



**ISO Consumer Insights Report Q4/2023:
the sports industry is on course for growth with promising trends
and new developments in 2024**

Munich, 19 December 2023 – According to the latest ISPO Consumer Insights Report, the sports industry continues to experience positive development as 2023 nears its end. The promising trends seen during the year’s first quarters persist and the market is developing dynamically with growth opportunities likely in the coming months. The European Football Championships in Germany and the Summer Olympics in France will positively impact the market in 2024 and are expected to provide additional impetus for the sporting goods trade, especially among industry’s leading brands.

The ISPO Consumer Insights Report 2023 for the fourth quarter, which is important for the industry and for market developments, was presented in November as part of ISPO Munich 2023. These reports regularly evaluate the latest trends in the sports market based on responses from members of the ISPO Collaborators Club, which counts more than 30,000 sports-loving consumer experts among its members.

The twin focuses for the coming year will be on the Summer Olympics in Paris and the European Football Championships in Germany. The public’s positive attitude towards both events opens up new sales opportunities, also for niche sports. Brands such as adidas and Nike retain their top position in consumers’ favour; the outdoor sector benefits from the urban

zeitgeist, and the Digital & Connectivity megatrend ensures sales growth for manufacturers of sports wearables.

Niche sports are experiencing an upswing

The public's positive attitude toward major sporting events enables brands and outfitters in the Team Sports & Spirit sector to benefit from the upbeat mood. Official sponsorships are an effective (but admittedly costly) way to benefit from the buoyant vibe. However, creative campaigns surrounding these events can likewise promote brand awareness and boost sales.

adidas and Nike remain at the top

adidas and Nike continue to maintain their leading positions among the top five brands, followed by Salewa, Salomon and Patagonia. Decisive factors are the importance of sport for the metropolitan lifestyle (Urban Culture), as well as the fusion of sport, music, art, fashion and urban mobility. Patagonia too has further established itself in this segment, while The North Face and Vans remained successfully positioned throughout the course of the year.

Sponsorship as a customer magnet

Organised team sports (Team Sports & Spirit) also remain a strong field, which expanding thanks to a growing number of informal groups that bring likeminded people together to enjoy athletics as a social experience. adidas continues to lead this sector for the next three months in terms of purchasing intentions, while Nike is likewise well positioned. It is noteworthy that both of these brands almost completely dominate the field, a large gap separates these two leaders from the next-largest brands Puma and asics. However, it should not be forgotten that consumers' purchasing intentions are strongly dependent on upcoming major events in the respective sports.

The two major events in 2024 are expected to clearly show that outfitting top athletes, along with accompanying sponsorship measures, likewise embody worthwhile ways of acquiring customers for less popular sports.

Market driver: major sporting events

Although the football World Cup in Qatar has been globally categorised as problematic and the Winter Olympics in China have met with strong criticism, the overall outlook for the 2024 sports year is favourable. The Summer Olympics, which hope to be a peaceful sporting event, are in tune with the zeitgeist of the population, which has been shaken by crises. The European Football Championships in Germany will not be overshadowed by essential construction projects, but will instead provide the perfect infrastructure for exciting matches.

The results of the latest consumer surveys emphasise this positive picture: 35% of the respondents regard both the Summer Olympics and the European Football Championships as symbols of peaceful coexistence; 28% of those queried are looking forward to the Olympics bringing otherwise neglected sports back to centre stage. In addition, 60% of the respondents intend to keep abreast of the two upcoming megaevents via the media.

Outdoor brands prevail

A close look at the top rankings over the past few quarters clearly shows that outdoor brands have successfully established themselves. It is clear that a specific group of people, who can be categorised as belonging to the Adrenaline & Adventure sector, can be inspired by testing their strength and abilities and by embarking on new adventures. The members of this target group place great importance on sustainability and environmental awareness, which explains the strong mix of outdoor brands with labels from the former Action Sports sector. Patagonia and VAUDE are the current leading brands, both in the overall market and in the Nature Escapes segment, which attracts people who yearn to escape into natural surroundings and put themselves as far away from everyday life as possible. VAUDE and Patagonia are on a par in this target group for the first time, while Fjällräven has improved its position. Unlike the situation in other lifestyle segments, many small and medium-sized brands likewise have a share in this market.

Salewa, Salomon, Mammut and Ortovox have continuously developed into the most popular brands in the community during the past few months. These labels are not only reliable companions for all outdoor activities, but also impress consumers with fashionable, casual, Urban Outdoor collections.

How influencers affect product communication

One surprising finding of the current ISPO Consumer Insights Report Q4/2023 is the relatively small impact that influencers exert on the credibility of a brand as perceived by members of the sports-affine target group. But influencers can still serve as an important part of brand communication because they have a significant reach in the relevant target group and are able to support sales and push product launches in the media.

Digital & Connectivity are megatrends

Garmin is the undisputed leader in the Digital & Connectivity segment, but the absolute winner is Wahoo. This fitness technology company has made great strides into the High-Potentials group. The newcomer is Coros, the Chinese performance sports wearables manufacturer, which can look forward to an upswing in purchasing intentions. In contrast, Samsung has completely disappeared from this field, while Apple has slightly improved its position.

Downswing in the market for winter sports equipment

The current ISPO Consumer Insights Report Q4/2023 does not show a particularly rosy trend for sales of winter sports equipment. It has become clear that the traditional and formerly firmly established institution of the winter holiday could soon become a thing of the past. Although winter holidays are still popular, in future they will be booked more on the spur of the moment and without much advance notice.

Consumer behaviour is changing too. Winter sports enthusiasts are becoming more likely to rent rather than buy the necessary equipment. The rental market is accordingly well positioned to emerge as a major beneficiary of this trend, which was already apparent in the Consumer Insights Report from Q2/2023. Tourist destinations that can offer alternative activities when snow conditions are poor will benefit from this change in consumer behaviour. One outstanding example is the Austrian region of Ötztal: this region is the home of the outdoor leisure park Area 47, which has its own indoor bike park.

You can find further information at: www.ispo.com/munich

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About ISPO

ISPO is the world's leading sports network for business professionals and consumer experts. The platform, which has been in existence since 1970, bundles an integrated range of industry-related analogue and digital services under the ISPO family brand. These include the world's largest multi-segment trade fairs ISPO Munich, ISPO Beijing and ISPO Shanghai, the online magazine ISPO.com, and the business solutions ISPO Brandnew, ISPO Collaborators Club, ISPO Award, ISPO Academy and ISPO Textrends. With this wide-reaching portfolio of innovation promotion, industry networking, know-how and editorially prepared content, ISPO operates 365 days a year with the aim of supporting companies and sports enthusiasts and promoting a passion for sports worldwide.

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With more than 50 of its own trade fairs for capital goods, consumer goods and new technologies, Messe München is one of the world's leading organizers of trade fairs. Approximately 50,000 exhibitors and circa three million visitors attend the more than 200 events held each year at the trade-fair centre in Munich, the ICM (Internationales Congress Center München), the Conference Center Nord and the MOC Veranstaltungszentrum München, as well as abroad. Together with its subsidiaries, Messe München organizes trade shows in China, India, Brazil, Russia, Africa, Turkey and Vietnam. Messe München has a global presence thanks to a network of affiliated companies in Europe, Asia and South America and around 70 foreign representatives for more than 100 countries.