

INTERVIEW | RAYOMAND CHOKSI

Regional Sales Director, Titlis Cableways and Hotels

You can't miss out on Mt Titlis

We see that Mt Titlis is the most popular mountain excursion in all of Switzerland. What makes it so special? I guess this calls for an elaborate answer because the reasons are many. Firstly, our USP is the location, right in the heart of Switzerland, with ease of accessibility. Then, of course, is the guaranteed ice and snow 365 days of the year. With these two huge natural benefits we have developed the excursion giving an opportunity to visitors in summer and winter to have an experience which shall forever be part of their memories. Just the way up, with the revolving Rotair, is so unique that it makes for a great start to what lies ahead.

Besides the unique way up that you mention, what else can one do in the Indian summer?

From end of April to early July we have a lot of Indian visitors who can be divided into leisure and MICE groups and FITs. In this season we offer the Ice-Flyer, an open chair lift which is a 3 minute ride over the glacier crevasses to the Glacier Park. There we have various snow sliding equipment which one can use for as long as one wants because all these activities are free of cost. Then you have the opportunity to walk 100 heartstopping metres on Europe's highest suspension bridge, the Titlis Cliff Walk. A journey through a 120-metre-long tunnel of ice in the Glacier Cave will surely excite you.

And one can round it off with a sumptuous Indian lunch that we offer along with local specialities.

Is the Indian season very strong only in these months? What can one do

during winter?

The Indian season has developed a very strong shoulder season. So we have early arrivals in February and the end season arrivals till the Diwali holidays. We do have some clients in winter too, a few leisure groups, some MICE groups and a decent number of FITs including honeymooners.

Winter is very strong with skiers and snowboarders but we have conceptualised a special experience for our winter visitors. Besides the above attractions, which are offered all year round, in winter one can try the "My First SnowXperience" in which you get to wear skis and gently slide down a small slope, try out the electric SnowXbikes and finally visit our igloo hotel. This is around the frozen lake of Truebsee which is halfway up the mountain.

Engelberg seems to have almost all its hotel capacity occupied by Indians. What makes the village so special?

There may be no better place in Switzerland to enjoy an overnight stay in a typical Swiss mountain village than Engelberg. Here you stay amongst alpine meadows with little streams running through, the sound of cow bells, the fantastic mountain views with snow-capped peaks and most importantly the invigorating fresh air. The hoteliers are very welcoming to Indian visitors and understand their needs. For example, the Terrace Hotel, besides the Indian dinner, offer a welcome Indian tea and a Bollywood disco 4 times a week. We have in Engelberg a hotel with Indian chefs which lets out its banquet area even to groups staying in other hotels. An Indian restaurant with a pick-up service

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INTERVIEW | WERNEER LUOND, Sales & Marketing Director, Lake Lucerne Navigation Company

Indians are most welcome

The Lake Lucerne Navigation Company has been active in the Indian market for a few years now. How did this story start?

The story started in 2015, with the introduction of a new product, especially created for the Indian market. It was the Indian Dinner Cruise, which we are offering for the fourth year this season. We felt that we have a lot of Indian guests in the Lake Lucerne area, but we had no product which fitted their needs exactly, especially when it came to the food aspect. Last year, we were really happy to have around 70 guests on board each Indian Dinner Cruise. With the launch of the Indian Dinner Cruise, we started investing our efforts and time in what Indian travellers truly want.

What are your future plans for the Indian market?

India will be a key market for Lake Lucerne Navigation Company in the future. No questions about that. We will focus more and more on FITs (free individual travellers) as we feel a steady increase in demand from that segment. We are thinking about another new product; maybe with some traditional Swiss folklore show on an evening cruise. One big advantage is that our company is part of the Swiss Travel System. That means that all our scheduled cruises are free with a Swiss Travel Pass, 365 days a year. The Swiss Travel Pass is your all-in-one ticket to travel by rail, road and waterway in the whole of Switzerland.

How does India perform vis-à-vis the other international markets?

We are seeing a constant growth from India

in the past few years. In 2017 alone, we saw 25% growth in Switzerland. I see no reason why it shouldn't continue to be so in the next couple of years. Unfortunately, we haven't had the same success, particularly from Europe, in the recent past due to currency reasons. The Swiss franc and the Euro have devaluated too much. But other Asian markets, especially China, have shown very healthy growth too.

How have your product offerings been enhanced over the years?

We started the Indian Dinner Cruise with just two departures a week. Because of the high demand, we offer now in May and June a cruise nearly every evening. And it's the same with the 1-hour cruise on our panoramic yacht Saphir. In the past, we started the season in April and it ended in October. Now, we provide this popular 1-h-cruise the whole year. Last year, we launched a new boat: MS Diamond. The cruiser's modern interior provides the "wow" factor and the restaurant area has banquet seating for more than 400 diners. These aspects combined make the new boat an ideal venue for large events in a one-of-a-kind location as well as an interesting and comfortable vessel on regular timetable cruises.

And we will be launching a new boat, a catamaran, at the end of May 2018. With this boat, we will connect the city of Lucerne with the new Bürgenstock Resort by boat and funicular in half an hour, with hourly departures from Lucerne. The Bürgenstock, a mountain on the shore-

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INTERVIEW | STEFAN PFISTER, Head of International Sales, Zentralbahn

An Alpine journey to cherish

The Zentralbahn is part of the regular rail network. What makes it so special?

Yes, we belong to the Swiss National rail network. But our two lines, Luzern-Interlaken and Lucerne-Engelberg, are different. Every day business people, leisure Swiss travellers and international tourists travel on our trains. This route has the highest density of mixed clients traveling for work or on vacation. We carry our passengers from downtown Lucerne directly to the most important travel destinations in the Swiss Alps. Our train journey is definitely more of a unique panoramic experience compared with a normal commuter railway connection between two cities.

Congratulations on becoming the 5th official panoramic route of Switzerland – what's so special about this route?

On this almost two-hour superlative ride, our guests get to see five crystal-clear lakes, Switzerland's snow-capped mountains and magnificent waterfalls.

Travellers also cross the Brünig Pass while relaxing in the comfort of our modern trains and enjoying the fantastic Alpine panorama. The uniqueness of the Lucerne-Interlaken route is that it is the only official Panoramic Train Route which operates on an hourly basis and for which no prior reservations are needed for FITs, only for groups. So you are not time-bound with fixed reservations and are free to explore the highlights on both sides of the route to your heart's content.

What product enhancements have you put in place over the last 3 years and what is your plan for fu-

ture upgrades?

Through the "Zentralbahn Live Guide" App Indian travellers will learn a great deal about the most interesting sights this area has to offer and using the built-in map can find out at any given moment where they are on their journey and where to expect the next highlights.

"Zentralbahn Bistro Order" App: From every single seat in our train you can order drinks and food with our new "Bistro Order" App. Our Bistro staff will serve the order directly at the passenger's seat.

We are working on some more innovations for 2019 which will be announced soon.

Is there something special that you are planning for Indians? What have you done on this front in the past?

We always urge them to enjoy the Indian cuisine on Mount Titlis. We give them the most friendly welcome in English language and make sure they feel comfortable. In the past we have organised a free Indian welcome tea at Engelberg station for our Indian guests (Luzern-Engelberg Express) which was surely a very pleasant surprise to them.

How do plan to make your product more popular in the Indian market?

We do work together with different Swiss partners such as Titlis Cableways, Switzerland Tourism and the Swiss Travel System. This allows us to increase the brand awareness. Together with the Swiss Travel System, we specially promote the Swiss Travel Pass in the Indian market. And of course the different travel agencies and tour operators are very important for us. They talk

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INTERVIEW | ANDRE KUETTEL

Marketing & Sales, Swiss Museum of Transport

A rich array of attractions

Switzerland and museums do not sound synonymous. Please elaborate what the Swiss Museum of Transport is all about

1100 museums in Switzerland report 20 million visits a year. The Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne is the most-visited museum of Switzerland and known worldwide. Visitors experience road, rail, water and air mobility, and, even space travel. Many interactive and entertaining attractions indoors and outdoors are open for discovery.

Switzerland's largest cinema screen in the Filmtheater presents documentary films in XXL format. Meanwhile, the country's largest, most modern Planetarium offers 360-degree flights to the edge of the universe. The MediaWorld is where you'll unearth new communication trends and on a ride at the Swiss ChocolateAdventure visitors learn about Swiss chocolate making.

What made you decide that India would be a potential market for the museum?

Lucerne and the Mount Titlis are well known destinations for Indian tourists. But many of them do not know the Swiss Museum of Transport yet. We would like to attract more groups and individual travellers for a one day or half day visit. The ride at the Swiss Chocolate Adventure and a visit

or guided tour at the museum is an excellent combination and a great experience for groups.

So what would the strategy be for marketing and selling this product?

We have opted for a multi-channel strategy. Our promoters and sales partners are Swiss Tourism, representatives, tour operators and travel companies. We are also present at various international trade and travel fairs and this enlarges our network.

The Swiss Travel Pass includes a lot of museums. Is there any reason why the Swiss Museum of Transport is not? Any special offers?

The Swiss Museum of Transport is just not a pure museum. We offer interactive experiences and hence we could almost qualify as a theme park. Holders of a Swiss Travel Pass get a 50 percent discount on the museum ticket. For groups we offer special prices.

As yours is a unique experience, what special arrangements have you made for the MICE segment?

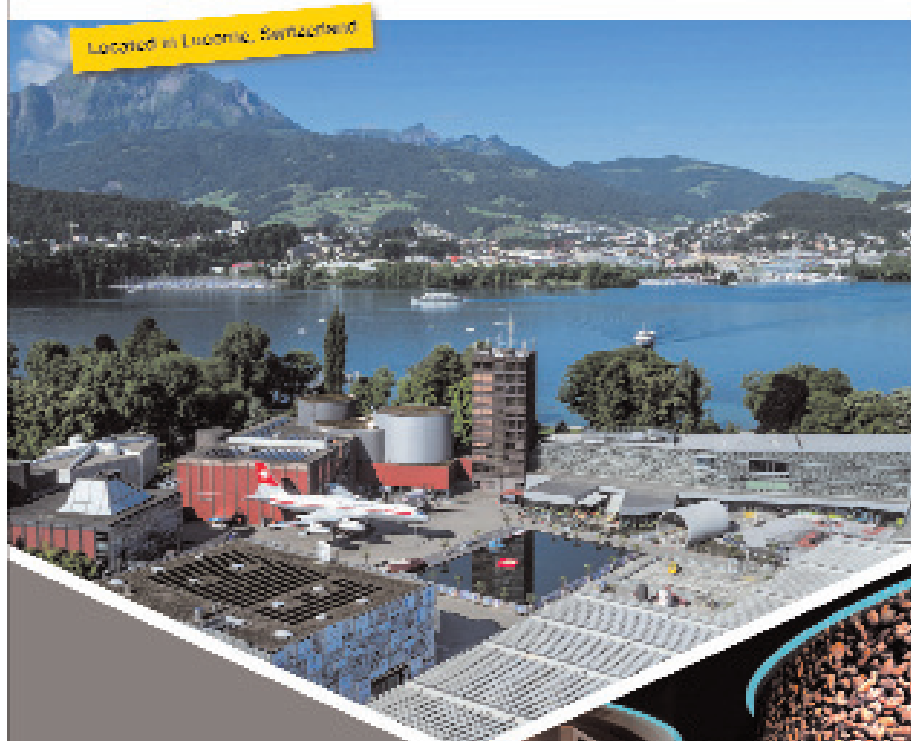
Our customised experiences are manifold. Start your event at the Filmtheater, dine in the aviation hall and watch a show at the Planetarium afterwards. Our con-

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verkehrshaus.ch

Swiss Museum of Transport

Located in Lucerne, Switzerland



SWISS MUSEUM OF TRANSPORT

At the most popular museum in Switzerland you discover interactive and varied the development of the mobility: on road, rail and water as well as in the air and in space. Other unique attractions include the Planetarium, the Filmtheatre, the Media World and the Swiss Chocolate Adventure.

OPENING TIMES (Open daily)

Wintertime 10 am to 5 pm

Summertime 10 am to 6 pm

Swiss Museum of Transport

Universitätsstrasse 5

CH-6006 Lucerne

www.verkehrshaus.ch/en

SWISS CHOCOLATE ADVENTURE

Feeling, hearing, tasting: this multimedia ride is a discovery and appeals to all the senses.

Swiss Museum of Transport


Universitätsstrasse 5

CH-6006 Lucerne


www.swiss-chocolate-adventure.com

Open to discoverers.

Luzern-Interlaken Express

 Die Zentralbahn.


Travel by Train!





Luzern-Interlaken Express (a section of the GoldenPass Linie).

Come aboard for an unforgettable scenic travel experience on the 5th premium panoramic train of Switzerland!


www.zentralbahn.ch/en/panorama


Bistro

Bistro Order App

Live Guide App

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*  (READ. ENGAGE. DELIVER.) IS THE MARKETING SOLUTIONS TEAM OF THE INDIAN EXPRESS GROUP



A rich array of attractions

ference facilities located next to the lake in a beautiful surrounding have a capacity of up to 600 people. There is even the possibility of bringing your own Indian food caterer for these groups.

Looking at the glass bowl, how do you the future of tourist arrivals, especially from India, to this attraction?

Swiss Tourism is actually campaigning with Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh. I am sure

this will have an impact on a growing number of Indian tourists travelling to Switzerland. We are ready to welcome them at the museum and show them the world of mobility. Ranveer had a great time and so shall all the Indians who visit us.

Anything else you would like to add?

A visit to the Swiss Museum of Transport is a must if you visit beautiful Switzerland. Put it on your bucket list.

Indians are most welcome

line of Lake Lucerne and in front of Lucerne, has three luxury hotels, a Healthy Living Centre, Residence Suites with hotel service, business facilities, the Bürgenstock Alpine Spa as well as numerous restaurants and bars, all set in a breath-taking mountain landscape.

What are the long term goals of your company in India?

I think that the Indian business will have continuous growth in the next few years and more clients can be expected in the Lake Lucerne region. We want to be a part of this growth. So, we have already extended the timetable for our one-hour cruise to winter and we provide a whole-year experience with this cruise. We are also seeing more and more requests for charter cruises and hope to get more bookings in the future.

All in all, we have extended the timetable of the scheduled cruises to winter. We now have several departures every hour from Lucerne also in the low season.

Last year at the same time outbound tourism was supposedly in a crisis with the demonetisation and service tax issues. That passed with a very good year for outbound travel. Seeing no such uncertainty this year what is your forecast for the Indian business?

I'm looking forward to another good year. The signs we are getting from the market are quite positive. With our various products, the new catamaran, which would connect Lucerne with the Bürgenstock Resort and the event boat MS Diamond, we are ready for the higher demand we expect from the Indian market.

An Alpine journey to cherish

to the end consumer.

Are there any expansion plans for the Zentralbahn network? If so, please elaborate.

We do plan to buy some new rolling stock in the next few years. The goal is to have more capacity for our travellers and more co-ordinated schedules.

What is your feeling about growth in the Indian market?

In our trains we see every day warm-hearted and happy Indian people!

The Indian market is very important for our company. We do very much like the stable growth in the number of Indian travellers in the last years, especially as they fit very well with our other passengers.

ABOUT LUZERN-INTERLAKEN EXPRESS



Serving you since 1888, we elegantly carry tourists from downtown Lucerne directly to the most important travel destinations in the Swiss Alps. Indian guests are guaranteed an unforgettable train journey right through the heart of Switzerland.

PREMIUM PANORAMIC JOURNEY: Five crystal clear lakes, Switzerland's snow-capped mountains and magnificent waterfalls — On this almost two-hour superlative ride (a section of the GoldenPass Line), the Indian guests will cross Brüning Pass while relaxing in the comfort of our modern trains and enjoying the fantastic Alpine panorama.

SECTION OF THE GOLDENPASS LINE (MONTREUX–GSTAAD–INTERLAKEN–LUCERNE): This extraordinary line featuring three different trains has it all: a panoramic view of Switzerland's most beautiful landscapes, and a spectacular journey across three mountain passes and along famous 12,000-foot peaks, and eight lakes as well as various waterfalls and rivers.

The Luzern-Interlaken Express is a section of the famous GoldenPass Line connecting Lucerne and Montreux, which in turn also forms a part of the Grand Train Tour of Switzerland.

PART OF THE GRAND TRAIN TOUR OF SWITZERLAND: This is a great experience for train aficionados of any age, offering travellers varied excitement. Anyone interested in experiencing our Alpine nation in one go is in for an unforgettable ride. Where else than on the Grand Train Tour of Switzerland can you enjoy 1280 kilometres of Switzerland's most beautiful panoramic views in a single comprehensive package? This exciting journey will take you across towns both large and small, over mountains and along glaciers, lakes and rivers as well as through areas where two languages are spoken.

FROM CITY CENTER TO CITY CENTER: Here's where it all starts: in the heart of the famous historic Lucerne. Boarding our trains, the guests are carried directly to the top destinations of Interlaken/Jungfrau and Engelberg/Titlis. An easy, comfortable journey is guaranteed. Hourly direct service between Lucerne und Interlaken

BISTRO — GREAT IF YOU'RE HUNGRY: At our à-la-carte restaurant on wheels we serve our passengers what their heart desires — a delicious breakfast in the morning, for example, or a variety of regularly changing themed specials throughout the day.

FREE DIGITAL TOUR GUIDE: Using our digital tour guide, you can derive even more thrills (and information) from your journey between Lucerne and Interlaken. The guests will learn a great deal about the most interesting sights this area has to offer and, using the built-in map, where its next highlights will be.

The fastest and most beautiful way to travel from Lucerne to Engelberg/Titlis. Using Zentralbahn, the guests will reach Engelberg from downtown Lucerne in mere 43 minutes — and very comfortably, too.

You can't miss out on Mt Titlis

caters to FITs who crave for the occasional home food. The Titlis Resort is a collection of buildings with studio to 4-bedroom apartments to rent and this Resort has become very popular with Indians.

Finally, how was 2017? And what is your forecast for 2018?

Much against our forecast made early in the year, and thankfully, 2017 ended on a very positive note and turned out to be our best year ever. We are looking positively at 2018 and hope this strong urge of people to travel continues and we are able to grow our already fantastic numbers.

ABOUT TITLIS GLACIER MOUNTAIN



GUARANTEED SNOW:

One of a handful of accessible mountains where you are guaranteed ice and snow throughout the year, even in the hottest of summers.

ROTAIR:

The world's first revolving cable car which ascends on the last stage offers a truly unique experience as you see the verdant valleys & blue lakes below and as you gently spin around the Titlis mountain glacier closing in on you.

ICE-FLYER:

Soar like a bird over the glacier crevasses on a 3 minute ride each way on a chair lift adapted specially for non-skiers. The view which stretches as far as Germany is truly stunning! As this Ice-Flyer is not motored you will experience the sound of silence.

GLACIER PARK:

A fun area with ear-marked courses where people of all ages can experience the various fun toys in the snow for free and unlimited use. This brings out the kid in you as you have a rollicking time.

TITLIS CLIFF WALK:

Walk on Europe's highest suspension bridge which is 100 metres long and has a 450 metre vertical below your feet.

Views as far as the Italian dolomites will amaze you.

GLACIER CAVE:

20 metres below the surface of the snow is the surreal world of the glacier cave with a year round temperature of -1.5° centigrade.

NOSTALGIC PHOTO STUDIO:

Dress like the traditional Swiss of yesteryear and take home a precious memory.

FUN AT TRUEBSEE:

In summer try the bag jump, a game of curling or just gently stroll to the Lake of Truebsee for some boating. In winter you can visit the igloo village and try the SnowXbikes. Or why not try some "ski-tasting" —an experience which shows you how to gently slide down a small slope with skis.

TERRACE HOTEL:

With over 170 rooms it is the most requested hotel for Indian groups. The view from the rooms is stupendous and you can also expect some lip-smacking Indian food.

THE TITLIS RESORT:

Very popular fully furnished alpine style apartments for rent. We have everything from studios to a 4-bedroom apartment which fits up to 10 people. A feather in our cap!

Breathtaking Cruises on Lake Lucerne

1-HOUR ROUNTRIP WITH PANORAMA-YACHT «SAPHIR»

Experience Lucerne Bay aboard our panoramic motor yacht. The vessel sports an amazing sliding roof that can be opened and closed according to the weather. As for the main deck, it features a unique lake-level water terrace.

Schedule

Operates daily all year round 3 – 8 tours per day, depending on the season.

Free audio-guide!

Enjoy the benefit of a free audio guide available in Hindi!

MS Diamant - the newest large motor vessel on the lake!

INDIAN DINNER CRUISE

Combine a cruise on Lake Lucerne with an Indian dinner and enjoy the unique landscape of Central Switzerland. Pass by beautiful castles and get inspired by the breathtaking view of the nearby mountains. A sumptuous buffet by the finest Indian Restaurant Kanchi awaits you and no wish remains unfulfilled.

Schedule

23 April – 30 June 2018
Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday

1 July – 30 July 2018
Every Monday and Thursday

Timetable

dep. 7.30 p.m./arr. 9.00 p.m. in Lucerne

Operates daily for pre-booked groups of 30+

ONE MOUNTAIN ALL SEASONS

Imagine a bright blue sky and the touch of sparklin fresh-fallen snow. Explore the world of eternal ice. Feel like an eagle and hover over stunning glacier crevasses. Enjoy snow tubing at the Glacier Park. Mount TITLIS is a spot not to miss!

Snowmobile

TITLIS Cliff Walk

Snow Tubing

TITLIS

GLACIER MOUNTAIN

LUCERNE

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TITLIS GLACIER MOUNTAIN WELCOME TO THE HEART OF SWITZERLAND

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