

DATA-DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION

How PwC Italy achieved 91% online lodging program adoption through structured, automated, and insight-based lodging management

15%

**HOTEL SPEND
OPTIMIZATION**

↑91%

ONLINE ADOPTION

>20,000

**TRANSACTION SHIFT
IN ANNUAL BOOKINGS
MOVED ONLINE**

↓50%

AGENCY FEES

~10%

**TOTAL SPEND
RECOVERY VIA
VAT RECLAIM**

ABOUT PWC ITALY

Industry:

Professional Services

Employees: 7,500+

Annual Travel Volume:

>20,000 hotel bookings/year

Location:

Italy, with international operations

Key Objectives:

1. Regain visibility over hotel spend
2. Improve traveler satisfaction and policy adoption
3. Enable VAT recovery and reduce agency cost
4. Build a compliant and scalable travel structure to support business growth

Travel Ecosystem Setup:

SAP Concur (OBT), HRS, Cispina

Covered Lodging Segments:

Transient hotel stays

Program Design:

Digitally enabled, employee-driven, policy-aligned

INITIAL SITUATION

From a Fragmented Landscape to the Need for Structure

In 2013–2014, PwC Italy managed travel in a highly decentralized way. Around 2,000 professionals traveled frequently, often booking at the last minute and outside of any centralized process. Travel was largely left to personal initiative, with little oversight and limited tools.

- Hotel spend was scattered across expense reports and agency bookings
- Travel policy was hard to enforce and nearly impossible to monitor
- Procurement lacked structure — negotiated hotels were inconsistently used
- Employees faced time-consuming and complex booking flows and low-quality service.

This approach was manageable at small scale. But as PwC prepared for growth, it became clear that transformation was essential.

KEY CHALLENGES

- **Fragmented hotel spend:** ~40% of bookings were outside agency systems
- **Lack of centralized data:** no visibility into most-used hotels or total costs
- **Primarily offline booking:** high manual effort, low traveler satisfaction
- **Poor compliance:** difficult to enforce travel policies or monitor behavior
- **No VAT recovery:** missing out on tax savings due to unstructured payments
- **High costs:** manual bookings led to excessive agency fees and inefficiencies

HRS SOLUTION

End-to-end from procurement to booking to reimbursement

To resolve these challenges, PwC Italy partnered with HRS to drive a digital transformation of its hotel program — from fragmented and reactive, to streamlined, data-informed, and scalable.

The solution focused on four key areas:

→ Centralized Booking

A fully integrated platform within SAP Concur, allowing travelers to book policy-compliant hotels with global coverage and pre-negotiated rates and increasing online program adoption by 91%.

→ Automated Insights

Standardized reporting across departments enabled monthly tracking of adoption and performance, replacing guesswork with data.

→ Employee Empowerment

Policy-compliant self-booking put users in control, improving experience and accountability — while reducing load on the agency.

→ Integrated Payments

Central billing was introduced to automate payments and efficiently manage invoices. Paired with thorough audit and data enrichment, this enabled unlocking full compliance and ~10% VAT recovery while consolidating data at the source.

KEY RESULTS OF THE PARTNERSHIP

To meet PwC Italy's challenges, HRS deployed a fully integrated solution — from procurement through to payment — tailored to the firm's high-volume, fast-paced consulting environment. The outcome: measurable improvement across all critical KPIs.

HRS brought structure and transparency to PwC Italy's travel program. By combining deep operational expertise with scalable tech, the partnership unlocked:

- Clear visibility into spend and supplier performance
- Automated, policy-compliant booking for employees
- Real-time data and monthly dashboards for travel management
- Tax savings through VAT recovery
- Greater employee satisfaction and ownership

Together, PwC and HRS built a fully compliant travel program that optimize savings and enhance traveler satisfaction, the one that is ready to scale — and to lead.



"Technology is an enabler — but it needs to be paired with deep operational experience. HRS offered both."

— Gianluca Ceresa, Head of Procurement, PwC Italy

"When people are empowered to make smart decisions — and given the right tools — satisfaction goes up, and so does efficiency. It's a win-win."