

# HackTics®



# Turning a Game into a Lesson for Life

A money-savvy couple have come up with a board game that promises to teach young adults how to engage with wealth, writes **Joanna Mathers**.

Benjamin Franklin once proclaimed: “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” And this classic quote underpins the development of Hackt!cs, a board game that may well change the way young people engage with money.

Released in December for the Christmas market, Hackt!cs was developed by property investor and mum, Debbie Trent. Four years in the making, it draws on Trent (and husband Craig’s) years of experience with money and property. In Trent’s words “it’s a fun game about life, community, environment, happiness, and making mountains of money” ... something that should appeal to anyone with aspirations around future wealth.

Trent had “retired at 28”, due to their success with property, and became a full-time mum. But she’s always wanted to run her own business. Having graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce before working in a start-up in the UK, she knew about business.

## A blank piece of paper

The money-savvy couple have often been called on by friends for advice about money. “We really have a passion for helping people,” she says.

And watching her two children and friends play board games gave her an insight into young people’s hunger for knowledge.

“I saw that they were really wanting to learn about how the world works, but there were no board games that helped them with important lessons around life and money.”

An idea was born: a board game that was fun, educational, and helped young people get set up for a successful life.

Trent confirms the board game started with a “blank piece of paper”. Working alongside a design company for an effective and attractive game, the development took nearly half a decade.

“It took four years to make it simple,” she laughs. Aimed at the 13-25 age group (“the sweet spot is for 18 to 22-year-olds, heading out into the world on their own for the first time”), there was a huge amount of fine-tuning throughout the creation.

“Our friends would come and play it on a regular basis and give feedback,” she says. “They were very patient.”

## Game based on points system

Hackt!cs is based on a small town, which has opportunities for players to buy and sell stocks, property and businesses, work in a chosen career, and get ahead in life. It’s 12 rounds long and based on a points system; when the scores are tallied up at the end of the day, it’s often a surprise.

‘It really helps young people understand how money works.’

“It’s interesting as people often don’t realise who has won. It usually isn’t who people think it will be.”

Networks are often a key to the success of any new venture. Trent says she joined a community of board game makers to gather information on exactly how they worked. It was a good move. The network is run by University of Auckland’s Richard Durham, from the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries, and through him she was able to find a Chinese-based manufacturer who could make the game.

“The game has a lot of magnetic parts, which meant it was quite hard to find anyone who could do it. The manufacturer we chose was amazing; the games have now

arrived in Australia, and will soon be in New Zealand.”

The games will be sold through [hackticsboardgame.com](http://hackticsboardgame.com); they will use influencers to market the game as well as Facebook ads and social media.

In all 3500 games have been produced for the first run; 2000 for New Zealand and 1500 for Australia. And the margins are tight. At \$99 per game, they are hoping to keep it affordable. “We want people who are starting out and have a limited budget to be able to afford it.”

## Four years of development

The Trents are fortunate their own financial skills have allowed them to amass wealth; they self-funded the game without getting into debt.

Four years of development could have been costly, but their property portfolio has provided the financial backing needed to get the job done without sacrificing family life or having to service a huge loan.

It’s a good looking game that stands up to others at the \$99 price point, and the Trents are hoping that the response will be positive. Feedback from players so far is excellent, with the young people who have played it claiming it has helped change their mindset around money.

“It’s a really fun game and offers many life lessons,” says Trent.

“We hope young people will be encouraged to buy it for their children or grandchildren, it really helps people understand how money works.”

**For more information about the game, people can visit the website: [www.hackticsboardgame.com](http://www.hackticsboardgame.com)**