

THE

PROFESSIONALS

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While watching players make characters (both player-characters and non-player-characters) I can't help but notice how often the Profession skill is not even considered. Perhaps it is the lack of obvious tangible benefit to characters that now call themselves adventurers. Perhaps it is because the focus of their group (or Game Master) is always a dungeon crawl that keeps the characters cut off from any concept of a regular society. Or perhaps their game-style is always hack-and-slash where any concept of interaction with an encountered society is always for the purpose of slaying them. For whatever the reason, I see many people overlooking the Profession skill by name alone.

As a result of this observation, I invite players and game masters to give the Profession skill a second look.

Earnings: Initially, a character gains the benefit of being able to make some money when exercising his skills in the chosen profession. As mentioned in The Player's Handbook, you earn gold pieces based on your skill check result per week attempt. Sometimes a character is having downtime in a city and having the extra coins come in during this period could help. Maybe it's not a dragon's hoard, but in campaigns where the characters don't carry around a king's ransom in their packs, some extra coins could always be helpful.

Knowledge: There is another initial benefit mentioned in The Player's Handbook. Having ranks in a Profession equates to having knowledge about the profession and about the tools of the trade. Such knowledge can sometimes prove useful when interacting within a society itself. Imagine having ranks in Profession (Sailor) and then being able to apply that skill when speaking with a tavern full of off-duty sailors. In such cases, you are more likely to get the information that you need from these sailors by having something (the knowledge of the profession) about with which to relate to them.

Character: Third, there are obvious role-playing and character development possibilities with defining a profession, even if it is a minimal number of ranks. By choosing a profession and assigning at least one rank to the skill, you are shaping yet another aspect of the character. Maybe the character has always had aspirations and skill but something else (the need to quest on

a specific adventure) has kept him from attaining his dream. Or perhaps his family wanted him to be in a particular profession and started him in an apprenticeship but he never seemed to be able to get more than a single rank of skill within the Profession. The possibilities are varied but can add rich detail to a character.

Logistics: Fourth, the logistics of it all states that more people should have at least some ranks in Profession than those without any ranks in the skill. Experts (some of which need the Profession so that they can be in expert in it) and Commoners (who need a Profession to increase their chances of bringing home bread and butter to their respective families) need these skills. Player characters, as well, could also have Profession skills. Not all (if any) grew up from birth stating that they were going to be adventurers or noblemen. In most medieval-based fantasy settings many children would probably raised in an apprenticeship of some sort, especially if they lived in a city. It is because of this factor for characters to have some number of ranks invested into a Profession. Before circumstances swept them into adventure, most would have been planning to support themselves for the rest of their life with these skills.

Prestige Classes: If there are Prestige Classes in the campaign, it is conceivable that a couple of them require some number of ranks in one of various Profession skills. By taking ranks in these Profession skills, a character is one step closer to achieving a desired Prestige Class. In the real world, many organizations only invite people to join if they share some common skill, and so in a fantasy setting, the Knights of Goodness do not seem nearly as interesting as the Knights of St. Bath's Shelter, who are all former innkeepers.

Synergy: As an optional rule, you can get synergy galore! After all, what are professions but a combination of other skills applied toward a particular goal. If you are trained as a professional scribe, for instance, you will be simultaneously increasing your steady hand thus leading to a potential synergy bonus in Forgery skill checks. At the game master's discretion, 5 or more ranks in a Profession skill can grant a +2 synergy bonus to related other skills.

Perhaps from a meta-gaming standpoint it could be argued that none of these benefits alone is reason

enough to merit investing the skill points. Maybe synergy bonuses don't mean much if you can invest the skill points directly into the other skill. And it is entirely feasible that you can find other things to relate to professionals about other than a profession itself. Or perhaps your game group *does* carry around a king's ransom and therefore doesn't need the extra few coins. However, when considering the combined value from each of the aforementioned points, perhaps having your character learn a few tricks of a trade the next time he levels up won't be that bad of an idea. Not all benefits in roleplaying games come directly from dice and numbers.

THE MENU

Some possible profession choices (for player and non-player characters alike) are listed below along with a brief description of the job, any skills to which the profession can grant synergy bonuses, and any other miscellaneous notes.

Profession (actor)

You are skilled in the dramatic arts (comedy, tragedy, etc). You may use your Charisma modifier for this skill instead of your Wisdom modifier – whichever is higher. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Bluff checks and Disguise checks. If you have 5 or more ranks in a Perform skill, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (actor) skill checks.

In addition to just the process of acting, this skill also covers details of registering at playhouses, finding directors to employ you or actors to work for you, acquiring and setting up props and setpieces, and the appropriate courtesies at various venues, ranging from brothel to throne room.

Profession (announcer)

You can earn a living as a speaker or announcer for events (formal or informal such as or announcing decrees of the local nobility or sporting events). If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Bluff and Diplomacy checks if they involve deceiving or convincing the audience to believe your stated opinion. If you have 5 or more ranks in a Perform skill related to vocalization (song, ballad, etc), you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (announcer) skill checks.

Profession (apothecary)

You are experienced in creating pharmaceuticals and other concoctions. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Alchemy

checks, and to Knowledge (nature) checks involve the medicinal properties of plants and animal parts. If you have the Brew Potion feat, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (apothecary) checks.

Profession (barrister)

You are knowledgeable in local laws and skilled in providing council in the court of law. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Diplomacy checks when they are used to persuade or convince and a +2 synergy bonus to Knowledge checks relating to local laws or history of your home region.

Profession (cartographer)

You are skilled in the art of maps and map making. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Forgery checks involving maps. If you have 5 or more ranks in Intuit Direction, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (cartographer) skill checks while attempting to make original maps from field work.

The time required to create an any particular specific map depends on the size of the map and the scale. You must first travel through the entire area, collecting data, which usually requires one day for every 25 square miles, to a minimum of one hour for anything smaller than a square mile. Once you have the necessary information, compiling and drawing a map typically requires between one and eight hours, depending on the precision relative to total size. A dungeon map that only shows the general location of rooms would probably take an hour or less to draw, while one that detailed the exact dimensions of floor, wall, and ceiling could take eight hours or more.

Creating an accurate map is DC 10. For every 5 points you beat this by, people using your map get a +1 circumstance bonus to Intuit Direction or Search checks that involve information provided on the map.

Profession (cook)

You are quite knowledgeable in the culinary arts. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Knowledge (nature) checks that are used in relation to plants (herbs and spices) or animals that are commonly eaten. And, as any chef can tell you, presentation is key, therefore if you have 5 or more ranks in this profession you gain a +2 synergy bonus to the reaction checks of people who eat your cooking. If you have 5 or more ranks in Alchemy, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (Cook) checks.

Profession (farmer)

You are skilled in the ways of agriculture. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to any Knowledge (nature) checks in cultivated terrain. If you have 5 or more ranks in Wilderness Lore or Handle Animal, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (farmer) checks.

Profession (fisher)

You can earn a living by fishing. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Spot checks against submerged creatures, and a gain a +2 synergy bonus to Knowledge (nature) checks in relation to fish, fish life, and the natural life on or near coastal areas. If you have 10 or more ranks in this profession, you gain free proficiency in any one spear, or in the net. If you have 5 or more ranks in Wilderness Lore, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (Fisher) skill checks.

Profession (groom)

You are capable of maintaining a small stable and the animals within it. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Handle Animal checks. If you have 5 or more ranks in Animal Empathy, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (groom) checks.

Profession (guide)

When you pick this skill, choose one area that you are skilled as a guide for. The size can be anything from a single historical mansion to a vast mountain range. You are knowledgeable enough with this location that you can make a living giving direction and information about the local area of choice. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Intuit Direction checks in this area, and +2 synergy bonus to Knowledge checks relating to the history or society of the locality. If the area to which you are a guide is a natural setting, then having 5 or more ranks in Wilderness Lore grant a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (guide) checks. If the area to which you are a guide is an urban setting, then having 5 or more ranks in Gather Information grants a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (guide) checks.

Profession (healer)

You are skilled in the practice of applying the healing arts to patients in their time of need, including acting as a midwife or barber. Since those who work in this field rely heavily on empathy with the patient, if you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2

synergy bonus to Sense Motive checks. Since you also know what hurts a man and can mention it in your threats, if you have 5 or more ranks you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Intimidate checks if you can actually inflict bodily harm on a person. If you have 5 or more ranks in Alchemy or Heal, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (healer) checks.

Profession (herbalist)

You are capable of preparing herbs for remedies and other applications.

Herbal mixtures are not always made of the same ingredients – the herbs in one type of climate are different from the herbs in another – but the different herbs can still often be mixed in different quantities to produce similar effects. They also come in a variety of forms: pastes, powders, ointments, teas, etc. Their effects are non-magical in nature and therefore can not be dispelled or subject to spell resistance.

These abilities assume that the character collects the necessary herbal ingredients on a semi-regular basis while traveling or stopping. It also assumes that plant life does exist in the areas therefore traveling or residing in an area devoid of plant life nullifies the chances of using this skill at that time.

To impart the herbal benefit to the target, the herbalist must be able to touch the target and applying the application is a full round action that draws an attack of opportunity since the herbalist's guard is down to apply the mixture to the other person.

Some possible herbal mixtures are listed below.

Name: This is the generic name of the effect that the type of herbal mixture imparts on the target. Depending on the ingredients used and the form of the mixture (tea, paste, powder, etc) more common names may be used for the specific alternative recipes.

Minimum Ranks: This is the number of minimum ranks in Profession (Herbalist) that the herbalist must have before he can even attempt this type of mixture. It is reflective of the fact that some herbal mixtures are more complex or requires more knowledge about the hidden properties of herbs then others and therefore require more knowledge.

Potency: This shows how strong the herbal mixture is or can be. Some mixtures increase in strength in direct proportion to the more skilled the herbalist is as is noted on the chart.

Frequency of attempts: This is the number of attempts that can be made in a given time frame. This is reflective of the expenditure of the herbal resources either locally found or carried on person. The more difficult and time consuming it is to gather enough

materials for one application, the more time must pass in-between each application. Furthermore, you can not save herbs from one week to the next because they begin to spoil or loose their natural properties.

ANTI-TOXIN

Minimum Ranks: 6

Potency: +1/3 ranks (max +5)

Frequency of Attempts: 1 per week

Duration: 12 hours

Effect: Grants the target a resistance bonus to his saves against poisons

APHRODISIAC

Minimum Ranks: 12

Potency: +1/4 ranks (max +5)

Frequency of Attempts: 1 per week

Duration: 12 hours

Effect: Grant the target an enhancement bonus to Charisma checks and on skill checks that use Charisma as their key ability. However, these bonuses only apply when these checks are used against (or otherwise in relation to) members of the opposite gender.

BALM

Minimum Ranks: 6

Potency: +1/3 ranks (max +5)

Frequency of Attempts: 1 per 2 weeks

Duration: 24 hours

Effect: Grants the target a resistance bonus to saves versus non-supernatural diseases. In addition to this, at the end of the duration, an additional 1d4 hit points are healed.

COGNITIVE AND MEMORY ENHANCER

Minimum Ranks: 9

Potency: +2

Frequency of Attempts: 1 per 2 weeks

Duration: 24 hours

Effect: Grants the target an enhancement bonus to Intelligence checks and for any skill checks that use Intelligence as their key ability.

PANACEA

Minimum Ranks: 5

Potency: +2

Frequency of Attempts: N/A

Duration: Permanent

Effect: Grants the Herbalist a synergy bonus to Heal checks (as is standard in The Player's Handbook, see Heal skill description)

SKIN REJUVENATOR

Minimum Ranks: 9

Potency: +1/3 ranks (max +5)

Frequency of Attempts: 1 per week

Duration: 12 hours

Effect: Grants the target a resistance bonus to acid, cold, and fire damage effects.

STAMINA-ENHANCER

Minimum Ranks: 9

Potency: +1

Frequency of Attempts: 1 per week

Duration: 6 hours

Effect: Grants the target an enhancement bonus to Constitution checks, to skill checks that use Constitution as their key ability, and to Fortitude save throws. For the duration, the target may act as though he has the Endurance feat even if he does not already have it.

STEROIDS

Minimum Ranks: 12

Potency: +2

Frequency of Attempts: 1 per week

Duration: 6 hours

Effect: Grants the target an enhancement bonus to Strength

The above are just suggestions, DM's are free to develop other Herbal mixtures and effects. This system for herbal mixtures allows a basic application of the rules and does not rely on a campaign to have a heavily detailed flora.

Profession (innkeeper)

You are able to maintain an inn or guesthouse. Through the dealings with many people and travelers, if you have 5 or more ranks in this profession you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Gather Information checks. If you have 5 or more ranks in Sense Motive, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (innkeeper) checks.

Profession (merchant)

You can earn a living by selling crafts or other items. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Bluff and Diplomacy checks as they involve deceiving or convincing the audience (buyer) to believe your stated opinion. If you have 5 or more ranks in Sense Motive then you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (merchant) skill checks. Also, if you have 5 or more ranks in a Craft or Knowledge skill relating specifically to the wares being sold at the time, then you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (merchant) skill checks.

Profession (prostitute)

You have the talent and skill to sell your own body and make a living in doing so. You may use your Charisma modifier for this skill instead of your Wisdom modifier – whichever is higher. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Bluff and Diplomacy checks when they are used to seduce, deceive, convince, or persuade people who might be sexually attracted to you (obviously it is rarely useful for a human to try to seduce a Beholder, or a very old and celibate priest). If you have 5 or more ranks in Sense Motive or Gather Information, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (prostitute) checks. Additionally, a myriad of enchantments, illusions, and transmutation magics can be useful in aiding a prostitute's occupation. A magic-user with access to appropriate spells gains a +2 synergy bonus to her checks.

Profession (sailor)

You are skilled as a boater and have the ability to steer and upkeep a ship. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Use Rope checks and a +2 synergy bonus to Balance checks when on uneven terrain. If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (nature), you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (sailor) checks.

Profession (scribe)

You are skilled at penning parchments, either duplicating texts or listing notes. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Forgery checks and to Decipher Script checks. If a character has the Scribe Scroll feat, he gains a +2 synergy bonus

to Profession (scribe) checks. If you are illiterate, you may still take ranks in this profession, but you are limited simply to copying text image by image, since you don't understand what the words mean.

Profession (spelunker)

You earn a living by exploring and studying caves. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Climb, Intuit Direction, Knowledge (nature), and Wilderness Lore checks that are done in relation to caves, geology, and cave-life. If you have 10 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks that are done within caves or other subterranean settings.

Profession (teacher)

You are well schooled and are skilled at imparting that knowledge to others. You may use your Intelligence modifier for this skill instead of your Wisdom modifier – whichever is higher. For every 5 ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to checks for any one chosen Knowledge skill.

Profession (teamster)

You are skilled at driving a team of animals to haul cargo, cart, wagon or carriage. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Handle Animal checks. If you have 5 or more ranks in the Ride skill or in Animal Empathy, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (teamster) checks.

Profession (woodcutter)

You are skilled with the axe and knowledgeable about plant life in a manner such that you can chop and sell the best timber while allowing the rest to grow. If you have 5 or more ranks in this profession, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Knowledge (nature) checks that are used in relation to knowledge about trees. If you have 10 or more ranks in this profession, you gain proficiency in handaxes if you do not already have it. If you have 5 or more ranks in Wilderness Lore, you gain a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (woodcutter) checks.

Again, synergy bonuses from ranks in Profession are an optional rule at the DM's discretion. Other professions and relevant synergy bonuses are possible; the above list merely represents only a sample of the wide variety of potential professions. While not every character should have the Profession skill, this skill should not be passed over on the basis of its name alone. Characters cannot exist alone, unconnected to the world, and the various Profession skills provide a simple, and potentially beneficial, way to create important connections between a hero, and the world he lives in.

