

4.2 Influence

Overview

The Influence system allows you to tangibly connect to the gameworld in a variety of ways. You gain Influence by treating well with Factions and individuals within the gameworld, through certain Skills, or through means both savory and unsavory. Influence can be spent on Schemes, allowing you to make things happen within the gameworld, or to solidify your connection with a Faction or an individual.

Influence also allows you to directly (or indirectly) effect the lives of other Characters, PC or otherwise. In this, rather than have a Skill that would directly cause someone to become your best friend, and take away their agency, you can use Influence to affect some aspect of their life, earning their gratitude by action. Or conversely, you might seek to earn their enmity, but attempting to undermine their power base.

Forms of Influence

Influence comes in various forms. The two most common are in the form of Cards and Skills.

Influence Cards are cards that you receive for treating well with various Factions at Events. You may hold these Influence Cards for as long as you like and spend them at your leisure. Influence Cards can only be gained at Events, they can never be gained via Geoscape Actions.

Various Skills provide Influence, reduce the Influence cost, or allow you to circumvent the expenditure of Influence to a limited degree.

Influence can also be gained as a result of Geoscape Moves, via bonuses attached to certain items, or as a result of Schemes.

Only Influence Cards carry over from Event to Event. Influence gained through any other method expires at the end of each Event with one caveat. If you gain Influence via a Geoscape move and are unable to attend the following Event, that Influence applies to the next Event you are able to attend.

Schemes

Influence is spent to accomplish Schemes at Events. Schemes come in all shapes and sizes. While many can be done as individuals, others will require you to work with others to accomplish your goals. Below this section of the Rulebook is a list of General Schemes which are always available. At each Event there will be a number of open Schemes which may be accomplished by anyone. Some of these open Schemes are attached to Black Channel, Lightning League, and the Bounty Board. This is however not the limit to Schemes. You may at any time during an Event, approach a Plot Marshal about a Scheme you would like to put together. If the Scheme is viable, the Plot Marshal will let you know how much Influence that Scheme will cost. You may also come across Schemes from fellow players.

Any Scheme directly involving a Faction requires at least 1 Influence Card of that Faction.

Contacts are required for many Schemes to work (see below for Standard Schemes). For instance, let us say you want to have the NTA Military take out a target for you. You have 1 NTA Influence Card and a lot of general Influence to spend. However, you have no contacts within the NTA Military. Logically there is no reason that your Influence should allow you to accomplish your goals. However, if you meet someone from the NTA Military, you may spend Influence to add them to your Contacts. After that, you may well be able to use your Influence to bomb your enemies.

It should be noted as a general rule of thumb, that you can only accomplish Schemes that you would logically have some degree of control over, and which those who are accomplishing the Scheme on your behalf are capable and willing to do. Plot Marshals will ask you questions when you approach them with a Scheme as to the validity of that Scheme. If you have no logical way to make that Scheme happen, it will not happen no matter how much Influence you might have.

For individuals, 5 Influence is the most you can spend on any Scheme. Schemes that require more Influence require you to pool your Influence with other players. The one exception to this Rule is in regard to Influence Cards. If you are **only** spending Influence Cards on a Scheme, you may spend as much Influence as you like. Most Schemes cost 10 Influence or less, with the average Scheme costing 2 to 3 Influence.

When pooling your Influence for a Scheme, only 1 person may apply their bonuses (Influence cost reductions) unless an Influence Skill explicitly states otherwise.

Skills that reduce the cost of a Scheme can never reduce that cost to less than 1.

Unless it is set up ahead of time with a Plot Marshal, or made generally available as a Scheme, you may not create a Scheme during an Encounter that effects that Encounter.

The Above and Beyond Rule

While the Influence system is intended to allow greater control over the game world in both small and big ways, it is not intended to replace roleplay, only enhance it. You are encouraged to go Above and Beyond when pursuing any Scheme. When you do so, the NPC or Plot Marshal may award you with Influence, or reduce the Influence cost of a Scheme.

For instance, while talking to a Plot Marshal about speaking to one of your Contacts is perfectly acceptable on its own, you are likely to receive better results by way of inducement. Were you to pen a hand written letter, or have some small confectionary delight to hand to the Plot Marshal to give to the Contact (and certainly not because Marshaling is hungry business, and small edible bribes are not unreasonable), you would likely achieve a superior result.

Negative Influence

It is possible that your dealings with certain Factions may lead to that faction disliking you and everything you stand for. There are three levels to this; Distrusted, Hated, Infamous. When taking part in a Scheme for a Faction in which you are Distrusted, the Scheme costs 1 additional Influence. You may not take part in any Scheme for a Faction you are Hated by. If you are Infamous with a Faction, you may use the Skill "Fear" at any time by spending 1 Stamina against a member of that Faction. In addition, you do +1 Damage against members of that Faction. On the other hand, anyone who acts against you will stand to gain Influence with that Faction.

Scheme Examples

Here are several examples of Schemes that might be possible for your PC to carry out.

EXAMPLE 1: You are attempting to gain the favor of a PC Consul. This political figure however does not like the cut of your jib. You discover through dubious means that the Consul on the outs with a group of nearby Androids. You run the Standard Scheme "PR Campaign" and erase their Negative Influence. The Consul still doesn't quite trust you, but seems more than a bit willing to at least hear what you might have to say.

EXAMPLE 2: Your time has come. You are ready to learn a Prestige Class. You have a Contact within the Secret Order of This or That. You see a Plot Marshal and spend Influence to convince that Contact to have a teacher sent to Train you.

EXAMPLE 3: You are attempting to uncover the secrets of an Ancient Space Tomb, but are uncertain as to where to start. You see a Plot Marshal and spend 1 Influence each on 3 separate Schemes in order to make first contact with 3 different groups, and post the question to them.

EXAMPLE 4a: You are a shady figure. An associate of your's needs some contraband moved through security check points, no questions asked. They are willing to pay you well. You have a Contact on the local security force. You spend 1 Influence to Contact her and pose the question. She is somewhat amenable, but needs a bit more cajoling. At this point you could spend an Influence to push a bit harder or go Above and Beyond and offer your Contact a bribe. You make it worth her while and are soon sitting on a piles of Comps.

EXAMPLE 4b: Or...you could spend Influence and make arrangements with some underworld toughs on your payroll, and have them secure the Contraband for you. It's got to be worth a lot more than your associate is paying you.

Standard Schemes

Call* - 1 Influence - Allows you to make a call to Target NPC, Faction or group. You must physically be able to have a way to make a Call in order to enact this Scheme.

Contact - 5+ Influence - When you meet an NPC, after spending at least 5 minutes talking to them, you may spend Influence and add them to your Character Card as a Contact. When adding someone as a Contact, make certain that you note both their Faction and area of Expertise. Normal Contacts cost 5 Influence, however special Contacts, such as Faction Leaders and other incredibly important individuals, may cost far more Influence. When making a Contact, you should ask the NPC how much Influence it would cost to add them as a Contact.

Notoriety - 10 Influence (At least half of this Influence must be in the form of Influence Cards of that Faction) - You gain Notoriety with a Faction. For you, all Schemes involving that Faction cost 1 Less.

Renown - 30 Influence (At least half of this Influence must be in the form Influence Cards of that Faction) and Notoriety with that Faction. - You gain Renown with a Faction. You gain 1 Influence Each Event. In addition, you gain a Badge for that Faction that can be used to show your Renown to any member of that Faction, this will prompt them to treat favorably with you if it is in their best interest.

Fame - 60 Influence (At least half of this Influence must be in the form of Influence Cards of that Faction) and Renown with that Faction - Once Per Period you may, after a PC has interacted with you in a favorable manner, have a Marshal give that PC a Influence Card of the Faction you are famous with. Once Per Event, you may do a Scheme involving that Faction with a cost of 5 or less for Free.

PR Campaign - 8 Influence - Name a Faction you are Distrusted by. You are no longer distrusted by that Faction.

*Technically many Schemes are some form of "Call", as they require you to connect with someone in order to make a thing happen. A Simple "Call" as per Standard Schemes merely allows you to have a brief conversation with the Target, if things move beyond the bounds of that simple conversation, additional Influence may need to be expended.