Part 3 of this article series focuses on the **market for cloud-based IGA solutions (Identity Governance & Administration)** — the new buzzword for managing identities and authorizations (IAM).
This market is so densely populated that a complete evaluation of all available options is practically impossible. There are highly specialized analysts such as **KuppingerCole** and **Gartner** who can undoubtedly provide more comprehensive and detailed assessments of the IAM solutions landscape.

However, our perspective in this series is different.
We are addressing **SAP IDM customers** specifically and presenting possible alternatives that we, as an **independent service provider with decades of experience in SAP customer projects**, consider relevant.

In practice, all **cloud services** share the same fundamental issue:
They are no longer, as with SAP IDM, **highly flexible custom software**,
but **standardized software** that is usually only slightly or not at all customizable.
Therefore, **booking or implementing a cloud service must always be preceded by a thorough check for potential showstoppers**.

If no showstoppers exist — or if your company is flexible enough to respond through **process standardization** (see also **Part 1** of this series) — cloud services offer **benefits that cannot be ignored**.
You've surely heard the sales slogan: *"You focus on your business, and we take care of the rest."*
With streamlined processes and the right cloud services, this can actually become reality.

Please note that these assessments are **not final** and **do not replace individual consulting**.

Overview of the Series

- **Part 1:** The End of an Era – The Future After SAP IDM
- **Part 2:** SAP – Cloud Identity Services, GRC edition for SAP HANA
- **Part 3:** Cloud Services
- **Part 4:** On-Premise Solutions (e.g. One Identity)

Options Presented in This Article

- **Option A:** Microsoft Entra
- **Option B:** Omada Identity Cloud
- **Option C:** Okta
- **Option D:** IBM Security Verify

Option A: Microsoft Entra

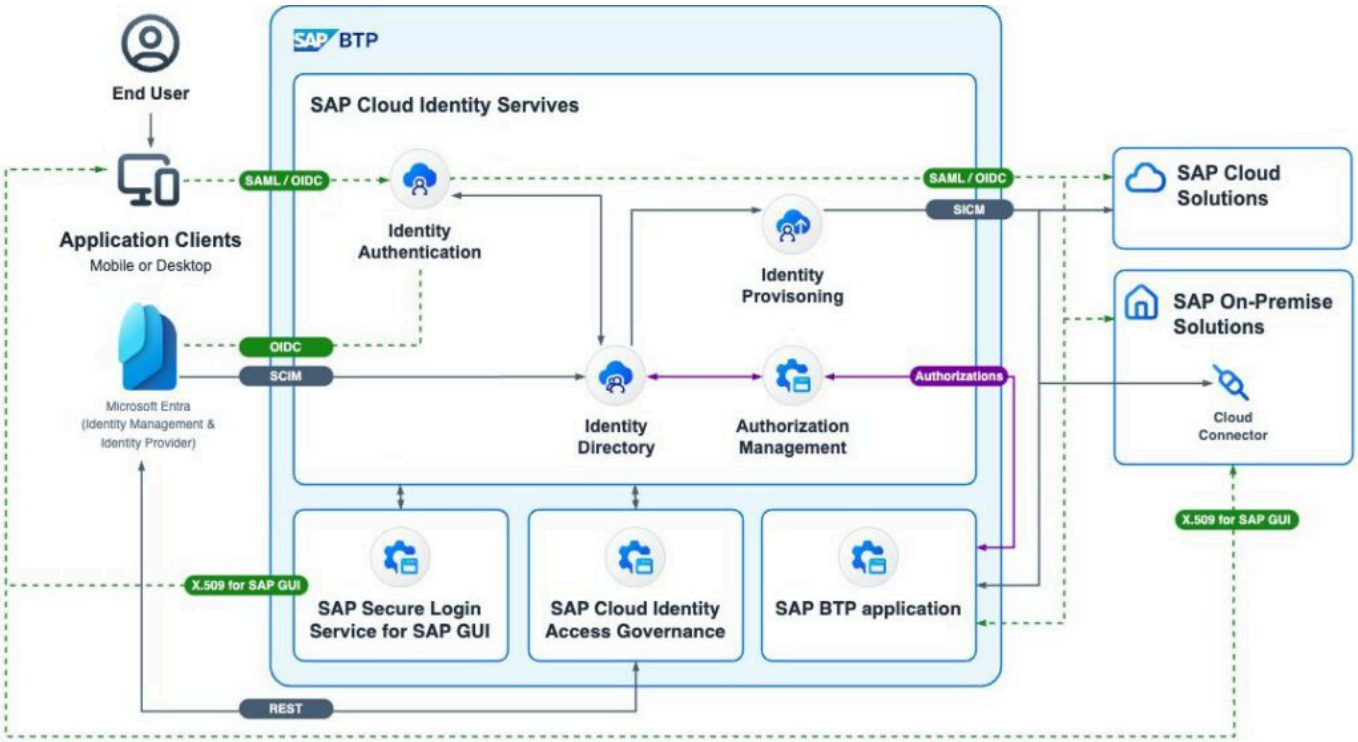
The **DSAG Technology Days 2024** in Hamburg had just kicked off on **February 6**, when **Jürgen Müller (CTO SAP)**and **Sebastian Westphal (DSAG Board Member)** made what is likely the **most important announcement of the year**in the field of Identity and Access Management.
What had long been known to insiders and heavily speculated in the rumor mill was confirmed with a single slide — declaring **Microsoft Entra** as the **“official successor” to SAP IDM**.

But what exactly is **Microsoft Entra**?
Formerly known as **Azure Active Directory (Azure AD)**, **Entra ID** is a **cloud-based identity and access management solution**.
It provides **authentication and authorization services** for various Microsoft offerings such as **Microsoft 365**, **Dynamics 365**, and **Microsoft Azure**.
On **July 11, 2023**, Microsoft announced the **renaming of Azure AD to Microsoft Entra ID** to ensure consistent branding across its cloud portfolio.

The **on-premise predecessor** of Entra is the well-known **Microsoft Active Directory (AD)** — a directory service introduced in **1999**, which has since become the **de facto standard** for managing Windows user accounts, application permissions, and email accounts.

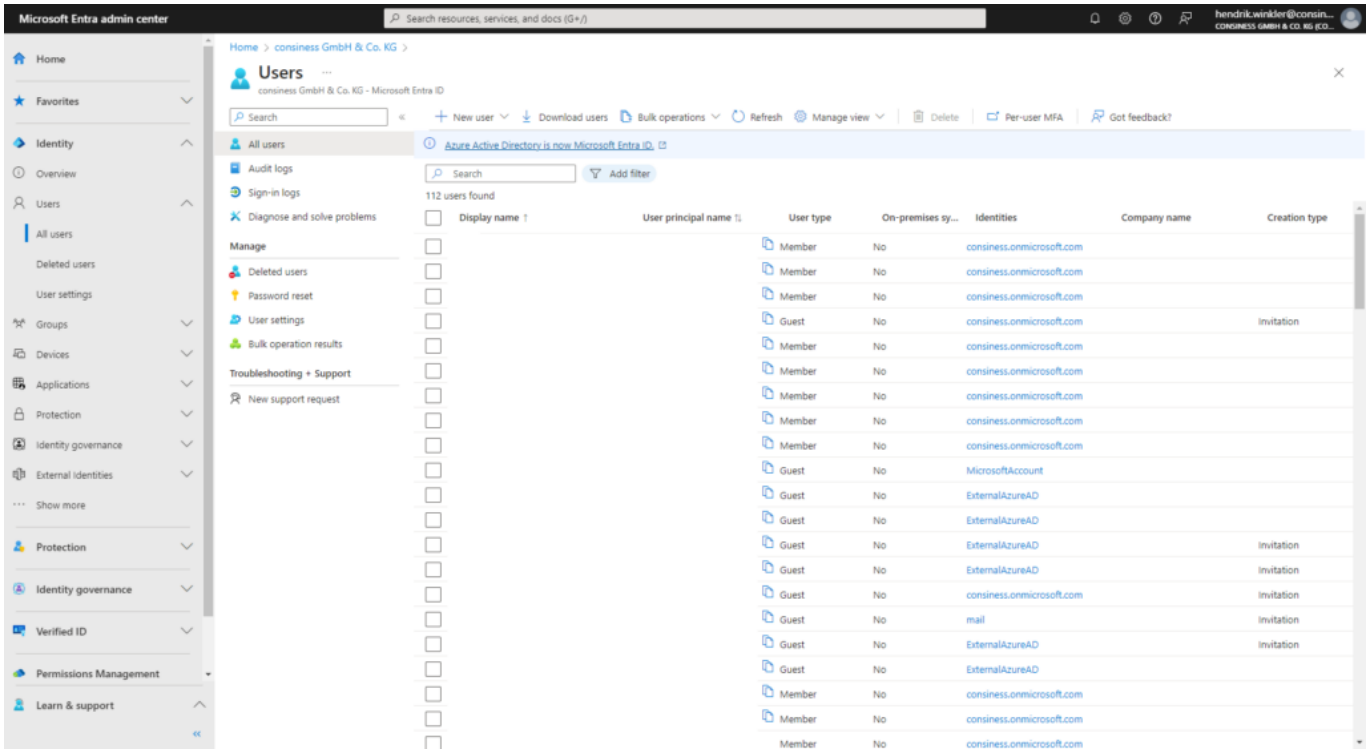
Due to the **quasi-monopolistic position of Microsoft products** in the business world, Active Directory is used by **virtually all SAP customers** in one form or another.
In many organizations, all **identities**, the **organizational structure**, and **access information** for numerous applications reside within the **AD structure**.

For this reason, in many **SAP IDM implementations**, the **first non-SAP system** integrated into the IAM infrastructure as an **identity provider and/or target system** is **Active Directory** itself.



The new reference architecture from SAP!? (Source: https://community.sap.com/t5/technology-blogs-by-sap/preparing-for-sap-identity-management-s-end-of-maintenance-in-2027/ba-p/13596101)

Following the **DSAG announcement**, **SAP** published a blog post presenting an **architecture** that will most likely serve as the **reference model for the coming years**. The diagram shows **Entra** as the **central identity provider and identity management solution**, integrated via interfaces with the **SAP Cloud Identity Services** and **Cloud IAG**. The **Identity Provisioning Service (IPS)**, connected through the **Cloud Connector**, is responsible for bridging the gap between **cloud and on-premise solutions**. Although this architecture may appear complex at first glance, it offers a major advantage:
SAP-centric organizations already have **Entra (formerly Azure AD)**, **SAP IAS**, and **IPS** in use within their cloud environments.

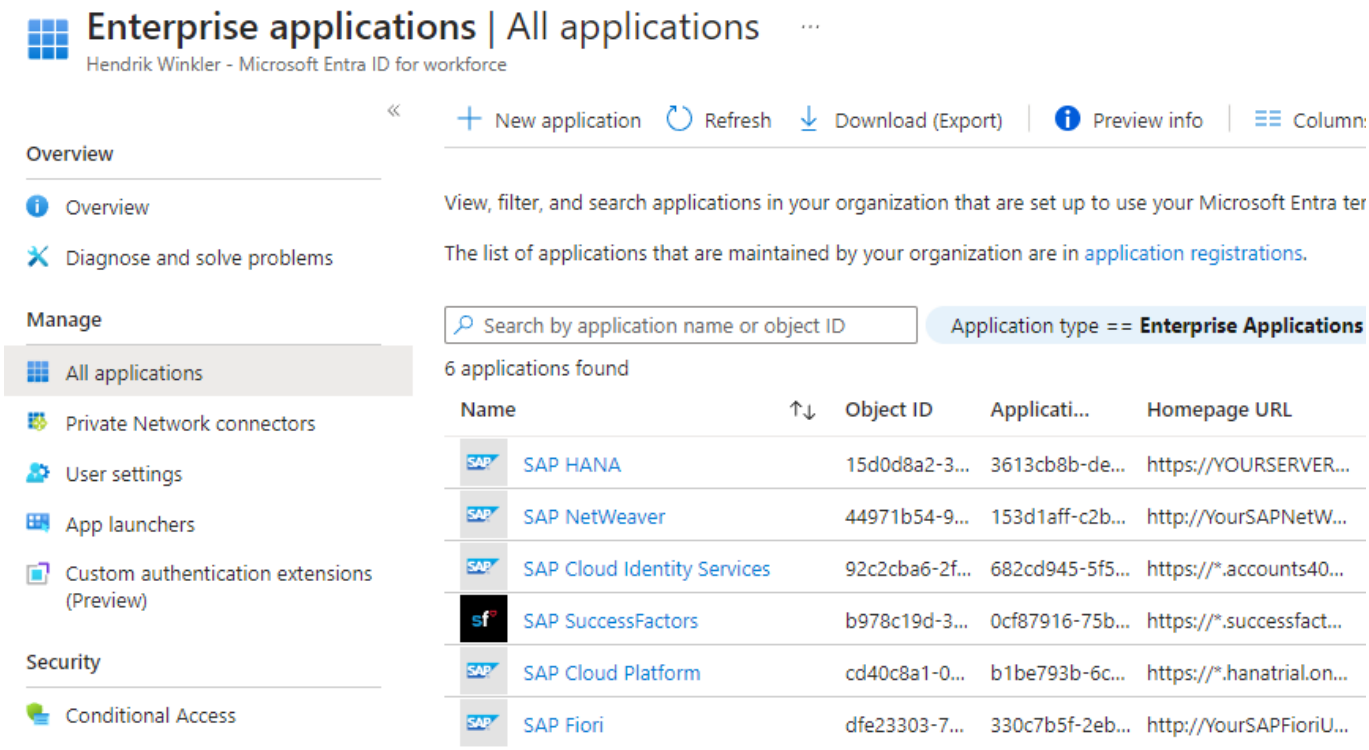


consiness also uses Entra for internal purposes.

If you or your company work with **Office 365** and/or **Azure applications**, it is highly likely that you already have your own instance of **Entra** in operation.
Upon login, Entra welcomes the user or administrator with a **clean and organized interface**.
Even a quick look at the menu reveals, to the trained eye, the general scope of the application:

- **Users and Groups** – Directory service (as known from Active Directory)
- **Applications and Devices** – Connectors / configuration management
- **Protection** – Authentication, password management
- **External Identities** – Collaboration with identities outside the organization
- **Governance** – Identity lifecycle, privileged access management (PAM)

For **provisioning to external systems**, the **Azure AD Provisioning Service** is used, which provides access to a range of applications.
SAP connectors can also be configured—albeit with some effort.
Provisioning is implemented via the **SCIM protocol**, which, to our knowledge, offers **few options beyond standard functionality**.



SAP Integration over Enterprise Application-Provisioning

Another positive aspect of **Entra** is its **pricing transparency**. While **SAP customers** often have little clarity about what they actually pay for their applications, **Entra stands out with a pricing model so simple it could practically fit on a beer coaster**. However, it should be noted that the designated infrastructure involving **SAP** would, of course, also include **costs for the respective SAP products**.



A benchmark in transparent pricing

Advantages

- Service is usually already available, even independently of the IAM architecture
- Slim architecture without additional third-party systems
- Partnership with SAP
- Modern application
- Excellent documentation

Disadvantages

- Additional **lock-in effect** toward Microsoft products
- Customers are inevitably exposed to **subscription price increases**
- **No support** for distributed domains
- **On-premise infrastructure** (e.g., Windows domain controllers) still requires the classic **Active Directory**
- The **extent of SAP's partnership**, and thus the **level of support and adaptability** for extended SAP integration scenarios, remains to be seen

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Assessment

Quiz question: What is Entra's unbeatable advantage? **Network effects!**
Microsoft's **quasi-monopoly on business application software** is not only a sound **investment tip** on the stock market but also a **valid strategic argument** when planning your next IAM landscape.

As with other cloud solutions, however, the **Achilles' heel**—despite SAP partnership—will likely remain **limited flexibility regarding customer-specific requirements**.
Whether the standard infrastructure, consisting of **Entra**, **IAS/IPS**, and **IAG**, will ever be able to **provision custom ABAP tables and fields**, remains doubtful. We are open to being positively surprised!

Option B: Omada Identity Cloud

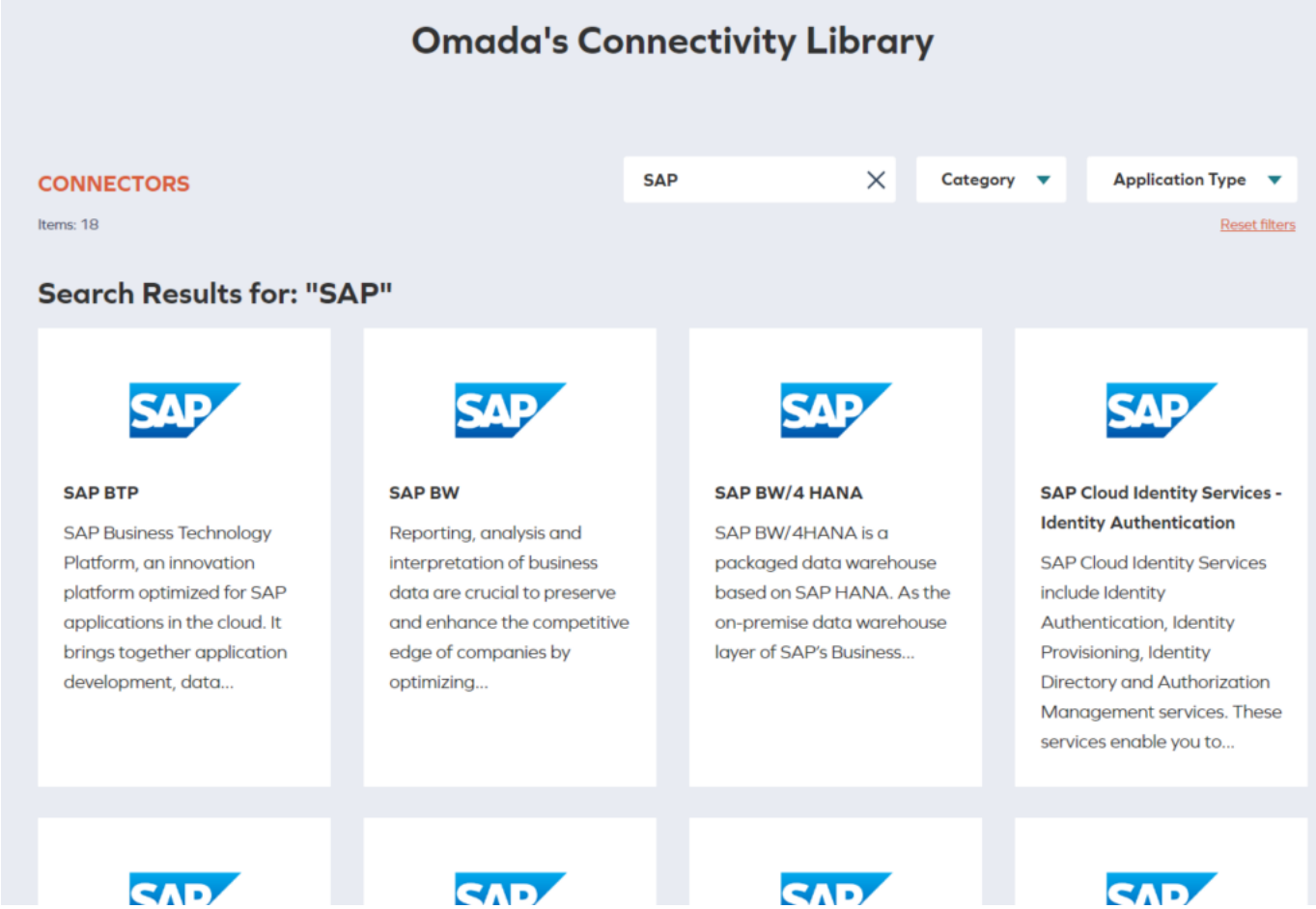
All under one roof!
The **Omada Identity Cloud** is the **modernized cloud edition** of the **Omada Identity Manager**.
It provides all essential capabilities for the **secure, compliant, and efficient management** of user access to systems, data, and applications across **hybrid**, **cloud**, and **multi-cloud environments**.

Built on a **modern, cloud-native microservices architecture**, Omada delivers **speed**, **intelligent decision support**, **connectivity**, and **higher performance** than its predecessor products.

The solution itself is based on **more than 20 years of experience** and focuses on providing **fast and reliable results** for enterprises.
Conceptually, it includes:

- the **best-practice framework** for identity governance processes (**IdentityPROCESS+**)
- a **deployment and operational methodology** (**IdentityPROJECT+**)
- and **guaranteed customer value** through **training, support, and professional services** (**Identity Success**)

Integration capabilities are **excellently documented** in the **Omada Connectivity Library**.
With no other product is it easier for us to **evaluate an existing infrastructure's compatibility** with the **connectors of the IAM solution**.



Omada Connectivity Library

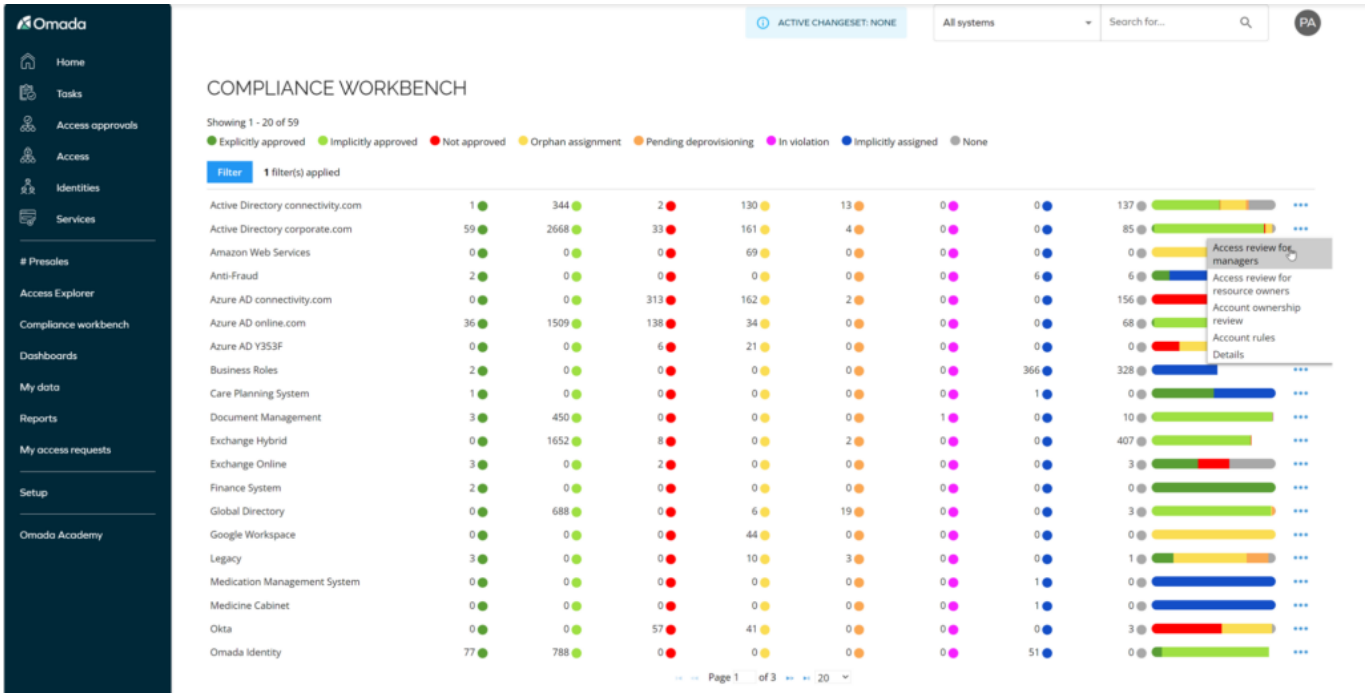
In the case of a planned **SAP integration**, we were able to find **all commonly used connectors** already available.
The **supported objects and operations** are listed for each connector.
The **Omada team** has indicated that, upon request, **custom "special requirements"** can also be implemented if the **standard scope** does not fully meet a customer's needs.

Supported Objects and Operations

LDAP Objects	Omada Identity Data Model	Operations
Users	Account	Create, Read, Update, Delete
Groups	Resource	Read
Group Memberships	Resource Assignment	Create, Read, Update, Delete

Unterstützte Objekte und Operationen am Beispiel des SAP IPS Konnektors

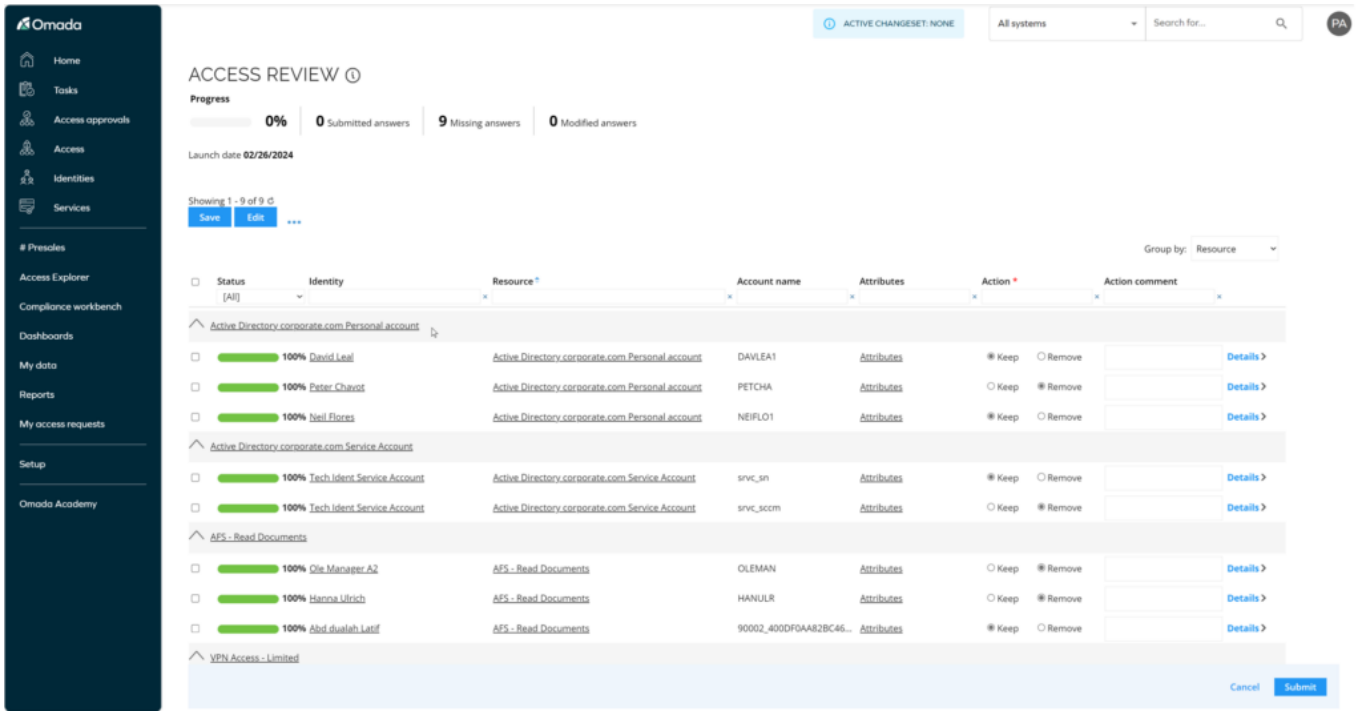
Also worth highlighting is the **strongly promoted promise of a fast and efficient implementation**.
Through the **Accelerator Package**, Omada offers a **standardized project and implementation methodology** for deploying the software and its processes.
A project duration of **12+ months**, which is typically expected (and also recommended by us) for an IAM implementation, is claimed to be reducible to **just 4 weeks** in many cases — a process only possible with a **highly standardized and fully developed software solution**.



All in one place – Compliance Workbench

To illustrate this point, the **Compliance Workbench** and the **Access Review** feature will be shown as examples.
The **Compliance Workbench** provides a **standardized overview of all**

integrated systems and evaluates assignments based on their current status — a simple way to identify **major gaps in processes across the entire system landscape**.
The **Access Review** feature is a **predefined solution** designed to make the execution of **attestations (or recertifications)**as **convenient and efficient** as possible.



Step-by-step attestation process

Advantages

- Vendor specialized in IAM software for **over 20 years**
- **Extensive range of standard features**
- **Fast and straightforward implementation**
- **Strong German-speaking team** with direct access to the vendor

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Disadvantages

- **No online trial function** like some competitors (though demos can be requested)

- **Relatively limited customization** options for highly specialized scenarios

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Assessment

The strength of the **Omada Identity Cloud** is undoubtedly its ability to offer a solution that can best be described as **feature-rich**.
Those who choose the **Omada Identity Manager** receive software from a **highly specialized company**, offering a wide range of features that are often missing from other solutions—or that would otherwise require **costly custom development**.

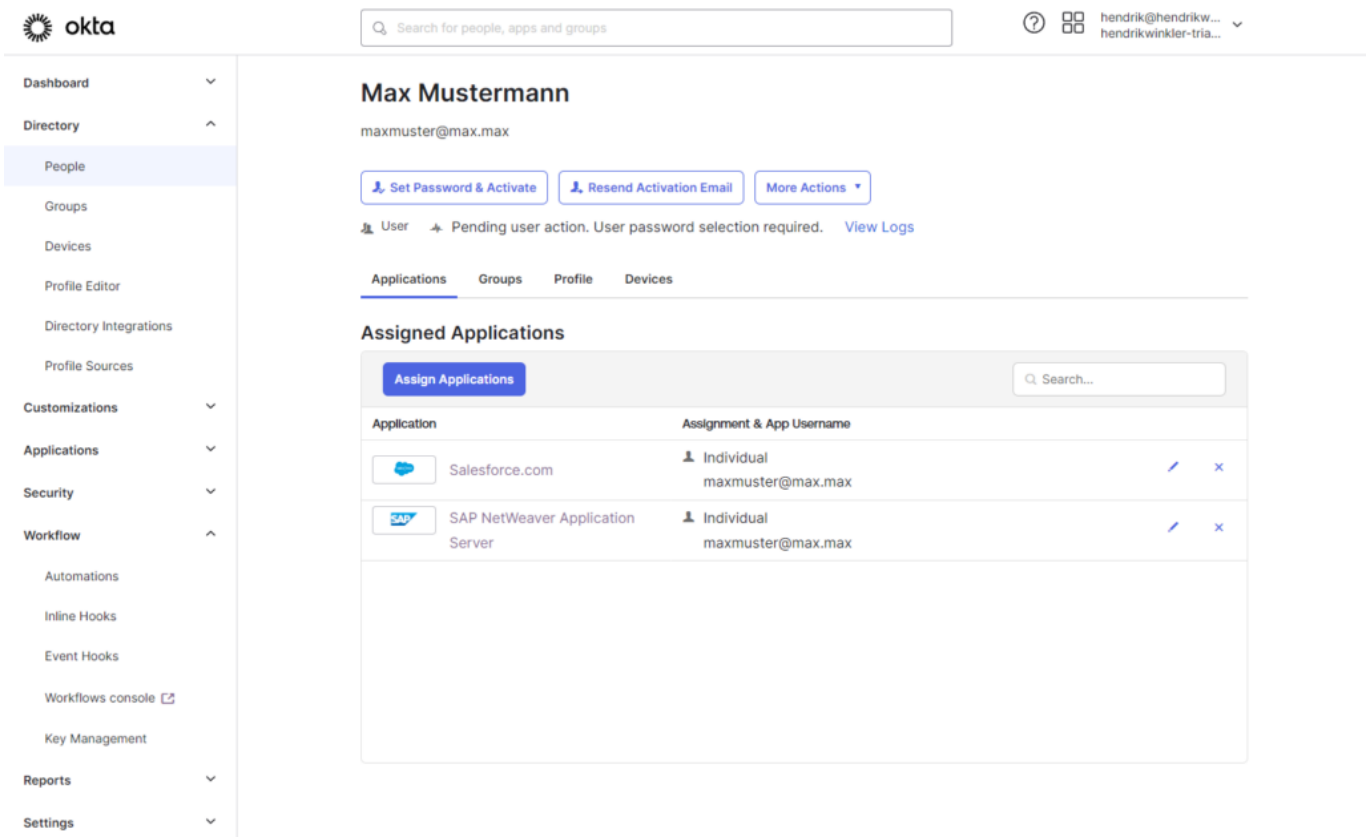
Although the software originates from **Denmark**, customers can rely on a **highly dedicated and capable German-speaking team** that is open to incorporating specific wishes and requirements.
This level of **closeness to the manufacturer** is something you will likely miss with industry giants such as **Microsoft** or **SAP**.

If you're looking for a solution that **"just works"** and can do without **highly specialized SAP integration scenarios**, the **Omada Identity Cloud** should, in our view, be among your **top choices**.

Option C: Okta

Okta is an **independent provider** specializing in **identity and access management**.
The platform is known for its **flexibility** and **user-friendliness**, offering a wide range of identity management functions, including **Single Sign-On (SSO)**, **Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)**, and **identity lifecycle management**.

Okta places strong emphasis on **integration with a wide variety of applications and platforms**, making it a **popular choice** for organizations with **heterogeneous IT landscapes** that seek a **seamless user experience** across different applications.

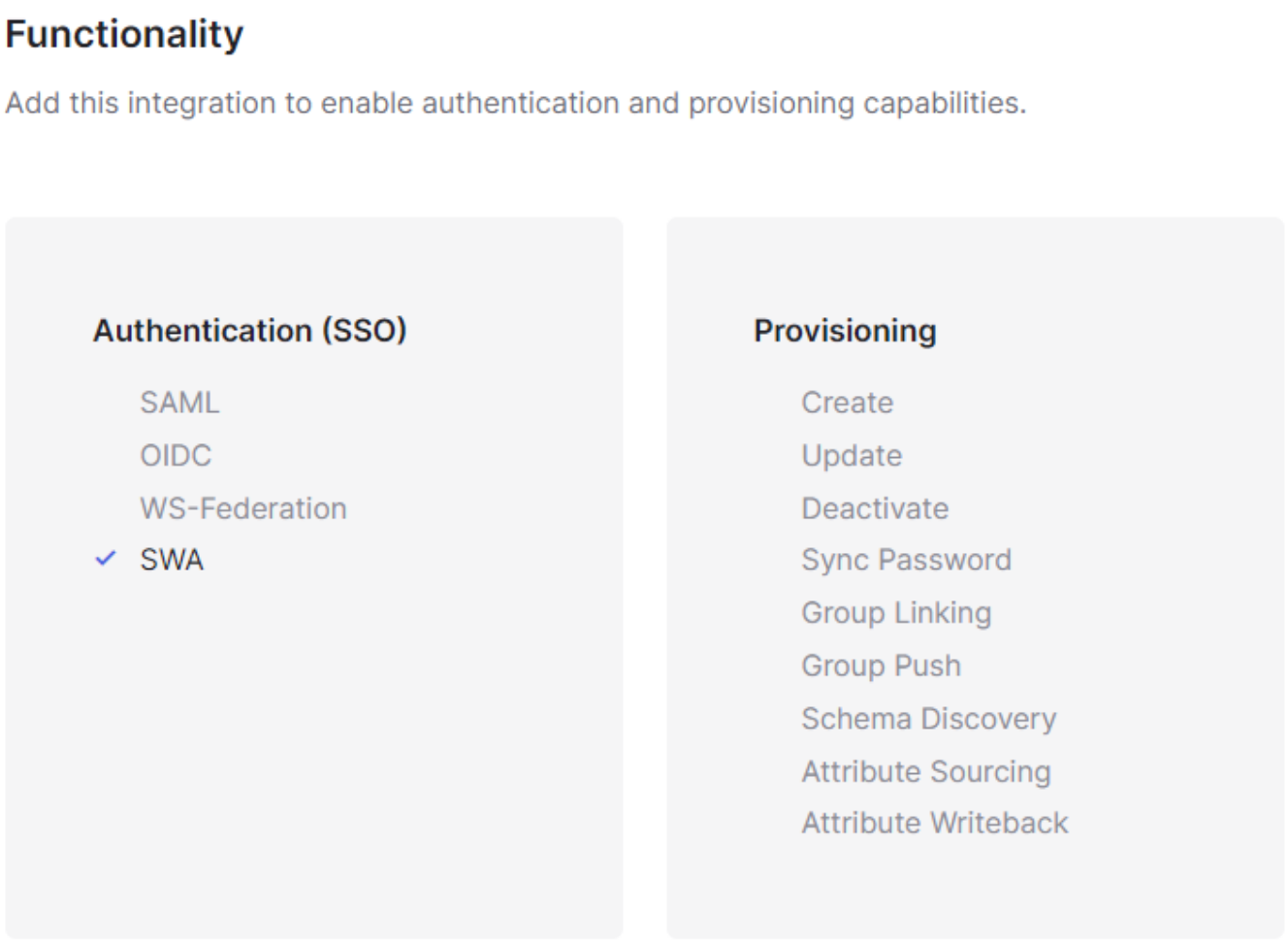


People, Groups, Devices – A modern directory service in action

From a **technical and conceptual perspective**, **Okta** represents a so-called **Directory-as-a-Service (DaaS)**.
This means that, at its core, it is a **directory service** offered as a **cloud-based service**.

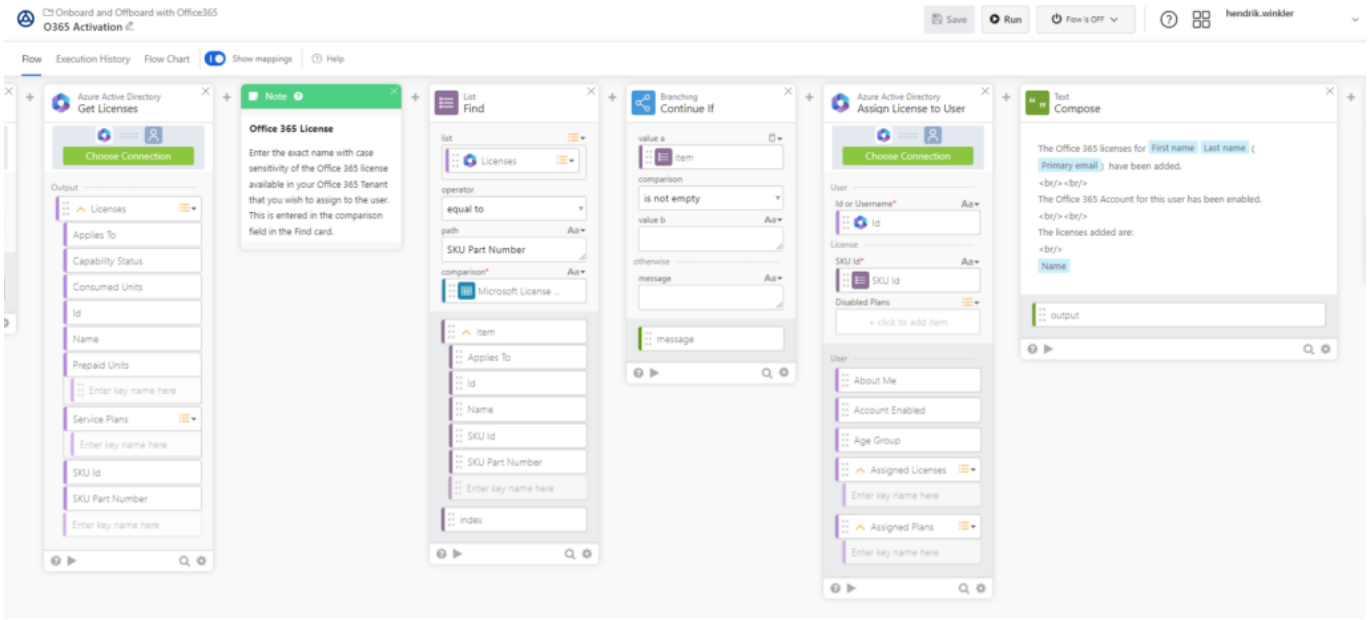
Directory services differ from **identity management solutions** in that they **store and provide data about people and objects** (e.g., network infrastructure) to **third-party applications**, **without directly managing user accounts and permissions** within those applications.

With this approach, **Okta** is in **direct competition with Microsoft Active Directory (AD)** and **Entra**.



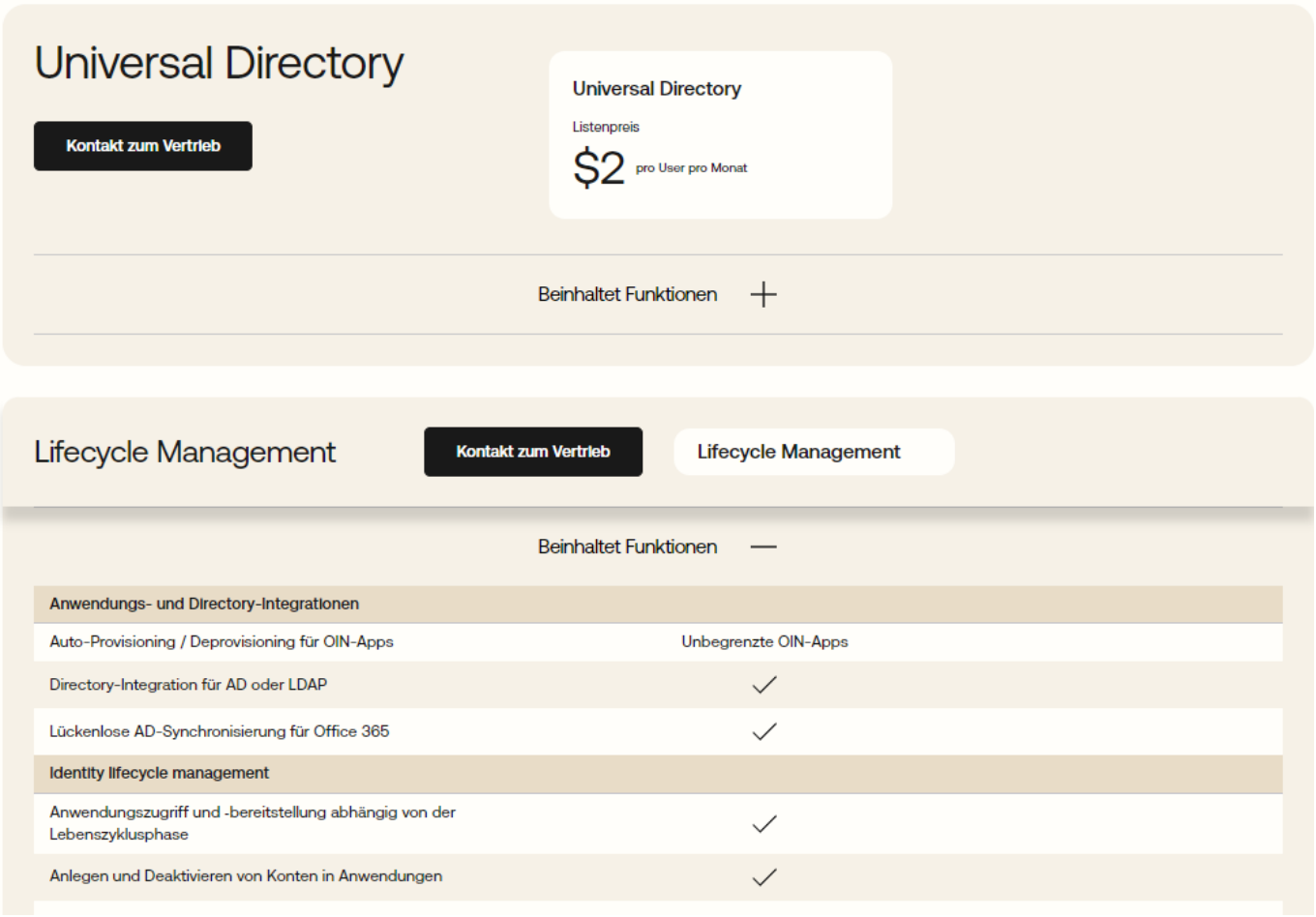
Functionality of the SAP NetWeaver Connector

Genau wie bei Microsoft Entra sind hier jedoch die Übergänge von einer DaaS-Lösung zum Identity-Management fließend und es können auch Provisionierungsszenarien konfiguriert werden. Okta besticht dabei durch eine, zumindest von uns wahrgenommene, höhere Flexibilität als bei Konkurrenzprodukten. Dies wird vor allem bei der Workflow-Funktionalität deutlich.



Die grafische Okta Workflow-Engine wird mit Templates angeboten

Okta’s **pricing structure** is **highly individualized**, which makes it appear **fair and transparent**.
It is based on the **specific products** a customer selects and the **number of users** who will be using those products.
The available products include **Single Sign-On**, **Multi-Factor Authentication**, **Universal Directory**, **Lifecycle Management**, **API Access Management**, and more.



Okta Pricing – Transparent and individually customizable

Each of these **products** has its **own price per user per month**.
In addition, there is a **minimum annual contract**.
For **enterprise customers** with a large number of users, **volume discounts** are available.
It is important to note that **actual prices may vary**, and it is best to contact **Okta directly** for the **most accurate and up-to-date pricing information**.

Advantages

- High degree of **customizability** for a cloud solution
- **Strong global presence**
- Considered **user-friendly**, **lightweight**, and **quick to implement**

- Highly **individualized pricing model**

Disadvantages

- **On-premise infrastructure** (e.g., Windows domain controllers) still requires **classic Active Directory**
- The **core structure** of Okta, as with most directory services, is **group-based**—there is **no distinction between groups and roles**
- Not primarily focused on the **SAP-centric DACH market**, resulting in **limited SAP integration scenarios**

Assessment

Okta is rated a **“Leader”** for Identity and Access Management solutions by **Gartner**, and likely not without reason.
With reportedly **over 18,000 customers**, Okta appears to be the **most widely adopted IAM solution** behind the **Microsoft-dominated market**, according to our research.

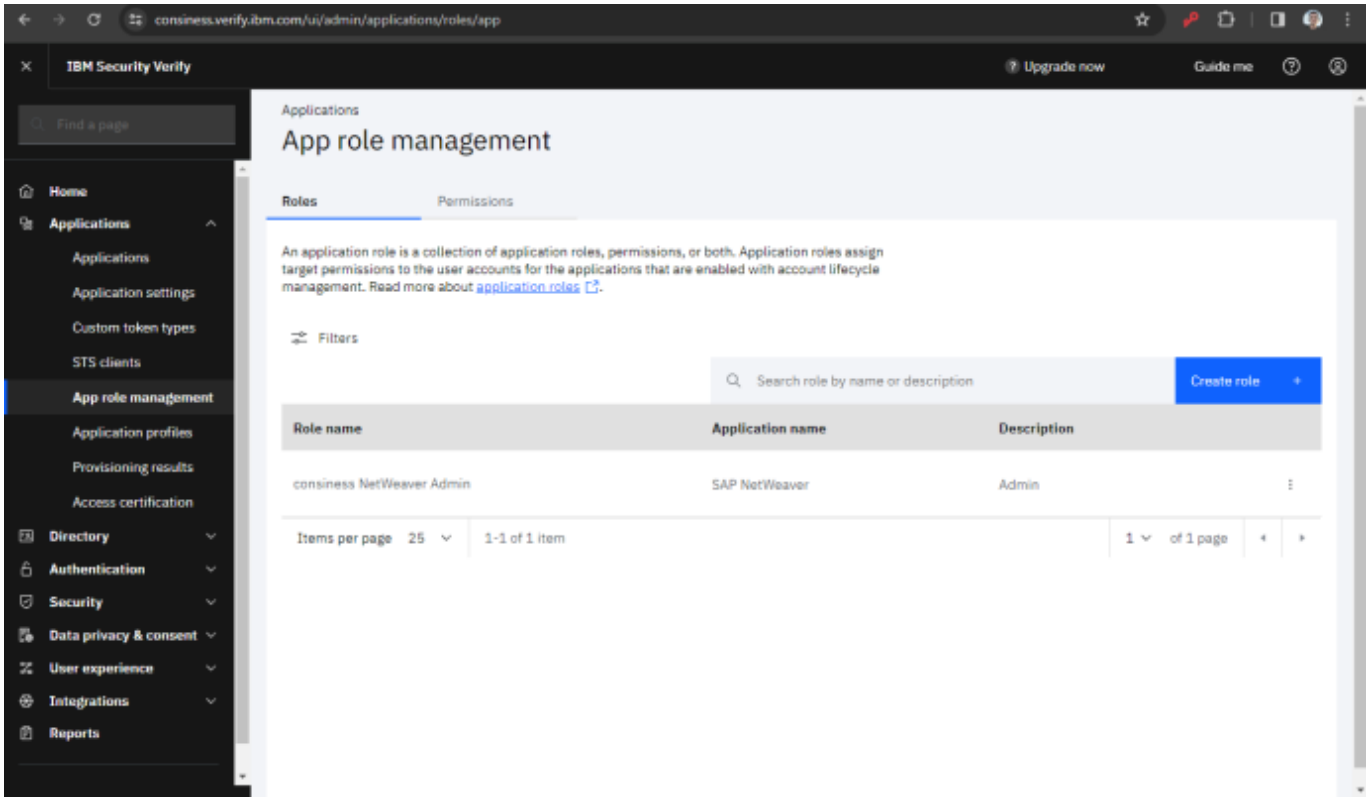
When using Okta, **SAP integration scenarios** should generally remain **within the standard scope**.
The **availability of Okta experts** in the **German-speaking region** also tends to be **lower** compared to other competitors.
Moreover, it is important to note that **Microsoft-based on-premise infrastructures** will still need to be managed via **classic Active Directory**.

However, if your company aims to become **less dependent on Microsoft’s quasi-monopolistic market position**, **Okta** is the right choice.
Its advantages lie particularly in being a **highly adaptable**, **easy-to-implement**, and **industry-focused solution** that can integrate **nearly your entire infrastructure**.

Option D: IBM Security Verify

As the **fourth option**, the solution from software giant **IBM** fits seamlessly into the world of **cloud-based IAM solutions**.
Since we have had **fewer touchpoints** with this product, this section will be somewhat shorter.

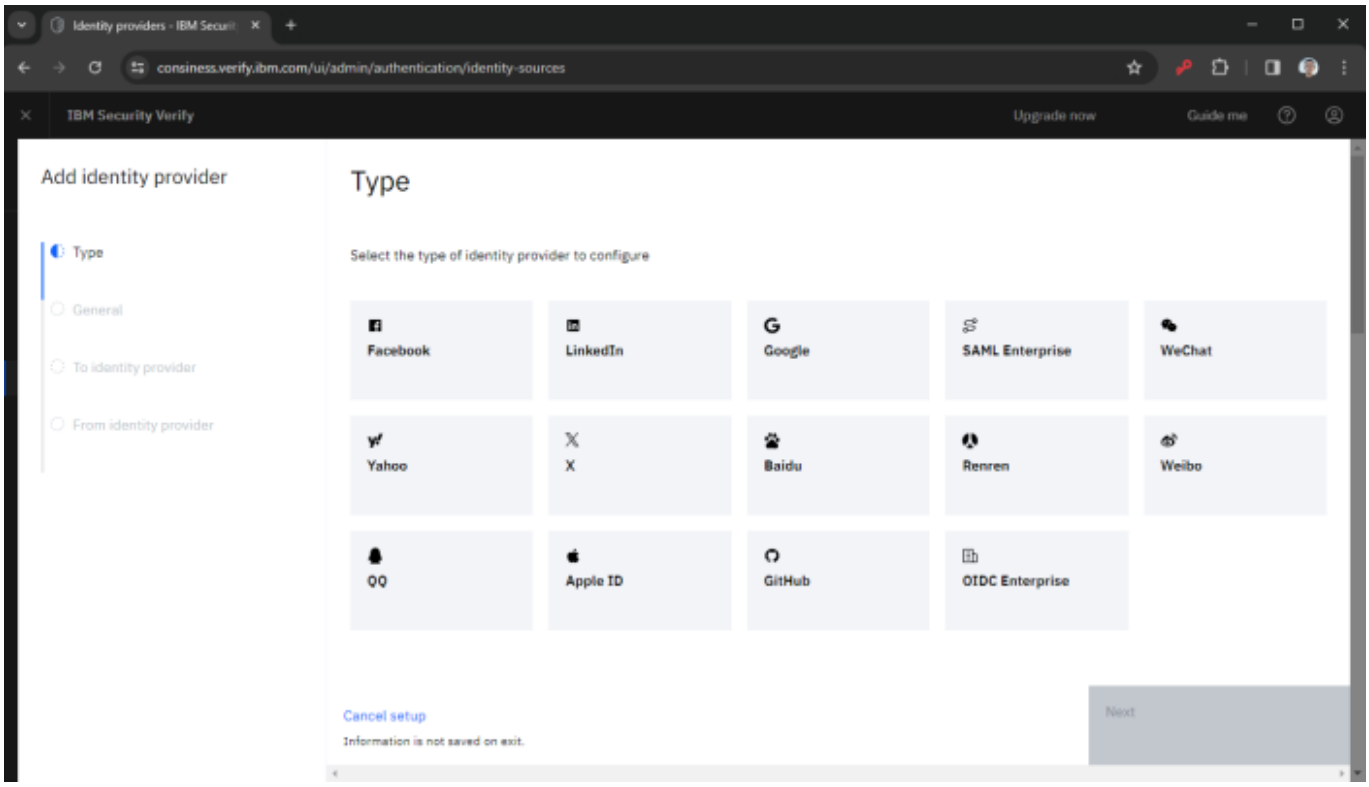
IBM Security Verify is the result of **continuous development and refinement** of IBM's security solutions.
Before its introduction, the product was known as **IBM Cloud Identity**.
Many industry veterans will also remember the **IBM Tivoli Identity Manager**, which, in our assessment, was **technically superior to SAP IDM** in its time.



Looks just like you'd imagine an IAM solution: IBM Security Verify

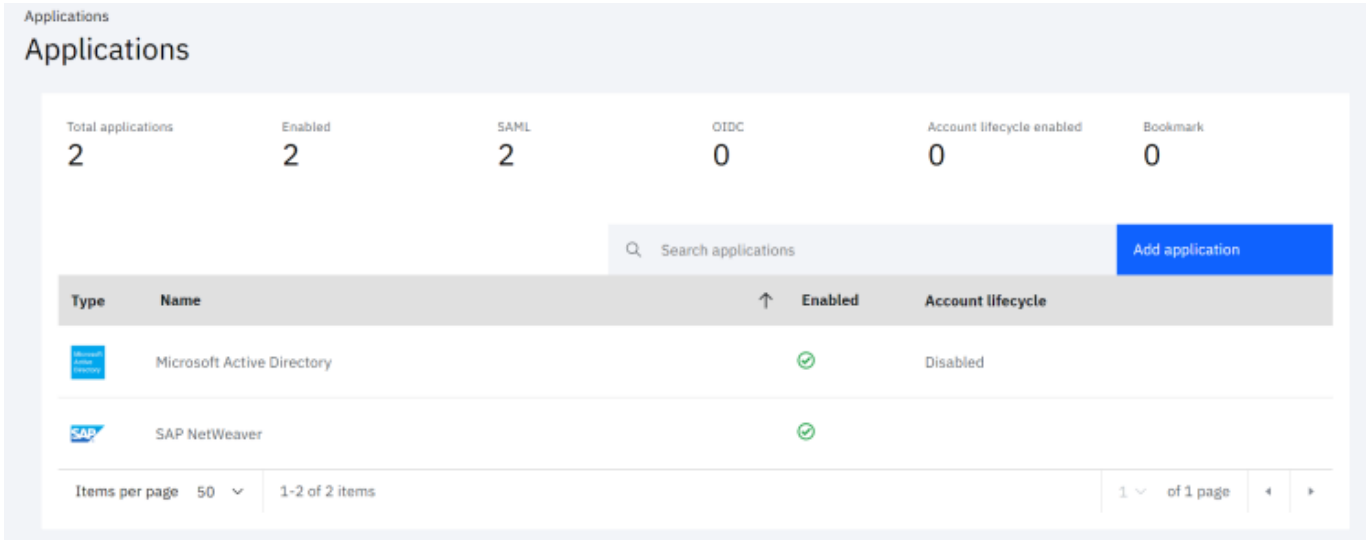
In the **cloud era**, however, the cards are being reshuffled, and **IBM** presents a solution that appears **highly intuitive and familiar** at first glance.
Among its features are **SAML- and OIDC-based Single Sign-On**, a **"digital workspace"** that — similar to a **Citrix launcher** — simplifies access to all authorized applications, **adaptive access control powered by artificial**

intelligence, and **industry-standard identity governance functions**.



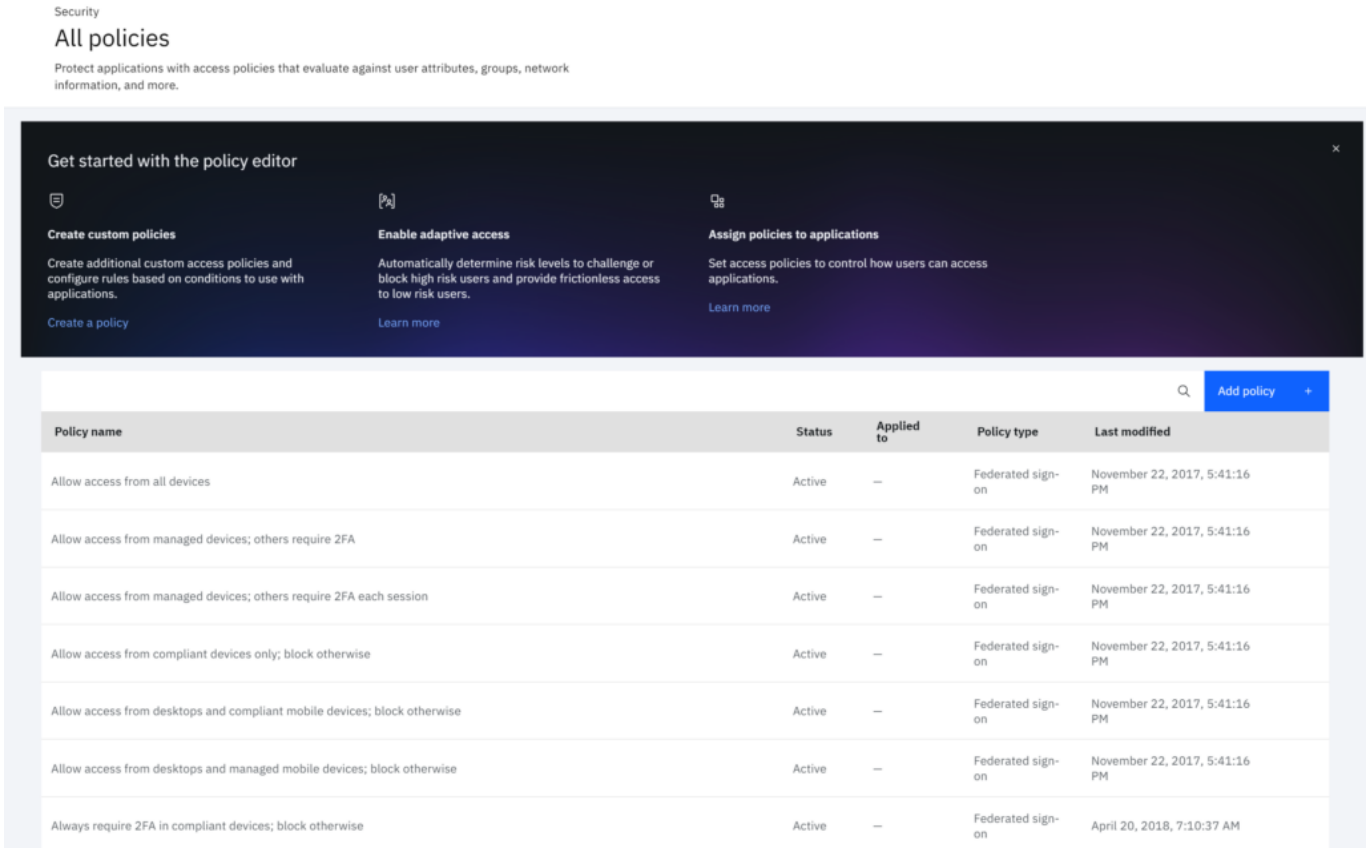
Out-of-the-box Identity Provider: Focus at B2C

A look into the **identity provider configurations** shows that with **IBM Security Verify**, **all common B2C authentication scenarios** can be covered.
For example, implementing a **LinkedIn-based login** for your application can be accomplished in just a few clicks using a **wizard**.
On the other hand, as **SAP-focused testers** of the solution, we found **only a preconfigured integration package for the classic SAP NetWeaver**.



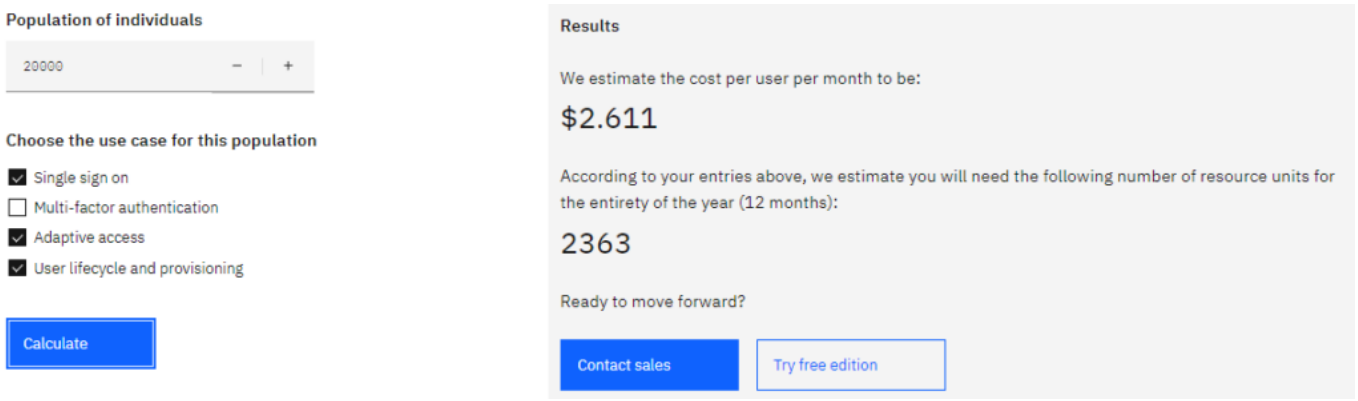
Limited selection of SAP-specific applications/connectors

We found the **Policy Editor** to be **well designed and neatly organized**. Here, **security settings** for groups of applications can be **configured and audited easily and clearly**, all within a **clean and intuitive interface**.



Policy Editor – Simple and well structured

The **pricing structure** can be viewed and **calculated exemplarily** on the **IBM Security Verify website**.
As with other cloud solutions, the **pricing primarily depends** on which **features** are selected and **how many identities**are ultimately to be managed.



IBM Pricing Calculator

Assessment

Based on our initial demonstration, our impression is that **IBM Security Verify** is another **well-structured DaaS solution** equipped with the **typical IAM features** one would expect.
Whether the **extensibility** of the solution is as **flexible** as it once was with **IBM Tivoli**, however, cannot be assessed at this stage.
Given the **relatively high recognition** of IBM's predecessor solutions in the **German-speaking market**, **IBM Security Verify** certainly deserves a mention.

Summary

Cloud computing is the talk of the town, and **market competition** continues to grow.
Even **on-premise heavyweights** such as **Quest** (more on **One Identity** in Part 4) are now positioning themselves with **cloud-based versions** of their successful products.

As a result, conducting a **comprehensive evaluation** of all available options is nearly impossible, and the **final decision**for or against a particular product often depends on **how well it is positioned and marketed** within the industry.

For **SAP customers**, we believe that the **partnership between Microsoft and SAP** will continue to **dominate the market**.
As a result, customers receive an **infrastructure composed of products** they would likely be using anyway—even when adopting a third-party IAM solution. This helps **streamline the architecture** and thus provides **strategic advantages**.

However, whether this combined solution will be offered with the **same focus and quality** as that of a **specialized vendor like Omada** remains to be seen.
The **lack of active support for SAP IDM** in recent years may still leave a **bitter aftertaste** for some customers and could motivate them to **look elsewhere in the market**.

Next Part 4: On-Premise Solutions (e.g. One Identity)

Über den Autor



Hendrik Winkler is a partner at **consiness** and the lead architect for Identity and Access Management solutions. He draws on extensive expertise in **SAP ABAP**, **GRC**, **cloud technologies**, and **SAP Identity Management**. With more than ten years of experience in the IT industry, he has specialized in the development and implementation of complex **IAM systems**, always keeping a close eye on **security**, **usability**, and **compliance**.