Feedback round

Swiss business customers give their ICT providers above-average marks. The Computerworld Satisfaction Survey presents the most loved companies in the Swiss ICT industry.

(Source: Fotolia/sean824)

There doesn't seem to be any dissatisfaction here: That's what the latest Satisfaction Survey, which was conducted by Computerworld for the seventh time in 2019, suggests.

The survey queried more than 100 ICT managers at SMEs and large-scale companies between March 12 and July 16, 2019, asking them to rate their hardware and software providers and their telecom, Internet, and network service providers on a scale of 0 (very unimportant or very bad) to 100 (very important or very good).

Although optimization potential was clearly identified in the three segments of the Swiss ICT industry (which is not very surprising), the companies that use ICT services once again expressed an above-average level of satisfaction with manufacturers and service partners in nearly all cases.

Survey participants rated their providers and suppliers in six different categories:

Quality of Product or Service, Price, Customer Orientation, Industry Expertise, Advice before Sign-Up, and Support after Sign-Up.

Quality is paramount

Requirements

You're thinking of implementing a project with an ICT company. What aspects are important to you?

Requirement	Rating
Qualität des Produkts bzw. der Leistung	92
Preis	72
Kundenorientierung	83
Branchen-Know-how	75
Beratung vor Vertragsabschluss	78
Support nach Vertragsabschluss	86

Ratings: 0 = very unimportant. 100 = very important
Survey period: March 12 to July 16, 2019. n = 129

Source: 2019 Computerworld Satisfaction Survey

2019

If you look more closely at the level of satisfaction of companies using ICT services, you'll notice that the quality expectations of products and services offered by manufacturers and providers have increased further. With 92 points (last year: 89), this category is by far the most important one when it comes to implementing ICT projects.

In view of the clouds now gathering on the economic horizon, that seems quite remarkable. The continued emphasis on quality is also surprising because more often than not, digitalization efforts at companies are subject to considerable cost pressures.

What's easier to understand, however, is the ongoing great importance of support, which was rated with 86 points in the latest survey (the same score as last year) and was once again second in terms of the order of importance. It's long since become the case that any interruption to operations is one too many, and receiving rapid assistance as opposed to being put on hold or having to wait is one of the most critical criteria when it

comes to choosing a product or service.

Somewhat more emphasis is now being put on the customer orientation of manufacturers and providers, as this category was rated with 83 points, or two more points than last year. The importance of advice before sign-up (78 points) and industry expertise (75 points) of suppliers with regard to ICT projects remained more or less unchanged. It remains to be seen how long price (72 points) will remain at the bottom of the priority of categories at companies.

In terms of specific experiences with suppliers, the ratings issued by Swiss companies, however, frequently did not correspond to their obviously somewhat high expectations. At any rate, manufacturers, retailers, and telecommunications companies as a whole fail to meet the expectations of their customers. Nevertheless, this sobering conclusion should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the customers of providers and suppliers in Switzerland always express above-average levels of satisfaction with their business partners' performance.
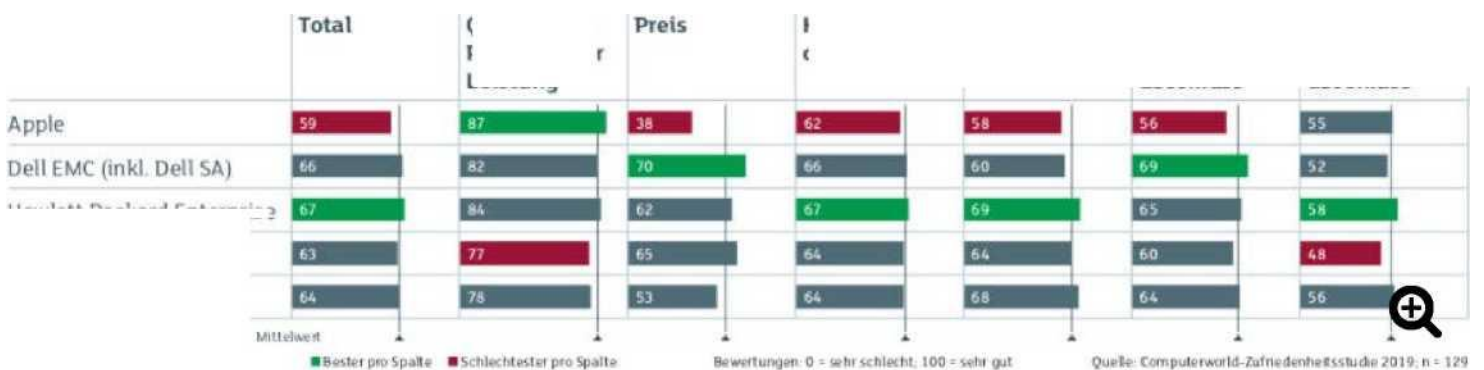
METHODOLOGY

Computerworld conducted its 2019 Satisfaction Survey from March 12 to July 16, 2019, using an online questionnaire. 129 decision-makers participated in the survey. The results therefore very much reflect current opinions and indicate trends among ICT customers in Switzerland. Swiss industrial companies and medium-size businesses with 100-249 employees were equally represented in the survey at almost 25 percent each. However, smaller and larger companies from diverse areas such as the finance and insurance industries, public agencies, and the health, social welfare, retail, traffic and transport sectors also took part, with statistically relevant response rates. Mostly, it was representatives from the executive management level who completed the survey, with 45 percent of the returned questionnaires submitted by members of top management. More than half of the respondents (52 percent) were IT decision makers (CIO/Head of IT).

Hardware: Good marks for manufacturers
Ratings: Hardware suppliers

HPE and Dell EMC dominate the field of the most-liked hardware manufacturers Apple scored points with device design and workmanship

	Total	Lieferung	Preis				
Apple	59	87	38	62	58	56	55
Dell EMC (inkl. Dell SA)	66	82	70	66	60	69	52
Hewlett Packard Enterprise	67	84	62	67	69	65	58
	63	77	65	64	64	60	48
	64	78	53	64	68	64	56

Mittelwert
■ Bester pro Spalte ■ Schlechtester pro Spalte   Bewertungen: 0 = sehr schlecht; 100 = sehr gut   Quelle: Computerworld-Zufriedenheitsstudie 2019; n = 129

Source: 2019 Computerworld Satisfaction Survey

Obviously, the suppliers were pleased with the results. In the case of those hardware manufacturers whose overall results were very close together, the top positions were captured by HPE (67 points), Dell EMC (66 points), and HP (63 points).

Dell EMC Switzerland: "Hard work pays off"

Frank Thonüs, General Manager Enterprise at Dell EMC Switzerland, is pleased "that we did so well once again in this year's Computerworld Satisfaction Survey." Indeed, the survey result is a confirmation of the company's policy of consistently focusing on the customer every day. Staff take "a lot of time to understand the individual challenges customers face and develop tailor-made solutions together with them to address those challenges."

When asked to offer a reason for the lower ratings in the Industry Expertise category, Thonüs referred to the company's "extraordinary growth over the last year." More specifically, he pointed out that the company had made disproportionately high investments in new employees and then trained these employees in specially developed programs in order to provide them with the necessary industry expertise in addition to the technical know-how. "This training, however, does take some time," he adds. "We're very confident that our customers appreciate this and will reward our efforts next year by giving us a top rating in this category as well."

"Wir investieren massiv in unsere Mitarbeitenden„

Frank Thonüs, Dell EMC

While Thonüs says that the overall ratings generally reflect the actual situation, he doesn't believe this to be the case with respect to the result for support (52 points): "The result in this survey category doesn't correspond to how we at the company see things." According to Thonüs, employees ask customers after every support case if they were satisfied with the service they received, and "this customer satisfaction rate has remained relatively stable at between 92 and 95 percent for several quarters now." Still, Thonüs doesn't disagree with the notion that his company can improve.

He says that despite having received top ratings for quality, the company continues to work "at full steam on the integration of the various product lines of all members of the Dell Technologies family – that is Dell, Dell EMC, VMware, Pivotal, Virtustream, RSA, and SecureWorks." According to him, the goal is "to develop solutions that can be implemented and managed even more smoothly so that our customers can become more agile and also reduce their costs."

HP Switzerland: "Training in the area of support was well worth the effort"

With 63 points, HP Switzerland was right on the heels of Dell EMC, and it received good marks particularly in the Price (65 points), Customer Orientation (64 points), and Industry Expertise (64 points) categories of the study. Stefan Nünlist, Computing Category Manager at HP Switzerland, points out right away that half of all office computers in Switzerland today are HP models.

He also explains the company's success by pointing to the fact that HP Switzerland is working "closely and successfully with an experienced and very professional partner network to ensure personal onsite support for customers. The high degree of continuity with regard to our contact persons and the reliability of our products have enabled us to score points – and not just in this survey."

Overall, product quality is the key to HP's success, according to Nünlist. The company's goal, therefore, is to ensure that "our hardware makes work a little easier for every customer." For this reason, HP business hardware undergoes very extensive testing: "The notebooks used for professional applications are certified in accordance with stringent military standards, for example, and the three-year manufacturer's warranty we offer gives customers an added feeling of security at a high level."

HP staff also work closely with customers and specialist retail partners. Their feedback is incorporated into the product development process, says Nünlist, who also explains the fact that HP even received top marks in the separate survey of satisfaction with support by pointing out that "the extensive training we provided for our numerous support staff clearly paid off here."

However, he also says that one should not overlook the fact that "in many cases, support after sign-up does not involve direct contact with HP as the manufacturer but instead interaction with a specialist retailer," and this interaction is not taken into account in the survey. In that sense, the survey "only reflects a part of our view of the market, which we gain through our own observations, studies, and the direct feedback from our customers and partners."

Software: SAP passes Abacus

Ratings: Software providers

SAP has caught up in terms of customer approval and now outperforms Abacus after many years The quality champion VMware has consolidated its leading position

	Total	Quality of Product or Service	Preis	Customer Orientation	Industry Expertise	Advice before Sign-Up	Support after Sign-Up
Abacus	57	70	49	55	55	65	50
Adobe	49	73	32	46	56	44	41
Microsoft	57	74	56	55	60	57	38
SAP	63	77	33	69	69	71	60
VMware	67	89	57	67	65	65	58

Mittelwert

Computerworld Top 500/2019   ■ Bester pro Spalte ■ Schlechtester pro Spalte   Bewertungen: 0 = sehr schlecht; 100 = sehr gut   Quelle: Computerworld-Zufriedenheitsstudie 2019; n = 129

Source: 2019 Computerworld Satisfaction Survey

Software providers, too, expressed criticism about the survey: The St. Gallen-based software firm Abacus, which came out on top by a wide margin last year (71 points), only received 57 points this year and was defeated by SAP, which had finished last in 2018. The international software giant only received 54 points in 2018, but finished with a score of 63 this year.

According to Martin Riedener from the Abacus executive management team, it is impossible for results relating to industry expertise, for example, to drop from a high level of 73 points to only 55 points in just one year. "It takes many years to fully establish industry expertise," he says, so you don't just lose it in the space of a year. In addition, it is "questionable from Abacus' point of view to include in the same survey products such as Adobe and VMware, which cannot be compared with products from Abacus." Riedener also points out that it's not clear which SAP and Microsoft products were being assessed.

He also asks whether recurring surveys with the same format might lose their impact at some point: "If 0.3 percent of 4 000 Abacus customers took part in this survey, well that's more than just arbitrary." In such case, the results certainly can't be considered representative, Riedener adds.

Not surprisingly, SAP Switzerland has a completely different take on the survey results. Simon Hammer, who is a member of the top management team at SAP Switzerland and is responsible for business with medium-size companies, is pleased by how SAP Switzerland garnered top marks in four categories this time around: "We focus on our customers and listen to what they say, and that pays off."
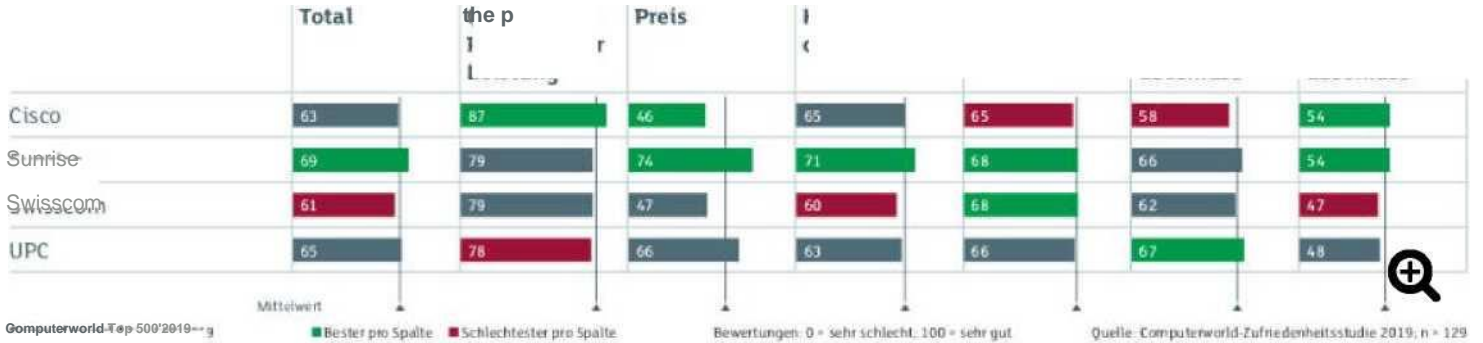
"Wir stellen den Kunden in den Mittelpunkt, hören zu. Das zahlt sich aus„

Simon Hammer, SAP

Particularly pleasing to Hammer is how SAP finished at the top of the group in the categories Customer Satisfaction and Industry Expertise. If you also consider that "the majority of the respondents are from medium-size businesses, you can see how the results reflect something we've long since noticed, namely that small and medium-size companies are the drivers of innovation, and such companies need a strong partner."

Providers and Networks: Companies love Sunrise

Ratings: Telecom/Internet/Network Providers

Sunrise was able to shine particularly brightly this year, as the telecommunications company made a big splash with B2B customers, especially with regard to price, customer orientation, and support

	Total	the p	Preis				
Cisco	63	87	46	65	65	58	54
Sunrise	69	79	74	71	68	66	54
Swisscom	61	79	47	60	68	62	47
UPC	65	78	66	63	66	67	48

Mittelwert · ■ Bester pro Spalte · ■ Schlechtester pro Spalte · Bewertungen: 0 = sehr schlecht; 100 = sehr gut · Quelle: Computerworld-Zufriedenheitsstudie 2019; n = 129

Source: 2019 Computerworld Satisfaction Survey

Telecommunications companies and Internet and network providers are also basically satisfied at the moment. Robert Wigger, Chief Business Officer at Sunrise, believes his company finished at the top of the Satisfaction Survey once again this year because "we have been consistently implementing a simple strategy for years now – a strategy based on offering the best network, innovative solutions and services, and outstanding customer service."

Business customers appreciate the focus Sunrise places on its core business with telecommunication solutions, and they also like the "extensive partner ecosystem for integrated solutions such as the Unlimited Mobile Workplace." Wigger wasn't entirely happy with the results, however, because Sunrise also wants to do better in terms of support. "Apparently we're still not good enough when it comes to fully implementing our strategy of focusing on service and quality," says Wigger.

"Providing advice and support to our customers is always our top priority"

Robert Wigger, Sunrise

All of this is "homework that we will be doing better in the future." In any case, he adds, "those who stop getting better have stopped being good. We're constantly improving our network, products, and processes, which is why the quality of our services is continuously increasing in every area. Providing advice and support to our customers is always a top priority here."

There is good reason why Sunrise earned a top spot, as evidenced by its business results, the list of business customers it has acquired, including Nestlé, Swiss Post, Axpo, P&G, and Swiss International Airlines, and its results in other ratings.

Swisscom scores points with industry expertise

The reaction to the survey by top-dog Swisscom was more reserved, despite the fact that Swisscom's operating companies received good or very good ratings again this year in the categories of Quality of Product or Service,

Industry, and Advice.

Similar appreciation of Swisscom is illustrated by top marks in four of six categories relating to support. "The survey is very general and it doesn't specify which services or products customers obtain from the providers being compared," says Urs Lehner, Head of Business Customers at Swisscom. According to him, the results are therefore difficult to compare, and with a base number of 129 participants the survey is only of limited significance.

"Business customers appreciate their contact persons and the support they provide; they view Swisscom as a reliable provider and also value our wide-ranging portfolio and overall performance capability."

Urs Lehner, Swisscom

This is all the more true, per Mr. Lehner, when you consider that telecoms offer business customers dozens of different products, which in some cases are very customer-specific, industry-specific, and complex. "The requirements and expectations of full outsourcing customers are completely different from those of customers who use individual services, for example," Lehner explains. This aspect and others are what makes comparisons between providers difficult, Lehner explains. Therefore, when surveys are conducted, there "can be distortions in both an upward and downward direction."

Regardless, the majority of business customers are satisfied, says Lehner: "They appreciate their contact person and the support they get; they view Swisscom as a reliable provider and also value our wide-ranging portfolio and our overall performance capability." As Lehner points out, these are the factors that make customers happy, according to Swisscom's own surveys. This is true in the SME market as well, where "satisfaction and recommendations to others remain stable and at a high level."

Cisco partners deliver quality

Roman Schmid, who is responsible for the Partner Organization and SME Business at Cisco Switzerland, is pleased by his company's good performance in the survey and "the high ratings we received for quality and support, which reinforce one another." He is convinced that here, "we can see the impact made by the complete renewal of our portfolio and our efforts to achieve top quality." Schmid also highlights the importance of "local partners and eco-partners" in the retail sector, who offer top-quality solutions to companies.

These partners get just as much credit for the solid ratings "as our own engineers and developers." Schmid explains Cisco's lower performance in the Price category by pointing out that cutting-edge technology doesn't come cheap: "While the purchase price is perceived as high, our products are often used over a long period of time, long after they've been written off in the books."
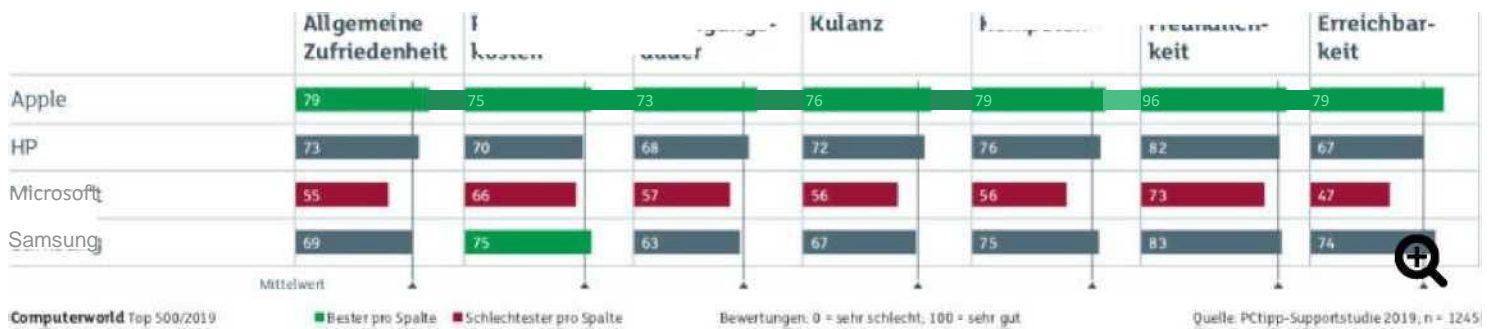
Schmid also says it's important to understand that "traditional consulting is not really a key issue for a network equipment specialist that doesn't focus on specific industries." That's why Cisco is "all the more proud of our Swiss partner network, which offers advice to customers on how to optimally utilize our technology in their ICT environment in order to improve business processes, protect against network attacks, and use better data to make effective business decisions."

Schmid also says that "Cisco feels like it was rated realistically." Nevertheless, he adds that despite the good results, they are never completely satisfied, "because that's the only way to ensure that we will continue to strive for better and better quality." That's also one of the reasons why "we use big data and artificial

intelligence to determine where our customers' problems lie." Cisco also enables "channel partners to consistently stay one step ahead of technological developments."

	Allgemeine Zufriedenheit	kosten		Kulanz		Freundlichkeit	Erreichbarkeit
Apple	79	75	73	76	79	96	79
HP	73	70	68	72	76	82	67
Microsoft	55	66	57	56	56	73	47
Samsung	69	75	63	67	75	83	74

Computerworld Top 500/2019 — ■ Bester pro Spalte ■ Schlechtester pro Spalte — Bewertungen: 0 = sehr schlecht; 100 = sehr gut — Quelle: PCtipp-Supportstudie 2019; n = 1245

Source: 2019 Computerworld Satisfaction Survey

Along with the results of the Computerworld Satisfaction Survey, we are also presenting the results of the Support Study conducted by our sister publication PCtipp. That magazine's readers evaluated the quality of support offered by Swiss computer manufacturers and retailers, as well as telecom companies, in a survey conducted from February 6 to March 6 of this year.

The survey queried slightly more than 1200 PCtipp readers who needed support services over the previous 12 months. The readers were asked to rate the service performance of manufacturers, specialist retailers, and telecommunication companies in seven categories: Problem Solving, Cost of Support, Duration of Support, Goodwill, Expertise, Friendliness, and Reachability. The ratings ranged from 1 (poor) to 5 (very good).

Satisfaction with support: Telecom providers

The Sunrise and Swisscom service teams scored points with B2C customers with their friendliness and reachability

Salt	63,5	70,8	55,3	53,3	53,0	70,3	56,0
Sunrise	79,0	87,0	74,5	83,5	76,5	86,8	76,0
Swisscom	77,5	84,8	78,3	81,3	78,8	86,8	76,3
UPC	70,3	80,5	69,0	69,8	69,5	81,5	61,3

Source: 2019 Computerworld Satisfaction Survey

Here as well, the support provided by the ICT industry was assessed quite positively, as a rating of 3 (fair) was only issued in few cases, while the performance of most manufacturers, specialist retailers, and telecom providers was rated either good or very good.

There's always room for improvement

The fact that Brack was the undisputed leader among specialist retailers for the seventh consecutive time is due to "the tireless commitment of our customer service and B2B sales teams," says Daniel Rei, Head of Communications at Brack. These teams have "dedicated themselves to continuous improvement." As Rei adds, there's always room for improvement, and "resting on one's laurels harbors the risk of allowing the competition – both domestic and international – to catch up with you."

"Our top position in the study is due to the tireless commitment of our customer service and B2B sales teams"

Daniel Rei, brack.ch

Such statements are clearly more than just marketing slogans: Rei explains the clear lead his company enjoys over the competition by pointing out that Brack uses the detailed results of studies such as the PCtipp Support Study and its own customer surveys and feedback as a basis for the "continuous optimization of aspects that are rated less favorably."

Representatives of Digitec, which finished behind Brack but also once again received high ratings in all support categories, point out that their company is in a special situation at the moment. They explain that the company is growing significantly faster than the market and as a result is experiencing a disproportionate increase in the number of e-mails and calls it receives from customers. "We're pleased to have achieved such good results, despite the challenges associated with having to keep pace with this increase," says Digitec PR Manager Rico Schüpbach.

"Schweizer Händler heben sich auch durch den Support von der ausländischen Konkurrenz ab„
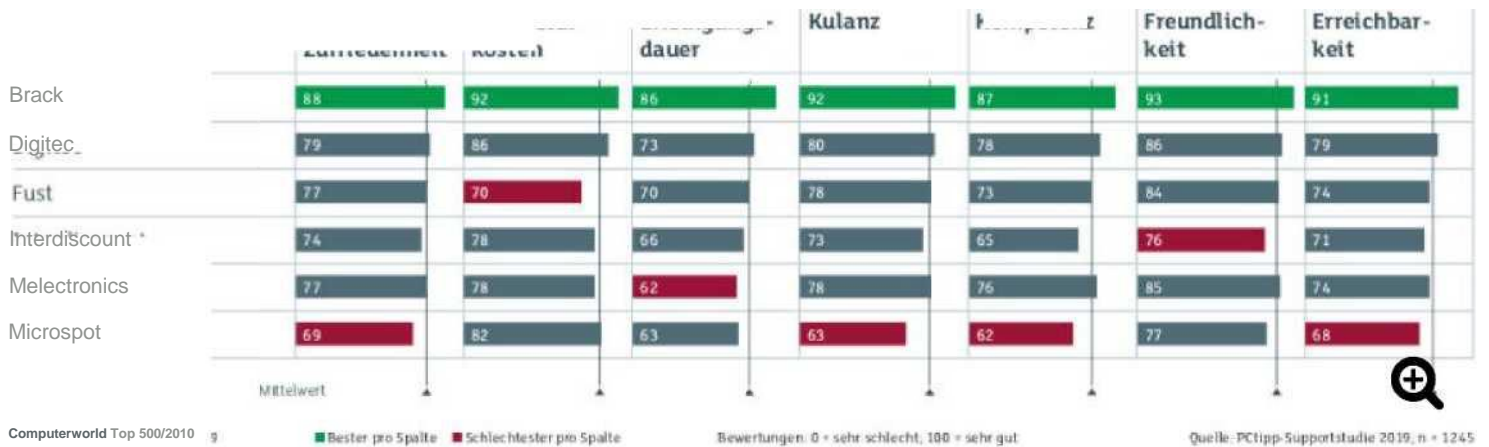
"Swiss retailers also stand out from their foreign competition with the great support they provide"

Rico Schüpbach, Digitec

The fact that Digitec did well in terms of price illustrates the importance the price factor holds in relation to customer satisfaction, even if Digitec doesn't focus primarily on price in its market positioning strategy, as Schüpbach points out. The crucial thing is that "our customers can make purchases from us comfortably, efficiently, and at consistently low prices."

Satisfaction with support: Retailers

Brack was the clear leader this year The online retailer made a big impression on customers in all categories

	Zufriedenheit	Kosten	dauer	Kulanz	...z	Freundlich-keit	Erreichbar-keit
Brack	88	92	86	92	87	93	91
Digitec	79	86	73	80	78	86	79
Fust	77	70	70	78	73	84	74
Interdiscount *	74	78	66	73	65	76	71
Melectronics	77	78	62	78	76	85	74
Microspot	69	82	63	63	62	77	68

Mittelwert

Computerworld Top 500/2010   9   ■ Bester pro Spalte ■ Schlechtester pro Spalte   Bewertungen: 0 = sehr schlecht, 100 = sehr gut   Quelle: PCtipp-Supportstudie 2019, n = 1245

Source: 2019 Computerworld Satisfaction Survey

Good customer service is also important: "Swiss retailers also stand out from their foreign competition with the great support they provide." Good service also pays off in the form of customer loyalty. In order to maintain a high level of support quality, we continuously analyze customer satisfaction and look for specific problem areas, says Schüpbach and adds: "We then adopt a self-critical view when working on these aspects." At Digitec, too, everyone knows that they can always improve further: "We pick up the pace so we can keep up and anticipate the developments most relevant to us."

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You'll find the source with the original article and all images at:
http://www.computerworld.ch/zufriedenheit_2019

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