

CASE STUDY

JIRA ALIGN: COST-EFFECTIVE SCALING AT EVERY LEVEL

CONTEXT

A US Department of Defense (DoD) client was undertaking a large transformation effort to modernize technology, improve day-to-day team agility, develop program-level solutions, and align portfolio-level technology investment decisions with ground conditions. Pockets of teams were already experimenting with agile tools like Jira and needed to take the next step to align their work to the portfolio (Lean Portfolio Management).

CLIENT CHALLENGES

Existing “home-grown” Program/Portfolio Management tools were slow to adapt to changing conditions, frequently required double data entry, and lacked integration with Jira. The day-to-day work in Jira was often mis-aligned to investment plans, which were misaligned to ground conditions. These conditions undermined regular status reports that were not reflecting real-time progress and were a drain on personnel time. The custom solutions and double data entry also contributed to high operational overhead and increased data entry errors.

SOLUTION

LSA Digital advised its DoD client to select Jira Align for its built-in integration capabilities with the already widely-deployed Jira, ability to support Lean Portfolio Management, and scale to large enterprise solution program management (see [LSA’s Application Portfolio Rationalization](#) case study). Jira Align provides enhanced visibility, strategic alignment, and reduced costs compared to previous custom-built systems. The cost per user was reduced from ~\$3,100 to ~\$1,000.

Partnering with Atlassian, we integrated Jira Align with Jira, enabling data synchronization and providing a “single source of truth” for better data to make program- and portfolio-level decisions.

SNAPSHOT



Lean Portfolio Mgmt. /
Application Integration



Department of Defense



 Jira Align

PAIN POINTS

- Inefficient and late reporting
- Lack of integration
- High custom solution costs
- Wasted personnel hours

RESULTS

- Reduced per-user costs from \$3,100 to \$1,000
- Saved ~40 hours team reporting per month
- Program Transparency with live aggregate Jira reporting, enhancing transparency and alignment
- Portfolio Insights by leveraging quality, consolidated program data

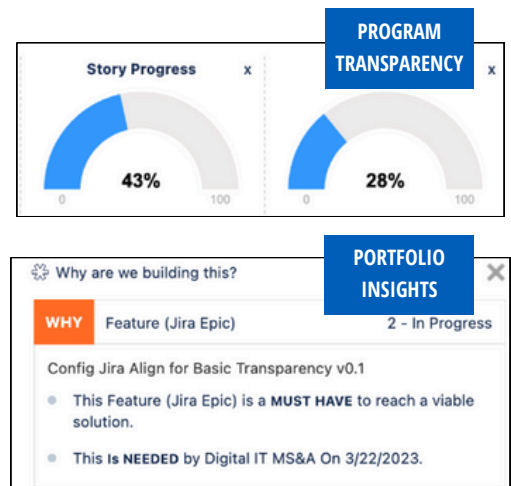
IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

We used a Start Small, Scale Up (SSSU) approach to maximize learning and adoption (see our [SSSU Micro-Learning & Hands-On case study](#) for more about the approach).

- **Configuration & Training:** We started with essential features and gradually scaled up. This method allowed the organization to adapt to the new system without overwhelming users with too many changes at once. By focusing initially on key functionalities - e.g., basic transparency & alignment at the program level - the organization could quickly realize benefits and build confidence in the system and data, setting the stage for further adoption and portfolio insights.
- **Training and Support:** We provided role-based training to ensure that all users, from executives to delivery team members, understood how to use Jira Align effectively. This training was essential for promoting user adoption and ensuring that the organization could fully leverage the tool's capabilities. Ongoing support and guidance were also provided to address any issues and optimize the system's configuration as needed.

RESULTS

- **Program Transparency:** Jira/Align integration allowed teams to continue using multiple security enclave-separated Jira environments for day-to-day tasks, while benefiting from automated, cross-program transparency alignment.
- **Portfolio Insights:** Combining strategic themes / intent with real-time data allows data to be summarized up and provides answers to both teams and leadership, such as “Why are we building this?” and “When is it needed?”
- **Automated Reporting:** Before Jira Align, monthly "Quad Reports" were manually generated in PowerPoint, often resulting in outdated data by the time of presentation. With Jira Align, teams can access real-time data during status meetings, saving teams over 40 man-hours per month.



WORDS OF ADVICE

Implementing Jira Align requires careful planning and a “Start Small, Scale Up” approach. Start with essential features and gradually scale up to ensure smooth adoption, configuring the platform to fit your organization's context and processes. Focus on small goals first, such as basic transparency for a few teams, then validate the incoming Jira data and adjust agile practices / tool usage standards to ensure quality data is collected for program transparency metrics. Then, “mine” the data for key portfolio insights.