BUSINESS TRAVEL SHOW AMERICA 2025 BY NORTHSTAR

BTN Academy: Setting Up a Corporate Lodging Program

JENNIFER NICHOLAS
Global Lead, Hotel Spend Management,
Advito

BTNACADEMY
BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWS' LEARNING PROGRAM FOR TRAVEL BUYERS
BY NORTHSTAR

BTNGROUP
CONFERENCES & EVENTS
BY NORTHSTAR

Jennifer Nicholas

Senior Director & Global Practice Lead
Advito Hotel Spend Management

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITY

Jennifer is the Senior Director and Hotel Spend Management Practice Lead at Advito, where she leads a global team of consultants driving strategy across 120+ client hotel engagements. With over 20 years of experience in corporate lodging and hotel spend management, she specializes in optimizing programs through strategic sourcing, data-driven insights, and process improvement. Jennifer also advances internal product innovation and process efficiency through close collaboration with sales, operations, and implementation teams—delivering scalable, data-driven solutions that help global clients achieve measurable savings and build strong partnerships.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Strategic Sourcing & Category Management
- Global Program Strategy & Development
- Hotel Program Optimization
- Supplier Relations & Contract Management
- Project Management & Stakeholder Engagement
- Resource Planning & Cross-Functional Team Leadership

E: Jennifer.Nicholas@bcdtravel.com

LI: linkedin.com/in/Jennifer-d-Nicholas

What is your level of experience in setting up or managing a corporate lodging program?

BUSINESS TRAVEL SHOW AMERICA 2025 BY NORTHSTAR

BTNACADEMY
BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWS' LEARNING PROGRAM FOR TRAVEL BUYERS BY NORTHSTAR

AGENDA

1. **The New Travel Landscape**
   Markets, rates, and travelers

2. **Setting Goals & Strategy**
   Establish program objectives, analyze data, and prepare for negotiations

3. **Rate Types & Lodging Options**
   Understand fixed vs dynamic rates and evaluate hotel types

4. **Building Your Solicitation List**
   Create strategic bid lists and establish key contacts

5. **Negotiation & Implementation**
   Master negotiation tactics and maintain program success

BTNGROUP
CONFERENCES & EVENTS
BY NORTHSTAR

BUSINESS TRAVEL SHOW AMERICA 2025 BY NORTHSTAR

BTNACADEMY
BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWS' LEARNING PROGRAM FOR TRAVEL BUYERS BY NORTHSTAR

THE NEW TRAVEL LANDSCAPE

MARKETS, RATES, AND TRAVELERS

BTNGROUP
CONFERENCES & EVENTS
BY NORTHSTAR

The New Travel Landscape

Market Changes

Travel patterns over the last three to five years have fundamentally changed hotel negotiations. Rising rates, increased leisure and bleisure travel, and evolving traveler expectations require new strategic approaches.

Rate Volatility

Hotel rates are subject to frequent fluctuations due to broader market dynamics such as rising demand, seasonal travel patterns, and economic shifts. Factors like increased meetings volume, remote work trends, and longer business trips have disrupted traditional booking cycles, making it harder to predict rate behavior.

Traveler Behavior

Remote work and evolving travel patterns have blurred the lines between business and leisure travel, increasing demand for shoulder days and longer stays. Travelers' preferences—such as loyalty programs, location convenience, and amenities—play a role in hotel selection and compliance with corporate lodging programs.

BUSINESS TRAVEL SHOW AMERICA 2025 BY NORTHSTAR

BTNACADEMY
BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWS' LEARNING PROGRAM FOR TRAVEL BUYERS BY NORTHSTAR

SETTING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

ESTABLISH OBJECTIVES, ANALYZE DATA, & PREPARE FOR NEGOTIATIONS

BTNGROUP
CONFERENCES & EVENTS
BY NORTHSTAR

Setting Goals & Strategies

Define Goals

1

What do you want to achieve?

- Will the hotel program be mandated or strongly encouraged?
- Will the program be internally managed or outsourced?
  - *Consider the return on investment of internally managing the entire process with your own team.*
- Do you have available resources will the skill sets to achieve your objectives?
  - *If not, an option is to outsource all or some of the work to a third-party sourcing company, consulting firm or an agency*

Gather Data

2

Supplier Collaboration

3

Setting Goals & Strategies

Define Goals 1

Gather Data 2

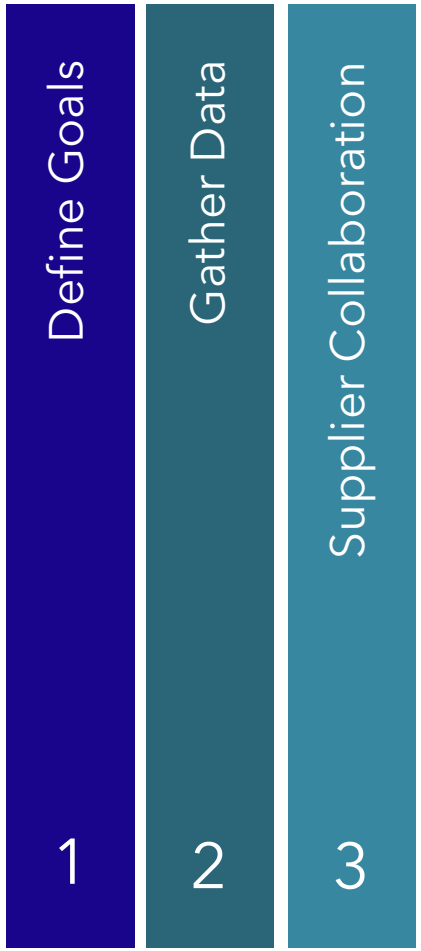
Supplier Collaboration 3

Which sources are best?

Buyers should approach negotiations armed with **validated historical information** to show the organization's specific travel patterns, including day of arrival and departure, projected room nights and average rates. Have your most current history available for negotiation discussions.

Also consider **cost of stay information** and utilization of amenities.

Setting Goals & Strategies



Communicate: Help your partners help you

Specific information about your company's travel program will be mutually beneficial for your organization and potential hotel partners.

- Ideal price tier
- Volume information
- Adherence to policy
- Upcoming changes to footprint

Program Foundation

Key Statistics

40%

Travel & Expenses Market Share

- Business Transient
- Relocation
- Training
- Internal Meetings
- Incentive Travel

50%

Off-Channel Bookings

- Payment Data
- Expense Data
- Supplier Data
- Meetings vs Transient
- Amenities Data

500+

Minimum Room Nights

- City Demand
- Upcoming Data Changes
- Seasonal Markets
- Office Locations
- Safety & Security

BUSINESS TRAVEL SHOW AMERICA 2025 BY NORTHSTAR

BTN ACADEMY
BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWS' LEARNING PROGRAM FOR TRAVEL BUYERS BY NORTHSTAR

RATE TYPES & LODGING OPTIONS

UNDERSTANDING STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES

BTN GROUP
CONFERENCES & EVENTS
BY NORTHSTAR

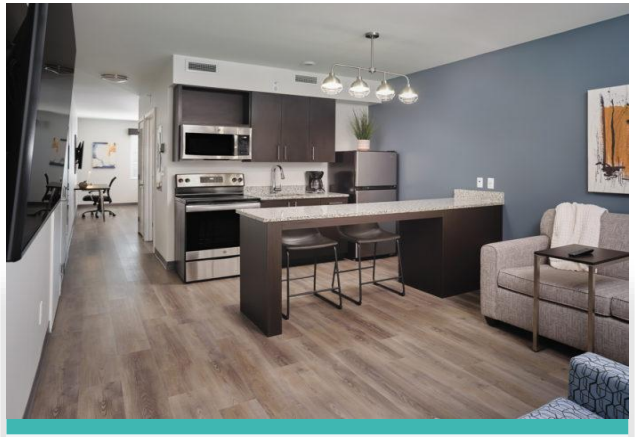
Hotel Type Options

Hotel Chains

- Leverage volume across multiple markets
- Brand consistency and loyalty programs
- Dynamic pricing models available
- Franchise opt-out considerations

Independent Hotels

- Potentially deeper direct discounts
- More flexible negotiations
- Local relationship building
- Requires more management effort



Extended Stay

- Cost effective for longer term stays
- Home-like amenities for the traveler experience
- Growing availability in the GDS
- Corporate housing alternatives

Rate Type Options

Static

LRA

- "Last Room Availability"
- Most preferred negotiation
- This does NOT mean that you always have a room at this rate

NLRA

- "Non-Last Room Availability"
- May be necessary in high demand markets
- Hotels restrict availability

Dynamic

w/o Ceiling

- Dynamic without Ceiling is most common type of dynamic offer.
- Generally LRA
- Best for lower volume properties in secondary/tertiary markets

w/ Ceiling

- Dynamic with Ceiling means that properties will have a maximium rate in place, but if BAR is below that maximum then the dynamic discount is active
- Many major chains do not have the ability to support this

Other Considerations

Non-Commissionable (Net)

- Also known as "Net" rates
- Commonly 5-10% lower than commissionable rates
- Consider the structure of your TMC agreement if pursuing commissionable rates

Other Content

- Outside of the core rate types, additional content is available through:
  - TMC negotiated rates, accessible to their clients
  - Third-party content
  - Chain/Brand discounts

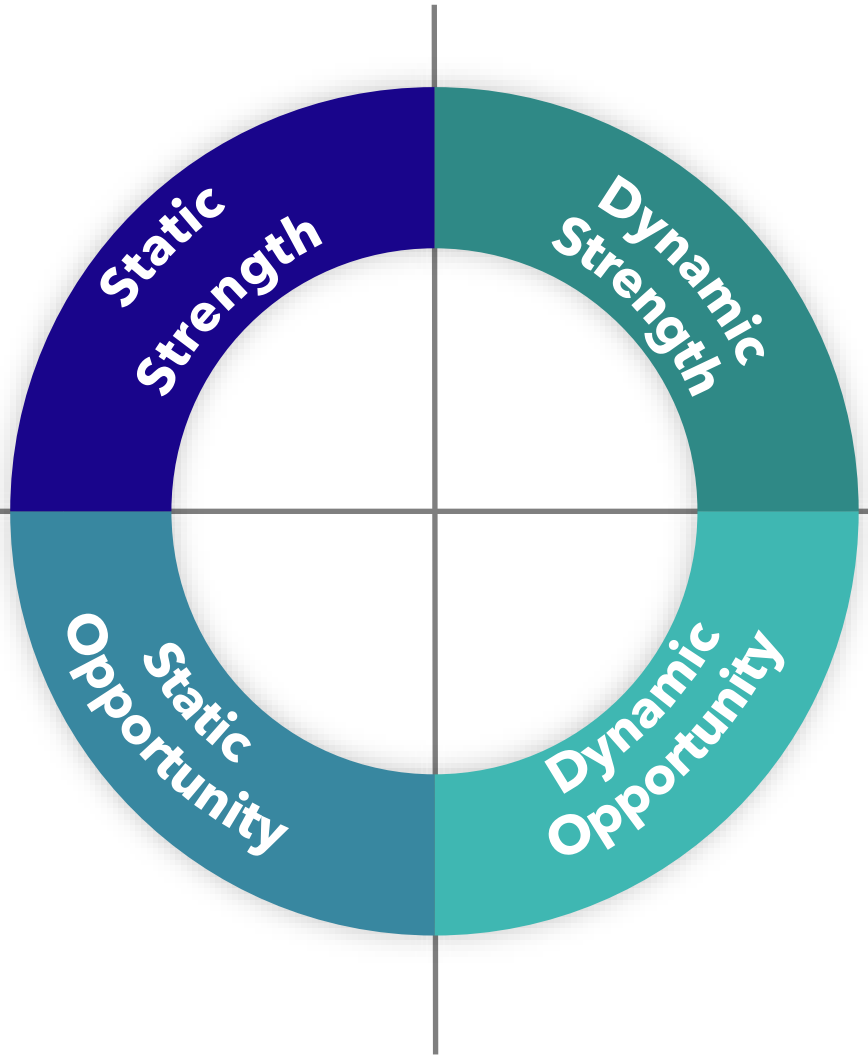
Rate Type Considerations

STATIC

- Ideal for higher volume properties
- 15-20%+ off "Rack Rate"
- More stable for forecasting

DYNAMIC

- Ideal for lower volume properties, high demand or secondary/tertiary markets
- Protective component if "Rack Rate" drops

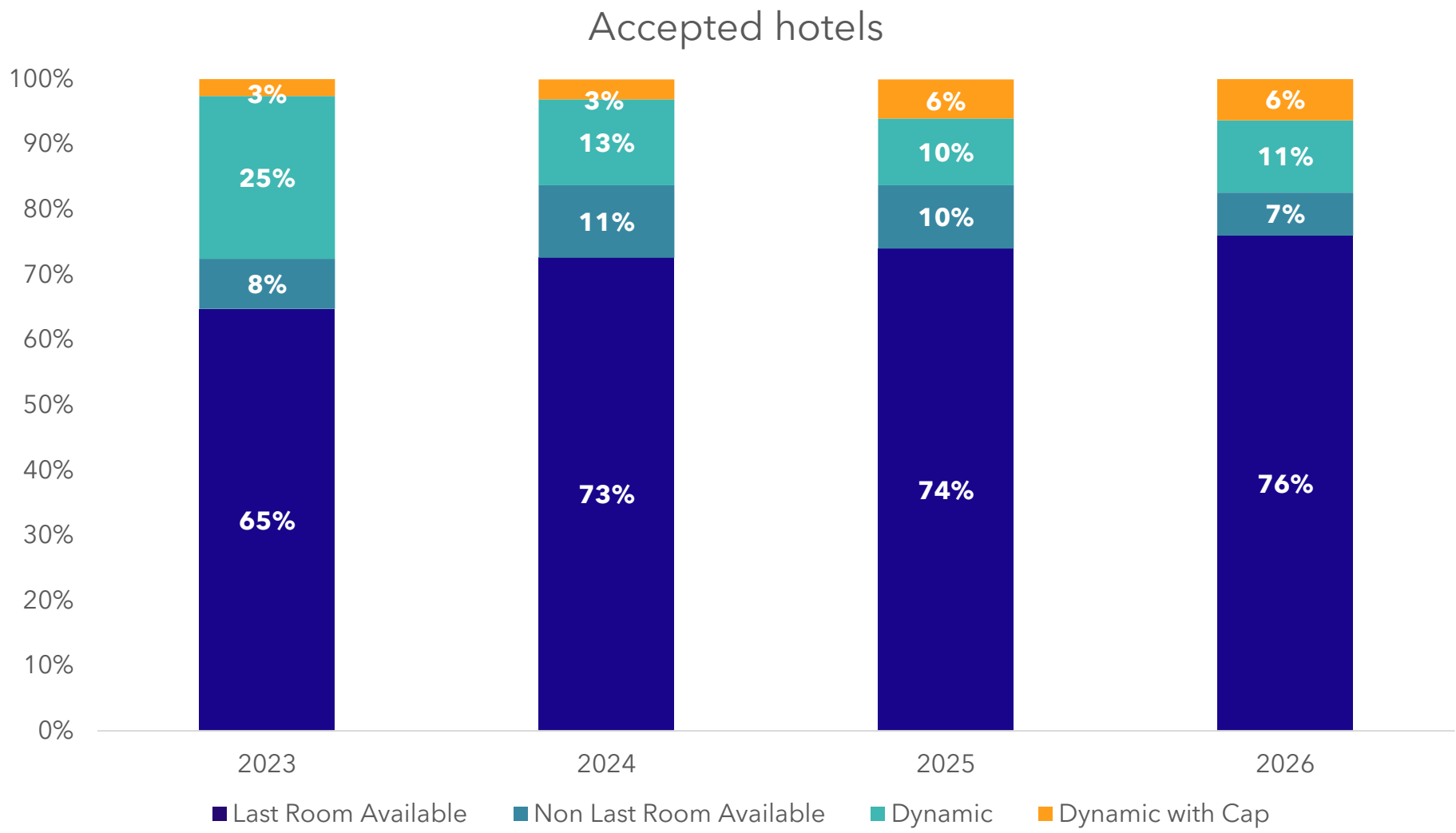


- May be inflexible during low demand periods
- Could be undercut by competitors using dynamic pricing strategy IF rates only drop to BAR

- More difficult to forecast
- Traveler confusion through frequent price change
- Requires more sophisticated analysis to validate and manage

Advito Accepted Rate Type Trends

Based on 2026 acceptances sent by September 12, 2025



BUSINESS TRAVEL SHOW AMERICA 2025 BY NORTHSTAR

BTN ACADEMY
BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWS' LEARNING PROGRAM FOR TRAVEL BUYERS BY NORTHSTAR

BUILD YOUR SOLICITATION LIST

CREATE STRATEGIC BID LIST AND ENGAGE SUPPLIERS

BTN GROUP
CONFERENCES & EVENTS
BY NORTHSTAR

Creating a Solicitation Bid List

Understand your Markets

1

What is your footprint?

- Analyze the data and collaborate with your internal stakeholders.
- What markets are you traveling to?
- Which hotels are your travelers primarily using?
  - Manage your travelers' memberships in hotel loyalty programs against your company's needs.
- Are there safety or security concerns in any of your markets?
  - If yes, consider hotel's walkability, public transportation options, access to medical, etc.

Consider Amenity Needs

2

Investigate Alternative Rate Offers

3

Creating a Solicitation Bid List

1 Understand your Markets

2 Consider Amenity Needs

What do you really need?

Consider **cost of stay information** and utilization of amenities.

- How many of your travelers are renting a car and paying for parking in major US cities?
- Is airport or office transfer important?
- Do you have an expense policy for meals, inclusive of breakfast? If yes, is there a need to negotiate breakfast?

3 Investigate Alternative Rate Offers

Creating a Solicitation Bid List

1 Understand your Markets

2 Consider Amenity Needs

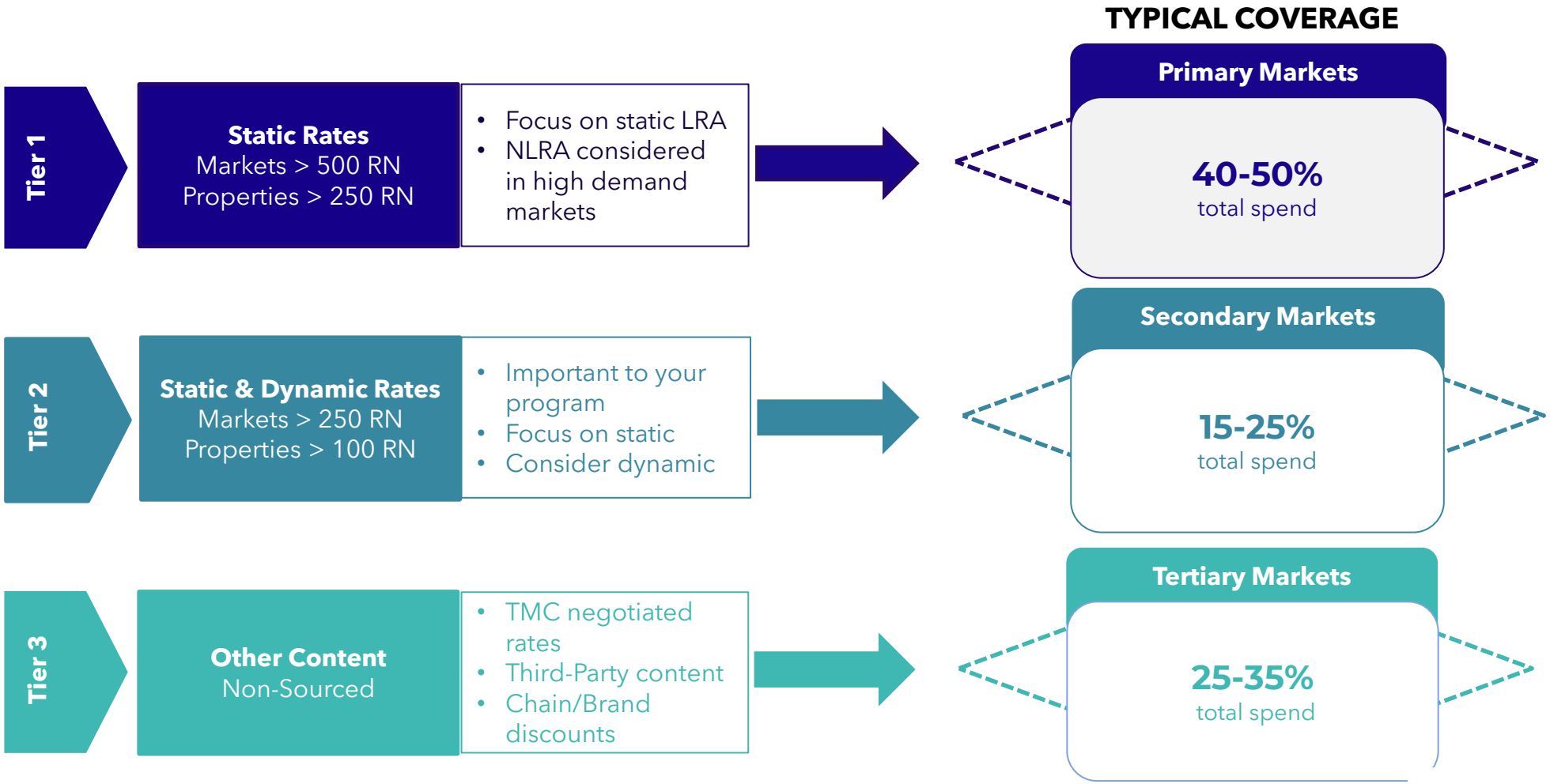
3 Investigate Alternative Rate Offers

What are my other options?

- If you are working with a TMC then it is very likely that they have negotiated rates that you may utilize. Confirm what your options are here.
- Turn on third party content if you haven't already. Your travelers look and know what's out there – in many cases it may make the most sense.
- Negotiating a chain or brand discount? Make sure the hotel chains you select have properties in most, if not all, of the key destinations your business travelers visit, including international locations.
- Ensure regional chains' distribution and brand categories are not too limited.
  - Consider location and quality of the chains.
  - Negotiate with several to get the best deal and choose at least two to keep rates competitive.

Solicitation List Selections: Where to start

The below thresholds provide a guideline in determining which hotels receive RFPs and where the most competitive rate offers are possible. *Not all hotels will fall perfectly into these categories.



BUSINESS TRAVEL SHOW AMERICA 2025 BY NORTHSTAR

BTNACADEMY
BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWS' LEARNING PROGRAM FOR TRAVEL BUYERS BY NORTHSTAR

NEGOTIATION & IMPLEMENTATION

MASTER NEGOTIATION TACTICS & MAINTAIN PROGRAM SUCCESS

BTNGROUP
CONFERENCES & EVENTS
BY NORTHSTAR

BUSINESS TRAVEL SHOW AMERICA 2025 BY NORTHSTAR

BTNACADEMY
BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWS' LEARNING PROGRAM FOR TRAVEL BUYERS BY NORTHSTAR

BTNGROUP
CONFERENCES & EVENTS
BY NORTHSTAR

Platform

How will you communicate your RFP and collect responses? Will you use a consultancy?

Organization

Timeline, due dates, supplier response periods, account for holidays & out of office time

Essential Materials

Bid details packet – communicate as much and clearly as possible your expectations

Negotiate Efficiently

Be consistent and clear in your expectations, be aggressive, and don't extend too long

Communicate the Strategy

Relay your final program to internal and external stakeholders; ensure supplier rate loading

Strategy Considerations

What will you prioritize?

Core Focus

- Mitigate YOY increases and focus on overall value
- Ensure the discount offered vs Market Rate is reflective of the value you bring
- Leverage booked rate data to support requests
- Suppliers will push for dynamic; advocate for static where this makes the most sense for your program
- Maintain focus on overall value by strategically negotiating or excluding amenities

Custom Focus

- What is your threshold for allowable rate increases?
- Will you allow all rate type submissions, or only LRA and NLRA?
- Which amenities will you prioritize? Same-day cancellation and WiFi inclusion encouraged
- Be sure to assess variances in rate offers between submitted room types and determine appropriate variance tolerance

Implementation & Management

- Preferred partners
- Internal stakeholders
- Travelers – policy, guidelines, booking tools
- OBT configurations

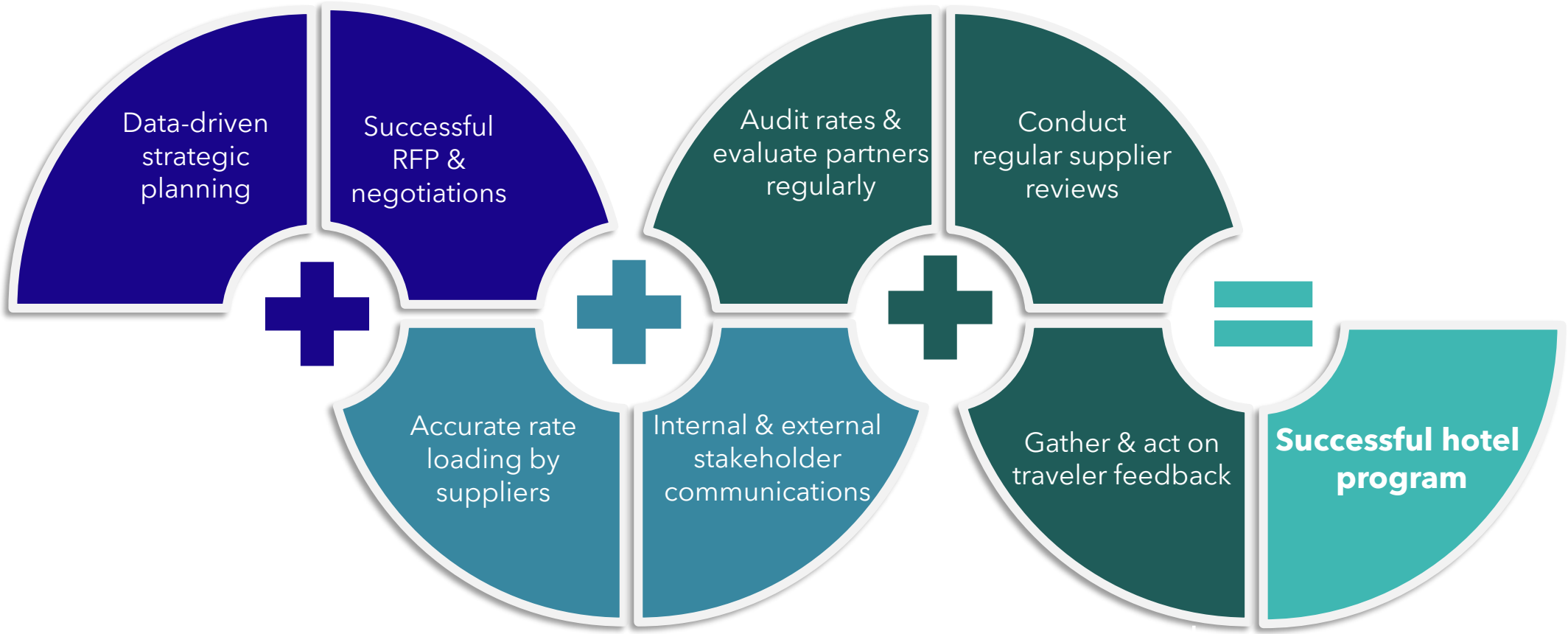
- Work with a third-party or consultancy to audit rates for availability and accuracy
- Give a buffer period

- Establish a cadence for supplier reviews
- Address sentiment, performance, new needs

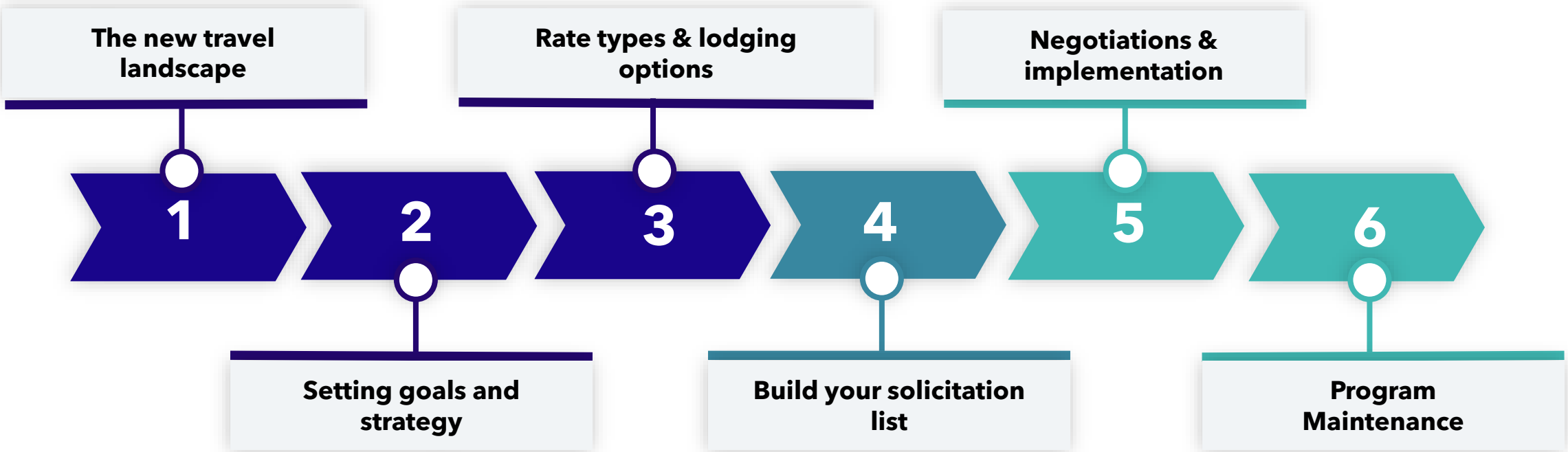
- Keep the lines of communication open
- How will you receive feedback?
- Review data routinely

- Continually optimize your program
- Add/Remove hotels as needed

Successful hotel programs require maintenance



Summary


The new travel landscape
1
Setting goals and strategy
2
Rate types & lodging options
3
Build your solicitation list
4
Negotiations & implementation
5
Program Maintenance
6

BTN ACADEMY

BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWS' LEARNING PROGRAM FOR TRAVEL BUYERS

Welcome to the Business Travel News Academy:
the managed travel industry's only free, on-demand learning destination for anyone who touches business travel.

BTN ACADEMY LEARNING COURSES AT A GLANCE

AVAILABLE NOW!

- Structuring a Managed Travel Program
- Establishing a T&E Policy
- Selecting a Travel Management Company
- Selecting a Travel Payment Provider
- Selecting an Online Booking Tool
- Setting Up a Corporate Lodging Program
- Working with Airlines
- Working with Car Rental Firms
- Working with Chauffeured Transportation
- Taking on Travel Risk Management
- Selecting an Expense Reporting Tool

BUSINESS TRAVEL SHOW AMERICA 2025 BY NORTHSTAR

THANK YOU

Jennifer Nicholas
Senior Director, Advito Hotel Spend Management
Jennifer.Nicholas@bcdtravel.com

BUSINESS TRAVEL SHOW AMERICA 2025 BY NORTHSTAR

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

BTN ACADEMY
BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWS' LEARNING PROGRAM FOR TRAVEL BUYERS BY NORTHSTAR

BTN GROUP CONFERENCES & EVENTS BY NORTHSTAR