

# Cost cutter

Christopher A Juneau of **Concur** tells Barry Mansfield his company has thrived by helping its customers to simplify corporate travel and expense management online.

For decades employees had no choice but to bundle up receipts, complete expense forms, and send them over to their accounting team in order to achieve reimbursement for work expenses. Staff would waste precious time filling out forms and accounting departments would spend hours double-checking the figures. Since its inception in 1993, Nasdaq-traded Concur Technologies has attempted to change all this by developing software to help companies with the automation of employee spend management.

Concur's on-demand, subscription-based services have been bolstered by a string of acquisitions over that time – including Gelco, Outtask, Captura and Seeker Software – helping the firm to a gross profit of \$85.4 million last year and \$37.8 million in the quarter ending 30 June 2008. Over the last two years, Concur's sales have increased 81%, while profits have increased 167%.

In these times of corporate belt-tightening, technology is coming to the rescue once again. The traditional expense management process is costly and time-consuming; once employees' time and effort has been factored in, the total cost of each filing is typically around \$30.

Concur has slashed this to \$19 per expense report with its software. It may sound like a niche market, but the firm's customer base, which is 7,000-strong and spread over 90 countries, includes Dell, Honeywell, and Deutsche Bank. Concur has also partnered with the likes of Cognos, ADP, BCD Travel and American Express Corporate Card.

'Our challenge today as a company is to reach out and fully tap into this market, which I judge to be less than 3% penetrated, certainly in Europe,' says Christopher A Juneau, EMEA Strategic Marketing Director at Concur. This growth potential has inspired the firm to invest

heavily in its Prague office, the centre of excellence, to open sales branches in Frankfurt, Munich, Paris, Brussels and Stockholm, and to add to its APAC offices in Hong Kong, Singapore and Sydney. 'Our expansion so far all comes down to the fact that we free employees up to focus on driving revenue, versus other non-revenue driven tasks,' adds Juneau.

'We drive costs out of the process. The acquisition of travel, whether that's for rail, a hotel stay, or air travel, has historically been treated as one process, and the

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employee getting his or her money back as a separate thing altogether. It makes sense instead to begin expense management when you begin travel booking.'

## Smart thinking

Concur's key differentiation is what Juneau calls 'smart expenses'. He explains: 'We eliminate keystrokes by the employees and highlight transactions so that a manager doesn't necessarily need to review, because everything matches up. For example, we can bring attention to the fact that an employee upgraded his hotel room. Or perhaps he was charged the wrong rate, when the company worked hard to negotiate that price down a year ago, or he was charged for Internet access,



an expense that the firm should have been exempt from.'

Juneau recalls a recent survey of organisations motivated to automate their employee spend process, which revealed that 54% of respondents felt hampered by a lack of access to sufficient data. 'That's their biggest challenge,' he says. 'But the supplier invoice process can also be automated. You have to capture the information, route it around for approval, and ultimately somebody has to get paid in 30 days. That's what we do. We have no plans to diversify into HR, or any other sector. 97% of this market is untapped so we're going to continue to focus on what we do best.'

Concur's service is entirely on-demand. 'No software to purchase, nothing to be installed on the user's desktop,' as Juneau puts it. 'Five years ago, this conversation would have been centred on FTSE 100 or Fortune 500 companies, because they were the ones that could afford the technology, the consultants to implement it and IT staff to support it. Now, with an on-demand service, 50-employee organisations can automate their processes just as easily as the multinationals. It's an equaliser in the business world, we really want to bring down the barriers to adoption of the technology.' ■

## Further information

Concur

Website: [www.concur.com](http://www.concur.com)