

Case Study

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



20%

Air travel
spend saved



72,000

Missionaries
worldwide



2016

Partnership
started

Supporting first-time travellers visiting remote locations

On a mission

The missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints travel to far-flung, remote destinations to preach their doctrine. While travel has evolved dramatically over the decades there remains challenges when travelling across Africa, where some **1,400 missionaries are posted across 26 countries**. Think remote villages that are largely inaccessible with rudimentary travel facilities. Before FCM, multiple local travel agencies were being used, supported by a team of 14 and volunteers on the ground to arrange and book travel.



Travel plans of two extreme halves

Young and enthusiastic, the missionaries of The Church are often embarking on their very first flight. Among the new experience of it all, they often get lost in airports and miss flights and connections, or there's often last-minute changes. You can't blame them for worrying. It's not only their first international trip but their unconventional travel arrangements are challenging for even the most seasoned of business travellers.

Unique requirements and challenges include:

- Alternative accommodation that is rudimentary and isn't available on usual online channels.
- Booking by fax still reigns supreme for these travel options.
- Remote locations mean communication is difficult and safety is paramount.
- Travel policy covers missionaries and Senior Church Leaders. But in an unconsolidated and reactive travel environment with inexperienced travellers, compliance is difficult.

A dedicated travel team and tool

It was clear The Church needed a more robust, consolidated solution for travel processes. One that combines quick and efficient travel assistance from our travel consultants, with a reliable and globally-consistent online booking tool. A tool and team of experts were implemented, as part of a strategic approach to consolidate travel planning and booking into one place.

FCM's global presence means all The Church's offices are managed under one TMC but with local expertise in destinations such as Africa, which require specialist knowledge. Consolidating all its Africa offices through AeTM technology was hugely successful and was later seamlessly migrated to Concur. 92% of profiles were migrated to Concur with dormant and duplicate profile data cleaned.

With bookings made through FCM channels, **The Church gained a better overview of travel volumes and spending patterns. Their Account Manager can advise on strategy, policy and tech, backed by reliable reports and data, that save money and reduce traveller stress. With the help of their Account Manager and FCM's global travel relationships, the Church benefited from better air, hotel and transport rates.**

And that's not all. The FCM Global Airfares desk provides support for business routings and **savings of up to 20%**, over and above regular ticket prices and beating The Church's direct airline deals. They're always on hand with a personalised and professional service for any queries.

A finance resource was appointed, led by the Account Manager, who manage travel statements and invoices, meaning on-time travel card reconciliation and card and statement balancing.

An on-going partnership

The FCM team continue to optimise The Church's travel programme through regular Concur refresher training sessions and travel industry updates.

Melanie Harrybarran Account Manager, FCM spends a day a month in The Church's office to keep the partnership aligned and relationship flourishing. This includes supplier contract negotiation and preferred rate negotiation and setting, creating annual business plans to indicate key drivers and focuses for the year, and providing monthly travel spend reports.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the FCM team created a **COVID Policy Addendum** in addition to the travel policy for information related to travel during the pandemic. 24/7 support was available when COVID evacuations started in March 2020. All families were moved back to their country of residence.

What's next? There will be a future migration to the IDP data platform for access to incredible dashboards and travel insight. Additionally, the FCM team has been entrusted to negotiate with suppliers for The Church's new office in Beira, Mozambique.

FCM has retained The Church's business through a very strong business relationship and the value added to its programme. It's a partnership that's been extended; they've verbally agreed to sign with FCM for another 18 months from 1 January 2022.

Results for all parties

"The unconventional nature of business travel conducted by The Church and volume of travel to remote destinations by inexperienced travellers has proven an exciting challenge for FCM. The blend of cutting-edge tech and personalised service is critical in a programme like this that needs to deliver on specific requirements but still deliver value and peace of mind," Bonnie Smith, General Manager, FCM South Africa.

The Church's teams benefitted from consolidation in different ways.

- Project manager Sandile Makasi doesn't just have a TMC but a travel partner who can formulate and implement strategies that save The Church money. He has more travel insight than ever before thanks to one tool, one travel policy and one TMC.
- Finance is happy, thanks to their Account Manager securing favourable supplier deals and support of a personalised finance team.
- On-the-ground travel bookers are empowered to use the online tool where possible, freeing them up to focus on the trickier arrangements and assisting travellers.
- Travellers have one TMC contact who can proactively advise on travel information, health threats, travel risks and potential challenges.



The numbers do the talking

- **8-15%** of travel savings through **negotiated rates** and Airfare desk as well as driving online bookings and advance purchases.
- **R2 to R5million** worth of **refunds** obtained every year.
- **26%** increase in **preferred hotel programme** usage.
- **Service fees** retained to a minimum of **3.5%** of travel spend vs the average market fee of **6%**.
- **60%** of travel bookings are made online through **online booking tool**.
- Average international air ticket price is **8% below the normal customer benchmark**.
- **97%** **customer satisfaction score**.

"The service we are receiving from FCM is very professional. Their solution helps us serve people in many different countries. They are well-versed in ticketing, the travel industry and their offering. They have a high work ethic and always go the extra mile to assist. Travel emergencies tend to happen after-hours and early mornings. We are grateful that FCM has such a strong online support team that's always ready to help us"

SANDILE MAKASI, PROJECT MANAGER, THE CHURCH JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS