

the Small Business game

THE ONLINE BUSINESS SIMULATION GAME THAT **MAKES**
LEARNING FUN!



The National Bank
of New Zealand

New Zealand
TRADE & ENTERPRISE

Microsoft

Player manual



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Game basics

The Small Business Game is an educational game where you run your own sport franchise store (The Sports Store).

Each full game starts at week 1 and moves through to week 52 when the game ends. You can leave and come back at any time – we will save the game from your last week of inputs.

A game week is pretty much like any week in a retail sports store business. Each week customers come in, browse and (maybe) buy a product from you. Each week you need to make sure that you have enough stock for people to buy, manage your cash and keep your eye on what is happening.

Starting a game

During the registration process you assigned a team. This selection will set up the branding to be used in the game.

Once you have been registered for the game, to get started, follow these steps.

Click, '**play now**' from any screen in the web site.

To start a new game, click on the '**new game**' button.

To restart your most recent game, click on the "**play**" button.

Your top 5 scoring games are stored for you. Any of these games that are still live are also available to restart from this screen. If a game in your top five has ended with a game over, the game can not be restarted.



Once your game is started, you can begin making business decisions. When you have made all your decisions for the current week, click the 'Next week' button to advance to the next week.



Finding your way around

To move around, click in the middle of the rooms, and you will be taken directly into each of the game areas.

When you first play the game, go into each of the rooms and try clicking on all the objects in the room. This will give you a good idea of where everything is. Each week you may want to check your emails in your office, see what your customers are saying in the store and read the news ticker at the bottom of the game screen. This will give you crucial information about what's happening in your business and the surrounding environment.



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Core activities

Remember the store runs like any business. There are some core activities that you will need to do each week, while others you may only need to complete every few weeks or monthly.

Ordering product

Order product in the stock room. Experiment with what may be best sellers, what might suit certain targets, and which methods of promotion will work best. The worst thing that can happen is that you either run out of stock (customers will not be happy), or that you have too much stock (you may find it is left unsold and worthless).

Making sales

Your sales are calculated at the end of each week. Once you have completed all of your activities for the week click on the 'next week' button and the game will calculate your sales.

Increasing your sales

There are various ways to increase your sales, from running a promotion, improving customer service and giving your staff some sales training, to a whole bunch of ideas you'd probably never consider (You will need to find these out for yourself. You didn't think we'd tell you everything did you?). We recommend you take a 'test and see' method to increase your sales - you may be surprised by what works, and what doesn't. And of course, what works in real life may just work within the game.

Hiring staff

If you need help in your store, you can hire staff. Hiring a staff member has several effects in the game, including:

- You will have increased capacity to handle all the customers coming through the door (reduce your lost sales)
- Your costs will increase due to salaries being paid each week.

Once you have a staff member it is possible to improve motivation and sales ability by training and rewarding. Other activities such as team building exercises will also improve staff performance. Options for staff related activities can be found in the staffroom.

Hiring staff is a two step process.

- 1**– Advertise. The poster in the staff room has options for advertising for new staff.
- 2**– Assess applications and hire. Once you have advertised, you will receive applications via email in the office. These have a covering letter and CV attached and provide a decision option to hire or not.

Once you have staff, you can also fire them! :-)

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Game score

Your game score is a combination of your net profit, your character rating (what kind of person you are and whether people like you) and your social status (how well respected you are in your community). To do well in the game (and in life) you've got to pay attention to all aspects of your score.

3738
SCORE

Key Indicators

Available cash

£ 461

The amount of cash available to spend is displayed on the game screen at all times. It is important to stay aware of this figure as you make decisions on what to buy.

Warning: Lack of cash can result in game over!



Social status

Your social status is indicated by the 'Blue Man' icon. This is affected by a number of game activities such as community involvement, donations and volunteer work.



Health

Your personal health is one of the contributors to your character rating. Health is something you need to continually boost and will be affected by stress (taking on loans and commitments), exercise and time off plus hours worked.

Warning: Poor health can result in game over!

40
HOURS

Hours

At the start of the game, when you don't have any staff, you need to work a full 40 hour week in the store. When you take on staff, some of this store time will be taken up by them, freeing up your time to undertake management activities. Most activities you undertake will have a time commitment. Work too many hours in a week and your health will suffer.

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Game characters

There are a number of people in the game who are available to help or react to your game decisions.



Sam

Entrepreneur and mentor

Sam at just 22 is a high profile entrepreneur and just happened to live down the road from you when you were at school (he doesn't any more of course).

He made his money setting up an online lost dog text service (people report the dog as lost, and then finders can text the dogs location earning a reward), selling out the technology and idea to a multinational dog food company.

Sam will pop in from time to time with advice and ideas. If he wants to talk, he usually turns up in the office arm chair.



The accountant

Chartered Accountant & Adviser

He works for your parents in their business, and has agreed to be your accountant as well.

He certainly knows his numbers.

Ask him any advice on the financial analysis side of the business – he will keep you on the straight and narrow.

If the accountant needs to speak to you, he will be in the boardroom.



The bank manager

The bank manager is on hand to help you with the money.

She has been in the banking industry for some time, and has a lot of experience dealing with retail stores (her sister owns a number of fashion stores), so she knows the issues with cash flow, buying and selling stock and the financial structure of your business.

Don't run out of cash though.....



The lawyer

He can be a bit boring, and is the kind of person you avoid at parties.

But he is a good lawyer if you ever find yourself on the wrong side of the law (by mistake, right?).

He does tend to charge like a wounded bull, but makes it up with good sound advice.

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Checking progress

You should always keep an eye on your game progress. Within the game there are several indicators to help you judge your current situation and the effect of your actions.



Current week

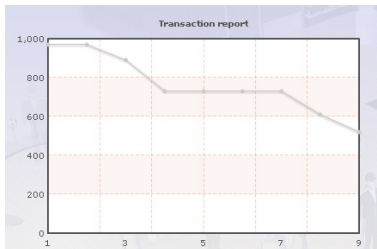
The game runs for 52 virtual weeks. You can see your current week and date in the week indicator in the bottom left corner of the game screen.



Stock levels

Keep an eye on the number of boxes in the stock room and the quantity of stock in the shop. These provide a graphical indication of current stock levels.

For an accurate assessment, click on the man standing in the stock room. He can produce a stock-take report.



Purchase reporting systems

The counter in the shop has some options for special reports. Like any real business, these come at a cost. You can purchase a footfall counter, sales reports, conversion rating reports and average basket reports. These reports are presented in graph form and can be very useful for finding out how effective any of your management decisions are.



Check effect of promotions

When you promote products, a 'Sale' sign will appear in the front of your shop for the duration of the promotion. Clicking on this will provide you with a sales graph.

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Insurance | \$350 |
| Interest | |
| Investments | |
| Legal fees | |
| Market research | |
| Merchandising | |
| Other | |
| Repairs/Maintenance | \$100 |
| Power/Phone | € 200 |

Financial reports

The projection screen in the board room provides access to both a Cashflow report and a Profit & Loss report. These are useful for checking your progress throughout the game, providing historical financial data.



Customer comments

Customer comments are a crucial indicator of a number of your key performance areas such as customer service quality and price competitiveness.

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Options A-Z

Standard game play options. What you can do and where to find it.

| Option | Location |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Borrow money | Safe - Board room |
| Build an online store | Filing cabinet - Office |
| * Business plan | Filing cabinet - Office |
| * Business structure | Filing cabinet - Office |
| Cash flow report | Screen - Board room |
| Clean store | Centre display - Shop |
| Create a customer database | Counter - Shop |
| Emails | Computer - Office |
| Exercise & time out | Pinball machine - Staff room |
| Hire staff | Poster - Staff room |
| Improve facilities | Table - Staffroom |
| Improve service | Counter - Shop |
| Increase profile | Poster - Shop |
| Invest your own money | Safe - Board room |
| Library | Bookcase - Office |
| Market research | Bookcase - Office |
| Merchandising | Centre display - Shop |
| Online training | Filing cabinet - Office |
| Order stock | Truck - Stock room |
| Phone calls | Telephone - Office |
| Price stock | Boxes - Stock room |
| Profit & Loss report | Screen - Board room |
| Promote products | Poster - Shop |
| Promote to customer database | Counter - Shop |
| Promote your business | Poster - Shop |
| Purchase a Replica kit printer | Filing cabinet - Office |
| * Purchase reporting systems | Counter - Shop |
| Reward staff | Cake - Staff room |
| Set your salary | Filing cabinet - Office |
| Sponsorship | Poster - Shop |
| Staff salaries | Poster - Staff room |
| Stock count | Stock room guy - Stock room |
| Store security | Filing cabinet - Office |
| Train staff | Poster - Staff room |
| * View sales report graphs | Counter - Shop |

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System requirements

Ram

Minimum 512 Mb

CPU

2 GHz processor recommended

Disk

No data is stored on your hard drive

Screen settings

Resolution: 1024x768 recommended

Plug-ins

Flash Player 8

The game uses a Flash based interface and runs within the user's browser if Flash Player 8 is installed.

Browser

We recommend Microsoft Internet Explorer versions 6 or 7 or Mozilla Firefox 2.

Maximise the window to make full use of the screen space.

FAQ:

Q. What if my computer crashes or my internet connection drops - are my results lost?

A. No. All of your decisions are recorded and saved during the game. Just log-in again and away you go.

Q. What do I win?

A. Prizes change from time to time. Prizes have included Microsoft Xbox's, cameras, software and cash.

Q. What do I need to play?

A. You will need an internet connection and Flash Player 8 or higher installed on your computer. The game's minimum browser requirements are Internet Explorer 6 or Mozilla Firefox 2.

Q. Do I have to be at school to play?

A. No. You can play at home or anywhere you can get the internet.

Developed by


















THE SMALL BUSINESS COMPANY
experts in small business



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Game sites

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