

Star Traders: Frontiers

v3.3.37

Big Network Unlock Guide

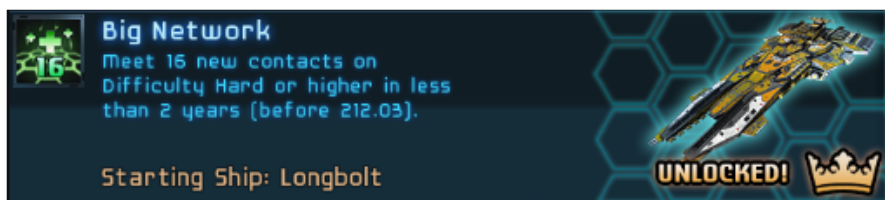
by Iguana Tabarnak



Preface

This is the third in a series of detailed step-by-step guides on how to achieve the Hard+ difficulty sprint unlocks in Star Traders: Frontiers. These guides are designed to guide you to victory on your very first attempt, even if it's your first time venturing above Normal.

In this guide, we'll be completing the **Big Network** unlock, which unlocks the **Longbolt** as a starting ship option. It's a good one!



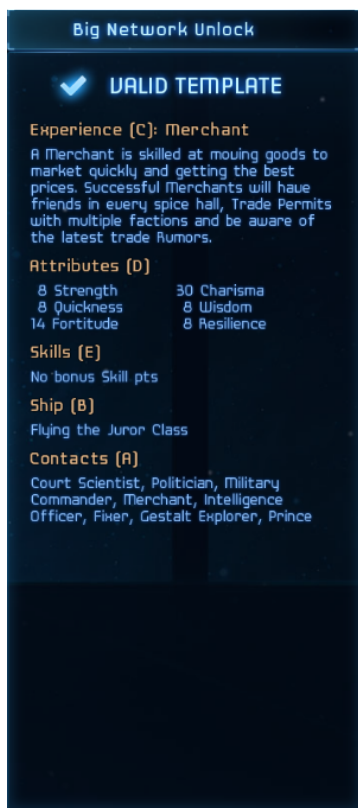
This unlock requires us to know 16 non-story contacts at some point within the first two years. With this guide, you'll be able to easily complete this in just a few minutes of play time.

Following this guide does not require you to have previously completed any other unlocks.

NOTE: *There is a video companion to this guide available on the Tabarnouche Interplanetary YouTube channel*

Captain Template

This unlock is extremely straightforward if you keep your eyes entirely on the prize, but requires a very specific build. The unholy things that we are going to do, however, are not going to leave you in a position to particularly want to continue with the run after achieving the unlock. So don't worry if this doesn't look like an appealing captain. You'll only have to be this person for a few minutes.



Priority A: Contacts - Contrary to what the unlock description implies ("new contacts"), our starting contacts absolutely do count towards our target of 16. So Contacts at A gets us halfway there. Make sure your first three contacts offer Introductions. Other than that, who you choose doesn't matter.

Priority B: Ship - We need money to make this work, so we're putting Ship at B and choosing the Juror, for an extra \$43k in starting cash.

Priority C: Experience - We're starting as a Merchant because they have TWO rank 1 talents that can discover contacts. And we've got Experience at C because we need our officers to be ready to multiclass (also into Merchant) straight away.

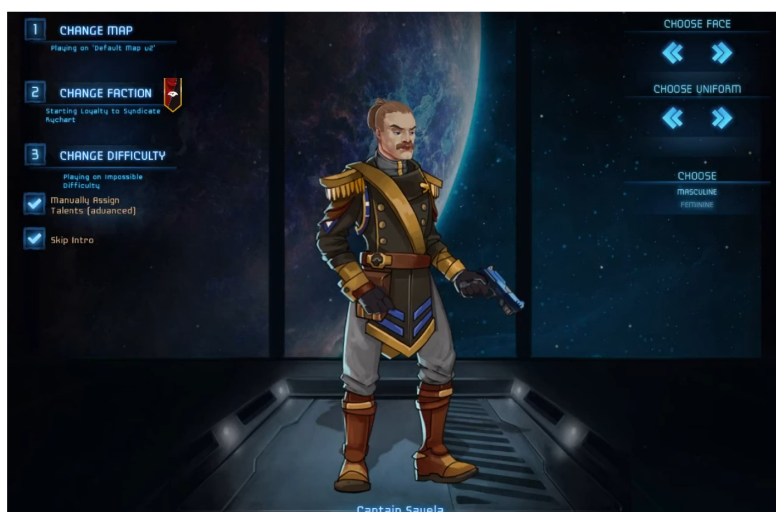
Priority D: Attributes - Max out Charisma.

Priority E: Skills - We don't need skills where we're going.

Starting Options

I usually recommend choosing Rychart for the sprint unlocks because they have a nice, compact starting quadrant on the Default Map v2. In this run however, we don't really care about that. What we do care about is being able to spice early and often. And so, we're going to choose the faction with the best spice-related bonuses...

...Rychart.

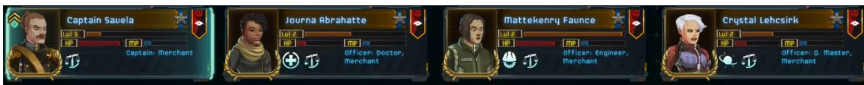


As with all these guides, I'm playing on Impossible. If you choose to play on Hard, you'll get a little extra starting cash, which is nice. But, in an odd twist, morale mechanics actually make this strategy slightly less effective on hard than it is on Impossible.

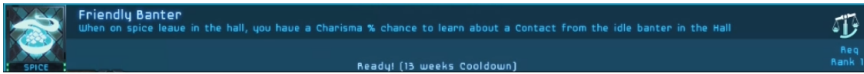
Oh, and it's very important that you manually assign talents for this run.

Choosing Talents for your Starting Crew

As soon as the game loads, it's wise to give a skill save talent to every non-officer crewmember who can learn one.



As for the officers, everyone gets a level in **Merchant** and everyone gets **Friendly Banter** as their first talent.



Your captain should probably take **Market Confidant** as their second talent for a backup plan, though we're honestly not going to need it.

Picking up Estelle and Meeting Calagan

Calagan offers Introductions, so we would like to make his acquaintance. Go pick up the Arbiter and drop her off at Calagan's court, earning yourself a very welcome \$10k bonus and a bit of rep.



Take a peek at Calagan's Introductions panel, even though you won't yet have the effective rep needed to purchase any. Assuming that Calagan does have some Introductions on offer, take a single Proving Your Charter mission from him, ideally one that is going to a zone where some of your other contacts are (but not a Commodity Delivery mission). This one mission (completed with the +rep turn-in option if available) should be all it takes to get Faen introducing.

Buying Introductions (and Proving Your Charter)

Now it's time to do the rounds of our home quadrant starting contacts. Take note of how many Introductions each is willing to sell and how many credits they're asking for it. On average, each contact will have between one and two introductions available at the start of the game. We need 8 new contacts and we have 4 potential home quadrant sources of introductions. So if we get very lucky, we might be able to just buy our way straight to the unlock. If there are that many introductions for sale though, we'll probably need a little bit more money first.



No problem, take a couple of Proving Your Charter missions from these contacts. Only take ones that have their distance measured in AU, not jumps, and preferably ones named One Way Shipper or Return Shipping. Turn these in with the reputation boosting option ("Public Spectacle" or similar) when it's available and, within four or five missions you should have plenty of money, and the effective rep boost will probably have driven down the price of introductions besides.

Now buy every introduction on offer, from your starting contacts and from Calagan. And get ready to hit the spice hall...

Dismiss All Crew

Yes, you read the title correctly. We're going to be intentionally tanking our morale, and we don't want to risk a mutiny. Also, the fewer people on our ship, the more we can spice without the spice hall running dry. So go ahead and dismiss literally everyone except your captain and officers.



High Risk Speedrun Alternate Strategy: Dismissing 23 crew is a lot of clicks. If you prefer, you can carry on to the next step without dismissing anyone, and instead let them mutiny and then fight them when they do. This has a slight risk of actually killing your captain, but it's a fun exercise, especially if you've never seen a mutiny before, and it can save you a repetitive strain injury.

Fly Around Without Fuel to Tank Morale

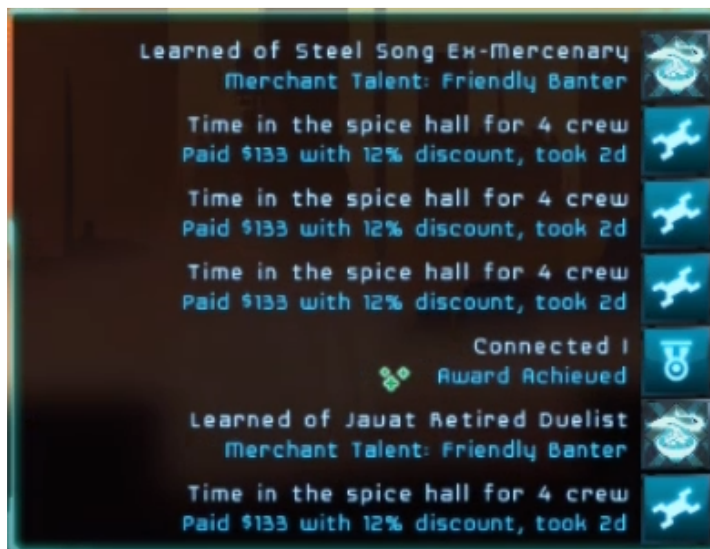
Now undock and start flying in circles by right clicking in space until your ship runs out of fuel and your morale starts to plummet. Don't worry about your top panel and your event log lighting up like christmas trees.



Once your captain and your officers are all down below 50 morale, dock up and hit the spice hall.

Spice Your Way to Victory

Assuming you were able to buy at least four introductions, all you should have to do to complete this unlock now is click the [Spice Leave](#) button until **Friendly Banter** triggers the appropriate number of times.



Ta-da!

Failstates and Emergencies

If your morale gets too high, just go for another little cruise to dampen your spirits again.

If the spice hall runs out of spice, just fly to another zone and keep spicing.

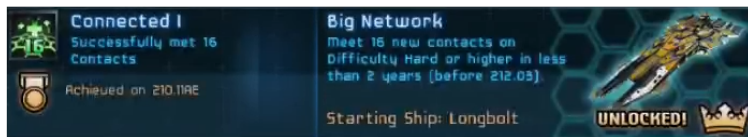
If you can't afford to spice, run a single Proving Your Charter mission (shortest distance possible). You should be able to limp 9 AU even in this sorry state.

If you run out of Friendly Banter talents, just dismiss your starting officers and recruit some level two Swordsmen from the Spice Hall. Make them Merchants, teach them Friendly Banter. Keep spicing.

But really, 90% of the time or more, this should just... work.

Victory

Congratulations!



The Longbolt is a super fun ship, take it for a spin!

And stay tuned for my upcoming guides covering the Press Gang unlock and more!

Appendix - TL;DR

TL;DR version for those already comfortable on Hard+ difficulty:

1. Contacts at A (choose ones that offer introductions). Ship at B (Juror). Experience at C (Merchant). Attributes at D (max Charisma). Start as Rychart.
2. Pick up the Arbiter and meet Calagan.
3. Run a small handful of Proving Your Charter missions (like 1 to 3) for credits and rep, if necessary.
4. Buy as many introductions as you can from Calagan and your starting home quadrant contacts.
5. Give all officers 1 rank in Merchant and teach everyone Friendly Banter.
6. Dismiss EVERYONE except for officers.
7. Fly in a circle until Morale is very low.
8. Dock up and spice your way to victory.