

# 15 ways to experience hiking in Ticino

We have shaped an integrated service, both physical and digital, capable of enhancing the Ticino tourist experience and guide people on their discovery of more than 4,000 km of hiking trails.

## THE CHALLENGE

**An integrated service for tourists, invaluable to the area.**

Ticino is the region with the most extensive network of walking trails in Switzerland. A resource that already generates a significant return on an economic level and that could be even more strategic for the local economy in the future. The goal of the project was to fully exploit the routes' potential, attracting an increasing number of people and provide tourists with an unforgettable experience during their trip.

## PEOPLE

**Not just for hikers: trails for everyone**

Thanks to the huge knowledge gained (field research, interviews with users and local professionals, observation, routes' exploration), we were able to identify the dynamics which encourage people to use the trails in Ticino. Some important insights emerged from this: for example, contrary to expectations, the main users of the service are not (only) experienced hikers, but families, the elderly, residents and many daily visitors.

Another interesting fact is about how the trails are used: it became clear that people often organize an excursion when they are already on site, or even that they start a walk just for the sake of it, unaware that they are on a trail. Therefore offering tourists in-depth discovery opportunities throughout the end-to-end cycle of the experience is of paramount importance.

## VISION

**Inspire, welcome, guide.**

The idea behind the project was simple: provide an integrated experience encompassing both the physical and digital world, which can create expectations for all types of hikers/tourists and, at the same time, allow those arriving in the area to discover and explore the routes.

## PROJECT

**An engaging experience: before, during and after the trip.**

We designed an integrated ecosystem made up of 15 physical and digital touchpoints that guides people throughout the trail cycle. We expanded the points of contact - by integrating new tools with the existing structure - to ensure that anyone, at any time, can discover the best route for them and can be supported throughout their exploration.

The outcome is a service that:

Promotes the routes to the medium/long range tourists who want to take a trip which requires little planning or directly on site;

Creates awareness about the existing routes to all the local people and support regarding guidance and organization;  
Supports walkers and hikers with prompt tools and information;  
Lets people share their routes on social media channels and talk about their own experiences.

## **SOME OF THE 15 TOUCHPOINTS**

### **Info-advertisements to inspire visitors on nearby routes**

Billboards located in the centre of the main Ticino towns to provoke curiosity and provide information on the nearby accessible hiking trails.

### **Interactive Totem displays for choosing the nearest ideal route**

Located in strategic places around the region, these displays support the user when exploring the available routes and choosing their ideal itinerary. Using a screen interface, the infopoint displays the local trails, the weather forecast and photos submitted by other users in a targeted way and as part of an animated sequence.

### **On-site tablets to discover the trails**

These tools are located in the tourist offices and allow users to virtually explore the routes and find the one most suited to their expectations.

### **Informative papers**

Documents that provide the user with all the information for each route and let hikers quickly consult the maps and information along the way.

### **Online communication to inform and inspire**

A dedicated area on the current website [www.ticino.ch](http://www.ticino.ch), with the explicit aim of inspiring the tourist and providing all the information necessary to plan or prepare their hike.

### **Google Trekker and Drones to experience the trails in advance**

The hiking trail network has been mapped with Google Street View Trekker™ and photographed by drones to offer hikers an emotional expectation of the routes to be discovered.

### **Mobile application**

To discover the hiking trails and nearby points of interest. The app, which also works offline, has been designed to enable hikers to orientate themselves, travel and navigate the routes via GPS.

## **NEXT STEPS OF THE PROJECT**

The Ticino Hike project is expected to evolve towards two main directions. The first will cover the continuous expansion of quality content: new trails, more information, more videos&images, more interaction with local stakeholders. The second refers to the future

integration of beacon technology within the system so as to ensure faster and more effective communications for and with the visitors.

## **RESULTS**

Since the project has been launched in July 2015, there is still no structured data. Nevertheless, the itinerary section of the website has already experienced a remarkable growth (+1000 unique page views per day) and the app has been downloaded 5.000 times so far both on Android and IOS device.

In the future, we are going to measure the impact of the project according to three main goals:

INTEREST > enlarge the number of people that get inspired by Ticino trails

ECONOMIC RETURN > increase the return for Ticino and local actors

FREQUENCY > more people on the trails, more often

The related key-indicators are:

INTEREST > number of downloaded app + number of access to the website + papers printed

ECONOMIC RETURN > more than 40CHF spent by each hiker, each day on each path  
(now the estimated return is 40CHF per hiker, per day)

FREQUENCY > more people on the itineraries + more papers printed