

An Opportunity To Own Something Special

As consolidation continues, IWDC provides a valuable and unique option for independents committed to private ownership.

Most independents prefer to own assets like cylinders, trucks, buildings, etc., so owning a cooperative fits their DNA. With modest one time equity investment and ongoing annual dues, each IWDC Member is, in turn, an Owner. Profits generated by the cooperative are paid back as patronage dividends, meaning each Owner receives their share based on participation. Assets owned range from a strategically located hardgoods warehouse, a centralized paperless billing and payment system, and proprietary Weldmark® and PurityPlus® brands, to name a few.

To help better convey IWDC's story, www.iwdc.coop was launched January 2013 aimed at prospective new members and overall industry. Visitors will learn about Member benefits, key programs, vendor partnerships, cooperative fundamentals and insights shared by several IWDC Members on value they see both as a Member and an Owner. IWDC's new website also has robust content serving existing Members behind a password-protected firewall.

Prior to launch, IWDC refreshed its logo to more clearly emphasize the firm's cooperative business model. IWDC's new logo still contains a diamond shape to bridge the old logo, but it is now more open. Its pattern conveys both forward movement and separate components coming together to form a whole. IWDC's Members are strongly independent, but they recognize the power unlocked as they give up a bit of independence to collaborate on platforms benefiting the wider cooperative. The words "Independent. Cooperative." were added right below the logo to emphasize this very point.



IWDC headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana.

To understand drivers behind IWDC's website, branding and programs, one has to look no further than key industry trends.

Margin Compression — On resale items, IWDC sources some lower cost products directly from overseas manufacturers and runs a warehouse primarily supporting Members' owned Weldmark brand. Both activities improve margin by retaining profit mark-up from IWDC to Member, ultimately paid back to participating Members as a component of patronage dividends.

Distributor Consolidation — IWDC's strategic vendor management program, involving approximately 200 vendor agreements, leverages Members' aggregate requirements to even the playing field against nationals that are consolidating. This program also frees up Members' purchasing personnel to focus on more strategic spend areas.

Gas Supplier Consolidation — IWDC's gas program develops sourcing strategies to help secure economical supply of atmospherics, CO₂, fuel gases and specialty gases for its membership

Gas Suppliers Competing for Specialty Gases — IWDC's PurityPlus program is an exclusive set of capabilities aimed at strengthening Members' specialty gas business while providing access to a growing end-user valued national brand.

Pressure to Improve Productivity — IWDC's annual meetings are designed around networking and best practice exchanges about business processes and productivity. IWDC sponsored training provides access to industry experts and is another venue for networking and best practice exchanges

IWDC, working closely with vendor partners, continues to enhance programs and is actively shaping new offerings to drive even further value for its membership. In the last decade, IWDC has delivered well over \$50 million in patronage dividends to its ownership and is working aggressively to build on that track record. 