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(54) MULTI-LEVEL MARKETING GAME

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(57) ABSTRACT

A game that teaches network marketing concepts includes a game board, a plurality of game pieces, a plurality of game cards and a success determination device. At least one of the plurality of game cards allows an active one of a plurality of players to build an associated business by adding distributors. The success determination device is used to determine the number of distributors added when an appropriate one of the game cards is selected.

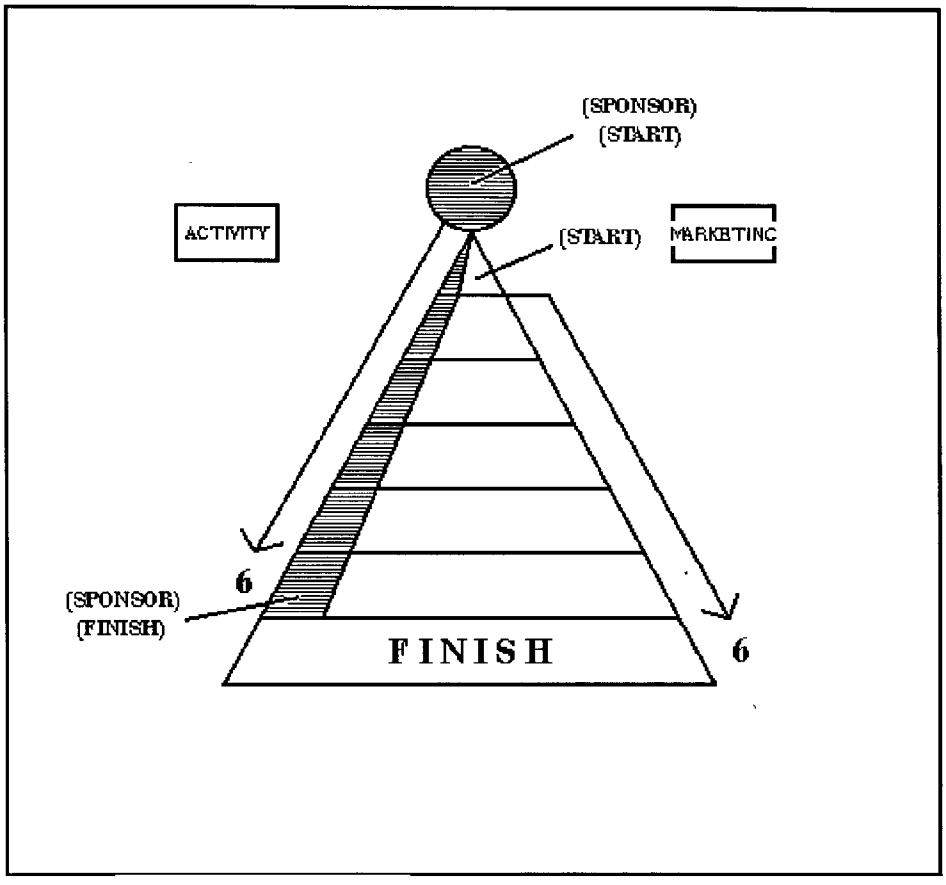


FIG. 1

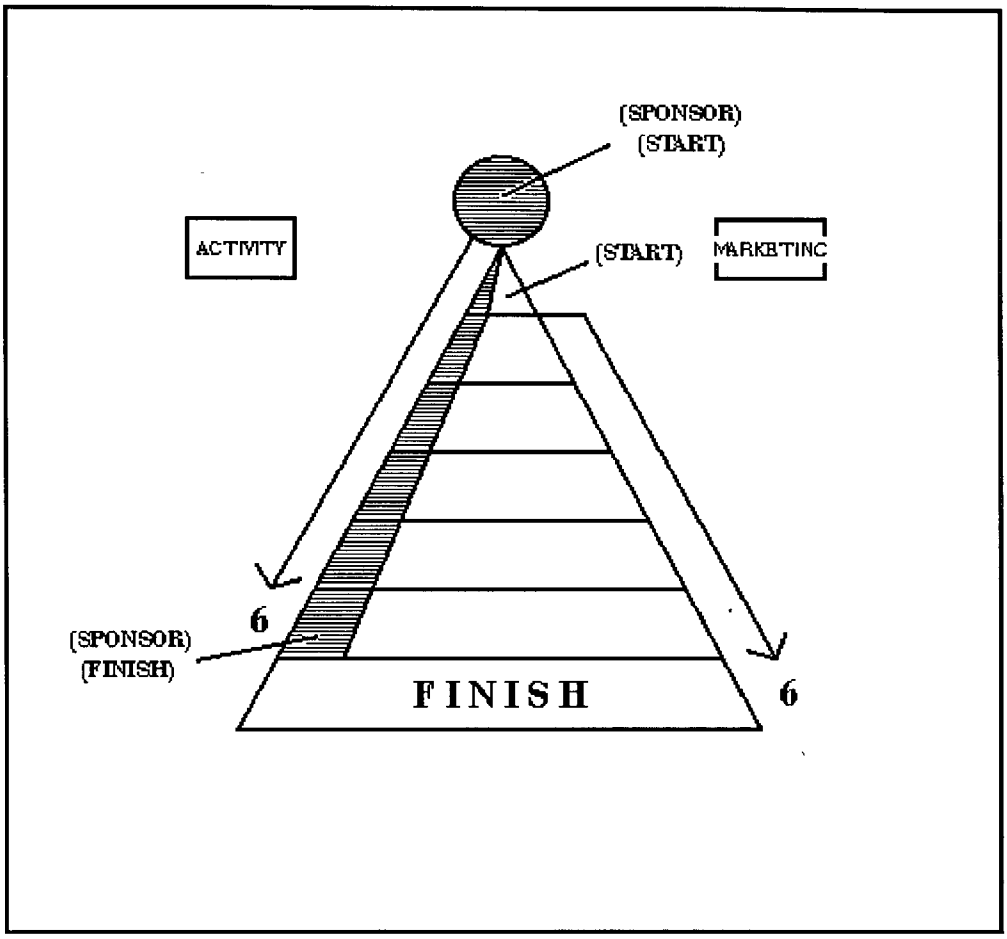

(SPONSOR)
(START)
ACTIVITY
(START)
MARKETING
6
(SPONSOR)
(FINISH)
FINISH
6

FIG. 2

"The Game of Opportunity"

Level 1
Roll #1 ____ + Roll #2 ____ + Roll #3 ____ + Roll #4 ____ = _____ you sponsored
(level 1)

Level 2
Roll #1 ____ + Roll #2 ____ + Roll #3 ____ + Roll #4 ____ = ____ x _____ = _____
(level 1) (level 2)

Level 3
Roll #1 ____ + Roll #2 ____ + Roll #3 ____ + Roll #4 ____ = ____ x _____ = _____
(level 2) (level 3)

Level 4
Roll #1 ____ + Roll #2 ____ + Roll #3 ____ + Roll #4 ____ = ____ x _____ = _____
(level 3) (level 4)

Level 5
Roll #1 ____ + Roll #2 ____ + Roll #3 ____ + Roll #4 ____ = ____ x _____ = _____
(level 4) (level 5)

Level 6
Roll #1 ____ + Roll #2 ____ + Roll #3 ____ + Roll #4 ____ = ____ x _____ = _____
(level 5) (level 6)

Note: When rolling zeros on dice, do not log that roll

Tax Exempt Expenses:

	Mileage	Food	Other
Totals			
	x $0.34	x50%	x100%

FIG. 2A

	Reps	Games/Rep	Comm./Game	Commission
	YOU	10	$3	$30
Level 1		10	$1	
Level 2		10	$1	
Level 3		10	$1	
Level 4		10	$2	
Level 5		10	$2	
Level 6		10	$2	
	Total Games Sales Commission to you = $_____			

Marketing Card Commission

Total Reps from side 1= _____

Product/Service

Card 1 Total Reps x___ % x comm.___ x 12 = $_____ _____
Card 2 Total Reps x___ % x comm.___ x 12 = $_____ _____
Card 3 Total Reps x___ % x comm.___ x 12 = $_____ _____
Card 4 Total Reps x___ % x comm.___ x 12 = $_____ _____
Card 5 Total Reps x___ % x comm.___ x 12 = $_____ _____
Card 6 Total Reps x___ % x comm.___ x 12 = $_____ _____
Card 7 Total Reps x___ % x comm.___ x 12 = $_____ _____

Total Marketing Card Commission = $_____

Total Game Sales & Marketing Card Commission = $_____

$_____ - $_____ = $_____
Total Commission Game & Marketing | Total Expenses from side 1 | Taxable Income

You get paid first and then after your expenses you pay taxes on what is left"

Game of Opportunity, Inc. 00100000
VanBuren Rd
Hart, MI 49420

Pay to Order of _____ $ _____

_____ Dollars

NON - NEGOTIABLE

memo _____

FIG. 3

(top portion of worksheet side 1)

Level 1

Roll #1 __3__ + Roll #2 __1__ + Roll #3 __1__ + Roll #4 ____ = __5__ you sponsored
(level 1)

Level 2

Roll #1 __2__ + Roll #2 __1__ + Roll #3 ____ + Roll #4 ____ = __3__ x __5__ = __15__
(level 1) (level 2)

Level 3

Roll #1 __1__ + Roll #2 __2__ + Roll #3 __1__ + Roll #4 ____ = __4__ x __15__ = __60__
(level 2) (level 3)

Level 4

Roll #1 ____ + Roll #2 ____ + Roll #3 ____ + Roll #4 ____ = ____ x _____ = _____
(level 3) (level 4)

Level 5

Roll #1 ____ + Roll #2 ____ + Roll #3 ____ + Roll #4 ____ = ____ x _____ = _____
(level 4) (level 5)

Level 6

Roll #1 ____ + Roll #2 ____ + Roll #3 ____ + Roll #4 ____ = ____ x _____ = _____
(level 5) (level 6)

Note: When rolling zeros on dice, do not log that roll

Above is the top portion of the worksheet side 1 Below is an example of a player's recruiting results during a game. This example will demonstrate how to log results on worksheet:

During the game a player sometimes is allowed to draw an "activity card" like example below, this player's results of activity cards allowing recruiting are in bold above based on rolls of one or more die.
Results of dice after each activity card as follows: 3, then 1, then 0, then 1 player moves to level 2 then rolls 2, then 0, then 0, then 1 player moves to level 3 then rolls 1, then 2, then 1.

(Example of an Activity Card in which player rolls dice to determine the number of recruits)

Stopping at friend's house after work and setting a date to play the board game with some of their friends builds business.

Roll Dice

Tax Exempt Expenses:

Mileage = 25 miles

FIG. 4

While staying at hotel and inviting others to play the board game in the lobby is building the business.

Roll Dice

Tax Exempt Expenses:
Mileage = 200 miles, Food = $100.00, Hotel = $160.00

Above is an example of an "activity card" that has an activity that is marketing the game and has some tax-exempt expenses to be logged on the worksheet side 1, which the bottom half of the worksheet is shown below to demonstrate where to log the results from card above. Each time a player draws an activity card that allows tax-exempt expenses, they would log them, and add them up at the end of the game to get totals like example below.

Tax Exempt Expenses:

	Mileage	Food	Other
	200	**$100**	**$160**
Totals	**200**	**$100**	**$160**
	x $0.34	x50%	x100%
	$68.00	**$50.00**	**$160**

FIG. 5

Level 1
Roll #1 __3__ + Roll #2 __1__ + Roll #3 __1__ + Roll #4 ____ = __5__ you sponsored
(level 1)

Level 2
Roll #1 __2__ + Roll #2 __1__ + Roll #3 ____ + Roll #4 ____ = __3__ x __5__ = __15__
(level 1) (level 2)

Level 3
Roll #1 __1__ + Roll #2 __2__ + Roll #3 __1__ + Roll #4 ____ = __4__ x __15__ = __60__
(level 2) (level 3)

Above is an example of a portion of worksheet side 1 (from FIG. 3) and below is an example of the information above recorded on a sample of worksheet side 2 (from FIG. 2A). Notice that the total of each level on side 1 corresponds with the number of reps on each level of side 2. A player then multiplies the # of reps by 10 games each by the commission per game for that level to get the total commission for game sales on each level. This example is for just the first three levels.

	YOU	10	$3	$30
Level 1	5	10	$1	$50
Level 2	15	10	$1	$150
Level 3	60	10	$1	$600
Level 4		10	$2	
Level 5		10	$2	
Level 6		10	$2	
	Total Games Sales Commission to you			= $830.00
	Reps	Games/Rep	Comm./Game	Commission
Totals	200	$100	$160	
	x $0.34	x50%	x100%	
	$68.00	$50.00	$160	

Above is an example of the tax-exempt totals from worksheet side 1 (from FIG. 4) and below is an example of the information transferred to side 2 from the totals of the three columns above.

$_____ - $ ____278____ = $_____
Total Commission Game & Marketing | Total Expenses from side 1 | Taxable Income

You get paid first and then after your expenses you pay taxes on what is left"

FIG. 6

Marketing Card Commission

Total Reps from side 1= 80

	Product/Service
Card 1 Total Reps **x20 % x comm.$5 x 12 = $ 960.00**	**cell phones**
Card 2 Total Reps **x30 % x comm.$10 x 12 = $ 2880.00**	**water systems**
Card 3 Total Reps x___ % x comm.___ x 12 = $	
Card 4 Total Reps x___ % x comm.___ x 12 = $	
Card 5 Total Reps x___ % x comm.___ x 12 = $	
Card 6 Total Reps x___ % x comm.___ x 12 = $	
Card 7 Total Reps x___ % x comm.___ x 12 = $	

Total Marketing Card Commission = $3840.00

Total Game Sales & Marketing Card Commission = $4670.00

Above is an example of the marketing card portion of worksheet side 2 (from FIG. 2A) and below are two examples of marketing cards from the game that a player would possibly acquire. The information from the cards is recorded above, then as an example the player has rolled a 2 for 20% on first card and rolled a 3 for 30% on second card. The total reps is from total of first three levels side one (see FIG. 3) and the marketing card commission total is added to the game commission total (see FIG. 5). This gives player the total game sales commission and marketing card commission of $4670.00, which is players check total.

The player also adds this total of $4670.00 to the tax-exempt section of worksheet 2 (see FIG. 5) and subtracts the tax-exempt expenses of $278.00 to get the taxable income of $4392.00

(card 1)
You and your team market cell phones. Assuming that the average active representative has 20 customers, you would earn $5/mth per active representative.

Roll dice at end of game and multiply your roll by 10. This is the percentage of representatives in your downline that market cell phones.

(card 2)
You and your team sell water treatment systems. Assuming that the average active representative sells 4 units per month, you would earn $10/mth per active representative.

Roll dice at end of game and multiply your roll by 10. This is the percentage of representatives in your downline that market water treatment systems.

FIG. 7

The Game of Opportunity™ **Player's Name** _____

	New Leaders
☐Level 1 is brought into the business by YOU based on the activity cards **Start Here** Spin#1__+Spin#2__+Spin#3__+Spin#4__=_____reps ____if sponsor add # of other players + **(level 1)**	+ ___+___+___ **(level 1)**
☐**Level 2** is brought into the business by LEVEL 1 based on the activity cards Spin#1__+Spin#2__+Spin#3__+Spin#4__= ___x level 1 =_____reps _____if sponsor add all other players' level 1 + **(level 2)**	+ ___+___+___ **(level 2)**
☐**Level 3** is brought into the business by LEVEL 2 based on the activity cards Spin#1__+Spin#2__+Spin#3__+Spin#4__= ___x level 2 =_____reps _____if sponsor add all other players' level 2 + **(level 3)**	+ ___+___+___ **(level 3)**
☐**Level 4** is brought into the business by LEVEL 3 based on the activity cards Spin#1__+Spin#2__+Spin#3__+Spin#4__= ___x level 3 =_ _____reps _____if sponsor add all other players' level 3 + **(level 4)**	+ ___+___+___ **(level 4)**
☐**Level 5** is brought into the business by LEVEL 4 based on the activity cards Spin#1__+Spin#2__+Spin#3__+Spin#4__= ___x level 4 =_____reps _____if sponsor add all other players' level 4 + **(level 5)**	+ ___+___+___ **(level 5)**
☐**Level 6** is brought into the business by LEVEL 5 based on the activity cards Spin#1__+Spin#2__+Spin#3__+Spin#4__= ___x level 5 =_____reps _____if sponsor add all other players' level 5 + **(level 6)**	+ ___+___+___ **(level 6)**

Note: Do Not Log Zero's when spun above. If sponsor, cross out "Spin #1" in each level.

Tax Exempt Expenses:

Mileage	Food	Other
_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____
_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____
_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____
_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____
SubTotals_____	_____	_____
x $0.30	x 50%	x 100%
Totals_____ +	_____ +	_____ = $ _____

Marketing Cards: 1 ☐, 2 ☐, 3 ☐, 4 ☐, 5 ☐, 6 ☐, 7 ☐

FIG. 7A

Side Two

Your Commissions From Game Sales:

You receive $5.00 for each game you sell, sell 10 games receive = $50.00

You receive $0.50 for each game sold from levels 1 through 4!
Compute commissions based on each rep selling 10 games.
Total of Levels 1,2,3,4 from other side_____ x 10 games x $0.50 = $_____

You receive $1.00 for each game sold from levels 5 and 6!
Compute commissions based on each rep selling 10 games.
Total of Levels 5 and 6 from other side_____ x 10 games x $1.00 = $_____

Your total commissions from game sales is $_____

To qualify for levels 1-4 a rep must personally sell one game and two games for levels 5 & 6.

Disclaimer: The above calculations are not intended for income projections. They are only intended to illustrate the marketing plan.

Marketing Card Commissions:

Product/Service	Commission from Card
1. _____	$____
2. _____	$____
3. _____	$____
4. _____	$____
5. _____	$____
6. _____	$____
7. _____	$____

Total Commissions From Cards $_____ (from above) x _____ (# of reps levels 1-6) x _____% (spin = # x 10, no zero's) x 12 months = $_____ (Total Marketing Card Commissions per year)

Your check equals your games sales commission plus your marketing card commission! $_____

Your Check **minus** your tax deductions expenses equals your taxable income.

"You get paid first and then after your expenses, you pay on what is left!"

Disclaimer: The tax exemptions illustrate the benefits of having a home-based, multi-level business. The exemptions used in the game are not to be construed as tax advice and anyone in the business should seek the advice of a tax professional.

MULTI-LEVEL MARKETING GAME

[0001] This application claims the benefit of United States Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/332,387, entitled "MULTI-LEVEL MARKETING GAME," which was filed Oct. 22, 2001, and which is hereby incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention is generally directed to a game and, more specifically, to a game that teaches multi-level marketing and markets itself, as well as other games, products and services.

[0003] Multi-level (network) marketing is a legal practice that distributes products and services through a group of distributors. For example, a company has a product and offers an individual an opportunity to market the product to others. The individual also has an opportunity to recruit other distributors that have an opportunity to market the product, and receive a commission on all sales by the individual and distributors the individual recruited. This commission structure may reach several levels deep. However, in contrast to a "ponzi scheme", a network marketer does not get paid for recruiting others, but receives payment for products or services, such as long distance phone service, that are sold through his/her downline.

[0004] There are thousands of network marketing companies throughout the United States and worldwide, several of which are publicly traded on both the NASDAQ and the NYSE, that market various products and services through a large number of distributors. It is well known in the industry, however, that many distributors fail to succeed in network marketing businesses, as they have difficulty getting started. This accounts for much of the public negativity associated with network marketing. One reason for the failure of many network marketers is associated with the fear of presenting products or business opportunities to others. In general, a network marketer cannot build a successful business if he/she does not effectively develop a downline of distributors that also sell products and/or services.

[0005] Thus, what is needed is a practical technique for teaching network marketing concepts to potential business associates. Further, it would be desirable for the technique, when introduced through a game, to market the game, as well as other games, products and services.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] An embodiment of the present invention is directed to a game for teaching network marketing concepts. The game includes a game board, a plurality of game pieces, a plurality of game cards and a success determination device. The game board includes a plurality of game piece locations for receiving one or more of a plurality of game pieces each representing one of a plurality of players. At least one of the plurality of game cards allows an active one of the plurality of players to build an associated business by adding distributors whose number is determined by the success determination device when an appropriate one of the game cards is selected.

[0007] These and other features, advantages and objects of the present invention will be further understood and appreciated by those skilled in the art by reference to the following specification, claims and appended drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] **FIG. 1** is a front view of an exemplary game board, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0009] **FIG. 2** is a front view of side one of an exemplary player's worksheet used in recording the results of the game;

[0010] **FIG. 2A** is a front view of side two of the exemplary player's worksheet of **FIG. 2**;

[0011] **FIG. 3** is an example of a top portion of side one of the player's worksheet of **FIG. 2** showing appropriate entries for recruiting others into a marketing team;

[0012] **FIG. 4** is an example of side one the player's worksheet of **FIG. 2** showing appropriate entries for expenses earned from various activities associated with the game;

[0013] **FIG. 5** is an example of the player's worksheet of **FIGS. 2 and 2A** showing the transfer of the information from side one to side two and showing the calculations of the commissions earned from the game sales sold through the marketing team;

[0014] **FIG. 6** is an exemplary worksheet showing sample calculations of the commissions earned from the products and/or services marketed through the marketing team and showing the recording of the information from a marketing card;

[0015] **FIG. 7** is a front view of side one of another exemplary player's worksheet used in recording the results of the game; and

[0016] **FIG. 7A** is a front view of side two of the exemplary player's worksheet of **FIG. 7**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0017] In a typical network marketing company, a speaker may introduce a network marketing opportunity, i.e., a business opportunity, which generally includes a compensation plan for selling a variety of products, to a number of meeting attendees. As may be appreciated by anyone that has attended a network marketing meeting, the speaker may have difficulty in selling the meeting attendees on the business opportunity as the compensation plan for the business opportunity may be relatively complex and difficult to understand.

[0018] According to the present invention, a board game is disclosed that simulates network marketing opportunities, which allows players of the board game to learn the concepts of network marketing, including tax and financial benefits, through playing the game and then using the game to teach network marketing to others. The board game may be marketed through the network marketing concept and may be sold through a network marketing opportunity. Further, the game demonstrates to a game participant how to market the game, using activity cards, and introduces available products, using marketing cards. Additionally, the game demonstrates a compensation plan by simulating commissions earned from game sales, at the completion of the game.

[0019] The game is designed to be educational and to be used as a marketing tool for distributors to use to introduce the network marketing concept in a fun, interactive fashion. This allows distributors to present their network marketing opportunities to others in a non-threatening manner, possibly allowing more success in their business and, in general, their industry.

[0020] As used herein the term "distributor" includes the terms representative, network marketer and team member. As is also used herein the term "downline" includes the terms marketing team, distributors and representatives and is commonly used in network marketing to refer to distributors that a person has personally recruited into the business or recruited from others within the person's organization.

[0021] The game simulates network marketing by allowing players of the game to compete with one another by building a downline of distributors that market the game and other products and/or services acquired in the game. The downline of distributors are recruited or sponsored into the business based on hypothetical activities of each player and his/her downline that is created in the game. Each player and his/her simulated downline of distributors market products and/or services acquired in the game, which pay commissions, and the player with the largest non-negotiable commission check, at the end of the game, wins.

[0022] The activities are provided as "activity cards", which are either activities that promote the business and allow each player and their downline to recruit others, which are determined by a roll of one or more die or other device. In general, the die may be replaced with any type of success determination device, e.g., a placard with numbers that are selected when a rotating hand mounted to the placard stops after being spun by a player or a random number generator when the game is implemented within a computer environment. Activities that are other than business activities do not allow a player and their downline to recruit others. The activities that promote the business also provide examples of tax related expenses that can be written off in the business.

[0023] A given activity card may include a variety of scenarios, such as the thirteen exemplary scenarios set forth below:

[0024] 1. Diligent Doug takes a business trip with his family to market the game to friends in Alaska. Log tax-exempt expenses of $1400 for airfare, $450 for hotel, $300 for food, and spin/roll to see how many recruits you or your downline get from doing this activity.

[0025] 2. Hard-working Harry gives up weekend overtime at his job to play the game with friends and family and to build the business. Log tax-exempt expenses of 80 miles, $50 for food for guests and spin/roll to see how many recruits you or your downline get from this activity.

[0026] 3. Taking a vacation versus a business trip is determined by not setting any appointments to play the game prior to the trip. This does not give you any tax-exempt expenses to write off income taxes nor does it allow you or your downline to get recruits, so do not spin/roll.

[0027] 4. Procrastinator Paul's aunt gets in the business with someone else. This does not create any recruits, so do not spin/roll. Keep this card face up in front of you and when you get an activity card that mentions relatives, do not use it, just discard it with this card.

[0028] 5. Procrastinating playing the game with a relative and showing him/her the business not only costs getting them as a business partner, but also the others that are recruited by that relative. This does not create business partners, so do not spin/roll.

[0029] 6. Sponsoring Steve invites friends to a ski lodge for business meetings and to promote the game on a weekend. Log tax-exempt expenses of 250 miles, $500 for hotel, $350 for food, and $600 misc. Spin/roll to see how many recruits you or your downline get from this activity.

[0030] 7. Play the game with friends and family and get paid for it, when they decide to buy one for themselves and market it. Spin/roll to see how many recruits you or your downline get from this type of activity.

[0031] 8. Procrastinating Paula's friend gets in the business with someone else. This does not create any recruits, so do not spin/roll. Keep this card face-up in front of you and when you get an activity card that mentions friends, do not use it, just discard it with this card.

[0032] 9. Marty Marketer goes to the grocery store. He tells everyone he meets about the game and gets appointments to play the game, while getting groceries. Log tax-exempt expense of 15 miles and spin/roll to see how many recruits you or your downline get for this activity.

[0033] 10. Some of your downline have just quit. Spin/roll and multiply the selected value by 10. This is the percentage of representatives that have quit on your last completed level. Downline quit when they get discouraged from not getting any recruits or when someone approaches them with another opportunity.

[0034] 11. You have sponsored a new leader. Add one to your first level and spin/roll for each level of downline that you have completed including your current level. Multiply each spin/roll from level to level to determine the number of new recruits in each level. Zeros do not count.

[0035] 12. Open Minded Oscar shows everyone the game that approaches him about another network marketing business. He shows them how the game creates a non-threatening approach to recruiting business partners. Spin/roll to see how many recruits this activity creates.

[0036] 13. When Chatterbox Charlie goes to the mall shopping, he talks to everyone he meets about everything but the game. Since he isn't doing business, he doesn't have any tax-exempt expenses and no recruits, so do not spin/roll.

[0037] The products and/or services that are marketed through the acquired downline are earned during the game as "marketing cards." The marketing cards give examples of

various products/services, which can be a number of items, for which each player earns a commission based on a projected number of customers, per active distributor. A roll of one or more die (or more generally, activation of a success determination device) determines the percentage of downline that market each product and/or service for each player.

[0038] A given "marketing card" may include a variety of scenarios, such as the ten exemplary scenarios set forth below:

[0039] 1. You and your team market 'long distance service'. Assuming the average active representative has 5 customers, you would earn $1 per month, per active representative in your downline.

[0040] 2. You and your team market 'vitamins'. Assuming the average active representative has 5 customers, you would earn $4 per month, per active representative in your downline.

[0041] 3. You and your team market 'health magnets'. Assuming the average active representative has three sales each month, you would earn $2 per month, per active representative in your downline.

[0042] 4. You and your team market 'water filtration systems'. Assuming the average active representative has one sale each month, you would earn $3 per month, per active representative in your downline.

[0043] 5. You and your team market 'life insurance & investments'. Assuming the average active representative has five customers, you would earn $5 per month, per active representative in your downline.

[0044] 6. You and your team market 'Internet service'. Assuming the average active representative has five customers, you would earn $1.50 per month, per active representative in your downline.

[0045] 7. You and your team market 'videos, CDs, and DVDs'. Assuming the average active representative has five sales per month, you would earn $1.50 per month, per active representative in your downline.

[0046] 8. You and your team market 'clothing'. Assuming the average active representative has five sales per month, you would earn $3 per month, per active representative in your downline.

[0047] 9. You and your team market 'jewelry'. Assuming the average active representative has five sales per month, you would earn $2.50 per month, per active representative in your downline.

[0048] 10. You and your team market 'board games'. Assuming the average active representative has two sales per month, you would earn $1.50 per month, per active representative in your downline.

[0049] In one embodiment, the play area of the board game is shaped like a pyramid, to illustrate the increasing number of distributors downline, and to have a little fun with the so-called pyramid scheme. **FIG. 1** illustrates an exemplary game board, which may include a blue colored pyramid separated into seven levels with a yellow circle (shaded) at the top of the pyramid with the words "Sponsor Start". A first level of the blue pyramid has the word "start" and a seventh level has the word "Finish." A yellow section (shaded) starts at the yellow circle and widens to the sixth level at the left side of the blue pyramid. The yellow section (shaded) of the sixth level of the blue pyramid includes the words "sponsor finish." At the top and left of the yellow circle is a rectangular green shape with the words "activity" for receiving activity cards and at the top right of the yellow circle is a rectangular red shape with the words "marketing" for receiving marketing cards. In one embodiment, all the above is on a background of simulated U.S. currency in various denominations scattered about with two cartoon characters and the name of the game "THE GAME OF OPPORTUNITY™" (not shown).

[0050] The game can be played with any number of levels, however, the board disclosed herein consists of six levels that represent the downline, and each player has a colored game piece that moves from one level (i.e., game piece location) to the next as they and their downline recruit others.

[0051] The person who invited everyone to play the game is the 'sponsor' and is represented on the board as a circle on top of the pyramid. The sponsor's downline includes each of the other players, each of the other players' first five levels and the sponsor's downline acquired in the game. It will be appreciated that the game may be used to illustrate that the sponsor does not always earn the most money and that the other players can win the game, even with the sponsor at the top of the pyramid.

[0052] In one embodiment the game consists of a board, two decks of cards (i.e., marketing and activity cards), dice (i.e., a success determination device and/or a card selection device), colored game pieces (markers), and worksheets. Each player has a worksheet to chart the growth of their downline, record their tax-exempt expenses, and calculate the commissions from the sales of the board game and the commissions from the other products and/or services sold by the player and the downline of distributors acquired in the game.

[0053] This invention has many practical uses such as a training tool, marketing tool, or recruiting tool in the network marketing industry. There is also a business opportunity to actually market the game and get paid a commission for game sales from personal, as well as downline distributor sales.

[0054] Purpose of the Game

[0055] As network marketers, the players of the board game are competing with each other to earn the largest commission check. This is accomplished by building a sales organization that markets the board game, by drawing "activity cards" and moving through multiple levels to a highest level, e.g., a sixth level. According to one embodiment, the players also collect "marketing cards," which determine the amount of products and services marketed through their sales organization.

[0056] Starting the Game

[0057] According to one embodiment of the present invention, all players (with the exception of the person who invited everyone to play) place their markers on the top of a blue pyramid on the yellow word "start." The player that invited everyone to play is the "sponsor" and places his/her

marker on the yellow circle with the blue words "Sponsor Start." Each deck of cards (activity cards and marketing cards) are shuffled and placed on their corresponding rectangles on the board. Alternatively, activity and marketing cards can be embodied within a single game card. Each player is then given a worksheet.

[0058] Placing the sponsor above all the other players in the game demonstrates how the sponsor benefits from the other players' organizations. Since each player has six levels of downline, this shows everyone that the sponsor does not benefit from the other players' sixth level, which would be the sponsor's seventh level. This will show that the sponsor does not necessarily make the most money.

[0059] Playing the Game

[0060] In one embodiment, play of the board game starts with the player to the left of the sponsor and continues in a clockwise direction around the table. On their turn, each player moves his/her marker to the first level and rolls a colored die (three green sides, one red side, and two blank sides) or may roll a number of dice. More generally, each player actuates a card selection device, which can be, for example, a placard with a rotating hand and the terms "activity" and "marketing" one of which is selected when the hand stops on the term. Depending upon the color rolled on the colored die, either an activity card (green side), a marketing card (red side) or neither an activity nor marketing card (blank side) is drawn. Whenever the roll of the colored die indicate that either an activity or marketing card are to be drawn, the numbered dice may also be rolled (or more generally the success determination device can be actuated). The invited players are part of the sponsor's first level. The number of other players represents the sponsor's successful recruiting through the activity of inviting others over to play the game. In this manner, the sponsor has initiated the game and in essence has taken the first turn. As such, the game starts with the person to the left of the sponsor and ends with the person to the right of the sponsor.

[0061] If a green side of the colored die is rolled, then the player draws an "activity card" and reads it aloud. As is illustrated above, each "activity card" is a hypothetical situation where the player either is doing an activity that is marketing the game and using the game to find business partners or the player is doing an activity that has nothing to do with marketing the game and building the business. If the activity suggests that the player is marketing the game, then the player is allowed to roll numbered dice (e.g., one die has 1,2,3,0,0,0 and the other die has 1,2,1,1,0,0) and the sum of the dice indicates how many recruits this activity created. For example, if one die read **3** and the other die reads **2**, the player has recruited five players. It should be appreciated that numbers other than those disclosed above may be utilized on the numbered dice. The sum is then logged on side one of a worksheet (see **FIG. 3**), indicating that the player has personally recruited that number of recruits (note: zeros are not logged) and tax-deductible expenses, if any, that the activity created are recorded on the bottom of side one of the worksheet (see **FIG. 4**). The activity card is then placed on the bottom of the activity card deck face-up.

[0062] Even though the player may get an activity card that suggests he/she is marketing the game, the roll of the dice may result in no recruits (i.e., only zeros are rolled on the numbered dice). This simulates real life experiences in network marketing, as many times potential business associates attend a presentation and do not choose to join the business. Play continues with the player to the left of player that just completed his/her turn.

[0063] If the activity card states that a current player is not marketing the game, then the player does not roll the dice and, as such, no tax-deductible expenses are created. The activity card is then placed on the bottom of the deck face-up and play continues with the player to the left of the player that just completed his/her turn.

[0064] According to one embodiment, there are also activity cards that indicate that some of player's downline have just quit. In this case, the player rolls the dice to determine the percentage of distributors or representatives that have quit on the player's last completed level. This simulated real life network marketing in that various distributors and representatives may choose to no longer be a part of the business. However, a given player may still win the game even though various ones of his/her distributors have quit during the game. This effectively demonstrates to the players that even though some of their downline may quit, they may be successful by continuing to build their business.

[0065] If a red side of the colored die is rolled, the player draws a "marketing card." In one embodiment, each "marketing card" states that the player and his/her marketing team marketed either a product or service to a number of customers that resulted in a commission based on, for example, the number of active recruits and an average customer base. The player records the information from the card to side two of the worksheet (see **FIG. 6**). It should be noted that at the end of the game, each of the players rolls the numbered dice to determine the percentage of their marketing team that are actively marketing each individual product or service. For example, a total of five rolled on the dice would indicated fifty percent of the marketing team was active. In one embodiment, each of the players is limited to drawing seven marketing cards. After a given marketing card is drawn and an appropriate task is performed, the marketing card is placed on the bottom of the marketing card deck face-up and play continues with the player to the left of the player that just completed his/her turn. If a blank (e.g., a white color) is rolled on the colored die, then the player does not draw any card and play continues with the player to the left.

[0066] A player's first level is a representation of the people that the player personally recruits or sponsors into the business. The second level is a representation of the people that the first level recruits or sponsors, not the players themselves. The third level is recruited or sponsored by the second level and so on through the sixth level of each player's marketing team.

[0067] From the second round on, the player must decide whether to move to the next level before he/she rolls the colored die. This determines what level of the player's marketing team is being recruited. For example, if a player is on his/her second level, the activity cards represent the activities of the recruits on the first level; the results of the dice indicate the average number of recruits sponsored by those people on the first level.

[0068] In general, network marketing is about working as a team, versus doing it all yourself. The decision of a player

to move from one level to the next can influence whether they win the game, as spending too much time building one level, in the game, is akin to allowing small groups to do all the work in a representative's downline. The power of duplication in network marketing is much stronger than trying to do too much alone, or relying on a small group within the player's organization do all the work. As the game progresses, the players, in general, begin to better understand the network marketing concept.

[0069] It should be noted that players cannot move to the next level of play until they have recruited at least one or more people on their current level. In one embodiment, each of the players are limited to four successful rolls of the numbered dice (rolling a sum of one or more), which indicate the number of recruits sponsored from the activity at each level of the marketing team. If the bottom of either the activity or marketing deck of cards is reached, it is desirable to reshuffle the cards before continued play.

[0070] Even though the activities of the second level through the sixth level are a representation of what the player's marketing team is doing, the player is allowed to log the tax-exempt expenses from each "activity card" drawn. This is based on the presumption that the player is continuing to do these activities, and the result of this is indicated by the players sometimes drawing an "activity card" that gives the player a new personal recruit and allows player to build additional downline. As in the real world of network marketing, the above activity demonstrates that a player never stops personally recruiting, even after working on several levels of their organization.

[0071] End of the Game

[0072] In one embodiment, the first player whose fifth level has successfully sponsored an average of 5 recruits on the sixth level determines the last round of play, which ends with the player to the right of the sponsor (a player has his/her marker on the sixth level and has total rolls of 5 or more).

[0073] The sponsor adds the number of players that are playing the game to his/her first level total, each of the other player's first level to sponsors second level, each of the other player's second level to the sponsor's third level, each of the other player's third level to the sponsor's fourth level, each of the other player's fourth level to the sponsor's fifth level, and each of the other player's fifth level to the sponsor's sixth level.

[0074] At this time, each player transfers the information from side one to side two of the worksheet (see **FIG. 5**) and then calculates the commission for each level and the total commission. This is the commission earned in the game for building a marketing team that sold an average of ten games each.

[0075] Each player then takes the total number of people in their marketing team and calculates the commissions earned from the marketing cards drawn during the game (see **FIG. 6**). Each player then rolls the dice to determine the percentage of the marketing team that market each product or service (note: each card is done separately). The commission is multiplied by twelve to determine what an annual commission would be for the sales volume created for each product or service. The 'Game Sales Commission' total and the 'Marketing Card Commission' totals are added to determine each player's commission check. The player with the largest check wins the game.

[0076] It should be noted that the tax-exempt expenses are totaled to show how a person benefits from marketing the game from home. A player's total commission is the amount of the player's check. The player's taxable income is the amount of the player's check minus the player's tax-exempt expenses. Taxes are due on the player's taxable income.

[0077] While the game disclosed herein is played on a physical board using physical dice or a spinner, markers, cards, etc., it will be understood that it is readily adaptable to a computer environment and the game may be provided in electronic form on a floppy disk, CD ROM or other suitable medium. Further, in such an embodiment, players can play the game at diverse locations via a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN) or an extended network such as the Internet. Accordingly, the various terms employed in the above description to identify physical components, such as "board,""markers,""cards," etc. should be understood to include electronic media equivalents.

[0078] **FIG. 7** is a front view of side one of another exemplary player's worksheet used in recording the results of the game and **FIG. 7A** is a front view of side two of the exemplary player's worksheet of **FIG. 7**. According to the embodiment of the present invention that utilizes the player's worksheets of FIGS. **7-7A**, a given player is limited to a set number of marketing cards. For example, if there are three players, then only twelve marketing cards are used in the game. When the game utilizes a spinner, a base of the spinner may be snapped into the game board, from underneath, and the spinner is then snapped into a top of the base. Both decks of "marketing" and "activity" cards are then placed on the board and each player spins and the highest number earns the sponsor position. The sponsor places his/her marker on sponsor position, all others place their colored markers on "Start" triangle. The sponsor also has to cross-out the first spin on each of his/her levels on the game sheet. It should be noted that the sponsor will replace his/her first spin on each level with the other players' totals on each level at the end of the game.

[0079] The sponsor starts the game by getting the highest number from the spin and earning the right to have recruited all the other players, all the other players are now on the sponsor's first level. The player to the left of the sponsor moves his/her marker to level 1 and spins for a card. If the spinner stops on: red, the player takes a marketing card; green, the player takes an activity card; yellow, the player takes either a marketing card or an activity card; and blue, the player skips his/her turn.

[0080] If the "activity" card suggests that the player is marketing the game, then the player spins for a number to see how many recruits the activity creates. A successful spin is logged on the player's first level (this is the number of recruits that the player personally recruits). Spinning a zero yields no recruits from the activity. If the "activity" card suggests that the player is not marketing the game, then the player does not spin. If the "activity" card has tax exemptions, the player logs them down whether they get recruits or not. Further, the cards may have special instructions for procrastination, new leaders or downline that quit. A drawn card is then placed back in an appropriate deck, after use.

[0081] A procrastination card shows how procrastinating will affect a player's downline. A player does not get that person in the business and anybody else that they mutually know who comes in under that person. This is why a player will hold on to this card until another friend or relative "activity" card is drawn. A new leader card shows how the players never stop personally recruiting, even though the "activity" cards are also representing downline activity. A leader will also build a strong downline that catches up to your current level. So, when one of these cards is drawn, the player will log "1" on a space on level 1 under new leaders and spin for each level that has been completed and multiply the result of the spin by the previous level to get the number for each level. If a zero is spun then the player spins again. In this embodiment, there is space for three new leader cards per player in the game. A downline quit card shows the players the disappointments felt by many network marketers, when some of their downline quits. When a player draws this card, he/she will spin for a number and multiply it by 10. This is the percentage of representatives in their last completed level that have quit and will need to be subtracted from that level. The player then computes a new number, erases the old number and enters a new total for that level.

[0082] A marketing card allows a player to market other products and services in their downline. In one embodiment, each player is limited to drawing seven marketing cards. However, it is possible that not every player will get seven cards, depending upon the total number of players and the total number of marketing cards. Each player should check a box for each card they draw, at the bottom of the work sheet, and save the cards as they are used at the end of the game.

[0083] When a player both spins for a card and gets the appropriate card or is skipped, then play continues with the next player. Players start by recruiting their personal representatives on their first level, based on their activity cards and spinning for a number. Once the player decides that there are enough recruits on their first level they can move to the next level, moving their marker and checking the boxes as they move. The player then calculates the total representatives for each completed level by multiplying the total of spins from the current level by the previous level's total (which includes any representatives from a new leaders' section of that level). The marker now represents the recruits from the previous level. The previous level, based on the activity cards, recruits each new level. Each level is limited to four successful spins for a number. Spinning a zero does not count as a successful spin, so zeros are not logged.

[0084] When a player gets to level 6 and his/her representatives on level 5 have recruited five or more recruits each (successfully spinning a total of 5 or more on level 6) or complete spin number four on level 6, which ever comes first, determines the last round of play. The round ends with the player to the right of the sponsor.

[0085] The players then add up the sub-totals for the tax-exempt expenses and multiply the sub-totals with a provided multiplier to determine a total for each category. These totals are then summed to provide total tax-exempt expenses. This total reduces a player's tax liability. These exemptions merely represent a fraction of those deductions available. The logging of expenses allows the players to experience tracking expenses and to understand the tax benefits of a home-based business.

[0086] The players then transfer the total number of recruits on each level to the other side of the work sheet, adding any numbers from the new leaders' section for each level. A sponsor also adds all the other players' totals from each level specified on the worksheet to their level totals before transferring. The players then calculate the game sales commissions for all six levels and total.

[0087] The players then log the marketing cards and spin to determine what percentage of their downline is marketing each product or service. Next, the players multiply the marketing section to calculate the total commissions earned each year from downline sales of products and services. The player with the largest check, which includes the sum of the game sales commissions and the marketing card commissions wins the game.

[0088] The above description is considered that of the preferred embodiments only. Modifications of the invention will occur to those skilled in the art and to those who make or use the invention. Therefore, it is understood that the embodiments shown in the drawings and described above are merely for illustrative purposes and not intended to limit the scope of the invention, which is defined by the following claims as interpreted according to the principles of patent law, including the Doctrine of Equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A game for teaching network marketing concepts, the game comprising:

a game board including a plurality of game piece locations;

a plurality of game pieces each representing one of a plurality of players, wherein each of the game pieces are located at one of the game piece locations;

a plurality of game cards, wherein at least one of the game cards allows an active one of the players to build a simulated business by adding distributors; and

a success determination device for determining a number of distributors added when an appropriate one of the game cards is selected.

2. The game of claim 1, wherein at least one of the game cards allows the active one of the players to build the simulated business by selling at least one product, and wherein the success determination device determines a number of the at least one product sold when an appropriate one of the game cards is selected.

3. The game of claim 1, wherein at least one of the game cards allows the active one of the players to build the simulated business by selling at least one service, and wherein the success determination device determines a number of the at least one service sold when an appropriate one of the game cards is selected.

4. The game of claim 1, wherein at least one of the game cards allows the active one of the players to build the simulated business by selling at least one of a product and service, and wherein the success determination device determines a number of the at least one product and service sold when an appropriate one of the game cards is selected.

5. The game of claim 4, wherein the game cards are activity cards.

6. The game of claim 5, further including:

a plurality of marketing cards, wherein at least one of the marketing cards allows the active one of the players to build the simulated business through simulated selling of the at least one product and service, and wherein the success determination device includes a card selection device, the card selection device indicating whether the active one of the players is allowed to select one of the activity cards or one of the marketing cards, and where the success determination device determines the number of distributors added when an appropriate one of the activity cards is selected and a number of the at least one product and service sold when an appropriate one of the marketing cards is selected.

7. The game of claim 6, further including:

a worksheet for each of the players, the worksheet providing a plurality of blanks in which one of the players enters information received from the success determination device.

8. The game of claim 1, wherein the simulated business includes the actual marketing of the game to at least one of the players for profit.

9. A game for teaching network marketing concepts, the game comprising:

a game board including a plurality of game piece locations;

a plurality of game pieces each representing one of a plurality of players, wherein each of the game pieces are located at one of game piece locations;

a plurality of activity cards, wherein at least one of the activity cards allows an active one of the players to build a simulated business by adding distributors;

a plurality of marketing cards, wherein at least one of the marketing cards allows the active one of the players to build the simulated business through simulated selling of at least one product and service;

a card selection device, the card selection device indicating whether the active one of the players is allowed to select one of the activity cards or one of the marketing cards; and

a success determination device for determining one of a number of the distributors added when an appropriate one of the activity cards is selected and a number of the at least one product and service sold when an appropriate one of the marketing cards is selected.

10. The game of claim 9, further including:

a worksheet for each of the players, the worksheet providing a plurality of blanks in which one of the players enters information received from the success determination device.

11. The game of claim 9, wherein the simulated business includes the actual marketing of the game to at least one of the players for profit.

12. A game for teaching network marketing concepts, the game comprising:

a game board including a plurality of game piece locations;

a plurality of game pieces each representing one of a plurality of players, wherein each of the game pieces are located at one of the game piece locations;

a plurality of game cards, wherein at least one of the game cards allows an active one of the players to build an associated business by adding distributors; and

a success determination device for determining a number of distributors added when an appropriate one of the game cards is selected, wherein the success determination device includes a spinner with a segmented multi-color base with associated numerals for each of the segments of the base.

13. The game of claim 12, wherein at least one of the game cards allows the active one of the players to build the simulated business by selling at least one product, and wherein the success determination device determines a number of the at least one product sold when an appropriate one of the game cards is selected.

14. The game of claim 12, wherein at least one of the game cards allows the active one of the players to build the simulated business by selling at least one service, and wherein the success determination device determines a number of the at least one service sold when an appropriate one of the game cards is selected.

15. The game of claim 12, wherein at least one of the game cards allows the active one of the players to build the simulated business by selling at least one of a product and service, and wherein the success determination device determines a number of the at least one product and service sold when an appropriate one of the game cards is selected.

16. The game of claim 15, wherein the game cards are activity cards.

17. The game of claim 16, further including:

a plurality of marketing cards, wherein at least one of the marketing cards allows the active one of the players to build the simulated business through simulated selling of the at least one product and service, and wherein the success determination device includes a card selection device, the card selection device indicating whether the active one of the players is allowed to select one of the activity cards or one of the marketing cards, and where the success determination device determines one of the number of distributors added when an appropriate one of the activity cards is selected and a number of the at least one product and service sold when an appropriate one of the marketing cards is selected.

18. The game of claim 17, further including:

a worksheet for each of the players, the worksheet providing a plurality of blanks in which one of the players enters information received from the success determination device.

19. The game of claim 12, wherein the simulated business includes the actual marketing of the game to at least one of the players for profit.

20. A method for teaching network marketing concepts, comprising the steps of:

introducing a network marketing game to a plurality of players;

assigning each of the players to a different one of a plurality of game pieces;

locating each of the game pieces at one of a plurality of game piece locations;

providing a plurality of game cards, wherein at least one of the game cards allows an active one of the players to build a simulated business by adding distributors;

actuating a success determination device to determine a number of distributors added when an appropriate one of the game cards is selected; and

marketing the game to at least one of the players for profit through play of the game.

21. The method of claim 20, further comprising the step of:

presenting an opportunity to at least one of the players to market the game for profit through play of the game.

22. The method of claim 20, further comprising the step of:

demonstrating tax benefits associated with a business activity through play of the game, wherein the tax benefits are set forth on an activity card and are based on the business activity.

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