



Case study



Pittsburgh's PNC Park Brings Back the Nostalgic Park Experience With the Help of Evolv

PNC Park

LOCATION: Pittsburgh, PA

MLB TEAM: Pittsburgh Pirates

OPENED: 2001

CAPACITY: 38,747

WEBSITE: www.mlb.com/pirates/ballpark

Solution Snapshot

Goals

- ; Improve NPS ingress experience scores
- ; Help deliver great fan experience without sacrificing safety
- ; Minimize lengthy lines that formed outside of ballpark entrances due to metal detectors
- ; Scale security screening to support rush of fans seeking to enter ballpark when the gates open
- ; Reduce high nuisance alarm rate of metal detectors
- ; Minimize security guard stress and fatigue
- ; Enable fans to get concessions, visit retail shops, and reach their seats before first pitch
- ; Reduce intrusive, lengthy secondary screening checks

Solution

People

- ; Delivered onsite training to security guards during onboarding and deployment
- ; Provided online training to security staff through Evolv Academy
- ; Evolv Customer Success Manager provided support and training for Evolv Insights®

Process

- ; Evolv Solutions Engineering aided in the configuration and planning of the Evolv deployment
- ; Evolv coordinated with the PNC Park team to update the screening processes in their ConOps Playbook

Technology

- ; 10 Evolv Express® Single-lane Systems
- ; 1 Evolv Express Dual-lane System
- ; Evolv Cortex AI®
- ; Evolv Insights®

Outcomes



Reduced security screening footprint by reducing 40 metal detectors to 12 Evolv Express lanes—a more than 70% reduction



Lowered nuisance alarm rate with Evolv compared to metal detectors



Expanded the security perimeter



Reduced intrusive, time-consuming secondary security screening processes



Improved NPS ingress scores



Got fans into the stadium quickly so they can enjoy concessions and visit retail shops before the first pitch



Able to handle sudden “rush” of fans when gates are first opened

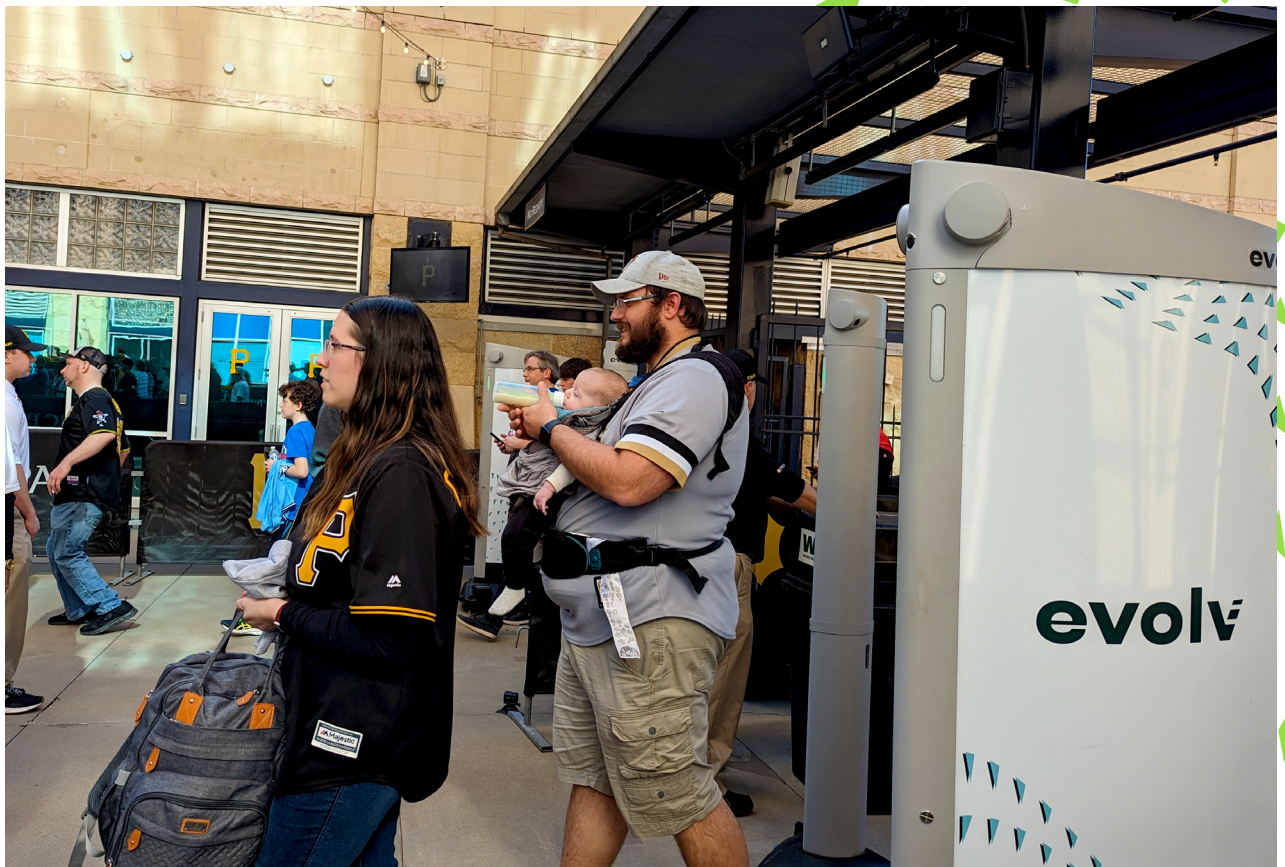
A Culture of Friendliness and Entertainment at PNC Park

J.J. McGraw, the Director of PNC Park Operations for the Pittsburgh Pirates, joined PNC Park two decades ago because of the culture and atmosphere of the Park.

"Our fans expect the ballpark to be first rate and for us to anticipate their needs when they come here," he says. "Everyone comes here for different reasons. Every game we have a certain number of fans who have never been to the park before. When you come to PNC Park, it starts with all the noise and chatter and the excitement of entering the gates."

PNC Park is an intimate, classic-style ballpark that embraces the progressiveness of Pittsburgh and the spirit of the original ballparks. "The ballpark is known as one of the friendliest parks and best entertainment venues in baseball," relates Travis Williams, the President of the Pittsburgh Pirates. "Our fans have a beautiful view of the ballpark and the city."

Pirate fans are not the only people who are able to experience PNC Park. In addition to 81 MLB games, PNC Park hosts several concerts and a couple of hundred private events such as weddings and bar mitzvahs annually. "When fans come to the ballpark, they come for a lot of different reasons," Williams continues. "In addition to games, concerts, or events, they also come for the experience. Everything we do impacts it—food and beverage, ticketing, retail merchandise, and security screening. Ensuring that experience is great is extremely important."



Walkthrough Metal Detectors Sacrificed Experience for Safety

Safety is a critical part of experience at PNC Park.

"While we want everyone to feel welcome, we also want them to come to the ballpark and not worry about their safety or that of their friends and family," Williams says.

Security has been an important part of PNC Park since it opened and walkthrough metal detectors were installed a number of years ago. But the limitations of the metal detectors were problematic. "Our walkthrough metal detectors kept us safe but they sacrificed fan experience," Williams explains. "Several years ago, we determined we needed a different approach and embarked on a journey to find a better solution."

The metal detectors simply could not scale to meet the volume of fans coming into PNC Park, damaging the experience of fans and security staff alike. "With the metal detectors, we had a bottleneck getting into the ballpark," Williams accounts. "I remember as a young kid going to the ballpark when you could simply hand your paper ticket to the agent and walk directly into the park. The metal detectors created the exact opposite of that experience, where everyone had to take all their items out of their pockets and bags. We wanted to maintain our focus on safety while ensuring security screening isn't a bottleneck when entering the park."

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- Travis Williams, President, Pittsburgh Pirates



Narrowing Down the Decision to Evolv

The PNC Park team performed a thorough search and looked at a number of different options in the security market.

“Our team spent a lot of time searching for better solutions, including talking to other MLB and professional teams,” Williams says. “We narrowed the selection down to three different screening solutions and ultimately settled on Evolv.”

Certainly the fact that the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust was an early mover on using Evolv for their various venues was a factor that weighed on the decision. “Virtually everyone on the team has been to events at the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and had experienced Evolv firsthand,” Williams notes. “We were confident it would meet our requirements—both in terms of safety and experience.”

The machine learning capabilities of Evolv Cortex AI was one of the features that impressed McGraw and his team. “Every metal object set off an alarm with our metal detectors,” McGraw says. “The Cortex AI capability evolves and constantly learns as new threats and nuisances are identified.” Here, the Threat AI Classifier in Cortex AI differentiates true threats from those that pose no threat in real time. Analytics around traffic flow, nuisance alarms, and threats detected using Evolv Insights was another aspect of the Evolv solution that the PNC Park team found compelling.

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Fourth of July Deployment

Implementation of the Evolv Express systems at PNC Park took place on July 4, 2022.

"The Evolv team was on site for the deployment and remained with us for a month afterwards to ensure everything went well," McGraw says. "This included coordinating the onboarding and training process. The investments we made in training our security team on the Evolv technology was critical." In addition to the on-site training, the PNC Park security team leveraged the Evolv Academy for online training.

Before the go-live deployment, Evolv Solutions Engineering coordinated with the PNC Park team to assess and configure each Evolv Express system for optimal traffic flow. The Evolv team also worked with McGraw's team to update their ConOps Playbook to reflect the migration from metal detectors to Evolv.

The PNC Park team really appreciates the hands-on support provided by the Evolv team. "They have been fantastic," McGraw says. "Our operations team loves Evolv and team. It enables them to be more efficient at their job and greet fans as they come into the stadium. They've found that it is simple to use, very intuitive, and fast to set up."



Collaborative Partnership

The relationship between Evolv and PNC Park has been very collaborative.

"Evolv has been great to work with," McGraw says. "They're always available to answer any questions and helped ensure our launch was successful. The Evolv team has been there to answer any questions when they arise. They also check in with us frequently and come to use with solutions whenever we encounter a problem. They also think outside the box and come to the table with great ideas."

Initial Impression

When the Evolv Express systems were deployed, McGraw and his team were confident it would be a success.

"I had seen Evolv at a couple of other facilities and I was a believer before we went live," McGraw says. "Seeing the systems in action is the 'proof in the pudding.' When we first implemented Evolv, it was for one of our largest events of the year—and we had a large crowd waiting for the gates to open. I was a bit nervous beforehand, but those concerns evaporated almost immediately when I saw people walking through the systems."

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Safety is something that everyone expects and that they shouldn't need to worry about it when they come to PNC Park. We take this charge very seriously.”

- J.J. McGraw, Director, PNC Park Operations,
Pittsburgh Pirates



Getting Fans Into PNC Park Quickly and Safely

Differences between the prior walkthrough metal detectors and Evolv are night and day.

McGraw notes that Evolv can screen as fast as the fan can walk through the Express. “The faster fans gain entry into PNC Park translates into more time in concessions and retail shops,” he says. “In addition to generating more revenue, this provides fans with a better experience. They don’t feel rushed to get into the park because they know they’re not late. They can walk around and enjoy everything in the park before the game starts.” Minimization of security lines in front of park entrances also reduces security risks. “All lines are potential risks, and Evolv enables us to large eliminate them,” McGraw comments.

Better Insights Lead to More Strategic Planning

To optimize traffic flow and weapons detection, McGraw’s team took advantage of Evolv Insights, the data analytics platform that Evolv users gain access to upon their Express deployment.

“We’re able to track things like traffic flow to five-minute increments at each gate using Insights,” McGraw says. “For example, we can identify instances where certain gates are handling less throughput than other gates and reconfigure the placement of the Express.”

Evolv’s Customer Success Manager, Sean O’Grady, coordinated with the PNC Park team to train them on using Insights to generate analytics after each game or event. He also continues to support the team in their ongoing use of the Insights reporting and customization features.



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Minimizing Long Lines Benefits Security Staff

Security screening with the metal detectors created stress and fatigue for McGraw's security guards.

The rush of fans at the start of a game and event had a negative impact on security staff. "With Evolv, we don't have the stress of a big rush at the start of an event," McGraw conveys. "This gives our staff a little breathing room and reduces their stress levels. It also enables them to focus on interacting with fans."

One of the biggest pluses for McGraw's team is a much less intrusive experience. The high rate of nuisance alarms caused by the metal detectors was dramatically cut with the Evolv deployment. Rather than needing to ask fans to empty their pockets and bags and guessing where the threat might be located when an alarm occurs, the security guard in the Threat Resolution position conducting secondary security checks know the location, which is marked by a red box on the Evolv Tablet.

“ Since implementing the Express systems last season, we've seen a substantial increase in our NPS scores. Fans love that security screening is hassle-free, unintrusive, and free flowing. With Evolv, they have time to get concessions and visit retail shops before the first pitch.”

- Travis Williams, President, Pittsburgh Pirates



Improve the Fan Experience, Increase NPS Scores

PNC Park relies heavily on their Net Promoter Score (NPS) index to determine how fans feel about their different experiences when attending games or events at the park.

And this includes security ingress. "Since implementing the Express systems last season, we've seen a substantial increase in our NPS scores," Williams reports. "Fans love that security screening is hassle-free, unintrusive, and free flowing. With Evolv, they have time to get concessions and visit retail shops before the first pitch."

Williams continues, "Evolv reduced the long lines outside our entrances and created a user-friendly screening process at our gates. Evolv has had a major impact on the wait times at our gates. Plus, having more fans in the park for the first pitch translates into more energy and indirectly more runs."

Safety and Fan Experience Inextricably Intertwined

Safety is a critical part of fan experience for PNC Bank.

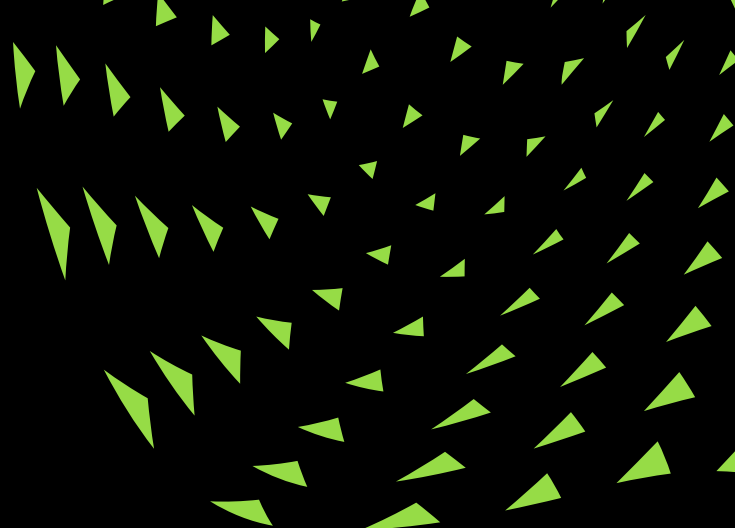
"Safety is an immense responsibility for us as an organization," Williams notes. "We don't take this charge lightly. Having Evolv in place helps ensure this happens while facilitating a seamless flow into the ballpark."

"Safety is something that everyone expects and they shouldn't need to worry about it when they come to PNC Park," McGraw concludes. "We take this charge very seriously. When anyone comes to the ballpark, they need to feel safe and not worry about their safety or that of their friends and family. What we've done enables them to relax and enjoy the game."

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- J.J. McGraw, Director, PNC Park Operations, Pittsburgh Pirates



Contact us to learn more about helping to create
safer zones where you live, learn, work, or play.

info@evolvtechnology.com **+1 781.374.8100**

