



Okta + F5 Networks = A Perfect Balance of Security and Convenience

Acxiom's marketing platform brings customer data, business intelligence, and deep analysis together to forge powerful connections between industries and audiences. Okta + F5 Networks helps the platform stay strong, connecting more than 300 cloud-based apps and on-premise apps.

It takes an intense amount of data crunching to do the work Acxiom does, whether it's helping retailers attract new customers by providing a deeper understanding of their existing customers¹ or helping a university authenticate the identity of an online test-taker². Handling all this data effectively demands agility and security, and to meet those needs, Acxiom quickly adopted a sprawling network of cloud and on-premise applications.

To enforce the principle of least privilege, Acxiom built more than 200 VPN tunnels so only the right people would have access to resources. It was a lot to manage—until Acxiom discovered Okta and its integration with F5 Networks and realized these benefits:

- 900% ROI in annual IT savings, thanks to the \$60,000 a year Acxiom was able to save by eliminating a contract position
- More than \$1 million in annual productivity benefits
- Increased security benefits totaling \$40,000 in annual savings
- Replaced its legacy MFA provider
- Met several regulatory requirements including: HITRUST, PCI, GDPR, and HIPAA

Identity overload

Founded in 1969, Acxiom—and its IT infrastructure—was ready for a change. Acxiom began its modernization process by rolling out a few best-of-breed apps, including Slack, Workday, Okta, and ServiceNow. These new cloud-based apps would provide the agility and scalability Acxiom's IT team was hoping for, but the adoption of each new app made management difficult for end users and administrators. It soon became clear that a strong identity solution was needed for improved access and security.

Acxiom quickly got to work rolling out the Okta Identity Cloud, beginning with [Single Sign-On](#) (SSO), then branching out to [Adaptive Multi-Factor Authentication](#) (MFA), [Lifecycle Management](#) (OLM), and [Workday-Driven IT Provisioning](#). Together, these products helped bridge the gaps between the disconnected cloud-based apps.

Specifically, Okta:

- Simplified the sign-on process for employees and contractors
- Added another layer of security to cloud-based apps
- Reduced the workload for user provisioning
- Reduced the number of service tickets and other tedious administrative tasks

^[1] <https://www.acxiom.com/resources/case-study-lulu-guinness-handbag-giant-got-handle-customers/>

^[2] <https://www.acxiom.com/resources/online-university-adds-real-time-identity-verification-case-study/>

Getting started with Okta and F5 Networks

That took care of the cloud-based apps, but there were the on-premise apps to consider. There were a significant number of them left to maintain, and remote users also needed an easy way to access them. This was not an insignificant problem due to the 800 home-based employees and contractors who regularly leveraged a VPN.

Acxiom likes to keep its VPN infrastructure granular, so users only have access to the resources they need. As a result, individual secure environments have their own VPN tunnel. In total, there are more than 200 of these. That's where F5 Networks SSL VPN came in.

"If associates are working remotely, they have a way to connect into Acxiom's network," says Ryan Johnson, Team Lead of Endpoint Security at Acxiom. "F5 Networks allows them to work remotely and connect into our network just as if they were sitting here on the campus with us."

With Okta and F5 working separately, they were able to provide easy, secure access to all their apps. But it wasn't until another Acxiom engineer attended Oktane, Okta's annual conference, that he realized Acxiom could increase security and streamline authentication by integrating Okta and F5 Networks.

A streamlined workflow

When he returned from Oktane, the Acxiom engineer told Pablo Valarezo, Acxiom's Expert Information Security Manager, about the Okta + F5 Networks integration, and together, they decided it was the best option.

They rolled out Okta + F5 Networks across the entire IT infrastructure. Data now is more secure, and days are running smoother. Now, all of Acxiom's apps—cloud-based and on-premise—can be securely and conveniently accessed through the Okta SSO dashboard. Behind the scenes, the Okta workflow allows direct access to cloud-based apps and filters on-premise access requests through F5 Networks. But for users, the process is seamless.

Security and compliance made simple

The increased security provided by Okta + F5 Networks has been the biggest payoff, particularly in terms of standardization. Overall, these benefits add up to \$40,000 in annual savings. "We have the ability to deploy a single solution across the globe—with the individual policies—while meeting our regulatory demands in different countries," Valarezo says.

In Germany, for example, you can't require employees or contractors to use their personal phones. With the Okta + F5 Networks integration, Acxiom has the flexibility to use adaptive MFA to create a localized policy that allows people to use physical tokens instead. This integration has helped Acxiom to achieve HITRUST certification as well as PCI, FISMA, GDPR, and HIPAA compliance.

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Pablo Valarezo

Acxiom's Expert Information Security Manager

MFA Upgrade

Acxiom was also able to increase its security by replacing its legacy MFA provider with Okta's Adaptive Multi-Factor Authentication. Originally, users could only access on-premise apps using SafeWord tokens, which was a significant challenge for Acxiom's IT department and its employees, particularly when a user lost or forgot the token.

Valarezo, who leads the team responsible for managing the tokens, wanted an MFA provider that would provide better, more convenient security, while offering increased visibility and rule-based access control.

He started testing Adaptive MFA with just a few on-premise apps at first, but when he realized how easy it was to control and monitor access on the go, thanks to [Okta Verify with Push](#), he quickly rolled out the product to the rest. "When I saw that Verify was coming up on my Apple Watch and I could just touch it, it was a moment of awe. It's a really cool thing. From there, we decided to do it across every single application."

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Number crunching

For Acxiom, rolling out the Okta + F5 Networks integration for SSO and MFA across all Acxiom's apps has made a huge impact on many areas. Not only has the solution helped the company get a firm grasp on all its new cloud-based apps, it has ensured Acxiom's IT remains on the cutting edge—and Johnson and Valarezo are enjoying every minute of it.

Okta + F5 Networks Integration

- Helped Acxiom achieve regulatory compliance in many industries
- Replaced an unreliable, token-based on-premise sign-on process
- Drove cost savings due to increased efficiency and reduced maintenance
- Increased security and standardization
- Simplified workflow by running cloud-based and legacy apps through Okta, powered in part by F5 Networks

About Okta

Okta is the leading provider of identity for the enterprise. The Okta Identity Cloud connects and protects employees of many of the world's largest enterprises. It also securely connects enterprises to their partners, suppliers and customers. With deep integrations to over 5,000 apps, the Okta Identity Cloud enables simple and secure access from any device.

Thousands of customers, including Experian, 20th Century Fox, LinkedIn, Flex, News Corp, Dish Networks and Adobe trust Okta to work faster, boost revenue and stay secure. Okta helps customers fulfill their missions faster by making it safe and easy to use the technologies they need to do their most significant work.

For more information, go to <https://okta.com>