



Cook Medical manages APAC regional growth with financial systems innovation

The implementation of new financial systems, including Concur Expense, and the continuing innovation of that platform has aided Cook Medical's accelerated growth in the Asia-Pacific region over the past decade.

About Cook Medical

Cook Medical is an American privately-owned company with global operations that was founded in 1963 and is based in Bloomington, Indiana. The company is primarily involved in medical device manufacturing and, since it was established, Cook Medical has worked closely with physicians to develop technologies that eliminate the need for open surgery. Today Cook Medical combines medical devices, biologic materials and cellular therapies to help the world's healthcare systems deliver better outcomes more efficiently. In Asia-Pacific, Cook Medical has operations in ten countries and 1300 staff across the region.

“Concur has aided the global alignment of our business.”

Birgit Harmsworth, Cook Medical's Business Process Manager APAC

Ten Countries, Ten Different Systems

Since first establishing a presence in the Asia-Pacific region in the late 1960s, Cook Medical has undergone constant, organic growth and now has operations in ten countries across the region. Over that period, each country had developed its own financial systems and processes. Prior to the implementation of Concur, each country had been using its own highly-manual expense process, based on Excel spreadsheets and paper-based workflows.

Birgit Harmsworth, Cook Medical's Business Process Manager for APAC, explains the difficulties faced by the company in those pre-Concur days.

“Running things manually was very time consuming, and you would have different interpretations of the same rules. You ask ten different



Company Name:

Cook Medical

Solutions

- Concur® Expense
- Concur® Expenselt Pro
- Concur® Policy Audit
- Concur® Triplt Pro
- Concur® Business Intelligence

Industry

Medical Devices and Supplies

Company Size

1300

Location

Asia-Pacific

Why Concur?

- Automation of manual expense processes across ten countries
- Integration with ERP system and third party financial providers
- Alignment with Cook Medical's Americas and Europe regions
- Data analysis and reporting
- Standardised expense claim auditing
- Extension of functionality to mobile devices

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Birgit Harmsworth, Cook Medical’s Business Process Manager APAC

people and they would come up with ten different solutions from the same expense. And there was no central control; reporting on a central level was very difficult because you had to pull everything manually together.”

Cook Medical also lacked visibility on employee spend and had to rely on accounts reports and income statements, providing great difficulty in breaking that spend down to particular employees.

Immediate Benefits

Cook Medical’s first implementation of Concur for its Asia-Pacific operations was in Australia in 2007. The regional deployment of Concur Expense and Concur Business Intelligence was completed country-by-country over three years to integrate with the roll-out of a new internal financial system – Microsoft Dynamics NAV.

“Our project timeframes were dependent on the rollout of the new financial systems,” explained Harmsworth. The deployment was complicated by the fact that Cook Medical was not able to engage with one bank and one credit card provider across the region for the data connections needed, instead having to negotiate separately in each country. “We had to choose different local providers per country, so we now have six different banks across the ten countries.”

Despite this, the expense automation and reporting capabilities of Concur’s platform resulted in “immediate benefits,” said Harmsworth.

The biggest initial benefit across the business was the massive reduction in time and effort required throughout the expense report process. “It’s certainly much faster pushing a button to input data into the finance system rather than someone sitting there and manually entering it,” said Harmsworth.

Cook Medical also had a complex APAC operation, with different regional headquarters for different parts of the business, and cross-regional and cross-country functional teams. Concur brought an immediate benefit with easy approval processes, and the ability for regional management to keep track of spending, including expenses that were still being processed.

Expense tracking has been improved by giving the company far greater visibility on spending as it happens. For example, all Cook Medical sales representatives – one of the biggest spending groups in the business – have been issued with an iPad. Coupled with the user-friendly Concur mobile app, that has led to a rapid increase in expenses being inputted at the time they are incurred, rather than at the end of the month when expense reports are due.

“You can report on everything that has been spent, whether it’s completed, processed or waiting approval. It’s all there in the system. We were able to determine our top spenders, our top employees in terms of travelling, and we can benchmark certain people, roles and departments against each other. These are all things that we couldn’t do before.”

“Concur is used on a global level to compare travel expenses by countries and regions, helping our HQ understand other regions, and where and how the spend is made. Concur helps our travel and event organisers to find out how much we have spent with,



for example, the Hilton Hotel group in the region, so they can renegotiate the contracts. It helps with identifying our major airlines so we can get better contracts and conditions.”

Cook Medical has grown from approximately 500 to 1300 staff in APAC in the past ten years, and has also become increasingly globally-aligned over that period. “If we would have had the same complexity ten years ago, it would have been a very difficult thing to handle. Concur has aided the global alignment of our business,” said Harmsworth.

Taking the Pain Out of Audit

More recently, Cook Medical has embraced enterprise mobility with the roll out of Concur Tript and Concur Expenselt, and has also been using the Concur Audit Service since 2013.

The medical industry is one of the most tightly regulated with regards to financial practices, so it is critical for Cook Medical to have the reporting and auditing capabilities provided by Concur.

“Anything to do with doctors and healthcare professionals – entertainment, any specific payment, proctoring – has to be very strictly approved, organised and reported on. Without Concur, this level of reporting would not be possible.”

While Cook Medical has multiple levels of internal auditing and expense reviews, Concur Audit has resulted in significant time savings and taken the pain out of the process. Every expense claim goes through the external service Concur provides, highlighting any non-compliant expense items, with all reports sent straight to the manager with the Concur auditor’s comments on it for the managers to deal with any issues directly. Concur’s service is completely objective and focuses on compliance and adherence to policy, allowing Cook Medical managers to spend more time dealing with the exceptions and respond to audit findings.

As a result, managers are better able to identify bad practices and more effectively enforce change in employee behaviour. For example, since the introduction of Concur Audit, missing receipt exceptions across the region have reduced from 50 percent to 20 percent.

Concur Audit also provides support for multiple languages. With Cook Medical staff submitting reports from ten different countries with different languages, it used to be very difficult for the internal team to review all the receipts and claims effectively. The auditors’ findings can now be presented in a preferred language for both approvers and Cook Medical’s financial staff, enabling a more efficient review process.

“It highlights for the approver what is wrong or missing on a report. In APAC, we hold the approver responsible for anything on the report. With Concur Audit, they can flag all the issues they find, so the managers can spend their time looking at the exceptions rather than looking

at every single expense item. It's mostly about time-saving, but also allows us to look at which countries have the most missing receipts, and we can take action to rectify these issues and reinforce the rules on a country-by-country basis," said Harmsworth.

Embracing Enterprise Mobility

Cook Medical has undertaken a limited roll out of Concur Expenselt Pro, with its main benefit so far experienced by Australian domestic travellers. Expenselt's capability to itemise traveller's hotel bills has taken away a major pain point for users.

Concur Triplt Pro has been in use for three years at Cook Medical, with the key goal to make the individual user's travel more convenient. Everyone who joins Cook Medical is encouraged to use the app.

"Every time I go away, I cannot go away without Triplt," said Harmsworth. "It monitors my trip, it monitors my flights. If anything is delayed, I get my emails and if anything is cancelled I can get support via Triplt to find out what other alternative flights are around and how many seats are available on those flights. Sometimes, I can go up to a transfer desk and I can tell the people more than they can find out."

"Plus, my husband can keep track of me because I can put all my trips on his iPad so he knows where I am. It makes the whole management of the trip easy. There's no paperwork required, you just take your Triplt app with you. Everything is in one place. All I need is an eTicket: the rest is on my phone."

About Concur

Concur, a part of SAP, is the leading provider of spend management solutions and services in the world, helping companies of all sizes transform the way they manage spend so they can focus on what matters most. Through Concur's open platform, the entire travel and expense ecosystem of customers, suppliers, and developers can access and extend Concur's T&E cloud. Concur's systems adapt to individual employee preferences and scale to meet the needs of companies from small to large.

[Learn more at concur.com.au](http://concur.com.au)

