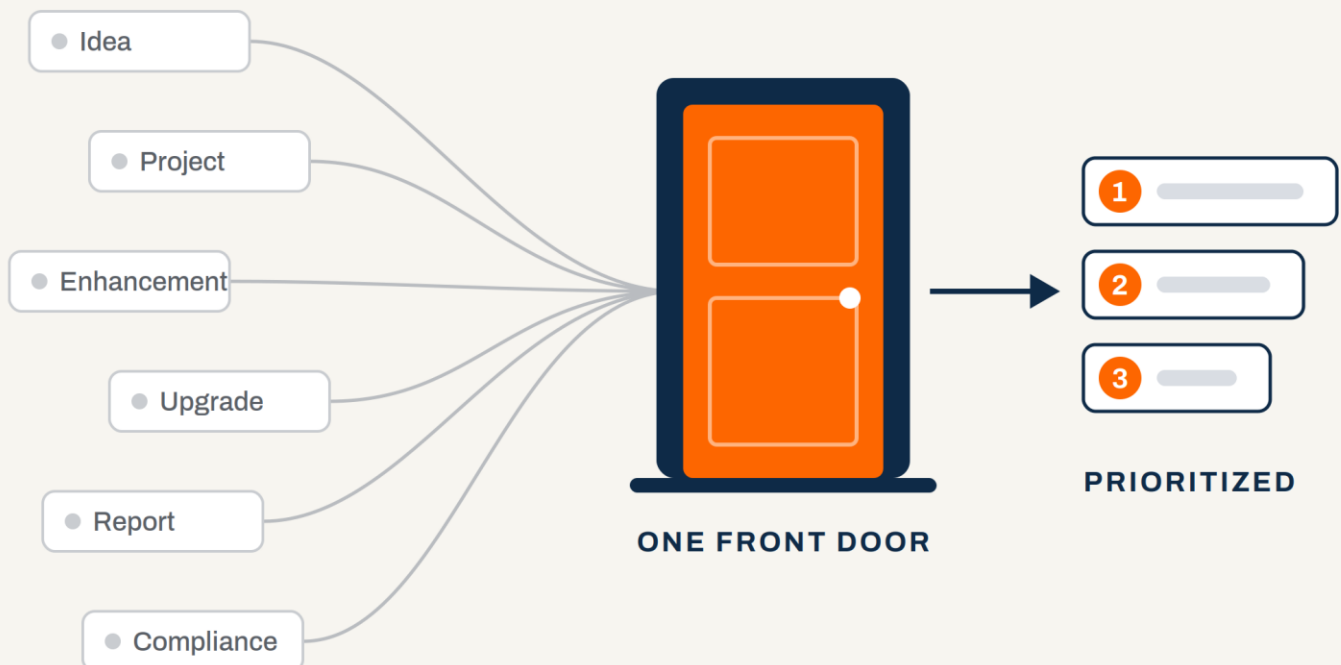


IT DEMAND MANAGEMENT · PMO GUIDE

Demand Management 101

An eBook on building a single front door for every project request

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INTRODUCTION

IT demand management: one front door for every project request

Every project your organization delivers starts as a project request. When requests arrive through emails, hallway conversations and steering-committee side deals, IT commits to work it cannot staff, and the most important ideas wait behind the loudest ones.

This eBook shows how to build an IT demand management process that replaces those side doors with one front door: one place to submit project requests, one way to qualify them, one way to decide. It is written for CIOs, PMO leaders and transformation executives who want a project intake and prioritization process that is simple enough for requesters to use and rigorous enough for the portfolio board to trust, as the first building block of project portfolio management (PPM).

What you will get

- A minimum viable project intake form you can deploy in weeks, not months
- A triage flow from idea to approved project, with clear service levels
- A project prioritization scoring model you can adapt to your strategy
- The PMO governance roles, demand management KPIs and 90-day plan to make it stick

THE CORE IDEA

A front door does not slow demand down. It makes demand visible, so the organization can say yes to the right things faster.

Inside this eBook

- 01 Why IT demand management needs a front door
- 02 What is demand management (and what it isn't)?
- 03 Designing the project intake process
- 04 Project request triage and qualification
- 05 Project prioritization and scoring
- 06 Linking project demand to capacity and budget
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- How PPM-Factory supports demand management

CHAPTER 1

Why IT demand management needs a front door

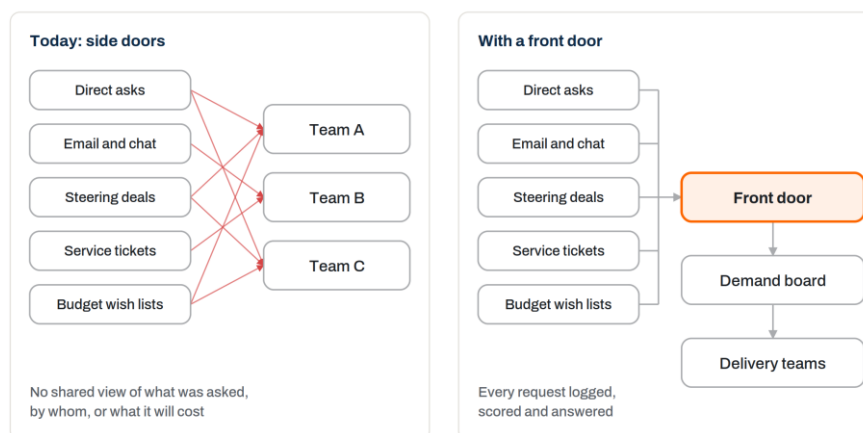
Without a single entry point, the portfolio is shaped by who asks loudest, not by what matters most. Most IT organizations do not lack ideas; they lack a shared view of what has been asked, by whom, and why.

The side doors

Requests reach IT through many channels at once:

- **Direct asks** to a favourite architect or project manager
- **Email and chat threads** that never become a formal request
- **Steering-committee side deals** made without a capacity check
- **Service tickets** that quietly grow into projects
- **Budget-cycle wish lists** submitted once a year, then forgotten

Side doors scatter demand; one front door makes it visible



The same five channels can stay open; what changes is that every request passes through one door before it reaches a delivery team.

What it costs

Symptom	What you see	What it costs
Shadow projects	Work under way that no portfolio report shows	Capacity consumed before approved work starts
Overloaded teams	Too many projects in parallel, constant context switching	Longer delivery times on everything
Political prioritization	Decisions revisited in every meeting	Lost trust between business and IT
No visibility	Nobody can say how many requests are waiting	The board decides without the full picture
Duplicate demand	Two departments funding the same solution	Wasted budget and conflicting systems

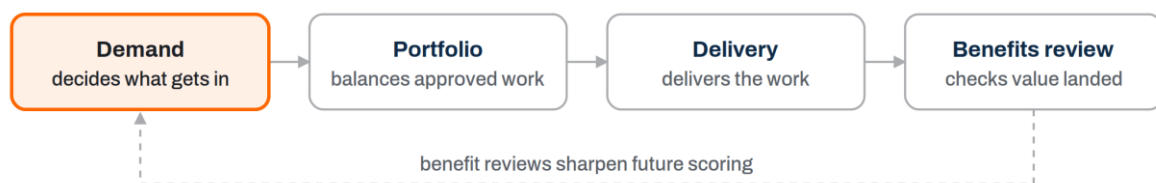
CHAPTER 2

What is demand management (and what it isn't)?

IT demand management is the process of capturing, qualifying and prioritizing every project request and every request for IT effort or investment, so that only work the organization can fund and staff enters the project portfolio.

It sits upstream of project portfolio management (PPM). Portfolio management decides how to balance what has been approved; demand management decides what gets in. In most organizations, the PMO owns the demand management process.

Demand management decides what enters the portfolio



What benefit reviews learn about past projects flows back into how new requests are scored.

What counts as project demand

Request type	Typical example	Usual path
Idea	"Could we use AI to classify supplier invoices?"	Light qualification, then business case if promising
Project	New ERP module, data platform, site rollout	Full scoring and portfolio decision
Enhancement	New report, workflow change in an existing system	Fast track if under an effort threshold
Run / compliance	Licence renewal, regulatory change, end-of-life upgrade	Mandatory, but still sized and scheduled

Enhancements and run requests matter because they consume the same people as projects. Leaving them out of demand management is how capacity disappears without a decision.

What it is not

- **Not a bureaucratic gate.** A good front door answers small requests in days, not quarters.
- **Not a ticketing system.** Tickets track incidents and service requests; demand management decides investments.
- **Not the annual budget cycle.** Demand arrives all year, so qualification must run continuously, with funding reviewed on a regular cadence.

CHAPTER 3

Designing the project intake process

A front door has three parts: one channel, one form and one owner. Get these right and most side doors close on their own.

One channel

Every request, from any department, enters through the same place. Other channels are redirected, politely and consistently: "Happy to look at it. Please log it in the demand portal so it gets scored." The rule only holds if leadership follows it too, including for its own ideas.

One project intake form, kept short

The first form should take a requester less than ten minutes. Ask only what is needed to triage; detail comes later, if the request survives qualification.

Field	Why it matters	Required at intake
Title and short description	Lets triage understand the ask in one read	Yes
Business problem or opportunity	Separates the need from the requested solution	Yes
Requester and sponsor	Someone must own the value	Yes
Request type	Routes the request to the right path	Yes
Strategic objective supported	Links demand to strategy from day one	Yes
Desired timing and any hard deadline	Flags regulatory or contractual dates	Yes
Rough size (S / M / L)	Sets expectations before estimation	Yes
Expected benefits	Feeds scoring later	Optional
Affected systems and departments	Spots dependencies and duplicates	Optional

One owner

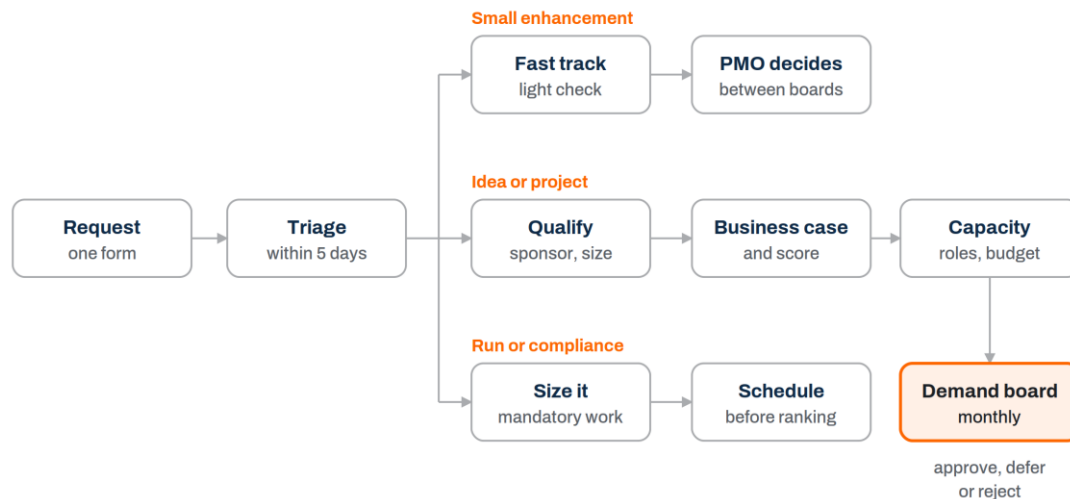
Name a demand manager, usually in the PMO, who is accountable for the flow: every request acknowledged, triaged on time and answered. This person does not decide priorities; they make sure decisions get made.

CHAPTER 4

Project request triage and qualification

Triage decides, within five working days, which path a request takes. Not every request deserves the same effort: a report change should not wait for the same board as a new ERP.

After triage, every request takes one of three paths



Small enhancements take a fast track; ideas and projects pass through qualification, a business case, scoring and a capacity check before the board; mandatory work is sized and scheduled first.

Set an effort threshold

Define a fast-track limit, for example a number of person-days or a cost ceiling, below which the PMO can approve an enhancement without the board. Review the limit after two quarters: if the fast track carries most of the volume but little of the effort, it is set right.

Service levels requesters can count on

Step	Service level
Acknowledge the request	2 working days
Triage and route	5 working days
Fast-track decision	15 working days
Board decision for standard requests	Next monthly board after qualification
Decision communicated to requester	2 working days after the board

Weed out early

Triage is also where duplicates, requests that belong to another team and wishes without a sponsor are closed or merged, with a short explanation. Closing them early is a service, not a rejection.

CHAPTER 5

Project prioritization and scoring

A transparent scoring model turns “my project is urgent” into a comparable number, so the board debates criteria once instead of debating every request.

A starting project scoring model

Score each criterion from 1 (low) to 5 (high), multiply by its weight, and sum. Effort and risk are scored inversely, so a higher score always means a more attractive request.

Criterion	Weight	What a 5 looks like
Strategic fit	30%	Directly delivers a stated strategic objective
Business value	25%	Clear, quantified benefit with a named owner
Urgency and compliance	15%	Regulatory or contractual deadline within 12 months
Risk (inverse)	15%	Proven technology, low delivery and operational risk
Effort (inverse)	15%	Small team, short duration, no scarce skills needed

Score = Σ (weight × criterion score), with all weights adding up to 100%.

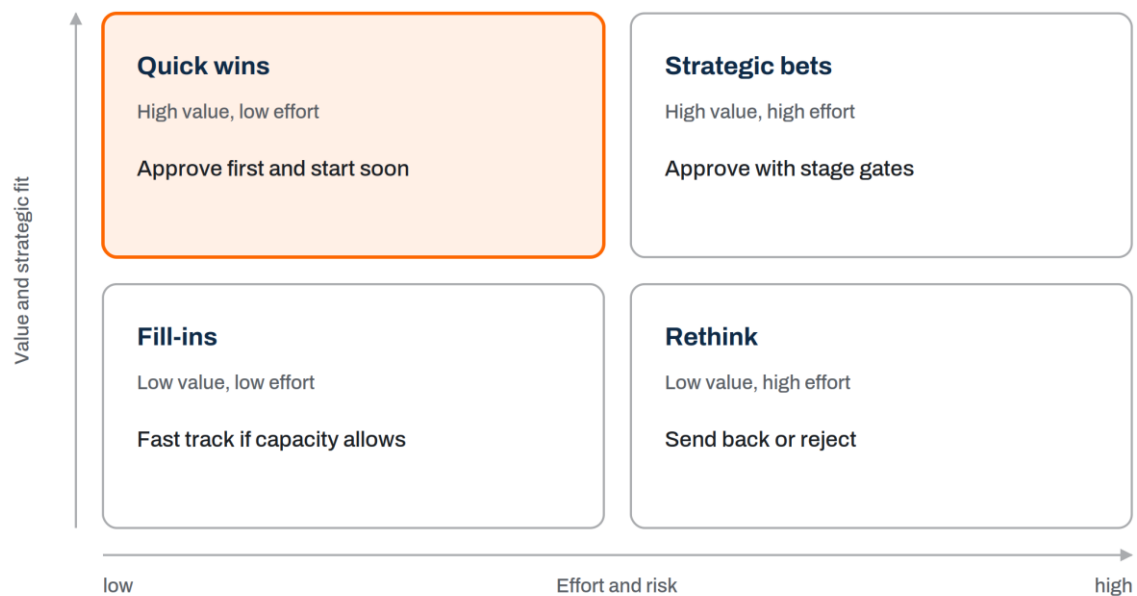
Rules that keep scoring honest

- **Fix the weights for a year.** Changing them to fit a favoured request destroys trust.
- **Score in pairs.** Requester and demand manager score together, then the PMO calibrates across requests.
- **Keep mandatory work separate.** Compliance and end-of-life requests skip the ranking but still consume capacity, so they are scheduled first.
- **Use the score to inform, not to decide.** The board can override a ranking, but it records why.

Plot the shortlist

Before each board, place the scored requests on two axes: value and strategic fit against effort and risk. The board sees the trade-offs at a glance instead of reading a ranked list.

Plot the shortlist: high value, low effort goes first



Quick wins go first; strategic bets are approved in stages; fill-ins wait for spare capacity; the rest goes back to the requester.

CHAPTER 6

Linking project demand to capacity and budget

A request is not ready for approval until someone has checked that the people and money exist to deliver it. Approving demand without that check is the most common way portfolios overload.

Capacity planning by role, not by name

You do not need a detailed resource plan to start. Track capacity for the five to ten roles that are always scarce, such as solution architects, data engineers or ERP specialists. For each request, estimate demand on those roles by quarter and compare it with what is available after run work and committed projects.

The approval check

Before a request goes to the board, the demand manager answers four questions:

1. **Who?** Which scarce roles does it need, and are they free in the requested window?
2. **How much?** What are the one-off costs, and what will it cost to run each year once delivered?
3. **What moves?** If capacity is short, which approved work would be delayed or stopped?
4. **When?** What is the earliest realistic start, given the answers above?

Saying “yes, starting in Q3” is often better than saying “yes” and starting a project nobody can staff.

Budget follows the same logic

Allocate funds in stages, released at each gate, rather than funding the full project at approval. Include run costs in the decision, because every project you deliver adds to next year’s operating budget.

CHAPTER 7

Demand governance: PMO roles and the demand board

The front door works when everyone knows who submits, who qualifies and who decides, and when the decision gets back to the requester.

Who does what

Activity	Requester	Business sponsor	Demand manager (PMO)	IT architecture / delivery	Demand board
Submit request	R	A	I		
Triage and route	C	I	A/R	C	
Size and estimate	C	I	A	R	
Score	R	A	R	C	I
Approve, defer or reject	I	C	R	C	A
Communicate decision	I	I	A/R	I	

R = responsible, A = accountable, C = consulted, I = informed.

The demand board

- **Members:** CIO (chair), business unit sponsors, head of PMO, enterprise architect, IT finance.
- **Cadence:** monthly for new projects; fast-track items decided by the PMO between meetings.
- **Input:** a ranked shortlist with scores, capacity impact and costs, sent five working days before the meeting.
- **Output:** approve, defer to a named date, send back for more detail, or reject, each with a one-line reason.

Close the loop

Requesters who never hear back go around the front door next time. Publish every decision, with its reason, within two working days of the board. A rejected request with a clear reason builds more trust than an approved request nobody explained.

CHAPTER 8

Demand management KPIs that matter

Six measures tell you whether the front door is working. Track them monthly and share them with the board; the targets below are starting points to calibrate after your first two quarters.

Metric	What it tells you	Starting target
Share of work entering through the front door	Whether side doors are closing	Above 90% after six months
Time to first response	Whether requesters feel heard	Within 5 working days
Time from request to decision	Whether the process is fast enough	Under 30 days for standard requests
Backlog age	Whether requests are piling up undecided	No request older than 90 days without a decision
Approval rate	Whether the filter is working	Neither near 100% (no filter) nor near 0% (no point applying)
Benefits realized vs. promised	Whether scoring predicts value	Reviewed for every project 6–12 months after go-live

WHERE TO START

Start with the first three. They are easy to measure from day one and show requesters that the process respects their time.

CHAPTER 9

Common demand management pitfalls

Most demand processes fail for organizational reasons, not technical ones.

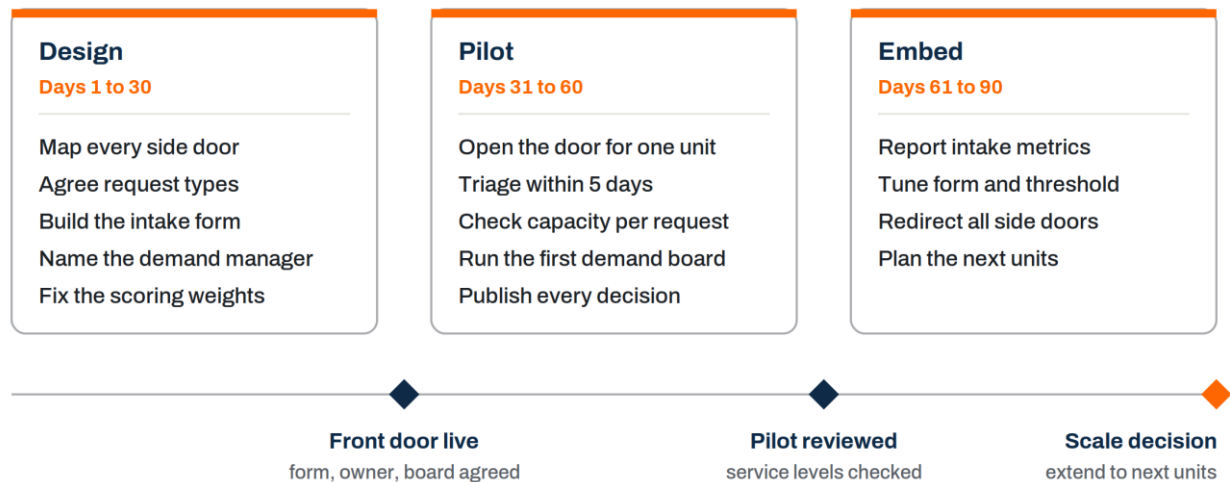
Pitfall	Why it happens	How to avoid it
The 40-field form	Every stakeholder adds “just one more” question	Cap intake at about ten fields; collect detail only for requests that pass triage
Executive bypass	Leaders keep asking delivery teams directly	Get the CIO to redirect their own requests first, visibly
A black hole	Requests are logged but never answered	Publish response times and the backlog age every month
Scoring theatre	Weights are changed to fit favoured projects	Fix weights annually and record every override
Capacity ignored	Approval happens before anyone checks who will do the work	Make the capacity check a mandatory step before the board
Big-bang launch	Trying to cover every department and request type at once	Start with one business unit or one request type, then extend
Run work left out	Enhancements and upgrades bypass the process	Include them, with a fast track for small items

CHAPTER 10

A 90-day demand management rollout plan

You can have a working front door for one business unit within 30 days and a reviewed pilot within 90. Start small, prove it works, then extend.

A working front door in 90 days, one business unit first



Each phase ends at a gate: the front door goes live once the form, owner and board are agreed; the pilot is reviewed against its service levels; and the board decides which units come next.

Readiness checklist

Tick these before Day 1 of the pilot:

- ☐ A CIO sponsor who will redirect side-door requests, including their own
- ☐ A named demand manager with time allocated to the role
- ☐ Agreed request types and a fast-track threshold
- ☐ An intake form of about ten fields
- ☐ A scoring model with fixed weights for the year
- ☐ A capacity view for the five to ten scarcest roles
- ☐ Demand board members, cadence and decision rights confirmed
- ☐ A pilot business unit willing to route all its requests through the front door
- ☐ A simple way to publish decisions and the first three metrics

FAQ

Demand management FAQ

What is IT demand management?

IT demand management is the process of capturing, qualifying and prioritizing every request for IT projects, enhancements and investments, so that only work the organization can fund and staff enters the project portfolio.

What is the difference between demand management and project portfolio management?

Demand management decides which project requests enter the portfolio. Project portfolio management (PPM) balances, funds and monitors the work once it has been approved. Demand management is the front door of PPM.

What is a project intake process?

A project intake process is the single, standard way project requests are submitted, triaged and routed. It usually combines one intake form, one owner in the PMO and clear service levels for responding to requesters.

Who owns demand management?

The PMO usually owns the process through a demand manager, who keeps requests moving. Decisions on what to approve belong to a demand board chaired by the CIO, with business sponsors and IT finance.

How should project requests be prioritized?

Score each request on weighted criteria such as strategic fit, business value, urgency, risk and effort, then check capacity and budget before the board decides. Mandatory compliance work is scheduled first.

How long does it take to implement demand management?

A working front door for one business unit can be live in about 30 days, with a reviewed pilot within 90 days. Extending to other units follows once the process is proven.

HOW PPM-FACTORY HELPS

PPM software for demand management

PPM-Factory is project portfolio management (PPM) software that gives CIOs and PMOs across DACH and Italy one platform to capture, score and decide on every project request, and to see the impact on capacity and budget before saying yes.

Front-door step	How PPM-Factory supports it
One channel, one form	A configurable request portal with request types and required fields
Triage and stage gates	Workflows that route each request type through its own gates and approvals
Scoring	Weighted scoring on strategic, business, technical, financial and risk criteria
Capacity and budget check	Role-based capacity planning and cost views alongside each request
Governance and metrics	Board-ready ranked lists, decision tracking and portfolio dashboards

PPM-Factory Ready

A pre-packaged, best-practice demand and portfolio configuration.

BEST FIT

Organizations building their first front door and wanting results in weeks.

TYPICAL START

One business unit or one request type, standard form and scoring.

PPM-Factory Adapt

Configured to your request types, scoring model, gates and governance.

BEST FIT

Organizations with an established PMO, multiple business units or specific approval rules.

TYPICAL START

Several request paths, custom criteria and integration with finance.

Next steps

- 1. Map your side doors.** List every channel through which requests reach IT today.
- 2. Draft your form.** Start from the intake fields in Chapter 3.
- 1. Talk to PPM-Factory** about a 90-day pilot on one portfolio.

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Open one front door. Decide with confidence.

Start with one business unit and one real request backlog.

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