

What's important in breaking into the (non-electronic) game industry?

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Don't think you're going to make a lot of money. Very likely, **you'll spend a great deal of time for little return.** Non-electronic gaming is "small potatoes", not a big source of money. "How do you make a small fortune in the game industry? Start with a big fortune."

Publishers want games, not ideas.

Ideas are cheap, a dime a dozen; recognize that your "great idea" is not that great, not that original, not that interesting to others. That's reality. (How often do we get a really extraordinary new idea? D&D, Magic:the Gathering, maybe Mage Knight?)

You have to **DO something to give yourself some credibility**, before publishers are likely to look at your game. If you're a complete unknown, why would publishers deal with you?

- Volunteer at cons
- Write articles
- Make variants/mods and publish them
- have a decent Web site
- GM at conventions

Sorry, folks, while you're really important to yourself and your family, you're nobody to any publisher.

Don't design games for yourself, design for others. They're the ones who must enjoy it, your enjoyment in playing is unimportant! But don't design something you expect you'll dislike.

If you're only working on one game, or a few, you're not likely to end up with a good one, AND you identify yourself as a dilettante, an amateur. Pros are working on many, many games.

Patience is a virtue. Britannia existed in fully playable form in 1980. It was first published in 1986. In 2008, one publisher told me, "it's a good thing you're immortal, because it's going to take a long time" to evaluate and publish one of my games.

So if you're the "instant gratification" type, recognize your instant gratification will be in seeing people play your prototype, not in the published game.

Self-publishing is practical, if you don't mind **losing a lot of money.** Moreover, at some point you become a publisher/marketer, not a designer. What do you want to do?

Playtesting is sovereign. You have to playtest your game until you're sick of looking at it, until you want to throw the damn thing away. Then maybe you'll have something. But you have to be willing to **change the game again and again:** listen to the playtesters, watch how they react, recognize your game isn't perfect and won't be even when (if) it's published.

When your game is rejected, there's a good chance the rejection had nothing to do with the game's quality. Be persistent.