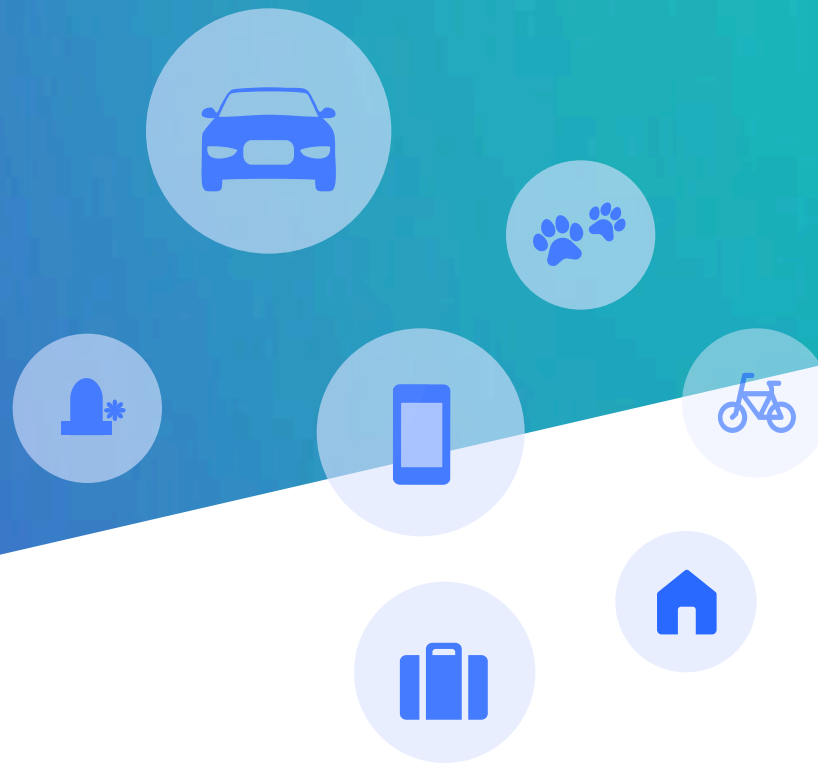
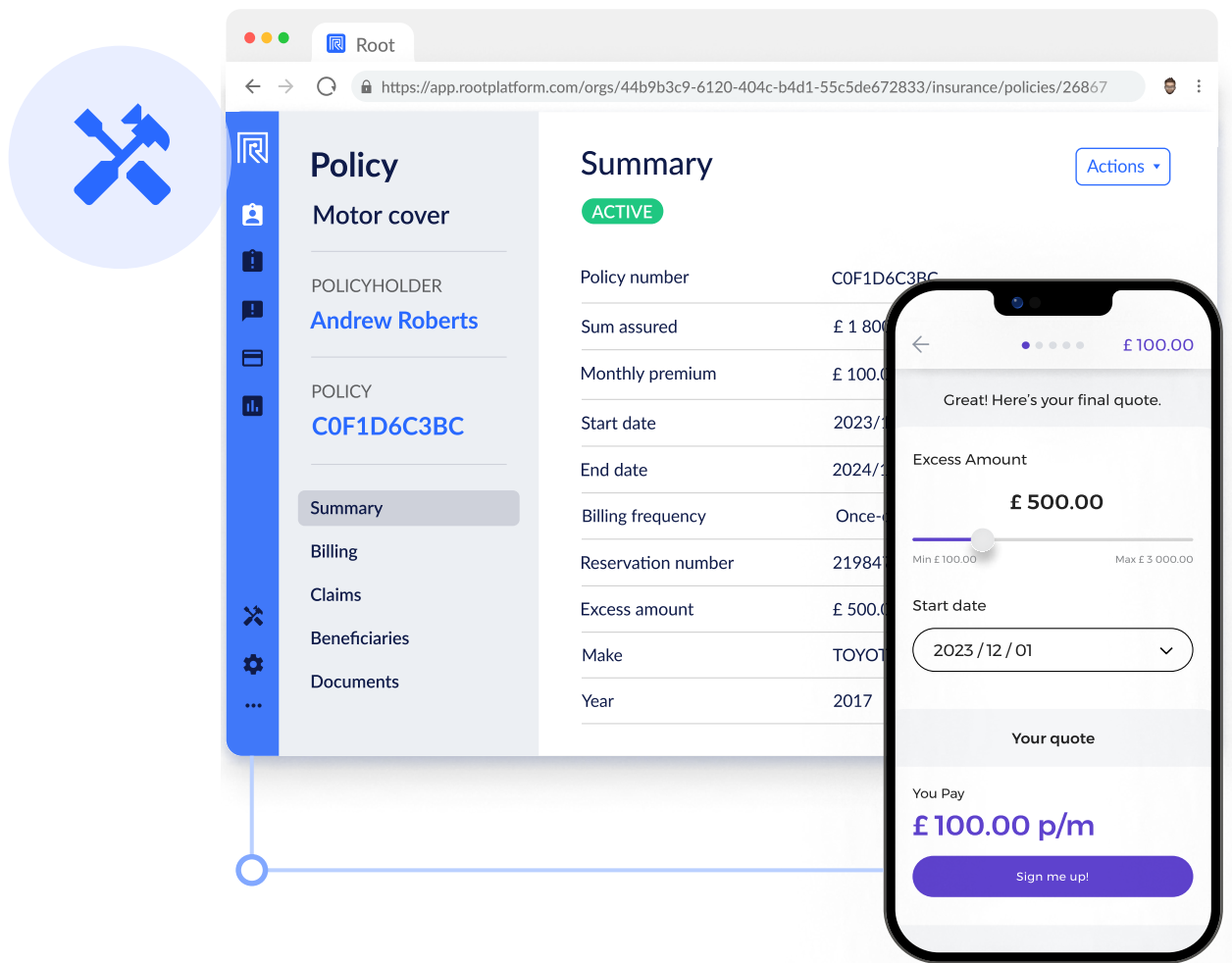




ON-TIME AND ON-BUDGET:

Product Launch Guide





INTRODUCTION

Product Launch Guide

Launching insurance products is high stakes - but should it be?

Launching a new digital insurance product on a modern insurance platform should be a moment of momentum for your business, a clear sign of strategic intent and an opportunity to unlock growth.

For many insurers, MGAs and schemes, launching new digital products still feels extremely precarious. Like a high-stakes gamble that costs time, budget, and reputation and still too often fails to deliver.

The **reality**? Most insurance product launches are slower, riskier and more difficult **than they need to be**.

In this guide, we share our **5 product launch principles** to help you launch on-time and on-budget. **Every time.**

What's at stake?



The risk is real and personal

Launching a new product isn't just a strategic move. It's a reputational one.

As an executive sponsoring a new product going to market, success usually involves personal stakes.

A failed launch doesn't just cost money. It can stall careers, erode stakeholder trust and push back strategic objectives and timelines by months or even years.

Even "successful" launches can create long-term drag if they go live late, are over budget or are launched without critical buy-in from operational teams.

The cost of getting it wrong isn't only monetary.

It's in the **momentum** and **opportunity cost** your business and your team loses.



The problem isn't innovation, it's execution

From embedded offerings and niche schemes to flexible, modular products designed for underserved markets, the appetite for experimenting with new products and selling into new distribution channels is strong.

With that appetite, also comes added **pressure**.

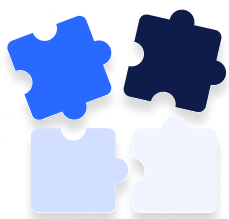
Customers demand better experiences. Partners expect more agility. Investors and boards want fast results.

Turning an idea into a live, scalable product is still a major challenge.

We've witnessed this firsthand in every type of insurance organisation.

Common launch blockers

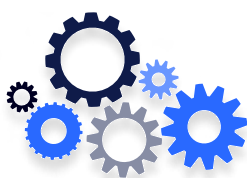
These are the 3 most common roadblocks that prevent insurance organisations from getting digital products to market with speed and confidence:



1. Fragmented teams and unclear goals

Without clarity on the business case, the customer value being added and who is accountable for decision-making, product launches and implementations stall.

Implementation can be treated as a handover: from strategy to product, from product to tech, from tech to ops. Without a clear product owner and a shared understanding of the “why,” teams end up pulling and pushing in different directions. This usually manifests as scope changes or requirement shifts, bleeding time and money.



2. Complexity creep

Insurance products are inherently nuanced, but over-engineering at the beginning of a project can kill delivery timelines.

Building at the outset for every possible edge case, automating every process and mirroring every legacy workflow is an easy trap to fall into.

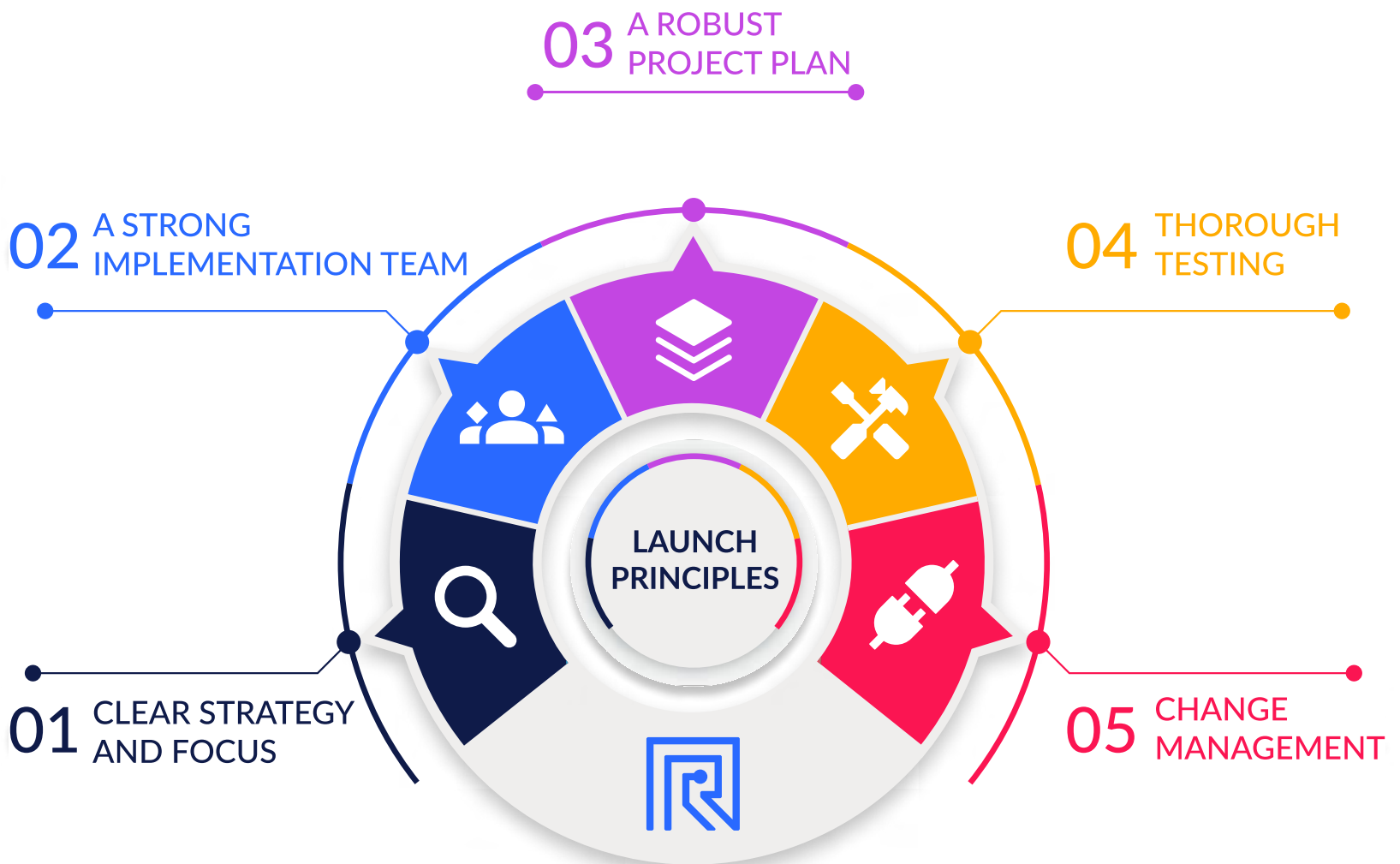


3. Slow, long feedback loops

Launches are often treated like “big bang” moments. The build cycle is long, followed by a hard launch and then a flurry of post-launch fixes.

The most valuable product insights come from real customers, which can only be received once the product is live. Without a live product in the market, every assumption, whether about pricing, customer flows, UX or claims still needs to be proved. Waiting too long to test products in the market risks building the wrong thing, too late and for too much.

The 5 principles of a successful product launch



PRINCIPLE 1

Clear strategy and focus

Before beginning a product implementation, start with the end in mind.

When making decisions about technology, product features or timelines, first gain clarity on **3 things**:

Why does this launch matter?

What real-world customer pain needs to be solved? What business objective needs to be achieved? For example, are you launching a new benefit to improve retention, or validating a new, untested distribution channel?

How will we launch?

What are the minimum product features, team resources, partners, technology and tools needed to achieve the objectives from the first question?

What are we launching?

This flows naturally from the answers to the first 2 questions.

With this clarity, teams make faster, more informed trade-offs and collaborate more effectively.



The **Why**: Solve a real customer problem

Successful insurance products aren't built around internal complexity. They solve a real problem for real customers. Without defining the core problem the product needs to solve early in the design and implementation process, the implementation team can be pulled in every direction, solving for misaligned problems and edge cases.

By having a single, focused strategic intent, your team will have clarity on the objectives that the product needs to achieve and will be equipped to build it to achieve that objective.

Consider measuring success metrics to give you data on whether you are achieving your objectives for the launch. This will help with retain focus and guide decision-making during the turmoil of a launch.



The How: Keep it simple

There's a misconception that a product must be perfect to go live. The truth? The best way to build the right product is to launch a simple version and learn from real customer behaviour.

Speed doesn't come from short timelines or rushed builds. It comes from **knowing what not to build**.

We advise our clients to **solve for 90% of the problem**.

- ✓ Avoid being distracted by edge cases that may only impact a fraction of users and customers
- ✓ Avoid trying to replicate every nuance of a legacy product or system
- ✓ Avoid automating every internal process from day 1

Instead, ask: What's the **minimum valuable product** we need to build to confidently give our target customers value and a good experience? Build that first, make it exceptional, then iterate.

Plan to build a product that will deliver value fast, while leaving room for iteration after launch.

Getting to market quickly provides the opportunity to observe how the product performs and adjust based on data, with confidence. **Customer feedback** always beats internal debate, and simplicity isn't just a delivery tactic - **it's a strategic advantage**.



Building an MVP

The financial, regulatory and reputational consequences of bringing a non-compliant product to market are too severe to launch a true minimum viable insurance product that only has the features needed to issue a policy and collect premium.

But it is still possible to gain significant speed by not building full functionality before launch. A good example is products with extended waiting periods before claims can be lodged → building full claims functionality immediately at launch is clearly unnecessary in this instance.

Similarly, the minimum required customer notifications may suffice at launch instead of creating fully customised, bespoke notifications templates.

PRINCIPLE 2

A strong implementation team

Great products don't launch themselves. **People do.**

We've seen it again and again: the strongest launches come from **small, focused teams** with clear ownership, the right skills and deep collaboration between business, IT, finance, compliance and operations.

Here's what that looks like in practice.

Appoint a strong internal project owner

Every launch needs a dedicated internal lead who owns the day-to-day running of the project.

In most cases, this will be a project manager or business analyst - someone who understands the business and strategic objectives, can interpret technical discussions and can keep the project on track across multiple stakeholders. A strong internal owner should bring clarity, remove blockers and ensure priorities are aligned and communication is flowing.

Without this person, projects stall in email chains and meeting loops.



A lean, focused launch team

More people doesn't mean more progress. In fact, the opposite is often true.

One of the most effective teams we've worked on had a core launch team of only **4 persons**, each with clear responsibility and authority to make decisions:

- **Project manager** → co-ordinates internal teams.
- **Product owner** → knows the product
- **Tech/integration lead** → knows the technical and integration infrastructure
- **UX expert** → knows the customer

This doesn't mean other departments don't, or shouldn't get involved. They should be brought in at the right time, with the right context and with a clear purpose.

PRINCIPLE 3

A robust project plan

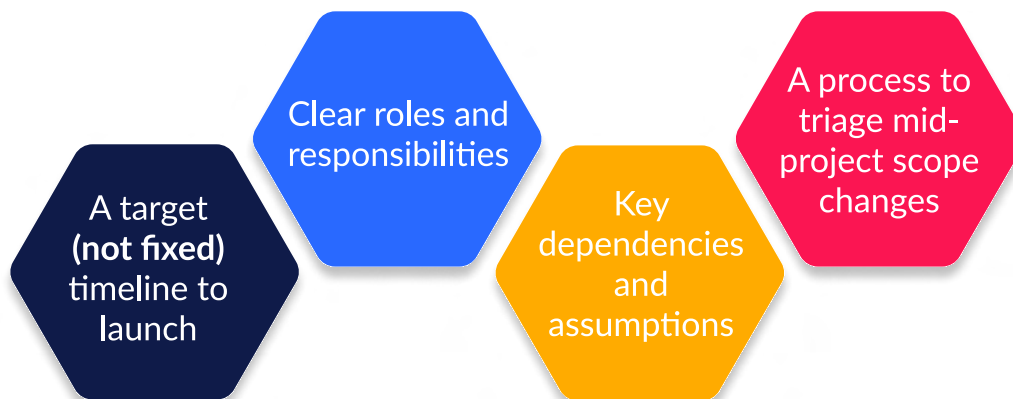
Clear strategy (Principle 1) gives direction and a lean, focused team (Principle 2) gives momentum, but a robust plan is what keeps a product launch on track. Clear planning, rigorous project discipline and structured risk management are essential.



Good planning prevents painful delays

There's a natural temptation to jump straight into designing and building, especially when pressure to launch is high. But skipping proper discovery and planning is one of the fastest ways to run into delays, scope creep and costly rework down the line.

A good plan will include:



Create a clear Business Requirements Document (BRD)

Creating a clear, well-structured Business Requirements Document (BRD) as part of project planning is critical to any successful implementation. The BRD will list product features, benefits and business rules and also outline what must be built for the product to go live.

This key document helps the project team prioritise what is critical for launch and what can wait, reducing the likelihood of project delays and overruns. Preparing a good BRD internally reduces the risk of misalignment on product and launch requirements when introducing third-parties during implementation.

Go hybrid

Most insurance companies or tech providers who develop and implement digital insurance products will offer 1 of 2 approaches to launching a product:



Both models have value, but **neither** fully meets the needs of today's insurance landscape to de-risk insurance product launches.

The **waterfall-style** model offers structure but lacks adaptability. It locks in assumptions early and often delays market feedback until it's too late to change course. This is risky, expensive and fails to deliver the speed or customer insight that you need.

The **agile** methodology, on the other hand, breaks down in environments with fixed budgets, hard regulatory constraints, fixed deadlines and multiple business units to align. It assumes unlimited flexibility; something most insurance businesses don't have. Without clear milestones and governance, agile projects can lose direction, exceed budgets or under-deliver on scope.



We've proven that there's a **better** way

With our **hybrid-agile-waterfall** approach, we blend the structure and predictability of traditional delivery with the adaptability of agile thinking. This puts control in the hands of our clients, but supported by expert guidance, phased delivery and a repeatable playbook built on real-world success.

A hybrid agile-waterfall approach breaks up each implementation project into clear phases with **structured feedback loops** and room for iteration along the way. This ensures the project team stays on track without locking down decisions prematurely.

In a high-stakes industry like insurance, **launch confidence is everything**. You need to move fast, but you also need to know you'll land safely.



Having **stage gates** at key points in the project will also help lock in core components (like policy issuing or alterations) at the right time, preventing costly changes at the 11th hour that can cause unintended consequences across the entire build.

It's not only about delivering technology.
It's about **de-risking the process of delivering insurance products to market.**

PRINCIPLE 4

Thorough testing

Every feature, rule, workflow and UI decision has a downstream impact. If something goes wrong late in the project, the fix often ripples through multiple modules: policy issuing affects mid-term adjustments, mid-term adjustments affect claims, claims affect reporting and more. This can place the entire launch timeline at risk.



Test every release, and give feedback fast

Testing every release as it's delivered, not just at the end of the build, is an effective way to de-risk a product launch.

By testing early and giving feedback quickly, issues can be flagged before they grow roots. When feedback is delayed or vague, the cost of change increases and the risk to delivery timelines climbs.

Assign a dedicated resource - ideally a BA or the project owner - to test releases and ensure timely feedback.



Use manual workflows to de-risk early stages

Automation is powerful but if workflows are automated before being validated, you risk locking in inefficiencies and complexity.

The better approach is to use manual processes to handle edge cases or unvalidated workflows during the initial launch.

This allows you to:

- Go live faster
- Learn what really matters
- Delay automation decisions until the value is proven

There might be value in using manual flows for features like **refunds, cancellations, or low-frequency mid-term adjustments**. This gives the project team time to understand how these processes actually unfold in real life and avoids the cost and rigidity of automating something that might soon change.



Document manual processes clearly for future automation

Manual workflows work best when they're clear, consistent and documented. The business analyst or operational lead should map these manual processes during and after go-live.

Ask:

- What are the exact steps the team takes to complete this process?
- What tools are they using?
- Where are the bottlenecks or pain points?
- What's the volume, and how often does it occur?

When it's time to automate, the project team will already have the requirements and real-world learnings documented, saving time and resources.

What can you implement **manually** first before automating after launch?

This depends on the applicable regulatory requirements of the product, but here are a few practical examples we've seen save time and money:

- Require claims agents to manually resolve claims once approved, rather than automating claim resolution
- Require agents to manually implement scheduled policy changes e.g. when minors who are included as covered lives turn 18
- Uploading files to external payment or claims systems can be done manually at first, before building an integration to automate the upload

Once you have a better understanding of user behaviour, you will have the data to make smarter investment decisions about automation. The underlying principle is that it is generally better to avoid automating edge cases and rules before launch.

PRINCIPLE 5

Change management

Even the best modern insurance software, the smartest products and the fastest builds can still fail if the people operating them aren't on board.



Get engagement early and keep it high

Strong internal engagement and buy-in from day one is **essential**.

Start managing changes before the build with open conversations, clear expectations and honest answers to key questions like:

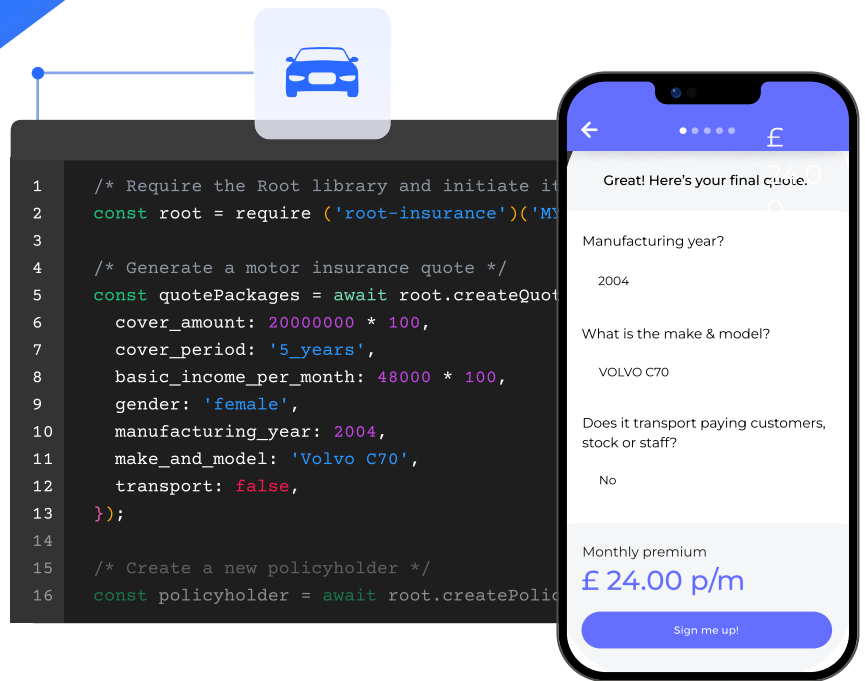
- What's changing and why?
- Who will be impacted and how?
- How will this help them do their job better?

Start with the internal project team, then go wider. Make sure ops teams, finance teams, call centre staff, agents and marketing all understand what's coming, what it means for them, and how they'll be involved.

Include distribution partners, brokers and third-party administrators in these engagements too, where and when appropriate.

Don't just tell teams and stakeholders what's different. Show them what's better:

- Faster quote times?
- Fewer manual steps?
- Clearer audit trails?
- Simpler policy updates?
- Easier claims processing?



CONCLUSION

Your trusted insurance tech partner

Applying the 5 principles for a successful product launch will help de-risk your implementation.

But working with a partner who understands how to implement technology and launch your insurance products can also transform your business and unlock its growth potential.

At [Root](#), we bring deep experience across both worlds - illustrated by our proven track record and many years of launching digital insurance products for our clients.

We don't just provide you with an insurance platform, but we help you design, build and launch scalable and tailored products, simplify operations and avoid the common traps that derail insurance launches.

Because launching with a true, trusted insurance technology partner - not just a vendor - is the best way to launch **on-time** and **on-budget**.

Every time.



The **proven platform**
for modern insurance

rootplatform.com