



Case Study

Part 2

52 markets live in two months with JTI

Where JTI started

JTI (Japan Tobacco International) had a fragmented travel policy. Sixteen TMCs across the world, operating in more than 80 countries. They had one major TMC but when it came to service and attention, JTI felt like a small fish in a big pond.

It was time to go to RFP. An RFP that saw Mike Potter, Travel Services Director and Nichola Rimmer, Global Category Manager Travel & Events flip the RFP process on its head, with support from Jo Lloyd of travel consultancy Nina and Pinta. But that's another story, that you can read here.

This story starts when the major incumbent TMC served JTI just 90 days' notice with zero flexibility. How were the team going to get 72 countries live in such a short time?

On top of the short notice, Mike and Nichola were facing internal pressures as part of a relatively new indirect procurement function at JTI. This was their first major global change initiative.



80+

Markets in total



90

Days' notice given by previous TMC



52

Onboarding meetings held

Prioritization

“From the very beginning, we talked through our focuses and implementation plan with FCM. The team were super agile. They knew what was really critical to get this up and running, and what could wait.”

NICHOLA RIMMER
GLOBAL CATEGORY MANAGER TRAVEL & EVENTS

“That prioritization project management has been awesome. The whole relationship is quite tight and we’re prepared to put difficult conversations on the table and move to quick resolution,” says Mike.

At time of implementation JTI had an international travel ban in place, so there were fewer bookings than usual. Which didn’t dampen the workforce’s concerns, but was a different landscape to usual.

- Turning off Concur Travel for online travel bookings.
- Implementing in an offline capacity.
- Introducing a hub structure where travel is booked from one location for a region or multiple countries.
- Launching FCM Platform and Mobile.
- Having profiles in place – some offline and some with a HR feed.
- Ensuring preferred partners and rates from various sources were in place.

Senior alignment

There was a sense of nervousness around such a big shift. Mike and Nichola already had the endorsement of CEO Eddy Pirard, which was a major coup when it came to difficult internal discussions.

As leader of the indirect procurement team, the CFO also needed reassurance. This kick-started monthly calls between JTI’s VP of Global Indirect Procurement and

FCM’s Global Managing Director Marcus Ekland to discuss the project. It built trust and confidence in the indirect procurement team, as well as FCM and our leadership. They still talk monthly.

“From top down, the FCM team are aligned; I understand that from Marcus down we can be successful together,” says Mike.

A Wonder Woman of an account manager

“In this pressurized situation, it meant that we had to form those relationships really quickly. Having that split second where you think “I’m going to have to trust that they’re going to deal with this”. Because otherwise we’re not going to get anywhere and we’re never going to hit that deadline,” explains Nichola.

While Nichola and Mike tackled difficult internal conversations, their FCM Account Manager Ashley Icton took the reins when it came to onboarding. Traditionally, Mike and Nichola would have carried out training in each country face to face. With COVID-19 restrictions and a tight deadline; Ashley took on the task of holding 52 separate meetings with each local country contact. During a two week period she ensured each was onboarded and communicated with before the Go Live date of 1st April, on top of on-going global workshops and weekly project updates.

“Ashley was like Wonder Woman. She always knew what was happening with each country, and there was a lot going on,” says Nichola.

Jo adds, “Ashley is quite special in that she gets how the structure should work and she makes sure it works. If there were hiccups, Mike and Nichola could have absolute confidence that they could leave it with Ashley. She’s integrated into the team.”

Unwavering support from very honest conversations

Flexibility. Trust. Open.

Just some of the words used frequently by Mike, Nichola and Jo when talking about the FCM/JTI relationship.

Nichola explains, “The team absolutely over-delivered on everything that we talked about in the RFP. Usually the sales person over-promises and then when you’re implementing you find out you can’t or it’s extra costs, but that was not the case. Throughout conversations with FCM you know that people are so important and the tech was supporting the people. That’s exactly what we’re seeing the day in day out. We’ve still got challenges. But it feels like we are one team; the conversations are still very open and we’re still seeing that flexibility.”

Mike goes as far to label the team “best in class”. Matthew Heymans, Enterprise Sales Director has stayed engaged throughout the process, largely supporting the payment and expense complications of globalizing. Mike calls out Greg Fieldgate, Global Customer Implementation Manager for his attention to detail and praises the entire implementation team for “being brilliant to get us into shape”.



Result

- After just 10 weeks from the kick-off call, 52 markets went live.
- Massively engaged local markets who are building relationships with their FCM team locally.
- Enhanced collaboration and focus on VIP servicing and support for Geneva HQ supported by Ptisem, JTI's Swiss Travel Services Manager.
- Improved confidence and engagement between Mike, Nichola and internal stakeholders.
- Trusted relationship between JTI and FCM team which will only strengthen when they can meet in person.
- JTI indirect procurement team's credibility sky-rockets.
- Enhanced reporting visibility and consolidation.
- "We don't feel like a small fish with FCM" – Mike

What's next?

- Continued re-introduction of Concur Travel for online travel bookings – USA and Spain priority as bookings pick up.
- On-going work to change payment and credit terms. Mike and Nichola wanted to use corporate cards globally, which has not been possible in some markets.
- Phase two roll-out of the global program to another 21 countries including Russia, Philippines and Indonesia.
- Managing all visa and passport fulfilment through CIBT and getting away from local fixers.
- Introducing Concur Connector to sync Concur Expense and FCM Platform data.
- Data aggregation from Concur Expense over travel data held by FCM.

Then there's the matter of what JTI's travel policy looks like post-COVID. A white paper has already been created and JTI's executive committee are debating what is going to stay and what will change.

