

*A Rebirth Project...*

# Alacrity of the Commander

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

“Self Evaluations”

Serve the Brotherhood —

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# “Self Evaluations”

## 1—INTRODUCTION

A self-evaluation is a document where a member writes about their performance in a given position in the Brotherhood. Often times, self-evaluations are seen as an unnecessary nuisance. However, when done properly, self-evaluations can be immensely useful in personal development, both for your own benefit and for the benefit of others. Self-evaluations can show your superiors how active you've been, showcase your strengths when you apply for positions, and chart your career in the Brotherhood.

## 2—WHY DO A SELF-EVALUATION?

Self-evaluations are most useful for regular members who consistently want to improve their skills and participation in the Brotherhood, especially with an eye toward leadership roles. The discussion of a member's strengths and goals can serve as a solid foundation for both improvement and advancement. A member who has an up-to-date self-evaluation is well ahead of other applicants for a position, because they can immediately identify the traits that would serve them well in the position they apply for, as well as knowing beforehand if a skill set doesn't quite match a position. Likewise, a member who can list their activities over the past few months is more likely to receive promotions and medals.

Members in leadership positions, on the other hand, use self-evaluations to evaluate their performance in a given position. Benchmarks, or goals that are based off of “typical activity”, are important in this evaluation. They will be discussed below. Self-evaluations are especially important to leadership positions because the early signs of burnout can be spotted and accommodated. The self-evaluation also confers the same benefits on leaders as it does on regular members – the opportunity to identify strengths and goals with an eye towards further advancement.

## 3—THE BASICS

As stated in the introduction, a self-evaluation is a document where a member writes about their performance in the Brotherhood. The self-evaluation is designed to be a look into a member's Brotherhood career, showing everyone who reads it exactly what their skills, specialities and accomplishments are. Any member of the Brotherhood may find a self-evaluation useful, although they will most often be required of those in leadership positions.

Self-evaluations are a combination of several elements. They detail the member's strengths, growth areas, accomplishments and goals within the Brotherhood. Members will also include their performance against the benchmarks of their position, which are described below. These categories make for a comprehensive view of a member's Brotherhood career. The categories listed here will be discussed in more detail later.

The two most important features of a self-evaluation are honesty and information. Honesty is important in order to give an accurate portrayal of a member's performance, to better evaluate the path their Brotherhood career should take. Honesty also has the sub-element of fairness: members should neither glorify nor degrade themselves; they should just provide an honest assessment of their circumstances.

Information is the other most important part of a self-evaluation. When asking whether a member went above and beyond expectations, a simple “yes” tells a reader nothing. Give specific examples and explain why the examples support the answer. If a member did go above and beyond expectations, what did they do, and why was it beyond what was expected of them? This information will help readers understand the situation and decide on a course of action.

## 4—BENCHMARKS

Benchmarks are central to any self-evaluation. Members can describe their strengths and growth areas, but to say that a member is good at something or needs improvement at something else requires a standard to

compare them to. Benchmarks are these standards.

Unlike the strengths and growth areas of an individual member, benchmarks are individual goals that a member tries to achieve. For members who are not in leadership positions, benchmarks are usually goals that the members set for themselves, or sometimes activity levels that are recommended by their Summits. These could be a certain level of performance on a certain platform (an individual game, fiction writing, the ACC) or a minimum activity level (a certain number of submissions per month).

For members in leadership positions, benchmarks often involve the duties of that position. Some examples can be e-mail turnaround times, regular reporting and completion of certain tasks within given time-lines. Leadership benchmarks are also extremely useful to members who aren't currently in leadership positions but are interested in advancing; if a member is interesting in becoming a Quaestor, for example, it would be important to know beforehand what the benchmarks for the Quaestor position are, so that the member can choose their course of action.

**Benchmarks should follow the SMART template: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.**

*Specific* benchmarks are just that – specific. If a benchmark is too broad, it will be difficult to show whether you've met that benchmark or not. Likewise, benchmarks must be *Measurable* in order to determine whether you've actually met them. Benchmarks should be *Achievable* so that a member's progress can actually be tracked, instead of fighting towards a goal that they can't really expect to achieve. Besides being *Achievable*, benchmarks should consider whether the work is *Realistic* for a given member to do. *Time-bound* benchmarks help the member to focus and reach their standards in a specific time frame.

An example of a SMART benchmark is “reply to e-mails within 48 hours of receiving them, 80% of the time in the next six months”. The goal is specific (“reply to e-mails within 48 hours of receiving them, 80% of the time”), measurable (can be checked by comparing the time the e-mails are sent against the time the reply is received), achievable, realistic (a 100% standard would technically be achievable, but may or may not be realistic, whereas an 80% standard would be realistic unless the volume of e-mail is simply massive), and time-bound (“in the next six months”).

The SMART template can also be applied to a member's goals; the same standards apply. For example, “become the best writer the DB has ever seen” doesn't follow the SMART format. It's not very specific, difficult to measure, may or may not be achievable, may or may not be realistic, and doesn't specify a time frame.

On the other hand, “win 60% of my individual Empire at War matches in the next three months” is a good example of a SMART benchmark. It's specific (addresses only individual Empire at War matches), measurable (wins/losses are easy to keep track of), achievable (it's definitely possible for someone to win 60% of their individual Empire at War matches), realistic (with practice, many people could achieve this goal) and time-bound (it addresses these goals within a three-month period).

## 5—TYPES OF EVALUATIONS

Generally speaking, Brotherhood members will use two different types of self-evaluations: the “chronological” evaluation and the “functional” evaluation.

**“Chronological” evaluations** are a description of a member's activity and change over time. Members can periodically add things to their chronological evaluation, using it as a running tally of their activities, accomplishments and opportunities for development. A member can use their chronological evaluation to spot activity trends (both frequency of activity and activity types), types of positions applied for, and consistently-demonstrated skills. See the example Chronological evaluation below.

**“Functional” evaluations** are a short-term evaluation designed to capture a member's performance in a given

role during a specific period of time. Often, functional evaluations are done at pre-determined intervals (every two weeks, every month, three months, six months, etc.). These are the evaluations that measure a member's performance against their benchmarks, rather than keeping track of more general trends. However, functional evaluations should be included in the chronological evaluation.

Effective self-evaluators will make use of both chronological and functional evaluations. Chronological evaluations are more useful in identifying a member's interest areas (areas they seem to return to consistently) and patterns over time, whereas a functional evaluation is a "snapshot" of a member's performance. One tends to be a list, the other a comparison. Finally, functional evaluations tend to be more "forward-looking" than chronological evaluations, using a member's performance at a given time as an indicator of what steps need to be taken to reach a certain goal.

## 6—EVALUATION CATEGORIES

Five categories of evaluation were mentioned above. These categories are strengths, growth areas, accomplishments, goals and benchmarks. Benchmarks have already been explained; the other four will be described in more detail below.

*Strengths* are fairly self-explanatory; these are the personal strengths that each member of the Brotherhood has. Strengths don't tend to be as specific as benchmarks, instead referring to things like "communication skills" or "interacting with people".

*Growth areas* replace "weaknesses" in self-evaluations. Like strengths, growth areas aren't as specific as benchmarks. They usually refer to areas in which a member feels they need to develop their abilities. It's important to note that growth areas can also be strengths; if a member is already very good at something but wants to become even better, that area could be listed as both a strength and a growth area.

*Accomplishments* are fairly self-explanatory. Accomplishments don't have to be awards or promotions, but can include anything a member is particularly proud of, especially completing projects that were not specifically rewarded. Descriptions of these accomplishments should be specific, including dates, names of people involved (other than the member) and a brief description of what happened (or in the case of awards, why the award was given). Accomplishments should also discuss which goal they relate to, if any. A convenient way to keep track of accomplishments is a calendar. Adopt a rule for what you consider an accomplishment and stick to that. For example, make note on your chronological tracker of anything that took you over a half-hour to complete. This will allow you to consistently add items, as well as measure your commitment to the DB in the future.

*Goals* are also fairly self-explanatory. For members that aren't in leadership positions, goals and benchmarks are often the same thing - things that a member strives to do, but aren't specifically required. Like benchmarks, goals should be created with the SMART template in mind (the SMART template is described above, in the Benchmarks section).

These categories will be used differently, depending on the type of evaluation. Accomplishments and goals will usually be the main body of a chronological evaluation, since these categories more effectively record a member's progress over time. In chronological evaluations, the categories of strengths, growth areas and benchmarks will usually be used to highlight a pattern drawn from a member's accomplishments and goals.

In functional evaluations, on the other hand, benchmarks are the primary category used. Whether a member meets their benchmarks (or in some cases, to what degree the benchmarks are met) is used as justification for describing a member's strengths and growth areas, as well as plotting the best way to achieve the goals the member has set for themselves.

Since strengths and growth areas tend to be less specific than goals and accomplishments, a list is provided below. This list is not complete; members are free to use areas which are not listed here.

- Communication (making yourself understood easily)

- Interpersonal relations (getting along well with others)
- Conflict management (helping to resolve or prevent conflicts between others)
- Work management (distributing work to others based on their ability to complete it)
- Motivating others (convincing others to maintain interest and activity in Brotherhood events)
- Motivation (retaining an interest in a project over a certain length of time)
- Work ethic (continuing to work on a project consistently over a certain length of time)
- Multi-tasking (ability to juggle multiple projects at once)
- Time estimation (giving an accurate assessment of how long it will take to complete a project)
- Deadline management (ability to deliver work by a promised date)
- Detail work (any work which requires attention paid to the specifics of a given task)
- Conceptualization (creating new project ideas)
- Development (taking existing ideas and refining them to become more useful)
- Specific skill sets (skills with certain game platforms, writing styles, coding, graphics creation, etc.)

## 7—TRACKING ACTIVITY

A crucial component of self-evaluations is tracking your activity. Records of your activity are used by your leaders to evaluate your performance, and you can use them as a way to measure your own progress and even present a case for advancement. Since activity tracking is so crucial to self-evaluation, a separate section on how to track activity is included below.

Activity tracking is absolutely vital to any self-evaluation; in fact, most self-evaluations will not be complete without a section on previous activity. The reason for this is simple: when evaluating their performance against their benchmarks, a member must show how they have or haven't met the benchmarks. When there is no activity record of any kind, it is impossible to evaluate a member's performance – or worse, it could be assumed that the member has simply done nothing since their last self-evaluation.

The first question one generally asks when tracking activity is, “what do I track?” When tracking activity it is important to be specific, but not tedious. Here are some examples of what to include:

- Competition submissions
- Run-on Posts
- Multiplayer gaming activity
- Special projects (web pages, graphical contributions, developing policy, etc.)
- Competitions organized and run
- Awards received, with reason
- Communications with other leaders and subordinates
- Time on IRC

Below are a list of things which you may or may not wish to include. Recording these items may be tedious at times, but they provide an excellent record of exactly how active a member has been:

- Individual multiplayer matches
- Individual e-mails, IM sessions, message board posts or IRC conversations with other members

When collecting these records, it is very important that you list dates alongside the tasks on your list, including start dates and completion dates. An excellent example of this is GM Jac Cotelin’s Task List on the DB Calendar. On this list the Grand Master has compiled his “to-do” list, as well as a list of items he has already completed. While most of us may not have tasks lists as high-tech as the Grand Master's, an Excel spreadsheet or even a text file works extremely well to record activities over a given length of time.

Make every effort to record your activities as they happen rather than trying to compile them periodically. As you become more active, you will understand the reasons for this: trying to dig through e-mails to find records of individual activities is very difficult when you have ten or more things on your list each month. Having said that, take a quick glance through old e-mail messages each month to see if there are any items that you may have missed on your activity record.

Keeping accurate activity records makes it much easier for your leaders to evaluate members, and much easier for members to advance. Rather than a leader knowing that a member has been generally active without having specifics, the member's activity records will show that leader exactly what the member has been doing, especially items that may have gotten lost in the shuffle of everyday activity.

## 8—WORKING WITH LEADERS

Self-evaluations need a reference point for them to be both accurate and helpful. An essential task in completing any evaluation is making those benchmarks and comparing yourself to them. However, that is not a task that you should do on your own. Leaders within your clan or house are great resources that any successful member will utilize.

When you are starting a self-evaluation, recently appointed to a leadership position or working to improve certain aspects of your job performance, sitting down with your supervisor before you start is a wise decision. Your supervisor can help you create a list of goals, give suggestions on how to allay weaknesses, and figure out a timeframe upon which to make improvements. Generally, it is a best practice to again meet with your supervisor at a set time in the future, often two to three months, so that you can gauge your progress. A supervisor can help you evaluate why you exceeded or failed in your original goals. He can compare it to his own evaluation of you to see everything matches. He can again give you tips and advice and then help you create your next set of goals and benchmarks. With a leader's help, an accurate assessment of your performance can be had.

Aside from working with leaders in the development and analysis of your self evaluation, the self-evaluation can be used in several different ways.

The way that most members like to use their self-evaluations is as justification for advancement – showing that they should be promoted or rewarded without actually coming out and asking. Most often, this takes the form of saying, "I just wanted to show you my progress over the past month." Here, the self-evaluation is crucial because it allows the member to actually present their case. This is much more effective than simply harassing leaders about getting promoted – not only will a self-evaluation not fray nerves, but when a leader has a collection of points in front of them justifying the promotion a member wants, they'll be hard-pressed to find a reason not to do so.

Likewise, self-evaluations can be used as a position application. Oftentimes, when a position is open the supervising leader will ask that the candidates include some measure of their fitness to hold that position. A functional self-evaluation and attached activity record highlighting the member's strengths and activities can be quite useful.

## 9—OLD SELF-EVALUATIONS

Once a self-evaluation has been completed and presented to a superior, members often wonder what should be done with it. This usually means keeping it tucked away in some remote corner of a folder to collect virtual dust.

Old self-evaluations can be put together in the same manner as a chronological evaluation, but on a much larger scale. If a member has improved a certain amount in three months, how much have they improved in six months? A year? Two years? Extended self-evaluations can be very useful in the same way that short-term evaluations can. Often, extended evaluations give their members an ego boost, looking at how much they've accomplished and grown within that period of time. Extended evaluations can also be used when applying for higher-level positions like Consul or main body Dark Council positions, where the position requires consistent

activity and dedication over a long period of time.

Old self-evaluations can also be used to diagnose recurring problems. For example, a member compares their current functional evaluation to their functional evaluations of the previous two months. In all three evaluations, “submitting reports on time” is listed as a growth area. The oldest evaluation had encompassed a busy time at work for the member, when time was short and reports were a day or two late. The second evaluation contained those same circumstances for the first half of the month, but during the second half the member's work life eased up, leaving them with more free time. However, the reports still did not come in on time. In the most recent evaluation, this problem has occurred again. However, the member would not have noticed without comparing their previous evaluations.

## 10—EXAMPLE EVALUATIONS

Below are some samples of different evaluations that a member of the Brotherhood may use. These include both a functional evaluation from a leadership perspective and a chronological evaluation from a non-leadership perspective.

Apprentice Darkflower has recently joined the Brotherhood. She has completed her Test of Lore, and is well on her way to being promoted through the Journeyman ranks. Over time, Darkflower progresses to the rank of Protector. She is active in a wide variety of areas, and records this in her chronological evaluation.

*Chronological Evaluation: PRT Darkflower  
Apr 1 – Jun 10*

*Goals:*

- *Fulfil requirements for promotion to DJK by the end of October*
- *Present a strong application for Battle-Team Leader when the position opens*
- *Win first place in a Sunday Invitational Tournament*

*Accomplishments:*

- *Took Test of Lore, Apr 5*
- *Downloaded IRC and logged on to Undernet, Apr 5*
- *Promoted to Novice, Apr 7*
- *Played 3 JA matches and won two, Apr 8-15*
- *Promoted to Acolyte, Apr 29*
- *Submitted short story for House competition, May 15 (won third place and Crescent)*
- *Qualified in the ACC, May 15*
- *Redid Battle-Team web page, May 15-20*
- *Got Dark Cross for doing web page, May 21*
- *Promoted to Protector, May 23*

*Strengths:*

- *Work well with people*
- *Fiction writing (in the ACC)*
- *Playing JA*
- *Stay motivated to be active*

*Growth Areas:*

- *Communication*
- *Development*
- *Fiction writing (in the ACC)*

This is a good example of a brief chronological evaluation. Two of Darkflower's goals are specific, although the third is less so ("present a strong application"). Her accomplishments are described in enough detail, and her strengths are supported by her accomplishments. Two of her growth areas may be things she's bad at. Darkflower has also listed ACC writing as both a strength and a growth area – she's good at it, but wants to keep improving. She didn't include her benchmarks because she has no specific duties and her goals are a standard for her to live up to. Since this evaluation covers a relatively short time period (about two and a half months), it could be called both a chronological evaluation and a functional evaluation.

A few months later, Darkflower has been promoted to the Battle-Team Leader position she mentioned in her first chronological evaluation, with the rank of Dark Jedi Knight. She's held the position for a month, and her Aedile has asked her to do a functional self-evaluation.

*Functional Evaluation: DJK Darkflower, Battle-Team Leader*

*Sept 1 - Oct 1*

*Benchmarks:*

- *Send a report to the House each Thursday with details on Battle-Team activities such as participation in competitions, membership changes, promotions, medals and upcoming events (met)*
- *Encourage Battle-Team members to maintain a high level of activity each month (met; weekly reminders to participate in competitions led to 75% participation in three separate competitions, as well as at least two additional non-competition submissions from each team member)*
- *Maintain a visible presence on IRC (met; I am on IRC for at least two hours each weeknight and most of the day on weekends)*

*Strengths:*

- *Interpersonal communication*
- *Motivating others*
- *Multi-tasking (both coordinating participation for and participating in three separate competitions, as well as playing individual JA practice matches)*
- *Deadline management (all Battle-Team submissions were compiled and sent to the House Summit by the deadline, submitted all reports on time)*

*Goals:*

- *90% Battle-Team participation in the next House competition*
- *At least one battle-team member places in the top 3 in the next House competition*
- *50% of Battle-Team members participate in ACC matches in October*

As we see here, functional evaluations tend to be shorter and more concise than chronological evaluations. This format very specifically addresses how well Darkflower is performing in her role as a Battle-Team Leader: the benchmarks are immediately put forth and addressed, with details on exactly how she met those standards. Next, she uses the benchmarks as evidence of her strengths. She didn't include growth areas this time around because there were none she felt related directly to her performance as a battle-team leader; if there were problems meeting her benchmarks (submitting reports late, for example) she may have put "deadline management" down as a growth area with a description. Finally, the goals that Darkflower lists encompass her team's performance, but all of them leave her a significant part to play.

## 11 — CONCLUSION

The keys to a successful self-evaluation are honesty, clarity and detail. Proper applications of these three principles in a self-evaluation will make that evaluation more valuable to every member that reads it, as well as more useful to a member and their superiors. Specific, SMART benchmarks, activity tracking, functional evaluations and chronological evaluations work together to provide a very clear and distinct perception of a member's performance.

When used regularly, self-evaluations are an invaluable tool for all the members of the Brotherhood. These self-evaluations allow members to keep track of their accomplishments and provide themselves with opportunities for advancement, as well as allowing leaders to determine the quality of the members underneath them. Applied effectively, a self-evaluation is one of the most useful tools a Brotherhood leader can have.