

It's All About Communication

by BeckerC

An important part in playing DarkGalaxy is the part of being in an alliance - sooner or later everyone will be in an alliance as all members do realise very fast that playing alone without any friends or at least comrades is playing without even the chance of having any access. An alliance is the place you belong to, a place to find comrades, a place to co-ordinate attack- and defence-strategies and having fun. I've seen very different ways alliances are organised - some are organised very military-like with a strict commandment, some are more anarchy-like, where the members only agree upon the lowest level of co-operation and only set up common targets in a very open way.

What all succesfull alliances do have incommon is some way of MASS-COMMUNICATION. They use their ingame-forums, some even use specially created forums on their own web-sites, but all of them use some matter of instant communication like iRC, ICQ or any instant messenger. Joining iRC is even more useful to communicate with other alliances, which is an utmost important thing for having success in DarkGalaxy.

Some alliances try to build up immense organisations, with every kind of military-structure, you may think of. They have an admiral, a high-council, some sub-commanders for different Galaxies (which will not be necessary in DG 4 anymore), some sub-commanders for sectors or even for minor squads and teams. Some also do implement specific rules for specific fields, like having a minister of war, a minister of diplomacy, etc. I believe that all these command structures are completely without any sense. DarkGalaxy is a game and in a game I do play. I'm searching for fun while playing, not for being bossed by someone or being just the receiver of orders. I won't do anything someone tells me to do just because within my alliance he has the necessary rank to do so. I follow orders or suggestions of someone I know I can trust, sometimes even like, but at least I should know that he (sorry to the girls, but it makes it much more easy to read if I only use ONE form of sex, not always need to write he/she) is someone who is acting to make the game for succesful for the alliance. And being in a succesful alliance leads to being succesful and is a part of the fun. It is always more fun to be a member of the winning team, not of the losing one - nevertheless it is up to your definition what winning and losing in DarkGalaxy-terms is.

This doesn't mean that the player with the highest score is the one who should automatically be the leader. Team-play, coordinating attacks and defence, laying out strategies and making the contacts to other alliances is one of the most demanding but also one of the most demanded thing

within an alliance. A leader is one who has good ideas, who knows what are important tactical target, who is capable of laying out succesful strategies and who knows a lot about the enemy you are probably dealing with. By having good ideas and succesful strategies you will automatically achieve a state, where your alliance-members do follow you, agree to your plans and strategies and are not doubting that whatever you will advise them to do is good for them, too.

Lets take a look of two totally different concepts of alliances I did expirience last round. At the beginning of the round I was a member of the "Steel Company", an alliance founded by a real-life friend of mine together with some other people I did know from real-life. The alliance did exist for only 1 months and did break apart due to the lack of communication. Our admiral wasn't using the ingame forums, we didn't use iRC or any other mean of communications. Some of our members - including me - used the ingame forums for request, seeking for advise or even help, as our admiral was ranked #1 within the 2 first weeks of round 3. No replies had been given, every member was totally alone and within 4 weeks all members did leave the alliance and the admiral himself than cancelled the "Steel Company". On the other hand I did play a long part in round 3 together with the Reservoir Dogs, a bunch of chaots, the complete anarchist. No command structure was given, the ranks within the alliance varied from "The ring bearer" over "Mr. Dildo" to "Fluggiest Dog" and actually no one was commanding or giving orders. But Gollum was someone full of ideas, someone to arrange things, someone listening to his members, someone knowing the weaknesses as well as the strengths of his members. We used outgame-forums to make suggestions, gather informations, seeking help, and they had been very frequently visited - furthermore we used iRC, discussing about strategies, incidents and happenings, discussing about other alliances and possible enemies. Each member trusted the other one, which is - IMO - the most important part about being in an alliance. I can remember events when Gollum entered the iRC-Channel asking "Who is willing to fight in war in Galaxy 6?": Some members just stated "/me raises hands" in iRC, others refused and decided on making up the home-defence. It all worked out perfectly. Attack dates were agreed upon, movement-plans made, soldiers gathered, all the stuff needed to be succesful and all went out being succesful.

As far as I can see it being in a bunch of players you trust in, being together with a lot of experienced players and some newbies, will make the game succesful. You will have most if the fun possible the more members stay active, the more you communicate within your alliance and with other alliances. Having a nice alliance-idea, like making an alliance according to a specific book or a specific movie is nice, but somewhat irrelevant. It's all within trust and communication.

You don't need to have 200 members in your alliance to be succesful - many members ot cause many problems and need many help. But a couple of people, lets say 30-60, will always be enough to reach a strong position. Active members for sure - and active does also mean taling part in the discussions and strategies. If you are in an alliance full of egoists, who check their accounts every tick but never lose a single word about WHAT they are doing and never even thinking about

teamplay and co-ordination, you won't ever have fun within DarkGalaxy. Reaching the #1-spot scorewise may be a nice achievement, may be something you have done, something you have achieved. But playing in a team, co-ordinating strategies and tactics and then seeing how everything works out as you and your comrades did plan it, THATS fun, thats DarkGalaxy. So I wouldn't care for ranks or titles, although many alliances try to recruit new members by offering them something like that, thats worth nothing. Being a commander without troops is no fun at all, fighting wars without having anyone to trust on at your back isn't fun and furthermore won't be succesful.

Another important part of DarkGalaxy is the way, Alliances interact with each other. Being on iRC you will realise quit fast that the DarkGalaxy-Community has its specific rules, that there are persons representing alliances you should know - not only the admirals. If you reach a status where people do respect you not only for your strength but also for your behaviour, reaching a status where you make friends outside your own alliance, will help you a lot in the game. I go back to the example used before: As the Reservoir Dogs moved to their war against FoP in Galaxy 6, leaving their home-galaxy mostly undefended behind, another alliance made up the home-defence for them, cared for their homes. You cannot achieve this by being arrogant or only relying on your own power, but by being a well-known member of the community, being a respected player, being someone people - even from other alliances can count on as they know you keep up your word, as they know if they would be in an equal situation you would help them the same way they did without even the need of discussing about that. Some people do thing those "powerblocks" are unfair or leaving no chance for other alliances, but thats simply nonsense. Meta-Alliances aren't working very good, there is only a limited way of incorporating as your troops still keep hostile to each other and would fight against each other ingame when being at the same place at the same time. These powerblocks have been formed by alliances which have some common ideals and common states of mind what this game is about, which do think in some common categories. And they are not a closed "club", there are new alliances every round on the catwalk that make their way fast towards being a fully accepted bunch of players within the DG-community. Some never get that status and there are good reasons why they never reach that status, e.g. cheating, abusing bugs or fighting unfair. Let me add something: Fighting a war against each other doesn't mean people do not like each other. As far as I can remember there has been no personal reasons why the Reservoir Dogs went into war against FoP, it was only about being in war as DarkGalaxy is and will ever be a wargame. A warGAME - some should keep that in mind. No one loves to lose the efforts he did spend months long being active, building up his own planets, building up large forces, within a tick, but as it is still a game, it shouldn't be the reason for any personal insultats. If someone beats the crap (escuse my french) of you, you should just realise that he did have the better strategies and that this is a strategy game. Being a game if leaves you some options when being confronted with an overwhelming enemy. You could just lay down and die, making a new account in a far away Galaxy (dunno how that will exactly work next round), you could even try to fight back as long as possible to give your enemy a good battle, or your could seek for some help, even outside your alliance, to fight the attacker back. It is also an option to insult your enemy, to complain and whine and never accept that you did lose, but that is the worst way of all. Being a good player does also mean realizing when you have lost. And if the enemy you thought you would have already win again suddenly brings in some good friends raping you, you should keep in mind

that diplomacy is also a part of a strategy game. Thats not unfair, thats smart.

So keep in mind, no matter if you are a newbie or someone only searching for a new alliance: It's all about communication, its all in the mix

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