
Animal Farm Escape Room Feedback Collection and
Planning Project

Cyclone Escape Rooms

March 15 2026

Jacob Rhoden

Dale Cooper
Lead Puzzle Designer
Cyclone Escape Rooms
1000 Farm House Ln.
Ames, IA, 50014

Dear Mr. Cooper,

The proposal listed in this document will address the difficulty issue which your Animal Farm escape room is currently experiencing. It will do this by first ensuring which sections are experiencing these problems specifically, before organizing and handing that data over to your team of puzzle designers, all within a specific timeframe.

Through consistent communication, well-crafted deadlines, and thorough planning, we can construct a framework which you can use, not only for Animal Farm, but for iterating in your other escape rooms, as well.

Thank you for your consideration on this project. I appreciate the opportunity to expand my skills and leverage my abilities for the present and future of your company, and hope that we can work together in the future following the guidelines this document has laid out for both Animal Farm and, in part, your business as a whole.

Additionally, if you'd like to speak with me regarding any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at jkrhoden@iastate.edu, or call me at 515-357-7882.

Sincerely,
Jacob Rhoden

Jacob Rhoden
Technical Communication Student
Iowa State University
513 9th St.
Nevada, IA, 50201

CER's Situation.....	3
Methods.....	4
Data Collection and Playtesting.....	5
Organizing Survey Data.....	6
Iterating on Animal Farm.....	7
Deadlines and Benchmarks.....	8
Our Qualifications.....	9
Industry Experience.....	9
Education Qualifications.....	9
In-Depth Industry Understanding.....	10
Your Benefits.....	10
Mid-Project Benefits.....	10
Post-Project Benefits.....	11

CER's Situation

Cyclone Escape Rooms has seen great success from its opening in 2015 at the tail end of the escape room craze in the United States to today, opening escape rooms in other regions of the United States. Because of the scientific accuracy and the overall high quality of your attractions, you have pulled ahead of your competitors in the Midwest, earning strong growth for your company and a wide base to jump off of for future expansion, ensuring continued success even after the pandemic.

However, despite the stability of Cyclone Escape Rooms, escape rooms as a whole have been plateauing in recent years. This is due to a number of factors, including a low customer return rate and the niche nature of the industry as a whole. While this is not necessarily a negative outcome, and preferable to decline, your company still has plenty of room to grow, due to your unique qualities as a business and as escape room designers. However, you need to make certain changes in order to maintain your business' upwards growth.

Your company's escape rooms, while overall high quality, are sometimes lacking in certain departments and receive negative feedback. In total, the Animal Farm escape room has received 63 total pieces of voluntary customer feedback this year. 49 have been at least partially negative, while 40 have been totally negative. 3 quarters of your recent playerbase for your Illinois escape room have come out of the Animal Farm room with at least a partially bad experience.

While this is only one of your escape rooms, the effect of Animal Farm's poor reviews and negative customer experience has a widespread effect. Dissatisfied customers reduces your employee's morale, leading to a decline in the family atmosphere you maintain for your employees. It also means another problem you will need to attend to, disturbing your focus on an east coast expansion. Additionally, the poor reviews will lead to further reduction of customer return rates, lowering the Illinois location of CER's growth rate by a significant percent.

This negative feedback spans multiple separate issues, but the one of the utmost importance is the difficulty of the puzzles. Many groups have complained that it took far too long to complete the puzzles due to their complexity. Some have tied that issue to the scientific rigor, and some say that the depth of the puzzles themselves is too complex to complete within a small amount of time. However, much of the positive feedback also cites the scientific rigor of the room as a positive. This means that, in order to solve your

problem, you will need to focus on making these puzzles still scientifically sound, but making them relatively simpler, and more accessible for the average person.

Through my plan to make Animal Farm more accessible to the average person through revisions to the escape room's puzzles with carefully guided, well organized design documentation and research, CER can ensure their entertainment facility retains its accessibility, increase employee morale through a reduction of negative customer experiences, and ensure a strong jumping off point for further east coast expansion. By maintaining the scientific accuracy of the room through careful removals and inclusions, your brand and your style as a game developer is retained, and the room once again becomes enjoyable for all audiences.

Methods

Because CER's current data gathered is lacking in terms of specific feedback on Animal Farm, we will need to gather specific information on which aspects of Animal Farm are problematic for customers. Therefore, we will gather surveys from playtesters. More specifically, we will gather data on the reasons why these puzzle steps are difficult, the groups of testers that have trouble with them, and these puzzles' relative necessity in the room as a whole. While we did have access to some data, the post-room surveys offered previously were not stored or organized well, meaning the information is difficult to access, and will be difficult and costly to organize, as compared to simply creating new information to work with.

In order to maximize cost-effectiveness, Animal Farm should be modified as few times and as little as is possible. For this, you need methods that produce usable information as thoroughly and as quickly as possible. While the gathering of data is important for this, organizing it is equally as important. Therefore, we will organize the information we have gathered through a system that allows you to most effectively sort, utilize, and add to the information collected. We will communicate with your team to diagnose which aspects should be organized, preparing a full document and organizing a system that will keep the project in line with expectations laid out by you and your team.

By using the data points which have been collected and organized thus far, CER can begin enacting changes on Animal Farm. By looking through Animal Farm's various puzzles, I can note which will likely need future changes, and note down which aspects of them could cause friction between the intended experience and the player. Then, your team can go through these issues and decide on which aspects should be left the same, changed, or entirely removed.

By utilizing all these methods, Animal Farm will have the tools to succeed, within a dedicated timeframe, using as few resources as possible while still maintaining effectiveness. However, to do so during a limited timeframe requires planning and a focus

on managing time effectively. This will require a focus on the timeframes of each length of the project, including the sections which will be primarily performed by your team of game designers, during which the room will be updated to match the data collected by the playtesters.

Data Collection and Playtesting

Because of our lacking data, we need to gather testers to perform playtesting on Animal Farm, to diagnose its problems more minutely. To ensure the highest level of accessibility for the escape room, we want to ensure this group is as diverse as possible. To ensure this, CER should put out playtester applications through their social media and local groups. These sessions should be set up as often as possible between real scheduled escape room sessions, and should be completed over the course of a month. The data collected will be obtained through email post-room, and will focus on multiple factors :

- Overall Customer Satisfaction
 - Gauged from a 1-10 star rating during the post-room survey. Data will be grouped together by demographic. These demographics will be made up of age groups and education groups. For example, 25-30 college educated, 24-18 high school educated, etc.
- Written Response
 - Players will write down any additional notes they have about the room. Intended to gather any information that the other two sections cannot, and to serve as notes for the game designers.
- 'Problem Sections' of Animal Farm.
 - Data gathered from a post-room survey. Players will select which sections gave them trouble, which can be due to complexity or time needed to solve.

This group of numerous testers will be chosen from a number of applicants, with a lean towards non-college educated adults within the age range of 20-60. Primarily, CER's game design team is made up of college-educated adults. Because of this, you may lack foresight on designing for non-college educated players. The testing group will be diverse beyond just that group, including college-educated adults, but as the non-college educated adults have the highest amount of negative feedback on Animal Farm, and because they are a large part of your consumer base, they will be the focus. By gathering this data, CER will have a more focused lens to study Animal Farm, to make stronger, longer-lasting changes, reinforcing the room's popularity and quality by using specific information to decide which puzzles should be changed or removed.

Organizing Survey Data

After CER has gathered all this useful information, it comes time to use it. But a great deal of data has the issue of becoming unruly; when unorganized, the breadth of info gathered becomes worthless. Organizing data makes it usable, and organizing it well makes it invaluable. There are multiple options for file organization. The initial data gathered from the surveys given to playtesters will be organized like so :

- Full Survey
 - The full digital surveys will be stored, organized by demographic. While these may not be used often by CER, they are still important, and so will be kept. Any future playtests will be separated into folders by batch, and then separated into demographics.
- Written Response
 - Will be stored, organized by demographic and batch. Names will be added so as to cross-reference with total ratings and problem sections.
- Star Rating
 - Numerical data stored, organized by demographic and batch. Names will be added so as to cross-reference with written response and problem sections.
- 'Problem Sections'
 - Will be stored, organized by demographic and batch. Names will be added so as to cross-reference with written response and total ratings.

This organization style will mean that CER has a future-proofed tool to allow for further testing and expansion in their escape rooms, beyond even Animal Farm. This tool is also far faster to use than accessing the raw files, while still maintaining the initial focus of being a thorough tool for your designers.

Iterating on Animal Farm

With access to high-quality info from our playtesters, we can begin to iterate on Animal Farm itself. By and large, these complaints have been based on the difficulty of the puzzles, citing excessive scientific accuracy. We can maintain the scientific accuracy of these puzzles by focusing on specific feedback. As an example, with the 'Cattle Herd' puzzle during the initial third of the room, players need to accurately vaccinate certain cows in order to pass to the next section of the room, obtaining the code to a padlock using the numbers on their ear tags. This section of the puzzle has a lot of equipment connected to it (vaccination tablet, vaccination document, vaccine machine), meaning it would be costly to remove and replace it. Players have also almost always had to use a hint during this section,

as the primary puzzle, figuring out which cows have received which vaccinations, is notated too accurately.

While this is scientifically accurate, it is also indecipherable to players, and could be easily simplified. By matching each vaccine to a color or symbol, while still having it named correctly, the scientific accuracy stays the same while making the puzzle more accessible. By going through the problematic puzzle sections and diagnosing their removability / replaceability, consulting the player feedback, and deciding what changes should be made depending on both the difficulty and accessibility of the problem, a strong framework can be constructed, which your game designers can work off of, establishing a set of rules and guidelines for iterating on Animal Farm, and subsequent escape rooms.

Deadlines and Benchmarks

Additionally, managing these aspects of the larger Animal Farm project is important for the sake of organization and timeliness. While it is tempting to eternally collect information so as to make the most effective, accurate decisions, it's also important to know when to stop. Additionally, while the storage system is important, there is infinite room to iterate, and putting a cap on that early is important to the efficiency of the project as a whole. As such, I will put in place deadlines and benchmarks in order to ensure CER is reaching its goals in a timely, cost-effective manner. These deadlines will be the following :

- Playtesting + Data Collection
 - 1 month is the deadline for this section of the project. Playtesting should be done as often as possible during this timeframe, scheduled at least twice a day between actual rooms, or as often as is convenient for employees.
- Data Organization
 - 2 weeks is the deadline. While this may seem like a long time, considering that some of the data may not be able to be automatically sorted, it allows ample time to manually organize the full breadth of data that will be collected during the first section of the process.
- Animal Farm Iterating
 - 9 weeks is the deadline. This is the section of the process which you, the game designers, will be guiding. Because I am not intimately familiar with your process, I cannot say how long iterating on Animal Farm will take, which is why I've allotted the remainder of the 15 weeks to this section of the project, so as to give you the greatest amount of time possible within the total project deadline to complete your changes to Animal Farm.

By allotting time beforehand for tasks, we can ensure the process stays on schedule and does not go over-budget. We can also ensure that communication stays open between me

and CER as a whole, in case any of these deadlines are insufficient, for any reason. Additionally, at the end of each of these deadlines, I will communicate with Dave the completeness of these tasks, so as to keep everybody in the loop during the process.

Our Qualifications

Animal Farm is going to begin struggling, beginning this year, if changes are not soon made to improve it. While considering your options to solve Animal Farm's problems, you should carefully consider your decisions during this important time for not only Animal Farm, but for CER as a whole.

While time is of the essence, it's also important that changes are not made hastily. You need someone to work with you that considers your needs a priority, while not undermining speed for quality. You need someone that will help you stay proactive, keep the project organized, and communicate, staying conscious of the cost of these benefits along the way. I can provide these things for your team, giving you the framework you need to meet your goals in preparation for future expansion.

Industry Experience

I have personally worked with an escape room for an internship my Freshman year of college. While I primarily performed work on Midwestern Entertainment's design documents, seeing how they changed over time and working through the process of choosing best practices for various parts of the business provided me with meaningful experience that will allow me to easily work with CER.

For example, I worked with Midwestern Entertainment to improve the color design of their rooms, making them more accessible to those experiencing colorblindness. This previous experience will let me ensure your rooms are accessible, not only in terms of pure difficulty, but also in the realm of physical disability.

Education Qualifications

Because of my education as a Technical Communication major, I've received training on a number of topics in relation to this project. A focus on Web Design means I focus largely on organization and efficiency. Experience in large school projects means I've worked with these aspects of project management before, over a long period of time, both alone and with others.

This experience will allow me to ensure that CER's Animal Farm project is well-organized, ensuring timeliness, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. In my previous work, I had a large focus on design documents. Those projects were entirely focused on efficiency and organization, and I will use the skills and experience earned through those to benefit CER.

In-Depth Industry Understanding

During the beginning of the Escape Room craze in 2013, I temporarily worked at an escape room opened in my hometown. By the time it closed in 2015, my work there as an assistant helped me understand the wider details of running an escape room, as I helped out in most parts of the business when people were short handed.

In addition to my internship, this means I have experience in escape rooms as a whole. The most important skill these experiences have given me is communication. Leveraging these skills for your company, I can ensure communication stays open between all aspects of your business, and that the needs and requests of all your employees are met during our work together.

Your Benefits

Throughout this proposal, I have described the way that my working with you will benefit CER during and after our work on Animal Farm, with my assistance being paramount to you and your team's success. Here, I will describe in more detail the benefits you will experience during the process of reinvigorating Animal Farm, as well as after our project has been completed.

Mid-Project Benefits

Through the cooperation of myself and your team, we will enable a framework that will allow for simple iteration throughout the span of the project. This action framework will be constructed based on user feedback collected at the beginning of the iteration process, used in order to cost-effectively change or replace Animal Farm's puzzles based on necessity, cost, and accessibility.

Additionally, throughout this process of collecting and utilizing data, thorough communication will be enacted so as to ensure the project is running on time, and that all aspects of the project are being completed to the fullest extent possible. This communication will also be open so that, at any time during this project, CER can contact me directly in order to make clear any desired changes for your project.

Finally, as a measure throughout the process of iterating on Animal Farm, the organizational efforts made to categorize both user feedback from previous playtests, customer surveys and user feedback from this project's playtest will be made. This effort will be so that your team can use this feedback to the fullest extent possible, reducing the total length and cost of the project via reducing friction between CER's various moving pieces, allowing work on Animal Farm to be completed more efficiently.

Post-Project Benefits

Additionally, after this project is completed, CER will continue seeing benefits based on our work together on Animal Farm. The system used to organize data will belong to CER after the project has been completed, meaning that in the future, all iteration on CER's escape rooms can be done using the method created during this project. This will allow for greater company growth in the future, ensuring that your East Coast expansion can occur without difficulty.

The method used to gather feedback during the process of Animal Farm's iteration can also be utilized outside of its initial project. While small pieces will need to be changed in order to maximize effectiveness, this will also allow for simple iteration on CER's current and future rooms.

Jacob post-peer notes

Add 2 more tasks. Maybe Task 4 should be ideas for iterating, task 3 should be changed to developing a plan, and Task 5 should be where Task 3 (deadlines) goes? That would be more chronological to how the plan is completed.

Remember that Dave does want some vague ideas, but he does not want answers. He wants an outline, and I need to add stuff BESIDES insight to methods. Important.

Adding fiscal amounts to certain things could be good. Considering this is a fictional project, I can always just undermine the numbers.

Jacob Design Notes

Document Design is supposed to :

Make a good impression

Makes readers understand document structure / organization.

Helps readers locate and understand information they need.

Helps readers remember info.

Focus on type design and headings.

Legible typefaces essential for body and document elements.

Display typefaces can be used in large sizes in short stretches of text.

Cover page!! Include proposal title, date, your name / organization. Doesn't need CER on it.

Table of contents is 2nd page. Requires each heading in document and page it can be found on.

Maybe for benefits do during, after, outside of project for benefits.

For front page, detail what you're going to do. Namedrop room, use some of the themes in it too. Thank them for consideration, tell them how to contact you.

List name, business, address (top line is like 513 9th st, bottom line is place)

Remind dale we had a convo. This damn thing is basically a cover letter.

Don't need to cover everything.