Ghelamco Standardizes on HID Mobile Access and Door Readers for All Flagship Polish Skyscraper Projects

Ghelamco is a family-owned international real estate investor and developer operating in Belgium, Cyprus, France, Poland and the UK. Founded in 1985 and with assets now totaling over €2.6 billion, the company has an impressive track record building spectacular, high-quality, BREEAM-certified residential and office buildings particularly in Poland, where it has been instrumental in establishing Wola, western Warsaw's new thriving business district.

Ghelamco Poland has built various skyscrapers in the area: the 220-meter (721 feet) high Warsaw Spire, with hyperboloid glass facade and 109,000 square meters (1,173,266 square feet) of space, along with The Warsaw HUB complex. Completed in 2020, this features two 130-meter (426.5 feet) towers — purchased by Google for €583 million — along with a third building, home to two IHG Group hotels — a Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn Express — as well as a conference center.

Warsaw UNIT is Ghelamco's third flagship project which opened in 2021. Standing at 202 meters (662.7 feet), it combines office and retail space, and is one of the most technologically advanced green buildings in central Europe. It uses 30% less energy compared with similar developments. A fourth skyscraper project called The Bridge is underway and expected to open in early 2025.

CHALLENGE

The buildings are multi-tenanted by blue-chip corporate clients. To support this, Ghelamco's physical access control strategy focused on selecting solutions to guarantee secure entrance while offering maximum flexibility and future proof upgradeability.

"We prepare the shell and core of each building, provide access to these common areas via speed gate turnstiles, lifts and the car parks, and then support clients with bespoke fitouts depending on their specific needs. This means the base building access control technology we use must work with numerous other systems — which may even include other access control products that clients choose to install themselves. Easy integration, updating and management over time was therefore, key," Łukasz Stępień, Ghelamco Poland's Project Manager, explains.

Ghelamco is also progressively deploying smartphone-based access control throughout its portfolio — a process that started with their office in Warsaw Spire, and was next fully implemented in The Warsaw HUB.

"Innovation is our hallmark, so we want to use the latest technology on projects. Many of our tenants want mobile access today. Others, however, still prefer physical cards, so selecting a vendor that supports both in tandem was an imperative," Michał Nitychoruk, Ghelamco Poland's communications manager, says.

Furthermore, Ghelamco wanted to integrate mobile access with an intuitive smart building software platform and app to augment and add value to how users interact with each building and enable a productive and seamless experience. The requirement was to manage not only physical access control, but offer an easy-to-use way to link lift and parking systems, closed-circuit TV, visitor management and — in the future — other building management systems and sensors that monitor air and water quality, for example.

SOLUTION

In Poland, HID® has become Ghelamco's preferred partner of choice for mobile and physical access control across its prestigious sites, with the developer standardizing on its solutions.

"HID was chosen because it is the best-known physical access control company in the world. This gives us the confidence — a warranty if you like — that our tenants will accept their solutions when they move in. They trust HID because it is the market leader," Stępień says.

A combination of mobile-enabled HID iCLASS SE R10 and R40 smart card readers have been installed throughout The Warsaw HUB and Warsaw UNIT. Specialist subcontractor GEO-KAT fitted 1,400 readers in HUB, with Tech Lab working in UNIT to implement 1,200 devices.

In Warsaw Spire — while physical cards are still predominately used — HID iCLASS SE readers with Bluetooth® and NFC modules have now been fitted for testing to support a phased transition to mobile access in Ghelamco premises. Moreover, mobile-ready HID Signo Readers will be deployed in the new Bridge skyscraper leveraging Seos as its underlying credential technology.

The Bridge is planned to have an operating system, which will allow for efficient access control management and solutions, increasing its safety.

"We love using smart phones for access as they're just so flexible. It's much easier to issue, revoke and manage credentials not only for us, but our facility management partners, tenants and owners, too," Stępień adds.

In addition, a feature-rich enterprise workplace platform has been implemented from Signal OS, a Polish proptech software development company based in Warsaw. It has become the main interface for all systems.

The Warsaw Spire includes a unique urban space, accessible to all Warsaw residents.

SOLUTIONS

- HID Mobile Access® solution
- HID iCLASS SE® R10 and R40 readers
- HID Signo™ readers
- HID Seos® credential technology

Utilizing Google Cloud Platform™ service at the backend, Signal OS provides a wide array of functionalities within four key modules. The 'Edge' module is a middleware used to integrate all building systems into the platform, with the 'Visitor' module providing a secure web-based guest invitation system for employees and receptionists.

The 'Parkiza' garage module has been installed, with access control linked to it. This allows garage access based on car plate recognition technology, smartphones running HID Mobile Access technology or physical cards themselves. The system has a complex rules engine to manage nearly 400 car plates in UNIT and 1,000 in HUB given the high ratio of users per parking place.

"The system helps tenants make reservations and consume spaces efficiently. So, for example, advanced bookings, setting minimum and maximum times, even allocation by job role if needed– all is done via our mobile app," Tomasz Felczyk, Signal OS' chief executive officer, explains.

Supporting stringent General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules, the 'Wayin' and fourth module automates and controls the delivery, issuing and privacy control of mobile access, with the system supporting both Android and iOS devices. 'Wayin' is connected via an API to HID Origo, a cloud-based system that provides the specific mobile access control credentials.

The main advantage of 'Wayin' is the control of personal data. "Wayin is a crucially important component of our solution as it sits on top and consolidates data from HID Origo, the licence plate system and tenant's own access control systems, so there is one holistic view per building," Felczyk explains. "It then manages the granular privacy policies so — if required — critical data involving base building security is available to the third-party facility managers, but only tenants can view personal employee data. They get a dedicated panel to manage their own staff and set up profiles, rules and access privileges."

To date, 9,000 active users are registered in the Signal OS system in The Warsaw HUB and 1,500 in Warsaw UNIT, with about half using HID Mobile Access solution in both buildings. Given the number of people, two-factor authentication is used to automatically onboard users based on their corporate domain and email addresses. This has avoided unnecessary paperwork and queuing.

"The Ghelamco buildings are complex and like small cities in terms of the number of occupants. Each site has a range of resources. Simply put, we democratize them so that tenants can use and manage access control themselves and move about more freely and easily," Felczyk, says.

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Łukasz Stępień
Ghelamco Poland's Project Manager

HID

RESULTS

The benefits of using HID Mobile Access in combination with Signal OS have been immediate. It has enabled Ghelamco to attract new clients who want to lease space in efficient and green buildings. Ghelamco is also saving money by not having to issue PVC access cards, which are commonly lost and then create a security risk.

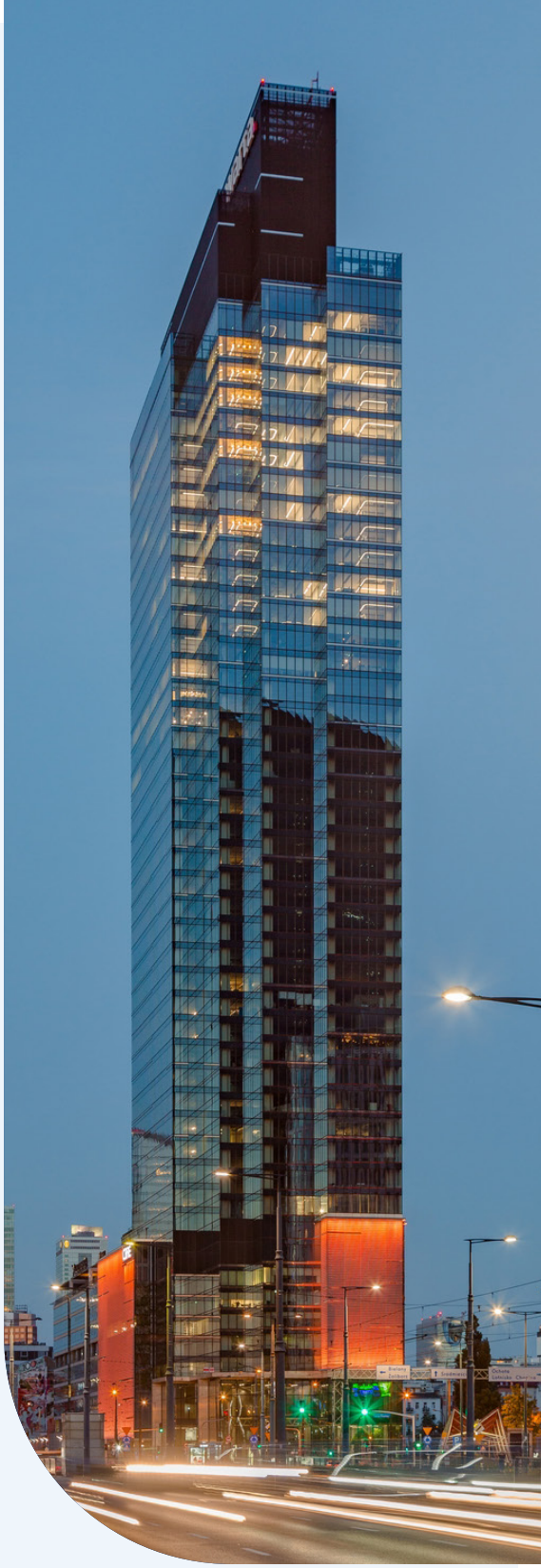
Visitor management has also been simplified. In Warsaw Spire, for example, 10% of all cards issued to visitors per month were never returned. This has been addressed as the QR code functionality within the 'Visitor' module is now used to invite people for their meetings. QR codes are emailed in advance so access to buildings and lifts can now be done remotely without time-consuming involvement from office or facility managers. As guests arrive and the QR code is scanned, the person they are meeting receives a notification alert. "It is the flexibility of mobile access combined with Signal OS, which everyone benefits from," Nitychoruk adds.

As the first developer in Poland to join the Science Based Target Initiatives, Ghelamco has set targets to be a zero-emission company by 2025 and is aiming to have its office buildings powered from renewable sources by then. To support this, the firm announced it is building its first solar farm — capable of generating 10 megawatts — which will power Warsaw UNIT and other sites.

The shift to mobile access control directly supports this ambitious ESG policy as it removes waste and carbon emissions associated with producing and replacing PVC access cards. Smartphone use is ubiquitous today, so having the mobile credential on a device makes logical sense.

"HID is focused on sustainability. Features in the HID door readers like Intelligent Power Mode mean they go into standby mode when not used. Substantial power savings can be gained when you consider the numbers of them installed in our buildings multiplied by the 15-to-20-year life span of each," Sępień adds.

Looking to the future, Ghelamco is looking at how best to extend and augment the access control approach in its estate by adding support for digital wallets to enhance speed of access and user convenience.



Opened in 2021, the Warsaw UNIT addresses user experience, operational efficiency, as well as safety with the use of cutting-edge IT technology.

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