



Case study

Lincoln Center

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Trailblazes Next-generation Security Screening with Evolv Express®

Organization Overview

LOCATION: 16.3 Acre Campus in New York City

FIRST OPENED: 1962

NUMBER OF GUESTS ANNUALLY: 5+ Million

PERFORMANCE FACILITIES: 22

IN-HOUSE SECURITY STAFF: 115

PREVIOUS SECURITY SYSTEM: Magnetometers and Secondary Wand Screening

Solution Snapshot

Goals

- Touchless screening for improved guest experiences
- “Load” guests into venues before show start times
- Eliminate ingress queues
- Utilize portable indoor/outdoor security screening systems
- Reallocate security staff from ingress to other areas and expand security perimeter
- Tap into screening insights for greater security effectiveness and efficiency

Solution

People

- Solutions Engineering Team: Deployment, Configuration, and Training

Process

- Implemented 10+ Evolv Edge® Systems in 2017
- Replaced Edge Systems with 13 Evolv Express® Systems in 2021
- ConOps Playbook
- Guard and Operations Training

Technology

- 13 Evolv Express® Systems
- Evolv Cortex AI™
- Evolv Insights®

Outcomes



50% reduction in security staff used for ingress screening



Eliminated ingress queues to load guests into venues before show start times



Improved guest experience with touchless security screening



70% reduction in false positives



Improved security efficacy over hand wands

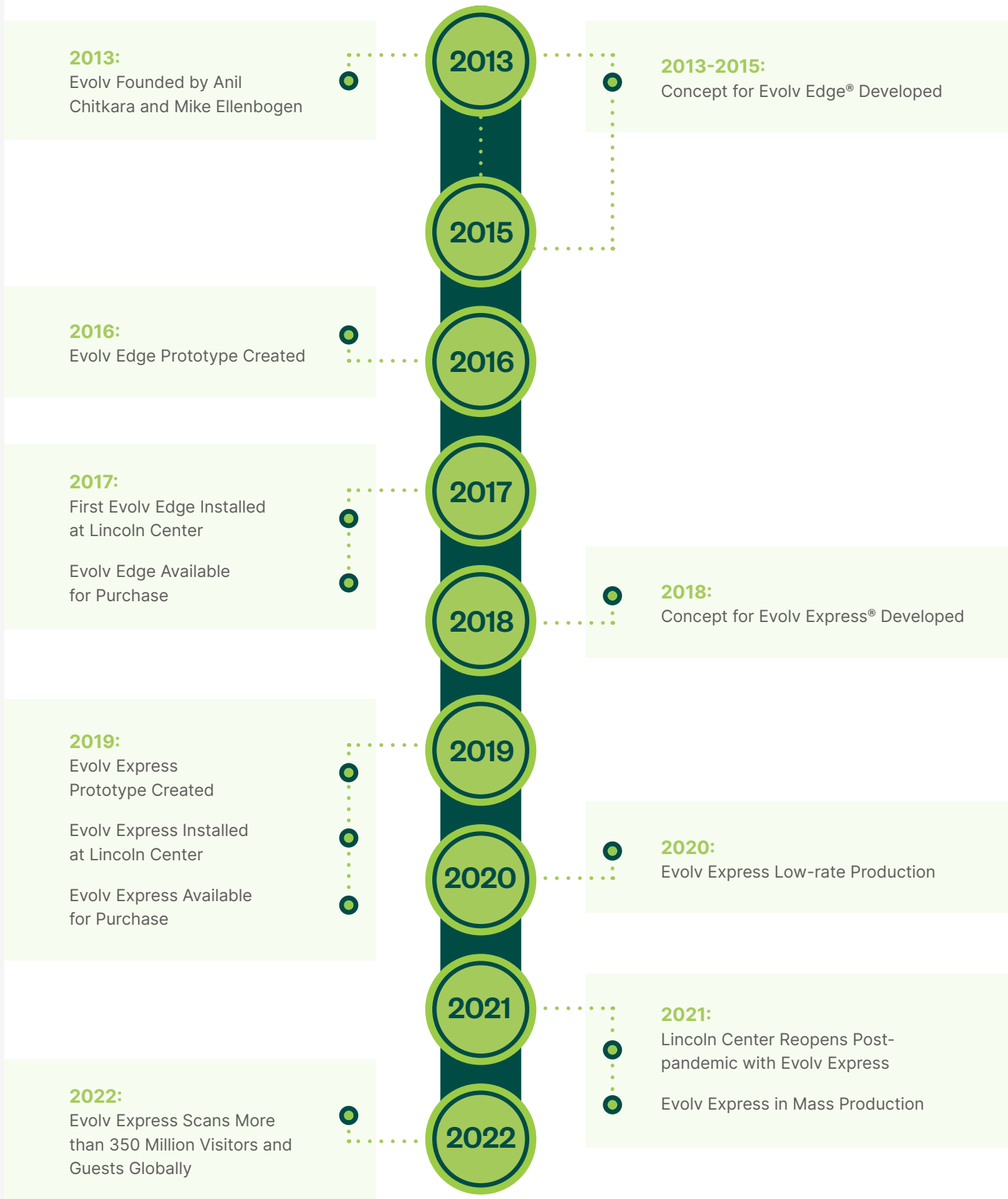


Continuously leverage analytics to improve efficiency and efficacy



Supports both indoor & outdoor venues

Evolution of Evolv and the Lincoln Center





Addressing Both Security Screening and Guest Experience

The Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City is iconic in many ways and has blazed new trails ever since its first performance facility opened in 1962.

Its 16.3-acre campus touts 22 different performance facilities that host over 5 million guests annually. The Lincoln Center was created with a vision of bringing together all of the city's resident performing companies into one major performing arts center.

Keeping millions of visitors safe each year is a major undertaking and is a responsibility the Lincoln Center takes very seriously. At the same time, the Lincoln Center takes great pride in delivering

optimal experiences to its guests. But in the past, security screening processes thwarted the Lincoln Center from delivering the nonintrusive experience New Yorkers expect to see from a world-class performance center. As part of a multilayered approach, the Lincoln Center welcomed guests with both hand wands and bag checks. The security staff also employed numerous canines as an additional layer for checking guests for weapons.

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- Danny Mulligan, Dir. of Security, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

The Negative Impact of Metal Detectors

Danny Mulligan, Director of Security at Lincoln Center, spent 27 years working in the New York City Police Department.

“When I left, I was looking for something that would be as challenging and as diverse, and I found it at the Lincoln Center,” he says. “We have multiple facets of security—from theaters to the largest parking garage in the city, to a high school and dorms, to office buildings. New Yorkers and visitors come to Lincoln Center to experience something. Many are here for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and we aspire to ensure that this experience isn’t negatively impacted without compromising on their safety and the safety of our performers and staff.”

But depending on the venue, a number of which have a seating capacity of over 1,000, significant wait times and queues would form at security screening before the start of performances.

“To be quite honest, the lines were long,” Mulligan explains. “The lobbies were full.” This was a real challenge to the security team, which had one hour to load guests into each venue,” Mulligan continues. “The doors to each venue close when the show starts, and guests must wait for intermission to enter. This was a big issue for us.”

In addition, walkthrough metal detectors and hand wands—not to mention canines—were not customer friendly. “For a hand wand to be effective, you must be less than one inch off a person’s body,” Mulligan explains. “It was intrusive. Plus, when you rely on something like traditional metal detectors, there is going to be a level of human error.”



“

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Becoming Evolv's First Customer

Yet, despite these pressing challenges, a solution didn't exist.

This changed when Lincoln Center's Chief Security Officer Susan Bick was introduced to the founders of Evolv Technology. She and her team had a keen interest to change the security screening experience at the Lincoln Center.

Evolv's first customer was the Lincoln Center. There were several reasons Evolv selected the Lincoln Center, Chitkara recounts: "At the top of the list is the fact that they have a complex environment, with many different theaters and venues on the campus. Second, the security team is very forward-leaning; they were looking to understand how they continue to improve their security operation and their security posture, and how technology might play a role in that. Finally, Sue and the rest of the executive team were invested in not just the security side, but in visitor experience and ticketing as well. We wanted insights and feedback on both security and their overall operations."

"Evolv's products have changed a lot, and we have evolved significantly since starting the company," Mike Ellenbogen, Founder and Chief Innovation Officer at Evolv Technology. "When we first started the company, we licensed a technology that simply didn't work. We then developed our own millimeter-wave-imaging capability that became part of the Evolv Edge system."

In the first few years of the company, the Evolv team spent a lot of time in New York City. "The reason we spent time in New York was driven by the fact that the city has a heightened level of security and a more sophisticated approach to security than other locations," says Anil Chitkara, Founder & Chief Growth Officer at Evolv Technology. "Plus, New Yorkers can be tough and straight to the point; this was exactly what we needed."



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- Jermaine McLean, Captain of Security, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

Evolution from the Edge to the Express®

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After providing feedback on the prototype, Bick and the security team at the Lincoln Center decided to move forward with Evolv and deployed 10 Edge systems in 2017. But as the feedback accumulated from the Lincoln Center, it became increasingly clear that the Edge didn't deliver a complete seamless screening experience. "The Lincoln Center wanted to screen parents and children and couples together without forcing them to go through screening one at a time," Ellenbogen says. "They wanted a system that could be used outdoors, and the Edge would only work indoors. They also needed a system that was portable and could be moved around easily and quickly."

In response, the Evolv team went back to the drawing board and, tapping into experiences and feedback from early customers like the Lincoln Center, developed the Evolv Express. Lincoln Center was excited to try the technology, which addressed many of the deficiencies of the Evolv Edge. The team embarked on a proof of concept in 2019 to test and prove the new Express system technology, finding that it improved guest experience while increasing security efficiency and efficacy. The deployment of the Evolv Express at the Lincoln Center started a couple of months before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, but the rollout was paused until late 2021 when performances restarted.

"It was September when we reopened, and Alice Tully Hall was first on the list," Mulligan remembers. "People were out in force to attend the first show after being locked down for a year and a half. In addition to getting everything through security, we also needed to check everyone for vaccinations. I was worried we couldn't load the house in time. Everything worked perfectly, however, and the Express units were a big part of it. I was truly amazed. Not only did we reopen successfully, but we did so by delivering an ingress experience that was seamless, less intrusive, and safer than ever before."

Ellenbogen observed the change over from Edge to Express systems at the Lincoln Center, and his reaction was similar. "It is amazing to see guests walk through the Express system, complain to a guard that they weren't screened, and then be told they had just gone through security and simply didn't realize it," he observes. "This is exactly what we were hoping to accomplish from day one of the company."





The Decision to Work with Evolv

The decision to partner with Evolv was reached with due diligence.

"I'm going to be quite honest," Mulligan recalls. "We looked at a lot of different systems. We traveled throughout the country to a lot of different security shows. Evolv really is the best out there."

The engagement and commitment of the Evolv team was a critical factor in the Lincoln Center's decision. "The entire team was very open to suggestions and sought ways to work with us," Mulligan says. "I truly believe it is more than a sale, more than the product, more than the revenue for the Evolv team. They want to make the world safer, people safer, and this is one of the joys of working with them. That said, if there was something better than the

Express unit out there, then we would drop Evolv tomorrow. But that isn't the case."

The relationship between the Evolv and the Lincoln Center teams was key to the success they achieved. "Evolv focuses on building trust with our clients, seeking to understand how we are fundamentally here to help them," Chitkara says. "Each of them is unique and their security requirements are never the same. It's about the people we work with at the venues, and it's about the people they're trying to serve as guests. Security is about keeping people safe, and that's what we continually focus on."



It is really easy to teach our security officers how to use the Express systems. It is actually easier than teaching them how to use hand wands."

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Positive from Guests to Resident Companies from the Start

Lincoln Center guests were very positive about Evolv from the very start.

Mulligan recalls the response of a regular patron to the New York Philharmonic: “We were still doing the proof of concept but didn’t have the Edge units turned on and they were sitting on the side. A regular patron of the New York Phil came over to me and demanded, ‘Why aren’t those machines being used? I am so tired of your guards going through my purse and running their wands up and down me.’” The positive feedback from Lincoln Center guests accelerated with the migration to the Express units in 2021.

The 11 resident companies in the Lincoln Center were very enthusiastic when the Express units were installed. “No selling process was required,” Mulligan says. “It was a no-brainer. While the Edge improved the screening process, the Express units were a dramatic improvement—everything from guests being able to walk through together to easily and quickly repositioning them indoors and outdoors. Plus, while improving the guest experience was obviously crucial, we couldn’t meet this objective while sacrificing the quality of security. The Express unit actually exceeded the security efficacy of the Edge unit as well as our previous system based on metal detectors.”





From Implementation to Management

The deployment of the Evolv systems—both Edge and Express—was seamless with the support of the Evolv Solutions Engineering team.

“As always is the case with a technology deployment, we had our ups and downs,” notes Jermaine McLean, Captain of Security, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. “But there was always someone there from Evolv to rectify the situation.”

When it came to setting up the Evolv units, McLean reports that they are very easy to get up and running. “It is really easy to teach our security officers how to use the Express systems,” he says. “It is actually easier than teaching them how to use hand wands.”

Unlike the Edge units that could not be deployed outdoors and relocated easily and quickly, the Express systems can be deployed outdoors and repositioned across the Lincoln Center campus. “The Express unit is very easy to transport,” McLean reports. “It also takes me about five minutes to set up. It’s friendlier to set up than my cellphone. We can use the same Express units for our Summer for the City performances that occur outdoors, such as the Outdoor Cinema, dance festival, and Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra performance. This offers us immense flexibility.”

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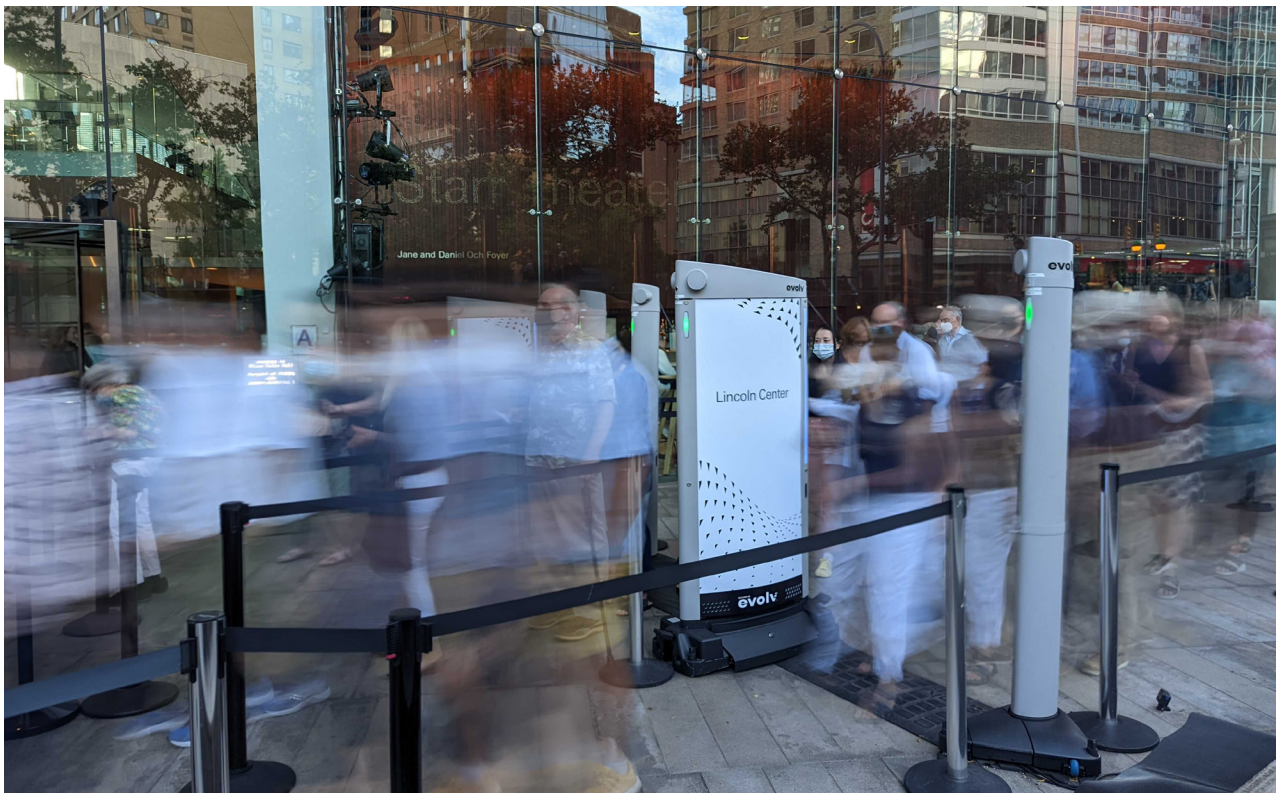
Adding Up the Security Outcomes

The Lincoln Center is experiencing significant returns on its investment in Evolv. To begin, the team reduced the number of canines used for security.

This alone generated 100% ROI. In addition, the number of security staff needed for ingress was cut in half—from four per machine to two. “We can redeploy these staff to other areas in the venues, which expands our security footprint and bolsters our security posture,” McLean says.

The long security queues at venues before shows also have been eliminated. “We open security screening one hour before performances and must load each venue in that timeframe,” McLean observes. “Before Evolv, we tried to encourage guests to show up as early as possible, because we were afraid that we would be unable to get all of them into the venue in time. That no longer is a concern. We can load everyone before the first bell with Evolv.”

Challenges with false positives have also been eliminated. Specifically, walkthrough metal detectors and hand wands generated upwards of 50% false positives. This was reduced to around 30% with the Edge units and to less than 10% with the Express systems. “False positives were a big problem for us,” Mulligan reports. “The Express system, in particular, made a big difference. Plus, the Cortex AI™ software delivers regular upgrades that keep driving those false positives down.”



Evolv Insight Analytics for Proactive Management

Evolv also enables Lincoln Center to remove human error and fatigue.

After 15 or 20 minutes of dealing with false positives and continuous hand-wandering, fatigue, and complacency become a factor for any security team. But this isn't an issue with Evolv. Security guards remain engaged with guests while the Express unit does the work of detection. "And when there is a training problem with a guard, Evolv Insights® enables us to identify and address it," Mulligan notes.

"Analytics from Evolv Insights is an important part of the security strategy at the Lincoln Center. "We absolutely love Insights," Mulligan says. "We use the analytics in a number of different ways. For example, we can compare ingress flow at different entrances and pinpoint instances where a smaller number of people were screened. In those instances, we can seek to identify the root cause—was there a problem with the system or was it a training issue with the security guards—and address it accordingly."



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Trendsetter: “Like the First Person on the Moon”

“The mission of the Lincoln Center security team is to keep the entire campus, not just the people who come here but the community, safe in an open and customer-friendly manner,” Mulligan sums up.

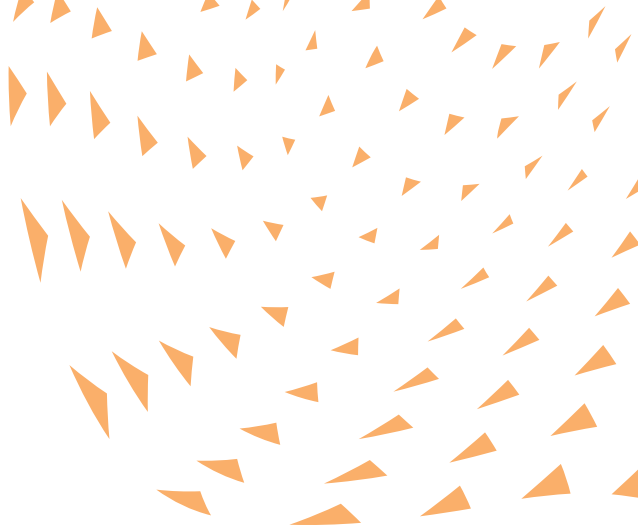
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“Being Evolv’s first customer is special,” McLean adds. “We hold that as a gratitude. It’s like being the first person on the moon. We feel special here at Lincoln Center to know that we’re the first ones to try and succeed at utilizing this unparalleled technology.”

The story of Evolv at the Lincoln Center demonstrates the importance of vendor-customer relationships, and how ongoing collaboration can produce measurable results. “Customers like

the Lincoln Center who are willing to test new technologies like Edge and Express systems and share their feedback and recommendations make it possible for us to continually enhance our technology—making it increasingly more accurate and more efficient to use while staying ahead of evolving threats regardless of venue type,” Chitkara says.

At the same time, Mulligan explains, this makes the Lincoln Center the industry trendsetter. “Evolv made us so good that we get calls all the time to give them demos of the technology and the processes we’ve wrapped around them,” he sums up. “We do it right here. We love technology and seek to be ahead of everyone else with the ultimate objective to keep all of our guests and community safe.”



Contact us to learn more about how to protect your workforce
and facilities with touchless security screening.

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