IT Made in Switzerland

As a business location, Switzerland is famed for its giants: Roche, Novartis, Nestlé, UBS, ABB or CS sell their products worldwide. The achievements of the Swiss IT industry are less well known, although people are by now aware that the World Wide Web originated in Switzerland. Unfortunately that just about exhausts the list of associations between Helvetia and IT. Whereas the country has spawned a density of leading multinationals unparalleled worldwide, Logitech is still the only ICT heavyweight with a Swiss passport. Only insiders know that things like the compiler or the formerly very important programming language Pascal are Swiss-made. And virtually no one is aware that one third of the Google's operating system Android was also developed in Switzerland. Instead the achievements of big players like Nestlé, UBS, Swatch & Co simply still get the lion's share of international attention.

What is often forgotten here is the fact that ICT und especially software contribute in no small measure to the success of corporations like these. And here, the predicate "Swiss-made" has grown in importance. A fact reflected by the export numbers: With more than three billion Francs, the Swiss IT industry derives more income from abroad than one of the Alpine country's most acclaimed export goods: chocolate (800 million). The aim should now be to accelerate that trend by making the achievements of the Swiss IT industry better known internationally. This book is part of our effort to do so. IT aims to show the world the achievements as well as the potential of the Swiss ICT sector. And there are quite a few things to be proud of.
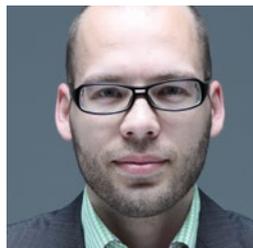
That Swiss companies are among the leaders in the areas of "Finance" and "Security" is not really surprising since both terms have formed part of the country's cultural identity for a long time. The same applies to "Collaboration". It is no coincidence that Switzerland is known worldwide for its unique system of direct democracy. Another thing Switzerland is known for is a long and impressive tradition of engineering. The chapter "Industrial/embedded" draws attention to the way that tradition and innovation merge in this field today. Finally the chapter "Innovation" presents a whole range of interesting developments which underscore the importance of the software industry to Switzerland as a business location.

Next to established companies a range of promising start-ups is portrayed throughout this book. They testify to the dynamism of the Swiss IT sector, even if Switzerland is not Silicon Valley. And, at the end of the day, start-ups and established companies face the same challenge: A country of high salaries and prices like Switzerland must create products characterized by outstanding quality and cutting-edge innovation. Because, in the end, on the open market only this can differentiate a product. The potential for continued worldwide success is exemplified by the many examples of successful projects and companies in this book.

We hope you enjoy the following pages and gain interesting insights into "swiss made software".

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