

Offworld Trading Company

Strategy Guide

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1. Introduction

What I expect to convey to you in this guide are a mindset as well as the tactics and strategies that I've come up with that will help you compete against AI opponents in the campaign, skirmishes and daily challenges as well as against human opponents in online Multiplayer 1v1, team and FFA matches.

I've tried to compile into this guide my research so that you do not by trial and error have to discover the generalities and nuances of the game that us long time regulars and gaming aficionados have integrated into our psyches. There is no good substitute for the strong desire to win, a lot of experience and a good functioning mind.

If you have technical issues with the game or questions not answered in this guide, please refer to the game forums at forums.Offworldgame.com.

I expect you to at least have played the in game tutorials before reading this guide any further. With all that said, my goal is to radically reduce the time it takes you to start enjoying OTC and become proficient at beating AI and human opponents in all formats of the game.

2. General Concepts

a. Overall Strategy

Offworld Trading Company is an economic RTS which I believe to be vaguely inspired by Starcraft, Settlers of Catan and Transport Tycoon. What I think that the developers intent was while developing OTC was to create a game that was innovative, intellectually stimulating and fun to play. In my experience as someone who doesn't compete well in First Person Shooter or high APM environments, OTC is a game aimed at a slow paced audience who want to win by wits rather than reflexes (although quick reflexes are definitely very helpful).

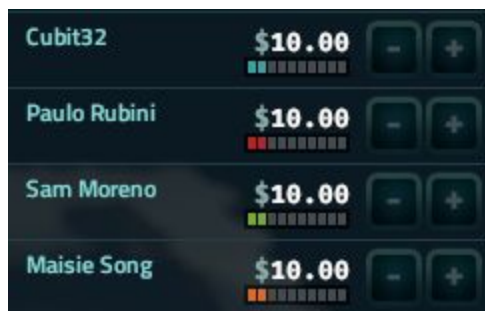
OTC is a game about gaining and keeping the upper hand economically and buying out all your competition. To do so every company needs to earn wealth, which is made up of Cash & Resources. Resource wealth is the cumulative value of all your resource stockpiles and they can be turned into Cash at an instant and are counted as part of your wealth. In almost every game format, gaining as much wealth as quickly as possible is what will win you or your opponents the game most frequently.

Holding onto your wealth and judiciously investing it only when called for (when the investment is very likely to give you a good return within an acceptable timeframe) is what'll elevate your gameplay from average to something above average. Magnifying your wealth continually until you can buy out your remaining competitors and thus win the game is the main strategy of every winning player.

b. Stock

The main part of actually winning (outside of the first rounds of the campaign) is buying a majority of your remaining opponent's stock. In the image, we have 4 companies, one of which is my own. To win, every other company needs to become a subsidiary of my company. (Subsidiaries are what companies become when they are eliminated.) Every company's stock is made up of 10 units of stock. At the start of the game all companies start with some of their own stock; at 2-4 and 5-8 players, everyone starts with 2 or 3 of their own stocks, respectively. Companies can be eliminated with either a majority buyout or a full buyout. Stock can be bought one at a time until 5 self-owned stock remain or all

unowned stock taken. Grey (unowned) stock can be bought for the shown price whereas self-owned stock must be bought for double the price, or more.



A majority buyout happens when 6 units of stock have been bought and are currently owned by OTHER companies. It is possible for 6 stocks of a company to have been bought up by 6 different companies and for that situation to trigger a majority buyout and thus eliminate that company.

A full buyout happens when a second company accumulates enough cash to pay somewhere between double or triple the current stock price per stock that is self-owned by the 1st company or not-owned (ie. grey). Any stock that is already owned by 3rd parties does not need to be bought and can not be acquired in any way unless said 3rd parties sell out before the target company turns into a subsidiary or the 3rd parties are bought out by the 1st. For every stock that is owned by a 3rd party, self-owned stock becomes 20% more expensive to buy all at once (meaning that the last 5 stock can be as much as 3x as expensive compared to unowned stock). A full buyout can be triggered when you click the buy button while no unowned stock remain, or by holding shift and clicking buy when unowned stock do remain. If the stock purchase button isn't red while holding shift, you do not have enough cash to make an all at once buyout.

When a company is bought out, it becomes a subsidiary, all its wealth vanishes, its debts are cancelled out completely, any stock that company currently owns are divided up as fairly as possible among the companies that invested in its stock (and any stocks that can't be split equally will be sold off and the proceeds split) and the company will be under the control of an AI that tries to produce the most profitable thing of the moment. All wealth henceforth generated from the subsidiary is distributed to its owners at a rate of 1% per second relative to stock ownership. Stock in subsidiaries can not be sold.

c. Debt

Debt is a negative resource that is technically never good for you. However, early on, it is also almost never really really bad for your company either, so long as it remains under control (ie. You have a good plan on how to win in spite of it). The amount of debt you have is shown to you along the top left hand side of the screen. The amount of debt you have compared to your company's total value determines what bond rating you have. While you have ANY debt your bond rating will fall in between AAA and D, with D being the lowest. Every company's bond rating is visible along its stock ticker. With a AAA bond rating, you will pay only 1% interest over your debt at midnight. With a D rating, you will pay 30% over your debt at midnight. Typically you will have about 5k debt while you have a AAA bond rating, 100K debt while you're in a C bond rating (meaning 20% daily interest), and 150k debt while you have a D bond rating. The only downside of debt is that it depresses your stock price, unless you reach the D bond rating.

At D bond rating, you will be completely banned from using aggressive black market items. If you want to recover the use of the black market, you will have to pay off enough to reach a C rating at least momentarily. To see how much you need to pay off, hover over your debt and the mouseover information will tell you exactly how much. On rare occasions, it is possible to purchase a "Cook the Books" black market item, which lowers the threshold at which your bond rating depreciates. Cook the Books is one of the few black market items that can be bought while your company has a D rating.

Generally, if the resource market prices are low, the only way to escape from a D bond rating is to win the game or to build very profitable and very expensive Offworld Markets. However, because of the nature of D debt, you will not be able to defend your Offworld Markets because you won't be able to purchase Goon Squads.

Because of the timing of daily debt interest it is almost always best to upgrade your HQ just before midnight when possible, as this almost always boosts your rating. Paying off debt and upgrading your HQ are the two most effective ways to raise your bond rating. Buying stock, contrary to common sense, does not increase your bond rating because the game doesn't count it into your company's total value, it does however significantly increase stock price. Buying stock actually slightly lowers your company's bond rating because it takes cash to buy stock and cash is counted into your company's total value.

The screenshot displays two panels. The left panel shows the financials for 'Cubit32 : Level 2 Scavenger HQ'. The right panel shows a stock ticker for four companies: Cubit32 [AA], Ilana Kamat [AA], Silas Crichton [AAA], and Sam Moreno [A].

Company	Rating	Stock Price
Cubit32	[AA]	\$10.02
Ilana Kamat	[AA]	\$9.52
Silas Crichton	[AAA]	\$10.23
Sam Moreno	[A]	\$9.29

Financials for Cubit32 : Level 2 Scavenger HQ:

- HQs: \$1,200K
- Cash + Resources: \$1,622
- Structures: \$33,600
- Assets: \$1,235K
- Debt: -\$16,485 (x5)
- (AA Bond Rating: 6% Interest Rate)
- Total Value: \$1,152K
- Target Value per Share: \$11.53
- Current Value per Share: \$10.02
- Stock Price: \$10.02

Total Value = Assets – 5x Debt (on Manager difficulty). Your assets are your HQ value + your structures' intrinsic (unchangeable) value + your cash + your resource stockpiles' value. Resources that are currently being used by your advanced buildings are also counted as assets, until those advanced buildings finalize their project and make the use of their input resources permanent. The ratio of your debt to your total value finally is what determines your bond rating, both are visible by mousing over any company's stock ticker. In a 2p match, 10% Debt to Total Value or worse means a company receives a D bond rating; in an 8p match, it is 5% and somewhere in between that in other formats.

d. Resources

Every resource in the game is worth some value and that value changes every time that resource is bought or sold. Purchases and sales of resources increase and decrease the price respectively. If the same quantity of a resources are bought and sold, the price of the resource doesn't move. Even if 1 million units are bought and sold every second, the price won't change as long as the quantities are the same.

There are 13 or so resources: Power, Water, Food, Oxygen, Fuel, Aluminum, Iron, Steel, Carbon, Chemicals, Silicon, Glass and Electronics. You can consider Cash as a resource even though it doesn't have a colored icon like the other 13. Of the resources, Power, Water, Iron, Aluminum, Silicon and Carbon are harvestable, meaning they do not require any resources from the player's resource stockpiles in order to be produced. The other 7 resources are intermediate resources and they require harvestable resource stockpiles in order to be produced. You could also conceivably call cash a harvestable resource because it can be produced from (a lot of) Power at a Pleasure Dome.

Harvestable resources can be produced at a rate up to almost 4 per second (without upgrades) whereas intermediate resources can only be produced at a rate of about 1 a second (without upgrades).



None of the resources are always going to be the most important, but (depending on the map) the rarest resources are going to be more expensive overall, especially if 1 player gets a monopoly on a specific harvestable resource. Aluminum, Steel and Glass (in order of importance) are the most important resources because they are required to upgrade your Headquarters to higher levels, which will generate the number of claims necessary to properly exploit the resource markets. The general construction resources (see picture) are also required to build most other buildings. So in short, without an adequate supply of construction resources, you're not going to have a successful company because you won't be able to make the buildings to make all the other resources. Of an additional note, Steel requires Iron from Metal Mines in order to be produced and Glass requires Silicon.



Water, Food and Oxygen are life support resources. Power + Fuel can also be counted as life support too as almost every company must use them in order to do anything. Water, Food and Oxygen are constantly consumed starting starting at HQ2 and up. Oxygen is consumed at up to 0.4/s, Water is consumed at up to 0.8/s and Food at up to 1.2/s on HQ5. Power is used to run almost every building and Fuel is used at a rate of 0.2/s per resource Freighter in flight. Not producing your own life support merely causes your company to accumulate debt. This means you don't need to make life support resources until they get really expensive or until debt becomes a major issue. Power is the only

resource that can't be stockpiled (with 1 minor exception), which makes it more unique and a common point of vulnerability. Additionally the profits from surplus Power production go directly to paying off debt, which makes Power much less desirable to produce because you need cash in the bank to buy stock to win the game and not just a dent in your debt problems. When you produce life support resources, you won't be accumulating stockpiles until you produce more than you consume. Thus, it is very important to always produce (a lot) more life support than you consume so you actually make more cash and wealth which gives you the ability to be in control and aggressive.



The remaining 4 resources, Silicon, Iron, Chemicals and Electronics, aren't in many facets of the game but they are still important enough to consider from time to time. Iron is used to build Steel Mills and the Steel resource. Iron is only a problem if your Metal Mines get attacked while you have Steel Mills and no Iron stockpiles. Silicon is another resource without which it is typically possible to survive because only smaller quantities of it are required; it is used to produce Glass and in small quantities also Electronics. Chemicals require Fuel and Carbon and are used to research technology upgrades (more on those later) and patents (more on those later too). Electronics are exclusively a construction resource for the Robotic HQ and the advanced buildings (Patent Lab, Optimization Center, Hacker Array, Pleasure Dome and Offworld Market).

e. Buildings

There are 19 building for the player to choose from. Resource buildings output resources and sometimes also need input resources to produce their outputs. Advanced buildings have an indirect effect, are more expensive and slower to build, are more vulnerable and any investment in them always take much longer to pay for themselves but pay off a lot more in later stages of the game. What follows are a list of the games' buildable buildings. Base Prod stands for base production of the buildings output resource, per second.

Resource Buildings	Steel	Alu	Glass	Silicon	Carbon	Iron	Electronics	Build Time	Base Prod
Metal Mine								20	1 to 2
Water Pump								20	1 to 2
Elemental Quarry								10	1 to 2
Solar Panel		20		100				20	0.9
Wind Turbine		20			80			20	0.9
Geothermal Plant	120	40						40	2
Greenhouse Farm	20		10					20	0.5
Hydrolysis Reactor	40	10						20	0.5
Steel Mill						20		20	0.5
Chemicals Refinery	40				20			20	0.5
Glass Kiln	40			20				20	0.5
Electronics Manufacturer	40	20						20	.25
Solar Condenser			5					10	0.67
Adv Buildings	Steel	Alu	Glass	Silicon	Carbon	Iron	Electronics	Build Time	
Patent Lab	80						20	40	
Optimization Center	80						20	40	
Hacker Array	40						40	40	
Pleasure Dome	80						40	40	
Offworld Market	400		100				100	60	
Buildings	Steel	Alu	Glass	Silicon	Carbon	Iron	Electronics	Build Time	
HQ2	80	80	20					0	
HQ3	160	160	40					0	
HQ4	240	240	60					0	
HQ5	320	320	80					0	
HQ1 to HQ5	800	800	200					0	

Solar Panels and Wind Turbines produce different amounts depending on their location. Wind is best placed on top of many adjacent cliffs and Solar Panels at high altitudes. Additionally Dry and Water Ice Condensers and Solar Panels only produce their outputs during the day.

Every intermediate resource producing building has a base production of 0.5 per second for their main resource. The only exception is the Electronics Factory which produces Electronics at a base rate of 0.25 per second. Additionally, the Electrolysis Reactor produces Oxygen in addition to Fuel but at half the rate of Fuel. Intermediate resource buildings generally consume their input resource at a constant and unmoveable rate of 1 per second.



The primary resource harvesting buildings (Water Pumps, Metal Mines and Quarries) produce resources at a base rate of somewhere between 1 and 2 per second depending on which resource pips they are placed on. (high, med and low shown to the right.) A Water Pump would on its own produce a base amount of 2.0, 1.5 or 1.0 units of Water per second placed alone on a High, Medium or Low

Water tile respectively. Geothermal Plants always produce Power at a base rate of 2 per second, Wind Turbines and Solar Panels under the best conditions produce at an average base rate of 1.0 per second (Solar Panels are only active during daytime). Ice Condensers produce at an average base rate of 0.67/s as they are also only active during the day.

In addition to a resource being High, Medium or Low, two resource pips can also be on the same tile. This only makes a big difference in the case where Aluminum + Iron or Carbon + Silicon combine on one or more tiles because Metal Mines and Quarries can in these cases simultaneously produce both resources. The only other structures that have to be placed on top of resources are Ice Condensers, of which there are 2 types. The Dry Ice Condenser sits on Dry Ice and Water Ice Condensers sit on Water ice. Dry Ice has a darker color and Water ice is pure white. Dry Ice Condensers produce both Oxygen and Carbon at equal rates.

Every resource producing building without exception benefits from being adjacent to identical resource buildings. Any resource building that is adjacent to an identical counterpart generates 50% more output resources (without requiring additional input resources). With adjacency to 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 identical buildings, the bonus is 75%, 85%, 99%, 95% & 100%. In practical terms this means that your resource buildings are about as efficient as you'll ever need them to be with 2 adjacencies. The only other thing that improves efficiency (not speed) are Optimization Center upgrades (more on those later). The difference between speed and efficiency is that buildings that are twice as fast also consume twice the inputs, while buildings that are twice as efficient still consume the usual amount while producing twice the output.

f. The Black Market

The black market is what your competitors will use in their cunning and diabolical plans to wrest control of Mars and its market from your benevolent influence. In order to prevent your competitors from overtaking you, you need to be prepared to account for the effect that the black market can have.

The effects that the black market can have on a match is tremendous. EMPs and Power surges can completely shut down whole districts of your industry, dynamites can obliterate your advanced structures and Mutinies can steal your profitable resources right out from under you, to name a few things. Black market effects can be bought once every minute (or twice, for Scavengers).

The outlook of the black market heavily influences which companies are or not optimal to use on any given map. In 1v1, but even more so in 4+ player matches, it is very important to just buy cheap black market effects as long as you don't specifically need to buy a specific black market item and aren't severely strapped for cash. Having black market items stockpiled enables you to take advantage of future opportunities that you can't properly capitalize on if you don't anticipate them by stockpiling black market effects.

The ubiquitous Goon Squad must be utilized from time to time to protect key vulnerabilities, like a 4 tile industrial area or a highly valuable Water Pump, for example. Goon Squads simply prevent 1 black market item targeted at their tile from taking effect, and it gives the blocked black market item to the company that would have otherwise suffered from its effect. Additionally, area of effect black market items (with 1 minor exception) can not affect tiles protected by Good Squads. Other black market items are less ubiquitous and I'll describe them in a later chapter.

g. Player Controls

It is very important (if you want to be competitive) to be quick and able to use the available hotkeys so you don't spend too much time just trying to do what you need to do. To learn them the fastest take the time to look up the relevant building construction hotkeys while playing instead of clicking buttons. Mousing over buildings shows you their hotkeys.

Other hotkeys include:

Ctrl+Shift+Down:	Sell all resources all at once
Alt+Sell Resource:	Sell all of a particular resource all at once
Tab:	Scroll through all headquarters and the colony
Spacebar, + key, - key:	Pause the game, speed up and speed down (respectively).
WASD:	Scroll the map in any one of the 4 cardinal directions.
Ctrl or shift buy/sell:	Buy or sell 1 or 100 units per click respectively, instead of 10
Ctrl + Click on building:	Turn building on/off
Ctrl + Shift Click on building:	Same as above but for all buildings of the clicked type
Backspace:	Scrap selected building
Shift+Backspace:	Scrap all buildings of the selected type
C:	Claim tile (ie. Press C and then click the desired tile)
B:	Bid on auction (when available).
~:	Toggle between the available resource and resource stockpiles overview
Z:	(While pressed down) hides all buildings
E, R, T or Y:	Found as Expansive, Robotic, Scavenger or Scientific respectively.
Alt + (Shift +) click	Send a shipment early (or all shipments of that type)

3. General Information

a. Company types

At the beginning of the match, a player can choose to found as any one of 4 different types of companies, each company has distinct traits. No company type is intrinsically better than any of the others and it is better to know how to play all 4 because it is definitely going to happen that you'll run into circumstances that practically require you to use one specific company.

Expansive:

- 50% faster Freighter movement
- All buildings cost 50% less Steel
- +1 extra claim per HQ upgrade (up to 4 extra by HQ5)

Expansive companies usually do better on maps where the resources are far apart from each other and aren't laid out in big fields. Because they consume half the Steel compared to other companies, they are also best positioned to take advantage of the Powerful Offworld Market. The Expansive HQ footprint is the biggest of them all and is thus best capable of destroying resource pips during the founding phase.

Scavenger:

- Carbon replaces Steel as a construction resource (and buildings requires 50% more of it than they would for Steel).
- Receives warnings of upcoming shortages and surpluses
- After using the black market, regains access to it twice as fast compared to other companies.

Because Scavenger can use the black market twice as often, it is very well positioned (especially in big Free For All matches) to take advantage of black market items like Mutinies, Bribe Claims, Tile Auctions, Adrenaline Boosts, Pirates and Goon Squads because they directly benefit the Scavenger company in addition to sometimes hurting the target. Scavengers can afford to spend only 3 tiles on their 2 main construction resources, especially when they have access to high Carbon and Aluminum tiles.

Scientific:

- Scientific buildings placed on top of primary resources (Iron, Aluminum, Water, Carbon, Silicon) don't need those resources as inputs (for example this means Farms built on top of Water don't require Water input).
- EMP and Power Surges only last half as long on Scientific buildings.
- 50% faster patent acquisition (taking 33% less time).

Scientific companies are particularly Powerful when they can place their HQs next to fields of Iron and Water and not too far away from Silicon and Carbon. Scientific companies also suffer half as long from EMPs and Power Surges which make them more preferable in matches where these are both present on the black market.

Robotic:

- Does not require life support (Water, Food, Oxygen and Fuel).
- Robotic companies use Power as Fuel.
- Uses Electronics instead of Glass to upgrade its HQ, and only half the usual amount.
- HQ upgrades also require half the usual amount of Aluminum.

- Resources gained by crushing resource pips with an HQ found give the player double the usual resource bonus.
- Buildings receive adjacency bonuses from any adjacent buildings that produce one of their inputs, including Power.

Robotic companies generally are better on maps with very scarce Water and/or Aluminum resources and on maps with hybrid metal tiles (tiles which have both Aluminum and Iron).

Robotic companies are also the only companies that can use (Power) production buildings to boost the output of harvesters on lonely resource pips (resource pips not adjacent to other same-type pips).

b. Buildings

There are several types of buildings in the game: primary resource buildings (Water Pumps, Metal Mines, Elemental Quarries as well as Wind Mills, Solar Panels and Geothermal Plants), secondary resource buildings (every building that uses stockpiled resources to produce other resources) and advanced buildings (Pleasure Dome, Patent Lab, Optimization Center, Hacker Array and Offworld Market) which do not produce resources but have other effects.

Primary resource buildings are generally your first source of cash income via the resource sales you get with them. These buildings are free to build but still take 10 to 20 seconds to finish construction.

Among these buildings, Water Ice and Dry Ice Condensers can also be included. Condensers, like Solar Panels, only work during the day. Condensers and Solar Panels are particularly vulnerable to the black market because any black market actions used against them in the morning are virtually extended by the fact that they are only active during the day (21:00 to 5:00) and thus can almost completely miss a day's worth of production by suffering from the effects of just one Power Surge or EMP.

Primary resource buildings are a very common point of vulnerability that is very hard to defend and very easy to abuse with the black market. For example, a disabling action on a high Water Pump can potentially disable up to 10 tiles by extension because the Water stops coming in and consequently the Farms and Reactors using that Water will in short order become idle or unprofitable.

Secondary resource buildings produce every other resources from the primary resources. They should generally always be placed next to the headquarters (with the exception of Scientific buildings). When secondary resource buildings are placed away from the HQ, they have to use Freighters to ship in primary resources and more Freighters to ship them back. This costs Fuel, causes delays and is a big vulnerability. Only Scientific players can afford to remotely build their secondary buildings because they do not have to ship in the primary resources if the secondary buildings are placed on top of resource pips that correspond with their inputs.

Advanced buildings can not be built right away but are progressively unlocked as a company upgrades its HQ during every match. HQ2 unlocks the upgrade and Patent Lab, HQ3 unlocks the Pleasure Dome and Hacker Array, HQ4 unlocks 1 Offworld Market and HQ5 allows you to build a 2nd Offworld Market. Advanced buildings must be connected either to the Colony or to your HQ.

The Pleasure Dome generates cash at a rate of \$4 per second per unit of population. A map's population is the sum of the number of inhabited habitats on the colony plus up to 5, 10 or 15 for every level 5 headquarters of the Scientific, Scavenger or Expansive faction, respectively. The income of Pleasure Domes is at its highest when placed next to the colony and is furthermore boosted by 10% for every colony habitat that is adjacent to it. Successive Pleasure Domes built by any company will reduce

the average income per Pleasure Dome to \$2.5 per population for 2 Pleasure Domes, \$2 / pop for 3, and so on and so on with a minimum of \$1 / pop.

Hacker Arrays allow you to generate artificial shortages and surpluses, which increase or decrease the price of a particular resource. This takes 60 or 30 seconds to activate respectfully and an additional 20 or so seconds to take effect over another 20 seconds. Shortages and surpluses move the price of a resource by an amount inversely proportional to the the number of players in the game, making artificial ones especially powerful in duels. Artificial shortages cost \$2K to initiate the first time and become \$2K more expensive every time they are used linearly, not exponentially. Surpluses take half the cash.

Optimization Centers increase the efficiency of resource buildings by up to 100% in steps of 25% per individual upgrade per individual resource. The first upgrade costs 20 Chemicals and takes 40 seconds and every successive upgrades takes 20 more Chemicals and seconds compared to the last.

Optimization Centers are especially good when you anticipate a long game, as it takes a long time to reap the rewards from technology upgrades. The Optimization Center benefits from Machine Shops which make it 10% faster for every adjacent Machine Shop.

The Patent Laboratory gives you access to additional traits at the cost of some Chemicals and some time spent on obtaining 1 or multiple patents. Every patent that is already obtained can NOT be obtained by any other companies under any conditions. Patents take as many seconds as they do Chemicals to research. The patents are as follows

Superconductor (40 chems): Doubles Power production that is connected to your HQ. This is particularly useful for Robotic players who have built Power adjacent to their HQs.

Energy Vault (40 chems): Generates +1 Power (not sellable) that generates up to 100 units worth of a stockpile. When Power production is exceeded by consumption, the energy vault tries to compensate.

Financial Instruments (40 chems): Gives 25% of all debt interest to the player (except for the player's own debt).

Water Engine (40 chems): While Water is cheaper, it is used instead of Fuel for Freighters and for Offworld Markets.

Perpetual Motion (60 chems): All buildings consume 50% less Power. This basically has a very similar effect to superconductor but is map-wide.

Virtual Reality (60 chems): Increases Pleasure Dome income by 50%.

Nanotech (60 chems): When buildings are scrapped, they refund all of their build cost. This is extremely useful for Scientific and Robotic players who usually have to spend a lot of resources to build their infrastructure. Nanotech can NOT be used to regain the resources of an Offworld Market.

Cold Fusion (60 chems): Water Powers buildings while Water is cheaper than Power.

Carbon Scrubbing (80 chems): Buildings that require Carbon as an input no longer do so.

Slant Drilling (80 chems): Resource pips count as being on their adjacent tiles as well. This patent can easily lead to a company effectively creating hybrid tiles either through closely adjacent tiles or by using Core Sample to create resources on tiles next to Metal Mines or Elemental Quarries.

Thinking Machines (80 chems): Black Market effects used against the player last half as long on tiles adjacent to the headquarters. This is extremely useful in matches where the black market is particularly nasty and Offworld Markets particularly good.

Teleportation (80 chems): Eliminates the need for Freighters. All resources are sent to their particular buildings instantly as though they were right next to the HQ. Obviously this patent is the better version of Water engine and it is extremely useful for Scientific players who have remote production areas but are also suffering from the threat of Pirates and Magnetic Storms. One very pleasant side effect of this patent is that all resources that are stockpiled across the map inside buildings are instantly sent, giving a sudden influx of wealth.

Patent Labs receive 10% bonus per adjacent colony laboratory, but in my opinion this benefit is merely cosmetic because the cost of the Chemicals is usually a much greater concern than the time it takes to acquire a patent.

The last and final advanced structure is the Offworld Market. Offworld Markets are by far the most expensive to build and usually the most profitable on a per-tile basis. Launches consume 100 units of a particular resource plus 20 Aluminum and 20 Fuel and generate a lot wealth every time they go Offworld. The prices of resources Offworld (rather than on world) are different. Offworld prices are random at the beginning of every match and increase over time. Offworld Markets get 10% faster for every adjacent colony warehouse and can NOT be scrapped once completed.

c. Black Market

The black market is made up of several purchasable actions that can be bought for a price. This price starts at a base amount that is determined by how many players are playing in any given match. The more players, the lower the base price. Every time a black market action is purchased, the black market becomes unavailable to the company that just used it for 60 seconds or 30 seconds if the company is a Scavenger. Every time a black market action is purchased it becomes approximately 33% to 50% more expensive for everyone to use. Additionally, there is a small ping over any black market icon every time a company purchases it that is visible to everyone. In a 2p match the base price starts at \$3k and will go as low as \$1k in an 8p match.

Black market actions like EMPs and Adrenaline Boosts (that affect tiles over time) will experience diminishing returns, meaning that the same black market item used multiple times on the same tile will slowly have less and less effect.

It is NOT possible to actively stockpile more than 1 use of a black market item. It is only possible to stockpile more than 1 if someone targets one of your tiles with a Goon Squad using an action which you already have, in which case you'll end up with multiple units of that action.

The items that may or not appear on the black market are almost entirely random:

Bribe Claim: 1 extra claim per purchase.

Goon Squad: Protects a tile from black market effects. When a black market action targets this tile specifically, it triggers the Goon Squad and will defend the tile for a short while. Actions that are used on tiles with Goons Squads are granted to the defender.

Cook the Books: Improves your bond rating. The presence of this black market item alleviates some of the problems that comes with too much debt, but the depression in stock price is not one of the problems being solved. Cook the books can help you stay out of D levels of debt. Cook the books and Bribe Claim are the only two options you can still use while having a D bond rating.

Pirates: Steals at 100 units in resources by attacking Freighters traveling across a specific small region of the map. The Freighters that go through its area of effect will be pirated. Each attack will take half of the resources on the Freighter.

Magnetic Storm: Destroys all Freighters and any other moving units in any given area. This is particularly fiendish to use against Scientific players who decide to produce their profitable resources away from their headquarters because their shipments of resources are usually extremely valuable and consequently painful to lose. Magnetic Storms can be combined with dynamite because the repair droid that can repair a building can be destroyed and thus cause additional delays to a building being repaired.

Adrenaline Boost: Doubles the speed at which the targeted buildings work. The targeted tile will receive the longest lasting boost. Adrenaline Boosts are generally best used after your competitors use their own black market opportunity so they can not respond to it until a minute after you activate it.

EMP: Electromagnetic Pulses freeze buildings for a time. The targeted tile is frozen for 100 seconds, the buildings next to it for 50 seconds, and the next ring of buildings 25 seconds. EMPs can be targeted on empty tiles which guarantees that they don't trigger a Goon Squad.

Power Surge: Freezes buildings like an EMP, but will jump from tile to tile. The 1st tile is frozen for 100 seconds, the 2nd for 90, and so and so on. Power surges will not jump to Goon Squaded tiles and will go around them if they can. Power surges will not jump back to a tile which it has already jumped to.

Circuit Overload: Spreads like a Power Surge and lasts longer but instead doubles Power consumption instead of freezing the affected buildings. (However, buildings which produce Power are frozen by Circuit Overload.) This effect can also often be used to cheaply undo a competitor's Goon Squad.

Slowdown Strike: Cuts the speed of targeted buildings in half. Slowdown strike is the only offensive black market action that can ignore a Goon Squad.

Core Sample: Generates extra resources on tiles that have none. The chance to generate a specific resource can be as much as 90% on specific terrain types. River and lake beds give a 90% chance to generate Water, volcano terrain 90% Iron, sand 90% Silicon, rocky 90% Aluminum and crater terrain 90% for Carbon. Normal terrain is completely random. Core samples can give a low, medium or high resource pip and this particular chance is entirely random.

Core sample is particularly Powerful when combined with the slant drilling patent and/or right next to lonely high resource pips.

Robotic players in particular can make good use of Core Sample by using it on tiles next to their Geothermal Plants because the Geothermal Plant will guarantee that any incidental high tiles will produce 50% extra.

Hologram: Causes the target tile to appear to be something that it is not. Only spies can show your opponents what the targeted tile really is. Holograms will tend to appear to be the same as buildings adjacent to them or a random advanced building when not available. Holograms do not trigger the black market cooldown when purchased and are always available for purchase. To prevent your opponents from inferring that you're making a tile somewhere hologrammed it is generally best to activate this action right after using a different particularly distracting black market action like a mutiny or EMP on a location far away.

Spy: Spies do not trigger Goon Squads and give complete information on the targeted and surrounding tiles that they target for the remainder of the match. Spies do not trigger Goon Squads but are however able to reveal them. Information that spies provide include the exact nature of an advanced building its activities and the amount of resources stockpiled inside of a building. Spies do not trigger the black market cooldown when purchased and are always available for purchase.

Network Virus: Spreads like a Power surge, lasts shorter on successive tiles and instead forces the target buildings to be online and use resources regardless of whether or not the target company wants them to be. Input resources will be bought with debt if cash and resource stockpiles are not available. Network Virus also prevents the scrapping of any building it affects and eliminated Holograms.

Dynamite: Demolishes the target building, forcing it to need to be repaired at the cost of half its construction resources and taking its full construction time. Dynamite is particularly fiendish to use against Offworld Markets as well as buildings that are far away from the headquarters, because the repair droid that does the repairs travels very slowly and will consequently take a lot of time when it needs to travel across half the map.

Mutiny: Takes control of the target building for 120 seconds. Mutinies can be used to counter-mutiny the Mutinies of your opponents. Mutiny is particularly fiendish when used in conjunction with Goon Squads, which are capable of being used on mutinied tiles and consequently countering counter Mutinies.

Underground Nuke: Underground Nukes reduce any low or medium resource pip to trace, cutting its base production value to 0.25 per second or to 1.0 per second (low) if used on a high resource pip. The presence of this black market effect is particularly tough on any non-Scientific companies who can not afford to claim.

Auction Tile: This action will only appear in 4 player or more matches. This will cause the targeted unclaimed tile to go up for auction or (if targeted on one's own tile) auction one's own tile (in which case the owner can't bid in the auction itself). If a self owned tile is being auctioned, the proceeds go to the company initiating the auction as CASH (and not debt relief), otherwise the proceeds will disappear into the ether.

Black market auctions are particularly useful when bribe a claims aren't available. This action is best used on tiles connected to your headquarters because they have the least value to your opponents and the most value to you. Because it triggers a black market cooldown like any other black market action, this action really needs to be worth it and the player who initiates it must simply be willing to let it go if the auction price goes too high.

This black market action can also enable you to weigh opponents down with debt if they bid too aggressively on auctions.

Auctioning one of your own tiles can be a good way to get the last bit of cash to win a very close buyout race. You could even sell off an Offworld Market (after getting a send off) in the desperate hope that someone is willing to pay tons of debt for it, activate an adrenaline boost on top of it to sweeten the deal.

MULE: An easter egg for gamers who get the reference; produces 200 units of a primary resource over time. It is an okay action to use if you need a little more of a primary resource. However, it takes a long time to get there, a long time to get back and generally isn't that good and rarely appears in a match and hardly gets used when it does because it triggers the highly valuable black market timer and isn't all that good in general.

Several black market items are semi mandatory in multiplayer matches, meaning that either one or the other MUST be present in every multiplayer match and both of them could be. Goon Squads are ALWAYS available if at least two items would trigger it. Power Surges or EMPs, Mutinies or Dynamites and Pirates or Magnetic Storms are semi-mandatory.

d. Match Runout

Every day from 5:00 to 21:00 is daytime, during which Solar Panels, Ice Condensers and Dry Ice Condensers operate at their full capacity regardless of which hour of the day it is exactly. The match always starts at 6:00 on Mars. All debt interest is accrued every day at midnight, and the random auction is generated at 12:00 every day except Day 1. Every game second represents 10 minutes and every day lasts 148 real seconds (or 24 hours and 40 minutes in game time).

There are also several unannounced random effects in the game, Solar Flares (100 seconds of double solar Power & 50% increased condenser production), Dust Storms (50% less condenser and Farm production but double wind Power) and various other random events that increase or decrease the price of one or more resources.

e. Game Facts

The following are some basic facts of the game that don't fit into a particular category:

1. The market gets more volatile the fewer players are in a match. This means that prices will jump up and down much more readily in a 1v1 than in a 4v4 match. The degree by which the market is more or less stable is almost directly proportional to the number of players in game.
2. Wind Turbines produce a 0.4/s base amount of Power increased by every down-facing slope next to them, up to 1.0/s for 4 down-facing slopes.
3. The first founder always starts with a black market cooldown of 2 minutes. In a 1v1, the 2nd founder starts with 1 minute. For a larger number of players the black market delay is shorter the later a company founds.
4. Tiles can spawn on a map containing multiple resources. When these multiple resources are Aluminum and Iron or Carbon and Silicon, a single Metal Mine or Quarry can produce both at the same time.
5. Freighters will transport between 20 and 60 units of a resource at a time. 20 units of the primary resources, 40 units of Fuel, Oxygen, Food or Steel or 60 units of Chemicals, Electronics or Glass will fit into a single Freighter.
6. Freighters consume 0.2 units of Fuel per second and move 1 tile a second. Mathematically this means that if a primary resource must travel 100 tiles, it takes 1 unit of Fuel per 1 unit of primary resource to transport. This particularly means that all companies but particularly Scavengers need to be very close to primary resources. This also means that Water needs to be fairly close by because the Water being far away means that more Fuel needs to be to ship in the Water with which to make the Fuel with which to ship the Water. Secondary resources almost never consume enough Fuel for transport to worry about.
7. The general amount of value that can be extracted from a particular resource is based on its price. In a 2 player match, if a resource is 100\$ the total value that could be extracted from that resource at an instant (by selling out a large stockpile) is roughly 100\$ to the 2nd Power times 2, or 20,000\$. As a general rule, selling out a large stockpile of resources will give you the square of the price of that resource multiplied by the number of players in game. This number is further multiplied by a factor that gets closer to 1 (from 2) depending on the degree by which a

resource is priced higher than 100\$.

As a general rule, selling out a quantity of a resource that lowers the price of that resource by 50% will recover about 75% of what you would get for driving the price to \$1. This means selling out a stockpile completely isn't always a good idea when that causes the price to plummet from \$300 to \$1.

8. Every dollar that goes into a resource can be extracted again by selling that resource at some later point (not considering random events and Hacker Array activities).
9. 10k of debt makes it 20k cheaper to buy all 10 stock of a company all at once or 12k one at a time if all 10 stock were unowned.
10. It is possible to get 2 Offworld launches off of a competitor's Offworld Market by queuing up an Offworld send before activating your mutiny on their Offworld Market. A similar effect can be achieved for Hacker Arrays, Patent Labs and Optimization Centers.
11. Buying 6 unowned stock in a company generally takes about 7x the stock the price.
12. Back to back shortages have an effect roughly equivalent to $1/s$ resource consumption per player, up to $8/s$ in an 8p match.
13. 100k of company assets increases the stock price by 1, meaning that 100k of cash+resources makes it 20k more expensive to buy all of your company all 10 stock at once. The 100k to 1 relationship begins to diminishes after about 2,000k worth of assets are accrued.
14. HQ value starts at 600k in an 8p match, goes up to 1200k in a 1v1 and increases by 20% with every upgrade.
15. Stock prices will adjust over time from their current value to a target value by about 5% of the difference per second. Price changes due to stock trading are instant.
16. In 2p and 3p games. a black market purchase makes that item more expensive to purchase for the player making the purchase than for other players.

4. Strategy

a. Tactics

Tactics are the parts that make up a strategy. There are several tactics known to me that can be used to gain an advantage over your opponents:

Buying into a Shortage

When a random event or a Hacker Array causes a shortage the price of a resource automatically goes up, investing your spare wealth into that shortage will generally increase your wealth by between 15-50%. Buying into a shortage does bring a risk if someone else has a stockpile of the resource into which you're buying because they can tank the price of that resource and basically steal some of your wealth.

Overproducing & Stockpiling

This is simply producing way more than propriety would usually demand on a moment to moment basis. Overproducing is best done with primary resources that are adjacent to your HQ. Aluminum as an example is one of the easiest resources to stockpile and one of the best because you need only a limited amount to upgrade your HQ to level 5 and only a little bit extra for some additional buildings. Thus it can be very profitable to overproduce Aluminum at the start and generate a stockpile of 600 units and then re-use the tiles for something actually profitable.

Withholding Stockpiles

New players will often sell out all of their stockpiles even when this reduces the price of a resource to 1\$. It is almost always a bad idea to sell any resource for a price of 5\$ or less. Reducing the price of a resource by 66% by selling it down will net you about 85% of the wealth that can be generated by driving the price to \$1, preventing it from becoming much too affordable while still consolidating wealth.

Attacking a Goon Squad

If you know with certainty that an opponent has used a Goon Squad on a tile, you can use a fairly benign black market effect to remove it without risking being retaliated against with more painful black market effects. Good black market effects to attack Goon Squads with are Network Virus and Circuit Overload.

Stockpiling Wealth

Obviously stockpiling cash and resources is a good idea but it is also something that new player's don't always do when they are in a rush to achieve HQ4 or HQ5. Sometimes upgrading costs 100k and the new claims you get by upgrading don't really have a way to pay you back the 100k that it costs you to upgrade. In that case, delaying the upgrade can be better.

Retooling

Changing some of your old production buildings into others should be a simple choice when the resources they are currently producing aren't worth a lot but the resources they could produce are. Retooling is best done when the required construction resources are cheap and the resources you're retooling for are expensive. This means that Expansive player's are better at shifting around their production because they only use half the Steel to re-tool. The Nanotech patent also makes this

extremely easy for any company but especially for Scientific and Robotic whom have no construction bonuses.

Timed Auction Bidding

When auctions pop up, instantly bidding on them generally will influence (most) opponents to re-bid on an auction. If you insta bid and rebid on an auction a couple times in a row and then drop out, you can manipulate some of your opponents into needlessly taking on too much debt. Conversely, waiting to bid will generally cause your opponents to let an auction go to you as long as they don't value it too much for themselves.

To best take advantage of this you need some experience with evaluating how much you can afford to bid on an auction because you'll need to make up your mind about what to do beforehand so you have the best opportunity to either saddle your opponent with a lot of debt or conversely win an auction cheap that is extremely valuable. Your bidding patterns can be a very useful tool.

Spreading Buildings Around

The black market is a common tool that will be used against you. To negate the effects of the black market it is generally better to split up your production buildings out over several areas around your headquarters to mitigate the effect that it will have. If the black market is particularly unfriendly to you (ie. it has EMPs and Power Surges and you don't have a Scientific company), having more than 3 tiles adjacent to each other will make the effects of the black market worse.

Investing Spare Cash

Whenever you have cash lying around, particularly during the early stages of a match, it is almost always best to invest it in Food or another resource that is continually going up in price. Doing this will increase the value of the cash you've just invested and make it more expensive for your opponents to use as life support. Naturally spare cash should only be invested in a resource that your opponents don't have stockpiled nor are producing to excess.

Never Always Auto Selling

Many times, holding on to Food instead of selling it is the better idea, like when you're the only one producing it. Naturally holding on to a resource means you have to monitor who is beginning to produce it so you can respond to that by using the black market against it or by selling out of the resource (and moving into another one) as soon as they get their production up.

Black Marketing the Early Bird

Using the black market can be a particularly favorable option for 2nd or late founders, particularly with a mutiny. Whoever founds first will under no circumstance be able to defend themselves against the black market effects of late founders until after 2 or so minutes pass. This is particularly true in big Free For Alls.

However, early game black market purchases should generally only be made upon reaching HQ level 2. Otherwise, the black market purchase may delay your HQ upgrade by too much time and hurt you more than it helps.

Fuel Debt to Cash

It is possible to transform a portion of debt into cash by remotely producing Fuel. This is done by simple making a patch of Fuel producing buildings 1 tile away from your headquarters while simultaneously consuming a lot of Fuel by shipping in a lot of resources from far away and selling the

Fuel when it comes in. Magnetic Storms must be mitigated by sending shipments early and out of sync. This tactic is not viable when the black market provides Pirates.

Dynamite +

Dynamite is particularly fiendish to use against remote Glass Kilns because they can store up to 59 units of Glass before sending it. You can destroy 59 units of Glass and up to 40 units of Oxygen by detonating a remote Glass Kiln at the right time. Spies can be used to reveal the stockpiles, or you can simply try to time your dynamite according to when the Glass Kiln should have a lot stockpiled. Some opponents will send their shipments early, so don't always anticipate being able to do this.

Resource Probing

Do you want to know if someone has stockpiles in a resource? Look at their Cash + Resource value, Buy 200 units or more of it, look at their C+R again and see how much the difference is. This is particularly easy to do during auctions because the C+R value doesn't fluctuate much then due to the passage of time. Buying 200 units at a time can be risky because your opponent can always sell out of his stockpiles if he has them, so you need to be quick about it.

If you want to know at an instant and with accuracy, you could even initiate a black market auction to give you all the time you need to do some resource probing. Smaller purchases (or sales) can also be made and you can infer by the change of C+R how much or not your opponent has. A purchase of 10 units at 100\$ costs 1,000\$, thus if the C+R changes by 1,000\$ as a consequence of your 10 unit purchase, this means that your opponent has massive stockpiles. If the change is only 500\$, the stockpiles are considerably less. If there is no change, they have no stockpiles.

Reverse Psychology

Do you know your opponent never ever Mutinies your Geothermal Plant after they see the price of Goon Squads increase? Then hold onto your Goon Squad and use it elsewhere when and where they won't expect it. Naturally you need to be highly certain that your opponent won't try to make a run for something valuable of yours anyway (like when they've used spies).

Hiding your wealth

This can particularly important in big Free For Alls, where people's stock prices are low and majority buyout opportunities present themselves. When your Cash + Resources gets high enough a big flashing 50% (or more) will show up next to your name showing them how close you are to having enough wealth to be capable of buying them out by majority or all at once.

Nanotech can be used to hide your wealth by producing a lot of expensive structures like Pleasure Domes, Solar Panels or wind mills. The resources these structures are made of should however not have been stockpiled by any of your opponents because that will destroy the value of the resources out of which the buildings are made.

Stocks are another thing in which you can hide your wealth, by selling out of them later when a majority buyout opportunity presents itself. You do lose at least 10% of the investment if the stock price doesn't increase after you buy them.

Failing to Finish a Scavenger

In a Free For All, as a general rule, players will retaliate as soon as you start buying into their stock by buying into your stock too and by throwing a lot of black market effects at you. Because Scavengers have twice as much access to the black market, you need to be certain that you can finish your purchase of them quickly (or that the black market is too expensive to use) and decisively because kicking a

Scavenger's hornets nest is a bad idea if you can't finish them quickly. Failing to Finish a Scavenger is a losing tactic. Failing to quickly finish any player is generally a bad tactic in a Free For All.

Slow Rolling

Slow Rolling is when you don't upgrade at the earliest opportunity. Generally it is always best to upgrade to HQ2 ASAP. However instantly upgrading beyond HQ2 should never be an automatic decision, especially when there aren't so many important tiles to claim nor profitable resources to produce. I'll often invest in a resource that the colony is consuming and that my opponents don't produce and instead constantly sell out of my construction resource until it effectively only costs me 10K or less in Cash+Resources to upgrade. In this way you'll enter HQ3 or 4 well prepared.

This is a particularly good tactic when you're in the lead and your opponent is producing the exact same construction resources as you. By selling out of them yourself and buying into Glass (to excess) when both you and your opponent require it, you make it much harder for them to also upgrade because the only resources they produce are worth less and less and the ones they need are worth more and more. By the time they are done selling out their construction resources to get the 40 or 60 units of precious Glass, your Aluminum and Steel upgrade cost may well be only \$3K and you'll have used your opponent's production to get some cheap extra construction resources.

Upgrade Surfing

What I mean by upgrade surfing is buying 1 or 2 stock in a company just before or at the exact moment that it upgrades its HQ and selling out when the stock price peaks. Stock prices will practically always increase in value by at least 10% (before day 4) whenever a company upgrades (especially the ones that do not generate debt). Selling a stock gives you 90% of the funds you paid for it, not counting any differences due to stock price changes or stock trading by other parties so you'll need at least a profit margin of 10%.

Buying more than 1 stock in other companies is like kicking a hornets nest, so be careful. People can be very defensive of their stock. Purchasing your own stock before upgrading is a lot safer because your opponents (in Free For Alls) won't find it to be nearly as threatening as you buying into one them.

Selling out from 10 to 5 (or possibly even less, but with risk) of your own stock can give you the ability to buy another company out without risking getting bought out through majority.

If you want to buy one company's stock while selling another's at the same time, first buy the other stock, sell the first stock and then wait for the timer to recover in order to repeat.

Intel Gathering

Some players don't regularly check on their opponents often enough, but it needs to be done, especially in a 1v1 match. It is not enough to just see which resources you have and your opponents have. Ideally, your screen is hovering over your competitions' HQs 24/7.

Attacking Water Pumps

As of the time of writing, it is a very common mistake among players of all types to leave their Water Pumps completely undefended almost always. Take advantage of this by throwing an EMP, Power Surge or 2 underground nukes at them and buying up a lot of Water.

Emergency Cash

Are you short an amount of funds that if they existed would enable you to buy out an opponent before they buy you? Cancel Offworld sends, cancel patent acquisitions, cancel optimization upgrades, sell out of your stock (when safe) and sell all your resources with ctrl+shift+down.

Hologramming the Offworld

Using a hologram on your Offworld is a common and obviously good tactic. However it is hard to successfully disguise an Offworld because there are a couple tell tale signs that an Offworld is being built.

Because Offworld construction usually spikes the price of Steel, Glass and Electronics all at once, the spikes in the prices of these resources are highly noticeable, especially in a 1v1. Additionally plenty of people monitor the wealth levels of their opponents by regularly mousing over their stock ticker. A decrease in wealth of 50-100k almost always indicates that someone is building an Offworld (if there is no other reason for their wealth to have vanished).

Additionally, you first need to have an empty plot to hologram if you don't want your opponent to have an opportunity to see the Offworld Market construction before it gets hologrammed.

Firstly the problem of resource price spikes can be mitigated by slowly acquiring the required resources ahead of time. The second issue is very hard to disguise but you could first throw a black market effect on someone (to distract them) and then immediately place your Offworld, leaving a gap of time during which your wealth is probably not being monitored.

Thirdly even if your opponent(s) do see that you're obviously building a hidden Offworld Market somewhere, you can still disguise it's location as long as no spies are available by deleting a patch of buildings and rebuilding them along with a hologrammed Offworld Market. You can also discourage the use of spies by buying up a bunch yourself.

b. 1v1 Skirmish

Founding

This applies to 1v1 matches on small maps with default settings. 1v1 automatch happens on a small map, reveal map enabled and all default settings. The 1st founder in a 1v1 usually takes on some starting debt or extra cash.

At the beginning, you will only have about 40 seconds to decide what the best founding location is and what its value is in terms of how much debt a found is worth taking on for in order to found 1st on it. Practically every 1st found is NEVER worth more than 50k debt because that is about the threshold of debt that puts you permanently into D levels of debt.

Every 1st found location should be valued according to the colony, the black market and its proximity to primary resources, especially Iron (or Carbon), Aluminum and Water. The spot that is the closest to each of these (especially Iron or Carbon and Aluminum) is almost always the most valuable. The further away your primary resources are, the more Fuel it costs to ship them in and the longer it takes for you to truly access them.

The biggest black market factor by far that influences founding are Pirates. With Pirates available, Scientific founds are only viable when they are next to a lot of Water (or Silicon) and Iron. The presence of both EMPs and Power surges makes non-Scientific companies less viable. Mutinies, Pirates and bribe a claims make Scavengers more viable. Underground nukes make non-Scientific

founds less viable, but Robotic players can better deal with them because they use less resources overall.

Resource generation severely impacts the types of companies that are viable in any given match. The lack of Iron and Water triangles (or better) makes Scientific almost completely nonviable. The lack of high or medium Carbon pips next to other Carbon pips makes Scavenger much less viable. When the different primary resources are far apart, Scavenger in particular is less viable due to Fuel costs. With the lack of medium or high Iron pips, Scientific is more viable because their buildings don't suffer from low quality resource pips.

Finally the colony always spawns with several of one particular module type (in addition to habitats) at random. These will continually and exclusively consume one of the following: Glass, Power, Chemicals or Electronics as well as a little bit extra of the remaining 3 resources after it grows. Habitat modules next to the colony will always consume Food, Water and Oxygen in similar ratios to company headquarters.

Naturally, if the colony consumes Glass, non-Robotic companies are less viable (unless they plan to produce Silicon+Glass by HQ2 or 3). If it consumes Power, Scavengers will be more viable (because Quarries consume a lot less Power than Steel Mills+Iron mines). If the colony consumes Electronics, Robotic players are less viable. Chemicals consumption doesn't affect company viability a lot, but it is a slight positive for Scavengers because they (should) always have better access to Carbon to produce the Chemicals with. The colony will always consume Food, Water and Oxygen which makes life support almost always expensive by day 2 or 3.

The 3-point checklist for a found's value is in my opinion made up of three major facets: resource distribution, the black market and colony resource consumption (as I've described them in the previous paragraphs). Of these the first two resources and the black market are more important. An additional checkpoint can be Offworld Market prices. If Offworld prices are high, Expansive companies are better because they can build (and repair) Offworld Markets cheaper.

I find that it works the best for me to evaluate resource distribution by checking the high Iron and Carbon pips first (by clicking on them) and then checking how close they are to the high or medium Water and Aluminum tiles. Silicon is the least important in these considerations, unless the colony primarily consumes Glass. High Iron or Carbon pips (adjacent to other similar pips) close to Aluminum, Water and Silicon are the most valuable but very rare.

After considering the black market and the colony too, you also have to consider what effect your found will have on the viability of other founding locations because your HQ found will prevent another HQ from founding within 4 tiles of any of the tiles that your HQ occupies. and additionally resource pips up to 4 tiles away from your HQ will be protected for 20, 40, 60 or 80 seconds depending on proximity to your founding location (meaning you're the only one that can claim them for that long). It is always disadvantageous to wait to found after the 1st founder has founded. It is also almost never viable to wait for resource pips to come out of the 20 to 80 second protection timer either. Because players should not wait, resource pips that come under a founders protection generally (especially at 40+ seconds) can be assumed never to fall under the 2nd founder's control until HQ2 (and possibly never if the 1st founder has the opportunity to upgrade first).

Finally you also have to consider that hills and cliffs block headquarters meaning that your founding location might on rare occasions be capable of blocking HQs from founding within up to 8 or so tiles of it.

Practically every found should be next to Iron (or Carbon for scav) unless that prevents you from claiming plenty of tiles next to your headquarters. The next best resources to be adjacent to are Aluminum and Water. Some consideration should also be given to clifftops, because clifftop tiles can be converted to produce quick and easy Power.

Considering how good the best possible 1st found can be and how bad it will make the 2nd found should finally determine how much debt the 1st founding location is worth taking on for. Many games between competent players are decided as soon as just one player has founded. It is absolutely paramount (this can not be overemphasized) that you identify a 1st and 2nd founding location. If you do not identify a 2nd founding location before your opponent founds it is extremely likely you'll waste a lot of time or make a mis found. On the other hand, you can also found way too early and your opponent will have a lot more Power in the random auctions and in how much debt they can spend on life support and upkeep.

Actually Founding

The found itself should always be with an appropriate headquarters: a Scavenger close to Carbon or any of the others close to Iron. In my experience an Expansive found should always start with 1 Metal Mine on a high Iron pip, another mine on a high Aluminum pip and a Steel Mill. A Scientific generally should start with 3 Steel Mills in a triangle (unless high Aluminum tiles are more than 2 tiles away from the HQ and likely to be taken by the 2nd founder) and adjacent to plenty of Water. As it happens Robotic generally should get a lot of Iron/Aluminum by founding on top of Iron and/or Aluminum and make 1 mine on a high metal pip and 2 Steel Mills off in another area adjacent to the headquarters but separated from the Metal Mine.

The 1st founder has the opportunity to use their spare cash (that which they don't need to upgrade) to spike the price of Aluminum or Steel to make it more expensive for their opponent to upgrade to HQ2. I usually wait until my opponent makes their 2nd found before buying into a resource that isn't adjacent to their headquarters because they will be forewarned of your market manipulation and may found Robotic on a patch of Aluminum and sell out of overpriced Aluminum before you can respond. Glass can be manipulated too but only after upgrading to HQ2.

The player generally should have thought up a plan on how to reach HQ3 (or above) ASAP with a 100% guarantee (ie. in spite of the black market effects that your opponent could affordably and conceivably throw at you and in spite of the tiles they could block). This planning is generally too difficult to complete before you found but the effort should still be made after identifying the 1st and 2nd founding locations. HQ3 is always the top priority before considerations are made about how to finally win the game because almost no 1v1s ever are concluded before then nor is it ever a bad choice to reach HQ3 before anything else.

Upon reaching HQ2 Scientific and Scavenger players usually have enough tiles left over (after getting 3 Steel Mills or 2 Quarries and 1-2 Aluminum mines) to grab other important tiles, starting with Water and/or Food for Scientific. Other factions generally should wait until HQ3 before grabbing more than 1 Water tile and beginning to build life support or Glass.

Every little disadvantage in a 1v1 compounds many times over because there aren't any intrinsic disadvantages to being in the lead. The only disadvantage that could be considered intrinsic to the leading player is debt, because the 1st player to found usually starts out in the lead but also takes on a significant amount of debt. The leading player is generally the one with more wealth or a higher HQ level. The things that put a leading player in the lead can and should be used to put the runner up even further behind.

c. 4 player FFA

Founding

Founding in a 4 player Free For All is similar to how it is in a 1v1, except that you have to identify 4 viable founding locations instead of 2. If you don't identify more than 3 good founding locations within 40 seconds, found early at all times.

Due consideration again should be given to resource distribution, the black market and the colony. The colony has less relative effect on market prices with more players, especially when compared to 1v1 so no big expectations should be made of the resource that happens to be consumed by the colony. In FFA, more consideration can also be given to Offworld prices because Offworld Markets are regularly very profitable depending on which resources have the high Offworld prices. If Food or Fuel are high priced Offworld, that makes Offworld better because Fuel and Food require less tiles to be produced than Oxygen. If Oxygen is high and Dry Ice is available, that is also almost equally good because Oxygen then does not need Water. Chemicals or other resources could also randomly be expensive but the 3 Water based resources are the more common suspects.

The black market's negative effects should be given a little less consideration because a Free For All environment does not encourage attacking your opponents as much and so fewer players actually do. Spending money on purely negative black market effects put you behind and the other person behind but not the remaining 3rd parties that weren't affected by that black market effect. This means that the black market should be used offensively less regularly compared than in a 1v1.

The most influential black market item in a FFA is the underground nuke (especially when some resources are rare) but combinations of other effects are also very important to notice before deciding which founds are and are not viable. The absence of holograms and presence of dynamite make Offworld Markets highly undesirable because they stick out like sore thumbs, making their owner an acquisition target and requiring a lot of Goon Squads to prevent from being constantly forced offline via the black market.

In my experience it is better to found slightly early (ie. with around 20k debt) to ensure that you have a good founding location. As it stands as soon as someone founds almost everyone will follow moments afterward and you'll get left out in the cold if you haven't prepared. If you identify 4 viable locations (in a 4p FFA) you can afford to wait so you get earlier access to the black market and an extra claim. Scavengers in particular can found late when the black market offers things like free claims, Mutinies, Pirates and Adrenaline Boosts because black market items are cheaper in 4 or more player matches and thus they don't suffer from expensive black market prices until later.

Actually Founding

The types of founds you can make are more varied in a 4p FFA because you'll be able to rely on other people producing your construction resources frequently. In my opinion it is much riskier to rely on other people producing your construction resources for you, but it can work when no conventional founds are available. The types of founds that you can make in a 1v1 can also be made in FFAs but in FFAs you can also make other founds like the following:

Robotic: 2 Solar Panels 1 Silicon Quarry, particularly Powerful with sparse Silicon. Alternatively, 2 Wind Turbines off somewhere and 1 Carbon Quarry can also be done. The Robotic HQ must be placed on top of some Silicon or Carbon in order to have the resources with which to make the 2 Solar Panels or Wind Turbines.

Expansive: 1 Geothermal and 2 Aluminum mines adjacent to the HQ. The 1 Geothermal could be Goon Squaded and boosted afterward when possible. When Mutinies are available the Geothermal MUST be Goon Squaded because everyone will be using Mutinies on your Geothermal Plants. The previous 2 founds can be properly made by selling off your starting resources and depending on your opponents for keeping your construction resources cheap so I don't recommend them if you can make a conventional found. Alternatively construction resource pricing can be mitigated by claiming 1 high Iron tile and making 2 Steel Mills at home on HQ2 until the day that Steel becomes cheap enough not to produce yourself.

Scavenger:

1 Geothermal and 1-2 Quarries and perhaps an Aluminum mine. Naturally it is best to have free claims on the black market when you decide to make this found. You depend on the income of the Geothermal so it also needs to be protected ASAP.

Post-found, the top priority should be upgrading ASAP to HQ3 or 4 and then evaluating where you're at compared to everyone else and identifying who is a good acquisition target.

General

Some players will happily overproduce certain primary resources and sell them for cheap, when you notice this you can take advantage by buying up small stockpiles of them and under producing primary resources yourself (although you should still catch up in the long term unless they're your subsidiary).

It is generally a mistake to purchase another player until after they've made an Offworld or 2, have obtained optimization upgrades and/or have solid primary resource production. If you do purchase another player, even by majority and even for only 50-80k of funds, you usually still only get very little benefit and you'll be down a big sum of funds and you'll need a lot more funds to buy the rest of your remaining stock with.

The players that have the most Offworlds the earliest are the best targets to purchase because they'll make the most profitable subsidiaries while suffering from a lack of cash with which to defend themselves at least until 2 or 3 minutes after their Offworld finish construction. Usually, it is possible to keep an Offworld offline long enough to buy out its owner (by having 1 effect pre-purchased and triggering its Goon Squad next and 30 seconds later using the pre-purchased effect).

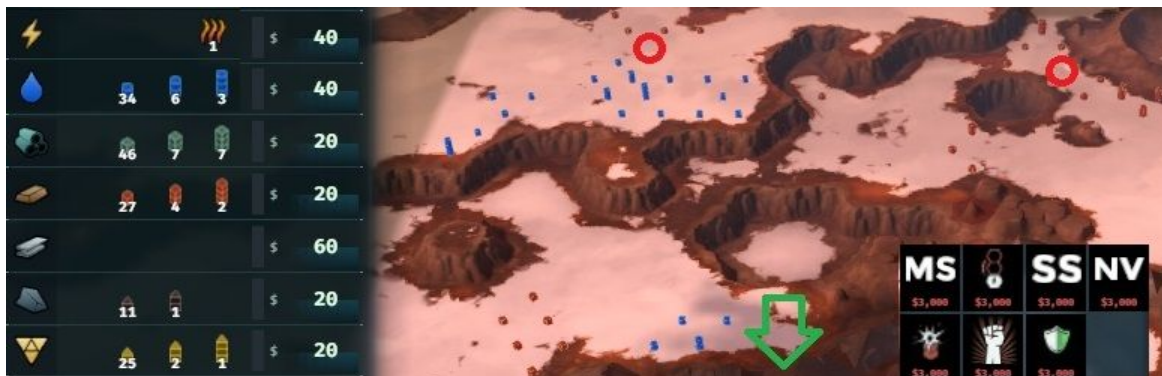
Once someone is bought out their Offworlds almost always are completely left alone and will generate tons of profit for their owner's owner.

If someone begins to buy into a lot of your stock you are almost always forced into a fight to the death with them, which can only be ended by the one or the other being bought out. People initiating an attack on you can not be easily controlled, why they do what they do is sometimes beyond comprehension. When someone buys multiple of your stock, you absolutely have to defend yourself because anyone who does so will eventually accumulate the wealth they need to complete their attack if you do not defend. This can lose you the game because someone who attacks you may not make a good subsidiary and thus can enable a 3rd party to get the 4th party who may or not turn out to be a better subsidiary.

Luck plays a significant part in Free For Alls, but I find that most FFA players still approach the game methodically and selfishly (ie. players generally only do things that benefit them, and not to spite others). This means that people don't usually use black market items against you unless they think that they benefit. For example, if you build 3 Farms after someone else already built 3 Farms, that person may use black market items against you because you started to directly compete with them in Food. You must consider whom you make your enemy when you decide to get into a resource.

5. Examples

What follows are some examples and what I think about how to deal with them in terms of founding. As always 1st and 2nd found must be identified within 40 seconds and you must be prepared to instantly found 2nd or late in the case your opponent(s) finds first because time is precious. Circles and arrows represent resources or founding locations. Iron = red, blue = Water, Alu = Green, etc



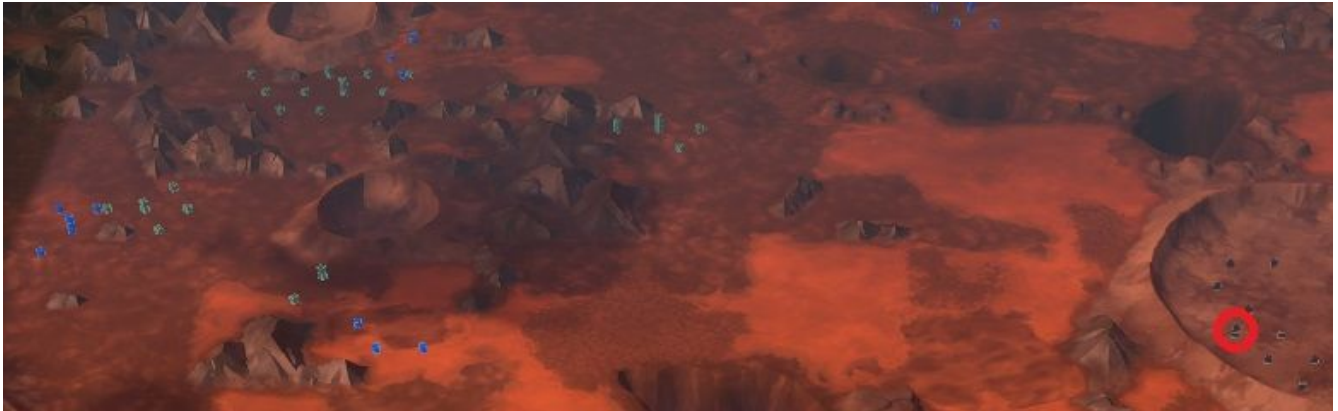
1v1 Map 1 Founding

Colony consumes: 0.8/s Power

The left hand circle is a good founding location for a Scientific player, especially because there are no Pirates on the black market. There is also only 1 Geothermal spot on the map. The right-hand patch of Iron pips is a good Expansive location, but due to the presence of nukes on the black market is not as valuable as the Scientific location on the left. The Scientific location doesn't suffer from the low quality of the Iron pips, is directly adjacent to the Water and Aluminum is close by in the direction of the green arrow. In this particular case the colony consumes 0.8 units of Power in addition to the usual amount of life support from habitats. The screenshot shows the northwest corner of the map, the Silicon is to the far southeast and it would require the teleportation patent to realistically use.

The Scientific spot I pointed out would be by far the most valuable but as always a 2nd founding location must be decided upon. In my opinion the Expansive spot is a good 2nd option. The high

Aluminum pip to the south is alone and the nearest other Aluminum tiles are much farther away and less feasible. Founding as Expansive second would be undesirable because you'd be competing for the Aluminum, which the 1st founder will have better access to and is thus much more likely to be able to claim before you.



Fortunately, there is another possible 2nd founding location to the south (see screenshot). Besides the two I already presented and this one, there are no other viable ones. This end of the map has a patch of Carbon with a medium Carbon tile and plenty of Water/Aluminum. It is also closer to the Silicon to the east. Because there are underground nukes on the map the value of the 1st Scientific found is increased. However, the colony's Power consumption and the 1 Geothermal tile makes this 2nd founding location foundable because the only 2 options with which to make Power besides Geothermals are Wind Turbines and Solar Panels, which require a lot of Carbon or Silicon one of which a Scavenger will definitely have. The colony's Power consumption also makes Scavenger better because Scavengers don't use much Power.

I estimate that the Scientific spot would be worth about 35k worth of debt to found first on because of the presence of nukes on the black market and the relatively suboptimal 2nd founding location. The more skilled I'd guess my opponent to be, the closer to 35k debt I'd found.



1v1 Map 2 Founding

Colony consumes: 0.8/s Electronics

The Iron and the Water is further apart in this example and too far apart to directly connect to a Scientific HQ regardless of how exactly it is located. Fortunately Pirates are absent so the Water tiles are still as good as adjacent to the headquarters. The 1st founder will still have to claim the 2

underlined Water tiles to prevent the 2nd founder from blocking off adjacency bonuses and to grab the only high Water tile on the map.

There are high Aluminum pips just outside the borders of the screenshot. If you look at the number of Water tiles that the map has you will realize that the patch of Water shown is just about the only Water on the entire map. As it stands there happens to be a lone Water pip to the north and two adjacent ones northeast. Additionally, the map only has some Dry Ice to the south and no Water ice so Water will be a major issue on this map.

Assuming that the 1st founder founds Scientific between the Water and Iron, he will certainly reach HQ2 before the Water tiles come out of protection and thus will be able to use 2 of its spare claims to secure the 2 underlined Water pips which in turn will put the 2nd founder in a situation with poor access to Water.

The colony consumes Electronics, is east of the shown area and patches of Iron with high pips are just south of it. An Expansive found close to that Iron is viable but not most desirable which leaves Robotic an option as none of the Carbon pips are adjacent to any others (meaning Scavenger is not really a viable option). In almost any event, the 2nd founder will be 2nd to HQ2. Because of the Water advantage the Scientific 1st found is highly valuable as it will have a very big advantage over the 2nd founder; the 1st found should be worth about \$30k of debt.



1v1 Map 3 Founding

Colony consumes: 0.8/s Electronics

This map has 2 founding locations that I consider the best. The obvious 1st founding location is the one with the hybrid tiles. The Water pips are all medium or worse which favors the Robotic found. Also, the hybrid tiles and the founding location will provide the resources for an instant upgrade, the black market is very soft and Geothermal Plants are good because there aren't any Mutinies on the black market. The 1st founder has the option to hold on to the Aluminum until the 2nd founders starts producing his own or alternatively sell it (and 10 Electronics) early in order to upgrade instantly. An Expansive headquarters in this location is viable too. The first 3 buildings should probably be a Metal Mine on the medium Iron pip, another mine on the hybrid tile toward the headquarters and a Steel Mill to connect everything to the HQ.



The 2nd founding location in the image here is a Scientific spot next to 3 Silicon tiles and plenty of Iron. I consider it viable because of the lack of Pirates and thus the viability of remote life support production. It would be a more ideal to start next to the Water if it also had Iron. Additionally, the nearest Aluminum tiles are of low quality.

If it were possible to start adjacent to the high Silicon tiles just a little bit north without losing adjacency to the Iron, that would have been better because it would provide much better access to cheap solar Power (because of the higher quality Silicon). As it is, the low Silicon tiles are better for Glass Kilns because they do not have to hold a stock of Oxygen in order to function because they will connect to the headquarters.

I estimate that the 1st founding spot is worth about \$25k of debt because the 2nd founding spot isn't terribly bad either and because the 1st found's hybrid tiles aren't awfully good.

1v1 Map 4 Founding



Colony consumes: 0.8/s Electronics.

This map gives a long laundry list of viable founding locations. The east (circled) location shows what I believe to be the best founding location but the one to the far southwest (circled) is a decent contender.

The southwestern location could be founded with a Scientific headquarters, adjacent to the Iron and Silicon, but it will also have to claim an empty tile (probably best filled by an Optimization Center) if Pirates are to be prevented from abusing life support production. It's major problem is that it is far away from Aluminum. The contender location east of the colony is adjacent to Aluminum, Iron and Water, which is much better than being adjacent to Silicon, Iron but not Water.

Additionally, the black market contains 5 items that are directly beneficial to their user, and there are 2 adjacent medium Carbon tiles to the far north (circled) which means a Scavenger found between that Carbon and the Water+Aluminum is totally acceptable too and possibly highly recommended. An argument could also be made for an Expansive found somewhere just west of the colony because of the presence of high Iron pips, especially if the other player finds non-Scavenger.

Because the east Scientific founding location starts next to Aluminum I think it makes a 1st found worth about 15k of debt. The 2nd found is best made by crushing the Aluminum north of the colony with Expansive and claiming a high Iron tile just west of there and 2 Steel Mills next to the headquarters.

The other 2 2nd founds I already described are viable too but they are vulnerable to Aluminum price manipulation by the 1st founder. However, if your opponent doesn't raise the price of Aluminum the other 2 founds are fine too as long as you manage to make 1 starting Aluminum mine and manage to buy your 60 extra Aluminum while the price is right.

4p FFA Map 1 Founding



Colony consumes: 1.2/s Electronics.

The green arrow shows a big patch of Aluminum to the west. The red circles show founding locations. There are two high Iron pips fairly close to each other and it is possible to prevent the other players from founding right next to them but it is not quite possible to block them off completely. Also, there are nukes on the black market which is particularly bad because all the Water on the map is far away from high Iron and high Carbon pips.

At first glance, this map looks reasonably Scavenger friendly because of the high/medium Carbon pips but this must be reconsidered upon realizing that the Water is very far away and very sparse (there are only 2 medium and 2 high Water tiles). Because of the fact that distance automatically means that the Water being harvested will be used to make the Fuel to ship the Water, the Water situation really is quite terrible. These are strong arguments for founding Robotic.

On the other hand, making a fancy Power play is also seemingly bad because the high Carbon pips certainly will encourage 1 or 2 players to found Scavenger (especially because the Iron situation doesn't support more than 2 Iron-companies) which means that Steel will cost a LOT because you need at least 2 Steel sellers to make a Power play really viable. Thirdly, only 3 Geothermal Plants are available.

There is a good Scavenger found to the northeast, having 1 high and 1 medium Carbon pips adjacent to each other, nearby Aluminum and just north of it a high Water pip and an adjacent low Water pip. I think that that is by far the best founding location and worth about 20-25k to found first on. Founding 2nd, 3rd or 4th next to one of the Iron pips as Robotic is probably the only other viable option. Because it can turn out that all of the remaining options will be blocked, I really recommend founding early.

Alternatively, a Scientific late found could be made next to the Water patch to the far northwest and 3 Farms made right off the bat but again this highly depends on there being 2 Steel producing companies

in the match. It is possible to crush 4 Water tiles with the Scientific headquarters and claim the hi and medium Water tiles that remain and basically monopolize Water by obtaining the slant drilling patent and using underground nukes on Water tiles that aren't your own.

4p FFA Map 2 Founding



Colony consumes: 1.2/s Glass

This map has plenty of Water and plenty of Aluminum but a shortage of Iron and Carbon. The 2 red circles show where basically all the map's Iron is. Additionally there is a high Carbon tile to the northeast (brown arrow) and a couple pairs of low Carbon tiles in 3 other areas (see the 2 brown arrows in the west and the brown circle). All of the map's Silicon is to the south and is all low quality. This is a significant issue because the colony consumes Glass which requires Silicon. Finally, Geothermal locations are plentiful so Power should not become a major issue.

The black market has free claims but not much else to really support a Scavenger black market rush. Iron companies can start on or near the two Iron patches, and the other 2 players will probably have to make do with Carbon or forego making their own Steel. This makes early founding an advantageous strategy again because there are less than 3 good founding locations. The patches of Carbon make decent late Scavenger finds but if 2 Steel producers found before you, founding a late Power robot is fine too (2 Solar Panel, 1 Elemental Quarry) on the Silicon to the south.

The lack of Pirates on the black market makes Scientific very viable on this map. If a Scientific player can obtain teleportation they will also be able to generate a lot of profit from Glass.

4p FFA Map 3 Founding



Colony consumes: 1.2/s Electronics.

The map has plenty of Iron and Aluminum and one patch of high/medium Carbon to provide the building blocks for the usual founding options. Unfortunately all of the Water patches don't have any high quality Water pips and they're very small. High Water pips exist but are on their own. To conclude, the Water situation is fairly unimpressive. Slant drilling is a very valuable patent on this map because there is no other (practical) way to squeeze enough Water out of this rock dry map. There is Silicon in the northeast and southwest corners of the map although not a huge amount of that either. Other than the circled Carbon, the remaining Carbon tiles are alone.

Naturally, a Scavenger found in between the Aluminum and Carbon is an option, as well as Robotic or Expansive founds almost anywhere in between the Water and construction resources. There also happens to be a low Iron/alu hybrid tile to the west that is adjacent to a high Iron tile, which would be an excellent founding location for an Expansive or Robotic found. Robotic is naturally more favored on this map because the Water situation is fairly terrible and because they can use their trait to boost the production of high quality but lonely Water Pumps by deploying Wind Turbines or Solar Panels adjacent to lonely Water Pumps.

The black market is fairly timid this match as it doesn't provide a lot of direct attacks to throw at one's competition. The lack of Pirates favor a Scientific found but the map itself does not. There is not one found that is overwhelmingly better than the other but care must still be taken so that you don't get locked out of Water (which would happen if everyone else claims the rest of the good Water) before you reach HQ level 3. As such I think that it is better to voluntarily found late in order to get an extra free claim and be able to buy a cheap 2nd from the black market.

4p FFA Map 4 Founding



Colony consumes: 1.2/s Glass consumption.

There is plenty of Iron to go around on this map. There is a lackluster amount of Carbon too, which would typically mean that Scavenger is a bad choice, but the black market is looking very well stocked with plenty of offensive effects, two of which can feed a Scavenger's early game efforts directly. The Water situation is slightly unique because all of the map's quality Iron is southwest whereas all the maps Water is all northeast. The Water is laid out in 3 reasonable patches each with at least 1 medium Water pip and one which has 1 medium and 1 high Water pip. There is 1 high Aluminum pip in a big patch near the Iron but 2 others near the Water to the northwest. There are 9 Geothermal spots on the map.

The colony consumes Glass and the Silicon situation is fairly dire. There is a pair of low Silicon tiles in midst of all the Iron and 2 Silicon couples north and also east of the colony (in the top right corner of the image). This means that Glass is nearly guaranteed to become very expensive (and thus profitable) even though the Silicon pairs are of low quality.

It is fairly safe to assume that 3 Iron companies will found in the southwest corner because that is a fairly safe thing to do, as Expansive or Robotic. The distance to the Water is a fairly big problem. Scientific isn't very good on this map because there are Pirates on the black market and the Water isn't adjacent to any potential founding location. Expansive and Robotic have the best time coping with distances and so are better on this distance heavy map. It should be quite safe to expect that the other 3 players will choose 2 or 3 Iron companies to found on this map, each of them producing their own Steel. If you see 2-3 Steel producers found, it is very safe to play the Power Expansive in the north east by founding Expansive, building 1 Geothermal Plant + 2 Aluminum mines or 1 Aluminum mine and 1 Water Pump (a Water Pump on HQ1 is reasonable this time because there is only 1 high Water tile on this particular map). As usual, the Geothermal should be protected as soon as possible. By HQ2, at least 2 Farms should be built.

The Expansive northeast Power play would be my favorite tactic because I think that that it is an unexpected way to play in addition to actually being good in this specific environment.

The patch of Iron the most northeast is almost adjacent to the colony and is actually fairly close to the map's Water. Because that location is so close to the Water, it should be the 1st founding location of whoever it is that founds first. The 2nd and 3rd founding locations should be closely behind it towards the southeast.

The 1st found should be worth about 10k of founding debt because no specific founding location is overwhelmingly better than any other. There is still the Scavenger founding location that could be utilized effectively by someone who knows how to use the black market, but it remains sketchy because the Carbon is of low/medium quality.

6. Final Words

*In general, to become good at this game I think you need to play 50% and study 50%. Before clicking the "play" button remind yourself what your founding priorities are and what you need to know in order to make the best plan correctly. Also remind yourself that both you and your opponents will face the same initial circumstances, good or bad, as you do so do not despair if the game throws something at you that doesn't look pretty.

I wish you good times with the game.