

# Focus

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FOCUS.

Straight out of a fairytale: mountain road through Beverin  
Nature Park in the Safien valley (Graubünden).  
© Renato Bagatini

## ST responds with a Switzerland offensive...

**The Swiss National Bank's decision to abandon the euro peg in January 2015 rocked the country's tourism industry. In response, ST forged even closer partnerships with our regions to launch a whole catalogue of measures. This resulted in 222,000 overnight hotel bookings – so ST counts its response a success.**

Significant revenue losses were expected when the euro peg was scrapped, particularly at Alpine destinations which have always had high European bookings and fewer long-haul ones. In a campaign

to stabilise the situation, ST stood shoulder-to-shoulder with its tourism partners. In an unprecedented move, ST teamed up with most of the tourist regions, Swiss Railways, SWISS and Swiss Travel System to generate additional marketing worth around CHF 3.4 million.

The central plank of this campaign was the Switzerland offensive. Swiss celebrities such as Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, singer Bastian Baker and ex Miss Switzerland Christa Rigozzi shared their most memorable Swiss experiences, under the slogan #INLOVEWITHSWITZERLAND using their enthusiasm to inspire readers to book a Swiss holiday. These contributions were used in advertorials in major media titles, and accompanied by attractive special offers.



Adverts, special offers and advertorials: at the heart of the Switzerland offensive are VIPs such as Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann and ex Miss Switzerland Christa Rigozzi.

### Facts and figures.

Additional promotion		2015
Investments impulse	CHF m	3.4
Additionally generated overnights		222,000
Additionally generated revenue	CHF m	55.4
Marketing efficiency		16.5



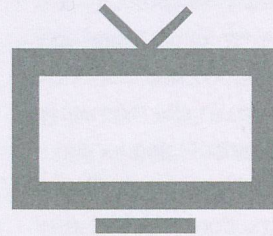
## ...and redouble efforts in promising foreign markets.

For our charm offensive on long-haul markets, ST pulled out all the stops to drum up over 167,000 extra overnight hotel bookings from the US, India and Southeast Asia. This was complemented by targeted advertising to high earners in Europe. By plugging SWISS's new direct flights to the Baltic, Scandinavia and southeastern Europe

to 180 selected travel agencies and tour operators, 500 opinion-formers and 100 media representatives, it influenced over 18,000 overnight hotel bookings. Additionally, ST produced a one-off Switzerland pull-out for "Svenska Dagbladet", a major Swedish daily newspaper, which resulted in around 4.5 million contacts.



Whetting Swedes' appetites with a monothematic Swiss magazine.

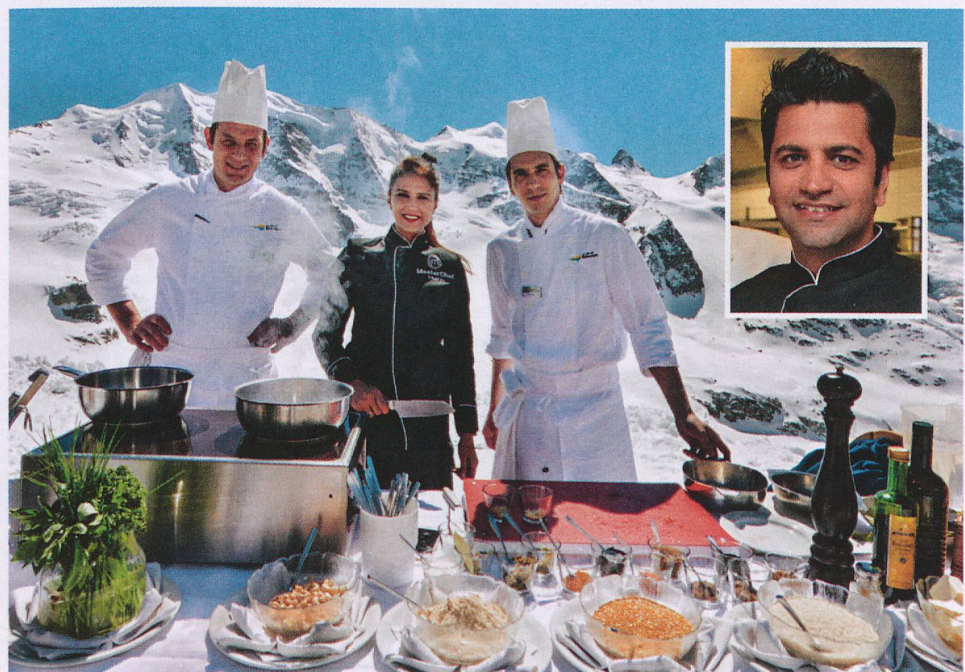


71,413,500

### Over 71 million marketing contacts

The success of the Grand Tour of Switzerland launch in India, and the partnership with travel agents Cox & Kings, won ST an eye-watering 71,413,500 marketing contacts via print media, social media, TV and radio spots.

One of our stunts for the charm offensive in the Indian market. Cookery shows are all the rage in India, as they are worldwide. In partnership with travel agents Cox & Kings, MasterChef India host and judge Kunal Kapur (inset) and Shipra Khanna (centre), winner of MasterChef India season 2, dished up Swiss and Indian specialities to promote the Grand Tour of Switzerland. Here, Shipra visits the Berghaus Diavolezza (Graubünden) with chef Lino Valmadre (left) and cook Tiago Funina.



## Focus market North America.

**Since 2012, Swiss hotel bookings from US and Canadian guests have increased year-on-year. This year, ST redoubled its North American efforts.**

With around 12% more guests (216,236 hotel overnights) than three years ago, the North American market is growing in Switzerland. The sectors which benefit most from this market are leisure travel, Alpine destinations, smaller cities and towns, and our four- and five-star hotels. US travel associations Virtuoso and Signature expect this trend to continue, and major trend-research institutions are also talking about the potential for luxury travel and destinations such as Switzerland. ST has responded to this welcome news by boosting its marketing resources for the USA and Canada. Going forwards, this will be largely geared towards the life-style traveller, nature lover, attractions tourer and outdoor enthusiast traveller-types.

### Facts and figures.

#### North America

Overnights 2015	m	1.97
Change compared with 2014	%	5.2
Media reports generated		918
Visits to MySwitzerland.com	m	1.82
Advertising & marketing contacts	m	132.13
High-value customer contacts		488,333

Two questions for Alex Herrmann, head ST North America.



#### **How would you explain this Swiss renaissance in the USA?**

Switzerland is in an excellent position as an add-on destination for river cruise passengers, and also as an active travel destination. The strongest growth for this type of travel is in the USA. The robustness of the US economy and strength of the dollar against the franc also help.

#### **Why do Americans tend to go for the four- and five-star segment?**

US visitors have high expectations of hospitality and quality of service, and the top two categories of hotels are the best at providing that. We are focusing on higher-spending market segments in the US, as this is where the above-average growth has come from in recent years.

*“With American guests, the knack is to anticipate their wishes before they ask.”*

Alex Herrmann, head ST North America



Spiritual home of the traveller: 50 clickable highlights of the Grand Tour of Switzerland on the “National Geographic” website.

#### **“National Geographic” homes in on Switzerland**

Across North America, it is “National Geographic” which opens windows on a world of discovery. From late March to late May, subscribers saw impressive visual presentations of Swiss themes in this world-leading travel magazine, and on their website and Facebook page. Supported by ST, “National Geographic” focused heavily on the Grand Tour of Switzerland with exclusive coverage for their readers. The magazine also created an interactive Grand Tour map, dotting it with 50 Swiss highlights. ST’s collaboration with “National Geographic” led to around 15 million unique marketing contacts, ensuring a strong, long-term effect.

## Focus market France.

**ST succeeded in stemming the decline in French tourists and attracted potential new French visitors by appealing to their key interests.**

Among Switzerland's major traditional European markets, France forms a relatively small share of the overall decrease, with a drop of 83,435 hotel overnights (-6.2%). It's also worth noting that the French have proven to be less price-sensitive in their reactions than visitors from other European markets.

Targeting these Cultural Travellers by advertising the Swiss cities seems to have paid off. Also popular are Switzerland's UNESCO World Heritage properties and touring experiences. Additionally, the Meetings Department has reported a successful outcome: despite the strong franc, with 49 seminars and congresses booked by French companies in 2015, almost as many as the previous year (54).

### Facts and figures.

France		
Overnights 2015	m	1.25
Change compared with 2014	%	-6.2
Media reports generated		528
Visits to MySwitzerland.com	m	1.83
Advertising & marketing contacts	m	622.15
High-value customer contacts		278,144



Greatly exceeding expectations: joint initiative with Valais and "Courier international".

Two questions to Gilles Dind, country manager ST France and head Europe West.



### **So why are the French less price-sensitive than other Europeans?**

Their proximity to Switzerland and the ease of reaching us is a big part of the answer. Most of our French visitors are either Parisians or come from the Franco-Swiss border regions. SNCF's attractive TGV ticket prices mean that we can count on a high number of regular repeat visitors, which is very much appreciated in the current economic situation.

### **What particularly appeals to the French about Switzerland?**

Their greatest love is for our culture and history. Besides that, they are keen on contemporary art, exhibitions and music — and these are all areas where Switzerland is world-class.

*“French visitors find our art and culture especially appealing.”*

Gilles Dind, country manager ST France and head Europe West

### **Wanted: citizen journalist with a passion for Valais**

A million people read the French weekly "Courier international"; 1.2 million visit its website each month and the magazine also has 700,000 social network followers. So ST had high expectations when it joined forces for a readers' competition to visit the canton of Valais. Via a major video campaign, the "Courier international" selected a winner who won a road trip through the Valais with a reporter to create a selection of travel videos and print articles. This initiative netted over 13.5 million unique visitors in total.



Their fourth time on the pedestal thanks to the Swiss Snow Report app: Markus Ditti (ST), Roland Inderbitzin (ST), Felix Lamouroux (iosphere), Philipp Herzig (ST), Thomas Winkler (ST) and Sebastian Hagedorn (iosphere).

## ST wins major awards.

The MILESTONE award, the Golden Dolphin and the Telly Award... ST looks back with pleasure on a year full of recognition.

- At the Best of Swiss Apps 2015 in Switzerland itself, ST was awarded two silvers and two bronzes for their Swiss Snow Report app, winning plaudits for the clarity of the app's structure and its contemporary design.
- ST Southeast Asia was given the Most Valuable Partner award by Trafalgar, one of the largest global tour operators, testament to their confidence in the brand.
- The TV promo "Time" won ST the coveted Golden Dolphin at the sixth annual Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards, in a record-breaking candidate field of 772 promotional films. ST could not be more grateful!

### Other awards

- **Best of Swiss Web 2015, Switzerland:** two bronze medals for the "Winterfinder" interactive search engine in the Online Marketing and Public Affairs category
- **MILESTONE Award 2015, Switzerland:** second place for the Grand Tour of Switzerland in the Challenging Projects category
- **Telly Award, USA:** award for the documentary "Real Rail Adventures: Switzerland"
- **Best Sales Office 2015, Germany:** first place for Switzerland
- **Grand Prix CIFFT, Austria:** award for the "Time" TV promo
- **Best FIT Tour Destination, China:** award at the World Travel Fair 2015 in Shanghai



The coveted Golden Dolphin was won by ST for its "Time" TV spot.



ST feted as Most Valuable Partner: Mae Chea (Trafalgar), Ivan Breiter (ST SE Asia), Brett Tollman (The Travel Corporation).

## Outlook.



On the Grand Tour of Switzerland: a stunning view of Lake Lucerne against a backdrop of Mount Mythen.

### New market situation – the same strong hand to play.

There's no denying it: the strength of the franc has hit the Swiss tourism industry hard. The dip in exchange rates since 2010 has been a shock, and priced many Eurozone tourists out of the country, which has in turn affected the international composition of our visitor base. But the industry has realised that a new market reality has arisen, and with it, new opportunities which must be seized this year. Switzerland has the potential to be a strong brand in key markets in Asia, and has an excellent foundation for future growth there. The concept of Swiss boutique towns, a direct response to the city-break boom, is perfect for business tourism, and presents long-haul visitors with the ideal solution for combining town and countryside. Yet the trump card is the same as ever: the unforgettable experience that is Switzerland.

### Emotional storytelling – technique of the moment.

In 2016, ST will be striking out on new paths, with content that focuses on key visitor segments and desires, and a newly appointed marketing team to match. They will be focusing more closely than ever on storytelling as a strategy. This is about presenting enriching content to the visitor in the form of experiences that resonate with guests at a credible, emotional level. Specific, authentic experiences put the price of such experiences in second place; instead, they motivate people, re-ignite their desire to travel, and ensure lasting memories.

*“Unique experiences mean people don't mind the relatively high cost.”*

Jürg Schmid, CEO Switzerland Tourism