



Switzerland Tourism

An evaluation of performance measurement, cooperation and satisfaction

Key facts

In the first half of 2003, the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) carried out an evaluation of Switzerland Tourism. The evaluation is intended to illustrate the way in which Switzerland Tourism measures its results and whether or not the causal connections described between its activities and the improvement in the situation in the tourist sector are appropriate. Furthermore, examinations were also carried out to see whether Switzerland Tourism coordinates its market image sufficiently together with the other organizations in the Confederation which have an interest in the image of the country. The question of whether the partners and other concerned or interested organizations and companies are happy with the services of Switzerland Tourism was examined in greater detail.

Main results

Satisfaction

With its 2002 budget of CHF 68.8 million, Switzerland Tourism offers a broad range of services and measures. Generally speaking the partners and members are very satisfied with the services of Switzerland Tourism, although their needs are diverse in nature. The work of Switzerland Tourism was overwhelmingly considered to be impressive, well thought out, professional and consistent in its execution. The diversity of the activities organised, together with their variety has allowed the "clients" of Switzerland Tourism to arrive at general agreement, and this in spite of greatly differing opinions in part concerning specialist questions. Switzerland Tourism is anxious to exclude as small a number of clients as possible. This means that Switzerland Tourism does not restrict its budget and strengths to key products.

Compared with tourism organizations in neighbouring countries, the contribution of the Confederation (CHF 41.6 million in 2002) to Switzerland Tourism is middling. Switzerland Tourism is developing momentum in generating additional funds from partners and "strategic partnerships" (CHF 21.5 million in 2002) in order to organise joint marketing activities and platforms. The joint activities and the pooling of related funds enables Switzerland Tourism to become better acquainted with and better understand the needs of its partners and members. Indeed not all regions and destinations have sufficient financial means at their disposal to participate in all activities and products which causes some frustration.

Coordinating efforts with organizations interested in the image of the country

Alongside Switzerland Tourism, the Confederation supports a number of other institutions which, within the scope of their work, represent Switzerland abroad and foster international exchange of experience. The legal mandate and the instruments employed by these organizations are admittedly diverse in nature. Generally speaking it can be said that Switzerland Tourism maintains good and appropriate cooperation with the important, internationally active organizations involved in the image building of Switzerland and that the market image is coordinated. The potential for possible savings through better coordination should not be overestimated. The different organizations operate either directly from Switzerland or from agencies/subsidiaries. There are few countries in which organizations are represented in parallel with their own offices (disregarding the representations of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs [DFA]). Their clients and the measures adopted are very different. Coordination is mainly necessary when the organizations and institutions conduct joint non-commercial measures aimed at promoting Switzerland's image. It is from this perspective that "Presence Switzerland" was founded.

Evaluating the success of the measures

Switzerland Tourism makes considerable efforts in order to evaluate the numerous measures that it implements in Switzerland and abroad with the assistance of its fourteen overseas representations (contracts with tour operators, contacts with journalists, press releases, brochures) and at head office (developing marketing concepts and product administration). In the meantime it is difficult to get a clear idea of the most important products and their development during the last ten years in light of Switzerland Tourism's priorities.

In terms of the effect it has, Switzerland Tourism goes to considerable lengths to put a figure on its contacts. By that it refers to the number of individuals that can be reached through Switzerland Tourism activities (e.g. the number of readers likely to see an advertisement). In accordance with the Switzerland Tourism 2002 annual report, this resulted in 5.438 billion contacts at a global level. Switzerland Tourism also attempts to measure the actual results, i.e. to determine the number of tourists who visited Switzerland due to the measures it undertook (3.54 million overnight bookings). If it has to be admitted that arriving at these figures is complicated, then it should also be admitted that the final figures seem to be unreliable.

- Tourists who booked a trip within the scope of a contract between agencies abroad and tour operators (including Switzerland Destination Management AG), are registered as "directly influenced overnight bookings", in spite of the fact that the results of this type of contract are difficult to monitor. Tourists, who would have come to Switzerland anyway are also included in this figure.
- On the basis of an extrapolation, 1.2 million overnight stays were reported as a result of the 2001 winter campaign. The data forming the basis for this extrapolation is in actual fact far too small to support this figure. In addition, inconsistencies were found in the way the effects of the winter campaign were reported in the figures for the Annual Report 2001.

In the run-up to summer 2003, and for the duration of this evaluation an internal working group was established (headed by the director, not including representatives from the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs [seco]), in order to justify afresh the "working model and the operating figures for Switzerland Tourism".

Conclusion

Switzerland Tourism leaves the SFAO with an impression of an organisation which is forward-looking and focussed. To a large extent, it is geared towards realising future marketing measures. In view of the significance of the financial contribution of the Confederation to Switzerland Tourism, the diverse nature of the products and the needs of the partners and members and the joint campaigns, reporting of activities can be structured in a more extensive and transparent way. Amongst other things, the recommendations of the SFAO refer to this aspect.

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