

PitchFest™

videogame edition



PitchFest is an improv party game about pitching zany videogame ideas. Create your best pitch and then watch it fall into a smoking ruin as the people with funding get their hands on it.

2-10 Players, 15-30 minutes per game

Setup

Sort *PitchFest™* cards into decks, according to the number or letter on the back: 1, 2, 3, 4, A and the single Try Again Card.

Shuffle each deck separately. Place decks within easy reach, and arranged in order.

Read aloud the note about the Try Again Card. It is important. Do not skip it.



Some of you will be playing Developers. Read the following out loud to all players:

As Developers, you are so very indie. But so very broke. But you know games, and you lucked into a meeting with the Producers. The money from this deal will keep the lights on, and you're prepared to make a deal with the devil, and then get back to your own projects.

Some of you will be playing Producers. Read the following out loud:

As Producers, you control the budget. You have the cash and the access to the market, and you know it. You don't really understand game design at all (but you think you do). You know the Developer needs the money, so you're determined to get the perfect game for your contribution.

Have someone draw four cards to determine the terms in the Initial Concept:

A/An [1] [2] about [3] [4]



Take a couple of minutes and think about the Initial Concept.

The first player (or players) that feels inspired by the Initial Concept takes on the role of the Developer (or Developer Team), and should then tell the Producers a quick 10-20 second pitch of the game. You don't need to get into too much detail at this point.

The Developer should now take the facedown deck of Answer Cards (A).

IMPORTANT Try Again Card

If at any point, a particular question or answer comes up during play and you feel *any less than completely enthusiastic* about it, tap or raise the Try Again Card, and the player should backtrack and Try Again. You are not required to say why you raised the card. Respect your friends enough to create *together*.

Inspired by the X Card by John Stavropoulos.

<http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>

Play

The Producers each ask a question about the game. It must be a yes/no question, and may assume new information that has not already been stated by the Developer. Leading questions are good. Producers are opinionated and should not hesitate to share their opinions.

For example, “We hear that loot boxes are the best way to monetize players. Does this game contain multiple options for loot boxes?”

The Developer must *draw and discard* an Answer card to see how to answer. If playing as a Developer Team, decide ahead of time if you wish to consult with your peers before answering, or take turns answering. Don’t contradict each other’s statements. That’s a dead giveaway to the Producers that you don’t know what you’re talking about.

“Yes, and...” [agree, adding more]

“Yes, and the loot boxes contain items that grant additional magical construction powers to the architects.”

“Yes, but...” [agree, and create a contradiction]

“Yes, but the loot boxes are cursed, making the contents not so much a reward, but an obligation.”

“What do you mean by...” [clarify the question, then agree]

The Developer must ask the Producers to clarify their question with a question of their own. If you can’t think of something, “What do you mean by [something they said]?” works well. The Producers may answer however they wish, adding more detail to the question. The Developer then answers “Yes, And...” to the clarified question.

“Uh. What do you mean by... boxes?”

“A crate, or cardboard box, or something. Doesn’t really matter the shape.”

“Oh! Yeah, totally. We present construction materials to the player as a hyper-realistic swirling mass of colour and energy. You can pluck the items out of the maelstrom with a magic wand and a voice command. We’re working on the voice recognition next week.”

“We’re working on that...” [offer an replacement that meets the need instead]

“We’re working on that. In the meantime, during our early access period, players can purchase the loot box contents outright.”

Continue asking and answering questions amongst the Producers.

When the Answer deck is exhausted, wrap up the pitch by naming the game. Producers can and should suggest names too.

For the next game, shuffle the Answer deck, and pass the Developer role to any player(s) who haven’t pitched yet.

Notes from the Designer

Fixed Turn Order

The default turn order in PitchFest is fluid. Players may interrupt and jump in when they have an idea. This is perfectly fine and encouraged. However, with some groups, it can be useful to enforce a turn order by going around a table instead. This allows more careful players to mentally prepare for their time to ask a question.

Drop-in, Drop-Out Play

The default fluid turn order accommodates much of casual play. The only person who *has* to stick around for all questions is the Developer. All other players can easily drop in or out at any time.

Play Your Best Game

The Try Again Card has a greater power than simple safety. Use it when a question is weak, when an answer falls flat, and especially when anyone is uncomfortable.

Figuratively Literal

The phrases on the answer cards do not need to be spoken. As long as the intention is met, try playing with phrasing.

Topical Solution

Some players may be intimidated by the PitchFest edition topic. If a player is unfamiliar with videogames, suggest they instead imagine how a new professional, perhaps an intern or junior, might try to cover for their boss after they ate some bad clams last night.

Credits

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