



Locomote – a home grown, travel tech success story



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Melbourne startup Locomote has taken full advantage of a gap in the travel planning market by developing a platform that has quickly won over its corporate target market.

Overnight success stories are the exception rather than the rule in the high tech world, but Melbourne software start-up [Locomote](#) has joined their ranks with a corporate travel management platform that's found favour with a string of multi-national customers.

Launched in 2014 by cousins Ross and David Fastuca, the Locomote system helps businesses reduce the cost of managing work-related travel by automating the process of organising, approving, and managing trips and travel-related expense claims.

It's a proposition that has been given a warm welcome by Locomote's target market. Two years in, the firm's customer list includes a host of household-name organisations, including [Japan Airlines](#), [Allianz](#) and [World Vision](#).

Ross Fastuca, who serves as Locomote's chief information officer, puts the ready reception down to the fact that the system is aimed at an area of the corporate market which was poorly serviced by travel software suppliers in the past.

While the internet has revolutionised the leisure market and made organising vacations a simple and stress-free affair, corporate travel management remained a neglected niche – and an area where companies could realise significant savings, according to Fastuca.

Locomote's swift success has seen it expand from a two-man, home-based affair to a thriving local enterprise employing 65 developers and operations staff, based in the inner Melbourne suburb of St Kilda. On current growth projections, Locomote's headcount is expected to exceed 100 by 2017.

Many staff in the firm's young team have been drawn from the alumni ranks of local tertiary institutions. These include [Melbourne](#), [La Trobe](#) and [Monash Universities](#) and the [Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology](#), all of which offer internationally recognised undergraduate and higher degrees in information technology and computer science.

Investors, as well as customers, have been quick to register the potential of the Locomote system. Respected Melbourne high tech and healthcare identities Philip Weinman and Dr Clive Sher mentored the Fastuca cousins through the product's development phase and were foundation investors and directors in the firm.

A serial entrepreneur, Weinman founded the highly successful 1980s computer services consultancy HiSoft, which achieved a turnover of A\$300 million within three years of inception, prior to its sale to National Mutual. Co-investor Dr Sher has built and sold a string of medical and healthcare-related enterprises.

In late 2014, the heavyweight duo was joined by US-based travel technology giant [Travelport](#), which took a stake in the firm. A year later, Travelport upped its holding to become Locomote's majority owner.

Listed on the New York Stock Exchange, the company runs reservation and payment systems for hotels and airlines. It has a presence in 180 countries and turned over \$US2.2 billion last year.

The market reach of this powerful parent will be leveraged to advantage as Locomote begins turning its attention to lucrative corporate markets outside of Australia.

Expect to see this Victorian grown software house standing tall on the world stage in 2017, Fastuca says.