

How Paramount Pictures Reopened its Gates and Got the Cameras Rolling

Overview

The Need

A way to safely resume operations amid the COVID-19 pandemic and report cases as they arise.

The Solution

A platform that facilitates case tracking and management without disrupting daily work.

The Benefit

An efficient and intuitive system that allowed Paramount to return to normal processes.

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Background

COVID-19 has added to the daily operations of many organizations. Organizations not only have to continue to keep the lights on, but protect their workplace and employees from infection.

Fermin Castillo, Global Threat Manager for Paramount Pictures, is the one heading this adjustment for his organization. Safety has always been at the forefront of his role, but now his team's goal is to get people back to work, make sure the cameras keep rolling, and keep COVID-19 at bay.

A Look Into the Solution

Paramount Pictures, a ViacomCBS company, is the fifth oldest film company in the world. With over 1,000 production sites in 32 countries, Fermin and his team work 24/7 to maintain their global security operations.

When the pandemic began, Fermin had to get employees back to work at a few locations within the United States and many locations across the world. With different production sites having different needs and expectations depending on their country or region, forming the process has been a constant build-out.

One of the first steps Fermin took was building a Veoci dashboard that everyone under the Paramount Pictures and Viacom umbrella had access to. He described it as a one-stop-shop for COVID-19 information; the number of cases being tracked, CDC guidelines, and any announcements are all displayed on this dashboard.

New Day-to-Day Operations

What was Fermin's biggest obstacle when it came to COVID-19? Getting a back-to-work process that would be easy to use and accessible to anyone that might want to be on a site anywhere in the world.

Before every individual (vendor, staff, cast member, etc.,) steps onto a production site they must fill out a health screening form. This is a public facing form; anyone with the link to the form can complete an entry, whether or not they're an employee or associate of Paramount Pictures.

The form asks three simple yes-or-no questions, ensuring that medical or personal information is not collected. When an individual submits their form entry, they receive an email with a confirmation number and language that indicates whether they are allowed on site or are to stay home. The entry is then documented in the system.

Fermin explained that most of their documents default to English. Paramount Pictures, however, has an international scope of operations, and works with many people who are not comfortable with English. To accommodate this fact, the first question on the screening form asks about the individual's preferred language. After the individual makes a selection, the form will reload and display in their preferred language. The confirmation email is sent in the individual's favored language as well.

Case Management

Initially, the Global Operations Center was notified of positive diagnoses and when cases were updated accordingly. Now, Paramount's individual business partners around the world have access to the solutions and can update their region's information continuously; the platform helps facilitate the onboarding process at different production sites.

With over 1,000 locations documented in Veoci, individuals filling out the health screening form identify the exact site they are planning to visit, which facilitates detailed and accurate case tracking. The system also allows for the public-facing form to remember users; a profile is created when an individual submits the form for the first time, streamlining all future entries.

There is also a private form, or non-public facing health screening form, in place for Paramount Pictures. This version is a part of a closed system that limits building entry to predetermined personnel. When this form is accessed, employees must type in their name. If their name does not populate, they do not have permission to enter the building, and are not able to move forward with completing the form.

In addition to the closed system form, employees are organized into different zones within buildings, an effort to contain the possible spread of the virus. Each individual is assigned an area to enter and exit the building, and are expected to stay within their zone when on the premises. This precaution is executed by security guards at each entrance who check every employee's confirmation email which details their confirmation number, whether they are cleared to enter the site, and their designated zone.

A risk calculator is also being utilized on sets and production sites to monitor and make informed decisions. Before the pandemic, the office's daily operations utilized an existing risk assessment. Fermin and the rest of the global security team recognized that they needed to change this calculation; physical and cyber security were no longer the only influential factors.

A new COVID-19 specific risk assessment was born from this idea. This new form feeds into the original physical security calculator, and is used to determine where it is "safe" to go. The COVID-19 risk assessment was created with questions that were weighted by the team. These weights then influenced the calculation, depending upon how the question was answered. The amount of risk found after completion is displayed at the bottom of the screen and used to move forward.

Looking Forward

As time moves on and the pandemic continues, Fermin's goal remains the same: get people back to work. With the help of Veoci's platform, Paramount Pictures will continue to create and film, producing more content for the world to enjoy; a gift to many that will help them get through this very difficult time.