



Showcase
& Awards
2024

Chester Racecourse

The Raceday Award – Oktoberfest Race Day



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Objectives



Background

The Oktoberfest Race Day at Chester Racecourse, held on a new later date of 14 October, was designed to reinvigorate the season finale by combining the thrill of racing with the vibrant and festive atmosphere of Oktoberfest. The event not only provided a unique and memorable experience but also aligned perfectly with Chester Racecourse's brand, attracting both existing racegoers and a new, younger audience. The race day exceeded expectations, delivering on multiple strategic objectives, and set a strong foundation for future events.

Objectives

1. **Identity and Attendance Boost:** With the new season finale date of October 14th, the fixture was at risk due to a lack of identity and declining attendance. The goal was to redefine this race day by creating a distinctive and engaging event that would draw in a larger crowd.
2. **Added Value:** We aimed to go beyond the core racing product by introducing added value through themed entertainment and activities, making it more than just a race day.
3. **Seasonal Commercial Opportunity:** Leveraging the Oktoberfest theme, we aimed to drive attendance and revenue by tapping into the Oktoberfest festivities that appeal to a broad audience.
4. **New Audience Engagement:** A key objective was to introduce a new audience, particularly younger demographics, to the world of racing through a fun and engaging event.
5. **F&B Sales Increase:** By incorporating themed food and drink offerings, we aimed to boost F&B sales, which ultimately saw a 26% increase.
6. **Market Testing for Future Events:** The event served as a testbed for future initiatives, allowing us to gauge market interest and refine our approach for 2025 and beyond.

Delivery



The delivery of Oktoberfest Race Day at Chester Racecourse was meticulously planned, ensuring that every element of the race day contributed to a memorable experience for guests.

- **Research and Planning:** The event planning began with extensive market research, during which our team visited leading attractions such as Alton Towers and the Liverpool Arena. We observed how these venues successfully themed their events, particularly noting the benefits of concentrating themed activities within specific areas. This research informed our decision to create a dedicated Oktoberfest zone named the Bavarian Village within the racecourse, allowing guests to fully immerse themselves in the festivities without detracting from the core racing experience. This strategic approach enabled us to cater to a broad audience, from dedicated racegoers to those primarily drawn by the Oktoberfest theme.
- **Venue Transformation:** The racecourse was transformed with vibrant Oktoberfest-themed decor, including custom signage, bunting, and photo opportunities that invited guests to capture and share their experiences. Traditional trestle tables, a central stage, and strategically placed themed zones reinforced the festive atmosphere. This attention to detail ensured that every corner of the dedicated Oktoberfest area contributed to the overall theme, creating an immersive environment that delighted guests.
- **Entertainment and Activities:** The event featured a full day of entertainment designed to engage and entertain a diverse audience. Highlights included performances by the Jagermaestros Oompah band, a jazz band, and an accordion player, all of which added an authentic Bavarian element to the day. The Mayor of Munich, our charismatic host for the day, led various activities such as the Best Dressed Bavarian competition, Bavarian dancers, and dachshund competitions (including categories like best dressed, waggiest tail, and best turned out). Additionally, traditional Oktoberfest games like keg rolling, stein holding competitions, sausage tossing, and German singalongs provided interactive and fun experiences that kept attendees entertained throughout the day.
- **Marketing and Promotion:** A comprehensive marketing campaign was launched to promote the event, combining outdoor advertising, social media, and public relations efforts. A series of engaging videos featuring the Mayor of Munich were central to our social media strategy, generating significant interest and shares, and helping to create a buzz around the event well in advance. The campaign effectively targeted both existing racegoers and potential new customers, particularly younger demographics attracted by the Oktoberfest theme.

The careful planning and execution of the Oktoberfest Race Day ensured that it was a standout event, combining racing with the vibrant energy of Oktoberfest to create an experience that was as memorable as it was successful.

Results



The Oktoberfest Race Day at Chester Racecourse yielded exceptional results across all key performance metrics, demonstrating the event's success in achieving its objectives and delivering a memorable experience for attendees.

- **Attendance:** The race day attracted 10,680 attendees, a significant 20% increase compared to both the forecast and the previous year's figures. The increase in attendance was largely down to the appeal of the Oktoberfest theme and the effectiveness of our marketing and engagement strategies.
- **Media Impact:** The event received extensive media coverage, with 12 pieces of local and regional press coverage reaching an estimated audience of 150,000. This media attention amplified the visibility and positioned Chester Racecourse as a creative and dynamic venue capable of hosting innovative events beyond racing.
- **Retention and Engagement:** The Oktoberfest Race Day resulted in a 7% increase in rebookings for the 2024 fixture, indicating strong customer satisfaction and a high likelihood of return visits. Additionally, our social media channels and email campaigns saw a marked increase in engagement, with event-related content generating higher-than-average interactions, shares, and positive feedback.
- **Revenue Growth:** The Oktoberfest theme also led to a 26% increase in food and beverage sales, driven by the introduction of themed offerings such as German beers, pretzels, and bratwurst, which resonated well with the audience.
- **New Audiences:** this race day helped to attract a younger demographic to the racecourse with 55% of bookers aged 18-34 years old – 30% of these were 18-24 years and 25% were 25-34 years.
- **Guest Feedback:** Post-event surveys revealed positive feedback, with value for money being 5% ahead of the previous fixture and the NPS score 7% ahead of the previous fixture. Attendees praised the unique combination of racing and themed entertainment, noting that it enhanced their overall experience and provided excellent value.

In summary, the Oktoberfest Race Day exceeded expectations, laying the groundwork for future events and securing our reputation as a premier destination for innovative and engaging race day experiences.

