

- Officer Churn

The first thing I've learned is that officers come and officers go. You will almost never have the same team in the end that you had in the beginning. When we started Apotheosis v2.0, we had me, Majikmarine, Fog, Dayden, Daey, Darista and Huntertoga as officers. When Cataclysm ended and we had promoted new people to replace those leaving, not a single officer remained from the start of Cataclysm. They had Jasyla, Tikari, Serrath, Slout, Chronis and Serrinne. While we had added Jasyla, Tikari and Serrath over time through the expansion, they hadn't been there at the start. Things have already changed in that group of officers and, no doubt, by the time Mists of Pandaria is over, more things will have changed. This is normal. This happens. It's unfortunate, but it's something you have to expect and anticipate dealing with.

- Promoting Officers

Okay, promoting people to officers. As I mentioned in the previous section, I am a fan of officers taking on tasks when they get promoted. What tasks you hand out to the officer group is entirely dependent on what you can do by yourself and even what you *want* to do on your own.

Let's look at what happened at the start of Apotheosis v2.0, when I brought the old gang back together after spending Wrath of the Lich King apart. We were going to be a 25-man raiding guild that raided normal and heroics. We also had some people coming back from the original Burning Crusade version of Apotheosis.

A raiding guild (in my opinion) needs:

- GM (which was me)
- Raid Leader (also me)
- Role Leaders (tank lead, melee lead, ranged lead, healing lead
– I was healing lead)

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- Recruitment Officer (or person – it doesn’t have to be an officer position)
- Lootmasters (again, not necessarily officers)
- Bank admin (should really be an officer, but can be done in conjunction with another officer job)

Since we were bringing back some old faces, I asked if any of those older members were interested in being an officer and what they might want to do. I managed to snag my BC-era tank, melee and ranged leads (Dayden, Daey and Majikmarine) and brought back Hupertoga as an officer (lootmaster) and added Darista to the group (lootmaster) and finally, added my brother, Fog, as the guild bank administrator. This whole group had known each other for years and all but Darista had been an officer with either Fated Heroes or the original Apotheosis, so I figured our team would work very well together. With me in the mix, that made seven officers. We didn’t have a recruitment officer, but had two people working on recruitment for us from the membership. (This was a mistake on our part which led to me taking on recruitment, but if you’ve read the recruitment section, you know how to avoid that.)

Due to our history, we were all pretty much on the same page. We agreed on many issues and wrote down our decisions, codifying them so that we could refer to the results of those discussions later. In short, the officers of Apotheosis v2.0 were awesome.

There was one problem, though: I didn’t want to make my officers do more work in the sense of reviewing our raiders on a regular (or even irregular) basis. I made it clear that it was their call. As healing lead, I only managed two sets of reviews, myself, between January of 2011 and August of 2012. I did do reviews for all *kinds* of initiates, not just the healers, throughout 2012, but still, I was hardly leading by example.

Requirement 1: Paperwork & Additional Duties

What did Dayden, Daey and Majik do if they didn’t review their raiders? They coordinated. Daey organized and coordinated the

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melee and usually delegated interrupts, Dayden helped organize the tanks and he also did a lot of raid calls while I healed frantically. Majik coordinated the ranged, pretty much, as well as also making some calls and usually taking on the terrible jobs that would fall to someone in the group. These three guys were essential in doing stuff for me during raids, which were our primary activity. I could say in officer chat “Daey, Maj, organize your groups for this fight”, and they would. Dayden helped coordinate tank swaps and cooldowns and positioning. It was really a great team.

However, one of the biggest complaints we got over the Cataclysm expansion was that people wanted more feedback from their role leader. A lot of people didn’t see the “behind-the-scenes” work that Daey and Majik were doing in particular. Dayden was more visible, being a tank and being vocal, but Daey and Majik weren’t seen as doing a lot, despite the fact that I considered them both pretty invaluable.

The first question you need to ask here is what are you, as guild master, willing to do? Do you want to take on reviews? Do you care about reviews? Do you want your officers to do them? Once you figure that out, your course of action will be much clearer.

If you are running a 25-man raiding guild, you don’t want to do all reviews yourself, even if reviews are important to you. Trust me. Through most of Dragon Soul (early 2012), I reviewed the majority of our applicants myself. I learned more about warlocks than I ever thought I would know, considering I’ve never played one. I did this myself because, well, I had the time to do it, but also because I knew I didn’t expect my officers to do it. And that was just applicants – we didn’t do regular reviews for anyone in the guild. Still, I would never take that on again, because it was that time consuming and it was difficult because I wasn’t 100% up on each of the specs and classes I was reviewing.

If you’re raiding, progression is likely important to you, so reviews of some kind ought to be important to you because you need to be able to identify problems in your raid group that are preventing progress. It’s not always feasible to just throw out underperforming

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players. Every guild that’s not in, say, the top 50 in the world has had recruitment troubles since Wrath of the Lich King, if not since Vanilla. Sometimes, you won’t have a choice but to remove an underperforming player, or flunk them out of their trial, but sometimes pointing out their issues can lead to remarkable changes.

As such, for most guild masters of raiding guilds, I think the wisest idea is to have officers willing to do regular reviews, as well as reviewing the appropriate applicants. Thus, when looking at promoting people to officer, you need people who are willing to do the extra “paperwork”.

Paperwork sucks. It’s not even *actual paper*, but it still sucks. If you’re going to have officers do reviews, you need to make sure they understand what it is they’re going to do. We’ll go more in depth on those duties later on, but in short:

- Find issues in the play of the player (usually done via World of Logs parses)
- Communicate with the player about problems and various solutions
- Communicate with the other officers about what steps are being taken with the player in question – figuring out a timeline for when improvement should be shown
- Communicate that timeline to the player
- Reassess the player’s play and communicate whether changes are good or not enough
- Eventually decide whether the player’s play has improved enough or not
- Communicate with the player about whether they will be kept or not

Lots of communication. Of course, if you’re the guild master and you happen to be a great communicator, you can be the person sending notes to the player, based on the comments of your officers, but I’d really recommend that you find officers who are willing to put in the effort. It’s just a lot of work and effort to have to do it

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yourself, even if all you’re doing is summarizing what your officers are saying.

Okay, I think I’ve hammered that point home enough, right? Right. What else does an officer need to be, aside from willing to do the work?

Two words: Great player.

Requirement 2: Level of play

If you’re keeping an eye on the entire group while doing your own job, you’re going to make mistakes. That is, however, the job of many officers. To take an example from Apotheosis, we can look at the Heroic Alysrazor fight in Firelands. Majik, our ranged officer, was the one who was responsible for making the call to hit the meteor that falls to the ground during the fight. He was doing this specifically so the other 20-some people on the ground didn’t have to pay attention to that particular event amidst all the insane environmental damage we were facing. As such, his damage done as part of the ranged group was lower than some others. That’s okay, though – he was doing an important job for the entire raid. I would often ask an officer to do some kind of crazy job that had little to do with their overall damage or healing done in order to ensure that it got done well. Why? Because all my officers were amazing players.

Without raid calls to worry about, without these little jobs like hitting the gongs on Atramedes in Blackwing Descent, without soaking adds on Heroic Beth’tilac, without soaking orbs on Warlord Zon’ozz, my officers would obliterate everyone else in damage and healing done. Without my own calling out, without my watching other people to make sure they did used cooldowns appropriately or were in the right position, I was a great healer. But all of us suffered at least a little bit due to our in-raid responsibilities. Many of us were middle-of-the-pack in terms of our output because of those responsibilities, which I think is acceptable. I view it as the “officer tax”, somewhat similar to the old “hybrid tax”, where hybrid classes like druids, paladins, shaman and priests all did less damage than

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“pure” DPS classes because they could also heal. That’s to say “hey, you’re going to do less damage because you have other abilities others don’t,” which can translate to “hey, you’re going to do less damage because you have other things to keep in mind, in addition to not standing in fire.”

It doesn’t always happen, but it happens often. As such, for an individual to take on more responsibilities in a raid (or whatever activity in which you’re participating), you want that individual to start out at a higher level of skill than others, so that if their performance *is* compromised, it won’t be too much of a drag on the group. Not only that, but someone is going to be much more willing to listen to someone’s advice or tips if that person is doing very well at their job.

If I’m a holy paladin, for example, and I am terrific at it and I show it with keeping my targets up, using my cooldowns effectively and even rankings on parses, another holy paladin will be much more likely to go “wow, okay, Kurn knows what she’s talking about, I ought to listen to her.” However, if I’m doing terribly and am not keeping my self-buffs up, if my targets die due to lack of cooldowns, if I die to fire on the ground, who’s going to listen to me? No one, that’s who. Since officers are part of your leadership team, they need to be people the other players can look up to and can ask for advice or try to emulate. If you have an officer who is terrible, it sends the very damaging message that low quality of play is acceptable. I don’t know any decent raiding or PVP guild that routinely accepts a low quality of play as the standard. Conversely, I do know *several* guilds that have leaders who will actually *yell* at you for poor performance. I’ve been yelled at before and been insulted before. It’s not fun and I did everything I could to avoid being yelled at again. (Eventually, I left that guild and moved on before reforming Apotheosis.) My point here is that, regardless of what type of guild you’re running, player performance is generally regarded as important and if your officers are not playing at an acceptable level, the trickle-down effect is that the rest of your players don’t think they have to play at an acceptable level.

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I was once in a guild, back in Wrath of the Lich King, where one of the officers (and I assure you, he was an officer in name only) pretty much never clicked on a Fish Feast and only took a flask when people noticed he hadn't.



At one point, I just lost my patience and whispered the guild master, because I was SO tired of this guy's lax attitude during progression raids.

Kurn (to GM): Any particular reason (officer) isn't flanked and hasn't been for at least two attempts?

GM: no

Kurn: Just checking. ;)

Bottom line: officers need to be very skilled players, who can pull out all the stops to increase their own performance so as to ensure the respect of the other players and to compensate for the "officer tax". (Clearly, this guy who didn't eat or flask during progression raids had zero respect in the guild.)