

A Rebirth Project...

Alacrity of the Commander

An extensive guide to the operative specifics of command...

“Clan Summit Management of Envoys”

Serve the Brotherhood —

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Clan Summit Management of Envoys

1—INTRODUCTION

Prior to the Exodus, a new member was expected to join the Brotherhood, pass the basic exams of the Shadow Academy, and join a clan within the Brotherhood without guidance. The burden was very much on the new member, guided only by automated e-mails and an unwieldy Dark Side Compendium. The new recruit had no contact with actual members of the Brotherhood and was even responsible for finding the administrative functions to request a transfer to a clan of arbitrary selection.

This was the bleak picture of the life of a new member in the Brotherhood prior to the initiation of “Project: Dark Fury”, a project which redefined the position of “Envoy” within the Brotherhood. Envoys, who were previously simple historians, are now mentors of Initiates, Apprentices, and other Journeymen.

As a Clan Summit member, creating an atmosphere full of communication for all new members of your clan is the first step toward member retention – one of your primary goals as a leader within the Dark Brotherhood. You contact new members that arrive in your clan, welcome them and act as a distributor of the necessary, vital information that these Apprentices need to excel within the Brotherhood. You, with your House Summit, share the responsibility of contacting and mentoring each new member of your clan from the time the Apprentice joins until he becomes fully acclimated to the Brotherhood and its workings. (Please refer to Addendum 1.0—“Welcoming New Members” which explores, in depth, how to achieve this early contact with your new Apprentice). Being a Clan Summit member is in itself a very time consuming responsibility. Beyond this responsibility of first-contact, there are competitions to run, active members to track and reward, games and events to participate in, reports to write, etc.

Now, instead of relying solely on the House and Clan Summit to make first contact with these new members, there are full-time assistants known as “Envoys” employed to make first contact, befriend, and communicate with prospective Apprentices of the Brotherhood long before they join your clan. These assistants are a part of the Society of Envoys. They are members of your clan; and, if managed properly, will raise a new generation of gamers, writers, and leaders. They will be an invaluable asset in retaining your membership and acquiring new members.

2—ENVOY RESPONSIBILITY

The Clan Summit is ultimately responsible for the treatment of his new members, and the Envoys will carry a great responsibility in welcoming them. Be sure that you as the Clan Summit are involved with new members. You will share an equally important role in welcoming new members to your clan.

Before one can manage his Envoys, it is important to first understand their collective responsibility. Let us consider a very practical example. A new member has just joined the Dark Brotherhood and was sent a conformation e-mail which contains a link to activate his dossier. The member clicks the link and his dossier is created. This member is assigned the rank of Initiate and assigned an envoy from Clan X via an automated e-mail. The envoy will be responsible, via a series of e-mails or via chat, for contacting and relaying information to the Initiate. In the beginning, the Envoy has the **practical responsibilities** of:

- Explaining, again, what the Dark Brotherhood is all about
- Describing his role as an Envoy in assisting the Initiate in his early career in the Brotherhood
- Explaining what the rank of Initiate is and what it means
- Describing how to earn an elevation to Apprentice, and introducing the idea of the Test of Lore - where it is, and why the Initiate should take it.
- Explaining what materials are necessary for taking the Test of Lore and how to take it (i.e. Yes, you can use the notes)
- Explaining the advantages of joining a clan over remaining an Initiate.
- Revealing the existence of IRC, describing how to get onto IRC (irc/chat guide), and explaining how all successful members of the Brotherhood use IRC.

Later, the Initiate will pass the Test of Lore and join Clan X as an Apprentice. The Envoy has the **practical responsibilities** of:

- Explaining what joining the clan means, including necessary contact information
- Welcoming the new member to the Clan (refer to Addendum 1.0 – “Welcoming New Members”). Remember, Clan Summits will also welcome new members.
 - If you have made contact prior to the member’s entrance into the clan, try to continue the relationship you’ve established so far. Avoid writing a welcome letter designed for someone you’ve never written to before if you have already written to them. Try to say something new that you have not yet informed the member about.
 - If you have not yet made contact, repeat important information that you’ve given in previous Envoy e-mails. Describe what a clan is again, reinforce IRC, and tell the Apprentice what the next step is toward rising through the ranks.
- Emphasizing the use of IRC in progressing the Apprentice’s career as a Dark Jedi.
- Explaining that all successful members have found their way to IRC.
- Introducing the basic rank structure that is relevant to the new member (APP/NOV/ACO/PRT) and how they can earn promotions. Discussing the merit system (i.e. DC/StA, etc) should only be done if you can make contact and the member expressed interest in the DB’s reward system. Try not to give too much information at once – especially if you have not yet made contact.
- Ensuring that you are sending multiple e-mails over different days. Do not pile all of this information into one e-mail.
- Discussing the Master/Student program and discussing the advantages of getting involved with such a program.
- Discussing existing competitions within the house and clan that the new member can get involved with.
- Suggesting assignments the Apprentice can do to achieve promotions.
- Discovering what the Apprentice is interested in doing and trying to tailor his assignments to appeal to the Apprentice.
- Periodically announcing new membership to the clan. This is a good way for prospective masters to grab new apprentices. It is also a good way of letting the new members see that they are important and worth mentioning to the clan. This duty is sometimes shared with the Clan Summit.

After the envoy has welcomed and made contact with the Apprentice, the envoy will:

- Continue to stress the importance of IRC if the new member has not yet used it. If the member is using it, try to exploit the advantages of using IRC to do useful tasks – like organize MP matches, get to know others, etc.
- Discuss the advantages of getting involved in the Master/Student program (if your clan has one).
- Attempt to create assignments that the Envoy and Apprentice can do together – ACC, MP gaming, etc – the goal is to try and form a bond that is centered around a facet of the Brotherhood.

The Envoy is also responsible for some basic administrative work:

- Report any contact made with the Apprentice (whether as an INI or APP) to the House Summit, Clan Summit, and Clan Envoy. The Clan Envoy will provide the information to the Knight Commander in his report.
- Ensure you are copied on any and all welcome e-mails sent by the House and Clan Summit. Do not assume your House and Clan Summit will make contact. If you do not get copied, find out why.
- Be informed of any contact made with the Apprentice by the House and Clan Summit.
- Write regular reports detailing the efforts you’ve made at contacting new members. For each member, describe:
 - Who did you contact? When?
 - What information did you try to convey in each e-mail/contact?
 - Did you receive a response? When? To what e-mail(s)?
 - Did the member do anything? What did he do? When?
 - Did the member earn any promotions or awards? Why?
 - Has the member become involved in a Master/Student relationship? Who is the master? What have they done?
 - Has the member shown activity on IRC or other form of chat program? If so which?

If there has not been any contact made with specific members, you must still include them in your report. For each member, state how you tried to make contact, when you tried to make contact, and note that you did not receive any reply.

It is important to understand that the entire hierarchy of Envoys within your clan is responsible for these duties – not just one Envoy individually for an entire clan.

3—METHOD

Your ability to hand-select Envoys and understand each Envoy's strengths will determine how you divide responsibility among your Clan Envoy, House Envoys, and Assistant Envoys (where appropriate).

3.A—METHOD: WHO QUALIFIES TO BE AN ENVOY?

Not everyone has what it takes to be an Envoy. These Envoys will be in more frequent contact with new membership than either you or your House Summit and have the full-time job of mentoring new members specifically. Find candidates that will help your clan grow – do not find candidates that will jeopardize the status of, stagnate, and waste new membership. The following are some guidelines that we strongly suggest you use in determining the basic qualifications of your aspirant Envoy.

- Envoys must be very active via IRC. This will ensure that they are able to advertise and help new members with learning the IRC medium.
- Envoys must have a very short e-mail response time (perhaps quicker than yours) and have access to their mail several times a day.
 - Some new members take only hours before joining the Brotherhood and attempting the Test of Lore. Most others take longer, and some may never try the test without first receiving the Envoy's instructions.
 - The Envoy must be immediately available to reply and help any new member that replies to initial e-mails. Grab the new member while he's paying attention and show, by the speed of your reply, that you are interested in helping him.
- Envoys must have enough experience in the Brotherhood that they can easily respond to questions that may not have immediately obvious answers. Some answers will change dependent on the status of your Clan or the members within your clan – i.e. who are available to act as masters, what competitions are occurring, what the current promotion guidelines are within your clan. Your Envoy will either need to have a broad knowledge base or have access to one from which to create answers for any new member's questions.
- Envoys should have a very good idea of exactly what is necessary to advance within your Clan. Remember that Envoys can be seen as the first step for members wanting to achieve Knighthood. New members need to understand how things work. Envoys were redefined for doing just that.
- Envoys must be able to deal with a wide variety of personality types. Not every new member is as mature as the next. Envoys must have patience and the ability to adjust their mannerisms to appeal most to the new member. New members can be 12 years old, share none of the same interests as the Envoy, and have an attention span of 5 seconds. New members can also be 29 years old, share exactly the interests of the Envoy, and be a Medical Doctor. The Envoy must be prepared to deal with both of these member-types and know how to adjust mentorship and communication appropriately.
- The Envoy must be able to deal with the fact that on many occasions his/her email will go unanswered. No matter how hard they try, some people will never respond. It is part of the job and being able to deal with this silent rejection can make or break an Envoy.

3.B—METHOD: HIRING ENVOYS

Envoy selection is a duty shared jointly with the Clan Summit, the Headmaster, and her Knight Commander. The selection process begins when a vacant Envoy position becomes available.

- Envoy selection is not an application process. The Clan Summit is responsible for knowing his members and who would be most qualified for the job. The Clan Summit may, however, consider a seasoned veteran or former proven Envoy who has displayed interest in the position.
- The Clan Summit should construct a body of Envoys that is able to work as a team and is also able to follow its directives.
- The Clan Summit selects qualified candidates by considering the guidelines detailed in Section 2.3.A.
- The Clan Summit sends a nomination of the qualified candidate(s) to the Knight Commander of the Brotherhood and the Headmaster of the Shadow Academy.
- The Clan Summit does not inform the nominees of their status as prospective envoys.
- The Knight Commander and Headmaster will review the nominated members and reply with approval for all, some, or none of the candidates.
- The Clan Summit interviews the approved candidates and makes a selection.
- The Clan Summit informs the Knight Commander of his choice and the appointment is made.

3.C—METHOD: CLAN ENVOYS

The Clan Envoy is seen as the overseer of the training of new members within your Clan. The Clan envoy...

- Is the most skilled and experienced of the Envoys in dealing with new members.
- Uses his experience to help answer questions posed by House and Assistant Envoys. He should also be willing to give constructive criticism on the practices of the House and Assistant Envoys.
- Willingly accepts criticism and directives from the Clan Summit and the Knight Commander.
- Constantly communicates with the House Summit, Clan Summit, and the Knight Commander about the status and progress of new members within the clan.
- Copies the Knight Commander on all clan-level efforts made to contact and mentor new members.
- Recommends award/elevation of new members to his Clan Summit.
- Suggests award for subordinate Envoys for work above and beyond that normally covered by the Envoy Reward policy of the Headmaster and her Knight Commander.
- Writes regular reports to the Clan Summit and Knight Commander, discussing the status and progress of the envoys and new members of his Clan.
- Is included on all e-mails intended for new membership written by House Envoys, Assistant Envoys, House Summit, and Clan Summit.
- E-mails new members occasionally to provide information other than that already provided by House Envoys or House/Clan Summit.
- E-mails new members once the fatigued House Envoy has not had success at contacting a new member. This allowance ensures that when one member gives up there is another Envoy available with a fresh perspective to continue the communication process.

3.D—METHOD: HOUSE ENVOYS

House envoys carry the greatest hands-on work-load of anyone in the society. House envoys

- Perform all of the practical responsibilities detailed in Section 2.2.
- Copy their Clan Envoy on all efforts they make to contact and mentor new members.
- Seek constant guidance from the Clan Envoy, House Summit, and Clan Summit on current house and clan policies that can affect the training of new members - i.e. use of master/student programs, automatic promotions for new members upon completion of basic activity requirements, etc.
- Willingly accept criticism and directives from the Clan Envoy, Clan Summit, and Knight Commander.
- Constantly communicate with the Clan Envoy, House Summit, Clan Summit, and Knight Commander about the status and progress of new members within the house.
- Write regular reports to the Clan Envoy and House Summit, discussing the status and progress of new members within the House.
- Is included on all e-mail intended for new membership written by the Clan Envoy, Assistant Envoy, House Summit and Clan Summit.

3.E—METHOD: ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT ENVOY

Assistant Envoys often do not play a permanent role within the Clan or House they serve. Therefore, they are not usually selected and hired except during circumstances when the Clan/House Envoy require it or when the Clan Summit believes they are necessary. Assistant Envoys are designed only to assist the Envoys of the Clan. Assistant Envoys are often useful for:

- Completing single tasks that could be done better by one person who has no other responsibilities.
- Assisting the House Envoy with sending e-mail during periods when there is a sufficiently large population of new members that require attention.
- Assisting Envoys when they are unable to perform their duties.

Since the position of Assistant Envoy will often be a rotating position among aspiring leaders within your clan, some Clan Summits may consider using the position of Assistant Envoy as a prerequisite before achieving Knighthood. It is expected that all members of DJK and above have applied themselves in some situation of leadership. Assistant Envoy is a perfect opportunity for aspiring Knights to achieve experience of basic leadership duties within the Dark Brotherhood.

3.F—METHOD: MONITORING YOUR ENVOYS

Aside from knowing what your Envoys should be doing, you need to know that they are performing their duties satisfactorily. Your new membership is too valuable to allow for holes in the training program.

- E-mail will be your main indicator that envoys are doing their jobs. Instruct your envoys to copy you on all e-mails sent to new membership. If you aren't getting e-mails, instruct the Envoy that he must include you on these e-mails.
- Monitor the contact activity of your Envoys in either excel spreadsheets or word documents. Record the date of the contact, who was contacted, and a brief summary of the contact. You might choose to sort the records by who was contacted. For example:

Date	Contacted	Comment
06/29/2005	INI Blahblah	Welcome to the Brotherhood, What is the DB all about?
06/30/2005	INI Blahblah	How to pass the test of lore. Here is my contact info.
07/01/2005	INI Blahblah	Why it's important to pass the test, what you can look forward to once you become an Apprentice.
07/02/2005	APP Blahblah	Welcome to the Clan
07/04/2005	APP Blahblah	Welcome (Follow-up #1)

You might consider having your Clan Envoy keep this record for your House Envoys and Assistant Envoys if you can't manage it yourself. In this case, your Clan Envoy should forward the report to you every week with the main Clan Envoy report.

- Envoys are responsible for writing regular reports. Their reports should contain information about everything they have done in the last week, progress that has been made with each member under their supervision, and recommendations. The Clan Summit must check the consistency of these reports with the activity record found above.
- If the Clan Summit has had contact with any new membership, you may consider rating the performance of your Envoys by directly appealing to the new membership that they contact. Do this with both "active and successful," "active and unsuccessful," and "inactive" members. Choosing to contact only those "active and successful" members that make it to Protector could introduce bias - perhaps the so-called "unsuccessful" Apprentices that never made it to PRT were simply ignored.
- In some circumstances, it is necessary to observe your Envoys in action, first-hand. The use of "test" Initiates/Apprentices, while crude, is an effective means of seeing whether your Envoys really are doing their job. It is not only a way of "catching" derelict envoys, but it is always a means of seeing the true effort and talent of your Envoys. However, be aware that doing this without the knowledge and approval of both the KCB and HM is the same as creating a clone and will be referred to the Chamber of Justice as such. Additionally, this "test" method works to bloat the roster as well as undermine the basic trust between members and should therefore only be used in very rare circumstances.
- Always maintain constant contact with your Envoys. They should have a strong IRC presence which will allow you to discuss, one-on-one, the new membership. It provides a good opportunity to hand out advice and comments on the Envoy's performance while also getting to know the new membership through another perspective. Your strong interest in their duties may inspire them to continue working for you.

3.G—METHOD: WORKING WITH THE KNIGHT COMMANDER

The Knight Commander, in combination with the Headmaster, is the final authority on ALL Envoy matters; however, the Clan Summit has a very large stake in the Envoys. The Envoys (who are themselves clan members) serve the Summit to achieve a more active, more informed clan. The Clan Summit depends on the Envoys to make a good clan. Bad Envoys are a disservice to the clan's activity and training. Therefore, it is important to realize that the Knight Commander and Clan Summit play a dual role in managing the Envoys - the Knight Commander maintains quality control within the Society of Envoys and the Clan Summit ensures the healthy beginnings of the new membership. Envoys have two superiors.

- The Knight Commander is an independent check on the quality of the Envoys. Envoys are required not only to submit reports to leaders within the clan but must also report to the Knight Commander. The Clan Summit and Knight Commander are encouraged to regularly discuss the Envoys to find ways of improving their level and efficiency of service to the clan.

- The Knight Commander, an extension of the Headmaster, oversees the training of all members within the Dark Brotherhood. The Knight Commander is able to work independently, and she ensures that training is progressing well within your clan. If she finds problems, she will work with the Clan Summit to find a mutually beneficial solution all parties involved.
- The Clan Summit is best qualified for understanding his membership, therefore the Clan Summit is responsible for nominating Envoys. However, the Knight Commander is the director for the Society of Envoys and, as such, she has the final say on all Envoy appointments and dismissals.

3.H—METHOD: AWARDING EXCEPTIONAL ENVOYS

Good Envoys perform a great service for your Clan. They assist the House and Clan Summits in contacting and bringing new members into the fraternity of the Brotherhood and your Clan. It is a deed that, done well, deserves recognition. The Headmaster already employs a standard reward policy for Envoys. However, should your envoy perform his duties above and beyond the call, there are additional forms of recognition available. Always consider discussing extra awards with the Headmaster and the Knight Commander as both may likely be planning similar recognition.

- Merit Awards, Scrolls of Indoctrination, Advanced Degrees, and rank elevations are all acceptable forms of reward for Envoys who work for the Clan and Shadow Academy.
- A recommendation for awarding an Envoy may originate anywhere from within the clan hierarchy or the Society of Envoys.
- Try to work with the existing reward policy for Envoys. If you feel your Envoy is doing exceptional work, you can always inform the Headmaster and the Knight Commander so that they may boost the Envoy's reward when the time for review comes.

3.I—METHOD: DISMISSING ENVOYS

Envoys, like anyone else, can stop performing their duties. It doesn't take very long before this becomes a problem – especially in a position where communication is such a vital necessity. A couple of missed days, and the Envoy may be sacrificing the welfare of new membership if no one else is monitoring and communicating with the members. You need to be able to take steps to correct the situation.

- At the first indication of dereliction, try to find a temporary replacement to step in for the “missing” Envoy – possibly another Envoy or other trusted leader.
- E-mail the “missing” Envoy, asking for an explanation. If the Envoy shows a will to resume his duties, notify the temporary of the situation let him know that his services may be needed again in the near future.
- If the situation does not improve, re-assign your temporary for the interim.
- Regardless of the derelict Envoy's response, contact the Knight Commander and inform her of the situation and the steps you have taken to correct the loss of contact to new members.
- The Knight Commander, if she does not already know about the situation, may make her own quick review of the Envoy and decide on a course of action.
- If the Envoy in question has been dismissed from the Society, he is not eligible for returning at any point in the future. Big mistakes simply are not permitted in the Society of Envoys.
- If your Envoy is dismissed, begin the process of finding a permanent replacement by reviewing your clan membership and finding qualified nominees to send to the Knight Commander.

4—CONCLUSION

Envoys are an effective tool for nurturing a dynamic, active, and promising class of Journeymen within your clan. Good management of your Envoys secures your Clan a larger fraction of active, successful, and non-AWOLing Apprentices. Use your Envoys as a supplement to the efforts of the Clan and House Summits. Also consider referring your Envoys to Addendum 1.0—“Welcoming New Members” – a very in-depth guide on contacting and welcoming new members, containing numerous suggestions. Envoys can very easily revise some of the examples in this document to benefit Initiates who have not yet joined clans and just need a reminder about the club they have joined, how to pass the Test of Lore, or any other aspect of being a new member that they would like to know about. Remember that every Initiate and Apprentice you save is one more that you may mentor to become the next great leader of the Clan. Retaining those new members is the key to a having a clan full of life in the future.