



IOD Strategic Planning Committee Recommendations

January 16, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report of this committee is by Rick Thompson, Luigi Galbiati, John Roberts, and John Burnham (chair), with Doug Witter as part of early deliberations.

The Assignment

- Conduct SWOT analysis of IODWCA, its structure, and class as a whole
- Develop strategies to:
 - i. Leverage strengths
 - ii. Maximize opportunities
 - iii. Mitigate weaknesses
- Present recommendations to the IODWCA in January.

The SWOT

An extensive analysis listing the class strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats was created for this report from three primary sources:

1. 2016 IOD Strategic Reports and Questionnaire (attached)
2. Email survey of IOD WCA members
3. Individual research and committee discussion

Recommended Strategies & Accountabilities:

1. **Strategy:** Establish “IOD Fleet/WCA Partnership Initiatives” to increase interfleet racing & build relationships across fleets. **Action/Accountability:** WCA Executive Committee to approve this partnership effort as a primary focus of the Executive Committee in 2018; to approve these three or similar initiatives as pilot initiatives by the end of February; and to appoint one or more members of the Executive Committee to lead the effort.
2. **Strategy:** Establish Rebranding Campaign for International One-Design Class. **Action/Accountability:** WCA Executive Committee to direct Strategic Planning Committee to further develop rebranding campaign and detail of focused narrative on history, tradition, aesthetics, sailors and trophies; and to direct Strategic Planning and Communications committees to work together to implement the campaign and narrative in class website, newsletter, social media and other communications channels.
3. **Strategy:** Create New Fleet Development Initiative. **Action/Accountability:** WCA Executive Committee to direct Strategic Planning Committee to create New Fleet Development plan and implement in consultation with Executive Committee.

Part I - Assignment

Four IOD owners were appointed to a strategic planning committee in October 2017: John Roberts, Rick Thompson, Doug Witter, John Burnham (chair). Luigi Galbiati later replaced Doug Witter.

As a committee, we met monthly beginning in October and developed a three-pronged approach to assessing strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities.

First, we reviewed the extensive survey produced by the 2015-2016 Strategic Planning Committee. This includes extensive commentary from fleet leaders and owners in several fleets. The report is appended to this one.

Second, we polled the WCA Executive Committee by email. We received responses from nearly every member.

Third, we each did our own research and came up with our own assessments. While all input was useful, the longer-time IOD owners on the committee found particularly valuable the fresh insights provided by owners in our newest fleet, Doug Witter and Luigi Galbiati of Manhattan Yacht Club. At meetings, we developed and discussed our SWOT list and generated the resulting recommended strategies.

Part 2 – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

This SWOT review of the IOD Class and its class association is based on discussions within this committee, a 2016 questionnaire and report by the committee (see appendix), and fall 2017 input from other class members and most of the IOD World Class Association executive committee. We did not include every comment received, but included the majority, either singly or merged with others. The list of Opportunities grew so long that we grouped them thematically.

- **Strengths**

- Established class with 13 active fleets and over 150 boats racing.
- Attractive racing circuit of interfleet/borrowed-boat competition—Worlds, NAs, invitationals—all of which make competing easy.
- Aesthetics: beautiful boats and fleets in extraordinary venues (Life's too short to sail an ugly boat!)
- International competition and community: The IOD class has a family feel and general vibe that generates friendship above all else.
- Stronger Corinthian spirit than in many newer higher-performance classes
- Sailors can compete age 10 to 100 and with a wide range of physical abilities
- The “arms race” is under control, in part due to cost-effective, sail-purchasing
- The class has a remarkable history spanning 80 years and has both a book and a Hall of Fame to reinforce that.
- Sustainability: reasonably priced boats are available through builders in Chester and Sweden.
- Many active sailors have serious pedigree as Olympians and international champions.
- A “global fleet” of IODs exists outside regular fleets representing the IOD “brand” in classic boat circuits (e.g. *Altair* in San Diego).
- World Sailing recognizes the IOD as an international class with a world championship

- The IODWCA executive committee meets consistently and connects class leaders/fleets.
- Class rules have recently been revised and are up to date.
- The class has a large archive of class documents accessible on website.

- **Weaknesses**

- Ownership is aging and in some fleets we struggle to get youth involved. (True for most sailing classes/fleets—80 percent of all sailors are 45-65 years old.)
- There is variance in one-design adherence and different equipment rules from fleet to fleet.
- Many wooden boats are expensive to maintain, with widely varying quality of boats in some fleets due to deferred maintenance.
- There is a lack of awareness of and marketing of the class; the class website, for example, is overdue for an update.
- There are many great IOD trophies that are under-utilized or under-exposed (e.g. the Gold Cup, although there is a good chance it will be sailed for as the “Argo Gold Cup Match Racing Series”). There are other hidden trophies with history that racers want to see and race for. (See <https://www.6metre.com/the-trophies> for inspiration.)
- The class lacks an individual-boat database, helpful in marketing and in growing new fleets, e.g. in the Mediterranean.

- **Opportunities**

- Fleet/WCA Partnership
 - WCA should continue to look for consensus in establishing clear WCA-fleet jurisdiction and ways to assist local fleets.
 - To increase travel opportunities for newer, younger sailors, the WCA should encourage more inter-fleet regattas hosted by as many fleets as possible.
 - Establish standing invites/easy contact forms via class website for sailors to sail with and be housed by other fleets when traveling. Contact fleet captain or delegate.
 - Encourage development of low-key events (e.g. pursuit and PHRF evening races) to bring new sailors to fleets (highlight existing races annually in newsletter)
 - Promote sharing culture, helping each other to get better. Create a mentorship program led by active, top-level sailors.
 - Periodic articles by top sailors to help others improve (eg: proposed tech update).
 - To help find and enlist new leaders in each Fleet who will catalyze growth, the WCA should regularly profile/interview top class motivators to reveal their passions for the IOD and their fleets.
- New-Fleet Development Initiatives
 - Target new fleet locations/clubs with nucleus of sailors and invite from to regattas (e.g. Toronto, Chicago). It's people who will sell the class. Also in So. Hemisphere or Mediterranean—the former sailing Nov - April, would see benefit in heading north during winter. The Med is an opportunity for the classic yacht circuit to be built further.
 - Target marketing for the “non-converted” rather than the “converted”. Facebook and Twitter might be too focused towards the converted. Sailing magazines or Sailing Anarchy, etc. for the non-converted.

- General Marketing Initiatives to brand class, reinforce strengths, and build cohesive community through communication and mutual pride.
 - Branding - “Spirit of Tradition, Another Way to Sail” or “The Spirit of sailing Classics, a different way to sail”
 - Use 75th anniversary book for marketing
 - Create off-season opportunities to visit builders.
 - Utilize drone footage from 2017 Worlds in marketing.
 - Upgrade WCA website & Newsletter
 - Develop regular plan of schedule of content for web which can then be included in quarterly newsletter
 - Create pages with visuals of all fleets plus text profile and contact info
 - Report each of the season’s major regattas and inter-fleet invitationals
 - Report WCA initiatives, actions, decisions
 - Publish news from fleets as it develops (Nantucket boats sinking/rescued)
 - Use newsletter to push out all of the above to WCA members.
 - Expand social media reach to:
 - Develop regular schedule of content for social media accounts
 - Identify social media communicators in every fleet; give them IOD Facebook access and encourage them to post.
 - Appoint WCA Communications Comm. social media person to track down and train fleet communicators and provide webinar tutorials/best practices
 - Build communications expertise in off-season to focus around regattas, shoot photos & videos, write reports for every event
- Leverage IOD history, traditional values, aesthetics and pride of ownership:
 - Work with and compare IOD class to other “Friendly Fleets” such as Dragon, Atlantic, Six-Metre (i.e.traditional keelboat).
 - Capitalize on IOD Trophies. Use in additional events, e.g. Amorita Trophy (NY-Bermuda) and Gold Cup - There are many more hidden trophies with history attached that racers want to see and race for. See link for inspiration <https://www.6metre.com/the-trophies>
 - “Designer Allure”: Bjarne Aas designed and built not only the IOD but many 6 and 8 Meters. Build and grow the Bjarne Aas brand to grow the IOD Class. Witness the success of William Fife as a brand.
 - Pride: Every owner loves their IOD- let them showcase it in the newsletter/website.
- **Threats**
 - Well-managed and well-promoted keelboat classes may be more attractive: Etchells, Dragon, 6+ Meters, J Class
 - Newer, faster classes (e.g. J/70) will attract many younger sailors. (This is not our brand and the IOD is for a differently motivated sailor.)
 - Decrease in available time is a threat to all organized sailboat racing
 - Consistent, competent crew can be hard to find, especially for less experienced owners.
 - Expense of maintenance, costs of maintaining wooden IODs
 - Millennials are often more interested in experience than ownership

Part 3 - Recommended strategies:

To leverage the strengths of the IOD and the IOD Class, to maximize the opportunities ahead, and to mitigate our weaknesses, we recommend the following strategies including the creation of accountabilities for each:

ONE: Establish IOD Fleet/WCA Partnership Initiatives to increase interfleet racing & build relationships across fleets.

Purpose: Leverage and grow an existing strength of the class and thereby address threats such as “Millennials are more interested in experience than ownership.”

Recommended Initiatives

1. To reinforce and grow the IOD community, the WCA should encourage fleets to increase the number of low-intensity, inter-fleet invitationals and one-off sailing opportunities for class members creating more travel opportunities for less-experienced and younger sailors.
2. The WCA can lead an experiment with a willing fleet to create a development regatta with an experienced and a newer skipper sailing together.
3. With enough willing fleets, the WCA can create and highlight easy-contact forms on its website, inviting traveling sailors to contact fleet captains or designates to sail with and be housed by local fleets when traveling.

Accountability: WCA Executive Committee to approve this partnership effort as a primary focus of the Executive Committee in 2018; to approve these three or similar initiatives as pilot initiatives by the end of February; and to appoint one or more members of the Executive Committee to lead the effort.

TWO: Establish Rebranding Campaign for International One-Design Class

Purpose: Leverage the IOD Class’s historic strengths and capitalize on the opportunity of becoming a stronger part of the international community of traditional racing classes. Rather than competing with the latest “flash in the pan” class, brand the IOD as “the Better Way to Sail” emphasizing not only its traditional aspects but its age and gender inclusivity.

Recommended Initiatives

1. Rebrand “International One-Design: Spirit of Tradition, a Better Way to Sail”
 1. The goal of this campaign will be to put the IOD class back in the sailing public’s eye in print, web, and social media.
 2. The message emphasizes the class’s traditional values, its community, and it’s inclusiveness for young adults who want to engage in a social sport or older adults who want to get back in the game at an affordable cost.
 3. The campaign requires collating and creating text, images, and videos available for club newsletters, fleet websites.
 4. Build in good usage of our superb 75th Anniversary book
 5. Families sail together on IODs and part of the campaign will include multi-generational photos and stories demonstrating this.
 6. Social gatherings and activities are pivotal to fleet success, whether its regular, informal drinks together after a day’s racing, a potluck after an AGM or a formal dinner with a prize giving. The WCA should encourage this and also get pictures and dialogue to post after these events.

7. Build IOD Pride: Feature at least one IOD per email and on Facebook, creating connections and enhancing owners' pride. Call it "Boat of the month". In rotation, fleet captains would nominate boats and send photos and text to WCA editor photos and text.
2. Build focused narrative on history, tradition, aesthetics, sailors, and trophies:
 - a. "Friendly Fleet Focus": Develop relationships with and benchmark IOD with:
 1. 6 Meter: Worlds were just held in Vancouver with 45 boats on the line. Competitors included Dennis Conner, the King of Spain etc.
 2. 8 Meter: Worlds were just held in Norway with 28 boats on the line. Competitors included the King of Norway.
 3. 10 Meter: Class is being relaunched in the Mediterranean.
 4. 12 Meter: Class is having a small resurgence in the US and Europe, possibly as they gear up to the 2019 Worlds.
 5. 15 Meter: Class races regularly and competitively in the Mediterranean with 4 boats.
 6. J Class: Fleet is pushing a growing – see Bermuda during the AC.
 - b. "Designer Allure": Create a media program to build the Bjarne Aas brand. His "brand" power could be incredibly strong, as he also designed/built 6- and 8-Meters. See the success of William Fife as a brand. Other notable designers part of this 'pool of cool' are Johan Anker & Olin Stephens.

Accountability: WCA Executive Committee to direct Strategic Planning Committee to further develop rebranding campaign and detail of focused narrative on history, tradition, aesthetics, sailors and trophies; and to direct Strategic Planning and Communications committees to work together to implement the campaign and narrative in class website, newsletter, social media and other communications channels.

THREE: Establish New Fleet Development Initiative

Purpose: Leverage the class's appeal and support its builders by promoting the growth of new fleets in receptive environments.

Recommended Initiatives:

1. Write a deliberate plan based on the simple premise of getting new people into the boats, which worked in the case of Nantucket, Chester, and Manhattan.
2. Work with the WCA Marketing lead to develop appropriate marketing materials. Don't forget the 75th Anniversary Book.
3. Work with fleets to hold a space at invitational regattas or create team-race events to include several prospective owners.
4. Work with builders to host builder-tour opportunities.
5. Network across fleets to identify targets venues, clubs and sailors.

Accountability: WCA Executive Committee to direct Strategic Planning Committee to create New Fleet Development plan and implement in consultation with Executive Committee.