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Case study | **SoFi Stadium**  **YouTube Theater**

# **SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater Stay on the Leading Edge of Guest Experience with Evolv Technology**

# Organization Overview

**OPENED:** SoFi Stadium in 2020, YouTube Theater in 2021

**EVENTS:** About 200+ Annually

**LOCATION:** Inglewood, CA

**SOFI STADIUM:** Home to the Los Angeles Rams and Los Angeles Chargers [70,000 Seat Capacity]

**YOUTUBE THEATER:** Performance Venue [6,000 Seat Capacity]

**WEBSITE:** [www.sofistadium.com](http://www.sofistadium.com) | [www.youtubetheater.com](http://www.youtubetheater.com)

## Solution Snapshot

### Goals

- Deliver unparalleled ingress experience for guests and employees
- Eliminate long lines resulting from metal detectors
- Speed up time for guests to enter SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater
- Minimize the number of nuisance security alerts
- Create less invasive secondary security screening checks
- Eliminate the “dwell time” of guests between the ticketing system and security screening

### Solution

#### People

- Helped configure and setup Evolv Express® dual-lane systems for SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater
- Provided insights to the security team on the configuration and deployment of the Express systems
- Trained staff on setup, operation, teardown, storage, and troubleshooting of the Express systems
- Worked hand-in-hand with Evolv Customer Success Manager for ongoing management and optimization of the Express systems

#### Technology

- 27 Single and Dual-Lane Evolv Express® Systems
- Evolv Cortex AI®
- Evolv Insights®
- Evolv Open API

#### Process

- Evolv Engineering Solutions team and Customer Success Manager helped with the initial deployment of 22 Evolv Express Systems
  - 5 additional systems have been deployed since
- Trained in-house and vendor security teams on Flow Control and Threat Resolution roles
- Provided best practices for modifying ConOps documentation to reflect the operation of Express systems
- Deliver ongoing training to the security team through Evolv online training portal, The Evolv Academy
- Evolv Customer Success Manager trained the SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater team on using Evolv Insights analytics

## Outcomes



**Cut** the number of security systems to manage by 85%—from about 170 walkthrough metal detectors to 27 Express systems



**Reduced** security alerts to a much smaller percentage of guests



**Experienced** a significant improvement in ingress satisfaction survey scores



**Reduced** security screening footprint, which was allocated to other park activities



**Enabled** security staff to become more engaged in welcoming guests into the stadium and theater



**Proactively** manage security staff allocation and training using Insights analytics





## A Goal of Unprecedented Experience

SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater are unprecedented in a number of ways. They are situated under the same roof canopy, with the American Airlines Plaza in between them.

SoFi Stadium is the first indoor-outdoor stadium in the world and is home to two NFL teams, the Super Bowl LVI Champion Los Angeles Rams and Los Angeles Chargers. The state-of-the-art stadium reimagines the fan experience and hosts countless events year-round. On top of hosting Super Bowl LVI in 2022 and the College Football Championship Game in 2023, SoFi Stadium will be host to the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the 2028 Olympic Games. In addition to SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater, a retail district, residential units, and outdoor parks, will all be open to the community in the near future.

“When guests come to Hollywood Park, and more specifically SoFi Stadium or YouTube Theater, they expect a smooth experience—whether it is parking, coming through the entrance, or the actual event they came to see,” says Nick Bermensolo, Senior Director of Security at SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park. “Guests set a very high bar when it comes to experience, and they expect us to meet or exceed it.”



Leading-edge technology is at the core of what we’re doing here. We’re at the forefront of digital transformation at Hollywood Park, seeking to deliver unrivaled experiences to guests. This includes ingress at our various entrances.”

– Otto Benedict, SVP, Facility and Campus Operations, SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park

# Great Guest Experience Thwarted by Metal Detectors

SoFi Stadium opened in 2020 but games were played without fans during the NFL season due to the pandemic.

When SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater opened to fans and guests, the ingress experience was not as seamless as the SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater teams wanted. Around 170 walkthrough metal detectors were deployed at the entrances to SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater. “They simply could not handle the volume of thruput that we needed,” explains Bermensolo. “People were frustrated at waiting in the security lines. Depending on the time when they sought to enter the stadium, they spent longer than anticipated in line. Plus, once they reached the metal detectors, they had to take everything out of their pockets and bags.”

The longer waits that queued before the metal detectors were just one of the reasons. Even after emptying their pockets and bags, many guests were flagged for a secondary screening check.

Otto Benedict, the Senior Vice President of Facility and Campus Operations at SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park, explains that this experience ran counter to the organization’s mission. “Leading-edge technology is at the core of what we’re doing here,” he relates. “We’re at the forefront of digital transformation at Hollywood Park, seeking to deliver unrivaled experiences to guests. This includes ingress at our various entrances. This is why we choose mobile app ticketing pedestals, to give fans tap-and-go capabilities when the stadium opened.”

The frictionless experience of fans in ticketing was quickly squashed when they found themselves stuck in lengthy security lines. “The ingress experience between the metal detectors and the ticketing systems was night and day,” Benedict describes. “We knew that we wanted to find something better.”



Working with Evolv has been great—everything from how the Express system works, to educating us on Cortex AI®, to getting our team scheduled for online training, to resolving tech support issues the few times they have arisen.”

– Kami Testa, Director, Guest Experience, SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park





## Selecting Evolv Technology

The SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater team had heard about the Evolv Express® system from other NFL teams who had replaced metal detectors with the Express system.

The evaluation process was conducted carefully. "I spent a lot of time speaking with Evolv customers and dove into how their technology works," Benedict says. "We also looked at some other non-metal-detector alternatives. We really did our homework to ensure that if we selected the Express system and brought it online, it would deliver the results we expected."



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– Nick Bermensolo, Sr. Director,  
Security, SoFi Stadium and  
Hollywood Park

# Seamless Deployment at SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater

Working with Evolv, the SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater team pinpointed an initial configuration consisting of 22 Evolv Express systems—20 for production in SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater and two for backup.

Deployment was scheduled for early August 2022 and a go-live date was set for the same week. One of the configuration decisions SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater made was to flip the ticketing and security screening processes. Before the Express deployment, guests passed through the walkthrough metal detectors and proceeded to ticketing. “As we no longer need to worry about long lines forming in front of security scanning, we were able to make this change, which streamlines the ingress process while improving the guest experience,” reports Kami Testa, the Director of Guest Experience at SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park.

“The entire Evolv team was just tremendous through the whole deployment process—from the initial configuration to determine how many Express systems we needed, to the actual delivery of the systems, to how we implemented and set them up,” Bermensolo says. “We have a multi-building campus that added complexity, and the Evolv team, including senior leaders, was there working hand-in-hand with our team through the entire deployment process. They understand our challenges and the pace at which we work.”

Response times from Evolv support impressed Bermensolo. “When you have 70,000-plus fans at your entrances seeking to get into the stadium for

a game or event, the pressure to resolve a problem is immense,” Bermensolo says. “The response times from the Evolv team have been remarkable so far—and this is unique for security vendors based on our past experiences.”

In addition to working with the SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater team to determine the most appropriate locations for each Express system, the Evolv Solutions Engineering team and Customer Success Manager helped Bermensolo’s team update their ConOps documentation to reflect best practices around Flow Control and Threat Resolution. “Our security team also got hands-on training on setting up the Express system, tearing it down and storing it, and troubleshooting,” Bermensolo notes. “The online training program from Evolv was also awesome. This year, we plan to roll Evolv training into daily training for our staff.”

Testa sums up the experience working with the Evolv team: “Working with Evolv has been great—everything from how the Express system works, to educating us on Cortex AI®, to getting our team scheduled for online training, to resolving tech support issues the few times they have arisen.”



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## Guests “Didn’t Even Know They Went Through Security Screening”

When it came time to go live with the Express systems, the process was seamless.

“The first few events with the Express systems were great,” Bermensolo says. “Guests didn’t need to wait in line and empty their pockets like before going through a walk-through metal detector. Our previous lengthy security queues evaporated with the Express systems. The whole process was great to watch.”

Testa concurs with Bermensolo. “When we first deployed the Express system, it was really interesting to see the expression on their faces,”

she recalls. “They looked surprised, like, ‘Wait! That was all I needed to do? I don’t need to take anything out of my pockets? You’re not going to check me for any other items?’ The Express systems put our guests at ease and really reduced the stress levels they experience when entering the venues.” Testa’s team conducts regular surveys with guests to SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater, and the scores on ingress experience reflect their improved satisfaction.

“

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- Otto Benedict, SVP, Facility and Campus Operations, SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park





## Security Operators Give the Express System High Marks

Fatigue is a huge factor with traditional metal detectors and retaining security staff can be a problem for many organizations due to the tedious nature of their operation.

"This is not an issue with the Evolv technology," Bermensolo notes. "Evolv allows our staff to be more engaged with the fans, to take ownership of everything taking place around them rather than just focusing on a 'table and bowl.' Because they can take account of their surroundings rather than asking every single person to divest their belongings in their pockets and bags, security staff are much more effective."

With AI at its core, the Evolv system constantly gathers data to help reduce the number of nuisance alarms, and consequently, guard fatigue and fan experience. "Evolv is truly investing in the success of its technology and has done an especially good job with its Cortex AI® capabilities," Benedict adds. "The system learns from the information we give it, and it constantly becomes smarter."

Feedback on the Express has been positive from both the in-house security staff as well as those from SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater's security vendor. "Everyone was nervous about the change from the metal detectors to Express initially, Bermensolo comments. "But the online training helped assuage our concerns, and then the on-site deployment and go-live support from Evolv gave us a high level of confidence. It's exciting to see security staff arrive for work and hear them talk about how they are looking forward to their day of interacting with fans."

"The Evolv technology 'gamified' security screening," Benedict adds. "There was a sense of being overwhelmed with the metal detectors. That is no longer the case with Evolv."



## Security Operators Focused on Greeting Fans

The security flow with the Express is seamless and completely changed the focus for security operators.

"Instead of telling everyone to empty their pockets and bags and direct the majority to secondary screening, security operators are focused on greeting guests as they pass through the Express lane," Bermensolo says. "When an alert does occur, they direct them to the Threat Resolution area, and they are back to focus on the next guest coming through the Express lane."

And unlike the walkthrough metal detectors where many guests set off alerts, Bermensolo explains that they have "a very small alert rate" with the Express

systems. "And the secondary screening experience is much better because our security operators know exactly where the potential threat is located, highlighted by a red box on the Express tablet," he says. "The 'guessing game' of traditional metal detectors is eliminated with the Evolv technology. Our security operators love it, our employees love it, and our guests love it."



## Leveraging the Portability of the Express System

One of the aspects of the Evolv technology that Benedict found compelling is its portability.

“The latest releases of the Outdoor Express make it even easier to transport them between locations,” Benedict says. “Currently, we’re moving only one system for each game—at our main entry point. We also have two systems for backup, and the fact that it is so simple to transport it enables us to get security flow moving again very quickly.”

## Evolv's Open API Offers a New World of Possibilities

Integration of the Express with other security systems that SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater has in place is next on Bermensolo’s list of initiatives to implement.

“Evolv’s API makes it easy to integrate other systems like our VMS [video management system] or mass notification systems,” Bermensolo says. “We appreciate Evolv’s leadership with the API, which gives us a much more holistic security and operational approach.”

“Guests and fans who come to SoFi Stadium or the YouTube Theater do so with immense energy. They don’t want to spend time in security and ticketing. They are excited to see a game or concert. With the Express system, there is no interruption of this energy. It just flows and feels electric.”

- Kami Testa, Director, Guest Experience, SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park





## Leveraging Insights® Analytics Out of the Gate

The Evolv Customer Success Manager worked with the SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater team to ensure they were trained on Evolv Insights so that they could begin using the analytics immediately out of the gate.

“Evolv Insights allows us to gauge what we’re seeing at the entrances and to plan ahead for future events,” Bermensolo says. “Insights gives us a lot of different reports and data that we analyze after every event. It tells us how many guests pass through each entrance and the time when they did so, how many alerts occurred at each entrance point, and what types of threats were detected. Insights also empowers our staff to play a larger role, enabling them to plan properly for events based on data from past events.”

Bermensolo’s team uses Insights analytics to plan staffing for each event, where to place the Express systems, and when to notify security staff of specific items that are being detected. And as Express systems are used at employee and VIP entrances in addition to all guest entrances, Bermensolo notes that the correlation of Insights

data from all of them makes his team more effective and efficient in their operation of the Express systems. “Our security screening for everyone who enters each venue is active 24/x7,” he says. “As our staff brings different items to Hollywood Park than our guests, we find the Insights data quite informative. Whether steel-toed boots or laptops, this data enables our security team to be more effective and efficient. Plus, with the artificial intelligence in Evolv Cortex AI®, this threat information results in improved screening.”

“We didn’t have exact entrance counts with the metal detectors,” Benedict adds. “We now have this information for each entrance with Evolv Insights. We also know what types of objects are coming into our buildings. This enables us to train staff on what to look for and plan staff allocation while improving the guest experience.”





## 85% Reduction in the Number of Systems to Manage

Previously, the SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater team relied on about 170 walkthrough metal detectors to screen guests for threats.

The number of systems was reduced by 85% to 27 Evolv Express dual-lane systems. “Around 22 are used at entrances to SoFi Stadium, and another four are used at the YouTube Theater,” says Bermensolo. Two additional units are kept as a back-up if needed. This dramatic reduction in systems to manage allowed the SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater team to reallocate security staff from entrances to other areas of SoFi Stadium and the YouTube Theater. “This allowed us to bolster

our security posture in those other areas while also improving guest experiences,” Benedict says.

Since the deployment of the Express systems in August 2022, the Hollywood Park team indicates they have hosted 66 different events at SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater. “We’ve screened over two million guests for these events,” Benedict notes. “Each year, we anticipate screening more than five million guests with the Express systems.”



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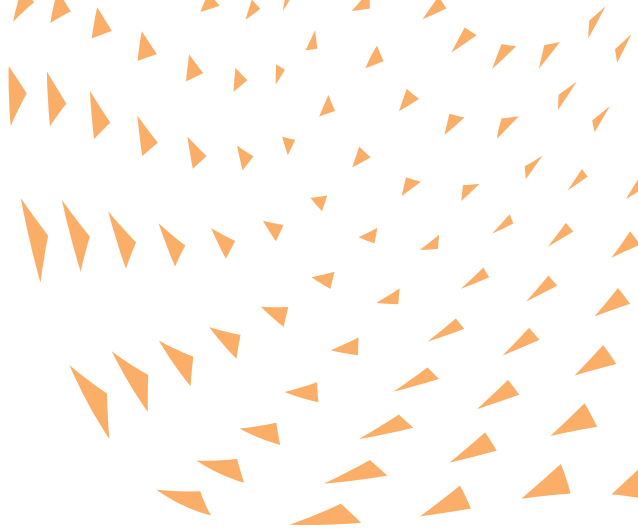
## “Game Changer” for Many Reasons

“Evolv has been a ‘game changer’ for us,” Testa comments.

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“Typically, guests must go through a lot of work to get to Hollywood Park and we want to provide them with a seamless, frictionless ingress experience. The same is true for our employees. LA traffic can be terrible and getting to work can be stressful and tiring for our employees. It’s been great to see a pleasant smile on their faces when they pass through the Express screening lane.”

She continues: “Guests and fans who come to SoFi Stadium or the YouTube Theater do so with immense energy. They don’t want to spend time in security and ticketing. They are excited to see a game or event. With the Express system, there is no interruption of this energy. It just flows and feels electric.”



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

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