Local playlists measurably improve hotel experience / HearDis! and Motel One present music study

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Munich. What people feel in a place is shaped not only by architecture, design, or service, but also by music. A new European pilot music study by HearDis! in collaboration with Motel One provides the first data-driven evidence of how local music influences the hotel experience. The results demonstrate clear positive effects on sense of place, guest satisfaction, and cultural curiosity.

HearDis! has long been creating music programs for Motel One and The Cloud One Hotels. These playlists form part of the Motel One Group's brand commitment to making cities and their identities holistically tangible. The study examined the measurable contribution local music makes to guests' sense of arrival and overall quality of stay.

The findings show a strong impact of local music on the guest experience. Guests exposed to local playlists were almost three times more likely to feel connected to the destination than those listening to non-local playlists. Overall satisfaction also rose significantly, with guests rating their stay as good or very good rising from 66 to 79 percent. Local playlists also strengthened cultural curiosity and the impulse to discover new artist.

The pilot study was conducted as part of the EU-funded Horizon Europe research project OpenMusE, which investigates innovative and fair usage contexts for music across Europe. Six Motel One Group hotels participated. Each hotel played two brand-fit music programs across two phases, identical in atmosphere and brand alignment. The sole variable was content locality: one playlist without local references and one featuring local artists, language, or regional context. Guests and employees evaluated their experience anonymously without knowing the study purpose, enabling a reliable comparison.

"Our guests should not just stay in a city – they should truly arrive, emotionally and culturally. This study shows that music is a highly effective yet often underestimated part of the guest journey" says Susan Schramm, CMO of the Motel One Group. "Local music strengthens the sense of place and measurably enhances the overall experience – regardless of age, gender, or musical taste. This proves that music serves as a strategic component of modern hospitality experience, which we will continue to develop and scale together with Motel One," adds Sören Maisch, Director In-Store Music at HearDis!.

The study highlights that effectiveness is not driven by song recognition, but by music's ability to convey the character of a place. Local playlists make a destination's identity audible and create a cultural connection between brand, city, and traveller.

Motel One and HearDis! will further develop and expand local music programs to embed local profiles consistently along the guest journey while increasing visibility for local artist.

Motel One

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Scan Me:

Inken Mende
Director Corporate Communications & PR
Tegernseer Landstraße 165, 81539 München
Tel.: +49 89665025-818
E-Mail: imende@motel-one.com
Internet: www.motel-one.com

Company Contact:

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E. desk@newsaktuell.de
W. https://www.newsaktuell.de/

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