

Module 4: Community Management

- In-Game Guild Community Building

Okay, moving on from the forums you should be setting up, let's examine some of the in-game ways to build up your existing guild community.

1) In-game Custom Chat Channels. To begin, Apotheosis had dedicated custom channels for raiders: one for healers, one for tanks, one for all DPS, one for ranged DPS, one for melee DPS and then individual class channels for better coordination between members of the same class (in terms of buffs and the like).

The best part about custom chat channels is that, barring game crashes that mysteriously remove all your channels, you are in that channel until you leave (or are removed). That means that even outside of raid times, I was hanging out in the Apotheosis healing channel. Conversations in the custom channels continued throughout the whole week, regardless of whether or not there was a raid in progress. Of course, conversation in those custom channels was dominated by raid discussion during raids (as that was the main purpose of those channels), but they were still a fun place to chat. (At least healer chat was rockin'.)

Through the continued use of these channels, it's almost easy to build a solid team. It's a smaller group of people (we only had eight healers, at most, on our raiding roster throughout Cataclysm, if I'm not mistaken) and can be less daunting to chat in than guild chat. In a 25-man raiding guild, the core of the larger raid team is the smaller teams within each role, so more bonding between the healers is to be encouraged, as is more bonding between the tanks and even the melee group and the ranged group. I cannot recommend the custom chat channels enough, pretty much whatever your aim.

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2) Guild-sponsored Games. This stuff can be hilariously fun, but basically, you want to create events and games for your guildies to participate in with a modest prize at the end. The goal is to *have fun*, not to win, exactly, but if you happen to win while having fun, that's great!

Examples of guild-sponsored games include, but are not limited to:

- a) Level 1 Race to a far-away Major City.** I think the first time I came across this concept, it was a Level 1 race of gnomes trying to get to Stormwind. The rules are simple: no summons, no flights, no trams, nothing. You have to run the whole way. If you die, go get your body and keep going! First one there wins. Sadly, level 1 characters can no longer be in a raid, so that makes things a little tougher for the judge to keep an eye on things, but the judge can always be at the finish line.
- b) Duel to the Death!** There are a few areas in Azeroth where you become flagged for combat and are able to hit people on your own faction, even kill them, as long as you're not in the same group. They include the Gurubashi Arena in The Cape of Stranglethorn and the Blade's Edge and the Nagrand arenas in Outlands. (The Darkmoon Faire arena also works in this manner, but is only available one week per month while the Darkmoon Faire is active and there are usually a *lot* of people there, so you might want a spot that's a little more out of the way.) Set a starting time and have people sign up and expect to spend about 90 minutes or so, depending on how many people signed up. The rules are as follows (although you can change them up for your purposes): fight to the death, external help is not permitted (so random people coming in and killing someone for you doesn't count), all self-buffs permitted (including food, flasks, trinkets, potions, etc). I've always done single-elimination rounds, but you can switch that up a bit. It's best if everyone's also in a voice chat program at the same time, because it can be absolutely hilarious to hear the comments everyone makes as the match goes on. Plus, cheering sections!

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- c) Naked Dungeon Challenges.** You know what? I don't even have words for this. Luckily, Hestiah and Rades do. Go read up on this hilariousness.

Hestiah's Blog: <http://www.hestiahthedruid.com/naked-dungeon-challenge-1/>

Rades' Blog:

<http://www.orcisharmyknife.com/2011/09/minipost-naked-dungeon-challenge.html>

- d) Scavenger Hunts.** I love scavenger hunts, I think they're hilarious. Logistics can be challenging, however. In order to maximize the "community building" part of it, you can put up signups on your forums and then assign people to teams randomly, using a website like <http://chir.ag/projects/team-maker/>. Then, you (or the organizer who, and let's be honest, is probably you) have to come up with a list. Great things for the list include things your guild bank actually needs, like certain types of herbs or ore or leather, but it wouldn't be much of a *scavenger* hunt if there aren't some difficult-to-acquire items on the list. Some of the rarities I included in the only scavenger hunt we ran in Cataclysm were: an Autographed Picture of Foror and Tigule, a Waterlogged Recipe, a Mechanical Chicken, a Blood Elf Bandit Mask, 1 Aged Yolk, the entire Twill set, 20x Savory Deviate Delights... Yeah, it was pretty ridiculous! I gave everyone ONE HOUR to collect everything from 4pm-5pm (I only posted the list at 4pm on the nose) and they had to deposit everything into designated spots in a specific guild bank tab AND they had a designated person who had to deposit it all, just so that I could examine the guild bank log and only look for a couple of people. Really, a lot of fun to do. I wish someone had set up a scavenger hunt that *I* could participate in!
- e) Level 1 Hogger Parties.** Again, since level ones cannot be a part of a raid, this has to be broken down into several parties of five. Have everyone create a human at level 1 and then all of you head down to Hogger and try to kill him. HILARIOUS results, even if you take some time to hit level 5. Tip: proximity aggro is insane!

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f) Go hunting for rare spawns! With a huge group of people (make sure to put a warlock in each separate group!), you can easily camp and/or kill most any rare spawn anyone needs.

g) Old-school raids. While it's kind of sad that Ragnaros in Molten Core only has a million health (and level 90s can scoff at a mob with that much health), destroying old raid content can be hilarious and fun. Not a lot of skill is required, making it a really laid-back experience. This is a great way to get a ton of old achievements, plus, I hear there are new non-combat pets that have been added to old raids. Who doesn't want a mini-Strider from Lady Vashj in Serpentshrine Cavern? (Warning: those who did old content while it was current may cry at how easy it's become over the years. Personally, I lament the fact that no one needs a Vashj macro anymore.)

3) Do Holiday Events & Dungeons Together. There may be little in the World of Warcraft that is as crappy (especially for a PVE player) as getting the Children's Week achievement entitled "School of Hard Knocks". With your orphan out, you need to: Capture a flag in Eye of the Storm, Assault a tower in Alterac Valley, Assault a flag in Arathi Basin and Return a fallen flag in Warsong Gulch. Holiday events like this one and the "With a Little Helper from My Friends" are best done in groups with people you know you can rely on to help you out! I don't recommend farming Noblegarden Eggs with your guildies, but for many of these achievements, a little help from your guildmates will make life a lot easier. That also goes for all the dungeons that crop up that are associated with these events, such as the Frost Lord Ahune during the Midsummer Festival or Coren Direbrew during Brewfest. It's especially good to run the bosses multiple times if you're in search of a specific boss drop and just queue up together over and over again until everyone's got whatever drop they need.

4) Raids and Alt Runs. If you're largely a PVP-based guild, perhaps some of your members are also interested in raiding. If you're a raiding guild, maybe some of your members are interested in going through a smaller, less-stressful raid on an alt character. Alt runs, as I'll call both

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types of raids, can largely be organized by the individuals involved in the events. As long as the alt runs don't conflict with your major events (including locking characters to a different raid), it's pretty much all good. The only warning here is that if you're a raiding guild, you may want to ask an alt run not to surpass the progress of the main raid, due to potential problems with ranking sites, which do tend to bring a *lot* of traffic to a guild site.

5) Arenas and (Rated) Battlegrounds. Similarly, if you're primarily a PVE-based guild, try out some battlegrounds, rated battlegrounds or arenas together. While I am probably the person the least likely to indulge in any kind of PVP whatsoever, I still managed to get the Rival title in, uh, Arena Season 2, I think it was. The team was a holy paladin (me), a destro warlock (Palantir) and a subtlety rogue (Fog). Glorious! It can be occasionally fun to PVP, even if you don't like it all that much, and it certainly builds bonds between guild members. There was this one time I was in a 5v5 arena team, again as a holy paladin. The rest of the team was Daey (fury warrior – yes. Fury. In arenas.), Cryptkikr (holy priest), Tiandrina (destro warlock) and a rogue, Cennathas. There we were, in Blade's Edge arena, in the starting room, chatting merrily away on Vent and then the doors opened. We were slow getting out and I was the first one up the ramp on the left, so I had a great view of the carnage that happened next. An arms warrior and not one, not two, but **four** elemental shaman came tearing across the map and basically obliterated my four companions in the span of approximately three seconds. Heroism and four chain lightning and a stun of some kind from the warrior and my friends were toast in no time. Naturally, I bubbled and prolonged my inevitable death for another ten seconds or so, but in the meantime, we were all laughing uproariously on Vent. Never in my life have I enjoyed losing an arena match more. It was just so completely ridiculous! So yeah, it can be fun when done with fun people, even if you don't particularly enjoy PVP!

6) Levelling Alts. One of the most irritating things during the levelling process in World of Warcraft, in my opinion, is

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sitting through DPS queues in the Looking for Group tool. It got to the point where I stopped even trying to level DPS characters. Four of my last five alts were a restoration shaman, a feral (tank at the time)/restoration druid, a discipline priest and a protection warrior. However, if you have friends available, be it through Real ID, BattleTags or in-guild, you can whip through levels like crazy. Shortly after Cataclysm came out, me, Majik, Tia and Fog rolled new alts. Like a moron, I chose a mage, because I actually like the class, but my (at the time) 80 mage was on another server. Fog chose to level a DPS warrior. Majik wanted to tank his way to 85 as a protection paladin and Tia decided she'd give healing another try, as a paladin this time. Lordy, did we have a good time crashing through instances like Gnomeregan. Yes, even Gnomeregan can be fun with friends! Don't forget that if you get to 80 on alts, you might want to *stop* there for a while to get the Herald of the Titans title from Algalon in Ulduar, which is another guild-bonding thing that can be done!

- Out-of-Game Guild Community Building

There are several opportunities outside of WoW for you to continue to build your guild's community. Here are just a few:

- 1) Other games.** So the chances are pretty good that if your guildies play World of Warcraft, they also play *other* games. Why not get a bunch of people together online on voice chat and play Civilization together? Maybe League of Legends is more your style. Perhaps you and others in your guild enjoy Team Fortress 2? Or maybe Mass Effect 3 or Portal 2 or Diablo 3 or StarCraft II or... you get my point, right? Encourage guildies to play other games with each other, as long as they don't interfere with your main guild events, of course.
- 2) Real-Life Get-togethers.** As of this writing, I have met the following members of Apotheosis in "real-life": Shamalah,

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Holyspace, Palantir, Majikmarine, JD, Kaleri, Chronis, Sephden, Caledor, Daey, Darista, Huntertoga and Kamilla. That's 13 people and doesn't include my brother, Fog. I'm not the only one who's met a ton of people; Majik's met even more! (Heck, six of the people I've met, I met at his wedding.) There's also a whole group of people who live in Toronto (why not Montreal, I don't know), and I know that they frequently get together for "Wine Night". Meeting in "real-life" really helps solidify bonds, at times. Other times, well, not so much. Still, if you get along with someone in-game and out-of-game, hanging out in person can be a lot of fun and will help build those elusive connections.

3) Spending Time in Voice Chat. Some of my best memories with my guildies were just chatting on Vent or Mumble together about everything and anything under the sun. Usually happening post-raid or after some other thing, like low-level dungeon runs, just hanging out with people was fun and entertaining. I got a chance to get to know my guildies better that way and they got a chance to know me better. As the GM, even with things like office hours and numerous private messages and whispers, I know I didn't spend enough time with the guild at large. Just hanging out in voice chat while doing other things, like guild paperwork (and there will be a lot!), will go a long way to reassuring your guildies that you're not this unreachable, out-of-touch person, but that you're just a regular human being just like them, albeit with a lot more WoW work than they have. Of course, you want guildies to talk to each other as well, so be sure to set up a lot of fun channels for people to chat in, to encourage people to have conversations together.