

## **SCAPEGOAT**

**A 15–20 Minute Game of Targets, Blame, and Corporate Survival**

**Players:** 3–5 (best with 4)

**Age:** 10+

**Components:** Standard 52-card deck

**Goal:** Climb until your Hand Size reaches 6. You win instantly.

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### **1. THE CONCEPT**

Year-end reporting is here. Your team must hit its sales target exactly.

**Miss it?** Someone gets cut.

**Beat it?** Someone gets investigated.

**Hit it perfectly?** Everyone looks suspicious.

Your hand size is your rank. Bigger hand = more power, more insulation, more ability to make others eat the fallout.

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### **2. SETUP**

#### **Targets**

Each year has 4 Quarters, all with the same target:

#### **Players Quarter Target**

3      10

4      15

5      20

#### **Deal**

Everyone starts at **Hand Size 4**. Deal 4 cards to each player.

#### **Start Player**

Everyone reveals a card. **Lowest rank** starts (A lowest).

Ties → reveal again. Return revealed cards to hands.

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### **3. CARD VALUES**

### **Face Up (Honest Sales)**

- **A = 1**
- **2–10 = face value**
- **J/Q/K = 10**

### **Face Down (Suspicious Sales)**

Always counts as **10**.

- **Black (♠ ♣):** Bending rules. Safe if investigated.
  - **Red (♥ ♦):** Cheating. If revealed, the player responsible pays.
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## **4. GAMEPLAY**

On your turn:

1. **Play 1 card to the current Quarter (up or down).**
2. **Add** its value to that Quarter.
3. **If below target:** Continue clockwise.
4. **If  $\geq$  target:**
  - Quarter closes.
  - Your played card **stays in that pile.**
  - Extra points carry forward to the next Quarter.
  - If this was Q4, the year ends immediately.
5. **Draw** back up to your Hand Size.

### **Deadline**

Each player gets **2 turns total** for the entire year.

If Q4 isn't filled before that → **Missed Target**.

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## **5. END OF YEAR**

Only closing Q4 triggers investigations and promotions. Earlier Quarters just close normally.

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## A. BEAT THE TARGET (Q4 > target)

You overshot.

The player who closed Q4 is the **Scapegoat**.

They gather all face-down cards from the year.

- **If none exist** → clean; continue below.
- **If any exist** → reveal 1 at random.

### **Black:**

A Promotion Review is held for all players.

### **Red:**

Scapegoat is Demoted.

A Promotion Review is held for all other players.

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## B. PERFECT TARGET (Q4 = target)

Suspiciously perfect.

The player who closed Q4 is the **Closer**.

They gather all face-down cards.

- **If none exist** → clean; continue below.
- **If any exist** → reveal 1 at random.

### **Black:**

A Promotion Review is held for all players.

### **Red:**

Everyone is Demoted.

No Promotion Review this year.

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## C. MISSED TARGET (Deadline hit)

Failure to deliver.

1. Everyone reveals 1 card.
2. **Lowest rank** is Demoted (A high, 2 low).
3. All revealed cards are discarded.
4. Everyone draws 1 card.

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5. No Promotion Review.

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## 6. PROMOTION & DEMOTION

### Promotion Review

Triggered only by an end-of-year outcome.

1. All eligible players reveal 1 card.
2. **Highest rank wins.** (A high.)  
Ties → tied players reveal again until someone wins.
3. **Winner:** Discards all revealed cards, draws 2, Hand Size +1.
4. **Others:** Discard revealed cards, draw 1.

If the Winner reaches **Hand Size 6**, they win the game.

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### Demotion

- Discard 1 card of your choice.
  - Hand Size -1 (minimum 1).
  - Still in the game, just miserable.
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## 7. NEXT YEAR

1. Clear all Quarters into the discard pile.
  2. Shuffle if needed.
  3. **Start Player:**
    - If a Promotion Review happened → the promoted player.
    - Otherwise → the player who ended the previous year.
  4. Reset Q1 to 0.
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## 8. QUICK REFERENCE

### Rankings

## Context Order

**Sales (face up)** K–Q–J–10...2–A

**Promotion** A–K–Q–J...2

**Missed Target** A–K–Q–J...2

**Start Player** K–Q–J...2–A

## End-of-Year Outcomes

Outcome	Trigger	Investigation	Demotion	Promotion Review
<b>Beat Target</b>	Q4 > target	1 random face-down	Scapegoat on Red	All players (Black) or all except Scapegoat (Red)
<b>Perfect Target</b>	Q4 = target	1 random face-down	Everyone on Red	All players on Black
<b>Missed Target</b>	Deadline	None	Lowest card	None

## Turn Summary

1. Play
2. Add value
3. Close if  $\geq$  target
4. Draw

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## 9. DESIGN NOTES (CONDENSED)

**Aces:** Weak in sales, kingmakers in reviews.

**Face-down Reds:** Fast closers—if you're willing to risk unemployment.

**Hand Size = Rank:** More cards = more control over when other people get blamed.

**Hand Size 1:** A corporate coffin, but not a grave.

**Memory:** Cheating in Q1 can explode in Q4.

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## 10. FAQ

**Do Aces count high or low?**

Sales: low (1)

Everything else: high

**What if I'm Hand Size 1 and get Demoted?**

Discard your card, draw 1. Stay at 1.

**Do earlier Quarters matter?**

Only Q4 triggers consequences.

**Where do extra points go?**

They stay in the Quarter; only the overflow number moves forward.

**Can I back out of a Promotion tie?**

Yes. Reveal a weak card and fold.

**Does the Deadline reset each Quarter?**

No. Two turns total for the entire year.

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