

Case Study

# Frontier ignites new-player engagement with Adestra





**INDUSTRY**  
**Video Gaming**

**COMPANY**  
**Frontier Developments**  
Cambridge, England, UK  
[frontier.co.uk](http://frontier.co.uk)

Frontier Developments is a UK-based video game developer that creates high quality, ground-breaking games across a diverse range of genres and platforms.



**Frontier Developments** used Upland Adestra to introduce new players to the world of their flagship game, Elite Dangerous. The multi-player simulation could be daunting to new users, and not all of them stuck around to learn the intricacies of the game. So, Frontier developed a series of onboarding emails to help them acclimate, leading to increased player retention and a doubling in play time.





# How do you acclimate newcomers so they become loyal users?

## Frontier needed to make their game seem less daunting

Elite Dangerous, a simulation without a linear narrative, offers incredible depth and freedom of choice. But to get the full experience, players had to understand a number of complex systems that work in tandem. New and inexperienced players could find themselves overwhelmed from the outset, causing them to quickly lose interest. Frontier needed to promote long-term game loyalty by nurturing new players.

## They used Adestra to create a series of tailored emails

Frontier implemented an automated onboarding journey to help new players integrate into the complex, multi-player world of Elite Dangerous. They created user personas and tailored content for each one, helping to significantly increase the number of gameplay sessions and total game time for new players during the first thirty days, which can make or break a player's loyalty to the game.





# The onboarding campaign got new users up and running

## Creating user personas helped to tailor messages

By creating an automated onboarding journey, the Frontier team helped guide new players and increased their game time.

By analyzing player data, Frontier identified three segments or 'personas' amongst new players: those who were struggling to get going and had only played a few hours in their first week; those who were still finding their feet; and players who had hit the ground running, having invested many hours into the game already.

Frontier developed tailored content for each of the three personas, pitched at the right level depending on how long they had played. This content was designed to help them progress and encourage them to experiment with more gameplay choices. For example, people who have played for less than two hours will get tips on how to fly their ship, while adept pilots receive information on improving their trading, charting systems for exploration and arming for combat.

To test the effectiveness of this strategy, Frontier used the Split Path functionality within Adestra's Automation Program Builder to separate a control group who received a generic (non-tailored) journey.

## Play time doubled thanks to the onboarding journey

Both the dynamic (segmented) journey and control journey achieved strong open rates (as high as 34%). Comparing click engagement, the dynamic journey achieved a 182% higher click-through rate compared to the control journey. Furthermore, average play time hours for the dynamic journey were over double those in the control. This proved that the segmentation strategy (based on time in the game) was effective. Frontier plans to develop the onboarding journey by adding more campaigns and testing different types of content (including video) to find out what works best by player segment.

### Results for Frontier Developments

**182% increase**  
in email click-through rates

**34% open rates**  
for segmented onboarding emails

**100% increase**  
in play time among new players

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