# CONDOR AIRLINES

Establishing Demand and Portfolio Management Across the IT Department

THE SITUATION

## Growing Demand, No Shared Process

The Condor IT department supported a growing number of initiatives, projects, operational requests, and system improvements across the organisation. While individual teams managed their own projects, there was no standardised process for handling incoming demand at department level.

Requests arrived through emails, Microsoft Teams messages, meetings, direct conversations, and personal contacts. Different stakeholders approached different teams, often with varying levels of information and urgency. New requests frequently appeared at short notice, making planning and prioritisation difficult.

The challenge was not a lack of commitment or delivery capability within the teams. The challenge was the absence of a common process for evaluating, prioritising, and tracking demand across the IT department.

As a result:

- Strategic initiatives and operational requests competed for the same resources
- Priorities were often unclear
- Teams were regularly informed about new initiatives at short notice
- Business stakeholders had limited transparency regarding prioritisation decisions
- Dependencies between teams were difficult to identify early
- IT leadership lacked a consolidated view of demand across the department
- Resource planning was largely reactive

Frustration existed on both sides. Business departments wanted greater transparency and predictability, while IT teams struggled to balance incoming requests with ongoing commitments and operational responsibilities.

THE OBJECTIVE

## Creating Structure and Transparency

The Director of IT recognised the need for a structured approach to managing incoming demand and creating visibility across the IT department.

The objective was not simply to introduce another process or tool. The goal was to establish a practical operating model that would:

- Create a single entry point for larger requests and initiatives
- Improve transparency across the IT portfolio
- Enable consistent prioritisation of incoming demand
- Create visibility into capacity and dependencies

- Improve communication between business departments and IT
- Support more informed planning and decision-making

To support this initiative, I was brought in as a SAFe and Lean Portfolio Management expert to help design the framework, adapt it to Condor's environment, and guide the implementation together with the internal team.

THE APPROACH

## Building the Demand Management Process

The work was carried out collaboratively with IT leadership, team leads, and Jira administrators.

The first step was understanding how demand currently entered the department and where the biggest challenges existed.

Together we designed a structured demand management process that provided a consistent path from request submission through evaluation, prioritisation, implementation, and tracking.

A dedicated Demand Management workflow was introduced, defining:

- How requests would be submitted
- Which information was required
- How requests would be analysed
- How prioritisation decisions would be made
- Which roles would be involved at each stage
- How progress would be communicated

The objective was not to create bureaucracy, but to create transparency and consistency.

## Defining Demand and Mini-Demand

One recurring challenge was that not every request required the same level of review.

To address this, two categories were introduced:

### Demand

Requests requiring significant investment, additional resources, cross-team collaboration, new software procurement, vendor changes, or strategic decision-making.

Examples included:

- Strategic projects
- Large system implementations
- Cross-department initiatives
- Architecture-impacting changes

### Mini-Demand

Smaller requests that could be managed within existing budgets and team structures.

Examples included:

- Business-as-usual improvements
- Operational tasks
- Technical debt reduction
- Smaller enhancements
- Defect resolution

This distinction helped simplify decision-making and ensured that larger initiatives received the visibility and discussion they required.

## Introducing Portfolio Reviews and Prioritisation

A recurring review process was introduced to create greater visibility across incoming demand.

On a monthly basis, IT leadership and team representatives reviewed new requests, discussed priorities, evaluated dependencies, and assessed capacity considerations.

In addition, quarterly portfolio planning and alignment sessions were established to review upcoming initiatives, discuss longer-term priorities, and create visibility across teams.

These sessions created a shared understanding of what work was coming, which initiatives were most important, and where dependencies or capacity constraints existed.

For the first time, incoming demand could be reviewed within a common framework rather than being addressed through individual conversations and escalation paths.

## Designing the Portfolio Structure in Jira

To support transparency and reporting, a new Jira structure was designed and implemented across the department.

The structure connected three levels of work:

**Portfolio Level**

Used to manage strategic initiatives and Portfolio Epics.

**Program Level**

Used to manage Features and ART Enablers that supported larger initiatives.

**Team Level**

Used by delivery teams to manage Stories, Tasks, Bugs, and day-to-day implementation work.

This structure created traceability from strategic initiatives through to delivery activities and provided visibility across all levels of planning and execution.

An estimation matrix was also implemented to provide a consistent approach to sizing demand and initiatives. By aggregating effort estimates from team level to portfolio level, it enabled improved visibility into overall workload, supported prioritisation discussions, and helped IT leadership make more informed planning and capacity decisions. Workflows, issue types, permissions, filtering options, and reporting structures were configured to support the new operating model.

## Defining Roles and Responsibilities

Successful demand management required clear ownership. Roles and responsibilities were therefore defined across the demand management process, including demand intake, coordination, prioritisation, capacity assessment, and implementation support. This created greater clarity around decision-making and accountability throughout the lifecycle of a request.

## Training and Enablement

Introducing a new process alone would not have been sufficient.

To support adoption, all eight IT teams received training covering:

- Agile ways of working
- Scrum and Kanban practices
- SAFe fundamentals
- Jira usage
- Roles and responsibilities
- New portfolio structures and workflows

In addition, a multiplier community was established.

Selected individuals received deeper enablement and acted as local experts within their teams. They supported colleagues, provided feedback, and helped ensure that knowledge remained within the organisation after the initial implementation.

A Jira library and training materials were also created to support long-term learning and onboarding.

### WHAT WAS ESTABLISHED

The engagement resulted in the implementation of a structured Demand and Portfolio Management capability across the IT department.

Key elements included:

- A dedicated Demand Management process
- A single entry channel for larger requests and initiatives
- Demand and Mini-Demand classification criteria
- Monthly demand review and prioritisation sessions
- Quarterly portfolio planning and alignment sessions
- A portfolio structure connecting Portfolio, Program, and Team levels
- Standardised Jira workflows and reporting structures
- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Optional Agile and Jira training sessions for interested participants
- A multiplier community supporting long-term adoption
- Improved visibility across demand, priorities, and dependencies

The foundation was established for managing demand in a more transparent, consistent, and scalable way as the organisation continued to evolve.

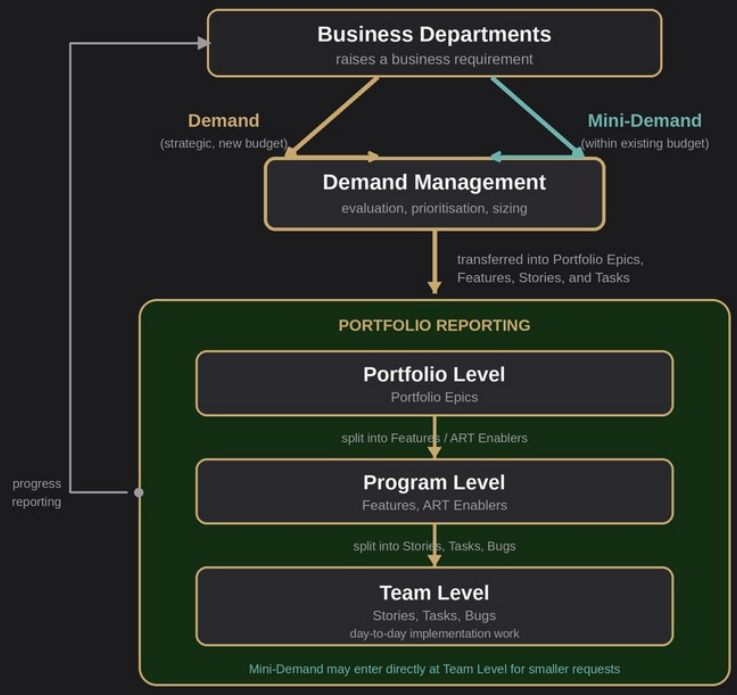


***Figure: Demand Management Workflow***

## CONCLUSION

The initiative was not focused solely on tooling or process design. It was about creating visibility and structure across a growing IT organisation.

By introducing a common demand management process, portfolio transparency, recurring prioritisation reviews, and organisation-wide enablement, Condor IT gained a clearer understanding of incoming demand, priorities, dependencies, and delivery commitments.

The result was a practical operating model that provided greater transparency for both IT and business stakeholders while supporting more informed planning and prioritisation decisions across the department.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
>
> As organisations grow, managing demand becomes as important as managing delivery. Establishing a structured approach to intake, prioritisation, visibility, and alignment helps ensure that resources are focused on the initiatives that matter most while providing transparency for both IT teams and business stakeholders.