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Press release

New survey on buying behavior of recreational athletes

How athletes make buying decisions

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- ISPO surveyed 2783 athletes about their buying behavior
- majority of customers gets product information online
- awards and technical labels as decision criteria
- sustainability as buying criteria

The sporting goods industry is booming: According to research firm Trefis, global sales of sporting equipment will climb to more than \$174 billion in 2018. But what motivates consumers to make their final buying decision? ISPO asked 2,783 sports enthusiasts about these factors in a Europe-wide survey. The relevance of digital media is clear. The majority of European amateur athletes prefers to look online for information on new products and sports trends and like to shop there, too. Distinctions such as the ISPO Award and technical labels featuring well-known product technologies such as Gore-Tex and Vibram are important buying criteria. Other factors in the purchase decision are the durability and repair capabilities of products.

Product awards give athletes orientation in the sporting goods market and distinguish particularly innovative and high-quality, winning products. Prizes, awards and labels with product technologies and sustainable aspects such as bluesign serve as selling points for manufacturers and retailers. Yet little is known about the effect of these quality features and how they influence the buying behavior of athletes.

To answer these questions, ISPO surveyed 2,783 active athletes about their decision-making process when buying new sporting goods. The majority of participants is very physically active and therefore well familiar with the subject at hand: 79 percent are active in sports twice a week, and almost half even participate more than three times a week. The respondents come mainly from Germany (29 percent), Italy (17 percent), the UK (17 percent) and France (16 percent).

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Active athletes are especially present in social media

ISPO first wanted to know where and how athletes get their information about new products and trends. 60 percent of respondents look to social media platforms for this information. That's more than twice as much as the average population (source: Faktenkontor, 2017).

Other online sources are also popular, especially Web portals (42 percent), Google (41 percent) and online magazines (36 percent). Beyond the digital world, 48 percent talk with their friends about the latest developments in the sports scene. The group is also divided when it comes to their purchasing channels: 41 percent said they bought their latest sport product in a brick-and-mortar store, 51 percent went online (36 percent via desktop/laptop and 15 via mobile device).

New sporting goods motivate – 80 percent plan a new purchase

A total of 68 percent of respondents are in fact motivated to be more active in sports thanks to newly purchased sports products. 33 percent even use the new equipment to stay active long-term, 35 percent gain at least a short-term boost in motivation.

Awards and technical labels are significant when purchasing

72 percent of respondents indicated that they pay special attention to awards and technical labels when buying new sporting goods. The second most important factor, named by 54 percent, is a recommendation from friends. 33 percent of respondents are inspired by tests and magazines. And the influence of labels and awards continues to grow: In recent years, they have become more relevant for almost half of those surveyed (46 percent). The respondents classify products with awards or distinctions, such as the ISPO Award, as higher quality and attribute greater functionality to them than to other products.

Athletes like to buy for the long term

The durability of a sports product is perceived as a quality feature and is an important purchasing criterion for three-quarters of respondents. 37 percent also pay attention to the availability of replacement parts or repair capabilities for correcting signs of wear and tear. These figures are not least a result of the strong presence of sustainability issues in the industry.



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Details on the Europe-wide survey on buying behavior, “How athletes make buying decisions 2019,” and related graphics are available [online](#).

About the product award for OutDoor by ISPO

The ISPO Award has become a quality seal in the sporting goods industry during its long history. The award serves as a guide to products for the coming season and is aimed at specialist retailers, journalists and end customers. At specialist retailers, for example, the quality seal is identifiable as a label on the products and is visible in point-of-sale systems. The [OutDoor Edition of ISPO Award](#) is the specific adaptation of this coveted prize for OutDoor by ISPO. The largest, market-shaping innovations will receive the Outstanding Outdoor label from the professional jury. Other products will be named Gold Winners and Winners. The award-winning products can be viewed all year round at [ispo.com](#).

About ISPO

ISPO is the world’s leading sports network for business professionals and consumer experts. The platform was launched in 1970 and brings together an integrated range of industry-related analog and digital services under the ISPO family brand name. This includes the world’s largest multi-segment trade fairs ISPO Munich, ISPO Beijing and ISPO Shanghai; the online news portal ISPO.com, and the business solutions ISPO Digitize, ISPO Brandnew, ISPO Open Innovation, ISPO Award, ISPO Academy, ISPO Textrends, ISPO Job Market and ISPO Shop. With its far-reaching mix of innovation promotion, industry networking, know-how and editorial insights, ISPO works 365 days a year to support companies and sports enthusiasts, and to foster passion for sport worldwide.

Messe München

Messe München is one of the leading exhibition organizers worldwide with more than 50 of its own trade shows for capital goods, consumer goods and new technologies. Every year, a total of over 50,000 exhibitors and around three million visitors take part in more than 200 events at the exhibition center in Munich, at the ICM – Internationales Congress Center München and the MOC Veranstaltungszentrum München as well as abroad. Together with its subsidiary companies, Messe München organizes trade shows in China, India, Brazil, Russia, Turkey, South Africa, Nigeria, Vietnam and Iran. With a network of associated companies in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America as well as around 70 representations abroad for over 100 countries, Messe München has a global presence.