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Guild Leader's Companion
Sample

Introduction

i – *Who is Ferrel?*

The first question I am certain you asked when you considered this book was, "Who is this Ferrel person and why should I believe that he is qualified to teach me anything about leading a guild?" It is a fair thing to ask and something that I felt compelled to address. I am not a huge fan of ego stroking and it has been difficult for me to explain myself without doing so. I think the best way to sum it up is to say that I am an individual that has been around guilds for over a decade now. I've sat and watched how others lead and contrast that with how I might do so. In all those years I learned a wealth of information and have had the opportunity to put it into practice for many years. I'm not here to tell you what is best for your guild. I'm going to tell you about some things that worked really well and some mistakes I or others have made and what I learned from them. With any luck you'll learn something too!

My MMORPG career began long before these games had fancy graphics (or any graphics for that matter). I got my start as a leader in the AOL role-playing chat rooms. The rule systems on AOL were very much a gentleman's agreement and frequently lead to frustration when players went outside of them. It was fun to play there but I always longed for something more structured and fair. That is how I found my way into text-based MUDs. In the fire of rule-driven online role-playing games my strong predilection for the genre was born. It was only natural that when Ultima Online was released that I purchased

and played it. From that point on there was no turning back; I was hooked.

The basis for my success as a leader truly began in EverQuest. I purchased the game at release and immediately jumped in feet first. My first character, Telbain, was unfortunate enough to join a guild with a terrible leader. It was unfortunate for him but for me it was extremely eye opening. I learned very quickly about a lot of things that you shouldn't do as an administrator! The experience soured my friends and I on guilds and eventually we ended the careers of those characters. It was in our second attempt at EverQuest that Ferrel was born. We knew what we didn't want and we were very careful the next time we chose a guild.

I'm not the only one who started a new character the second time we played EverQuest. All of my friends and I agreed to make a "perfect group" so that we could help drive any guild we joined forwards in progression. We were a warrior, a cleric and an enchanter so that made selling us easy. We were careful, researched guilds and didn't join one until we were in our low 50s. Our choice was Fist of Iron. It was a small raid guild and we fit in quite well there. After a few weeks I was invited to be a sub-officer and accepted. It was my first true EQ leadership position and we remained there for a little while. Eventually our ambitions grew larger and we applied to the top guild on our server, Blades of Wrath.

The recruitment period for Blades of Wrath was not that awful in comparison to other "uber" guilds but it did take us a while to get in. Once that happened, however, a whole new world was opened up to

me and my style of play changed to the extreme. I was now a "hardcore raider." Blades was an exceptional organization but had an officer or two that probably shouldn't have been in positions of authority. In time I became so frustrated that I did the unthinkable. I took a raid-gearred cleric, politely left the guild, and transferred servers. Back then that meant they destroyed ALL of your possessions. I ended up on Brell Serilis with nothing.

On Brell Serilis I joined some real life friends who helped me out. They also assisted me in applying to the undisputed top guild there, Silent Redemption. SR was so far ahead of the curve it was shocking. I remained with them until I retired from EverQuest. It was in that guild that I learned a lot of good things about how to be an officer. I also had the opportunity to serve as a class leader for a while. On the other side of things I learned how not to do recruitment (it took over six months for me to go from recruit to member) and how unfair council loot systems can be. On the whole it was a wonderful experience and set me up for my eventual success in EQ II.

When EverQuest II released I joined with my original EverQuest friends once more. We created our perfect group again and started plowing through levels. We waited until we were near max level to start selecting a guild and applied to what appeared to be the top dogs at the time: Rockeaters. We weren't max yet and they didn't really want to wait and see if we could level quickly. They turned us down and we were invited into a guild named Iniquity. Iniquity was just starting to raid and we were thrilled to be there at the onset of it. Much like Fist of Iron the managers of that guild saw something in me