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The Game Inventor's Guidebook: How To Invent And Sell Board Games, Card Games, Role-Playing Games, & Everything In Between!



Synopsis

The definitive guide for anyone with a game idea who wants to know how to get it published from a Game Design Manager at Wizards of the Coast, the world's largest tabletop hobby game company. Do you have an idea for a board game, card game, role-playing game or tabletop game? Have you ever wondered how to get it published? For many years Brian Tinsman reviewed new game submissions for Hasbro, the largest game company in the US. With *The Game Inventor's Guidebook: How to Invent and Sell Board Games, Card Games, Role-playing Games & Everything in Between!* he presents the only book that lays out step-by-step advice, guidelines and instructions for getting a new game from idea to retail shelf.

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Customer Reviews

According to its subtitle, *The Game Inventor's Guidebook* covers: "How to Invent and Sell Board Games, Card Games, Role-player Games, and Everything in Between!" In other words, the book covers the modern, *non*-computer game industry. The book opens with short descriptions of some of the success stories of the past couple decades: *Trivial Pursuit* *Magic: the Gathering* *Dungeons & Dragons* *The Pokemon Trading Card Game* If you're not familiar with the stories behind these games, they make very interesting reading, especially for indies. With the exception of the Pokemon TCG, these are stories of dedicated individuals pursuing a dream and not giving up when things get tough. After that, the book describes how the game publishing industry works, and provides summaries of the companies and games that a would-be "game inventor" should be aware of. More

useful than the birds-eye view of how the industry works are the frequent interviews with publishers and game designers. These are probably the best part of the book. Such modern "name" game designers like Reiner Knizia (Lord of the Rings, Tigris & Euphrates & many, many more), Brian Hersch (Outburst, Taboo), Mike Fitzgerald (Mystery Rummy, Wyvern), and more, discuss how they got started and how they approach game design. Equally informative were the interviews with publishers such as Mike Gray of Hasbro, Peggy Brown of Patch, Mike Osterhaus of Out of the Box, and others. Because of the costs associated with games of this nature, the book several times cautions against self-publishing your game ideas, recommending that the would-be game inventor go through a publisher.

I read this book on the recommendation of game designer Lewis Pulsipher. Tinsman, game design manager for new business at Wizards of the Coast, describes the book's target audience as "really just for one person...the lucky person destined to create the next category-defining blockbuster game." In fact, though, his book addresses anyone who seeks to have a game published, one way or another, with valuable advice and insight toward making a game concept into a reality. Tinsman opens with a series of anecdotes about four of the wildly successful games of our time - Trivial Pursuit, Magic: The Gathering, Dungeons and Dragons, and Pokemon. These stories of blockbuster proportions are exciting to read, inspiring to imagine, and yet a little daunting to the hopeful designer. What are the odds of coming up with the next Monopoly? Is that too crazy to consider? Perhaps, but Tinsman offers much more than just a review of the peak games of the age. He follows with chapters on the nature of the industry, the considerations that publishers have when they consider a new design, and the motivations behind designing (or as he likes to say, "inventing") games. I found especially interesting his description of the inner workings of a game company and the internal considerations that weigh on whether a game is published. Tinsman spells out four "markets" for games, and here I could quibble with his taxonomy, but really, his classification works for the purposes of his book, which come down to the different ways to approach design, publication, and marketing.

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