

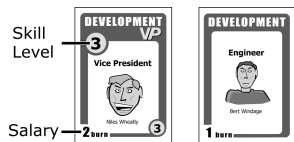


Rules of Play

For 2 to 4 players ages 10 to adult
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BURN RATE™ is the game of dot-com failure. You and your friends each become the owner of a dot-com startup with great funding but terrible business ideas. Force your opponents to hire too many employees and launch bad dot-com ideas, and they'll burn through their money and go out of business. If your company is the last one afloat, you win!

The Cards



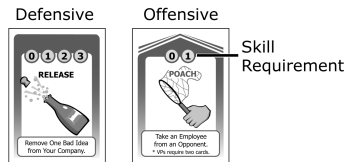
Employee Cards

Employee cards represent the workforce available to the players. They are divided into four departments: Sales, Development, Human Resources (HR), and Finance.

Most employees have a *skill level* that ranges from 0 to 3. An employee with a high skill level is good at his or her job.

Employees also have a *salary* between 1 and 3. This is how much you pay them each turn.

Engineers are a type of Development employee with no skill level. Engineers work on dot-com projects for you. Without engineers, you may have to add expensive contractors to your company instead.



Play Cards

Play cards represent actions that you can take. They allow you to do things like collect more money or hire an employee. You'll play these cards from your hand during your turn.

Some Play cards are *defensive* and will benefit your company. Others are *offensive*, and you'll use them to attack your opponents. You can recognize an offensive Play card by its pointy top and red print.

Play cards have a *skill requirement*. You'll need to match one of these numbers to an employee when you play the card.

Take a few minutes to look through the cards before you read on.

Setup

Separate the contractors from the rest of the employees and set them aside. You don't need them yet.

Sort the employees into their departments. Shuffle them by department and place them face down in four piles at the center of the table, one pile for each department. This is the **labor pool**. Flip the top card of each department pile so that it is face up.

Shuffle the Play card deck and set it at the center of the table.

Each player starts with **100** units of funding in a bank account. Players will pay their employees' salaries at the end of their turns. Use a pencil and scrap paper to keep track of how much money each player has left.

First Hire

Begin by taking turns hiring employees. The dealer goes first and must choose one of the four face-up employees to join his or her company. Hiring proceeds clockwise, with each player choosing an employee, until every player has hired a total of **four**. As each player takes an employee, flip the next one in the pile face up.

You should try to hire an employee from each department, but you don't have to — you can leave one or more departments unstaffed if you want. You still must hire a total of four.

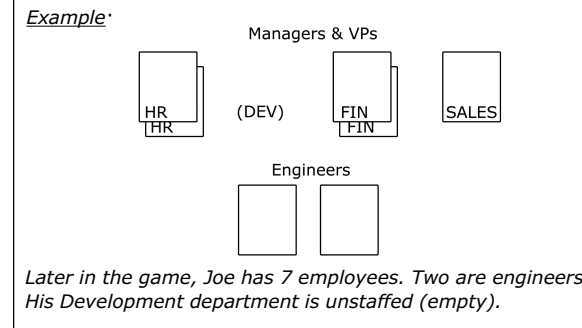
Example: Joe is the dealer. After shuffling and arranging the cards, he looks at who is available for hire. He sees that Martin Able, Brad Duke, Tony Fuji, and Ben Zhao are the four employees that are face up. Since Ben Zhao has a high skill level (3), Joe chooses to hire him. He takes Ben Zhao and flips over the next card, revealing Mary DeLany.

Arranging Your Employees

Arrange your employees face up on the table in front of you by department. Take your best employee from each department — the one with the highest skill number — and put him or her on top. This one is your **department head**.

Other employees in the department don't do anything but collect a salary. Put them underneath the department head, so that only their salaries are showing.

Put your engineers in an unruly mob below your managers.



Vice Presidents Are Special:

Here are some special rules for Vice Presidents:

- If you ever have a Vice President (VP) in a department, then the VP *must* be the department head, even if other employees in the department are more skilled!
- You may never have more than one VP at a time in each department. Once a VP occupies a department, you cannot hire or be forced to hire another one.
- Vice Presidents are more loyal to your company, but on the other hand, they are harder to remove. To FIRE one of your VPs or to POACH one from your opponent, you must play two of those cards at the same time, instead of one.

Game Play

Once hiring is complete, deal **six** play cards to each player. The player to the left of the dealer goes first. Each player follows these four steps on each of his or her turns:

1. Play or discard cards.
2. Add or remove contractors.
3. Pay salaries.
4. Draw.

1. Play or Discard Cards

On your turn you may choose to play up to **four** Play cards from your hand, in any order. If you decide not to play any cards, you may forfeit your turn and discard up to **four** cards instead.

Hint: You should try to move cards through your hand rapidly. Don't be afraid to discard. You need to play lots of cards to stay ahead!

Each type of Play card belongs to a certain department, as shown by its color. For example, the HIRE card is blue and therefore belongs to the HR department.

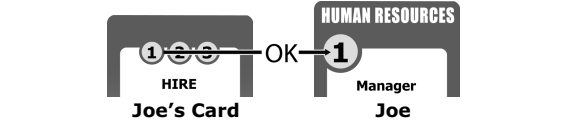
To play a card, you'll need to match its skill requirement to a department head of the same color.

- If the card is **defensive**, then one of its skill numbers must match the skill level of **your department head**.
- If the card is **offensive**, then one of its skill numbers must match the skill level of **your opponent's department head**.
- Cards with a zero (0) skill number can be played on a department of the same color that is **unstaffed**.

If the skill numbers don't match, you can't play the card. Some examples are found on the next page.

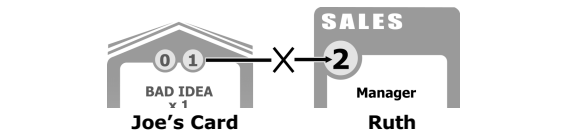
This way, good department heads will enable you to play more defensive cards to help yourself, and will block your opponents from playing their offensive cards against you.

Example 1: A legal defensive play.



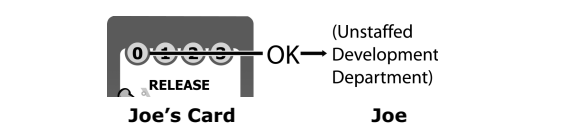
Joe has a HIRE card with a 1, 2, and 3 on it. HIRE is a defensive HR card. Joe's HR department head has a skill level of 1. That's a match, so Joe is allowed to play the card and hire the employee of his choice from the top of the labor pool.

Example 2: A blocked offensive play.



Joe has a BAD IDEA card with a 0 and a 1 on it. A BAD IDEA is an offensive Sales card. Joe would like to give it to Ruth, but Ruth's Sales department head has a skill level of 2. There is no match, so Joe cannot play this card against Ruth. Her skilled Sales manager keeps her safe.

Example 3: An unstaffed department.



Joe has no Development managers or VPs. This means that his Development department is unstaffed! Fortunately, he has a RELEASE card with a 0 skill number on it. Joe is allowed to play this card because the number 0 can be used with an unstaffed department.

Vice President Play Cards:

- A group of Vice Presidents can do some crazy things. There are four unique Play cards in the deck that don't belong to any department. Instead of matching a skill number, their requirement is to match a minimum quantity of VPs.

After you play any card other than a BAD IDEA, place it in a discard pile, and move any fired employees back to the bottom of their pile in the labor pool.

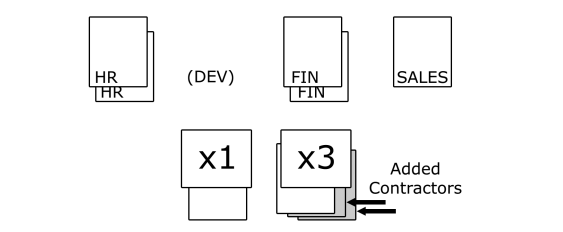
A BAD IDEA card represents a money-losing dot-com project that your opponent must deal with. Your opponent must keep it, until he or she is able to remove ("RELEASE") it.

2. Add or Remove Contractors

Now it's time to account for any BAD IDEAS you've accumulated from your opponents. Each BAD IDEA occupies between one and four engineers, as shown by the "x" number on the card. Add up how many engineers you need. If you don't have enough, make up the difference with contractors. Take as many contractors as you need, or put some back if you have too many. If you run out of contractor cards, just make some more. As in real life, there's an endless supply of contractors!

Contractors are very expensive, and you can't fire them with FIRE cards. To get rid of them, you need to replace them with engineers, or RELEASE the BAD IDEAS from your company.

Example:



At the end of his turn, Joe still has two engineers working for him. His opponents have given him two BAD IDEAS: Free Internet Access (x1) and Online Grocery Store (x3). Since the BAD IDEAS total x4 engineers, Joe has to add two contractors to make up the difference.

If Joe plays a RELEASE card, he could remove the Online Grocery Store (x3), and then he'd be able to remove the contractors. Or, Joe could HIRE or POACH more engineers to replace them.

3. Pay Salaries

Pay all your employees' salaries at the end of your turn, even if you chose to discard instead of play. Add the salaries of all your employees and contractors (this total is commonly known as your BURN RATE). Subtract that amount from your bank account.

If your bank account goes below zero, your company has gone bankrupt. You are immediately out of the game, and you must return all of your Play cards to the discard pile and employees to the bottom of the labor pool.

4. Draw

Draw to refill your hand to **six** cards, reshuffling the deck if needed. Play passes to the left.

Winning the Game

A player wins when all the other players have gone bankrupt!

Hint: During the game, you should drive up your opponents' costs by forcing them to hire useless employees and by giving them BAD IDEAS.

Hint: You should try to protect yourself by hiring and keeping a small but skilled group of employees.

Credits

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