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Talkin' 'bout my Reputation?

by Charles Rice

Reputation is one of two new level-related statistics introduced in d20 Modern (the other being Defense). To players and mechanics gearheads alike, this is something of a big deal. I mean, something that is always there in the background and changes as you go up, added to the exalted list of base attack bonus and saving throws? Whew. Too much pressure.

However Reputation isn't nearly as important as those other abilities. Why is that? Well it might have been because they didn't want to alter the flow of play too much. Or it might have been because they thought that people wouldn't respond to something that was too radically different than the d20 they know and love. Or maybe it was because they figured it wasn't broke so there was no need to fix it.

Regardless of the reasoning (and all of the above could have factored into the decision) Reputation has an extremely subtle effect on game play. So subtle in fact that it is avoided by many players and GMs. This article expands on the Reputation rules to make them important, a way to enhance your game and make your character's life easier (or a living nightmare).

Allies

This rule variant links Reputation with Allegiances. Allegiances typically allow you to make a friend and gain a reaction-bonus when dealing with that friend (in other words with others who share the same allegiance). However no rules are given as to exactly how powerful those friends can be, and what they can be expected to do for you other than take your calls (sometimes not even that).

Note: The following system was inspired by the

contact rules in the excellent Unearthed Arcana. This rules variant is my attempt to bring this system fully in line with d20 Modern mechanics. The main differences are that allies are always tied to allegiances and that the power of the contact is based on your Reputation rather than your character level.

This system allows you to pick allies within larger organizations. Your ally's abilities will be linked to your Reputation. In other words the higher your Reputation, the more influential your allies. Allies are broken down into the following categories: supply, influence, knowledge and skill.

What each type of ally can provide is detailed below.

Gaining Allies

Gaining an ally is a function of Reputation. When a character gains a level he may attempt to establish an ally within one of his Allegiances by making a Reputation check (DC 20). In other words, $d20 + \text{Reputation}$, if the combined total is 20 or higher the character has established the ally.

A character can have a maximum number of allies equal to one-half his Reputation modifier.

Losing Allies

Allies are dependant upon allegiances. If a character renounces an allegiance (or has it revoked by the game master) he loses all allies tied to that allegiance. Even if the character later regains the allegiance he must reestablish his allies within that allegiance as if they were totally new allegiances.

Supply

Organizations frequently have full members that they allow to requisition equipment in order to further the aims of the organization. And all of those organizations have people whose job it is to hand out that equipment, make sure it all comes back in good shape and maintain the storerooms of equipment not

in use to ensure that the equipment is maintained and does not “walk away”.

Supply allies are usually very low on an organization’s “totem pole”, not being the ones who bark out orders or go hunt down vampires. However these quiet paper-pushers have a lot of power, in that they usually are the ones who decide if you get what you have requisitioned. Even if a higher-ranking member of the organization orders them to give you something, well, sometimes things just get lost. And anyone who has ever tried to find something hidden a stockroom knows *that* isn’t the way to go.

Supply contacts grant a bonus to Requisition skill checks equal to your Reputation modifier from the agency in question.

Influence

Influence allies might not have skills or information or the keys to the stockroom but they do have valuable commodities that can aid the most powerful character: friends. Charismatic heroes begin play with an influence ally already established so long as they take an appropriate allegiance for the ally to belong to (possibilities would be celebrities or members of a political action committee or lobbying group).

When a character uses an influence ally to make an introduction the initial attitude of the person he’s introduced to is improved one step (if the party was inclined to be Neutral to the character before the introduction he will be friendly now and so forth).

Knowledge

Knowledge allies are specialists in various Knowledge or Intelligence-based skills. Smart heroes may begin play with one Knowledge ally already established, so long as they take an appropriate allegiance for the ally to belong to (possibilities would be academic institutions or government think tanks).

When a character calls on a knowledge ally he gains a bonus to one Knowledge skill check equal to

his Reputation or a bonus to one Intelligence-based skill equal to one-half his Reputation (the ally will not show up to perform the skill for the character in the middle of an adventure but will offer helpful advice to give the character a bonus to his own skill check).

Skill

Skill allies are specialists in skills based on abilities other than Intelligence or Charisma. Strong, Fast, Tough and Dedicated heroes may begin play with one Skill ally already established so long as they take an appropriate allegiance for the ally to belong to. This ally’s chosen skill must be one of the class skills for the character in question and represents a former teacher or master of that skill.

When a character calls on a skill ally he gains a bonus to the ally’s skill specialty equal to one-half his Reputation bonus (the ally will not show up to perform the skill for the character in the middle of an adventure but will offer helpful advice to give the character a bonus to his own skill check).

Calling On Allies

No matter how many allies a character has there is a limit to how many times he can use his allies during an adventure. A character may automatically call on one ally per allegiance during the course of a single week of game time. A second call to an ally of the same allegiance requires a Reputation check (DC 20). The DC of this check increases by 5 for each additional time during that week the character attempts to call on allies from that allegiance.

If a character needs a rationale for this limit inform him that his



allegiances *like* him, they don't *work* for him.

Whether or not the character needs to make a check to get in touch with his contact, it will take the contact 1-4 hours to get in touch with the character and/or provide the needed assistance.

New Feats

Black Market

You are able to acquire illegal or restricted items more easily through your allies.

Prerequisite: At least one Supply ally, Reputation 6+

Effect: When purchasing a restricted or illegal item you may call on a supply ally to grant you a limited access to an item of that type. This allows you to ignore the Wealth increase due to the item being restricted or illegal.

Bonus: This feat is a bonus feat for Charismatic heroes.

Fixer

If the most powerful person is the one with the most friends then you are a powerful person indeed.

Prerequisite: Speed Dial, Well-Connected, Reputation 9+

Effect: You may have a number of allies equal to your Reputation score.

Normal: Characters may normally possess a number of allies equal to one-half their Reputation scores.

Bonus: This feat is a bonus feat for Charismatic heroes.

Midas Touch

Your Reputation for skillful business dealings makes others much more willing to support your ventures.

Prerequisite: At least one Influence ally, Wealth 6+, Reputation 6+

Effect: You may call on an influence ally to grant a bonus to a Wealth check equal to one-half your Reputation. While this could allow you access to much more expensive items than you could normally afford your Wealth is still reduced by the usual amount, representing loans needed to purchase the items in question. However characters with this feat are much better able to live "above their means" than other characters.

Bonus: This feat is a bonus feat for Charismatic heroes.

Miracle Worker

Your reputation for being a flawless doctor actually causes you to *be* a better doctor since your patients' faith in you enhances their bodies' ability to heal.

Prerequisite: Treat Injury 6 ranks, Reputation 6+

Effect: You gain a bonus on all Treat Injury skill checks equal to your Reputation.

Bonus: This feat is a bonus feat for Dedicated heroes.

Rumor Monger

Your friends have keen ears and tend to pass along useful bits of information they come across to you.

Prerequisite: At least one Influence ally, Reputation 6+

Effect: You may call on your Influence ally for information rather than making an introduction. This grants you a bonus to a single Gather Information or Knowledge (current events) check equal to your Reputation. Use of an ally for rumors still counts as contacting that allegiance for help and the character must still pay the normal Wealth cost for making the Gather Information skill check (his ally is simply pointing him toward the information not providing it).

Bonus: This feat is a bonus feat for Charismatic heroes.

Speed Dial

People don't just return your calls, they *drop everything* to return your calls.

Prerequisite: Well-Connected, Reputation 9+

Effect: When you get in touch with an ally it only takes 1-4 minutes for you to receive information or assistance.

Normal: Allies normally take 1-4 hours to provide assistance.

Bonus: This feat is a bonus feat for Charismatic heroes.

Tough Customer

Your reputation makes others tread lightly around you.

Prerequisite: Reputation 6+

Effect: You gain a bonus on Intimidate checks equal to your Reputation.

Bonus: This feat is a bonus feat for Charismatic heroes.

Trusted Associate

You are very highly regarded by a single Allegiance and they are much more willing to help you than normal.

Prerequisite: The allegiance this feat is associated with must be your first Allegiance (allegiances are listed in order from most to least important), Reputation 6+

Effect: Your gain a +4 bonus to your Reputation when dealing with allies from the chosen allegiance. You also gain a +4 bonus to all Requisition checks from the chosen allegiance.

Bonus: This feat is a bonus feat for Charismatic heroes.

Well-Connected

Your allegiances think very highly of you and are willing to help you much more often.

Prerequisite: At least two allies of any type, Reputation 6+

Effect: You can call on allies of each allegiance three times per week before needing to make Reputation checks to gain their aid.

Normal: Characters can normally only call on an ally within an allegiance once per week before Reputation checks are required.

Bonus: This feat is a bonus feat for Charismatic heroes.

Mystery Man

While some characters thrive on their Reputation, on being known, the mystery man thrives on being unknown. His weapons are rumor and superstition, his cloak secrecy. The mystery man represents the classic pulp superheroes such as The Shadow who were normal men (for the most part) yet used their abilities at stealth and disguise to terrify the common thugs they faced, giving them a superhuman edge over their much more numerous opponents. This concept is so powerful it has even made its way into the modern age of comics with... well you know who... and him... and that guy over there too.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Mystery Man a character must meet the following criteria (the quickest path into this class is through the Tough Hero basic class).

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Skills: Intimidate 6 ranks, Knowledge (streetwise) 6 ranks

Feats: Low Profile, Secret Identity (this feat first appeared in Issue #2 of the Dispatch)

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6+ one-half character level, rounded down, every time the character gains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The mystery man's class skills (and the ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Disable Device (Int), Disguise

Table X-X: The Mystery Man

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1 st	+0	+1	+1	+0	Persona	+1	+0
2 nd	+1	+2	+2	+0	Cloak of Secrecy	+1	+0
3 rd	+2	+2	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+0
4 th	+3	+2	+2	+1	Cloak of Fear	+2	+0
5 th	+3	+3	+3	+1	Persona	+3	+1
6 th	+4	+3	+3	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+1
7 th	+5	+4	+4	+2	Phantom	+4	+1
8 th	+6	+4	+4	+2	Quick Change	+4	+1
9 th	+6	+4	+4	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+2
10 th	+7	+5	+5	+3	Persona	+5	+2

(Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (behavioral sciences, current events, popular culture, streetwise) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex)

Skill points at each level: 7+Int. modifier

Class Information

The following information pertains to the mystery man advanced class.

Persona: The mystery man is even more adept at adopting disguises to further his secret identity. Rather than the +5 bonus to disguise detailed in the Secret Identity feat the mystery man gains a +10 bonus for adopting the specific disguise of his alternate identity (this will usually be enough to allow even a medium-level mystery man to go unnoticed by loved ones and close friends in his heroic identity).

As the mystery man gains levels he becomes a master of disguise and is able to adopt more personae in order that he may infiltrate criminal organizations, pick up rumors or even patrol the city invisibly (a mystery man might adopt the persona of a simple cabbie allowing him to prowl the streets completely unnoticed until he is needed).

When in a persona other than his heroic identity, the mystery man is quite adept at using the seemingly

unimposing nature of his alternate identities to find out information from others. When the mystery man spends an action point to aid a Bluff, Diplomacy or Gather Information skill check he adds all available dice to the skill check not merely the highest die.

Each time the mystery man gains a new persona he should inform the game master of that identity's appearance, occupation, habits and normal "stomping grounds".

Cloak of Secrecy: To use this ability the Reputation of the mystery man's alternate identity (the one he adventures under) must be +0 (this is easily accomplished by using the Secret Identity feat to funnel Reputation gains into the mystery man's public identity).

So long as the mystery man's Reputation is +0 in his secret identity he gains a bonus to all Hide and Move Silently skill checks equal to his mystery man class level.

Cloak of Fear: So long as the mystery man's Reputation is +0 in his secret identity he gains a bonus to all Intimidate skill checks equal to his mystery man class level. If the mystery man possesses the Frightful Presence feat the DC to save against it is raised by 5 as if the character possessed the Renown feat.

Phantom: This ability allows the mystery man to hide in plain sight, without needing to find cover or

create a distraction using the Bluff skill. Use of this ability requires the mystery man to spend an action point.

Quick Change: At 8th level the mystery man has become so practiced at changing into his standard disguises (those modified by the Persona ability) that he may adopt those disguises as a full round action. This ability includes the character's secret identity and any Personas he has established through that class ability. Use of this ability requires the mystery man to spend an action point.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th levels the mystery man gains a bonus feat from the following list: Acrobatic, Advanced Martial Arts, Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Deceptive, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Mobility, Spring Attack