

ROBOTICS

Any old pot can become a bot! A Game for 3 to 5 robot designers

Have you ever wanted to have a free shot at building robots with some useful and also some dodgy functions? Sounds difficult? Not at all! The main thing is that the bots look funny and have some function – any function ... Make a name for yourself as the oddest designer of robots, but also as a stone-cold merchant. This is your big break!

86 game counters: (components: 12 heads, 10 sets of wheels, 12 pincers, 6 suction cups, 6 propellers, 6 plungers, 12 torsos, 10 switches; special counters: 4 multi-functional components, 4 manufacturing controls, 4 saboteurs.



12 wooden nuts to mark components bought from the black market

Outline

The game plays out over several turns. In each turn, you may perform two actions. Most often, you will be acquiring new parts.

Orders allocated to your workshops inform you which types of robots are currently in hot demand, and which components are mandatory for inclusion in these designs.

You win the game if you are the first designer to have fulfilled three orders, or if you have amassed the sum of 10,000 credits.

Preparing to Play

Before you can begin your first game, you need to attach the disc to the market place. Then place it at the centre of the table.

How to link the disc to the market place

Punch the disc, the shim, and the market place out of the perforated sheet. Put the plastic piece with the larger dish towards the bottom. On this, place first the market place, then the shim, and last the disc. Then take the other plastic piece, the one with the smaller dish, and click it onto its larger counterpart.

Game Components

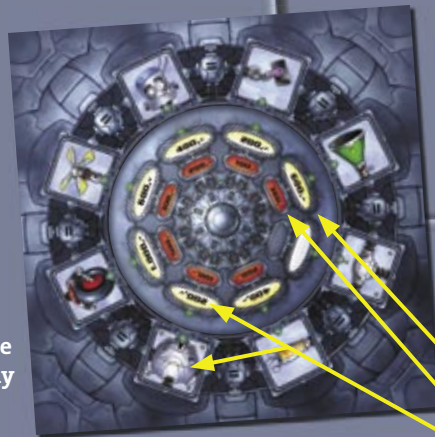
1 market place (disc): this displays offer and demand for components on both the regular and the black market.

16 order cards: these list the current demand for robots.

1 linen bag: this stands in for the scrap yard. Players may randomly collect components here, but manufacturing controllers and saboteurs also lurk here.

5 garages: these are the players' workshops.

100 bills in these denominations: 25 x 100 credits, 25 x 200, 20 x 500, 20 x 1,000, and 10 x 5,000 credits.

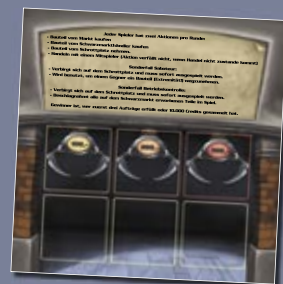


At the start of any game, the disc always looks as in the accompanying illustration.

Prices on the regular market

Prices on the black market

Initial position



On each square of the market place put (number of players minus 1) of the components depicted there. *Example: If there are four players, place three components on each square.*

Components not needed, and all special counters, are put into the linen bag. They have been scrapped.



Every player is given 2,000 credits (e.g., 10 x 100, 2 x 500). The rest of the money is placed next to the market place to create the bank. All amounts paid to the bank by the players are placed here. All amounts that players earn through sales are taken from here.

Now shuffle the order cards. Then set out one order less than the number of players, face up. *Example: If there are four players, set out three order cards face up.* Orders not needed are placed next to the market square, face down. They are going to be used as a draw pile during the game.

The wooden nuts are also placed next to the market place. Players need to identify components they have bought from the black market by placing one of these nuts on them.

Finally, every player chooses a garage. This is the place where players may store components they cannot or do not want to use right away. Players may store up to three components for free. They may rent additional storage space, but this will cost them.

The Game Begins

The right to be the starting player is auctioned off, with the youngest player making the first bid. S/he needs to bid at least 100 credits. Alternatively, s/he may choose not to bid anything at all, automatically forfeiting the right to become the starting player. Bidding now proceeds clockwise. The next player either places a higher bid, or decides to pass. This is continued until all players but one have passed. Once you have passed, you cannot re-enter the auction at a later time.

The auction winner becomes the starting player and pays the amount of money offered into the bank. If nobody has made any bid, then the youngest player is made the starting player. From now on, players take their turns in clockwise order. The auction takes place only at the beginning of the first turn of any game, never in subsequent ones.

When bidding, and later trading, all amounts need to be in multiples of 100.

A Player's Action

A player may perform two of the following actions during his turn (s/he may perform the same action twice):

Action: Buy a component on the regular market

The position of the disc on the market place displays offer and demand. If a player wants to buy components from a regular trader, s/he simply reads the higher of the two figures off the disc and pays the appropriate amount of money into the bank. If s/he has to overpay due to the selection of bills at their disposal, the bank returns any change.

An empty square on the market place indicates that this particular component is not available at the moment. Players will need to wait until another such component becomes available (is placed on that square) before they can buy it. Also, if the disc does not give a price for that particular item, players cannot buy it.

After any purchase, the acting player immediately turns the disk by one position, clockwise, even if s/he wants to make a second purchase.

Buying on the regular market

Action: Buy a component on the black market

If you want to get cheap components with a filed-off serial number, you will need to go to the black market. To do so, players simply read the lower of the two figures off the disc and pay the appropriate amount of money into the bank. They will also need to place a wooden nut on the component they have just bought, to indicate that this component has come from the black market.

An empty square on the market place indicates that this particular component is not available at the moment. Players will need to wait until another such component becomes available (is placed on that square) before they can buy it. Also, if the disc does not give a price for that particular item, players cannot buy it.

After any purchase, the acting player immediately turns the disc by one position, clockwise, even if s/he wants to make a second purchase.

Buying on the black market

Action: Take a component from the scrap yard

Instead of paying good money for components, players may also make a trip to the scrap yard. You are usually going to find something useful there – it just may not be what you need at the moment.

To visit the scrap yard, the player simply reaches into the linen bag and draws a counter without looking. If s/he draws a component, s/he has found it and may keep it. Then again, a few special counters are lurking here, too, and these may cause problems (see boxed text). ...

Multi-functional components

Multi-functional components are like wild cards. They can be used to replace any extremities (i.e., anything but torsos and switches).

Players may attach several multi-functional components at the same time.



Saboteur!

The scrap yard is also favoured by disreputable saboteurs waiting for a patron. A player who draws a saboteur needs to play him on another player immediately. The player sending the saboteur may then take one extremities component (i.e., no torsos or switches) of their choice from a robot currently under construction (which also includes robots that have been finished but not yet sold) and throw it onto the scrap yard. The saboteur leaves the game completely after doing his bit; he is not sent back onto the scrap yard.

The player's action is over.



Manufacturing control!

The scrap yard is also haunted by your friendly neighbourhood manufacturing controllers. Once they appear, they set to work immediately by meticulously inspecting the workshops of all players.



A player who draws a manufacturing control needs to play it immediately. The controller seizes all black-market components bought by all players – both components already fitted into robots and components still in storage. This may lead to the undesired effect that even components that were bought legally need to be discarded, for instance if they are joined to an illegal torso or an illegal switch.


The seized components go onto the scrap yard, after which the manufacturing control leaves the game completely. Once the last of the four manufacturing control counters has been drawn, they are all of them put back into the linen bag.

The player's action is over.

Action: Trade

The acting player may trade with one fellow player. Both the number of components traded and the compensation (other components, or money) are up to the players involved. *Example: Brad, the acting player, demands 500 credits from Vanna for a head component. Vanna instead offers two pincers and a set of wheels for a head and a plunger.*

Trading only counts as an action if the deal comes about. If it fails, the acting player may perform one of the other actions, or try to trade with another player.

 The player who has successfully traded with the active player needs to either attach, store, or scrap any components he has just received immediately.

Action: Cannibalizing and converting robots

A player can take their own robot apart again. To do so, s/he needs to dismantle the robot in question completely, breaking it down into its component parts. S/he may then immediately rebuild the robot in any way s/he desires. If s/he has unused storage space in his garage, s/he may also store some of the components. All surplus components are thrown onto the scrap yard, with the player receiving no compensation whatsoever.

Forfeit action

A player may simply forfeit their action(s) and pass.

Use components

After a player has performed their two actions, s/he must attach their newly acquired components to their robot, or store them in their garage. If the garage is out of storage space, the player has to scrap the components.

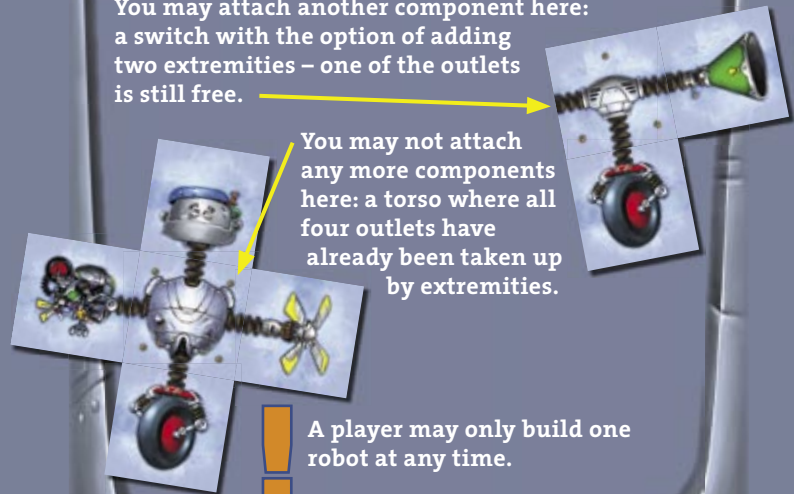
Robot design 101


When designing robots, components may be attached to one another in any way desired as long as there is some connection between them. The order cards only list the number of extremities; it is up to the player to decide how many torsos and switches to use.

If it is not possible to attach any more components, all that is left for the player is to either cannibalize (see above) or sell the robot, provided it meets the requirements of one of the face-up order cards.

You may attach another component here: a switch with the option of adding two extremities – one of the outlets is still free.

You may not attach any more components here: a torso where all four outlets have already been taken up by extremities.



 A player may only build one robot at any time.



Storing Components

If you cannot attach newly acquired components, or do not want to attach certain components at the present time, you may store them in your workshop. Your workshop comes with storage space for up to three components. If you need to store more components, you will have to rent additional space. Storage space for the fourth component requires a one-time payment of 100 credits. Space for a fifth component is an additional 200 credits, space for a sixth component is an additional 300 credits. You may never store more than six components at any time.

If you free additional storage space but need to use it again later in the game, you have to pay the rental fee again.

You may exchange, trade, and re-sort stored components at will. Surplus components are sent to the scrap yard or need to be attached to your current robot design. You may take as many components out of storage, and fit them onto your robot, as you like, without needing to spend an action for this.

At the end of their turn, the acting player needs to have stored, attached, or scrapped all components gained in the current turn.

Play now passes to the next player.

Finishing Robots

Selling a finished robot (which has to conform to the specifications on one of the order cards) may only take place at the very beginning of a turn – i.e., before a player takes their first action. Thus, a player who has just finished building a robot needs to wait for their next turn to actually sell it.

All players may compare the robot in question with the respective order card in order to determine whether it has been finished correctly. If the robot possesses at least all the components as required per the order card in sufficient numbers (it may have more components than specified, and may even have components that are not actually needed), it is considered ready for sale.



If the acting player has a robot “ready for sale” at the beginning of their turn, s/he may clear it off the table and take the amount of money indicated on the order card from the bank.

The selling player also takes possession of the respective order card. In return, s/he turns the next order card from the draw pile face up. This new order card is open to all players.

Components cleared off the table are used to restock the market place. These components are stacked onto their respective squares in exactly the same way as was done when preparing for play; the number of components for sale is still limited to the number of players minus 1. Surplus components are thrown onto the scrap yard.

Ending the Game

You win the game if you are the first designer to have fulfilled three orders, or if you have amassed the sum of 10,000 credits. You may now call yourself master robot designer!

Optional Rules

A player who draws a saboteur may store him in his shop, just like a standard component. S/he may then play him at any time during one of their later turns, and s/he may trade him. To do either of this, s/he needs to spend actions normally.

A player who draws the manufacturing control may also place the counter face up in front of them, as some kind of “warning.” This does not initially have any consequences. The effects as described above do not enter play until another player draws a second manufacturing control.

The right to be starting player is auctioned off at the beginning of each and every turn, not just the first one. Auctions proceed as described above.

Credits

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