

The Gen Z Mountains - How the next generation is changing the outdoor industry.

## Board4Next: Under 25s have their say at Oberalp

If you ask more questions than you have answers to, then you belong to Generation Z - and for this generation, the mountain is a project. This is the conclusion drawn by the Oberalp Group after its retailer summit in Zurich. The topic of future generations has been given wide space. "The mountain does not change - but our approach to it must," said Ruth Oberrauch,

member of the Oberalp Executive Board, in her introduction to 200 clients from around the world. The Oberalp Executive Board, the strategic directional leader within the Oberalp Group, will be joined in the future by a "shadow board" consisting of Gen-Z employees within the group: the Oberalp "Board4Next" will become a permanent part of the company starting from 2023.



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The Oberalp Summit on October 18 in Zurich focused on "The Gen Z Mountains - How the next generation is changing the outdoor industry". The stage belonged exclusively to the generation of 18 to 25-year-olds (Gen-Z), which presented their ideas as consumers, employees, and directional leaders for the future. "We didn't want to talk about Gen-Z, we wanted to listen to them," said Christoph Engl, CEO of Oberalp and part of the Baby Boomer Generation, explaining the chosen focus. At the Oberalp Summit, which takes place twice a year, the mountain sports company regularly presents topics that affect and concern the mountain sports industry, the trade audience, and the press. In addition, the new collections of the six Oberalp mountain sports brands are presented, which go on sale in the following year.

The term Gen Z is currently on everyone's lips. Representatives of Gen Z now have a permanent place in every talk show and news block: climate, gender, environment, digitalization, and much more - every topic moves them, and they want to have their say because it's their future. This, of course, also affects mountain sports. "We see the shift in work-life balance towards life as a

clear objective of this generation. The home-office arrangements forced by the pandemic should continue to exist to have more presence for one's own family and time for hobbies - or to be able to work from another place in the world," Oberalp CEO Christoph Engl summarizes the Gen-Z mood. "But it's not just about our employees. It's also about a new perspective on the expectations of our new customers," Engl says clearly. While the average age of Oberalp's workforce today is 36.5 years, that of the end customers is significantly higher. "If we want to understand new generations of customers, we have to engage with them much earlier than they become our clients," the company states. Many behaviors form quite differently among those under 25 than they did among generations before, especially at a very different rate. Social media such as TikTok are replacing expertise, the tangible touchpoint is competing with the virtual one, and the boundaries between online shopping from the sofa and in-store shopping are blurred. The triumph of outdoor apps is transforming trails into virtual races between like-minded people. How do you

stay relevant to Generation Z in this new world of experience?

The two speakers, Gazelle Vollhase and Simon Schnetzer, gave retailers at the Oberalp Summit in Zurich clear advice on how to take the changing needs of these new generations seriously. "Anyone who ignores this will go OutOfBusiness," predicted the recruiter from idealo internet in Berlin. Youth researcher Schnetzer pointed out from his studies "that outdoor and mountain for the Gen-Z must have to do strongly with the topics of sustainability and longevity." What is used for the second time has a higher value for this generation than if it were new, Schnetzer said.



Photo by: Jörg Hennecke  
l. Ruth Oberrauch Executive Board Member, Giulia Gema Salewa  
Media & Influencer Marketing Specialist, Christoph Engl Group CEO

Setting the stage at the Oberalp Summit for the next generation is not enough for the group of leading mountain sports brands. "These young people will be our customers and employees of tomorrow. That is why we have decided to give this generation a chance to participate in the development of our company. They should help our management to find the right answers to the questions and concerns of the future by asking the

right questions and actively contributing to the success and development of Oberalp." With these words, Stefan Rainer, CSO and Board Member of the Executive Board at Oberalp announced the Board4Next project in Zurich. Applications for these extraordinary tasks are already underway: via the internal communication platform "Campfire", which gives Oberalp's more than 1,000 employees access to internal messages and topics. The call for applications was published via [video message](#) just one day after the Summit in Zurich.

All contents and presentations on Gen Z can be found on the Oberalp Group's specially launched website. All contents are available to the public and can be viewed at [convention.oberalp.com](https://convention.oberalp.com) from October 25, 2022, at 17:00 CET. The Oberalp Virtual Convention is the official platform and digital catwalk for the Oberalp brands Salewa, Dynafit, Wild Country, Pomoca, Evolv, and LaMunt. The website presents the fall-winter collections for 2023 and 2024 and introduces new technologies.



Photo by: Jörg Hennecke  
Oberalp Fashion Show – Winter Collection 2023-2024

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The Oberalp Group is a family-owned and management-led company with headquarters in Bolzano, northern Italy. Heiner Oberrauch founded the company in 1981 and today the group employs roughly 900 people, runs 10 subsidiaries in Europe and the United States, and serves 3,500 customers in over 60 countries worldwide. In addition to the development and production of mountain sports articles, the company also operates as a distribution partner of sports-based brands. The formerly Munich-based SALEWA brand has been part of the Oberalp Group since 1990. Over the years, the group has acquired the brands DYNAFIT, POMOCA, WILD COUNTRY, and EVOLV. In 2022, the group launched the new mountain brand by women for women LaMunt. The family business relies on the courage to break new ground, continuous innovation in products, processes, and thinking. A conscious, sensible approach to the environment and resources and a passion for sport and mountains are the foundation of a living corporate culture. Since 2019, the Oberalp Group's sustainability report "Contribute" has been published simultaneously with the balance sheet figures. For the sixth time in succession, the company was the only enterprise in Italy to be awarded the "Leader Status" of the NGO "Fair Wear Foundation".

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