CONFIG™

A speciality game of effective CMDB implementation

by Nigel Hopkins

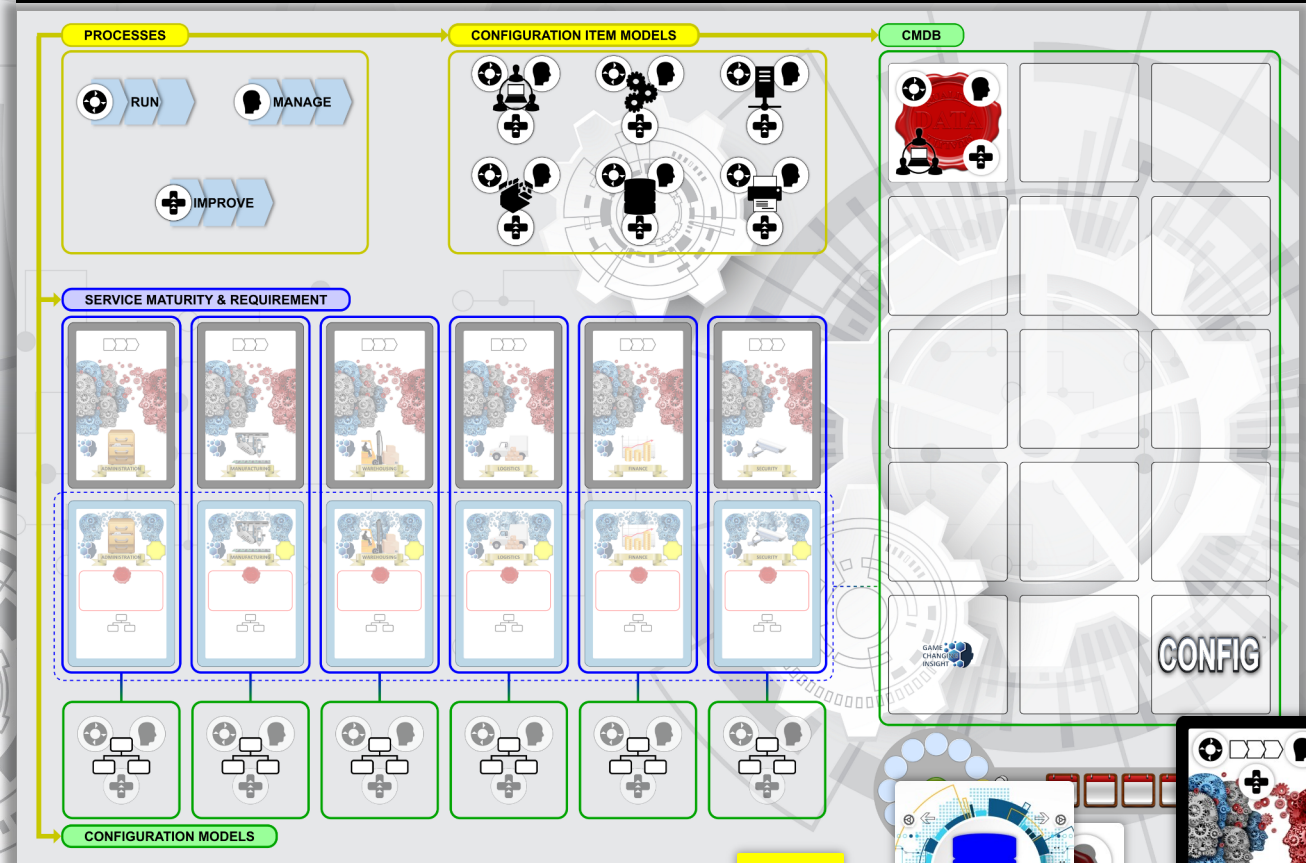
CONFIG is an easy to play business training game focusing on developing a holistic view of the service configuration management practice. The game establishes a generic, top-down, value driven approach to the creation and population of a configuration management database (CMDB).

The approach provides a holistic understanding that can be easily transferred into the real world of IT

OBJECTIVE

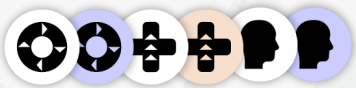
The objective of the game is to create the greatest amount of business value after a 6 month gaming period. This is achieved through understanding the configuration requirements for the various services and implementing it within the CMDB. The requirements change as the services become more mature.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?



Main board

2 Tracking pawns



120 Development markers

Health dice

6 Config markers

16 Component cards

18 Service cards

Main board

1. The game covers the development of your CMDB over a 6 month period, as shown in the progress track bottom right.

2. With your available resources, you are able to perform 12 actions during each round, tracked on the resource roundel.

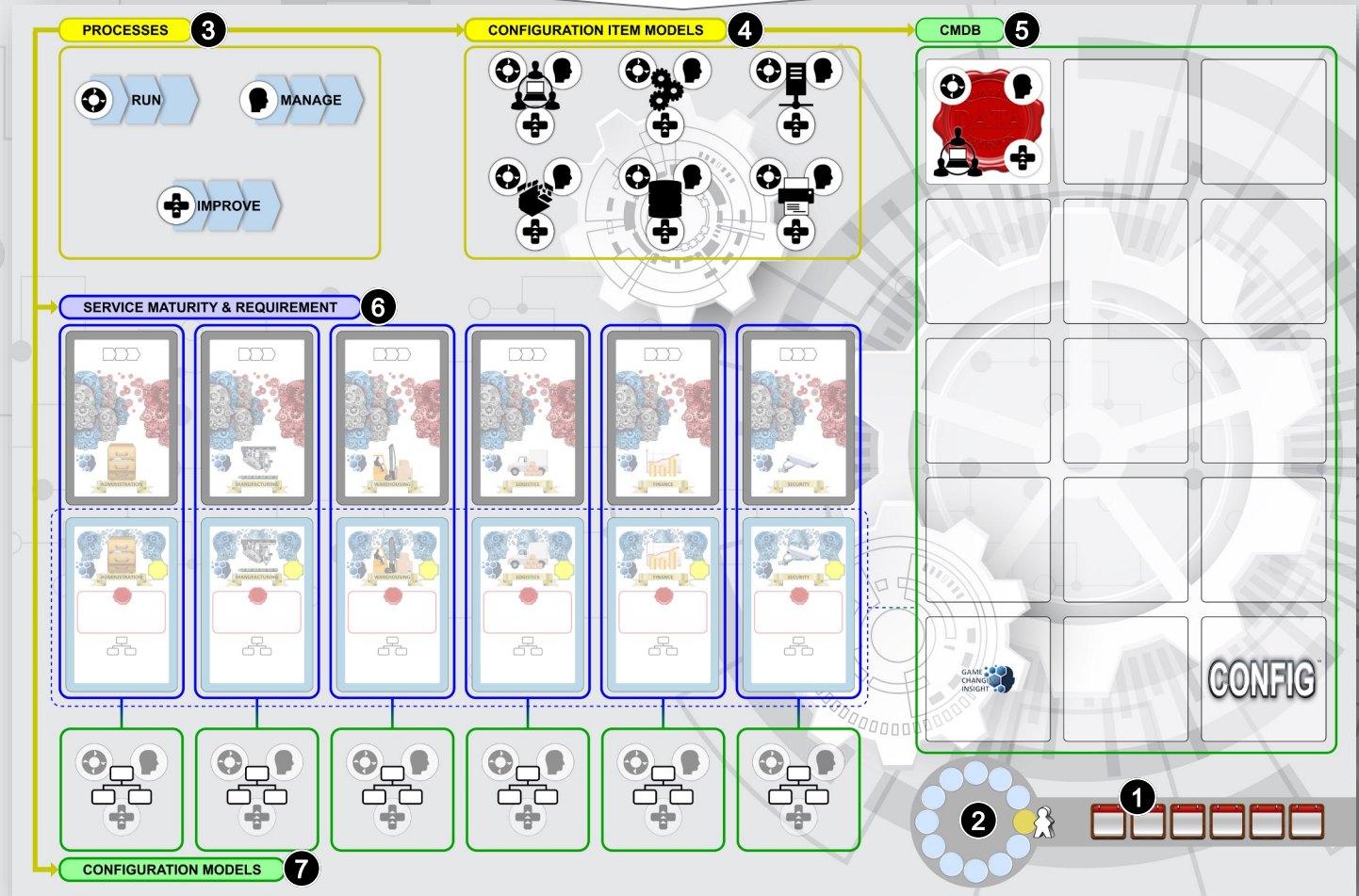
3. The Processes section is used to track the development of the three process areas in the game; Rune, Improve, Manage. At the start of the game, each process is at it's first development level (white).

4. To the right of the processes section is the area containing the Configuration Item Models. The configuration item models detail define what details are required for each of the main configuration item types; Service, Server, Network gear, Applications, Databases, and Printers. The models are developed to supply the need of the corresponding process.

5. The CMDB area contains the different sub-types of components that have been added to the CMDB as configuration items (CIs). There is space for up to 15 different configuration item sub-types, though the Generic service is preassigned and represented top left. The CMDB area is used to develop the health of the configuration items.

6. The Service maturity and requirement area contains the six services that are to be supported by the CMDB; Administration, Manufacturing, Warehousing, Logistics, Finance, and Security. The bottom row represents the requirements associated with the current maturity level of the service. The top row contains the next step of maturity to which each service is to be taken.

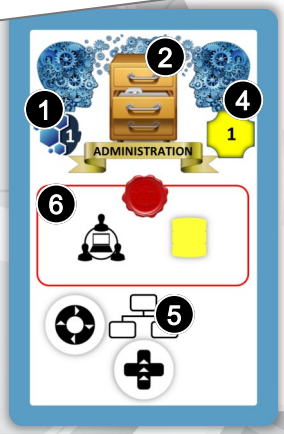
7. The current configuration model for each service is shown immediately below the service. This is develop in line with the requirements of the service and the process areas.



Service cards

The service cards have two sides, the training side (left) depicts the next step in maturity and the requirements side (right) details the needed configuration and business value associated with the current maturity level.

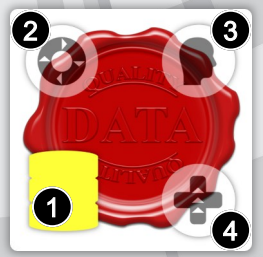
1. The maturity level is shown as a numeric value from 1-3
2. Each side contains a representation of the service to which the card pertains
3. The top of the training side shows the levels needed, in each of the three process areas, to be ready to train the service owner for the next maturity level. In the example below, the run and manage process areas need to be at the intermediate (blue) level.
4. Top right of the requirements side shows the business value achieved once the configuration has been established as per the requirements.
5. The bottom of the requirements side indicates the process levels that need to be supported by the configuration model. In the example below, the basic run and improve process areas must be supported .
6. Above the configuration model is the detail of the configuration items that must be included in the configuration. These need to be in the CMDB and their health needs to be at least at the same level as the process areas shown in the configuration model. So here the service and yellow database need to be in the CMDB with health to support the basic run and improve process areas



CI cards

The Component cards represent a specific component sub-type found in the IT landscape. There are two sides to the card. The component side (left) shows the component sub -type and the CI health side shows the level of health that has been established for the Component sub-type once it is incorporated into the CMDB (right). Once incorporated into the CMDB the components become configuration items (CIs).

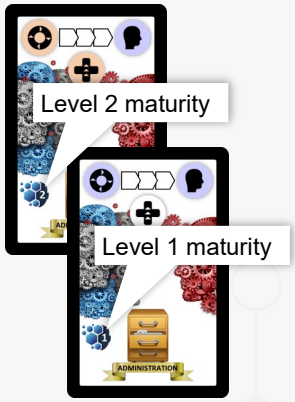
1. The component is represented by an icon. The icon design indicates the type of component (her it is a database) and the colour indicates the sub-type.
2. Top left of the CI health side of the card is the location for a marker indicating what level of the run process is supported by the current health of the CIs.
3. Top right is the location for a marker indicating the level of the Manage process supported by the health of the CIs.
4. Bottom right is the location for a marker indicating the level of the Improve process supported by the health of the CIs.

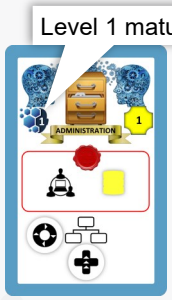


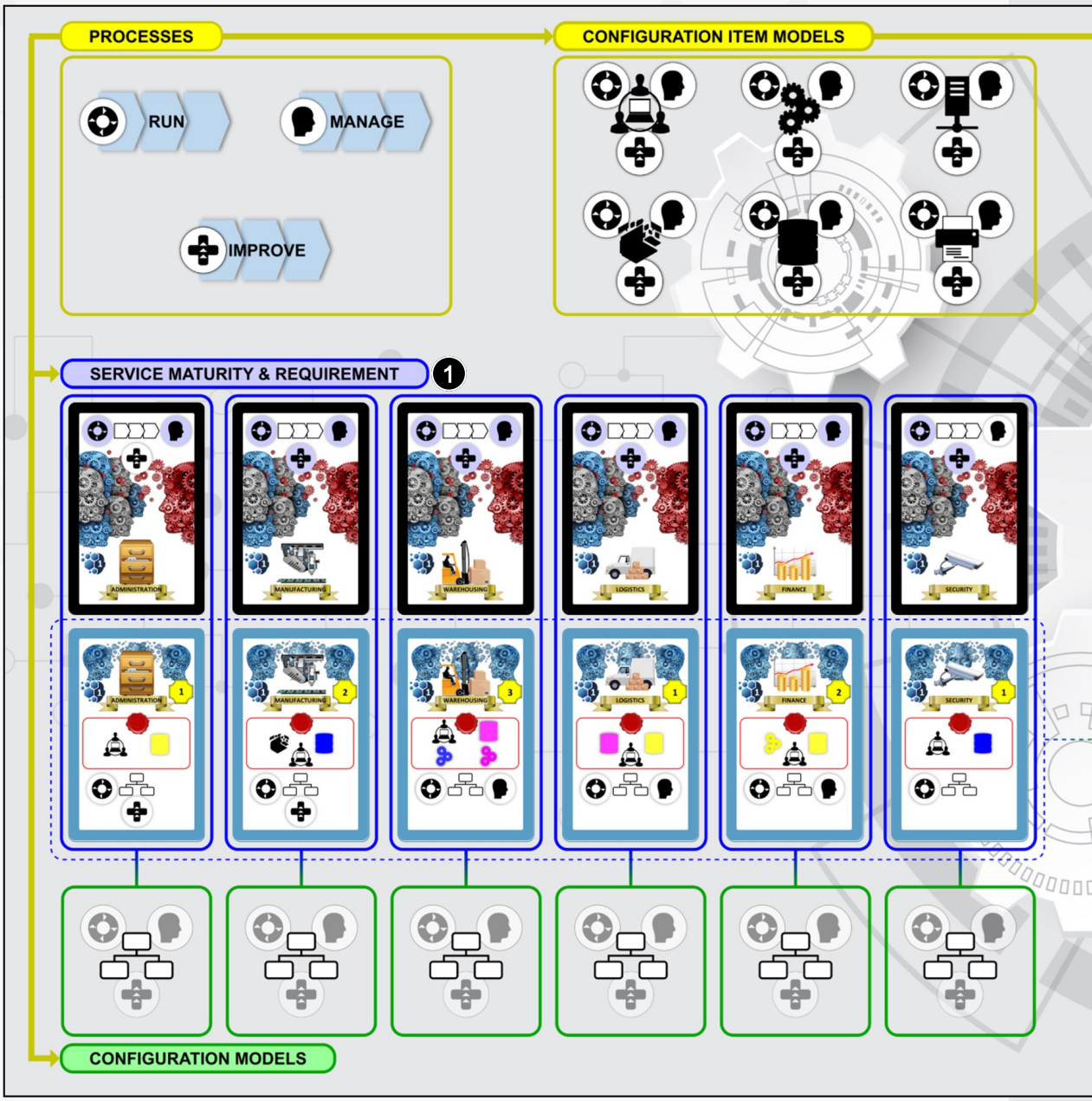
SETTING UP

Place the main board in the centre of the table.

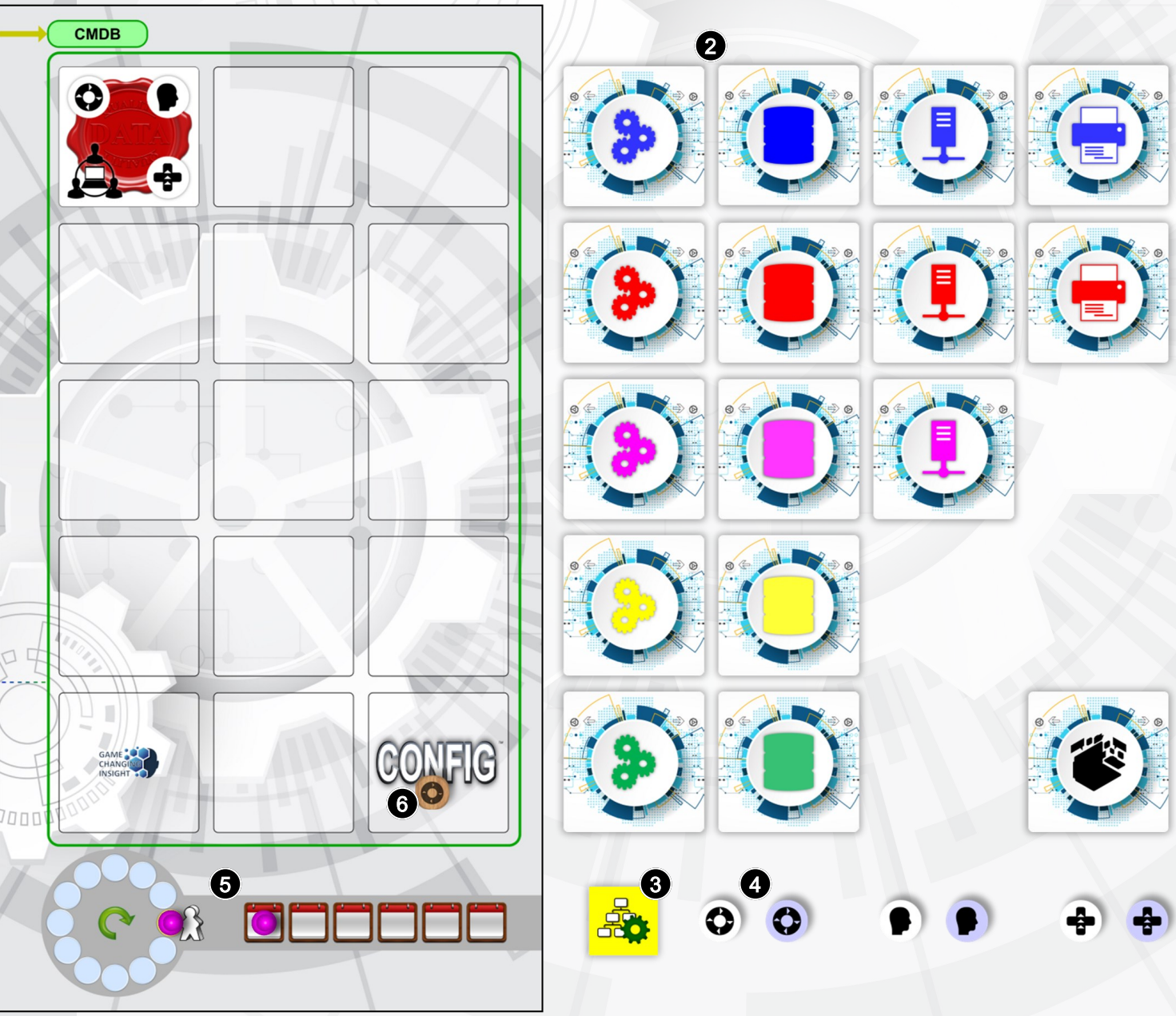
1. Separate out the three cards for each of the six services. Place the cards with the training side maturity of level 2 in the top spaces with the level 1 card on top. In the lower section place the cards with the requirements side showing level 1 maturity.







2. Set out the Component cards to the side of the board, with the component side upwards.
3. Stack the 6 config markers next to the board
4. Place the development maturity markers in stacks according to their process, as shown by the icon, and level, as shown by the background colour. The intermediate level (blue) and advanced level (red) are opposite faces of the same marker. The basic level (white) is the same on both faces.
5. Place one tracking pawn at the start of the resource roundel and one at the start of the progress track.
6. Place the heath dice on or near the board.



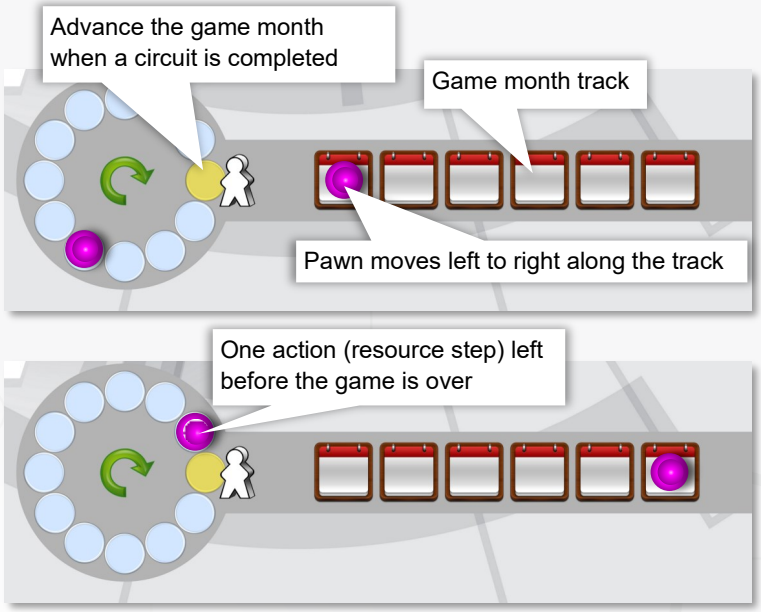
SEQUENCE OF PLAY

The game is played over 6 game months

CONFIG is a cooperative game, played over 6 rounds with each round having 12 resource steps. Performing any of the 8 actions, shown opposite, will take one resource step.

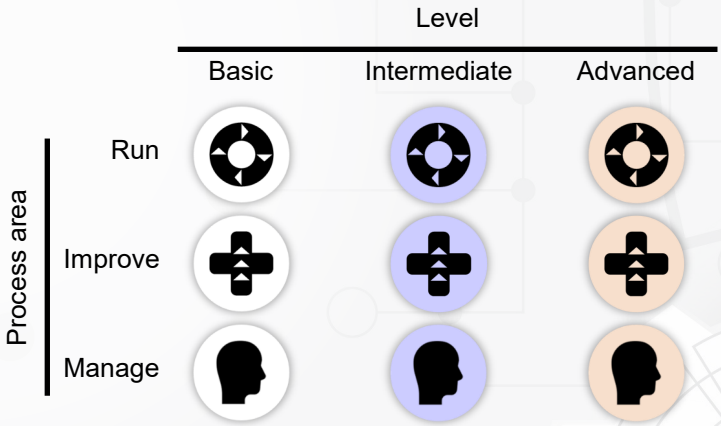
For each action the tracker pawn on the resource roundel is moved one step clockwise. Once a circuit has been completed, with the pawn back on the gold spot, the game advances to the next month. If the game is already on its last month, the game ends when the resource tracking pawn reaches the gold spot.

The game is played action by action until all the resources and time has been used.



Development stages

Many of the actions are based around development of some aspect of the game. There are three development steps associated with each of the three process areas. Developments must progress through the steps in the defined order, basic first, followed by intermediate and then on to advanced.



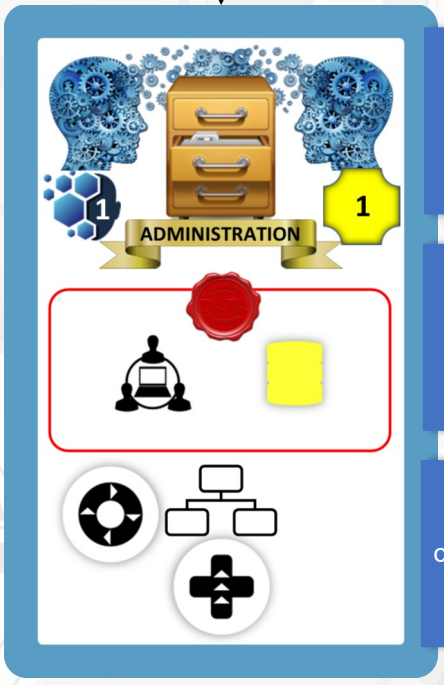
End of game scoring

At the end of the game, the score is determined by adding up all the business value points shown on top right of completed service cards.
If you score more than 14 you should feel satisfied with your performance.

Each action takes one resource

Develop processes

Increase service maturity



Populate CMDB

Develop CI models

Develop CI health

Develop configuration models

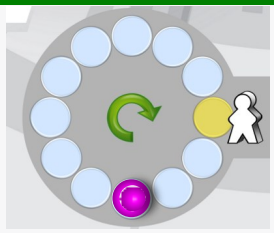
Create configuration

Verify configuration

Completed service cards are scored at the end of the game

ACTIONS EXPLAINED

Each action costs one resource step to perform. The tracking pawn moves clockwise around the resource roundel as the resource steps are consumed.



Develop processes

There are three process areas depicted in the game; Run, Improve, and Manage.

The Run process area supports the handling of incidents, events, changes, and requests.

The Improve process area supports problem management and continual improvement activities.

The Manage process area supports the financial activities and portfolio management.

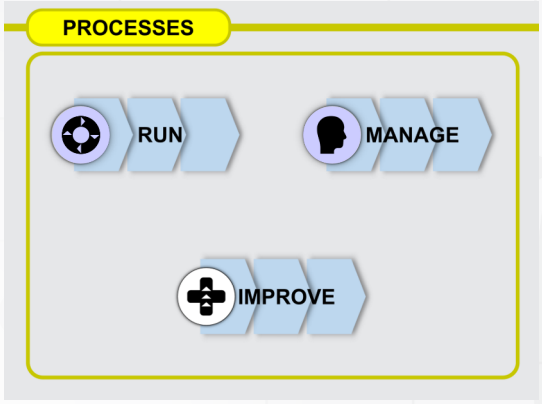
The three process areas are individually developed from basic, the starting level, through intermediate (blue) to advanced (red).

Each development step in each process is a separate action and costs a resource step.

In general, you are going to be developing the process areas to allow you to take the services through to the next level of maturity.

The needed levels of each process are shown at the bottom of the service card (training side).

In this example, the run and manage process areas need to be at intermediate level.

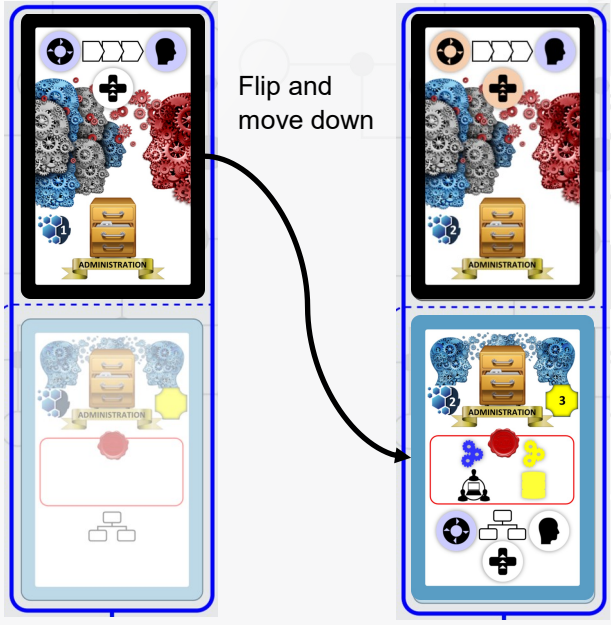


Increase service maturity

To increase the service maturity, members of the service management team are trained in the processes. Following the training, the team decide what of the new processes are leveraged into the configuration model and how much additional business value would be created.

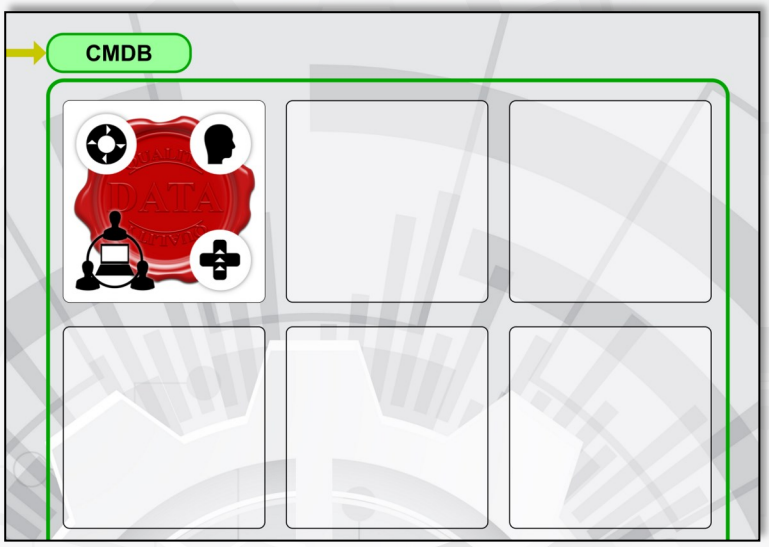
To complete the action, take the associated service card, flip it to reveal the requirements side and move down to the space below, in the requirements section.

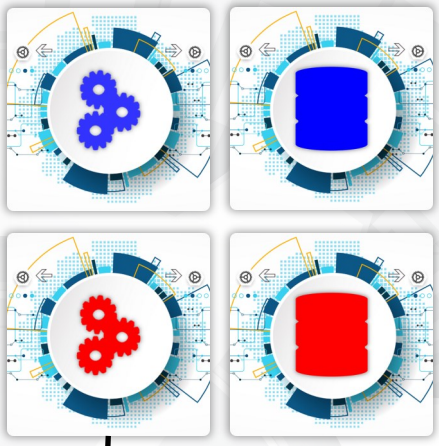
NOTE: if the requirements space is already occupied by a service card, that card is removed from play and returned to the box. It will not contribute to end of game scoring.



Populate CMDB

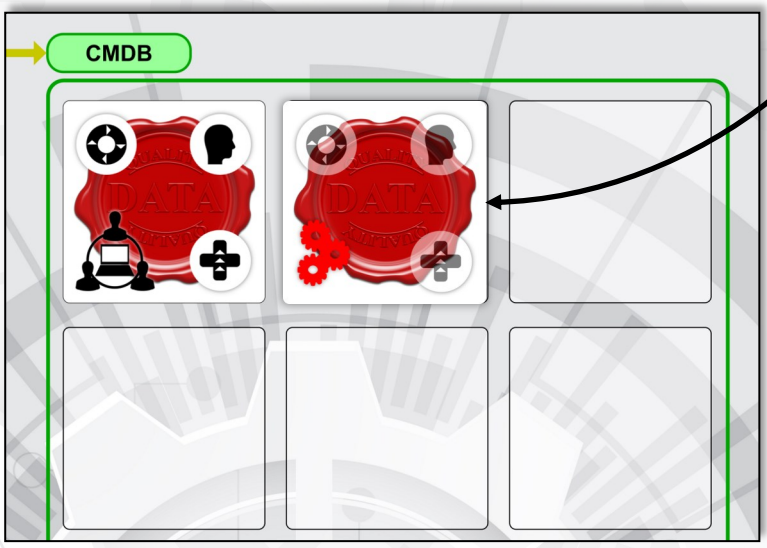
During this action, a component sub-type is added to the CMDB as a configuration items.

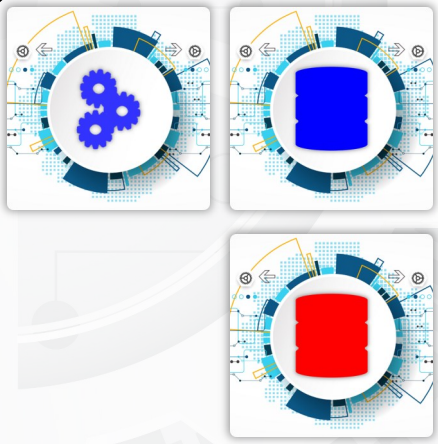




The chosen component card is moved from the area next to the board, flipped and added to the CMDB area. In this

Flip and move into CMDB area





example we have added the red server component as the latest set of configuration items.

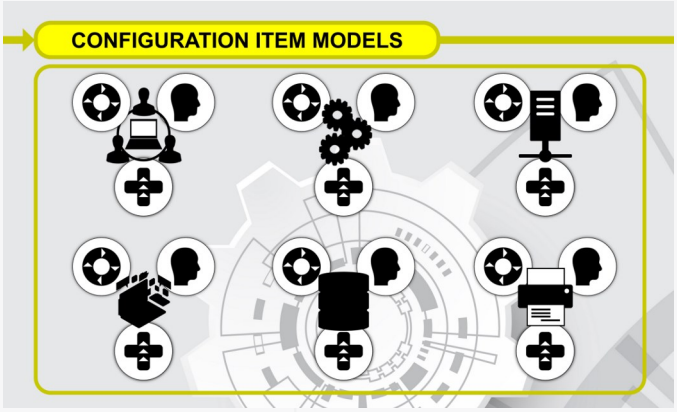
Some CIs already have a degree of good data quality without any additional effort. To finish up this action, roll the Health dice and, if required, adjust the health accordingly.

Here we rolled a Run icon which means that we need to add a basic Run development marker to the card.

Develop CI models

The Configuration item models (CI models) define the use and content of a CI type, when included in the CMDB. It includes such elements as naming conventions, mandatory and recommended attributes, key relationships and details of the CI lifecycle.

Each process places a different demand on the CI models.



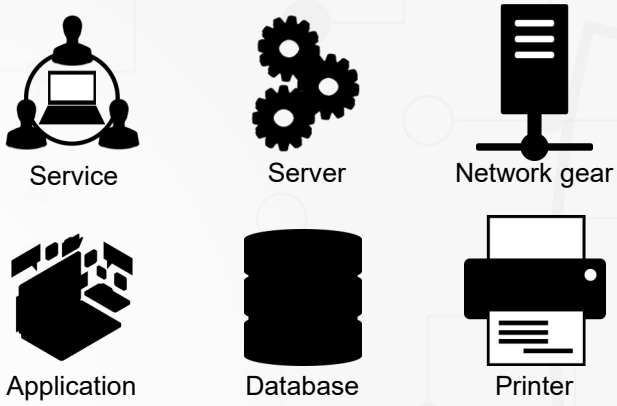
All CI models have been defined to a basic level for each three processes. Over the course of the game, the models are further developed, as required, through intermediate into advanced levels.

Each development step takes a single resource per process area.

The CIs in the CMDB can only be developed as far as their associated model. So, a red server, can't be developed to advanced level in a process area if the CI model for server is currently at the intermediate level for the same process area.

So, development of the CI models is needed to support development of the CMDB CIs.

Configuration item types:



Develop configuration models

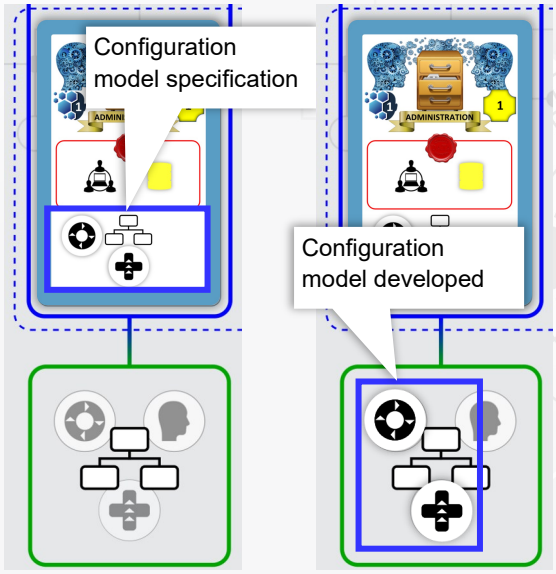
The Configuration model defines the logical grouping and dependencies of configuration items needed to be managed to successfully deliver the service, including supporting the associated decision-making and processes.

The requirements side of the service cards, show the process areas that need to be supported along with the development level for each.

The configuration model must be developed to a level equal to, or above that shown in the requirements.

The configuration model can never be developed beyond the current level of the associated process areas.

When developing the configuration model, each development step takes a single resource per process area. In the example, the development would take 2 resource steps.



Develop CI health

The CI health verification and audit routines have been established to ensure that the configuration items in the CMDB are meeting the associated CI model. This includes detection and correction of any deviation from the CI model.

The CI health is developed to ensure that the CMDB supports the decisions and processes to the level required by the business.

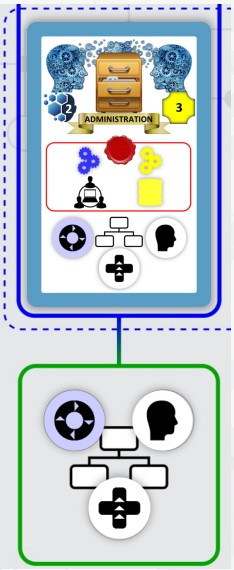
The health to support each process area, represented on the CI, can be developed from basic through intermediate to advanced. Each development step requires a single resource per process area.

The health of a CI cannot be developed beyond the levels shown in the current CI model.

In the example below, the yellow database has been developed to support the intermediate level of the Run process area and the basic level of the Improve process area.

Create configuration

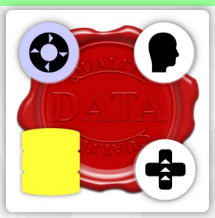
To finalise the creation of the configuration in the CMDB, the Configuration model and the health of all required CIs must be at the level shown on the service card.



In this example, the configuration model has been developed to support the required intermediate level for the Run process area and a basic level for both the Improve and Manage process areas.

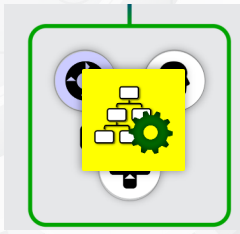
There are four required CIs; generic service, blue server, yellow database, and yellow server. All four of these must be in the CMDB and have their health developed to support the process areas to the same level represented in the configuration model.

Here is an example of the yellow database with its health correctly set to meet the needs of the service.



Once the configuration model and all required CIs are developed to support the required process areas, the configuration can be created, taking a single resource step.

To indicate this, a Config marker is placed on to the configuration model. It is now awaiting final verification by the service team.



Verify configuration

The service team must review the configuration in the CMDB and confirm that it meets their requirements.

It takes a single resource step to perform this action.

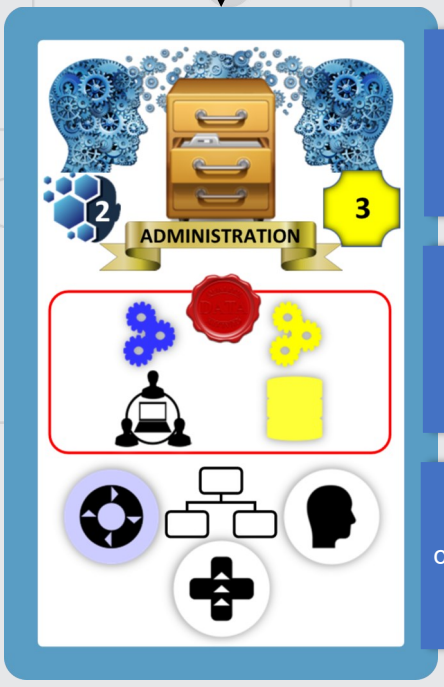
The Config marker is returned to the general supply and the completed service card is removed from the board. The business value associated with this card will be scored at the end of the game.

3 business value points are scored at the end of the game

Each action takes one resource

Develop processes

Increase service maturity



Populate CMDB

Develop CI models

Develop CI health

Develop configuration models

Create configuration

Verify configuration