



# Working together:

How FCM partnered with a client to create a first-of-its-kind expense reporting tool



## The Problem:

A multinational pharmaceutical manufacturing client was experiencing discrepancies between their travel and expense data. They needed to control leakage and learn how to better use their data to communicate with stakeholders.

## The Solution:

FCM would work directly with the client to design a one-of-a-kind reporting and reconciliation tool that would be used by clients across FCM's customer base.

## Setting the scene

**“We always look for the ‘blip’ in the data...where something unexpected jumps out. By merging reservation and expense data, we see hidden connections and opportunities that would have remained impossible to identify using stand-alone data sources.”**

MIKE COX  
PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT  
FCM CONSULTING

Mismatched data goes back to the beginning of corporate travel management, with TMC data always being a subset of the larger picture. Travel managers either had to make do with less or spend a ton of time trying to cross-reference expense data with reservation data to get an accurate picture of where the company's travel dollars were going. But a decade ago, FCM and an entrepreneurial client decided they didn't want to settle for the status quo. They wanted to find a solution: FCM would need to create the tool, but the client's unique perspective and collaboration was essential to the process. This kind of innovation couldn't be done in a silo.

And that's how the FCM Expense Connector was born. Since then, FCM has expanded the tool's capabilities, including its ability to work with all the major expense tools.

## How it works

The FCM team realized they needed to connect the Concur Expense data to the FCM reservation data to clearly display comparisons, sources, and vendors to then identify outliers. No tool currently existed that could achieve these results. Expense Connector was designed to connect to the expense tool of choice, match it with category identifiers in the FCM Platform, and then display the data in illustrative and filterable ways. Travel managers can then see the variances between the data from their expense tool and the FCM Platform and filter through invoice records to identify where the leakage is occurring.

In slightly more technical terms, Expense Connector de-silos an organization's defined data strings to stop leakage and identify internal travel trends. In simpler terms, Expense Connector empowers travel managers to control the narrative around their program's expense data.

## Expense Connector in action

**“FCM’s Expense Connector exemplifies how data science can transform travel expense data into a clear and actionable story. Traditionally, travel managers struggled with siloed information, making it difficult to identify spending trends and leakage and enforce travel policies. Power BI’s flexibility allows for in-depth analysis and insightful visualizations.”**

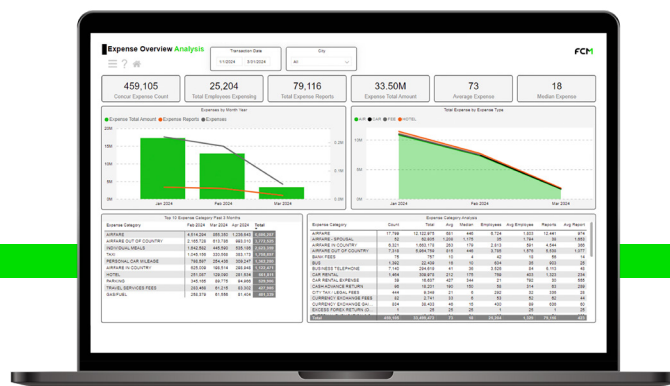
STEPHEN PITCHER  
CHIEF DATA SCIENCE OFFICER  
FLIGHT CENTRE TRAVEL GROUP

The main driver behind creating Expense Connector was to mitigate out-of-policy bookings and transactions by making travel managers less beholden to their expense tool's reporting structure. This data clarity helps travel managers enforce the “rules” more easily and will always be Expense Connector's top priority. It's also the first entry point for every travel manager FCM Consulting onboards. Because it's simple: You can't right the ship until you plug the leaks.

Once travel managers have leakage under control, FCM Consulting can show them how to interpret their expense data to identify how money is spent, where it's being spent, and areas of opportunity. This manifests itself in some very unique (but money-saving) stories. Here are just a few:

### Saving dollars on dining out

Did you know that travel expenses (airfare, train fare, car rental, taxis, etc.) only comprise 40-50% of your overall travel costs? One of FCM's first Expense Connector clients wanted to seek any savings opportunities within their incidental expense data trends. After conducting reconciliation across expense reports, they discovered that their home office employees + visiting employees were frequenting a local restaurant to the tune of \$50,000+ in spend. This prompted the client to reach out to the establishment and demonstrate how much revenue the client's business travelers were generating for them, resulting in an exclusive partnership and coupon deal for the client's employees and travelers.





“Now that we have about a year and a half of spend history, I can start to see what carriers we’re flying, [...] I can see what hotel chains we’re using, and we can begin to negotiate based on that spend history some global deals or pricing. FCM is helping us with many integrations, such as [...] Expense Connector, so we can start to see a little bit more between Concur on the expense side and FCM on the travel side.”

TRACY STUEVE  
SR. DIRECTOR FINANCE,  
TALENT, & PROJECTS  
WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL

### Optimizing hotel amenities

One FCM Consulting client was paying a much higher rate with their preferred hotel to include certain amenities for their business travelers, including breakfast. Using Expense Connector, they were able to identify that travelers were still expensing breakfast while staying at a preferred hotel, which led the client to an important decision: Do they renegotiate with the vendor to remove breakfast (and save money), or do they revitalize their traveler communications to remind travelers that breakfast is available? Using this newly unearthed data, along with FCM Consulting’s expertise, the client developed a personalized plan to solve the problem.

### Stopping leakage in its tracks

Of course, Expense Connector’s main goal is to find and fix leaks in your policy. The most significant value of identifying leakage in your hotel program is in sourcing. If only 50% of hotel nights are booked through the TMC, and that’s what’s used to negotiate rates, then buyers only leverage half of their available spend. Using Expense Connector, FCM Consulting and the client can identify the “missing half” of the volume, which TMCs can use to negotiate more effective rates and amenity packages.

The creation of FCM Expense Connector is a testament to the power of a challenger mindset and the importance of feedback when focusing on solving real problems. Since its inception, Expense Connector’s evolution hasn’t stopped. In 2022, FCM rebuilt its reporting on Microsoft’s industry-leading Power BI framework, giving travel managers more insight and opportunities for action regarding their expense data than ever before.

**Expense Connector is your tool if you want to rewrite the story around your expense data. Reach out to FCM Consulting today to find out more.**