



FUN UNPLUGGED

RAIN CITY GAMES

The image displays a collection of colorful cards arranged in a grid-like pattern, each representing a different type of game or player preference. The cards are tilted at various angles and overlap each other, creating a dynamic and visually appealing layout. Each card features a small icon in the top left corner and a small circular arrow icon in the bottom right corner.

- I WANT A COOPERATIVE GAME** (Purple card)
- I WANT A GAME FOR 8 PLAYERS** (Green card)
- I WANT TO PLAY WHILE TELLING STORIES** (Orange card)
- I ENJOY EASY TO LEARN GAMES** (Pink card)
- I ENJOY FANTASY GAMES** (Blue card)
- I ENJOY SCI-FI GAMES** (Blue card)
- I ENJOY ECONOMIC GAMES** (Dark Blue card)
- I WANT TO PLAY WITH FAMILY / KIDS** (Yellow card)
- I WANT A BLUFFING GAME** (Pink card)
- I WANT A GAME THAT IS EASY TO LEARN** (Pink card)
- I WANT A GAME FOR UP TO 4 PLAYERS** (Green card)

Each card includes a "FLIP TO SEE SUGGESTIONS" button with a circular arrow icon.



ABOUT RCG

WHO

Rain City Games is a Vancouver based independent board games shop.

WHAT

They sell board games and host dedicated game-related events.

WHY

Their goal is to provide a retail experience that accommodates all types of gamers.

IMPROVING THE IN-STORE RETAIL EXPERIENCE

DESIGN OPPORTUNITY

- Events are well-attended and generate little revenue
- Board game sales are the largest revenue generator
- Rain City Games is competing with online retailers





LACK OF STAFF-CUSTOMER INTERACTION ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

11%

of customers approached
the staff with questions

12%

of customers were
approached by the staff

32%

of customers used a mobile
device to find information

* gathered from a sample size of 161 unique customers



CUSTOMERS ENJOY RECOMMENDATIONS

CUSTOMER INTERVIEWS

- Customers were pleased with the staff's knowledge of board games
- Customers who receive a recommendation are more likely to make a purchase

“ Last time I was here, the staff showed me the game ‘What do you Meme?’. I’m here to buy a copy as a birthday present for my cousin.

- Novice Gamer

TARGET AUDIENCE

NOVICE GAMERS

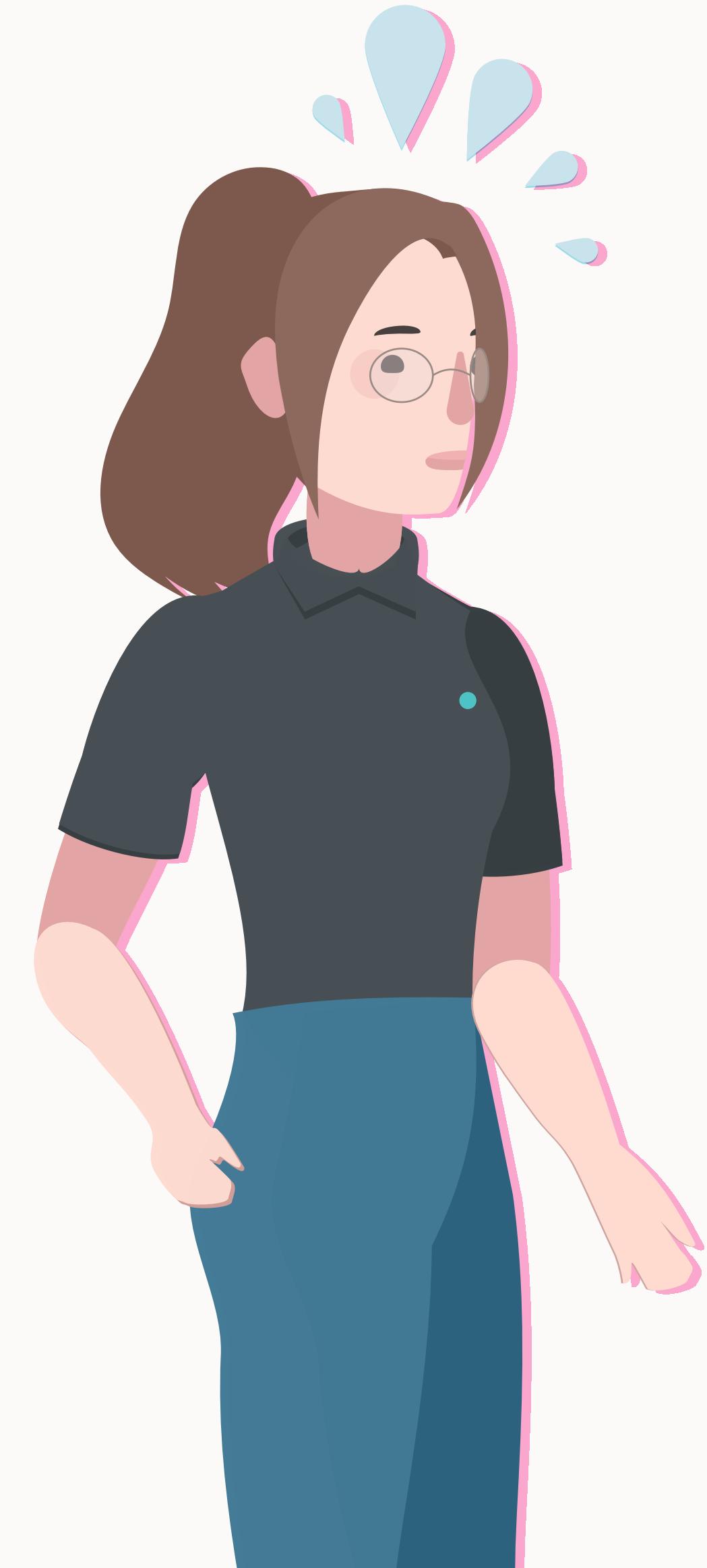
- New to modern board games
- Search for games based on context of play
- Arrive at RCG seeking recommendations
- Uncomfortable approaching staff



SECONDARY AUDIENCE

STAFF MEMBERS

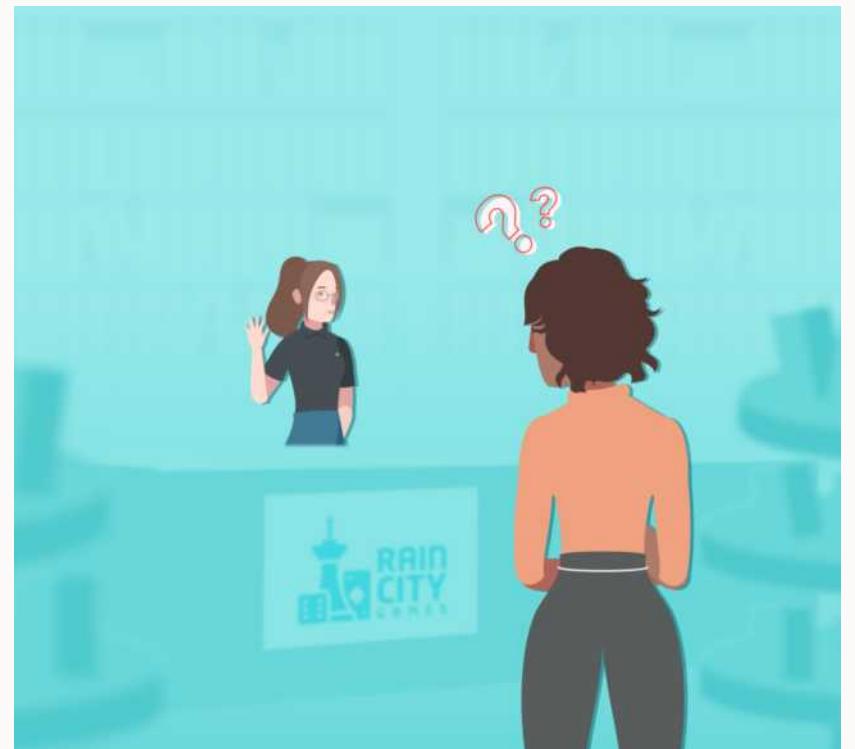
- Enjoy finding the right game for a customer
- Have extensive knowledge of board games
- Anxious about approaching customers



TYPICAL CUSTOMER JOURNEY

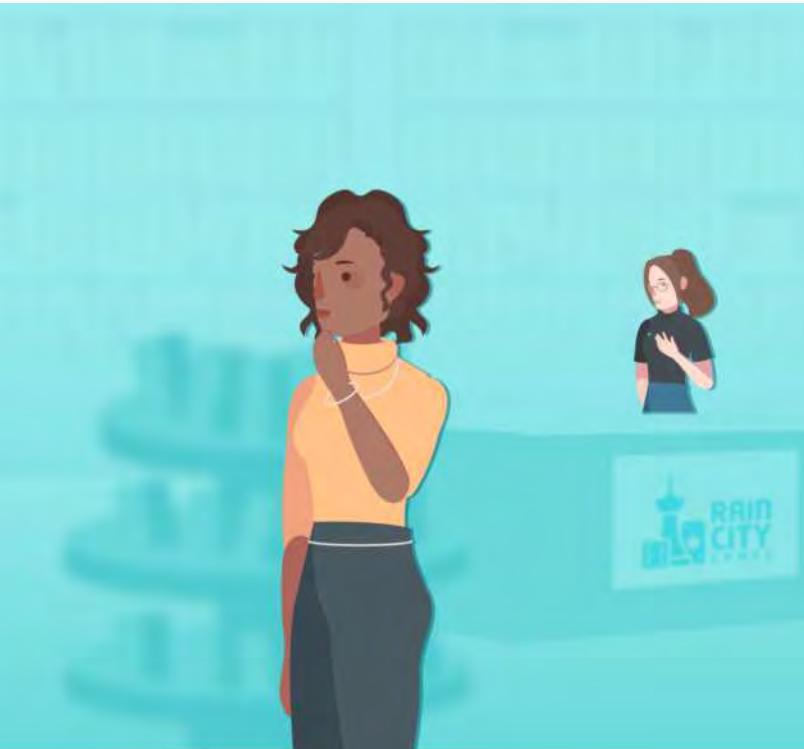
THE PROBLEM

ENTER



overwhelmed

ENGAGE



embarrassed

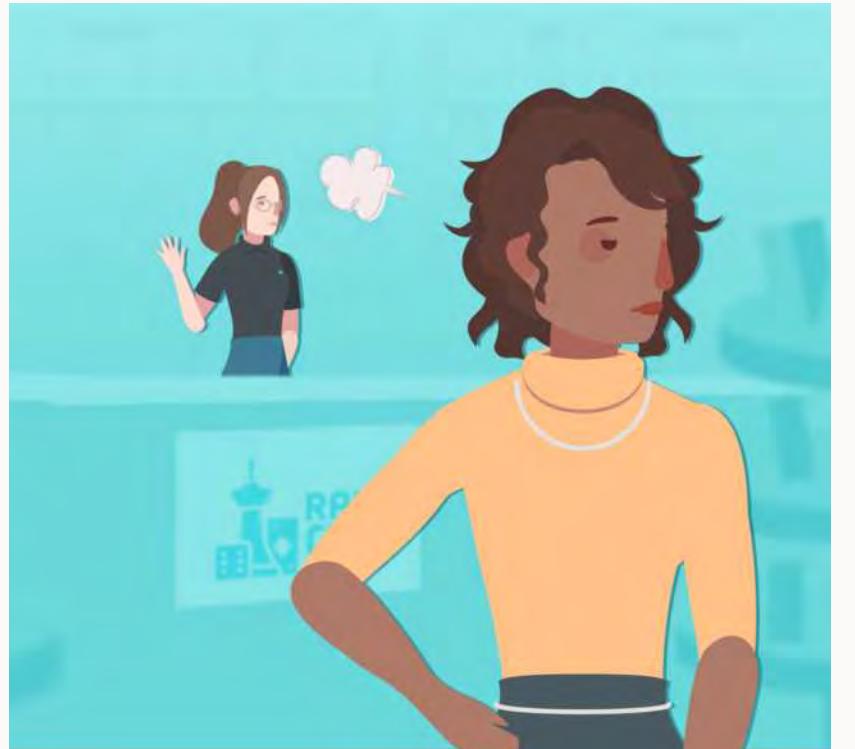


anxious



unsupported

EXIT



unsatisfied

OVERWHELMED

ENTER RCG

“ I didn't know where to start in the store, so I just browsed the products to my left.

- Novice Gamer



EMBARRASSED BROWSING

/// I didn't talk to staff because I didn't have a specific game in mind. I wouldn't want to bother them...

- Novice Gamer



ANXIOUS

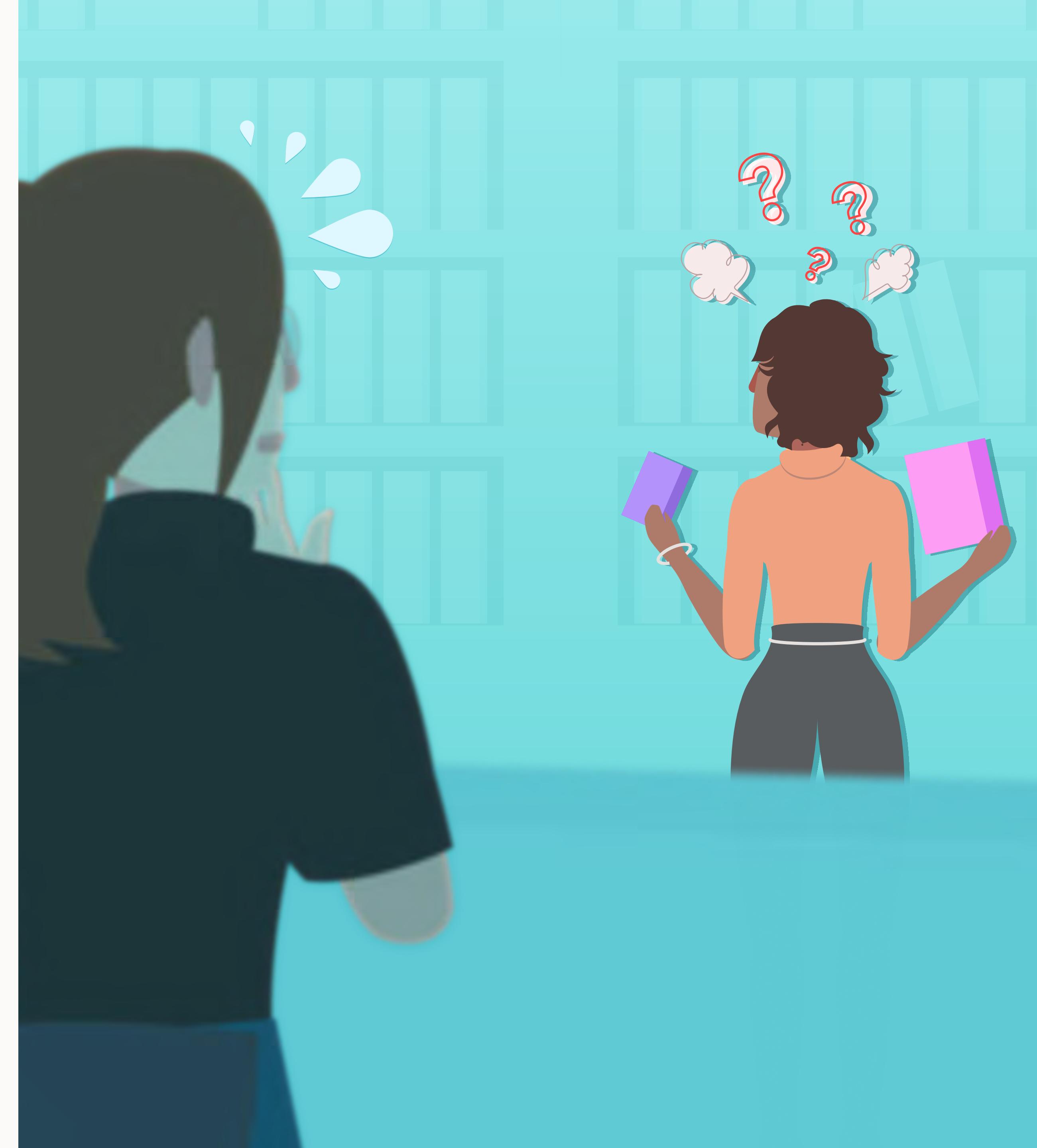
OBSERVING

/// Some of our staff get really anxious about approaching customers.

- Store Owner

/// My least favourite part is having awkward conversations with customers.

- Staff Member



UNSUPPORTED FINDING GAMES

|| We aren't really familiar with the genres. We just want a fun game that can be played on a plane.

- Novice Gamers

|| I'm just checking 'Werewolf' reviews on Google to see if it'll be good for my party tonight.

- Novice Gamer



UNSATISFIED

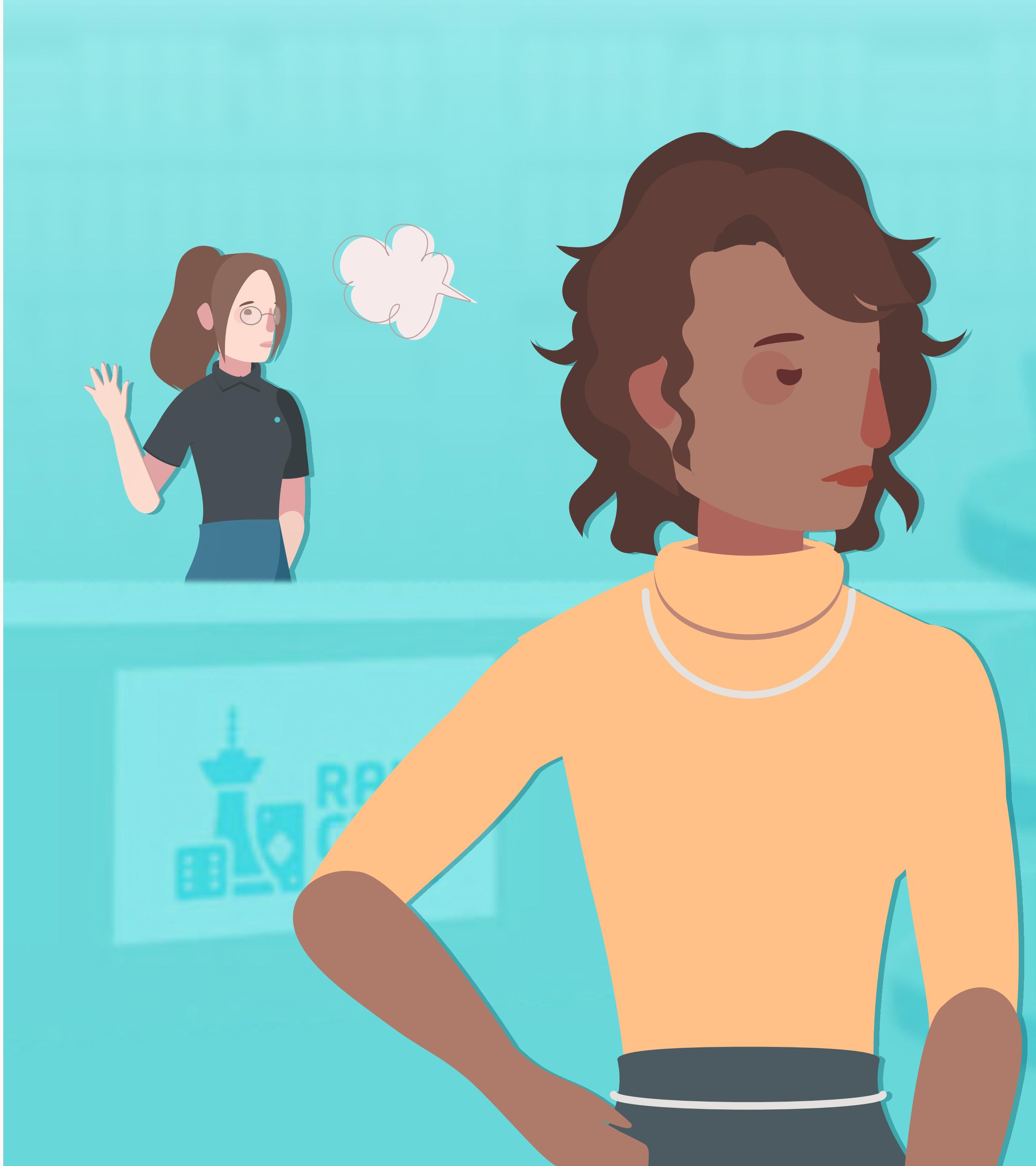
LEAVE THE STORE

|| I wasn't able to find games that are similar to the one that I would want to buy.

- Novice Gamer

|| We really dislike it when people come in to the store and use it like an Amazon wishlist.

- Store Owner



DESIGN FOCUS

Providing novice gamers with tailored recommendations
that match the context that they are shopping for

DESIGN INTERVENTION

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

01

Promote staff-customer
interactions

02

Create an affordance for
independent search

03

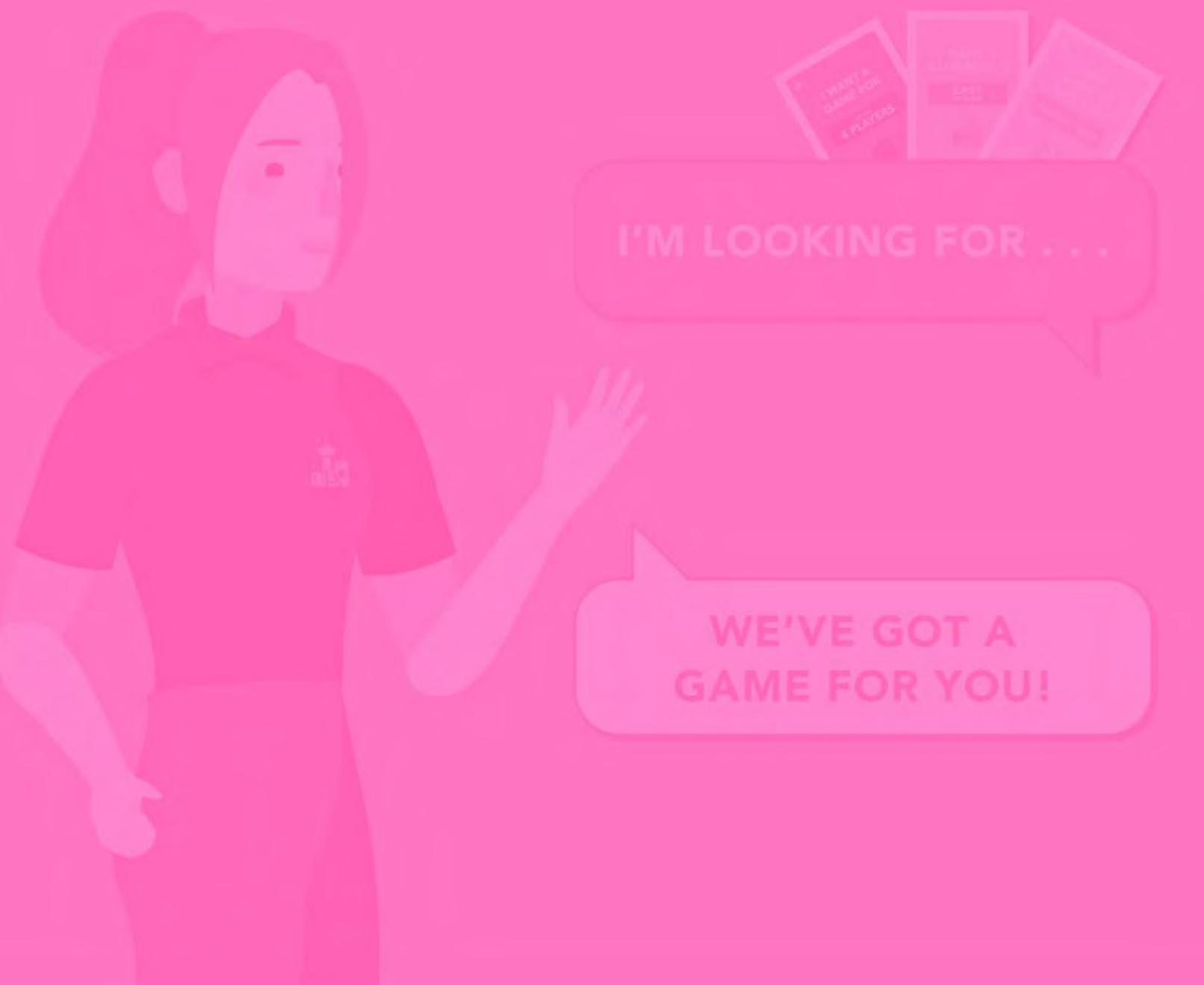
Increase novice gamers'
board game knowledge



OR

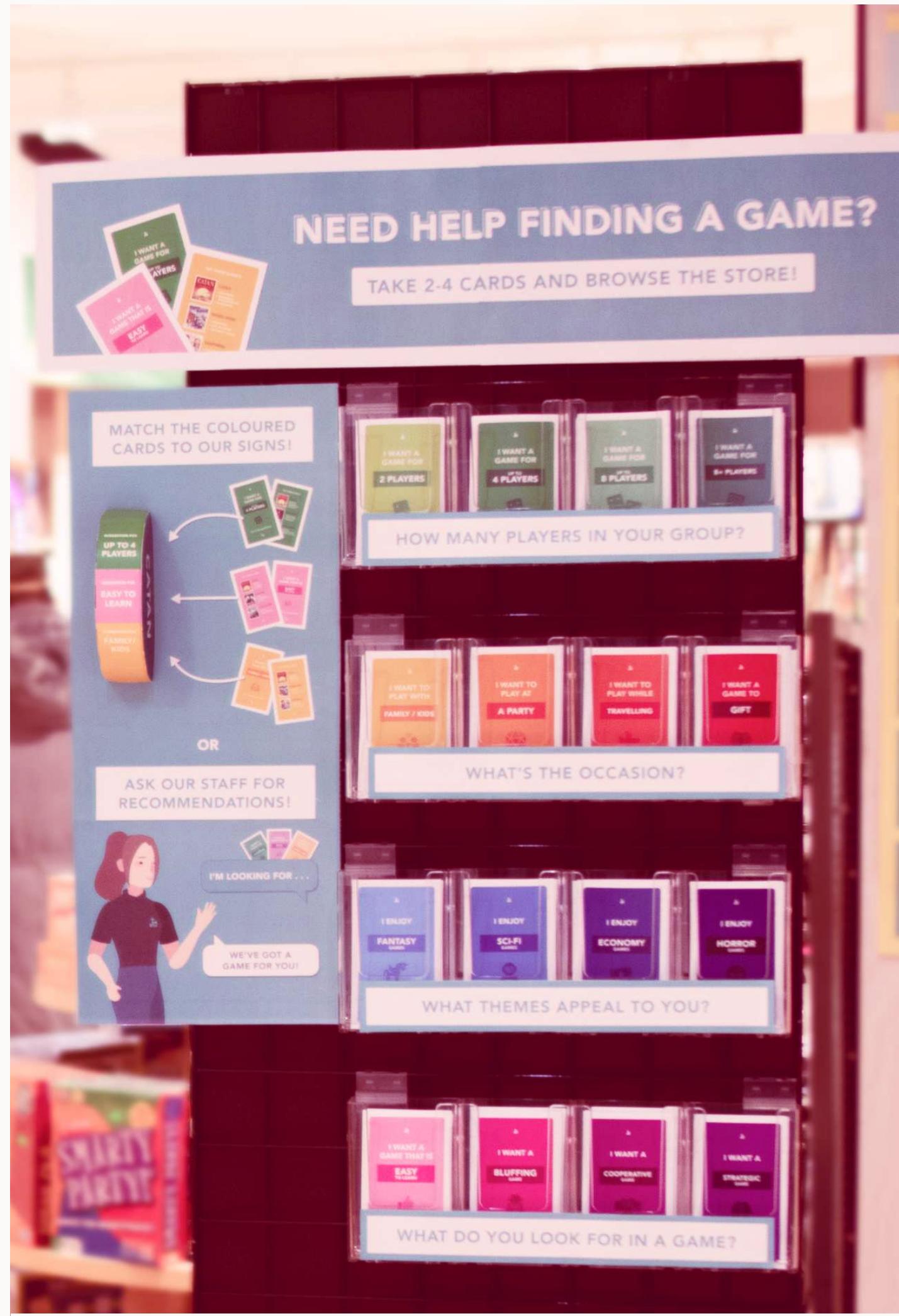
ASK OUR STAFF FOR
RECOMMENDATIONS!

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE



WHAT THEMES APPEAL TO YOU? DESIGN INTERVENTION





DISPLAY



CARDS



SHELF SIGNAGE

DESIGN INTERVENTION

THE SOLUTION

ENTER



intrigued



delighted



adventurous



validated



satisfied

ENGAGE

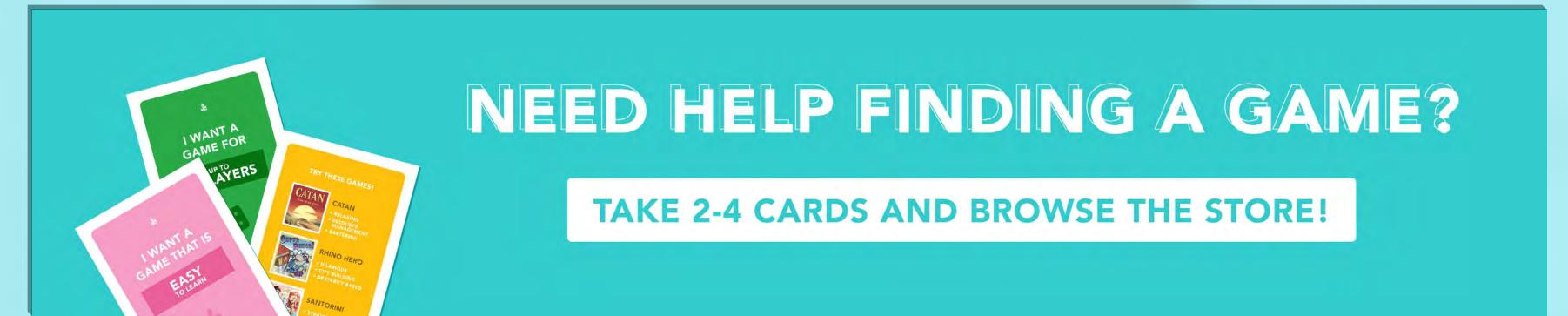
EXIT

INTRIGUED

NOTICE DISPLAY

// It was the first thing I noticed in the store, and it's really colourful.

- Customer



CURIOUS INSPECT DISPLAY

/// They look like brochures and it felt right to take one with me. I wanted to see what was on it.

- Customer

/// I hadn't seen it in the store before. It seems like something that that would be really helpful.

- Frequent Customer

The display board features several sections:

- Top Left:** A stack of four cards: a green one for 2 players, a pink one for up to 4 players, a yellow one for 8+ players, and an orange one for 8+ players.
- Top Right:** A box containing the text "TAKE 2-4 CARDS AND BROWSE T".
- Middle Left:** A circular graphic with a black border labeled "CATAN". Inside, arrows point from three colored boxes to three corresponding colored cards:
 - Green box: "UP TO 4 PLAYERS" (green card)
 - Pink box: "EASY TO LEARN" (pink card)
 - Yellow box: "FAMILY / KIDS" (yellow card)
- Middle Center:** A section titled "MATCH THE COLOURED CARDS TO OUR SIGNS!" showing the same colored cards from the previous section.
- Middle Right:** A section titled "HOW MANY PLAYERS IN YOUR GROUP?" showing four boxes for 2, 4, 8, and 8+ players, each with a die icon.
- Bottom Left:** A section titled "ASK OUR STAFF FOR RECOMMENDATIONS!" featuring an illustration of a staff member and a speech bubble saying "I'M LOOKING FOR ...".
- Bottom Right:** A section titled "WHAT THEMES APPEAL TO YOU?" showing four boxes for Fantasy, Sci-Fi, Economy, and Horror games, each with a theme icon.
- Bottom Bottom:** A section titled "WHAT'S THE OCCASION?" showing four boxes for playing with family/kids, at a party, while travelling, and as a gift, each with an occasion icon.

DELIGHTED

CHOOSE CARDS

“ I really like the cards. They feel right to hold and the colours are really vibrant.

- Customer

“ I can see customers using the cards and the recommendations line up with what I would typically recommend.

- Staff Member



ADVENTUROUS BROWSE GAMES

/// I want to find the games that are on the back. I've heard of Catan but not Love Letter or Carcassonne.

- Novice Gamer

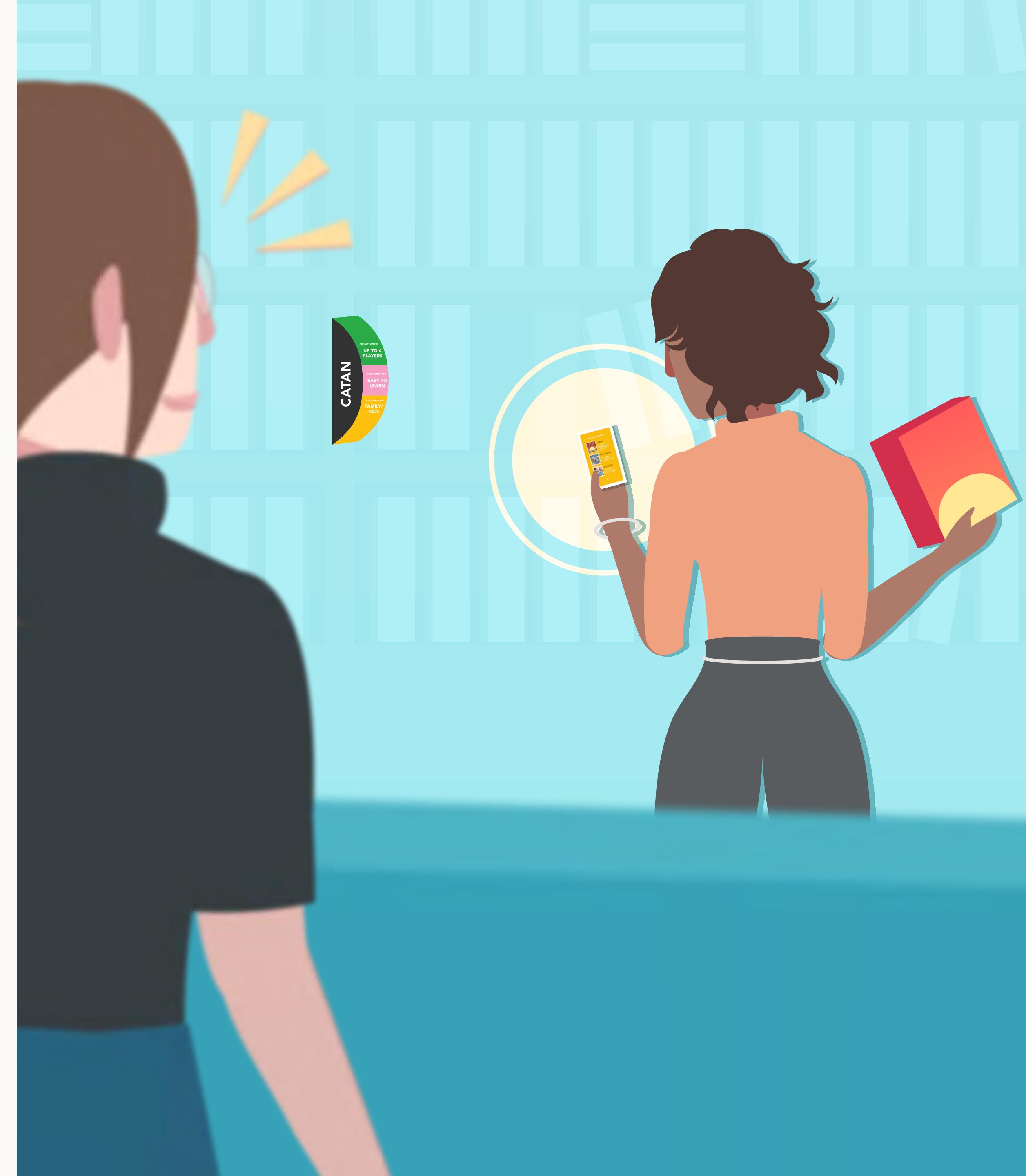


RELIEVED

IDENTIFY NEED

/// I have to pay attention to a lot of things, so making it easier to notice which customers need help is good.

- Staff Member

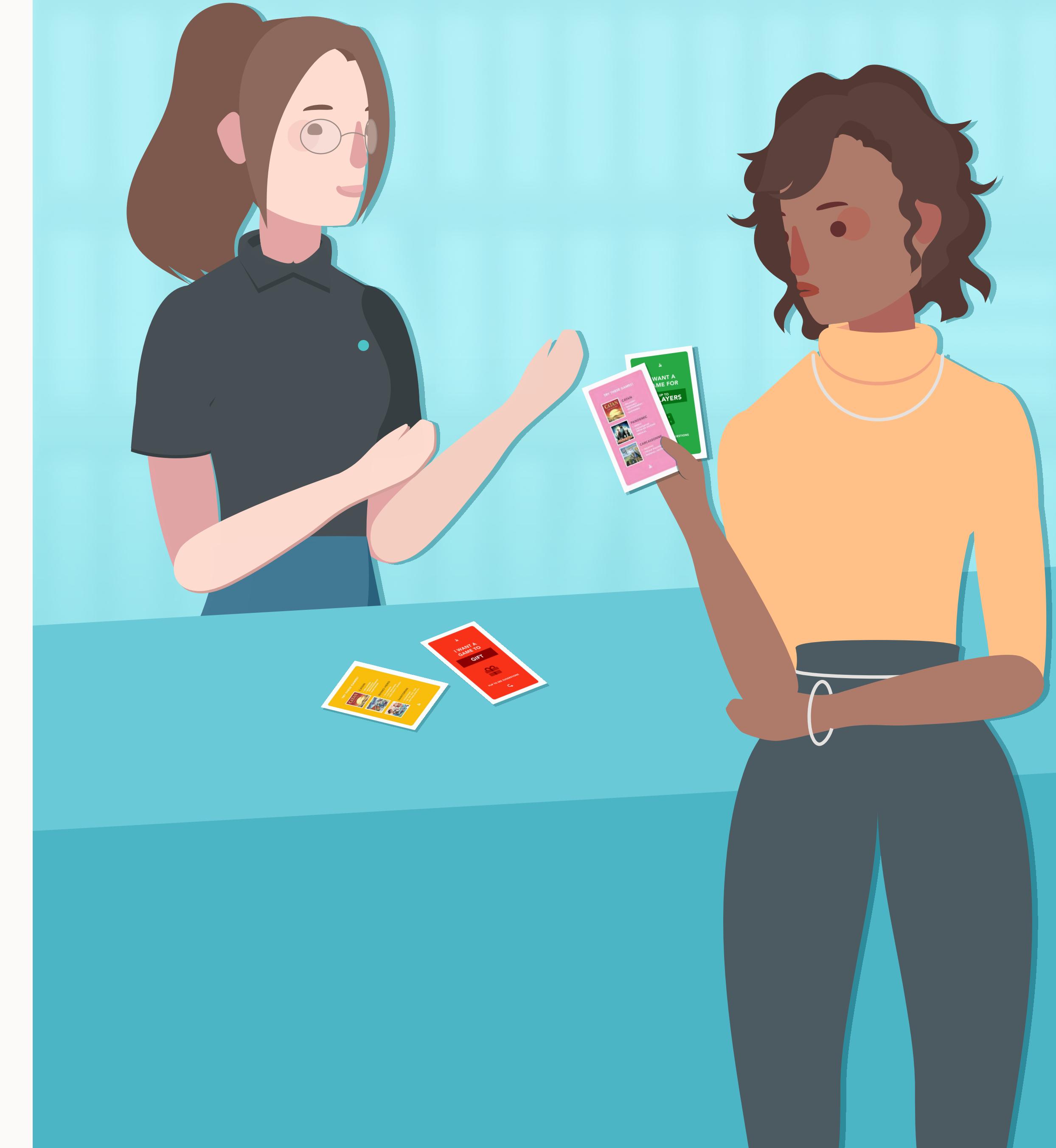


INQUISITIVE

ASK THE STAFF

/// I would still appreciate talking to staff about the games. The [game box] descriptions don't tell me enough.

- New Customer



VALIDATED

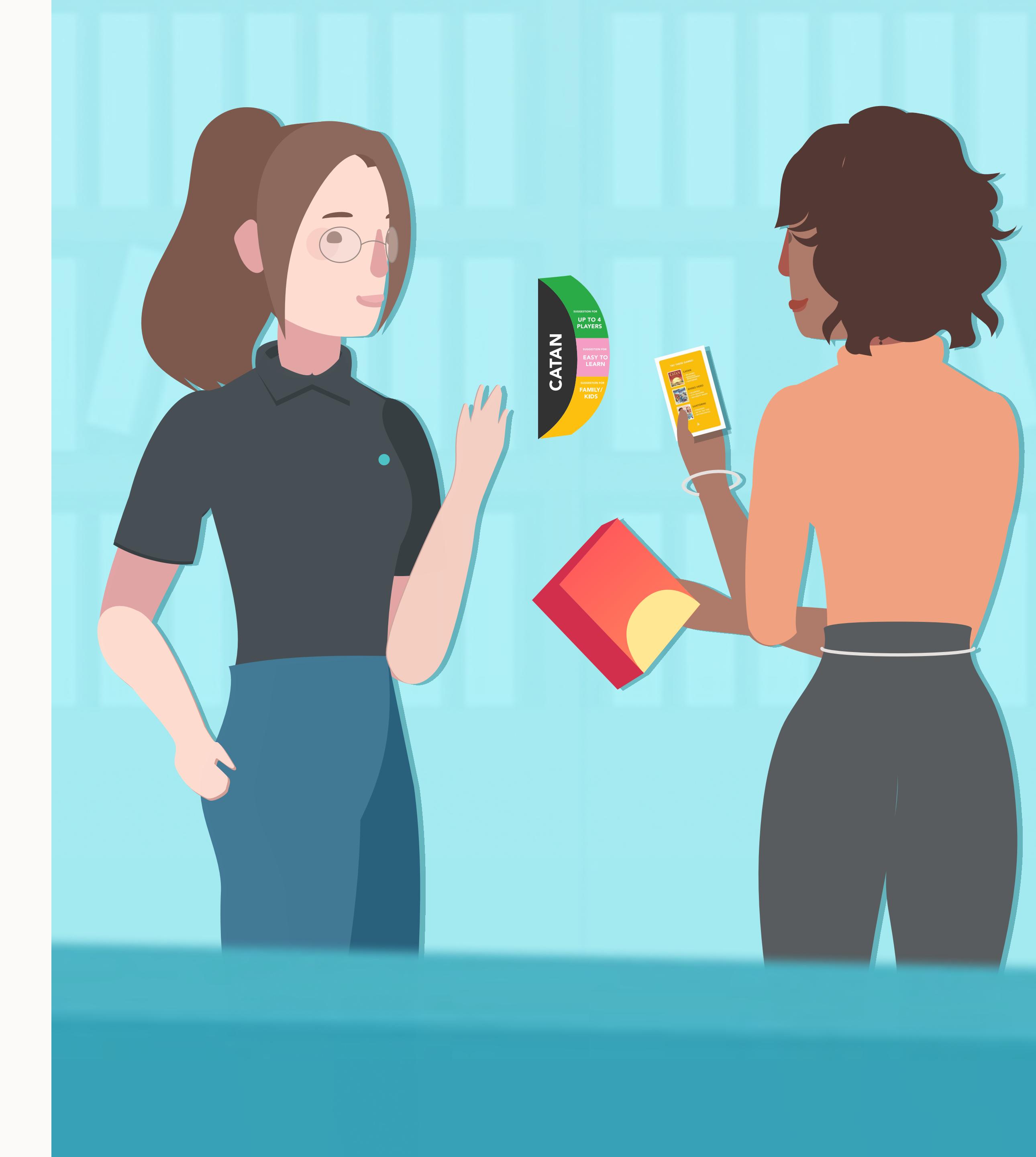
DISCUSS GAMES

/// I wasn't sure which game to buy, but having the staff explain them helped.

- Novice Gamer

/// I really enjoy helping customers find games. Its the best part of the job and I get to test my knowledge.

- Staff Member



SATISFIED

PURCHASE A GAME

“ I bought Catan after talking to Rodrigo. I’m looking forward to playing it this weekend.

- Novice Gamer

“ Having more customer engagement differentiates us from Amazon. I can see the cards being a conversation starter for a lot of customers.

- Store Owner





DISPLAY

CARDS



SHELF SIGNAGE



TOP BANNER AND QUESTIONS

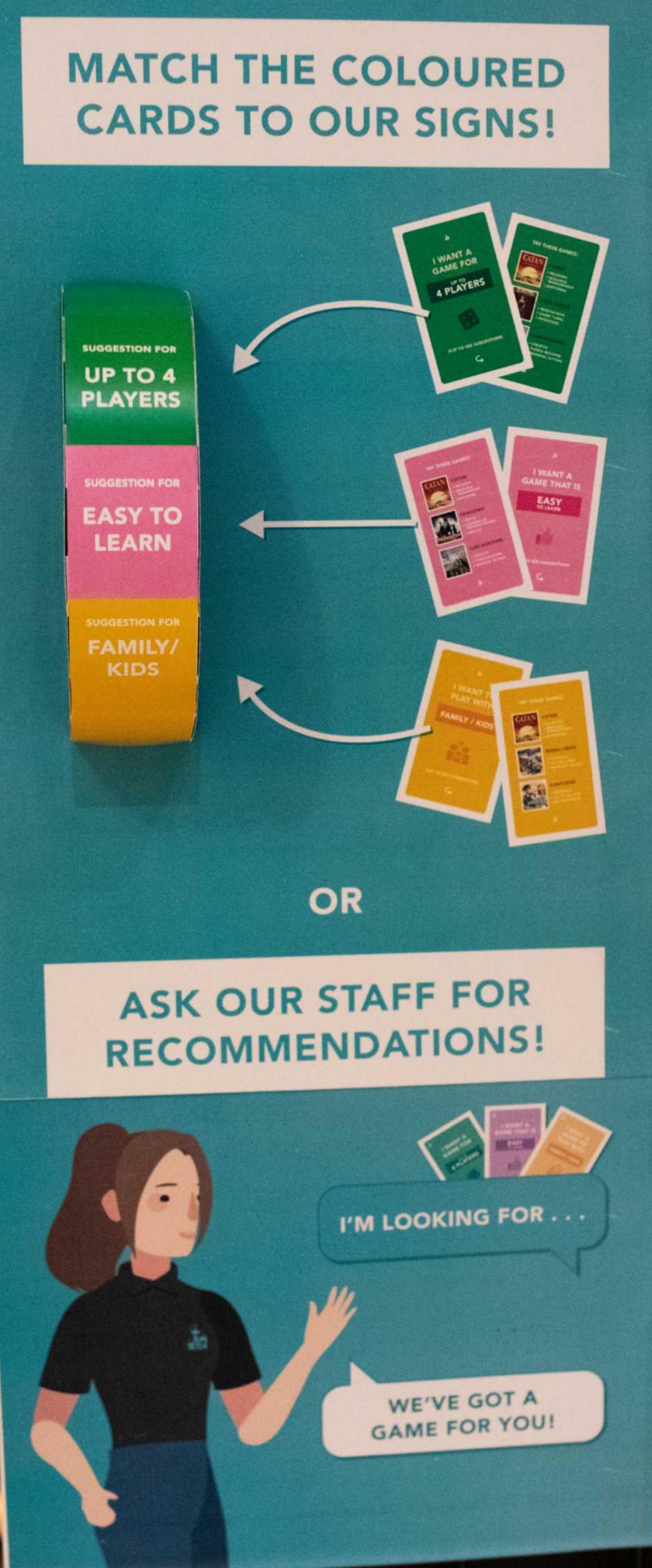
THE DISPLAY

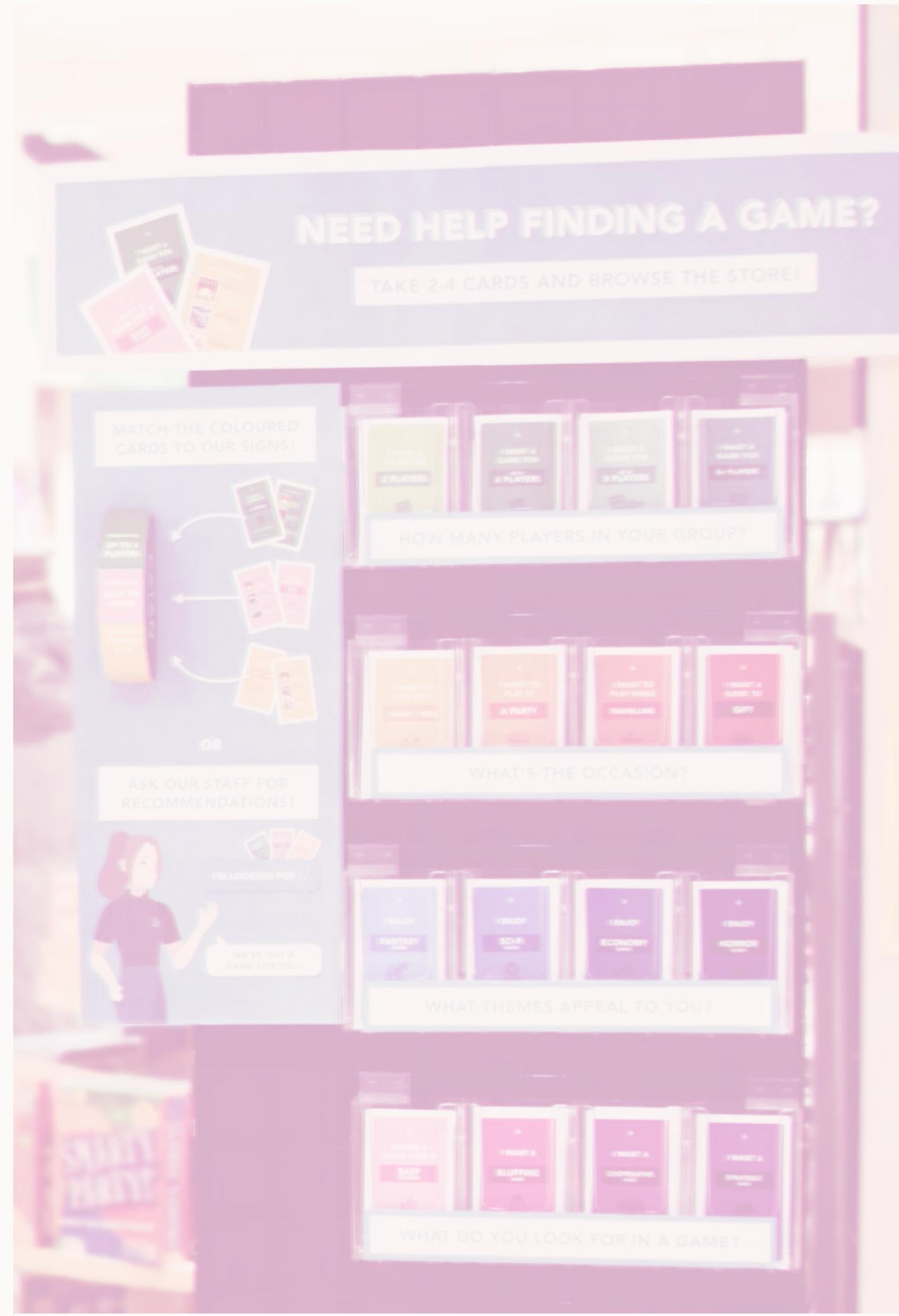
- Oriented to draw customers attention upon entry
- Concise instructions for ease of use
- Questions posed to spark customer engagement



EXAMPLE SIGNAGE AND PROMOTING STAFF THE DISPLAY

- Establish the connection between the cards and shelf signage
- Increased understanding of shelf signage by 43%
- Frames staff to be more approachable





DISPLAY



CARDS



SHELF SIGNAGE

SIZE, PAPER QUALITY, AND COLOURS THE CARDS

- Index card sized for holding and visibility
- Light weight glossy paper encourages people to take them
- Square cut for easy creation and low production cost
- 16 unique colours to differentiate the cards



Rain City Games
branded logo

Short statements that
customers can relate to

Icons to capture customers
attention and to support ESL

CARD CATEGORIES & ICONOGRAPHY

FRONT OF THE CARDS



CATAN

Familiar modern classic

RHINO HERO

Unfamiliar game with unique mechanics

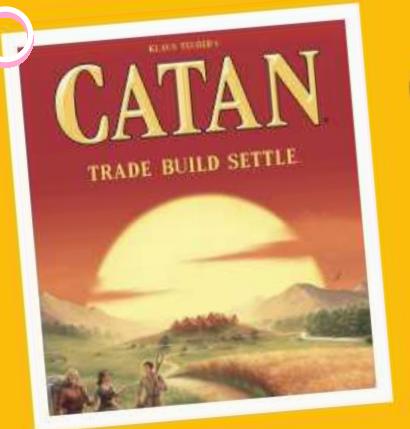
SANTORINI

Easy to learn, hard to master

RECOMMENDED GAMES

BACK OF THE CARDS

TRY THESE GAMES!



CATAN

- RELAXING
- RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
- BARTERING



RHINO HERO

- HILARIOUS
- CITY BUILDING
- DEXTERITY BASED



SANTORINI

- STRATEGIC
- 3D TIC TAC TOE
- MYTHOLOGICAL



Large picture of box art
to aid in-store searching

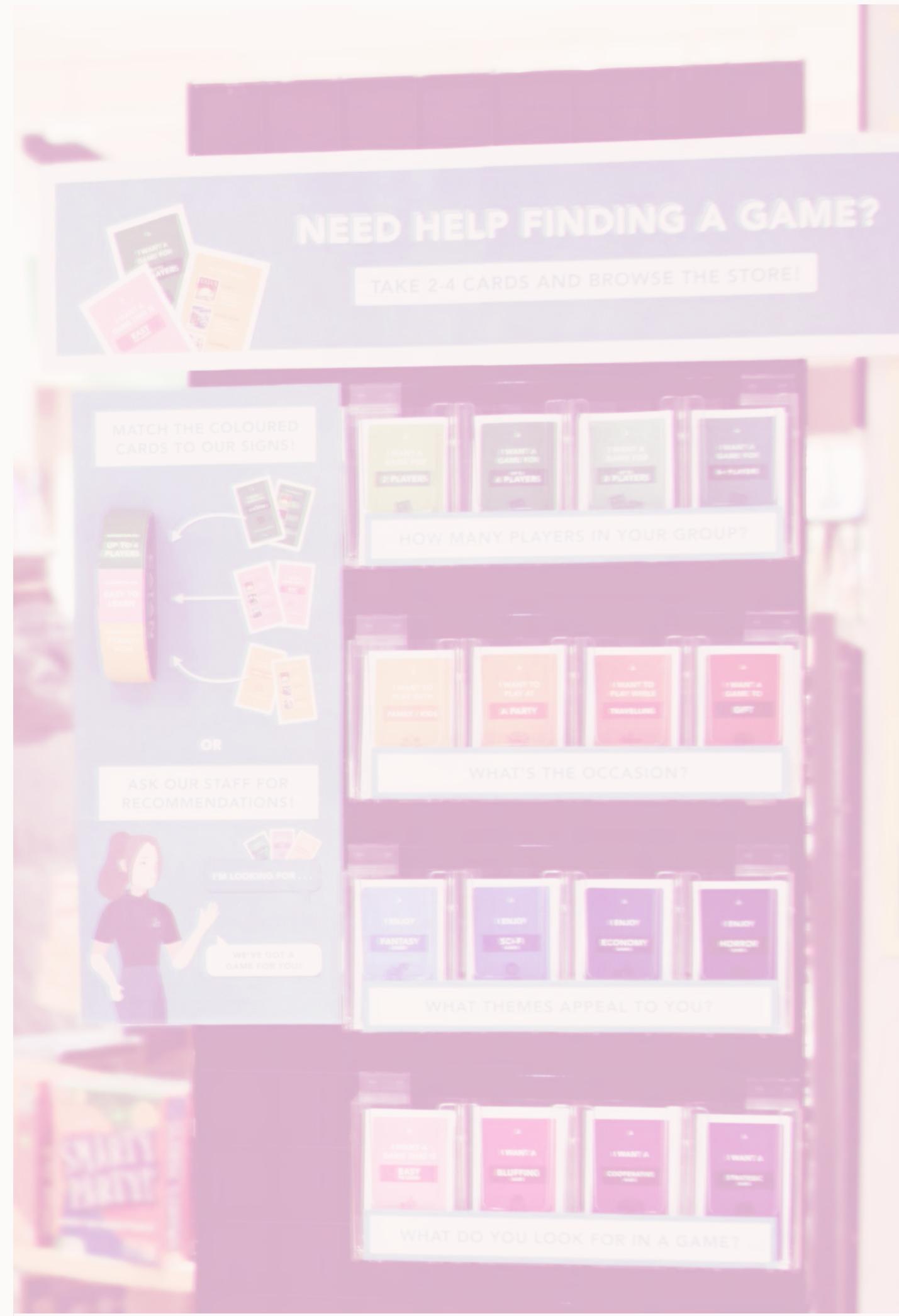
Short description about:
- Emotional experience
- Gameplay
- Theme

BOX ART & DESCRIPTIONS BACK OF THE CARDS

RECOMMENDED GAMES BACK OF THE CARDS

- Worked with RCG to develop a robust list of games
- 29 games recommended across 16 cards
- Recommendations are constructed to overlap





DISPLAY



CARDS



SHELF SIGNAGE

SHAPE, COLOURS, AND COPY

SHELF SIGNAGE

- Round signage contrasts rectangular board game boxes
- Coloured sides connect to the cards and are useful on their own
- White text on a black background is most noticeable



BOX ART & TITLE BASED SEARCH SHELF SIGNAGE

- Enhancing current exploration process
Visitors love looking at box art

- Black side panels allow for increased
glanceability against games



COLOUR & TEXT BASED SEARCH SHELF SIGNAGE

- The colour of the cards match the stripes on the signs
- The category of the card matches with the text on sign



IMPROVED INDEPENDENCE

SHELF SIGNAGE

- Signs highlight recommended games throughout the store
- Provide more context for games on the shelves



MOVING FORWARD

Future outcomes based on *Guiding Principles*

COMPETING WITH AMAZON

PROMOTING INTERACTIONS

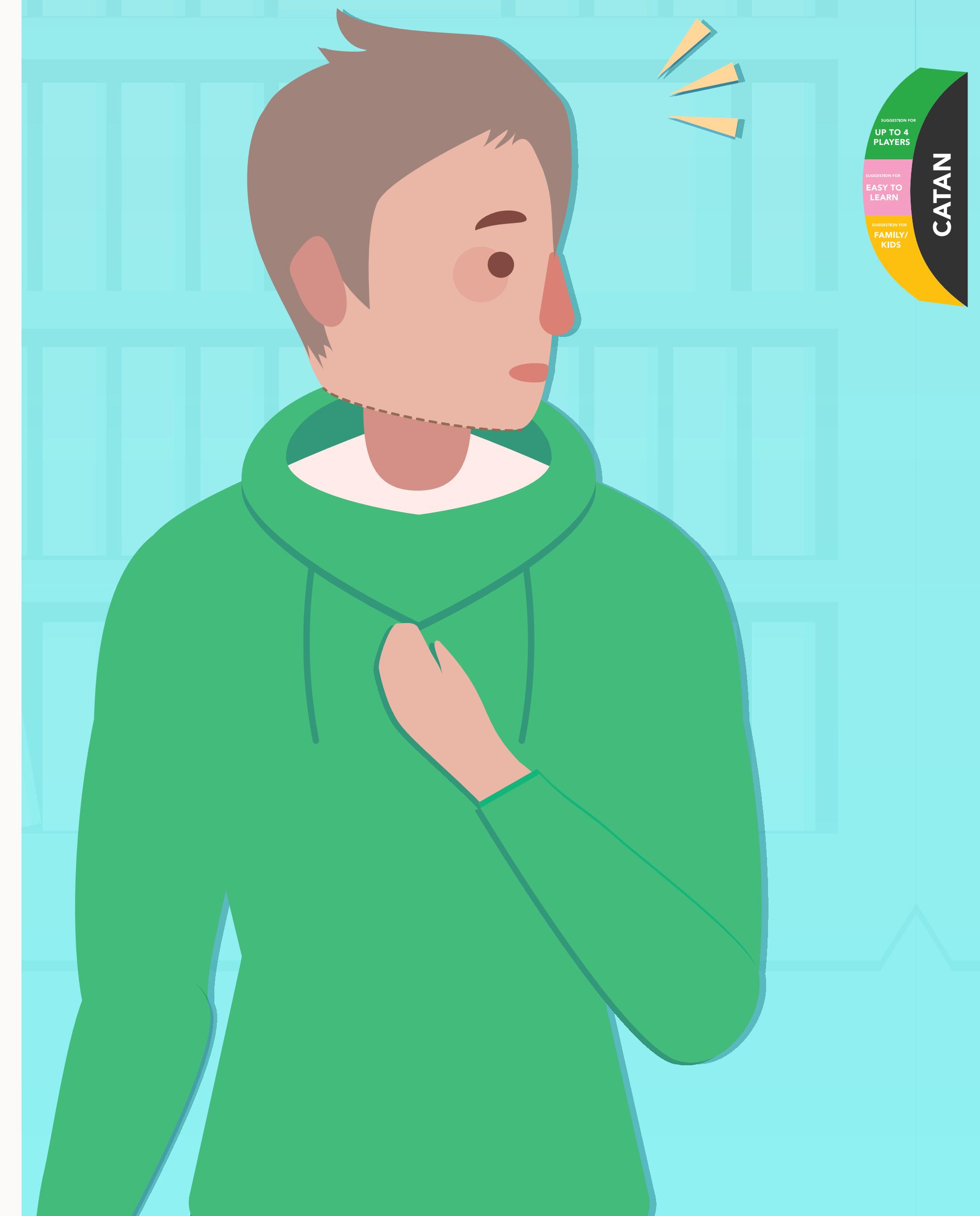
- Customers receive tailored recommendations
- Novice gamers appreciate the staffs' expertise
- Staff experience the best part of their job



ACCOMODATING ALL GROUPS

IMPROVED INDEPENDENCE

- Lowers staff anxiety without increasing workload
- Allows shy customers to browse and find games on their own
- Signage also improves exploration without the cards



FUTURE GENERATIONS

GROWING AS A GAMER

- RCG is established as the best shop for novice gamers to learn and play
- Novice Gamers understand what they are looking for in board games
- Customers receive recommendations for their next visit to RCG



thank you

