INTERNATIONAL SAIL TRAINING & TALL SHIPS CONFERENCE 2017







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Ship Recruitment – Strategies for Success

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Overview

- Context & considerations
- Fleet aspirations
- Types of vessel operator
- Planning and engagement
- Your experiences...



The ship recruitment task...

Same as it ever was....?

OR getting harder....?

What is your experience..?



Port Advisory Group

• 18 topics suggested by members for discussion

- Ranked by the group in priority order
- Four of the top five topics related to ship recruitment



What are your fleet aspirations?

- Minimum number of vessels?
- Minimum number of Class A ships?
- No 'gaps' on the quayside?
- (Maximum number of vessels..?!)
- The 'ideal' fleet is more than just a number



What is the optimal event area?

- Have you a vision for the ideal event area in your port?
- What quay space do you have?
- Compact event area v space for expected visitor numbers
- Will more vessels mean expanding the event area too far or splitting the fleet?
- Does double banking ships add to the spectacle?
- Infrastructure and staffing cost considerations
- More is not always better





Toulon 2013

35 vessels

9 Class A

1.5 million visitors



Blyth 2016

20 vessels

8 Class A

500,000 Visitors

Avoid the 'number trap'

- Success is not a number of ships, success is satisfied stakeholders
- Don't create a problem through number fixation with senior city figures and the media
- Articulate meaningful measures of success to key stakeholders



Why do Cities Host Tall Ships Events?

- Community festival
- Tourist attraction
- city specific objectives What fleet is required to meet these objectives?



A fleet to meet the event objectives...

Spectacle

Public Access

Public Acc

Fill Quaysides

Large ships

Colourful smaller vessels

Large Open ships

Military ships

Balance with deck events

Double banking??

Good sail training vessels

Large and small

Open for bookings

Ships offering hospitality

Range of sizes & prices

Day sailing?



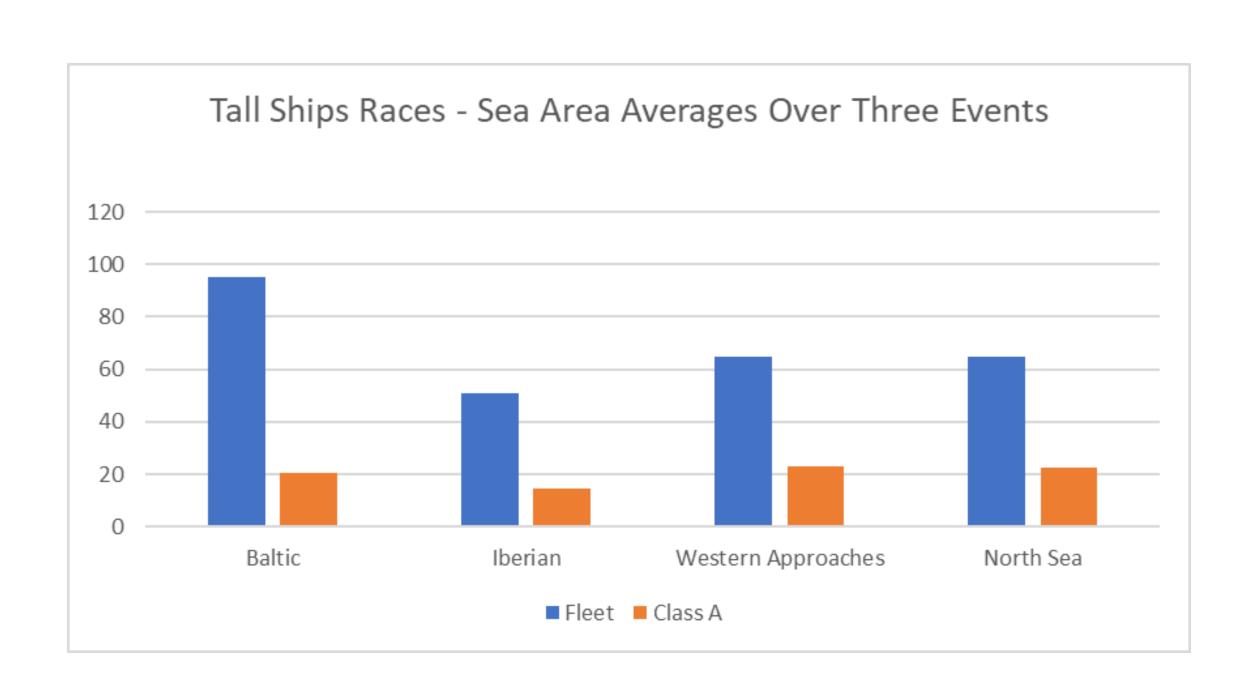
Considerations...

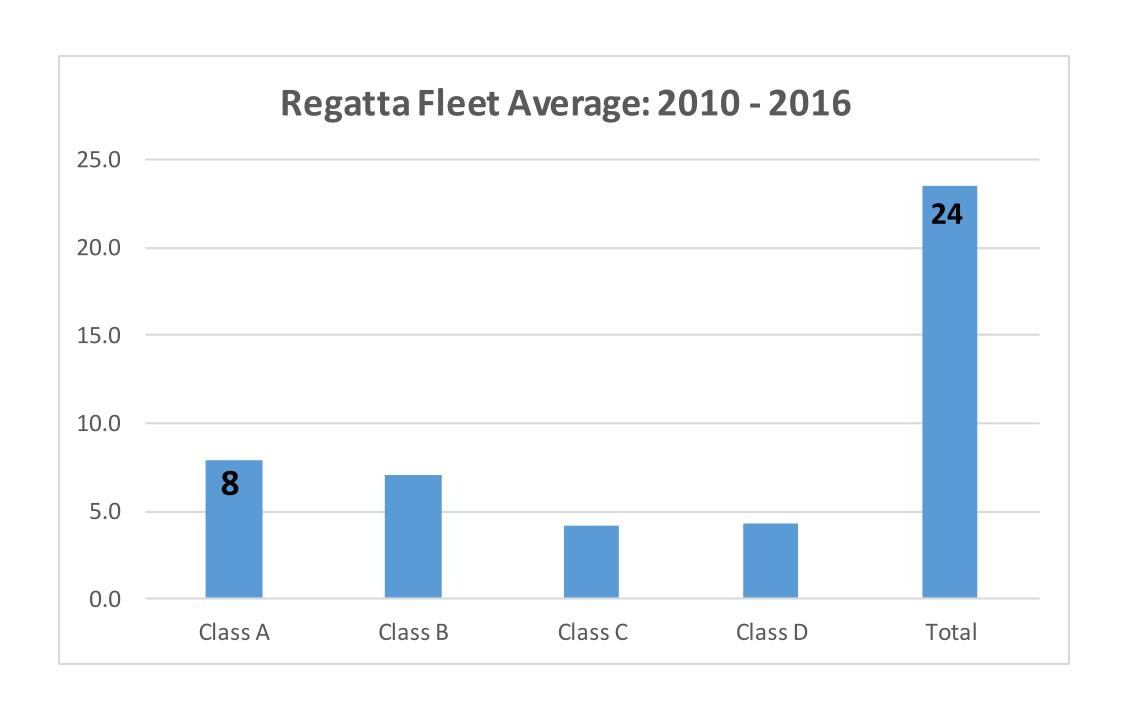
Sea Area Rotation

Races or Regatta?

Repeat host port or first event?







Repeat Host Port or First Time?

- Repeat Host Port
 - Existing vessel operator relationships
 - Vessel operators experience of your port (good / bad..?!)
 - Experience of the ship recruitment process
- First Time
 - Any vessel operator relationships?
 - Port new to vessels..?
 - No experience of the process?



Barriers to Success?

Port known to vessel operator!?

Other tall ships festivals & events

Poor ship recruitment processes

Port unknown to vessel operator

Insufficient lead time

Unattractive vessel propositions

Under your control...

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The Ship Recruitment Process



Who's responsibility is it...?

2.6 Ship Recruitment

2.6.1 The recruitment of vessels to a Tall Ships event is the joint responsibility of the individual and collective event ports, together with the Organiser.





- STI Marketing
- Host Port Marketing
- Joint Host Port Marketing
- Best practice process
- Shared information / joint strategies





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Understanding types of vessel operator

- Those driven by financial opportunity
- Those influenced by financial opportunity
- Those uninterested in financial opportunity
- Military vessels



Cost recovery – a focal point for all vessels

- All vessels are expensive to operate and maintain
- Voyages perceived as 'high risk from a cost recovery perspective will need additional justification
- Its not just the Races that make up the voyage:
 delivery legs form part of the overall cost recovery calculation
- Vessel operators have to be risk averse to ensure financial stability













The Ship Recruitment Process



As the old saying goes...



Plan the campaign

- Develop a plan with a clear set of activities and timeline
- Linked with the trainee recruitment and deck event sales processes
- Start planning as soon as the host port contract is signed
- Work in close collaboration with other ports and STI



Plan the campaign

- Appoint a suitable owner
 - Organised
 - Tenacious
 - Networker / relationship developer
 - Vessel knowledge is useful but not essential
- Treat target ships as sales prospects
 - Adopt a sales cycle mindset
 - Contact management
 - Relationship development



What motivates commercial ships?

- The commercial proposition
 - The race series as a marketing platform (berths)
 - Host port trainees
 - Deck events
- In port programme & services for trainees
- Fit with season's plan
- Affinity for the port
- Personal relationships / contacts



Commercial Ships

- Who is selling to who…?!!
- Host Ports wants ships as 'customers' for their event
- Ships want ports to find them customers for their 'products' (trainee berths / deck events)



So why is it so difficult..?!!





Your Invitation Process

- Make it as high impact as possible
 - From most senior VIP(s)
- Consider joint invitations letters with the other ports
- Consider joint commercial offers with the other ports
- Follow up diligently until response
 - Use contact management system
- Coordinate with other ports and STI
 - Joint commercial offers



Ship Recruitment Timeline

- Up to 36 months prior host ports start building vessel relationships
 - Conferences / event visits/follow up
 - Arrange ship visits to port in preceding years
 - Initial invitation letters, especially for military ships
- Entry form available 14 months prior
 - STI marketing to vessel database
 - Ongoing invitation process from host ports
 - Specific offers for commercial ships (subject to entry)
 - Relationship marketing / follow up



Commercial Vessels

- No appearance fees BUT:
- Can commit to a number of decks / trainees in principal
- Written agreements ONLY after race entry
- You can take the risk and underwrite the decks
- Any unsold decks can be used for municipal events or open ship
- Spread business across fleet



Gaining Commitment

- Race entry form
 - = entitlement to participate

- Deck event contract or trainee bookings
 - = commitment to participate



Deck Events

- Pre-sell concept to local companies
- Include deck events in sponsor packages
- Not vessel specific
- Generate demand early
- DON'T WAIT!



Trainees

- Set an ambitious trainee target
- More trainees = more leverage with ships
- Use city marketing channels to encourage engage self-funded trainees
- Channel city funding towards 'need to go' trainees



Tailored vessel propositions

- Work with the other ports to make combined offers to target vessels
- Trainees and/or deck events it's the overall value proposition that counts
- Recognise that commercial potential of each port will vary
- Collaboration with fellow host ports and STI is key





Military Ships

- Training cadets can be done on whatever ocean or sea and visiting whichever ports
- Ambassadorial needs and costs are decisive in the choice of the operational Plan

- Access to visitors
- Media attention



Military Ships

Military ships want to be OPEN to visitors

- Not unusual for a ship to count many thousands of visitors across its decks over one day
- Likely to host one or more diplomatic receptions
- Possible events involving local nationals



Attracting Military Ships

- Invitation letters to Ambassador and Naval Chief of Staff
- Invitations via most senior VIP and your Navy
- Consider a joint host port reception in each host country capital, for resident ambassadors / naval attaches
- Encourage ship visits in preceding years



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Best practice guidelines

- Port Advisory group focus for 2018
- Templated project plan with timeline and key milestones
- Shared resource for host ports
- Shared commitment to adopt best practice
- Checks and measures for all via conference calls and checklists



Audience Experiences

