



INDUSTRY

Corporate housing &
Business travel

CORPORATE CLIENTS

Parallels, Healthlinx, Zillow,
Rhapsody, Amazon,
Microsoft, Glympse

LOCATIONS

Washington, California

EXPANSION PLANS

Boston, MA
Los Angeles & Oakland, CA
Portland, OR

CASE STUDY

How Automated Screening Unlocks A Better Renter Experience

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CHALLENGE

To improve operations and accuracy by simplifying and automating renter screening without asking for too many sensitive details.

SOLUTION

Integrate SafeDecision API with a proprietary fraud-detection system.

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Screening isn't a choice for us – it's required by the partners we work with to cultivate a safe environment for their communities. Our previous process was slow and consumed a lot of time. Having the SafeDecision API to guarantee that 100% of renters are screened is an absolute must.

Michael Monu, Barsala Founder & CEO

Demand for more than a ho-hum hotel room is high in rapidly growing cities with high population densities.

And so are visitors' standards, especially among business travelers who need more than a place to sleep. And that's the opportunity that drove entrepreneur Michael Monu to start Barsala, which provides luxury suites and corporate housing on the West Coast.

“We focus on high walkscore areas in urban cities and combine the best of what you'd get in a hotel with a home in a way that delivers an excellent experience every time.

“Our repeat guests who stay month after month enjoy being able to check in quickly, sit down on a sectional to wind-down after a busy day. In a hotel they might have had to wait in line to check in to a tiny studio with a bed. In that sense, we believe we offer a fundamentally superior product for a set price point.”

Renters Accept Screening, But Resist SSN Requests

To meet the requirements of the communities that contain its units (condo boards, HOAs, or building management), Barsala screens 100% of its renters.

Renters typically find Barsala offerings through the company's relationships with corporate HR departments and with tech companies like Amazon, Rhapsody, and Zillow. Others, mostly business travelers, find them through sites like Expedia, Egencia, and Booking.com.

Almost all understand the need for screening and rarely push back – except when extremely personal details like a Social Security number are required.

“Asking for Social Security numbers is extremely invasive,” Monu said. “We’ve found that people staying for fewer than six months are highly reluctant to share that information.”

Since many Barsala renters – including business consultants on Monday-to-Thursday cycles and traveling nurses on 90-day assignments – stay for less than six months, most balk at the SSN request.

And that made Barsala's preexisting background check approach hard to scale. Without SSN, the third-party screening vendor Barsala used at the time couldn't process the background checks. Instead, a Barsala team member devoted 15 to 30 mins per renters to manually search public records by birthdate.

Flexible Inputs Allow Automation, Improve Results

The need for a screening API with flexible inputs yet high accuracy led Barsala to Inflection's SafeDecision API.

Because the SSN created such a barrier for Barsala renters, the Inflection team looked for other ways to return accurate results. After all, not all court records include SSN – in fact, most don't.

The team pioneered a way to combine the unique identifiers that Barsala already collects at signup (such as legal name and birthday), with machine-learning algorithms and other big-data techniques to accurately match records to the right person. The result: SafeDecision has an impressively low dispute rate of less than .005%.

For Barsala, the solution scans hundreds of millions of court records to identify people with risk indicators. Whereas the manual process took 10 to 15 minutes on average per renter, the automated solution returns results in real time. Removing the friction of asking for sensitive information improved renters' signup experience.

Even better, SafeDecision integrates with Barsala's custom fraud-detection system that uses APIs to check that an identity exists on Facebook and to verify the phone number provided. That gives Barsala a leg up over competitors who don't check as carefully, Monu believes.

When It Comes To Implementation, Team Matters

Just having the system in place, though, isn't enough. It has to work. Integrating the fraud-detection and background screening API together required Barsala and Inflection's teams to work closely together.

“We had a bug early on where something failed and the system kept searching over and over,” Monu recalled. “The Inflection team responded quickly to solve the problem. They were very responsive, helpful and knowledgeable.”

And the supportive onboarding process with SafeDecision gave Barsala the confidence to move forward.

“Rapid collaboration with the Inflection team helped us launch faster and be more confident in the solution,” Monu said. “The process hasn't failed a single time. It's been fantastic.”



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Automated Screening Serves Renters And Communities

Monu says he can't underestimate the importance of background checks to the communities that house his properties and, therefore, to his own business. "Our homes are part of large communities full of families and kids. We have to make sure that the people we invite to these communities don't have red flags."

The automated SafeDecision solution offers a smoother experience for renters and more consistent results. "Before we sent access codes to the apartment or condo complex, we spent a lot of time looking at screening results and making a decision. Then we had to have someone manually send the codes," he explained. "Now everything happens automatically."

With the new system, Barsala simply defined a set of criteria. When a renter passes the screening process, the system sends the necessary access codes automatically.

If an applicant gets flagged, the SafeDecision solution kicks off an automated "adverse action" process to ensure fair

treatment, transparency, and compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

Designed with the help of Inflection's in-house compliance team, the process shares the results of the background check with applicants who were turned away so they can review the results for inaccuracies in court records and dispute the information if they find mistakes.

Unlocking Growth

The operational efficiency achieved and the costs saved on staff hours certainly matter to Barsala. But the real benefits of automating this process go far beyond the dollars.

"If you think about it, it's not just the hours you're saving," Monu said. "The whole guest experience used to stop and wait for this manual process to happen. That's okay when you have a small number of guests. But when you're trying to scale, you want automation. It just provides a smoother experience and more consistent results all around. It really helps our team focus on our partners and our guest experience."

The SafeDecision solution can help you increase trust so you can grow your business.

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Inflection delivers powerful, fair, and reliable screening products to empower companies to make better and faster people decisions about who they should hire, who they should trust, and to whom they should grant access. With more than a decade of experience sourcing, filtering, and analyzing billions of public records, the Company provides employment screening products and services for more than 75,000 companies through its flagship brand GoodHire, and helps peer-to-peer platforms and businesses make informed decisions through its Trust and Safety APIs.

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