REMOTE ONBOARDING ORCHESTRATOR

MVP Validation & Build Plan

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Executive Summary

The Remote Onboarding Orchestrator is a lightweight SaaS tool that automates the cross-functional coordination required to onboard new hires at remote and hybrid companies. It sits on top of existing HRIS and payroll systems, filling the gap between "paperwork complete" and "employee is productive and integrated."

Community research across HR, management, and startup forums revealed that onboarding at companies with 50–300 employees is consistently described as a manual, fragmented process held together by spreadsheets and email chains. The pain is acute, recurring, and directly tied to HR burnout and new hire attrition.

This document outlines a structured plan to validate the concept and build an MVP within 4–6 weeks.

Problem Validation Summary

Research across r/humanresources, r/managers, r/ExperiencedDevs, and r/startups surfaced 160+ signals. The following pain points emerged with high frequency and emotional intensity.

Core Pain Points

Pain Point	Evidence	Frequency
Manual process overload	HR professionals report 10+ manual steps per hire, losing entire weeks to onboarding. 30+ item checklists in Google Docs break constantly.	Mentioned in 12+ signals with high emotional intensity (burnout, soul-sucking)
No single owner	Tasks split across HR, IT, managers, and finance with no coordination layer. Things fall through cracks when IT forgets account setup or managers skip intros.	Mentioned in 8+ signals; root cause of most failures
New hire confusion	New hires constantly ping HR with questions: "Who do I talk to about X?" and "Where's the login for Y?" No structured first-week experience.	Mentioned in 6+ signals; directly impacts retention
No 30/60/90 follow-through	Check-ins don't happen. Managers ignore scheduled reviews. No system to auto-schedule and track completion.	Mentioned in 5+ signals; linked to early attrition
Remote amplifies everything	Document verification, equipment shipping, time zone coordination,	Persistent theme across all remote-focused communities

	and lack of in-person walkthroughs make every step harder.	

What People Are Currently Using

Current Solution	Strengths	Limitations
Google Sheets / Docs checklists	Free, familiar, easy to start	No automation, no notifications, breaks at scale, no accountability tracking
HRIS onboarding modules (ADP, Paycom, BambooHR)	Handles compliance paperwork well	Limited to HR tasks; doesn't coordinate IT, managers, or team intros
Power Automate / SharePoint	Powerful automation within Microsoft ecosystem	Requires technical skill to build and maintain; most HR teams can't set this up
Single person owns everything	Nothing falls through cracks	Doesn't scale; creates single point of failure and burnout

Phase 1: Validate (Weeks 1–2)

Before building, validate that people will pay for a solution. This phase focuses on confirming demand, willingness to pay, and refining the feature set.

1.1 Customer Discovery Interviews

Target: 8–12 interviews with HR Generalists and People Ops leads at companies with 50–300 employees that are hybrid or remote-first.

Sourcing channels:

- Post in r/humanresources and r/peopleops offering to share research findings in exchange for a 20-minute call
- Reach out to posters from the signals identified in this research (they've already expressed the pain)
- LinkedIn outreach to HR Generalists at remote-first companies (filter by company size)
- Pittsburgh HR / startup meetup groups and AlphaLab network

Key questions to ask:

1. Walk me through what happens from the moment a new hire accepts an offer to their first productive day. What steps are involved?
2. What breaks most often? What tasks get dropped?
3. How many people are involved in onboarding a single new hire?

4. What tools are you using today? What have you tried and abandoned?

5. If a tool could automate the coordination and follow-up, what would it need to do to be worth paying for?

6. What would you pay per month for a tool that cut your onboarding time in half?

1.2 Landing Page Test

Create a simple landing page to test positioning and collect early interest. Include a clear value proposition, a brief feature overview, and an email signup for early access.

Positioning to test: "Stop losing new hires to broken onboarding. The lightweight workflow tool that coordinates HR, IT, and managers — so nothing falls through the cracks."

Traffic sources: Share in relevant Reddit communities, Product Hunt upcoming, LinkedIn posts targeting HR professionals, and Indie Hackers.

Success metric: 50+ email signups in 2 weeks, with at least 10 from HR professionals at companies in the target size range.

1.3 Competitive Landscape Audit

Before building, thoroughly evaluate these existing solutions to identify the precise positioning gap:

- **Sapling (by Kallidus):** Closest competitor. Enterprise-focused onboarding automation. Evaluate pricing, minimum seat count, and feature depth.

- **Process Street:** General workflow tool with onboarding templates. Evaluate how well it handles multi-stakeholder coordination and integrations.

- **Trainual:** Knowledge management with onboarding focus. Evaluate overlap and differentiation.

- **Rippling / Deel / Gusto:** Full HRIS platforms. Map exactly where their onboarding features stop and the coordination gap begins.

- **Notion / Monday.com templates:** DIY solutions. Understand why they break and what's missing.

Phase 2: Build MVP (Weeks 3–6)

Based on validation findings, build a focused MVP that solves the highest-pain problem first: cross-functional task coordination with automated follow-up.

2.1 MVP Feature Set

Priority	Feature	Details
P0	Onboarding workflow templates	Configurable by role and department. Pre-built templates for engineering, sales, operations. Each template defines tasks, owners, timing, and dependencies.

P0	Multi-stakeholder task assignment	Assign tasks to HR, IT, hiring manager, buddy, and new hire. Each stakeholder sees only their tasks. Auto-triggers based on start date.
P0	Automated nudges and reminders	Slack and/or email notifications when tasks are due or overdue. Escalation to manager if tasks remain incomplete after configurable threshold.
P1	New hire portal	Simple web view showing the new hire their onboarding journey: day-by-day schedule, key contacts, resource links, and task completion status.
P1	Onboarding dashboard	HR admin view showing all active onboardings, task completion rates, overdue items, and bottleneck identification across all current hires.
P2	30/60/90 day check-ins	Auto-scheduled manager check-ins with templated questions. Captures feedback and flags at-risk hires based on sentiment or missing check-ins.
P2	Integrations	Slack (notifications + task completion via emoji), Google Calendar (check-in scheduling), and webhook triggers from HRIS systems.

2.2 Technical Architecture

Stack recommendation: Keep it lean for speed to market.

- **Backend:** Go or Kotlin (leverage existing expertise) with a simple REST API
- **Frontend:** React or Next.js for the admin dashboard and new hire portal
- **Database:** PostgreSQL (workflows, tasks, users, audit trail)
- **Notifications:** Slack API + SendGrid for email; scheduled job runner for reminders
- **Hosting:** Fly.io or Railway for fast deployment; scale to AWS/GCP later
- **Auth:** Clerk or Auth0 for quick SSO/OAuth setup

2.3 Build Timeline

Week	Focus	Deliverables
Week 3	Data model + core API	Database schema for workflows, tasks, users, and companies. API endpoints for CRUD operations. Basic auth flow.
Week 4	Workflow engine + notifications	Template system with task assignment logic. Scheduled job runner for due dates. Slack webhook integration for notifications.

Week 5	Admin dashboard + new hire portal	HR admin dashboard showing all onboardings. New hire's personal onboarding view. Task completion tracking.
Week 6	Polish + beta launch	Bug fixes, onboarding flow for the product itself, 3 pre-built templates (Engineering, Sales, General). Deploy and invite beta users.

Phase 3: Early Customers (Weeks 7–10)

3.1 Beta Program

Recruit 5–10 beta companies from the validation interview pool and landing page signups. Offer free access for 60 days in exchange for weekly feedback calls and a testimonial if satisfied.

Beta success criteria:

- At least 3 companies complete a full onboarding cycle using the tool
- NPS of 8+ from HR admins
- At least 2 companies willing to convert to paid
- Identification of top 3 missing features from real usage

3.2 Pricing Strategy

Target the gap between free spreadsheets and enterprise HRIS platforms. Flat monthly pricing (not per-seat) is a key differentiator for budget-conscious HR teams.

Tier	Price	Target	Includes
Starter	$99/month	Up to 5 active onboardings	Core workflows, email notifications, basic dashboard
Growth	$199/month	Up to 15 active onboardings	Slack integration, new hire portal, 30/60/90 check-ins, custom templates
Scale	$349/month	Unlimited onboardings	All features, HRIS webhooks, priority support, custom branding

3.3 Go-to-Market Channels

- **Content marketing:** Publish "The Remote Onboarding Playbook" as a free guide (captures emails). Write case studies from beta users.
- **Community presence:** Become a helpful regular in r/humanresources and r/peopleops. Answer onboarding questions; don't hard sell.

- **Product Hunt launch:** Coordinate a launch with beta user testimonials and a compelling demo video.
- **HRIS integration partnerships:** List in BambooHR / Gusto / Rippling marketplaces as a complementary tool.
- **LinkedIn outreach:** Target HR Generalists at remote-first companies with 50–300 employees.

Key Risks & Mitigations

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
HRIS platforms add coordination features	High — could eliminate the gap	Move fast, build integrations they won't. Position as the coordination layer that works with any HRIS.
HR teams resist new tools	Medium — adoption friction	Make setup take under 30 minutes. Offer white-glove onboarding for first 5 customers. Start with Slack-first (where they already live).
Low willingness to pay at target size	Medium — revenue ceiling	Validate pricing in discovery interviews before building. Consider moving upmarket to 300–1000 employees if needed.
Scope creep toward full HRIS	High — unfocused product	Strict "coordination layer" positioning. Integrate with HRIS systems, don't replace them. Say no to payroll, benefits, compliance features.

Success Metrics

Validation Phase (Weeks 1–2)

- 8+ customer discovery interviews completed
- 50+ landing page email signups
- 3+ interviewees say they would pay $99–199/month for this

MVP Phase (Weeks 3–6)

- Functional MVP deployed with 3 workflow templates
- 5–10 beta companies onboarded
- Slack integration working end-to-end

Early Customer Phase (Weeks 7–10)

- 3+ companies complete a full onboarding cycle using the tool
- 2+ companies convert to paid plans
- $500+ MRR within first month of paid launch

Immediate Next Steps

The following actions should be taken this week to kick off the validation phase:

1. **Draft interview script** based on the questions in Section 1.1. Refine with 1–2 practice interviews.
2. **Identify and reach out to 15–20 interview candidates** from Reddit signals, LinkedIn, and personal network.
3. **Build a simple landing page** (Carrd, Framer, or a single-page Next.js site) with email capture.
4. **Sign up for free trials** of Sapling, Process Street, and Trainual to evaluate the competitive landscape firsthand.
5. **Set a go/no-go decision date** at the end of Week 2. If validation signals are strong, proceed to build. If not, pivot or shelve.