

Digital products by ISPO: service provider and path finder for the digital transformation in the global sports business

As the world's leading sports network, ISPO offers an integrated range of sector-specific cross-media and digital services all year round. In recent years, ISPO has developed digital services for the industry which work 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. With these products, ISPO links together brands, retailers and consumers round the clock. ISPO customers can then select the right solution for their marketing strategy aimed at specific target groups. The ISPO Group presents its digital portfolio here.

1. ISPO Open Innovation: The crowdsourcing platform for a direct line to customers

ISPO Open Innovation links companies with consumers who contribute ideas when products are developed or can test products before they go on sale. After all, consumers nowadays do more than just consume. They are also interested in how a product is developed, who uses it and how it is used. These interactive experiences are a key part of the shopping experience for consumers. For companies, this co-creation, rating and recommendation principle is important in order to generate new ideas, secure customer loyalty and show market presence. With ISPO Open Innovation, the sports industry can use customers' expertise and find out in advance what requirements a new product must satisfy.

The crowdsourcing platform with more than 40,000 active community members from more than 60 countries offers various models for this:

- **Product tests/influencer campaigns** – Product tests allow new types of products to be tested in detail by selected customers. Their feedback is then taken into account during subsequent development phases.
- **Product development** – New ideas come about here as a result of manufacturers and customers working together.
- **Creation** – What do customers expect? In the early phase of product development, consumers' ideas are essential for success later on.
- **Surveys** – How is the new product received by customers? What new products are customers waiting for? The results of surveys can influence product development considerably.

The ISPO community is made up of sport professionals, ambitious hobby sportsmen and women and influencers who share experiences, rate products



and recommend them to others. ISPO Open Innovation is aimed at the entire ISPO network with B2B and B2C players and target groups. Practical examples from various manufacturers show that ISPO has its finger firmly on the pulse.

- **Dynafit:** The mountaineering retailer has carried out a survey on “Adding bikewear to the product range” among consumers and retailers. The result: 1,900 end consumers and over 300 retailers gave Dynafit important ideas when preparing to introduce a new product category.
- **WEITBLICK:** The workwear manufacturer used the platform to obtain direct product feedback from DIY fans and professionals. 45 testers uploaded over 110 detailed test reports with 168 photos and shared the test reports via blogs and social media channels.
- **riri:** Working with product management from the sports industry, the brand used ISPO Open Innovation for an innovation project in order to develop new applications for its technical press studs. It achieved its aim of establishing B2B contacts with product decision-makers from the sport sector and placing products. Over 80 qualified, relevant leads were generated.
- **ABS Airbags:** With an influencer campaign, the airbag manufacturer is boosting its presence among consumer experts and obtaining product feedback regarding the latest generation of the P.Ride avalanche rucksack.

2. ISPO.com: Content portal with digital marketing offerings

With ISPO.com, a news portal allowing customers to communicate their brand messages to retailers and consumers 365 days a year was created in January 2016. Since the launch, the portal has had more than 5 million unique visitors, around 50 percent of them end consumers. There were 2.7 million visitors in 2017. Thanks to the English-language website version, the visitor profiles are international. Users come from countries including Germany, the USA, Austria, Italy and Switzerland. ISPO.com increases coverage beyond trade fair halls, extending it as far as consumers. With suitable marketing offerings, ISPO is following the trend in the industry whereby more is invested in direct communication with end consumers. The following services are available to choose from:

- **Native advertising** with content marketing and storytelling: Information is conveyed in stories. Customers would rather read a story than dull product leaflets. With a story, a brand can reach up to 10,000 visitors.
- **Re-targeting and banners:** The targeted evaluation of user profiles makes it possible to define topic and brand-specific target groups and to address these outside ispo.com using “re-targeting” adverts as part of user-specific advertising.

Case studies show that the offerings are successful:

- **Salomon:** Salomon works together with ISPO and uses ISPO’s digital products. With an advertising campaign, the manufacturer promoted its new all-mountain front side collection. Salomon will also use ispo.com throughout 2018 to advertise its key areas.
- **Re-targeting:** The pilot projects with CEP, Dyaco Fitness and Indigo revealed high click-through rates (CTR) of 0.36 - 0.6 percent. These are well above the international average for re-targeting campaigns (0.05 percent CTR).
- **Returning customers:** Customers who come back are the best indication of quality. Just under 50 percent of native advertising customers book a further report via ispo.com following their campaign.

3. ISPO Job Market

The ISPO Job Market is the most important online jobs forum for the sports industry. With international coverage and major names such as adidas, The North Face and Vans, experienced professionals and lateral entrants alike can quickly find a new challenge. Together with the recruiting experts from sportyjob.com, an international jobs market for the sport sector has been created to help people entering or already working in the sports business throughout their careers. The service includes training programs (schools and universities), positions for newcomers and middle management and executive headhunting for filling senior management positions. Since the start of the partnership, more than 2,000 job vacancies have been advertised on the platform, generating over 20,000 applications.

4. ISPO Digitize: Making the digital transformation a success

With ISPO Digitize, ISPO is expanding the digital strategy into the offline world and supporting sport retailers and the sports industry on the way to a digital, competitive future. The digital transformation has already changed the structure of the sports industry throughout the entire value chain. Systems are becoming more and more complex and require new know-how. This knowledge and digital skills are often found to be lacking in companies. However, these are essential for understanding and being able to properly make use of the countless digital solutions now available on the market. ISPO has recognized this challenge and has launched a new event format which supports the sector during the digital transformation. For the first time ever, the ISPO Digitize Summit takes place from June 28–29, 2018 in Munich.

- **ISPO Digitize Summit:** Is a conference, exhibition and interactive event in one. It meets the needs of all participants – from beginners to experienced entrepreneurs. During the exhibition, participants will discover useful technological solutions and acquire new digital skills in workshops which they will then be able to put to effective use in their own companies. The Digital Readiness Check is the basis for this.
- **Digital Readiness Check:** With the help of this tool, a company's digital readiness is determined. For those taking part, it answers the question: "How 'ready' is my company for digitalization?" The analysis depicts the current status quo and the areas where the company needs to do more.
- **Target group – participants:** Sport retailers and sport industry; IT managers, product managers, marketing managers, supply chain managers, store managers, business developers, chief digital officers
- **Target group – participating companies:** Technology and service providers, consultancy companies, sport brands with their digital practice reports and experiences