

# Environment

The space station and its inhabitants form a living, dynamic backdrop for your shop, where time, lighting, and ambient sounds ebb and flow with day and night cycles, station announcements, and special events. Customers range from routine locals to unique Patrons, each with distinct patterns, chatter, and story threads that unfold across visits, while travelers introduce fleeting but meaningful interactions. Life on the station is conveyed through overlapping voices, environmental cues, and narrative fragments — from overheard conversations and bulletin updates to private messages — allowing the player to influence outcomes subtly through stock choices, advice, and personal touches. Even during downtime, the station hums with activity, offering opportunities for observation, small tasks, and quiet engagement, reinforcing a sense of immersion and presence within a living, breathing space.

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# Space Station

The space station is more than a backdrop — it's a living environment with its own rhythms, sounds, and changing moods. These systems subtly shape the atmosphere both inside and outside your shop, influencing foot traffic, customer behavior, and the feeling of time passing within the station's enclosed corridors.

## Day/Night Cycle

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Controls the station's lighting, audio, and activity patterns to reflect a steady passage of time.

- **Day Mode** - Hallway lighting at full brightness, higher NPC traffic, busier background chatter from the concourse.
- **Night Mode** - Lighting dims to softer tones, foot traffic subsides, and ambiance shifts to quieter layers such as light lobby music or station hums.
- Transitions happen gradually to maintain immersion.
- Integrated with the **foot traffic system** so customer flow naturally ebbs and peaks with time of day.

## Ambient Audio

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A dynamic mix of environmental sounds that builds the station's sense of place.

- **Default Tracks** - Light public music, background hums of vents and systems, occasional mechanical clunks or distant voices.
- **Custom Music Option** - Optional upgrade allowing the player to override default station music in favor of personal playlists or alternate ambient tracks.

Audio layers shift in response to **time of day**, **events**, and **player-triggered upgrades**.

## Station Announcements

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Automated public address system broadcasting station-wide information and flavor.

- Triggers for regular updates (dockings, departures, maintenance notices) as well as rare story beats.
- Can be **time-based** (scheduled service messages), **event-based** (alert during a docking delay), or **narrative-driven** (news tied to ongoing story arcs).

- Announcements briefly cut or duck music layers for clarity, then return seamlessly to the ambient mix.

## Foot Traffic

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Determines station corridor activity and NPC density.

- **Peak Hours** - Higher spawn frequency of locals and travelers; shop may see more browsing customers.
- **Off Hours** - Sparse corridor population, occasional lone passerby.

Special events or announcements can temporarily spike or reduce traffic density regardless of time of day.

## Lighting & Atmosphere

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Global lighting behavior that reflects the station's state.

- **Standard Operations** - Soft ambient tones with station signage and display screens active.
- **Night Mode** - Dimmed corridor lights, stronger contrast from illuminated shopfronts.
- **Special States** - Emergency red lighting, maintenance flicker effects, or brief power dips, triggered by rare scripted events or narrative beats.

## Environmental Hooks

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Framework for station-wide environmental variations that can be expanded in future titles.

- Examples include:
  - Temporary power outages affecting lighting and announcements.
  - Nearby celestial events altering exterior lighting glimpses through vista windows.
  - Station upgrades that expand ambient customization (e.g., holographic décor in corridors).

# Customers

In the daily rhythm of the station, not every visitor shops the same way — or for the same reasons. Most are just faces in the crowd, pulled along by the hum of daily dockings; some you see every week, while others are gone as quickly as they arrive. A few stand out — the ones you know by name, or who carry a story that threads back into your own.

While every person is unique, they fall into four main roles that shape both the day-to-day flow of your business and the kinds of stories you'll overhear: **Locals**, **Semi-Regular Locals**, **Travelers**, and **Patrons**. These roles also determine how character meshes are created, reused, and reserved — a critical balance for maintaining world variety on a small asset budget.

## Customer Types

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### Locals (Generic Pool)

Permanent residents of the station who make up the steady, day-in/day-out traffic. They visit often for routine needs — food staples, tools, small comforts — and are recognized more by *type* than by individual identity.

Variation comes through props, accessories, and outfit swaps, aligning with **buying profiles**:

- Grease-smudged overalls → tools, replacement parts.
- Casual station clothes → snacks, small luxuries.
- Kitchen apron → cooking staples or spices.

They constitute the background hum of the shop. Most will never seem memorable — but they're the world's heartbeat.

### Semi?Regular Locals

These begin as normal locals — different mesh pool, same casual chatter — but over time, the player learns they have more going on.

They come with subtle evolution: minor gossip threads, changing moods, perhaps a unique prop that changes over visits. They don't have the scope of a Patron's story, but they carry enough personality for the player to notice and feel a mild sense of discovery:

- The cargo handler who first complains about pay, then later hints at leaving for a rival dock.
- The gardener tending station flora who swaps surplus seedlings for coffee.

Distinct from the Locals pool, they're woven in just enough to stand out once you've seen them a few times.

## Travelers (Generic Pool)

These are the transient crowd — transient visitors stopping at the station for fuel, food, repairs, or quick trade before moving on. Most are one-offs and vanish as quickly as they appeared, but every so often, one comes through again by coincidence.

Drawn from faction, off-world, and industrial styles, with outfits and props tied to **buying profiles**:

- Bold prints & casual gear → tourists, looking for snacks and station trinkets.
- Clean lab wear → scientists seeking instruments or data storage.
- Stained exosuits → miners wanting heavy tools or bulk rations.

They add color and variety to the station, and occasionally act as rumor carriers, mentioning events or characters the player might have heard of elsewhere.

## Patrons (Unique Story Characters)

Patrons are the long-form story engines of the shop — major narrative characters with dedicated arcs that unfold only inside your store.

They are instantly recognizable, and their visits punctuate the game's pacing:

- A salvager bringing mysterious scrap each week.
- A quiet traveler who eventually reveals they're in hiding.
- A diplomat soliciting you to help with back-channel trades.

Some are straightforward buyers; others are **recurring solicitors**, placing goods in your shop for sale. They function as anchors in the gossip network — locals may talk about them, travelers may relay news of them, and your own interactions have ripple effects on their fortunes.

## Mesh Reservation

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Customer meshes are allocated as follows:

- **Locals (Generic Pool):** 6-10 reusable meshes. Routine station traffic. Reuse driven by clothing, prop, and accessory swaps. Not individually memorable.

- **Semi-Regular Locals:** 2-4 fixed meshes distinct from the local pool. Appear multiple times with light evolving chatter and quirks.
- **Local Kids:** 2-5 reusable meshes appearing with locals. Optional semi-regulars appear 2-5 times with small, incidental moments.
- **Travelers (Generic Pool):** 6-10 reusable meshes from off-world and faction sets. Outfits/props tied to buying profile. Mostly one-off visits, rare repeats.
- **Traveler Kids:** 2-5 reusable meshes appearing alongside travelers. Used sparingly for variety and cultural texture.
- **Patrons (Unique):** Minimum of 5 unique meshes, never reused. Central to primary story arcs. Some also act as recurring solicitors.

**Total Mesh Budget Range:** 23 (*low count*) – 44 (*high count*), depending on whether optional kid pools are used to their maximum and whether extra patrons are added.

# Story Threads

While most transactions in your shop are quick and routine, a few customers stand out from the crowd — particularly the Patrons and key Locals who return again and again. Over weeks or even months, these familiar faces begin to reveal more of themselves, sharing pieces of their lives in the spaces between purchases. Like a clerk in any quiet outpost, you catch these details in fragments: a passing remark at the counter, a message left on the shop's terminal, or a rumor overheard while you're restocking the shelves.

In time, you come to realize that this is the station's true narrative. It isn't a single, dramatic storyline, but a web of personal histories — stories that overlap, intersect, and drift apart as the days go by. Some are small and lighthearted, glimpses of everyday joys and routines. Others carry a quiet tension, hinting at struggles or secrets never fully spoken aloud. Together, they form a living tapestry of voices, each adding depth to the hum of daily life in your little corner of the galaxy.

## Narrative Delivery

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The station's stories reach you in many ways — some direct, others arriving at a distance. Most pass like background hum; some pause in front of you and wait for a reply.

- **Face-to-Face Exchanges** - From time to time, a Patron, familiar regular, or visiting solicitor will linger at the counter or on the showroom floor. They may bring news, a product to sell, a request, or just a thought they felt like sharing. You can answer as you choose — offering help, humour, or nothing at all — and they'll remember it in their own way.
- **Overheard Conversations** - Fragments caught while customers browse or while their voices filter through comms; pieces of stories never told straight through.
- **Station Bulletin Updates** - Public notices, opportunities, and events that echo something you heard earlier, confirm a rumour, or shift its meaning.
- **Secure Comms Messages** - Remote updates from characters you know — formal notes from locals and Patrons, or a short text from someone half a sector away.

## Multiple Ongoing Voices

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Life on the station doesn't move in a straight line; its stories build in overlapping rhythms. Some you encounter in fragments through chatter or bulletins, others walk right up and speak to you.

- **Locals** set the steady pulse of the community, their small updates and passing remarks filling in the background.
- **Patrons** return with longer arcs that can span weeks, sometimes intersecting another's path without either of you meaning it.
- **Travelers** add new context — perhaps a casual mention of someone you know, or a rumour that shifts your view of an event.

And every so often, one of them stops and talks, handing you a thread you can decide to pull — or let go.

## Influence Within Your Domain

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You never step beyond your shop's doors, yet the conversations, suggestions, and choices you make can reach further than you expect.

Sometimes it's as simple as stocking the right part; sometimes it's a quiet word across the counter.

- **Product Recommendations** - Pointing a customer toward something that might solve their immediate problem.
- **Stocking Decisions** - Having, or lacking, the item they came for changes what happens next for them.
- **Advice in Passing** - A shortcut, a tip, or a name, shared in the easy flow of conversation.
- **Special Orders** - Taking the trouble to bring in something rare for a Patron or local contact.

## Consequences

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Outcomes rarely arrive in a straight report — you hear them folded into the life around you:

- **Positive Impact** - Success traced back to your help; a thank-you gift, a rarer item, or simply warmer conversation next time.
- **Negative Impact** - A poor suggestion or faulty product leading to trouble; perhaps a pointed review, or a subtle cooling of tone.
- **Ripple Effects** - One person's misstep or success echoed by others: a traveler repeating the tale, or gossip drifting back weeks later.

# Downtime & Small Tasks

Because most shoppers handle their own purchases, downtime is a constant undercurrent of station life.

This isn't "waiting" in the traditional game sense — it's space to act, reflect, or catch small moments of unfolding story. Even when the shop is still, the station hums: someone passes in the Outer Hallway, a shipment arrives, or your PDA pings with new gossip. During these quiet stretches, you can engage in small, optional actions that reinforce the feeling of a lived-in space.

## Personal Touches

- Make coffee or tea — the cup remains on your desk or display counter.
- Adjust trinkets or knickknacks simply out of habit.
- Change music tracks or put on headphones to muffle the world.

## Shop Care

- Straighten a display.
- Polish the counter.
- Water your plant.
- Restock items piece-by-piece instead of relying on auto-fill.

## Idle Observation

- Watch foot traffic outside the shop.
- Sit in your chair and absorb ambient station sounds.
- Glance through your PDA for non-urgent rumors.

Some of these actions are purely cosmetic; others can trigger small events or overheard dialogue, giving the sense that you are *present in passing moments*.