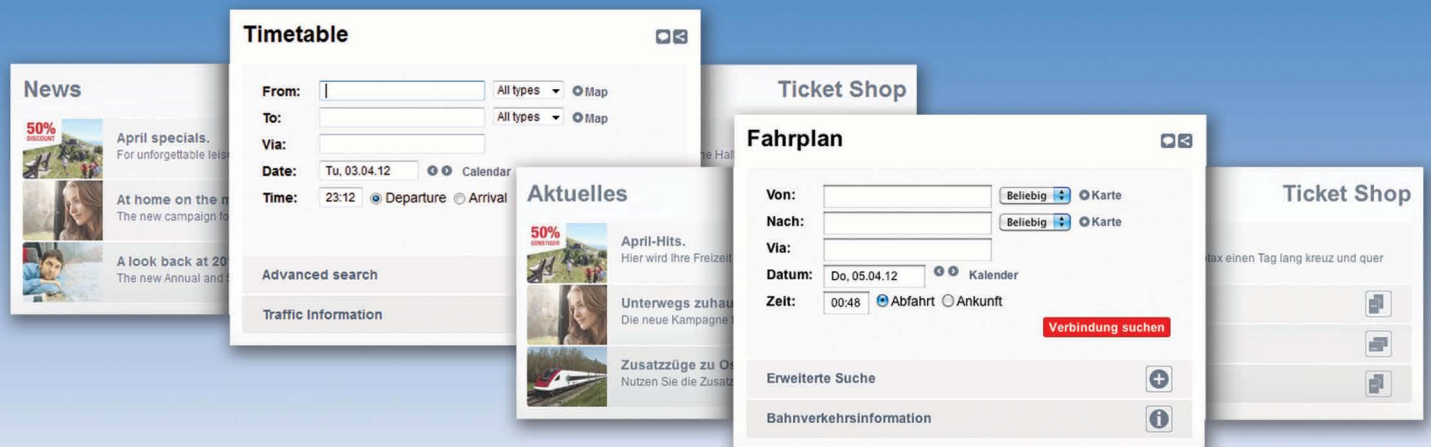Swiss Federal Railways (SBB)

A full-service, online railway station

SBB CFF FFS

Swiss Federal Railways
Bern, Switzerland
www.sbb.ch/en

Results

- Increased time on site and pages per visit through a more easily navigated, high-quality web experience
- Simplified content authoring processes for a site comprising 13,000 pages in four languages
- Enabled publication of a rich, mobile experience under the same URL as SBB's desktop site
- Improved marketing flexibility through the ability to promote any type of service on any sub-site

Swiss Federal Railways creates a customer-centric travel planning destination with Adobe Experience Manager

More people use the train in Switzerland than in any other country in the world, traveling an average of 2,000 kilometers by rail each year. Every day, Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) carries more than 977,000 passengers—equal to almost half the number of people who travel by air in all of Europe. With 28,000 employees, SBB isn't just the largest travel and transport company in Switzerland; it's also one of the biggest employers.

Serving a railway-intensive travel market, the SBB website is one of the most heavily visited in Switzerland. The website had grown to support expanding traveler and business requirements; however, over time it had become less customer friendly, as well as more burdensome and costly to maintain. More than 25 separate sub-sites were maintained independently by different business units, each with their own IT provider and content management system platform, and the site's overall structure reflected SBB's own corporate organization more than the needs of a customer seeking to plan a trip. "We started an initiative to change the entire context of the information, opportunities, and transactional features we offered to put the customer's view at center stage," says Patrick Comboeuf, director of e-business for SBB.

By standardizing on Adobe Experience Manager, SBB is efficiently creating and delivering high-quality online experiences for the more than five million travelers visiting SBB's multi-language websites each year. Travelers now engage easily using their desktop or mobile devices to purchase tickets and plan trips, as well as browse railway shops.
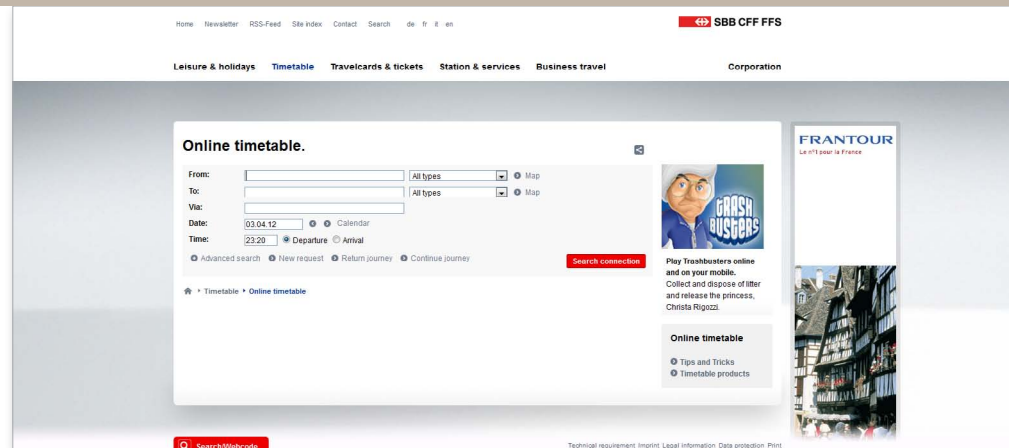
Challenge

- Unify 25 independently managed websites into a single, centrally managed web presence
- Provide a more intuitive, seamless, customer-centric web experience
- Improve capabilities to cross-promote offers across different types of services
- Meet next-generation requirements for mobile content and social features

Solution

- Use Adobe Marketing Cloud, including the Adobe Experience Manager solution, to consolidate sprawling legacy web infrastructure onto a single platform
- Leverage the open standards-based technology in Adobe Experience Manager to migrate legacy data
- Use capabilities, such as social bookmarking and mobile content, to deliver a fully modern, high-value web experience

Systems at a glance

Adobe Marketing Cloud, including the Adobe Experience Manager solution. Capabilities used include:

- Web content management
- Digital asset management
- Social communities

As part of the project, SBB sought to consolidate its web infrastructure technology in order to improve manageability, reduce cost, eliminate duplication of effort across business units, and replace end-of-life web content management systems lacking modern functionality like mobile web and social media. This reorganization would be mirrored by a streamlined authoring operation: instead of having content handled separately by individual business units, an approach which made consistency in branding and user experience hard to achieve, SBB planned to set up a new, centralized content management team which would serve internal customers throughout the organization.

SBB performed a thorough evaluation of the options for its new web content management platform and determined that Adobe Marketing Cloud, including the Adobe Experience Manager solution with web content management and digital asset management capabilities, was best able to meet its needs. Experience Manager multi-site management capabilities would help SBB manage versions of the website in multiple languages with low administrative overhead and enable content reuse to increase efficiency, greatly simplifying the task of publishing the SBB site in all four of Switzerland's official languages. Additionally, with its standards-based architecture, the Experience Manager solution offered a way to connect with the legacy systems from which the new website needed to pull data. Mobile integration and social features were also key for offering a richer customer experience online.

For implementation support, SBB turned to Adobe partner NAMICS, the leading provider of Internet services in Switzerland, which provided deep knowledge of the technical architecture of Adobe Experience Manager, as well as the extensive development resources needed for SBB to meet its launch date for the new site. NAMICS helped migrate the content from most of SBB's legacy systems onto Experience Manager and integrated back-end systems for product and marketing content, timetables, and ticketing into the new front end.

Delivering a better customer experience

The SBB website now presents an entirely revamped online experience based on the metaphor of an Internet-era railway station, explains Ralph Hutter, director of marketing and communications for NAMICS. "The first thing you would do at a railway station is find a timetable, so that is now at the center of the first page. Next, you need to buy tickets, so we provide an online ticket window. With that done, you can relax until your departure, so we offer information about the shops and restaurants in each station." The SBB mobile website, also delivered using the Adobe Experience Manager solution, follows the same metaphor. Information about SBB as a company, from its sustainability commitment to current job openings, is also easily available. "Our original goal was for visitors to need no more than three clicks to find their desired information, and we've already reached this goal in 80% to 90% of cases—it's a vastly improved user experience," says Comboeuf.
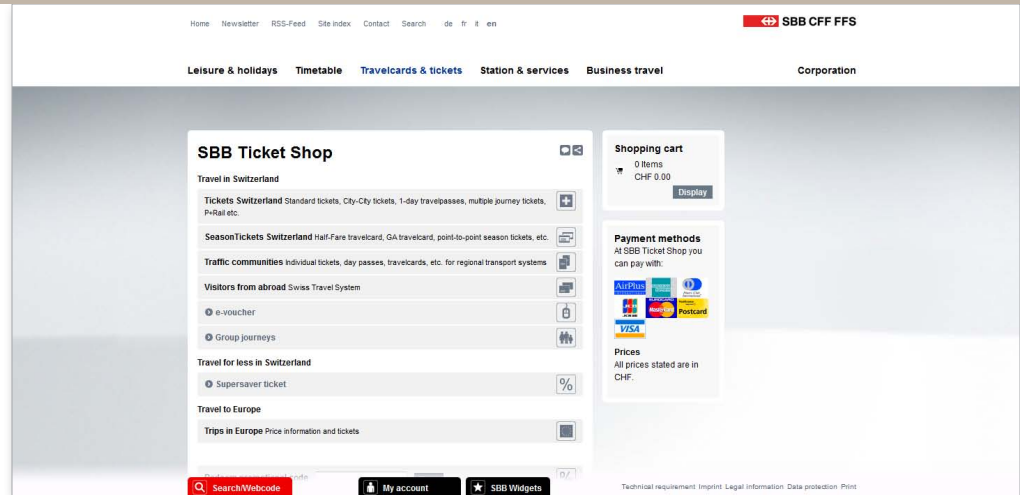
"Adobe Experience Manager has given us a highly professional platform to cater to all the needs we previously had to fulfill with more than a dozen separate systems."

Patrick Comboeuf
Director of e-business, SBB

The site's customer experience improvements are measurable. The average time spent per visit and pages per visit have both increased, while time spent per page has decreased. "We interpret this as meaning that users are inspired to stay longer and look at more content across our sub-sites, and can more easily find the information they're looking for on each page they visit," says Comboeuf.

SBB will soon use social communities capabilities in Adobe Experience Manager to provide features like social bookmarking, which will make it easier for customers to plan group travel, and Twitter integration to share arrival times and other up-to-the-minute details.

Providing immediate service for mobile travelers

The mobile channel is already a key part of SBB's business; the railway sells 50% of its tickets through its highly successful mobile app. Adobe Experience Manager now helps SBB complement this app with a richer mobile web experience published under the same URLs as its desktop site. The solution's automated device detection and optimized content delivery renders the ideal experience for each visitor however they choose to access the site. "Adobe Experience Manager makes it simple for us to provide a number of useful features for on-the-go travelers, from timetables to forms for lost items that trigger an immediate search order without the need to go through a call center. These services are implemented directly as a transaction within our content management system," says Comboeuf.

Creating a more efficient content management environment

"Adobe Experience Manager has given us a highly professional platform to cater to all the needs we previously had to fulfill with more than a dozen separate systems. This has had a significant impact on our organization, enabling us to establish a centralized content management team that publishes development content for internal customers throughout SBB," says Comboeuf. Business people submit requests for online needs of any kind, from new text and rich-media content to page optimization, to the 12-person content management team, which includes personnel dedicated to web publishing, multimedia, writing and editing, social media, search engine optimization (SEO), and web analytics. The content management team also sees to the translation of SBB's approximately 13,000 web pages into all four of Switzerland's official languages, German, French, Italian, and English.

"The Adobe Experience Manager solution will help us increase the advertising revenue we generate through the SBB website, which will in turn help support further initiatives that the platform makes possible, such as increased use of multimedia, new social media channels, and new revenue-generating advertising and affiliate programs."

Patrick Comboeuf
Director of e-business, SBB

Increasing flexibility for marketing and advertising

In the past, SBB's fragmented online environment prevented the company from cross-linking content across pages managed on different content management systems. For example, teasers for domestic travel offers could only be published on other domestic travel pages, not on those for international travel. Now, a centralized content management platform, combined with the advertising capabilities in Adobe Experience Manager, enables SBB to distribute its full array of content across every sub-site in its environment.

SBB is also using this capability to sell banner ads more effectively to advertisers to capitalize on its status as one of Switzerland's most heavily trafficked websites, with more than 5 million visitors per year—in a nation of only 7.8 million people. "The Adobe Experience Manager solution will help us increase the advertising revenue we generate through the SBB website, which will in turn help support further initiatives that the platform makes possible, such as increased use of multimedia, new social media channels, and new revenue-generating advertising and affiliate programs," says Comboeuf.

For more information
*www.adobe.com/solutions/
digital-marketing.html*