



The Three Pillars of Corporate Travel Programme Consolidation



Are you facing the possibility of consolidating your travel programme?

If it's on your mind, then you know the idea didn't appear out of thin air. Data inconsistencies, doubling your efforts, or even a looming merger can cause consolidation to come knocking. And if you're anything like the thousands of corporate travel professionals around the world, the word "consolidation" tends to invoke ire and not inspiration. But what if we told you that consolidation is supposed to be a good thing?

Don't believe us? Then let our friends at the Oxford English Dictionary help:



Consolidation, noun.

1. the action or process of making something **stronger** or more **solid**.
2. the action or process of **combining a number of things** into a single more **effective** or **coherent** whole.



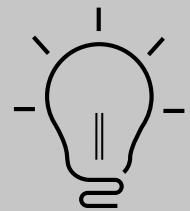
Stronger, solid, effective, coherent.... these are all words that are heavy with positive connotations; and if you approach travel programme consolidation with a focus on the positive outcomes instead of dwelling on the complex process, you'll see consolidation for what it is: an opportunity.

To make it even simpler, we have broken down travel programme consolidation into three pillars, or categories, based on the consolidations we've conducted with various clients over the years:

knowledge, effort, and organisational.



The **3** Pillars of Consolidation



KNOWLEDGE CONSOLIDATION

The process of streamlining your data and information flows, including reporting analytics, traveller details, and integrations.



EFFORT CONSOLIDATION

The process of optimising workflows to avoid various inefficiencies, including booking policies, approvals, and standard operating procedures.



ORGANISATIONAL CONSOLIDATION

The process of restructuring and rebuilding business units due to major changes like mergers and acquisitions.

Maybe **one**, or **all**, of these pillars struck a chord with you. Maybe you're still struggling to see yourself reflected in these scenarios.

Let's break down these consolidation types one by one with a bit more detail and some real-world examples.

Knowledge Consolidation

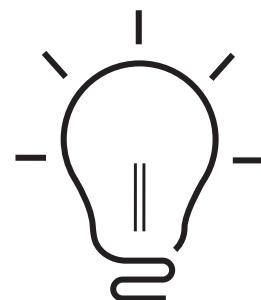
“It’s a capital mistake to theorise before one has data.”

SHERLOCK HOLMES (ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE)



Here is the cold, hard truth about data: if garbage goes in, then garbage comes out. One of the first things you need to do when adopting new technology or setting up new integrations is to clean house. And data doesn't just cover your reporting metrics – it's all your traveller profile information as well that feeds into the reporting. If John Smith has two different traveller profiles because he accidentally typed a lowercased j one time, it's going to lead to some reporting headaches (not to mention boarding pass issues). And in a world where your travel platform, booking tool, duty of care, sustainability, and governance may all be managed by separate apps, ensuring that data is flowing cleanly between each is imperative.

Take our friends at [an ecommerce website](#). Their goal was clear: cleaner data = better decision making. They were running into constant issues with a specific field in their travel platform: Senior Vice President (SVP). The problem was the field for the SVP name was free text, so if there were any misspellings data would not aggregate correctly under an SVP's name. This was solved by converting the free-text field to a dropdown and creating a failsafe so any data under incorrect SVP names would be sent directly to the booking team, allowing them to correct (i.e., consolidate) the data under the correct SVP to receive accurate reporting. FCM also deployed a translation table to clean up historical data, or, take out the trash.

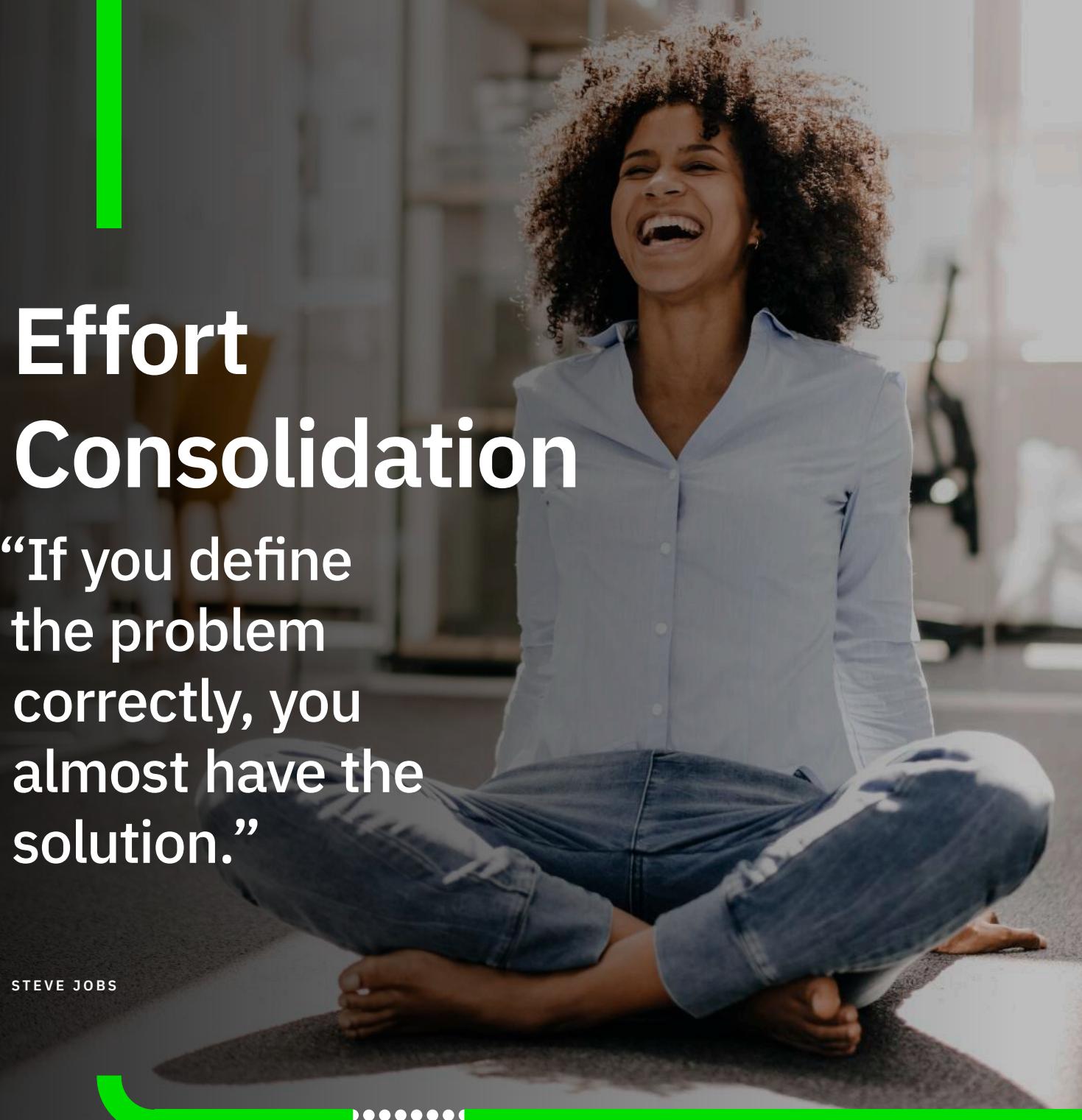


The result? \$9 million of travel spend was correctly allocated and accounted for, and an audit one year later proved the knowledge consolidation was still working.

Effort Consolidation

“If you define the problem correctly, you almost have the solution.”

STEVE JOBS



It may seem beneficial to have different vendors, agreements, or even entire TMCs for various business units or even employee personas – however, this can lead to the dreaded cycle of doubling your efforts.

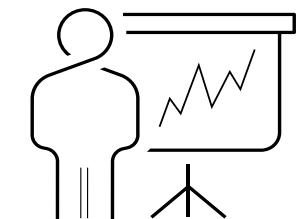
For example, maybe your Global Sustainability Officer gives a new directive for travel programmes. In a regional TMC model, you'll need to work with each TMC individually to ensure they can create a framework to support this new sustainability policy and adjust booking workflows accordingly. Let's say you're working with ten different TMCs...that's a lot of Zoom calls. and These redundant processes can also have a direct impact on employee retention, which then leads to disjointed support for your travellers. Long story short, inefficient workflows bring business to a halt.

After completing a knowledge consolidation, our friends at **Tractor Supply Company** made a startling discovery: they were netting six-figure losses due to inefficiencies with managing unused airline tickets. Once they had cleaned up their data, FCM built them a tracking solution to keep tabs on unused tickets in their system.

Employees were then made aware of the unused tickets and kept informed on ever-changing airline policies and ticket validity (which was especially helpful during the COVID-19 pandemic) and resulted in \$55,000 of unused tickets redeemed in 2019, with another \$51,000 redeemed, or refunded, in 2020. Effort was consolidated by having employees check for unused tickets first before booking new trips.

[Get the full picture here.](#)

In another amazing effort consolidation success story, a **global consumer goods manufacturer** consolidated from 95 TMCs globally to just one: us. After earning their business in three of their major markets (North America, Europe, and Northern Asia), they saw the potential of consolidating the rest of their global travel operations with FCM.



Currently, FCM is implemented with this client in 60 countries and in 2019 they reported \$7,000,000 in savings.

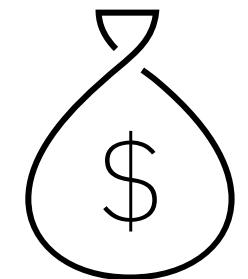
Organisational Consolidation

“Watch the little things; a small leak will sink a great ship.”

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

A business' number one goal, aside from profit, is growth. A CEO's greatest joy is to expand their company's reach or acquire more business, either with the purchase of another company or a merger with a larger one. And when large organisational shifts occur, many new considerations pop up, one major consideration being: which TMC will you use?

And that's the story of our organisational consolidation project with our friends at Charles River Laboratories. They first partnered with FCM as their TMC when they acquired a smaller biopharmaceutical company that was already using FCM's corporate travel services. Charles River chose to consolidate their entire travel programme with FCM after the acquisition, which included updated compliance policies, vendor agreements, and a renewed focus on sustainability and risk management. Prior to partnering with FCM, Charles River used a different TMC in every geographical region, resulting in high costs and booking inconsistencies.



After consolidating with FCM, Charles River saved \$907,000 in 2018 and \$1.3 million in 2019.

Our Final Word on Consolidation

Travel programme consolidation is complex, but it doesn't need to be **complicated**.

Travel programme consolidation is time-consuming, but it doesn't need to **waste time**.

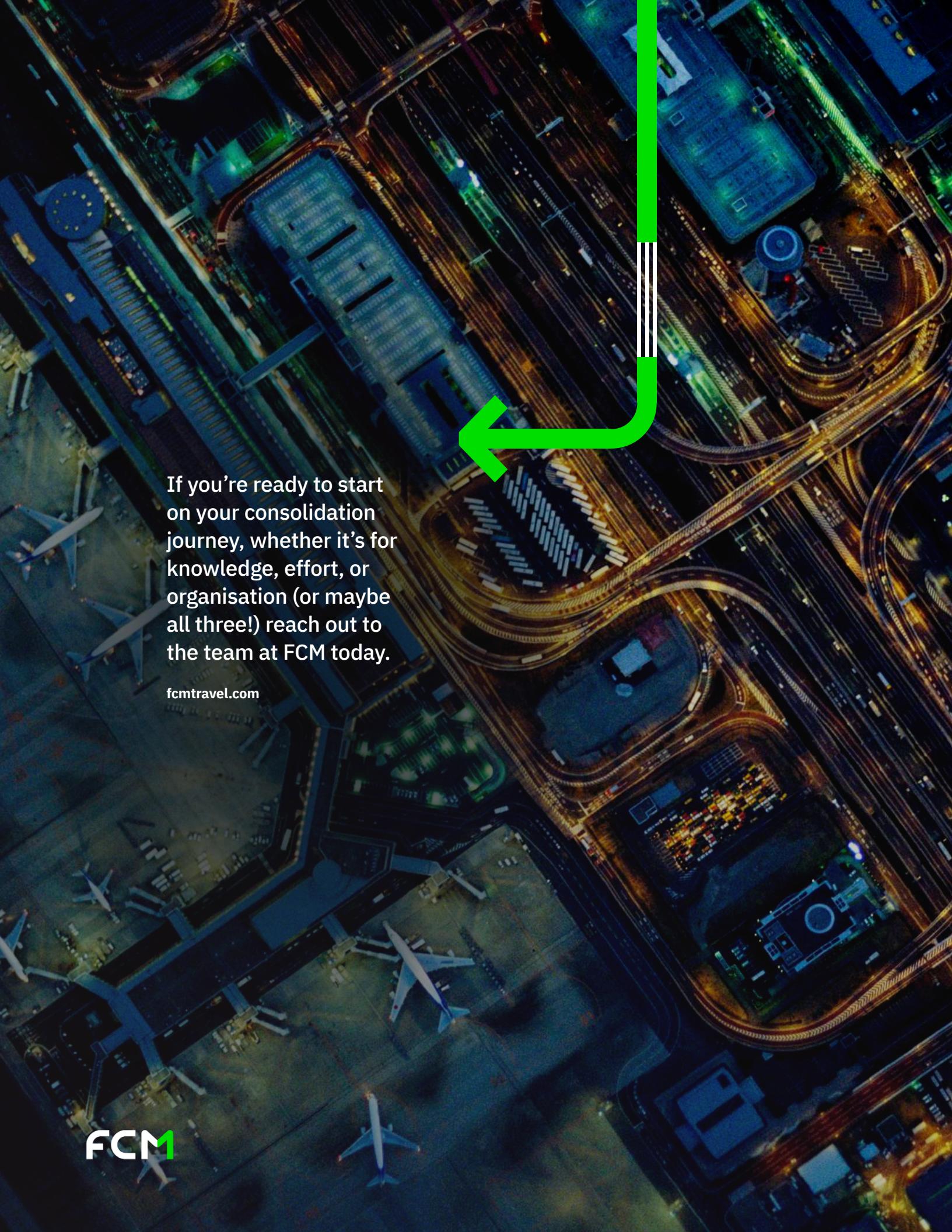
Travel programme consolidation isn't nice-to-have, it's **essential**.

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You don't need to feel like you're staring up the side of a mountain when facing an imminent consolidation, you just need that right teammate at your side.

And even though we've described three distinct types of consolidation, that doesn't mean you need to stick with just one. Many organisations see major benefits in completing a second type of consolidation after successfully implementing a first.

FCM is a proven changemaker with more than **300** multinational clients for whom we consolidated more than **\$2 billion** in travel spend. New FCM clients save an average of **10%** in their first contract year, with a mature programme saving an average of **5%** each contract year.



If you're ready to start on your consolidation journey, whether it's for knowledge, effort, or organisation (or maybe all three!) reach out to the team at FCM today.

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