

# IT Startup – The Card Game!

Thank you for helping us test the english game prototype - the game is currently [released only in Poland](#) and we are planning to release it worldwide in Q1 2020.

You can find the Print & Play cards here: [playitstartup.com/beta-cards-v1.pdf](http://playitstartup.com/beta-cards-v1.pdf)

## About the game

You play as an IT Company/Startup. The programmer (developer) cards give you project points every turn. Knowledge cards improve efficiency of your developers (+2, +3 etc.). HR cards let you take over your opponent employees and draw additional cards. Action cards can be used to sabotage your opponents or help out your own employees.

**Winning a game in “IT Startup” is a matter of efficient resource management and landing a devastating sabotage on your opponents.** It's a game for 2-4 players. All players draw cards from the same deck (like in UNO).

*One of the best ways to learn the game is watching the **Quickstart Video Tutorial**: [playitStartup.com/video](http://playitStartup.com/video). Some people prefer it over the written game manual.*

## Game components

- 64 cards,
- 32 chips (resources),
- 32 red cubes (employee burnout visualisation),
- 1 k6 dice,
- game manual.



To play the print and play prototype bottle caps/change can be used as chips and cube replacement. Any marker will be ok.

## Goal of the game

**The goal is to finish your project** - the player who does that in fewer turns (or gets more project points if another player finishes his project in the same turn) wins. **Finishing your project means getting enough project points.** There is a standard game mode: 64 points, fast game mode: 32 points or a long game mode: 128 points. Choose your game mode


depending on how long you want to play. No one is stopping you to set a higher goal (like 256 points if you enjoy really long game sessions) but our suggestion is to set the max goal to 128 points.

## How do we get project points?

Every developer has an efficiency. The sum of the efficiency of your developers is how much project points you get by the end of your turn.

**An example:** we have 2 developers on the board. Look at the big number in the circle (ignore the rest for now): **5** and **2**. By the end of our turn we get 7 (5 + 2) project points. We get the point by the end of our turn - no need to wait for every player to finish their turn.

**Lead Developer** 1 2 3 4 5




**Employee - DEV** 5

**While in play:**  
transferring knowledge between developers costs you (2) less.

*In order to understand recursion, one must first understand recursion.*

**BI Developer** 1 2 3



**Employee - DEV** 2

**When played:**  
draw a card. If the drawn card is a knowledge card: you can play it this turn for (2) less.

*BI is basically about concepts and methods to improve business decision making.*

## Counting points

An easy way to do this is using a sheet of paper. It helps to take note if every player took an equal amount of turns and lets us quickly check which turn we currently have. In the example below we see that after 3 turns Player 1 has 8 points, and Player 2 has 10 points. The next turn is turn number 4.

Player 1	Player 2
2	0
5	5
8	10

## When do we check if a player won?

After **each player has finished his turn** and one of the players has scored a set number of points (or more), they win. We check the win condition after everyone has finished their turn - **each player must have the chance to do the same number of turns**. If more players reach the win condition, the player with the higher score wins. For example: if we play the standard game mode (64 points) and after 7 turns 2 players reach the win condition (64 or more points), the **player with the higher score wins**. If they have exactly the same score: **we play another turn**.

## Let's start the game!

- Every player draws 5 cards.
- A dice roll (k6) decides about the number of resources (chips) the players start with. **Every player starts with the same number**. If we roll 3, every player starts the game with (3) resources/chips.
- The card mulligan. If we don't like a card from our starting hand we can discard it and draw a new one. You can do this for one, two, three, four or even all five cards from your opening hand. Which card to mulligan is learned by playing the game. For starters: it's good to have at least one developer in your opening hand.
- We choose or roll who starts the game.

## A turn

- At the start of your turn you draw a card.
- After the card draw we get resources/chips. In the first turn it's (1) resource chip, the second (2) etc. The max amount of resources you get at the beginning of your turn is (8).
- If you have an outsourced employee (an employee you got using the "Outsourcing" card) it returns to the opponent.
- **Optional game mechanic: bonus for good project planning** (while first learning the game **you can skip this mechanic and introduce it later**). If your project points are equal to 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128 (power of 2) you can remove 1 burnout point from one of your employees.
- We play our cards! Playing cards costs us resources (the play cost can be found in the top-right corner of a card). We can do this only during our turn. We can also

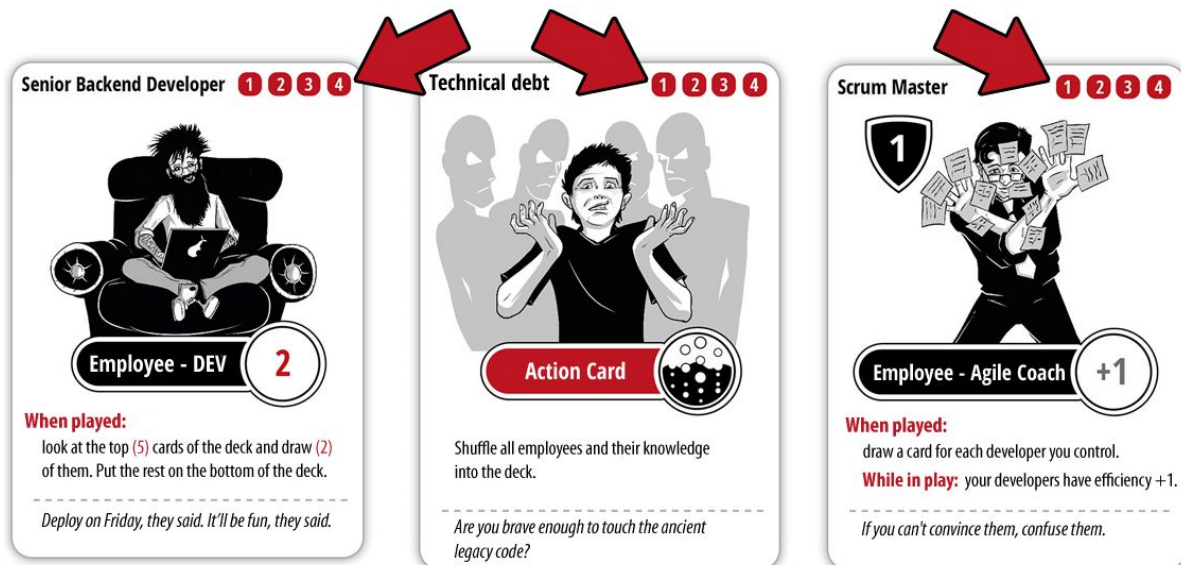
“plan” an Action Card (put it face down on the table). “Planning” Action Cards will be explained in detail later.

- By the end of our turn we get project point for our developers. We count the efficiency of our developer + optional effects from Action Cards played this turn.
- After we added the project points every employee we control gets (1) burnout point. Red cubes are used to mark an employees burnout points.

## Resource cost of cards.

To play a card we have to pay its play costs. We pay with **resources** (chips) - just like we play a card using mana in other similar card games.

Here are 3 cards that cost (4) resources to play (see the upper right corner):



## How do we get resources?

- **At the start of your turn:** in our first turn we get (1) resource chip, in the second turn (2)... in the fifth (5) etc. The maximum amount of resources received at the beginning of the turn is (8). So on turn eight we get (8) resources in the ninth turn also (8) and so on.
- **At the start of the game:** A dice roll (k6) decides about the number of resources (chips) the players start with. Every player starts with the same number.
- **By discarding (selling) cards from your hand** or playing the “Investor” Action Card.

## Discarding (selling) cards and extra card draw

There is an option to discard cards from your hand (discarded cards go to the bottom of the deck) and get (1) resource chip for every card discarded this way. So discarding (1) card gets you (1) resource chip, discarding (2) cards gets you (2) resource chips etc. This can be done **only on your turn**. Some players refer to this as “selling cards”.

There is also a way to draw extra cards by paying resources. Paying (2) resources allows you to draw (1) extra card. There is no limit how much cards you discard for resources or how many extra cards you draw (there is no hand size limit) as long you have cards to discard or resources to pay for the extra draws.

## Hoarding resources

Resources can be hoarded and used in later turns (they don't float like for example mana in other card games). How much resources can be hoarded depends on the number of players. 2 players -> (12 resources), 3 players (10), 4 players (8).

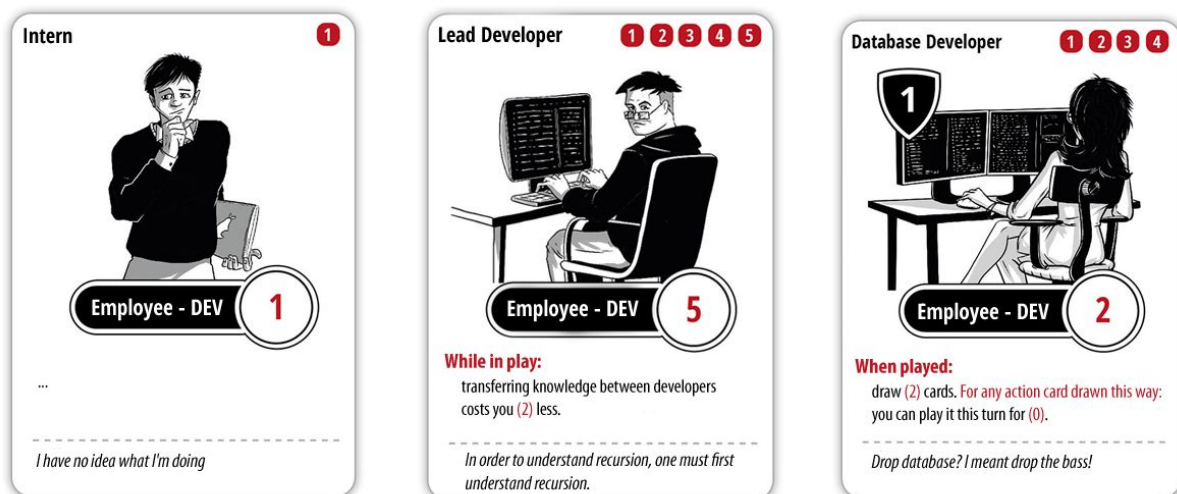
## Cards types

There are 3 basic card types:

- Employees,
- Knowledge (Knowledge cards),
- Action Cards.

## Employee cards - Developers (programmers)

*Developers are our main source of project points.*



The upper right corner of a card informs us about the playing cost of a card. For this example cards the cost is as follows: (1), (5) and (4). The digit on the shield (“1” on the “Database Developer” card) is burnout resistance (the burnout mechanic is explained in detail in the “Employee burnout” section of this manual). The big number in the circle (1, 5 and 2) indicates the developers efficiency. The rule text on the card informs us about the

triggered effect when the card is played or while the card is in play. The text on the bottom (for example “I have no idea what I’m doing”) is called flavor text - it does not affect the gameplay.

## Employee cards - HR

*HR lets you draw extra cards and take over opponents employees.*



The upper right corner of a card informs us about the playing cost of a card (2, 3 and 3). Every card contains a rule text. What happens when the card is played, what happens at the end of your turn (**it's important to remember that “At the end of your turn” triggers EVERY turn** - while the card is still on the board of course). The “Undercover HR Agent” has an ability that can be activated by paying (1) resource chip. The icons in the circle should help you to remember what the card does: draw a card at the end of your turn or give you the option to flip a coin. HR has no efficiency like developers. HR (like every employee) can also have burnout resistance (the digit on the shield icon).

## Employee cards - Agile Coach

The value of the Scrum Master is higher with every developer you control. While the Scrum Master is in play every developer has efficiency +1. When he is played you draw a card for each developer you control.





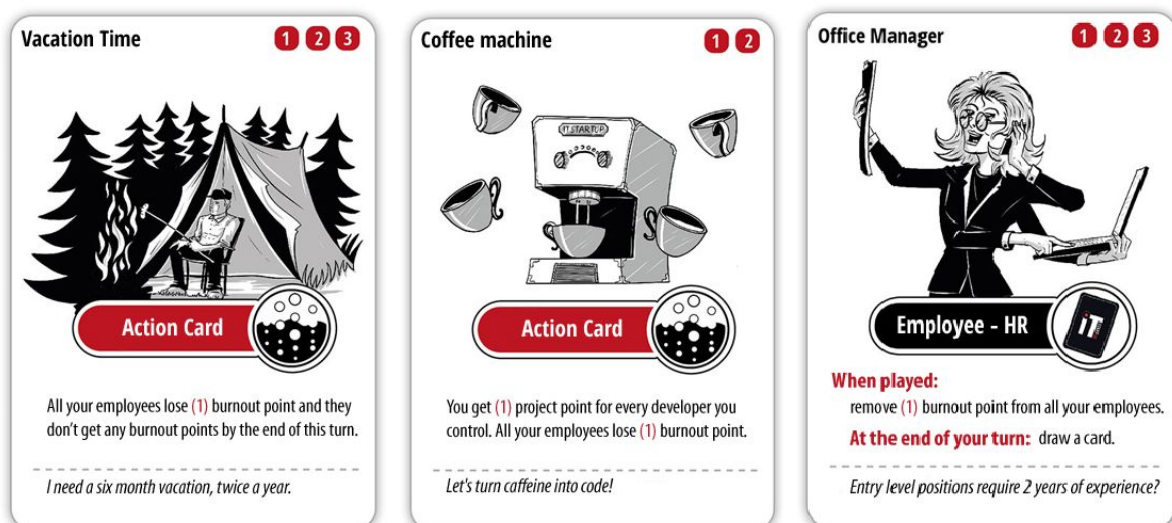
## Employee burnout

At the end of your turn your employees get 1 burnout point. **After an employee gets 3 burnout points, they leave the play** (they get back to the bottom of the deck) - this happens the moment they get his last burnout point (not only at the end of turns). An employee can have more than 3 burnout points if he has **burnout resistance** (shield icon). With the burnout resistance of 1 an employee leaves the play after 4 burnout points, with burnout resistance of 2 - after 5 burnout points.

Burnout is marked with red cubes - for the prototype any marker (preferably red) can be used.



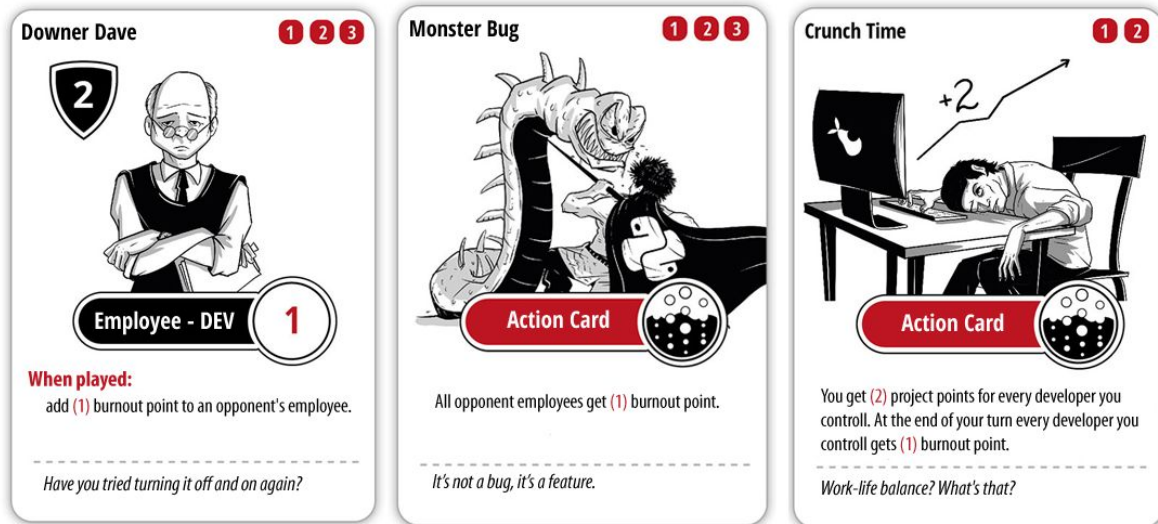
**Burnout can also be removed.** A few cards that can do this are: "Vacation Time", "Coffee machine", "Office Manager".



Burnout can also be removed by using **the good project planning bonus** - an optional game mechanic.

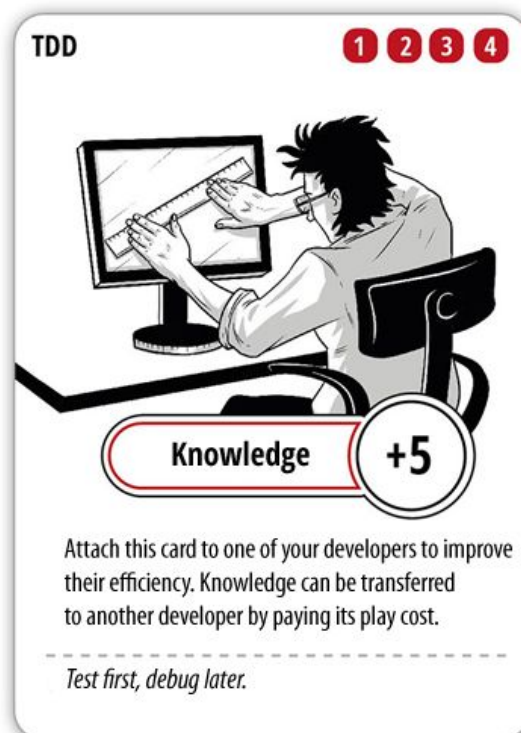
**Good project planning bonus** (optional game mechanic) - at the start of your turn: if your project points are equal to 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128 (power of 2) you can remove 1 burnout point from one of your employees. It's an optional game mechanic that makes the game more complex. You can skip it while learning and introduce it later if you want to add more depth into the game.

There are also cards that can add burnout points to employees. For example: “Downer Dave”, “Monster Bug”, “Crunch Time”.



## Knowledge (knowledge cards)

Knowledge cards improve our developers efficiency. You attach this card to one of your developers by paying it's play cost. In the case of the “TDD” card you have to pay (4) resources.





## Playing knowledge card for less resources

If a developer card contains the rule text “playing and transferring knowledge cards on this developer costs you (2) less.” a knowledge card can be attached to this developer for less resources. In this example the “TDD” knowledge card can be played on the “Full Stack Ninja” for (2) instead of (4).



## Transferring knowledge cards

Knowledge can be transferred to another developer by paying its play cost. **There is one exception:** knowledge cannot be transferred to or from a temporary employee you got from playing the “Outsourcing” card.

There is no knowledge cards limit a developer can have.

It’s a good idea to transfer a knowledge card from a developer before he burns out. If a developer with knowledge burns out, they and all knowledge cards attached to them are returned to the bottom of the deck.

## Action Cards

Action cards do what the rule text says. A played or countered action card returns to the bottom of the deck. An Action Card sometimes contains information on how it can be countered.

An Action Card can also be “planned” (played face down - this does not cost any resources) and played in one of the next turns for (1) resource point less.

### Head Hunter

1 2 3 4 5



Take over an target employee.  
The opponnent can pay you (5) to counter this card.

*Don't sell yourself short, my friend.*

### Monster Bug

1 2 3



All opponnent employees get (1) burnout point.

*It's not a bug, it's a feature.*

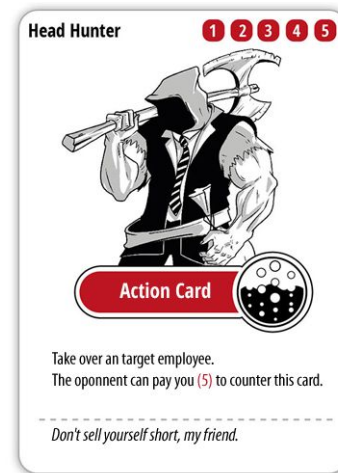
## Playing Action Cards face down - “planning Action Cards”

Action Cards (only Action Cards) can be placed face down (“planned”). This does not cost any resources - we pay the cards play cost after we turn the card face up. **If you have a “planned” card from one of your previous turns (a card has to “planned” for at least one turn), you may play it for (1) less.** Only 1 card can be “planned” at a time.

This comes with a small downside: the planned card can’t be replaced with another Action Card (you can’t return it to your hand and “plan” another Action Card - another Action Card can be “planned” when the previous one was played). You may of course play another Action Card that was not “planned”, but then you have to pay the cards full play cost (“planned” Action Card can be played for (1) less).

**An example:** you “plan” (place it face down) the “Head Hunter” card on your **third** turn. From the **fourth** turn the card can be played for (1) less. So in the case of the “Head Hunter” card you may pay (4) to play it instead of the cards standard play cost (5).

“Planning” Action Cards saves you resources, but remember that you can plan only one Action Card at a time and a “planned” Action Card can’t be replaced (you have to play the “planned” Action Card to “plan” a new one).



## Taking over employees

Some cards let you take over employees. Like the “Head Hunter” card from the previous example.

- An employee is taken over with his burnout points and knowledge cards.
- After you took over an employee all normal mechanics apply: getting points from developers, burnout poinsta etc. The only exception are “**temporary employees**” from the “Outsourcing” card. Rules for outsourced employees follow in the next point of this manual.

## Temporary employees - outsourcing

An employee who has been taken over by the “Outsourcing” card:

- Can’t transfer knowledge cards to your employees.
- returns to target opponent at the start of your next turn.
- Can’t be returned to your hand (returning employees to you hand is explained in the next chapter of this manual).
- gets burnout points like every other employee.

The opponent gets the resources you paid for the “Outsourcing” card. If it was “planned” and you pad (1) - he gets one. If it was played for (2) he gets two resource chips etc.



## Returning employees to your hand

One of the cards allows you to return employees to your hand:

- When an employee returns to your hand he loses all burnout points.
- If the developer has Knowledge Cards attached, the Knowledge Cards also are returned to your hand.
- An outsourced (temporary) employee can't be returned to your hand.



## Looking for feedback!

Feedback is appreciated! This is the v1 public beta of the english version: to get as many hands on the game as we can. This is a side project of a programmer - not another card game from a big company that lives in an ivory tower :) all feedback is read and answered personally by the [game author](#).

This is also a v1 translation of the [polish game version](#): for the final game version the translation of the manual and cards will be of course reviewed by a professional.

I hope you will have fun playing the game,  
Mateusz Kupilas

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