STRATUS
An Infosys company

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EXECUTIVE PAPER · GUIDEWIRE CONNECTIONS 2026

# The Stratus Blueprint: Modernization Without Disruption

What CIOs who've done it know about moving core systems without stopping the business

OVERVIEW

# Executive summary

Core modernization does not have to put the business at risk. The carriers that modernize without disruption treat it as a leadership discipline, not a technology outcome.

**This Blueprint draws on two programs delivered with Stratus, an Infosys company and a specialized insurance transformation partner. California Casualty moved PolicyCenter and BillingCenter to Guidewire Cloud in 10 months. Horace Mann turned its Guidewire state rollout into a repeatable, multi-state delivery engine.**

**It also reflects the perspectives shared at Guidewire Connections 2026 by Adam Waldron, VP and CIO of California Casualty; Stephanie Fulks, CIO of Horace Mann; and Rao Tadepalli, CEO of Digitran Technologies.**

## Three principles run through both programs:

01

### Plan for what could disrupt.

Find the risks early and clear them before they reach go-live.

02

### Transform at a sustainable pace.

Build a repeatable rhythm, and govern it so your teams can sustain it.

03

### Deliver what you promise.

Treat predictability as the return your board is actually buying.

The toolkit at the end helps you bring these principles into your next team or steering committee conversation.

# Why core programs lose predictability

Most core programs don't fail on day one. They lose predictability slowly, in ways that are easy to miss until go-live is close. Three patterns show up again and again:



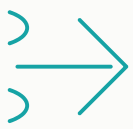
### Risk deferred to the end

**Blockers, integration gaps, and testing slide into later sprints, where they collide with the cutover date.**



### Governance that reports but doesn't decide

**Status meetings track progress, but decisions on scope, trade-offs, and escalation wait too long.**



### Scope that moves without control

**Regulatory changes and shifting business priorities enter the plan without a clear process to absorb them.**

**Each pattern is avoidable. The three principles that follow show how two carriers kept them out of their programs.**

PRINCIPLE 1

# Plan for what could disrupt 01

The surest way to protect go-live is to move risk to the front of the program.

**10+ yrs**
of on-premises customization

**2 weeks**
of inception to align scope and risk

**32**
file-based integrations upgraded

**34**
APIs reviewed or remediated

California Casualty brought more than 10 years of on-premises customization into its migration. Guidewire Cloud tooling flagged thousands of cloud assurance issues that had to be resolved before cloud approval. With a single go-live rather than a phased one, there was no room for late surprises.

Stratus and California Casualty began with a two-week inception to align scope, risks, and delivery cadence, and to find failure points early. The team then ran an assurance-first sprint strategy and cleared the majority of cloud assurance blockers in the first sprint. That opened the path for integration and testing: 32 file-based integrations upgraded and 34 APIs reviewed or remediated for the cloud.



"Completing a seamless cloud upgrade of this scale in just 10 months is no small feat."

ADAM WALDON, CIO, CALIFORNIA CASUALTY

## PUT IT TO WORK THIS QUARTER

- Run a risk-focused inception before you commit to a delivery date.
- Rank blockers by what they unlock downstream, and clear those first.
- Build testing into every sprint instead of saving it for the end.

PRINCIPLE 2

# Transform at a sustainable pace

02

Speed you can't sustain becomes risk. A repeatable rhythm, backed by governance that makes decisions, lets a program move faster without wearing out the business or the team.

## 12 states

36 states over a 3-year period

## Kits

of reusable requirements and rollout artifacts

## Waves

that overlap, without a t"big bang"

**Horace Mann had already rolled out its first eight states through its own State Rollout program when it brought in Stratus. The goal was to move from one state at a time to a repeatable, wave-based model. The teams sequenced states by common coverage and regulatory patterns, and packaged requirements and rollout artifacts into reusable state "kits." Overlapping release waves kept throughput steady without a "big bang."**

"We achieved the successful completion of our Guidewire state rollouts ensuring a seamless implementation."

STEPHANIE FULKS, CIO, HORACE MANN



# Governance kept that pace sustainable

Each carrier matched its cadence to the shape of its program.

| CADENCE | California Casualty<br>SINGLE CLOUD GO-LIVE | Horace Mann<br>MULTI-STATE WAVES |
|---|---|---|
| **Several times a week** | Daily standups and twice-weekly client checkpoints | Workstream forums, about three times a week |
| **Weekly** | Program status and look-ahead planning | Program leadership |
| **Monthly** | Demos to validate progress | Steering committee |
| **Decisions and escalation** | Dedicated channel for real-time triage | Paired accountability from workstream leads to executive sponsors |

At Horace Mann, a formal Change Request process absorbed late regulatory and Department of Insurance changes without putting milestones at risk.

PUT IT TO WORK THIS QUARTER

- Set a delivery rhythm your teams can repeat, then reuse what works from one release to the next.
- Match each governance layer to the decisions it owns, and escalate only what changes scope, schedule, or cost.
- Treat change control as how you protect credibility, not as paperwork.

PRINCIPLE 3

# Deliver what you promised

03

Predictability is the return your board is actually buying. A modern platform matters, but credibility comes from landing it exactly when and how you said you would.

**10 months**

to Guidewire Cloud, on time and on budget

**1**

go-live, with no business disruption

**12**

states rolled out per year, on average

**California Casualty's program delivered PolicyCenter and BillingCenter on Guidewire Cloud in 10 months, on time and on budget, with a single go-live and no business disruption. Holding schedule and budget also avoided prolonged "dual-run" costs, preserving budget for future modernization and innovation.**

**At Horace Mann, Stratus delivers multi-state rollouts without interruption, holds to target dates, and averages 12 states rolled out per year. That predictability reduces the hidden cost of executive attention and escalation, and frees the organization to focus on broader modernization.**

"Stratus delivered on time and on budget, with zero disruption to our business processes."

ADAM WALDRON · VP AND CIO, CALIFORNIA CASUALTY

PUT IT TO WORK THIS QUARTER

- **Report progress against the commitments you made to the business, not just tasks completed.**
- **Lock milestone dates early and protect them with change control.**
- **Decide now where the time and budget you protect will go next.**

# Wherever the program stands

The three principles apply whether you are planning your first move to Guidewire Cloud or strengthening a program already in motion.

## Planning your move to Guidewire Cloud

**The Stratus Cloud Readiness Approach shifts effort to the front of the program, so risk is addressed before the Guidewire Cloud project starts.**

01

### Optimize

Review manual or offending code and integrations.

02

### Remediate

Fix DBCC errors, refactor APIs and test scripts, and align custom code to the base product.

03

### Migrate

Archive unneeded data and resolve table and row errors before cutover.

04

### Access

Confirm data access, roles, and permissions for the Guidewire Cloud console.

05

### Engage

Assess digital readiness and procedures for production data and log access.

## Your timeline shapes the plan.

3–6 mo

A move in three to six months focuses on custom code, existing integrations, and data access.

1–2 yrs

A one- to two-year horizon adds room to refactor APIs, automate test scripts, and rework the product model.

# Strengthening a program already in motion

Not every program starts from a clean slate. Horace Mann had built strong momentum before Stratus joined, and the goal was to raise predictability without a restart. The teams standardized rollout artifacts, formalized governance, and built a repeatable cadence while state releases kept moving.

**For any program in flight, the same principles apply. Name what could still disrupt, reset the pace to one your teams can sustain, and re-baseline to commitments you can keep.**



WHAT COMES NEXT

# A foundation for data and AI

A predictable core comes before AI ambitions. AI in claims and underwriting depends on accessible, trusted data and a platform the business has confidence in. A modernization that lands on time and without disruption builds both.

**California Casualty's on-time delivery preserved budget for future modernization and positions it to explore cloud-only capabilities as the platform matures. Horace Mann's predictable rollout cadence lets the organization shift focus from rollout execution to broader platform maturity. In both cases, discipline in the core program made room for the next wave of value.**



# Rao Tadepalli

CEO, DIGITRAN TECHNOLOGIES

[Placeholder: about 150 words from Rao on why core predictability is the prerequisite for AI value. Pending his input.]

# Team toolkit

Share this section with your teams. It turns the three principles into a working conversation.

## Readiness self-assessment

**Check each statement that is true for your program today. Any unchecked item is a place to start.**

01

### Plan for what could disrupt

- ◆ We know the blockers that could stop cloud approval, and we have a plan to clear them early.
- ◆ Our integrations and APIs have been reviewed for cloud compatibility.
- ◆ Testing is built into every sprint, not saved for the end.

02

### Transform at a sustainable pace

- ◆ We have a delivery rhythm we can repeat from one release to the next.
- ◆ Every governance layer has clear decision rights.
- ◆ A change control process protects our milestones.
- ◆ Our teams can sustain the current pace through go-live.

03

### Deliver what you promise

- ◆ Our milestone dates are set and visible to the business.
- ◆ We report progress against business commitments, not just tasks.
- ◆ We know what the time and budget we protect will fund next.

# Five questions for your next steering committee

1. What could disrupt the business between now and go-live, and who owns each risk?
2. Which decisions are waiting longer than they should?
3. Is our current pace one our teams can sustain?
4. What have we promised the business, and are we on track to deliver it?
5. When this program lands, what will it free us to do next?

# 30-minute team discussion guide




| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0–5 min | **Set the frame** | Share the three principles and why predictability matters to the business. |
| 5–15 min | **Plan for what could disrupt** | Walk through the self-assessment. Where are the gaps? |
| 15–25 min | **Pace and promise** | Choose one delivery or governance change to make this quarter. |
| 25–30 min | **Commit** | Name an owner and a date for that change. |

NEXT STEP

# Book a Cloud Migration Strategy Session

Turn your next modernization into a predictable business outcome.

**In a Cloud Migration Strategy Session, Stratus works with your team to build a clear plan for Cloud Assurance remediation, integration readiness, and a go-live path that protects business continuity.**

**Contact solutions@stratustech.com**

ABOUT STRATUS

Stratus, an Infosys company and a specialized P&C transformation partner, helps P&C insurers modernize core insurance operations while maintaining business continuity through transformation. Combining deep insurance expertise with proven delivery models, we support Guidewire Cloud migrations, platform modernization, and optimization across the Guidewire ecosystem, helping insurers modernize with confidence.

**Our domain-driven frameworks, CloudReady accelerators, and phased delivery approach reduce risk, accelerate time-to-value, and keep critical operations running smoothly. Backed by Infosys, Stratus delivers tailored services spanning core systems, data, analytics, development, and support. Together with Infosys and Topaz, we help insurers improve operational performance and unlock AI-driven business value.**

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# Modernize.
# Without Disruption.

**stratustech.com** **solutions@stratustech.com** **Follow us on LinkedIn**

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