

# Casual Game <sup>TM</sup> INSIDER

The Premier Guide to Casual Board and Card Games  
Issue #12 – Summer 2015



ALSO FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE...

## GAME MECHANICS

Understanding the basic building blocks of a game  
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# BATMAN<sup>TM</sup>

# FLUXX<sup>®</sup>



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(s15)

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Wow, this website, this initiative, everything about this Revolution is awesome! – Sean G. (Reader)

Great magazine! I appreciate the efforts being made for gamers who prefer games that last less than 90 minutes but are not so simple as to be only 'family games.' Keep up the good work! – Chuck W. (Reader)



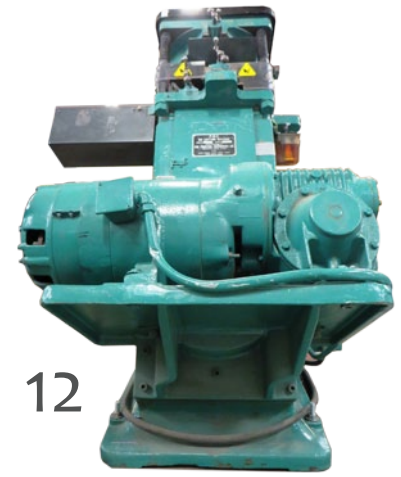
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Printed in China

"A casual board (or card) game is played in under an hour, set up and taught in under 10 minutes, and requires some light strategic thought. Casual games are not specifically marketed to children, but can be enjoyed by anyone from older children to adults."

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Lamp Light Games was founded in 2013 to bring new, creative board games to life. Our mission is to design and publish a variety of games that are both fun and challenging. We strive to build a business on the principles of integrity, service, and ingenuity. Games bring people together!

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Wiggity Bang Games was founded on the belief that a sense of humor is the key that unlocks the universe. The creators of the original *Quelf*, *FURT*, *QUAO*, *Crazy A's*, and *Alpha Bandits* games, the WBG team is always hard at work developing completely random and entertaining games that encourage friends and family to come together and talk, play, laugh, and most importantly, have fun.

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Flying Frog Productions is dedicated to making fun, fast-paced, and exciting games! Each game is rooted in a particular genre and conveys a cinematic gaming experience. First and foremost, we are gamers, ourselves. We are making the games that we want to play with all of the features that WE would want in a game. Our games have an emphasis on fun, fast gameplay with strong theme, and maximum replayability.

[FlyingFrog.net](http://FlyingFrog.net)



Founded in 2013 by Greg Cozza, Inappropriate Gaming publishes board games for adults based on hilariously inappropriate topics. No subject is safe when it comes to our games. We strive to provide quality games that you can enjoy while laughing your @\$\$ off.

[InappropriateGaming.com](http://InappropriateGaming.com)



Looney Labs offers a small line of fun, award-winning family games. Our mission is to create fun — but it isn't just that we make fun games — our games create fun times! Our biggest hit is *Fluxx*, the card game with ever-changing rules. Pick your favorite theme (from *Zombies* to *Pirates* to *Cartoon Network*) and get together with your family and friends around the table for a game today!

[LooneyLabs.com/our-games](http://LooneyLabs.com/our-games)



MAGE Company has been publishing games since 2011 and is growing rapidly. We design games for all ages, for both families and gamers. Our purpose is to create unique games that will be enjoyed for a lifetime! Some of our award-winning games include *Wrong Chemistry* and *12 Realms*.

[MageCompany.com](http://MageCompany.com)



U.S. Games Systems has been producing award-winning family games and specialty playing card decks for over 40 years. We offer a colorful array of products that are attractively packaged and affordably priced. Our wide selection of cards and games has something for every age and interest including word games, card games like *Wizard*, *Banana Split*, and *Mystery Rummy*, and military history games like *HOOYAH!*

[USGamesInc.com](http://USGamesInc.com)



Goldbrick Games publishes games that are challenging, exciting to play, and most of all...fun! And because we believe it's the little victories that fuel our days, our games are guaranteed to release the competitive spirit that exists in all of us. Our line includes *Perpetual Commotion*, *Rumble Pie* and *Skōsh*, the trivia game for people who have more fun figuring it out than knowing it all.

[GoldbrickGames.com](http://GoldbrickGames.com)



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Family Favorite Card Games! That is what we are all about. Gather some friends, grab some snacks, and enjoy a great card game. Fresh, future classics. Something for everyone to enjoy. 100% guaranteed to please. For about the cost of a movie ticket you will have a game that you will enjoy for years to come!

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# FAR BENEATH THE OCEAN...

Nemo is gone, but his machines have opened up a whole new world! The floors of Neptune's seas lay open to us, ready to surrender their bounties. Equip and upgrade your mining machines, then guide them to the rich mineral seams beneath the ocean. Control the supply of resources to bend the market to your will. Become the master of *Nautilus Industries!*



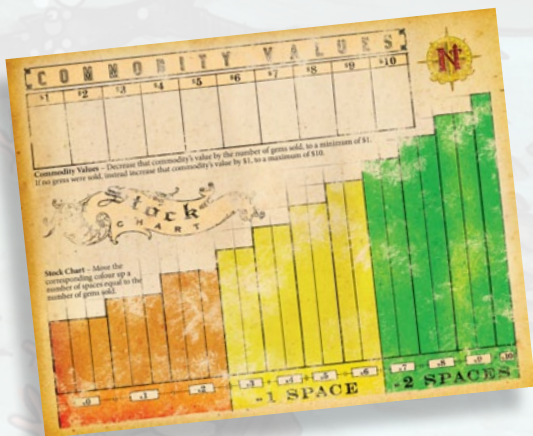
The game is played in three phases: the Action Phase, the Market Phase, and the Upkeep Phase. These phases are repeated until game end. The player with the most money (cash plus stock values) at the end of the game is the winner!





### During the Action Phase:

Players will take actions, in turn order, that include: sending mining subs to the depths for specific elements, upgrading their warehouse capability, changing the order of the board tiles, switching resource locations, or investing in one of 5 companies.



### During the Market Phase:

Players will resolve the game boards in order by collecting the resources they mined, and either selling them or holding on to them. When players sell resources the commodity price of that resource goes down to reflect the market demand, but the stock value of the company using that resource goes up accordingly.

### During the Upkeep Phase:

The game boards are each resupplied with 5 random gems from the bag, and the starting player marker moves clockwise one player.



The actions you can take in *Nautilus Industries* are simple, making the game quick to learn and teach. It also means there is very little downtime between turns. However, the variety of things you can manipulate and accomplish with these actions makes each game a rich, involved, and exciting experience. Your actions are limited, so use them wisely, because there can only be one master of *Nautilus Industries*! 🎲





## Backstab

When you feel like you want to take a swing at your friends, a good “take that” game fits the bill perfectly. *Backstab*, as its title suggests, gives you the opportunity to destroy your opponents until they’re all broken and bankrupt – but only if you play it smart.



### Chris James

Editor-in-Chief and Award-Winning Game Designer

**MSRP: \$20**

**Designer: Dave Stawar**

**Publisher: U.S. Games Systems**

**2-4 players, ages 8+, 30 mins.**

*Backstab* offers an interesting flavor of gameplay – it combines the experience of a dungeon crawl game like *Munchkin* with a trick-taking game like *Hearts*. In each round, players travel to a different Zone (wasteland, village, ruins, etc.) and encounter various deadly creatures. Each of these Encounter cards contains a number and is also randomly paired with a suit (axe, blade, magic, or range). All players choose an Action card from their hand and simultaneously reveal it. Each Action card contains a number and a suit – if the chosen card trumps the Encounter in its number and/or suit, the player earns a 1-cent coin and draws a new Action card. If multiple players beat the Encounter, the player with the highest-valued card earns an additional coin. The current trump values of each suit are shown on the Zone card from highest to lowest, and the Zone card changes at least once per round.

Here’s how the backstabbing comes in: one player chooses another player to backstab, and both players choose a card from their hand to reveal simultaneously. The winner of the backstab (the player with the highest valued card) steals a coin from the loser and draws a new Action card, while the loser gets nothing – even the player who initiated the backstab risks losing. Each player can initiate a backstab up to 3 times per round. Players who prefer not to enter into conflict are not immune from backstabs, either – some Encounter cards contain a trap, which forces each

player to roll a die and either backstab an opponent, change the Zone, or gain a coin. Gameplay continues in rounds, with a new Zone, new Encounter cards, and a full hand of Action cards each round. If a player has accumulated 25 cents at the end of a round, he is declared the winner.

If you like direct interaction, you’ll almost certainly enjoy *Backstab*. We found it to be a highly amusing game that is both unique and addictive – with its simple gameplay, little downtime, and close scores throughout, we found ourselves anxious to play again. The theme is very light, but there is just enough to add excitement and set it apart from basic trick-taking games. Each card features its own cartoony artwork of eccentric weapons, horrific villains, etc., that are both humorous and grotesque at the same time. As our favorite game from U.S. Games Systems to date, you should give this one a try.







## Hold Your Breath!

Given our appreciation of lightly-themed card games, *Get Bit!* and *Walk the Plank!* by Mayday Games both earned an easy spot on our Recommended Games list when they came out. As the third and final installment in this series, *Hold Your Breath!* features the same idiotic pirates from the previous games. After being kicked off the ship in *Walk the Plank!* and out-swimming the shark in *Get Bit!*, they now decide to hold a contest to see who can dive to the greatest depth underwater.

In the game, players swim as deep as they are willing to go, while avoiding hungry sharks and trying not to panic. Each player takes turns playing as many cards from his hand as desired: a combination of Air and Swim cards allows the player to dive deeper on the board, Shark cards prevent an opponent from swimming, and a Kracken can either remove a Shark or cause all other players to discard a card. Most cards also contain an additional action that the player can choose to use instead, such as Panic, which also prevents an opponent from swimming, and Calm, which removes Panic or moves the Shark to another player. Any player who doesn't play Air on his turn automatically begins to Panic. After the card deck is depleted, players place an anchor on the board to mark their depth, and then begin their ascent back

**MSRP: \$20**

**Designers: Christopher Urinko & Daniel Jenkins**

**Publisher: Mayday Games**

**2-4 players, ages 6+, 15 mins.**

to the surface. The player who dives the deepest and returns successfully to the surface is the winner — but not everyone will be so fortunate.

*Hold Your Breath* is a light press-your-luck game that rounds out the “Get Bit Trilogy” well, though it is played standalone without needing experience with its predecessors. While *Get Bit!* and *Walk the Plank!* deal more with bluffing and smart card selection, *Hold Your Breath* is more about direct confrontation. Despite being highly luck-based, there are enough strategic options to keep the game interesting for the whole family.





## Kerflip!

When it comes to word games, *Scrabble* comes to mind first and foremost for many people. However, when you don't have hours to spend contemplating those obscure words to score a record number of points, there are some great casual games that scratch that spelling itch without wearing out their welcome. *Kerflip!* is one such game.

In *Kerflip!*, players try to score the most points by calling out words faster than their opponents. In each round, players draw a certain number of letter tiles to place on the board, white side up. They then race to call out a single word found among the tiles (with a timer available to put pressure on the last player). After all players have called out a word, each player scores 10 points per letter used in his word. However, once a letter has been used, it is flipped to its orange

side and is worth only 5 points for each subsequent use. In this way, players who are quick and players who use less common letters can score big points. Some letters contain a bonus number – the first player to use these letters draws this number of bonus cards for extra points at the end of the game. When the letter tiles run out, the game ends and the player with the highest score wins.



**MSRP: \$30**

**Designer: Damon Tabb**

**Publisher: Game Salute**

**2-4 players, ages 8+, 20 mins.**



*Kerflip!* is a fun, fast, and frenzied word game that is one of our new favorites in this category. With simple rules and scoring, as well as random hidden bonuses for added luck, it is accessible to many kinds of players. While the game itself is well-designed, the box it comes in is just as genius. The game board is placed right inside the box – after each round, all used tiles are swept to the tile return chutes located at the side of the board. After the game ends, the box is tilted and all the tiles are instantly gathered into a hidden tile cup underneath the board for easy pouring back into the draw bag. With the cleanup happening so seamlessly, there is more time for fun!



## Evolution

If you're looking for a bit more "meat" for your gaming session, you might consider *Evolution* by North Star Games. With mostly light party games in their product line, this strategy game is a step in a new direction for them.

**MSRP: \$55**

**Designers: Dominic Crapuchettes,  
Dmitry Knorre & Sergey Machin**

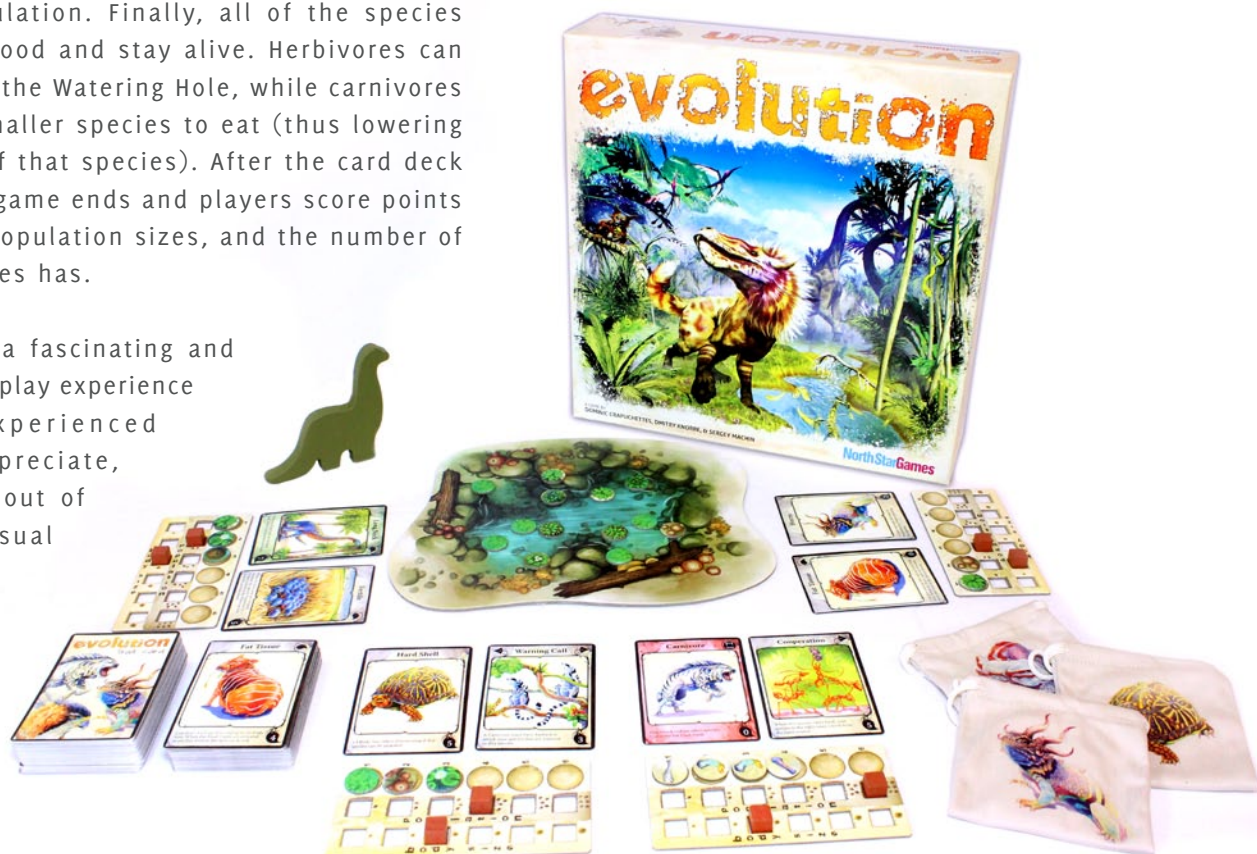
**Publisher: North Star Games**

**2-6 players, ages 12+, 60 mins.**

In *Evolution*, players create new species and adapt them with different traits to help them survive in a competitive ecosystem. In each round, players are dealt a certain number of Trait cards. First, they select a card to place on the Watering Hole board to determine the amount of plant food available this round. Next, each player takes turns playing Trait cards to either create new species or enhance existing species with new traits, a larger size, or a larger population. Finally, all of the species compete to eat food and stay alive. Herbivores can grab plants from the Watering Hole, while carnivores must attack a smaller species to eat (thus lowering the population of that species). After the card deck is depleted, the game ends and players score points for food eaten, population sizes, and the number of traits each species has.

*Evolution* offers a fascinating and competitive gameplay experience that more experienced gamers will appreciate, while not being out of reach of the casual

gamer who is looking for some more depth. The game is extremely polished, with great components and a visually appealing and easy-to-read rulebook. The rules are relatively simple; however, the full spectrum of strategic options is made possible by a wide range of Trait cards that interact with each other in many different ways. Clever use of Trait cards will allow players to enhance both the offensive and defensive abilities of each species based on the ever-changing opportunities and threats that exist in the game's mini-ecosystem. For the first couple of plays, a good amount of card studying is needed to fully understand each trait, but all traits seem realistic and make sense in terms of gameplay. If you like the idea of creating and adapting unique creatures in a competitive environment, *Evolution* may be the right game for you.





# Stuff and Nonsense

In London, a group of wannabe adventurers gather together to share grand tales of their travels around the world, sharing evidence of the items they found, the people they met, the things they learned, and the photographs they took. The problem is, all of these stories are completely made-up, with evidence gathered from various locations around London. Such is the unique theme behind *Stuff and Nonsense*.

The game is played on a circular array of Map cards, with various shops surrounding the Adventurer's Club (where stories are told) and the Market (where cards are traded). Each shop receives various Adventure cards throughout the game, which are collected by players to create an elaborate story. There are also Bonus cards that represent exotic locations for the setting of each story. The goal of the game is to gather sets of cards and tell stories in exchange for points. However, the point values of stories told in each setting are constantly changing – after all, how many times can you hear about a trip to the Amazon without getting bored? On a turn, the current player can choose to move his pawn one space and, depending on where he ends up, either pick up a card, trade a card for a new one, or turn in cards to tell a story for points. During the game, Professor Elemental continually moves around London trying to catch you in your fraud – when he

is encountered, a small penalty must be paid. Play continues until one player reaches the target score to win the game.

*Stuff and Nonsense* is an all-around great casual game in many respects: it is easy, the theme is light but fun, and there is a good balance of luck and strategy. Players must carefully plan ahead to try to tell stories in the highest-valued settings before their opponents do. But not every setting is created equal – some require more Adventure cards than others, and each Adventure card can only be used in certain settings. There are a lot of unique cards, each with a whimsical backstory and artwork. Actual storytelling is optional, but it adds a personalized touch that really creates an unforgettable experience. The only downside to the game is the potential to drag a bit toward the end.



**MSRP: \$25**  
**Designer: James Ernest**  
**Publisher: Cheapass Games**  
**2-6 players, ages 12+, 40 mins.**



## Coconuts

Occasionally, we run across a kids' game that is just too much fun to put down, even for adults. Enter *Coconuts*, a dexterity game imported from Korea in which players try to catapult rubber coconuts into cups on the table. (*Coconuts Duo*, shown here, is the 2 player version that can also be used as an expansion for the original).



Each player controls a monkey that serves as a coconut launcher — load a coconut in his hands, pull down, aim, and let go to fling it into the air. If you land it in a cup, you take the cup and stack it on your player board in a pyramid formation. The number of cups on the table soon becomes scarce — fortunately, you can also land in an opponent's cup to take it from him. Twice during the game, you can play a Magic card to give yourself a special ability or hinder an opponent. The first player to build a complete pyramid wins.

*Coconuts* is that rare gem that offers instant fun for any age group, whether experienced gamer or not. It requires skill and precision to land into the cup you're aiming for, plus it has the added tactical element of playing your Magic cards

at the most beneficial times. The components are great — the monkey launchers work very well and the coconuts are perfectly weighted to give a nice “thunk” when they enter a cup. The rubber material sometimes causes them to bounce out of a cup, or, if you're lucky, into one, which adds to the fun. If you're looking for an extra challenge, try spacing apart the cups or launching from a greater distance. 🎲

**MSRP: \$26 to \$36**

**Designer: Walter Schneider**

**Publisher: Mayday Games**

**2-4 players, ages 6+, 20 mins.**



## ★ RECOMMENDED GAMES ★

For a complete list, visit [CasualGameRevolution.com/games](http://CasualGameRevolution.com/games)

### Casual Games

Alpha Bandits  
Aztack  
**Backstab\***  
Bang! The Dice Game  
Battle Sheep  
BraveRats  
Camel Up  
Can't Stop  
Carcassonne  
Castle Panic  
Chocoly  
Coup  
Eruption  
**Evolution\***

Fastrack  
For Sale  
Forbidden Desert  
Forbidden Island  
Get Bit!  
Get Lucky  
Gold Mine  
Gravwell  
Hanabi  
Hive  
**Hold Your Breath\***  
Incan Gold  
Indigo  
**Just Desserts\***

**Kerflip!\***  
King of New York  
King of Tokyo  
Kulami  
La Boca  
Let Them Eat Shrimp!  
Longhorn  
**Love Letter\***  
**Ninja Dice\***  
Niya  
Pairs  
Quartex  
Rattlebones  
Relic Expedition

Scotland Yard  
Sellswords  
SET  
Six  
Smatrix  
Splendor  
**Stuff & Nonsense\***  
Survive  
Takenoko  
The Hare & the Tortoise  
Ticket to Ride  
Tsuru  
Walk the Plank  
Zombie Dice

\*Newly added

### Party Games

20 Express  
Apples to Apples  
AttrAction  
Buffalo  
**CDMC 3000\***  
Choose One!  
**Coconuts\***  
Concept

Last Word  
Loonacy  
Mad QUAO  
Off Your Rocker  
Pluckin' Pairs  
RANDOMonium  
ROFL!  
Sketch it!

Skōsh  
Smarty Party  
Spot It! Party  
Snake Oil  
Taboo  
What's It?  
Wits and Wagers  
Word on the Street

Publishers: would you like to see your games reviewed or added to this list? Please send 2 sample copies to:

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1000 N. Beeline Highway #259  
Payson, AZ 85541



# GAME MANUFACTURING 101 FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY

**S**o, you're sitting down with friends or family to play a board or card game. Have you ever stopped and wondered: how was this game made? Well, we know. We bring games to life/reality and LOVE what we do. Here at DeLano Service, a division of EPI Marketing Services, we've been producing games domestically for over 30 years, from the basic card game to complex board games (everything except plastic/wood pieces). To give you a better idea of how games are made, let's walk through the production process of a simple board game.



**Kim Drayer**

*President, DeLano Service,  
A division of EPI Marketing Services*



**Kelly Graham**

*General Manager,  
EPI Marketing Services*

Most board games consist of a 2-piece box, platform, game board, card decks, rules, game pieces (dice, pawns, die cut tokens, sand timer, etc.) and then packing/assembly of the game. Games can have any combination of these components, depending on what the creator wants – more complex games can include card trays, tuckboxes for the card decks, game stands, score sheets, money, spinner board/arrows, etc. The whole process begins with the game creator, the person or company looking to manufacture a game. All games begin the same way, however: with the

concept. When a game creator decides that a game is ready to print, they work with a manufacturer like us to receive guidance, recommendations, support, and pricing estimates before beginning the actual printing process.

Let's assume all the elements of the game have been determined and it's time to move forward with production. There are 3 main phases to the production process:



**Complete Board & Card Game Manufacturing**  
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## ***PHASE 1: PREPRESS***

The game creator submits all the artwork files and some really creative people will take the files and make sure all the artwork “fits” on the appropriate sized paper. They create the die lines and layouts that will be used during production for each printed component, ensure any cards are laid out in the preferred order, and place the front and back sides of each card as required. When this is completed, the

proofs are sent back to the game creator, who must review and sign off on the design. This is the approval to move forward with the game production. This process can vary with the amount of time required, as it depends upon the number of revisions that are needed; however, once the approval is received, it’s time to bring the game to life, which usually requires 4-6 weeks (more during the peak holiday season).

## ***PHASE 2: PRESS AND POST PRESS OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS***

The game artwork needs to be printed, whether it’s the artwork for the lid (box top) or base (box bottom), the game board, cards, rules, etc. Each component can be run on one of several presses and will go through

multiple finishing operations after it has been printed to become the final pieces going into the game. These components will later be “married up” at the game packing/assembly stations.



*Man Roland 700 series press (6 color with inline coating)*



## **THE PACKAGE (2-PIECE SETUP BOX):**

Most board games are contained in a setup box, meaning a box that has a lid and a base (box top/box bottom). For a setup box, the core of the box that provides the strength is a piece of 32 or 40 point (pt.) chipboard that has been scored and cut out into a shape that resembles a cross. It is then formed on a Box Maker, reinforced on the corners with tape, and wrapped with a sheet of printed paper to make the finished box top or box bottom.

*Left: Emmeci Box Maker  
(used to manufacture box tops and bottoms)*

## **PLATFORM:**

Most game creators like to include a “platform” in the game, which is designed to hold the game components for safe keeping while the game is being stored or transported. These can be manufactured using either corrugated e-flute material or plastic injection molding. E-flute material is much like what a standard shipping carton is made of, only in this case it is die cut (a process by which shapes are made using the manufacturing equivalent of a cookie cutter) to resemble a tray to compartmentalize the components. Plastic injection-molded inserts are custom-fitted plastic forms to hold the components more securely, and are typically used in more complex games with lots of components. However, they are significantly more costly because molds need to be created.



*Emmeci Rigid Board Maker  
(used to manufacture game boards)*

## **GAME BOARD:**

A game board is generally 79 pt. chipboard, which provides a lot of strength. The board is wrapped on both the outside and inside with sheets of paper. Often, it's just a printed sheet on the inside and a plain black (textured/bubble-like) material that is very durable on the outside – however, printed sheets can be used

for both sides of the board. They are produced on a Board Maker and finished by being die cut with slits and scores that allow the end user to fold them down. Game boards can be no-fold boards, bi-fold, tri-fold, quad fold and 6 panel boards. Most game boards are bi-fold and quad fold.

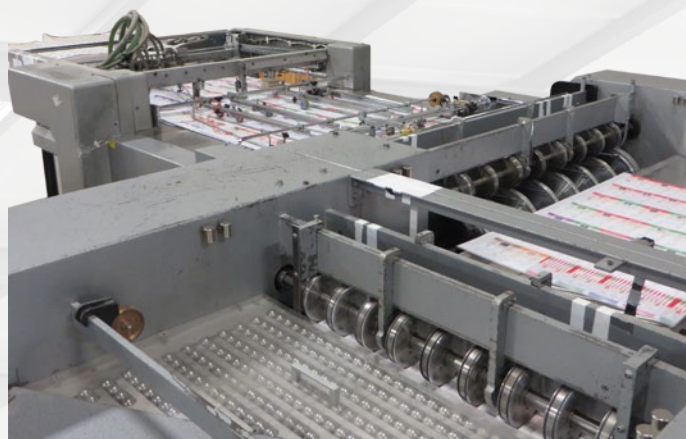




## CARDS:

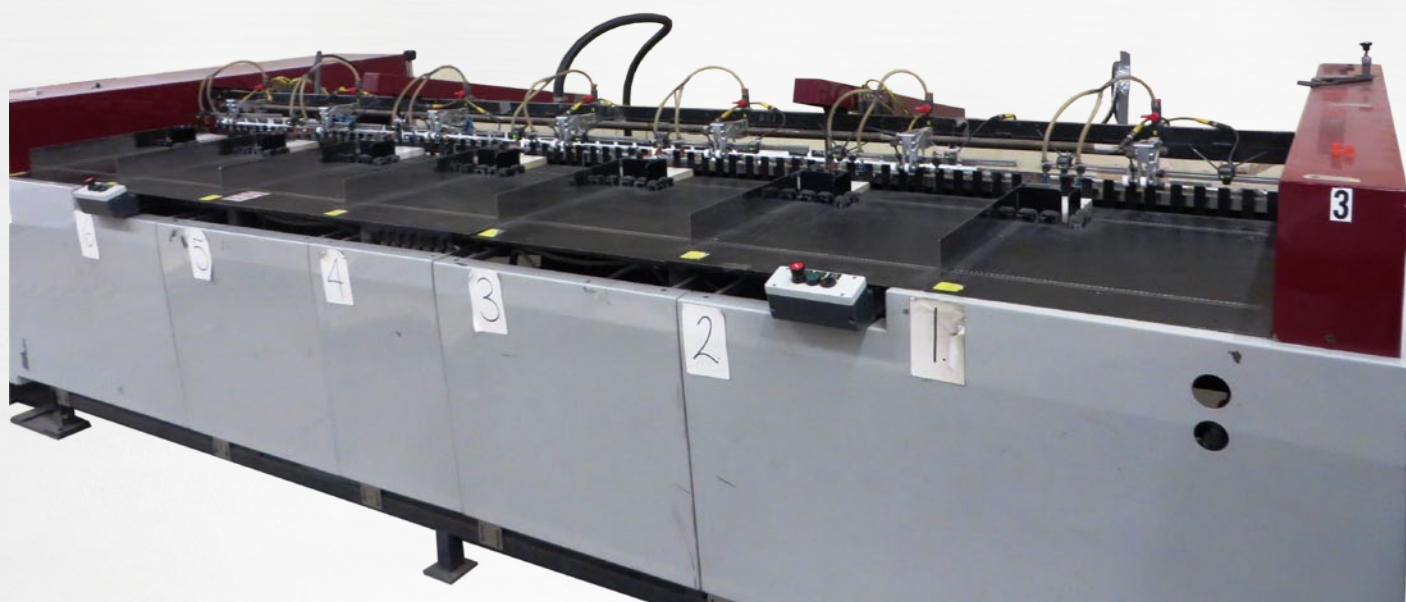
Most games contain some quantity of cards. There are a variety of papers that can be utilized depending upon how frequently cards are shuffled, what age the player is, etc. Cards can be a multitude of sizes (mini, standard poker, bridge, flash card, etc.) and are printed on both sides and then collated (gathered) via mechanical means. There are 2 ways to collate cards, and the number of cards in the deck really dictates which method is used. Rollem Slipstream collators are used to collate full sheets of cards. The sheet is fed into the Rollem unit and slit in one direction; it is then turned 90 degrees and fed into a second set of slitters to divide the cards into individual pieces. They continue on through the machine, where they are collated down into a single deck and ejected out of the machine. The print layout (submitted/approved during the prepress stage) is what determines the order, so cards can be laid out to print multiple cards on a sheet of paper and collate down to be A, B, C, D, etc.

The second method of collating cards is via a collator sheet. Cards can be printed in multiples of the same card or a specific set of cards, then trimmed down into sheets designed to be stacked to complete the collation. They are then trimmed down to the final size and stacked on top of each other (merged) to form the final deck.



*Rollem Slipstream Collator  
(slits and collates full press sheets)*

Cards can be inserted in a tuckbox – in this type of box, the top and/or bottom of the box is folded or tucked; the bottom can also be glued shut. Some tuckboxes include a hang tab for easy display in retailer locations. Most cards included in a game are typically shrink-wrapped (wrapped and heat sealed in plastic) or they are fin-sealed, whereby the top and bottom of the plastic is pressed together to create a seal and the packaging is loose (not tight-fitting like shrink wrap). For some games, cards are bound together with rubber bands.



*Setmaster Collator (gathers sheets)*

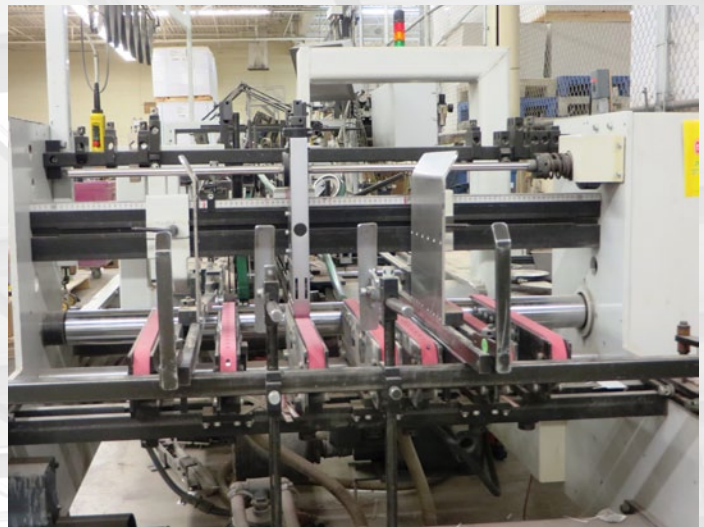


## RULES:

Players need to know how to play the game, right? There are variations on how to produce the rulebook. For simpler games, rules can be printed on a thin, white sheet of paper and folded down to size or stapled (saddle stitch) into 4 or more pages and included in the game. More complex games with in-depth rules that require pictures and expanded explanations are manufactured as stitched booklets. Often, these are printed in full color on a glossier paper stock. Less frequently, the rules are printed on the box itself – the box bottom or on the inside of the box top (lid).

## GAME PIECES:

Dice, pawns, tiddlywinks, tokens, etc., are also very frequently found and used in games. Tokens, for example, can be manufactured by either printing 2 sheets of heavier board stock and mounting them together, or printing litho sheets that are then mounted to chipboard to give the game pieces more strength in the core. In both cases, these are then die cut (remember the cookie cutter as described previously) into individual playing



*Bobst Media III Folder and Gluer  
(used on tuckboxes)*

pieces with any shape the game creator chooses. Other items, such as custom molded plastic pieces and wooden components, are sourced from factories that specialize in these materials. Often, these factories are located overseas, as it is still quite cost prohibitive to obtain plastics and wood components domestically.

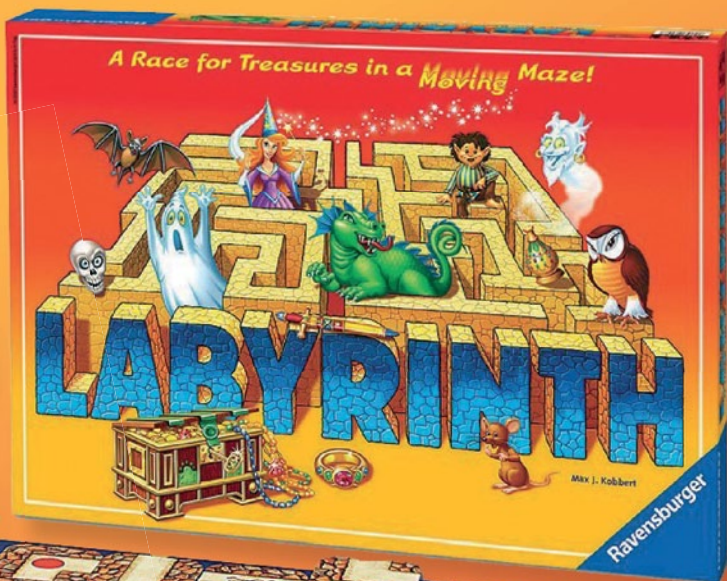
## PHASE 3: PACKING AND ASSEMBLY

During the manufacturing process, the various game components are produced on many different pieces of equipment, in various locations in the production facility. Packing and Assembly is the process where all the components are “married up.” First, a single game is put together and approved as the master. Subsequent games are assembled the exact same way and quality checked to the master frequently. The assembly/packing lines (with additional components placed behind the lines to continuously supply the assemblers/packers) consist of actual human beings putting the games together. The empty box bottom is placed on a moving belt and as it moves down the line the specified components are placed inside. As the final step, the lid is placed over the top and the games are shrink-wrapped in plastic for display at a retail store. They are carton packed and stacked on pallets for shipment or storage.



*PMC High Die (used to die cut card corners)*

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# The Mechanics Shoppe:

## Understanding the Building Blocks of a Game

**Y**ou're sitting around playing a new game with your good friends, laughing and having a good time. It's your resident rules lawyer's turn, and he turns out some ridiculous move that makes everyone at the table say "Is that legal? Can he do that? What were they thinking when they put THAT in the game?!"



**Skyler Nichol**

*Lab tech, motorcyclist, dancer, gamer.  
Did I mention I'm eclectic?*





You may think that the person who designed the game is completely delusional and should take some advice from you at this point. Perhaps this is true, but you might want to get a better picture of why they built the game the way they did. We're going to explore the nuts and bolts of games today, something many designers call "mechanics" (or "mechanisms"). I feel that I should preface: I am a hardcore gamer, and I am also hyper-competitive. When you crave that competitive edge, you study a lot.

So what does this mean for the non-hyper-competitive person at the table? It still means a lot — once you understand the way a game is built, the different cogs and wheels that run the whole engine, you understand a game more deeply, and learn other games more quickly. More games equals more fun, and a better chance you'll know a game (or can pick it up fast enough) that it will be fun for whomever you have over.

For our purposes, we're going to divide different mechanics into fields, so it's a little bit easier to talk about them. What I call "Implement" mechanics are literally the things you use to play the game; cards, dice, the board, and "junk" are four of the biggest ones here. Social mechanics are usually what make the "feel" of the game. Is the game cooperative or competitive? Loud or silent? Things like this drastically change the way you think about the game. Lastly, Rules mechanics are what really make the game feel like a game — if there aren't rules, can a game even be played? Usually, if you notice these, it's a bad thing; if the rules are built well, they usually never get in the way of you playing. After today, hopefully you'll be able to see a rule and say "Oh, they did that to encourage/discourage [blank]."



## Implement Mechanics



Let's talk about implement mechanics first, since they're pretty universal. Each of the things you use when you play a game affects that game in ways that are usually quite subtle. Cards and dice are virtually opposites in most respects — most commonly, cards imply choices; you have a selection of things you can do and you pick one from your hand. Sometimes, you collect cards as a way of showing that you own something. Many games, especially games where you win by victory points, have point cards, or even sets of cards to collect — if you get certain cards, you can get bonus points or additional choices in the game.

Dice, on the other hand, imply chance or risk; you never know what you'll roll, and you're usually at their mercy. If a game is card heavy (or consists of only cards, like *Dominion* or *Seven Wonders*), you can bet that it's probably going to have more choices, and thereby more thinking, involved. Dice games (*Yahtzee* and *Tenzi* are extreme, *Elder Sign* and *King of Tokyo*-style are more common) make you subject to fate, and you may be able to do nothing or little at all if you get bad rolls. Most game-designers know that no one likes to do nothing on

their turn, so they try to avoid this (see the Rules mechanics section), but it can happen.

What about the board? Think about your favorite party games — how many of them have a board? There are probably a few, but not very many. Then think of your favorite strategy games — how many of them have a board? Probably most of them. A board allows for non-social interactions between players (and maybe some antisocial interactions, but we'll talk about that later). Games with more rules usually also have a more complex board, and games with fewer rules may not have a board at all. Most games have a board, and most also have both cards and dice, allowing chance, choice, and in-game interaction, to make a well-balanced game.

Since boards have mechanics within themselves, I'm going to give this a special section. Boards exist in order for someone to win, and the core mechanics in a game are often easiest to see on the board. Here are some questions to help you learn what the board is telling you: Is there territory you can control? Is there an end-goal area? Does the board tell you to do things,





e.g., draw cards or dance in circles? Each of these reveals more mechanics in a game. Things like territory, worker or troop placement, and moving pieces scream strategy.

So what about junk? This is the “other” stuff, and it’s the king of dexterity games. So what if you have to balance a book on your head? If the game says to do it, you do it, but it’s something you’d probably never care about

in the real world. Junk can be virtually anything that allows a game to be played, from the entire game of *Click Clack Lumberjack* and old-school favorite *Marbles*, to various portions of mini-game style casuals like *Cranium*. Junk is almost never tactical, and it’s rare to find outside of dexterity games. Fun and carefree, “junk” games are usually diversions, pastimes, or icebreakers, and can make an awesome mix-up for an evening of gaming.



## Social Mechanics



If there were no element of social interaction, you probably wouldn’t be playing a board game with your friends in the first place. The social aspect is usually at the heart of your decision to choose a certain game, even if you don’t realize it. Bluffing games like *Sheriff of Nottingham* would simply be putting cards in a bag if the elements of lying and role-playing were taken out, but the game becomes something entirely different when you start bluffing your way around Sherwood Forest in order to boost your points.

Do you and your friends have games that you refuse to play? Chances are, the social (or antisocial) mechanics are probably the culprit. Trust has been torn to shreds by games like *Diplomacy* and hyper-cutthroat *Cities and Knights of Catan*, and who can ever look at their friends the same way after *Cards Against Humanity*? These games are designed to introduce social tension and conflict; it’s what either makes the game fun, or

makes it banned at the table. The game’s feel and theme have some of their strongest influences in the social category, so know your group before you start including “antisocial” games in your library.

Cooperative vs. competitive — this is a big distinction. True co-op games are a fairly recent occurrence, with games like *Forbidden Island* and *Pandemic* allowing players to work together against the board or deck. Most games are competitive or team-based, where each player/team has an equal opportunity to win, but someone else loses. A very popular archetype is the Co-Op/Defector or All-Against-One style games, like *Shadows Over Camelot*, wherein everyone begins as a team, but someone turns on the rest, making the game competitive. Rules mechanics tend to support the defector in some way in order to balance out the all vs. one basis of the game.





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“I’m a fan of word games, and this one brings playful new twists I’ve never seen before.”



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## Rules Mechanics

Lastly, rules. We learned a lot in the last issue of Casual Game Insider, so I won't talk too much about them; if you haven't read it, pick up a copy! Here's a recap: For most people, rules aren't cool, but they're what makes a game. The most important rule is almost always how a person wins the game — it's what gives each player a goal. Their plans for achieving that goal may be different, but the end goal is virtually the same: win, and have fun. Rules beyond winning and losing are mostly to promote order and ensure that the fun engine doesn't need much maintenance. Turns ensure that each person can contribute and gives a deliberate "you act next" approach. Various "you can't do this" rules are in place to keep players from abusing other mechanics; what you do when you play gives you clear direction on how to win, so you aren't confused.

The interaction between every mechanic makes the whole of the game. Take a mechanic and the rules that relate to it and put them aside — they're much easier to analyze this way. When they're isolated, it's usually easier to see why a rule is made. Let's touch back to dice games for a quick example. Many dice games, like *King of Tokyo*, have actions associated with your rolls, and often allow you a re-roll. Since you're somewhat at the mercy of the dice, this allows a player to still make choices of what actions to take and whether or not to re-roll.

As another example of rule isolation, let's look at building in *Settlers of Catan*. In this game, you win by collecting points, most of which come from building. The majority of the game focuses on gathering and spending resources and trading with other players. There's a very simple rule that you have to learn even before you can start playing the game: a settlement (the main building that produces resources) has to be at least two spaces away from any other settlement.

There are some immediate consequences of this. Having to move farther away reduces overcrowding around resources, and it forces players to expand their building area. Because players have to build out, they spend their resources without getting points, which slows down the game. You can zone out your opponents by placing a settlement near where they are trying to go and block opponents from other parts of the board. Each of these are made possible by the simple "two spaces away" rule, yet add profound tactical depth.

If the purpose of a rule still doesn't make sense after isolating it, try looking at a related rule or mechanic for some clarity. It takes a little practice, but soon you'll be handling table questions with confidence and understanding rulebooks with ease.







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## Conclusion

Whether you're trying to better understand the game designer's intent or you're designing your own game, pay attention to the game's mechanics. As the building blocks of every game, they will give you clues and insights for learning, explaining, or improving the gaming experience. 🎲



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# OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, AND FOR THE PEOPLE: THE BASICS OF BOARD GAME CROWDFUNDING

There are many places to acquire board games: friendly local game stores, online stores, thrift stores, and more. But one of the newest methods of buying a game is by crowdfunding it. The idea behind crowdfunding is that people pool their money to help fund different projects and receive rewards in return — usually the final product itself along with other incentives.



**Geoffrey Briggs**

*Board Game Enthusiast  
and Kickstarter Addict*

With crowdfunding, anyone can attempt to get their dream product made and in the hands of the community. There are a handful of different crowdfunding sites to choose from, each with dozens (or even hundreds) of prospective games seeking backers. Backing a project is not an investment, but a communal experience — you are taking a risk with the other backers and the project creator to get a product made and delivered. As with any other social platform, there are mixed results: some projects gain viral popularity and skyrocket to the top, while others relaunch numerous times in an attempt to obtain their minimum funding goal.

Over the last three years I have backed almost 300 projects, with over 200 being board game related — amid all of this crowdfunding, I can honestly say I have no regrets, and I will surely continue for years to come. I have also gained much experience on what to look for when choosing a project to support with my money. But if you're new to crowdfunding, how do you know which projects to support? I'm here to help! In this article, we will look at two of the most prominent crowdfunding sites for board games, and then discuss how to spend your hard-earned money wisely.

## CROWDFUNDING SITES

The first site is Indiegogo. Indiegogo was first started in January 2008 by Danae Ringelmann, Slava Rubin, and Eric Schell. It began with a focus on film projects, but has added the ability to fund many other types of projects, as well. They claim to be the largest crowdfunding platform in the world, hosting over 300,000 campaigns with around 7,000 active at any given time. With its 1,000% growth over the last two years, it now has offices in Los Angeles and New York, in addition to its headquarters in San Francisco. Much of what makes Indiegogo stand out are the people who have supported them over the years. Some of the most notable ones are angel investors, including Sir Richard Branson, Max Levchin (Cofounder of PayPal), Maynard Webb (Chairman of Yahoo's board), and Megan Smith (White House CTO).

When looking at the most funded projects in the area of tabletop games, there are a few worth noting. The first is not





a game per se, but an internet show that helps promote our hobby: TableTop Season 3 raised \$1,414,159 during a one month time frame, with 22,211 “funders” of the project – it can be viewed now on their YouTube channel. The second is *Among the Stars*, published by Artipia Games, raising \$43,631 in one month with 621 funders. The third is *Assault on Doomrock*, published by Beautiful Disaster Games, raising \$26,198 in one month with 446 funders. Overall, the project success rate for Indiegogo is approximately 34%.

The second site (and the king of tabletop projects) is Kickstarter. Kickstarter was launched in April 2009 by Perry Chen, Yancey Strickler, and Charles Adler. With an initial focus in the United States, the site began accepting projects from the United Kingdom in October 2010, followed by Canada in September 2013, Australia and New Zealand in November 2013, and finally Denmark, Ireland, Norway, and Sweden in September 2014. As of February 2015 there have been over 227,000 launched projects, with around 7,000 projects active at any time, and a

40% success rate. Project creators on Kickstarter have raised over \$1.6 billion overall. At the time of writing, there have been 3,046 successfully funded tabletop game projects, raising over \$138 million in funding. One of the earlier Kickstarter successes to start the trend was *Alien Frontiers*, by Clever Mojo Games, which raised \$14,885 with 228 backers in April 2010.

When delving into the numbers in the tabletop category over the last 6 years, the results are impressive. The top three games include Monolith’s *Conan*, which raised \$3,327,757 with 16,038 backers in one month; Reaper Miniatures’ *Bones II*, with \$3,169,610 and 14,964 backers in 25 days; and Cool Mini or Not’s *Zombicide Season 3*, with \$2,849,064 and 12,011 backers in 27 days. As you can see by the numbers, Kickstarter is the more favored site when it comes to tabletop games. Many prominent publishers have run, are currently running, or will run a project on this platform. Below is a list of the more consistent ones, with funding totals as of April 29, 2015.

COMPANY NAME	SUCCESSFUL/ LAUNCHED	\$ RAISED	# OF BACKERS	FIRST YEAR USING KS
Cool Mini or Not	17 of 17	\$12,593,573	73,481	2012
Mantic Games	9 of 9	\$5,343,543	25,913	2012
Queen Games	30 of 31	\$1,797,474	22,126	2012
Game Salute	56 of 66	\$1,572,070	29,379	2012
Tasty Minstrel Games	18 of 21	\$1,441,584	64,149	2011
Indie Boards & Cards	14 of 15	\$1,180,748	38,058	2010
Mayday Games	21 of 23	\$862,353	18,709	2011
Eagle-Gryphon Games	33 of 35	\$619,806	12,243	2011
Crash Games	10 of 10	\$265,666	11,445	2011

## SPENDING YOUR MONEY WISELY

Now that the history lesson is over, let’s get to the real meat. Where and how should you choose to show your support? With so many board game projects, what do you do? Here are some key points to keep in mind when choosing whether or not to support a crowdfunding project:

### THE PROJECT CREATOR

The first and foremost is that your money is a contribution to the creator of the project – you are not an investor in

the company. When looking at a campaign you’re interested in, you really need to do your research on the creator. For starters, see if they have run any other projects – if they have, browse through the comments and updates sections for these projects. You won’t be able to post any of your own comments or view any backer-only updates, but you should be able to get an idea of whether or not previous backers had a positive experience. Another place to look is in the game and publisher forums on BoardGameGeek.com, where many project backers often discuss their experiences (both positive and negative).

## YOUR RISK

Another important point is that your money is at risk. In my experience, most project creators follow through with their commitments, but there is no guarantee — there have been a few companies that have not delivered campaign rewards and are no longer in communication with their backers. Much more commonly, however, you face the risk of receiving products that are poorly designed or manufactured, are delivered late, or that otherwise fail to meet your expectations.

To evaluate the risk, look closely at the “Risks and challenges” section of the Kickstarter campaign page looking for any red flags. You should also determine how close the project is to completion — if it appears well-polished, has final artwork, and has been reviewed positively by prominent reviewers, it is more likely that



the project’s commitments will be kept. On the other hand, if there is only prototype artwork available or there is little evidence of being playtested or reviewed, chances are you’ll get a poor product (if anything at all) or have a bad experience in general.

## YOUR PLEDGE

With Indiegogo, there are two types of projects: Fixed Funding and Flexible Funding. With Fixed Funding, the project is only funded if at least the minimum amount is pledged. When you make a pledge, the money is held and only released to the creator at the end of the project if the minimum was reached; otherwise it is refunded. With Flexible Funding, the money is released to the creator at the end of the project, regardless of the funding amount.

Kickstarter uses a similar model to Indiegogo’s Fixed Funding — but rather than receiving a refund if a project fails, you are only charged after a project ends successfully. With Kickstarter, you can cancel your pledge at any time during the campaign, while with Indiegogo you cannot. A credit card is required for both Kickstarter and Indiegogo, with Indiegogo adding the ability to use PayPal as well.

## YOUR REWARDS

When making a pledge, you select which rewards you would like to receive in return. These range from all sorts of incentives the project creator has come up with, including some that are added during, or even after, the campaign (using a third party pledge

manager). Many projects include stretch goals that are unlocked when certain funding milestones are reached. Often, these stretch goals are considered exclusive to project backers, with some companies also using them for sales at conventions. However, there is a growing trend to make these items available to other buyers while quantities last.

With Kickstarter, you can also choose to make a pledge without selecting a reward. For instance, it is common to pledge \$1 with no rewards to just receive the project updates and utilize the comments section. On Indiegogo, you can favorite a project to receive updates and post comments directly to the creator, but these comments remain hidden until you pledge towards the project.





## YOUR INPUT

Many project creators are open to suggestions about the products and other rewards they are producing. As a project backer, it is common (and useful) to express your feelings and opinions about the project, whether it be a rule change, an additional component, or any other suggestion. By taking the time to be a part of the creative process, you will likely be happier with the end result. If you want to have a say in the project, look in the comment section to find evidence that backer input is being taken seriously.

Many game projects include print-and-play files to allow prospective backers to play a prototype of the game prior to committing to the project. These are useful for reducing risk by allowing you to discover ahead of time whether or not you like a game. But they are also a great starting point for providing input to the project creator, as these gaming sessions will produce a lot of helpful feedback that can be given back to the creator to improve the end product.

## PROJECT UPDATES

When pledging to a project, you will begin receiving updates from the project creator. These updates may inform you of revised artwork or components, articles such as reviews or interviews, stretch goals, funding progress, or other project milestones. Most of the updates are very informative and are useful for keeping up to date during and after the project

funding period. However, be aware that some project creators get overzealous with these updates, which can be overwhelming at times. Fortunately, you can always change your account settings to not receive these updates.

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## WAITING PERIOD

Crowdfunding is not the same as shopping on Amazon – other than digital files, most rewards will take some time to get to you, since they do not yet exist in their completed form. Estimated delivery dates can range from a few months to up to a year or more, and they can change based on many factors. One factor is the number of stretch goals met, which can cause some projects to deliver in waves. Other factors include the number of backers, the number of projects headed to the same production facilities, or waiting on different aspects of the project to be finalized. Earlier this year, many projects were delayed in the U.S. due to massive port congestion. Small delays can sometimes escalate into much longer

delays – an extreme example is *Kingdom Death: Monster*, which funded in January 2013 with an estimated delivery of November 2013, but at the time of writing it is still awaiting production.

If the delivery schedule is important to you (a Christmas or birthday gift, for instance), you should back the project far in advance and stick with experienced companies who have a history of delivering on time. Avoid new project owners who haven't yet fulfilled a successful campaign, as they are most likely to experience delays. Also, if you stick to casual games with fewer components, there is less risk of manufacturing delays.

## RECEIVING YOUR REWARD

For the most part, when you finally receive your backer reward, it feels like Christmas. This usually begins by receiving notice from an update that fulfillment has started, and you begin to eagerly await the delivery of a package on your doorstep. What adds even more excitement is the

realization that you will be receiving this new game several days or weeks before it is available for anyone else to buy at a retail store. As you pop open the package, unwrap the shrink, and pull out the components, be prepared for your gaming group to envy all your shiny new toys.



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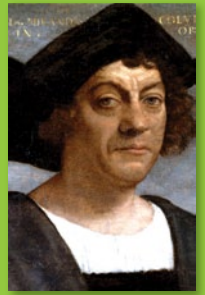
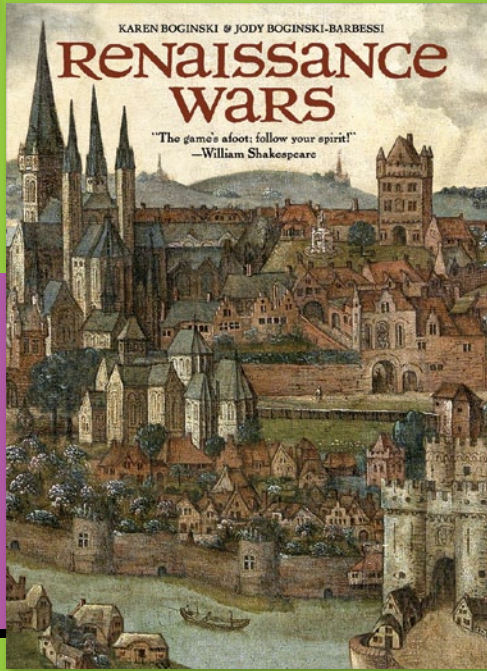
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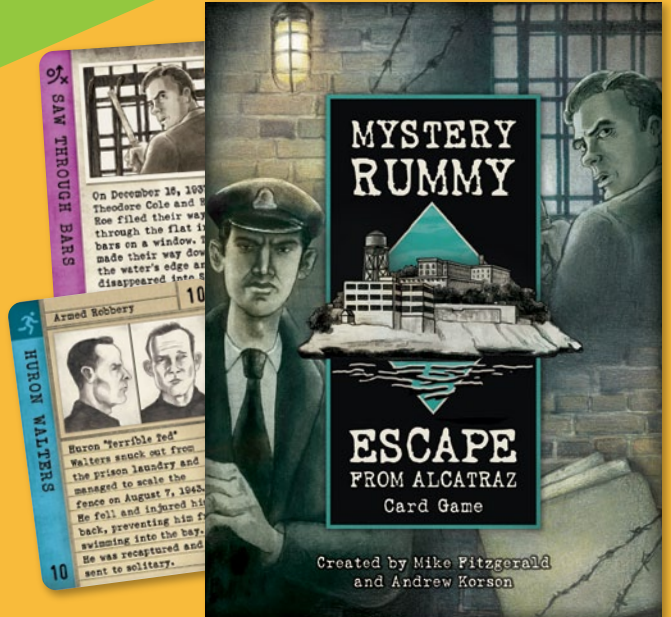
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## EXPERIENCING THE GAME

When you finally dive into the game, hopefully you find it to be worth all of the risk and anticipation, and that it meets all of your expectations. However, as mentioned earlier, you may want to also be prepared for possible disappointment – with the large amount of board games being crowdfunded nowadays, there is always the possibility of receiving a less than stellar game. The unfortunate reality is that one person’s amazing game concept may not always translate to someone else’s enjoyment when playing. On the bright side, however, these rare disappointments also make great white elephant gifts at your next party!

Now, with these points in mind, go forth and spread your money to worthy game projects to help grow the gaming hobby. If you choose wisely, you’ll experience the continual thrill of crowdfunding – and, like me, you’ll never look back! 🎲

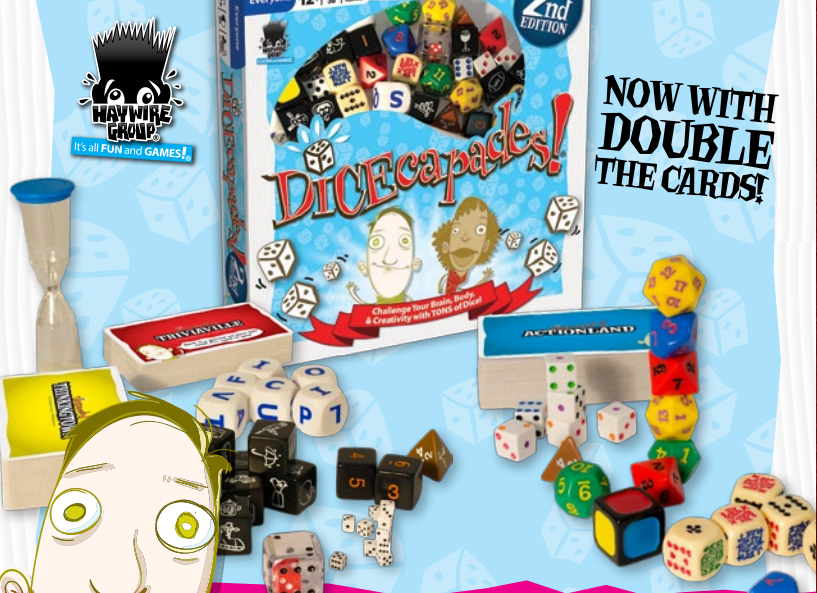


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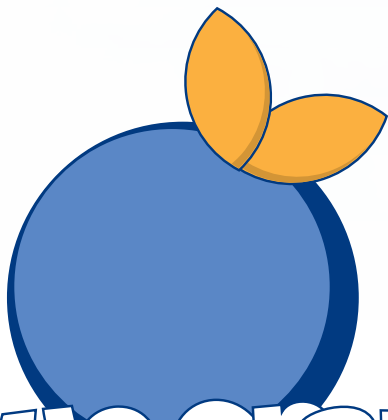




# GROWING UP:

## The **Blue Orange** Metamorphosis

With an explosive start as a children's game company, Blue Orange Games has begun transitioning into a well-rounded publisher that all casual gamers should be able to appreciate. This is their story.



**Brandan Parsons**

Marketing Associate,  
Blue Orange Games

**blue orange**  
Hot Games Cool Planet



## Gobbling a Start



Thierry Denoual

Blue Orange Games was founded in 2001, when Thierry Denoual approached Julien Mayot to promote and sell his new game, *Gobblet* — a classic 2-player abstract strategy game similar to *Connect 4*, but with different sized pieces that can be stacked on top of each other in order to “gobble” the piece(s) beneath it. When Thierry showed Julien his idea for *Gobblet*, Julien immediately came on board and embarked on a cross-country road trip, visiting 500 stores and selling 10,000 copies of the game!

After the great success of *Gobblet*, Thierry focused on publishing a series of simple wooden children’s games (affectionately referred to as “woody goodies”) that

focused on the key childhood development skills such as memory, visual perception, and hand-eye coordination. Over the next 10 years, Blue Orange continued to build momentum with Thierry’s simple, clever children’s games. Then, in 2010 we opened our doors to other game designers, publishing several titles from outside inventors such as *Shrimp Cocktail*, *Trigger*, *Fastrack*, *Tell Tale*, and (most importantly) *Spot it!* — a high-speed matching game in which there is always one and ONLY one match between any 2 cards.



*Gobblet* — the game that started it all

## Spotting a Hit

It’s funny, when we first saw *Spot it!*, there were people at the company who didn’t want to make the game — they thought it was TOO simple a concept. But Julien and Thierry saw the potential for the game, and knew they had to publish it. *Spot it!* is so straightforward that anyone can learn the game in less than one minute, and finish it in under five. But the compelling experience of the game keeps people coming back for more and more.

When we saw our community of family testers playing the game, it was CLEAR

we had a hit on our hands — it’s just one of those games that people understand right away. As they continued to play the game, it reached a point where we didn’t even need to teach them anymore — they started teaching themselves. And we had seen the same thing with some of our other games like *Pengoloo* and *Gobblet Gobblers*. So we recognized the pure contagious fun of the game, and picked it up right away.



*Spot it!* started in its red tin containing 55 cards full of familiar and eclectic symbols and quickly made a name for itself. From there, expansion was inevitable and it grew into a variety of editions. From educational versions, to learn the alphabet or practice reading, to licensed games, like Disney Publishing, MLB, or NHL, we created a game for everybody’s tastes. To date, Blue Orange has released 27 *Spot it!* editions, representing one-third of our game titles with over 3 million units sold!





## Game Philosophy

Making streamlined, intuitive and engaging games is our top priority. We want to make games that you can understand the concept of in less than 1 minute,

learn it in less than 5, and play it in less than 30. We want to create a play experience that is super quick to learn, but also immersive and deep in strategy.

**We believe games are best with as few unnecessary complications and components as possible, and focus on family-friendly games that kids can learn quickly, but are still interesting and engaging to the adults who play with them. We don't want our players sitting around for hours trying to learn the rules for a game — we want them to be able to dive into the fun immediately.**

## Recent Successes

*Doodle Quest* is a perfect example of the type of games we love to make. It was a huge hit for us last year — it's a simple drawing game where players are trying to complete quests by drawing lines and basic shapes on a transparent sheet. Each challenge has a drawing that tells the player what they need to do (connect the mermaids, draw teeth in the shark's mouth, etc.). The players look at the drawing to understand their challenge, and then complete the challenge by drawing on a separate transparent sheet. When everyone has completed their attempt, they take turns placing their transparent sheets on top of the drawings to see how they line up.



What makes *Doodle Quest* unique is that you can learn the game without saying a word — just watching one turn is enough. Each challenge is so simple that you can look at the



*In Doodle Quest, players use visual perception and spatial awareness to draw on a transparent sheet*

language-independent instructions and understand immediately what you are doing. Yet, the game is surprisingly challenging and engaging because it draws on the fundamental human experience of visual perception/spatial awareness. Its surprising depth of

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complexity allows for even the more hardcore gamers to get drawn in, as evidenced by winning second place for the Best Children's Game of 2014 in BoardGameGeek.com's Golden Geek Awards.

*Battle Sheep* is another recent success story for us. In *Battle Sheep*, your objective is to block out your opponents' sheep so that you can cover the biggest portion of the playing field. Players take turns moving stacks of sheep in straight lines until they reach the end of the board or run into another sheep stack – play continues until no one can move any more sheep. You can learn the rules in about a minute or two, but it also presents complex choices and opportunities for strategy. Even the setup of the game board allows for careful thought, because players take turns connecting the pieces of the modular board each game. Each piece has 14 different points of connection, so there are hundreds of different possibilities, and each one will have a subtle impact on play. Originally published as a 2-player abstract strategy game called *Splits* by our sister company Blue Orange Europe, we thought the game had more potential by increasing the maximum number of players up to 4 and adding in the sheep theme to make the game more engaging for children and families.




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*In Battle Sheep, players try to block out their opponents' sheep so they can cover the largest area of the playing field*




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*Longhorn bridges the gap between children's games and more in-depth strategy games*

*Longhorn* is another recent title, oriented more towards adults than the other games we are used to. We had well known illustrator Vincent Dutrait do the cover and components and acclaimed inventor Bruno Cathala contribute the game design. Just like all our other games, the rules are super simple. Each turn, all players have to choose which color of cow to remove from their location, and take ALL of the cows of that color, then move that many spaces away. Play continues like this until there are no more cows within reach. There are only 9 locations total and 36 cows. Because the cows are randomly distributed, and their value decreases based on which cows you take, it turns into a surprisingly complex game. There are not many factors to consider (number of cows in each color and which spaces can be reached by each color), so it is an easy way to practice thinking and planning ahead. For *Longhorn*, we have received a lot of positive feedback from gamer parents wanting to introduce their kids to slightly heavier games that are still casual enough for their kids to enjoy.

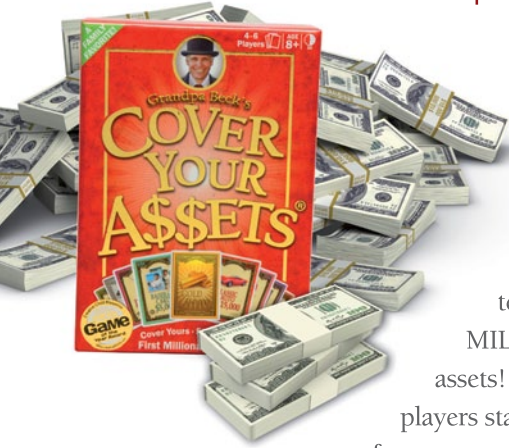




# New Classic Card Games!

Guaranteed to please for years of game nights.

## Best Selling!



### Gateway to gaming!

The goal of *Cover Your Assets*®

is to be the first player to achieve a total of at least ONE MILLION DOLLARS in assets! During gameplay, players stack matching pairs of assets to create their own asset

stockpiles. Excitement builds when players attempt to capture the top set of assets of other players. Players initiate challenges by showing another player a card that matches the other player's top set of assets, or a wild card. Assets are secured each time a set is covered, so make sure to cover your assets!

## Best Trick-Taking!

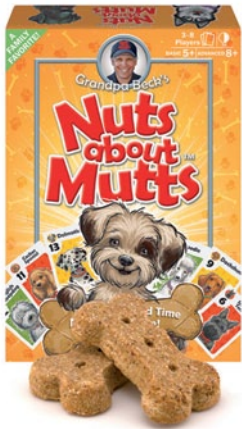
*Skull King*™ is an exciting card game where every hand can be a winning hand... if you play your cards right! With a "Yo Ho Ho," players simultaneously bid how many tricks they will win. Scheme to make sure you win exactly how many you bid. You'll enjoy the depth of this game with the Trump cards, Pirate cards, Escape cards, and the special Tigris and Skull King cards. Easy to learn, but it involves keen strategy and intriguing scoring options!



## Unique Challenge!



## NEW for 2015!



A fast paced hand-elimination game with many unique twists. The pile in the center of the table is your dogs' home! You can play a dog card if it matches the color, number or breed of the top card. The Mutt, Flea, Fire Hydrant, Dog House, and Pedigree cards are wild cards with special consequences! The two ways to play provide dynamic play for all ages.

## Classic for All Ages!



Finally, a game with a golf theme that is fun for the whole family! It's not a replication of golf mechanics but, "Like Golf, the Low Score Wins!" Easy enough for all ages! Challenging enough for everyone to enjoy! Do you have the lowest score? Take the risk and expose your last card! Finding a good two player can be tough. Try it! Great conversation game for 2-5 players.



## Own any of these new classics for \$12.99!

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# Moving Forward

Now that our original cadre of young players has grown older, we want to continue to provide them with worthwhile, entertaining products that are interesting to their maturing minds. This year, we are increasing the maturity of our games, adding slightly more complex titles from well-established game inventors. We have launched the Blue Orange Europe collection, created specifically with the Hobby

and Specialty Store market in mind, featuring games from well-known game designers. While you can still play these games with your family and kids, their added level of subtle complexity will also easily whet the appetites of the more serious gamer.

*Longhorn* and *Battle Sheep* were some of the first games in this collection, released in 2014. Because people responded so positively to them, we have grown the collection to include 13 games (and growing). For instance, we've got a cool, new push-your-luck card game from Bruno Cathala called *Dragon Run*, in which players compete to steal the most gold from the dragon, without being burned alive by its fiery breath! And we are proud to welcome Bruno Faidutti and Charles Chevallier into our creative fold, with two exciting, new 2 player strategy games: *Attila* and *Wakanda*. *Attila* is a trap-your-opponent game where players try to maneuver their pieces around the board so that their opponent has nowhere left to go; *Wakanda* is a totem pole building game where players try to combine totems worth the most points for their villages.



A new breed of products from Blue Orange Games.  
Clockwise from top: Dragon Run, Wakanda, and Attila

# GOLD MINE

The Game of Exploration, Riches & Peril



Video Tutorial



- Parents' Choice Recommended
- The Toy Man eChoice Award



"A solid game, delivering fun competition with light rules, easy game play, and allows for meaningful strategy and tactics." - Father Geek



Launching at Gen Con 2015 is our first heavier board game, called *New York 1901*. Expected to be a sensation, this game has been in the making for over a year, with amazing illustrations from Vincent Dutrait. It is a city building game where players try to score the most points by constructing, demolishing, and rebuilding skyscrapers on the famous streets of New York City.

# LOOKIN' FOR SOME FUN?



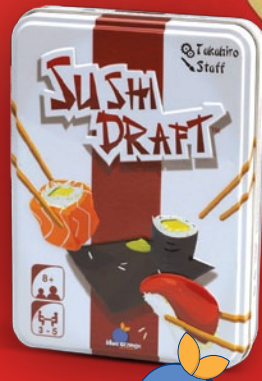
Springtime means adventure time to the gnomes as they travel the forest trail. They will brawl, play tricks and set traps in order to have the most gems!

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Pick the **TASTIEST GAME** on the menu!



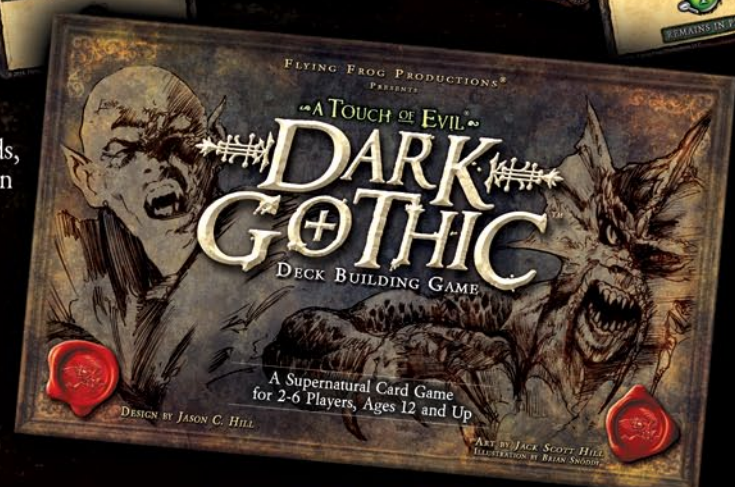
~ A TOUCH OF EVIL ~

# DARK GOTHIC™

DECK BUILDING GAME

A Touch of Evil: Dark Gothic™ is a Deck Building Card Game based on the colonial American gothic horror setting of the popular A Touch of Evil® board game! The game allows 2-6 players to each take on the role of a unique monster-hunting Hero, collecting Allies and Gear to aid them in their journeys while they root out evil and hunt supernatural creatures back to their lairs. Players must hunt down a series of increasingly difficult Villains that are terrorizing the countryside before the land is consumed in shadows. Dark Secrets lurk around every corner and only the most cunning and spirited hunter can prevail in the age of Dark Gothic™!

Dark Gothic™ includes 8 different Heroes to play, each with their own unique special ability and starting deck, 9 challenging Villains to face off with, and over 320 game cards, as well as the deadly Omen Die. Simple to learn and addictive to play, with a 60 minute game time, Dark Gothic™ is perfect for new gamers and deck-building veterans alike!



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## The Big Picture

Blue Orange Games is actually divided into 3 different divisions. Blue Orange (U.S.) is the company that's been around since the start. Blue Orange Editions is our creative team based in France, under Thierry's direct guidance. And, in 2013, we partnered with Jactalea Games. They changed their name to "Blue Orange Europe" and now we share many of the same resources and games in our catalog. Several of Thierry's classic wooden games have been brought to Europe (e.g., *Goblet*, *Goblet Gobblers*, and *Chickyboom*), and we have taken *Longhorn*, *Wakanda*, and *Armadora* from their catalog. It has been a great opportunity to expand our catalog and collaborate with some of the biggest names in European game design.

At this point, most of the games we make are published at the same time. But in some cases, because of specific market trends, differences in opinion, or restrictions with international distribution, there are some games that only get published by one or the other.

However, what WILL remain constant for all of Blue Orange (the U.S. and our sister companies overseas), is our dedication to quick, fun, rewarding play experiences, that can be easily learned, and played over and over again without losing their appeal. We want to provide our families of gamers with rewarding experiences that teach them something new – about the world, themselves, or their friends – each and every time they play. 🎲



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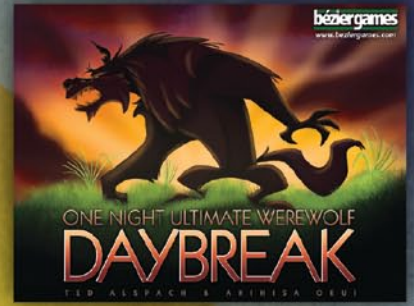
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