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# Preface

What are the Swiss proud of: fine chocolates, high-quality watches, or their long-standing hotel industry? The latter owes its success to characteristics that the Swiss frequently claim for themselves. We can pass over this collective pride with a smile – it is certainly gratifying, particularly when it also reminds us of the obligations that accompany the prerequisites for success. One special example of this is Switzerland's beautiful alpine landscape, which is at the very heart of the holiday hotel industry and must, without question, be preserved. The location in Central Europe is also «typically Swiss,» as are the Swiss Alpine passes which originally necessitated a hotel industry and symbolised our openness. In this sense, the fact that many achievements cannot be ascribed to the Swiss alone is also typically Swiss. For example, alpinism in Switzerland, winter tourism in the Engadine and the origins of Badrutt's Palace Hotel: all benefited from foreign influences. This openness has always been a Swiss recipe for success, even if there have also been reverse trends.

However, favourable conditions alone do not suffice to create something new – something that today we would describe as «innovative.» To achieve innovation, the ideas and work of an imaginative pioneer must be added – a pioneer who identifies new opportunities and knows how to meet the challenges head on. Johannes Badrutt, and the following generations, succeeded in developing and implementing a new idea thanks to a mixture of perseverance and flex-

ibility. This means that the idea may have been put into practice differently by the following generations, who adjusted it according to the times, but they never lost sight of or betrayed the basic premise. On the contrary: they persistently confirm and consolidate it.

## **The secret of the Badrutts' success**

What was the idea of the pioneering Badrutt family, and why is it still successful? There is no simple answer to this question, but the story of Johannes Badrutt's legendary bet on the charm of the winter season in 1864 provides an indication. On the one hand, it demonstrates the self-confidence that is an indispensable prerequisite for this pioneer's willingness to take risks and, ultimately, succeed. On the other hand, the gamble points to something else – what we nowadays so profanely call «product» which was, in the case of Badrutt's Palace Hotel, something special, emotional and genuine from the very beginning. This unique product was initially simply a «winter in the Engadine» – not for everyone, but for all those able to enjoy its charms – it gradually became «winter at Badrutt's Palace Hotel in the Engadine.»

From the very beginning, being special was part of the self-perception of the Badrutts and their hotel, and they trusted that enough guests – special guests – would appreciate this. Then, as luck would have it, an ever-increasing number of Palace guests shared in the delight of winter holidays in the Engadine. Thanks to their proficiency, the Badrutts knew how to

make their guests' stay a delight of the more sophisticated kind. It is self-evident that high-quality performance and constant investment are required, even if only as a prerequisite for, and certainly not as a guarantee of, success. From the very beginning, many human emotions were involved, and to this day they have never been stifled by the routine, sometimes almost robotic, friendliness that we know from certain large hotels. Instead, over the years, an almost club-like bond and frequent friendships developed between the Badrutts and their long-standing employees and guests of the Palace.

From the outset, a level of distinctiveness created this bond, and continues to do so to this day. It is a responsibility for the Badrutt family, the management and all employees. Besides the self-evident high-quality performance mentioned earlier, this responsibility consists of an awareness of their own very special culture, being proud of it and cultivating it without becoming presumptuous, and always being aware that it is ultimately the guests who account for the Badrutt's Palace Hotel's distinctive culture. Cultivated distinction must never deteriorate into

arrogance, but should mean tolerance for the personalities of the guests, who are all perceived as special. Accordingly, genuinely expressed gratitude to the guests is also part of the Badrutt's Palace Hotel culture and, just as significant, gratitude to its employees. The fact that two-thirds of the guests come time and again, many of them throughout their lives, proves that this perception is correct.

### **The importance of authenticity**

This volume on the pioneering Badrutt family is also an honour and a delight for Badrutt's Palace Hotel AG. Just as a luxury hotel – and Badrutt's Palace Hotel is such a hotel – is pleased that there are other luxury hotels in Switzerland as well as in St. Moritz, we hope that the Association for Historical Research in Economics will publish further volumes on famous Swiss hotelier families. I dare to predict that these books will also demonstrate the importance of the distinctive, the emotional and the authentic.

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