Experiences of a Swiss Thermal Business Auditor

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Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts

School of Engineering and Architecture

School of Information Technology

School of Art and Design

School of Business (incl. Institute of Tourism)

School of Social Work

School of Music
Institute of Tourism ITW

Core topics in tourism:
- destination management
- online marketing in tourism
  - sport tourism
- tourism and sustainable development
- Health and wellness tourism
Health and wellness tourism at ITW
The actors in the auditing process

- Association of the Swiss Thermal Baths and Health Resorts
- Swiss Tourism Federation (label “Wellness Destination”)
- Thermal businesses and destinations

Organizations
What are the goals of facility auditing?

a) Customer expectations = The reality on-site

b) An external viewpoint = A possibility for optimisation
Who benefits from the auditing process?

- **Organizations**: Association of the Swiss Thermal Baths and Health Resorts
- **Auditor(s)**
- **Thermal businesses and destinations**

WIN! WIN! WIN!
The label “Wellness Destination”

The whole place is dedicated to wellness

Infrastructure

Features of the destination

Services

Strategy
Auditing process of the wellness destinations – results and comments

- Most of the destinations see wellness and thermal water as **addition** and not their main offer

- **Unclear positioning in the wellness market** through thermal water, culture, natural features, thermal bath / wellness facilities

- **Networking** between the stakeholders in the destination could be improved

- A gap between the **stakeholders** in the destination and their **guests** when it comes to success factors
Auditing process of the wellness destinations – results and comments

Reasons which prevent guests from recognizing a destination as health and wellbeing destination:

- Lack of medical services/infrastructure: 15
- Lack of wellness and spa services / infrastructure: 14
- Others, such as lack of overall concept: 11
- Sprawling cities, villages and industrial areas: 8
- No medical staff available: 8
- Outdated health-promoting facilities: 6
- Bad quality of services, such as signage: 6
- Lack of natural environment: 4
- Too many disturbing industries: 3
- Too many tourists: 2
- Too expensive: 2
- Too much traffic: 2

What stakeholders believe that guests think

- Too much traffic: 217
- Too much disturbing industries: 209
- Too many tourists: 191
- Too expensive: 187
- Bad quality of services in general (e.g. signage): 170
- Lack of natural environment: 168
- Lacking wellness and spa facilities: 149
- Outdated health-promoting facilities (e.g. old): 140
- Inadequately skilled medical staff: 86
- Lacking medical services/facilities: 83
- Sprawling cities, villages, and traffic: 72
- Other: 48

What guests actually think

Positioning - examples from practice

Bad Ragaz

Natural resources

Thermal water

Grand Resort Bad Ragaz

Pictures from https://www.resortragaz.ch/
Positioning - examples from practice

Destination X

- Rich / luxury
- Events
- Car-free village center
Association of the Swiss Thermal Baths and Health Resorts

Thermal baths – rehabilitation – cure - prevention

Infrastructure

Medical aspects

Services and treatments

Accommodation and hospitality
Auditing process of the thermal and cure businesses – results and comments

- **Broad positioning:** little bit of everything for everyone → no business can offer all kind of treatments in a good quality

- Dealing with the **health insurance companies**

- Hotel staff or managers do **not** always know the **needs of their own customers / their own offer**

- **Differences** between what is published on the brochures or internet pages and what the business actually offers
Positioning - examples from practice

Sunnehus in Wildhaus

Psychosomatic and mental diseases

Burnout

Pictures from https://sunnehus.ch/
Positioning - examples from practice

Business X in Eastern Switzerland

**Therapeutic offers:** acupuncture, breathing therapy, electrotherapy, endurance training, fango, gymnastics, hayflowers, lymphatic drainage, medicinal massages, medical training therapy, movement therapy, physiotherapy, reflex zones massage, Traditional Chinese Medicine, ultrasonic therapy, water gymnastics, etc.
Conclusion

orientation for guests / a tool for development for destinations and businesses

Market success = profiling, focusing, quality, knowledge of the guests’ needs
Conclusion

Success factors of thermal businesses and destinations:

- Credible, convincing overall offer
- Location
- Region / destination
- Resources / substance
- Employees
- Regular guests
- Guests
- Atmosphere
- Offers
- Employees
- Competition
- Marketing
- Processes
- Quality management
- Cooperation
- Demand / guests
- Location
Thank you!

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