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ZHAW School of Management and Law

Swiss Population Longs for Live Events

People in Switzerland still value on-site events. The majority believe that these cannot be replaced by a digital equivalent. Digital and hybrid alternatives could, however, become a useful add-on, a ZHAW study shows.

Despite the pandemic, on-site experiences continue to be the Swiss population's preferred form of event, with 87.5 percent indicating that they consider live events to be "important" or "very important." A clear majority (57.8 percent) also believe that digital events – for example, via streaming or virtual reality – cannot replace a live gathering. These are the findings of "Events Switzerland 21," a study conducted by ZHAW. It is based on an online survey representative of the whole of Switzerland, which took place in January 2021 with 1,000 respondents. It was conducted by the ZHAW School of Management and Law's Center for Cultural Management.

Younger People Are More Open to Digital Events

The respondents would certainly like to attend live events again in the future. "The majority of the population obviously longs for experiences they can have in person," says Leticia Labaronne, Head of the Center for Cultural Management at ZHAW. The over-60s, especially, place higher-than-average importance on attending physical events. By contrast, the younger a population group, the more open-minded it is towards digital or hybrid events. "It is well known that preferences differ depending on the age group, so there should be opportunities here for event organizers to reach the younger target groups," explains study leader Marcel Hüttermann from the ZHAW Institute of Marketing Management.

Ready to Pay for Digital Formats

The 2021 event study also shows that the Swiss population would be willing to pay up to 53.2 percent of the regular ticket price for digital events. Theaters and plays, operas and music festivals, in particular, could benefit from this. Also, the importance of live events and experiences with digital events in recent months could lead to more hybrid events in the future, complementing the on-site experience with added streaming. "Hybrid events have the potential to combine the advantages of virtual and physical formats and therefore support the marketing goals of the organizers or event sponsors even better," says Marcel Hüttermann.



Concerts Are the Most Popular

Overall, concerts are the most popular type of event in Switzerland, followed by music festivals and sports events. The respondents also spent the most on these events before the pandemic – between 240 and 270 Swiss francs each year.

When it comes to assessing the quality of an event, musicals are the winners. They are rated best, ahead of concerts and operas, in terms of overall satisfaction and quality. On the other hand, trade events and exhibitions are appreciated least by the Swiss population in terms of service quality.

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