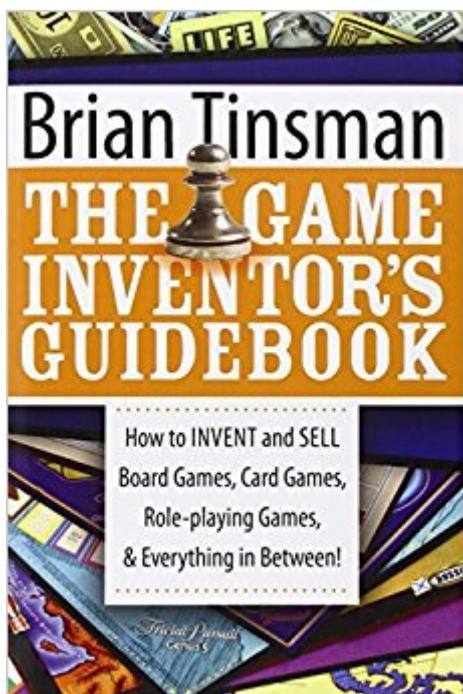


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# The Game Inventor's Guidebook: How To Invent And Sell Board Games, Card Games, Role-Playing Games, & Everything In Between!



## 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Brian Tinsman has more than nine years of professional analog and video game design experience with over 30 published titles and total sales of over \$100 million. He has won a Mensa Select award and been nominated for multiple Origins Awards. Armed with his BA from UC Berkeley and MBA from University of Seattle, he worked for Hasbro for many years before taking the position of Game Design Manager at Wizards of the Coast, the world's largest tabletop hobby game company. He is the author of several gaming books including a previous edition of *The Game Inventor's Guidebook* and *Magic: the Gathering Complete Encyclopedia*. He has been a keynote speaker and panelist at numerous game industry conventions.

Amazing book - Brian puts his experience and influence in the game industry to give us insightful interviews with talented designers and publishers from all around the industry. The book is not a "how to design games" book, but at the same, if you're thinking about or is already designing a game, this book is a must - too many valuable thoughts about the art of designing games and the industry to miss out.

This was a gift for my husband who is working on his own game. He loved it! And as he began to read the book he was impressed at how helpful this book was in get direction in how to launch a game idea. He has found it very helpful and is looking forward to using this book to leanr more about the gaming business. I'd recommend this book to anyone trying to launch-or thinking about launching- a game!

Brilliant, captivating, inspiring, and with tons of interesting and valuable information. I wrote a short motivational e-book, which I structured as a board game description and this book has helped me tremendously in the process. It continue to help me with my work (which is not game design). I haven't finished reading the book yet, but I definitely will. And I am sure I will re-read it too. I have already re-read several sections of it and quoted in my blog posts. I read this book bit by bit, because every page is extremely valuable and as with any great guide book, as well as for the name "guide", it should be used as guiding hand in the process of the work to be done. I highly recommend it not only for game developers, but also to writers, and especially to managers and entrepreneurs. You will get many great ideas and inspiration for adjusting successfully the game strategy for your business.

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. He categorizes games among the following markets:- Mass market (what you'd find in a big box retailer like Target or WalMart)- Hobby games (roleplaying, miniatures, and trading card games)- American specialty games (a "catch-all" category for small print-run games like strategy games and "how to host a mystery")- European market (German boardgames, largely)- Others (unique market type games, such as sports games that might sell in sports-related retail outlets, etc) Okay, that's really five, but he spends little meaningful text on the "Other" category except as an out for the types of games that he doesn't cover otherwise. Although the average gamer might not break down games into these categories, they work for purposes of addressing the different ways that a designer would approach a publisher with a prototype and the different ways that a game would be published and marketed. Tinsman provides considerable detail on specific games and companies that he feels the reader should become familiar with. Many are familiar to the regular gamer, but a few gems emerge that are worth investigation. Self-publishing had always struck me as a last great act of desperation, but that's not so much the case with the resources available to today's self-publisher. Tinsman spends some time discussing the special considerations that have to be taken into account to try to bring a game to market yourself. The upside potential and the downside risk are both staggering. A nice aspect of Tinsman's format is that he intersperses the book with interviews of key figures in the game industry and "Insider's Views" on publishers, information that he is in a unique position to provide as a longtime member of the industry himself. He provides remarkably insightful perspective on what designers and industry figures consider in bringing a game from concept to market. These vignettes make clear that there is more than one way to skin the boardgame cat, and different people have different priorities and visions on what they hope to bring to the gaming world. With all of this background, Tinsman walks the reader step-by-step through the process of conceiving and scoping a design, developing it, all the way through getting it on contract. This final walk-through brings all the elements of the book together into a soup-to-nuts accounting of all the steps that a designer will need to follow to make a game concept into something that people can buy, take home, and play. Appendices include considerable resources - contact information for game companies, brokers, conventions, as well as sample forms

for letters and agreements that the designer will find handy in conducting business with potential publishers. Brian Tinsman's Guidebook came well recommended by Lewis Pulsipher, and I am not disappointed. I hope my readers find it as valuable for gaining insight into the workings of the gaming industry as I have.

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. Despite this advice, the book also points out that such major successes as Trivial Pursuit, Pictionary, and even the perennial Monopoly were created and made successful by determined self-publishers before a major publishing company picked them up. The book does provide 4 chapters discussing what's involved with self-publishing games. Like most of the book, though, the chapters are at a very high level, providing more of a broadbrush overview than details. Still, the chapters cover the topic quite well. One point that the book stresses over and over is that all game design should begin by first deciding on your audience. If you don't care about the marketability of your game, then you can start where you wish and enjoy creating and playing your game. But if you want to appeal to a segment of the population bigger than "You and People Just Like You", you have to pick who you want to appeal to. Once you know who you're making the game for, you can adjust and refine to better appeal to those people. All in all, The Game Inventor's

Guidebook provides an entertaining and educational look at the non-computer game industry and its current markets. If you are serious about game design, and want to learn about all aspects of game design, and not just within the computer industry, this book provides a good place to start.

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