

Resource Management: **Place Your Bets!**

! Before the start, appoint a game leader who will familiarize with the rules of this game.



Game Instructions



Instructions & All Figures
Digitally Available



Contents

- 2 Sets of Game Instructions (German & English)
- 2 Resource Boards
- 6 Project Plans
- 4 „Project Portfolio“ overview cards 
- 12 Role Cards 
- 95 Resource Cards, including role jokers    
- 6 Projects
- 4 Round Cards 
- 7 Event Cards 
- 6 Risk Cards 
- Poker chips with the values 5, 10, and 25

Temporary partition barriers are also required (e.g., file folders).

Resource Management: A Marketplace of Supply and Demand

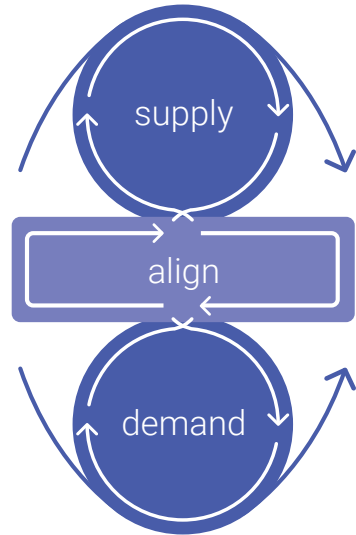
Resource management is a challenging topic that affects many companies from a wide variety of industries: What resources are available to us? Which projects and investments can we manage without overburdening our employees?

Addressing these questions is important, because realistic planning has a direct impact on employee satisfaction while ensuring you don't waste resources (and associated costs). In addition, you get planning security for your projects and can meet the requirements of the market.

Basically, resource management works like a marketplace:

- Supply of resources (= employees) with different skills, which is managed across projects by resource managers or the team leader
- Demand for resources to carry out projects, e.g., from project managers

The aim is to optimally staff your projects at the company with resources in such a way that employees



are never given too little to do or overburdened, and the right projects can be carried out by the right time.

As you play, you will find that this resource marketplace works better under certain conditions than others.

Preparing to Play

All players are spread out around a large table. The dealer now distributes the Role Cards with the symbol



as shown in Figure 1 (randomly or based on your actual roles). (If there are more than 6 people, additional manager and employee roles can be delegated as long as they are kept in equal proportion. If there are fewer than 6 people, then there are only 2 project managers.) The roles remain the same throughout the game unless the dealer decides otherwise at their sole discretion.

The three project managers each receive two Project Plans, which they place in front of themselves. They



Figure 1: Overview of the Game Setup

also receive the following projects, which they can add to the Project Plan according to the time t :

- Project manager 1: Construction of a Production Plant ($t = 6 - 8$), New Corporate Design ($t = 3 - 6$)
- Project manager 2: PPM Tool Implementation ($t = 2 - 5$), Website Launch ($t = 2 - 4$)
- Project manager 3: Tender of Financial Institution X ($t = 3 - 5$), Company Trip ($t = 6 - 8$)

The two resource managers each receive one of the Resource Boards. Now distribute all Resource Cards (except for the role jokers) with the symbols hearts, spades, and diamonds



to the two Resource Boards. The gray outlines indicate how many cards should be placed in a cell.

The numbers on the Resource Card indicate which column (time $t = 2 - 8$) the cards belong to; the symbols indicate in which row (skill = heartsA, B, spades, diamonds) the cards should be placed. All hearts Resource Cards with names starting with A (B) go to the A (B) Resource Board.

Hint: Role jokers are not initially part of the game and can be set aside.

At the beginning of the game, the partitions are used so that the project managers can only see their own Project Plans. For example, you can use file folders to function as these barriers.

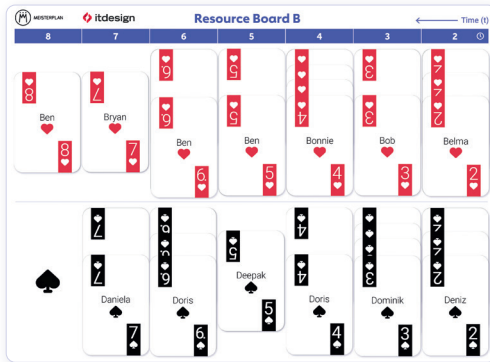


Figure 2: Sample Resource Board: The hearts and spades stand for a resource's skill. For example, Belma, Barb, and Ben with the „hearts“ skill are available during time $t = 2$.



Figure 3: Sample Project Plan: The project „Tender of Financial Institution X“ must be planned during time $t = 3$ to 5.

Overview of the Gameplay



A total of four game rounds of 17 minutes each are played. Each round is played as follows:

1 Determine the Setting and Basic Situation for This Round (5 Min)

At the beginning of each game round, the dealer puts different Event Cards with the symbol



into play, which determine the rules of the game for the respective round (→ Detailed Description of the Gameplay). Place the applicable Event Cards in the center of the table, clearly visible to everyone.

2 Playing: Allocating Resources for Projects (7 Min)

A total of four rounds à 7 minutes are played. In each round, the project managers want to staff and carry out their projects with the appropriate resources (as described by their project's specifications). The resource managers manage these resources and want to budget as many resources as possible.

The goal of each round is to score as many points as possible as a team: You want to achieve the maximum for your company, implement your projects optimally, and survive on the market.

Note: It is advisable to take a look at the section → Scoring beforehand.

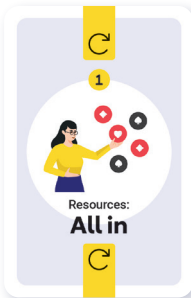
3 Scoring and Discussion of the Results (5 Min)

After each round there is a timeout during which the dealer assigns the points using the poker chips (→ Scoring) and the findings of this round are briefly discussed. Be sure to write down the score after each round, as the poker chips will be redistributed in the next round.

You then start preparing for the next game round. At the end of the game there is an overall evaluation (→ Overall Evaluation) and a final round in which all players can describe and discuss their observations and insights.

Detailed Description of the Gameplay

The individual rounds are explained in detail below.



Round 1: Resources: All in

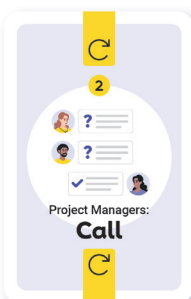
The Event Card for this round reads: „Resources freely available for project planning“. In this round, the resource managers do not yet have an active role to play. The Resource Boards are easily accessible in the middle of the table. The project managers are free to help themselves,

take the required resources, and allocate them to their Project Plans.

There is no communication between project managers in this round. As soon as this round is set up, the dealer starts the timer.

After the 7 minutes have elapsed, the partitions remain in place. The project managers now report to the dealer about the status of their project planning. In addition, managers and employees are each asked for their subjective assessment of the result. Based on this, the dealer assigns the points (→ *Scoring*).

Note for the dealer: As you will see, in this round, the fastest person „wins“. There is hardly any communication, and transparency is low. Make a note of the score from each round, as the poker chips are re-dealt for each round.



Round 2: Project Managers: Call

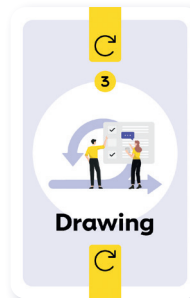
The game is reset to the beginning. The Event Card for this round reads: „Request resources from resource managers“. The resource managers now play an active role: The project managers have

to request their required resources from them. The resource is committed when the corresponding Resource Card is handed over.

The partition barriers remain in place. The view of the two Resource Boards is now also blocked by partitions. You have another 7 minutes, after which the points will be awarded again and the discussion will take place.

Important: Do not clear the Project Plans and Resource Boards after this round! The end result serves as the basis for Round 3.

Note for the dealer: As you will see, in this round, the dialogue between project and resource managers was particularly important. This also helped to foster more transparency between the project managers. The one who communicates fastest and most actively with the resource managers „wins“.



Round 3: Drawing

In this round, the results from the previous round are refined under new conditions. The final result from Round 2 is used as the basis for the third round. It is still the case that resources for project planning can be requested. There are also the following Event Cards:

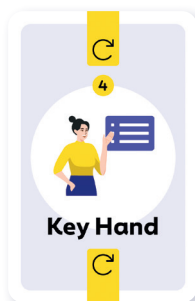
- „Visibility of all projects & resources“ (i.e., the partitions are removed)
- „Shifting of projects possible“

Try your luck again and improve your score from the previous round over the next 7 minutes. This will be followed by a short discussion and the awarding of points.

Note for the dealer: As the dealer, you can moderate this round and ask for communication. If necessary, you can

Final Round

give the other players first hints from the model solution (without revealing everything). As you will see, full transparency and communication in all directions increases the level of complexity, but the overall result will improve.



Round 4: Key Hand

The game board is once again reset to the beginning. The same Events Cards that we used in Round 3 apply again. In addition, the following Event Card is added to play: „Prioritization of projects through project portfolio“. The prioritization of the projects can be found on

the „Project Portfolio“ overview card. Prioritized projects should be started as soon as possible.

You now have another 7 minutes to find an optimal solution for your company based on the new rules. After this round, the dealer assigns the points in the same way as in the previous rounds.

Note for the dealer: See the note for Round 3.



Finally, take another 15 minutes to write down your key learnings from the game.

- Add up the points from all rounds and see the → Overall Evaluation section.
- Keep track of what you learn from the game. All roles should have their say (→ Key Questions).
- Pick up the Risk Cards ⚠️ and the previously unused Event Cards ☆ as well as the role jokers 👑 (→ Detailed Explanation of All Playing Cards) and discuss how the results could differ under real-world conditions.
- Take a look at the → 9 itdesign Best Practices for Resource Management.

Key Questions

- What is the optimal result for the company?
- Under what conditions can it succeed? What are possible stumbling blocks along the way?
- Which resource management principles would you like to try out in the real world?
- Are there other special considerations that need to be taken into account at your company?

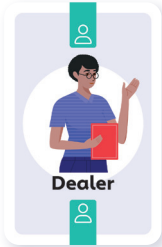
Extending the Game

Would you like to keep playing? The game can be extended in the following ways:

- Include the role jokers in your game (→ Resource Cards).
- Include Risk Cards in your game (→ Risk Cards).
- Play the Event Cards “Role jokers can be used” and “Hard booking of resources for project planning” (→ Event Cards).

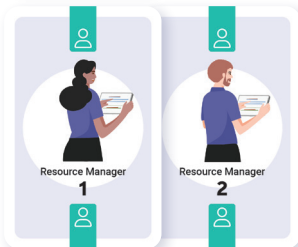
Detailed Explanation of All Playing Cards

Role Cards



Dealer

As the dealer, you take on a neutral role in the game. You know the rules, direct the game rounds, manage the bank account, keep track of the clock, and can make adjustments to the game and the player roles at your own discretion.



Resource Manager 1 and 2

As the resource manager, it is important for you to optimize the workload of your employees and, if possible, to have no unutilized resources left. In the game, you manage the resources for the times $t = 2$ to 8.



Project Manager 1, 2, and 3

As a project manager, you want to implement your projects within the planned time t while utilizing resources with the required skills. Your own project is the most important thing to you first.



Manager 1, 2, and 3 (optional)

As a manager, your goal is to achieve the optimal result for the company. After each round, you can award points that reflect your subjective assessment of the solution.



Employee 1, 2, and 3 (optional)

As a „resource“, you are interested, on the one hand, in not being overburdened, and on the other hand, you also want to advance your company's projects. After each round, you can award points that reflect your subjective assessment of the solution.



♥♦♠ Resource Cards

Resource Cards represent the resources in your organization and indicate three things:

- The *symbol* (spades, hearts, or diamonds) stands for the skill of the resource. For example, hearts could stand for HTML development or marketing skills at your company.
- The *number* indicates the time during which the resource is available. For example, the „2 of hearts“ card can only be used in the $t = 2$ column of your Project Plan.
- The *name* stands for the employee performing a role.

There is only one of each card, because each person can only be scheduled once within a period of time.



👑 Special Cards: Role Jokers

For the „hearts“ (A and B) skill, there are two role jokers for each point in time. Jokers are not used in the presented game variants for Rounds 1 to 4. However, they serve to better simulate resource management in the real world:

The resource managers can use the jokers to make a commitment to the project managers without actu-

ally having resources available at the specified time, because, for example:

- It is expected that not all committed resources will be required in any case.
- It is often not that important for long-term planning which person should be allocated as a resource (i.e., whether, e.g., Anna or Alex will be the joker later).

Tender of Financial Institution X (external) ⌚ 3 – 5		
2 x ♥	1 x ♥	1 x ♥
	1 x ♦	1 x ♦
	1 x ♠	2 x ♠

Projects

There are 6 different internal and external projects in the game, which are divided between the 3 project managers at the beginning (→ *Preparing to Play*). The projects indicate:

- which types of projects they are,
- in which time t the project should be scheduled in the Project Plan, and
- which roles or skills are required to manage the project.

Example: The project „Tender of Financial Institution X“ is an external project that is to be scheduled for the period $t = 3$ to 5. In $t = 3$, two resources with the „hearts“ capability are needed. In $t = 4$, one resource each is needed with hearts, diamonds, and spades, etc.

🕒 Round Cards

Round Cards are used to show which round you are currently in. They can be placed in the center of the table together with the Event Cards in effect for that round for maximum transparency. See the → *Detailed Description of the Gameplay* section for details on what happens during each round.



★ Event Cards

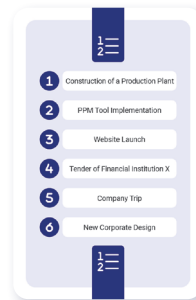
Event Cards determine the requirements or rules of the game for each game round. They are introduced by the dealer and placed in the middle of the table for everyone to see. You can find out detailed information about which Event Cards apply when in the section → *Detailed Description of the Gameplay*.

The Event Cards „Role jokers can be used“ (for an explanation of role jokers, see the → *Resource Cards section*) and „Hard booking of resources for project planning“ (keeping a history of commitments) are intended to provide points of departure for discussion, which better reflect the conditions in the real world.



⚠ Risk Cards

Risk Cards are not a direct part of the game, but can be brought in by the dealer during timeouts and the final round to serve as a basis for the discussions. Risk Cards are events that make the scenarios in the game even more realistic and therefore more complex and thus important for the implementation of resource management in the real world.



1/2 „Project Portfolio“ Overview Cards

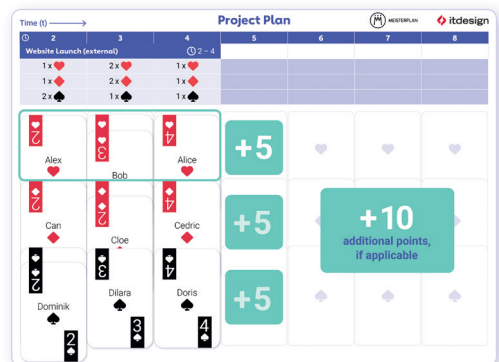
This card is particularly important for Round 4 in the game: It provides a prioritization for the projects within your project portfolio, for example, that is given by your management. Prioritized projects should be started as soon as possible.

Scoring

Project Manager

The more suitable resources you have been promised for your projects, the better the outcome. A full set (i.e., a fully committed resource with the desired capability) is worth 5 points each. For example, if you have all the resources you need for your project with the hearts capability, you get 5 points.

For a fully staffed project (i.e., 3 complete rows), you also receive an additional 10 bonus points. The maximum per game round is thus 25 points per Project Plan.



Resource Manager

For each fully committed time in $t = 2$ to 4 (i.e., no more available resource within a column), you get 10 points. For the times $t = 5$ to 8 , which are further in the future, you will receive 5 points for each fully committed time period.



In total, each resource manager can receive a maximum of 50 points (= 7 fully committed time periods) per game round.

Employees and Management

As either an employee or manager, you take on an observing role in the game. At the end of each round, you can each evaluate the result subjectively and award between 0 and 50 points (in increments of five). Please justify your decision.

If there are several employees (managers) in the game round, coordinate with each other beforehand to arrive at a consensus. If you fail to reach an agreement, 25 points are awarded.

Note for the dealer: You may critically question the subjective assessments of employees and management and, if necessary, veto them.

Overall Evaluation

Your goal as an overall company (= entire table) is to score as many points as possible. The scores for each round are noted and added up at the end.

If there are several teams: If you play against other companies (= other tables), the team that scores the most points overall wins. Make sure the maximum achievable score is the same (i.e., management and employees have the same amount of "power" at each company).

However, the number of points you were able to earn in one round compared to the previous one is also particularly important, because this reflects your actual knowledge gain about the topic of resource management. The points from Round 4 reflect your knowledge gain over all rounds and serve to classify you in one of the following categories:

Newbie

0–99 Points

Resource management is not an easy task, and you are certainly not alone. The learning effect from the game will have a positive impact!

Advanced

100–199 Points

You've already made solid progress, and you can build on that gradually. Discuss what you could have gone better in Round 4!

Pro

200–299 Points

You have mastered your project and resource planning really well. If you wanted to master the final touches for improvement, we recommend taking a look at itdesign's best practices.

Guru

300–350 Points

Wow, that was a great showing – you've already done a fantastic job! We recommend that you try the game extensions to make the game even more realistic.

Model Solution

You will find the model solution in the enclosed envelope. It should only be viewed by the dealer and only plays a role from Round 3 onwards. The dealer may give initial hints to the team if necessary and at their own discretion.

9 itdesign Best Practices for Resource Management



Communication

Talk to each other, e.g., during a weekly resources roundtable. This usually works better than time-delayed communication via a tool.



Transparency

Knowing what the other team members need makes it much easier to find a solution and supports the acceptance of decisions.



Prioritization

Prioritize your projects as part of a project portfolio. This allows you to efficiently decide where (limited) resources should be allocated.



Holistic View

You will achieve maximum success if you include all relevant factors, roles, and information in the planning.



Trust & Pragmatism

Rely on self-organization and pragmatic decisions. Reduce the level of complexity in your processes to ensure that they remain applicable across many project types.



Uniform Mindset

Ensure a uniform mindset and understanding while taking into account your company's specific culture.



Continuous Planning

Allow yourself enough of a margin to react to short-term changes or needs. Be agile, including in your resource and project portfolio planning!



Anchoring Your Processes

Focus on embedding your processes instead of following abstract theories. Conduct trainings, communicate the added value, and involve your team!



Software Support

Software such as itd Advanced Resource Planning for Clarity or Meisterplan can support you with your professional resource planning. We will be happy to advise you!

What the Game is About

With this game, you will playfully dive into the world of resource management. In several rounds, you will get to know the most important principles of a functioning planning on an abstract level and find out under which conditions you can realistically plan your projects and resources. To all project and resource managers out there: Get ready and place your bets!

 6 – 12 people
 approx. 90 min

 **Target Group:** Project Managers,
Resource Managers, Management, Team
Leads, PMO, Employees, Project Members

Contact & Imprint



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Contact Us

We hope you have lots of fun playing the game!

Do you have questions, feedback, or comments about our resource management game? Or would you like to play a game together with our experienced consultants? *Don't hesitate to get in touch with us.*

 mail@meisterplan.com