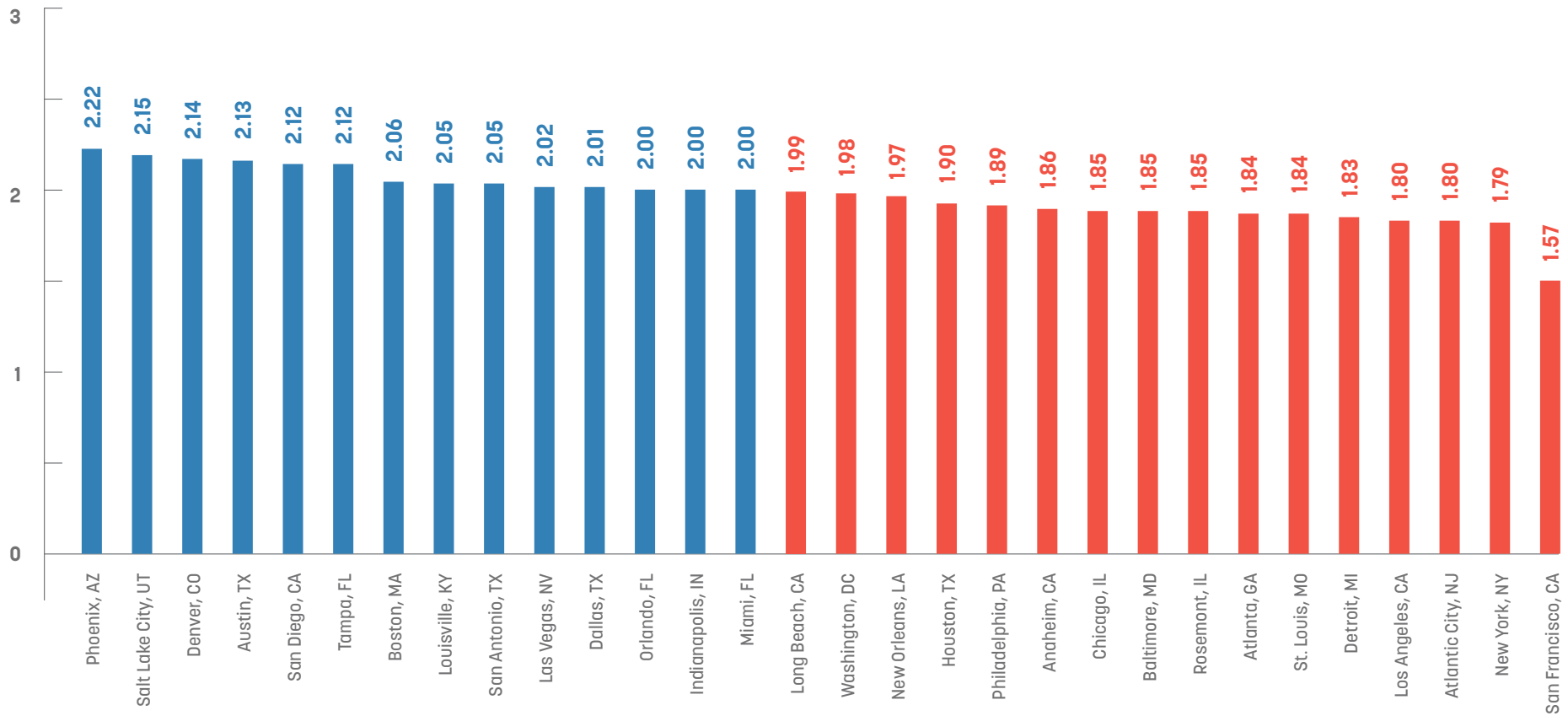
Based on the priorities you selected, how appealing are the following destinations for your typical meetings, events and incentive programs? (On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = least appealing and 5 = most appealing.)



Perceptions play a significant role in planners' destination decisions, and they're less enthralled across the board this year than in 2022. The consistency of the decline is likely due to more difficult market conditions for planners, as the low rates and flexible contract terms they experienced in 2022 are now much harder to come by.

# PERCEIVED CHANGE OVER TIME

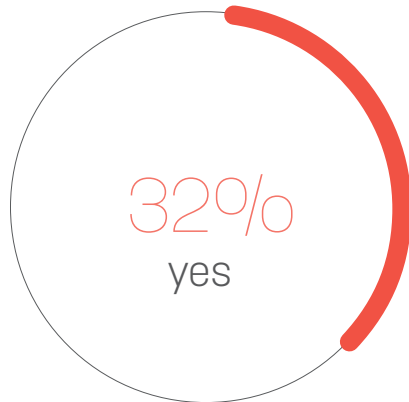
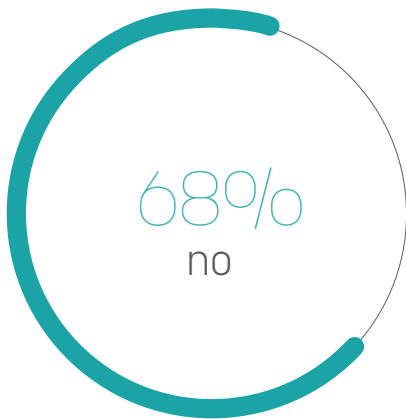
How has the appeal of these destinations for your programs changed over the past two years?  
1=Less Appealing 2=No Change 3=More Appealing



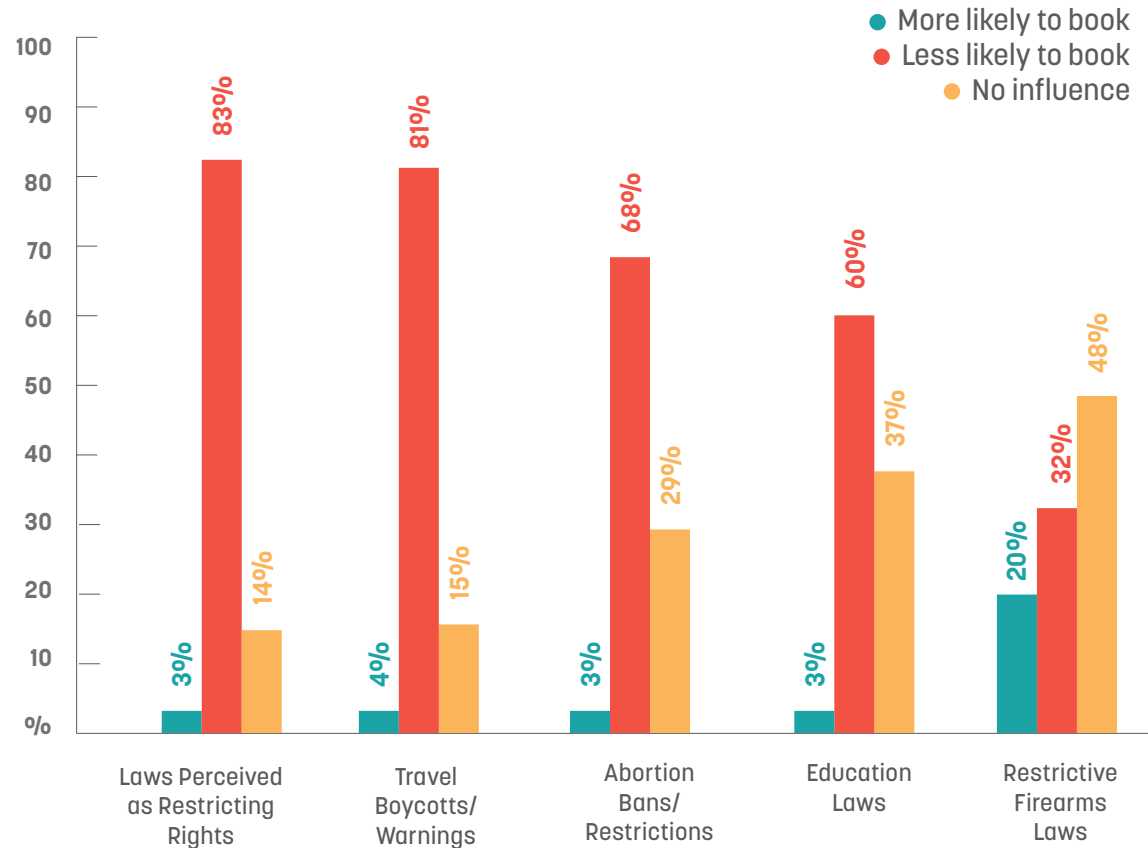
With a value of 2 representing no change, more cities are perceived as less desirable now than they were two years ago.

# WEIGHING THE IMPACT OF LEGISLATION

Have your site-selection considerations changed due to federal or state laws enacted over the past three years?



If yes, how have the following legislative factors influenced your site-selection decisions?



Nearly one-third of planners consider legislative issues in their site-selection decisions. Of those, the vast majority are likely to avoid states with any laws they perceive as restricting people's rights, as well as states facing travel warnings or calls for boycotts.