

pay off the quality cost; the character may not spend Karma on anything else until it the quality is paid in full.

Note that some qualities might also be considered innate—not something a character could ever learn—and so should not be awarded (ambidexterity, for example). The Adept, Magician, Mystic Adept, and Technomancer qualities may not be awarded; they may only be obtained during character creation.

Note that if a gamemaster ever decides that a positive quality is no longer appropriate for a character, that quality may be permanently removed. The character is not “reimbursed” in any way for the lost points.

Negative Qualities

If the gamemaster approves, a character can work off a negative quality by undertaking severe changes as appropriate to the quality. For example, a character with an Addiction quality must work hard to kick the habit, resisting the temptation to relapse for a significant period (chosen by the gamemaster). If the gamemaster feels that a character has made the necessary changes to shrug off a negative quality, he can allow that character to pay twice the quality’s BP cost to remove it.

Learning Spells

Magicians and mystic adepts may use Karma to learn new spells. Learning a spell costs 5 Karma. See *Learning Spells*, p. 172.

Learning Complex Forms

Technomancers may use Karma to learn new complex forms. Learning a new complex form, or improving an existing one, costs the same as learning/improving a Knowledge skill: 2 Karma for a new complex form, Karma equal to the improved rating for an improved complex form. See *Learning Complex Forms*, p. 233.

GAMEMASTER ADVICE

Shadowrun takes place in an exciting, dangerous time with plenty of opportunity for adventure. Whether stealing data from some megacorp’s top-secret database, providing security for a visiting dignitary when the drek hits the fan, or busting a valuable researcher out of a high-security corp enclave, the player characters are the heroes—or more likely, the *antiheroes*. The adventures a gamemaster creates should challenge the players’ wits more than their guns, and the gamemaster should reward good roleplaying as much or more than lucky dice-rolling.

When getting a group of players together, the gamemaster ought to learn something of their interests or else his adventures are likely to flop. One of the most important things to consider in planning the mission is to invent one that the players would really like to tackle. But don’t expect a lot at first. The players probably know less about the ways of the game universe than the gamemaster, and may have only vague ideas about what they want to do. They might want to make money, take on a corrupt corp, get involved with organized

crime, and so on. Once they get a few runs under their belts and their characters’ life stories take some shape, the players’ goals and ideas will become more defined. They may want to hunt down a particular enemy, find a lost love, avenge themselves on a corporation that did them dirty, or find a specific magical treasure from Dunkelzahn’s hoard, to give just a few examples. The gamemaster can and should build these ideas and suggestions into major themes in his adventures.

Encourage the players to write out their characters’ histories, including background on family, friends, and previous employment. The gamemaster can then draw on those histories to develop adventures that get everyone involved.

Be Informed!

Even the simplest, most straightforward game has many elements that the gamemaster must keep in mind: NPCs, the major events of a campaign, the flow of the adventure, and all the other little details that make the game world come alive for the players. Consequently, organizing all of your information for a particular game—and keeping it organized throughout the game—is probably the most important step for keeping track of everything. Maintain a running list of the major characters, including a few notes about each character’s appearance and personality. Keep a list of the major events in your campaign. You might even want to keep detailed maps, character statistics, and other references on hand.

Creating detailed notes of the events of each game session can also help you keep important information straight. Review your notes at the start of each session to refresh your memory. Also, listen to what the players say; they might note important points that you didn’t write down. They might also see the events of the game differently than you do, and having their perspective can help you keep your campaign interesting for your players.

Be Knowledgeable!

A gamemaster should be familiar with the whole game. That doesn’t mean memorizing the rulebook, just being familiar with the basic rules and knowing where to find other rules quickly when needed.

Gamemaster screens and notes offer two excellent ways to keep information on often-used rules close at hand. Keep a written outline of the adventure handy for quick reference when necessary. Experienced gamemasters usually improvise more, but those just starting out will usually find it best to think through the adventures in advance and to keep them relatively simple.

Be Fair!

The gamemaster and players should both work together to create a good story, which means that gamemasters should always strive to play fair when ruling for or against the players. Don’t make things too easy for the player characters, but don’t needlessly penalize them, either. In general, stick to the rules. If you or your players hate one of them, feel free to change it—but make sure everyone understands and agrees with the

