

## **- Trade Chat**

It was really tempting to have “Just say NO to Trade Chat recruiting” in this section, but that’s not all that helpful, is it? Even though it’s pretty concise and direct, I guess I’ll explain the reasoning behind *not* using Trade Chat as a recruitment avenue.

Trade Chat recruitment macros are several things, but they are *not* generally effective for guilds with a serious goal in mind. What are they? Annoying, that’s what they are. For another thing, they’re also spammy. They’re time-consuming. They’re effort-intensive.

Essentially, why put out a three-line blurb about your guild every 5, 10 or even 15 minutes, to essentially the same audience over and over and over again? Even on the bigger servers, you may not get much in the way of new people seeing your advertisements.

*But Kurn, you may protest, what about all that EFFECTIVE FREQUENCY stuff you were talking about?*

Well, I’m glad you were paying attention to that. There comes a point, however, where the frequency of seeing the same advertisement over and over and over again loses its effectiveness and simply becomes annoying. That’s why brands have different ads across different mediums and why they keep coming out with new ads. I mean, we’re not seeing the same Pepsi ads from the mid-80s, starring people like Michael Jackson and Michael J. Fox, are we? No, we’re not.

*So can I use a bunch of **different** ads for my guild and advertise in Trade Chat?*

Honestly, no, it’s not worth spamming Trade Chat, even with different ads in the mix. Chances are, you’ll just run into the problems of “ad blindness” and “ad fatigue”. Ad blindness means people will just ignore what you’re saying, if they even see it. But in-game, unlike in real life, people have an ignore button and people

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will not hesitate to use it to keep themselves from having to see your text regularly.

Worse, if they grow too tired of it, heading into “ad fatigue” territory, they may take action. This could range from rude comments in reply to your ads to reporting you for spam.

Using Trade Chat to promote your guild may *seem* like a good idea, but at best, you'll get a couple of likely mediocre applicants and at worst, you'll get on a lot of people's nerves, thereby preventing them from applying. Who wants to join a guild where the people consistently annoy those in Trade Chat? Plus, there's the (slim) chance of enough people reporting you for spam that your account gets actioned.

No, it's much better to stick to posting in those areas I told you about back in Step 3 of *Finding Recruits*.

That said, there are three situations in which I can potentially see the benefit of advertising in Trade Chat.

- a) If you want to indiscriminately grow your guild by inviting anyone who is interested in joining, Trade Chat is the way to go. People did this in Cataclysm a lot in order to level up their guilds quickly, as well as to gain a lot of money for the guild bank through the various guild perks.
- b) If you are on the verge of collapse and need bodies NOW to not fall apart, where you don't really care about quality.
- c) If you are on a huge server that consists almost entirely of like-minded players *and* all the top guilds do it regularly.

Here is a short example of a Trade Chat advertisement that you should use *no more than every 15 minutes* while you're in a major city, for the first situation.

“(guild name) is now open for invites! Interested in joining a large community? PST for ginvite now and benefit from all our guild perks! :)”

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Here’s another for the second and third situations, also not to be used more often than every 15 minutes.

“(guild name) is currently recruiting for (raids/PVP/RBGs/arenas/whatever)! Think you’ve got what it takes? Apply today: (website here)!”

Note that I do not resort to saying “we have a tabard” or “four bank tabs” or “we have vent” or any of that crap. No one cares because the vast majority of decent guilds already have those things.

Those are, to be honest, the only times I could even fathom using Trade Chat to recruit. Your chances are much better elsewhere.

### **- Guild Finder Tool**

By contrast with Trade Chat, the Guild Finder Tool is not horrific. It’s not fantastic, mind you, and in the 17 months between its launch in Cataclysm’s 4.1 patch and the release of Mists of Pandaria, do you know how many people I actually invited to my guild who had first “applied” through the Guild Finder?

*Zero.*

That’s right.

*Zero.*

I always responded to them via in-game mail thanking them for their interest and, if I was genuinely interested in seeing a real application from them, I sent them to our website. If I wasn’t interested in seeing an application from them (after having looked at their armory, of course), I’d thank them anyhow and let them know they weren’t quite what we were looking for, but best of luck. That sort of thing.

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The Guild Finder Tool wasn't going to be a magical solution to recruiting woes, but it ended up being pretty useful for me at the time of its introduction. In fact, one day, I found a mage applicant who had basically applied to us through the Guild Finder Tool. So I looked at his armory. Here's a quote from a blog post I wrote after this experience. (Full post at: <http://kurn.apotheosis-now.com/?p=2282>)

At first, I laughed. Then I facepalmed. And then I asked Twitter if they had any decent mage resources, like BEGINNER mage resources, to help this poor guy.

Missing enchants on: helm (though is revered with Hyjal), shoulders (hated by Therazane, is not a scribe), chest, gloves, belt (that is, no belt buckle), boots, weapon, offhand

Missing gems on: helm, shoulders, chest, belt, boots

Questionable gems: 2, 1 Quick Amberjewel (40 haste) and 1 Rigid Deepholm Iolite (50 hit)

Gear worn that is not meant for a mage: helm (spirit), shoulders (spirit), bracers (spirit), boots (spirit), ring #2 (agility), trinket #2 (melee attack proc), offhand (spirit)

Other weird stats: 13.32% hit

Surprisingly, the spec isn't the worst I've ever seen and the glyphs are decent (at least he has all his glyphs and the primes are what he should have for an arcane mage).

(large rant snipped)

Our poor mage friend, whose sad, sad armory started this two-thousand word post, might not be such a tragic, ignorant soul, if only Blizzard had bothered to tell him that he doesn't need spirit. Yet, they don't tell him that. They don't even tell him he needs hit rating (although the hit chance/miss chance table is

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certainly a step in the right direction). This is, I believe, one of Blizzard’s great failures over the years and this poor mage is but one example of the millions of people who don’t know (and perhaps, admittedly, don’t care to know) how to play their class.

And that’s the major problem in World of Warcraft right now: a sizeable population of the game doesn’t know how to play their class, *nor do they particularly care*. So when you’re recruiting with a specific goal in mind (competitive PVP, progression raiding and the like), you really need to be picky. There’s no filtering out the “bad” candidates when using the guild finder tool, but that’s why you push them to the website if you see potential in them and you thank them and decline them nicely if you don’t. If, on the other hand, you post on the other sites I’ve already talked about (or the ones I’m about to talk about), your audience tends to be slightly more educated players. (Okay, maybe not on the WoW forums, but elsewhere, at least.)

Of course, that doesn’t really help you *use* the Guild Finder Tool, does it? Okay, open up your guild tab and click on the bottom-right tab that says “Info”. In the second tab on the top, you’ll see “Recruitment”. Click that and you should get something like this.



Screenshot courtesy of Majikmarine, US-Eldre’Thalas.

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I have to hand it to Blizzard, this is pretty straightforward, if a little simplistic. This is where you let people know what your guild does (in the Guild Interests section). The rest is what you’d like to see from others. That’s to say, you select weekdays or weekends, depending on when you’d like others to be available. In Class Roles, that’s where you select what it is you’re recruiting. Under Level, that’s where you specify if any level will do or, if you’re doing max-level content, you insist people be maximum level.

Then you can enter a quick blurb. I always said something like:

“Apotheosis is seeking (whatever classes we were seeking). If interested, please visit (website address)!”

Then “List My Guild” will make your guild available in the “Browse Guild” listing, which is, I believe, only available to those who are: a) on your faction, b) on your realm and, c) not currently in a guild.

The bottom line about the Guild Finder Tool is that unless you’re on a server where your faction is hugely populated with like-minded individuals, your on-server prospects may be below your standards. That’s another reason why Trade Chat isn’t going to be very effective and it’s exactly why the Guild Finder Tool was not effective for Apotheosis during Cataclysm. I had at least 50 different people “apply” through the Guild Finder Tool during those 17 months and not a single one of them ended up in a trial with us. Your mileage may vary, of course, but unless you’re on a realm with a very high population of educated players *or* you’re not going to be at all picky about who joins your guild, the Guild Finder Tool might not do a lot for you. That said, it’s always worth a shot. You never know what diamonds in the rough may be lurking on your server.

## **- Making Your Guild “Different”**

Aside from your guild’s progression, be it in PVE raids or PVP ratings, there isn’t a whole lot that *really* distinguishes your guild from any other guild on your realm or across a variety of realms – at

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least, not on paper. Your group is, no doubt, very different from any other, but the fact is, you have to prove to others that you're different. How do you do that, outside of *exemplary* performance in PVE or PVP?

- 1) **Be huge.** Depending on your guild's purpose, maybe this option won't work for you, but there are several guilds out there that are absolutely enormous, to the point where there's no longer just one guild, but rather several separate guilds all linked together through custom channels and the like. Let's look at two of them.
  - a. **The Stonewall Family of US-Proudmoore (A).**  
(<http://www.thestonewallfamily.com/>) I believe they are currently made up of two guilds, La Familia De Stonewall and The Pride of Stonewall. This immense guild also has the distinction of being the largest LGBT Alliance-side WoW guild in the world.
  - b. **Alea Iacta Est of US-Earthen Ring (H).**  
(<https://portal.aie-guild.org/category/games/wow/>) Consisting of approximately *eleven* separate guilds, AIE is one of, if not *the* largest guild in the game with over 7000 separate players as of late May of 2013. Great stats here: [http://wiki.aie-guild.org/index.php?title=AIE\\_WoW\\_CoGuild\\_Stats](http://wiki.aie-guild.org/index.php?title=AIE_WoW_CoGuild_Stats)
  - c. **Convert to Raid of US-Aerie Peak (A).**  
(<http://forums.signalsmedia.com/viewforum.php?f=58>) This mega-guild encompasses at least seven guilds as of this writing and came about due to the extremely popular Convert to Raid podcast (<http://www.converttoraid.com>).

So what's the advantage of having such a giant guild? Simply put, you can have intra-guild teams for just about anything and everything. While a typical raiding guild might have just one main raid group, in meta-guilds like the Stonewall Family or AIE, you can have as many as the guild can support! Recruitment can be done entirely internally, for example. Among 7000 players, surely there's at least ONE warlock who's interested in raiding with you, right? I would imagine

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that the downside is that, logistically, it's likely more than a little harder than running a normal-sized guild.

- 2) **Be selective.** Another way to stand out is to be super-selective, by having a guild only consisting of one class or one race. For example, since druids are the only class (as of this writing) with four specializations, all-druid guilds do exist out there. You have all the roles of tank, healer, melee DPS and ranged DPS covered. And back when Burning Crusade launched, there were more than a few all-draenei or all-blood elf guilds. Of course, like the larger guilds, this particular distinction *may not* be compatible with your guild's goals. Still, it's certainly fun to imagine running content with 24 others all of the same class, right?
- 3) **Branch Out with Media.** The WoW community loves, loves, *loves* its blogs, podcasts, vlogs and streams. There is so much adoration for people and shows that I can't even try to explain it. Having a guild-related podcast (like our old one, Blessing of Frost: <http://www.blessingoffrost.com>) can help get your name out there. Blessing of Frost was responsible for more than a few people applying to Apotheosis throughout Cataclysm. They didn't always turn out, but at least we distinguished ourselves in that way. Plus, hey, free advertising, right? You can do similar things with YouTube videos (we did a few recruitment videos, but you can also do this with boss kill videos) and you can also use sites to live-stream your content to a broad audience, which can always be interesting. Basically, the more people hear about you, the better. If you start a blog, podcast, vlog or make great boss kill videos or stream your content, people *will* read, listen and watch. Just give it some time and make sure that the content you're creating is interesting. I constantly funnelled my own blog readers from Kurn's Corner to the Apotheosis website, as did other prominent Apotheosis bloggers, like the current guild master of Apotheosis, Jasyla, who writes at Cannot Be Tamed. (<http://www.cannotbetamed.com>)
- 4) **Post on forums.** Whether the official WoW forums or big fansites like Wowhead and MMO-Champion, make an impact and post there regularly about your class. When you make a

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name for yourself, you separate yourself from the other guilds, because other guilds don’t have *you*. And by *you*, I mean anyone in your guild who takes to the forums. The important thing in posting elsewhere is to be courteous, polite, respectful and, above all, helpful. If you’re not helpful, no one will care how nice you seem. Likewise, if you’re rude and dismissive, despite being “helpful”, no one will care what you have to say. Worse, they may negatively associate your behaviour with behaviour that might be typical of your guild. Also, *always* have a signature that links to your guild’s website!