The State of Travel & Hospitality Innovation

TOP TRENDS, INVESTMENTS, & SUCCESS
STORIES FOR 2025 & THE FUTURE AHEAD

*Expert guidance and strategies to
enhance your innovation journey.*

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Thank You

On behalf of the Plug and Play Travel team, we want to thank our partners for their collaboration. It has been essential in driving innovation forward in the travel industry. As we reflect on our journey together, we are grateful for your contributions and commitment to shaping the future of travel.

We look forward to continuing this exciting journey, exploring new opportunities, and making a lasting impact. **Thank you for being a valued part of our network.**

2016
Founded

40+
Investments

350+
Startups Accelerated

Corporate Partners

CWT

jetBlue | ventures

ACCOR

VIE Vienna Airport

Fraport

ANA

H/S

SINGAPORE AIRLINES

us bank | Elavon

CATHAY

FLIGHT CENTRE TRAVEL GROUP

TUI

WESTJET

IAG INTERNATIONALS AIRLINES GROUP

SKYTEAM

ADR AEROPORTI DI ROMA

YEG EDMONTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

UN Tourism

Austrian

Istanbul Airport

PORTS TORONTO

CHANGI airport singapore
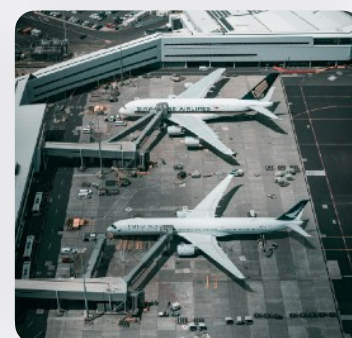
CEO Statement

Similar to many other industries, the travel industry is getting more advanced and becoming more digital. Using technology, especially AI, is more important than ever. It helps travel companies keep up, stay competitive, and learn more about their customers.

The pandemic sped things up, showing that using technology is the best way to be ready for the future. Those who embrace this change will be best positioned for success in the post-pandemic era.

Saeed Amidi

Founder & CEO, Plug and Play

> **" Using technology, especially AI, is more important than ever. It helps travel companies keep up, stay competitive, and learn more about their customers.**

Silicon Valley

A Message From Silicon Valley

Written by:

Amir Amidi
VP, Travel
Silicon Valley

Our Travel & Hospitality program was launched in 2016 in Silicon Valley with the goal of making the traveler's journey more seamless through timely digital solutions. Accor Hotels, JetBlue Ventures, and CWT supported the program's launch and played a pivotal role in setting its strategy and direction.

Today, we have accelerated over 350 stage-agnostic startups, made 40+ investments, and enabled countless collaboration opportunities between travel suppliers and stage-agnostic startups. Plug and Play's Travel & Hospitality program is at the forefront, enabling digital transformation initiatives across aviation, hospitality, TMC, tour operators, cruise, and airport communities.

Globally, our travel suppliers rely on our Travel & Hospitality program to give them exposure and access to technologies that have the potential to:

- Increase revenues
- Lower operational costs
- Increase operational efficiency
- Enhance customer (business and leisure) journeys

We look forward to playing a pivotal role in contributing to the future digital roadmap of the travel industry.

350+

Startups Accelerated Through the SV Travel Program

41

Travel Startup Investments

3

Travel Unicorns

Vienna

A Message From Vienna

Written by:

Nik Munaretto
Managing Director
Vienna

Driving Global Aviation Innovation from Vienna

Since launching in 2019, Plug and Play Vienna has established itself as the leading innovation platform for aviation across the EMEA region. As the primary hub for our global aviation activities, the Vienna office focuses on driving economic impact through meaningful collaboration between startups and corporations. Over the years, our scope has expanded beyond aviation to include adjacent sectors such as smart cities, infrastructure, energy, Industry 5.0, and manufacturing — fostering cross-industry innovation at scale.

Our ecosystem is built around results: 3,700 startups scouted, 155 tailored dealflows facilitated, 634 individual startup meetings held, and 85 successful pilot projects launched. With an average of 36 customized dealflows per year, the Vienna office is a proven engine for corporate innovation and startup growth.

Our partners understand that true innovation in aviation cannot occur in isolation. As one of the most interconnected industries, aviation depends on the collective efforts of airports, airlines, OEMs, and even competitors to advance meaningful technological progress.

In Vienna, we have built the largest network of airports, airlines, alliances, and OEMs under one roof — making cross-industry collaboration a core principle rather than a buzzword. What distinguishes Vienna is the strength and openness of its partner base, all committed to driving innovation through shared ambition and cooperation.

We take pride in cultivating this spirit of openness and progress. It's what defines Vienna's role on the global innovation map - and why the next generation of aviation is taking off right here.

Vienna's Highlights

Portfolio Investments

AEROVY	Iceflower	Riverkin
2024 | **Aerovy**	2024 | **Iceflower**	2025 | **Riverkin**

Success of The Practice

3700 Startups Scouted

155 Dealflows

634 Individual Startup Meetings

36 Dealflows Per Year on Average

85 Successful Pilot Projects Active

Singapore

Singapore's Highlights

Written by:

Patricia Nordstrom Antonio
Senior Director, Corporate Partnerships
Asia Pacific

Changi Airport Group Innovation Days

Changi Airport Group has been an Ecosystem Partner since 2018. During our partnership, we provided a platform to support dealflow sessions and hosted a series of Innovation Days for Changi Airport, branded as "CAG Pitch Days."

These Innovation Days were designed to offer insights into emerging technologies and introduce promising startups to Changi Airport's internal business units and leadership team. Each event was centered around a specific theme, ranging from Robotics and Energy Consumption to Agtech.

The events consistently attracted over 150 attendees from across Changi Airport, and each session featured more than eight startups pitching their solutions. Throughout the partnership, Changi's CEO and executive team also regularly visited Silicon Valley to engage directly with the innovation ecosystem.

Singapore Airlines

Singapore Airlines has been an Ecosystem Partner since 2019. As part of our engagement, we have hosted their team in Silicon Valley and facilitated focused dealflow sessions tailored to their strategic interests.
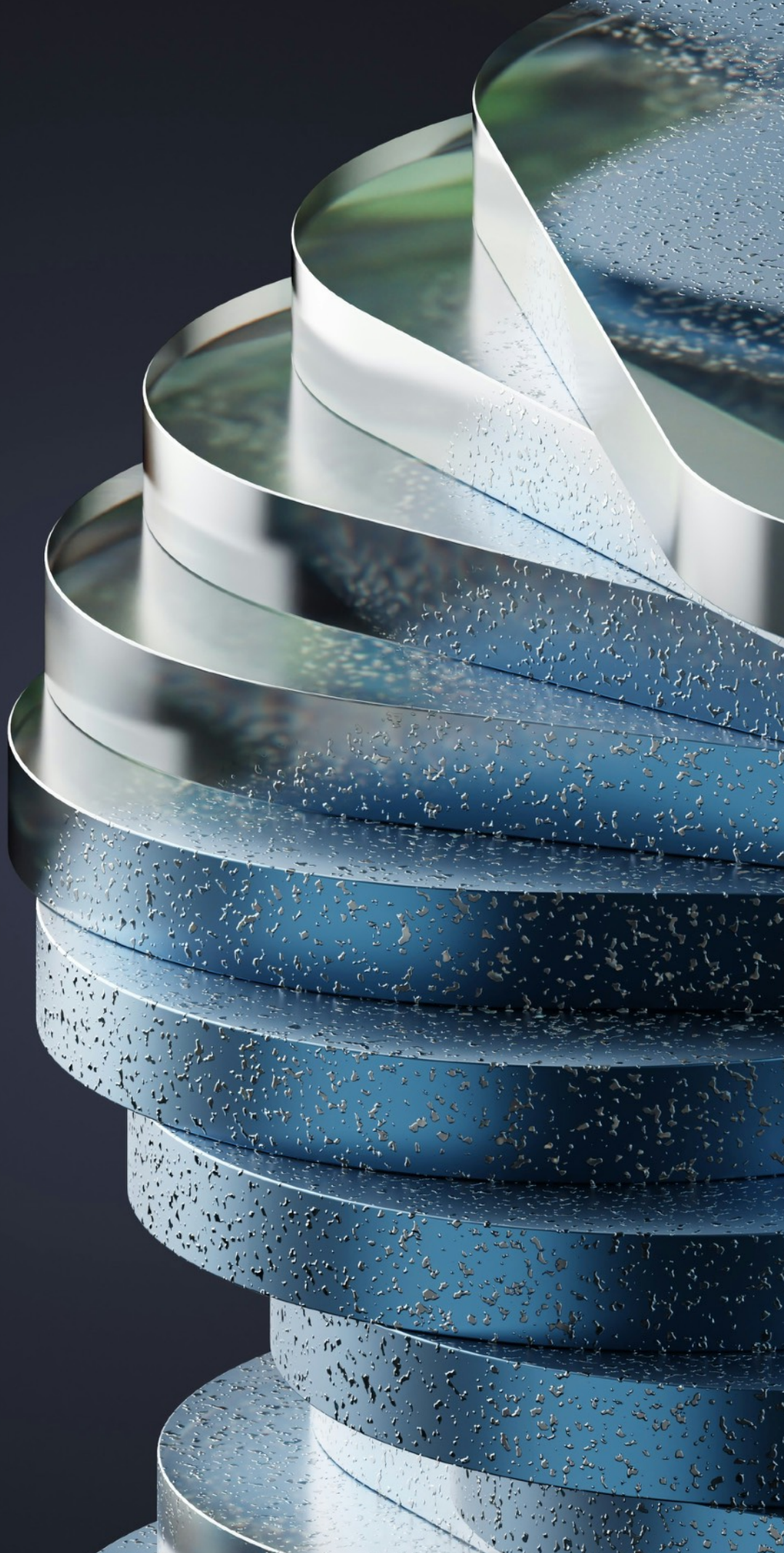
In recent years, our support has expanded to include sourcing and curating startup solutions for the Singapore Airlines App Challenge. This collaboration has helped them discover new technologies and engage with innovative startups aligned with their digital and operational goals.

Programs

Plug and Play Accelerators

Written by:

Curtis Chan
Program Director
Silicon Valley

Plug and Play accelerators are unique from standard venture accelerators in that they are co-funded by a collective of corporate partners and government entities and do not require taking equity from the participating startups. We are looking to invest, but it is not a requirement to join our accelerator. The focus of these programs is to drive corporate engagement and networking within each vertical's ecosystem.

This model is beneficial to startups and their founders as it provides the value of giving them a corporate audience with little to no downside other than an investment of their time. First and foremost, we are for the founder.

For our corporate partners, the accelerator is one of several products Plug and Play offers as an extension of their innovation arm and offers the opportunity for them to engage with a variety of vetted startups. We allow them to keep up to date with tech trends and dive deep into their needs during the selection process.

Plug and Play Accelerators

Travel Program

Since 2016, the Plug and Play Travel program has accelerated startups by catalyzing connections that provide industry insights and business development opportunities and help founders avoid common pitfalls.

Travel & Hospitality Batches

18

Over the span of 9 years

Startups Raised Collectively

~$7.37B

Publicly Available Information

Startup Stage as of Q4 2024

14%	Seed	<$1M
30%	Early	$1-5M
36%	Growth	$5-50M
20%	Late	>50M

Startups Accelerated

350+

In Silicon Valley Batches 1-18

Startup Operating Status as of Q4 2024

69%	18%	13%
Active	Acquired	Closed

The Travel & Hospitality program features a pool of world-class mentors and industry veterans who give their time to work with our startups through private meetings and workshops.

# Plug and Play Accelerators

Mentor Workshop Spotlights

Daniel Senyard
Founder & CEO, Shep | *VP of Innovation,* Flight Center

Workshop Title: How to Work with Corporates
Daniel is the Founder and CEO of Shep, a 2018 Plug and Play Travel Program alumni. Because of their time in the program, Shep was acquired by our partner Flight Centre. Daniel's workshop is a staple of our program and provides strategies for identifying the right corporate champion and practical tools for fast-tracking a partnership with them.
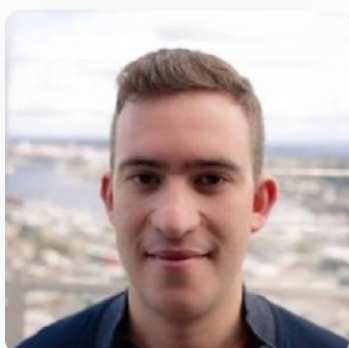
Gilad Bernstein
Founder & Investor, Brook Bay Capital

Workshop Title: Trends in Travel Technology
Gilad is an Israeli-born entrepreneur and venture investor based in Seattle. He leads Brook Bay Capital and serves on a handful of boards of large traditional and startup businesses. Gilad shares his expertise on the ever-changing landscape of travel technology, providing our founders with his insights on upcoming innovation trends and market shifts.

Betsy Mule
Investor, F-Prime Capital

Workshop Title: Fundraising in Travel
Betsy is an investor at F-Prime Capital, a Boston and San Francisco-based early-stage VC fund. She focuses broadly on enterprise technology, emphasizing hospitality and travel. Betsy's session shares insights on the investment landscape in Travel and peels back the curtain on the investment process for VCs.

Plug and Play Accelerators
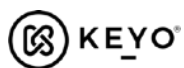
Past Startup Winners

Batch 1 | **Springshot**

Batch 2 | **Koniku Inc**

Batch 3 | **Groups360**

Batch 4 | **Keyo**

Batch 5 | **Lumo**

Batch 6 | **Shep**

Batch 7 | **Sherpa**

Batch 8 | **Wheel the World**

Batch 9 | **Troop Travel**

Batch 10 | **Smooss**

Batch 11 | **Chooose**

Batch 12 | **Tickitto**

Batch 13 | **reTravel.io**

Batch 14 | **Dtravel**

Batch 15 | **Tripian**

Batch 16 | **Aernology**

Batch 17 | **Lucia, Alō Index**

Batch 18 | **Swifty**

Portfolio

Travel & Hospitality Portfolio

Exit

loungebuddy

GO Moment™

Shep

BookingPal

nor1

FLYR

TURING

mozio

AiFi

Nethone

BEYOND

Springshot

denim

LUMO

TravelStride

Divinia

wheel the world

thrust

sherpa°

ZYTLYN

RemotePass

Zazume

airalo

TROOP

castia

Cruisebound

workn mates

Deal Engine

point.me

Tripbtoz

Hotelverse.

neoke

Directo

17

2024 Investments

Written by:

Inés López
Senior Ventures Analyst
Silicon Valley

Our 2024 investments reflect our belief that the future of travel lies in solving industry friction at multiple levels, from recapturing lost revenue through direct bookings and digitizing traditionally offline markets to addressing sustainability needs with data-driven tools. We are proud to back visionary founders with deep industry expertise and a strong focus on execution, who can navigate the complexities of the rapidly evolving travel landscape.

By harnessing technology, our newest portfolio companies are driving meaningful transformation in the sector, advancing digital innovation, sustainability, and stronger direct consumer engagement.

Directo

Directo addresses lost revenue and weak customer relationships from OTA reliance. Its free browser extension provides travelers with better deals when booking directly. With 200K+ users and partnerships with major hotel brands, Directo uses focused technology and hospitality experience to drive value and brand loyalty.

Cruisebound

Cruisebound brings cruise booking fully online in an industry where over 50% of bookings still happen offline. Its tech-driven platform streamlines the process from cabin selection to onboard experiences. Strong adoption and a 4.6 Trustpilot rating reflect high customer satisfaction.

thrust

Thrust Carbon simplifies travel sustainability with a carbon intelligence platform for reporting, reduction, and compliance. Its API enables accurate emissions tracking and integration into business workflows. With data from 102 million flights, 2 million hotels, and $100B in travel spend, it helps companies meet regulations and embed sustainability at scale.

Market Trends
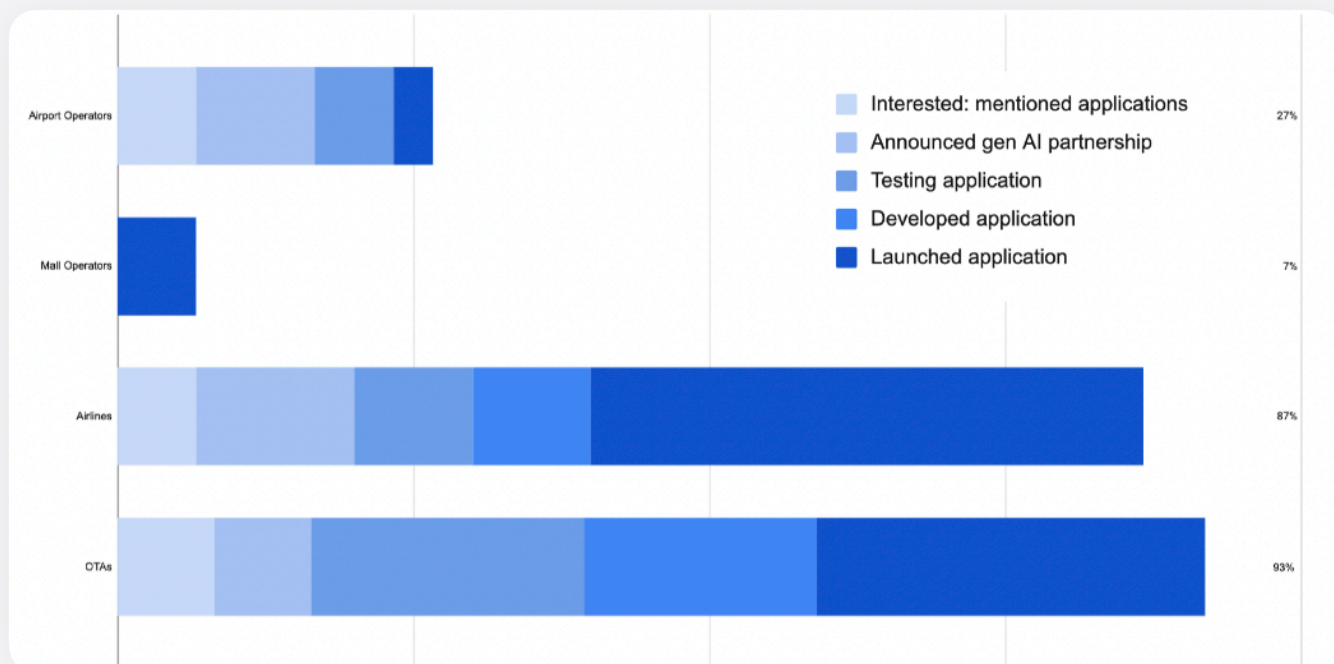
Gen AI in Travel

Written by:

Inés López
Senior Ventures Analyst
Silicon Valley

Generative AI marks a leap from traditional AI, creating new text, images, code, and more that mirror learned data patterns. This next-generation AI can boost key business functions by 15–40%, transforming every travel stage — from inspiration to safe landing.
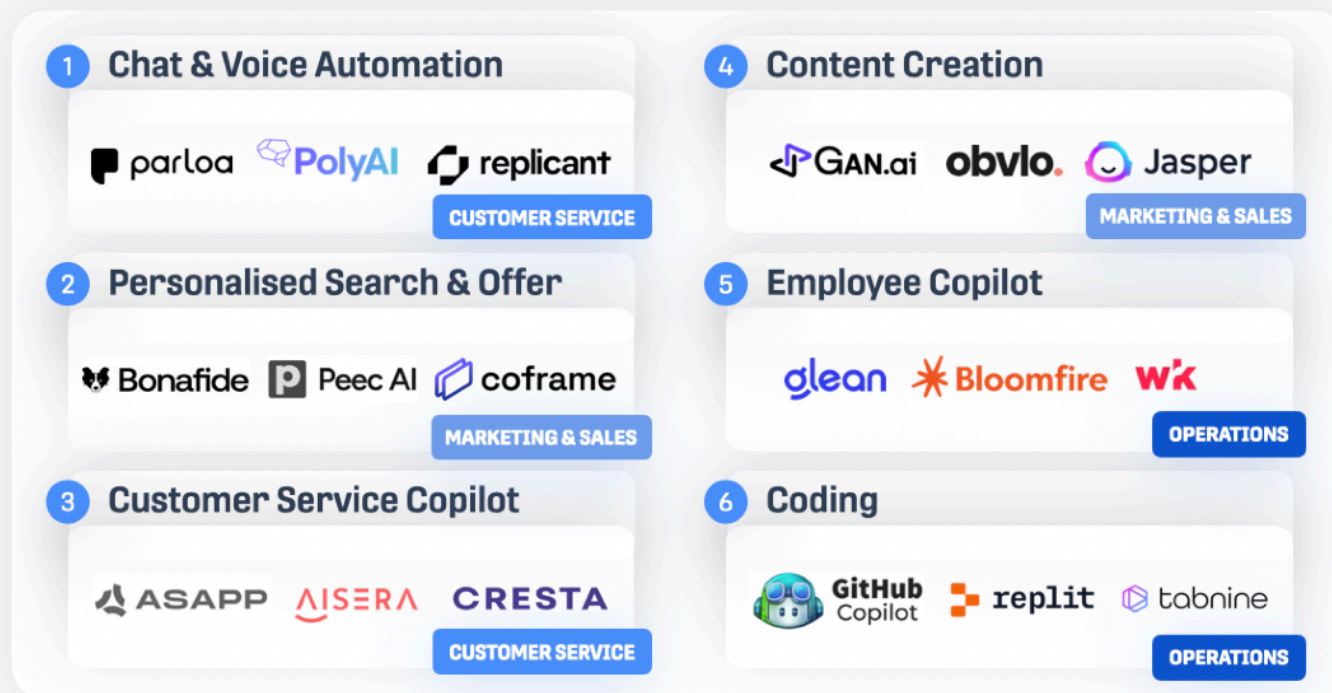
Generative AI Adoption in the Travel Industry

Plug and Play's media pulse of **120 travel enterprises** (30 each of airlines, OTAs, airports, mall operators) found **65 companies** exploring **150 use cases** publicly:

· **Airlines & OTAs lead adoption:** 26 of the 30 airlines and 27 of the 30 OTAs researched have implemented or piloted generative AI.

· **Airports are catching up:** From three early adopters to eight in six months.

Gen AI in Travel

Top Use Cases

1 Chat & Voice Automation

parloa   PolyAI   replicant

CUSTOMER SERVICE

2 Personalised Search & Offer

Bonafide   Peec AI   coframe

MARKETING & SALES

3 Customer Service Copilot

ASAPP   AISERA   CRESTA

CUSTOMER SERVICE

4 Content Creation

GAN.ai   obvlo.   Jasper

MARKETING & SALES

5 Employee Copilot

glean   Bloomfire   wk

OPERATIONS

6 Coding

GitHub Copilot   replit   tabnine

OPERATIONS

Customer Service: Agent Copilots & Communication Automation

Generative AI can increase customer service productivity by $405B across all industries (30–45% of current annual customer service costs) through 2 prominent use cases.

Copilots for Agent Augmentation

- Generative AI can provide tailored insights at the right time by analyzing past customer interactions to determine which agent responses work best. This information is then provided to every agent, helping less experienced agents perform at the level of experts.

- This not only broadens the applicant pool but also accelerates onboarding and training while increasing both customer and employee satisfaction by making workloads more manageable.

- JetBlue has reduced the average resolution time by 280 seconds by implementing ASAP, freeing a total of 7,230 agent hours per quarter.

Gen AI in Travel

Top Use Cases

Communication Automation

· Chat and voice bots can automate up to 50% of customer requests, maintaining a consistent brand voice across different locations and languages.

· This results in higher inquiry response rates, reduced response times, and lower agent workloads, all leading to increased customer and employee satisfaction.

· United Airlines pairs its chatbot with real-time radar maps to explain weather-related delays and suggest rebooking options on the spot.

Marketing & Sales: Personalized Search and Offer

Generative AI can increase marketing and sales productivity by $947 billion across industries (4–8% of current annual marketing and sales spending).

The most significant travel use case is **personalized search & offers:**

· Customers struggle with option overload when booking a trip, with many different offers from multiple suppliers and aggregators.

· Generative AI helps by displaying information in a more digestible way, adapting previously generated content to a specific situation by reusing and simplifying it.

· **TripAdvisor is collaborating with Perplexity** to improve its search recommendations by combining TripAdvisor's experiences, AI summaries, and reviews with Perplexity's gen AI search capabilities.

Top Use Cases

Operations: Employee Copilots

Generative AI can increase operational productivity by $485 billion across all industries.

Travel enterprises can benefit from adopting **employee copilots:**

- Employees struggle to find the information they need across the vast and dispersed data sources across multiple systems and interfaces.

- Knowledge bases aggregate company information to answer employee questions quickly and in a digestible way.

- Generative AI can also **streamline business processes** such as document generation or analysis to supercharge efficiency and reduce search times.

- **EasyJet** uses generative AI to extract and tailor information from historical flight crew manuals to support crew operations during disruptions.

Conclusion

Generative AI allows travel enterprises to **automate routine tasks, augment human expertise, and deliver hyper-personalized experiences** that **deepen customer loyalty and unlock new revenue streams.**

At Plug and Play, we're proud to work alongside some of the most forward-thinking travel companies as they navigate the generative AI era. As the landscape evolves, we remain committed to turning possibility into impact, connecting transformative technology with real-world travel challenges to shape the industry's future.
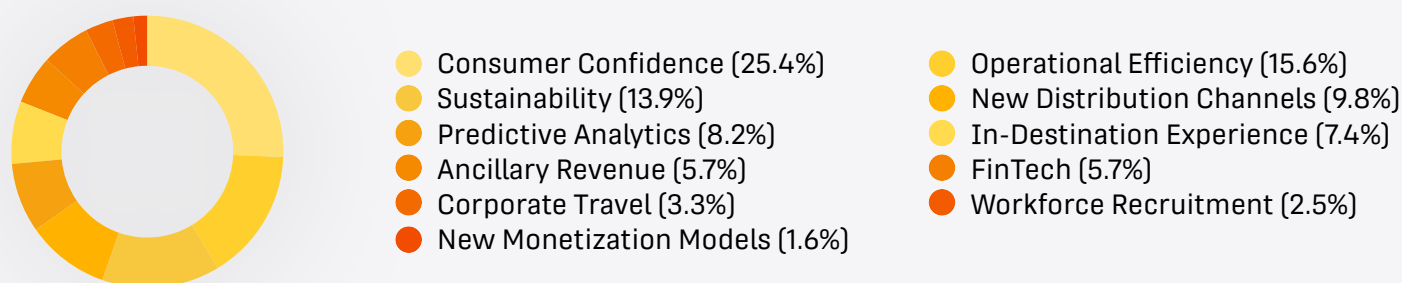
Past Batches Activity Levels

Written by:
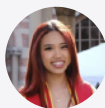
Sophia Nguyen
Program Associate
Silicon Valley

The objective of this section is to review and analyze the evolution of innovation within Plug and Play's Travel and Hospitality program across Batches 9 to 18 (2020-2024), focusing exclusively on the top three startup sectors— consumer confidence, operational efficiency, and sustainability— as they have the most data available for analysis.

Distribution of Startups Across Various Sectors

- Consumer Confidence (25.4%)
- Sustainability (13.9%)
- Predictive Analytics (8.2%)
- Ancillary Revenue (5.7%)
- Corporate Travel (3.3%)
- New Monetization Models (1.6%)
- Operational Efficiency (15.6%)
- New Distribution Channels (9.8%)
- In-Destination Experience (7.4%)
- FinTech (5.7%)
- Workforce Recruitment (2.5%)

Anchor Partners

These sectors reflect the primary areas of focus, which are ranked according to priority by Plug and Play's anchor partners.

Anchor partners are strategic collaborators who play a key role in guiding Plug and Play's programs by sharing their insights, priorities, and focus areas. While they do not define sectors outright, their interests are representative of the top innovative companies in the industry and help shape the direction of each batch program.

As a result, the trends and insights in this report reflect Plug and Play's Travel & Hospitality initiatives, not the entire industry. While the report is not a comprehensive industry overview, it offers valuable insights into the travel sector as broader industry changes and a global perspective on the evolving travel landscape shape the program.
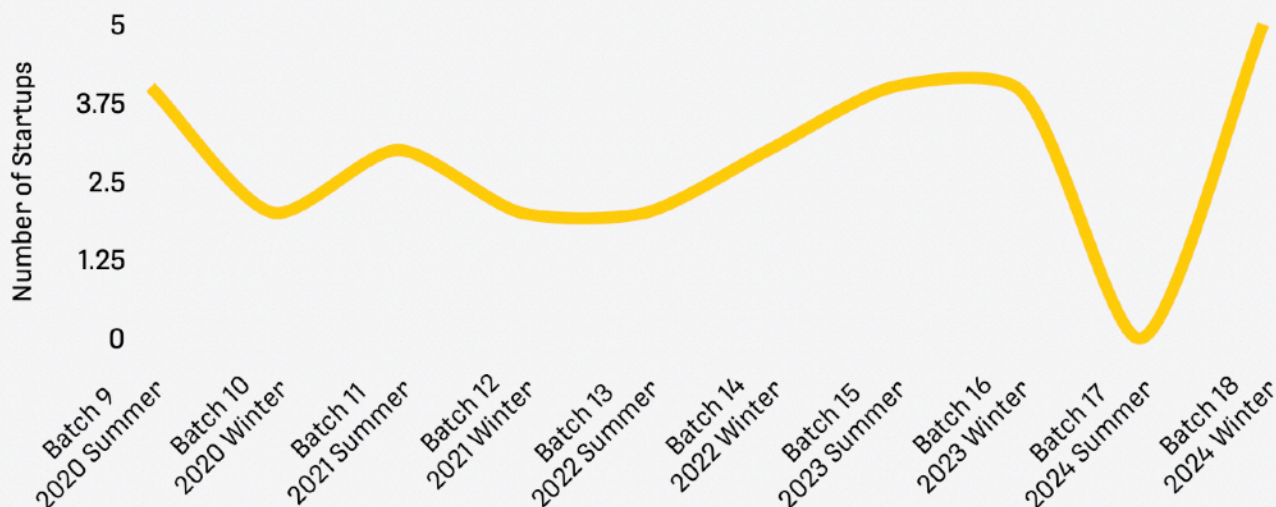
Past Batches Activity Levels

Consumer Confidence Activity Levels

Consumer confidence startups are the most active sector within the Plug and Play Travel and Hospitality program, with 31 startups participating across Batches 9 to 18. Of these, two startups were acquired, and two closed. However, Batch 17 (Spring 2024) showed a notable dip, with no consumer confidence startups included. This trend reversed in Batch 18 (Winter 2024), which saw a resurgence in consumer confidence startups.

Despite the absence of consumer confidence startups in Batch 17, 38% of the startups in that cohort focused on operational efficiency. This reflects a broader trend in the travel industry to reallocate resources in order to sustain and grow profit margins in a stagnant economic environment.

Although Batch 17 saw a dip in consumer confidence in startups, similar trends were playing out throughout the year as companies continued balancing cost optimization and customer retention efforts. Both operational efficiency and consumer confidence sectors address complementary priorities in such conditions: operational efficiency enables businesses to reduce costs and optimize resources, protecting their bottom line. In contrast, consumer confidence initiatives help retain existing customers and sustain top-line revenue in a challenging market. Over time, consumer confidence startups remain an active sector, as the economic slowdown has driven companies to balance cost reduction with efforts to preserve and expand profitability.

### Consumer Confidence Startups from 2020 to 2024 (Batch 9-18)

Past Batches Activity Levels

Operational Efficiency Activity Levels

Operational efficiency startups are the second most active sector in Plug and Play's Travel and Hospitality program, with 19 startups participating across Batches 9 to 18, including three acquisitions and one closure. This sector saw peak activity during the second year of COVID-19 (2021) as companies faced unprecedented disruptions. They looked for solutions to streamline operations amid labor shortages and fluctuating demand during this time of crisis.

However, the demand for operational efficiency startups has fluctuated, with none in Batch 14 (Winter 2020) or Batch 16 (Summer 2023) and an overall decline since 2021. As the travel sector stabilizes, priorities are shifting toward broader recovery strategies. As noted in the consumer confidence section, operational efficiency and consumer confidence address complementary needs, such as cost reduction versus customer retention. While efficiency remains crucial, companies are balancing cost-cutting with profitability, shaping the future of innovation in travel and hospitality.

**Operational Efficiency Startups from 2020 to 2024 (Batch 9-18)**
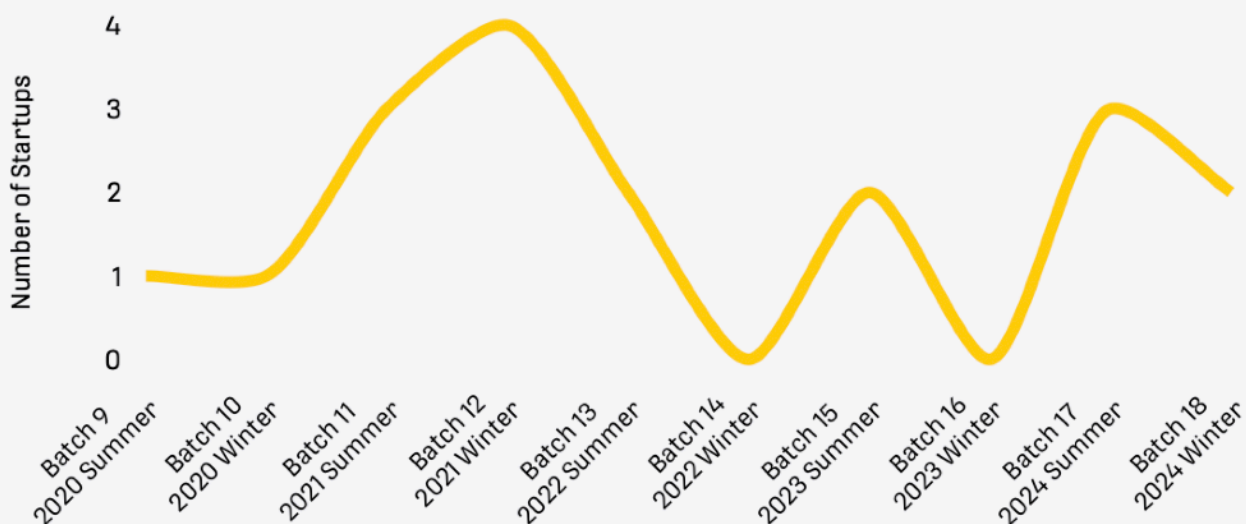
Past Batches Activity Levels

Sustainability Activity Levels

Sustainability-focused startups have maintained a consistent presence in Plug and Play's Travel and Hospitality program, with 17 participating across Batches 9 to 18. While most batches included just one sustainability startup, there was a noticeable spike during Batches 11, 12, and 13 with 3, 4, and 3 sustainability startups, respectively. These batches ran during 2021 and early 2022 when travel was rebounding from the pandemic, and there was more momentum and funding toward sustainability efforts as companies had more resources to experiment with long-term impact initiatives.
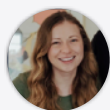
However, after Batch 13, participation in the sustainability sector declined significantly, with only one startup per batch and none at all in Batch 18. This drop reflects shifting industry priorities amid growing economic uncertainty. As the focus turned to cost reduction, automation, and immediate ROI, sustainability, while still important, became less of a long-term priority. Pandemic recovery funds and a heightened public interest in climate action may have fueled the earlier spike in 2021. Still, as those tailwinds faded, startups and corporates alike may have redirected their attention toward more immediate operational challenges.

Sustainability Startups from 2020 to 2024 (Batch 9-18)
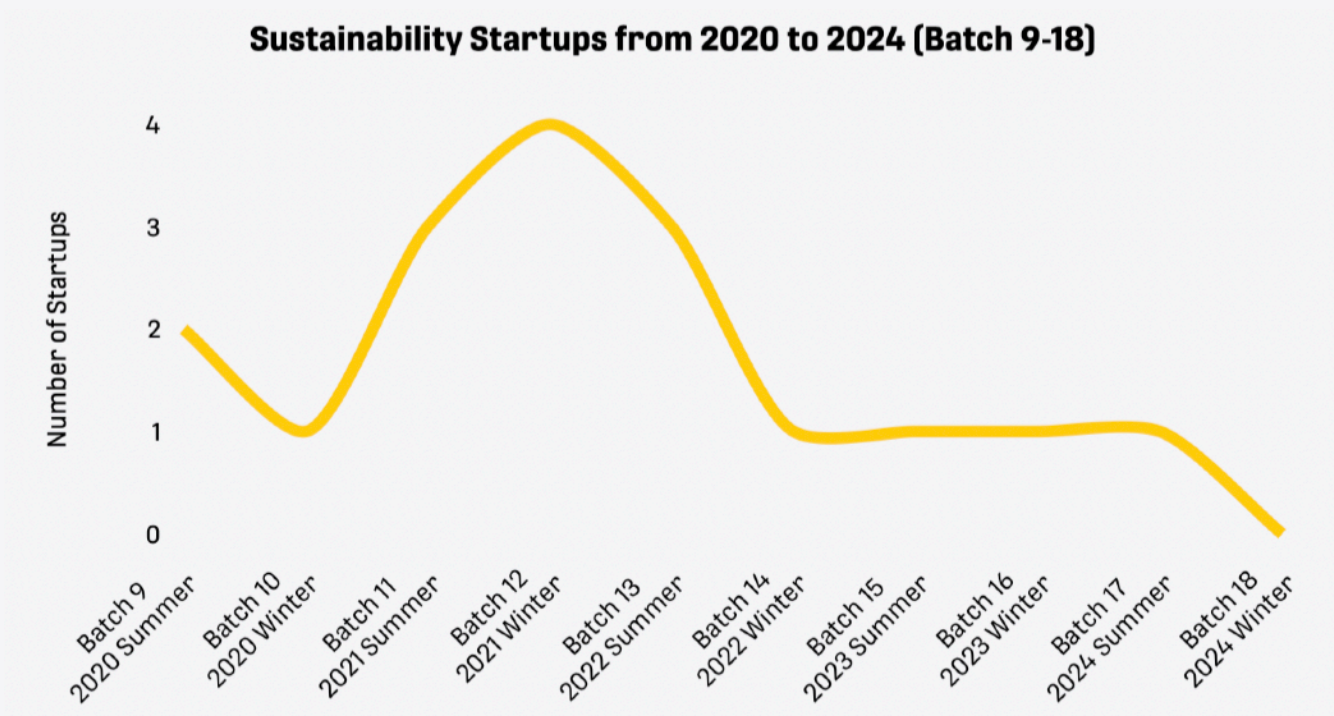
State of Travel — 2024 Recap

Written by:

Kaycee Antosiak
Former Ventures Analyst
Silicon Valley

Travel Industry Rebounded in 2024:

2024 marked a historic rebound and evolution for the global travel and hospitality industry. After years of recovery from the pandemic, the sector bounced back. There was record-breaking growth. Global travel and tourism surged by 24%, reaching $1.5 trillion. The industry contributed $10.9 trillion to global GDP (an 8.5% increase from 2023) and added about 21 million new jobs. International tourism virtually recovered (99%) pre-pandemic levels in 2024, signaling a robust recovery in both domestic and international travel.

Regional Changes in 2024:

Asia Pacific experienced a strong travel resurgence in 2024, driven by record-breaking tourism in countries like Japan and rising demand across Southeast Asia - though the rapid growth also reignited over-tourism concerns in destinations like Bali and Phuket. North America surpassed 2019 travel volumes, with U.S. arrivals to Mexico up 5.1% in early 2025, cementing its status as a top pick for U.S. travelers. Consumer behavior also evolved: (1) "Bleisure" travel grew, with 60% of business travelers extending trips for leisure. (2) Travelers increased spending on premium, personalized experiences, with luxury offerings growing by 20%. (3) AI and AR trip-preview tools gained traction, underpinned by a $4.2 billion AR/VR travel market in 2024 that's set to expand further.

Shift in Travel Tech in 2024:

Mobile bookings accounted for 35% of all online reservations, while voice-activated bookings are on the rise and expected to make up over half of bookings in 2025. AI-powered chatbots handled an estimated 40-60% of customer inquiries, with generative AI rapidly transforming customer service, trip planning, and operational workflows. Blockchain gained traction for secure, transparent transactions, particularly in cross-border bookings and loyalty systems.

State of Travel — 2024 Recap

Notable Technology Shifts:

Alongside the industry rebound, 2024 was defined by a profound shift toward intelligent, cloud-based systems and AI-powered services. According to the Skift + AWS Travel and Hospitality Technology Innovation Report, 92% of executives agreed that AI would be central to business value over the next three years. Notably, 54% of companies increased AI budgets by more than 11%, and 89% believe generative AI will have a meaningful business impact within three years. Top use cases included personalization, customer service, and marketing.
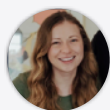
Generative AI took hold across the industry, with Booking.com, Ryanair, and United Airlines among notable adopters. Booking.com used Amazon Bedrock to personalize search and match travelers with hidden gems, while Ryanair built internal tools on AWS to streamline crew operations. United Airlines modernized its legacy passenger systems using natural language AI — turning complex code into human-readable insights.

Looking Ahead to 2025

Written by:

Kaycee Antosiak
Former Ventures Analyst
Silicon Valley

The future of travel technology promises even more disruption - and opportunity. Industry predictions for 2025 reflect a rapidly digitizing, customer-centric, and socially conscious travel landscape.

Hyper-Personalized, AI-Driven Travel

AI is redefining trip planning with tailored, real-time recommendations. Platforms like Expedia, GuideGeek, and Roam Around generate personalized itineraries using user data and contextual inputs. Hopper predicts airfare trends and automates rebookings, while Booking.com's partnership with OpenAI introduces "Operator," an AI assistant capable of managing end-to-end travel planning — signaling a shift toward agentic AI. In the short-term rental space, Airbnb's new loyalty program, developed with HotelTonight, uses AI to reward last-minute bookings and deepen user engagement, even in inventory-light categories.

Seamless, Contactless Journeys

Biometric and mobile-first solutions are making travel more efficient. Airports like Zayed International Airport in Abu Dhabi will involve biometric sensors at every airport identification checkpoint by 2025 to make the check-in process more efficient. Hotels are adopting contactless check-ins and mobile room access utilizing tools like NeoKe. Supported by 5G and advanced Wi-Fi, these tools enable real-time updates, itinerary management, and smooth in-trip experiences — especially critical for today's mobile-first travelers.
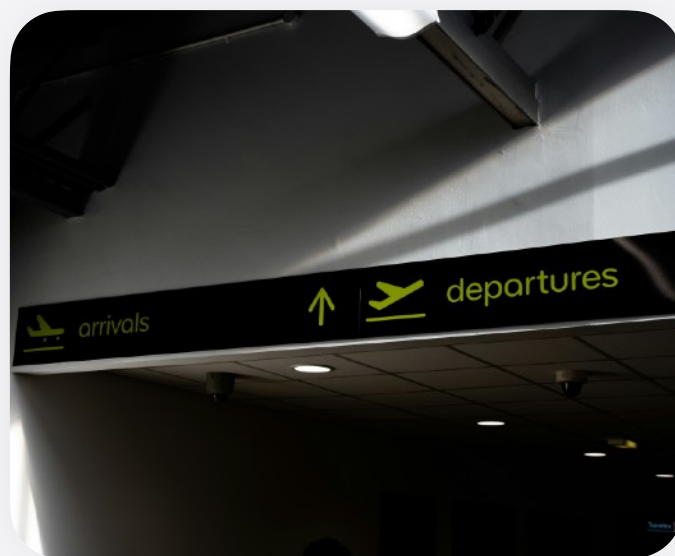
Immersive, Instant Booking Experiences

AR and VR technologies are enhancing how travelers explore and interact with destinations, from virtual previews to AR-enabled navigation and interactive museum tours. Meanwhile, social and conversational platforms are becoming direct booking channels. Klook's integration with TikTok allows users to book travel experiences straight from the app, merging travel inspiration with instant action. Similarly, Perplexity's partnership with Selfbook and TripAdvisor enables direct hotel bookings from within its AI-powered interface, bypassing traditional search and simplifying the customer journey.

Looking Ahead to 2025

Fintech-Enhanced Travel Payments

Fintech continues to increase accessibility and reduce payment friction. Buy now, pay later (BNPL) solutions are widely adopted, especially among Millennials and Gen Z, and now one in five American travelers said they plan to use BNPL services for their summer vacation. Apple Pay, Google Pay, and embedded payment tools offer secure, contactless transactions across travel platforms, airlines, and in-destination services. Brex and TravelBank integrate payments, booking, and expense management into a single AI-powered platform for both individual and business travelers.

Real-Time Payouts & Blockchain in Travel

The travel gig economy, from local guides to rental hosts, is benefiting from real-time payment (RTP) systems. These systems provide instant, 24/7 access to funds, improving financial stability and satisfaction among service providers. Meanwhile, blockchain is streamlining international payments by reducing fraud, enabling transparent transactions, and cutting down on currency exchange fees — especially relevant for cross-border bookings and partner payments.

Smart Business Travel Integration

Business travel is evolving with integrated tech-fintech ecosystems. Platforms like Navan and Brex automate bookings, enforce policy compliance, and provide real-time dashboards for travelers and finance teams. AI-driven expense tools reduce manual errors and offer data-driven insights to optimize budgets and vendor negotiations. Corporate tools now include sustainability tracking, like Thrust Carbon, wellness options, and carbon analytics, helping companies align travel policies with ESG goals. Virtual cards and flexible spending tools give finance teams greater control — especially vital for hybrid and remote teams on the move.

Success Stories

Publicly Available CVC Engagements

These are publicly disclosed investments that have been made possible through our introductions and facilitation. Due to confidentiality agreements, some investment opportunities cannot be shared.

At Plug and Play, we manage 25+ Corporate Venture Capital (CVC) partnerships, enabling our partners to identify, evaluate, and invest in high-potential startup companies.

Investments & Acquisitions by Partners

FLYR	mozio	LUMO
TravelStride	ZEROAVIA	ASSAIA
CLAIRE BY 30 SECONDS TO FLY	groups360	mapped
SPACE PERSPECTIVE	Shep	WhereTo A BUSINESS OF FLIGHT CENTRE TRAVEL GROUP
Springshot	OTTONOMY.IO	

Publicly Available Case Studies

Written by:

Anastasiia Brovkna
Partner Success Manager
Silicon Valley

Mir Hasanzade
Corporate Partnerships Manager
Silicon Valley

Through our platform, partners pilot cutting-edge solutions, co-develop new products, and invest in technologies that shape tomorrow's traveler experience. The following case studies highlight just a few of the many publicly available collaborations we've facilitated.

To enhance the travel experience, JetBlue Ventures teamed up with Autio, a location-aware audio storytelling app that delivers GPS-triggered narratives about nearby landmarks and cities. Through Plug and Play's intro, the platform was tested as a way to offer passengers a richer, more immersive connection to their journey.

To elevate operational efficiency, iGA Istanbul Airport partnered with Smart Kiwi, an AI-powered platform that predicts traveler demand by analyzing over 260 external variables. This collaboration enabled smarter resource allocation and led to a 30–50% reduction in queue times, resulting in a smoother airport experience.

Accor partnered with Groups360 to streamline the group booking process across its hotel portfolio. The collaboration introduced a real-time booking platform that eliminated the need for traditional RFPs. The platform, powered by GroupSync, was piloted and rolled out globally.

On December 22, 2021, FCM announced that the parent company, Flight Centre Travel Group, has fully acquired Shep. This Texas-based software company provides a browser-extension-based communication platform for multinational corporations.

Plug and Play Vienna introduced AiSight to Fraport as part of a Dealflow session. They ran a successful pilot project together and installed sensors to monitor parts of the baggage infrastructure at the Frankfurt Airport to predict disturbances in real time.

Publicly Available Case Studies

CWT partnered with Thrust Carbon to integrate real-time emissions data directly into its booking tools. This collaboration enabled travelers to see the carbon footprint of different itineraries during the booking process and select greener options.

Edmonton International Airport (YEG) initially invited iboardings to participate in innovation-focused discussions. It later partnered with them to pilot an automated carry-on baggage checker aimed at streamlining the security process.

Changi Airport partnered with Ottonomy.io to pilot autonomous delivery robots within the terminal. The self-driving robots were tested in a proof-of-concept, allowing passengers to order food or retail items via an app and have them delivered directly to their gate, offering a seamless, contactless experience.

Austrian Airlines passengers traveling from Vienna Airport can now check in baggage in advance and have it delivered to their destination airport. AirPortr provides the at-home baggage check-in and delivery service.

H.I.S. partnered with Wonderment to co-develop Copolo, a digital travel booking platform. The platform allows users to search and book flights, hotels, and transportation, offering a seamless, end-to-end travel planning experience through a single interface.

These case studies represent just a few of the many impactful collaborations between Plug and Play's corporate partners and startups in the travel and hospitality space. Each partnership highlights how innovation thrives when industry leaders and entrepreneurs come together with a shared purpose.

Testimonials

"

"When we started our digital transformation in 2017, we needed to build a strong portfolio of partners to help deliver our vision of making the customer travel experience better. Building this strategic partnership with Plug and Play was crucial, and still is."

Jeremy Drury
Director Digital &
Technology Services (CIO)

STAR ALLIANCE

"

"We've been anchor partners of Plug and Play Travel & Hospitality for over seven years. It was instrumental in the founding of JetBlue Ventures. In 2016, we were fresh to the West Coast, with a few team members based in SF full-time. Plug and Play helped us accelerate the development of our investment thesis and early investments. We've invested in over eight companies over the years."

Stephen Snyder
Managing Director

jetBlue | ventures

"

"Thanks to our partnership with Plug and Play, we defined an accelerator program with a two-year tenure, accelerated 26 projects, and launched ADR Ventures with two investments in its portfolio."

Giulio Ranucci
Head of Innovation, Digital & CVC

ADR
AEROPORTI DI ROMA

Testimonials

"

"We've been with Plug and Play for over seven years. This relationship helps shortcut the work of finding new ideas, products, and innovations in the marketplace. Without a partner like Plug and Play, you'd need several people constantly scanning the market, meeting with startups, and assessing viability in terms of their operations, funding, and flow."

John Morhous
Chief Experience Officer

FLIGHT CENTRE
TRAVEL GROUP™

"

"We've been a corporate partner for five years. I am so grateful to the Plug and Play team because every time I speak with them online, they always make me feel like a part of their global startup ecosystem."

Tomoko Yoshimura
Manager, New Business Development

ANA

"

"I think the most important value for us is that we are one of the largest leisure tourism groups, and we have many aspects of our business. Having Plug and Play be so strong across multiple sectors, not just Travel & Hospitality but also Sustainability, which is huge, and being able to also cross-pollinate across the verticals has been incredibly valuable for us. This is helping us to streamline how we innovate."

Gloria Adkins
Group Strategy Manager

TUI

Moving Forward:
New Services

New Services

Written by:

Mir Hasanzade
Corporate Partnerships Manager
Silicon Valley

Innovation Academy

The Plug and Play Innovation Academy helps corporate leaders develop the skills and knowledge to drive meaningful innovation. This program strengthens our relationships with corporate partners and startups, creating more opportunities for collaboration and growth. By expanding into executive education, we establish Plug and Play as a leader in both innovation and learning while increasing our global impact.

The academy is a two-week executive education masterclass in Silicon Valley, offering hands-on learning, networking, and insights into corporate innovation and venture strategies. Participants can enhance their careers, earn academic recognition, or work toward an Executive MBA through our partner universities.

Key Benefits:

Real-World Experience and Access: Gain hands-on insights and exclusive access to Plug and Play's innovation ecosystem, including startups, corporates, and industry leaders.

Professional Advancement: Benefit from the collaboration between Plug and Play and our partner universities, with options to earn academic credits or extend to an Executive MBA.

Unmatched Networking Opportunities: Build meaningful connections with global innovators, executives, and thought leaders throughout the program and beyond.

New Services

Open Innovation Services

The Open Innovation Team acts as a strategic partner, helping corporations and governments at any stage of their innovation journey. We support them through key phases such as getting started (ramp-up), expanding opportunities (upsell), and combining different innovation approaches (hybrid partnership). Our goal is to provide a comprehensive, end-to-end service leveraging strong partnerships to drive meaningful innovation.

Innovation Training: Innovation training offers employees and leaders a formal opportunity to upgrade their skills and draw inspiration from real-world innovation success stories.

Innovation Assessment: Understand the status quo and analyze current resources, capabilities, projects, and resources to identify strengths, weaknesses, and potential areas for improvement.

Innovation Framework: Our innovation framework service builds partners' strategies and capabilities to execute innovation.

Intrapreneurship: Building an internal activity empowering employees to develop their entrepreneurial ideas within the organization, with a comprehensive approach including ramp-up, ideation, training, and a modular accelerator program.

Hackathon: Hackathons are run to answer a pressing question — formulating a problem statement and finding new ideas or stipulating new focus areas for your innovation strategy. Based on close collaboration, applying the learning-by-doing approach.

Startup Scouting: We offer a comprehensive service bundle to generate, scout, and prioritize new ideas, culminating in a proof of concept (PoC) or pilot.

Venture Building: The service to create and nurture disruptive startups and ventures internally, tailored to your unique industry and goals. Designed to build, launch, operate, and scale businesses in less time and resources.

Contact Us

PLUGAND**PLAY**
TRAVEL & HOSPITALITY

Interested in collaborating, joining a program, mentoring startups, or just want to say hi?

We're always looking for disruptive startups, forward-thinking corporations, and passionate mentors to join our ecosystem.

Drop us a quick email — we'd love to hear from you.

Reach out to us:

✉ travel-hq@pnptc.com

🌐 pnptc.com

📍 Plug and Play
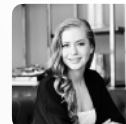440 N. Wolfe Rd
Sunnyvale, CA 94085

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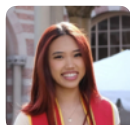Sr. Director, Corporate Partnerships
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