



NCSOFT Uses Games to Power Up Onboarding

NCSOFT

Best New Hire Onboarding Program

August 2018



Company Background



Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	South Korea
Year Founded	1997
Revenue	Approximately \$150 million
Employees	750 (NCSOFT West)
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	International
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	NCSOFT Corp. engages in the development and publishing of online and mobile games. It operates through the following business areas: massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG), casual games and web and board games.
Industry	Entertainment, technology
Stock Symbol	Publicly traded on Korean Stock Exchange: NCSCF
Website	http://us.ncsoft.com/en/



Budget and Timeframe

Overall budget	Approximately \$65,000
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	6
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	13
Number of contractors involved with implementation	2
Timeframe to implement	4 months
Start date of the program	Sep 6, 2017

Business Conditions and Business Needs

Based on the results of NCSOFT’s 2017 employee engagement survey, the company realized improvements were needed for onboarding. The HR team identified two core issues: engaging new hires in the culture, as well as delivering a more efficient onboarding process. The company also wanted to move away from doing everything through email and printed paper to create a better way to track when or how things were completed. The IT department, in particular, received very low satisfaction scores because equipment was not set up prior to day one.

To solve these challenges, NCSOFT decided to create a strategic onboarding program by leveraging their “game” brand and implementing SilkRoad Onboarding.

Overview

The NCSOFT goal was to create a best-in-class strategic onboarding program that would engage new hires immediately upon acceptance of an offer. By using characters from the company’s games, videos and images, the company created a branded onboarding site

that introduces new hires to the culture and gets them excited about joining NCSOFT. The new onboarding program also equipped new hires with the knowledge and socialization to be successful on day one, including personalization and early collaboration with managers. Processes also run more smoothly, including ratings going up for IT satisfaction. Manager engagement is also a critical component of the NCSOFT onboarding process through a dynamic feedback loop. With the 30-/60-/90-day check-ins with new hires built into the new hire journey, managers can identify areas of improvement, two-way dialogue and cultural fit needs for new hires. It also establishes management tenets related to new hires, including day one institutional knowledge on how they are expected to lead, interact and develop new hires based on their experience with the process. Both new hires and managers receive the right content at the right time.

Overall, the new program delivers a best-in-class experience for new hires and their managers that strengthens the employment brand, accelerates new hire performance and maximizes retention.

Design and Delivery

NCSOFT's strategic onboarding program centers around an onboarding portal which creates a unique employee experience for new hires. The portal was designed with the characters from the company's games, not only from the NCSOFT West games, but with content from their headquarters in Korea. It's a truly global experience where the new hire immediately gets connected to the company culture through a video message from the CEO. It appeals to the "gamer" in everyone. In addition, NCSOFT created an onboarding mascot named, Wuju, which is a 3D animated robot that welcomes new hires to the portal and directs them to their "quests." All of the content includes lingo specific to its gaming culture. For example, the portal displays the payroll section as "Loot," benefits as "Cache of Wealth" and FAQs as "Query of the Known." The brand is also extended to all of the new hire swag through a welcome kit on day one.

The pre-boarding process begins by introducing the new hire to the onboarding program, NC Launch, which is an extension of the global onboarding program in Korea called Conquer the Space. The first "Quest" or task that goes out is mailing out a welcome card



and the “NC Launch” logo pin to the new hire’s home. This NC Launch pin symbolizes the beginning of their journey with NCSOFT and welcomes them to the company.

The new hire is then given a link to a video message given by the CEO before entering the NC Launch onboarding portal. Once in the portal, “Wuju,” the onboarding mascot in 3D animation, welcomes the employee to the first quest in the new hire journey. The new hire then navigates the NC Launch portal to pages such as “Loot” to discover payroll information or “Our Guild” to find out more about the headquarters in Korea. All pages are named using lingo that fits the gaming culture.

The first quest given to a new hire is an “All About U” form. This unique questionnaire asks questions like, “What is your super power?” and “Would you survive the zombie apocalypse?” It’s a fun way to get to know new hires and answers are shared with their teams during their first week at NCSOFT.

Throughout a 90-day period, new hires are given specific tasks that bring them back to the portal for quests such as benefit enrollment, 30-/60-/90-day check-ins with managers and a new-hire onboarding survey to provide feedback on their experience. It also creates a dynamic feedback loop so managers can identify areas of improvement, two-way dialogue and cultural fit for new hires. It also sets the stage for manager expectations with new hires, including how they are expected to lead, interact and develop new hires.

The company also offers a unique offboarding portal, which is a separate site and branded similarly to the onboarding portal. However, the content is updated with pages such as “Ready to Depart” and “Cache of Wealth,” which talk about COBRA benefits, what happens to their 401k and more. The mascot, “Wuju,” continues to make an appearance to thank the exiting employee from NCSOFT. The offboarding portal may appear to complete the employee’s entire lifecycle at NCSOFT, but it really offers the organization a transition to shift departing employees into NCSOFT ambassadors, referrals and boomerang opportunities.

Engagement

Every 60 days, the HR team submits a task for new hires to complete an onboarding experience survey. That feedback and feedback from internal clients make sure the onboarding strategy continues to be the best-in-class onboarding program. The company also has an Onboarding 2.0 initiative to continually make updates to the portal and workflow to evolve with employee and business needs.

The process also includes 30/60/90-day check-in/goal setting quests for employees and managers to help give clear expectations and guidelines. A SMART goals template is used by new hires with their managers and is uploaded to the portal during check-ins. In addition, the company posts content on pages to bring awareness to various programs depending on their location such as joining a “Culture Club” at their location.

The company has leveraged a powerful combination of teamwork throughout the organization and automated through SilkRoad Onboarding to meet its goals.

Measurable Benefits

The company’s new hire survey results originally showed that 43% of new hires disagreed or strongly disagreed that their computer and systems were properly prepared and ready on their first day. Today, 0% of recent new hires disagreed or strongly disagreed. On average, it was taking new hires up to 3 weeks to get the critical software/hardware they needed to complete their jobs and it’s now all set on day one. Through the automation with SilkRoad, there is a clear line of communication between tasks for the manager and the IT department and tracking these tasks means nothing falls through the cracks.

In addition, the company’s first employee engagement survey in 2016 indicated the need for a more engaging employee experience and a more efficient onboarding process. Since launching the new onboarding program, employees recognized that the company listened to their feedback and delivered on a promise to improve engagement through the new hire experience. The company created good will by creating all employees in the launch by setting up each employee’s desk with a new hire welcome kit and revealing the



onboarding portal by giving presentations at all locations. All employees were able to see, firsthand, what future new hires will experience.

The company has received positive feedback from new hires and employees, including:

- “The NC Launch Onboarding Portal is useful and informative. The welcoming gift, the greeting card I received, the 1 to 1 meeting with my supervisor after 30 days etc. just goes to show that NCSOFT cares for its employees and goes to great lengths to keep its employees happy.”
- “After 20 years in the workforce, I’ve never experienced anything like it and I’ve shown it to my spouse and children. It’s a real differentiator and makes me, as a new employee, feel good about my choice to join the company.”
- “Not only does this program sound like it will be helpful to new hires and managers alike, it is also really great to see feedback transformed into action! Kudos!”

Finally, the company has experienced process improvement. Employees went from waiting weeks after they started to get set up to everything being prepared and ready to go at their workstation on day 1. Promptness increased by allowing managers to complete a customized eform 2 weeks prior to the new hires’ start date for ordering of equipment and set up of hardware/software. The new onboarding workflow has also drastically decreased the amount of administrative time HR spends completing paper I-9 forms, scanning and entering into e-Verify manually.

Overall

NCSOFT learned these key lessons:

- It’s critical to involve all stakeholders in the company and provide insight to the value onboarding will provide and how it will affect them. Providing communication along the way will engage them and inspire them to get excited about onboarding.
- It’s important to assess current process before putting together the vision for a new process, including what’s working or not working and define who is involved.

- Think about the audience and what their experience will be. Ask—what would you want to see as a new hire?
- Allow enough implementation time to create the best outcome possible. Have fun and be creative.

Future plans include leveraging the SilkRoad platform to incorporate more of the employee's journey through their career at NCSOFT, such as a buddy system, training and leaves of absence. The company also have plans to implement more gamification by adding NC Coin for each quest an employee completes in onboarding to win swag.

Figure 1: NC Launch Portal

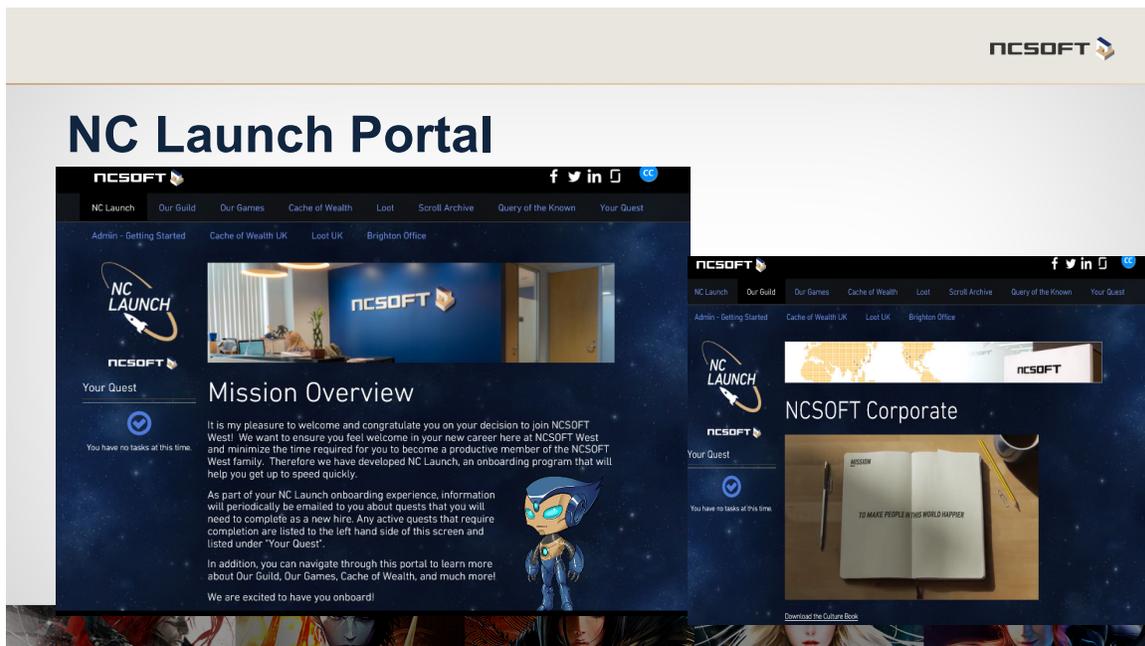
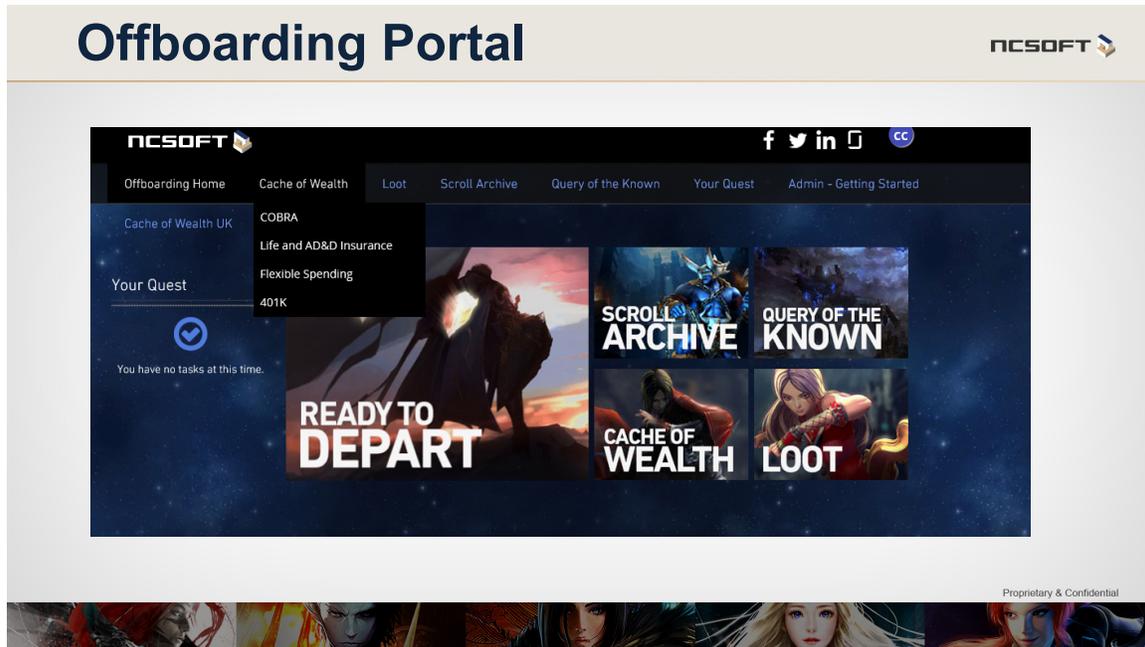




Figure 2: Offboarding Portal



Source: NCSoft

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