

# i'm the BOSS!

Game Design: Sid Sackson



To make deals and earn a fortune, you need good connections with influential investors. By bringing the right people to the bargaining table, negotiating wisely, and offering them a piece of the action, you can amass millions and stand atop the business community. But watch out for competitors who will botch your handiwork with underhanded tricks in order to turn your potential deal into their personal profits!

## components

- 98 Influence cards
- 15 Deal cards
- 1 Game board
- 6 Investor placards
- 1 Marker
- 1 Rulebook

## the board

The gameboard shows 16 potential business deals. Each of these deals shows a number of dividends to be paid out and the specific investors needed to make the deal. The more investors needed for a deal, the higher the dividends paid. The value of each dividend is determined at the time the deal is made during the game.



Investor placards

Deal cards

number of investors

required investors

optional investors



number of dividends

### Example:

The space requires the participation of the Red, Blue and Yellow Clans, plus 2 investors from the Clans of Magenta, Orange, Green, a total of 5 investors in all.

Influence cards



Clan (24)

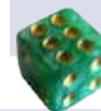
Travel (21)

Boss (10)

Recruitment (33)

Stop (10)

Cash cards



Die



Marker

## object of the game

Each player seeks to bring investors together in order to close deals and collect dividends. Players can also earn money by participating in the deals of opponents. At the end of the game, the player with the largest sum of money wins.

## Preparation for Play

Each player will represent one or more of the investor clans, also known as Investors, in business deals throughout the game. Randomly distribute the 6 Investor placards which show the investor on both sides of the card, one to each player. With 3 players, each player receives two Investor placards and with 4 or 5 players, the unused Investor placard(s) are placed face up next to the game board. The players place their Investor placard(s) in front of them on the table to show the clan(s) they represent.



Shuffle the deck of Influence cards, and then deal 5 cards face down to each player. These cards form a player's starting hand. The remainder of the deck is

placed face down in the middle of the board. Don't let the other players see your cards!

Stack the deal cards in order—#1 on the top and #15 on the bottom—and place them in the middle of the board. The top deal card shows how much each dividend is currently worth; the value of the dividends increases as the game progresses.

Choose one player to be banker. When a deal is made, the banker hands out the appropriate payment for the deal. Players start the game with empty pockets!

Randomly determine who will take the first turn. The player to his right places the marker on any space on the board, then the game begins.

## Order of Play

On your turn, you have the following choice:

- Try to make the deal where the marker stands (see "Let's Make a Deal" below), or
- Roll the die and move the marker clockwise the indicated number of spaces, skipping over board spaces that are covered by



deal cards.

At this new space, you again have a choice:

- Try to make the deal shown on this space, or
- Draw three cards from the deck of Influence cards. No player may hold more than 12 Influence cards; a player drawing to more than 12 cards must immediately discard down to 12 cards or play a Recruitment triple (details below).

Whether you draw cards, make a deal, or (sadly) fail

### Play Tip:

At the beginning of the game, you should first stock up your supply of cards so that you will be able to interfere in negotiations or protect yourself against the actions of other players.

to make a deal, the player to your left (in most cases) will take the next turn. (See "Boss cards" below for details.)

## "Let's make a deal"

With these words, you open negotiations on the deal where the marker stands; until you make this announcement, opponents can't say anything to influence you or play any Influence cards. You are now the Boss of this deal and want the Investors named in this space to agree to make a deal. A large colored box on this space means that this Investor Clan must participate in order to make the deal. A number printed next to a



list of smaller colored boxes shows how many Investors on this list must agree to make the deal in addition to the larger colored Clan boxes. How do you make a deal?



- When you are the Boss, the Investor(s) you represent will automatically agree to make the deal. If, for example, a deal requires the Red and Orange Investors, and you hold both of these Investor placards, then you automatically get their agreement.
- If needed, you can bring other required Investors into the deal by playing Clan cards from your hand, placing them face up in front of you. Clan cards represent members of the Investor's clan, and a Clan member can take the place of an Investor placard in any deal. The Influence deck includes 4 Clan cards for each Investor clan.
- If you don't control an Investor placard who must be part of a deal and can't (or choose not to) play the appropriate Clan card, then you need to recruit these Investors or Clan members by negotiating with other players.

As soon as you try to make a deal, all players can participate or interfere in the process. There is no special order, and any player can be active at any time whether by:

- participating in negotiations, or
- playing Influence cards.

## Participating in negotiations

Players who control Investor placards or have Clan cards in hand that are needed to make a deal can enter into negotiations with the Boss. If the player has an Investor placard, she can offer the use of that Investor to the Boss immediately; if she holds a Clan card, she must first lay that card face up in front of her, revealing to all players that she controls a Clan member who represents that Investor. In either case, she may then negotiate with the Boss over what it will cost to get that Investor or Clan member to agree to make the deal.

Negotiations are only for cash payments from the current deal. A player can ask for a dividend or for any other amount of money. As the Boss, you must decide whether you're willing to pay that price to get that Investor's agreement! Prepayments aren't allowed; all

payments are made only after the closing of the deal. Once played, Clan cards remain on the table in front of whoever played them, whether or not the Boss agrees to pay the requested amount. Since multiple Clan cards exist (in addition to the Investor placard), more than one player can represent that Investor in negotiations, giving the Boss a choice of who to include in a deal.

## Playing Influence cards

Each player (including the Boss) can play Influence cards to influence the negotiations or react to the actions of other players. Note that any player can play Influence cards at any time during the negotiations; players don't take turns playing cards. The detailed scenario at the end of the rulebook gives concrete examples of how to use the various Influence cards.

## Travel cards (2)

A Travel card can be played on a matching Investor placard or Clan card disqualifying that card from participating in the current deal. (The deck includes three Travel cards for each Clan, and those cards can



be played only on the matching Investor placard or Clan card. The deck also includes 3 gray Travel cards that can be played on any Investor placard or Clan card.)

When a Travel card is played on an Investor placard, it stays on that Investor until the end of the negotiation round, after which it goes to the discard pile. When a



Travel card is played on a Clan card, both cards are immediately discarded.

## Recruitment cards (33)

These cards can be played only in sets of three; otherwise they are worthless. When you play and discard a Recruitment triple, you steal another player's Investor placard and make it your own. (With 4 or 5 players, the extra Investor placards near the board must be recruited first.)

Clan cards may not be recruited.

## Boss cards (10)

By playing this card and saying "I'm the Boss!" the former Boss is unseated. The player of this card becomes the Boss and now controls the negotiations for the current deal. Whether the new Boss and other players stick with the terms of previous agreements or negotiate new terms is up to them. Clan cards that have already been played remain on the table. Investors or Clan members who have been sent Traveling continue to be out of play after the change of Boss. The previous Boss can still take part in the negotiations and play cards.

Multiple Boss cards can be played in a negotiation round. The deal belongs to whoever played the final Boss card, and the player to the left of that Boss will take the next turn, which means that some players might be skipped in the turn order.



## STOP cards (10)

A STOP card can be played immediately after:

- a Travel card,
- a Boss card, or
- a Recruitment triple

### Play tip:

As a harmless variant, you can also agree that the Boss must ask each player if he wants to play cards before the Deal is concluded.

to cancel the effect of that play.

A STOP card cannot be played to cancel another STOP card. A player can also play a STOP card to help another player in order to protect his negotiations or for any other reason.

## Closing the Deal

No matter who the Boss is, as soon as you have the support of all of the required Investors or Clan members



### Example:

The Boss has secured the support of the Investor placard of another player, and they have agreed on what the Investor will earn from the deal.

A third player plays a Travel card on this Investor. If the affected player has no STOP cards (or chooses not to play any), the Boss can play a STOP card to cancel the Travel card because he wants the deal to go through.



### Example:

For the sixth deal, each dividend is worth \$3M. If you make a deal that returns 4 dividends, you receive \$12M from the banker.

for the current deal, announce the terms of the deal, followed by "Going once, going twice—the deal is closed!" Once the deal is closed, players may not play any Influence cards!

If a player played a Clan card and that card wasn't involved in the deal or sent on Travel, the player returns that card to his hand. All other played Influence cards are placed on the discard pile. When the deck of

### Example:

The Boss has secured the support of the Investor placard of another player, and they have agreed on what the Investor will earn from the deal.

A third player plays a Travel card on this Investor. If the affected player has no STOP cards (or chooses not to play any), the Boss can play a STOP card to cancel the Travel card because he wants the deal to go through.

Influence cards is exhausted, shuffle the discard pile and place it face down as a new draw pile.

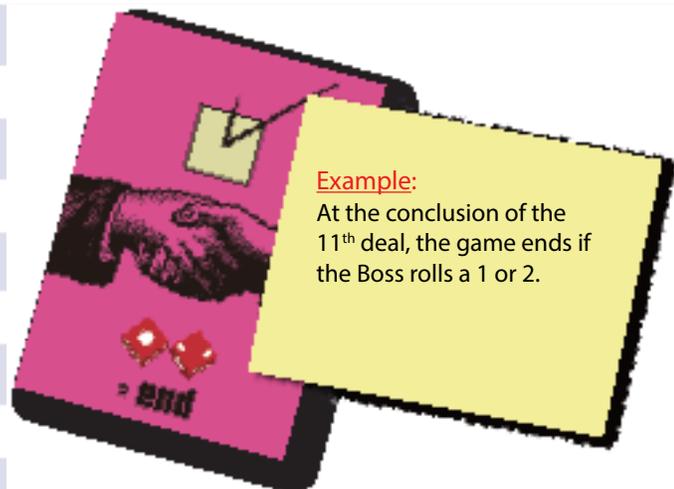
The banker pays the Boss the dividends shown on the board space; the top deal card determines the value of each dividend.

After you receive the dividends, you—the Boss—must pay the other players the amounts agreed upon during negotiations. All agreements for payment must be honored!

After all payments have been made, place the top deal card face down on this board space, moving the marker clockwise to the next free space. The player to your left takes the next turn.

## Can't make a deal?

If you don't succeed in getting the required Investors or Clan members to agree to the deal, you must announce that the negotiations have failed. This situation is usually bad, but sometimes you'll choose this option because other players are demanding too much money. Other times, a required Investor goes traveling and no Clan member can fill in. In either case, Clan cards on the table are returned to the players' hands. All other played Influence cards are discarded.



### Example:

At the conclusion of the 11<sup>th</sup> deal, the game ends if the Boss rolls a 1 or 2.

Note: When a deal fails, the player to the left of the Boss takes the next turn. The Boss may not reopen negotiations, roll again, or draw Influence cards.

## Game money

Each player must keep his money visible on the table. He may stack it face-down, however, so the total amount is concealed from other players. Other players may estimate your holdings, but no one else can touch or count your money.

## End of the game

After the tenth deal and each subsequent deal, the Boss places the deal card on the board space, then rolls the die. If the die shows one of the numbers on the back of this deal card, the game ends; otherwise play continues. The game automatically ends after the 15<sup>th</sup> deal. Each player then counts his money, and the player with the largest amount wins.

## Variants

You can use any or all of the following variants to customize *I'm the Boss* to your tastes. The first two variants are the ones most commonly adopted:

- The turn order does not change following the playing of a Boss card.
- A player who starts his turn with 10 or more Influence cards must try to make a deal on his turn, whether before or after the die roll.
- A player must be the Boss or have played a card in order to receive money from a deal.
- Drawing Cards: A player with no Investor placard draws 4 cards, a player with one Investor placard draws 3 cards, a player with two Investor placards draws 2 cards, and a player with three or more Investor placards draws 1 card.
- A player holding fewer than 4 cards may not attempt to make a deal.
- Starting with the tenth deal, a player may not hold more than 10 cards in his hand.
- Short Game: When stacking the deal cards at the start of the game, remove tiles #3, 6, and 9 and place them in the box. Use the normal rules for ending the game, rolling the die after placing deal card #10 and each subsequent deal card.
- Less Cutthroat game: Use the special rules below for "The Game for two" no matter how many players you have.

## the game FOR TWO

The rules are the same, except for the following:

The Boss may use any of the opponent's Investors, paying a "fair share" for each.

Either player may play a Travel card on his own Investors to try to keep a deal from being completed.

The Boss must complete the deal if possible, using the available Investor placards and any Clan cards the opponent plays.

## EXAMPLE OF A ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS

The following example demonstrates how Influence cards work and how turbulent the negotiation round can be.

Twelve deals have been made, and the 13<sup>th</sup> is next. One dividend is now worth \$5M. The space that the marker stands on will give the controlling Boss \$30M—an enticing sum, but this deal requires five Investor Clans: Yellow, Blue and Red, and two from the list of Orange, Magenta and Green.

It is David's turn, and he resolves to make this deal (or at least to try). He controls the Blue and Magenta Investor placards, which are automatically in on the deal. From his hand, he plays the Green and Yellow Clan cards.

The other players (and their Investor placards) are Larry (Red), Bill (Yellow and Green), and Amy (Orange).

David tells Larry, "If you let me use Red, I'll pay you one divided for \$5M."

Larry considers this offer too low, replying: "I'm not interested in anything less than \$8M. You'll be getting \$22M anyway!"

David can't deny this argument and accepts Larry's request with gritted teeth—but before he can declare the deal closed, Bill sends David's Blue Investor placard on vacation with a Travel card. David successfully fends off this attack with a STOP card, placing both cards on the discard pile. However, Amy also plays a Travel card on Blue, and David has no more STOP cards to defend himself. With this Investor placard out of play, Amy plays a Blue Clan card and offers to let David use it in the deal in exchange for a participation fee of \$9M.

While David negotiates with her, Larry plays a Boss card and announces, "I'm the Boss! Forget David, you have to deal with me now."

"I think not!" retorts David, who plays a Boss card of his own, so that he remains the Boss. Despite

David's bold assertion though, Larry has another Boss card in his hand and plays it. No further Boss cards are played—the other players having none in hand or declining to play them—so Larry really is the new Boss and now controls the deal.

"I have Orange and Magenta myself," says Larry as he lays those Clan cards in front of him. His Red Investor placard is automatically in play. Therefore, he still needs Yellow and Blue to complete the deal.

Amy speaks up first: "I was offering Blue to David, but it'll be more expensive for you; you'll have to promise \$10M to use it."

David offers the Yellow Clan card that he played at the beginning of the round for \$10M as well, hoping to still get a piece of the pie.

"Mine is cheaper!" says Bill, who offers Larry the use of his Yellow Investor placard for \$8M.

"No it's not!" answers David, who plays three Recruitment cards on Bill to steal his Yellow Investor placard. Bill feels stupid for not having kept any STOP cards to protect against this. "As I was saying, Yellow costs \$10M," repeats David. He now has Yellow as both a Clan card and an Investor placard in front of him.

"Usury!" whimpers Larry, but he agrees quickly before the deal gets away again and declares, "Going once, going twice, the deal is closed!"

The banker pays \$30M to Larry, who pays Amy and David \$10M each and keeps a profit of \$10M for himself.

Of the Clan cards, Larry's Orange and Magenta are discarded since they were needed for the deal, as is Amy's Blue. Naturally, David used his newly recruited Yellow Investor placard for the deal and not the Clan card of the same name, so he can take the latter back into his hand. He also takes back his Green Clan card, since it was not needed for the deal.

All played Influence cards are placed on the discard pile, as well as the Travel card that was covering David's Blue Investor placard.

Larry, the final Boss, places the top deal card on the space and rolls the die to determine whether the game ends. He rolls a 5, so the game continues, with the player to the left of Larry taking the next turn.

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