

Submission Guidelines

Thanks for considering Lookout as a potential publishing partner for your game design! Please review all of the information below before contacting us, as your design is more likely to be considered if you follow them!

What is Lookout's submission policy?

In general, we do not accept open submissions of prototypes - prototypes that arrive unannounced from designers we have had no previous contact with. In general, these submissions are likely to be discarded and not returned. Open submissions by e-mail are acceptable to an extent—sending a sell sheet, a rule book and/or some photos of the prototype without prior contact is fine. Other than that, please do not send any unrequested game materials to us!

What does Lookout generally look for in game designs?

We are known for publishing medium- to heavy-weight euro games with innovative mechanics and captivating themes. Family games at the Kennerspiel level mark the lower bound of the spectrum we will usually consider. Even though euro games have the bad reputation of having “pasted-on” themes, we make sure that the theme makes sense, helping the player to understand why they are doing something while playing the game. Purely abstract designs with no emotional connection to the actions taken during the game do not work for us at all. On the other hand, controversial and potentially offensive themes are not welcome either. We usually refrain from games about politics (including war and slavery), religion, and sex. Keep in mind we produce our games in Germany and we avoid outsourcing production to China.

How does Lookout obtain new designs?

We work with designers that we have past relationships with, and designers recommended to us by our existing network. In addition, we actively look at designs at conventions where our production staff is present by appointment. This always includes the Essen SPIEL fair. We also welcome designers at our biweekly play-testing sessions in Berne, Germany.

How do you contact Lookout about a design?

Our editor is Grzegorz Kobiela (kobiela@lookout-spiele.de). You can always submit your design via e-mail. We are much more likely to consider a game from a designer willing to make the effort to meet us at a convention or show, and we do schedule meetings at shows to evaluate as many designs as possible. Our meeting schedule is usually full before we arrive onsite for a show, so it is very unlikely that we will meet with you at a show without a previous appointment. Once scheduled, plan on taking about 20-30 minutes to present your design.

How does a submission to Lookout work?

We prefer to start with a one-page synopsis of your submission: who you are, a bit about your game (2 paragraphs or so), and why you believe Lookout would be an appropriate fit to publish and market your game. Adding a rule book alongside your synopsis is welcome. If we are interested in your design, we will then request a rule book (if you did not provide one in the first place) and/or a prototype. We greatly prefer receiving a physical copy of your prototype by mail, as it speeds up our evaluation process. If you submit a physical copy of your prototype, it will be returned to you after the evaluation is done unless we decide to publish the game or you state in advance that you do not need it back. Be aware that we may alter your prototype during the evaluation process, e.g., cut or write on pieces, adding or removing components etc. Restricting us in doing so will greatly decrease the likelihood of getting your design published with Lookout.

How long does the evaluation process take?

The evaluation process varies greatly from project to project. Although we look at designs year-round, we have multiple product evaluation meetings during the year where we aggressively review designs. Normally, a design will be evaluated during one or more of these sessions, so a 3-9 month evaluation process is typical. Should a design's evaluation exceed this time frame, we will contact the designer and determine if both parties desire the process to continue. In general, Lookout will not review games that are being considered by other companies. We put time and development effort into our prototypes, with the understanding that should we be unable to publish a product, we will provide our play-testing information to the designer for use. The flip side of this is that we will not spend time on a design that we may not have the right to acquire.

Some Important Notes About Submissions

- Lookout's policy is NOT to sign non-disclosure agreements to evaluate designs. If you will require us to sign an NDA, we will decline to evaluate your design. We do not share designs outside of company personnel and company-coordinated playtest groups, and any wider exposure is always with the permission of the designer.
- Lookout has a tradition of co-producing games for other markets in cooperation with international publishers. Although we will continue to consider foreign partners for our games (especially when a game will be significantly improved for the worldwide market through multiple companies' development and playtest processes) and the occasional co-publication, Lookout is focusing more on designs where we hold exclusive worldwide licensing rights (including electronic rights).
- Lookout prefers to be involved with a game throughout its development and production. That said, we have been and will be open to acquire the German license of successful games released outside Germany. If you are looking into introducing your published game to the German market, we are happy to partner up!

Kickstarter Projects

Kickstarter is a very powerful tool that designers can use to self-publish designs. One of the perceived opportunities is that a publisher will see the success of a Kickstarter and consider it for wider distribution. Lookout has certainly not ruled out doing a Kickstarter project of some kind in the future, and as part of our consideration, we have monitored both the experiences that Kickstarted campaigns experience, and the long-term success that the projects generally exhibit.