Openkoda

Empowering MGAs to Build Custom Insurance Products Faster with Openkoda

✓ No Vendor Lock-in ✓ Unlimited Users ✓ Unlimited Customizability

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The Role of MGAs in Insurance

Managing General Agents (MGAs) are specialized insurance organizations that operate under delegated authority from carriers. This means an **MGA can underwrite, price, and manage policies on behalf of an insurer** – often focusing on niche or specialty lines that large insurers find too small or specialized to handle directly.

In practice, MGAs blend the agility of insurtech startups with the underwriting and regulatory rigor of traditional carriers. They bridge the gap between insurance companies and distribution networks (brokers, agents, or even embedded insurance partners) by providing tailored products for specific markets. For example, an **MGA might quickly launch coverage for emerging risks like equine mortality, marine cargo, or cyber liability** – filling market gaps that big insurers can't address swiftly.

This **hybrid role enables fast market entry and product experimentation**: MGAs can bring new insurance solutions to market without the lengthy internal approval processes that slow down large insurers. Despite their entrepreneurial flexibility, MGAs also carry the responsibility of an insurer. They must prove to their carrier partners that every underwriting decision falls within the granted authority.

Every quote, policy endorsement, and claim must be handled with discipline and recorded for audit by the capacity provider. In other words, MGAs are judged not only by growth, but by how clean and compliant their data and processes are. The ability to show an insurer exactly how a particular quote was priced or why a claim was approved is critical. This puts unique demands on MGA technology: it must support agility and innovation, while making compliance "default" – built-in audit trails, rule enforcement, and transparent workflows.

> MGAs design and run insurance programs on a carrier's behalf. Unlike brokers, they can price, underwrite, and bind coverage; unlike insurers, they don't carry the balance sheet. That mix lets them move faster in niche markets and tailor products
>
> Michalina Stark
> Openkoda Business Analyst

The Need for Faster, Specialized Solutions in Niche Lines

Many MGAs focus on specialty lines of insurance – such as equine insurance for racehorses, marine insurance for small vessels or cargo, or cyber insurance for digital businesses. These niche lines are often growth opportunities but require very customized products and processes. Off-the-shelf policy administration software built for general insurance often doesn't fit the unique way MGAs operate.

A one-size-fits-all system may lack the specific data fields, rating formulas, or workflow steps that a niche product needs. For instance, an equine insurance MGA might need to capture a horse's breed, age, and medical history in underwriting, while a cyber MGA might require integration with cybersecurity ratings services – features generic platforms might not support. If an MGA's products aren't generic, their software shouldn't be either.

Speed is another critical factor. MGAs thrive by launching new products quickly to capitalize on market gaps or emerging risks.

In practice, this means their technology must be highly configurable – product managers and underwriters need to tweak coverage terms, rating rules, or forms without waiting months for IT development.

A traditional carrier might take **6–12 months to roll out a new insurance product**, but an MGA can't afford that lag. The right MGA platform should enable configuration and changes in weeks or days, not half-year projects.

Additionally, MGAs require strong integration capabilities. They sit in the middle of a complex insurance ecosystem and must exchange data seamlessly with carrier systems, brokers, third-party data providers, and regulatory reporting tools. A modern MGA system therefore needs open APIs, webhooks, and connectors so it doesn't become an isolated island.

For example, an MGA in marine insurance might pull real-time ship location data or weather information into its underwriting, while an equine insurance MGA might connect to veterinary databases – these integrations reduce manual data entry and improve accuracy.

Crucially, delegated authority controls and compliance are non-negotiable. Because carriers trust MGAs to act on their behalf, the system must enforce underwriting guidelines, referral rules, and approval limits automatically. Built-in permissioning, rules engines, and audit logs allow an MGA to show the carrier "exactly how a quote or endorsement was made" and that it stayed within authority.

In short, MGAs – especially those in fast-evolving specialty niches – **need software that combines agility, connectivity, and control**. As one industry analysis put it, specialty lines like pet insurance (analogous to other niche lines) are growing much faster than the broader market, but they require agile, configurable technology to support that growth. The bottom line: MGAs thrive when their technology enables them to act quickly, respond to market gaps, and deliver highly customized insurance offerings.

How Openkoda Accelerates MGA Digital Transformation

Openkoda is an **open-source, core insurance application platform purpose-built to meet these MGA needs**. It enables insurance innovators – including MGAs and insurtech startups – to develop and deploy custom applications and new products far more rapidly than traditional methods.

Openkoda's approach addresses the major pain points MGAs face: it provides ready-made insurance components that are fully customizable, an integration-ready architecture, and a domain-driven design that keeps business logic front and center. By using Openkoda, **MGAs operating in niche markets can go from idea to working software in a fraction of the time,** without sacrificing control over their unique workflows or data.

Customizable Core Platform

At its core, **Openkoda** offers a **core development platform with pre-built modules covering the insurance lifecycle.** MGAs don't have to start coding a system from scratch – instead they can begin with Openkoda's domain-specific templates for key functions like policy administration, claims management, or even an insurance client portal.

Each template comes with standard insurance domain objects (e.g. policies, claims, clients), business workflows, and user interface components already in place. his means much of the "undifferentiated heavy lifting" – login/authentication, role-based access control, basic screens for quotes or claims, etc. – is already done. Instead of spending months on boilerplate infrastructure, an MGA insurance software development team (or even a "citizen developer" business analyst) can focus directly on configuring product-specific logic and features that set their niche apart.

> In custom insurance software projects, you don't need to reinvent the wheel. It's smarter to start from a solid foundation of ready-made application templates, RBAC, dashboards and integrations—and build the specific logic you really care about.
>
> 
> Arkadiusz Drysch
> CTO Stratoflow

Because the platform is open-source and fully customizable, there's no ceiling on how you tailor it. The entire Openkoda stack is built on familiar enterprise technologies (Java, Spring Boot for the backend and React/JavaScript for the frontend, with PostgreSQL for data). An MGA's developers can tweak any aspect of the system – from the data model (e.g. adding a "Horse" entity for equine coverage or a new field for cyber risk score) to business rules and UI layout – all within a framework that's already insurance-aware. This blend of low-code convenience and full-code flexibility exemplifies domain-driven design in action: the technology is structured around insurance concepts and workflows, yet the MGA has ownership to extend or modify the domain model as their product evolves.

Unlike black-box vendor systems, Openkoda lets MGAs own the code. There's no vendor lock-in – the platform is MIT-licensed, so MGAs can continue to evolve the software on their own terms. This is especially valuable for niche MGAs who may need very unique features; with Openkoda they can build those features or hire developers to do so, all while maintaining full control of their IP.

Integration-Ready Architecture

Integrations are often the lifeblood of an MGA's operations. Openkoda was designed API-first, which means every function of the platform is available through modern APIs (REST and GraphQL) for easy connectivity.

The platform also supports event streaming and webhooks, enabling real-time data exchange with external services. For an MGA, this integration readiness translates to faster partnerships and data enrichment. For example, an equine insurance MGA could plug Openkoda into a third-party database of veterinary records or horse registries to automatically fetch health and value information during underwriting. A cyber insurance MGA might connect to cybersecurity scan providers to import a client's risk score. Openkoda's built-in integration layer makes these connections with carriers, data providers, or other software relatively plug-and-play.

One of Openkoda's key features is a fully developed API layer that lets you "plug into carriers, third-party data providers, accounting systems, and distribution channels with minimal friction."

Compliance and Domain Control by Design

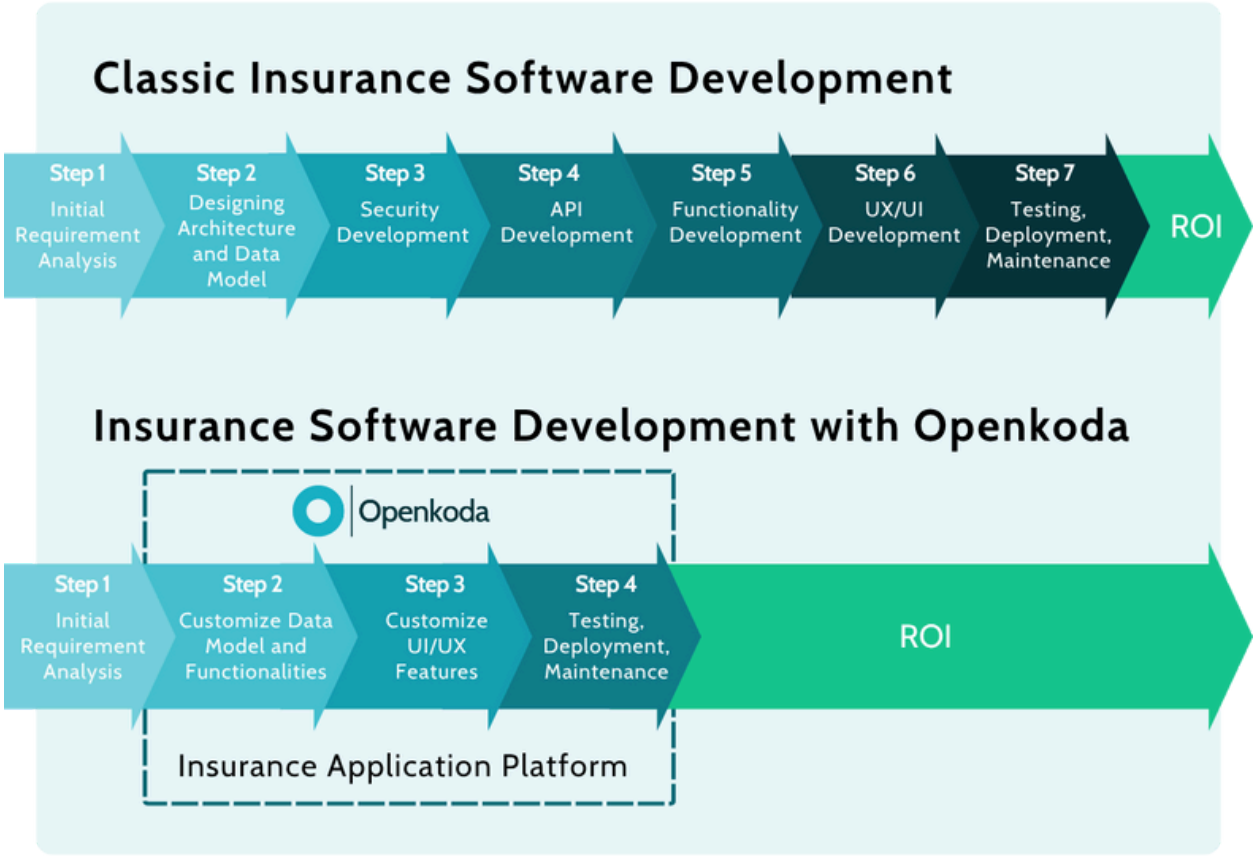
For MGAs, maintaining regulatory compliance and adhering to carrier guidelines is as important as speed. Openkoda addresses this through its domain-driven, rule-based design. Because MGAs can encode their underwriting guidelines and business rules into the platform, compliance is enforced by default in the workflow. For example, if an MGA's binding authority from a carrier limits them to writing policies up to a certain value, Openkoda's rules engine can automatically prevent quotes above that limit from being bound without a referral. The platform also supports detailed permission settings and audit trail.

Importantly, **Openkoda lets MGAs maintain full control over their data, rules, and user experience even as they accelerate development**. In fast-moving niche segments, regulations or market conditions can change quickly. With a traditional core system, making a compliance update or product tweak might require vendor involvement or long development cycles. In Openkoda, because the MGA owns the configuration and code, they can swiftly adjust rating factors, form wording, or approval processes in response to new regulations or carrier audits. This agility ensures that speed doesn't come at the expense of governance. As a result, MGAs using Openkoda can confidently grow their specialty portfolios knowing that compliance and reporting capabilities are woven into their technology from day one.

Rapid Product Launches – Speed to Market Gains

Perhaps the most tangible benefit **Openkoda provides to MGAs is a dramatic improvement in speed-to-market for new insurance products**. By leveraging the platform's pre-built components and flexible design, MGAs have reported launching new programs in a fraction of the normal time. In fact, **development cycles can be cut by roughly 50–60%, meaning what might have been a year-long IT project can often be piloted in 3–6 months.**

For an MGA exploring a new niche (say a sudden opportunity in renewable energy insurance or a new equine coverage program), this acceleration is game-changing.



It allows them to be first to market, capturing brokers and customers before competitors do. Moreover, the quicker iteration cycle means MGAs can refine their offerings in near-real time. If the initial product configuration needs adjustments (pricing tweaks, coverage additions, new state filings, etc.), the platform's low-code nature lets them implement changes without derailing the whole system. This rapid launch and iteration capability is crucial in specialty lines, where learning and adapting quickly to underwriting results can make the difference between profit and loss.

Another aspect of faster deployment is operational efficiency. Openkoda helps remove manual work through automation (for example, automating document generation, renewal reminders, or bordereau reports), which not only speeds up processes but frees MGA staff to focus on higher-value tasks

The net effect is that new products don't demand a proportional increase in headcount or overhead – the MGA can scale its portfolio fast, while technology handles much of the routine workload. In short, Openkoda turns software from a traditional bottleneck into a growth enabler. For MGA owners and insurance professionals, this means the ability to pursue niche opportunities confidently, knowing the platform will support rapid deployment and smooth operations.

Example: Building a Niche Equine Insurance Application with Openkoda

To illustrate how an MGA can leverage Openkoda in practice, consider a hypothetical Equine Insurance MGA. This MGA specializes in insuring high-value horses and equestrian businesses – a classic specialty line requiring tailored coverage and careful risk management. Using Openkoda, the MGA's team can develop and launch a custom equine insurance system quickly, following a few key steps:

Step 1: Defining Custom Workflows and Product Logic

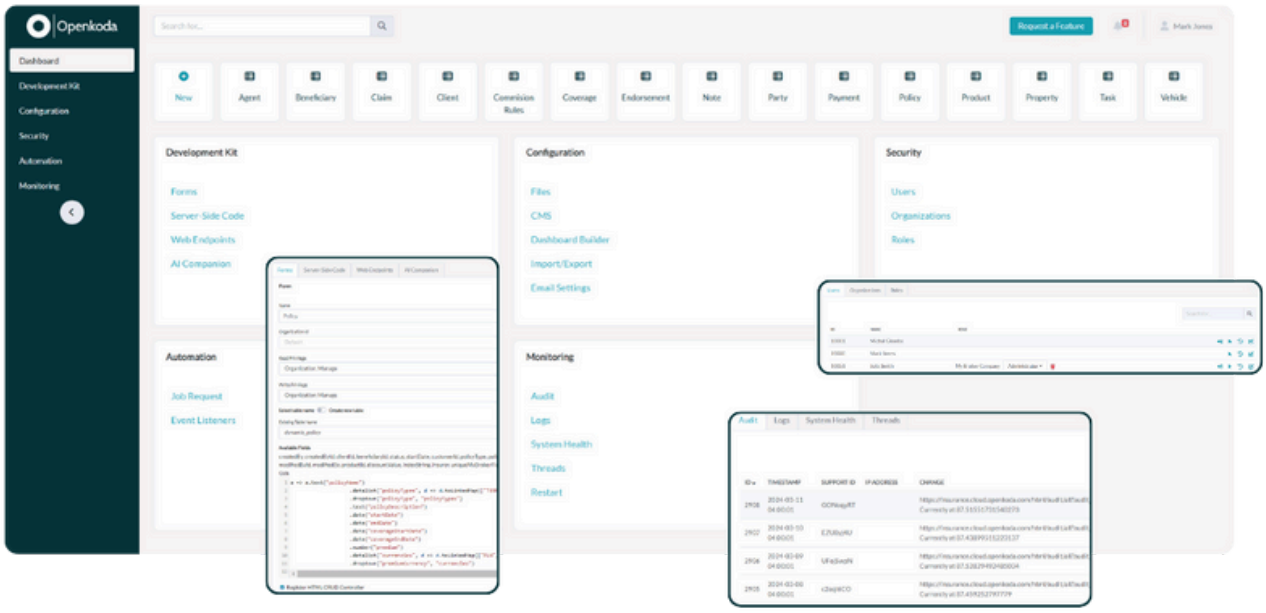
The MGA starts by using Openkoda's built-in templates for policy administration and claims as a foundation. Instead of coding basic screens and database tables from scratch, they import the template and then configure the product-specific details. For an equine policy, this might mean defining coverage options like Mortality Coverage, Major Medical, or Liability coverage for horse owners. With Openkoda, the team simply adjusts the product model – adding fields for the horse's name, breed, age, and value, and setting up rules (e.g. age limits or required veterinary exams for horses above a certain value).

The platform's domain-driven design makes this easy: it already understands the concept of "Policy" and "Coverage," so the MGA just plugs in their niche parameters. Within days, the basic quoting and underwriting workflow is in place, tailored to the equine business. (In a traditional approach this step alone could take months of development.) By leveraging Openkoda's policy templates and just defining unique business rules – such as dynamic pricing based on the horse's age or use (show horse, race horse, etc.) – the MGA rapidly creates a working product backbone

Step 2: Launching a New Equine Product in Record Time

Once the product logic is configured, the MGA can move straight to testing and deployment. Thanks to Openkoda's low-code environment, much of the UI (user interface) for agents and underwriters is already provided – including quote screens, proposal generation, and policy document issuance.

The MGA customizes the branding and language for their audience (for example, renaming certain fields or adding help text specific to equine terms) but does not need to build the application framework. This means the time from concept to launch is dramatically shortened. What might traditionally be a long IT project becomes a matter of configuring and fine-tuning. Within a few weeks, the MGA can pilot the new equine insurance product with a subset of their brokers. The speed doesn't compromise quality: because Openkoda's components are tested and robust, the MGA's focus is on business testing – making sure premiums are calculating correctly and coverage documents meet regulatory standards – rather than debugging software issues. Many organizations using Openkoda have seen product launch timelines cut by around 60% compared to building from scratch.



Step 3: Integrating External Systems and Data

A unique line like equine insurance often benefits from external data integration. Using Openkoda's integration-ready APIs, the MGA connects their application to a third-party equine database. For example, they integrate with a veterinary records service to automatically retrieve a horse's medical history when a quote is being worked up. They also set up a link to a carrier's policy administration system for reporting and reinsurance purposes, since this MGA is writing on behalf of a larger insurer. With Openkoda's API-first architecture, these connections take days, not weeks – the platform readily plugs into carrier systems and data providers.

Now, when the MGA's underwriter enters a horse's identification, the system can pull in details like breed and past injury history in real time, enhancing underwriting accuracy. Similarly, once a policy is bound, a bordereau (data report) can automatically be sent to the carrier each month via an API. The MGA also integrates a payment gateway for collecting premiums online and a document e-signature service for faster binding.

Step 4: Ensuring Compliance and Control

Throughout the process, the MGA leverages Openkoda's built-in controls to maintain regulatory compliance and adhere to carrier guidelines. They configure the system's delegated authority rules so that any quote above a certain coverage limit or for a particularly valuable horse triggers an alert or requires a senior underwriter's sign-off. Openkoda's workflow engine handles this easily – it was designed with insurance approvals and auditability in mind.

Every quote, bind, and endorsement action is logged. If a carrier or regulator asks, the MGA can produce a report showing how decisions were made within the system. For example, they can show that a policy for a championship race horse went through an extra approval step and that the underwriter's decision was within their authority. Documents generated (like insurance certificates or policy schedules) are stored and versioned automatically, aiding compliance checks.

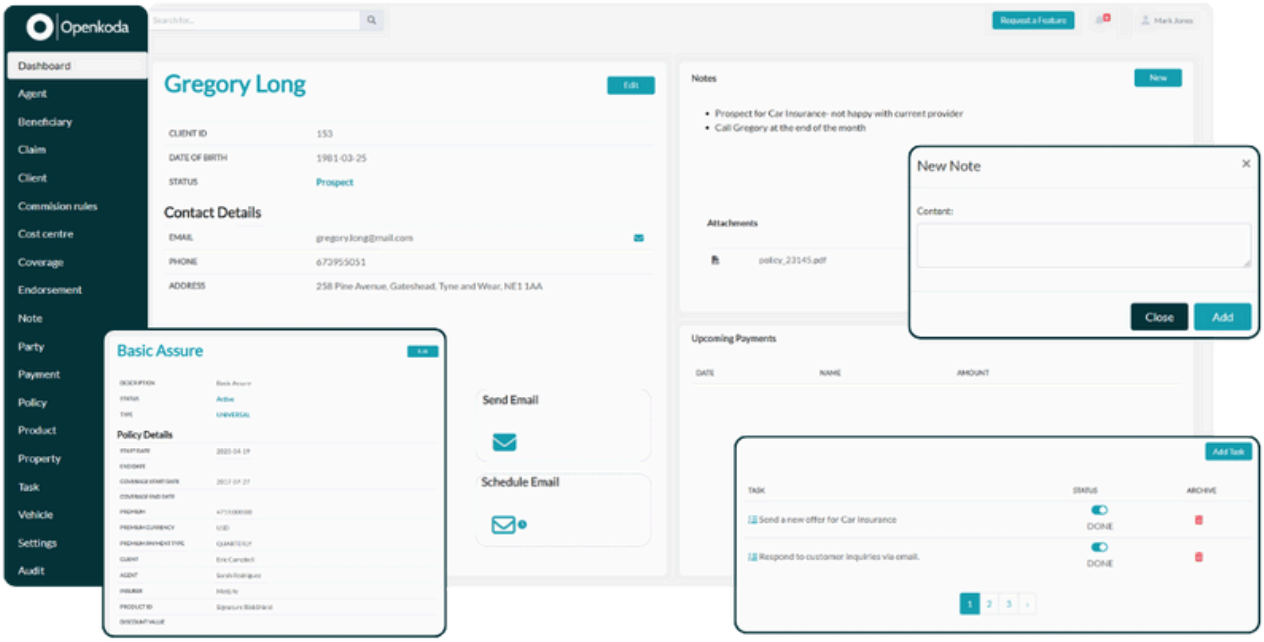
Bottom Line

Within a short span, our hypothetical MGA has a working, integrated, and compliant equine insurance platform – tailored exactly to their niche – instead of a generic one-size-fits-all system. This example underscores the power of Openkoda: it lets MGAs focus on their unique underwriting and service model, while the platform handles the heavy lifting of infrastructure, integrations, and compliance.

> Openkoda was born from a simple idea: insurers should be able to launch and evolve digital products fast—on their own terms, without vendor lock-in.

Michał Głomba
CEO Openkoda

The MGA can innovate in product and customer experience, rather than getting bogged down in software development minutiae. As Openkoda's own success stories demonstrate, even highly specialized MGAs can leap ahead in digital transformation using this approach.



Conclusion

Openkoda provides MGAs – especially those serving niche and specialty insurance markets – a formidable advantage in the race to innovate. By combining a low-code, insurance-specific platform with full customizability and open integrations, Openkoda allows an MGA to develop and deploy custom insurance applications at unprecedented speed.

It addresses the core challenges MGAs face: needing to launch new products quickly, integrate across a complex ecosystem, and maintain strict compliance and data quality. The platform's domain-driven design means MGAs get to start with the building blocks of insurance (policies, claims, workflows) and mold them to fit their exact business model rather than conforming to a rigid vendor system.

For MGA owners and insurance professionals, this translates into faster digital transformation – the ability to enter new specialty lines like equine, marine, or cyber insurance with confidence that their software will accelerate, not impede, their ambitions.