

# Zapitalism Hints & Strategies Guide

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Welcome to the Zapitalism Hints & Strategies Guide.

Zapitalism appears simple at first, but there are a number of subtle strategies you can use to get the upper hand on your opponents.

After reading this, you should have no problem making zillions of zables and hopefully becoming an expert Zapitalist.

**NOTE:** This is 50% of the **Hints & Strategies Guide**. If you want the complete **Hints & Strategies Guide**, it is available from LavaMind's Online Store at [www.lavamind.com](http://www.lavamind.com)

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## **Pricing Your Products:**

What products should you buy? When you start, it is difficult to tell what products are worth buying. This is because you don't yet know much about the products. Every game is different. Each time you begin a new game the underlying perceived value and quality of each product is randomly generated. Figuring out the true worth of each product is like solving a puzzle.

To start with, the best strategy is to buy a variety of products and sell them at the default price. If a product sells easily, you can raise the price, and if it doesn't sell, you should lower the price.

In the Tutorial, Novice and Beginner levels you can spy on the other players' stores and see their pricing. A good technique is to find out the highest possible price at which the product will sell and make a note of this. This serves as a good reference point. You now know the maximum amount you can charge for the product under ideal conditions.

Once you have a feel for the products, you should begin thinking of the competition. If you are the first one to the Royal Wholesaler, look at the supply/demand chart. If you find a good product, and nobody else has that product in their store already, then it is a

good idea to buy up the entire supply. This will give you a virtual monopoly on this product and allow you to charge a good price. How high you price the product depends on how many tons you have and the current demand for the product.

Keep in mind that it's not always a good idea to buy up the entire supply of a product. If the demand for that product is low or if the perceived value of the product is low, you may not be able to sell the product for a good price even if there is no competition. It's only a good idea to buy up the entire supply if you're sure you can sell the units at a good price.

If you aren't the only one with the product, you have to gauge how much your competitors will be charging for the same item. If they undercut your price, you may not sell many units.

As a general rule, it's a good idea to sell 70% or more of the products on your store shelves every turn. The goal of pricing your products is to move merchandise. If a product doesn't sell, then it's simply taking up valuable shelf space without producing any revenue.

## **Buying Products:**

Once you know the value of a product, when you go to the Royal Wholesaler, look at the ESTIMATED NET PROFIT PER UNIT. Pick the product with the highest value. If you have the pricing set correctly, this product should make the most money per unit sold.

Now how much should you buy? Look at the SUPPLY VS. DEMAND chart. If the demand is low and the supply is high, you shouldn't buy too many units. It's still a good idea to buy a few units. You can usually sell a few units of each product if your price isn't too high.

If the demand is high, then you might consider buying as many units as you can fit on your store shelves.

There are really two basic strategies. One is to spread out your risk and buy many different types of products. For beginning players, this works well. It means you won't make much money on any one product, but you also won't get stuck with something that's difficult to unload.

When you don't know much about the products, especially at the start of a new game, it is always good to spread out your risk and buy many different products. However, once you begin to get a feel for which products sell at what prices, you can gradually start being more selective.

That leads us to our second strategy. If you see an opportunity to buy out a product you know commands a high price on the market, you should do this. You can often make much more buying up a choice product and jacking up the price than buying many mediocre products. But this method only works when you know what products are truly worth buying.

## **Bidding for Building Permits:**

If you're playing against human players, then you're on your own. There are no set rules to follow. However, there are a number of tricks you can use to outsmart the computer opponents.

As a rule of thumb, the more money the computer opponents have, the more they will bid. If the computer opponents are in debt, they will typically bid under 60,000 zables. However, as they emerge from debt, their bidding increases.

It is good to always have an extra building permit on hand. Ideally, your company should be continuously building larger stores. You will notice that if you get behind in store size, it's very difficult to catch up later in the game.

***Hint:** On the higher levels, your first bid should start around 65,000 zables because the computer opponents are likely to be in debt. If you can't afford this much, don't go too far into debt. It's not wise to exceed your 200,000 zable credit limit with Burch.*

*Your second bid should be at least 25% higher. A general rule of thumb is to keep increasing your bids by roughly 25% whenever a human player wins the bid. The computer players adjust their artificial intelligence according to whatever the last series of bids were. So if a human player breaks a new high and wins a bid, the computer players take note and increase their bidding amounts.*

*If a human player bids 500,000 zables or more for a permit, the computer players switch their mode. They tend to bid between 500,000 and one million zables depending on how much they need the permit.*

## **Taking out a Loan from Burch:**

It is never a good idea to exceed your credit limit. If you exceed your credit limit, Burch will usually raise your interest rates. This makes it all the more difficult to pay off your loan and get out of the red.

A good strategy is to borrow money at the beginning of the game to buy products and build larger stores. Just make sure you don't get too carried away and exceed your credit limit.

It's not a bad thing to borrow money. In fact, if you're going to win the game, you have to get a running start, and the only way to do that on the higher levels is to borrow enough to cover your initial expenses.

## **Exploring the Archipelago:**

At the beginning of the game, the best places to visit are the Hermit Pit and the Mystic Figs.

If the grumpy old Hermit gives you a blessing, this can put you on a good luck streak. Having good fortune is important because it affects what special events come up at the end of each game turn. Once you have a blessing, you don't need to bother visiting the Hermit Pit again until you run into a streak of bad luck.

Traveling to the Mystic Figs is also vital. You need to make sure your employees are happy, and the best way to do this is by feeding them these magical figs. Whenever your employee morale falls below 60%, it's a good idea to head for the island of the Mystic Figs. As you will quickly learn, a strike can be devastating to your business. Another benefit of the Mystic Figs is that this delicious treat can help persuade your employees to lower their wages by up to 25%. But watch out, the figs sometimes backfire, and you can run into trouble.

Another good place to visit is The Lost City of Mermadan. Mermadan has a wealth of ancient relics, which you can display in your store to attract customers. In fact, displaying these relics in your store is equivalent to doubling or even tripling your advertising budget.

Outer Reboundrum ranks as one of the best places to visit throughout the entire game. It is an ideal place to find treasures. Some of these treasures are worth a great deal of money while others are more magical in nature. Later in the game, you'll discover that building a large store takes months. You can cut this time down to one week by simply obtaining a Wand of Haste or Ball of Building from Outer Reboundrum. This is one of the best ways to keep your store expanding at a rapid pace.

Another place to visit is the Grand Zubar. The Grand Zubar will often help you with Building Permits or Import Rights by offering to double your bid. The Grand Zubar can also get you a meeting with the Queen, which may mean a boost in your reputation, lower insurance premiums, or if you're very lucky, a free Building Permit.

The Mud Dogglers is the place to visit if your reputation is low. By helping these poor creatures, you can quickly boost your company's reputation, and you may even receive some valuable gifts.

Don't bother visiting Yapinalia until you have a good idea of what the various products are worth. Once you know the true value of each product, Yapinalia is a great spot for picking up products at bargain prices.

You should wait until later in the game, after the Import Rights have been introduced, before you visit the Hive and the Magma Zone. If you visit the Hive you can often persuade the Hive Master to change the demand or perceived value of a product by sending out a wave of potent pollen. This will basically make a product either more or less profitable for everyone. If another player owns the import rights to this product, you will want to lower the demand and perceived value of the product. If you own the import rights, then it's a good idea to raise the demand and perceived value of the product.

If you visit the Magma Zone, you can often convince the factory owners to either raise or lower the quality of a given product. Again, if you own the import rights, you'll want to raise the quality, and if someone else owns the import rights, you'll want to lower the quality.

When you have a lot of money saved up, it is time to consider going to the Zable Exchange. However, before you travel there, check the local branch office and see if the market is on an upward trend. If the market is moving up, it's a good time to invest. If the market is moving down, it's a good time to sell. This is because the market works according to trend lines. If there is a bear market, and the stock price is dropping each turn, chances are that the market will continue to fall until the trend is broken. The same holds true for a bull market.

Last but not least, there is Mount Bulbus. All you do on Mount Bulbus is gamble. If you love gambling, this is the place to go.

***Hint:** The odds on Mount Bulbus are stacked slightly in your favor. That means, over the course of the game, you should win more than you lose.*

A good strategy is to almost never travel to a place that takes two or more weeks. Even if it costs more, it's usually better to travel to a one week destination. The only exceptions to this are if you absolutely have to get somewhere, such as The Zable Exchange to sell off your stocks. In this case, even if the travel time is 2 weeks, it's worth going. However, if the travel time is 3 weeks, it's debatable. You might want to wait.

Another factor is the cost. It's generally not worth paying too much to travel. The location you travel to should be dictated primarily by the travel time and the cost. Then if all is equal, you can choose based upon whichever you feel is most attractive for your business at the time.

## **The Stock Market:**

When buying and selling stock, it's good to look for bull and bear markets. In Zapitalism, a bull market is defined as when the stock market keeps going up for 4 or more consecutive turns. Every time the market goes up the chance that it will continue rising increases.

The same is true for a bear market. Once the stock market starts declining, the chance that it will go down further increases.

***Hint:** At the beginning of the game the market starts off at 50%. That means there is a 50% chance the market will go up or down. If the market rises, the chance of the market going up the next turn increases to 55%. If it goes up again, it increases to 60%. This holds true all the way up to 85%. That means, after 7 consecutive turns of market increases, there is an 85% chance the market will continue to rise. This trend will continue until the market takes a dip. When the market dips, the trend lines immediately jump back to 50%. The trend is broken and the market can go either way, up or down.*

*The same is true for a bear market. If you watch the market carefully, you can time your investments to maximize your chances of making money.*

It's good to wait until you have enough money to make investing in stocks worthwhile. Generally, at the beginning of the game, it's not worth investing in stocks. Only after you have a few million in cash is it worth putting some of it in the stock market.

One reason for waiting is that you'll need your cash to buy products and expand the size of your store. If you put money into the market, you may miss out on some opportunities to expand your business, and this can be devastating at the beginning of the game. Once you get behind, it's tough to catch up.

## **Bonds:**

In Zapitalism, bonds are a great investment. You can earn good money with minimal risk. Unlike stocks, bonds never drop in value. The only risk you have is that your money is tied up in the bond, and you cannot cash it in until the bond expires.

Don't buy bonds at the beginning of the game. It's good to wait until you have at least several hundred thousand zables in cash before buying a bond. It's never a good idea to take out a loan to buy a bond. This will most likely defeat any benefit you'll gain from the bond. It will also leave you cash poor. Without cash you can't expand the size of your store or buy products. For this reason, make sure you have at least 200,000 zables in cash after you pay for the bond. If you don't have this minimum amount, don't buy the bond no matter how good it appears.

## **Insurance:**

As a general rule it's a good idea to buy insurance if it's a low enough price. If you're lazy and you don't want to check the price every turn, you can set the Auto-Buy Insurance button. Typically, a good place to set this to is Middle. This will ensure that you buy the insurance when it's cheap enough.

Another good time to buy insurance is when you have very valuable products in your store. The more valuable the products, the more it's worth paying for insurance. After all, if you're unlucky and your products are stolen, you stand to lose a great deal of money.

As you will quickly discover, luck runs in streaks. You can be on a good luck streak or a bad luck streak. If you are on a good luck streak, every time you have a good event, the chance of having more good luck increases. This goes on until the streak is broken by bad luck.

If you are on a bad luck streak, it's generally a good idea to purchase insurance. This will protect your company from lawsuits, theft, floods, fires, etc...

***Hint:** Speaking of fires and floods, if a news event warns you that a hurricane is going to hit the island or that Mount Kukubu is about to erupt, it's well worth your while to consider buying insurance. This is doubly true if you're already on a bad luck streak. That means it's almost certain you are going to get clobbered, and the only way to protect yourself is with Quagmire Insurance.*

## **Import Rights:**

Buying up the Import Rights is a great long term investment. It typically takes at least 50 turns for Import Rights to pay off, but when they do, they can pay off big. Later in the game you will also have the opportunity to change the perceived value, demand, and quality of the various products. This means you can increase the value of your Import Rights by simply visiting the Magma Zone or the Hive.

How much should you pay for the Import Rights? That's a tough question. The best answer is to keep notes on the product. If it seems like everyone is buying the product, it's a good bet you'll make money. If no one is interested in buying the product, then you should bid rather low.

As a reference point, we put in the LOWER, MIDDLE and UPPER buttons. If you consider a product to be valuable, bidding well above UPPER is not a bad idea. However, if you consider a product to be marginal at best, you may want to bid around MIDDLE.

You will notice that if the computer opponents have enough money, they tend to bid well over a million zables for products they feel are valuable. If you think a product is really good, don't hesitate to bid a million zables for it if you have the excess cash. But don't get carried away, especially at the beginning of the game. It's never a good idea to go into debt just to buy the Import Rights to a valuable product.

As a general rule, good products make a lot of money, while marginal and poor products have a hard time earning even 10,000 zables.

***Hint:** The computer opponents will never spend more than 50% of their cash on Import Rights. They will also never spend more than 3 million zables for any Import Rights. The only exception to this rule is when you are playing the Master Level, where the computer players will bid up to 6 million zables for the Import Rights.*

## **Exploring Zapinalia:**

You will notice that the majority of hot spots on the Zapinalia map are informational in nature. Their only purpose is to give you a sense of the world and the characters which inhabit it. These hot spots will not affect your business in any way.

The hot spots, which make a difference in your game, are the following:

- The Catacombs
- The Smuggler's Hole
- The Druid's Den
- Pirates Peak
- The Furnace
- The Zubar Mines
- The Wuzzie Tunnels
- The Hungry Forest

The Catacombs are a good place to boost your company's reputation and find valuable alien relics.

The Smuggler's Hole is where you go if you want to deal in stolen goods.

***Hint:** Plain and simple, it's not a good idea to visit the Smuggler's Hole. The bad events outweigh the good events by 3 to 2. On average, you'll end up worse off by hanging around with thieves and gangsters.*

The Druid's Den is a nice place to get blessed and increase your luck.

Pirates Peak is full of buried pirate treasure.

The Furnace is where you go to gamble.



***Hint:** If you choose to gamble at the Furnace, you should be aware that your odds of winning are 50%. This is as fair as it gets.*

The Zubar Mines still contain plenty of gold and gems.

The Wuzzie Tunnels are filled with strange items, some of which are valuable.

If your employee morale is low, you should head for the Hungry Forest. There is a chance you will find some Mystic Figs and other exotic items.

## **Store Image, Maintenance and Public Service:**

Having a good reputation is vital to winning the game. Hardly anyone will come to your store to buy your products if you have a terrible reputation.

Your reputation is affected by a number of things, primarily your Store Image, Maintenance and Public Service.

It's a good idea to keep your reputation as close to 100% as possible without wasting a lot of money. This will not only bring you more customers, but it will help you to impress the Royal Wholesaler and gain access to all the best products before your competitors.

The fastest way to do this is to set your Store Image to FANCY, your Maintenance to TIP TOP SHAPE, and your Public Service to GREAT PHILANTHROPIST.

Once you've achieved a reputation of 100%, you have a choice. If you want to save money, it's a good idea to set your Store Image to FANCY, your Maintenance to TIP TOP SHAPE, and your Public Service to NOTHING AT ALL.

If it's later in the game, and money is not your primary concern, it is a good idea to set your Store Image to FANCY, your Maintenance to TIP TOP SHAPE, and your Public Service to GREAT PHILANTHROPIST. This may waste some money, but it will help insure that you are one of the first ones to visit the Royal Wholesaler. Remember, you can make far more money by being the first one to buy up all the best products on the market than you will save by cutting down on these expenses.

***Hint:** If you want to know a subtle way to get ahead, always have your Store Image, Maintenance and Public Service either set to the maximum or the minimum values. If you're playing a competitive game and you don't have these set to their maximum values, you'll probably be the last one to the Royal Wholesaler no matter what. As a general rule keep in mind ALL or NOTHING. If you want to get recognized by the Royal Wholesaler, you need ALL. If not, save some money and set it to nothing. That's the best way to get ahead.*

*Keep in mind that if your MAINTENANCE is set to less than SATISFACTORY, you stand a chance of suffering from various maintenance problems, such as a leaky roof, water pipes breaking, shelves collapsing and other troubles.*

*Another situation you may face is that if your PUBLIC SERVICE falls below BARELY ENOUGH, there is a chance someone may publicly criticize your company for not giving much back to the community. As a result, your store's reputation could drop considerably.*

*An advantage of having your PUBLIC SERVICE set to GREAT PHILANTHROPIST is that you are then eligible to receive the prestigious Unglar Tuflin Good Citizenship Award. If you are fortunate enough to receive this honor, it will further boost your company's reputation.*

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