

MEGACORPS

Millions of organizations do business within and without the Imperium. Most of these are limited to one or two worlds. A few thousand trade over one or more subsectors, a few hundred cover one or more sectors. Only a few firms are truly imperial in scope; these are known as megacorporations. Staggering in size, these organizations are so large that no one person can know everything they are concerned with at any given moment. Total shares of stock, annual profits, numbers of employees are all astronomical. Many organizations are so large that different divisions of the same megacorporation may actually be working at cross-purposes.

In most regions, megacorporations merely own the land their installations are on, but in some areas they control entire planets, either directly or indirectly.

Most megacorporations are organized very much like smaller companies (with aboard of directors, a president, and vice presidents), but the board and the higher-level executive officers of the company are largely out of contact with the day to day (or even year to year) functioning of the company. These upper level executives serve to plan general policy and long distance actions. The most important executives, in terms of personal power, are the various regional managers (by whatever name they may be called). A regional manager may control only a small portion of a megacorporation's total assets, but many hold more power in some regions than the representatives of the Imperial government.

A small number of Imperial regulatory agencies have power over megacorporations, and they are subject to any applicable local taxes, but, provided they do not blatantly violate Imperial sovereignty, regional managers can usually conduct their company's business as they see fit. Because a direct confrontation with the Imperium would be bad for business, intentional violation of Imperial laws is done only on a covert basis.

TITLES

Except for those pre-dating the Imperium, all corporations engaging in interstellar commerce are required to possess an Imperial charter. The letters LIC following the company name indicates this. LIC stands for Limited liability Imperial Charter. Occasionally, corporations make use of archaic titles, such as the Terran Ltd., Inc., Amt, AG, SA, etc. This is done either to indicate that the company predates the Third Imperium (rarely the case) or to add charm and quaintness to the title.

A few Vilani megacorporations are still in business under their Vilani titles (Makhidkarun, Naasirka, Sharurshid, and Zirunkariish). The names, at least, date back to 1st Imperium times, and were the names of the Imperial organizations, half-industrial trusts, half-government bureaus, which controlled commerce in the Vilani Imperium.

CAPSULE DESCRIPTIONS

Space considerations prohibit a complete description of the activities of every megacorporation. The following are basic descriptions.

Delgado Trading, LIC:

Originally a manufacturer of military hardware and widely known for their work in miniaturization, Delgado has extensive holdings in heavy mineral mining and refining, publishing, antiquities trading, and recently, the toy industry. Founded in 997, Delgado is the youngest of the megacorporations.

Stock ownership: Imperial family: 5%, Delgado family: 47%, Noble families: 27%, Private ownership: 21%

General Products, LIC:

Largely concerned with heavy industry, General is a manufacturer of starships, non-starships, and heavy machinery of all sorts. General is known for inexpensive products of adequate quality, but of late its starship division (particularly its military products) has been plagued with disaster.

The corporation was formed by the merger of a number smaller of manufacturing concerns shortly after the end of the Civil War, in the period 620 to 622.

Stock ownership: Imperial family: 5%, Hortalez et Cie: 26%, Noble families: 35%, Private ownership: 12%, Antares Holdings, LIC: 12%, Other: 10%

GSbAG:

Founded, according to company propaganda, in -2438 from a consortium of old Terran manufacturing firms. In actual fact, there is no concrete evidence of the corporation's existence prior to a contract with the Sylean Federation Navy in -334. Unlike other manufacturers, GSbAG (popularly known as Gas-bag) has restricted itself almost exclusively to the manufacture of starships since its earliest known existence.

GSbAG is one of two firms charged with the manufacture of the personal vessels of the Imperial family and is a major contractor for the Imperial military. Their products command extremely high prices, but it is generally conceded that the quality makes them well worth it.

Stock ownership: Hortalez et Cie: 19%, Imperial family: 4%, Noble families (includes the families of the legendary founders): 44%, Other corporations: 13%, Private investors: 4%, Other: 16%

Hortalez et Cie, LIC:

Founded in 221 by Lucienne Hortalez, capitalized from family funds. Primarily a banking and investment house, Hortalez specializes in loans to planetary governments, mercenary unit bonding, underwriting of large-scale projects of all sorts, and other fiscal activities. Hortalez is one of the major insurance houses in the Imperium. In some regions (the Spinward Marches especially) the firm acts as a mercenary clearinghouse. Stock ownership: Hortalez family: 74%, Other corporations: 15%, Imperial family: 5%, Other: 6%

Instellarms, LIC:

Founded in 626, shortly after the end of the Civil War, by Axel Murdoch, a retired colonel of mercenaries. Taking advantage of inside contacts in the Imperial military, Murdoch was able to obtain large quantities of surplus military equipment at very low prices, but still costing billions of credits. Where Murdoch got his financing is not known. Murdoch's connections with various mercenary unit commanders coupled with a willingness to ignore the Imperial regulations on mercenary warfare where the profits were large enough enabled Instellarms to dominate the mercenary arms trade in the coreward sectors of the Imperium within ninety years, and in the Imperium as a whole within two centuries.

Manufacturing, buying, and selling military equipment of all sorts, Instellarms is a specialty supplier of mercenary units of all sizes and types. Agents of the firm can often be found on a battlefield, negotiating the purchase of the equipment of the losing side before the battle is completely over. The company does not deal in interstellar vessels and chemical, bacteriological, or nuclear weaponry, but these can sometimes be obtained on low law level worlds for astronomical prices.

Stock ownership: Murdoch Holdings, LIC: 32%, Hortalez et Cie: 30%, Noble families: 8%, Ling-Standard Products: 6%, Ichiban Interstellar, LIC: 5%, GSbAG: 5%, Sternmetal Horizons, LIC: 8%, Other: 6%

Ling-Standard Products:

Originally a mining firm (and still very active in that area) LSP currently engages in a wide spectrum of activities including (but by no means limited to) manufacture of electronic equipment of all sorts, ground and air vehicles, starships and starship armaments systems, drive systems, power systems, computer systems and software, small arms, and a variety of other items. Concerned to a small degree with banking, insurance, and other activities, LSP maintains mining and manufacturing facilities throughout the Imperium and beyond.

Stock ownership: Imperial family: 8%, Hortalez et Cie: 26%, GSbAG: 23%, Noble families: 8%, Murdoch Holdings, LIC: 8%, Other: 27%

Makhidkarun:

The origins of this company are shrouded in the mists of the Long Night. All that can be stated with certainty is that its foundation predates the Third Imperium. Makhidkarun specializes in the communications and entertainment industries. The firm produces fine musical recordings of all types, two and three dimensional motion pictures, books, magazines, and art reproductions of all sorts. Its communications division produces a wide variety of data processing, storage, and retrieval equipment and the requisite software for it. A gourmet foods division trades in all manner of rare and expensive foods, wines, and delicacies.

Stock ownership: Imperial family: 5%, Noble families: 28%, Hortalez et Cie: 28%, Investment trusts: 25%, Private ownership: 14%

Naasirka:

Naasirka specializes in the manufacture of information storage and processing equipment and software, computers, robots, and other complex electronic devices. The firm is a Vilani megacorporation of uncertain lineage, but it is known to have been in business prior to the founding of the Sylean Federation.

Naasirka is the largest supplier of communications equipment to the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service's xboat branch.

Stock ownership: Imperial family: 4%, Investment trusts: 24%, Noble families: 23%, Hortalez et Cie: 11%, Other corporations: 14%, Igsiirdi family: 13%, Private ownership: 11%

SuSAG, LIC (Schunamann und Sohn AG, LIC):

SuSAG engages in a wide range of chemical, pharmaceutical, and geneering activities. SuSAG is the primary manufacturer of anagathics for the Imperium, and maintains psi drug manufacturing plants in certain client states outside Imperial borders. Because of the bad reputation for safety of its chemical/biological warfare division, the firm is not well liked in many regions, even though all of SuSAG's dangerous manufacturing plants and experimental stations are located on remote, uninhabited planetoids. Since sabotage of its plants is widespread, and its products extremely valuable, the firm maintains a large paramilitary security force, equipped to tech level 12-14 standards.

SuSAG was founded in 252 by Gustav Schunamann, financed from royalties received for his purification process for various psionic drugs, and using the shell of a bankrupt Sylean firm (hence the archaic AG in its name). In 800, psi drugs were declared illegal, all plants engaged in their manufacture within the Imperium closed, and all stocks confiscated and destroyed. Fortunately for SuSAG, the firm had by then expanded into other operations, and although badly damaged, managed to survive and prosper. SuSAG often engages in clandestine military ventures (using mercenary units) to protect their extra-Imperial interests.

Stock ownership: Schunamann family: 52%, Imperial family: 2.5%, Hortalez et Cie: 9%, Other corporations: 23.5%, Private ownership: 7%, Other: 6%

Sharurshid:

A Vilani trade and speculation corporation, with very little manufacturing capability, Sharurshid trades in luxury goods from all parts of the Imperium and many areas beyond. Most rare Terran wines and spirits are carried on the starships of Sharurshid.

Stock ownership: Sharurshid trust: 46%, Imperial family: 3%, Other corporations: 14%, Zirunkariish: 13%, Hortalez et Cie: 14%, Private ownership: 10%

Sternmetal Horizons, LIC:

Sternmetal is primarily engaged in mining operations and manufacturing. It produces mostly power generation equipment of all types, including power plants for starships, air and ground vehicles, cities, and industrial installations. Additionally, Sternmetal is the largest manufacturer of food synthesis equipment in the Imperium.

Stock Ownership: Imperial family: 2%, Hortalez et Cie: 29%, Investment trusts: 32%, Noble families: 18%, Antares Holdings, LIC: 19%

Tukera Lines, LIC:

Tukera Lines operates a vast fleet of passenger and freight vessels throughout the Imperium, following the xboat lines. In some subsectors (particularly the older, more established regions of the Imperium) Tukera Lines has a virtual monopoly on long distance shipping and travel.

The oldest record of the firm is a charter from the government of the Sylean Federation, but family tradition holds the company to be several centuries older.

Stock Ownership: Tukera family: 29%, Imperial family: 3%, Other corporations: 9%, Private ownership: 31%, Investment trusts: 28%

Zirunkariish:

A Vilani banking and investment company. Unlike most other Vilani megacorporations, whose origins are shrouded in mystery, Zirunkariish is known to have been founded by the noble Vilani family of Shiishuginsa (a member of which, Antiama, married the emperor Zhakirov in 679) in the year -425.

Zirunkariish is one of the largest insurance underwriters in the Imperium, and while its capital reserves are gigantic, it usually chooses to invest them in various trusts rather than in other megacorporations.

Stock ownership: Shiishuginsa family: 29%, Imperial family: 18%, Sharurshidtrust: 17%, Hortalez et Cie: 7%, Noble families: 12%, Investment trusts: 8%, Private ownership: 9%

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