

Dead Man's Hand— game design document

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Target Audience:	casual to experienced players who want addicting game to pass time
Gamer Type:	number junkie
Target Platform:	PC, Consoles, Mobile
Genre:	Wave-Based Auto-Attacking Survival with Card Powerups
Number of Players:	1-4 (co-op)

High concept statement

In "Dead Man's Hand," you embody a Western gambler who finds themselves entangled in a high-stakes poker game with the Devil. As you start to gain the upper hand, the Devil abruptly halts the game and unleashes an endless horde of demons and undead. Fortunately, you manage to steal his deck of enchanted cards. Now, you and up to three fellow gamblers must confront the Devil's army and outplay him in his own game. The name of the game: "Dead Man's Hand."

Core Mechanics: Fight enemies -> Collect cards -> Level Up -> Lose / Win loop -> Collect new cards / Gain permanent upgrades

Feature Set:

- **Fight enemies** with automatic attacks (Vampire Survivors inspired). You can (and should) use your enchanted playing cards to gain short term power-ups, summon AI allies or apply effects (e.g. poison) to enemies.
- **Collect cards** throughout the game loop. Before each loop you must choose cards for your deck. These cards will then become rewards for killing minibosses. Different characters can hold varying number of cards (and different cards).
- **All characters** will have Health, Attack Speed, Damage and Speed. Once they'll have enough EXP to level up, they can add one point to one of those categories.
- **You can win** by progressing through the loop (== Surviving waves of enemies, kill mini bosses that spawn once in a while, kill a few bosses) you'll get to the final boss. If you beat him you'll win this loop. If you die in a loop you'll lose and can try again.
- **Metaprogression** happens by leveling up your character after the end of a loop. Once you'll reach new meta level you will unlock new cards that you can use. And you can choose permanent upgrade for your character. Every character has its own unique meta progression.

Player experience goals:

- **Addicted to numbers** => progress through the loop introduces tougher enemies => you will need to do more damage => higher numbers on screen (can get absurd, easily above 1M DMG)
- **Just one more** => The game does not want much attention to be played. The player can easily make the decision to play another game and get further

Team Roles

- **Coder** (everything)

- **Artist** (concept, environment, characters, enemies, effects, cards, UI) using 2.5D, cartoony style
- **Tester** (endless playtesting, one loop can be quite long, hard to find bugs and edge cases)
- **Designer** (damage scaling, level scaling, meta progression, power up scaling, difficulty scaling)

The Competition

Inspiration is a *Vampire Survivors* for its gameplay and *Bounty of One* for its aesthetics. Cards are borrowed from games like *Slay of Spire*, *Monster Train*, and *Gwent*. Using cards as a one-time power up is direct inspiration from *Neon White*. These could be the competitors of the game namely the *Bounty of One*, because it also implements co-op. However I have not heard of *Vampire Survivors* like game with cards.

Compelling aspects

„Dead Man’s Hand“ tries to merge casual/idle aspects of *Vampire Survivors* with strategies from card games and meta progression. Its unique gambling-themed aesthetic could also be considered a compelling aspect.