

Gawande Consulting

Gawande Consulting was originally a minor terraforming lobbyist organisation, networking between various groups on Mars and the Chinese government think tanks. Today it is a major (if neutral) power in Planetary Consortium politics.

Gawande cornered the market for political consultants during the early months of the formation of the Planetary Consortium. The company bought the indenture contract of every lobbyist, political analyst or spin doctor they could get their hands on. It paid off well, making Gawande Consulting a key player in PC politics and absurdly well-connected.

Since then Gawande has reinvented itself as a "metaconsultancy". Rather than trying to keep lobbyists and analysts in-house it networks them. The originally indentured consultants have all finished their contracts and started their own consultancies. But Gawande was very successful in building networks (and, by all accounts, being indentured by them was pretty exciting) so it rarely has problems getting them and their firms to play along. Gawande can create think tanks and PR firms on the fly by connecting the right experts and lobbyists in its network (for a percentage of their fees). This makes them the go-to-guys when new problems or players appear, or when there is a need to forge unusual alliances - which, thanks to the nature of the PC, happens all the time.

Rather than having old-fashioned offices it owns Ryu's, a restaurant/bar (and the adjoining cafe/tobacco shop). Located in the outskirts of HQ close to the U-Mars campus it is frequented by a crowd of political strategists, public affairs people, policy bloggers, lawyers, marketers and social network analysts. Many come here purely for food and social interaction, but under the schmoozing there is also a discreet bidding for projects and meta-lobbying. Outsiders who don't understand the codes are treated politely but ignored.

Zahir

Zahir does attention management: when you want people to notice something, or get distracted from something, then Zahir can help you. This creative firm is an expert in media manipulation, spin doctoring and lobbying. It is regularly hired by corporations and NGOs who want to affect public attention. It was involved in getting the public roar for the blood of Prism Exergy when their near-slavery practices were revealed, and it manufactured a media sensation that successfully blotted out the news that some mishandling at Caltech had lost a valuable ecosystem archive, dooming several butterfly species to permanent extinction.

Zahir's main offices are in a nicely leafy genomist building in Nytrondheim dome of Valles-New Shanghai, but in practice the company is delocalized across all of Mars.

RepRip

RepRip is one of the most successful reputation management and monitoring companies in the inner system. It is also very good at not being noticed: most CivicNet users never notice the fine print on their client software or social spaces that mentions that they belong to RepRip.

RepRip makes its money from keeping track of reputations, opinion and mood across the inner system. This valuable information is sold to other hypercorps, making a tidy profit and keeping the social networking software free or cheap.