



E-book

Okta + AWS: Building SaaS apps with security and scalability



okta

aws

Introduction

You've a successful consumer-facing app. It's growing fast. You want to take it to the next level and bring it to enterprise customers—but you know scaling up for a business audience will open up a world of complexity. How do you connect potentially millions of new customers in a secure and trusted way?

As cloud drives growth in B2B SaaS applications, customers have an ever-growing array of vendors to choose from. Confidence is a critical factor in their decision-making: 72% of businesses say trust in a seller is of the utmost importance, trumping price and ease of use. Business buyers must believe in your ability to provide them with a solution that's secure, reliable and easy to use.

To build trust with clients, many SaaS businesses are turning to Customer Identity. This report looks at how together, Auth0 by Okta and AWS help you build enterprise-ready apps that secure access at scale, meet compliance requirements and deliver frictionless user experiences.

B2B2X unlocks new possibilities

SaaS is everywhere. On average, businesses deploy nearly 100 apps per company, according to Okta's [Businesses at Work 2024](#) report—a growth of 4% year on year. The proliferation of SaaS apps is creating a lucrative opportunity for app makers keen to expand upmarket. B2B SaaS products are highly scalable, allowing you to serve multiple business customers at minimal incremental cost. And once connected, you gain a large and high-value customer base with the potential to last into the long term.

Stepping up to the B2B space could also unlock other profitable business models. You could partner with other businesses to amplify your app's impact and extend its reach, or develop solutions that your business clients can integrate into their own services to better serve their own customers or partners. Being part of a B2B2X ecosystem is a powerful way to enhance your value proposition and create new revenue streams.

\$1,080

average annual contract value
for B2B SaaS companies

\$100

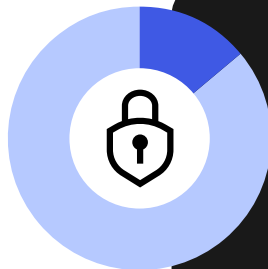
average annual contract value
for B2C SaaS companies



When scaling up, security becomes table stakes

Scaling up your app to enterprise level is both exciting and daunting. B2B clients operate in a world where security posture and reputation are critical. They expect vendors to meet tough requirements on resilience, compliance, privacy and uptime, with clear evidence of the controls you have in place to ensure this. And they want the latest security features to protect user accounts, like enterprise Single Sign-On (SSO), multi-factor authentication (MFA), account management, observability, and security APIs.

Whether you're expanding your B2C user base or reaching new audiences in B2B, scaling up will inevitably increase your exposure to security threats. The more user accounts you have, the higher the incentive for bad actors to attack your business, by taking over accounts and stealing valuable data. Growth-building activities like free trials may also lead to abuse: one study of a B2B app offering free trial sign-ups found that nearly half were from fake or duplicate accounts. Proving you can safeguard applications from hackers and bots is a non-negotiable in securing your clients' trust.



14% of registration attempts in January–June 2023 were assessed to be fraudulent ¹

As data privacy and security requirements become stricter around the world, compliance is also top of mind for business customers. Keeping up with constantly changing regulations is no mean feat: as of 2024, 71% of countries now have data protection legislation in place.

As with all challenges, this is your opportunity to gain a competitive edge. Demonstrating expertise in regulatory compliance will position you as a thought leader to your customers, who will look to you to educate them on privacy regulations and set them up for success.

[1] Source: [State of Secure Identity, Okta](#)

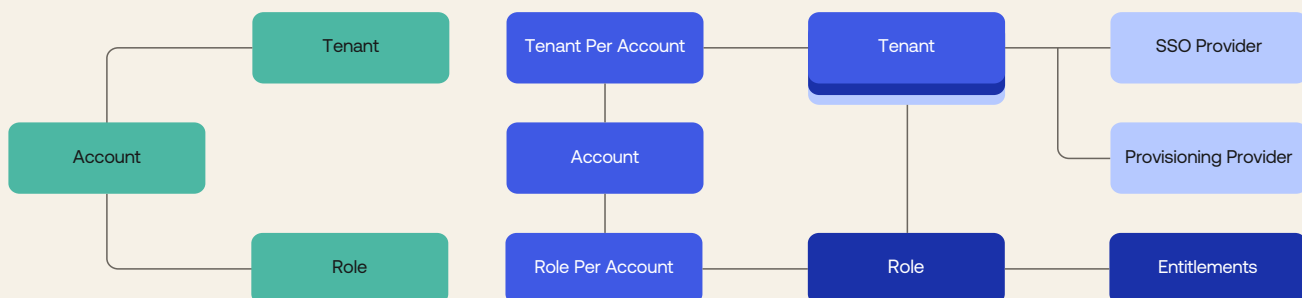
B2B requires enterprise-grade Identity

Identity is a prime example in which B2B requirements typically grow linearly in quantity, but exponentially in complexity.

Identity requirements for a B2C app are typically limited to a basic login box with sign-up, social authentication and account recovery controls. But this isn't enough to succeed in a B2B customer environment. Enterprises have complex Identity needs—such as enterprise SSO, granular authorization, and provisioning integrations—that include functionality around user provisioning, administration and security at scale. They require robust mechanisms to handle different roles, permissions and data segregation for each tenant to ensure security and compliance.

Common requirements include SSO, MFA and role-based access control. You may have to incorporate helpdesk services, password reset flows and ID proofing. Instead of admin screens, you need to provide customers with native integrations to their Identity stacks—such as Okta, Microsoft Entra, Oracle, Ping, and SailPoint—with extensive documentation so they can effectively manage their accounts. You also need to provide tenant isolation, so each customer tenant's data and security posture is set to their needs. Managing these requirements can add significant overhead, distracting your development teams from focusing on core features.

B2B Identity requirements grow exponentially in complexity



B2C

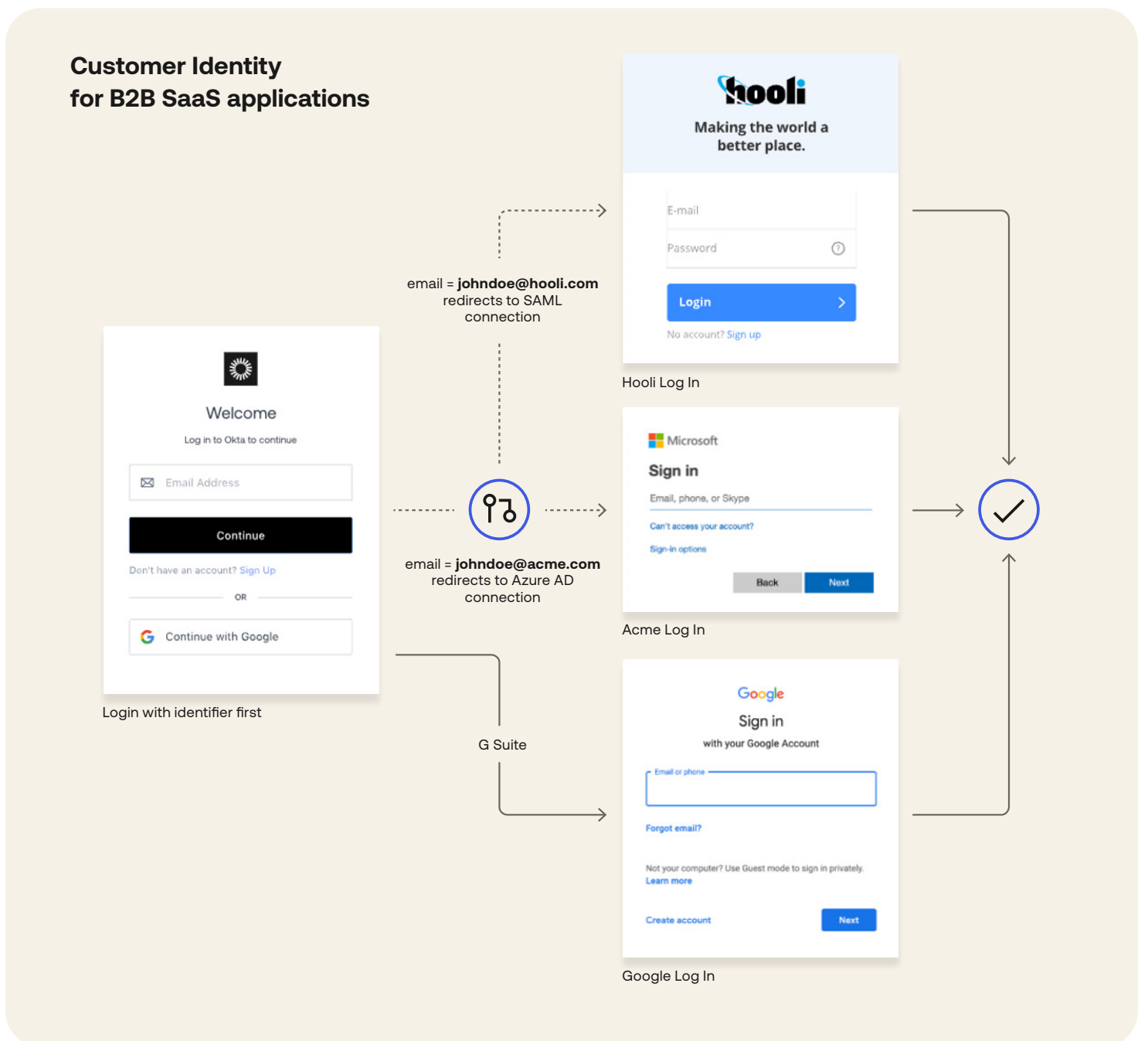
- No SSO or SCIM
- A user can log only to a single tenant
- A user has only one single role
- Roles are not customized

B2B

- Each tenant brings their own identity provider or use your system for identity (SSO)
- A user can log into multiple tenants
- A user has one of multiple roles
- Roles are customized at the tenant level

Customer Identity is key to SaaS success

While a seamless customer experience is considered critical for a successful B2C app, it often gets overlooked in B2B SaaS. Yet making your service effortless to use can be a key competitive differentiator. This starts with a frictionless onboarding process that ensures customers can quickly start realizing the benefits of your app. At the heart of this is a Customer Identity solution.



Some SaaS companies have built and maintained Identity flows themselves, but as we've seen, integrating with B2B infrastructure can be complex—and it's hardly what you hired your developers to do. An out-of-the-box Customer Identity solution does the heavy lifting of authentication, helping you to simplify customer onboarding, automate manual tasks, and shift developers' focus to innovation.

Let's look at a few key ways it drives your app's growth and success.



Simplify access

A Customer Identity solution allows you to quickly and easily implement Enterprise Federation and provide the convenience of Single Sign-On. Users can register and log in seamlessly using existing work credentials, improving their overall experience and making them more likely to use your app.



Strengthen security

By integrating Customer Identity into your app, your business customers can leverage advanced authentication features from their existing employee Identity provider, like MFA, which stops attackers from breaching accounts even if they're using compromised credentials. Role-based access control with fine-grained authorisation simplifies and fine-tunes the management of user permissions, granting access only to the exact information, and resources users need for their role.



Stay compliant

A modern Customer Identity solution ensures users' data is managed, stored and protected in a way that supports compliance with data protection regulations like GDPR, CCPA and HIPAA. Be a thought leader to your customers, educate them on privacy regulations in the rest of the world and set them up for success.



Scale with ease

With automated provisioning, frictionless authentication, and robust access control, Customer Identity allows you to handle large numbers of tenants and user identities without compromising performance or security.



Gain customer insights

Customer Identity solutions centralize and store user data collected from across various touchpoints. This gives you a 360-degree picture of customers' behavior and preferences, which you can use to personalize their experience and increase engagement.



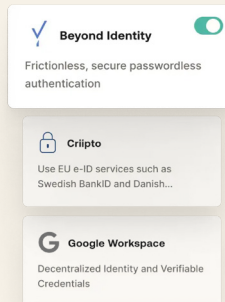
Customize to your client's needs

Extensibility capabilities enable integration with various other business tools and platforms that your clients use, allowing you to solve complex Identity needs—for instance, for customers with more stringent data security requirements.



Auth0 by Okta: build enterprise -ready apps

Auth0 by Okta is an out-of-the-box Customer Identity solution designed for building enterprise-ready apps. Development teams can quickly implement features like enterprise federation, attack protection, and access control, and customize apps with a range of extensibility features.



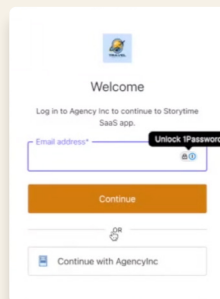
Facilitate enterprise connections

Enable Enterprise Federation using pre-built integrations with commonly used enterprise Identity systems.



Safeguard your data

Protect against Identity-related attacks with features like bot detection, breached password detection and suspicious IP throttling.



Customize your login experience

Use Identifier-first SSO to give your customer's login page a distinct look and feel that matches their brand.

Okta and AWS: delivering secure, scalable customer experiences

As an AWS Security Competency Partner, Okta is a trusted Identity services provider, offering over 25 integrations across different AWS services. By centralizing and automating access control and administration over AWS resources, Okta and AWS empower you to build seamless, scalable, and secure customer experiences.

Other benefits of the AWS and Okta collaboration include:

- **Higher availability:** Okta runs in the always-on AWS Cloud.
- **Lower costs:** Okta orders contribute to the AWS Enterprise Discount Program (EDP).
- **Faster procurement:** Customers can buy Okta directly through the AWS Marketplace.
- **Simpler contract management:** Okta invoicing can be managed the same way as AWS invoicing.



Headspace delivers security and mindfulness at scale

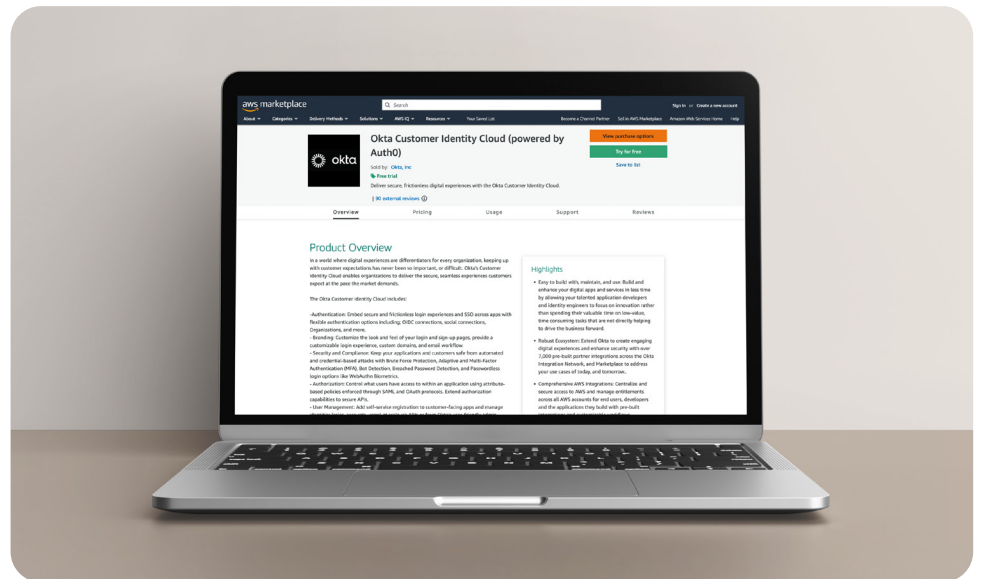


Case Study: Okta and AWS for Headspace

When mindfulness app Headspace experienced a boom in popularity, the company sought an Identity solution that would enable it to grow and support its millions of monthly active users. This solution needed to meet the needs of over 70 million members in 190 countries, secure diverse environments (iOS, Android, Web, Alexa, Apple Watch, Google Voice, Amazon, and Spotify), and mitigate threats such as credential stuffing and account scraping. Auth0 by Okta offered universal authentication and authorization for web, mobile, internet of things, and legacy applications that seamlessly integrated with Headspace's design. Pre-built enterprise connections allowed for integration to any standards-based Identity provider utilizing Identity industry security standards and streamlined the ingestion of personally identifiable information. Read the full story [here](#).

Summing up

Aiming your app at enterprises is a profitable opportunity as long as you can solve complex security and scalability challenges. The Okta and AWS integration allows you to swiftly meet these requirements by centralizing access control and safeguarding customers with enterprise-grade security. Quickly implement features such as Enterprise Federation, Access Control, Custom Branding, and Multi-Factor Authentication, accelerate time to market, and deliver frictionless user experiences that give your business the edge.



About Amazon Web Services (AWS)

Amazon Web Services (AWS) is the world's most comprehensive and broadly adopted cloud platform, offering over 175 fully featured services globally. Millions of customers — including the fastest-growing startups, largest enterprises, and leading government agencies — trust AWS to power their infrastructure, become more agile, and lower costs. To learn more, visit aws.amazon.com

About Okta

Okta is the World's Identity Company. As the leading independent Identity partner, we free everyone to safely use any technology — anywhere, on any device or app. The most trusted brands trust Okta to enable secure access, authentication, and automation. With flexibility and neutrality at the core of our Okta Workforce Identity and Customer Identity Clouds, business leaders and developers can focus on innovation and accelerate digital transformation, thanks to customizable solutions and more than 7,000 pre-built integrations. We're building a world where Identity belongs to you. Learn more at okta.com

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