



# Microsoft customers are upgrading to Okta, Zoom, Slack, and Box. Here's why

Microsoft customers are supplementing their suites with best of breed solutions from Okta, Zoom, Slack, and Box. Here's why.

okta zoom  slack box

# Introduction

Being an IT leader has always been challenging. Being an IT leader in today's world of remote work? Immensely difficult. Remote work presents new security hurdles, new difficulties in providing timely user access, and new pressure to ensure business continuity with the best possible user experience.

All the while, the knowledge workers IT leaders support are facing increased pressure in their own roles to be efficient and handle more responsibility in less time. In such a demanding environment, it's no surprise these workers are demanding the best, most streamlined tools for the job—rather than a bundled suite of software that checks off requirements.

For more than a million companies around the world, that suite of software is Microsoft. Yet Okta's annual [Businesses At Work](#) report reveals that more than 78% of their customers using Microsoft are now enhancing their productivity with best-of-breed solutions like Slack, Zoom, or Box. And the number is growing year on year. Why?

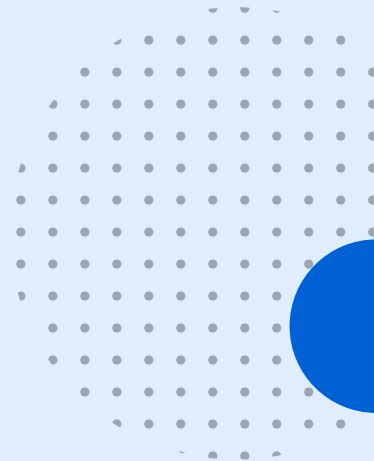
Of course Microsoft includes team communications, video conferencing, document sharing and collaboration in Microsoft 365. But many companies are finding that these add-ons don't always offer the best user experience, are difficult to deploy at scale, and don't always integrate well with non-Microsoft products. Overall IT leaders feel nervous about locking into a single vendor, where they may become trapped into accepting 'good enough' and not getting the best the industry has to offer.

When the Microsoft offering isn't good enough, Microsoft customers are turning to Okta for highly available, cloud-first authentication and vastly simplified lifecycle management. To Zoom, for intuitive, unified, video-first experiences that let their teams communicate productively. To Slack, for real time channel based collaboration that brings teams both inside and outside of a company's walls together. To Box, for a single platform that delivers secure content management, collaboration, and workflow.

Simply put, a single vendor cannot deliver the best product suite anymore. Microsoft's customers need future-proof solutions, purpose-built for the challenges they face today and those they expect to face tomorrow. IT leaders need to be wary their most important services work across all platforms and devices in their IT landscape, and avoid being locked into a purely Microsoft integrated world. And it's the new breed of cloud-first, focused innovators like Okta, Zoom, Slack, and Box delivering those superior solutions.

Here's why leading companies choose to combine certain capabilities from the Microsoft suite with more mature and capable outside solutions in target areas like security, communications, collaboration, and content management.

# 5 Key Reasons Microsoft Customers Add Best-of-Breed Solutions To Their Stack





## For a superlative user experience.

Everyone who interacts with a business wants a pleasant, intuitive experience. Employees need anywhere, anytime access to the tools and data they need, without friction. Customers need to be guided effortlessly from inspiration through transaction. And admins and managers need intuitive dashboards that pull together all the information they need to take informed action.

We're seeing a generational shift in how we collaborate at work, as people move away from email and into channels, and away from legacy suites of badly connected products and onto customizable platforms that present all the tools they need. Employees now expect their business tools to deliver the same superior user experience they're getting from consumer apps. Individual products from a suite like Microsoft can afford to provide a user experience that's "okay." But customers of market leaders like Slack are looking for the best experience—so Slack invests a significant amount of time ensuring a consistent high-quality user experience across all devices to provide deep engagement that's sustained over long periods of time.

It's no longer true that for a seamless user experience, you need to purchase all your IT solutions from a single vendor. Modern cloud based software is highly integratable and vendors are able to build experiences for collaboration, application access, virtual meetings that are superior to native solutions that Microsoft may not be investing as heavily in.

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*The more we can handle transitions across tools, the more productive the user experience becomes. More importantly, there's less context fragmentation for the individual and team.”*

**Mike Gotta, Research VP, Gartner**



## For business and operational agility.

With fast-paced industry innovation and ever-evolving governmental regulations, modern enterprises need to be able to pivot quickly. Their tech stack has to effortlessly support that agility so they can adapt to new circumstances quickly and decisively. This does not mean legacy, on-premises based solutions, but rather cloud-native architectures that support and inform nimble business decisions. Delivering full visibility into all company access and activities, providing powerful analytics tools that can process enterprise data suggesting actionable insights in real time, and automating repetitive-tasks that free employees to focus on moving the business forward.

With the recent shift to remote work, the requirement for companies to move quickly as a cohesive unit has never been greater or more challenging. Whether it's providing process automation to simplify life for internal business teams or adjusting tech and security stacks to meet new priorities, enterprise software needs to be a driving force for reducing operational friction and generating business agility.

Best-of-breed innovators like Okta, Zoom, Slack, and Box were born in this competitive world of fast-changing business imperatives. They understand how business agility has moved to center stage, so they build it into every aspect of their products: helping customers get workforces up and running quickly with the best tools available, speeding up decision making with improved visibility, removing procedural barriers like app-jumping, and improving communication and collaboration. By dedicating themselves to improving specific business capabilities like video-first communication, these companies produce solutions that each contribute meaningfully to improving business agility across the board.

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*We felt we should leverage the best capabilities of each tool and not force one tool to solve every problem across the company.”*

***Phil Wiser, CTO, ViacomCBS***



## For scalable efficiency.

In this rapidly shifting business landscape, enterprises need to be prepared to scale up or down quickly and efficiently. On any given Monday, teams might be called on to absorb a new division, shift five factories, onboard five thousand employees—or all of the above. Enterprises need to be able to roll out a software solution in stages or all at once, expand or contract elastic cloud infrastructure on demand, keep teams happy and productive while minimizing transitional costs, optimizing software utilization, and shortening time to value.

Because solutions from Zoom, Slack, Box, and Okta are purpose-built for the cloud—without the excess baggage of a legacy system—they're easily scalable by design. Whether it's helping thousands of new users begin communicating and collaborating quickly, letting users share documents securely with newly added project teams, or deprovisioning the workforce of a defunct division automatically on their departure, solutions like these support scaling at every level, adjusting dynamically and proactively to efficiently serve businesses of all sizes.



# 4 For modern security.

Armies of hackers and automated bots are constantly targeting enterprise workforces, and adapting in real time to new security measures. As employees shift to bring-your-own-device remote work, and as the classic corporate data center shifts toward cloud hosted services, security teams need total visibility into the threat landscape, so they can ensure enterprise services are secure and accessed by the right people.

Security can sometimes seem at odds with business efficiency: requiring users to jump through extra hoops, or slowing the implementation of new products. And this is where best of breed services shine: They can create entirely new ways of doing business using cloud-first platforms and modern security standards—unlike a platform solution like Microsoft that must make each new solution backwards compatible with decades of on-premises, legacy technology.

For example, Microsoft has been slow to innovate how customers connect their on-premises Active Directory into the cloud. Their bolt-on strategy—iterating on their 20+ year old identity management system and legacy authentication protocols like NTLM and WS-Trust—exposes customers to legacy vulnerabilities such as “pass-the-hash” attacks. Best of breed cloud solutions don’t inherit Microsoft’s legacy challenges, and can deliver more reliable authentication, based on modern protocols, right out of the box .

Security is an ever-evolving battlefield, and software companies need to provide security solutions that are transparent, responsive, and minimally impactful to the business, so customers can enjoy secure, productive, and frustration-free experiences. Freed from legacy constraints, best of breed companies can simply bring these to market faster than Microsoft.



# 5 For seamless interoperability.

Even the most powerful business solutions can be counterproductive if they take too long to implement, work for only one class of users and devices, or require expensive upgrades of other software. New solutions need to integrate quickly and seamlessly with the rest of the tech stack, to minimize hassles and to get new tools deployed to the workforce quickly and securely.

As companies build out ecosystems that can deliver rich, tailored experiences, legacy tech stacks are increasing in size and complexity. A typical stack today might include a unique mix of best-of-breed, niche, and custom solutions, as well as product suites like Microsoft 365 and Google's G Suite, which all need to work together effortlessly.

That's no problem for neutral, solution-focused companies like Okta, Zoom, Slack, and Box, who share a "plug and play" mentality that strongly emphasizes seamless integration with other software. Okta, Slack, and Box each integrate natively with thousands of partners—and the lists are constantly growing. Best-of-breed services like these have risen to the top specifically because their solutions integrate easily with existing enterprise tech stacks of all kinds.

Interoperability may be a second thought for developers of a product suite like Microsoft 365. Even within the Microsoft legacy identity stack, backwards-compatibility can be at odds with modern interoperability: Take, for example, the legacy, decades old technology Azure AD Connect Sync, which is still required to enable Azure AD to sync with on-premises AD. But interoperability is at the very core of how best-of-breed companies operate, starting with supporting common, modern provisioning protocols like SCIM and Single Sign-On methods like OAUTH. These lead to robust/reusable APIs and other elements that enterprise teams can leverage in custom solutions or extend to existing services that lack the integrations.



# Conclusion

To address today's extraordinary business challenges, enterprise leaders need to identify and deploy superior solutions.

For some companies, Microsoft's all-in-one product suite may seem to be good enough for now. But there are significant, hidden costs and compromises, and Microsoft's interconnected suite is unlikely to provide the best solution for cross platform, mission-critical needs like team collaboration or authentication. That's where best-of-breed solutions really deliver. Forward-thinking executives hoping to future-proof their enterprise against tomorrow's challenges will be unable to accept anything less than the very best solutions, and that means exploring beyond the comfort and convenience of a software bundle.

For more information, go to  
[www.okta.com/partners/box-slack-zoom/future-of-work/](https://www.okta.com/partners/box-slack-zoom/future-of-work/)

If you have questions, please contact our sales team at  
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