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EVENTS

# THE EVENTS INDUSTRY IN 2023:

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A Look at the Trends That Will  
Shape the Way You Do Group  
Business Travel





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# INTRODUCTION

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The events industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors across travel, with a projected compound annual growth rate of nearly **23.1% through 2028<sup>1</sup>**.

That level of sustained growth has implications across every aspect of the business, including destinations, accommodation choices, food service and — of course — industry tech and trends.

With a global pandemic, a massive shift in consumer preferences, the rapid emergence of new technologies and a host of other factors, the events and group travel industry is poised for a major change in the years ahead. **That's why we're thrilled to share our latest trends report with you**, which explores the impact of these forces in-depth and provides a glimpse into what's ahead for this dynamic sector.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.researchdive.com/8401/events-industry-market>



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# TEN OF THE BEST EUROPEAN CITIES FOR MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Europe is home to many of the world's most popular destinations for business travel — and for good reason! These destinations are full of history, culture and plenty of unique experiences to offer your attendees. But which cities are best suited for meetings and events?

**1 London:**  
With more than three million business visits in the first eight months of 2022<sup>2</sup>, England's capital still reigns supreme as one of the world's most popular destinations for meetings and events. Home to numerous iconic landmarks and attractions, London is a great choice for events that want to offer attendees plenty of opportunities to explore the city as it boasts extensive rail links between its many boroughs.

**2 Paris:**  
Although it's known as the "city of love", Paris is an excellent choice for group business travel too. So much so that the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) named it "the world's leading city for hosting international congresses."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.visitbritain.org/2022-monthly-data>

<sup>3</sup> [https://de.meeting.france.fr/sites/default/files/document/static\\_page/Brochure%20FRANCE%20a%20successful%20congress%20destination%20BD\\_6.pdf](https://de.meeting.france.fr/sites/default/files/document/static_page/Brochure%20FRANCE%20a%20successful%20congress%20destination%20BD_6.pdf)



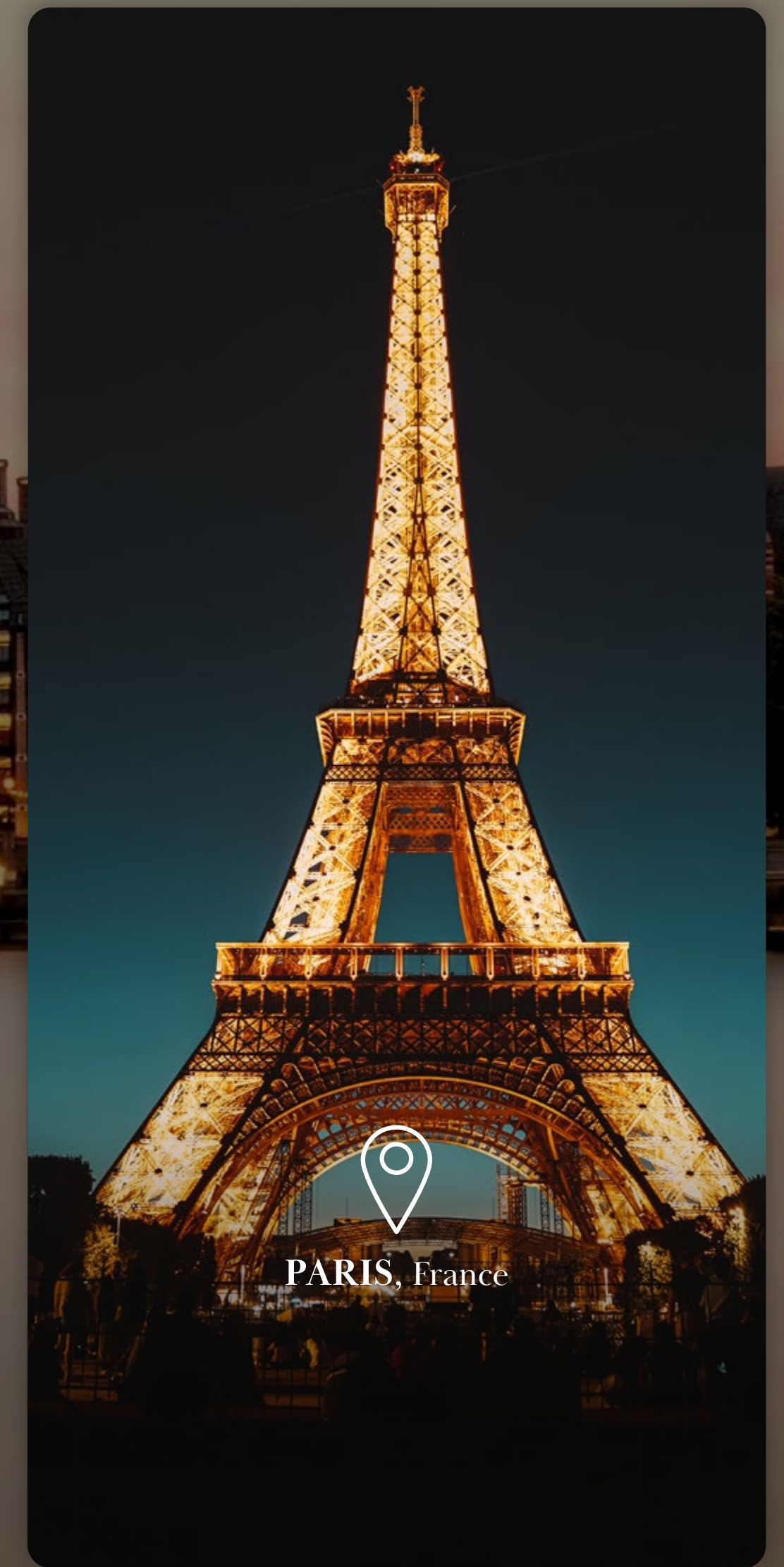
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LONDON, England



PARIS, France



**3 Amsterdam:**  
As one of the world's most inclusive destinations, Amsterdam is a great choice for companies that embrace diversity as one of their core values. And, with more than 500 venues to choose from, it's easy to find a space that will fit your needs.<sup>4</sup>

**4 Madrid:**  
With direct flights from North and South America, Europe and Africa, well-connected is an understatement when it comes to Madrid — no wonder it welcomes approximately 30,000 visitors per month.<sup>5</sup>

**5 Munich:**  
Extremely walkable and bike-friendly, Munich is a great choice for companies that want to reduce the environmental impact of their event — and, by 2025, the city plans to be 100% powered by renewable energy.<sup>6</sup>

**6 Frankfurt:**  
This city is full of culture, tech and business opportunities. It's known as "Mainhattan" because 14 out of the 15 highest skyscrapers in Germany are located here — so if you want to impress your guests, Frankfurt is the place.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.iamsterdam.com/en/business/meetings/venues/venue-finder>

<sup>5</sup> <https://madridbarajasairport.net/statistics/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.emeoutlookmag.com/industry-insights/article/102-munich-aims-for-a-100-clean-electricity-supply-by-2025>

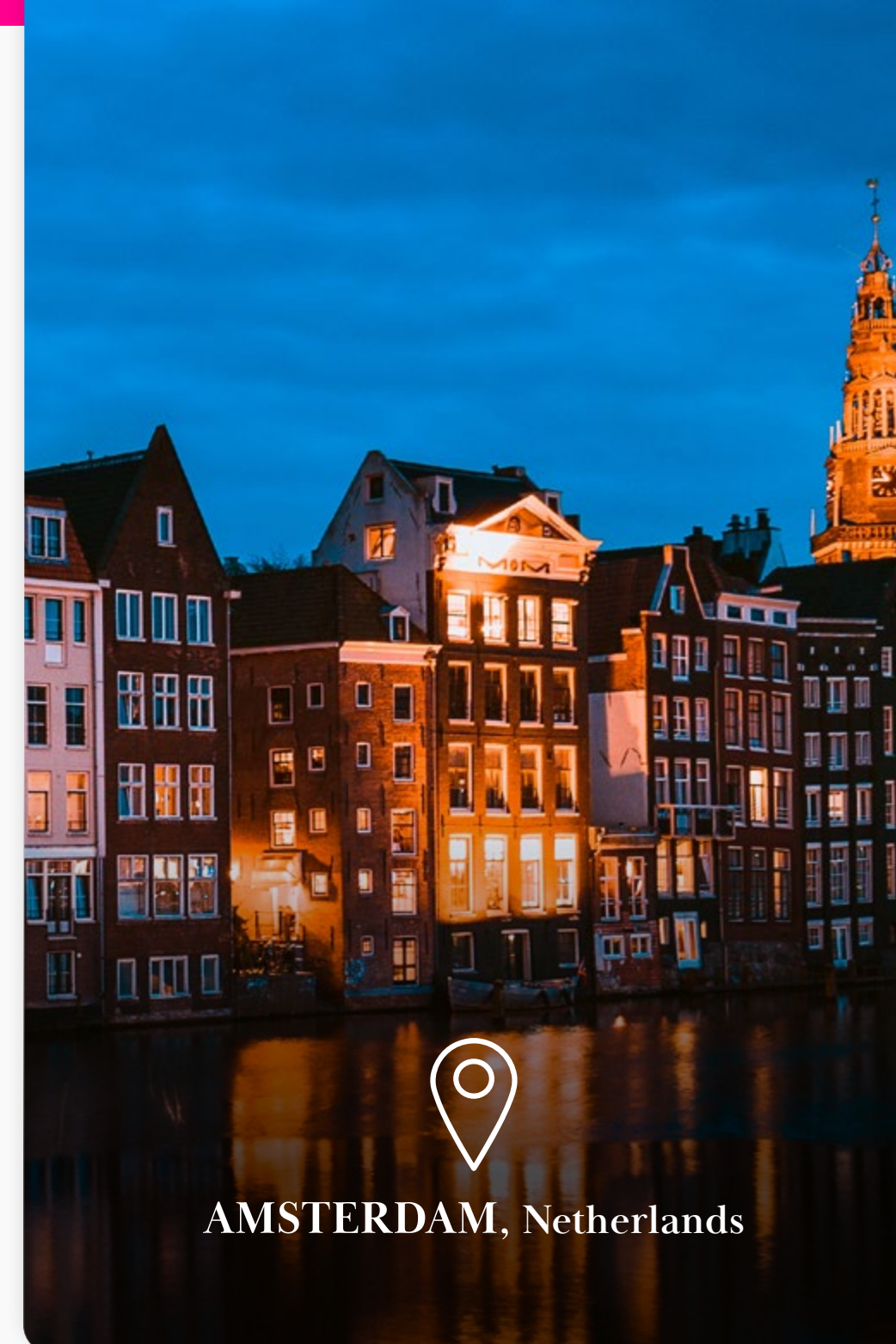
<sup>7</sup> <https://www.frankfurt-tourismus.de/en/Discover-Experience/Points-of-Interest/Modern-Frankfurt/Skyscrapers-in-Frankfurt>



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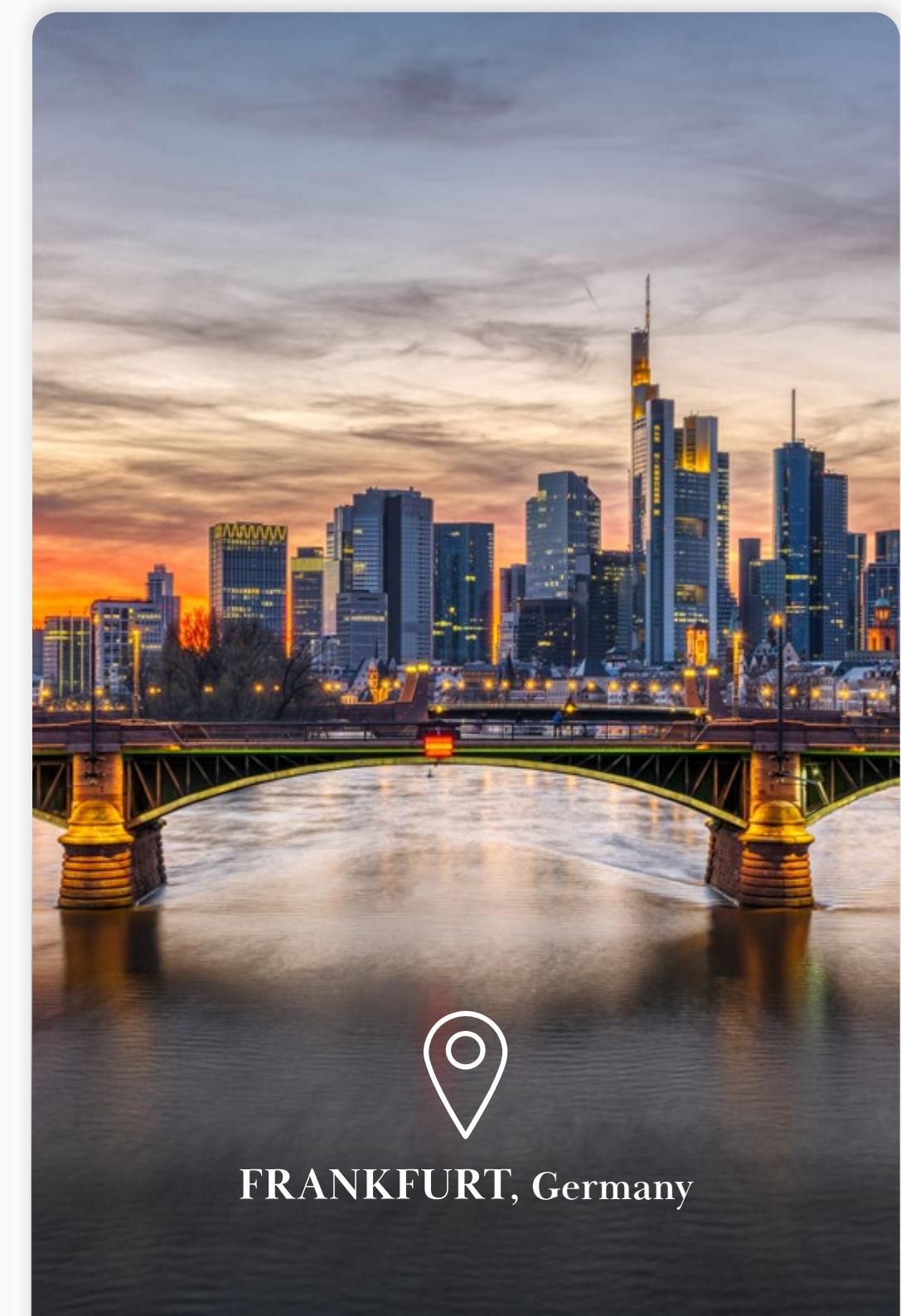
AMSTERDAM, Netherlands



MADRID, Spain



MUNICH, Germany



FRANKFURT, Germany





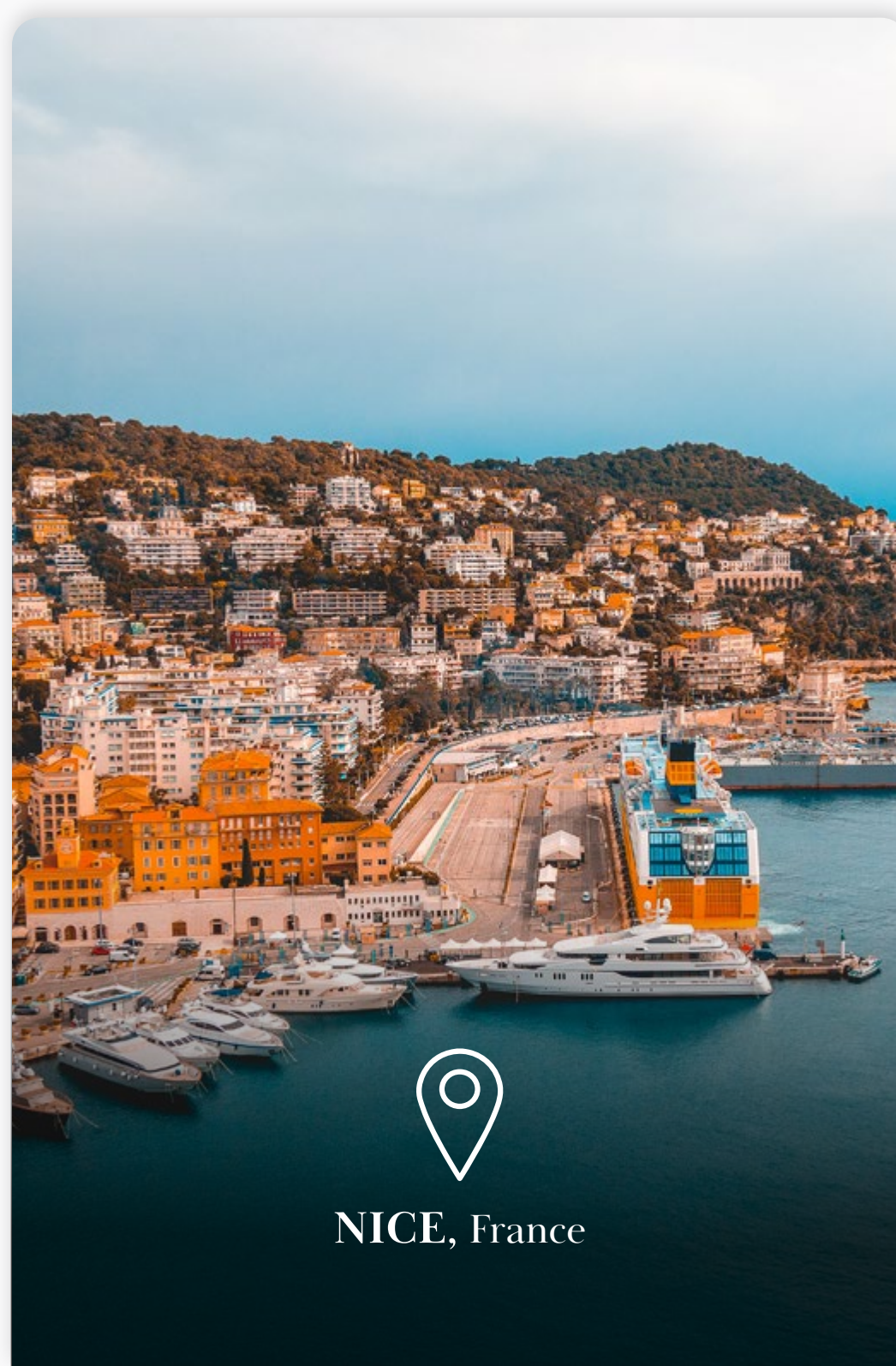
MILAN, Italy



EDINBURGH, Scotland



BARCELONA, Spain



NICE, France

## 7 Milan:

Due to its numerous conference facilities, including the largest convention centre in Italy and one of Europe's largest, which can accommodate up to 18,000 people, Milan is considered one of the world's best-equipped cities for organising events.<sup>8</sup>

## 9

### Barcelona:

Situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the Pyrenees Mountains, Barcelona is a city of contrasts. It's famous for its architecture and culture, beautiful beaches and cosmopolitan atmosphere. And, with an average temperature of 15.5°C, it's the ideal destination for companies looking to host an outdoor event.<sup>9</sup>

## 8

### Edinburgh:

The economic value of Edinburgh's business tourism industry has been estimated at more than £300 million per year.<sup>10</sup> The city's historic buildings, stunning scenery and exceptional accessibility make it an ideal destination for any event.

## 10

### Nice:

Although Nice is mostly known for its picturesque beaches and sun-soaked climate, it's also home to impressive research facilities, which make the city a magnet for scientists and academics looking to host a conference or event. Plus, it's only 15 minutes away from the nearest airport.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.fditally.com/blog/top-10-event-venues-italy/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://en.climate-data.org/europe/spain/catalonia/barcelona-1564/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.etag.org.uk/market-info/business-tourism/>



# TEN OF THE BEST AMERICAN CITIES FOR MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Now that we've covered some of Europe's most popular cities for meetings and events, let's take a look at America's hot spots. Since the US is so vast, its biggest metropolises have their own flair — but here are 10 of the best:

**1 New York:**  
Undoubtedly one of the most popular cities in the world for meetings and events, New York has 13.3 million business travellers visit each year<sup>11</sup> It also has something to offer every attendee — from Broadway shows to professional sports games and museums galore, it's no wonder the Big Apple is a top choice.

**2 Miami:**  
Imagine having a conference in a city surrounded by beaches, palm trees and sunshine — that's exactly what you can expect in Miami. With an average of 252 days of sunny weather each year, it's the ideal place to host an outdoor or festival-themed company event.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/osdc/tourism-industry-new-york-city>

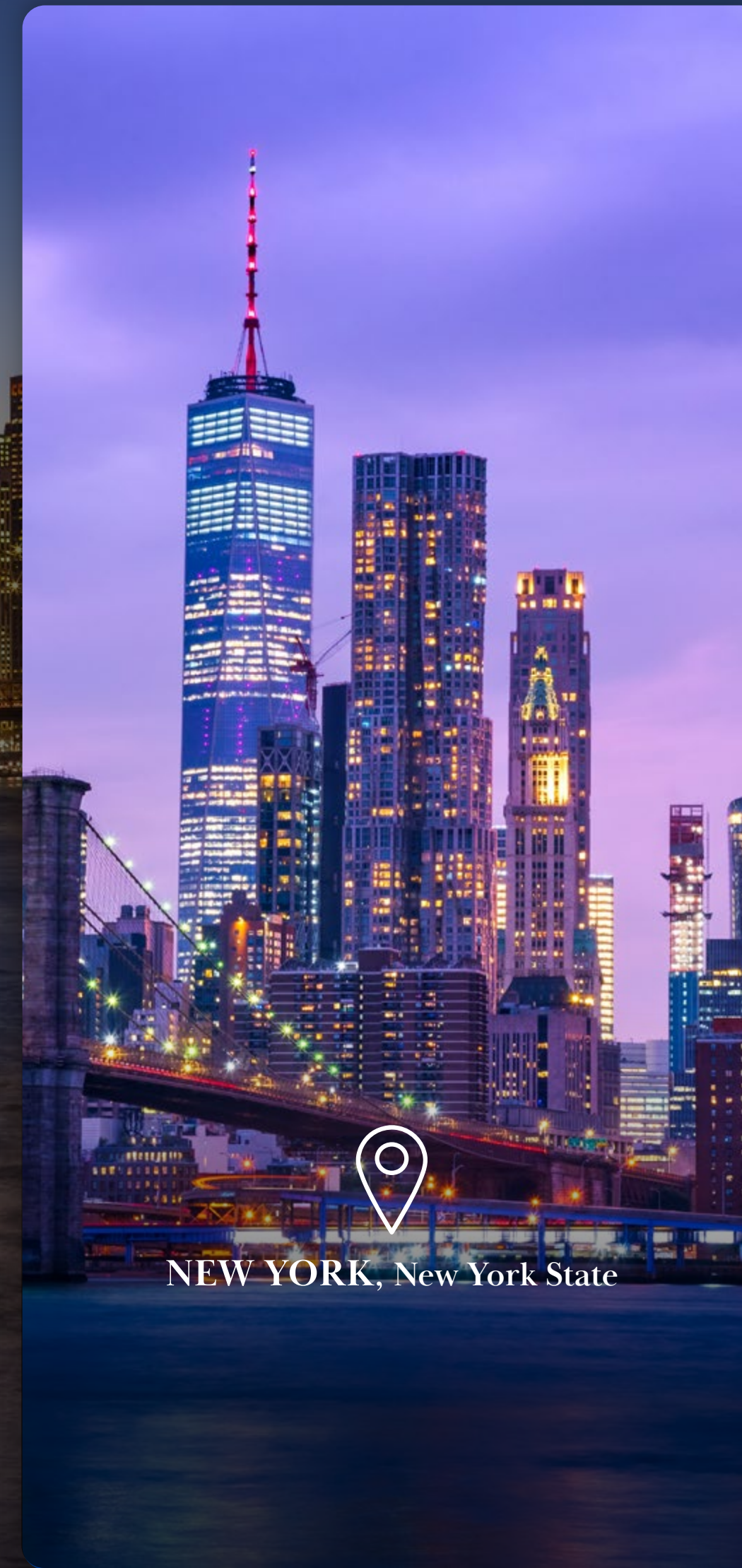
<sup>12</sup> <https://www.bestplaces.net/climate/city/florida/miami>



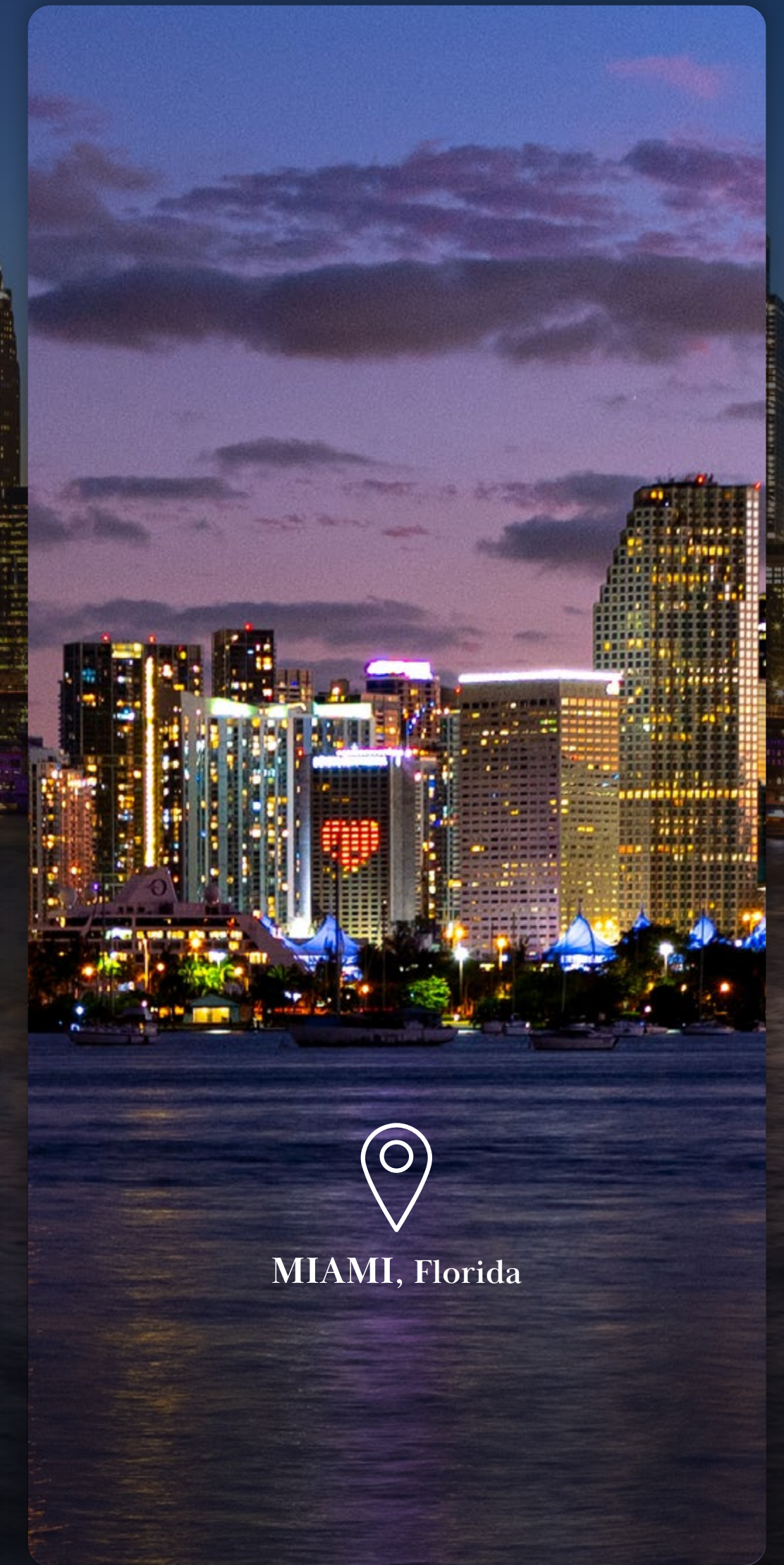
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NEW YORK, New York State



MIAMI, Florida



**3 San Francisco:**  
Known as the “tech capital” of the world, San Francisco is a great place to host a tech-focused event. In fact, 10.9% of total jobs in the San Francisco Bay Area are held by people working in technology – almost triple the 3.9% national average.<sup>13</sup>

**5 Washington DC:**  
As the capital of the United States, Washington is a major centre for politics and policy. You’ll get unrivalled international awareness and exposure by holding your event in Washington, where there are more than 175 embassies.<sup>15</sup>

**4 Los Angeles:**  
With a bustling hub of entertainment, Los Angeles is also home to the Los Angeles Convention Center, which has 720,000 square feet of exhibition space, 147,000 square feet of meeting space and a theatre with a 300-person capacity.<sup>14</sup>

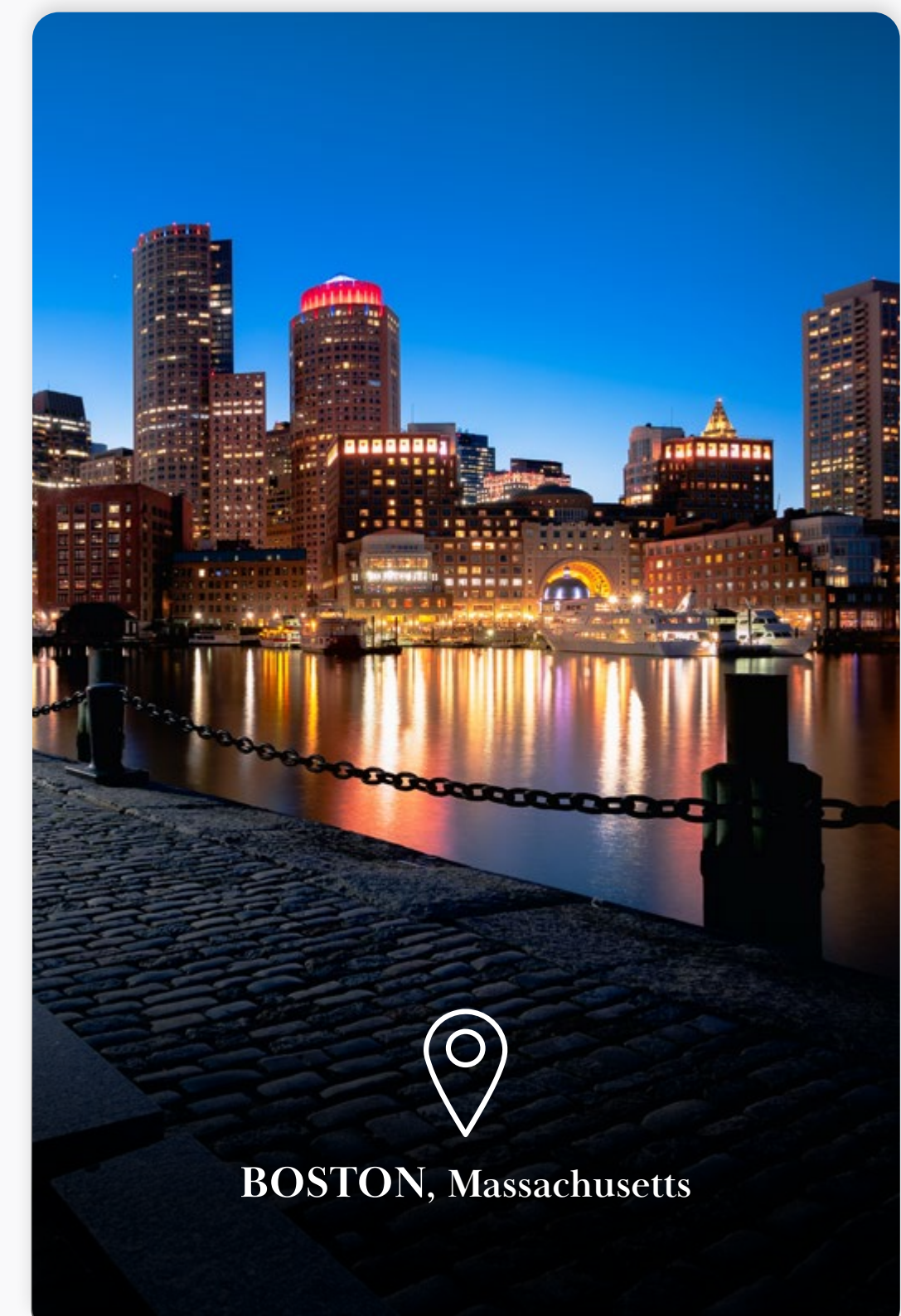
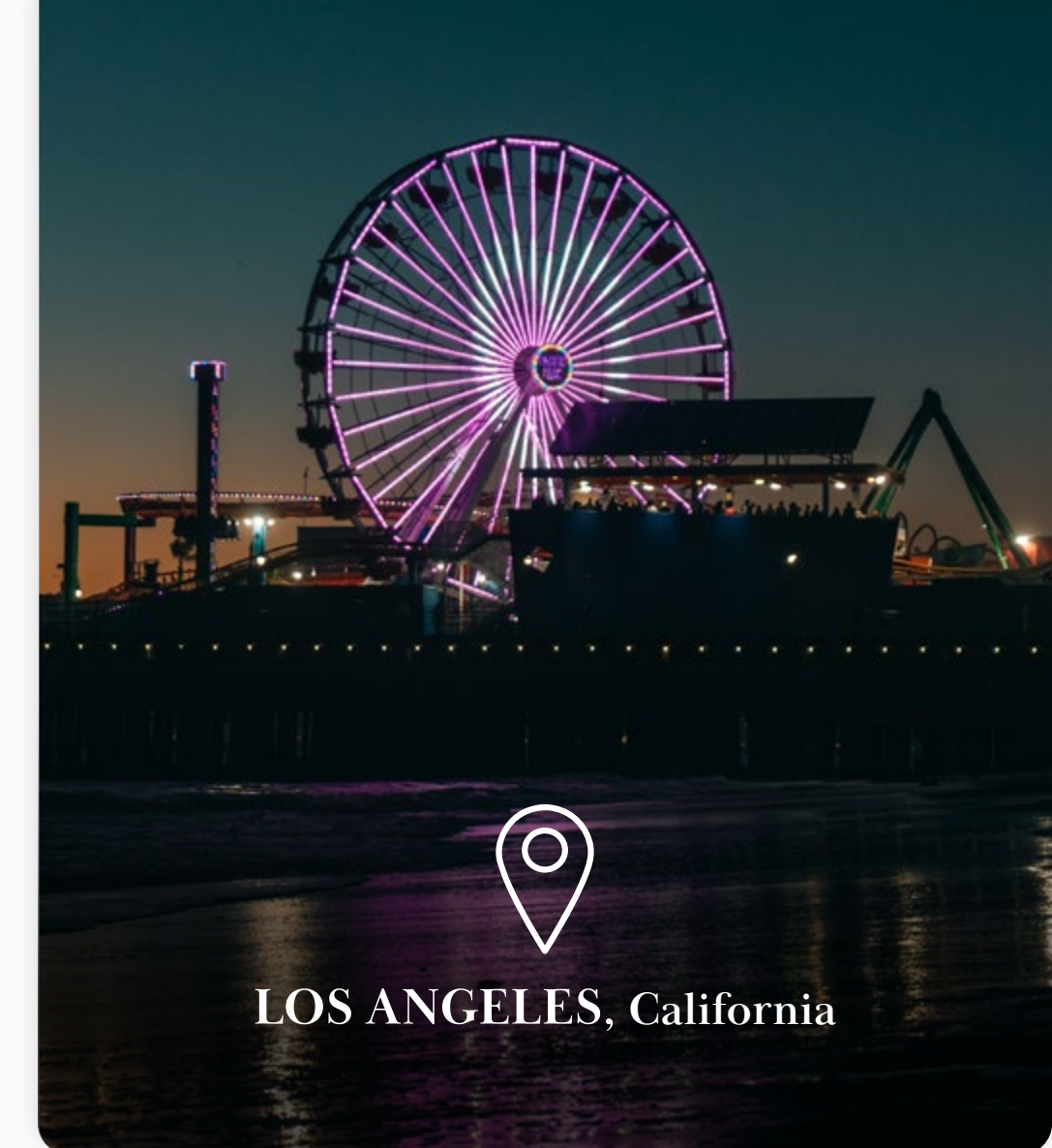
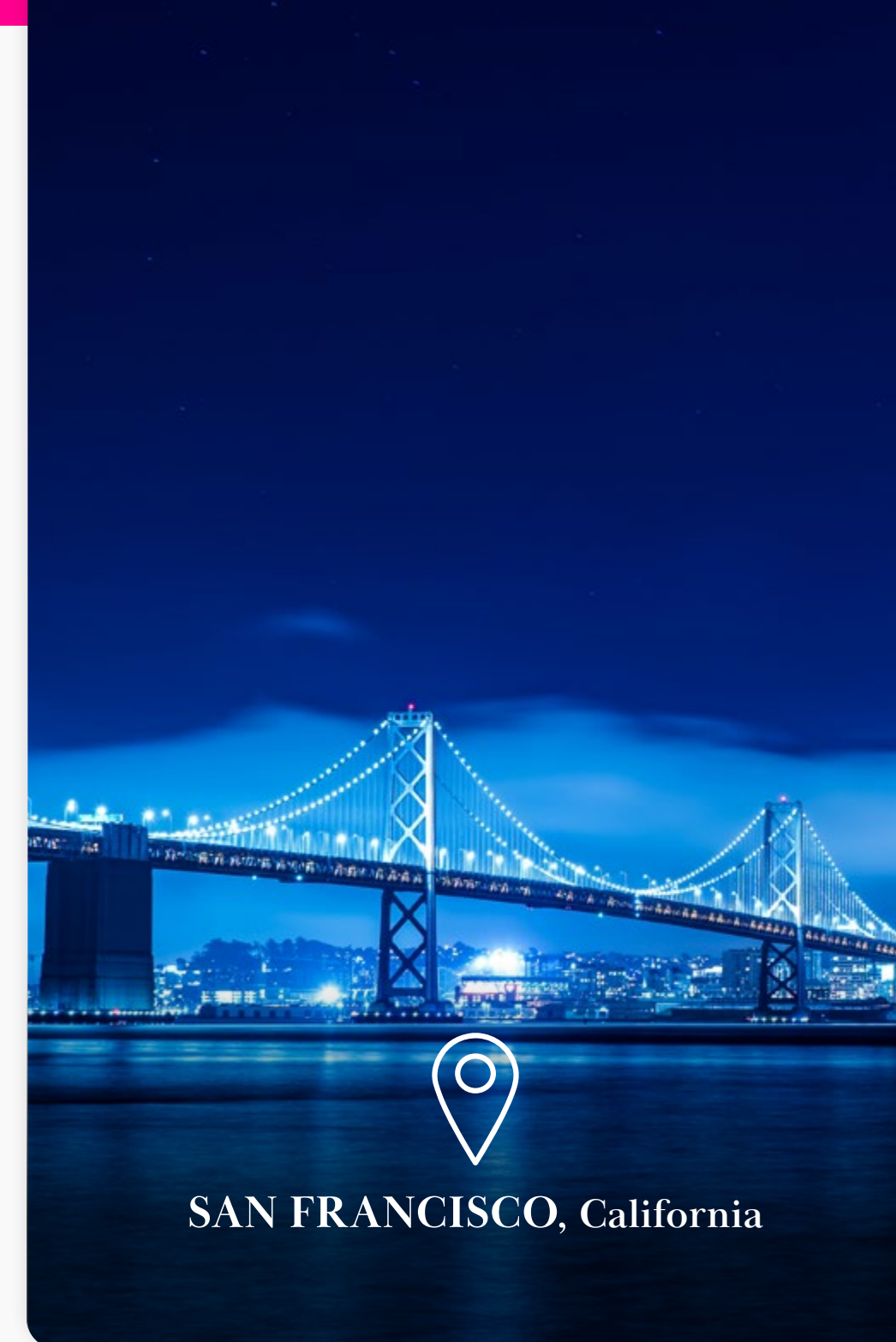
**6 Boston:**  
This city is a hub for healthcare and technology, making it an ideal location for medical conventions, industry conferences and trade shows. Boston’s Convention and Exhibition Center (BCEC) has more than 500,000 square feet of exhibition space and 82 meeting rooms.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.cbre.ca/press-releases/san-francisco-bay-area-ranks-first-among-north-american-tech-hubs-with-the-largest-tech-labor-pool>

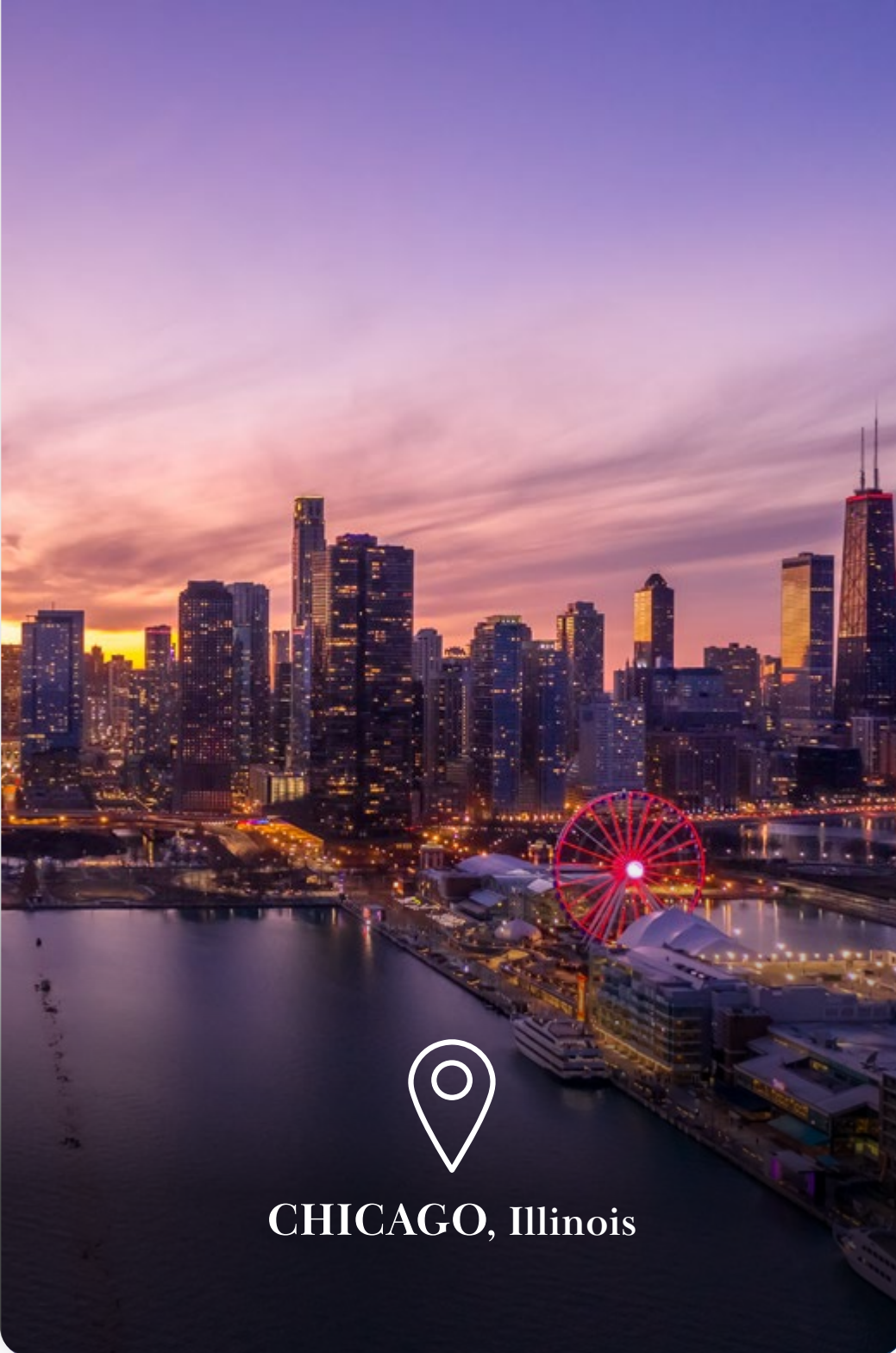
<sup>14</sup> <https://www.lacclink.com/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://washington.org/groups/DC-information/international-visitors>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.mpi.org/blog/article/boston-area-is-a-powerhouse-destination-for-meetings>







CHICAGO, Illinois



HOUSTON, Texas



DALLAS, Texas



ATLANTA, Georgia

**7 Chicago:**  
There are more than 150 hotels and 80,000 rooms available in Chicago, making it a popular destination for large conventions and trade shows.<sup>17</sup> The city also boasts numerous restaurants and nightlife venues, perfect for entertaining event attendees.

**9 Dallas:**  
The nation's largest art district is located here, where visitors can enjoy 19 streets filled with museums and galleries.<sup>18</sup> Why not host your event in Dallas and provide attendees with an opportunity to view some of the country's most famous art collections?

**8 Houston:**  
Iso known as “space city”, Houston is home to NASA's Johnson Space Center. This makes it an ideal destination for hosting meetings and events related to aerospace, engineering and other sciences.

**10 Atlanta:**  
Something that may come as a surprise is that Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson has claimed the title of being the world's busiest airport by passenger traffic since 1998 — they know how to handle large crowds and have the facilities to make your event a success!<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.choosechicago.com/press-media/toolkit/tourism-research-and-statistics/chicago-hotel-supply/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://theculturetrip.com/usa/texas/articles/10-unique-facts-about-dallas-you-didnt-know/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ajc.com/news/atlanta-airport-blog/hartsfield-jackson-reclaims-title-as-worlds-busiest-airport/ICFMVSEDPF-GXHNRZ6GWXGXPVYM/>



# WHAT MAKES A GOOD DESTINATION GREAT?

A city's ability to attract and retain meetings and events professionals is largely dependent on how well it meets their needs — being good to holiday in doesn't guarantee a good business group travel experience. So, when deciding where you should hold your next international event, take into account these 10 factors:



## 1 Safety:

You want to make sure your group can travel with confidence, knowing they're in a safe environment. That means well-lit streets, a good police presence, reliable public transportation, easily accessible emergency services, and proximity to amenities such as restaurants, hotels, and hospitals. It's important to consider both physical safety and emergency preparedness when selecting a location.



## 2 Budget:

While event managers can certainly accommodate budgetary constraints, you're bound to get more bang for your buck in a destination that's affordable.



## 3 Infrastructure:

The destination should have the infrastructure to support meetings and events, including adequate accommodation facilities and multifunctional event spaces, as well as a range of restaurants to suit dietary requirements and additional activities for accompanying spouses or family members.



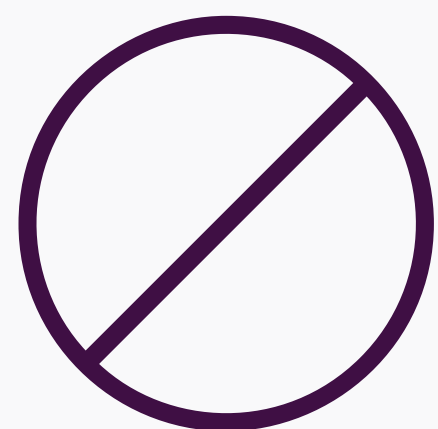
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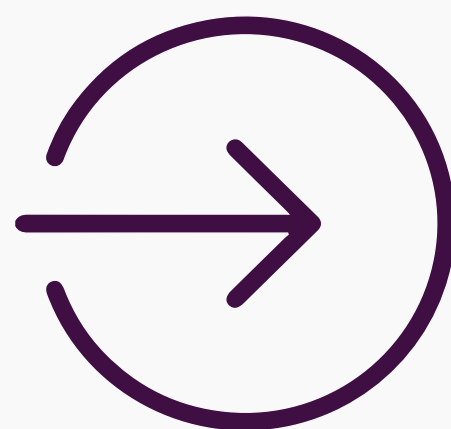






#### **Travel Restrictions:**

You'll need to take into account whether there are travel restrictions or visa requirements in place, particularly if your group includes delegates from several countries.



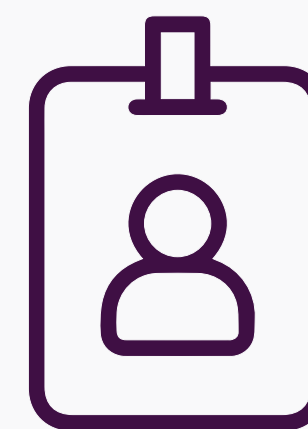
#### **Ease of Access:**

The location should be easy to reach by air, road and rail. You want your group to enjoy their travels as much as they do the event itself.



#### **Weather:**

You'll need to choose a destination at the right time of year, as you don't want your meeting disrupted by extreme weather conditions.



#### **Staffing:**

The availability of skilled staff is vital, as you'll want your group to be looked after by a dedicated team that can handle all aspects of the event.



#### **Technology:**

These days, it's not just about having access to the right equipment. You'll also need reliable WiFi and other technologies that allow attendees to stay in touch with others while they're away.



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### Entertainment:

The best destinations are those where there's plenty to do and see. That way, members of your group have the opportunity to explore the area and enjoy themselves.



### Culture:

Consider the cultural aspects of your destination and evaluate how they align with your event and group's interests.

## Bonus: Tips for Seamless Event Management

From Reed & Mackay's Global Director of Groups, Meetings and Events Mandy Warwick:

- ✓ Ensure you have the necessary technology, such as real-time attendance tracking and event scheduling software, for all meetings and events.
- ✓ Make sure you have a backup plan in place for any unexpected incidents that may occur.
- ✓ Work with people that you trust — they can be the difference between success and failure.
- ✓ Keep organised and use the right tools to facilitate communication.



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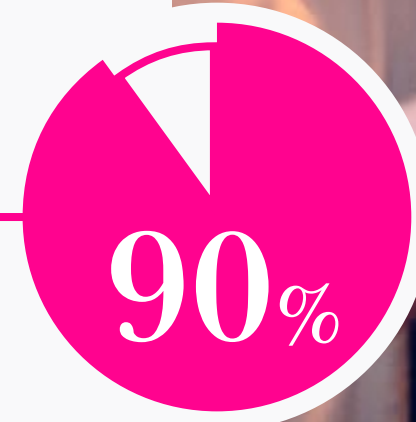
# 2023 GROUP BUSINESS TRAVEL TRENDS AND INSIGHTS

## Trend 01:

### The Increasing Importance of Connections in the Hybrid Working Environment

The future of work is about more than just productivity. It's about creating a culture that empowers people to do their best work and enjoy their jobs too. The importance of connections in the workplace will become even more apparent as more businesses adopt hybrid working arrangements, with employees working both in the office and remotely.

In fact, **more than 90% of workers** wish their employers would do more to help them stay connected with colleagues through in-person events.<sup>20</sup> In 2023, we can expect to see businesses placing a greater emphasis on maintaining connections and building relationships with their employees through team-building events, social activities and other in-person interactions. The focus will be on creating an environment that fosters collaboration and employers will invest more time and money into making their employees feel valued.



<sup>20</sup> <https://business.just-eat.co.uk/blog/lunch-bonding>







## Trend 02:

# The Rise of Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility in Business Travel and Events

As businesses become more conscious of their impact on the environment, they will look for ways to minimise their carbon footprint and make smarter decisions about how they travel. In light of this, Reed & Mackay's Head of Meetings & Events UK Kirsty Tod comments:

“

**Destinations need to start thinking ahead about how to make meetings and events as eco-friendly and sustainable as possible.** It may seem like a long way off, but with the government's Net Zero strategy to meet targets by 2050, it's important to highlight to clients where they can start building sustainability options. For example, while a teambuilding activity, like a quiz, is undoubtedly great fun, **why not put forward an activity that gives something back to the community?** Not only will delegates feel good about doing something to help someone else, but it also demonstrates the type of company you are and could even draw in new talent.”



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Trend 03:

# Reshaping the World of Events Through Technology and Innovation

It’s no surprise that technology has changed the world. But what does that mean for event organisers? It means an increased demand for innovative event management services, where delegates are able to enjoy a seamless experience from start to finish.

“

Offering your clients cutting-edge technology, which is designed to keep your delegates up-to-date and safe — wherever they are in the world, can also significantly enhance planning. Staying ahead of the latest event management technology will also play a huge part in intelligent planning.”

— **Kristy Thomas Bonet**, Head of Groups,  
Meetings and Events North America, Reed & Mackay



Technology can be a real game changer when it comes to group business travel and events and, in 2023, it’s likely we’ll see more innovation in this area. From more streamlined booking processes to innovative event management services that help delegates stay connected with the world around them — there is plenty to look forward to.







#### Trend 04:

## America Reopen for Business



**The US has long been attractive to event professionals** for its world-class infrastructure, a diverse range of venues and destinations, competitive pricing and accessibility from major international hubs.

These factors, along with the country's strong reputation for producing notable events, have cemented its place in the hearts of event professionals worldwide.

As the country continues to recover and reopen, we can expect to see an increase in competitive pricing, new infrastructure developments and a renewed focus on organising events that will be remembered for years to come. With an eye toward the future, the US will be an attractive option for event managers looking to create safe, efficient and memorable events.



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**Trend 05:**

## The Growing Need for Flexible and Adaptable Travel and Event Policies



**In light of the pandemic, travel and event policies will need to become more flexible and adaptable.** As we enter into a new era of travel where strict compliance is no longer possible, event professionals will have to consider new ways in which they can manage their events while still ensuring they are meeting the needs of both their attendees and clients.



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Reed & Mackay Events has signed The Net Zero Carbon Events pledge, which was hosted by The Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC), the global umbrella organisation for the events industry, and supported by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, (UNFCCC) at Cop 27.



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