

## Switzerland:

Switzerland's key message during Interski 2015 was on client retention and development. We received an insight into the measures they are taking to retain clients in the Swiss Ski School, particularly with children.

The workshops on and off snow focused on the issue of drop out rates and introduced the changes the Swiss Ski School are making to keep their clients involved in snowsports for longer.

During the on-snow workshop we were taken through the rationale of each level in the Swiss Snow League through to their newest product the Swiss Snow Academy. The deliverer, Dean, skilfully explained the development stage of the type of client you could expect through each of their levels. This was complimented with a snapshot of the type of task you might set to firstly create an environment that is engaging and encourages a social experience along with the technical benefits. The tasks predominantly worked on balance and a blend of steering elements although more importantly were inclusive of the whole group, fun and created an experience that children in each age group/ability would look forward to taking part in again.

The age ranges they had identified and style of learning were;

- (3 – 7yrs) Tasks have clear rules set by the instructor. This can be done through setting up games, using markers and rewarding goals.
- (7 – 9yrs) Creating a strong team atmosphere that is inclusive of all abilities in the group is important. Tasks can often be competitive and the instructor will guide them in their decision making. It starts to become more learner led.
- (9 – 12yrs) Tasks are often learner led and children are encouraged to imagine possible outcomes and how they can be achieved. This enables them to set their own boundaries. As they progress to the Academy the instructor needs to be more flexible and create a social experience. They recognise that will keep them coming back above and beyond ticking off certain criteria.

Off-snow we continued to look at retention during their small lecture. The issue was highlighted through the number of medals awarded as you move up each level. There is a recorded drop of 50,000 – 6000 in The Swiss Snow League. This clearly identifies the potential market that is being missed.

They have concluded that it mostly comes down to ski school no longer being 'cool' at a certain age/level and the need to ski socially with friends and family. Ski School has enabled them to ski without boundaries and therefore they no longer need the ski school. Through recognising this they have

established their methods of teaching for different ages/levels and introduced a new product The Snow Academy.

The snow Academy focuses mostly on 12 + skiers who have passed through and outgrown The Snow League. It builds on the benefits of the Snow league that encourages loyalty, progression and educational support. The Academy is structured around the model ABC.

- Atmosphere
- Belonging = Motivation
- Confidence

As demonstrated in the on snow workshop it was reiterated that the Academy focuses on building a social experience through experiential learning. To achieve a task, may involve the children/teenagers taking different roles to achieve it, for example making a movie.

Working towards the ABC model they have created a membership card with benefits that exemplify the 3 points.

- Log in at different resorts
- Cheaper lift passes
- Further discounts
- Online community
- Video sharing
- Media contributed by kids from their lessons

With a vision to offer;

- Prizes such as concert tickets
- Define specific groups
- Connect through the summer
- Interaction with instructors
- Work opportunities
- Further special offers

A crucial benefit is a discount on their first instructor exam. This offers a pathway from grass routes to becoming an snowsports instructor. It bridges the gap and expands the community they aim to build.

**A technical note:**

During the week it was noted that the Swiss demo team lift their inside ski above the fall-line. During the on-snow workshop one of the tasks in shorts involved this move. When questioned on it, our

demonstrator informed us that is actively encouraged in their system in performance skiing. The reason being that it enables the skier to get their inside leg out the way and increase edge angle at the top of the turn allowing a tighter arc and to move freely. They look for functional skiing outcomes over esthetics.