

The Metaverse does not replace the experience in the mountains but offers new possibilities to the outdoor world

## Oberalp takes its first steps in the Metaverse to discover new virtual opportunities to offer mountain lovers and its partners

Venice, May 9, 2023 - On the occasion of the Oberalp Summit, an annual meeting organized by the Oberalp Group to present and discuss current or future issues impacting the outdoor world, research was conducted to analyze and investigate the opportunities and limitations of the Metaverse for companies specializing in mountain sports. From the study, conducted with more than 2,500 respondents, it emerges that an exclusively virtual product presentation in the outdoor

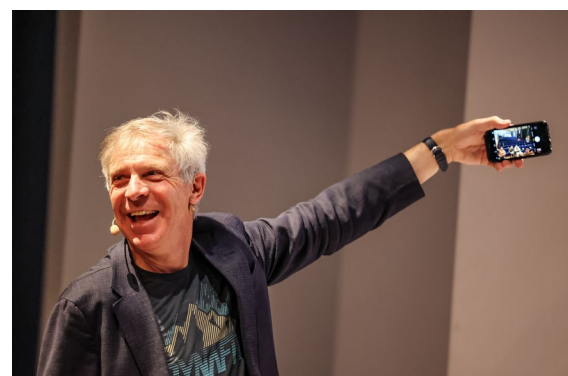
business can be ruled out for the time being, but ample space is offered in the Metaverse for educational programs to explain products and their areas of application better. According to the results of the study, the Metaverse, with its features such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and related technologies such as glasses and visors, cannot replace a real-world experience.



*Oberalp Metaverse World*  
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In 2022 alone, investments toward companies and start-ups operating in the Metaverse were \$120 billion. By 2030, according to Dr. Wieselhuber & Partner GmbH, the German consulting firm's estimates, this market will be worth between \$1 and \$8 trillion. So, there is no doubt that the Metaverse, with its "virtual and interconnected worlds", represents an investment opportunity for companies in every sector today.

"The Metaverse fascinates us because it raises more questions than answers. Will mountains become an experience that can also be lived in the virtual world? Will communities and mountain sports enthusiasts be born in the Metaverse? We don't know yet, but it is important to find out today to keep up and understand what challenges and opportunities await us as Oberalp Group," comments Christoph Engl, CEO of the Oberalp Group.



Christoph Engl, CEO Oberalp Group  
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Thus, several potentials emerge that the Italian company wants to seize by announcing the development, in the short term, of virtual experiences not only for mountain enthusiasts but also for those taking their first steps, whether virtual or physical, in the mountains. In particular, Oberalp will develop virtual showrooms and many other digital services to better interact with partners and customers for a unique product experience for its six mountain brands.

"The idea to talk about Metaverse came from the need to understand the next development stage for our online business - both from a sales perspective and at the strategic level of brand building and communication. We launched our first e-commerce site for the brand Salewa in 2015. Since then, purchasing our products has become a multichannel experience where physical stores and e-commerce co-exist. It is, therefore, necessary for us to question the life of our brands in the Metaverse as well," adds Ruth Oberrauch, member of the Management Board of the Oberalp Group.



Ruth Oberrauch, Membro del Consiglio di Amministrazione  
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The Metaverse represents a great opportunity to build a brand's reputation for future generations. Through the many virtual platforms inhabited by heterogeneous communities with specific interests and passions, the Metaverse offers many opportunities to create communication and brand awareness campaigns. Those initiatives of a new brand approach are also aimed at new targets of interest - such as Gen Z and those under 20 years of age - with the goal of building solid and lasting relationships with future mountain goers.

Another major strength of the Metaverse concerning the mountains and of great interest to Oberalp is the possibility of integrating instructional platforms. As the mountaineering industry and its products are often very technical and innovative and thus require in-depth and detailed explanations, developing presentations on a digital platform will bring significant advantages.

The representation and visualization of products through augmented reality are also beneficial at the point of sale to display more difficult-to-understand products. The Salewa brand has recently developed a solution to display tents through VR technology. To date, the solution has not yet been applied at the point of sale; however,

discussions are taking place at Oberalp about how this technology can also find implementation in creating virtual showrooms for its mountain brands Salewa, Dynafit, Wild Country, Pomoca, Evolv, and LaMunt.

Oberalp is confident about the numerous possibilities offered by the Metaverse and is convinced that a symbiosis of digital experiences and the real mountain will be possible in the future.

## Highlights of the study "The Mountain and the Metaverse."

### I. Combining the outdoor experience with virtual reality is of interest to mountain lovers

Mountains are experienced intensely through all five senses. While the Metaverse cannot replace the "authentic" sensations that an experience in contact with nature gives, it can nevertheless be a valuable tool for virtual activities and initiatives aimed at those who practice mountain sports. For example, it can offer immersive ski touring and hike & fly experiences; it can allow people to try new sports; mountaineers can organize and plan itineraries for their hikes, identify possible risks, and participate in mountain-specific courses. Among all the different opportunities offered by the Metaverse, mountain enthusiasts also point to the possibility of socializing and sharing information with others, which, to date, they do with other tools, such as WhatsApp. Compared to the population analyzed in the main markets of Italy, Germany, and Austria, mountain lovers among them are the ones who are more open to innovation and find digital services much more attractive.

### II. A shopping experience to express oneself strengthens the connection with consumers

Thanks to increasingly sophisticated augmented reality interfaces, in the Metaverse, companies will be able to create virtual stores where users, impersonated by their avatars, will not only have the opportunity to try on

mountain apparel and equipment as if they were in a physical store but also dress in "digital skins," or outfits that cover the 3D models of their virtual characters. This way, shopping becomes an immersive experience, where consumers co-create with companies, generating new business opportunities.

### III. E-Commerce in the Metaverse: A benefit for consumers, companies and the environment

In the medium to long term, companies in the Metaverse will have the opportunity to present products in greater depth and detail to users, who will then be able to choose more carefully what to buy via e-commerce. In this way, returns on purchases will be reduced, which will benefit consumers, companies, and, most notably, the environment due to the resulting reduction in carbon emissions from transporting goods and waste.

### IV. The impact of virtual worlds on the value chain of mountain products

The potential of the Metaverse affects not only the company and the end user but also the entire value chain. Virtual reality can improve and make collaboration with suppliers more efficient. Through visualizations with the help of VR-Multiuser, language barriers can be broken down, and travel costs - and consequently, the environmental impact - can be reduced. In addition, remote training and greater flexibility of processes are possible. All of this, however, requires a higher degree of IT training and knowledge among the staff.

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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 1,300 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 for 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, and 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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