

Zeitschrift: Annual Report / Switzerland Tourism
Herausgeber: Switzerland Tourism
Band: - (2016)

Artikel: The humour strategy
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-685623>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 15.04.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

The humour strategy

You might not expect the Swiss to be overflowing with humour. And yet those advertising tourism on behalf of the country have consistently reaped laughs since the 1950s, generating attention for Switzerland at the same time.

April 1957: eight million people were amazed by the masterful TV documentary on the “spaghetti harvest” in Morcote, Ticino, shown on the UK’s weekly news programme “Panorama”. BBC cameraman Charles de Jaeger showed, in all seriousness, farmers’ wives busily picking the ripe spaghetti from the trees, with the narration noting that, thanks to an extremely mild winter and successful Swiss breeding techniques, the pasta strands had all grown to exactly the same length. The SNTTO office in London provided considerable support to the filming. The strategy bore fruit – the humour paid off, and Switzerland was on everyone’s lips. In contrast to provocative campaigns, this humorous type of advertising engenders positive emotions, which can be associated with Switzerland as a holiday destination.

A flair for sophisticated jokes

Years later came the second prank: on 1 April 2009, a short TV piece went viral. It was a report on daring men and women who do everything possible to ensure that their country remains clean – which

is why they were seen devotedly scrubbing away at cliffs and mountaintops. ST Director Jürg Schmid himself lent the story even more credibility by launching it on the radio at 7 o’clock in the morning. Thousands wanted to get stuck in and scrub the Matterhorn and other peaks clean of dirt. The Swiss joke was viewed over 100 million times, and Time Magazine online nominated the April Fools’ Day prank as the fifth best in the world – at Spiegel online it even reached number one. And even better: the PR gag became a reality, in the form of cliff-cleaning courses.

A joyful heart. Again and again the SNTTO/Switzerland Tourism have produced advertising with its tongue firmly in its cheek. Other witty campaigns include:

- 1966: A jovial step for mankind – “Before you travel to the moon – travel to Switzerland” campaign.
- 2006: Mountain men, not football players – a call for football World Cup “widows” to discover real Swiss men.
- 2007: Hot snowmen – bare-chested ski instructors enjoy the winter sun.
- 2016: Bruno and the fantastic stuntman – to shoot the coolest selfies you need a cool stunt double.

1953

Swiss television began: the first studio was situated in a converted tennis hall.



1957

Beginnings of European unity (Treaty of Rome)



Launch of joint marketing of the Alpine region in the US (Alpine Tourist Commission ATC).

1958



"Spaghetti Harvest in Ticino" (1957), filmed by the BBC with the support of the SNTO in London.



Giving their all for a clean Switzerland:
the cliff cleaners on 1 April 2009.



BERGLUFT MACHT SCHLANK



Print und Gestaltung: Hubert Suter 1987. Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Bern. Für die Herstellung von C. Müller AG Zürich 1988.

© Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, Poster Collection @ ZHdK