

A Guide to Building an IAM Roadmap





How to Build an IAM Roadmap to Transform Your IAM Program

The most effective identity and access management (IAM) roadmaps prioritize solving business problems within the business context. This article defines a typical IAM roadmap and provides leading practices for ensuring that your IAM program supports the business efficiently and effectively.

What drives the need for IAM transformation programs?

Securing employee credentials is no longer an option as enterprise cybersecurity risks continue to rise. The current cybersecurity landscape has repeatedly demonstrated that it is not a matter of if but of when your company will be breached. Cybercriminals are developing sophisticated malware using advanced technologies. They are more organized, innovative, and strategic in exploiting gaps and vulnerabilities than at any other time in history.

According to Shurouq Hijazi, Senior Cybersecurity Manager at KeyData, “Transformational programs typically result from comprehensive assessments. When our clients see the full picture of all the gaps they have within governance, processes, and technology, they choose transformation over a band-aid solution.” Experts predict that successful data breaches will cost businesses more than \$5 trillion by 2024.

Leading causes to think about changing your IAM program

Governance and compliance regulations are important drivers of IAM. While IAM can assist your company in streamlining compliance and navigating newly emerging regulations, it also serves as an important security layer. Inadequate IAM programs, for example, lead to unauthorized access and account for at least 58 percent of reported data breaches.

Adoption of the Cloud and NextGen IAM programs aid in the expansion of functionality across deployed digital services, cloud computing solutions, and the Internet of Things (IoT). Extending functionality across solutions is critical for achieving increased efficiency, scalability, and flexibility, which translates to streamlined operations and higher productivity. Businesses that invest in transformational IAM programs see reduced errors, lower costs, and more man-hours saved.



Guidance for your IAM Program

Regulation, maturity, complexity, and organizational ownership all influence IAM programs. Every good roadmap, however, focuses on improving core IAM functions such as identity lifecycle management (e.g., onboarding, cross-boarding, and offboarding of users), access control, and privileged access management. It should also be designed first to solve a business case because doing so should result in overall improvements in identity security. Some ideas for project framing include:



Simplicity: Focus on solving IAM use cases for business areas with standardized functions that produce a high ROI. These projects can be marketed as facilitating business speed.



Low Hanging Fruit: Identify areas and initiatives that are easy to implement with low complexity, such as clean-up exercises. If all else is equal, target quick wins first; for example, Privileged Access Management (PAM) solution implementations tend to be faster and can show immediate ROI than Identity Management solution implementations.



Manual effort: Target areas that require time-consuming, repetitive tasks to grant or gain access. This is an IT improvement project that can be framed as a business efficiency initiative.



Business change: leverage new lines of business, mergers, and so on as a catalyst for your IAM program. These initiatives can be marketed as business enablement.



Access Control: Target areas where excessive access poses a greater risk. This is an identity project that is undertaken to address specific audit or security concerns.



Elements of an IAM Roadmap

Your IAM roadmap should include the following components:

- ✓ Processes re-engineering including policy and procedures documentation
- ✓ Clean-up exercises, consolidation, and migration of directories
- ✓ Infrastructure build and upgrades
- ✓ Comprehensive requirements gathering and vendor assessment prior to procurement
- ✓ Assessment of use cases for each tool and how it co-exists with other technologies in the current state and target state environment
- ✓ Agile implementation of selected solutions
- ✓ Integration of target applications and/or accounts in a phased approach
- ✓ Gradual deployment of solution capabilities (e.g., identity lifecycle process management, password management, access reviews enforcement, SSO integration, MFA roll-out, etc.)
- ✓ Collaboration with business owners and relevant stakeholder to establish Role Based Access Control (RBAC) framework
- ✓ Enterprise solution integrations (e.g., SIEM and ITSM integrations)
- ✓ Decommissioning of older IAM solutions in a phased approach

The following may also fall under the purview of the roadmap, depending on the program's current state:

- Create a governance committee to decide how the program will run
- Engage business owners, application owners, and other stakeholders to garner business support, trust, and engagement
- Build a team and provide IAM training and skill development



How to Create a Transformative IAM Program

Assess, plan, build, and iterate are the four steps you can use to manage your IAM transformation program.



1 Assess:

An IAM initiative is not a one-time exercise or a one-time product purchase. To assess and understand the business value of an IAM program to the organization, all stakeholders must be involved and participate on a continuous basis. IAM programs that are successful must align with the primary CIO goals, support business services, and products, and support overall business objectives. They must also help to reduce security threats while providing a competitive advantage to the organization. Answering the following questions can help you decide how to implement an IAM program in your company:

- Do you currently have an IAM program, and how mature is it?
- Is the current program capable of supporting future plans or trends?
- Who are the program's sponsors? Is their budget adequate?
- Do you have enough resources to keep the transformation going? Is it possible for you to manage the program in-house, or do you need to outsource it?
- Who is best suited to teach end-users about identity management?
- Is the organization aware of the importance of IAM in improving cybersecurity posture of the organization and delivering digital transformation?



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2 Plan:

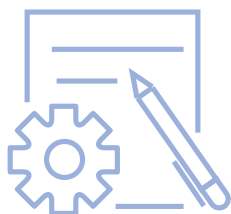
Following a successful assessment, you should consider how to begin the IAM transformation journey. It is critical to divide the identity initiatives into distinct projects, such as Employee IAM (EIAM) and Customer IAM (CIAM). When planning for EIAM initiatives, should consider the various components of IAM to break them into manageable work packages, such as IGA (Identity Governance and Administration), AM (access management), and PAM (Privileged Access Management).

“Implementing new technologies can have a large impact on existing governance and processes,” says Shurouq Hijazi, who has worked on many IAM transformation programs with KeyData. Involving Organizational Change Management stakeholders early on will reduce operational risks while also assisting you in updating relevant policies, standards, and guidelines to ensure successful technology control enforcement.”



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3 Build:

With a plan in place, you can now build, implement, and integrate your IAM program into your environment. All stakeholders must agree on business priorities and technical decisions that are documented, well-informed, and traceable in this step. Ensure strong stakeholder engagement and business representation during the implementation phase to address emerging risks, changes, and issues. You must also evaluate people - roles within the organization - processes - review processes that need to be streamlined or automated - and tools - the relevant tools that will fit your business and security objectives - during the build process.



4 Iterate and Expand:

Iterate is where you now put the IAM transformation program into action. This step may include tasks such as system maintenance, data maintenance, and monitoring the IAM program. From here, expanding the IAM program through integrations should be the primary focus. For example, connecting your IAM solution to your enterprise SIEM will significantly improve your organizations visibility into potential threats both internal and external.



Best Practices for the IAM Roadmap

The best IAM roadmaps prioritize supporting business initiatives and meeting stakeholder needs. Organizations must do the following to increase their chances of success:

- **Develop the core tasks:** Priority should be given to improving provisioning, de-provisioning, access control, permission management, and access certification.
- **Frame the IAM roadmap within the context of the business:** Use identity solutions to solve business problems (for example, acquisition growth) and business tools (for example, OKRs) to track progress.
- **Develop stakeholder relationships:** IAM, perhaps more than any other capability, is driven by people. Schedule time in the roadmap and on team calendars for developing relationships across the organization and developing the skills of team members.

The success of the IAM program is ultimately determined by people outside of the IAM function's direct oversight and control. In other words, the people who develop policies are not the ones who carry them out. As a result, success is dependent on the relationships that exist between the IAM team and the people who perform IAM tasks throughout the organization.

- **Control processes:** Before technology implementations, make sure processes are tightly controlled.
- **Think about resilience and support, especially for PAM:** If the solution isn't supported twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, how can privileged users trust you with their priceless possessions? IAM solutions need to meet at least the same HA SLA standards as your top-tier apps.
- **Train in-house talent:** Continue to train and up-skill your employees on how to properly utilize and maintain tools.



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Want to learn more?

KeyData can help you get started on your IAM journey.

KeyData's flagship service is Identity and Access Management (IAM). We concentrate all our efforts on IAM. The KeyData advantage is based on our people and our knowledge. Our team is made up of a highly skilled group of engineers and consultants who specialize in Identity Governance and Administration, Privileged Access Management, Customer Identity and Access Management, and Cloud Security Posture Management. Our team has a strong track record of providing end-to-end IAM services, from requirements gathering and roadmap development to full implementation, training, and managed support. **Don't hesitate to get in touch with us** right away for a free initial consultation.