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# How people use their phones for travel

New research by Google

In today's mobile-first world, people turn to their phones constantly to help make travel decisions. To help marketers better understand this dynamic, Google partnered with Ipsos to survey smartphone users to find out more about how phones have become a critical guide before, during, and after their travels.

In this report, Google shares insight into the role our phones play in making travel decisions.

# Methodology

**FORMAT**

15-minute online questionnaire covering travel category.

**POPULATION**

Smartphone users in the U.S., aged 18–64, who used a smartphone for finance in the past month. Quotas set on enumeration data per vertical for age, gender, education, and internet usage frequency.\*

**SAMPLE SIZE**

N=500 per vertical

**MARKET**

U.S.

**DATE**

October 2016

\*To ensure vertical representation, a soft launch based on the online population was conducted to determine the makeup of each vertical. After the soft launch was complete and each vertical's makeup was defined, quotas were set per vertical to match this universe. Weighting was applied on the back end if needed.

# Key findings

## 1 Smartphones are travel guides.

More than half of smartphone users turn to their device in I-want-to-go moments. Most often, they're seeking out discounts and researching activities to do before and during their trip.

## 2 Apps are for loyalty and convenience.

Travelers rely on both apps and mobile sites, but for different purposes. Apps are often used to track loyalty programs and access digital boarding passes, while mobile sites are used to research activities.

## 3 Simplicity of use is key.

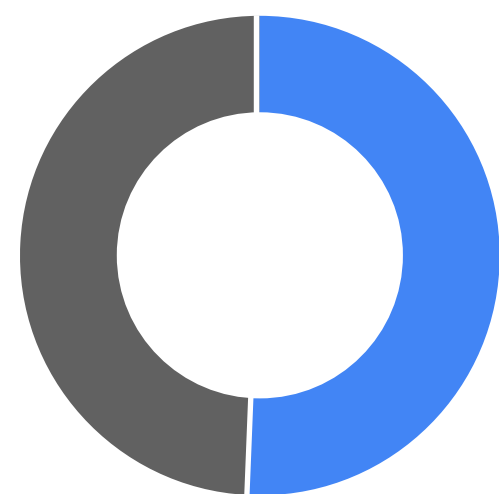
For consumers, there is not a more valuable attribute in a travel app than ease of use and navigation. This is nearly twice as important as anything else an app can offer.

## 4 Memory is a dealbreaker.

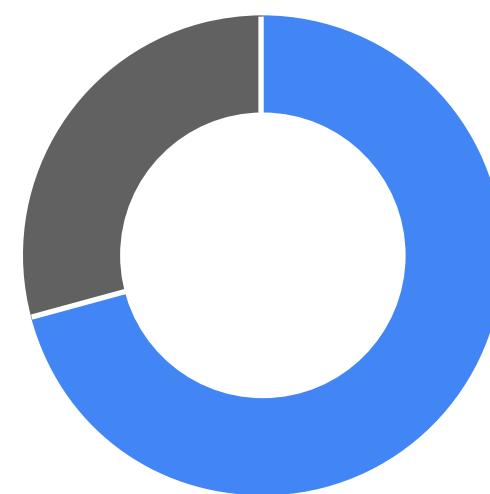
Taking up too much phone memory is the #1 app-related issue that leads consumers to uninstall a travel app. However, people will give your app another shot if changes are made.

# In I-want-to-go moments, more than half of smartphone owners turn to their devices

**51%** of smartphone owners use their device for travel-related activities



Of those, **71%** do so at least weekly



Base: 1,001\*

Q2. Below is a list of activities you can do using your smartphone. Please select all the activities you've done on your smartphone in the last 30 days.

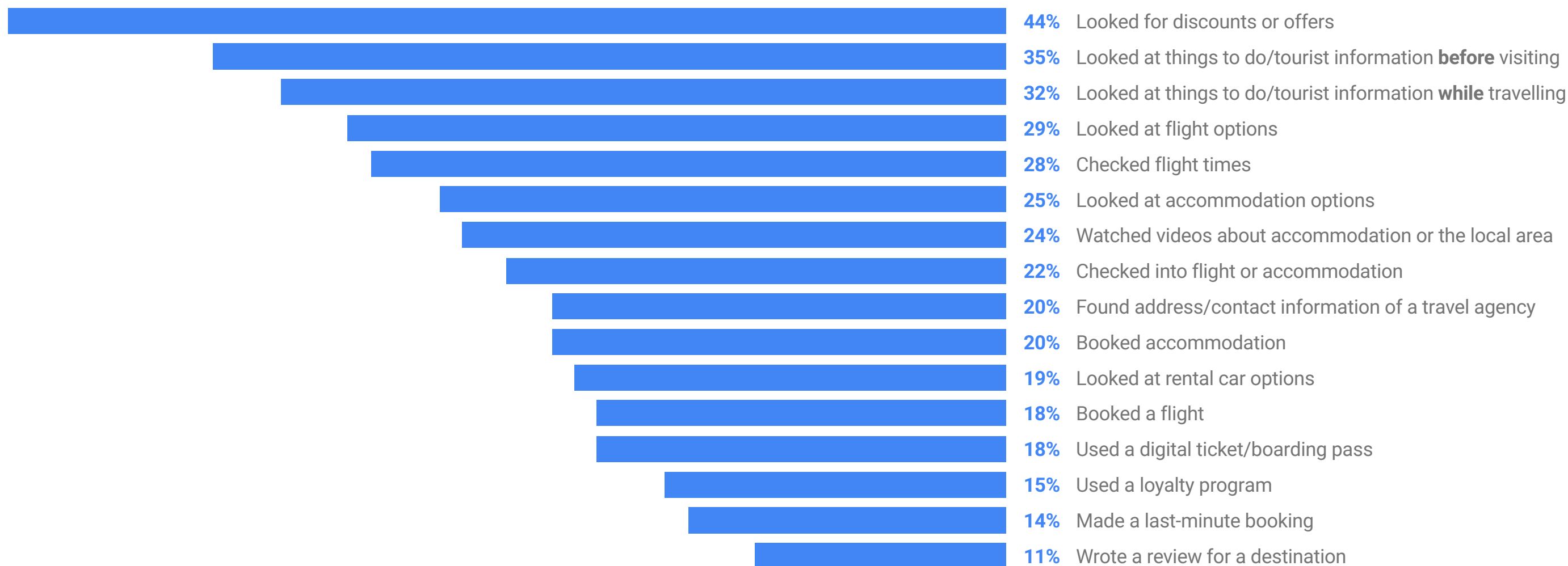
\*Data for this question was taken from the 2016 App Landscape study.

Base: 500

Q4. You've said you use your smartphone to do the following activities. How often do you do these on your smartphone? - Find things to do/places to eat while traveling; Organize holiday/business travel

# Smartphones have become a go-to resource for nearly every travel need

## Top travel activities over the past 30 days



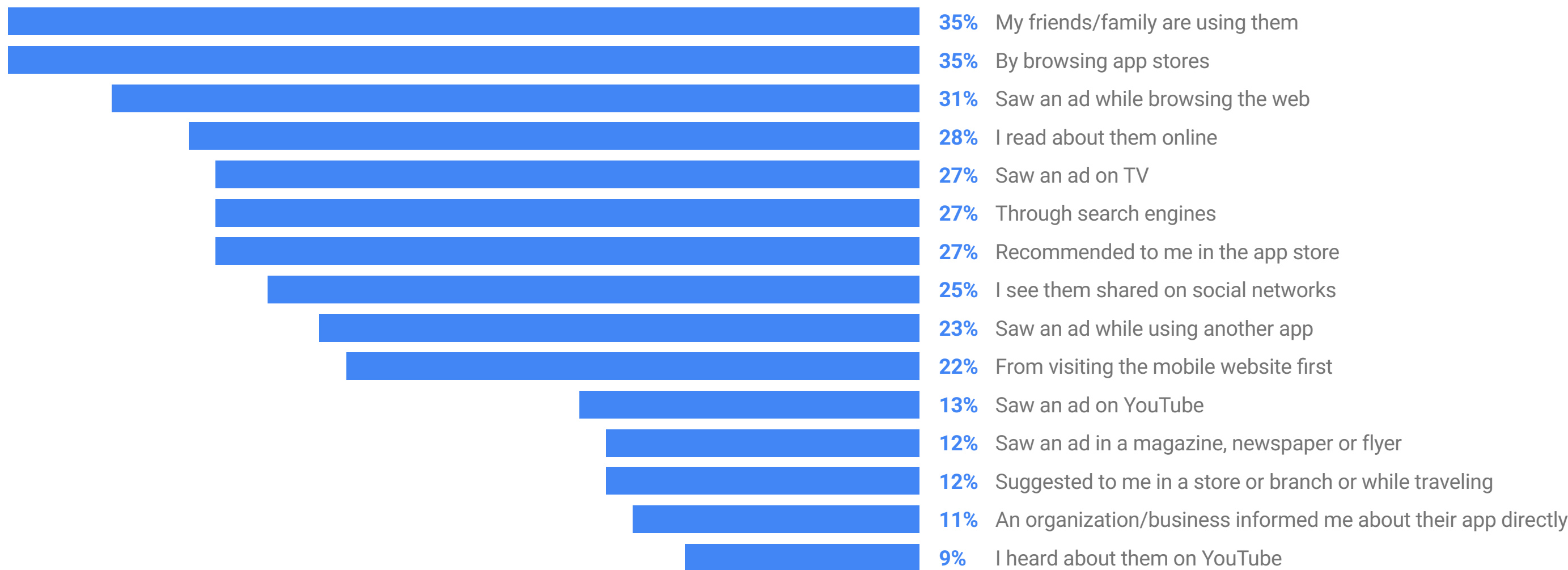
Base: 500

Q8. Which of the following activities have you done on your smartphone in the past 30 days (using either a mobile website or an app)?

Q9. How often do you do each of the following activities on your smartphone?

# To discover new travel apps, people turn most to friends, family, and app stores

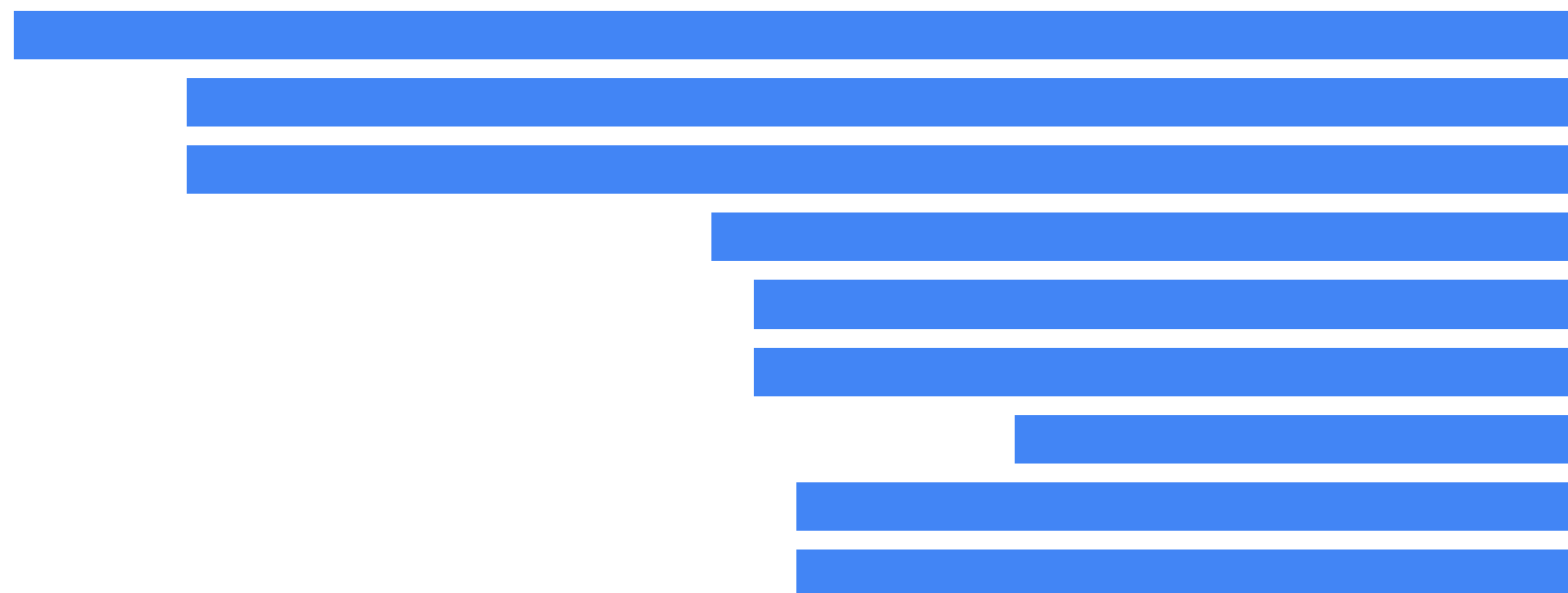
## Top methods of travel app discovery



Base: 500

Q34. What are the top 3 ways you find out about the travel smartphone apps you use?

# When deciding whether to install a travel app, ease of use is top of mind



## Top motivating factors for downloading travel apps

**36%** To make a specific activity/task easier

**32%** Recommended by others

**32%** To access discounts or offers

**20%** To complete a purchase

**19%** Got a specific reward for downloading the app

**19%** Past experience with a similar app

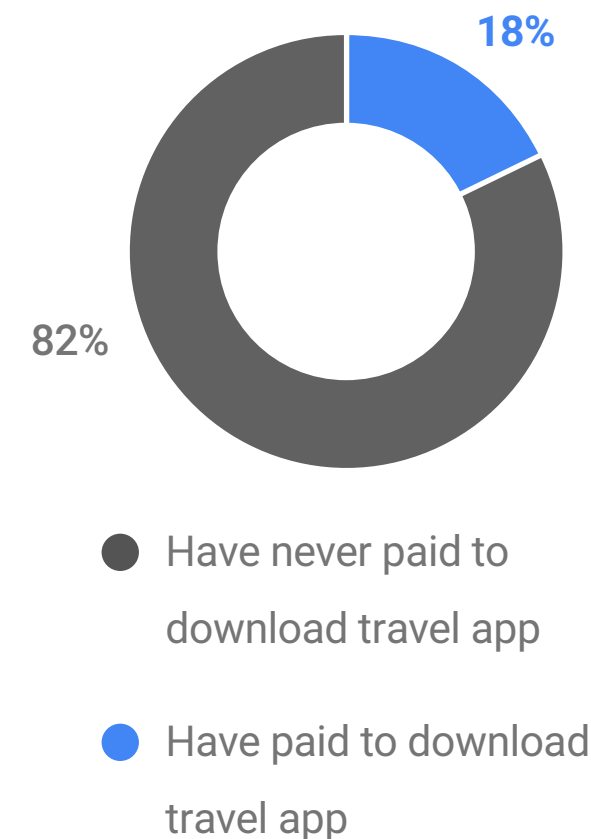
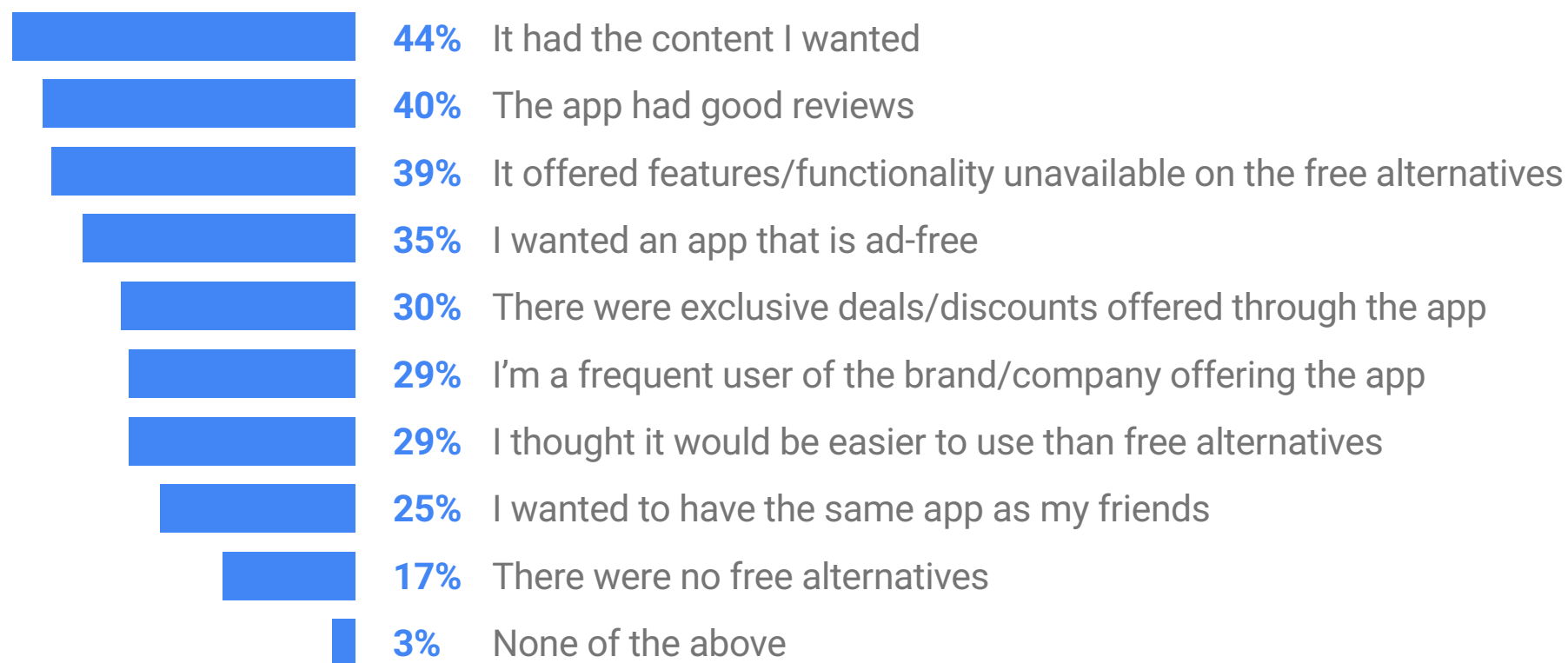
**13%** Activity unavailable on the mobile website

**18%** None of the above



# Most people have never paid for a travel app. But for those who have, content and reviews are the driving factors

## Reasons for paying



Base: 500 \*Median

Q22. What is the most you have ever paid for a travel app? Please enter amount to the nearest whole number.

Base: Have paid to download a travel app (n=92)

Q23. Why have you chosen to pay for travel apps over other free alternatives?

# Of the travel apps people have installed, over half are used at least weekly

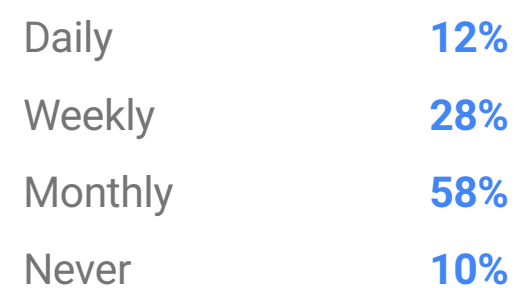
On average, users have **2.3 travel apps** currently installed on their smartphone

And **58% of those apps** are used at least monthly

Number of apps currently installed



Frequency of app use



Base: 500  
 Q14. How many travel apps are installed on your smartphone (including any that were already installed when you bought it)?  
 Base: Has travel apps installed on smartphone (n=373)  
 Q15. Roughly what percentage of the travel apps are installed on your smartphone do you use?

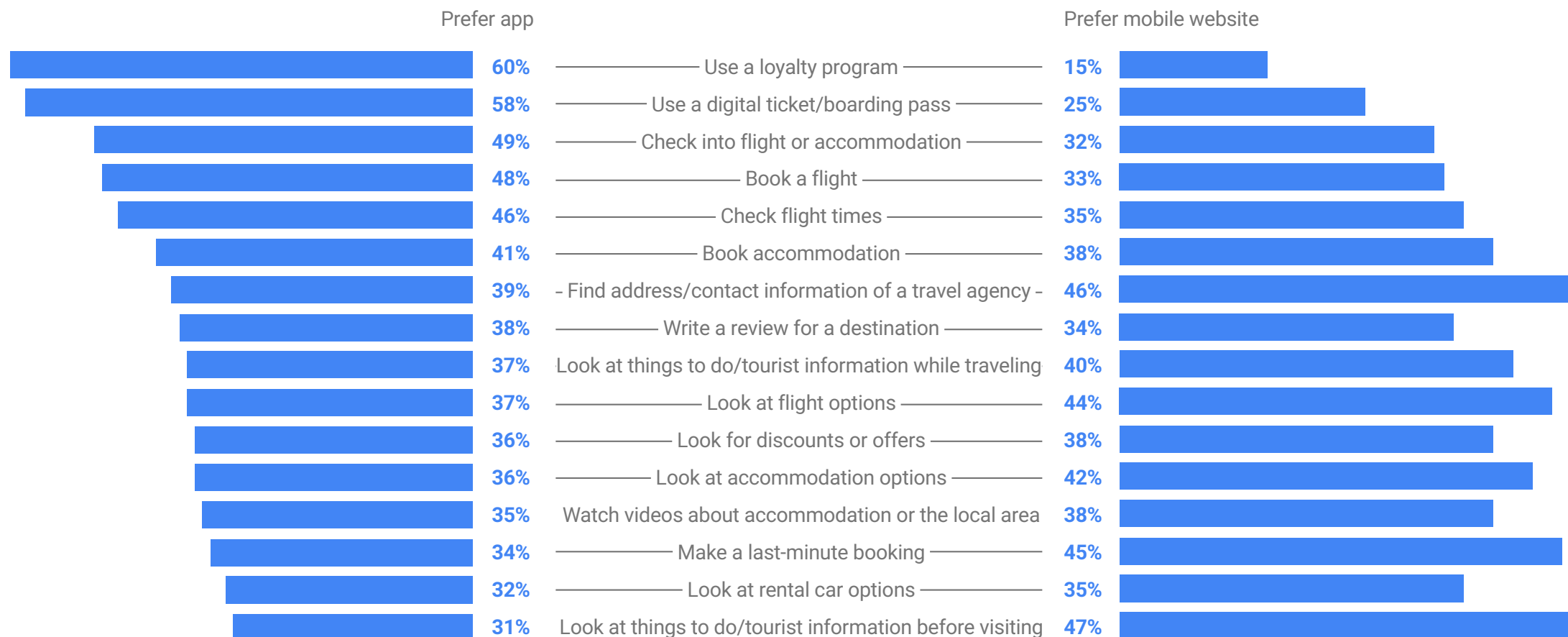
# More people turn to mobile sites for travel than apps, but each has a role to play

Travel activities in past 30 days

**58%**  
Used an app

**65%**  
Used a mobile website

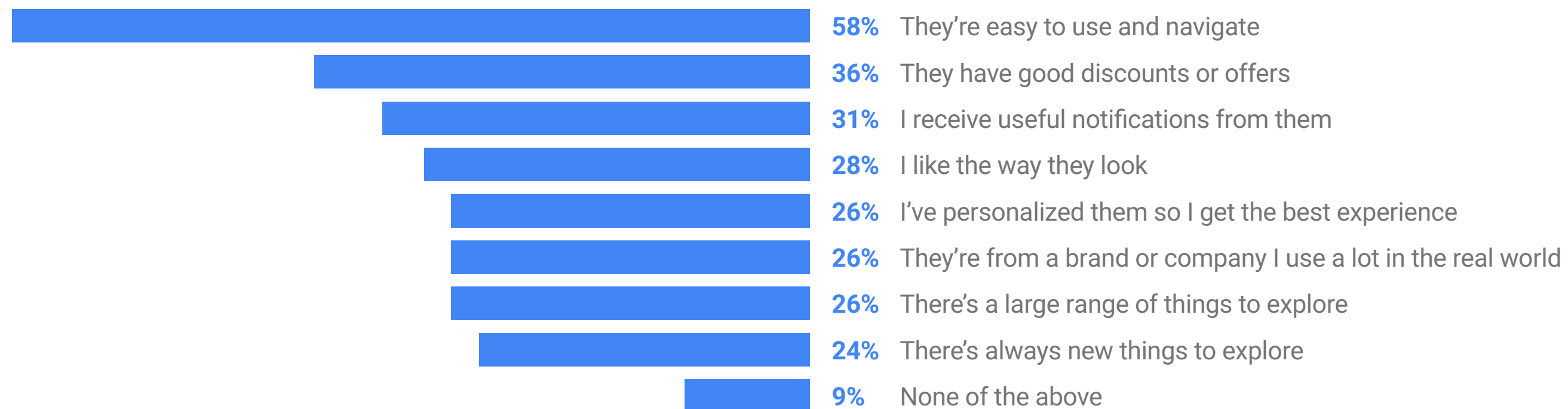
App & mobile site usage for top travel activities  
Among those who have performed activity in the past 30 days



Base: 500  
 Q5. Have you used a mobile website or an app for each of these in the last 30 days? – Find things to do/places to eat while traveling; Organize holiday/business travel  
 Base: Have done the activity on smartphone in past 30 days (base above n=30 are shown) \*Small base under n=50.  
 Q11. For which of these activities would you prefer to use an app, and for which would you prefer to use a mobile website?

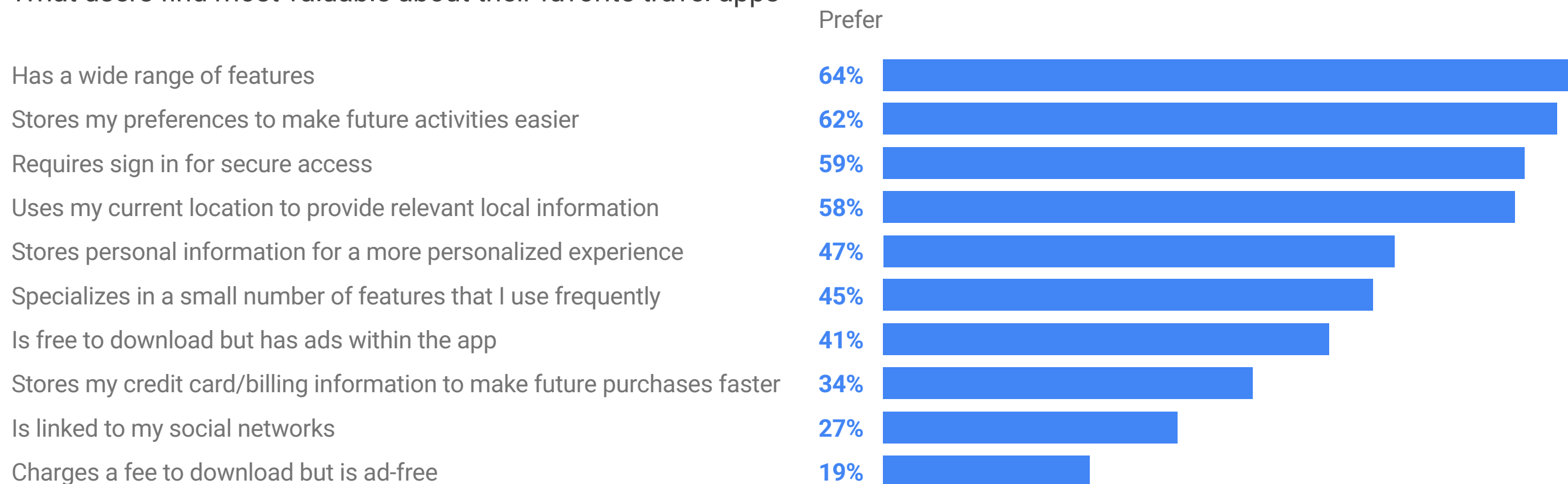
# The apps they love most are easy to use and navigate

What features people prefer to have in their favorite travel apps



# Offering a wide range of features and storage preferences for future activities are among the keys to building app preference

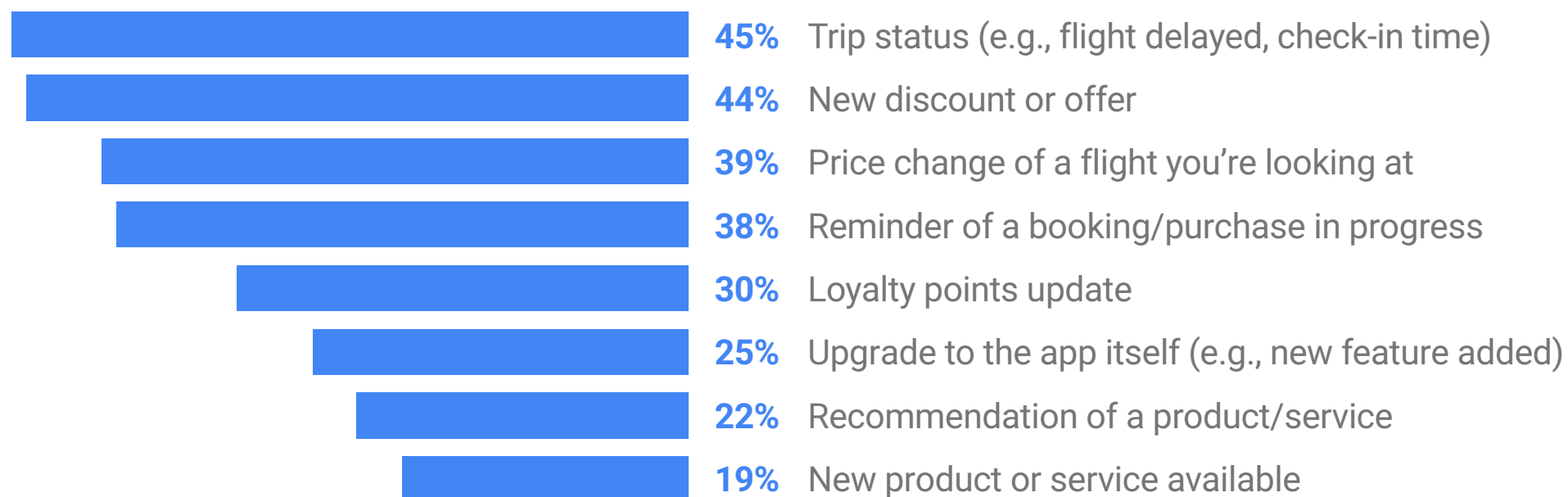
What users find most valuable about their favorite travel apps



Base: 500  
Q28. Thinking about all of the travel apps that you use, which of the following features do you prefer to have?

# If they provide value, push notifications aren't a turnoff

## Most useful notifications



**87%**  
find travel  
notifications on  
mobile **useful**

Base: 500

Q29. Apps or websites can give you notifications on your phone to tell you about a new update, message, or event, for example. What sort of travel notifications do you find useful?

Q30. What is the most useful travel notification you have ever received on your smartphone?

# Remember this: Travelers stop using apps when they're not useful or take up too much memory



Base: 500

Q40. Have you stopped using travel apps on your smartphone for any of the reasons below? Select all that apply.

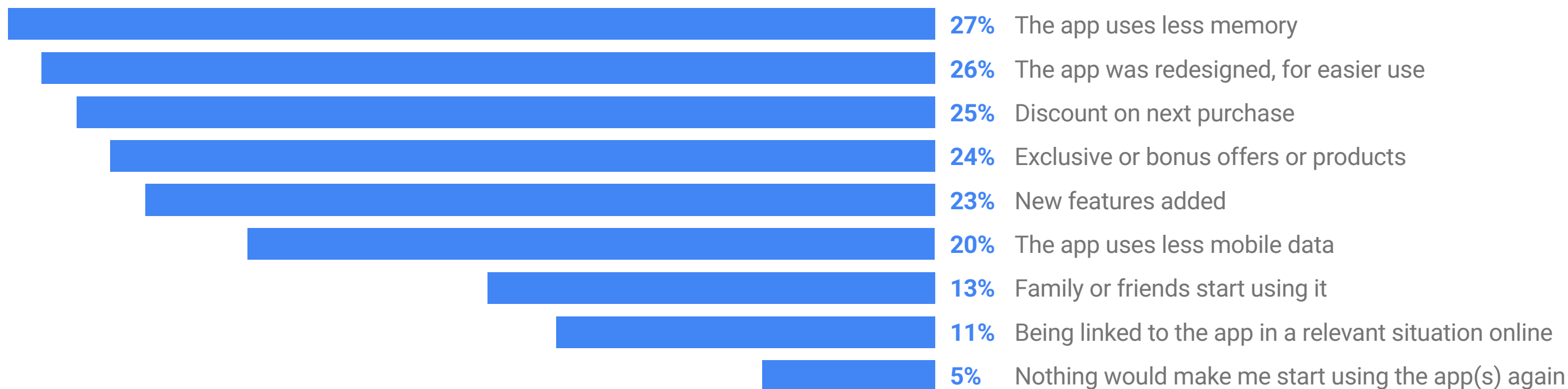
Q41. And have you stopped using travel apps on your smartphone for any of these reasons?

Base: No longer has need for a particular app (n=104)

Q42. You said you've stopped using travel apps because you no longer had a need for it/them. Why did you no longer need it/them?

# The good news: People will reconsider using an app if it's improved (and trimmed down in size)

## Reasons why users re-engage with travel apps





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