BUSINESS ANALYSIS CASE STUDY · MOCK SCENARIO

Open Access, Certified Answers

A data governance plan that gives a growing insurer one trusted set of numbers — without locking anyone out of the data

Snapshot	
Type	Mock case study — fictional company, systems and figures, built to show approach and artifacts
Company	Lone Star Mutual (fictional) — a regional auto and home insurer that has just acquired a smaller carrier
My role	Senior Business Analyst, data governance
Artifacts	Working Excel metric catalog (12 insurance metrics, variants, ownership, change log, live scorecard); decision rule; governance cycle; roadmap
Grounded in	Real experience tracing the data behind 300+ executive metrics at a large financial services firm after a major acquisition

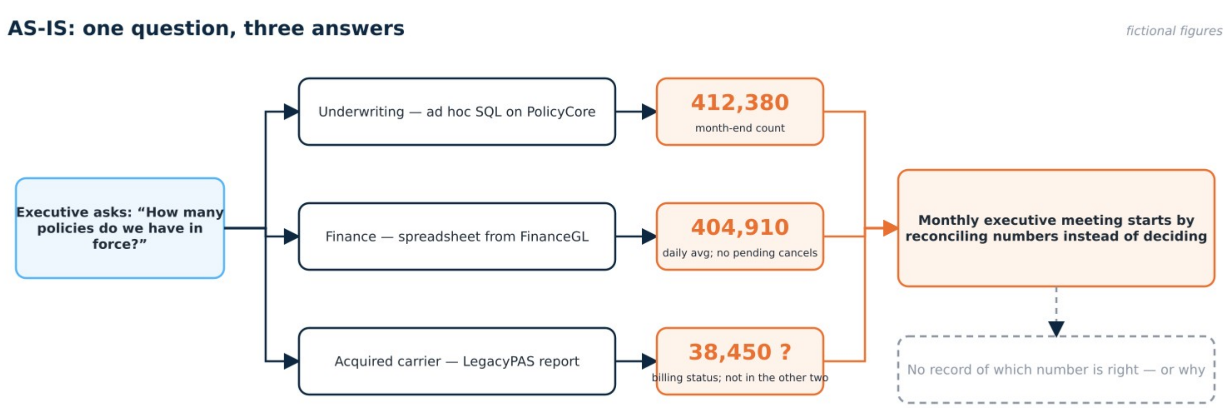
12	3	Monthly	100%
core metrics, one certified definition each	competing loss ratios — all labeled, none lost	metric check-ins, not audit-time surprises	target: certified or labeled numbers in the executive pack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After acquiring a smaller carrier, Lone Star Mutual has two policy systems, open access to data, and analysts writing their own SQL for ad hoc reports. Every monthly executive meeting starts the same way: Underwriting, Finance and the acquired team each bring a different number for the same metric, and the first half hour goes to deciding whose is right.

Leadership doesn't want to restrict access — it keeps the business fast. So the answer isn't locking data down; it's **certifying the answers.** Each of 12 core metrics gets one owner, one certified definition anchored to its compliance standard, and clearly labeled variants for teams with a different need. Definitions are reviewed at short monthly check-ins, because **metrics evolve, they don't drift** — change is normal, as long as it's assessed and captured.

1 THE PROBLEM



- **Unclear ownership.** After the acquisition, no one is sure who owns a metric's definition.
- **Open access, ad hoc logic.** Anyone can query any data element, so fields and filters get added to reports on the fly.
- **Two systems.** The acquired carrier's system tracks billing status, not coverage, so its counts don't line up.
- **Lineage without meaning.** You can trace a report's code back to its cloud source — but code shows where data comes from, not how it's used or what it means.

2 SCOPE, GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

Problem statement: Executives receive conflicting values for the same metrics because definitions have no owner, no certification and no change process — costing decision time every month and creating compliance risk.

Area	Definition
Goals	One certified definition per core metric; named owners and stewards; labeled variants for legitimate differences; a recorded change process.
In scope	12 core metrics used in the executive pack: premium, policies in force, retention, new business, quote-to-bind, claim frequency and severity, loss, LAE, expense and combined ratios.
Out of scope	Restricting data access; rebuilding source systems; the full data migration from the acquired carrier.
Constraints	Access stays open. Phase 1 uses tools already on hand (Excel, existing BI) before any platform purchase.
Success measures	100% of executive-pack metrics certified or labeled; reconciliation time in executive meetings near zero; every core metric with a named owner; change requests decided within one monthly cycle.

3 STAKEHOLDERS (MOCK INTERVIEWS)

Persona	Goal	Frustration or risk
CFO — executive sponsor	One set of numbers leadership can trust	Meetings spent reconciling, not deciding
Chief Actuary	Loss metrics that match statutory reporting	Paid and incurred ratios being mixed up
VP Underwriting	Accurate policy counts and retention	Finance and the acquired team reporting different counts
Head of Claims	A cash view of claim payments	Worried governance will take their paid-loss view away
Compliance Officer	Definitions that hold up with regulators and auditors	Undocumented changes to reported metrics
BI / data engineering lead	Clear specs and a single source per metric	Ad hoc SQL and constant one-off requests
Integration lead (acquired carrier)	Map legacy data correctly	Legacy fields that mean something different

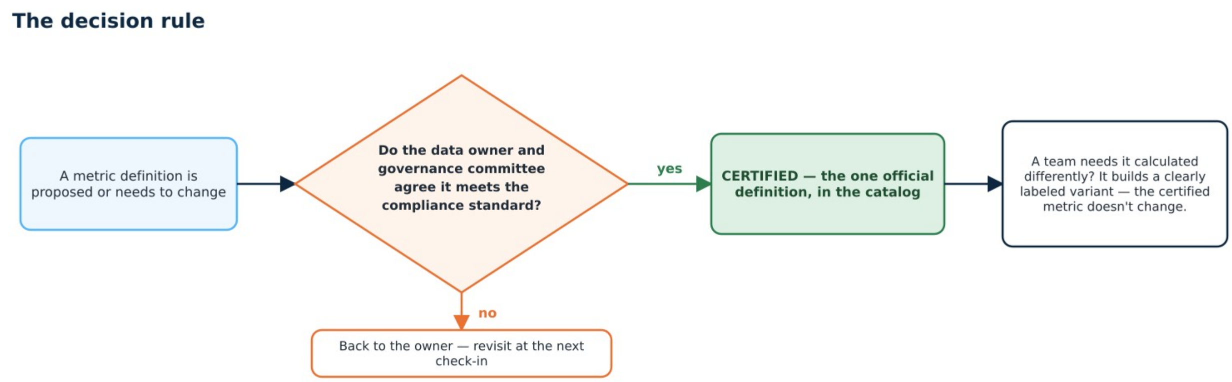
What we heard

“If you standardize loss ratio, don't take away my paid view — that's how I run the department.” — Head of Claims

“I don't mind definitions changing. I mind finding out at audit time.” — Compliance Officer

“I can tell you which table a number came from. I can't tell you which number is the right one.” — BI lead

4 THE DECISION RULE



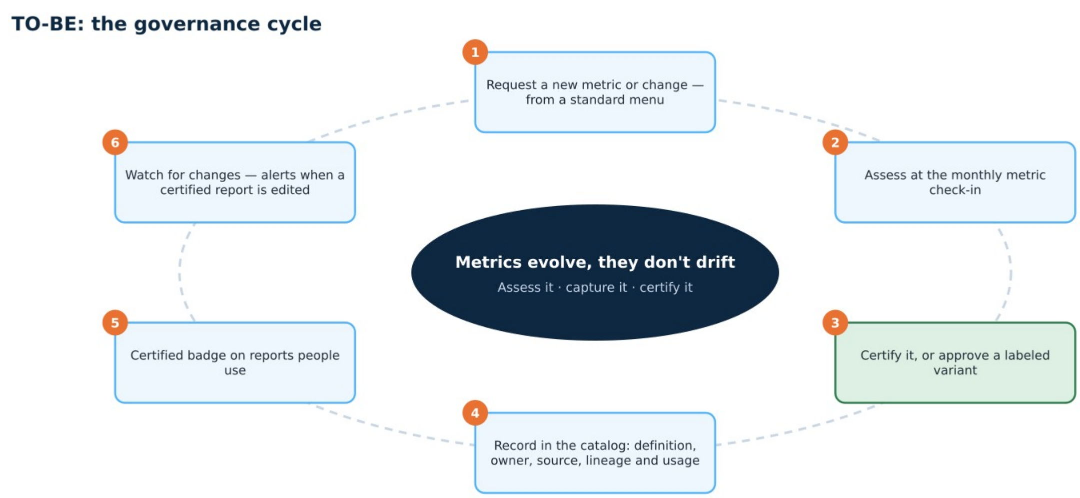
The rule settles disagreements without a tug-of-war. **The data owner and the governance committee set the standard, anchored to the compliance requirement.** When they agree, that becomes the certified definition. A team with a legitimate different need — like Claims' paid view — keeps it as a **labeled variant** in its own report, and the certified metric doesn't change.

Why three loss ratios can all be right

Version (fictional quarter, $50M earned premium)	Result	Label
Paid losses ÷ earned premium	52.0%	Variant — Claims (cash view)
Incurred losses ÷ earned premium	61.0%	CERTIFIED — Actuarial, statutory basis
(Incurred losses + LAE) ÷ earned premium	71.0%	Variant — Finance (includes claim-handling cost)

The workbook's Loss Ratio Example tab calculates these live — change the inputs and all three update.

5 THE FUTURE STATE (TO-BE)



Need	Before	After
Which number is right	Argued in the meeting	The certified definition, by rule
Ownership	Unclear after the acquisition	Named owner and steward per metric

Need	Before	After
Different team needs	Competing numbers	Labeled variants, never confused with the certified one
Changes	Discovered at audit time	Requested, assessed monthly, recorded in a change log
Lineage	Code traced to a source	Source plus usage and meaning, in the catalog
Access	Open	Still open — the outputs are certified instead

6 THE SOLUTION AND ARTIFACTS

The core artifact is a working **metric catalog** (attached Excel workbook). For each of 12 insurance metrics it records the business question, certified definition, formula, data owner, steward, source systems, refresh, compliance anchor, approved variants, status and next check-in date. A live scorecard counts certified metrics and flags the next check-in automatically.

Workbook tab	What it shows
Metric Catalog	12 metrics, one certified definition each, variants listed separately, status dropdown
Three Versions of Truth	How each team defined policies in force, retention and loss ratio — and how each was resolved
Loss Ratio Example	Live formulas showing paid, incurred and loss-and-LAE ratios from the same inputs
Ownership (RACI)	Who is responsible, accountable, consulted and informed for each governance activity
Change Log	Requests, reasons, decisions and effective dates — including a declined request
Scorecard and Glossary	Live governance measures, and plain-language insurance and governance terms

Sample requirements

User story	Acceptance criteria
As the CFO, I want every number in the executive pack to be certified or clearly labeled, so meetings start with decisions.	Each metric shows its status; variants carry their label everywhere they appear.
As a data owner, I want to propose a definition change and have it decided at the next check-in, so the metric can evolve with the business.	Requests are logged with a reason; a decision and effective date are recorded within one monthly cycle.
As the Head of Claims, I want to keep a paid-loss view, so I can manage cash — without it being confused with the certified loss ratio.	The variant is approved, named 'Paid loss ratio' and never replaces the certified metric.
As a Compliance Officer, I want to be alerted when a certified report's logic changes, so nothing reaches regulators undocumented.	Edits to certified reports trigger a notification and a change-log entry.

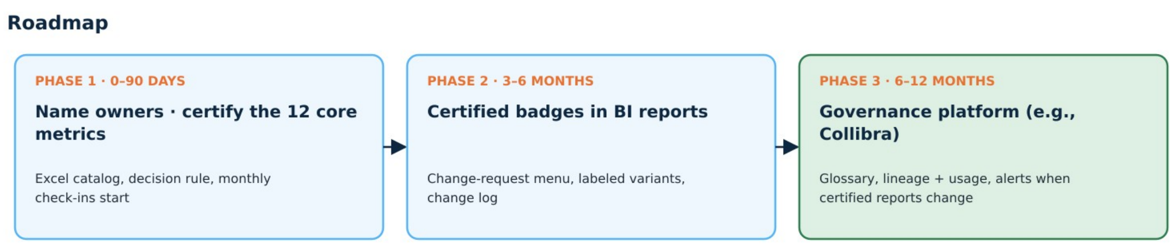
7 TRADE-OFFS AND RISKS

Option	Pros	Cons	Decision
Restrict data access	Fewer rogue numbers	Slows the business; leadership opposed	Rejected
Buy a governance platform first	Lineage, glossary and alerts	Tool before process; long setup	Phase 3
Certify outputs, catalog first	Fast, cheap, builds the habit	Manual until the platform arrives	Chosen

Risks and mitigations

- **Losing a team's view.** Labeled variants mean no one's legitimate number disappears — the main source of pushback is removed.
- **Committee fatigue.** Check-ins are short and monthly, with an agenda built from the change requests.
- **Shadow reports persist.** Don't ban them — label them. Certified badges make the official number easy to recognize.
- **Post-merger confusion.** Legacy fields are mapped to certified definitions and logged in the change log.

8 EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION



Keep data access open and **certify the answers.** Start with ownership and a catalog of the 12 metrics leadership already uses, put the decision rule and monthly check-ins in place, then add certified badges and a change-request process, and finally a governance platform (for example, Collibra) for lineage, usage and change alerts. Expected outcomes: executive meetings that start with decisions, fewer one-off data requests, and definitions that hold up with auditors and regulators.

9 WHAT THIS CASE SHOWS

Metrics evolve, they don't drift. When a business grows or slows, its metrics should change — the goal isn't to freeze them, but to make sure every change is assessed and captured before audit time.

Lineage isn't meaning. Tracing report code back to cloud data shows where a number comes from, not how it's used or which version is right. Governance needs business owners, not just technical maps.

Certify, don't restrict. Open access and trustworthy numbers can live together when the rules for what's official are clear.

Mock case study. Lone Star Mutual, its people, systems and all figures are fictional. Metric definitions follow common P&C insurance usage and are simplified.