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How Manufacturers Can Reap the Rewards of Digital Transformation

Modern identity and access management helps you win in the era of Industry 4.0

Executive Summary

For manufacturers, digital transformation is crucial to paving the way for smart manufacturing, also referred to as Industry 4.0, which promises to create more autonomous, flexible, and connected factories and supply chains. At the same time, global competitive pressures are pushing manufacturers to work with an increasingly diverse, dispersed supply chain that demand greater levels of system access and introducing increased levels of risk. Okta's modern identity and access management platform is a critical catalyst in speeding the transformation process and ensuring your systems and processes work together seamlessly, while allowing you to secure and manage application access across a globally distributed supply chain ecosystem.

Looking Toward the Future of Manufacturing

Every enterprise today has gone through some form of digital transformation. In manufacturing, digital transformation initiatives are very likely part of your organization's implementation of Industry 4.0. These initiatives promise to help your company thrive in the midst of increased global competition and shrinking profit margins while remaining connected to large, far-flung networks of suppliers and partners. And, they pave the way for a future in which technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of things (IoT) play a significant role on the manufacturing floor and in the supply chain.

While Industry 4.0 promises to help manufacturers become more flexible and competitive, many struggle to execute on modernizing their systems—a crucial part of the process. In fact, IDC predicts that 75 percent of CIOs and their enterprises will fail to meet all their digital objectives through 2019.[1] What's holding manufacturers back? Whether IT teams are moving apps to the cloud, building mobile or web applications, or increasing access for partners, a significant contributing factor is the ability to manage access—and the risk that comes with that.

To complicate matters further, manufacturers have a myriad of applications: legacy applications—some of which have been developed in house, packaged applications with extensive customization, modern custom applications, and cloud-based applications—many of which may be part of your company's modernization initiative and all of which must be managed and secured.

Modernizing IT is essential to complete digital transformation initiatives that will enable the move to smart manufacturing and integration of the technologies set to transform the industry in the coming years. Similarly, it is crucial to take full advantage of the rise of application programming interfaces (APIs) as a means of building (and connecting) the applications your company relies on to run—and grow—the business.

For manufacturers, these challenges are made that much more complex by the requirements of extended partner networks and supply chain providers—many of whom require access to your business applications in order to optimize efficiency and increase productivity. Regardless of how you choose to approach the challenge, a modern cloud-based identity management strategy is a critical catalyst in speeding the transformation process and ensuring systems and processes work together seamlessly. And, whenever you enhance your supply chain or take another step on the smart manufacturing journey, you must also consider data security and access management.

[1] IDC FutureScape: Worldwide CIO Agenda 2018 Predictions, IDC, November 2017.

Okta Has Answers to Today's Manufacturing Challenges

Okta's solution helps you secure and manage your extended enterprise, allowing you to integrate secure application access for global partners and suppliers. Okta enables you to:

- Protect, manage, and secure critical access points, ensuring safe, managed access for everyone participating in your supply chain—even far-flung partners

- Create direct-to-consumer digital experiences that deepen customer loyalty to your brand

- Participate in the "API economy", in which the ways a company manages and combines APIs can make it more competitive and profitable

Managing Access to Strengthen and Secure the Supply Chain

As global competition continues to increase, manufacturers have sought out new partners and suppliers that may be geographically dispersed. But the push-pull of enterprise security has always centered on the need to protect data by restricting access to it, while still providing legitimate users with frictionless access to the applications they need to do their jobs.

Okta lets you deliver both, along with complete access to apps, faster partner integration, and the ability for IT to maintain full control over provisioning and deprovisioning—at scale.

FLEX CUSTOMER STORY

flex

Enabling Connected Experiences—Securely

Flex is a leading designer, manufacturer, and distributor of intelligent, connected objects. Operating in 12 major industries with over $1 billion in revenue, Flex works with brands as diverse as Ford, Cisco, and Nike to design, build, and manufacture connected objects that interact with humans and other objects in smart, helpful ways. "Everybody wants their products on the shelf faster," says Flex CIO Gus Shahin, adding that faster time to market is even more important than having the lowest price. "So having an effective, fast supply chain to do that is key, and IT plays a key role."

But, according to Flex CISO Friedrich Wetschnig, the supplier portal the company used previously consisted of multiple solutions with disparate access management, each requiring its own account provisioning and deprovisioning. Wetschnig and his team realized they needed a unified identity platform. Okta fit the bill precisely, allowing Flex to secure its supply chain and ensure its employees and suppliers have appropriate access to the applications they need.

Shahin concludes, "Okta plays a role in all three of my key initiatives: cyber security, business productivity, and best of breed."

[Learn more about Flex's journey with Okta.](#)

Nurturing Customer Loyalty by Creating New Digital Experiences

For many manufacturers, providing direct-to-consumer digital experiences offers a way to expand business in a competitive landscape by establishing and nurturing direct relationships with consumers.

If a manufacturer of home appliances builds sensors into their products that securely connect to the Internet, these could be associated with a user account created when a new owner registers their purchase online. By monitoring usage activity, the manufacturer could notify the customer when it's time to perform maintenance on the appliance, send product updates or share tips for getting the best performance from the product.

By managing application access with Okta's unified solution, that manufacturer can ensure that the right people have access to applications containing consumer information—permitting only those that are approved to access customer data.

Preparing to Thrive in the API Economy

Organizations must take steps to prepare for—and participate in—the API economy, which will continue to grow as they look for ways to streamline and improve every aspect of their business with better, smarter apps. It describes a state in which companies can easily combine APIs for faster app integration, leading to increased productivity and faster time to market. For Okta customers, this means an accelerated path to IT modernization.

Okta API Access Management is the next generation of access management technology. It supports modern applications by providing the authorization layer for apps to securely access data from backend services. With user-friendly and centralized administration across all your APIs, Okta API Access Management enables identity-driven authorization for any app or service.

Modern Identity and Access Management for the Next Era of Manufacturing

To prepare for a future in which factories get smarter, sensors are everywhere, and AI and robots multiply, your organization must focus on IT modernization as you progress on your journey toward digital transformation. Okta is helping manufacturing customers by providing modern, flexible identity and access management. And, next-generation API management enables you to continue to innovate while securing and managing application access throughout the enterprise. Okta helps manufacturers compete today—and will continue to do so into in the next era of manufacturing.

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