CLIFF NOTES

The AWS Essentials Guide

Services + AI + Software

When you combine intelligent software with expert execution, your cloud delivers more.

CONTACT
stratus10.com
sales@stratus10.com
619.780.6100
San Diego, CA

Stratus10
CLOUD COMPUTING SERVICES

Kickstart Your Cloud Journey

FREE ASSESSMENT & CONSULTATION

Get expert insights, tools, and incentives to accelerate your AWS success.

We make it simple to start optimizing your cloud strategy and AWS environment with low-risk, high-value assessments.

Choose from these complimentary offers:

Migration Assessment
Evaluate migration readiness and unlock AWS funding.

Cost & Security Snapshot
See AWS security posture and spend insights in minutes.

App Modernization POC
Test modernization strategies with a quick proof of concept.

Consultation Call
Explore your cloud challenges and custom solutions with us.

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Practical tips about AWS tools, insights, and success stories inside!

Read the full content online:

AWS Cost Tools: Strengths & Gaps

Built-in cost management is useful, but not always enough.

AWS offers a suite of native tools to track and manage spend. These tools are free or low-cost, integrated into AWS, and provide useful insights.

Essential cost tools you should be using:

1. AWS Budgets → set cost limits with alerts
2. Cost Explorer → visualize spend trends and forecasts
3. Billing Console → centralized view of invoices and payments
4. Cost & Usage Reports (CUR) → detailed billing data for analysis
5. Cost Anomaly Detection → ML-powered alerts for cost anomalies
6. Trusted Advisor → optimization checks across cost and security
7. CloudWatch → monitor metrics, logs, and usage patterns
8. Compute Optimizer → rightsizing recommendations

Limitations: AWS-native tools are powerful but fragmented. They're a solid starting point for any team, but as environments scale, complexity grows. Multi-account setups, complex billing, and data overload often make these tools harder to maintain and less effective without dedicated expertise.

Key Takeaway: Use the essential AWS tools (at least #1 and #2 above) to build cost visibility. But the moment you feel growing pains, explore third-party options before costs spiral out of control.

> AWS-native tools are essential, but without expert setup and ongoing oversight, they can overwhelm more than they optimize.

Security Is Job Zero

Understand your role in keeping AWS secure.

Overview: AWS provides world-class security for its infrastructure, but customers share responsibility for protecting data, applications, and access. This Shared Responsibility Model means AWS secures the cloud (data centers, hardware, core services), while you secure in the cloud (identities, configurations, data).

Meeting compliance and security goals requires clear access controls, encryption, and proactive monitoring.

Security Essentials:

✓ **Shared Responsibility**
AWS secures infrastructure; you secure data, apps, and users.

✓ **Identity & Access Management**
Use least privilege, MFA, and audit activity regularly.

✓ **Encryption**
Protect data at rest and in transit with TLS.

✓ **Security Tools**
Leverage CloudTrail, GuardDuty, Inspector, and Security Hub for visibility and remediation.

✓ **Compliance Alignment**
Frameworks like SOC 2, HIPAA, and NIST can be mapped with AWS-native services.

Cloud security isn't automatic. Knowing where AWS stops and you start is critical to staying protected.

Read the full eBook:

Modernizing Made Easier

Practical pathways to extend the life and value of your applications.

App modernization isn't the heavy lift it once was. Organizations can update legacy applications using containers, serverless, and cloud-native databases—often faster and more cost-effectively than expected.

Modernization boosts agility, reduces licensing costs, and strengthens security while enabling faster time-to-market. Whether you're running .NET, SQL Server, or microservices, you can select modernization pathways for different workloads and business needs.

Common Modernization Pathways:

✓ **SQL Server on EC2 Linux**
Lower licensing costs, stronger security

✓ **.NET Core on Linux Containers**
Run microservices easily with ECS/Fargate

✓ **SQL Server to Amazon Aurora**
Open-source engines, reduced database spend

✓ **Windows Containers on EKS**
Run Linux + Windows workloads in one cluster

✓ **Serverless .NET with Lambda**
No servers to manage, pay only for usage

✓ **App2Container (A2C)**
Auto-containerize Java and .NET apps with CI/CD

It's never too late—or too daunting—to modernize your applications.

Executive Playbook on Migration

How leaders can avoid migration pitfalls and drive lasting value

Migrating to the cloud is one of the fastest ways to gain agility, reduce costs, and innovate — but success doesn't come from lift-and-shift. By planning ahead, aligning leadership, and modernizing early, organizations can avoid the common pitfalls that derail migrations.

The payoff is clear: a well-structured approach can cut infrastructure costs by 30–55% over 3–5 years, while setting the stage for modernization and scalability that keeps pace with business growth.

Key Strategies for Migration Success:
1. Secure executive sponsorship and align stakeholders early
2. Build a cloud-first strategy, not just migration plans
3. Use TCO analysis to uncover true costs
4. Apply the right "6 Rs" path for each workload:

   - Rehost aka lift-*tinker*-shift
   - Re-architect* aka refactor
   - Replatform*
   - Repurchase
   - Retain
   - Retire

   more work, higher payoff

5. Implement FinOps practices from day one
6. Modernize workloads early to capture ROI
7. Strengthen security with the Shared Responsibility Model
8. Utilize AWS-funded incentives and assessments to offset costs.

> **Why do migrations fail?**
> Poor planning. From unrealistic timelines to inadequate cost analysis, organizations often rush the process, and thus miss the opportunity to fully realize the cloud's value.

Closing the Data Center Gap

How Advent Resources modernized and automated on AWS.

Advent Resources, a software provider for auto dealerships, faced a deadline to close their data center without disrupting customers.

Stratus10 stepped in to complete the migration, streamline networking for 100+ VPN connections, and align the AWS environment with best practices.

Project Highlights:

- Migrated 45 VMs and 140+ VPNs to AWS
- Implemented AWS Transit Gateway for scalable routing
- Automated AMI builds with EC2 Image Builder + CodePipeline
- Deployed CloudFormation templates for repeatable onboarding
- Delivered zero-downtime migration under tight deadlines

Results: Beyond migration, Stratus10 delivered automation pipelines that transformed how Advent builds, deploys, and maintains infrastructure, enabling faster onboarding, version control, and a fully automated AMI lifecycle.

> *Stratus10 brought a solid solution and executed with precision. We now have a modern, automated environment in AWS.*
>
> — VP of R&D, Advent Resources

Automated DevOps for Agility

CASE STUDY: How iTrac transformed its platform with IaC and CI/CD.

Overview: iTrac, part of Alatus Solutions, provides a SaaS platform for subscription-based dental service providers. To support compliance and scale, they needed to overhaul a manual, error-prone deployment process that slowed down innovation.

Stratus10 rebuilt their cloud environment using CloudFormation, ECS, and CodePipeline, creating a secure, automated infrastructure.

Solution Highlights:

- Implemented ECS for container orchestration across microservices
- Introduced automated CI/CD pipelines with AWS CodePipeline and CodeBuild
- Added autoscaling to meet demand while controlling cost

Key Result: Deployment times dropped from weeks to under an hour, freeing iTrac to focus on expanding its platform for growing demand.

> "*Working with Stratus10 enabled us to meet our compliance goals and significantly improve our AWS environment. They created a highly scalable infrastructure with automated deployments, saving us time and resources.*"
>
> — CTO, iTrac

Data Migration Fuels Growth

CASE STUDY: How Skybound moved analytics to AWS Redshift for stability and scale.

Overview: Skybound Entertainment — creators of *The Walking Dead* — needed a scalable cloud solution to support rising traffic and improve analytics. Stratus10 designed and automated a pipeline using AWS Glue, S3, and Redshift to migrate and transform their data.

Project Highlights:

- Designed an automated ETL pipeline with Glue for consistent data preparation
- Migrated MySQL data into Redshift for scalable analytics
- Leveraged S3 as staging to streamline data transfer
- Implemented AWS Config to enforce security best practices
- Delivered a fully integrated analytics environment aligned to Skybound's business goals
- Long-term managed services for modernization and security

Result: Site reliability improved significantly, and analytics queries that once took hours now run in minutes.

> "*We continually get new solutions that improve our performance and security while keeping costs under control.*"
>
> — CTO, Skybound

Scaling Education in the Cloud

CASE STUDY: EdTech Learning Upgrade gains cost visibility as they expandworldwide.

Overview: Learning Upgrade, a global learning application, has grown to reach 3 million students in 25+ countries, completing more than 20 million lessons in math, reading, and digital literacy.

With this growth came new complexity: rising AWS bills and the need for clear cost tracking. Their previous tool, an enterprise cost visibility software, delivered too much noise. They needed was clarity, not clutter. That's when they switched to Kalos.

Solution Highlights:
- Kalos provided simpler, actionable AWS cost monitoring.
- Month-to-month comparisons made it easy to spot changes.
- Lightweight dashboards gave quick insights across accounts.
- Better alignment with their mission: spend less time parsing reports, more time serving learners.

Results: With Kalos, Learning Upgrade instantly sees what's driving spend changes each month. Instead of sifting through lengthy reports, their team gets a clear snapshot of usage and cost, so they can stay proactive.

> "*Partnering with Stratus10 and adopting Kalos has given us clear visibility into our AWS costs and security compliance as we've scaled to millions of learners worldwide. Their team understands our challenges and continues to guide us as we grow.*"
>
> — CEO, Learning Upgrade

Securing AI to Achieve SOC 2

CASE STUDY: How Fama strengthened cloud security and prepare for SOC 2 certification.

Objective: Fama Technologies is a SaaS company that helps HR teams evaluate candidate digital footprints for risk signals like harassment, bias, or other harmful behavior. Operating in highly regulated industries, Fama needed to meet SOC 2 compliance standards to protect sensitive data and maintain client trust.

Fama engaged Stratus10 for a comprehensive AWS security assessment across infrastructure, DevOps, and compliance.

Project Highlights:
- Reviewed infrastructure, delivery pipelines, IAM, and architecture.
- Benchmarked against CIS AWS Foundations, AWS Well-Architected, SOC 2, and the AWS Shared Responsibility Model.
- Automated security scans plus manual expert analysis.
- Prioritized remediation steps with risk scoring for each finding.

Results: Fama gained deep visibility into their cloud environment, identified gaps, and implemented changes to strengthen security and compliance. With Stratus10's support, they built a roadmap toward SOC 2 certification and established a stronger, more resilient foundation for their AI-driven platform.

✸✸FAMA

"With Stratus10's cloud security services, we gained comprehensive visibility into our infrastructure and clear guidance to improve our security posture."

— CTO, Fama Technologies

Why Stratus10 + Kalos

Because cloud success takes more than tools — it takes expertise.

Most cloud management platforms stop at surface-level dashboards. Kalos by Stratus10 goes further, combining AI-powered insights with the expertise of AWS-certified engineers. The result: clear actions that optimize cost, strengthen security, and accelerate modernization.

With Stratus10, you don't just get software, you get a partner. Our team has delivered hundreds of AWS projects, from complex migrations to cost reduction programs, for SMBs and mid-market enterprises.

The difference is context. Kalos understands your infrastructure; Stratus10 brings the playbook and people to turn insight into impact.

> **With most tools, you get dashboards.**
> **With Stratus10 + Kalos, you get outcomes.**

✓ **AI-Powered Insights**
Kalos continuously identifies cost savings & compliance risks.

✓ **Human Expertise**
AWS-certified engineers turn insights into action.

✓ **Proven Experience**
Hundreds of AWS projects delivered across migration, DevOps, and modernization.

✓ **SMB & Mid-Market Focus**
Tailored solutions for growing companies that need enterprise-grade results.

✓ **End-to-End Support**
From first consultation to ongoing optimization, we're with you at every step.

What People Say

"Stratus10 is not your typical provider; they continue to bring in new tools and solutions, constantly improving our performance and security while controlling costs. We've benefitted from their oversight, expertise, and continual improvements on our infrastructure."

— CTO, Skybound Entertainment

"Managing security across multiple environments used to take hours of digging through reports. With Kalos, I see prioritized risks and how they impact compliance scores. It's fast, clear, and saves our team valuable time every week."

— Engineering Director, Peachjar

"Stratus10 delivered an extremely helpful strategy for us in managing multiple AWS accounts and workloads. We appreciate their expert insight into AWS structure and how it has enabled us to efficiently manage our AWS resources and bolster our security now and in the future."

— VP of Engineering, Zebit

"Solid tool for monitoring our AWS accounts. Easier to use than our previous solutions, menu is simple, reports on spending are detailed allowing quick scans to see what has changed month to month."

— CEO, Learning Upgrade

Trusted. Proven. Recognized.

Leading organizations rely on Stratus10 to help transform their cloud operations and maximize the value of their infrastructure.

Stratus10 is an AWS Advanced Consulting Partner with expertise across cloud migration, DevOps, modernization, security, and cost optimization. Our Kalos platform brings cloud cost and compliance visibility, backed by AI-powered insights and human expertise.

From SMB to enterprise, we've helped numerous organizations transition successfully to the cloud and maintain a cost-optimized, secure AWS environment.

When the cloud gets complex, Stratus10 + Kalos make it simple.

aws PARTNER Advanced Tier Services

- Amazon EC2 for Windows Server Delivery
- Migration and Modernization Services Competency
- Education Services Competency
- Well-Architected Partner

- Solution Provider
- Amazon RDS Delivery
- DevOps Services Competency
- AWS CloudFormation Delivery
- AWS Systems Manager Delivery

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