

Reverse Engineering

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As a Viral empire, you need to reverse engineer ships, so that you can make them yourself. Virals start off with a very weak shipyard.

Reverse engineering (RE) is the process of discovering the technological principles of a mechanical application through analysis of its structure, function and operation.

In this case, you capture ships, RE them, and you can make them as if they were your own.

The only viral ships are the s.Kohoutek and the v.Borrelly. Virals also have a weak starbase, the v.Chiron and of course the neutrals.

Therefore you will need to make use of the neutral ships until you get your hands on some decent ones.

To do this, you must capture 5 ships of one type, then RE them by clicking the 'R' next to the ship in your fleet view. This costs 9 turns.

The only two ships that the Virals have that can capture are the v.Borrelly and the v.Chiron (OK, this is actually a starbase and not a ship, but who the hell cares).

As a starbase the v.Chiron can only be used for defending. The v.Borrelly can be used for both offense and defence. And since starbases are very redundant in this game. v.Chiron can only be used for defence, but if you have 2 stacks of capturing ships in your defence, you will have more chance of capturing the ships that you want

Now the ships you will be trying to capture are from the Terran, Aspha Miners and Marauders (in order of usefulness). Terran ships will be the most useful and most common. Aspha ships also very good and quite commonplace. Marauder ships are tougher to find, and are least useful. You can only RE 3 ships from each race, so you will have to choose carefully.

You cannot reverse engineer Collective ships or Guardian ships.

Collective ships all have the ability to capture other ships, if the Virals got more ships that could capture, it would make the job too easy.

Guardian ships are very strong, and need a lot of research to make (couple of thousand turns). It would also be unfair if the Virals could have them after only 9 turns.

The other reason for not being able to RE these ships is that they are not compatible with the Virals, story-wise. Collective ships presumably are very high-tech, since they are commanded by cyborgs. Therefore the Virals would not be able to use them properly.

The Guardians are a mutated race, whose bodies are made entirely out of pure energy. Therefore Virals for the same reasons would not be able to control the Guardian ships. Special ships such as Kalzul ships cannot be RE'd either.

Now before you do this, you should complete the missions until at least Act 2. By then you should have a steady flow of income coming in to fund your attacks.

You should remember that you do not want just the 'strongest' ships. It's pointless for example, to have every single juggernaut of every race and nothing else. You need the 'weaker' class ships too. Variety will help you more than brute strength here.

The ships you will want are.

Terran: p.Thor, t. Nirvana, and t.Kalieum OR t.Empeur OR t.Hercules

A. Miner: g. Livid (r), g. Lictor, and m. Lyth OR a. Aragonite

Marauder: e.Eel, d.Fallen, and d. Angel.

This will give you a wide range of ships, the best of each class.

Now how to go about capturing these? Always have some v.Borrelly in your fleet, it's really tempting to just use the c.class ships and strafez. Without v.Borrellys you won't be capturing ships.

First I suggest that you do the Viral missions until at least Act 2, where you will gain a Titan system and 10 d.Pikes. RE them. You will need it for some firepower.

Your offensive stack should be;
Small strafez fodder
v.Borrelly
c.Cancer
d.Pike
Light Corvette
Small strafez runner

You can change these around depending on what you have available, and what you can afford. This setup is a combination of economy and efficiency. You can move the v.Borrelly around too.

For defence you might want to change the small strafez runners or Light Corvette for v.Chiron starbases.

Once you start capturing ships you may want to replace the d.Pike, c.Cancer and Corvette with them.

You need 5 ships to RE it. Therefore it's really annoying when you only capture 4 ships. If this happens move the ships to a system people are unlikely to attack, to protect them from attacks. This should be a combination of high system defence and low planet count. Pray that they don't get attacked, and when you later get enough ships, move them together and RE them.

If you ever mess up and RE a ship you don't want, you can use unReverse Engineer project to 'erase' them. This should be available to you from the beginning, if it isn't you need to donate and buy it.

This was written by Theoretica on Hourly.
I hope this guide has helped you.

If you have any trouble finding any ships (the Marauder ships and the G.Lictor are very pesky to find), send me a PM and I'll see what I can do for you.

Happy hunting :)