

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

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

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.

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