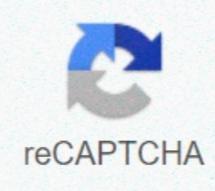




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Rush hour game cards pdf

If it is empty, the executive suite at Rush Communications, the conglomerate owned by Russell Simmons, could be the eco. Look around, and you'll see hardwood floors covered by inense oriental carpets, a set of in-depth red, leather sofas and chairs, mahogany tables, and inunverse 43rd floor views in downtown Manhattan that spans both rivers. You expect noise other than the flushed tone of a whished secretat that the appointment has arrived. But that's not the style of this CEO. At Russell Simmons's office, Lord Nez, an intern, broke into a spontaneous rap while helping Simmons pick a pink Phat Farm suit for tonight's MTV Video Music Awards. The doors are wide open, a good thing because it's often blocked by flows of designers, friends, and employees cheating in and out without prior notice, asking Simmons to sign this up or approve it. Phone either rings or Simmons uses it, all the while the thumb messages on a two-way Motorola like a crazy one, talk a blue streak to a reporter, and pour mysterious ochre-coloured powder into a bottle of Evian (that's lunch). Forget about power relations: Simmons made his execute statement with floppy Phat Farm jeans, spotless white shoes, a neon-green Polo shirt, and a pink Barbie Band-Aid behind his ears. Brimming! Simmons calls the Reverend Run, a third of the famous rap group Run-DMC (small brother aka Simmons himself Joey) to talk about the sneaker company they have together. Brimming! It's Dr. Benjamin Chavis, the former head of the NAACP and now president and CEO of Rush's Hip-Hop Summit Action Network, who wants to make preparations for a corporate meeting. Brimming! Kimora Lee Simmons, a former Chanel model, wife of four-year-old Simmons and female costume designer Rush's Baby Phat, was on the phone, worried that she didn't feel like going to the MTV awards. It's okay, honey, he teases. I'm just going to take [the sexy female rap star] Fox Brown. (Kimora didn't make it, but Simmons appeared with her brother instead.) This attention-deficit-as-management style is an amazing thing to hold: It is also business as usual for Simmons, arguably the most creative, successful, and respected African-American entrepreneur at the moment. He has built a career-and-fight against various business-on-premises simple that the music and culture of urban youth today have extensive commercial appeals across the United States and around the world. As hip-hop has blown up in Iowa, Connecticut, and Paris, so overly have the wealth, power, and influence of Simmons. I consider him one of the great entrepreneurs out there today, says his friend Donald Trump. He's a great guy with an incredible understanding of the business. Yet spending the hour with Simmons, and it became clear that he was no longer all about benjamins. His favorite line-up, says Craig Marshall, COO of Rush, Is What else? and which now seems intent on using its power to achieve social and political instead of overturning certain strict New York State drug laws to encourage voter registration. I would like to contribute more to the earth than I took from it, says Simmons. Simmons's success comes as much as what he is unlike what he is. He wasn't a guy who made it big and then left his roots but instead someone was still comfortable on the streets of the inner city because he had become on Wall Street. He was on holiday in St. Bart with the establishment's gatekeepers, almost all of whom called him a friend, while holding political opinions and promoting a cultural message that many of the same people might find offspring. He is radicalised and approachable at the same time. He, in a word, is authentic. Today, Russell Simmons's empire, dubbed Rush after Simmons' most apropos nickname, expects clothing (Phat Fashions, featuring Phat Farm, Baby Phat, and Phat Farm Kids online, expected to bring an estimated \$615 million in retail sales this year) and music (she is chairman of the Island records/Def Hours, even if she sells her interest in the company. There is a new branch of financial services, an entertainment unit that includes the Def Comedy Jam series and Def Poetry Jam's acclaimed live shows and television programs, monthly magazines, and energy soda, DefCon3. The rush also houses the nonprofit Hip-Hop Summit Action Network, a series of nationwide youth conferences aimed at increasing voter registration and political awareness, and the Rush Philanthropic Art Foundation. That would be a lot for any commonly operated planet, but Russell Simmons is abnormal. He is 46 appearing at 12, with the manic energy of a teenager and a goofy, almost a cartoon grin of someone who can't believe how great life is. Simple, words of equality, and funny, Simmons regularly speaks across the country to everyone from small-town entrepreneurs to Harvard MBAs, posing at every social event, taking intensive yoga classes every day, and somehow turning it home every night to his palatial 35,000 square feet spread across the Saddle River, New Jersey, to see his two daughters, Ming Lee, 3 He has a Platinum Rolodex of friends and acquaintances who scope mind boggles. How did he keep it together? Everyone around me is smarter than I am, he says. I don't track the, and he doesn't have to worry about anything, yes it is. Simmons probably doesn't know what happens on any particular day—I have 1 hour? What is it? He's yells on his best friend, speaker-but he's, in fact, very involved in most aspects of his company, whether it's adding a button to a suit, tinkering with a sports drink color, or a commercial can of sneakers already shot. Simmons' management style is a combination the business he studied selling fake coke on the streets of Queens; mellow nonjudgmentalism, which he credits to the practice of yoga, and exotic and optimistic curiosity that does not benefit the birth of could happily have a political dialogue with New York governor George Pataki or former Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres, and just as happy hanging out with his friend Spuddy from Hollis, the Queens neighborhood where he grew up. While Simmons moved easily from the Hamptons polo match to clubs frequented by 50 Cent, the rapper who had been shot nine times, he hadn't changed much. He still steamed receiving tape from the enthusiastic wannabe rappers he runs down the streets. He wore Timex, although he owned part of the Swiss company, Grindoli, whose watch face was stabbed in diamonds. What you see is what you get, says Donny Deutsch, chairman and CEO of Deutsch Inc., an advertising agency that has worked with Simmons. He didn't pretend to be what he didn't. Simmons is a man of contradictions. A real yoga fanatic who goes every evening to class, no matter where he is, as well as a vegan, he has no problem buying his wife Bentley or building a house that some call the temple for easy-to-understand use (it has a meditation room). Being a renunciation [a term for someone who provides material benefit for spiritual reasons] is bullshit, he said. Yes, we have this incredible house, we got a flower guy, a fish guy, Basquats, Warhols, a bunch of crap here. But to disarm yourself from world games is different than not attached to them. Simmons supported PETA-led protests against the treatment of chickens at KFC, yet at the same time letting the actual farcical sneak into his men's clothing line. He is bullish to Minister Louis Farrakhan and actively defends the idea of reparations to African-Americans for slavery, yet just as happy to break bread with Ronald Perelman or Donald Trump. (He nigga me, he says with The Love of Donald. Answering Trump, after a pause: I think that's a great compliment, and I think I'll thank him for that.) He gets with almost everyone, and that has made him a political and economic force to be reckless with. One thing Simmons isn't the man details by the book. He surrounds himself with people he believes in handling the daily aspects of his business. He is a kind of marketing pooh-bah, master brander and hype creator who harnesses his reputation as a hip-hop glory to unite the public and let things combust. Not only does he have a finger at the heart of popular culture, says Tommy Hilfiger, a friend and rival, but he also really recognizes raw materials and understands how to turn that potential into a marketable product. Simmons is happiest as people connectors information trafficker. He has always focused on the common interests of people of various races and classes, rather than their differences, and spent much of his life trying to unite people with the same goals but insulating backgrounds. He's only interested in people, says Island/Def Jam CEO, Lyor Cohen, and because he's interested, they're interested. He wants to nuance how others live, accept art, and experience culture. It has nothing to do with adding numbers to Rolodex. When you cut him open, that's what he bleeds. The middle child of three boys in a middle-class family, Simmons decided early on that his father's straight road, a teacher, and his mother, the recreation director, were not for him. School was tired of it, and she wanted a nice dress, so she turned down the street, selling marijuana for extra money. He joined the famous gang, Seven Immortals, watched his older brother Danny-now a successful-go artist for using drugs, got a job at the Orange Julius store in Greenwich Village, and eventually graduated to sell fake cocaine. Fake Coke isn't illegal and margins better, Simmons says, plus he reasons the only person you have to worry about ripped customers. Everything changed one day in 1977, when Simmons saw a man named Eddie Cheeba's wheeze the club crowd into a frenzy by shouting rhythm. Simmons has an epiphany. Just like that, I see how I can turn my life around the other way, better, write it in autobiography, Life and Def. Sex, Drugs, Money + God (Crown Publication, 2002). All the street entrepreneurship I learned selling herbs, erecting fake cocaine, and staying out of prison, I decided to put in promoting music. Simmons stopped dealing and became a concert promoter for the New York-area show and then eventually a manager, helping to get the first few rap singles on the radio. He got the biggest break when he breeds Run-DMC, a rap group featuring his children's brother. The group became the first rappers to appear on MTV and the first to score a crossover hits with a white listener, mainly because of the rap-rock collaboration of Walk This Way, with heavy metal band Aerosmith. Today, hard rock and rap weddings seem natural, two strands of the same teenage angst and are angry. But in the mid-1980s, the idea that children of black streets and white suburbs could be like the same shocking music. Simmons learned a great lesson from the success of Run-DMC. The group made it right because it didn't try to cross at all. Unlike other aspiring rappers, members of the Run-DMC didn't wear luxury superstar outfits but leather suits, hats, and Adidas-anythings shoes worn in the 'hood at the time. By appealing to smaller audiences with their own authentic style, they become mainstream stars. Simmons says this vision has become convergent in every business he owns. You have to tell the truth, he said. It ends you to society. [people] can smell the truth, and much smarter than those who put the record out. In 1985, Simmons and his partner Rick Rubin cofounded Def Jam Records, a label featuring big rap stars such as Public Enemies, Beastie Boys, and LL Cool J. Then, as now, he surrounded himself with a small cadre of smart partners, loyalists and employees who developed in unorthodox, organized conditions, free for all. The lifestyle is wild-litre Simmons says having sex cocaine and being boiled in the office is part of a normal business day—but it is in the rush to be on the rapidly changing edge of culture. Island/Def Jam's Cohen has been working with Simmons for 20 years and remembers those days with a fond. I live in a welfare hotel and sleep on the floor, and it's a very fun period of time, he said. We have a huge amount of arrogant need to swim against the tide. Def Jam collaborated with Sony before selling a 60% share to Polygram, and in 1999, Simmons sold the remaining 40% for \$120 million. Today, he has little operational involvement in Island/Def Hour but serves as a father figure to rappers such as Ludacris and Jay-Z, helping to solve legal and personal problems as well as teach them entertainment business. We're talking every now and then about industry, music, etc., says Ludacris. I looked at him. I want to follow in his footsteps in terms of ventures. Those efforts go beyond music. In 1990, Simmons started Rush Communications, an umbrella company for various efforts aimed at American youth. Today, the company is a mixture of percolating businesses, led by the outfit Phat Fashions, which was founded in 1992. Advertising and brand Phat Farm is quintessentially Simmons: The men's and boys' clothing lines have a classic style of Tommy Hilfiger or Ralph Lauren but with a little twist of edgy. There are sweat suits, jeans, and preppy pink argyle sweaters, all made well enough (and prices are pretty high, says Simmons) to meet the aspirations of the poor yet also appealing to the rich. Multi-ethnic ads show more attitudes than you see in the spread of Ralph Lauren, and they often carry social or political messages. Often, you'll see cross-marketing simmons skills at work: he likes to use the Def Jam rappers as a model, or feature a platinum-colored Motorola flip phone that he designed, complete with a Phat Farm logo and Simmons' signature (it retails for \$549). Today, Phat Farm has become the most distributed city brand, although mainly through smaller chain stores. To go head to head against retail giants such as Tommy Hilfiger and Ralph Lauren, the goal of simmons stated, Phat Farm must break into department stores. Federated Department Stores Inc., owner of Macy's and Bloomingdale's, has led Phat Farm for several years, but others do not, believing the crossover appeal is limited. While Phat Fashions is still growing at 30% a year, according to Marshall, COO Rush, Simmons has decided it is time to sell a majority stake. Do because he sees moisture coming or because he needs scale? We need better investment, sourcing and producing and better infrastructure, says Simmons. Clean city businesses have been fully exploited. We grew dramatically still, but I believe we were hitting the ceiling. Simmons has held serious negotiations with Kellwood, but at time there is no agreement. Sceptically say they think the popularity of his clothes with mainstream-suburban white kids is more trend than a permanent cultural shift, as Simmons believes. Another issue is that in the fickle world of youth, popularity almost always means isolating trendsetters, in this case city buyers. Simmons' success has also inspired many imitators who use their roots in the entertainment world to promote their clothes. I agree that hip-hop is cultural and lifestyle, but I disagree that he will be the only player in it, said Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst at NPD Group, a consumer markets researcher. Simmons is the biggest player now, but he fills the void, and the void is quickly closed. While hip-hop music has crossed the cultural divide, not all suburban efforts have made it. In the fall of 2002, dRush, Simmons' advertising joint venture with Deutsch, was set up to market mainstream products to urban youth, closed. Customer budgets are limited, and they will only take silvers and say, This is our minority budget, Deutsch said. But I'm going to go into business with him again tomorrow. There are many other projects, starting with the DefCon3 soda, distributed exclusively by 7-Eleven, and a joint venture with Unifund, a financial services company, for a new Rush Card, a prepaid Visa debit card aimed at an estimated 45 million Americans without access to checking accounts or credits. Simmons hopes to break people's reliance on expensive vetting agencies by allowing their salaries or other funds to be transferred to the cards. Not that Simmons plans to give it away: The card costs \$19.95, and each transaction costs \$1. Cheaper than a cash check window, yes. Charity, no. He likes to say it's hard to help the poor if you're one of them, said David Rosenberg, CEO of Unifund, who predicts that rush Cards will hit 250,000 people by the end of the year. Businesses like this, the kind that can boost one's economic status, attract the attention of Simmons today. In part, the change came from a nine-year yoga practice, which he said had changed his life. She went to classes at the expensive and star-stylish Jivamuktī manhattan, which combines intense workouts with different spiritual philosophies. A recent Thursday afternoon saw Simmons sneak in late, dressed in a grey Phat Farm sweater that became dry throughout the challenging 90-minute class. Forearm stands, headstands, tough balance pose-he does all of them, concentrating entirely as he has nothing throughout the day. Then he has lost, skipping the meditation segment He can make it to the MTV awards in time. If Simmons on yoga is a quiet guy, it's hard to fathom what Simmons did on cocaine like 20 years ago. Today, the kind of activity he's interested in is a lot about giving back as bling-bling. So he waited deeper into politics, making headlines earlier on this by holding meetings with Governor Pataki and others in his bid to try to get New York State to repeal the draconian Rockefeller drug law. Background attempts; not only was the law permanent, but Simmons found himself under investigation by the New York Provisional National Commission on Lobbying for organizing a rally on the issue without lobbyist credentials. Usually, he is undecided. People say I'm in trouble, he says, amazed. But they are talking about drug laws. That's all I want. I can say whatever *** I want about their laws. How dare they? Simmons sued the state for violating his free speech rights, and in the line told, saying he did so on behalf of the hip-hop community. Another political power base is Simmons' Hip-Hop Summit Action Network, which met in different cities and held its 11th encounter in Philadelphia in August. The all-day event featured speakers such as Philadelphia Mayor John Street and rapper LL Cool J, and the entry price was a voter registration card. Our five-year high aspiration was to register 20 million voters, said Chavis, the president and CEO of the network, who claimed the group already registered 1 million voters. No wonder that Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean, John Kerry, Dick Gephardt, and Al Sharpton have met with Simmons. I think he'll end up running for some sort of political thing, Ludacris said. (Simmons denies it.) His growing violence in the corporate world also led people to take notice. Earlier this year he threatened to call Peeps' public boycott when, under pressure from Bill O'Reilly Fox, it shot Ludacris as his new spokesman because of his use of obsession and then went on to pit the same porn-but-white-Osbourne family in a Super Bowl commercial. Simmons quickly won Peeps' consent to donate \$3 million to charity. I definitely appreciate that he stands for me, says Ludacris. He seems like flexing his economic muscle. As executives from Abbott Labs waited to meet with him, Simmons got frustrated, explaining that the company paid him around \$150,000 to do a public service campaign that encouraged the community to get HIV testing. He agreed, donated money to the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network, but said that he thought the money came from nonprofits, not the \$18 billion company that made the test itself. Suddenly, \$150,000 looked like a chump change, and Simmons was ready to tell the woman so. Why are we just talking about testing? he asked. Why don't we talk about prevention? I made a deal, but I talk about better deals. Today, Simmons does a lot of talk. His listeners have included Motorola executives (he shared a panel with Jack Welch, who wrote him the rap song [he was very nice, but it doesn't make sense, said Simmons]), and he mentioned the awards ceremony for Crain's 100 Most Powerful Minority Business Leaders. There's Stanley Stanley [O'Neal, CEO of Merrill Lynch], Dick Parsons, others, said. I can't count. I can barely read, and these guys are in the audience. They pay attention. So should we be the rest of us. The guy has got something to say. Sidebar: One Degree Russell Simmons there anyone this guy doesn't know? We don't think so. Here are some bold names among Simmons's colleagues. Jack Welch, Fellow panelist. Former CEO, GE Tommy Hilfiger. Friends and competitor, Fashion Designer Ludacris, Mentre, Rap Artist Def Jam Sharon Cannon, spiritual mentor, co-owner, Jivamuktī Yoga George Pataki, Governor of political partner, New York State Sean P. Diddy Combs, Protégé Rap Entrepreneur Joey Reverend Run Simmons, Brother, Star of rap group Run-DMC Donald Trump, branding role model, Real Estate Minister Mogul Louis Farrakhan, Political associate leader, Nation of Islam Hillary Clinton, political ally, New York Senator Sidebar: Business, Rush RushSell Simmons did not get an MBA from Harvard Keep It RealDesign your brand for the core market, and don't worry about appealing to people. They will come to you if your product has integrity. You go to the smartest and most sophisticated people and deliver on day one. Do a good job, and it will grow on its own, Simmons said. Never the new business idea Quia can take years to get results. You can lose a lot of money in the meantime. But most entrepreneurs give up too early. Simmons often takes years to develop new ideas, learn from mistakes along the way. If something doesn't work, then you know what not to do, he said. Give BackSimmons a very large life- his home in the Saddle River, New Jersey, measuring 35,000 square feet and has facilities such as Gianni Versace's bed and 10 fireplaces. But he also gives big, with a welfare base, regular benefit bashes, and business ideas he says are meant to help the poor. It's not that he's not interested in making money: it's hard to help the poor if you're one of them, he says. Simmons's companies are filled with old loyalists who are able to act as entrepreneurs, developing projects they feel passionate about. Typically, Simmons and one of the other executives will discuss a new product or line, then executives will go on their own to develop a work business plan and return to Simmons for the ultimate registration. I try to incentivize people fairly, says Simmons, with opportunities and money. Jennifer Reingold (reingold@fastcompany.com) is a senior author of Fast Company. Author.