# Character Profile

The boatswain on a ship has several duties. A boatswain is often the most senior rank of the deck department and usually the third-mate on a ship. The boatswain is primarily responsible for the upkeep of the ship’s crew and equipment. In the time of the pirates the boatswain was “in charge of a ship's [anchors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anchor), [cordage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cordage), [colours](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag), deck [crew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crew) and the ship's boats.”[[1]](#footnote-1) This made the boatswain responsible for the ships maintenance and renewal of the ship’s components, he is also important for the planning of the ship’s activities. Finally, the boatswain was in charge of organizing, and directing the crew.

# The Future of the Ship

The crew of *Queen Anne’s Revenge* gained a fearsome reputation as a ruthless and opportunistic band of pirates. Though the pirate operation lead by Blackbeard was efficient and profitable, there are several improvements that could be made. First, focusing on information gathering could boost return on capital. Also, privateering should be explored as a possible future for the *Queen Anne’s Revenge*. Finally, there are several small actions that the ship can carry out to increase efficiency.

An important aspect of piracy is gaining information about targets. Piracy like many other activities, is largely about maximizing return on investment. Each raid has a certain cost in both materials and lives; it should be the aim of a pirate ship to gain as much material as possible while minimizing the cost. Information can be crucial in maximizing the possible return from raids. Stede Bonnet, the captain of the Revenge, exemplified the danger of operating without information. In his first tour as a pirate heexperienced many unnecessary losses, in return for little gain. He first went to North Carolina, where he captured a ship captained by Thomas Porter. This ship had little cargo, however, Bonnet was forced to hold the ship, so he would not be discovered by the state of North Carolina.[[2]](#footnote-2) His ability to raid and capture ships was subsequently reduced. This was a problem better information could have prevented.

In contrast, there are instances where intelligence could greatly benefit pirates. In 1917, when journeying to the Lesser Antilles, the *Queen Anne’s Revenge* took on board a civil servant named James Knight. They questioned him to gain information. This information caused them to alter their path and attack St. Christopher[[3]](#footnote-3) leading to one of the most profitable journeys in the tenure of their piracy.

The option of privateering should be explored further. The system of privateering rose to prominence during the Thirty Year War. During the war, “It was common practices for princes to pay colonels to raise armies, often using credit as a means to pay for it. This allowed small countries such as Sweden to play a central role in the Thirty Years War. “[[4]](#footnote-4) To become a privateer one was given a letter of Marque; this was a licence to commit acts of piracy against enemy nations. [[5]](#footnote-5) After the “golden age of piracy, it became common for former pirates to become privateers.”[[6]](#footnote-6) It may be advisable for the crew of Queen Anne’s revenge to seek a letter of marque and to peruse Spanish targets. First, after May 1717, there were few British sightings of the *Queen Anne’s Revenge*, suggesting that the ship began predominantly attacking Spanish Targets.[[7]](#footnote-7) This suggests a halt of attacks on British territory would not limit the earnings potential of the *Queen Anne’s Revenge.* Also, taking a letter of marque that would spare many of the crew members from the risk of being prosecuted in British colonies, including Nassau. These two factors make a compelling case for the *Queen Anne’s Revenge* to seek a letter of marque.

There are several small actions that could increase the efficiency of the *Queen Anne’s Revenge*. Piracy was a seasonal operation, often pirates would sail “up the coast of the United States at the beginning of the year, then sail back to avoid hurricane season.”[[8]](#footnote-8) Altering capabilities of ships and their crew to make piracy a year round operation would increase potential revenues. This could be done through increased land operations, or expeditions into South America. Also, in the past, pirates place an emphasis on equality, “they were sailors, indentured servants, and runaway slaves rebelling against their oppressors.”[[9]](#footnote-9) Creating commitments to pay, to give reasonable working conditions, and to remove unreasonable leaders, could increase the effort and loyalty of crew members.

In conclusion, focusing on information could boost profitability. Also, privateering could lead to the long-term safety of the Queen Anne’s Revenge. Finally, several small actions could be undertaken to improve the efficiency of the Queen Anne’s Revenge.

1. "Boatswain." Wikipedia. Accessed November 10, 2016. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boatswain. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Woodard, Colin. *The Republic of Pirates: Being the True and Surprising Story of the Caribbean Pirates and the Man Who Brought Them down*. Orlando: Harcourt, 2007. 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Woodard, 123 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. # Sandberg, Bryan. War and conflict in the early modern world : 1500-1700. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016. 245.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Macintyre, Donald. *The Privateers*. London: P. Elek, 1975. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Macintyre, 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Woodard, 124 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Macintyre, 17 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Woodard, 16 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)