

Ambient.ai - VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Interview conducted on March 26, 2021

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle Expert is a lead decision maker and can speak in depth on physical security solutions they utilize at a Fortune 100 company.

Current VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle. The expert completely rebuilt Oracle's global security program-by-program on a \$75M+ budget to safeguard 130,000+ mobile and onsite employees, plus Oracle equipment, technology, data, IP, and 25M square feet of facilities, including 800 global corporate offices, data centers, residential complexes, hotels, and wholly-owned educational institutions.

Prior, the expert was with Cisco as the Sr. Manager of Global Safety, Security, and Business Resiliency. They were responsible for protecting Cisco's assets, leadership team, employees, and overall reputation.

Q: Are you a key decision maker at your company when it comes to evaluating physical security tools and software, like cameras, video management systems, AI-based threat detection software, etc?

A: Yes, I'm the global head of physical security at Oracle.

Q: Can you speak to your former or current company's existing physical security footprint, budget, purchasing criteria, etc?

A: Sure. I oversee physical security for our 800+ offices on a \$75m/year budget. I can elaborate on purchasing criteria as well.

Q: Are you familiar with companies like Verkada, Ambient.ai? Please elaborate.

A: Yes, I've heard sales pitches from them but am not currently a customer.

Tegus Client

Thanks for taking time to chat with us. I guess just to give some background, we're doing research on companies like Ambient and Verkada, and your name came up as someone who has experience with both. And given your background, we just wanted to chat with you for a few minutes. But I guess to give you context on how the call will go, we have kind of a question list we'll kick through fairly quickly with some pointed questions and some more broad questions. But it sounds like you're already familiar with the Ambient solution.

So just to give you some context, Ambient is a smart camera solution that sits on top of your existing infrastructure for your cameras and access control that gives you kind of a 360 view of like the video feeds and does help you with analytics and some other features that we can kind of get into a little bit later. But I guess to kick off, we're curious, what's the number of employees at your company that you kind of have purview over as the Head of Global Security?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Sure. So Oracle has about 140,000 employees, and pre-COVID, we had about an equal number of contractors that were embedded within our facilities as well.

Tegus Client

Got it. And then what's the number of offices you have kind of purview over?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Right around 600.

Tegus Client

Got it. And I guess just kind of digging into your kind of security footprint like tech stack, do you mind walking us through what vendors you use for access controls as a starting point?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Sure. So our access control and our video is by Lenel. We use them exclusively. We have an overlay of badging from a product called HID called SAFE, and this HID product allows us to manage the access rights, proxies, et cetera, globally. And then we've got, obviously, other systems outside of that. But we're 100% Lenel shop.

Tegus Client

Got it. And I guess out of curiosity, how do you kind of manage the access controls for your cameras from Lenel? Do they have their own integrated kind of software?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

They do. And then we use an Everbridge product called Visual Command Center, which, again, allows us to manage the full scope of pictures, a number of different feeds on a large video wall beyond just video. But for the most part, Lenel has their own operating system and software, and we utilize that.

Tegus Client

Got it. Would you consider the Everbridge solution to be like kind of physical security information management system?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

No. I would say it's Lenel. The Everbridge has some PSIM features to it, but it's really more or less allowing us the feeds to be viewed in a single video output. So I guess yes and no, but technically, yes, but I really don't consider it a full information management system. That's something that's to be prepared to the companies that you're probably thinking of.

Tegus Client

Right. Can you give us a sense of how you use the Everbridge solution, kind of use cases on how that product works and how it integrates with your video cameras, access controls?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. So think of it as a large video wall that allows us to customize the inputs accordingly. And then as an alert and alarm is triggered, it's all mapping based. So it's all mapping based. So if an alarm occurs at one of our facilities, there's also an incident out there that the police have reported, it will put it up on a map.

And show us the incident where our facilities are located, where our travelers are located, et cetera. It's more of a crisis information management as opposed to a true video management. If we're talking about strictly video management, then it would be 100% Lenel.

Tegus Client

Got you. So can you describe what the difference between like a video management and a crisis management means to you? It sounds like there's a little bit of overlap there.

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. There definitely is. And I think a lot of it is just based on how we're structured. The security operations center uses the Everbridge tool to not only message and notify employees, receive crime and geopolitical, weather-related incidents in real time, news feeds and then tie that into mapping capabilities of our travelers, our employees, and our offices to have a single view upon a screen.

So again, depending on definitions, et cetera, yes, there's a significant amount of overlay and some of my peers may say it's one and the same. I view it a little differently. I'm viewing the PSIM for just video to have more analytics, not having to watch cameras full time, alerts that pop up and say, this incident happened and it's outside the norm of what should happen, so therefore, take a look at this. We do not have that at this stage.

Tegus Client

Got it. Awesome. And then kind of jumping into a camera footprint, how many cameras do you have currently installed?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. I'm going to say somewhere in the neighborhood of 50,000 cameras.

Tegus Client

And that's globally, I'm assuming?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes, globally.

Tegus Client

And I guess now it's the manufacturer. Do you use a recorder system in conjunction with the cameras?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

So Lenel is not the manufacturer for the camera. They just provide the software. We typically use access cameras. And then we use Oracle proprietary servers to store the video and then it goes into Oracle's cloud network.

Tegus Client

Got it. And all the media feed is streamed to the cloud, there's no kind of box at each site, right?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

There is a server at each facility. Sometimes multiple facilities do have the server for the processing of the information, then it is backed up and it is accessed via the cloud.

Tegus Client

Got you. Could you explain why you kind of use this hybrid solution?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

You should have seen it 5 years ago. Yes, it is hybrid. It's the way our network is set up. We're in the process of trying to establish our own security network within Oracle and in which case we can reconfigure things. But right now, it's a bandwidth constraint issue. It's a historical issue, et cetera.

Tegus Client

Got it. So do you use any, I guess, like door sensors on your sites?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. So all of our facilities are door-sensored and door-alarmed for the most perimeter doors. That is also Lenel. There are special sensors in other areas for heat, water, motion, et cetera.

Tegus Client

And do you also use sensors for analytics like people counting?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

No. We do not.

Tegus Client

And then jumping on the next question. Does your company have any dedicated security staff?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes, it's a mix. So the management-level folks are Oracle, some contractor, and then we use contractor for security guards globally.

Tegus Client

Got it. How many security guards do you have on-premise?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

About 3,000 when we're open.

Tegus Client

Got it. And then I guess one of the value propositions that, I guess, Ambient and Verkada both talk about is kind of false alarm reductions. How many false alarms did Oracle have last year?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

So you mean actual false alarms where it goes to the police and the police respond?

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Tegus Client

Well, I guess both.

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Okay. So false alarms that go to the police and the police respond would be 0 at most. When I'm talking about alarms being, and if you hold our door open for too long, if you open a door without using your badge, those are considered false alarms for us and those are neighboring 1 million a year.

Tegus Client

Got it. And what's the process kind of cost to that one?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Well, good question. Yes, let me go back. So it was 5.8 million alarms, false alarms received in our security operations center a year. So I was a little bit conservative with that number. So that number is astronomical in the terms of if I were able to reduce those alarm numbers, could I then reduce my headcount in my GSOC accordingly?

And that's just a key question, and the answer would be you probably, but the GSOC is also there to handle emergencies, handle phone calls, et cetera. So it wouldn't just be a decrease in the alarms that would cause me to save some OpEx money, it would have to be a totality of decreasing accordingly.

Where I think the ROI for that comes into play is that the alarms are and the video is now more effective and that we're not having operators who are just pushing buttons to clear alarms or the time that it takes to open up an alarm and research it through video and verify that it was false. If that can be done in real time, the effectiveness of the GSOC goes up exponentially.

So we had a burglary this week at one of our facilities, 3:00 in the morning. It took 4 minutes for us to find out that it was actually a burglary and not a false alarm. Internally, we're really happy about that number. Personally, I'm not. That should have been 30 seconds. Analytics certainly is the way of the future with access and video, et cetera. We're just not there yet. We're still catching up.

Tegus Client

Kind of what's on your road map for the kind of spend in use cases over the next few years in terms of security? What features are you interested in maybe implementing?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. I think AI-related. Anything that would be a single expense for a CapEx and a smaller operating OpEx cost moving forward, that would enable me to provide better effectiveness for the corporation and at some point, potentially reduce some portion of security guards that are no longer needed based upon AI.

So people management, there's going to be a whole COVID aspect that's going to be coming in, in terms of what that entails. Oracle is very conservative, very pro-employee rights. So you're not going to see anything that's too aggressive in that regard.

But we hold major events, again, pre-COVID, so I'd have to see where it all goes. But we'd get a couple of hundred thousand people into a venue per day, and I'm hiring people to watch to see if bags are dropped or people are suspicious, et cetera. A, not effective; b, it's costly, why not use AI for some of that. So that's kind of what we're looking at.

Tegus Client

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I guess just two follow-ups. When you say kind of the upfront CapEx, which is small operational cost, what do you mean by that?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

So our preference is to buy something onetime and amortize it over a five to seven year lifespan, and it's minimal in the overall expense of my budget in Oracle. I'd much prefer to do that. We are constantly questioned if we buy something and it's not a purchase, but instead, we are obligated to \$100,000 first year, \$150,000 the next, et cetera.

Oracle and other tech companies that I've talked to are very apprehensive about getting locked into something that grows exponentially. I know that doesn't always work that way in the real world, so those are harder for us to get approved. If something in turn costs \$500,000 to install and \$50,000 a year in licensing, we're all in. That's not even a question. It's just the way kind of we work here.

Tegus Client

Got it. What would be the spend level that kind of makes you not bat an eye when it comes to ongoing operational costs for a solution like this?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. So you're telling me if I wanted to install a system that was AI capable globally and it could allow me to reduce my guarding expenses by 10%, I wouldn't bat an eye at something in the \$5 million to \$10 million range if I bought it and owned it and because the ROI is going to save me tremendously.

If it's just a this is a nice to have, it is going to be more effective, et cetera, a little bit more challenging of a sale, I probably wouldn't bat an eye on something in the \$500,000 to \$1 million range. But that would be a little bit more challenging. Anything less than \$500,000, I could probably approve tomorrow.

Tegus Client

Do you intend to implement a density counting solution next 2 years?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

No.

Tegus Client

How about an anti-tailgating solution?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

If you can find me an effective one, I would be very interested.

Tegus Client

Have you evaluated any yet?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

We've evaluated some more of the physical security ones in terms of the cameras, alarms, et cetera, that sound locally. Our fear is that there's going to be an inundation of potential alarms that go to our GSOC.

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And then again, what's the GSOC going to do? Stop, pull up a camera, look at someone and say, yes, they tailgated. Now what do we do? We don't know who they are, they never badged in. So it would have to be effective for us somehow, and I see facial recognition tied into that. That's something that Oracle would never go for.

Tegus Client

What if the solution conceptually was basically all of your cameras are monitoring and integrated with your Lenel system somehow so they can see, all right, 2 people entered, but 1 badged in. And then those cameras could essentially track that person that didn't badge in without facial recognition.

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. We only have cameras that are validating access control points to ensure that badging is done or for critical doors, we do not have cameras covering the entire office footprint. So it would not be something that I could do. Otherwise, yes, it would be great.

We even thought about, okay, what if 2 people come in and 1 tailgates, we shut down the badge of the person who actually swiped in. HR had a problem with that because what if they didn't know or we're punishing people and it becomes manpower intensive.

Now certainly a different idea of cameras that do cover data centers entirely but tailgating into a data center is almost near impossible because it requires remote access authorization and mantrap doors, et cetera. So that would be one area that would work, but it's physical security is already in place.

Tegus Client

Yes, that makes sense. Have you heard of Ambient prior to this call?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes.

Tegus Client

I'm curious, in what context?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Conferences, publications, things online, et cetera. I mean we try to stay up with some of the names of technology that we're considering for the future, but I have not looked at their specifics of how it operates, costs, et cetera. Just I would say I'm more passively familiar.

Tegus Client

Got it. And what about like Verkada?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

The exact same. Normally, I have a better answer, but with everything shut down, we haven't been to trade shows. We haven't been to vendor symposiums, et cetera. So I would say we're a little bit behind the curve this year on that and have a long list of things to look up. And AI is certainly top of our list of what we want to start diving into when we can get hands on.

Tegus Client

Any other players doing the same thing as Ambient and Verkada that you heard of that could be interesting down the line?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

There are different specialty vendors for specialty things, Crowd S.A.S., Dataminr, HIDs coming up with different products for COVID-related, more access control. Axis is trying to put some analytics on there as is Lenel. I think everyone's kind of jumping on the bandwagon, but none of them stick out any more so or any more favorably than the 2 companies that you've mentioned.

Tegus Client

I guess it sounds like you're considering evaluating solutions like Ambient and Verkada when you come back to the office. What would your purchasing criteria be for a solution like Ambient? Once you're evaluating something like Ambient, like what features would matter for you the most?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. I think firstly is it effective within our operation, right? And that's a gray in color question without having a lot of answers. Some of the things that would be instant roadblocks for us are it have to be IT approved and it have to be willing to go with us in that.

Anything that sits on an Amazon Cloud is probably not going to be accepted within Oracle. The discussions on contract costs and how much it goes up and licensing and all of that procurement issues that go along with it.

And then from a security standpoint, we have to sit in front of my boss, CEO of the company, and saying, I want to spend this much money, and this is what it's going to get us. We're very easy in terms of purchasing criteria and contracts, et cetera. It's the ongoing costs that are always a concern. But more importantly, it's the IT piece. IT has to sign off on anything that's going to be going on in our network.

And we have to make sure that Lenel allows this to happen on their network, if there's any type of cross-collaboration or anything to ensure that we don't violate our service agreements and warranties with Lenel.

Tegus Client

Got it. And then I guess in terms of specific features, how important is a feature or what features matter to you if you were to stack rank them between long-term video storage, video encryption, it sounds like compatibility with existing hardware and then referrals to some integrators?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

So the encryption is important but not extremely critical. Compatibility is #1. Storage is not critical to us because we have our own cloud storage. And you have to remind me on the other ones.

Tegus Client

What about referrals to kind of SIs for integrations?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Referrals and then also compatibility and proper certifications and licensing to work on the product is certainly key. So that's a good point. As we go out to RFP to our integrators, they would have to be either familiar with the product or familiar enough not to mess with it until that product company is able to come

out and actually provide the service, assuming there's anything at the ground level or maybe data center, hub storages, et cetera.

Tegus Client

And it sounds like you rely on SIs for integration. Do you rely on routine setup any of your kind of camera or security solutions internally as well?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. Integrators do 99% of all of our service maintenance and installation across the board.

Tegus Client

Got it. Any other kind of features or things that you'd be looking for, for a solution like this?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

It would have to not cross the bridge into extreme privacy concerns. It would have to be effective to minimize false alarms, false alerts, et cetera, and would have to have some type of ROI for me of why am I buying this. But we've already covered all of that.

Tegus Client

And then I guess I want to just walk through a few use cases. And you just saw how important the use case would be for you. Tailgating alert, it sounds like it's useful if it doesn't give you a lot of noise.

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

It is. The alert is useful, but what do I do when I get the alert? I don't know if we're set up yet to manage that effectively.

Tegus Client

Got it. Other types of alerts that you'd be interested in getting from a security solution like this?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

I would say like a dropped object, dropped bag, loitering, for lack of a better term, someone just acting outside the norm, someone trying to deviate into an area that is closed or off-limits. I mean typical analytical stuff.

Weapons, I mean, that's one thing that some of these companies are starting to look at is they're able to identify a weapon either in someone's hands, or there are certain companies now that are able to determine if somebody has a weapon hidden on their body. If that ever becomes effective, then yes, we would be all in for that.

Tegus Client

People counting and analytics?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

People counting at corporate events, perhaps. But no, in a day-to-day world, we have a solution for space

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management and counting in doesn't really factor in for us.

Tegus Client

Got it. And how would you think about ROI for something like Ambient? What costs could kind of help you replace or save?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Well, there's an enhanced safety feature, right? And I can't really put an ROI on that. So that gives us a little bit of buffer to work with. But if I'm able to either reduce some OpEx costs with either guarding or GSOC, then that is an easy fix.

Any type of regulatory concern, anything that we can do to sell to our customers that says we're safer than the guy down the street and here's why, I can't really put a dollar figure on that, but those are certainly something that we would consider.

The only ROI I can think of is reducing guards. And in a lot of cases, that reduction has already been done across the board, and there really isn't anything else that we can reduce because we still need people to respond to these video issues.

Tegus Client

Got it. And I guess, I think you kind of touched on it before. What's kind of a reasonable price that you'd be willing to pay for a solution like Ambient or Verkada if they can address kind of your enhanced safety or I guess the bar deemed to be enhanced safety?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes, enhanced safety, I would say, is something in the low 100s, \$100,000, \$200,000, \$300,000. No other saving anywhere else. Global deployment, if I spend \$300,000, this is what this system is going to do and it's going to make us much safer. I realize that's probably a low number to some. It's kind of a high to us just because there's not an additional offset associated with it. So that would be my take.

Tegus Client

Right. But once it starts allowing you to potentially save on security headcount, it starts getting into the million, right?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Maybe, right? It's where I have to dive in a little bit more and understand exactly, but hypothetically, if I can save on guards, then that number goes up significantly because that savings on guards is year-over-year. Plus guards are ineffective, right? Technology is much more effective than a guard.

Tegus Client

Right. I wanted to ask, I know you haven't evaluated Ambient and Verkada, but would love to hear your impression of kind of Ambient's strengths and weaknesses, if you have any.

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. I couldn't tell you only because I haven't dived that far into it.

Tegus Client

Same thing for Verkada?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. Through peers and staff for both companies have been positive feedback, which is good because we're very type A, anti-people. So that's good. But I couldn't give you strengths or weaknesses beyond that, just from peer discussions.

Tegus Client

No problem. Can I ask about equipment life cycle?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Seven years.

Tegus Client

Okay. And that's for your cameras?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

That's for our cameras. And anything electronic related on our systems and technology side, we try to aim for seven years. We're not always successful, but that is our goal. That's how we factor in pricing.

Tegus Client

As we think of the seven year life cycle, that's kind of like the max yield for best practices or you replace that after seven years?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

No, I have some technology that's 20 years old. So now seven years is what we're trying to aim for. We amortize it out over 5. So our selling pitch is that if we pay for it for five, we get two years of free, in essence, as the finance gurus like to think, and then boom, we look at refreshing after year seven if there's a need. Or if that year seven gets to be extended as long as year 10, then we look at savings from service repairs and maintenance warranties.

Tegus Client

Got it. Just one last like high-level wrap-up. Is your kind of view that these analytics solutions, whether they'd be like software on top of your existing cameras or new cameras with analytics embedded, do you think those are just inevitable to be adopted at companies like Oracle in the next five years?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. We all have to go there, right? And it came from banking and banking was very much of what's the bank across the street doing because if they're doing something different, then we're liable. We're not so much in that ballpark and large-scale tech companies.

But where our pressure comes from is employees who come from another company come to Oracle and say, wait a minute, Amazon did it differently, why are you not doing that? And then we want to ensure that our

employees feel safe and secure in the workplace.

Tegus Client

Makes sense. And it's just a question of finding the right solution at the right time that checks the boxes, right?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

You're absolutely right. And again, a very unique aspect for us is that we have a lot of large-scale security system conversion projects that are going on \$10 million a year, if you will. When those are done and my budget stays flat, I've got another \$10 million of spend that I could use on technology such as what we've discussed here, et cetera, and start to improve upon our physical security landscape as opposed to trying to fix the band-aid and fix the area of concern.

Tegus Client

Okay. You have a \$10 million CapEx budget per year? Is that right way to think about it?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

So if my budget is \$75 million, then I go into it next year, that \$75 million, and then I'm going to save or go above the zero-based budget. I forget what it's called but it's about \$75 million a year.

And if I can cut off \$10 million in projects because those projects have now been fixed, those buildings are now under warranty with brand-new equipment, and I go to my boss and I say, I can save you \$5 million a year on my budget, but in reality, I have \$5 million of extra spend now that I can use on new and improved technology to improve the overall structure.

Tegus Client

Got it. So you're currently running like \$10 million of projects right now. But once those projects go away, you have this kind of \$10 million left over that you can use for improvement. Is that the right way thinking about it?

VP, Head of Global Physical Security at Oracle

Yes. I have a lot more than that. That's just one particular project that we're looking at right now is \$10 million. But yes, your summary is correct.

Tegus Client

Got it. Awesome. These are all the questions that I have. Thank you so much for the time today. Really appreciate it.

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