



CONNECTION RATING TABLE

Connection	Description
1	Knows very few people and has practically no social influence. Many are useful only for their Knowledge skills. Examples: squatter, manual laborer, academic graduate assistant.
2	Knows some people but doesn't have a lot of personal pull. Examples: gang member, bartender, mechanic, mob soldier, corner hustler, corporate wageslave.
3	Meets people on a regular basis and has some personal pull. Examples: beat cop, private investigator, street doc, corporate secretary, club owner, street-level fixer or fence.
4	Knows many people or may be in a leadership position. Examples: gang boss, mob lieutenant, police detective or sergeant, corporate middle manager, low-level Mr. Johnson, fixer or fence with regional ties.
5	Knows lots of people over a larger area, or holds a senior leadership position: police captain, corporate division manager, high-level Mr. Johnson, fixer or fence with national ties.
6	Well-connected individual who knows people all over the world, or holds a key executive position. Examples: mob boss, corporate executive, Mr. Johnson or fixer or fence with international ties.



CONTACTS

There's an old saying that rings very true on the streets: "It's not what you know, it's who you know." Contacts are those people who the player characters know.

Contacts are NPCs who serve as sources of valuable information, goods, and services, as well as making the *Shadowrun* world a fuller, more colorful place to play. Contacts are often the best (and sometimes the only) way a runner can find out just what kind of drek he's gotten into. The following describes how to get the most from contacts—how to use them in the game, flesh them out, and maximize the roleplaying opportunities they represent for your players.

CONTACTS BY THE NUMBERS

Since player characters interact with them on a regular basis, contacts should be fully developed NPCs, with a complete profile of attributes and skills. You can quickly jot down basic stats for them on the fly, or you can go the full mile and create each contact using the Build Point System, considering them to be Inferior or Equal NPCs. Rather than assigning Resources (except for cyberware and bioware), you can simply assume that contacts have the necessary gear and lifestyle to fulfill their role. A Lone Star beat cop contact is going to have body armor, a pistol, and basic cop gear, for example, while a hacker contact would have an assortment of commlink upgrades and hacking programs available.

Contacts possess two ratings that determine how useful they are: Loyalty and Connection.

Connection Rating

Connection measures how influential the contact is. The higher a contact's Connection rating, the more people he knows and the more personal pull he has. Connection normally ranges on a scale of 1 to 6. The Connection Rating Table provides a description of how the various Connection Ratings should be portrayed.

Loyalty Rating

Loyalty determines how much the character can rely on the contact. Some contacts aren't willing to do anything more than they're paid for, and will have no qualms selling the character out if someone flashes them enough cred. Others will be actual friends, willing to provide favors, cover for the character, and stick out their necks a little—though not *too* far. Still others are hardcore pals who have the character's back; they will take any risks and go down to the line if necessary. The Loyalty Rating Table (p. 279) details how various Loyalty ratings should be handled.

The Loyalty rating is usually applied as bonus dice whenever the character is negotiating with the contact. It may also serve as modifier or threshold whenever a third party attempts to squeeze information about the runners out of the contact.

FLESHING OUT CONTACTS

Making contacts into fully realized characters—"fleshing them out"—is the key to getting the most from them. To achieve this, gamemasters (with some input from the players) must spend a little time creating a background for each of their players' contacts.

Deciding what a contact does when he's not helping out the character is a good place to start. Giving each contact a catch-phrase archetype title—such as Street Doc, Combat Mage, Mercenary, Detective, and so on—can help make the contact a distinct personality. With a little more effort, a contact can become a unique person.

For example, say Joe the Bartender spends his evenings tending bar, but what does he do in his spare time? Maybe he's an avid Urban Brawl fan, and he's got a game on the trid when a runner calls. Maybe he's having trouble with the wife, or his business isn't going too well. Maybe his daughter is getting mixed up with the wrong crowd: gangs, BTLs, or the like. All these things affect how Joe reacts to a runner's inquiries and might even serve as a springboard for a shadowrun.