

NEW HIRE SOFTWARE ENGINEER ONBOARDING.

COMPANY: e-Commerce

Objectives:

- Cut time to code for new hire engineers from four weeks to one day.
- Reduce new hire software engineer attrition to 5% in the first three months of employment. (Current attrition rate is 34% within the first three months of employment.)

Approach:

- Gamify the existing onboarding so that new hire engineers will have to use coding skills to “unlock” their onboarding. This will break up the monotony of listening passively to videos, or completing “clicky-click, next-next” onboarding courses.

Tone:

- Fun. A little satirical, a little tongue-in-cheek. This fits our new hire software engineer avatar.

Business Case:

- THIS COMPANY has lost a significant number of new hires in the first 90 days. Exit interviews indicate that the #1 reason for quitting so soon after hire was the “frustration, delays and boredom” in getting to do actual coding work. The cost of replacing these software engineers has cost THIS COMPANY \$1.70 million in the past year alone.
- Our current system has new hires focus 100% on their onboarding activities—and not immersing themselves in coding for the company. Current onboarding is also painfully tedious—often requiring new hires to passively watch dozens of videos, and complete rote elearning courses. While much of the onboarding is dictated by regulatory compliance, this onboarding program aims to gamify the onboarding experience, using coding. This innovative approach to onboarding aims to solve the high software engineer attrition rates.

OUTLINE AND GAME PLAY FOR *GET TO CODE*

Title: Get to Code

Genre: VR Narrative Game Adventure/Puzzle

Experience: Users play as BAILEY, the new hire software engineer. However, prior to entering game play, users enter their employee ID, so that their results can be processed in the LMS.

Scene 1: Entering the Company

FADE UP:

INT: Lobby

- Visual: BAILEY walks into a pristine, stark lobby with marble floors and walls. In the center is a large front desk.
- BAILEY approaches the front desk where a receptionist greets him.

RECEPTIONIST:

Welcome to [THIS COMPANY], you must be our new software engineer BAILEY. Go through those doors for your HR onboarding session to get your employee ID.

- BAILEY heads for a set of ominous looking double doors.

BAILEY [To himself]:

I can't wait to start writing some amazing code here! This is going to be epic.

- Visual: BAILEY opens the doors and enters a sterile corporate-looking room with bright fluorescent lights. In the center is a simple chair.
- As BAILEY sits in the chair, the room starts spinning around him. The lights glow brighter until everything fades to white.

BAILEY [Confused and a little frightened]:

Whoa, what's happening...where am I?

FADE DOWN

Scene 2: NewHire World Introduction

FADE UP

VISUALS:

- Bailey finds himself in a surreal corporate environment. An endless maze of identical grey cubicles stretch out as far as his eye can see. The fabric walls are dotted with motivational posters showing cat photos with nonsensical captions.
- Faceless employees stare expressionless at dull beige computers, where endless compliance videos stream.
- A never-ending barrage of new employee badges, handbooks, forms, and orientation materials pop out of printers and piles up endlessly on each desk.
- Every surface is covered in sticky notes, except the walls, which show slides on an endless loop: “Welcome”, “Fill out your W-4”, “Don’t forget to enroll in benefits!” “Learn the culture.” “Complete the 15,000 pages of new hire paperwork on your desk.” “Attend 300 hours of onboarding videos before getting your first assignment.”
- The labyrinth of cubicles seems to go on forever in each direction. Somewhere, faint motivational music plays on repeat.

VOICE: [A loud voice booms over the intercom]:

Welcome newcomer to the world of NewHire! To exit this realm and continue your journey, you must first complete the challenges of onboarding.

BAILEY [Looking up and around, trying to find the source of the voice]:

What is this place? I don't want to be trapped here; I just want to get to writing code!

VOICE:

Silence! You cannot leave until you have completed onboarding training. Your first task is to find your HR guide, Maggie. Only she can help you escape NewHire.

BAILY:

How do I find her? Where is she?

VOICE:

I said SILENCE! Be on your way.

[SFX: Loud, deafening screech.
Then, the intercom goes silent.]

Quest #1: Find HR guide Maggie to escape NewHire

BAILEY looks around as he ponders his next move.

BAILEY walks up to EMPLOYEE #1, staring Zombie-like at the compliance video on his computer.

BAILEY:

Excuse me. Do you know where I can find Maggie?"

EMPLOYEE #1 [Points silently and robotically toward a door at the end of the corridor. He doesn't look up from his computer screen.]

BAILEY:

Not much of a talker, are you?

[PAUSES, AS EMPLOYEE #1 CONTINUES STARTING EXPRESSIONLESS AT HIS COMPUTER SCREEN.]

Okay, thanks, then.

BAILEY starts walking down the very long corridor toward the door—ducking under waves of sticky notes cascading from the ceiling. At the end of the corridor is a door marked “HR.” He tries to open it, but it is locked. A sign to the right reads “API Access.”

BAILEY looks around to see if there might be an alternate entrance—or someone who could give him the API key. Just then a large pink STAPLE MONSTER flies in from above, knocking BAILEY to the ground. STAPLE MONSTER staples a piece of paper to the door, then flies off, out of sight.

PUZZLE #1:

BAILEY stands, a bit dazed. He looks at the paper on the door, and sees a poem. The poem reads:

Behind this door lies the key,
To access HR freely,
But it won't yield and let you through,
Unless the credentials are true.
The first key strand comes from mother's place,
The next is runner up in the annual race,
The third is the date display format in this space,
The fourth is the short fruit name that's a staple base.
Bring all together with the right syntax,
Or your API call will never transact."

A BRIGHT PINK HINT button flashes to the right of the door. If the user presses it s/he receives a hint.

HINT: Use the text window at the bottom of your screen to write a simple Python script that parses the poem text, extracts relevant strings based on clue context, and concatenates them together with the proper syntax of "Key1-Key2-Key3-Key4."

[NOTE to SMEs: This Python string is similar to string methods used in actual coding on the job. Hence, it is getting new hires coding within the first few minutes of onboarding.]

CODING ACTIVITY #1: The user, as BAILEY, writes the code.

The script pulls out "ANN" for mother's place (Ann Arbor), "TWO" for second place, "MDY" for the date format, and "FIG" for fig, the fruit.

- It assembles "ANN-TWO-MDY-FIG" and tries it as the API key.
- The API call with the decrypted key is successful, allowing BAILEY access through the door to the next puzzle.

FADE DOWN

FADE UP

Scene 2: Inside HR: The Search for Maggie

ONBOARDING ACTIVITY #1: Required DVI test-out or take the course.

BAILEY walks through the door into HR Land. He looks around and sees holographic screens are against every wall. He notices one off to the right that has an employee directory and a cubicle map.

BAILEY [To himself]
Ahhh...I'll bet I can find Maggie's cubicle here.

BAILEY walks up to the holographic screen. As he stares into the screen, searching for anything that might lead him to Maggie, the screen detects his gaze and activates a biometric face scanner. Nanobots in the screen quickly reconfigure themselves into a circular shape that extends out of the screen. A series of light and sound waves scan BAILEY'S face from different angles and distances.

BAILEY [Startled, takes a step back]:

What the...

When BAILEY looks back at the screen, he his personalized data displayed:

Name: **Bailey Duncan**

- Age: **27**
- Gender: **Male**
- Ethnicity: **Caucasian**
- Occupation: **Software Engineer**
- Department: **THIS COMPANY Development Team**
- Supervisor: **Dr. Alex Chen**
- Hire Date: **[Insert current date]**
- Salary: **\$120,000 per year**
- Performance Rating: **4.2 out of 5 stars**
- Feedback: **You are a talented and creative engineer who has shown great potential in the field of cybernetics and artificial intelligence. At your previous company you have impressed your supervisor and colleagues with your innovative ideas and solutions for the CyberEye project. You have also demonstrated excellent teamwork, although you seem to like to go rogue on occasion. Your communication skills are a little on the snarky/sarcastic side, so we'll be watching for that here. Overall, you show high potential to become a valuable asset to THIS COMPANY and its vision.**
- **First Coding Assignment: [NOTE TO DEVELOPERS: THIS WILL CHANGE, AND THE FIRST TASK FOR ONBOARDING CODING WILL BE TAKEN FROM THE LIST OF CURRENT MINOR BUGS THAT MUST BE FIXED.]**
- **Remaining Onboarding Tasks:**
 - Benefits Signup
 - Email setup
 - Software setup
 - Course: Policies, procedures, and organizational best practices orientation training.
 - Video: Company culture, mission, vision.
 - Handbook: Role expectations
 - Meeting: Team Introductions

BAILEY [As he backs away from the hologram]:

No...no....no. This is all too much. I just want to get to coding.

As he backs up, BAILEY bumps into the BENEFITS WARLOCK, who is standing behind him.

BAILEY [Screams in fear and turns around]:

AHHHH!!!

BENEFITS WARLOCK:

Going somewhere?!

BAILEY TURNS and tries to run down another hallway. But the BENEFITS WARLOCK can move instantly, and he blocks BAILEY'S path.

BAILEY:

Who...er, WHAT..are you?!

BENEFITS WARLOCK:

I'm the Benefits Warlock. NO ONE gets past me! You shall not pass without enrolling in your corporate benefits!

The BENEFITS WARLOCK begins assaulting Bailey with a barrage of paperwork, hurling forms and packets at impossible speeds. BAILEY takes cover behind a cubicle wall, frantically thinking of ideas. He notices a laptop on a nearby desk and makes his way to it and opens the laptop.

The laptop screen flickers to life, showing a standard corporate desktop background.

A BRIEF TEXT MESSAGE FLASHES ON THE SCREEN:

"Automation is the key. Reduce repetitive tasks to zero."

BAILEY [TO HIMSELF]:

Of course! If I can eliminate the tedious manual enrollment process, it should short-circuit the Warlock's powers since he draws strength from those boring HR tasks!

BAILEY cracks open the code editor, where he sees a text file named "**Enrollment_Hint.txt**" He opens the code editor, which populates clues.

TEXT ON SCREEN: WRITE A FORMS AUTOMATION CODE USING THESE CLUES:

Forms Automation Clues:

- *Import enrollment modules*
- *Create applicant object with personal data*
 - *Loop through each form*
 - *Identify form fields*
- *Populate fields with applicant data*
 - *Attach digital signature*
 - *Submit form*
 - *Confirmation message*
 - *Iterate to next form*

A TEXT editor box appears, where BAILEY can write the code.

A WIZARD ASSISTANCE button appears which, if clicked, reveals more hints:

WIZARD ASSISTANCE TEXT:

[NOTE TO DEVELOPERS: The clues provide pseudocode guidance without giving away the full solution.]

Here are the steps you need to take to write the automation code:

1. Import the benefits enrollment modules/packages
2. Create an applicant object with Bailey's name, contact info, etc.
3. Loop through each digital enrollment form
4. Use a parser to identify the blank fields on each form
5. Populate those fields by referencing the applicant object's properties
6. Digitally sign each completed form
7. Submit the signed form
8. Confirm success and continue to the next form

BAILEY begins rapidly filling out digital versions of all the required paperwork—thanks to the automation script, which populates Bailey's info into the sea of forms, consent agreements, questionnaires and more.

This causes the WARLOCK's paperwork attacks to suddenly halt, the incomplete documents whisked away.

WARLOCK [CRIES IN CONFUSION]:

What is this trickery?!

BAILEY seizes the opportunity. He runs up and jumps on the Warlock's back, sticking a USB drive into the villain's chest. It contains a virus script that infects the WARLOCK.

WARLOCK shudder and spasms.

WARLOCK [SHOUTING]

Illegal operation!

WARLOCK crashes to the ground disabled.

BAILEY returns to the benefits portal. A final digital form appears, which Bailey signs and submits. A text message appears on the screen.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

You have completed the required new hire benefits paperwork. Now the real journey begins.

BAILEY leans back in the chair, breathing a sigh of relief.

Suddenly, a glowing portal torn in the fabric of reality appears before him. Beyond the portal swirls a kaleidoscope of colors and shapes, suggesting a strange new world.

BAILEY tentatively approaches the shimmering portal. He sticks his hand through it.

BAILEY:

Whoa. That's quite the electric tingle I feel on my arm. This has to be the portal to Maggie.

BAILEY steps fully through the portal. It snaps shut instantly behind him as he becomes enveloped in the prismatic chaos.

VISUAL: Kaleidoscope and prisms dancing around as Bailey enters the portal.

THIS CONCLUDES THE SCRIPT SAMPLE FOR 'GET TO CODE.'

The narrative game continued with the following elements:

Early Puzzles:

- Bailey continues to encounter villains in his quest to find Maggie. These include Bailey SOULBLIGHTER (A vigilante HR supervisor determined to force Bailey through every single compliance video, one grueling hour at a time), HANDBOOK HARPY (A winged creature with the company policies and procedures handbook for a head and who screeches arcane rules and protocols at Bailey), HR PROPHET (A mysterious figure speaking in cryptic corporate jargon who compels compliance through vague threats and confuse Bailey with meaningless buzzwords. Bailey must master the buzzwords to proceed.)

Midpoint Challenge:

- BAILEY finds MAGGIE but she's been corrupted by NewHire and goes on the attack! She is determined to force BAILEY through every single compliance video, one grueling hour at a time.)
- BAILEY defeats her by crafting a computer terminal out of the items he's collected and coding a simple AI to reboot Maggie.
- Freed from her corruption, Maggie agrees to help Bailey escape NewHire.
- With MAGGIE'S insider knowledge, BAILEY navigates the inner workings of NewHire. MAGGIE is able to reschedule BAILEY'S mandatory compliance courses and spread them out over 90 days—rather than having to take them all at once in his first week.

Final Puzzles:

- With MAGGIE's help, BAILEY dodges firewalls, overrides algorithms, and defeats PASSWORD PROTECTOR to access his team files.
- For the final challenge, Bailey must defeat the evil IT MAVEN who guards the portal back to reality.

Climax:

- Bailey and Maggie make it to the portal but the IT MAVEN blocks their path. The IT maven is a series of sophomore IT courses teaching new hires how to avoid email threats and hacks. BAILEY, being a senior coder, finds this annoying and beneath him.
- In an epic coding duel, Bailey writes code to exploit the IT maven's weaknesses while also defending against his attacks.
- Bailey defeats the MAVEN, unlocks the portal and escapes with Maggie back to reality.

Conclusion:

- BAILEY Bailey finally arrives in the software engineering department and can start coding for real.

FINAL SAMPLE PREVIEW NOTE: This initial game was so well received that the company made it a series. The next installment was a narrative game where BAILEY faced the next epic challenge for employees: annual reviews.