GURPS® Fourth Edition

Boardroom and Curia™

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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INTRODUCTION

Adventurers tend to be remarkable, those one-in-a-million, uniquely capable people who can face destiny singlehanded. For everyone else, there's strength in numbers. That can be a problem for the rare standout individuals – many hands can make light work, or *quick* work of lone wolves and small adventuring parties. Coordinated groups can pose significant challenges in adventures: the heroes may need to sneak past a tribe of cannibals, counteract the agents of a shadowy spy network, or prevail against the resources of a massive corporation. On the other hand, an organization can be a source of power for the PCs, providing them with money, equipment, expert advice, and legal and moral support. Regardless of the setting, adventurers will eventually face an organized group of people, and then it's useful to have an idea of the organization's capabilities, from its material assets to its structural limitations.

GURPS Boardroom and Curia provides a framework for describing everything from bands of street thugs to multinational corporations. It isn't a comprehensive construction set (like the *GURPS Basic Set* is for individuals), although there are guidelines for starting and modifying an organization, nor does it contain a comprehensive system for managing day-to-day operations and resolving conflicts, though it does outline a number of significant actions that someone in charge can take. What it *does* provide is a format for expressing those aspects of organizations most relevant to PCs who encounter them. Thus, many of the statistics deal not with the group *in toto,* but rather with its functional capabilities – above and beyond its core functions – that it can practically bring to bear against or in favor of adventurers.

> *There go the people. I must follow them, for I am their leader.*
> *– Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin*
> *(attributed)*

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the first edition of *GURPS Boardroom and Curia.* The Medici bank and its context are discussed in another of Matt Riggsby's publications, *GURPS Hot Spots: Renaissance Florence.* Biotech Euphrates was first described in *Transhuman Space,* by David Pulver, and turns up in several books supporting that setting. The Raiders of the Black Void are loosely affiliated with the Cabal, which is featured in *GURPS Infinite Worlds,* by Kenneth Hite, Steve Jackson, and John M. Ford. A number of rules used here – notably those for loyalty checks – appear in a slightly different form in *GURPS Social Engineering,* by William H. Stoddard.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt Riggsby acquired qualifying credentials from different universities studying how societies assemble themselves, and has worked for a number of corporations operating under a few different governmental regimes. He associates with a wife who keeps things in order, a disruptive son, and several dogs who are in complete chaos.

Wealth

Wealth indicates, in a general way, the amount of resources an organization can bring to bear relative to its size. This statistic uses the same levels as the Wealth advantage (p. B25). Most groups have Wealth in the Struggling to Comfortable range.

In addition to being a major factor in an organization's Resource Value (p. 10), Wealth is a general indicator of the size and quality of facilities and equipment used for everyday operations:

Poor: The organization has minimal equipment, and what it has is outdated or cobbled together from mismatched parts, frequently secondhand, and possibly improvised (p. B345). Supplies are scant. Facilities, if any, are used only on the sufferance of the property's owner (for example, the organization may have the use of an upstairs room at a bar, or somebody's cousin's garage), and access can be lost if the arrangement becomes inconvenient. Long-distance communication (postage, phone calls, etc.) and official travel are strictly limited due to their cost, and may require personal hardship or expense by the members undertaking it.

Struggling: The organization has distinctly second-rate equipment and facilities. Any spaces it occupies are slightly shabby, in need of fundamental repairs, and/or in a bad part of town; any security is provided by lock and key. Equipment is likely to be cheap and/or outdated (for example, pen and paper in the typewriter era, or electric typewriters in the early days of business computing). Long-distance communication goes by the slowest and cheapest channels. Official travel is rare.

Average: The organization's facilities are unremarkable, though severe damage may be slow to be repaired. Equipment is typical for its activities, and repaired by professional technicians (if any are available in the setting) where feasible, replaced if need be. Travel and transportation costs are monitored but aren't necessarily matters of great concern.

Comfortable: The organization's facilities are nicely appointed though not luxurious, or are in a modestly well-off area. Equipment is kept up to date and in good repair, and is quickly replaced if damaged. Security is improved for the organization's most important assets (for example, high-quality strongboxes or a night watchman for a low-tech moneylender, or video surveillance for a TL7 office). Communications costs are of little or no concern, and official travel is undertaken regularly, possibly in vehicles the organization owns.

Wealthy: The organization's facilities are notably attractive and often very well situated, with immediate access to raw materials, transport networks, political or business contacts, and so on. Equipment is at least recent and in near-pristine condition, and sometimes of good quality. Security is comprehensive (at least one of fortified buildings, shifts of watchmen, all-over video surveillance, biometric sensors, etc.). The organization owns several vehicles for official travel, or has arrangements with transportation services giving them preferred treatment.

Very Wealthy: The organization's facilities are lavishly decorated and as conveniently located as its mission requires (for example, a political lobbying firm may have a building next to the nation's legislature). Equipment is brand-new and at least good quality, and the best gear available at the TL is sometimes used. The organization has access to several *luxurious* vehicles for official travel, and its facilities may enjoy both high security and extensive disaster preparedness, such as backup power supplies and well-appointed fallout shelters.

THE CHICAGO OUTFIT

Mission Statement: The Chicago Outfit makes money in 1930s Chicago by selling alcohol, smuggled into the United States or produced locally. It dabbles in other contraband, but mostly avoids narcotics and violent theft. Under the flamboyant leadership of Al Capone, the organization controls members and local government by appealing to a combination of greed and fear.

Capabilities

TL: 6   **Members:** 1,000
Wealth: Comfortable
Contacts: Criminal skills-18 [15]
Member Traits: Legal Immunity (12 or less, -34%; Against local law-enforcement only, -34%) [6]
Notable Resources: The Outfit owns no facilities in its own name, but it does operate and take the bulk of the profits from dozens of saloons and similar establishments which are nominally owned by members.
Reaction-Time Modifier: +2

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: $46,080,000   **Resource Value:** $230,400
Patron Value: 15 points   **Enemy Value:** -30 points
Ally and Dependent Value: The Outfit can supply 0- to 50-point thugs as Dependents or members of groups of Allies, or somewhat more powerful capos as individual Allies.

Social Attributes

Type: Criminal
CR: 3   **Loyalty:** Poor (9; +0)
Rank: Organized Crime Rank 0-5 [2/level]
Income Range: $1,600 (Average) to $8,000,000 (Multimillionaire 2)
Reputation: -3 (criminal organization, among law-enforcement agencies and law-abiding civilians)

Notes

Although the Chicago Outfit exercises little day-to-day control over the lives of its members, giving it a low CR, the consequences of disloyalty can be lethal. It is slightly unusual in that it is *not* notably racially intolerant, willing to deal with people of any ethnicity so long as there's money to be made.

PULLING RANK

GURPS Social Engineering: Pulling Rank provides extended rules for obtaining assistance from one's employers, depending on both the type and level of Rank one holds. Members of an organization may use Rank of the sort listed for their group to determine their chances of getting aid when using those rules.

The kinds of assistance a given organization is inclined to provide correspond very roughly to its Type. Here are some recommendations along those lines:

Advocacy: Funding, Introduction, Invitation.
Aid: Cash, Introduction, Transportation (all).
Commercial: Material Aid (all), Social Privilege (all), Transportation (all).
Criminal: Covert Activity (all), Muscle, The Cavalry.
Enforcement: Authorization (all), Muscle, The Cavalry.
Fraternal: Introduction, Invitation.
Government: Authorization (all).
Hobby: Gear, Introduction, Invitation.
Investigative: Covert Activity (all), Information (all).
Military: Violence (all).
Occult: Consultation, Files, Gear.
Religious: Facilities, Information (all), Introduction, Invitation.
Research: Facilities, Information (all).
Secret: Covert Activity (all).
Teaching: Facilities, Funding, Information (all), Introduction, Technical Means.
Trade: Gear, Hireling, Introduction, Invitation, Job, Service.
Voluntary: Information (all), Introduction, Invitation.

This list is neither exclusive nor comprehensive! For example, history shows that nominally legitimate groups will attempt cover-ups if they feel sufficiently threatened (though the *quality* of such actions is often dubious).

Reductions that drop the quantitative rating into the range associated with a lower qualitative level, temporarily or permanently, cause the group to function at that level; e.g., -1 to Poor (7) results in Bad (6).

Reaction Time

When an organization must act, it can take a while to make the decision to do so, let alone gather the appropriate personnel and equipment. Whenever someone makes a non-trivial request for assistance, and anytime it's important to figure out how quickly the group can effectively react to new circumstances, roll 3d plus the organization's Reaction-Time Modifier, and add any applicable modifiers on the *Situational Modifiers Table* (below). For a request, the requestor may try an Influence skill roll and subtract margin of success (maximum -5) or add margin of failure (no limit!) as well. Look up the final total on the *Reaction-Time Table* (below) to find the timeframe for a response.

Reaction-Time Table

The results below include the time to make a decision to provide aid *and* to initiate delivery (e.g., prep and fuel a private jet, or rally initiates in the central temple to begin the summoning ritual). Travel and shipping times may add delays, however. For example, when calling on a gang of local toughs to provide some muscle, it might take only an hour or two to make the right phone calls to get them together, but several hours more if they must catch a train to an out-of-town location.

Roll	Reaction Time	Roll	Reaction Time
-4 or less	Immediately	8	5 1/2 hours
-3	4 minutes	9	8 hours
-2	6 minutes	10	12 hours
-1	8 minutes	11	16 hours
0	15 minutes	12	1 day
1	20 minutes	13	1.5 days
2	25 minutes	14	2 days
3	40 minutes	15	3 days
4	60 minutes	16	5 days
5	80 minutes	17	7 days
6	2 hours	18	10 days
7	3 1/2 hours		

Situational Modifiers Table

Request	Modifier	Notes
Request for readily available information	-(TL/2), rounded up	[1]
Requestor's Rank in the organization	-(Rank/2), rounded up	
Cost of request	+1 per full 1% of Resource Value	
Unusual request (Versatile organization)	+1	[2]
Unusual request (most organizations)	+2	[2]
Unusual request (Hidebound organization)	+4	[2]
Very unusual request	Double modifier for unusual request	[3]

Notes

[1] "Readily available information" includes information that doesn't require significant processing or analysis. For example, a dossier on a subject of the organization's observations would qualify. Cross-indexed charts of contacts between subjects probably wouldn't.

[2] "Unusual requests" include anything that falls outside of the organization's Mission Statement.

[3] "Very unusual requests" include anything unusual for an organization of its Type.

They also call in bomb threats shortly before explosions in civilian areas, minimizing civilian casualties (a significant consideration in their propaganda war) but keeping tension high. They've been known to make hoax calls, to much the same effect. As well, they've recently started using homemade mortars effectively.

The bulk of the IRA's membership is concentrated in Northern Ireland, where it carries on a long struggle against the British. The IRA's strategy is to make continued rule of Northern Ireland as unpalatable as possible. This involves assassination of British police and army personnel as well as Irish sympathizers to make the north more difficult to govern and to turn British popular opinion against a continued presence. Combined with this, they carry out bombings to make long-term investment in Ireland unappealing. Their most notable recent success is the assassination of Lord Louis Mountbatten, last Viceroy of India and uncle of Prince Philip, with a radio-controlled bomb on a boat in which he was on a fishing holiday, on the same day a set of roadside bombs killed 16 British troops. Though the Provos have undertaken operations in Great Britain, their activity is concentrated in Ireland; most of the bombs set off elsewhere in support of Irish independence through the late '70s were placed by other groups. However, the "mainland campaign" may ramp up again in the near future.

The IRA has shown some willingness to call cease-fires and negotiate with the British, but only on the precondition that the talks be aimed at the withdrawal of the U.K. from Ireland. London is unwilling to make this concession, so peace talks remain elusive. The IRA has many goals in common with the political party Sinn Féin, but they are ultimately separate organizations.

The Mid-City Defenders

In the 1920s, Midland City, a small city in the American heartland, was plagued by crime and corruption – but help was on the way! The first masked adventurer to take on the many threats to civic life was the mysterious Dusk, who exposed cops and politicians on the take. Not long thereafter, the Terra-Cotta Warrior awoke at the Midland City Museum and took on street criminals of all kinds. In 1938, several of the city's resident superheroes organized themselves into the Mid-City Defenders.

Dozens of superheroes have been in and out of the group since its inception. It went on hiatus several times, though never for more than two years at a stretch, and briefly split into "east side" and "west side" divisions in the late 1980s. However, there have been some constants or near-constants over the years: The Terra-Cotta Warrior has been a member in nearly all incarnations, and remains the heart of the group. The team's long-term leader, the apparently ageless Queen of Diamonds, has been with the Defenders (with a few brief interruptions) since 1958. And the individual currently using the Dusk persona is believed to be the fifth or sixth member of the Defenders to do so.

The Defenders have always been a small group and have never numbered more than 16 (or slightly more, depending on how one counts the self-replicating hero Multiple Mary in the '90s), and its members have a tendency towards eccentricity, so they've never had a particularly rigid structure.

Mid-City Defenders

Mission Statement: The Defenders work to protect the safety of everyone in Midland City. This mostly takes the form of crime-fighting (violent crime takes priority), but also applies to natural disasters. The group's nominal leader relies on charisma and interpersonal relationships to build consensus.

Capabilities

TL: 8^   **Members:** 10
Wealth: Wealthy
Contacts: Administration-12 [1]; Area Knowledge (Midland City)-18 [3]; Crime-fighting skills-15 [10]; Technological skills-15 [10]
Member Traits: Legal Enforcement Powers [5]; Unusual Background (Occasional access to TL^ gear) [10]
Notable Resources: The group's headquarters is a retired Art Deco railway terminal a few blocks from City Hall. It contains living quarters for members who need them, laboratories, workshops, a hangar capable of housing a large VTOL aircraft, a private museum commemorating the Defenders' exploits, and a spectacular central chamber used for meetings, ceremonies, and coordinating the team's activities during crises. The structure has been reinforced and enhanced over the years to make it more secure, defensible and even, in places, self-repairing.
Reaction-Time Modifier: +1. As what is essentially an emergency service, the Defenders respond quickly to catastrophes (at least -5).

Costs and Values

Startup Cost: $2,168,400   **Resource Value:** $10,842
Patron Value: 20 points   **Enemy Value:** -30 points
Ally and Dependent Value: The Defenders are too diverse to constitute a homogeneous group of Allies. Individual members range from around 200 points to over 1,000. The al-Shams (p. 26) are unremarkable normals who could be Dependents for adventurers.

Social Attributes

Type: Enforcement, Investigation
CR: 1   **Loyalty:** Very Good (16; +3)
Rank: Superhero Rank 0-1 [1/level]
Income Range: $2,600 (Average)
Reputation: +3 (among residents of Midland City)

Notes

The group is essentially TL8, but with sporadic access to superscience and magical gear. While the Defenders don't offer formal salaries, they can support those members who need it in order to fight crime full-time.

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This is Information Retrieval, not Information Dispersal.
*– Jack Lint, in **Brazil***