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CASE STUDY · MARLUC SYNOPSIS

Virgin Atlantic shared AI platform and Concierge

IMPLEMENTED 2023 ONWARDS · TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS · UNITED KINGDOM · BAND D TO C · CLAIMED ONLY

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Virgin Atlantic built its AI work on two partners, OpenAI and Databricks. Staff tools, internal agents and a customer travel assistant, Concierge, run on one data platform; a finance team's agent cleared a month-long invoice backlog, by the former VP Data and AI's account.

ABOUT THIS SYNOPSIS

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NOTICE WORDING LAST UPDATED 16 NOVEMBER 2026

AT A GLANCE

AI used: Staff generative AI tools and agents (ChatGPT Enterprise, Workspace Agents, Codex) on a Databricks data platform, a customer AI agent (Concierge) and machine learning pricing.

Implemented: 2023 onwards. Grade: band D to C, Task support, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: 1,500 of about 10,000 staff given AI tools; a finance agent cleared a month of invoice backlog, by the airline's former data and AI lead

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 5 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

Virgin Atlantic. UK airline with about 10,000 staff, by its former VP Data and AI. It recently reported its first profit since 2016, and its VP Data and AI says AI played a supporting role. Canvas block: 4. Operations and process. Also 3. Customers and proposition, 5. People and skills.

Business challenge

The challenge. The VP Data and AI said the volume of AI products marketed to teams led to duplication and risk, with data copied into many systems. Airline data is complex: terms such as passenger and booking mean different things to different teams.

Who implemented it

OpenAI (Model or cloud provider): Supplies ChatGPT Enterprise, Workspace Agents, Codex and the models behind Concierge.
Databricks (Software vendor): Core data platform that the AI tools connect to.
Tomoro (Consultancy): Built Virgin Atlantic Concierge with OpenAI.
Fetcherr (Software vendor): AI-enabled dynamic pricing tool fed by the data platform.
In-house (In-house): Virgin Atlantic: central data and AI team builds skills and runs the platform.

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: T1 Chat assistants, T3 API integrations, T4 RAG / vector search over your own data, T7 AI agents, T8 Predictive / ML models. Deployment: Mixture. Vendors and products: OpenAI, Databricks, Tomoro, Fetcherr, ChatGPT Enterprise, Workspace Agents, Codex, Databricks Unity Catalog, AI/BI Genie, Virgin Atlantic Concierge.

Where it was built in: Staff AI tools connect to the Databricks data platform through shared skills synced to the identity platform; Concierge uses the airline's flight and holiday APIs on its website.

What changed

Before: AI tools bought separately by teams, by the VP Data and AI's account. After: one data platform and one main AI partner shared across teams; 1,500 staff with AI tools; a finance agent run weekly on invoices; a public AI travel assistant. Measured results: Not reported. The VP said in 2025 he could not quantify the impact of AI initiatives. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

What it cost

Not reported. Tomoro's director said running costs of Concierge were trivial.

What it saved

Not reported as figures. By the former VP's account, a month of invoice backlog was cleared by an agent; diginomica reports some finance reconciliation decisions moved from weeks or months to days or hours. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Governance and control

AI access is limited by role; pilots, engineers and other regulated roles get specific tools with more evaluation; a person makes each decision. Model choices are signed off through the data platform, and credits and observability track cost. Concierge has guardrails against prompt injection, per its developer.

S2 · Accountable owner · Claimed
The VP Data and AI led the airline's AI strategy, including how to use AI responsibly, and reported to the CFO. [4] [5]

A1 · Safe use · Claimed
Of about 10,000 staff, 1,500 were given AI tools, with access limited to roles that need it, by the former VP's account. [1]

A2 · Human in the loop · Claimed
A person makes each decision and remains responsible, and human teams stay in control of operational decisions, by the VP's account. [1] [5]

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Claimed
The finance agent is run weekly and monitored; credits and observability keep costs visible. [1]

A4 · Vendor AI · Claimed
Requests to use a different model are signed off and governed through the data platform, by the VP's account. [3]

A5 · Agent controls · Claimed
Skills are built centrally and synced to identity; Concierge has guardrails against prompt injection and jailbreaking, per its developer. [1] [2]

A6 · Standards and regulation · Not reported
Not reported.

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– Concierge errors exposed long-standing wrong website content, which was then visible to fix, by the former VP's account.

– A finance team cleared an invoice backlog with its own agent, with central teams giving only specialist support, by the same account.

– No jailbreaks after Concierge launched, per its developer.

DID NOT

– Concierge gave wrong answers at first, including about aircraft the airline did not fly.

– At launch Concierge could not complete purchases and linked to the website for payment.

UNPROVEN

– Savings or revenue attributable to the AI platform.

– Whether Concierge reduces call centre contacts.

– Quality of agent outputs in finance over time.

Timeline

Sept 2024 VP Data and AI describes generative AI uses in summarising messages and Databricks tools for querying data [4]

May 2025 VP Data and AI says the Health and Safety team uses AI to prioritise incident reports [3]

Dec 2025 Virgin Atlantic Concierge, built by Tomoro with OpenAI, goes live on the website [2]

Mar 2026 VP Data and AI says AI played a supporting role in the airline's first profit since 2016 [5]

Oct 2026 Former VP Data and AI describes the two-partner platform and the finance agent at aiblLIVE London [1]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: Not applicable. Grade: D to C, Task support. Proof: Claimed only. Level of change: Task support to Process change.

Task support with some process change (Levels 1 to 2, band D, span to C). Staff tools dominate; a weekly finance agent and machine learning pricing suggest process change in places.

Graded D, with a span to C. Most use is task support for staff. The working capital team now runs an agent weekly on invoices, and pricing uses machine learning, which point to process change; neither is measured in published figures.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

The design choice is consolidation: one data platform and one main AI partner, with skills built centrally and tied to identity. That makes governance travel with the tools. For a larger organisation, the transferable points are restricting access by risk and using AI errors to find bad source content. No figures yet show what the platform has saved.

1. Consolidate AI tools on one governed data platform.
2. Give AI access by role and risk, with more evaluation for regulated roles.
3. Treat wrong AI answers as a signal to fix source content.

Evidence

Score 1 of 4. Self-reported: the airline's data and AI lead in trade press and at a conference; the Concierge developer in The Register.

Evaluation method. Self-reported: executive interviews in trade press and a conference talk; the Concierge account comes from its developer.

Sources disagree. The aibl write-up says Concierge runs in the Virgin Atlantic app; The Register reported in December 2025 that it was only on the website while a new app was built. The Stack's 2024 article lists Claude and GPT among open-source models, which they are not.

Status. Ongoing: the platform and Concierge remain in use. Richard Masters had left the VP Data and AI role by October 2026.

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/virgin-atlantic-openai-databricks-ai-platform

[1] aibl: AI infrastructure at Virgin Atlantic: two partners, one shared platform
https://aiblmedia.com/downloads/ai-infrastructure-virgin-atlantic/

[2] The Register: Like a Virgin Airways bot, planning for the very first time
https://www.theregister.com/2025/12/23/like_a_virgin_concierge_planning/

[3] diginomica: How Virgin Atlantic is hitting new heights with generative AI and Databricks technology
https://diginomica.com/how-virgin-atlantic-hitting-new-heights-generative-ai-databricks-technology

[4] The Stack: Virgin Atlantic's VP of Data and AI on chatbots, transformation and enterprise astrophysics
https://thestack.technology/virgin-atlantic-ai-data

[5] Intelligent CIO Europe: The new fuel: How data and AI are powering Virgin Atlantic's flight path
https://www.intelligentcio.com/eu/2026/03/23/the-new-fuel-how-data-and-ai-are-powering-virgin-atlantics-flight-path/

Virgin Atlantic website: https://www.virginatlantic.com

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