

Chapter 9: Annexes

9A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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New material added since 2 June is in blue.

Abandoned Carts: Somebody who went to your internet store, put a few items into his shopping cart, and then never “completed the transaction”. Design your internet shopping cart in such a way that you can tell how many transactions are never finished (i.e., how many people browsed around and filled a cart and then never sent the payment information). If you get one or two, those are just people who were looking around. If you get a bunch, then something in your check-out procedure is too complex, or too expensive. Maybe you don’t offer credit cards, maybe your shipping charges are too high or too hard to calculate. Lots of abandoned carts mean a badly-constructed cart. Fix it. Fix it now.

Accountant: Someone skilled enough to keep track of the money you owe, the money you are owed, the inventory, and the checkbook, PLUS analyze this information to determine which way your business is going (up in smoke or down in flames). See *Business Manager*.

Advanced Payment Scams: These are criminal operations that trick you into paying something in advance to get something much more valuable later. (Hint: Later is going to be a long time coming.) Examples include: pay a bank processing fee to have millions of dollars in Nigerian oil profits wired to your account; buy a thousand dollars worth of vitamins to be eligible for “one of three prizes: a Lexus, a sailboat, or ten thousand dollars cash”; or put up a cash bond so you can come back tomorrow for the wallet full of cash the nice lady who stopped you on the street offered to share if you would put up the bond.

Adventure Game: A term created by GAMA to encompass “wargames” and “role-playing games” in a single term.

Aging The Accounts Receivable: Determining how old the unpaid bills of your customers are. If this suddenly gets to be a lot bigger number than it was before, look into it quick.

Alibi List: A management technique in which you keep track of small details not yet done. Say you are doing the final layout-edit-tweak of a new book. The obvious solution is to start on page one and work to the end. If you get to page 33 and discover that you need an artist to change a picture, then email the artist to make the change and add page 33 to your “alibi list” and move on to work on pages 34 to the end of the book. (The alternatives would be to stop working on the book until you can finish page 33, or to not write down the glitch on page 33 and hope that the artist will send the art on time and that this will remind you.) Another example: You are loading boxes on the truck to *Origins*, each book having a list of things to include. You discover that you are out of credit card slips for the “booth supply box” but you need to go ahead and

load that box now. List the credit card slips on your “alibi list” and when they become available, put them into the “alibi box” which will be the last box loaded on the truck, containing everything that did not get put into its originally assigned box.

ASAP: As Soon As Possible. In the old Confederacy, this means: As Soon as Practicable.

Backlist: All of the products printed in previous years which, while not “new releases”, continue to sell (mostly at a low rate). The classic example is expansion modules for a major game system which, while not necessary to play, are wanted by “completists” and are at least marginally useful (if not entirely useful) for current players. The point is that while current players bought the backlist products when they were new, players who are new to the system just might buy their way through the backlist. The term actually comes from the Comics industry and just barely applies to gaming, but is often applied even if it does not apply.

Bait and Switch: A tactic in which you are lured into the store (or deal) by a promise of a good (at least decent) deal on an inexpensive item and then high pressured into switching to a premium model that provides the seller with more profit. Technically illegal (if you can prove it really happened).

Bill of Lading: The document (usually applies to a freight line) which describes the shipment, the sender, and the destination. When the shipment is delivered, the driver will expect the receiver to sign this document to show that the merchandise was actually delivered. If the shipment is damaged, see Damage Notation. Also known as Uniform Straight Bill of Lading.

Bleed: Applies to printing. The way you get the picture to go right to the edge of the page is to print a bigger picture on a bigger page and then trim off the excess. The part that is trimmed off (or which will be trimmed off) is the “bleed”.

Blueline: A sample copy of your book done by taking the photographic negatives that will later be used to make printing plates and using these negatives to produce a “blue and white” (as opposed to black and white) copy of your book. This is your last chance to spot mistakes (made by you or the printer). **Most printers now have “direct to plate” technology and skip the blueline step, but have some other form of proof.**

Board Game: Within the adventure game industry, this means a game with a map and counters and usually a hexagonal field printed on the map. Within the larger “family game industry” (which isn’t even aware that the adventure game industry exists) this is a game like *Monopoly* or *Stratego*.

Bombthrower: This guy will show up on your web BBS or some general BBS and will announce that there are numerous well-known and sloppy problems with your product, but will never tell anyone just what they are. He’s probably not making it up, but is combining a number of different things (overreacting to a single typo, not understanding a rule, understanding a rule but just not liking what it says) and then blowing them out of all proportion. The problem is that you cannot really make any effective response other than “Can you give me some specific examples?” but even if he doesn’t, the damage to your reputation is done.

Book Trade: Selling games into chains like *Waldenbooks*,

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Borders, and B Dalton Books is very complicated and somewhat dangerous. There are very specific contracts, and the chain can charge you to fix anything that you do wrong (such as putting the wrong bar code on it). They often pay six months after delivery (as per the contract) and they have the right to return unsold copies (usually they just tear the cover off and throw the rest in the dumpster). It's great if it works, corporate suicide if it doesn't.

Book: Bound printed pages, not necessarily reading material, can include any kind of paper or binding.

Book Keeper: Someone skilled enough to keep track of the money you owe, the money you are owed, the inventory, and the checkbook. See Accountant.

Brick and Mortar: A term that defines a store which actually exists as a physical location, a building into which customers walk and inside which they find games. This distinguishes a physical store from an "on-line store" which does not have a physical "showroom".

Broker: A derisive term used by struggling manufacturers for a wholesaler who only buys a new product once, and does not try to stock products or serve repeat business. This takes the easiest part of selling away from proper Distributors.

Business Manager: Someone skilled enough to keep track of the money you owe, the money you are owed, the inventory, and the checkbook, PLUS analyze this information to determine which way your business is going (up in smoke or down in flames). See Business Manager, PLUS actually make decisions and get keep you out of trouble. See Bookkeeper.

Business Model: A general description of what your business does to make money. Obviously, a retailer, a game review web site, an independent writer or artist, a small press publisher, and a PDF publisher all use different business models.

Cash: Money actually in the bank, not including money you are sure somebody is about to pay you or inventory and equipment or sales you are sure you are about to make. Vendors will be far more interested in your current cash than in your future sales.

Cash Flow: Basically, having enough cash in the bank to pay the next bill that is due to arrive. (Ok, technically, it's the study-science-analysis of all of your money coming and going, but the only real point is can you pay the next bill!) Companies get in trouble when they have "profit" but not cash flow; that is, when the profit consists of increasing value of inventory not of increasing bank accounts of cash. You can make a profit (one you have to pay taxes on) while having a negative cash flow, and in theory at least you can be losing money and still having enough money come in to pay the bills. [It works this way. Say you have a thousand games in the warehouse for which you paid \$10 each and they won't sell for the retail price of \$60 or the wholesale price of \$24. You fire sale them out at \$5 each. This produces cash but on paper you are losing \$5 per game, i.e., negative profit, positive cash flow.]

Cardstock: A heavy paper, thicker than an index card. See also Playing Card Stock.

Carrier: A company that transports the games from one level of the distribution system to another. This could include the US Post Office, foreign post offices, UPS,

FedEx (both ground and air), truck lines, express companies, courier services, etc. The legal term is "common carrier" since these companies carry goods produced by many other companies.

Cart: See "Shopping Cart" below.

Carton packed: Packed in corrugated cartons (which can be reused for outbound shipments if not in bad shape).

Cash Discount: See Prompt Pay Discount.

Channel Manners: This term (which few in the industry really grasp) means you don't disrespect the other tiers. You don't sell to stores for better discounts than the wholesalers do because if you try it, the wholesalers will stop carrying your products. You don't sell to consumers (gamers) for discounts off of the Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price because if you do, the stores will stop carrying your products.

Cherry Picking: This means a retailer or wholesaler only carrying some of a manufacturer's products (the ones that actually sell) and not the others. Manufacturers don't like this (if we printed it, it must have been a good product and the wholesalers/retailers should stock it) but if wholesalers are doing this, you need to rethink what you're printing not complain about how they are buying.

Chipboard: That heavy gray cardboard you find in all kinds of things. This comes in various weights. Fifty point is good for die-cut counters, 80-point is good for mounted map boards. The same term is used as slang in the construction industry for particle board or multi-directional fiber board which is a half-inch thick and comes in 4x8 foot sheets.

CMYK: Cyan (blue) Magenta (purple) Yellow and Black, the four colors use in "four-color process printing". Printers cannot print RGB images without converting them to CMYK, which can be done (sometimes with unexpected results).

Coated: Shiny paper, made by using a clay coating. This won't work in laser printers as it causes them to overheat and will damage the printing drum. The good thing about shiny paper (other than that it is shiny and makes really nice sales fliers) is that the ink stays where it is put and does not absorb into the paper, spreading slightly and producing muddy photographs.

COD: Cash on Delivery, which means that the carrier must collect money before handing over the package to the destination customer. The carrier usually charges an extra fee for this. Sometimes the shipper has the option to either accept the recipient's check (which of course might bounce) or to demand "green cash" which means actual cash must be provided. Unless the customer agrees ahead of time to this, a problem can result if the customer just doesn't happen to have that much cash in his office at the time of arrival.

Commodity: Something you can buy in bulk from multiple sources, such as dice, paperclips, sweet potatoes, and pork bellies. Generally speaking, when looking for game components, if you can find something available in bulk from somebody who already made it for a wider market, you will save money.

Consolidator: A relatively new type of business, which fits in between manufacturers and distributors. Used by smaller manufacturers to get their games to distributors who would not normally want to deal with such a small account.

Consumer: Also known as a gamer or player. This is the individual who finally buys the game and plays it.

Copyright: Assumed by many to be “the right to make copies” it is in fact “the right to make money” or “ownership of an intellectual property”. Technically, an author has a copyright the minute that the words hit the paper (or whatever medium) but only the government can recognize a copyright (by the process of the author registering the copyright). Registered copyrights are more legally enforceable than unregistered copyrights since the violator of a copyright could try to argue that “he didn’t know it was copyrighted”. There are a lot of “amateur lawyers of the internet” who think they know a lot more about copyrights than they actually do, so be careful taking their advice. Copyright means that nobody can reprint the work without your permission (you would presumably charge them money, or you would deny such permission because you’re already busy selling the work yourself). There are also “derivative works” which means something that is based on or could *only* be used with a copyrighted work; somebody who has such a document cannot publish it without your permission but you do not own his work. See also “Fair Use”.

Corrugated: A heavy “sandwich” shipping carton material consisting of three sheets of paper, the middle one of which is rippled (like Ruffles potato chips) and all three are glued together. (Come on, you’ve all seen this stuff. It’s brown.)

Damage Notation: When you receive a shipment of merchandise, check the outside of the cartons (or pallets) carefully for any indication of damage. (The sound of broken parts inside is also something to check for.) Point this out to the driver and make a notation of the damage on the Bill of Lading before you sign it. Generally speaking, the carrier doesn’t want you to open and inspect the package before you sign for it, so you may have to just write “four boxes on pallet #2 damaged” or “entire shipment has been soaked in salt water”. Some unscrupulous carriers try to trick you by saying “Just sign it now and call us later about the damage.” but if you do not note that the shipment is damaged, you will never get paid the freight damage claim. (In one famous case, the author happened to be on the freight dock when a shipment came in. He noticed that the truck not only had a driver, but someone with a suit, tie, and briefcase. He knew right away that the shipment had been seriously damaged. And yes, the guy with the suit and tie made the friendly suggestion to just sign for the shipment and call in the damage later.) When you have freight damage, call the shipper immediately and warn them, then conduct an inspection as quickly as possible and set aside the damaged elements as well as the shipping cartons and packing materials.

Damaged: A product which has received some physical damage, usually in transit but sometimes in the manufacturer’s or wholesaler’s warehouse or in a retail store. This includes torn, crushed, stained, or otherwise despoiled making it unsalable or at least less desirable to a customer. Goods damaged in transit are usually replaced by the shipper who then files a freight damage claim with the carrier.

Dating: A term used in the toy and hobby industry and only

very rarely in the adventure game industry. It means selling something on an invoice that is “dated” three months or six months down the road. Usually used as an inducement to sell products to new customers.

DBA: Doing Business As, used when (for whatever reason) the corporation name and the public company name are not the same. For example, Game Corporation of Nebraska dba Arctic Games.

Death Spiral: How your business crashes and burns, usually because expenses are too high or sales are too low. You start borrowing against future income to pay past due bills and end up deeper and deeper in debt because each deal or project cannot pay for its own costs and the costs of repeated prior failures.

Debt: Something to avoid (but you can’t, really). Debt is money you owe and can’t or haven’t paid. (If you have the money in the bank and are just waiting a few days to write the check because you are busy, that’s not debt. Well, it is, but it’s not the kind of debt that is going to hurt.) Debt costs money (interest, penalties, carrying charges, lost discounts, etc.). If you have spare money (or are paying yourself more salary than you really need to survive), you need to pay that money on the debt. Once the debt goes away, the cost of carrying the debt goes away, and you have more money. You’re never going to have a successful company if you don’t get out of debt.

Deep Stock: This means a retailer or wholesaler has a lot of that particular product because he knows he will sell a lot of it.

Defective: This is a product that has something wrong due to a defect in manufacture. It might be mis-printed, mis-cut, mis-packaged, or have some other problem. Such products usually cannot be sold and are replaced by the manufacturer at his cost since he should not have let a defective product out of his warehouse in the first place. Sometimes there is a difference of opinion regarding just what is “defective” and the wholesaler usually wins that argument with the manufacturer by simply refusing to pay for the product.

Discard Bin: Somewhere in your warehouse you should have a box clearly marked as the “discard bin”. If you’re shipping an order and you find a defective book (or some other defective thing), you put it into the discard bin and get on with your business. When you have a spare moment, go through the discard bin and decide if each item can go to the “sample shelf” or the trash. If you trash it, write up a “discarded merchandise memo” and give it to your accountant, who will “expense” the discarded item for a tax deduction. This also makes sure that your inventory figure is right. If you toss books without writing them down, someday you will be out of a book when your computer says that there are 17 of them left.

Discontinued: The manufacturer does not plan to produce more copies of this product. He may or may not have a few copies left. This usually means that the manufacturer will no longer accept returns (if the product didn’t sell well) but sometimes he will (if the product sells very well but for some reason no more copies can be made). Some distributors use the term discontinued to mean that they have stopped carrying it, causing confusion when a store thinks that this

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means other distributors don't have it either. One must really wonder if the distributor who decided not to stock that item is happy about this confusion.

Discount: The percentage taken from the retail price, not a percentage of the retail price. A ten dollar game sold at a sixty percent discount would cost four dollars.

Discounter: A retailer who sells for less than the Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price, that is, at a discount. Brick and mortar stores hate these guys since they rob sales from "real" stores. Most discounters operate over the internet and are run as part time businesses. Since they have no storefront and probably no employees, they can cut other costs (such as insurance, health benefits) and can still make a profit. Some discounters do a good job, others have a rather casual approach to business and offer poor customer service. Some of the worst do not stock the products, but just list everything in the Alliance catalog and order it from Alliance (in batches, a few days later) when they have an order. Given the time delays to collect a large enough order, place the order, have it shipped to them, and then repack it and ship it, often interspersed with days that the owner just didn't feel like working or his wife wanted him to do something around the house, and including such things as back orders and products damaged between the wholesaler and discounter, it can take 1-3 weeks longer for a consumer to get a product from a discounter compared to a top-line mail order retailer who keeps things in stock and ships on the same day or the next day.

Distributor: Also known as a wholesaler. A distributor buys games from many manufacturers, and then stores them in a warehouse. Retailers then order the games from the distributor, who puts games from many manufacturers into the same shipment.

Double Box: A practice of reducing freight damage on shipments whereby the games are packed in one carton and that carton is put inside another carton which is an inch or two bigger with the intervening space filled with foam or some other cushioning material. If you ask wholesalers, absolutely every company but yours does this all the time with every shipment. Realistically, very few companies do it (although lots of companies do it for Alliance Midwest, which for some reason not the fault of Alliance has the vast majority of shipments damaged), and the wholesalers just expect you to pay extra money (boxes, packing materials, freight charges, and labor) just to reduce the number of damaged shipments from one in a hundred to one in a thousand. This also gives the wholesaler extra free supplies of boxes and packing materials.

Dragon: See "Visitation of the Great Dragon."

Drayage: Shipping costs.

Driver Collect: This is one method of freight collect in which the driver must be paid the freight charges before unloading the products.

Early Buy Discount (EBD): Sometimes a manufacturer will offer a bonus discount if the wholesaler orders the product early. This usually means that the manufacturer needs to have more confidence in how many he will sell before committing to print an expensive product. This is rarely done and most

wholesalers don't like it since it doesn't fit their system. They'll take the discount but they aren't going to order extra copies because of it. Retailers have to manage their cash carefully and really don't want to have to commit to buy a product without a fixed and reasonably close release date.

Ebay: The on-line auction house. Many companies regularly "auction" their products on Ebay, assuming that if there are people who want to buy that way, you might as well service their accounts. If your company takes credit cards, you could end up being the preferred source. Of course, Ebay customers won't ever pay anything close to full price, especially if they know that once you sell that copy of Arctic Wilderness RPG you will just auction another one from your warehouse, so if they can stand to wait, they can usually get a bargain.

Edition: A new edition of a product is substantially (or at least noticeably) different from the previous edition, for example, GURPS 3rd Edition is different from GURPS 4th Edition both because it SAYS that, because it uses different logos, and because the rules systems are not really compatible. When a new edition is released (often when it is announced), the old edition becomes obsolete dead inventory and either won't sell or won't sell unless the retailer gives a serious discount. Even better, once a new edition is released, the manufacturer won't take the old edition back (except in rare cases when valuable components could be salvaged for use in the new edition). While new editions mean a burst of new sales (since gamers have worn out their old edition books and want the manufacturer to fix the well-known rules glitches anyway) it also means a bunch of dead inventory that your wholesalers and retailers are stuck with. It is best to run out of the old edition, then tell the wholesalers and retailers that the new edition will come out a few months later. Then, while you refuse to take back the old edition, the wholesalers and retailers at least have a shot at dumping it for what they paid for it.

Educated Guess: While this is still a guess, the variables have been reduced to narrower ranges and the distance between an educated guess and the eventually-to-be-discovered reality is somewhat narrower than a Wild Assed Guess or TLAR.

Employer Financing: The despicable practice of using your day job's copier, printer, computer, bandwidth, office supplies, long distance service, fax machine, and most of all payroll time to launch your new game company. The author of this book is *shocked* — *shocked I tell you!* — to learn of many game designers who used this practice to start their new companies.

EOM: End of Month. This is generally associated with a number such as 10 EOM, meaning payable on the tenth day after the end of the current month. This method of billing is increasingly uncommon within the adventure game industry, where most terms are due in 30 days from the date of shipment. Some businesses use this kind of system because no matter when during the month they ship it they want everything paid by the end of the next month. This usually happens where someone makes numerous

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purchases during a month and then “settles the bill” at the end of the month, [paying from a statement rather than individual invoices](#).

Evergreen: A product that sells more or less forever, such as Monopoly.

Excellence: Something that is attainable and worth striving for. It means an excellent product, better than very good, but nobody’s perfect. See Perfection.

Exchange: Basically, it means trading a wholesaler some new stuff that still sells for some old stuff that doesn’t sell. See also Stock Balancing.

Exclusive: An arrangement in which a manufacturer agrees to use only one distributor in a given area. In theory, the distributor will then work harder to sell the product. In practice, such deals rarely work. The distributor, having no competition, may actually do a lot less work. If the distributor pays late, or otherwise mistreats the product line, firing him means you have to rebuild distribution in that area or country, starting with contacting wholesalers who are upset you would not sell to them the first time around.

Fair Use: The “Fair Use Doctrine” (see Copyrights) allows limited use of a copyrighted work. For example, it would allow a student to go into a library and photocopy a page or two of a book for his own personal use in researching a term paper, but it would not allow a teacher to photocopy an entire magazine and hand it to every student. It would allow somebody who purchased a game to make copies of expendable forms for his own use (and the use of his opponents). It would allow brief quotation in a review, and would allow an on-line retailer to put a photo of the game on his web site (but not to copy your photos from your own shopping cart).

Fast Pay Discount: See Prompt Pay Discount.

FFA: Full Freight Allowed. This means that the buyer pays the freight and then deducts the cost from the invoice. This is rarely done inside the Adventure Game Industry where the standard is that the manufacturer pays the freight to the wholesaler (if the minimum order is met, or even if it isn’t).

FLGS: Favorite Local Game Store, a term used by gamers.

Floor: See Flooring.

Flooring: A concept under which a manufacturer sends products to a wholesaler who stacks them on the “floor” of his warehouse. The goods belong to the manufacturer (who doesn’t get to bill the wholesaler for them until the wholesaler actually sells them). The practice allows manufacturers to make sure a wholesaler never runs out of their product but places all of the risk on the manufacturer. Distributors always insist on an “all or nothing” deal which means that either everything in their warehouse is something they ordered or everything is something the manufacturer floored. If a manufacturer has been selling to a distributor for some time, and/or has an extensive backlist of products, changing to a flooring deal could involve “crediting back” thousands of dollars of product (most of which is the slower selling stuff).

FOB: Free On Board or Freight On Board. This term is always associated with a location, usually but not always the point of shipping. Technically it means “we put it on your truck (or on the truck of the guy that you picked to take it to you)” which means that buyer pays the

freight from the shipper and sometimes assumes the risk of damage and responsibility to fight the battle for a freight claim. Sometimes you see “FOB Destination” which means that the shipper is paying the freight.

Found Under a Rock: This is an accounting trick. One day you order 1,000 books from the printer, who delivers a pallet of books and you write up 1,000 books in your inventory accounting. One day, you sell the 1,000th book and discover that the printer had actually sent you 1,023 books. You go “find the other 23 under a rock” which means that you write up a purchase of 23 books for zero cost. The “cost of goods sold” is going to be zero for those books (or lower if the book is part of a larger product) and your profit will be higher, but most computerized accounting systems won’t allow you to sell an item that the computer says you do not have.

Freight Collect: When the shipment arrives, the receiver either pays the truck driver or signs a blank on the bill of lading which says he will pay the shipping cost later when presented with a statement.

Freight Policy: Part of your business terms, this defines when you will pay the freight and when you will bill the freight costs to the customer.

Freight Prepaid: This means that the shipper has prepaid the freight. By prior arrangement with the customer, the shipper might have included the shipping costs in his original price quote or he might add them to the invoice as a separate line item.

GAMA: Game Manufacturer’s Association, the trade association for the adventure game industry.

Game Publisher’s Association: See GPA.

Gamer: See Consumer.

Game Engine: Basically, another term for Game System except that the “engine” could be used for radically different and totally unrelated games, such as a card game engine that would work more or less the same way to portray managing a sports team, a church, or a political party.

Games Expo: A new trade show in Las Vegas to start in 2007. Run by Mark Simmons of Matthews-Simmons Marketing. Some say that Mark started this show because he was mad at GAMA, but Mark says he’s honestly trying to expand the industry by building a show which will bring in many stores that do not currently carry Adventure Games (because they are simply not aware they exist). Whether any of those stores will actually buy anything from Adventure Game companies or anybody in the GPA is an unanswered question, but one that deserves to be asked.

Game System: A single cohesive set of rules allowing multiple games and game expansions to use a the same structure. For example, you might create an infantry combat “game system” which could be used for anything between the Boer War in 1895 and the War in Iraq in 2005 (each installment using different weapons tables and unit organizations but the same game scale and game rules).

Gaming: A term that properly applies to the gambling industry, not to the game industry. Think Las Vegas or Atlantic City.

GenCon: The largest of the national game conventions. Originally started by TSR at Lake Geneva (hence the

name) then moved to Milwaukee (where a larger convention center was available) and finally to Indianapolis. It is reportedly looking for a new home with larger facilities.

Good Humor Man: The guy from one of your suppliers who shows up (or calls) when your supplier messes up and tries to make you feel better. Sometimes this is an honest attempt at customer service; sometimes this is a flim-flam guy whose job is to make sure that you accept financial responsibility for their mistakes. From personal experience, if a freight line truck backs up to your dock and two guys get out, the driver and a "suit and briefcase" type, you can bet that your shipment has been severely damaged. Do not — repeat do not — take the suggestion of this man that you go ahead and sign an un-noted shipping form and call in the damage claim later.

GPA: Game Publisher's Association. Founded in 2003, this is a semi-formal club of the smaller publishers. It's focus is to help smaller publishers get recognition and find good deals on everything from printing to components. This is an excellent place to network.

Great Dragon: See "Visitation of the Great Dragon."

GTS: GAMA Trade Show, the annual event in Las Vegas where a hundred or more manufacturers show their upcoming products to the top retailers. Also includes no end of seminars, meetings, and parties.

Hard Count: The most accurate count, one that is done with precision and accuracy. For example, saying to the warehouse foreman: "The computer says we have 327 copies of Arctic Tundra packed and ready to ship, but I saw six boxes of ninety-six out there. We must have forgotten to update the computer sometime you packed some of them. Could you go do a quick hard count?" Another version of this is: "The hard count of sales of next week's new release is 400 (which counts only actual orders received) but penciling in what I think Alliance and ACD are going to order puts is at 700 or so."

Hidden Costs & Fees: Extra expenses added to your bill after you agree to a deal. Sometimes these are just added on without warning (check your phone bill), but more often the warning is either stated so vaguely you don't realize that it is a warning of extra fees. (Look for terms like "subject to our customary...") Another way to add extra fees is to get the customer to verbally agree to a "change order". On one home improvement TV show, the landscape guy said to the general contractor: "This rock garden is not right; do you mind if I fix it?" which meant that the landscaper added a thousand dollars to his bill, a minor detail that the contractor (actually, the contractor's out of work brother) did not realize because of his inexperience.

House Stock: Every printing company has one particular kind of paper in each category of paper which they buy in large quantities and use for jobs of that type if nobody tells them differently. This is always cheaper than special ordering something.

Incentive: Something done to encourage others to do what you want them to do. This could be a free display rack for a retailer who picks up your line, or a bonus to the wholesaler sales rep who convinces a retailer to pick up your line.

Index: A kind of cardstock, usually on the lighter end of the

scale, but thicker and stiffer than paper.

Internet Discounter: See Discounter.

ISBN: International System Book Number. Games are, in the eyes of the law, books. The ISBN system assigns every book a unique number. See chapter 2.

Jail: Something to avoid by, for example, not committing fraud, theft, or other felonies.

Judgement: A legal document issued by a judge which says "A owes \$X to B." Whoever B is can then "seize" certain kinds of assets of "A". (Get the lawyer who got you the judgement to do this; don't try it yourself.) For example, let's say you (a manufacturer) owe money to a printing company that is very past due and they file a judgement against you. They can then watch your bank account and seize any money deposited to it (which might cause you to bounce checks). They can also contact people who owe you money and have that money paid directly to them. In addition to what you owe, you will also be paying interest, penalties, and the vendor's attorney. If you have trouble paying your bills, work it out before it comes to this point.

Keystone: A term used by retailers which means that they paid 50% of the retail price for an item they sell. Regardless of what your actual terms are, feel free to sell leftover convention inventory to retailers "for keystone" during the last hour of the show. This is not the same as giving such discounts to consumers (a practice to avoid as next year they'll want that discount on the first day).

Legacy: Product lines or equipment that you had before you decided you needed new product lines or equipment. Say you spent 1995-2005 building a product line of miniature figures in a certain scale. Then some new product from some other company meant that miniatures of a different scale sold much better, and you started doing minis in that scale. The old miniatures are "legacy products". They still sell but are going to see a declining market and probably aren't worth spending a lot of money promoting or making new SKUs for. Similarly, say you went into business in a given year and bought Neutronium Computers, which were 'the latest thing'. A few years later the Quantum computers came out and you bought a few of those for key people but kept the older Neutronium machines for secondary employees or part-timers. Those are "Legacy machines". The term Legacy is often employed when there has been a change of ownership (or a new presidential election, or a paradigm shift) with Legacy referring to the stuff that was here when the new bosses arrived, and they'll use it until it wears out or is so obsolete as to be useless.

Lowball: A very low estimated intended to get you to award the contract to the bidder in question. It turns out later than the deal will cost a lot more due to hidden charges, taking advantage of change orders, unstated fees, or outright lies.

Manufacturer Code: Every company in the Adventure Game Industry has been assigned a three-letter code by the Games Quarterly Catalog, and for convenience, everybody uses these codes (usually combining them with the stock number). You can get such a code by calling Matthews Simmons Marketing at 303-469-

3277.

Miniature: A small-scale representation of a real or fictional person, creature, vehicle, or other item. These can be tanks, soldiers, monsters, and starships. These can be made in metal (usually pewter) or plastic or resin.

MSRP: Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price. This is usually done in our industry, and often not done in the toy industry. It establishes the "official" price for the product and the wholesalers and retailers get to buy at a discount from that price. Under the law, however, anybody can sell anything (that they legally own) for any price, so you will see *Internet Discounters* selling your games for less than the retail price to try and capture a slice of the market, and you cannot legally stop them.

Nightmare, Retailer: The next "cool, must have, product" is going to get noticed by Walmart which means nobody will buy it from the adventure game retailers who will then not have that profit engine to keep going. This has already come true.

Nightmare, Wholesalers: Someday the big toy, hobby, or video distributors are going to notice the Adventure Game Industry. They will then swoop down and take away the product lines of the five or ten biggest manufacturers (said manufacturers will think this is a good thing because their sales will double). The problem is that this will leave the current wholesalers (from Alliance down) without enough profit to stay in business, and could ultimately put all of the other manufacturers out of business for lack of distribution.

Net Pricing: Rather than a suggested retail price and a discount, some products (usually toys) are priced "net" meaning that the customer on the next tier pays that price and figures out for himself how much to sell it to the next tier for. This is rarely done in the Adventure Game Industry.

OPM (Other People's Money): A business practice of getting other people to pay for your expenses or more often borrowing money from other people (with or without their consent, and with or without paying interest). For example, if you pay your printing bill late, you borrowed OPM to keep your cash flow from going negative. The term comes from the military, where the Marines are always using the Navy's budget and the Army's equipment without paying them back.

Origins: The major national game convention, run by GAMA. See Chapters 3 and 7.

Out of Print: This means that the manufacturer himself has no more copies but does (sometimes on a specific date and sometimes at a vague future date) plan to reprint it, perhaps with revisions or in a new edition. This term is often used for a product which has been discontinued, and experts argue endlessly which is the correct usage of this term.

Out of Production: See Out of Print. There are those who use this term as the temporary condition and the other term as the permanent condition, and there are those who insist that the opposite is true.

Out of Stock: An item is temporarily unavailable. A wholesaler or retailer who is out of stock just hasn't ordered (or received) additional copies. A manufacturer who is out of stock hasn't produced more copies yet but plans to.

Overship: This means sending a customer more than he

ordered. This can happen several ways. One might be a simple mistake (your warehouse guy miscounted); wholesalers will usually just confiscate the excess. Another is an arranged overship, with the wholesaler's permission, of a new product that the manufacturer is certain will sell better than the pre-orders suggest.

Paper Weight: Go to www.paper-paper.com/weight.html which explains this. Lots of kinds of paper use weight, points, and other terms and use them differently. Twenty-pound bond (typing paper) is the same as fifty-pound offset. (Twenty-four equals sixty and twenty-eight equals seventy.) Good paper for printing books is 24# (sixty pound) and good stock for covers is Ten Point (which is 135 pound index). Be careful that you know which is which when ordering paper. Play aide charts can sometimes go on 90 pound index that runs through POD printers nicely. For laminated play aide cards intended for wipe off markers, use 14-point cover.

Paper: Nothing special, just what it says. But there are a lot of kinds of paper.

Paradigm: Pronounced "pair-uh-dime" this is usually stated in the form of a "paradigm shift". For example, wooden ships with iron cannons are one paradigm, while steam-powered ironclads are another. Getting caught by a paradigm shift means you are trying to sell wooden ships into a war being fought by iron ships. There may be some things that your wooden ships can be used for and they may be cheaper, but they are no longer "the way things work".

Pay Per Click: A type of internet advertising in which you run ads somewhere (on a search engine or another web site) and pay them so much for every person who clicks on one of your ads. Of course, you had better have a spiffy world class landing page to entice them to explore your web site and end up in your shopping cart paying you money. Without that, you're wasting your money on pay per click.

PAYG: Pay As You Go. A system used in some cases where you pay for each step of a production process as it goes along. For example, a sculptor does a new figure done as a 3d computer image, and when you approve it, you pay for it. Then the new figure is 'printed' into a solid 3d figure in a prototyping machine, and when you approve the result, you pay for that. Then it's turned into a silver master, and you pay for that when you see it was done right. Then the silver master is used to make a master mold, and you pay for that when you see some masters from that mold. Then the masters are used to make a production mold and you pay for that mold when you see some production pieces. Then several zillion arrive on your freight dock and you pay for those after inspecting them.

Payment Must Accompany Order: A business term used by two kinds of printers. One of them is a good printer who was burned by other game companies and wants to be sure he gets paid. The other one is a bad printer who produces defective and low-quality work and won't give you any refunds.

Perfection: An unattainable goal that (if pursued) will consume time and money better spent on new products while producing only frustration. See Excellence.

PIYS: Print It Your Self. POD printing when you own the equipment.

Player: See Consumer.

Playing Card Stock: This is a very special paper which is normally used only by companies that print playing cards. It has a dark (black, blue, purple) core between two white layers, good "memory" (snaps back to shape after being bent during shuffling), and a tough finish to stand shuffling (both riffle and edge-on slide shuffling). Some things like Monopoly Community Chest cards can simply be printed on cardstock, but something that is going to get shuffled a lot (like say a deck of playing cards) needs the special stock.

Pounds: See paper weight.

POD: Print on Demand. Relatively new technology involving high speed super-quality laser print engines which allow books to be printed one at a time for costs not that much higher than web-fed multi-thousand print runs.

Prime Directive: When starting to do something you have never done before, assume nothing, do extensive research, and even then ask somebody who actually knows how to do it.

Printer: A term that means two entirely different things and could confuse you in reading books like this one. It could mean a "company that does printing" or a "machine that does printing".

Product Line: A much mis-used term. Some companies (particularly smaller ones) tend to use the term "in our product line" to include everything they print. Arctic Games, on the other hand, has a boardgame product line, a role-playing product line, and a card game product line. Things might be differentiated into even smaller chunks, for example "card games about the arctic" and "card games about 1880 railroad empires" would be different product lines. In other cases, very different products might be considered part of the same product line (for example, a role-playing game and miniatures that work with it).

Profit: Increase in value. This works in two ways. One is transaction profit; how much did you make on one particular sale. Say you pay \$10 for a game with a retail price of \$60 and a wholesale price of \$24. This means selling that game produces a transaction profit of either \$14 or \$50. The problem with transaction profit is that it doesn't account for overhead (rent, salaries, utilities, interest on borrowed money, taxes, advertising, and so forth). The more proper use is in the increased value of the company, which is "paper profit" in that it shows up on the balance sheet not in the bank account. Say you buy 1,000 games for \$10 each. This amounts to no profit (you had \$10,000 in cash and now have \$10,000 in merchandise), and negative cash flow. Now let's say you sell 100 of those games to a wholesale for \$2400. That's a profit of \$1400 and cash flow of \$2400.

Prompt Pay Discount: An extra discount provided for paying even earlier than the normal invoice. The most common terms in the adventure gaming industry are 55/10 and 56/9 with the first number being a discount that you get if you pay in 30 days and the second number being a discount of the remaining bill which you get if you pay within some shorter period (usually 10 days but sometimes 13).

Proof: A sample copy of the planned printing for your approval, usually refers to color work but the term is sometimes used for any printing. Proofs are done by other means than printing so they won't be exact. After a printing job, ask the printer to let you see the proof again so you can compare it to the job and learn what a proof can and cannot tell you.

PROX: During the following month. Always associated with a number like PROX10 meaning the tenth day of the next month. See EOM for explanations.

Pull Market: One in which the consumers demand the products from retailers who (sure of a sale) are only too happy to order them from wholesalers (who, having already got them sold, are happy to order them from the manufacturer). Retailers (and to some extent wholesalers) like this model since it means they have no risk. If they have a consumer who wants a product, they order it, and need make no effort to "sell" that product. Retailers want manufacturers to create a demand, something very hard and expensive to do from so far away from the consumer. The problem is that if the demand is there, the manufacturer makes more money selling direct to consumers, and since the manufacturer is expected to market to consumers to get them to buy, the manufacturer might as well suggest that they buy from the manufacturer.

Purchase Order: Technically, a binding legal contract between the buyer (who issues the Purchase Order) and seller (who, by shipping the order, accepts the terms printed on the Purchase Order). Manufacturers insist that placing any order accepts the business terms they sent to the wholesaler. Wholesalers insist that the manufacturer accepts modifications of those terms printed on the purchase order at the time he executes the order. Usually such disagreements don't mean anything and when they do, the wholesaler (who 95% of the time doesn't need the business as bad as the manufacturer does) gets his way. Maybe a judge might someday decide such a case, but there is never enough money involved in this business to hire lawyers and fight it out. Just go with it; it will all be ok.

Push Market: One in which the manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers all try to convince the next level down to buy a product that they would not buy on their own accord.

Quality Control: Something you have to consider at every level. When you get books from a printing company or miniatures from a casting house, check enough of them (every single one if you have to) to be sure they are excellent products you are proud to sell.

Rainy Day Fund: Keep a thousand dollars in the bank. This is used to cover emergencies, such as the air conditioning going out or somebody dropping and destroying a computer monitor or finding out that you have to reprint a game cover or running late and having to pay air freight. If you use the Rainy Day Fund, your first obligation is to refill it, before you write the next paycheck to yourself.

Range: A term used by miniatures companies to mean a series of miniatures which are all to the same scale and all of which could logically be used in the same game.

Recycled Paper: Lots of Eco-aware people insist on using

recycled paper, noting that it is available in a wide variety of grades and types. True, it is, but not always in the kind you use, almost always not in stock at the printer (special ordered paper is more expensive than the "house stock"), often won't work on particular kinds of presses, is often more expensive, and most of the time it is not "post-consumer" recycled paper but recycled printer waste which was never used by the public. Sounds good, and use it if you can, but don't be fanatic about it or you may have production delays and cost issues.

Rep: See "Sales Representatives".

Reprint: A new printing of a product which has few if any revisions. (Usually, correcting typos isn't regarded as making a reprint anything other than a reprint.) The issue here is that a player finding two copies on a shelf (one the original printing and one a reprint) couldn't tell them apart and wouldn't care which one he bought. If the reprint is notably different than the original, any gamer worth his dice would take the new one and turn the old one into "unsalable dead inventory" which the retailer would be upset about being stuck with. So if the two copies are interchangeable, call it a reprint. If not, it's a new edition. If your reprint comes in before you ran out of the original printing, nobody should or even could tell that this happened. Where this gets tricky is in boxed games with many components that do not run out of stock at the same time. Say your boxed game includes a rulebook, a map, die-cut counters, and some dice. You run out of red dice and start using blue nice, nobody cares, that's not even a reprint. You fix a few typos in the rulebook, that's still a reprint. You replace the old one-color map with a new four-color map ... that gets to be a problem. You still have boxes in stock with the original stock number, and don't want to throw those out. If you put a sticker on the box saying "new full color map" then all of the boxes out there without that sticker become "dead inventory" and (all too often) you cannot afford to take the game off the market for three months so that stores can sell the old stuff before it becomes dead inventory. It's not very nice but you can just include the new maps in the old boxes and just not tell anybody. Call it the gaming version of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. Wholesalers hate that. You can ask the wholesalers to tell you how many old copies they have and send them that many new maps, but there is no way to track down the stores.

Restocking Fee: This is the fee (usually 15%) applied to merchandise which is Returned to you buy a wholesaler who couldn't sell it. See Returns.

Retailer: The shop or store which finally hands the game to the consumer. Retailers buy from wholesalers (or sometimes directly from manufacturers). See also brick and mortar retailers, and storekeepers.

Return: This is when a customer (usually a wholesaler) sends back things he could not sell. This might be something provided for on your terms sheet, or something you worked out with the wholesaler. Generally, it's bad news since stuff you thought you had sold (and may have even been paid for) is suddenly on its way back to your warehouse. This is usually subject to a restocking fee and requires that

the merchandise be in salable condition. The problem here is that the wholesaler already sent it back to you and isn't going to be interested in hearing that you don't think it's in salable condition [and is pretty much going to ignore you when you don't give him as much credit for the return. His version of your mutual records is going to show the credit he thinks he got and he's going to take that much credit against bills he owes you and ignore you when you send statements showing that he didn't have that much credit and still owes you money.](#)

Revision: A reprint of a previous product in which one or more of the components is somehow different (presumably improved) from the original. See "Edition". One could argue that a revision is less extensive than a new edition.

RFQ: Request for Quote, asking somebody to quote a price for doing (usually manufacturing) something.

RFP: Request for Proposals. [This term is seldom used in the adventure game industry, but does come from general business. A company that needs a new piece of equipment to accomplish some task will publish the specifications of what this machine needs to do and then request that other companies propose a solution \(i.e., a piece of equipment they make to do this task\).](#)

ROG: Receipt of Goods, the day that the product is received. Usually "payment due on ROG" which means that while not COD, the customer is expected to mail a check the same day (or the next day). This is sometimes used for trusted customers (wholesale or retail) who can reasonably be trusted to pay on time. This is usually done either to avoid the COD charges or because modern computer-printed checks cannot be issued in the time a truck driver is willing to wait.

Role-Playing Game: A game in which the player "plays a role" in an open-ended and un-scripted story. Role-playing came into the Adventure Game Industry back about 1970, and doubled the size of the industry just as boardgames had previously doubled or tripled the size of the previous "miniatures wargame" industry. [Role-playing games usually involve a campaign where the same characters are used over and over, gaining experience, abilities, and equipment over time.](#)

RPG: See role-playing game.

Sales Representatives: Once used more than they are now, a sales representation company has a number of geographically-based salesmen. They travel from store to store and present several games to the buyers. If they get an order, they take a commission. They may expect some fee or minimum commission just for trying to sell your games for you.

Secondary Market: Basically, buying things back from a consumer who bought them. Sometimes items are in very short supply or have been discontinued and somebody at one level of the system will buy them back from a lower level, either as a courtesy or because he thinks he can readily resell them. Think of ticket scalpers and you will have some idea. This often happens with those hot fad card games where the first guy who wanders into the store after the shipment arrives buys entire cases which he never opens but offers to sell at a higher price to other gamers or even back to the store. There are some

very unpleasant stories about wholesalers locking up super-hot inventory in the back room, placing a sign that says "secondary market" on the door of that room, and then telling a retailer who calls in that "I am out of the shipment from the manufacturer but I can get those cards for you -- at a substantially higher price -- from the secondary market."

Self-Insure: Not buy insurance coverage for the risk in question and hope that if the situation comes up you can pay it out of your pocket. Usually used for either minor risks that require some strange unique (expensive) insurance quote, or something so catastrophic you cannot afford to cover it. For example, virtually every game company self-insures against volcanic eruptions and asteroid impacts.

Sheet Fed Printing: This uses individual sheet of paper or other stock. It is slower than web-fed, produced a slightly higher quality image, can be economical for short runs, but for longer print runs is twice the price of Web-Fed printing. See Web-Fed printing.

Shopkeeper: Used as a derisive term for retailers who do not try to "sell" the games of struggling manufacturers, but who only want to stock games that are "pre-sold".

Shopping Cart: An internet sales site which combines the functions of a catalog with an ordering system. Includes product photos, product descriptions, and "click here to add this item to your cart" and "check out now" (by giving a credit card number to have the products sent to him).

Shrinkwrap: A clear plastic wrapper around a package which makes it shiny and shows that it has not been opened. Also keeps the color cover from getting scratched in handling. You can also protect products by varnish or laminating the covers.

Skid Pack: Loaded on a pallet and wrapped in plastic. Good enough to get it across town on the printers truck but not a great way to ship stuff across the country. Sometimes this term is used to mean better and safer means of packaging.

SKU: See Stock Keeping Unit. Basically, the stock number.

Spiff: Paying a special bonus to a wholesaler's sales reps to push a particular product. Nobody really likes this idea since it means paying a fee for what should be normal service, and if everybody did it we would be right back where we started from.

Stench (of death): Refers to a wholesaler or manufacturer (or sometimes a product line) whom the rest of the industry expects to go out of business very soon. You must avoid having this stench fall upon you, since it makes it hard to get credit or make deals. For a business example, let's say you have a wholesaler who isn't paying his bills on time, getting later and later, and other manufacturers report the same problems. Sooner or later, somebody is going to start talking about this "dead wholesaler walking" and that is the point that nobody gives them credit terms, nobody takes their word for anything, and nobody goes into any transaction expecting them to survive. For a product line example, let's say you have a huge but aging product line of 30 products. You notice that you have a 99-year supply of one particular product which you overprinted years ago, and decide to sell of this surplus to Titan Games (which is always buying such things). No only does this make it hard to

continue selling (at full retail) the few hundred copies you kept, but people might get the idea that your entire product line is dying. One way to avoid this is to keep putting out new products for older product lines, focusing on those that can be printed "on demand" so you aren't adding to the inventory.

Stock Balancing: Similar to an Exchange, this means a wholesaler sends you back some of your stuff that isn't selling in exchange for some new stuff that is. In theory, the difference between an Exchange and a Stock Balance is that in a stock balance the returned products are still selling, are not all that they have of that item, and will eventually be re-purchased, they just have too many of that particular item right now. This could for example happen if in one year you released ten books about monsters and one of the books sold at half of the rate of the others, but the wholesaler had bought the same amounts. By returning the surplus in exchange for other books, the wholesaler keeps his stock "fresh" and his "turnover rate" faster. The manufacturer (who decided what to print) gets hurt, but it was his fault for printing things that had a lower sales rate.

Stock Keeping Unit (SKU): Basically, the stock number of a product, usually a four-digit number. Since the UPC bar codes use a five-digit number, most companies just stick a zero in front of their four-digit stock number. Lou Zocchi once recommended that you put the zero in the fifth digit spot and use that spot for part numbers, so that stock number 67890 is your game, 67891 is the rulebook, 67892 is the map, and so forth.

Suicide Mission: A business deal that, if it goes bad, will destroy your company. Examples including spending every dime you can get your hands on to print a risky new product, a deal to place two thousand games into stores on a "return if not sold in 90 days" basis, or sending every dime you can raise to Nigeria to pay for bank transfer fees to get sixty-seven million from the account of an assassinated dictator.

Ten Percent Inventory: A theory under which your business does a hard count inventory of 10% of the SKUs every month, instead of trying to do the whole thing once a year. You skip the two busiest months to make it come out even.

Terms: Your statement of how you do business, what discounts you sell for, how many days to pay, who pays for shipping, return policy, etc.

That turns out not to be the case: The polite form of "what you said is just plain wrong." Can be used as a response to political propaganda or business advice.

Thomas Register: A list (register) of companies and products once created by somebody named Thomas. It still exists (thomasregister.com). It is an industrial search database. No matter what you want to buy, there are companies in Thomas Register that sell it.

Title to the Goods: Virtually all manufacturer term sheets include the phrase: "Title to the goods remains with us until paid in full." What that means is that if the wholesaler goes bankrupt, the unpaid goods are the property of the manufacturer and must be returned to him, not sold in the wholesaler's bankruptcy auction. As a practical matter, the wholesaler (being out of business) won't care and their creditors (who are conducting the auction) have no real interest in finding

out that they cannot legally sell everything in the warehouse. In theory if you found out about the auction you could walk into it with your records and your lawyer and (just maybe) get the merchandise in question handed over to you or impounded by the sheriff for later disposition (to you, after you prove your case). As a practical matter, you won't be owed enough to pay for the trip to the auction so just swallow the fact that you got ripped off with dignity.

TLAR (Tee-Lahr): That Looks About Right, a method for calibrating precision machinery. This term originated in the US Army when they began mounting weapons on helicopters that had no sighting system to aim the weapons. The sighting system often consisted of a spot of paint on the windshield.

Turn: See turnover rate.

Turnover Rate: Used mostly by retailers, it means "If I allocate one spot on my shelf for a specific book you print and replace that book with the same book every time it sells, how many will I sell a year?" Obviously, higher numbers mean a faster turnover rate and means that this particular spot on his shelf is generating more profit per year. A store knows it has to devote a small part of its space to "must have, seldom sell" books, but wants to keep this number down and only keep a slow seller when it implements a larger sales stream.

Uniform Commercial Code: The basic business law of the United States, in theory the way any two random businesses do business unless they arrange and agree to use some other system. It's the "default setting" for business practices. Wholesalers love to point out that the UCC says that a bill is paid if the check is postmarked on the due date. Manufacturers love to point out that their terms quite clearly state that payment must be received on the date listed and that the wholesaler accepted this term when he placed his first order. Many terms sheets provide that if your payment is late but was postmarked at least 2 or 3 days before the due date it won't be counted as late. Some accept the "postmark on due date" theory.

Uniform Straight Bill of Lading: See Bill of Lading. Many business supply stores sell boxes of these generic "uniform" Bills of Lading to companies that don't want to bother creating their own unique ones.

Universe: A cohesive background setting used for a number of game systems. For example, the author's Star Fleet Universe includes several game systems (Star Fleet Battles, Federation Commander, Federation & Empire, Prime Directive D20, Prime Directive GURPS, Star Fleet Battle Force).

UPC Code: Also known as "the bar code". Its that bunch of little lines on the back of any product that gets scanned at the cash register. These days, you can buy software to produce these for a couple of hundred dollars. However, you have to have a contract with the UPC guys to have the numbers to input.

Vendor: Somebody who sells something to somebody else. Wholesalers consider manufacturers to be Vendors. In the "six tier definition" the Vendor Tier consists of the printing companies, freelance writers and artists, casting houses, paper companies, office supply companies, utilities companies, and anybody else who sells things to the Manufacturer Tier.

Verify: What you should do with every step of every project.

Make sure that the instructions are understood and are being followed.

Visitation of the Great Dragon: This is one of our humorous in-house terms which means "some project just landed in the office and ate all available time and resources." This usually involves a product going to press but could also mean a trade show (getting ready, going, recovering) or some other large project (say, launching a major new web site). During periods of this visitation, you get to tell anybody who wants anything that they have to ask you when the great dragon has been slain as (1) you don't have time until then and (2) you won't remember by then time it's dead. Allowing the dragon to visit is a bad thing since during his visit, you will lose track of other things (like, say, advertising deadlines). You need to avoid having the dragon show up too often or stay round for too long, which becomes a challenge for project scheduling. You can do this by getting as much of the project done before the final deadline, being realistic about when to establish that deadline or when to start working on the project, taking steps to make sure people you are counting on actually deliver, and just plain old "working hard AND smart". You can also try to keep track of what's not getting done while the dragon is here. Things like "read my new story and decide if you want to use it in some future product" can wait. "Alliance wants the cover art for the November products by Friday" cannot wait. You can deal with these issues in two ways. One is to anticipate the dragon's arrival (say, the last two weeks before going to press) and if any deadline lands in that time, try to handle it earlier. The other way is to schedule an hour a day for "things that cannot wait until the dragon leaves". If you're lucky enough to have a big enough company that you have employees, you can assign one of them to handle "everything that can't wait during the time I am being creative".

WAG: Wild-Assed Guess.

Walk Off The Cliff Day: The day shown by your estimated cash flow tracking spreadsheet on which you will not have enough money to pay a bill that has a hard due date (on that day). If you actually reach Walk Off The Cliff Day you are in trouble. You need to do something as far from that day as you can to push that day back farther. The easiest and most honorable is to delay your own paycheck until after that day and then pay yourself only when you can.

Wargame: A game about war or other conflicts. See "conflict simulation" if you want to. Most old-line gamers (those in their 50s and 60s) regard the term as including RPGs but RPG players (most of whom are younger) resent being included in the term "wargamers" and insist that wargames refer only to "games about war". Of course, the oldest of the old-line wargamers insist that the term applies only to miniatures-based non-hex historical gaming, frequently of the American Civil War.

Web-Fed Printing: This uses huge rolls of paper. On runs of two thousand or more, it's half the price of sheet fed printing, but the quality is a tiny bit lower. Problem is, a million years ago when somebody invented web-fed printing, they used the standard paper that had been

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in production. The result is that if you order an 8.5x11 book, it is actually going to show up on your freight dock 8.375 x 10.875 inches because the way Web-Fed presses handle paper loses a little bit. Nobody seems to notice the difference. See Sheet-Fed Printing.

Wholesaler: See Distributor.

Win-Win: You want every deal to be one where both sides end up better off than they started, that is, for both side to win. Selling your games to a wholesaler is a win for you but if it's not a win for them, they won't be back.

WYSIWYG: What you see is what you get. A term applied to press proofs and on-screen displays. Most modern software does this.

X-Rated: Adult, sexually based, naughty, dirty, etc. Anything X-rated is probably something you don't need to be publishing anyway.

Year End Inventory: Required for tax and accounting purposes, and by those states (such as Texas) with "inventory taxes". In theory you have to hand-count everything you own at the end of every year. You can try going from your computer-tracked inventory (which will be wrong in minor instances) with a partial count to verify that the computer inventory is pretty much right. You might also try hand counting 8.5% of your property every month.

Zero Sum: A business theory that means at the end of any deal the sum has to be zero, which means the only way for you to get ahead is to destroy somebody else. Generally derided as over simplified thinking.

Zoo: Something you don't want your company, your product line, or your convention to turn into. Try to keep a free-thinking spirit while maintaining some order in chaos.

Please do not post this document on a web site or pass it around. Anybody who wants a copy can ask or download a free PDF. That's not because I want to be a control freak but because I do update individual chapters whenever I think of something to add and would just as soon there be one place for the most recent copy.