

## Out For Delivery Playtest/Feedback - Adam

Accompanying this document there should be the playtestV1 ruleset, map, and playerboard. I (Adam) playtested this game with 3 friends that I regularly play both board and video games with. This gave me feedback from the perspective of seasoned “gamers” and those that enjoy analyzing games. While this perspective was very helpful, especially for a first playtest, it was not necessarily an adequate test group for a marketable game since a lot of board game players only do so on occasion.

Things that went well:

**Mechanics/Objectives:** Everyone agreed that the game theme was cool and the objectives of the game made sense and were fun. From this, everyone said that it was worth expanding on this game idea, though there were some balancing and mechanic issues that made the game currently difficult to play. As soon as we started playing I was thinking exactly this.

**Fun:** I know this isn’t specific, but everyone did have a lot of fun. Considering how many issues we had and how rushed everything felt it was reassuring that nobody felt it a waste of time. Nobody felt obligated to do it just to help me with my homework. This was likely aided by the fact that all of these friends like to analyze games anyway.

Things that could be improved:

**Ruleset Language:** One player noted that DMC (Default Movement Cost) was a redundant and confusing phrase. He made a poor case for his argument and an actual argument ensued between players, but I think he had a fair point. I was originally worried that such phrasing would be confusing, but I was afraid “Movement” or “Movement Cost” would be too easy to confuse with “Movement Points”, or not make sense in the context of multipliers. I still don’t have a great solution to this problem but I do think it would need to be addressed for audiences that don’t regularly play and analyze games. I wouldn’t blame anyone for being confused the way it is currently worded, though it would be easy to make it even more confusing if one wasn’t careful.

**Dice/Parcel Tracking Mechanics:** We spent so much time rolling dice! I knew that was coming and already wanted it to be a card game, but I didn’t have the time to make cards to turn in. Dice were seen as a compromise for the purposes of this assignment, not an ideal goal. Everything from items and weather to parcel generation would be soooooo much better with just the drawing of a card, rather than the rolling of dice and using a lookup table. Again, this was my original intention anyway, but it was some of the loudest feedback during playtesting.

**Map Theme:** I love Minnesota but I don’t personally think it’s an intriguing map theme. I playtested with friends born and raised in South Dakota and they gave me no end of shit for it. I even joined them in it. Minnesota is cool but I’m playing a board game, not traveling the US. Beyond that, the ruleset was very much designed for a fantasy world, and clearly the map isn’t. This was a theme conflict that would have to be rectified. Private Couriers and Gold Pieces as a currency standard have little to no place in Minnesota. “I love that period of time when minnesota used gold and USPS wasn’t good enough” – playtester

**Item Balancing:** This was also very expected but some items just weren’t worth using. Everyone got a doughnut and nobody used it. The only reason to use it would be if it netted you more money than it was worth and this was never the case. As such, some items need to be made stronger or cheaper to make them actually worth using. Since items and their values were determined before the map was even created (I got the map not an hour prior to my scheduled playtesting) it was no surprise that

movement costs would not be balanced. A little time and some more playtesting and this could be ironed out.

**Rough Terrain Balancing:** In really bad weather, one mountain tile costs 6 movement points to cross. Considering that the most you can roll is 12, this can seriously hinder a player. While I do think that's more realistic (mail gets delayed by weather all the time), it wasn't very fun. Players complained about how little one could actually accomplish in one turn. We talked about a smaller map, but the solution to the "Timing" problem below would likely remedy this issue better.

**Timing:** Again, without the map in hand it was hard to balance the movement points and the timing of everything. I had no idea how quickly people would be able to deliver things, or how much items would actually pay off. As such we spent ~1.5 hours playing and we had only delivered 10 parcels, not the 20 that the endgame objective states. We agreed that the game had gone on long enough and was simply too slow. The best fix for this we found was to double the movement points from a roll. This also helps balance some of the rough terrain features, stated above. This change alone would warrant more playtesting and could reveal other balancing issues.

**Parcel Distance Balancing:** As of right now, parcels are valued based purely on how quickly you deliver it. It has nothing to do with how far they need to go to be delivered. This isn't realistic and rewards players for picking up the easiest packages. I haven't thought of a good solution to this issue without the use of cards. I'm afraid making different packages worth different amounts would just confuse people and add math that nobody wants to do. This is a very important problem in my opinion, so a solution would need to be found before the next playtest.

### **Biggest Changes That Need To Happen:**

**Cards Cards Cards!:** Dice work fine for movement points, but everything else should just be card based. Package Generation, Weather, Obstacle Events, and Items would be way easier to draw cards for. If I had more time, I would've done cards from the get go.

**Double Movement Points:** Speed the game up a little by giving people more movement points.

**Item Balancing:** Items need to be more useful, and/or worth less. It's just plain nonstrategic to use some of them as is.

I just thought of an idea that might fix the parcel distancing issue, and the parcel generation taking too long. Rather than 'generating' parcels every three turns, allow players to pick up a parcel in town as they please. They then draw from a deck of parcel cards. This would save a lot of time, and even out how far you have to go because the parcel destination would just be luck of the draw. Cards could even be unique parcel features, like varying value multipliers, and the like. You also wouldn't need parcel figures anymore. This would take some good playtesting to iron out, but the more I think about it the more I like the idea.

It think making these changes and playtesting more with the same people I played with before would net some very useful feedback. Once the game was a little more balanced and stable, it would be very good to playtest with non-gamers. Right now I'm a little afraid the ruleset isn't clear enough on some features that seem obvious to me and my friends. I also answered all of their questions, rather than having them check the rules themselves, which wasn't a very good test of the ruleset itself.