

NoodlEngine



TIME TO MARKET™

**A STARTUP STRATEGY CARD GAME
RULEBOOK**

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START HERE

The Startup Spark

It started with an idea — scribbled on a napkin during a midnight pizza run. You knew it was risky, but it felt different. You rallied a small crew of believers: an engineer who could build anything, a marketer who turns buzz into customers, and a loyal team ready to launch before the world was ready.

Now, it's a race.

The competition is building fast. Investors are watching. Markets are shifting. Your team is tired, inspired, and dangerously close to greatness. You'll pitch. You'll pivot. You'll outwork and out-think.

You're not just building momentum — you're building a company!

Welcome to Time to Market — where every card you play brings you one step closer to launch... or one mistake away from being left behind.

2 – 4 Player Mode

Overview:

Each player starts with a small StartUp Deck of 10 cards representing their startup business. Each turn, players play cards to gain Time, Money, and Influence. Money is used to buy more powerful cards to add to your deck. Time is used to achieve Milestones which bring your startup business to market or Obsolete your opponent's Infrastructure. Influence is used to gain more Market Favor with clients. If you achieve all your Milestones before your opponent(s), you win!

Setup: Divide the cards into specific decks: One StartUp Deck for each player, a Milestone Deck, an Investor Deck, and an Opportunity Deck.

StartUp Deck: Each player starts with a StartUp Deck (made up of 7 Loyal Worker cards, 2 Engineer cards, and 1 Startup CEO card), a Market Favor card, and 2 Scorecards. Set each player's Market Favor to 0 using the Scorecard. Each player shuffles their StartUp Deck.

Milestone Deck: The Milestone Deck is made up of the cards marked on the back with the word Milestone. The Milestone Deck is the set of cards shared by all players which represent the experiences and achievements of the startup founder on the Time to Market journey.

Shuffle the Milestone Deck and give each player 1 face-up Milestone card. Use a Scorecard to track its Time to Market, which is the amount of Time required to be spent to complete a Milestone.

Investor Deck: The Investor Deck has all the Investor cards. An Investor is a special type of Associate that can provide financial benefits (Money) when played. Shuffle the 10 Investor cards face down, then place the Investor Deck face up on the table.

Opportunity Deck: The Opportunity Deck has all the rest of the Associates and Infrastructure cards you may purchase with Money to develop your startup strategy and increase the power of your StartUp Deck. Shuffle all Opportunity Deck cards and place them face down. Reveal 5 cards face up to create the Opportunity Row.

Exit Piles: Set up space for discard piles: one discard pile for each StartUp Deck, one for Opportunity Row discards (the Opportunity Row Discard Pile), and one Exit Pile for each StartUp Deck. The Exit Pile is where cards that are Exited (removed from the game) are placed.

Game Play

The first player is the player who had the highest Time To Market on their first Milestone card. If there is a tie among the players with the highest Time To Market, randomly decide who goes first.

Players then take turns going clockwise. Each player shuffles their StartUp Deck. The first player draws 3 cards from their StartUp Deck, the second player draws 4 cards, and all other players draw 5 cards each. To win, a player must complete a set number of Milestones before any opponent does.

Recommended: 5 Milestones for a balanced game. Choose fewer for a shorter game, or more for a longer one. An alternate win condition for games where time or the Opportunity Deck runs out is the Market Favorite (i.e. tournaments).

Gameplay Example Setup



Turn Structure

Each turn has three phases, played in order:

1. Main Phase
2. Discard Phase
3. Draw Phase

1 Main Phase

During your Main Phase, you may do any of the following in any order and as many times as you like:

- Play cards from your hand.
- Use abilities of Associates, Infrastructure, or Milestones in play.
- Acquire Associates, Infrastructure, or Investors from the Opportunity Row using Money.
- Spend Time to reduce your Time To Market or Obsolete opponent Infrastructure.
- Spend Market to increase your Market Favor.

Playing Cards

There is no cost to play a card from your hand. When played, a card's abilities and any resource effect(s) it grants may be added once per turn. If a card has multiple abilities, you may use any or all of those abilities once per turn. You may choose to use a card's abilities and any resource effects they grant at any time during your Main Phase.

A card ability's effect does not repeat unless otherwise specified by the card. If there is a conflict between the wording on a card and a general game rule, the wording on the card takes precedence over the general game rule.

Types of Cards

Associate: One-time effect for each ability and/or add resource, discarded at end of turn.

Associate Card Example



Infrastructure: Stays in play until Obsoleted.

Infrastructure Card Example



Milestone

Milestones represent startup achievements. Spend resources such as Time to reduce their Time to Market (Milestone Time). When a Milestone's Time to Market reaches 0, the Milestone is complete — resolve its effect, then draw and begin a new Milestone. Track a Milestone's Time to Market using a Scorecard or similar tool. Completed Milestones remain in play unless otherwise stated.

Milestone Card Example



Using Abilities

Some cards have once-per-turn ability effects. Each card's ability — including Team and Exit Abilities — may only be used once per turn, unless the card says otherwise. If a card has multiple different abilities, you may use any or all of them as you like, but only each ability once per your turn. If a card lists multiple abilities separated by "or," choose only one. Unless the card says "must," using an ability is optional. If you search your StartUp Deck, you must shuffle it after searching.

Team Abilities:

These abilities may be used when you have another card from the appropriate team (Product, Outreach, Leadership, Operations) in play. They can be used once per turn during the Main Phase. Your initial 10 StartUp cards are neutral and are NOT allied with any team.

Exit Abilities:

Some cards can be Exited (removed from the game) for a powerful one-time effect. Exited cards go to the Exit Pile of the player who played them. Exiting an Investor returns it to the top of the Investor Deck instead.

Pivot Abilities:

Some cards allow you to Pivot other cards (to Pivot a card, move it from the Opportunity Row to the Opportunity Row Discard Pile). Immediately replace cards removed from the Opportunity Row with cards from the Opportunity Row Deck.

Market Favor Abilities:

Some cards allow you to use powerful abilities if you are the Market Favorite. You are the Market Favorite if you have the highest Market Favor score of all the players.

Acquiring Cards

Money gained during your turn goes into your Money Pool. Use it to acquire cards from the Opportunity Row or Investor Deck.

- Cost is shown in the upper-right.
- StartUp Deck cards have a cost of 0.
- Unless a card says otherwise, Acquired cards immediately go to your StartUp Deck Discard Pile.

- Some cards can be Acquired for no cost.

Resources

- **Time:** Used to complete Milestones or Obsolete Infrastructure.
- **Money:** Used to Acquire cards.
- **Influence:** Increases Market Favor. For every 5 Market Favor at the start of your Main Phase, you gain +1 Money. Market Favor can't be set lower than zero.

2 Discard Phase

- Lose any unspent Time, Money, and Influence.
- Discard any played Associates and all cards in your hand (Infrastructure and Milestones remain in play).

3 Draw Phase

Draw 5 cards from your StartUp Deck. If your StartUp Deck is empty, shuffle your StartUp Deck Discard Pile to create a new StartUp Deck.

Sample First Turn:

Main Phase: Play 2 Loyal Workers and 1 Engineer | (gain 2 Money, 2 Time).

Spend 2 Money to Acquire an Infrastructure, and put it in your StartUp Deck Discard Pile. Spend 2 Time to reduce the Time to Market of a Milestone.

Discard Phase: Discard all played cards.

Draw Phase: Draw 5 new cards.

Winning The Game

The first player to complete the agreed number of Milestones wins. (We recommend 5 Milestones for a balanced 2–4 player game.)

Solo Mode 1: Race Against the Clock

In this 1-player mode, your only opponent is time. Your goal is to launch your startup by completing 5 Milestones in as few turns as possible. Track your turns with a Scorecard.

Setup:

Use a normal starter deck: 7 Loyal Workers, 2 Engineers, 1 CEO
Shuffle and reveal 1 Milestone at a time from the Milestone Deck
Set up Opportunity Row, Investor cards, and Scorecards as usual
Set Market Favor to 0

Turn Sequence:

Play as normal with one exception — on your first 2 turns your **draw size is decreased** as shown in the chart below:

Turn 1: Draw 3 cards

Turn 2: Draw 4 cards

Turn 3: Draw 5 cards

If a card asks the opponent to choose, you choose as though you were the opponent. If a card ability causes your opponent to discard a card, you may draw a card instead. You are the **Market Favorite** only if your current Market Favor score is higher than the number of turns you've taken. Example: If you're on turn 5 and have 6 Market Favor, you are the Market Favorite. If you only have 5 or less Market Favor, you are not the Market Favorite.

Scoring: Count how many turns it takes you to complete all 5 Milestones.

10 or fewer turns: Legendary Founder
11-12 Turns: Tenacious Builder
13-14 Turns: Steady Founder
15-16 Turns: Market Lagger
17+ Turns: Vision Drift Victim

Solo Mode 2: The Founder's Journey

Every startup has a story... This one is yours. From pitch night to product recall, from first customer to market chaos — you're about to walk the full path of entrepreneurship. One milestone at a time. No skips. No shortcuts.

In **The Founder's Journey**, you'll face the real-world rollercoaster of building a business: wins that feel electric, losses that sting, and a few unexpected disasters that weren't in the pitch deck. You'll experience all 20 Milestones in a fixed order — the good, the bad, and the oddly familiar.

This mode isn't just about beating the clock. It's about seeing if you have the **grit, clarity, and adaptability** to finish what you started. Every card you play reflects a decision.

Every turn tells a chapter.

Every milestone is a test.

Do you still have what it takes to launch... and last? Let's find out! In this solo campaign mode, your **opponent is time, endurance, and adapting to what comes next**. You'll complete all **20 Milestones** in a fixed order, from "Pitch Night" to "Major Acquisition." You'll encounter setbacks, recoveries, growth spurts, and gut punches — just like in real startup life.

Setup:

Same as *Solo Mode 1: Race Against the Clock*, except prepare the Milestones in the following fixed order: (1-20)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Pitch Night | 11. Close Seed Fund |
| 2. First Customer Signed | 12. Unexpected Cancellations |
| 3. Build Your MVP | 13. Rebuild Product |
| 4. Launch the Website | 14. Get Featured in Media |
| 5. Join a Startup Accelerator | 15. Major Product Recall |
| 6. Pilot Success | 16. Market Disruption |
| 7. Fire Your First Employee | 17. Internal Founder Conflict |
| 8. Pivot the Business | 18. Go Viral on Social Media |
| 9. Trade Show Booth Mishap | 19. Win an Industry Award |
| 10. Launch the Mobile App | 20. Major Acquisition |

Place the Milestone stack **face-up**, so you can see what's coming next.

Turn Sequence, the Market Favorite, Discards, and Opponent Choices:

Same as *Solo Mode 1: Race Against The Clock*

Scoring: Count how many turns it takes you to complete all 20 Milestones.

- 14 or fewer turns: Legendary Founder
- 15-16 Turns: Tenacious Builder
- 17-18 Turns: Steady Founder
- 19-20 Turns: Market Lagger
- 21+ Turns: Vision Drift Victim

Replay the journey to try different paths, test strategies, and improve your score.

Icon Legend

Team Icons (Upper Left Corner)

These icons indicate the team affiliation of the card. Some abilities can only be used by having cards from specific teams in play at the same time.



Product Development Team – Innovators and builders who turn ideas into real, testable solutions.



Outreach Team – Marketers, communicators, and advocates who generate buzz, traction, and Market Favor.



Leadership Team – Strategists and hard decision-makers who guide the startup's growth and direction.



Operations Team – The systems thinkers and problem-solvers who keep everything running smoothly.

Resource & Card Type Icons



Cost – The number in the upper-right corner. The amount of Money required to acquire the card.



Time – Represents work, iteration, and hustle. A player can spend Time to complete a Milestone, or Obsolete an Infrastructure that is in play.



Money – Players can use Money to acquire new cards during their Main Phase.

Resource & Card Type Icons - cont.



Influence – Players use Influence to build Market Favor. A player can gain extra Money and Abilities if their Market Favor is high.



Milestone – Represents a major startup achievement. Players complete them by spending resources such as Time.



StartUp Cards – These cards form your initial team and initial StartUp Deck. Cards that form the initial StartUp deck are marked for easy identification and are usually basic but reliable resources.



Investor – A special type of Associate that provides powerful boosts, but can be Exited for strategic value.



Glossary

Acquire – To take a card from the Opportunity Row or Investor Deck and place it into your StartUp Deck Discard Pile. Acquired cards are not played immediately but will be available for you to use when your StartUp Deck Discard Pile is recycled to become your new StartUp Deck once your original StartUp Deck runs out.

Associate – A card representing a team member who provides a one-time effect when played. Associates are discarded at the end of your turn unless otherwise stated. Each Associate only produces each of its effects once on the turn it is played. The abilities of an Associate that has more than one ability can be played in any order.

Cost – The number in the upper right-hand corner of a card. Cost indicates how much Money is needed to Acquire it.

Exit / Exit Ability – To remove a card from the game by placing it in the appropriate Exit Pile. Some cards provide powerful one-time effects when Exited.

Exit Pile – The out-of-game zone for Exited cards. Exited cards do not return to any deck.

Influence – A resource that builds Market Favor and can produce special abilities and effects.

Infrastructure – Cards that stay in play until removed by some effect. They can be Obsolete by using resources such as spending Time or using card abilities.

Integrity – The amount of Time required to be spent in a single turn to Obsolete an Infrastructure.

Glossary cont. -

Investor – A special type of Associate card that offers financial boosts. They are often powerful and typically designed to be Exited for maximum effect.

Main Phase – The first part of your turn, where you play cards, add and spend resources, and take actions.

Market Favor – Your brand presence and public influence. If your Market Favor is higher than your opponent's, you are the Market Favorite. Being the Market Favorite may unlock special abilities on some cards.

Milestone – A key startup achievement that requires Time or other resources to complete. Milestones stay in play once completed and offer lasting benefits.

Market Favorite - The player with the highest Market Favor is the Market Favorite.

Money – A resource used to Acquire cards from the Opportunity Row or Investor Deck.

Opportunity Deck – The main deck of available Associates and Infrastructure. The Opportunity Row is replenished from this deck.

Opportunity Row – The row of 5 face-up cards available for Acquisition by any player.

Obsolete – To discard an Infrastructure by spending resources, such as Time equal to its Integrity, in a single turn.

Glossary cont. -

Pivot – To discard a card from the Opportunity Row and place it into the Opportunity Row Discard Pile. This is typically something the Leadership Team does to cycle stale options.

Resource Pool – Temporary pools (Time, Money, Influence) you collect during your Main Phase. Your Resource Pool is emptied during your Discard Phase.

StartUp Deck – Your opening deck of 10 basic cards (1 CEO, 2 Engineers, and 7 Loyal Workers). Build from there!

StartUp Deck Discard Pile – Your personal discard stack. Played and Acquired cards go here unless otherwise stated. When your StartUp Deck runs out, shuffle your StartUp Deck Discard Pile to form a new one.

Team Ability – A special effect on a card that can be used when another of your cards from a specific team (Product, Leadership, Outreach, or Operations) is also in play. Just like any other card ability, a Team Ability can only be used once per turn, no matter how many other cards are in play that fulfill the Team Ability's requirement.

Time – A resource spent to complete Milestones or Obsolete Infrastructure. Time reflects work, hustle, and iteration.

Rules Reminder

Each card's abilities can only be used once per turn; however, every ability on a card can be used each turn.

Resources (Time, Money, Influence) are added only once each time a card is played.

You may play cards and take actions in any order.

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