

Case Study

How World Travel Holdings cut reconciliation costs by 77%.



The Challenge

World Travel Holdings UK (WTH) is one of the UK's largest and fastest-growing multi-brand cruise travel distributors, founded in 2008 and based in Chorley, Lancashire. Operating as a standalone business, WTH runs three cruise brands – Cruise118, SixStarCruises, and RiverVoyages, spanning award-winning mainstream cruise retail, specialist luxury cruising, and dedicated river cruise expertise.

A critical business process – bookings reconciliation, had long been outsourced to a third party at a cost of approximately **£100,000** per year, plus around **£30,000** in annual capital expenditure. The system was fragile, slow to change, and required paid support tickets for even minor fixes.

That service came with significant drawbacks:

- Slow **change processes**, **high support costs**, and **limited ability** to onboard new suppliers

- Operational expenditure of around **£100,000** per year

- **Frequent failures** that forced staff into time-consuming manual workarounds

- **No autonomy**: every adjustment required a paid support ticket

- Annual capital expenditure of approximately **£30,000** for updates each time a supplier changed invoice formats



The Ambition

WTH wanted to change this. Their goals were clear:



There was also a hard commercial deadline. The third-party contract renewal was due within 12 months, creating a narrow window to design, build, and prove a viable in-house alternative.

Without a proven replacement in place, WTH would have no choice but to renew an expensive contract for a brittle system that was already holding the business back.

The stakes couldn't have been higher. WTH needed a partner who could not only replicate the existing process, but re-engineer it for resilience, long-term scalability, and complete operational ownership. They needed modern automation, transparent data flows, and a solution flexible enough to evolve with the business – all delivered within a tight commercial window.



The existing reconciliation system had become a constant source of friction.

It was error-prone and brittle breaking almost monthly when supplier documents changed format.

It couldn't adapt to change onboarding new suppliers or tweaking process rules was slow and cumbersome.

WTH had no autonomy, every fix or adjustment required a billable support ticket.

Support was slow and expensive with long response times and rising consulting fees.

When the system failed, reconciliations were delayed or incomplete, forcing staff into manual workarounds and distracting them from serving customers

WTH were paying a premium for a system they couldn't control, and that couldn't keep pace with their business.



The Moment of Truth

There was no single catastrophic failure. Instead, it was a steady accumulation of frustration: monthly issues, mounting costs, and a growing sense that the business was being held hostage by its own process.

The turning point came during an “Art of the Possible” workshop with Wanstor, exploring how Microsoft Power Platform could be used for process automation. During that session, WTH realised something critical: the reconciliation process they had assumed required specialist third-party management could be rebuilt in-house – with greater control, better resilience, and at a fraction of the cost.

With contract renewal approaching, the choice became clear: **continue paying around £130k** a year for a system that frustrated them – or **invest in owning the solution** themselves.

Previously, onboarding new suppliers was prohibitively expensive because each supplier required dedicated capital investment whenever invoice templates changed. This meant only high-volume suppliers were viable to automate. With the new technology, adding new suppliers no longer requires any Capex and can be enabled quickly and at negligible operational cost, opening the door to far wider automation coverage.

“The new technology has enabled us to automate reconciliation for more suppliers. Previously, this was prohibitive for relatively lower booking volume suppliers as it would incur a large Capex cost.”

Alex Dixon, Business Solutions Director



The Intervention



The project began with process discovery and definition, working alongside WTH to map the existing reconciliation workflow, identify pain points, and define how the new process should operate. This fed into solution design, translating requirements into a practical architecture with clear scope and realistic cost projections. A proof of concept was built early to validate the approach and surface potential blockers before committing to the full build.



The solution was then built, tested, and taken live within the 12-month window, exceeding the 6-month confidence milestone that enabled WTH to terminate their third-party contract.



The outcome is an AI-powered reconciliation engine. Supplier invoices and booking documents are analysed using artificial intelligence to extract key data, which is then automatically matched against WTH's booking records. Where discrepancies are found – such as mismatched passenger names, incorrect travel dates, price variances, or hotel booking errors – the system flags these as exceptions for WTH staff to review and resolve. There's no black box and no vendor dependency; the team can see exactly what's happening and why.



The WTH team were fully trained to manage the system themselves, handling exceptions and adjusting process parameters without external support. Since go-live, Wanstor continues to partner with WTH on process improvements and new automation opportunities.

World Travel Holdings (WTH) now runs its bookings reconciliation process in-house – at a fraction of the cost, with zero system failures, and complete operational control. What was once a brittle, expensive outsourced system is now a robust, AI-powered reconciliation engine owned and controlled entirely by WTH.

Full process ownership

WTH teams manage exceptions and adjust process rules independently

Delivered ahead of confidence milestone

enabling WTH to terminate their third-party contract early and on budget

77% reduction in operating costs

from ~£130,000 per year down to £2,500 per month (around £30,000 annually)

Zero system issues since go-live

no firefighting, no failed reconciliations, no dependency on third-party support

Faster, more reliable reconciliation

no processing delays, improved reporting accuracy and visibility

Increased first-time automation rates for packaging by over 50%

significantly reducing manual workload for the Customer Service Team and resulting in customers receiving their travel documents much earlier, improving their overall experience.



Why Wanstor

WTH had deep operational knowledge of the process, but not the in-house capability to design and build the solution.

They needed a partner who could:



Translate operational pain into a working technical solution



Help define the right approach – not just execute a spec



Design something practical, resilient, and cost-effective

From the initial discovery session, WTH had confidence that Wanstor understood their problem and could deliver a realistic solution within budget and timescale.

What set Wanstor apart was the way of working:

1. Clear governance – every change was safe, audited and communicated
2. Deep expertise in managing & modernising complex IT environments
3. Open communication, flexibility & collaboration with internal teams
4. A practical, care-focused approach that prioritised continuity

Have you got critical processes costing you too much and *still* breaking?

If you're stuck with brittle third-party automation, slow change, and paid tickets for every tweak, we can help you bring it in-house – with clear governance, practical design, and a solution your team can own. Let's talk.

Book a discovery session with Wanstor