

Directives Deck Explanation

The Directives Deck is an improvisation tool meant to be used for tabletop roleplaying games. It randomly assigns missions that are assigned by the uncoordinated leadership of an organization. It does not provide all the details, but is instead meant to give an idea of what the organization is looking for and why.

It's assumed the organization's leaders are not good at communicating or working together. You're encouraged to assign missions that contradict one another, or even undo the progress made by previous missions.

Furthermore, since leadership isn't interested in talking to each other, there's no way they'd explain themselves to the agents! You're also encouraged to include hints as to the leadership's motivations, but to avoid explicitly telling the players what's going on.

If the players start making conspiracy theory walls after a few missions, then the deck is working!

Using the Directives Deck

Draw a card and consult the chart. The value of the card gives the nature of the mission, while the suit can give additional details.

If you need additional details or context, draw another card.

E.g. I draw Six of Spades. Six is Sabotage Project (Caution). Spades represents Skill and Labor, so the project the agents are to sabotage is a training program of a rival organization.

For additional context, I draw another card: Seven of Hearts. Seven isn't relevant since we already have the mission, but Hearts represents Personal Connections. The mission is dangerous because the agents have dealt with the recruits in the training program before.

Finally, to determine why leadership wants this training program sabotaged, I draw a third card. 10 of Diamonds. Diamonds represents Motivated by Revenue. The Organization is seeking to somehow profit from this situation.

Quick Reference

Missions

Ace	Suicide Missions
2	Find Resources (Safe)
3	Sabotage Project (Safe)
4	Give Signal (Safe)
5	Find Resources (Caution)
6	Sabotage Project (Caution)
7	Give Signal (Dangerous)
8	Find Resources (Dangerous)
9	Sabotage Project (Dangerous)
10	Attack Target
J	Minor Personnel
Q	Major Personnel
K	Critical Personnel
Joker (minor)	Performance Evaluation
Joker (major)	EMERGENCY

Suits

Spades	Informants and Spies Damage Control Knowledge Wind
Hearts	Familiar People Pet Projects Connection to Others Water
Diamonds	Wealthy People Revenue and Costs Material Goods Earth
Clubs	Talented People New Possibilities Skill and Labor Fire

Detail Explanations

Missions

Find Resource

The organization needs something. It's most likely tangible, but it could be something else. Either way, you need to go out and get it.

Numbers represent the difficulty of the mission. Difficulty could come from rarity of the resource, the amount needed, or the danger associated with finding it.

Suits could represent the reason the organization wants it, or qualities of the material.

Sabotage Project

The organization needs a project disrupted. It may be a rival organization's, or it could be one leader in the organization being petty towards another. Either way, you need to go cause some problems.

Numbers represent the difficulty of the mission, as well as the significance of the project. Difficulty could come from how hard it is to disrupt the project, as well as the consequences of getting caught.

Suits could represent the reason the organization wants the project sabotaged, or the nature of the project.

Give Signal

The organization needs to send a message. It may be to a satellite branch, sister organization, or even a rival. Whichever the case, you're the messenger.

Numbers represent the danger of delivering the message. Danger could come from the difficulty of delivering the message, or the response you're likely to receive upon delivery.

Suits could represent the contents of the message, or the method of how it is to be delivered.

Attack Target

The organization needs something or somebody destroyed. Either a compound, a cache of resources, or incriminating evidence. Whatever it is, you're going to be the executioner. This is always a dangerous or wildly destructive mission where violence is the only option.

However, it is not to be confused with a Suicide Mission, where agent death or failure is almost certain.

Suits could represent the reason the organization wants the target destroyed, or the nature of what is to be destroyed.

Personnel Missions

The organization has a job that involves a specific person. This person may need kidnapping, persuading, or eliminating. This is not a mission that involves just anybody.

Rank of the face card determines the importance of the individual, ranging from somebody important but low ranking, to somebody that's a leader of other leaders. Suits represent what's special about them, or why the organization is interested in them.

Suicide Missions

The organization has a job that's utterly insane. Many agents could die undertaking this task, but it's a sacrifice that the organization is willing to make. Alternatively, it could just be impossible to complete because it contradicts the very laws of physics or reality. Either way, success hinges on extreme amounts of luck, creativity, or cheating.

Suits represent the nature of the mission, or why the organization needs this impossible task completed.

Performance Review

The organization has been monitoring your progress. Leadership has some questions for you and your fellow agents regarding previous missions. Unfortunately, leadership has conflicting reports regarding your actions, and it looks suspicious. Fortunately, nobody on leadership has the same reports, and nothing adds up. At all.

EMERGENCY

Leadership has an urgent and important mission that needs to be accomplished immediately and by any means necessary. It may truly be urgent and import. It could just as easily be leadership taking advantage of their authority. Either way, this mission needs to be your highest priority.

Suit Meanings

Personnel

Primarily used for deciding the importance of Personnel. Could also be used for other characters.

Spades – Spies an informants. People that possess valuable information for organization. Could also include turncoats and double agents.

Hearts – People connected to the organization. People who once or are currently apart of the organization.

Diamonds – People with something valuable. They could be wealthy, somebody who could be ransomed, or have a rare or useful object or collection.

Clubs – Skilled or knowledgeable people. People in a specific trade or field of study, or experts in their field.

Organization Motives

The reasons the organization may be doing a given task. This could be obvious, or merely hinted at through the mission.

Spades – Damage control from a previous activity. Either fixing the problem, or convincing

people it wasn't actually a problem. It's essentially about changing what other people think they know about the organization.

Hearts – It relates to the pet project of a member of leadership. Somebody in charge has a personal connection to what's being done, for good or ill. This is likely to be something that seems out of place given what the organization normally does.

Diamonds – Relates to revenue stream. Either by gaining more income, or reducing expenses. The organization is financially motivated to perform this task. It'll either make or save them money if they do this.

Clubs – Exploring a new possibility. Performing or supporting experiments. The organization is looking into trying something new that they don't normally do.

Symbolism

Information that isn't explicitly used anywhere, but had influence in other sections.

Reproduced here for posterity.

Spades – Knowledge and Expertise. Relates to knowing and understanding things.

Hearts – Emotions and Connections. Love it or hate it, it's about how we feel about things.

Diamonds – Wealth and Material Goods. Tangible things that have value.

Clubs – Labor and Skill. Doing things and having the ability to do them.

Classical Elements

This information that wasn't used anywhere, but was considered for use. Reproduced here for posterity.

Spades – Wind

Hearts – Water

Diamonds – Earth

Clubs – Fire