

Overview



Industry

Transportation

Company Profile

Gatwick Airport is the UK's second largest airport and the most efficient single-runway airport in the world. It serves around 200 destinations (more than any other UK airport) in 90 countries for over 40 million passengers a year on short and long haul point-to-point services. It is a major economic driver for the South-East region, generating around 25,000 on-airport jobs and a further 10,000 jobs through related activities.

Business Situation

Gatwick provides access to information for passengers, employees, and partners whom they rely on to maintain efficient operations. IT shifted strategy to move toward the cloud while providing the best possible experience for passengers. As critical UK infrastructure, security is paramount and any partner needed to surpass stringent audits.

Solution

Okta provided Gatwick with a powerful tool for being able to provide all of its employees—wherever they are—with secure access to the applications they need, when they need them. With integration to applications such as WebEx, Box, and Yammer, Gatwick has transformed to a leading modern organization. In addition, Okta led to an enhanced user experience by streamlining the bag drop process and move through security and immigration - all without queues.

Benefits

- Allows Gatwick to use identity to grant people access to applications on any device at any time.
- Maintains seamless user experience and secure IT, while apps, users, and devices proliferate.
- Supports authentication and single-sign on across proprietary and custom-built platforms that lie outside Gatwick's Internal Infrastructure.
- Enables easy access to information vital to Gatwick's employees, passengers, and partners.

Gatwick Airport takes flight with Okta

Always Operational

More than 40 million people pass through the United Kingdom's Gatwick Airport every year. In the truest sense, theirs is a 24/7/365 operation. They need their applications to be available in any situation—when a plane arrives at 3am, when the Department of Transport tightens security protocols, when a winter storm grounds flights across Europe.

IT plays an important part in ensuring that the passenger experience is fantastic and innovative while also maintaining tight security, efficient operations, and seamless lines of communication. IT has a hand in everything from improving bag-drop systems to speeding passengers through immigration and security.

To handle those needs, Gatwick developed complex, specialized technology systems including an extensive CCTV network, biometric scanning interfaces, airfield management and departure sequencing systems housed in three on-premise data centers.

Taking a bet on better communication

When Michael Ibbitson, CIO of Gatwick Airport, arrived on the job in May of 2012, he was faced with plans for a new data center—which he promptly rejected. Instead, Gatwick began moving IT operations to the cloud, sharing real-time flight status with all 25,000 airport workers (not just those behind the Gatwick firewall) and implementing a

bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policy for its 2,600 employees.

Over half of the airport's staff work in operations: in security, on the airfield, or in the terminals. At the time, they didn't have access to a computer. Unless they took time away from their work to stop at one of two Internet cafes, they couldn't get company email, intranet access, or real-time staff communication.

Ibbitson's proposal put communication at the center of the strategy, giving airport workers a renewed ability to respond to threats and work efficiently. "For employees, we want to make their experience of IT fantastic," Ibbitson explains. "By doing that, we believe they'll ensure passengers get a fantastic experience as well."

Rigorous evaluation

Finding partners that could deliver on the new IT vision was the next challenge. To work with the second largest airport in the UK, Gatwick partners must meet stringent security requirements. For every passenger, Gatwick processes an average of seven pieces of personal data. Multiply that by 40 million passengers per year, and you have an idea of the scope.

An identity management provider that could manage all that data and keep it secure would be key to Gatwick's cloud transition, serving as the connective tissue for an expanding set of applications, services, accounts, and credentials.

As the team evaluated candidates, Okta rose to the top of the list. The Gatwick team flew to San Francisco and spent three days working through Okta's security procedures, validating its certifications, and auditing its processes. "Okta proved that it has an enterprise-grade service that could meet our specific technical, operational and security requirements," Ibbitson concluded."

All systems go

Within two weeks of choosing Okta, Gatwick IT rolled out an integration with Active Directory and launched their first app. "What was really helpful and powerful for us was how easy it was to set up Okta initially," says Ibbitson.

The initial build out included SSO, provisioning, password reset, and pre-built SAML connections to four apps, including Box, Yammer, and ServiceNow. "Okta allowed management to perform mini audits ourselves to make sure all work was proceeding as we needed it to," says Ibbitson.

A BYOD program followed, which now includes 2,000 devices with SSO integration built in. "What's great about using Okta is that you don't need a thick client," Ibbitson says. "All you need is a Mac with a Web browser or a tablet on the airfield." These changes have freed IT to concentrate on customer experience, integration, and services.

Today, Gatwick also uses Okta's adaptive multifactor authentication (MFA) service to protect corporate data and the 55+ apps that employees use every day. The biggest benefit? Okta helps the Gatwick team understand and identify which applications need MFA protection. Apps such as the aircraft tracking app [Casper](#), which uses publicly accessible flight information, don't need the same security factors as Gatwick's HR portal, for example.

Administrators can designate different access management measures across applications without changing the login experience for users. No longer does Gatwick have to choose between efficiency, usability and security. With Okta, they can have all three.

Looking ahead, Okta enables Gatwick's team to build new tools that otherwise wouldn't have been possible. Ibbitson summarizes it neatly: "There's lots of future power involved in what we're doing."

The transformation takes off

On one day in August 2014, a total of 906 flights took off from Gatwick Airport. That's one takeoff every 63 seconds—a global record for single-runway airports. 40 million passengers passed through London Gatwick in 2015, with 96% of them getting through security in five minutes or less.

The airport has achieved remarkable growth rates—up 6 million passengers since Ibbitson became CIO. The team credits Okta with a significant role in that success. “For the past four years or so they’ve been running with absolute zero downtime,” says Ibbitson. By allowing IT to streamline previously manual processes with automated provisioning and deprovisioning and by sun setting legacy infrastructure, Okta has helped the airport save more than £200k in IT expenses.

Productivity is up an estimated £700k because people can access the information they need and leverage self-service to get tasks done on their own schedules. “Thanks to our IT strategy, we’ve made Gatwick the most efficient airport in the world,” says Ibbitson.

Okta makes it easy to assign and unassign duties and data access to various personnel, but it also offers a cutting-edge system for monitoring the infrastructure, encrypting data, and detecting unusual activity. With Okta’s Adaptive MFA and Verify with Push, Gatwick is able to protect apps while maintaining usability and a consistent log-in experience. Ibbitson puts the value of Okta’s security contribution at £200k, but that hardly tells the story when you’re talking about 40 million passengers.

Since working with Okta, we’ve seen minimal downtime. We don’t have to worry about whether or not our apps are up and running—or if our staff know what’s happening.”

— Michael Ibbitson, CIO, Gatwick Airport

500%+ ROI on Okta Investment

ZERO downtime in 4 years

>£1M annually in IT savings, productivity benefits, and increased security

“Gatwick Airport never shuts down, and we expect the same from our partners. Okta’s enterprise-grade service was the only solution that could meet our technical, operational and security requirements”

– Michael Ibbitson, CIO, Gatwick Airport

About Okta

Okta is the foundation for secure connections between people and technology. By harnessing the power of the cloud, Okta allows people to access applications on any device at any time, while still enforcing strong security policies. It integrates directly with an organization’s existing directories and identity systems, as well as 4,000+ applications. Because Okta runs on an integrated platform, organizations can implement the service quickly at large scale and low total cost. More than 2,500 customers, including Adobe, Allergan,

Chiquita, LinkedIn, MGM Resorts International and Western Union, trust Okta to help their organizations work faster, boost revenue and stay secure.

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