Star Intrigue

Legendary Games

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Star Intrigue

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SPECIAL ELECTRONIC FEATURES

We've hyperlinked this product internally from the Table of Contents and externally with links to online resources like starjammersrd.com where applicable. If it is in the core rulebook, we generally didn't link to it unless the rule is an obscure one. The point is not to supersede the game books, but rather to help support you, the player, in accessing the rules, especially those from newer books or that you may not have memorized.

ABOUT LEGENDARY GAMES

Legendary Games is an all-star team of authors and designers, founded by Clark Peterson of Necromancer Games, Inc. Legendary Games uses a cooperative, team-based approach to bring you the best expansion material for your game. We are gamers and storytellers first, and we believe that passion shows in our products. Check us out and Make Your Game Legendary!

Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and check out our website at www.makeyourgamelegendary.com.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE
STAR EMPIRES

This spectacular supplement lets your star-spanning heroes find fame and fortune like never before, forging potent personal brands whose influence spans entire systems and founding factions to further their interests and promote their power across the planets. You'll find rules for characters developing their own **personal brands**, allowing them to win friends and tip the balance in their favor in social situations based on their charm, acumen, and guile, pulling others into their orbit and setting trends. You'll also find extensive rules for establishing **factions** in the campaign, from political alliances to religious sects, with power brokers and elites of every kind working to rise up and seize whatever they can hold. These rules can be used to enhance any *Starfinder Roleplaying Game* campaign, managing **verbal duels** and debates and building influence within existing organizations and gaining **favors** as PCs rise to prominence, or risking **hazards** if they fail their faction bosses for the last time. These faction rules also include options for integrating with the colony and nation-building rules in *Star Empires,* allowing your heroes to play off their rivals against one another and use their wits to consolidate power and secure their rule from threats that can't be defeated by blasters. Plus, intrigue feats, sample factions, guidelines for adding factions to existing nations, and so much more! In the great game of interplanetary houses, if you want to survive you need to master the arts of *Star Intrigue*!

The Legendary Games tradition is to combine rich story and background with innovative and exciting crunch to enhance your campaign, along with lovely layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none. We hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Game on!

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The council assembled, four nations represented. On one side of the table sat a prince and his advisor, a veteran of the war which had sundered this planet from the empire. On the other sat the new leader of the world, a strapping nobleman surrounded by the mercenaries who had flocked to his coffers. Between them was the reigning crime lord of this sector, a woman whose compliance was sadly necessitated in this deliberation. Finally, there was Govance, the overseer of this exchange, whose psychic abilities had clarified what he had long suspected: one of these individuals won't be leaving this room intact.

If there is one thing that every science fiction fan knows, it is that no nation is monolithic. Nations may claim to embody certain ideals or follow specific ethos, but in truth they are always somehow fractured, made up of warring factions who all wish to determine the destiny of the universe in the name of their own gain.

Star Empires was designed to tell the stories of galactic empires and the romance between great cosmic nations. What goes on within these nations was too specific to be implemented in the rules presented. **Star Intrigue**, however, intends for players to explore this aspect of galactic politics, to delve into the internal feuds and alliances which define a galactic nation. **Star Intrigue** builds off of the colony and nation rules in **Star Empires** in some ways, but it also can be used independently to develop your own stories of skulduggery, politicking, diplomacy, and back-alley double-dealing with characters throughout your *Starfinder* campaign!

FACTION BASICS

Star Intrigue uses the following terms in specific ways to define factions in play and how they interact with each other, with individual characters, and with the nation as a whole.

ALIGNMENT/ETHOS

All factions have an alignment, similar to a character, which represents the faction's attitude towards its members, non-members, and the nation at large. Lawful factions gain a +2 bonus to resources, Chaotic factions gain a +2 bonus to power. Good factions gain a +2 bonus to reputation, Evil factions gain a +2 bonus to power. Neutral factions gain a +1 bonus to resources and reputation. Factions which are neutral with respect to both Good-Evil and Law-Chaos apply the bonus twice.

For more morally ambiguous setting, Ethos can be used in place of alignment. As in Star Empires, up to two traits which do not oppose each other can be selected, granting the listed benefit. If a faction has fewer than two traits, it gains a +1 bonus to resources and reputation for every trait slot it left open.

TABLE 1: ETHOS

TRAIT	MODIFIER	OPPOSING TRAIT
Authoritarian	+2 Power	Libertarian
Collectivist	+2 Reputation	Individualist
Individualist	+2 Power	Collectivist
Libertarian	+2 Resources	Authoritarian
Materialist	+2 Resources	Spiritualist
Militarist	+2 Power	Pacifist
Pacifist	+2 Reputation	Militarist
Spiritualist	+2 Reputation	Materialist
Xenophobic	+2 Power	Xenophilic
Xenophilic	+2 Reputation	Xenophobic

FACTION

A faction is an organization or group within a nation which is attempting to assert political, economic, or social control over the entire nation, or some part of it. A nation may have any number of factions of each type, however if the combined size of all factions in the nation exceeds 10 times the nation size, then the nation gains +1 Unrest during the Upkeep phase of the nation turn. Not every type of faction will be represented within a nation, but all nations should start with at least one Civil faction representing the citizens, and one Judicial faction representing the nation's rulers.

GOAL

A goal is something that the faction is attempting to achieve through use of its resources and manpower.

OPERATION

An Operation is a task that the faction chooses to attempt during the faction turn. The number of Operations that a faction can perform is determined by the faction's size.

POWER

Power represents the faction's ability to make things happen as they wish, through persuasion, guile, threats, or other means.

REPUTATION

How the faction is viewed by people outside it. This attribute is commonly used when the perception of the faction matters.

RESOURCES

This attribute represents the productivity of the faction's members when they are working towards the faction's agenda. It measures the faction's ability to obtain goods and property, as well as use its wealth effectively when working towards the faction's agenda.

SIZE

A faction's size is an indicator of how many members the faction has, as well as the breadth of its impact. Faction size may change during play. Each point of size should represent no fewer than 25 members of the faction, although in large-scale games each point of size could account for substantially more (a group with 25 or fewer members should not nor-mally use the faction rules, but may do so at the GM's discretion, and should be treated as having a size of zero). However, the scaling for size should be the same for all factions in a given setting. This number is purely to give an idea of the number of members of a particular faction – since people can be members of more than one faction, it's possible for the total membership of all factions to exceed the population of the nation. A faction receives a size modifier to faction checks equal to the 1/10 of the faction's size, rounded down.

TENSION

Tension measures the level of dissatisfaction the members of the faction have with the direction and leadership of the faction. Tension applies a penalty to all faction checks equal to -1 for every 10 points of tension the faction has. Certain operations and events can raise and lower the amount of tension the faction has. If the amount of tension reduces any faction check modifier below zero, the faction splinters.

TYPE

A faction's type describes the members of the faction and may give a broad idea of the aspects of the nation which are of greatest interest to the faction.

WEALTH POINTS

A faction's treasury is measured in Wealth Points (WP). Each WP is worth approximately 400 cp, making 10 WP equal to 1 BP in the **Star Empires** rules. At GM's discretion, WP may be purchased by members for 400 cp each, during the Income Phase of the Faction Turn.

CREATING A FACTION

A new faction may be created by any like-minded group of individuals within a nation. Factions do not start with any WP, and the members must find a way to pay for one turn's worth of WP as part of the faction creation process. If a faction is created composed entirely of NPCs with no PC influence to start with, it begins with 10 WP.

CALCULATING INITIAL SIZE

Factions begin with a size of zero (which indicates that they do not exist or are too small to have any impact on the nation). Certain infrastructure can increase the maximum initial size of the faction, depending on the type of faction. Infrastructure can affect the size of every faction in the nation. A faction of at least size 1 it can launch Operations, earn income, and increase its size. Factions may not wish to start at the maximum possible size and are not required to do so. If a faction starts a faction turn with size 0, the only operation it may perform that turn is a recruitment operation.

CALCULATING FACTION ATTRIBUTES

The individual faction attributes receive bonuses based upon the type of the faction (see Types), the alignment or ethos of the faction (see Alignment/Ethos). In addition, all factions gain a bonus on faction checks equal to 1/10th of their size, rounded down.

FACTION CHECK

Factions have three attributes: Power, Resources, and Reputation. Many actions a faction performs require a faction check using one of these attributes. It is not possible to take 10 or take 20 on a faction check. Unless otherwise noted, the base DC of a faction check is 15. A faction check automatically fails on a natural 1, and automatically succeeds on a natural 20. Faction Checks are made by rolling 1d20 and adding the faction attribute.

TYPES OF FACTIONS

The following are some different types of factions which may exist in a nation.

Academic: Academic factions are generally research groups or educators, in control of the education of the general populace. Academic factions gain a +1 bonus on Reputation checks and a +1 bonus on Resources checks. The maximum starting size of Academic factions increases by 1 for every lot filled with Development Infrastructure in the nation.

Artistic: Artistic factions are generally producers, writers, and other creative figures with some sort of political agenda. Artistic factions gain a +2 bonus on Reputation checks. The maximum starting size of Artistic factions increases by 1 for every lot filled with Monument Infrastructure in the nation.

Civil: Civil factions are typically public bodies made up of common citizens of the nation. They usually represent groups of citizens who work towards a common goal. Civil factions gain a +2 bonus on Reputation checks. The maximum starting size of Academic factions increases by 1 for every lot filled with Lodging Infrastructure in the nation.

Foreign: Foreign factions represent organizations from other nation. These are usually foreign diplomatic entities but can represent almost any other type of faction (trade, religious, and military are the most common). Foreign factions gain a +2 bonus on Power checks. The maximum starting size of Foreign factions increases by 1 for every lot filled with Transit Infrastructure in the nation.

Judicial: Judicial factions represent groups who are working to affect the overall legal structure of the nation. Examples include the current rulers, the judges, as well as groups trying to overthrow the current rulers, or trying to create new laws. Judicial factions gain a +1 bonus on Power checks and Reputation checks. The maximum starting size of Artistic factions increases by 1 for every lot filled with Governance Infrastructure in the nation.

Legal: Legal factions are groups with an interest in maintaining or manipulating the law. This includes police forces, lobbyists, and legal scholars. Legal factions gain a +1 bonus on Power checks and a +1 bonus on Resources checks. The maximum starting size of Legal factions increases by 1 for every lot filled with Governance Infrastructure in the nation.

Military: Military factions are directly involved in

the application of power through armies. They are typically the high command of the military (Nations with multiple branches of armed forces may have more than one Military faction). Military factions gain a +2 bonus on Power checks. The maximum starting size of Military factions increases by 1 for every lot filled with Military Infrastructure in the nation.

Religious: Religious factions are concerned with the spiritual well-being of the citizens of the nation. They typically represent a specific faith worshipped in the nation. Heretical groups within a faith are separate factions. Religious factions gain a +1 bonus on Power checks and Reputation checks. The maximum starting size of Religious factions increases by 1 for every lot filled with Monument Infrastructure in the nation.

Social: Social factions are typically groups of citizens who have joined together because of a shared culture, economic standing, or recreational activity. Generally, these groups are formed so that the members can feel as though they are part of something special and unique. Social Factions get a +2 bonus to one type of faction check, a +1 bonus to a second, but a -1 penalty to the third. The maximum starting size of Social factions increases by 1 for every lot filled with one category of Infrastructure (chosen when the faction is created) in the nation.

Trade: Trade factions are business or trade organizations involved in the manufacture, buying and selling of goods. Examples include guilds, coalitions of shopkeepers, and merchant companies. Trade factions gain a +2 bonus on Resources checks. The maximum starting size of Trade factions increases by 1 for every lot filled with Exchange Infrastructure in the nation.

Other faction types: The GM is free to create any other type of faction, if they have one that does not fit within the above types. The bonuses to checks for new faction types should not exceed a total of +2. One Category of Infrastructure should be chosen when another faction type is created, increasing the starting size of factions of this type by 1 for each lot filled with that category of infrastructure.

SECRECY

A faction can have one of three Secrecy states: Open, Covert, or Disguised.

Open: An Open faction is one that is publicly known. Any citizen may have heard of them, and it is easy to locate the faction. Skill checks made to learn things about the faction have their DC decreased by 2.

Covert: A Covert faction is hidden from the public eye. People might be aware of the existence of a Covert faction (such as a government conspiracy or secret police), but won't know anything about its members, structure, or base of operations. The DC for Knowledge checks or Diplomacy checks to gather information about Covert factions is increased by 5.

Disguised: A disguised faction is a group or organization which publicly claims to be one thing, while in secret is something else entirely. A network of black market merchants appears to be a Trade faction, but is actually a Legal faction. A disguised faction gains bonuses on checks based on its actual faction type, not the public one. The DC to learn information about the public faction type is decreased by 5 (since the faction is putting effort into making that information available), while the DC to learn information about the actual faction type is increased by 10.

GOALS

All factions have one or more goals (which may change over time). When a faction is first created, it must set one goal which is known as the Major Goal. This is the primary outcome the faction is striving to achieve. For example, the merchant federation looking to control all trade in the nation, a faction of revolutionaries hoping to overthrow the government, or a crime syndicate looking to bump their rivals off the planet. Other, less important goals, known as Minor Goals, represent the day-to-day goings on for the faction, and can be almost anything, from the merchants reducing the effectiveness of a settlement's tax collectors, the revolutionaries smearing a specific politician or organization, or the

crime syndicate trying to cripple law enforcement. Minor goals can be short- or long-term, depending on the faction's needs at the time. A new goal is set for the faction with an Operation. Goals may be public or secret, and each goal consists of an Aim, a Scale, and a Subject.

AIM

Control: The faction is exerting control over the subject of the goal. This may be simply using the faction's power of persuasion to get the subject to do what it wants, but also extends to direct threats and intimidation, or even the use of money to buy the subject.

Boost: The faction is increasing the subject's impact on the nation. For example, a Trade faction may be trying to promote a particular business. When a successful Advance Goal Operation is completed for a Boost goal, the subject gains a +2 bonus to any nation or faction checks made before the end of the next nation turn.

Reduce: The faction is reducing the subject's impact on the nation. A common example would be a Legal faction (representing the local police force) trying to reduce crime. When a successful Advance Goal Operation is completed for a Reduce goal, the subject suffers a permanent -1 penalty to a single type of nation or faction check.

Eliminate: The faction is removing the subject completely from having any impact on the nation. It does not necessarily mean that the subject is destroyed or killed. Eliminate aims are extremely powerful, but also very difficult to achieve.

Table 2: Scale of Operations

Scale	Example
Individual	A single small business or piece of infrastructure, a person with little political or social influence.
District	All business or infrastructure in a district, a popular local figure
Faction	Another faction, a lower-level businessperson or politician
Colony	All business or infrastructure in a colony, a moderate-level businessperson or politician
National	All business or infrastructure in the nation, a nation leader, a leader of a nation-scale business
International	All business or infrastructure across multiple nations, a leader of a nation the faction is not in, an internationally-respected individual.

SCALE

The scale of a goal represents the amount of impact caused by influencing the goal's subject. The ultimate decision about the scale of a particular goal is up to the GM. For goals whose subject is a place, the size of the area affected by the place determines the scale. For goals with a subject that is a person, or group of people, the scale depends on the size of the group. However, if a subject has a higher level of influence within the nation than the scale would normally indicate, the GM should increase the scale of the goal. For example, a nation's leaders should always be considered to be National Scale, as a group and individually. Likewise, the head of a guild might qualify as a district in scale (or even a faction), rather than an individual. When unsure, use the highest suitable Scale.

SUBJECT

The subject of a goal is whatever person, place, or item at which the goal is targeted. This can be almost anything the faction wants, except for abstract concepts (which may be allowed at the GM's discretion). So, a faction could set a goal to "Control the Nation's Treasury" but could not set a goal to "Control the Ruler's Reputation". The subject may not be the faction itself but can be another faction.

PRIVACY

A goal may be set as either Public or Secret when it is created by the faction. A public goal is something that the faction has made available to all faction members. If the faction is Open, then public goals can also be determined by an appropriate skill check. If the faction is Covert, then public goals are not typically known outside the faction. Secret goals are things that the faction is trying to achieve, generally known only to the faction's senior members. Goal DC Goals have a Difficulty Class (DC) indicating the difficulty to achieve that goal. Unless otherwise noted, the base DC to accomplish any goal is 15. Use the following table to calculate modifiers to that DC.

Table 3: Faction Goal DC

Aim	DC Modifier
Control	+2
Boost	+0
Reduce	+0
Eliminate	+5
Scale	DC Modifier
Individual	+0
District	+1
Faction	+2
Colony	+3
National	+5
International	+10 plus an additional 2 for every affected nation beyond the second
Privacy	DC Modifier
Public Goal	-1
Secret Goal	+3

THE FACTION TURN

Faction turns take place during the nation turn sequence. They should be inserted after the Edict phase of the nation turn, and any alterations which occur as a result of the faction turn should take effect before the Income phase of the nation turn begins. All factions in a nation should perform each phase of the faction turn before moving on to the next phase. The order in which the factions act in each phase should be determined by each faction making a Power check (this check has no DC), and they act in reverse order of the checks. In the event of a tie, the faction with the smaller size goes first. If factions are still tied, roll Power checks again until the tie is broken.

UPKEEP PHASE

The faction must pay its upkeep and maintain control and stability of itself before it does anything else.

Step 1: Check Tension. If the tension of the faction has reduced any of the faction's attributes below 0, then the faction has a chance of splintering. Make a Special Tension Check, which is a 1d20 roll +1 for every 10 points of tension (rounded down). The DC for this roll is 10 plus the faction's size modifier (+1 per 10 size, rounded down). If the tension check exceeds the DC, the faction splinters. See Splintering Factions.

Step 2: Pay costs. A faction costs WP equal to its Size each turn. If it is unable to pay (due to insufficient WP), it loses all remaining WP, and gains tension equal to the amount not paid. This penalty may be reduced or removed in future faction turns by use of the Reduce Tension operation.

Step 3: Add Wealth. Any character may choose to add wealth to a faction. Every 400 cp added to the faction's treasury adds 1 WP.

Step 4: Determine Income. The Faction makes a Resources check. This check has no DC, add the result as WP to the faction's treasury.

Table 4: Faction Operations by Size

Faction Size	Operations
0	1 (recruitment only)
1-10	1
11-25	226-50
226-50	3
51-100	4
101-200	5
201+	7

OPERATIONS PHASE

The faction may undertake a number of Operations based on the Faction's size, as detailed in Table: Faction Operations by Size. For each Operation launched, the Faction pays the cost of the Operation, and makes any checks required. The faction may launch Operations in any order. All effects for a single Operation are resolved before the next Operation is launched. Based on its activities, size, and patronage by PCs or NPCs that support it, a faction brings in money and other resources each faction turn.

TABLE 5: ADVANCING BOOST AND REDUCE GOALS

Scale	Example Impacts	Cost (WP)
Individual	Give the subject money, or prevent the subject receiving an income for a single nation turn	1 WP per 400 cp given or prevented
District	Alter a single infrastructure's colony and nation attributes by 50% (up or down) for one turn	1 per 2 BP cost of the building
Faction	Alter one of the faction's attributes permanently by +/-1	5
Colony	Alter one of the colony attributes permanently by +/-1	15
National	Alter one nation attribute permanently by +/-1	20
International	Permanently alter the nation attribute or colony attribute of another nation or colony outside the faction's nation by +/-1	25 + 5 for every additional nation affected beyond the second

OPERATIONS

Each faction may undertake a number of Operations in a given faction turn. These operations either boost their own power or limit the power of other factions within the nation. The number of operations a faction may perform per turn is determined by faction size and set at the beginning of the Operations Phase. Size increases occurring during that turn do not affect the number of operations a faction may perform.

There are two types of operation, Maintenance and Active. Maintenance operations are activities that the faction performs where the result is a change to the faction itself, while Active operations alter the nation or other factions. Maintenance operations may be performed more than once per faction turn, but only one of each type of Active operation may be performed in a given turn. Several operations apply modifiers to nation and faction attributes, with larger modifiers costing more WP. A faction can always choose to use a modifier lower than the maximum result generated by their faction check. Sometimes an attribute from the nation (or a modifier to a nation attribute) is used for faction checks. Unless otherwise stated, this is in addition to the existing faction bonus. Use the following table to determine which faction attribute is modified by bonuses and penalties to which nation attribute.

Abandon Goal (Active) The faction no longer wishes to pursue this goal. The faction makes a Reputation check against the Goal DC+10. If successful, the goal is abandoned and may be removed from the faction's goals.

Advance Goal (Active) The faction works to advance one of its existing goals. Choose one existing goal for the faction and make a Resources check against the Goal DC. If successful for a boost or reduce goal, the faction may do one of the following, depending on the subject of the goal: A successful check for a control goal allows the faction to immediately affect the goal's subject. The effect of advancing a control goal lasts until the next faction turn, unless otherwise noted. Because of the nature of controlling the subject, it isn't possible to provide a comprehensive list of effects and costs. This will vary depending on the subject, the goal, and the controlling faction's intentions. It is left to the GM's discretion to determine reasonable costs and impact for advancing these goals. Some examples might include controlling a single merchant's shop for a time, to help him avoid going out of business, costing them 2 WP. The lobbyists controlling the nation's Treasurer and setting the tax edict to suit their needs. This could cost 15-20 WP per change in edict level. The crime syndicate controlling the city watch's recruitment practices so that the watchmen are a little less competent, costing 8 WP.

Aid Faction (Active) The faction attempts to support the work of another faction. Make a Power check. If successful, you may choose to either remove a point of tension from the target faction or apply a +1 modifier to one of the target faction's attributes. For every 5 points by which the check succeeds, you may remove another point of tension or add another +1. The benefit of this operation does not have to apply to the same

attribute from a single operation. Each point of tension removed or attribute bonus applied costs 3 WP. Bonuses to attributes last until the start of the next faction turn.

Aid Nation (Active) The faction tries to help one of the leaders of the nation. The faction chooses one of the nation's leaders and makes a Reputation check. If successful, the faction applies a +1 bonus to the target leader's nation attribute modifier, increasing by +1 for every 5 points by which the check exceeds the DC. Multiple Aid operations do not stack – only the highest modifier applies. Each point of bonus costs 5 WP, unless the leader affected is the Ruler, in which case it costs 7 WP. The cost must be paid at the time the bonus is applied. This bonus applies until the start of the next faction turn.

Alliance (Active) The faction joins forces with another faction. The two factions must have a Goal subject in common (though the Aim and Scale of the Goal do not have to be the same) and agree to the alliance. Each Faction makes a Reputation check. The Faction which gets the highest result is the dominant partner and can choose whether the alliance is balanced or unbalanced. If the alliance is balanced, both Factions gain a bonus to all Faction attributes equal to 50% of the bonus the other faction has. If the alliance is unbalanced, the dominant partner gains a bonus equal to 75% of the bonus the other Faction has, while the other partner gains 25%. These bonuses are lost if the alliance dissolves. At any time two Factions are in an alliance with each other, either of them can attempt to absorb the other Faction. This requires another Alliance Operation. The allied Factions make opposed Power checks. The winning faction permanently gains Power, Resources and Reputation equal to half the losing Faction's attributes. Add together the Size of the two Factions to determine the new Faction's size. The winning Faction may make a Reputation check to remove any of the losing Faction's Goals (one check may be made per Goal). Success means that the goal is removed entirely. Failing the check by less than 5 means that the Faction may reduce the Scale of the Goal by 1 step (for example from nation to Colony). Failure by 5 or more means that the Goal is added to the winning Faction's Goals in full. Since a faction cannot have itself as the subject of a goal, all goals from either faction with the other faction as a subject are automatically removed. An alliance costs each faction 10 WP, plus 2 WP per turn thereafter. Merging factions which are already allied costs 10 WP.

Earn Wealth (Maintenance) The faction's members work to obtain money for the faction's coffers. The faction makes a Power check. If successful, the faction gains +2 on the determine income roll during the income phase. For every 5 points by which the check succeeds, the faction gains an additional +1 to the determine income roll.

Faction Conflict (Active) The faction mobilizes its members to compete with an opposing faction. This is not necessarily a violent altercation but can be resolved either using a modified version of the mass combat or simply an encounter. The number of members of each faction involved in the contest is equal to the size of the faction. If the numbers on either side exceed 10, it is advised that armies be created by the GM. Damage done is solely used to determine the success or failure of the faction in the contest, though a faction can choose to deal lethal damage during a contest if it wishes. This costs WP equal to the army's recruitment cost. A faction can rally an army whose size does not exceed half the faction's resources score and where the CR of individual combatants does not exceed half the faction's power score.

Lobbying (Maintenance) The Faction chooses one leadership role (except Ruler) in the nation and makes a Reputation check. If successful, they may apply a bonus to one single appropriate faction check equal to the bonus the leader in that leadership role is providing, as described in Table: Faction and Nation Attribute Equivalencies. Each point of bonus costs 1 WP.

Table 6: Faction and Nation Attribute Equivalencies

Faction Attribute	Nation Attribute
Power	Stability
Reputation	Loyalty
Resources	Economy

New Goal (Active) The faction creates a new goal for itself. Make a Reputation check against the Goal DC. If the check is successful, then the new Goal is added to the Faction's list of Goals.

Publicity (Maintenance) The members of the faction spend their time endearing the masses. Make a Reputation check. If successful, the Faction may apply the Ruler's nation attribute bonus to one of their Faction attributes until the start of the next Edict phase. Publicity costs the faction 2 WP per point of bonus applied.

Reduce Upkeep (Maintenance) The faction invests funds in a variety of properties and businesses within the nation, for the benefit of their members. This results in them being able to maintain the faction at a lower cost than normal. The upkeep cost for the faction is permanently reduced by 1. The upkeep cost may never be reduced below zero. This operation costs 10 WP.

Recruitment (Maintenance) The Faction works to recruit new members and increase its Size. Make a Resources check. If successful, the Size of the Faction increases by 1, and may be increased an additional 1 for every 5 points by which the check beat the DC. Recruitment operations cost 2 WP per point of size increased.

Relieve Tension (Maintenance) The faction takes some time to demonstrate to the members that they are progressing towards their goals, and makes its members feel valued and useful. The faction makes a Reputation check. If successful, the faction may reduce its current tension by 1. For every 5 points by which the check beats the DC, an additional 1 tension may be removed. Each point of tension removed costs 1 WP.

Spying (Active) The faction attempts to learn information about a known target faction. Make a Resources check. If successful, the faction learns information about one Goal of the target faction. Choose one of Aim, Scale, or Subject. For every 5 points by which the check beats the DC, the faction may learn one more piece of information about the goal or may learn one piece of information about another goal of the same faction. Alternatively, the faction may choose to learn the Power or Resources attribute of the target Faction. Each piece of information obtained costs 3 WP. Spying can also be used to learn of the existence of covert factions. Make an opposed Power check, if successful, your faction learns of the existence of a single covert faction operating in the nation, but learning any further information requires another Spying operation. This use of Spying costs 3 WP.

Subvert Faction (Active) The faction attempts to undermine the work of another faction. Make an opposed Power check. If successful, add 1 point of tension to the target faction. For every 5 points by which the check beat the target faction's check, add an additional point of tension. Each point of tension caused costs 2 WP. If the opposed check fails, add 1 point of tension to the initiating faction. For every 5 points by which the check failed to beat the target faction's check, add another point of tension.

Subvert Nation (Active) The faction works to undermine one of the leaders of the nation. The faction chooses one of the nation's leaders and makes a Reputation check. If successful, the faction applies a -1 penalty to the target leader's nation attribute modifier, increasing by -1 for every 5 point by which the check exceeded the DC. Multiple Subversions do not stack – only the worst penalty applies. Each point of penalty costs 5 WP, unless the leader affected is the Ruler, in which case it costs 7 WP. The cost must be paid at the time the penalty is applied. This penalty lasts until the start of the next faction turn.

SPLINTERING FACTIONS

Sometimes the tension within a faction causes the faction to fall apart from internal pressures. If splintering occurs, immediately increase the nation's unrest by 1. Then make one faction check of each type against DC 10. If all three succeed, the faction splits into two equal size factions. Share the original faction's current goals and tension evenly between the two and recalculate all other faction attributes. If one check fails, one of the resulting factions is ¾

the size of the original, and the other is the remaining ¼, and the goals should be shared in those proportions (if the original faction didn't have enough goals to share in these proportions, the smaller faction must take at least one goal of the original faction). If two checks fail, the faction splits into three equal parts (with goals and tension shared evenly). If all three checks fail, the faction dissolves entirely, adding a further point of unrest to the nation.

INFLUENCING FACTIONS

Just as factions can manipulate the course of nations, so to can they interact with individuals. The following rules can be used to track the PCs' social cachet within factions.

Small factions seeking to make their mark on society may allow the PCs a great deal of clout within them but are limited in what they can offer. Large factions, on the other hand, are typically more difficult to influence, but can bring much more power to bear on an area at large.

INFLUENCE POINTS AND RANKS

The faction influence system uses influence points to track the opinion of a faction concerning the PCs. When the PCs first interact with a faction, they typically start with 0 influence points, and hold no control over the faction's actions. If the PCs demonstrate their value to the faction, they can gain influence points, representing their growing ability to call in favors. If the PCs repeatedly fail or work against a faction, they lose influence points (see the details of gaining and losing influence points. The PCs' influence point total with a faction can be a negative number—the lower the total, the more resources the faction is willing to commit to actively oppose the PCs.

The PCs' influence points help determine the number of resources a faction is willing to commit to help or hinder them, but it is not the only component of that calculation. If the PCs seek to build a positive relationship with a faction, they may find themselves limited in what benefits they can gain until they perform certain tasks. For example, most factions limit the number of resources they commit to nonmembers, so PCs may need to officially join to gain access. On the other hand, a faction at odds with the PCs should not provide the same response to minor insults from the PCs as it does to the PCs crippling one of its major operations. The nine influence ranks presented below take into account tasks that the PCs may accomplish to pass to fundamentally alter their relationship with a faction. To reach a new influence rank, the PCs must accumulate (or lose) a certain number of influence points, as decided by the GM, and perform any required tasks that the GM sets. See the sidebar Influence Thresholds for guidelines on setting the required number of influence points for each rank. The possible influence ranks, and their meanings, are presented below.

POSITIVE RANKS

At these ranks, a faction either doesn't care about the PCs or considers them allies.

Unknown (Rank 0): The faction either doesn't know who the PCs are or does not believe they are relevant.

Known Ally (Rank 1): The PCs' actions have proven that they are aligned with the faction's goals. One or more PCs may be low-ranking members. **Respected (Rank 2):** The PCs have performed significant services for the faction. Some low-ranking members of the faction look up to the PCs. One or more PCs are members of the faction in good standing.

Admired (Rank 3): Average faction members admire the PCs. Some low-ranking members may have strong loyalties to the PCs. The PCs have notable positions within the faction.

Revered (Rank 4): While the PCs are not the official leaders of the faction, they are key members. The PCs can direct and shape policy.

In Control (Rank 5): The PCs have taken command of the faction and can fully dictate its actions.

NEGATIVE RANKS

At these ranks, a faction actively opposes the PCs.

Known Opponent (Rank −1): The faction's opinion of the PCs is unfavorable. It may act against the PCs if they are interfering in its affairs, but the faction mostly focuses on its own goals.

Disliked (Rank −2): The faction commits some resources to targeting the PCs even when the PCs are not actively interfering with its goals and retaliates when the PCs acts against it.

Hated (Rank −3): The faction seeks to discredit, humiliate, or kill the PCs, and commits substantial resources to doing so. However, the faction ultimately prioritizes its long-term power and stability over harming the PCs.

Hunted (Rank −4): The faction seeks to discredit, humiliate, or kill the PCs, and is willing to sacrifice enough time, resources, and lives to markedly weaken itself in the pursuit of this goal. Even the faction's leaders may risk their lives in pursuit of the PCs' downfall.

Anathema (Rank −5) The faction is out for blood, viewing the PCs utter destruction as their highest priority. Every member of the faction is doing everything in their power to make sure the PCs at minimum fail at their every endeavor.

GAINING INFLUENCE POINTS

As the PCs perform tasks that benefit a faction, they gain influence points. Performing favors requested by a faction is the most effective way for the PCs to accrue influence points with that faction. A typical favor earns the PCs from 2 to 5 influence points, depending upon how difficult and dangerous the favor is to complete. See the Favors section for more details. The PCs can also accrue influence points with a faction by taking actions that coincidentally further the faction's interests. Such actions typically earn the PCs 1 or 2 influence points. For example, if the PCs apprehend a notorious jewel thief who has been stealing from their own coffers (as well as those of local nobles), they may gain an influence point with the local nobility. The PCs can also gain influence points by building trust with a member of the faction.

The number of factional influence points that the PCs can earn from gaining the approval of a single NPC within the faction typically ranges from 1 to 5. Backing a rank-and-file member of the faction is worth at most 1 influence point, while the backing of one of a faction's leaders is worth 5 influence points, and may be worth more in extraordinary circumstances, at the GM's discretion.

LOSING INFLUENCE POINTS

The PCs generally won't actively seek to lose influence points with a faction. However, the PCs' actions over the course of a campaign are likely to put them at odds with one or more factions, and the PCs may inadvertently harm factions that they do not wish to antagonize. Whenever the PCs actively sabotage a faction's interests, they lose from 2 to 5 influence points with the faction. If the PCs take actions that coincidentally work against the faction's interests, they instead lose 1 or 2 influence points.

If the PCs horribly botch an attempt to perform a favor for a faction, they may similarly lose 1 or 2 influence points. If the PCs damage a prominent member's reputation or finances, they lose from 1 to 3 influence points, depending on the extent of the damage and the power that member wields within the faction. The PCs also lose influence points if they harm a prominent member of the faction. Killing members of any faction is a particularly effective way to lose influence. For most factions, any time the PCs kill one or more members of a faction, they lose at least 5 influence points per incident.

The most crippling blow to the PCs' reputation with faction is betrayal. To be considered traitors to the faction, the PCs must violate the faction's fundamental tenets while using the faction's own resources against it. If a faction that favors the PCs becomes convinced of the PCs' betrayal, the PCs immediately lose a number of influence points equal to twice their current total, essentially reversing their standing with the group. In general, the higher the PCs' influence rank, the more evidence the faction requires before it considers any accusations of treachery credible. If a faction declares the PCs traitors, it is possible (though difficult) for them to redeem their reputation. In general, this process requires the PCs to track down and discredit the source of the slanderous evidence. Doing so restores the PCs' original influence point total, and likely earns them additional rewards from the faction for unmasking the true threat against it. If they only partially exonerate themselves, they may regain some but not all of their influence points.

INFLUENCE THRESHOLDS

The number of influence points required to shift from one influence rank to the next sets the pace for how quickly the PCs' power in factions can change. The three main factors that play into setting influence thresholds are the length of the campaign, the interest level of the players in exploring their interactions with factions, and the power and personality of the faction itself.

Short story arcs generally require lower thresholds than long campaigns. Some groups of players would rather slowly earn influence within a difficult faction, while others would rather see how quickly their PCs can become powerful in multiple factions. Finally, within a campaign, weaker factions typically allow the PCs to gain influence ranks more quickly than prominent ones.

With all of these factors in mind, the following ranges provide guidelines for determining the number of total influence points a character must gain to reach positive ranks or lose to reach negative ranks.

These thresholds are for a weak faction, where the sum of their power+resources does not exceed +5. For a moderately prominent faction (+6 to +10), multiply the numbers by 2. For a strong faction (+11 to +20), multiply by 3, and for a preeminent faction (+21 or higher), multiply by 4.

Rank 1 or −1: From 1 to 5 total influence points.

Rank 2 or −2: From 3 to 8 total influence points.

Rank 3 or −3: From 7 to 12 total influence points.

Rank 4 or −4: From 13 to 18 total influence points.

Rank 5 or −5: 19 or more total influence points

FACTION INTERACTIONS

The PCs' interactions with factions are often only a piece of a larger political tapestry. Alliances and rivalries between factions shape how each faction reacts to the PCs' actions. If two factions are rivals, they typically require the PCs to choose a side. The PCs may automatically lose influence points with one for supporting the other. For example, if the PCs perform a favor for one faction during a war and gain influence points with that faction, they lose an equal number of influence points with that faction's rivals.

In less extreme circumstances, the PCs may lose half as many influence points as they gain.

While rivalries between factions make holding split loyalties difficult, allegiances between multiple factions can help the PCs accrue influence faster than they could otherwise and provide the PCs with access to additional resources. If the PCs help or harm one of two allied factions, treat them as coincidentally working for or against the second faction's interests for the purposes of the number of influence points the PCs gain or lose.

As the campaign unfolds, the web of alliances and rivalries between factions may shift. A sudden shift in allegiances does not retroactively adjust the PCs' influence point total.

PROMINENCE

A faction's prominence represents the political and social power of that faction in its home community or area of influence. The categories of prominence are weak, moderate, strong, and preeminent.

In general, a weak faction can provide only simple assistance within its limited area of concern. Most weak factions are eager to recruit new members to increase their prominence, though some appreciate the lack of attention they draw from outside forces. A gang of pickpockets is an example of a weak faction. In comparison, a moderate faction holds an established place in the power structure of its local area and has some connections and contacts with other local factions.

FAVORS

Favors lie at the heart of the factional influence system. When the PCs perform a favor for a faction, they can either gain influence points, or they can earn a favor from the faction in return. The PCs can spend favors that they have earned to gain benefits from the faction.

The PCs can slowly earn favors over time, after a certain number of sessions or amount of in-game time that is appropriate for the campaign. This rate also provides a guideline for modeling the behavior of factions.

Typically, this rate is an appropriate benchmark for how often allied factions approach the PCs with requests, as well as how often opposed factions act against them. In general, if a faction is willing to grant a benefit to the PCs when they have a positive rank with that faction, it is willing to grant that same benefit to someone acting against the PCs should they attain the corresponding negative rank.

Sometimes tasks for the PCs to complete as favors to a faction arise naturally out of the events of the campaign. However, at other times, the PCs may actively seek to assist a faction at a time when such tasks are not so forthcoming. The favors on the Table below are generic enough to apply to almost any faction. Some of the tasks near the top of the chart are too inconsequential for established members, while the tasks at the bottom of the chart are too significant for initiates. To use this chart, roll a d20, and add twice the PCs' influence rank to the result.

Benefit(s): Each faction provides its own unique set of possible benefits to the PCs based on their influence rank. The PCs can spend a favor that they have earned to gain one of the benefits that they have unlocked.

Borrow Resources: Many factions allow members in good standing to borrow money or items for short periods of time. If the PCs do not repay the loan in a timely manner, they risk losing influence points. Typically, the PCs cannot borrow resources from a faction if they have outstanding debts, and some factions require collateral. factions are more likely to have items that are relevant to their own interests—a mercenary group might loan weapons and armor, but not holy symbols or texts, for example. The maximum value of any loans the PCs make from a faction is based upon their rank in the faction, as shown in the table below.

Command Team: When the PCs reach a high influence rank within a faction, the faction typically allows the PCs to lead a team of its members on a mission. The PCs are expected to protect this team and bring the members back alive. The total combined CR of this team is equal to twice the PCs' rank and cannot exceed the PCs' level.

Gather Information: The PCs can ask several members of the faction to assist them in gathering information about a particular subject and gain a bonus on all skill checks to gather such information equal to the faction's reputation + the rank of the PCs.

Put in a Good Word: The faction promotes the PCs' reputation among its allies. The PCs gain a number of influence points equal to their rank with the faction with one of the group's allied factions. PCs must be at least rank 2 to gain this favor.

Reciprocal Benefits: The faction leverages its ties to one of its closest allies for the PCs' gain. The PCs can purchase a benefit from the benefits list of a closely allied faction by expending two favors. Treat the PCs' influence rank with the allied faction as 1 lower than their rank with the initial faction. PCs must be at least rank 3 to gain this favor Factions, depending on what they have at their disposal, may be able to grant additional favors, examples of which are provided as follows (at the discretion of the GM).

TABLE 7: FAVORS

Result	Favor
1	Deliver a message to a member of the faction.
2	Perform a disgusting or unpleasant chore for the faction.
3	Assist the faction in gathering information in preparation for an upcoming mission.
4	Purchase and deliver supplies to a member of the faction.
5	Carry out the duties of a specific low-ranking member of the faction for 1 week.
6	Produce verbal or written propaganda in favor of the faction.
7	Mediate a disagreement between members of the faction.
8	Provide spellcasting services or other specialized tasks to the faction for several days.
9	Credit the faction for your own publicly popular actions.
10	Collect money for the faction.
11	Assist in the construction or renovation of a building for the faction's use.
12	Investigate the disappearance of an ally of the faction.
13	Donate a substantial amount of money to the faction.
14	Recruit a new member to the faction.
15	Obtain a significant item for the faction.
16	Defeat a challenging foe (CR greater than APL +2) of the faction.
17	Help a member of the faction escape a dangerous situation.
18	Collect valuable information for the faction.
19	Mentor a new member of the faction.
20	Convince a powerful individual to cooperate with the faction.
21	Cover up evidence of an indiscretion tied to the faction.
22	Plan and execute a dangerous operation to achieve a difficult goal.
23	Sabotage a faction with opposing goals.
24	Repay the faction's debts by performing a challenging task for another faction.
25	Investigate a possible traitor within the faction.
26	Establish a branch of the faction in a new district or colony
27	Represent the faction in a meeting with extraordinary stakes.
28	Carry out the duties of a key member of the faction for 1 week.
29	Create or revise the chain of succession for the faction
30	Establish an ideologically similar faction in another nation

Table 8: Benefits

Benefit	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
Borrow Resources	Resources x20 cp	Resources x100 cp	Resources x500 cp	Resources x1000 cp	Resources x5000 cp
Command Team	CR 2	CR 4	CR 6	CR 8	CR 10
Gather Information	Reputation +1	Reputation +2	Reputation +3	Reputation +4	Reputation +5
Put in a Good Word	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reciprocal Benefits	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Case: The faction scouts an area, searching for guards, hiding places, and entrances. The total Perception skill bonus is equal to the faction's power.

Diversion: The faction creates a diversion to allow the PCs to sneak past guards or other watchful eyes. The total Bluff skill bonus is equal to the faction's power.

Item Crafting: The faction crafts a custom-ordered collection of items for the PCs, with the max level equal to the faction's resources. The items cost their usual market value plus 1 favor for every item crafted.

Library: The PCs gain access to the faction's information networks, allowing the PCs to substitute the faction's resources score for their ranks in one skill for the purpose of making a research check.

Lookout: A member of the faction acts as a lookout, monitoring one direction for oncoming guards or witnesses. The total Perception skill bonus is equal to the faction's power.

Pickpocket: A member attempts to take a specific item from a specific person. The total Sleight of Hand skill bonus is equal to the faction's power. If the faction believes the situation is too dangerous, it informs the PCs and refuses to attempt the task—in this case, the favor is not expended.

Remove Evidence: Members of the faction carefully enters a scene where the PCs committed a crime and removes evidence. This eliminates any obvious clues, such as the body of a victim or notes the PCs left at the scene and increases the Perception DC to find more subtle clues by 5. If the PCs are at least rank 3, this increase is doubled and the faction also discourages witnesses from testifying against the PCs, using a combination of intimidation, bribery, and even memory-altering magic.

Rob: The faction sends an agent to steal a specific item from a secured location. The agent has a total skill bonus on Stealth checks equal to the faction's power and a bonus on any other checks equal to the faction's power -2. This benefit costs from 1 to 3 favors, depending upon the danger involved. The faction expects the PCs to pay half the value of the stolen item.

Search Black Market: The faction locates any type of item whose level is up to the supply of the colony, even if the item is illegal in that colony, and arranges for the PCs to purchase it. Alternatively, the PCs can use black market mastery to search for a single item above the colony's supply, at the cost of 3 favors. There is a 50% chance each turn that the syndicate locates the requested item. If the PCs seek a unique item, the syndicate may be able to provide the PCs with the location of that item for the cost of 2 favors.

HAZARDS

Just as factions might reward PCs that serve them loyally with favors, they may also punish those who anger them. If the PCs have negative influence points with a faction, the faction can decrease the number of negative influence points the PCs possess in order to inflict a hazard upon them. The hazards that the faction can inflict are based upon the rank the PCs are at before the hazard is applied. Depending on the requisite rank, hazards reduce negative influence points by a different amount, and also cost differing amounts of WP to use. If the PCs ever reach rank -5, the faction must inflict a hazard on them each turn or else increase their tension by 1.

RANK -1 OR LOWER (5 POINTS OF INFLUENCE, 2 WP)

Affluence: The faction uses extra resources against the PCs. In either a combat with the faction or against a group the faction supports, each enemy receives one item whose level does not exceed half the faction's resources score. In a noncombat encounter, the affluence stratagem grants the faction or its proxy agents a modest advantage at a task in which they are competing against the PCs. For example, a bonus on skill checks equal to half the faction's reputation

False Witness: The faction accuses the PCs of some minor crime or other misdeed, either directly or by way of a proxy manipulated to provide false witness. The PCs must either avoid the authorities or spend time proving their innocence, often through some form of social challenge. Avoiding the authorities or failing to clear their names may have more drastic consequences, such as harsh fines, imprisonment, a decrease in influence, or even some form of corporal punishment.

Refusal of Service: The faction uses coercion to force a group of other NPCs to no longer associate with or conduct business with the PCs (since PCs often exchange vast quantities of wealth, merchants are a particularly effective group to pick for this stratagem). Members of that group of NPCs refuse to assist or discuss anything with the PCs unless the PCs succeed at a Diplomacy or Intimidate check. The DC is equal to 10 + the faction's reputation score.

Sabotage: The faction plants a counterfeit item at a shop it anticipates the PCs will patronize. The item the PCs purchase becomes nonfunctional 1d4 hours after it is purchased.

Scandalous Subversion: The faction engages in a campaign to spread rumors that impugn the PCs' reputation. These rumors aren't ubiquitous, but they are just believable enough to cause others to have doubts about the PCs. This stratagem decreases the characters' charisma-based skill checks and total influence points with all other factions by 1. Alternatively, the faction can target a single character and double the decrease.

Tail: The faction sends an agent to follow the PCs from a distance. This tail is an NPC or creature (typically one whose CR is equal to the group's APL −3). While they have a tail, the tail relays the PCs' activities and general plans to the faction. The tail follows the PCs wherever they go but will not enter dangerous locations (such as a dungeon or tomb). The tail makes daily reports on the PCs' activities. If the PCs split up, the tail follows one PC—either the one who seems to be doing something interesting or who's easiest to follow. The tail uses its own Perception and Stealth skills but attempts to remain hidden, using cover and crowds to hide its presence and staying at a distance to increase the Perception DC to notice it. The tail always attempts to flee if discovered or engaged.

RANK -2 OR LOWER (10 POINTS OF INFLUENCE, 6 WP)

Allies in Peril: The faction takes an ally of the PCs hostage while they're away or otherwise distracted. The CR of the Ally cannot exceed the faction's power score. Removing the ally proves to be a boon for the faction and a detriment to the PCs. The PCs might be forced to decide whether to spend their efforts locating their ally and attempting a rescue or opposing the faction's goal.

Contingency Plan: The faction has become accustomed to the PCs' interference and has developed a contingency plan. When the PCs are about to interfere with the faction, all agents of the faction either instantly benefits from an effect of a 1st- through 4th-level spell. Alternatively, it might unleash some non-magical contingency, such as collapsing the ceiling or opening a floodgate.

No Prize for Second Place: The faction discovers the PCs' eventual destination while they are on a quest, whether through spying or divination, and gets there ahead of them. It might alert those at their destination and explain the PCs' strengths and weaknesses (giving the denizens time to flee or set an ambush) or slaughter the guardians and pillage the place, leaving behind only traps for the PCs.

Nowhere Is Safe: The faction sends one or more agents ahead of the PCs as they are traveling or resting, tasking them with manufacturing obstacles to slow the PCs down. Simple dangers that the agents might devise (which would cost only 3 influence) include obstructing the PCs' travels by destroying a bridge or warp gate, stealing the PCs' vehicles, or luring weaker enemies to the PCs' location to cause havoc. More threatening obstacles may include locking the PCs inside a building and priming it to explode, triggering an avalanche, sabotaging their starship, or provoking a dangerous entity to attack the PCs. To use this hazard, the faction must have already used a tail hazard against the PCs at least once (or have another way of knowing where the PCs are going).

Powerful Allies: The faction strikes a temporary agreement with another group. This grants it the services of a number of allies equal to the number of PCs. The maximum CR of these allies is equal to the faction's power, though the CR of each ally should usually be no greater than the party's APL − 1. These allies assist the faction with whatever he requires, whether directly confronting the PCs or assisting with aid and resources. The alliance lasts a number of days equal to the faction's resources score.

Robbery: The faction attempts to steal something of value from the PCs. If they have stored valuable items at a particular location, the faction attempts a heist, typically stealing between 1% and 100% of the value stored at that location (roll d% and add the faction's power to determine the amount). If the PCs carry all of their wealth with them, the factions instead send pickpockets to steal items from the PCs, using Sleight of Hand and Stealth to purloin what they can and retreat (the modifiers for these skills are equal to the faction's power).

Surprise: The faction launches a surprise attack against the PCs at an inopportune time. The faction could send a powerful agent or team of agents against the PCs while they are already in combat, or when they are resting after running out of resources for the day. The surprise might also be an unsuspected sabotage of a plan or project the PCs are pursuing. The CR of the group of surprise attackers cannot exceed the faction's power score and should not exceed the party's APL - 2.

RANK -3 OR LOWER (20 POINTS OF INFLUENCE, 10 WP)

Backed into A Corner: The faction liquidates assets and calls in debts to gain additional finances. For the purpose of all other hazards used against the PCs for one faction turn, the faction treats its resources, reputation, and power scores as 4 higher

Death of An Ally: The faction callously slays a close ally of the PCs, whose CR cannot eceed the faction's power. The ally should be one who offers significant aid to the PCs or with whom they have a close personal connection. The method of the murder should provide the PCs a solid opportunity to strike back at the faction, since after this hazard, it's likely the PCs will be out for blood.

Enemy of The State: A more severe version of the false witness hazard, the faction has persuaded the local government that the PCs have committed treason. The PCs must not only contend with the faction's antics but must also escape the state authorities' hounding and possible criminal charges. The PCs can still attempt to prove their innocence, but doing so is extremely difficult, taxing the PCs' time and resources. Also, proving their innocence may not be enough, and the PCs may have to work on the fringes of society to achieve their other goals.

Loyalty Beyond Death: The PCs kill a fanatic member of the faction who returns from death as some type of undead. For higher-level parties, multiple slain associates might come back as a group. These unholy abominations pursue the PCs tirelessly, seeking to exact revenge. Unlike most hazards, the faction might not instigate this one on its own.

Mistaken Identity: The faction uses doppelgangers, illusions, or other impostors to make it seem like its members are in one place rather than another. The GM should decide to implement this stratagem before the PCs encounter the faction and use the stats for the impostors, rather than having the PCs fight the real, full-powered individuals. After the PCs kill the impostor, the GM should reveal that it was a fake.

Trump Card: The faction reveals a trump card it has been holding back for just the right moment, increasing its resources, reputation, and power scores as 10 higher for the purpose of a single operation

FACTIONS IN PLAY

These rules primarily present a way for GMs to add some extra effects to nation turns, which would normally suggest that they should be used outside normal play sessions as part of preparation or postgame reconciliation. The GM may, however, wish to include their players in the use of these rules. One of the most effective ways to do this is to give each player a faction to control. This can be a faction related to their character's leadership role (if any), a faction directly opposed to that leadership role, or just any faction within the nation. The key point to drive home is that the factions are largely independent of their characters, and the things factions choose to do should generally be in the faction's best interests, even at the expense of the nation and rulers.

For example, Matt (the GM) has given his players a faction each to manage. Jessie, whose PC is the nation's Warden has been given a prominent gang. Jessie needs to be careful to make sure that the operations the guild performs are sensible for the gang, even though it will make his character's job as Warden harder. This has the advantage of letting Jessie make decisions for the guild that can drive plotlines for his character, but can remove some control from the GM.

When allowing player-controlled factions, a word of warning to the players – the faction is a group of people in the nation that your character has probably never met. Don't get too attached to the faction, or competitive with the other players, even if your factions are opposed. Your factions go to war? Great! Now it's up to the PCs to stop the bloodshed in the streets. Your faction disintegrates due to tension? Excellent! Now you get to run the group that fills the power gap and deal with the fallout. Everything that factions do should be to drive the nation's story in interesting directions, and everyone involved, GM's and players, needs to be on the same page. It is recommended that if any of the players in the group are not interested in controlling a faction, the Simple Faction Rules should be used instead, to minimize bookkeeping and time.

CREATING FACTIONS FOR EXISTING NATIONS

The GM may find that they want to create factions for existing nations. The following rules allow for a number of factions to be created which can be assumed to "have always existed" within a nation.

NUMBER OF FACTIONS

A nation will typically have a number of factions – the larger the nation, to more factions there will be. Take the nation size and divide by 10 (rounding down), then add the result to 2d6. This is the maximum number of factions the nation should have. There is no requirement to create this number, and it is only for guidance – roughly 1/3 of the maximum number will be Major factions, the rest will be Minor factions.

SIZE

Major factions will have a size equal to the nation's size, while minor factions will each be between 10% and 60% of the nation's size (roll 1d6 and multiply by the nation's size, then divide by 10, rounding down). If you wish to vary these numbers from this base figure, roll 2d6 and add the result to the base size, then roll another 2d6 and subtract from the result.

TREASURY

Roll percentile dice. On a result of 1-25, the faction is Poor, and has WP equal to 3 times the faction's size. On a result of 26-75 the faction is average and has WP equal to 5 times the faction's size. On a result of 76-00 the faction is wealthy and has WP equal to 10 times the faction's size. At this stage, you may reduce the factions upkeep cost by 1 per 10 WP spent. All factions should leave at least their upkeep in the treasury before play starts, to pay the first turn's upkeep.

TYPE

Ideally the GM should choose the type of each faction being introduced, but if that isn't possible, you may randomly determine the type by rolling on the Random Faction Type table.

TABLE 9: FACTION TYPE

D10 roll	Faction Type
1	Academic
2	Artistic
3	Civil
4	Foreign
5	Judicial
6	Legal
7	Military
8	Religious
9	Social
10	Trade

SECRECY

Roll on the following table for the secrecy of the faction.

TABLE 10: FACTION SECRECY

D20 roll	Faction Type
1-11	Open
12-17	Covert
18-20	Disguised (roll a second time on faction type to determine what it is disguised as)

GOALS

All factions have one or more goals that they are currently pursuing. Use the following charts as a prompt to help determine some goals – as a rule of thumb, create 1 goal for every 10 size that the faction has.

Subject is probably the most complex thing to determine about a goal, since the subject can be almost anything. Below is a list of possible subjects, though this list is by no means complete, and GMs and players are encouraged to come up with their own: Trade, an individual, a guild, a business, a bank, a university, a leader, a district, a colony, a planet, the nation, the police, the secret service, a religion, a family, an army, a general, a school.

If a nation uses factions, it is advised that the following edict be added to those which are usable by the nation:

EDICT: SUPPORT OR SUPPRESS FACTION

The rulers of a nation may choose to issue an edict to support or suppress particular factions during the Edict Phase of their nation turn. Make a Loyalty check against the Control DC. If successful, the nation may choose to support or suppress. For every BP spent, the nation increases (if supporting) or decreases (if suppressing) a single faction's checks during the Operation phase. For every 5 points by which the nation beats the DC, an additional faction may be supported or suppressed. Every faction beyond the first affected this way causes a -1 penalty to Loyalty checks until the start of the next edict phase.

FACTIONS AND SKILLS

It sometimes becomes necessary for PCs to learn information about factions. This is most commonly achieved through the use of the Gather Information use of the Diplomacy skill. The most common Knowledge skill used is Culture, but the GM may decide that other Knowledge skills are suitable for some types of faction, such as Mysticism for Religious factions. To determine the DC of a check, subtract the size modifier of the faction from 15, and modify this result based on the secrecy of the faction (see Faction Secrecy DC table).

TABLE 11: FACTION SECRECY DC

Secrecy	Knowledge Check DC Modifier
Open	-
Covert	+5
Disguised	-5 (for disguise faction) or +10 (for disguised faction)

SIMPLE FACTION RULES

There are many circumstances where it isn't appropriate to use the complete faction rules, but as the GM you wish to still use factions to affect the nation. Some examples are where the players aren't interested in taking on the roles of factions; you're using factions secretly; or you have a number of important factions and you believe that the faction turn will take too long. Below is a shorthand method of running factions which condenses the full rules into a single die roll per faction, and results in a single effect on the nation or another faction.

For each faction that you are using, create a simplified faction stat-block, containing the name of the faction, the size of the faction, and a goal that the faction is attempting to achieve. During the faction turn, each faction should make a check modified only by the size modifier of the faction. Whichever faction gets the highest result may permanently modify any nation stat by +/- 1, increase or decrease the nation's unrest by 1, adjust any one edict by one step, or alter the size modifier for another faction by +/-1. After this modification is made, the nation's Ruler selects a single faction and rolls a Loyalty check against the nation's Control DC. Success allows the Ruler to modify the size modifier of the selected faction by +/-1. Failure causes +1 Unrest.

FACTIONS IN THE UNIVERSE

The most important thing to remember when using factions in your game is that they are there as a tool to drive stories, to provide story ideas to players and GMs, and to enhance the gaming experience of running a nation. These rules attempt to address the question of what the people in the nation are trying to do while the rulers are trying to lead it, in a way that creates opportunities for intrigue, but doesn't make running a nation significantly more challenging than the original rules. Not everyone will agree with the rulers, not everyone will want the rulers to succeed at their edicts, and until now, those people haven't had a voice. It is the nature of people to find like-minded individuals, and frequently those groups end up trying to achieve something that is far bigger than any of the individual members. When groups like this start being able to affect segments of society, whether it be a planetary council's rulings on arms trade, a ruler's taxation policies, or the immigration policy of a galactic empire, then they become factions. A big and powerful enough faction can be likened to a political party in a modern democratic society – able to influence the entire nation and possibly extending beyond.

PURE OF THOUGHT
PURE OF PURPOSE
PURE OF RACE

SAMPLE FACTIONS

CRUSADER ORDER

LE Public Military Faction
Size 80
Size Modifier +8
Power 12
Resources 10
Reputation 8
WP 240
Tension 2
Information DC 11
Major Goal: Reclaim planets which once belonged to the nation but have been taken by enemies (DC 28)
Minor Goals: Restore honor to the nation and its people (DC 19), quash those with heretical beliefs (DC 20)
Common Operations: Advance Goal, Aid Faction, Aid Nation, Alliance, Recruitment, Subvert Nation

INSURGENT ORGANIZATION

CG Disguised Military (as Social) Faction
Size 21
Size Modifier +2
Power 6
Resources 2
Reputation 4
WP 105
Tension 2
Information DC 23 (8 for disguise)
Major Goal: Stop the nation's corrupt and destructive government from ruining the lives of the nation's people (DC 24)
Minor Goals: Make known the crimes committed by the government, ensure that the people of the city are safe and well-fed (DC 16)
Common Operations: Advance Goal, Faction Conflict, Publicity, Recruitment, Reduce Upkeep, Spying, Subvert Faction, Subvert Nation

MEGACORP

N Open Trade Faction
Size 467
Size Modifier +46
Power 46
Resources 50
Reputation 48
WP 4670
Tension 7
Information DC 0
Major Goal: Ensure dominion of intergalactic trade (DC 36)
Minor Goals: Keep local regulators and competition under control (DC 21), Ensure that leaders are complicit in market domination (DC 25)
Common Operations: Advance Goal, Aid Faction, Aid Nation, Earn Wealth, Lobbying, Publicity, Reduce Upkeep, Relieve Tension, Subvert Faction

POWERFUL CRIME FAMILY

NE Disguised Legal Faction (Disguised as Trade)
Size 51
Size Modifier +5
Power 7
Resources 6
Reputation 6
WP 510
Tension 4
Information DC 5 (20 for disguise)
Major Goal: Eliminate rival families and businesses (DC 25)
Minor Goals: Keep local law enforcement turned in the opposite direction (DC 22), undercut legal business to promote their own (DC 21)
Common Operations: Advance Goal, Aid Faction, Earn Wealth, Faction Conflict, Lobbying, Recruitment, Spying, Subvert Faction, Subvert Nation

SPACE PIRATE FLEET

CN Covert Social Faction
Size 121
Size Modifier +12
Power 15
Resources 15
Reputation 12
WP 605
Tension 3
Information DC 3
Major Goal: Obtain wealth by plundering the ships of those who fail to ally with them (DC 24)
Minor Goals: Maintain safe relations with allied nations (DC 26), Scare off any pirate factions which would challenge the fleet (DC 16)
Common Operations: Advance Goal, Alliance, Earn Wealth, Faction Conflict, New Goal, Recruitment, Relieve Tension, Subvert Nation

STARFARER'S GUILD

N Open Academic Faction
Size 91
Size Modifier +9
Power 9
Resources 12
Reputation 12
WP 910
Tension 1
Information DC 1
Major Goal: Expand knowledge of the universe through research and expeditions (DC 24)
Minor Goals: Work to aid researchers and scholars throughout the nation (DC 19), Persuade the nation to share its knowledge with the galaxy (DC 21)
Common Operations: Advance Goal, Aid Faction, Alliance, Earn Wealth, Lobbying, Publicity, Recruitment

VERBAL DUELS

When two charismatic individuals have rival goals, a simple roll may not be sufficient to decide the outcome of their interaction. Verbal duels are battles of words rather than weapons, in which skilled duelists use facts, wordplay, and rhetorical flourishes against each other to win arguments or sway crowds. This kind of duel typically takes place in front of an audience, but the rules presented below can also be used for private discussions, or even large debates where multiple viewpoints conflict in an arena of opinion.

Many of the following rules assume the duel is between two chief opponents and is conducted in front of onlookers the duelists are attempting to sway—indeed, sometimes a duelist and her allies can improve their odds by discerning the crowd's biases and playing to them. A verbal duel's audience might be an angry mob, the members of a ruling council or senate, the jury during a court proceeding,

or socialites at a party—anywhere two characters might best each other with wit and cutting remarks. In some cases, there might not be an audience, and the two individuals are haggling to decide something between the two of them.

SETTING THE SCENE

It is important to set the scene of a verbal duel so the PCs participating in it know what is at stake. Sometimes these conflicts are simple, two-person struggles where each duelist attempts to shut down the other's argument.

These can be fun and whimsical affairs—two duelists may engage in an argument about the merits of competing performers or martial techniques, and the loser has to buy the next round of drinks. Verbal duels can also be nerve-wracking conflicts in which the participants spar over some serious issue, such as a debate in front of a council of war chiefs on the merits of peace or war. It is also important to determine whether or not the verbal duel involves an audience that can be swayed. Crowds often have their own motivations and predilections, and certain tactics during the duel will have a greater or lesser effect on its members, which can affect the results. Determining the nature of such crowd attitudes and how to affect them can sometimes grant a powerful advantage.

ASSESSING AN AUDIENCE

A duelist and any of their allies who have at least 10 minutes to interact with the crowd before a verbal duel begins can attempt a check to determine an audience bias (see below).

Succeeding at a DC 15 Sense Motive check allows a duelist or one of their allies to learn one of the crowd's biases. Sometimes assessing an audience can have a higher DC if the GM feels the crowd is particularly tight-lipped or their biases are otherwise obscured. Once a character attempts a Sense Motive check to assess an audience's biases, she can't retry that check, even if she has more time to study the audience.

AUDIENCE BIASES

When a verbal duel features an audience that can be swayed, the GM determines any types of dueling tactics that the audience either favors or disfavors. If a crowd has a negative bias against a particular tactic, duelists take a −2 penalty on the associated

skill check when using that tactic. If the audience has a positive bias toward a tactic, duelists gain a +2 bonus on the associated skill check when using that tactic. Some audiences may have even stronger biases, imparting penalties and bonuses that range from −5 to +5. In cases where a verbal duel has no audience, there are no audience biases to track.

The GM is free to create whatever biases she would like, but each bias should be both reasonable and fit with the attitudes of the audience. A group of hard-minded scientists might have a negative bias toward allegory but applaud logic, while a rowdy group of bar-goers could have a very positive bias toward mockery but start booing and hissing at logic. A GM does not need to create biases for all tactics, but having a handful of them can make the debate more interesting and flavorful and allow the duelist's allies to help affect the duel by assessing and seeding the audience.

SEEDING AN AUDIENCE

Once she knows one or more of the crowd's biases, a character can attempt to seed the crowd and gain benefits for her side of the verbal duel. A GM may rule that seeding a crowd is impossible or very difficult. For example, seeding a jury in a highly structured society may be very difficult, and is probably illegal or even practically impossible.

Audiences that can be seeded allow allies of each duelist to urge the argument in other directions. To attempt to seed an audience, a character must spend at least 10 minutes with members of the crowd before the verbal duel begins, choose one of the audience's biases she knows, and succeed at a Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check with a DC of at least 15. The GM may rule that the DC is higher due to the ally's lack of familiarity with the crowd or other factors—as high as 1.5 x the duelist's CR + 15 or 20 for especially challenging situations.

If the character chose to seed a bias and succeeds at the check, the duelist of her choice gains an edge that can be spent during the verbal duel. If the character fails the check, she can't attempt to seed the same audience again. If the character fails the check by 5 or more, no one can attempt to seed the audience.

Both sides can attempt to seed the audience before the duel begins and can even seed the same biases, but a given duelist can only benefit from a single successful seeding of a particular bias.

EDGES

Edges are gained either by seeding a bias, using some trick of a verbal dueling tactic, when an opponent decides to end an exchange, or due to some other effect. A duelist can spend an edge to reroll an associated skill check for a verbal duel tactic.

DUELING WITH WORDS

Often, how a duel starts and which duelist goes first is determined by the particulars of the scene. For instance, if the dueling PC is the defendant in a court case, she may be on the defensive, being forced to counter in the first exchange after the prosecution opens the duel. A PC trying to elicit a wealthy patron's help may open the duel, asking for favor and presenting the case for why granting aid is in the company's best interest. A playful battle of wits during a dinner party might start when the party's host chooses a guest to begin the first exchange.

At the start of a verbal duel, each duelist gains a pool of determination. Determination is a mix of personal magnetism, native intelligence, the ability to gauge and react to an opponent's tactics, and any other mitigating factors pertinent to the duel. As the verbal duel progresses, exchanges take place and the stakes increase. A duelist loses determination equal to the exchange's ante each time she either concedes or loses an exchange. Other factors may also decrease a duelist's determination.

When a duelist's determination is reduced to 0 or lower, the verbal duel ends with her defeat.

Determination: A duelist's base determination is the highest of her Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma modifiers (minimum 0) + her total level or CR.

One of the main ways to adjust determination is to consider if one of the characters has a social advantage or disadvantage. While the GM is free to determine the particulars of a character's social advantage or disadvantage in a situation, the four default categories are extreme advantage, significant advantage, significant disadvantage, and extreme disadvantage. A character at an extreme advantage multiplies her determination by 2 and gains 5 edges. A character with a significant advantage multiplies her determination by 1.5 and gains 3 edges. A character at a significant disadvantage multiplies her determination by 3/4. Finally, a character at an extreme disadvantage multiplies her determination by 1/2 and loses 3 of her starting edges (minimum 0).

TACTICS

Tactics are the weapons of verbal dueling. At the start of each duel, each duelist can assign her skills to tactics that have those skills associated with them. A duelist can only assign a given skill to a single tactic, so if a duelist assigned Profession (soldier) to allegory, she couldn't also assign it to emotional appeal (if a character has ranks in multiple profession skills, they may divide them among tactics as they so wish). A duelist might apply bonuses or penalties to a tactic's associated skill check due to the audience's bias, as well as from the following considerations.

Last Tactic: It's often considered bad form and awkward to counter with the last tactic used against you. When you do so, you'll take a –2 penalty on the associated skill check for the tactic. For instance, if your opponent uses mockery against you, countering with a mockery tactic is possible, but you take the –2 penalty on your associated skill check when you do.

Repetition of Tactics: Using the same tactic over and over again is not an effective way to win verbal duels. Over the course of a duel, each time you win an exchange with a particular tactic, you take a cumulative –2 penalty on all associated skill checks when you use the tactic again. At that point, the audience and your opponent have both seen some of the best you had to offer with that tactic.

Tactic Interaction: Some tactics are not as effective at countering other tactics. Others are more effective at countering specific tactics. For instance, it is harder to counter a logical argument with mockery, and most tactics have a hard time foiling a verbal trap set by baiting. Most tactic descriptions feature an "Interaction" entry detailing that tactic's conflicts and synergies.

VERBAL EXCHANGES

Verbal duels are fought in a series of exchanges. Each exchange is an argumentative back-and-forth in which each duelist attempts to gain the upper hand over her opponent and decrease the opponent's determination to continue the debate. The end of an exchange might signal the end of the verbal duel or mark a change in the flow of the debate's conversation.

At the start of each exchange, one of the duelists chooses a tactic as an opening, makes his associated skill check for that tactic, increases the ante of the exchange from 0 to 1, and sets the current exchange DC to the result of his check. The ante of the exchange is an ever-changing (usually increasing) value within an exchange; the duelist who either loses the exchange or decides to end the exchange reduces his determination by an amount equal to the exchange's ante.

At this point, the opponent must decide whether to counter the opening or end the exchange. If she still has 1 or more determination remaining, she can then choose to open a new exchange or concede the duel. If she decides to counter the opening, she first increases the ante by 1, then chooses a tactic, and attempts the associated skill check.

If that skill check exceeds the current DC of the exchange, the exchange continues. That roll sets the new exchange DC for the original duelist to counter if he decides not to end the exchange. If the countering duelist's check does not exceed the current DC of the exchange, she loses the exchange (reducing her determination as appropriate), though she can spend one or more of her edges to reroll the associated skill check, potentially multiple times.

If she decides to end the exchange, she reduces her determination by the exchange's ante, and her opponent gains 1 edge.

Duelists repeat this cycle until one decides to end an exchange, a duelist fails to counter her opponent's tactic, or the duel otherwise ends. When a duelist decides to end an exchange or fails to counter her opponent's tactic, her determination is reduced by an amount equal to the current ante of the exchange. Whichever duelist ends an exchange or fails to counter her opponent's tactic can either open a new exchange or concede the verbal duel if she still has determination remaining.

ENDING A DUEL

At the end of any exchange, either duelist can call to end the duel, and set the terms for ending the duel. When they do this, it can be considered a tie if both sides agree, or one side can call for the other to concede. A verbal duel ends immediately if one duelist's determination is reduced to 0 or lower. In these cases, the other duelist wins. In either case where there is a victor, the victorious duelist achieves some social advantage from his success, usually defined by the scene of the verbal duel. A victory or a defeat in a verbal duel might also lead to unexpected complications.

For instance, a duelist may enter a verbal duel with her rival, a corrupt advisor. After succeeding, she may not only convince the duke that his advisor was plotting behind his back, but also inadvertently catch the eye of the duchess, who invites her to a secret tryst.

Table 12: Verbal Dueling Tactics

TACTIC	ASSOCIATED SKILLS	DESCRIPTION	INTERACTION	SPECIAL
Allegory	Culture, Mysticism, Profession (any)	You use a fable or parable featuring an underlying message to frame the debate.	You take a −2 penalty on the associated skill checks when using allegory as a counter.	If you use allegory to open an exchange, and your opponent chooses to end the exchange rather than attempt to counter your allegory, increase the exchange's current ante by 2 (before your opponent's determination is reduced) instead of gaining an edge.
Baiting	Bluff, Intimidate, Sense Motive	You hurl taunts and barbs, or level false dichotomies, goading your opponent into a trap.	A duelist using a tactic other than presence takes a −2 penalty on the associated skill check when countering baiting.	If your opponent ends an exchange rather than counter your baiting, your baiting doesn't suffer the normal −2 penalty on future associated skill checks for winning an exchange.
Emotional Appeal	Bluff, Mysticism, Profession (any), Sense Motive	You make an argument appealing to the emotional desires of your opponent or audience.	You gain a +2 bonus on the associated skill check when using an emotional appeal to counter logic, presence, and rhetoric.	Successfully countering with an emotional appeal increases the exchange's ante by an additional 1
Flattery	Bluff, Culture, Diplomacy	You ingratiate yourself to your opponent, causing him to either let down his guard or to gain some other advantage.	You take a −2 penalty on the associated skill check when using flattery to counter mockery. You gain a +2 bonus on the associated skill check when using flattery to counter presence.	If you win an exchange with flattery, reduce the ante of the exchange by 2 (minimum 0) and gain an edge that can be used with any skill check in a verbal duel.
Logic	Culture, Diplomacy, Profession	You present facts, figures, and expert testimony	You gain a +2 bonus on the associated skill check when you use logic as an opener. You take a −2 penalty on the associated skill check when you use logic to counter baiting, emotional appeal, mockery, red herring, or wit.	When you win an exchange with logic, you gain 1 edge that you can only use with logic.
Mockery	Culture, Bluff, Intimidate	You use personal attacks, mudslinging, or creative insults to belittle your opponent.	You take a −2 penalty on the associated skill check when you use mockery to counter logic and wit.	You gain a +2 bonus on the associated skill check when you use mockery to counter a tactic with a negative audience bias, and if you win the exchange with mockery against such a tactic, increase the ante by 1. You take a −2 penalty on the associated skill check when you use mockery to counter a tactic with a positive audience bias, though if you succeed, reduce the ante by 1.
Presence	Culture, Diplomacy Intimidate, Mysticism	You make a show of confidence or true nobility or you simply put on airs.	You gain a +2 bonus on the associated skill check when you use presence to counter baiting or mockery. You takes a −2 penalty on the associated skill check when using presence to counter allegory, emotional appeal, or red herring.	If you win an exchange with presence, you regain 1 determination (to a maximum amount equal to your starting determination).
Red Herring	Bluff, Mysticism, Sense Motive	You use this tactic to distract your opponent or the audience from the heart of the debate, avoiding the danger of the current exchange.	When using a red herring as a counter, you can choose to gain a +4 bonus on the associated skill check. If you do so and succeed, instead of continuing and escalating the exchange as normal, you reduce the ante to 0 and automatically win the exchange. Unlike normal, you start the next exchange.	If you fail by 5 or more when using a red herring, you treat the ante as 2 higher for the purpose of losing the exchange.
Rhetoric	Bluff, Diplomacy, Culture	You use versatile debating tactics, applying advantageous rhetorical devices to squash your opponent's arguments.	The penalty for repeating rhetoric is only -1 rather than -2	Since rhetoric involves subtle word choices that most audiences don't notice consciously, it is very rare for an audience to have a negative bias toward rhetoric.
Wit	Culture, Profession, Sense Motive	You use humor or cleverness to gain an advantage over your opponent	You gain a +1 bonus on the associated skill check when using wit to counter mockery, presence, and rhetoric	When using wit, you can choose to gain a +2 bonus on the associated skill check. If you do so and fail the associated skill check, decrease your determination by 1. If you fail by 5 or more, you take a −2 penalty on wit's associated skill checks for the rest of the duel.

MULTIDIRECTIONAL DUELS

In unusual circumstances, a verbal duel might involve more than two independent duelists. In this case, the rules work the same with the following modification.

First, when a duelist opens an exchange, she selects one of the other duelists and the exchange continues between the two of them. When that exchange's winner is determined or the exchange ends, the winner must then start an exchange with a different duelist. This goes on until only one duelist remains.

TEAM DUELS

Team duels are a versatile option that can represent a variety of situations where there are several or many people representing one side of a debate, from a team of adventurers attempting to reason with a mob of angry peasants to a legislative body attempting to deliberate on a new bill. Team duels are particularly useful in adventures because they involve the entire party, rather than just the character with the most social skills.

In general, team duels work best when both sides have at least three participants, unless the outnumbered side possesses a significant advantage in skill against the other. While a multidirectional team duel is possible, it is not recommended. Team duels generally don't have an audience because often the audience participates as one of the two teams instead.

In a team duel, each team shares determination among all members, based on the best determination among members of the team. Since this gives some advantage to a team with a single powerful duelist, the GM can choose to multiply the determination of a particularly large group with a strong common belief or opinion by two or more (depending on the size) to represent the difficulty of swaying their unified resolve.

In a solo duel, when a duelist wins an exchange with a given tactic, that tactic takes a cumulative –2 penalty for the rest of the verbal duel. In a team duel, when a duelist wins an exchange, that character takes a –2 penalty on skill checks associated with all of her tactics instead.

Hearing many different voices, even if they have similar opinions, lends credibility to a team's arguments.

PERSONAL BRANDS

Just as factions can become powerful and influential, so to can individuals achieve a level of notoriety and preeminence which alters how others interact with them. The system of personal brands is designed to allow characters their own role in building a reputation, enabling them to interact more easily with characters and factions and even allowing them to acquire loyal followers and favors.

FACETS OF A PERSONAL BRAND

A wide variety of traits can inspire people to follow a budding leader, so instead of representing a PC's reputation as a single statistic, this system divides her public personal brand into six different facets: Charm, Genius, Heroism, Altruism, Acumen, and Guile. For each facet, a PC has a number of Facet Ranks ranging from 0 to 10, where 0 means the character is generally believed to lack that quality, and 10 means the character is seen as a paragon of it. The term Facet Rank is sometimes shortened to Rank, except in situations where it could be confused with skill rank. The meaning of each facet and its general effects on play are summarized below.

Charm: Charm represents a character's personal magnetism and force of personality. A character with a reputation for being charming has an easier time than most gaining access to social events, whether they're artistic performances or high-society balls. Charming characters have an easier time winning strangers' trust.

Genius: Genius represents a character's reputation for brilliance, whether measured in terms of knowledge or strategic vision. Characters with a reputation for genius have an easier time convincing others to follow their plans and trust them as intellectual authorities.

Heroism: Heroism represents a character's reputation for bravery and perseverance. It also captures the effectiveness with which a character earns admiration for her most exceptional deeds. Characters with a reputation for heroism are more likely to be asked to fight or face seemingly insurmountable challenges.

Altruism: Altruism represents a character's reputation as an upstanding member of society who gives of herself to improve the lives of others and who is capable of persevering through great hardships. Characters with a reputation for altruism have an easier time convincing others of their causes and inspiring others to make altruisms of their own.

Acumen: Acumen represents a character's reputation for having good judgment. Characters known for their acumen are more likely to be sought out for advice in complex matters, ranging from tangled interpersonal disputes to questions of morality, philosophy, or religion.

Guile: Guile represents a character's ability to operate effectively in the shadows, whether as a sly politician skilled in backroom dealings or a shrewd investigator who digs up dirt on her enemies. A character's skill at guile is likely to be less widely known than the other facets of her personal brand, but it still helps her cultivate contacts in just the right places.

These six facets do not represent an exhaustive list of metrics that PCs can leverage to rally supporters. With small adjustments, a GM can replace any of these facets with other options to suit a particular campaign.

When interacting with a faction for the first time (which may include threatening or angering them), the PCs start with an amount of influence with the faction equal to their highest facet rank among them.

If the character is in a nation leadership position, they may use their highest facet rank in place of their position's normal ability score modifier to determine the bonus they grant to nation checks.

STARTING RANK

Before a character can become a true agent of change, she must build some personal clout. A PC's personal brand does not necessarily begin as a blank slate when they start actively working on their reputation, however. Characters can begin using this rules system when they have 1 Rank in various facets based on their existing abilities or prior deeds. Characters whose mental ability scores are 14 or higher begin with 1 Rank in certain facets: a high Intelligence score grants 1 Rank in Genius, a high Wisdom score grants 1 Rank in Acumen, and a high Charisma score grants 1 Rank in Charm. The GM can also assign a starting Rank of 1 in one or more of the other three facets based on a character's prior actions. For example, a PC who unflinchingly faced great challenges earns 1 Rank in Heroism. Meanwhile, a PC who engaged in charity or self-denial demonstrates her willingness to altruism and begins with 1 Rank in Altruism. Finally, a PC who acted outside the rules of law or society with cleverness and subtlety begins with 1 Rank in Guile.

TRENDING PHASE

PCs leverage their influence in periods called trending phases, which are abstract representations of time spent building up their reputations or directing their agents to complete missions on their behalf. These phases take place separately from normal gameplay; a player typically makes all related decisions at the start of each trending phase, and those decisions stay in effect until the start of the next trending phase. Generally, a trending phase should occur once per nation turn, and can be done as part of a nation turn. If nation turn sequences are not used, PCs should experience about four trending phases per level. If you are running a campaign in which leveling up is infrequent, or if you wish to condense personal brand-building into a limited portion of your campaign, consider increasing the number of opportunities the PCs receive.

At the beginning of a trending phase, each PC chooses from one of two actions: developing her personal brand (see below) or launching an Engagement. The phase ends when the PC has chosen her action and made the associated decisions and actions (such as an Engagement check). As the PC increases her Facet Ranks, she unlocks several benefits. Unless otherwise specified, each benefit can be used only once per trending phase

DEVELOPING A PERSONAL BRAND

A PC might decide to spend her trending phase publicly demonstrating her prowess and character, giving her the chance to increase the Rank of one of her personal brand's facets by 1. To do so, the PC first selects a task she wants to perform to improve her Rank and determines what skill would be appropriate for it. Then she attempts a skill check associated with that task, with a DC equal to 15 + twice the Rank she is trying to achieve. Generally, the skill used must be associated with the personal brand facet the PC wishes to improve (see **Table 13: Personal Brand Skills**), but other skills may be deemed appropriate for certain circumstances. Profession, Culture, and Diplomacy may always be used for Personal brand checks

If she succeeds at the check, her Rank in that facet increases by 1. The scope of a PC's personal brand is limited by her character level. Her Facet Ranks for a facet can't exceed her character level. Checks to increase a PC's Facet Ranks represent placing the PC's skills squarely in the spotlight. As a result, PCs can't take 10 on these checks or receive direct assistance in the moment, such as aid another from other characters. Effects that boost PCs' skills and abilities apply only if their duration is at least 24 hours.

TABLE 13: PERSONAL BRAND SKILLS

Personal Brand Facet	Associated Skills
Charm	Acrobatics, Bluff, Disguise
Genius	Computers, Life Science, Physical Science
Heroism	Athletics, Intimidate, Piloting
Acumen	Mysticism, Perception, Sense Motive
Altruism	Medicine, Survival, Sense Motive
Guile	Bluff, Sleight of Hand, Stealth

GMs may also rule that certain achievements and actions that PCs take while adventuring increase a certain facet.

DIMINISHING PERSONAL BRAND

At the GM's discretion, PCs can lose Facet Ranks for public acts that go strongly against one of the facets. For example, a PC who engages in cowardly behavior could lose a Rank in Heroism. Losing Facet Ranks should not be common, and a PC's Rank in a facet can't fall below 0.

PERSONAL BRAND BENEFITS

As the PCs gain more Facet Ranks, they gain the following benefits, summarized in the table on the following page.

Agents: When she first gains access to the personal brand rules, a PC gains a number of agents equal to twice her total starting number of Facet Ranks, reflecting her newfound renown. Each time a PC increases her Facet Ranks in a facet, she rallies two additional agents to her cause. These agents represent people who flock to the PC for a variety of reasons, whether they are ardent admirers of the PC's cause, members of the PC's staff, or even people the PC has blackmailed into assisting her. Agents are generally much less capable than the PCs and not strong enough to accompany the PCs on adventures. However, as a PC increases her Facet Ranks, she unlocks the ability to direct these agents to perform Engagements on her behalf. Particularly dangerous Engagements can cause the PC to lose agents, which she can replace through the recover agents Engagement.

TABLE 14: PERSONAL BRAND BENEFITS BY RANK

Facet Ranks	Benefit
1	Agents
2	Basic Engagements
3	Skill Bonus +2
4	Admirers (Indifferent)
5	Accomplice
6	Intermediate Engagements
7	Skill Bonus +4
8	Admirers (Hostile)
9	Advanced Engagements
10	Master of Engagements

Basic Engagements: A PC who has at least 2 Ranks in a facet can send her agents on basic Engagements related to that facet. Basic Engagements are relatively safe and straightforward, requiring few agents to complete.

Skill Bonus: A PC can sometimes leverage her personal brand to gain a bonus on a skill check. A PC can spend a resolve point to apply a skill bonus to a single check for one of the facets in which she has at least 3 Ranks. She can apply this bonus after rolling her skill check, but before the results are announced. The exact skills to which this bonus can be applied depend upon the facet (see Table: Personal brand skills), although the skill bonuses can be applied to Diplomacy, Culture and Profession checks regardless of facet. The skill bonus begins at +2 and increases to +4 when she has 7 Ranks in the appropriate facet. For example, a PC with 7 Ranks in Heroism and 3 Ranks in Guile can spend a resolve point to grant herself either a +4 bonus on an Intimidate check or a +2 bonus on a Stealth check.

Admirers: The PC's personal brand has earned her fans and sympathetic souls. By spending a resolve point, she can leverage her reputation to improve the starting attitude of one NPC with an attitude of indifferent or friendly. She can increase the NPC's attitude by one step as long as she has at least 4 Ranks in a facet related to that NPC (see below). When she has 8 Ranks in a facet, she can also use this ability to improve the attitude of NPCs whose starting attitude is unfriendly. The following list is incomplete; other categories of NPCs can be related to various facets at the GM's discretion.

Charm: Artists, merchants, nobles;
Genius: Academics, mages;
Heroism: Athletes, police, soldiers;
Altruism: Activists, healers, philanthropists;
Acumen: Clergy, philosophers;
Guile: Criminals, politicians.

Accomplice: If a PC has at least 5 ranks in a Personal brand, she may gain the service of an accomplice who acts on her orders. The accomplice possesses a maximum CR equal to the PC's -2 and is strong enough to adventure with the PCs. Alternatively, the accomplice can be sent on Engagements to grant a +2 bonus to Engagements checks. An accomplice cannot gain points in any facet. In addition, if the PC has at least 5 ranks in a Personal brand, she can use the Recover Agents action once per Personal brand turn without having it count towards her Engagements per turn.

Intermediate Engagements: A PC who has at least 6 Ranks in a facet can send her agents on intermediate Engagements related to that facet. Intermediate Engagements can be more complex and dangerous than basic Engagements.

Advanced Engagements: A PC who has at least 9 Ranks in a facet can send her agents on advanced Engagements related to that facet. Advanced Engagements can be more complex and dangerous than basic and intermediate Engagements.

Master of Engagements: A PC who has 10 Ranks in at least one facet can perform one additional Engagement per phase related to one of the facets in which she has 10 Ranks, so long as she has enough agents to do so and even if she has already performed an Engagement in that phase.
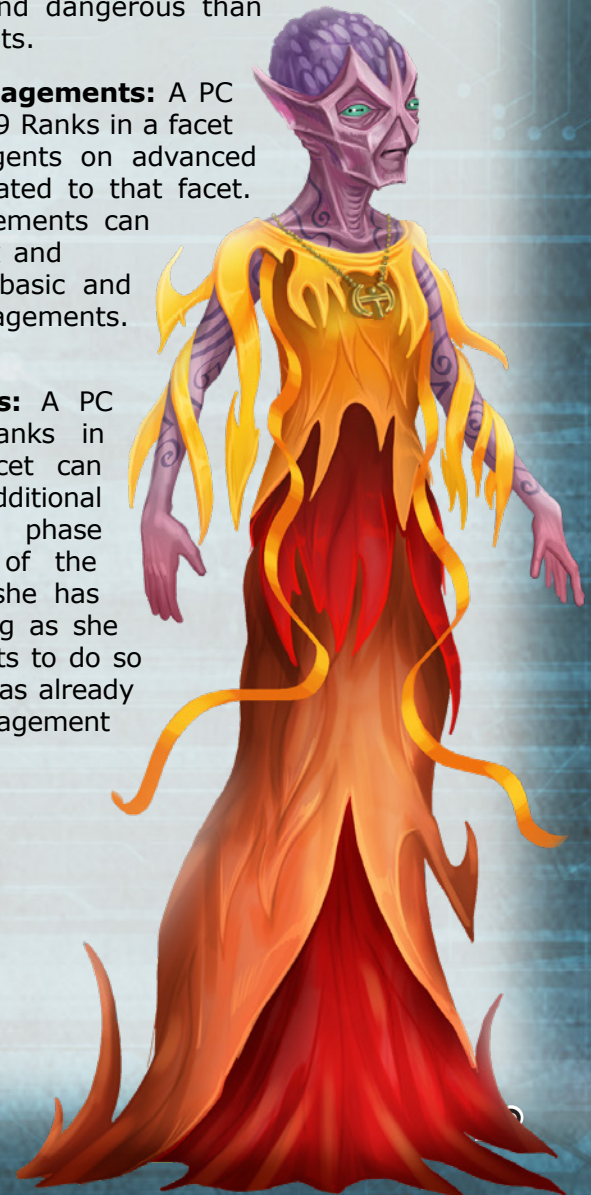
ENGAGEMENTS

Instead of using her trending phase to develop her personal brand, a PC can send her agents to perform an Engagement on her behalf. A PC gains access to basic Engagements (see page 74) for a given facet when she has 2 Ranks in that facet, and she gains access to intermediate Engagements when she has 6 Ranks in that facet and advanced Engagements when she has 9 ranks. A PC can initiate only one Engagement per phase. She must decide which Engagement she intends to perform at the start of the trending phase. To determine the outcome of the Engagement, the PC rolls an Engagement check. An Engagement check is a d20 roll with a bonus equal to the number of agents the PC sends on the mission, and its DC is set by the specific Engagement. A PC must choose how many agents to send before the roll, up to a maximum of the number of Facet Ranks she has in the relevant facet. Engagements always fail on a roll of 1 on the die and always succeed on a natural 20.

Persistent Engagements: While most Engagements conclude at the end of a trending phase, persistent Engagements begin the first time the PC succeeds at the DC 17 Engagement check for that Engagement and continue until the PC calls back her agents. A PC can maintain only one type of persistent Engagement at a time, and she must send at least five agents; these agents are not available for other Engagements until the persistent Engagement ends. Persistent Engagements must generally be focused on one location (at the GM's discretion, though generally limited to one colony); a PC can maintain the same persistent Engagement in as many locations as she has enough agents to support.

Risky Engagements: Some Engagements are dangerous to agents' safety or morale. If a PC fails a risky Engagement's check by 5 or more, or if she rolls a natural 1 on the check, she loses all of the agents she sent on the mission. These losses could represent the agents' imprisonment, their death, or their abandonment of the PC's cause.

BASIC ENGAGEMENTS

Filter Rumors (Acumen): Under your direction, your agents are skilled at separating fact from fiction. Once before the next trending phase, after you or another PC receives the results of a Diplomacy check to gather information, you can ask the GM to roll a secret Engagement check, using the number of agents you sent on this Engagement for its bonus. If the check results in a success, the GM tells you whether the information gathered is mostly true, has elements of truth, or is mostly false. If the check fails, the GM tells you that the information gathered is mostly true (regardless of its actual veracity). The Engagement check DC is generally 15, but if someone is actively spreading false information, the DC increases to 10 + the CR of the rumormonger (maximum 20).

Gather Information (Charm, Genius): Under your direction, your agents scour their various sources for relevant information. You can use the result of your Engagement check in place of a single skill check made to do research or gather information. Your agents must spend the required time, but this research takes none of your time.

Last-Ditch Effort (Any Facet, Persistent): When you perform a risky Engagement while this persistent Engagement is in effect, you can gain a +2 bonus on the Engagement check. If you do, you lose at least half of the agents you sent on the risky Engagement, even if it is successful. Beginning this Engagement requires a successful DC 17 Engagement check.

Manufacturing (Any Facet): You can call on your agents' practical expertise to manufacture items on your behalf, allowing you to use the result of your Engagement check in place of a skill check to create an item, using your level in place of ranks in the skill to determine the maximum level of item that can be crafted. You do not have to expend the time crafting, but your agents do, and you must still pay the raw materials cost for any items your agents manufacture.

Provide Distraction (Heroism, Risky): Your agents may not be individually strong, but your example has inspired them, and they'd risk anything to help you, even in dangerous circumstances. At the beginning of combat near a populated area, roll an Engagement check against a DC equal to 10 + the CR of the most challenging creature in the fight (maximum DC 25). On a success, each PC gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls or to Armor Class as if benefiting from the aid another action for the first round of combat.

Recover Agents (Any Facet): If a risky Engagement goes awry, a PC may lose the agents she sent on the Engagement. A PC who has fewer than the maximum number of agents her Facet Ranks would allow—that is, fewer than twice her total number of Facet Ranks—can launch an Engagement to rescue lost agents (or recruit new ones, if that flavor is preferred). To do so, she must attempt a DC 10 Engagement check, using the facet of her choice. On a failed check, she recovers one agent. On a successful check, she recovers two agents, plus one additional agent for every 5 by which the result exceeds the Engagement check's DC.

Smuggle (Guile, Risky): Your agents smuggle a relatively small or innocuous object (such as a weapon or evidence to be used for blackmail) into a hiding place on someone else's property. The DC of the Engagement check is equal to 10 + the CR of the captain or leader of any guards present.

Tend Wounds (Altruism, Persistent): Your agents help you tend to the injured, including you. If you succeed at a DC 17 Engagement check, you receive one of the following benefits for the duration of the Engagement: either everyone in the tended community gains a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves against disease, or you receive the benefits of long-term care whenever you rest for at least 8 hours in the area in which the Engagement is in effect.

INTERMEDIATE ENGAGEMENTS

Bad Advice (Genius or Acumen, Risky): You place agents among a target's advisors or messengers to feed him the information that will lead him to make wrong choices. At some point in this trending phase when your target must decide between two options, he must succeed at a Sense Motive check opposed by your Engagement check result or choose the option you favor or that benefits you.

Bolster Courage (Heroism, Persistent): You send your agents to tell tales of your bravery, bolstering your own courage. If you succeed at a DC 17 Engagement check, you receive a +2 morale bonus on saves against fear.

Guards (Altruism, Risky): You are accompanied by a guard who watches your back, and agents in the field listen carefully for any potential dangers. If an opponent tries to ambush or sneak up on you, that character's Stealth check result must exceed both your Perception check result and the result of your Engagement check to catch you unawares. On a failed Engagement check, your enemies eliminate your guards before engaging you.

Poison (Guile, Risky): Your agents slip a dose of poison or other material (which you must pay for) into an NPC's food as it is being prepared and delivered. Attempt an Engagement check with a DC equal to the CR of the target NPC. On a success, your agents deliver the substance without detection. The NPC attempts Fortitude saves against the poison as normal.

Rumormonger (Any Facet, Persistent): Your agents improve your cover by spreading false rumors, destroying evidence, and intimidating anyone who asks too many questions. If you succeed at a DC 17 Engagement check, anyone trying to see through a disguise or false identity you've assumed takes a –2 penalty on Perception and Sense Motive skills checks to do so.

Safe Haven (Heroism or Altruism): Your agents find you a quiet place to rest in safe anonymity, usually somewhere out of the way such as a barn or cavern. Anyone trying to locate you must first succeed at a Diplomacy or Survival check opposed by your Engagement check.

Sermonize (Acumen, Persistent): Your agents spread your philosophical or religious beliefs. If you succeed at a DC 17 Engagement check, you gain a +2 bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks against people who share your religion or philosophy, or who follow closely aligned practices, at the GM's discretion.

Spread Propaganda (Charm or Guile, Persistent): Your agents spread propaganda on your behalf. If you succeed at a DC 17 Engagement check, you gain a +2 bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks to either reinforce this same disinformation or deceive someone relying on it.

They're with Me (Charm or Guile, Risky): You place agents inside an enemy's forces. Once before your next trending phase, when you encounter a group of low-level, unnamed enemy agents, the total number of which can't exceed the number of agents you sent on this Engagement, compare the result of your Engagement check against a DC of 15 or a DC of 10 + the Sense Motive modifier of the agents' commander (whichever is higher). If you succeed, this "enemy" force is instead composed of the agents you placed earlier, allowing you to avoid combat and potentially resupply or rest. You can't use this Engagement to replace named NPCs.

ADVANCED ENGAGEMENTS

Operation (Any Facet): You may have your agents engage in complex affairs of state as if they were a faction. You may perform one operation of your choice as if you and your agents were a faction. You use the higher of your ranks betweens Guile and Heroism as your faction's effective Power, the higher of your ranks between Altruism and Acumen for Reputation, and the higher of your ranks between Charm and Genius for Resources. Your effective faction size for these operations is 1. This impromptu faction may not undertake any operations which would modify it's faction scores.

Palm Greaser (Charm, Genius, or Guile, Risky, Persistent): You place agents on the inside of a colony's government, allowing you to find a way out in the event you are ever arrested or taken prisoner. Whenever you or your allies would be taken, compare the results of your Engagement check against a DC of 17 or a DC of 12 + the Sense Motive modifier of whomever is charge of enforcing law in the colony (whichever is higher). If you succeed, you have enough friends on the inside to get you out of any trouble in the colony.

Privileged Meeting (Any Facet): You use your reputation and your agents to gain a private audience with a powerful individual such as a leader, general, high priest, or preeminent businessperson. You gain a +2 circumstance on Diplomacy checks for the duration of that audience.

INTRIGUE FEATS

The following are a collection of feats which utilize the new rules presented in *Star Intrigue* and *Star Empires*.

ADEPT LEADER

You have an affinity for high command.

Prerequisites: Hold a leadership role related to running an empire.

Benefit: Choose an ability score. Any time your leadership role calls for that ability score to affect one of your empire's attributes, your modifier to that ability score is treated as being +2 higher. For example, if you choose Charisma and occupy the General or High Priest leadership role, your Charisma modifier to affect your empire's stability would be +2 higher than normal. However, if you occupied the Spymaster leadership role—which employs the Dexterity and Intelligence ability scores—this feat would grant no benefit.

Additionally, the entire empire gains +2 Stability for as long as you occupy a leadership role.

Special: You may gain this feat multiple times, but each time you must choose a different ability score. The bonus to Stability gained from this feat stacks.

CENTER OF POWER

You have posted loyal followers in the most vital places.

Prerequisites: Must have a Personal brand with a score of at least 5, must hold a leadership role related to running an empire

Benefit: Choose a piece of infrastructure in your empire as your center of power, and dedicate an accomplice granted to you by your personal brand to overseeing that location. For every empire turn in which that accomplice does nothing but oversee that location, the benefits that infrastructure grants to your kingdom's Economy, Fame, Loyalty, and Stability are increased by 4 and any penalties are reduced by 2. This feat does not allow a piece of infrastructure to grant benefits it does not normally provide and has no effect on an infrastructure's other effects.

This feat only applies to one piece of infrastructure and committing multiple accomplices to this or different pieces of infrastructure has no effect—the selected location is treated as being of particular importance to you, and its uniqueness combined with the accomplice's loyalty grants it special efficiencies. The same accomplice does not have to oversee your center of power every turn, but you must keep at least one accomplice dedicated to this location for the entire turn to gain this feat's benefits. Once per ten turns, you may change which piece of infrastructure is your center of power.

EFFECTIVE OPERATOR

You are capable of guiding your faction to great success

Benefit: Once per faction turn, you may grant a faction you are part of a bonus on a single faction check equal to your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier. A single faction cannot benefit from more than one use of the Effective Operator feat per faction turn.

FORTUNATE LEADER

Your good luck shines on your people, even in the most trying times.

Prerequisites: Hold the Ruler leadership role for an empire.

Benefit: During your empire's Event phase, once an event's type has been determined, you may choose to roll twice on the applicable empire or colony table and choose either result. You must declare you are using this feat before the results of the initial roll are revealed.

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