

FOUNDER-TO-FORTUNE

IDEATE - PITCH - RISK



The entrepreneur's journey starts with an idea. An idea needs to be told to others to see if has value. Will anyone risk trying it? That's the inventor's as well as the investor's dilemma.

HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL DO

Play the game Founder to Fortune to come up with new ideas for a business.

Pitch your new ideas to an investor to see if they are willing to risk their money by investing in it.

PLAYING THE GAME

The game consists of a series of rounds. There are three “acts” to each round: ideation, pitching, investing.

Ideation in Founder to Fortune involves combining two words at random to come up with a new thought. Even common words put together can result in an uncommon pairing: for example, *military* and *tiny*. This could be a different way to deploy troops, informed by swarm intelligence. The goal of the game is to come up with ideas quickly, not to think them through in detail.

Pitching is also intended to go quickly, no longer than 30 seconds each. The essence of the new product or service must be communicated in few words--images may be used (drawn on whiteboards).

Investing provides feedback to the ideas pitched. An angel investor selects one idea that is most appealing. Other players may secretly sign up for shares in ideas they like. Investing

Entrepreneur

A person who starts a new business. An entrepreneur must tolerate risk because the outcome is uncertain.

Angel Investor

A person who invests their own money in a business for the purpose of making money when the business sells.

is risky--players who hold shares in companies that the investor does not choose, lose those shares. Of course, in the real world, investors have a lot to lose, too.

Each group of four plays four rounds. If there are five people in a group, five rounds are needed. A round typically takes 5 minutes.

After groups have concluded, have the founders add up their shares. The FOUNDER with the most shares is the most valuable FOUNDER.

Advanced Play: INVESTORS use the information on their term sheets to determine their personal FORTUNES. The INVESTOR with the biggest FORTUNE is the winner.

- Set out the cards, dice and word sheets for playing the game. One set is enough for 4 to 5 players.
- Each player starts with 12 Share cards (0 shares--3 cards, 1 share-- 4 cards, 2 shares--3 cards, 3 shares--2 cards).
- Set out two 10-sided dice
- Word List--a list of 100 random words is included with the game, but you may come up with your own list if directed by the session leader
- Individual whiteboards, erasable pens (or paper and pencil) for sketching ideas
- Advanced Play: each player receives pencil and paper

Founder

The person who founds (starts) a new business. When two or more people do this they may be called co-founders. A founder usually has the most control of the business.

Pitch

A presentation about a startup idea, product or opportunity for the purpose of getting someone (e.g., an angel investor) interested in its value.

Term Sheet

A document that investors and founders sign that specifies the amount of money invested and the percentage of the company value the investor receives for that investment.

TEAMS OF FOUR

Round One: Choose one player to be the first INVESTOR. This role passes to the next person in each round; everyone gets to be an INVESTOR for one round.

The other players are FOUNDERS--each of whom thinks up a competing new business idea.

The INVESTOR rolls two dice. The 00-90 die is the first digit, the 0-9 die is the second (e.g., roll a 00 and 5 = 5; roll 60 and 3 = 63). Roll each pair twice to determine the two keyword numbers.

Once the two keywords are known, the INVESTOR says “Founders Go.” If the two keywords are already a common product (e.g., Plastic Bag) the INVESTOR may roll the dice again) and either add that to the combination or substitute it for one of the previous keywords .

The INVESTOR gives the FOUNDERS 60 seconds to invent original business ideas that combine the two keywords. Use a timer. Sketch out ideas on whiteboards or paper. Playfulness is encouraged.

After the INVESTOR calls time, each FOUNDERS presents a short pitch. The INVESTOR may ask one question per pitch for clarification, if needed.

INVESTOR investments. After hearing the three pitches, the INVESTOR invests one Share card in each FOUNDER. The amount ranges from 0 to 3 Shares, depending on the fortune-making possibilities perceived. Cards are handed out face-down and not shown to other players.

Quick Play: “Most Valuable” Following the fourth round, players add up the share value of the cards they hold. The FOUNDER with the highest number of Shares is the *most sought-after FOUNDER*. See [Sample Results](#), below. In Quick Play, Raj is the most sought-after Founder with 25 total shares.

Use this guide when investing:

0 Shares: I'm passing on the idea (I take no risk)

1 Share: I like the idea (I take a little risk)

2 Shares: I like the idea better than my own (I take a moderate risk)

3 Shares: This is an awesome idea (I take a high risk)

Advanced Play: The INVESTOR privately records how much is being given to each FOUNDER on a simple term sheet. This helps the INVESTOR remember how much they invested and in whom; it also keeps the game honest. (Term Sheets are not needed for Quick Play--in which case the Most-Sought-After FOUNDER is the winner.)

Investment cards are handed out face down so other players do not know the amounts of the other investments (they may look only at the card they receive). Cards are not shown to others until the end. Cards not handed out are kept as part of the INVESTOR'S fortune.

FOUNDERS may invest too. While the Investor is investing, each FOUNDER decides whether to invest in the other FOUNDERS or not. No more than 1 card may be invested in another FOUNDER, face down, indicating the amount of the investment (from zero to 3). The FOUNDER who gets the card may look at it, but these cards are not revealed until the end.

Strategically, a FOUNDER must decide if it makes sense to give up shares to other projects or keep them. A FOUNDER may decide not to invest, however, doing so may limit their FORTUNE.

A FOUNDER may choose not to invest in anyone if they don't like the other ideas. In that case, they either use a zero Share or don't give out a card.

Strategically, an INVESTOR must decide if it makes sense to spread out investments (low risk in several places) or give them all to one FOUNDER (high risk all in one place). To invest too little or too much may have a negative effect on an Investor's ultimate fortune.

Share Value and Winning

Fortunes are based on share values. Each player calculates the share value of their holdings. The INVESTOR with the largest accumulated FORTUNE is the winner.

1. The share value for each player is the total number of shares they kept plus shares they received. See the Quick Play column below. Each FOUNDER reports this information to the other players.
2. Each FOUNDER multiplies the number of shares held in each company by that company's share value. The maximum any player may invest in another player is 10, determined by the Share Cards
3. Each FOUNDER adds up their share values.

The highest value is the winner.

Sample results

Player	Quick Play	Advanced Play (term sheets)
FOUNDER: Jen 13 shares kept	TOTAL SHARES received: 3 + 12 = 15	shares in Mike = 1 $1*17 = 17$ shares in Susan = 0 $0*5 = 0$ shares in Raj = 2 $2*25 = 50$ Value = 262 $((13*15)+17+0+50)$
FOUNDER: Mike 12 shares kept	TOTAL SHARES received: 5 + 12 = 17	shares in Jen = 1 $1*15 = 15$ shares in Susan = 0 $0*5 = 0$ shares in Raj = 3 $3*25 = 75$ Value = 294 $((12*17)+15+0+75)$
FOUNDER: Susan 3 shares kept	TOTAL SHARES received: 2 + 3 = 5	shares in Jen = 2 $2*15 = 30$ shares in Mike = 1 $1*17 = 17$ shares in Raj = 10 $10*25 = 250$ Value = 312 $((3*5)+30+17+250)$
FOUNDER: Raj 11 shares kept	TOTAL SHARES received: 14 + 11 = 25	shares in Jen = 0 $0*15 = 0$ shares in Mike = 3 $3*17 = 51$ shares in Susan = 2 $2*5 = 10$ Value = 336 $((11*25)+0+51+10)$

According to the results above, Raj's value of 336 is the highest. Raj's shares each have a value of 25. He kept 11 shares and those are worth $11 \times 25 = 275$. He then adds up what the shares he has in other players are worth. He made a good investment in Mike and was smart to hold onto most of his own shares.

Notice what happened to Susan, who invested as many shares as she could in Raj. Her fortune is 312, putting her solidly in second place because she invested wisely (she was in last place in Quick Play).

DISCOVERIES

Debrief the game by answering two questions from 1-6 and one questions from 7-8. If directed, capture your thoughts in a smartphone video or write out your thoughts to be turned in.



1. Founders: What criteria did you have in mind when you were making your pitch?
2. Founders: Why would thinking about an investor's criteria be important?
3. Founders: How can you determine what an investor's criteria are?
4. Founders: How would you change your pitch if you knew what your investor valued? [Try this with one of their pitches from the game]
5. Investors: As an investor, what do you look for in a good pitch/idea?
6. What insights into investor strategies does this game suggest?
7. In what way(s) is innovation worthless?
8. How is pitching important to the success of an idea?

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT SESSION



The game dice are rolled to pick two new words from the list. These become the basis for developing a new idea and pitch.

Start by listing as many ideas you can in 5 minutes. Then look at your list to see if you can expand on different types of ideas. Pick the one you like best and come up with a 60-second pitch for it that could appeal to an investor.

Plan to pitch at the next session; your pitch may include visuals.