

# Design Overview

A relaxed, narrative-driven **shopkeeper sim in a space station**, where the joy comes from **small daily rituals**, quiet observation, evolving décor, and relationships with a shifting cast of customers. You're a steady presence in a huge galaxy, shaping small ripples through **stocking choices, conversations, and personal touches** — but never the fate of the galaxy itself.

## Cozy Pillars

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1. **Small Significance** - You matter most in your corner of the station; big events arrive as gossip, souvenirs, or distant announcements.
2. **Ritual over Rush** - Stock shelves, check messages, watch the hallway, make coffee. Pacing is player-led, with no fail-states or forced urgency.
3. **Evolving Familiarity** - Regulars return with small changes; décor shifts over time; ambient station life feels alive and consistent.
4. **Downtime as Gameplay** - "Quiet" moments still offer meaning: overheard chatter, bulletin updates, or a patron lingering by the counter.
5. **Space as a Character** - The shop and surrounding corridor have distinct moods, lighting changes, and evolving details.

## Core Loop

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**Observe → Plan → Stock → Interact → Reflect**

- **Observe:** Check docking registry & hallway to see who's in port; watch foot traffic.
- **Plan:** Decide stocking priorities & décor tweaks based on who's likely to visit.
- **Stock:** Move goods from backroom to displays manually or via auto-fill.
- **Interact:** Chat with locals, negotiate with solicitors, overhear travelers.
- **Reflect:** Update personal PDA notes, rearrange items, enjoy the quiet.

## Story Philosophy

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- **"Tell, Not Show"** - Major events shared indirectly (customer gossip, bulletin posts, mysterious items).
- Stories are **fragmentary & overlapping** — player infers connections over time.
- Consequences are **soft & social**: warmer conversation, a gift, or a subtle shift in who visits.

# Player Spaces

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- **The Office** – Private, decorated with keepsakes; check PDA & messages here.
- **Underdeck Storage** – Quiet restocking zone; items shown as simple visual tokens.
- **Customer Service Desk** – Intimate story interactions; not primary sale point.
- **Showroom Floor** – Stocked displays; personal aesthetic flourishes matter.
- **Outer Hallway** – Public concourse; peaceful observation point into station life.

# Customer Types

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- **Locals:** Steady rhythm; visually varied via outfits/props.
- **Semi-Regulars:** Locals with light recurring arcs; subtle personality quirks.
- **Travelers:** Mostly one-offs; add novelty and outside news.
- **Patrons:** Unique meshes & arcs; long-term relationship anchors.

Each type informs **shop “feel”** based on who you cater to.

# Key Systems

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## Quests:

- Flexible stage-based containers; trigger events, dialogue, and environmental changes.
- Dock delays, visiting celebrities, special orders — always via station life, never as hero assignments.

## Stock & Displays:

- Manual or automated stocking with visual feedback.
- Default loadouts or one-off arrangements for events.
- Storage tokens give at-a-glance stock cues.

## Progression:

- Footprint expands by acquiring neighboring corridor units.
- Growth leads to visual/audio upgrades: glass frontage, increased foot traffic, vista window with dock views.
- Social network deepens via solicitors, suppliers, and remote offers.

# Atmosphere Tools

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- **Day/Night cycle:** Gradual light & traffic shifts.
- **Ambient audio layering:** Background hums, chatter, machinery; player music override possible.
- **Announcement system:** Flavor + world updates without dragging player away.
- **Lighting states:** Cozy day/night tones; rare event lighting for mood shifts.
- **Environmental hooks:** Occasional celestial or station events as light spectacle.

## Cozy Safeguards

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- **No punishing timers** — delays act as story beats, not blockers.
- **Soft reputation** — negative reviews add flavor/mystery, not anxiety.
- **Menu tactile feel** — visual and audio cues to keep terminal use cozy.
- **Emotional payoffs** — occasional longer Patron moments to break fragment pattern.

## Cozy Design Goals

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- Make **repetition comforting, not grindy**.
  - Focus rewards on **visual/social growth**, not stats.
  - Treat **watching, listening, and adjusting décor** as valid play.
  - Ensure the station feels alive even without direct player action.
  - Keep scope manageable through **modular systems** and **asset reuse with variation**.
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Revision #1

Created 2025-08-14 09:29:42 UTC by Mike

Updated 2025-08-14 09:35:43 UTC by Mike