

A visit with «Pulse Live» in Kenya Close to the action, close to the customer.



The present and the future of Ringier:
CEO Marc Walder (left), publisher
Michael Ringier, Robin Lingg (right).
He represents the next generation of
the Ringier family.

From generation to generation

To be continued ...

- 4 «We draw the line at «Silent Night»**
Setting the course for the company. Michael Ringier, Marc Walder and Robin Lingg in a big interview on the firm, family and (journalistic) faux pas.
- 12 Feeling the pulse of Kenya**
Ringier School of Journalism student Pauline Broccard on «Pulse Live» in Nairobi, where the focus is on social media and Africa's mobile generation.
- 16 Focus on Ringier**
The best press photos of the last quarter.
- 18 Inspiration for the future**
At the Ringier Management Conference, 220 people in Ringier management from nineteen countries got together to tackle questions regarding the company's future.
- 20 How I saved democracy day by day**
Ringier journalism student Florian Wicki takes part in the launch of the online magazine «Republik» and asks himself what exactly essayistic articles explaining the world are supposed to achieve.
- 24 The first laboratory**
Edwy Plenel and his comrades-in-arms founded «Mediapart» ten years ago. Today, this online magazine is the most important independent voice in France's media landscape.
- 26 My night with James Bond**
DOMO author René Haenig spends a night with 007. No, not in bed, but in the restroom where a dead body is lying in the corner. Despite this, Bond is and remains a gentleman.
- 28 Educating the heart**
Publisher Michael Ringier on why education and barbarity are not mutually exclusive and what we should learn from that.
- 29 My Week – Adetola Adegbite**
Why the head of Finance Intelligence in Nairobi has to be in her office at 6.30 a.m. every day.
- 30 Nadia's life from A to Z**
Anniversary: Nadia De Sousa Barros / Recommended reading by Marc Walder

Cover photo: Christoph Köstlin

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«No one pushed, no one had to bend; it all went very quickly.»

Michael Ringier



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«We draw the line at «Silent Night»»

A change of generations is taking place at Ringier: CEO Marc Walder is buying ten percent of the shares. In the mid-term, he will succeed Michael Ringier as Chairman of the Board. Robin Lingg will become the head of the family.

Interview: Peter Hossli Photos: Christoph Köstlin

On the 7th floor of the Pressehaus in Zurich; water, dates and Swiss chocolate wafers are on the table. CEO Marc Walder (52) is sitting in the middle, to his left, Chairman of the Board Michael Ringier (68), to his right, Ringier's nephew Robin Lingg (38). They are all wearing white shirts - only Marc Walder and the interviewer are sporting ties.

Mr. Ringier, what constitutes a true Ringier?

Michael Ringier (MR): We've had all sorts, from enormously capable people to less capable people, to freaks.

Mr. Walder, you are a new shareholder of Ringier AG. What does Ringier mean to you?

Marc Walder (MW): Ringier signifies the willingness to run risks, to reinvent oneself time and again, as well as a great responsibility towards the employees. In addition, Ringier signifies a modern media enterprise that has managed to diversify and digitalize.

Mr. Lingg, you are the youngest in this circle. At age 38, do you know what constitutes a Ringier?

MR: Given his mother, certainly! Robin Lingg (LG): I know one thing - you can't pigeonhole a Ringier. We are flexible. Ringier gives you a lot of

liberties.

What makes Marc Walder a Ringier?

MR: The common traits that Marc shares with the current Ringier generation are considerable, beginning with integrity right through to honesty and ambition. All of these are important qualities.

RL: Marc and I have been working together for five years. He supports the family's shared vision. The borderlines between Marc and the family dissolve when we're at work. We all agree on what is right and what is wrong.

Will the company now become «Waldier», as the tabloid «Blick» quipped?

RL: Puns seem to be a particular journalistic sport.

MW: When I saw this word in «Blick», I was slightly appalled. This pun presumes far too much. Ringier is one of Switzerland's longest-standing family enterprises, run by the fifth generation, now moving on to the sixth generation.

MR: The term «Waldier» was coined by me, so that's quite okay. I am hoping for us to go more in the direction of «Ringer» (German for wrestler), thereby finally shaking off «Gier» (German for greed).

What is your vision of your future task, Mr. Walder?

MW: During the period I'll have the pleasure of running Ringier, I will set the course in such a way that the next generation can take over an enterprise that is well positioned. The pun has no base in reality. The Ringier enterprise belongs to the Ringier family.

Whose idea was it to make Marc Walder a Ringier shareholder and designated Chairman of the Board?

MR: In other businesses you would probably hear: «That was my idea.» We...

RL: ... we don't really know.

MR: Honestly. It just evolved, very gradually, as many things do in our company.

RL: Suddenly, it was there. Then, everybody said - that's it.

MR: It made sense that way.

Things just happen at Ringier?

MW: Robin had a very good job in Mexico City, with a pharmaceutical company that is considerably larger than Ringier, with - how many employees, Robin?

RL: 45,000.

MW: With 45,000 employees. When I was already CEO, Michael, Robin, his mother Evelyn and I were asking ourselves whether we should get Robin to join Ringier. Nobody envisioned that five years later he would be responsible for the



A CHANGE OF GENERATIONS

company's most profitable division – digital – that now yields almost seventy percent of the operating profit. He is in charge of that division because he accomplishes a lot, because he has brilliantly advanced Ringier Africa, and not because he is a member of the Ringier family.

MR to MW: Twenty-five years ago, nobody thought you would become CEO.

RL: The secret of the success of our five – now six – generations is that you don't plan decades ahead but always try to do what's best in the current situation.

MR: Probably neither of my sisters thought I would do this job halfway decently. You just leave each other to work things out by themselves, and it will turn out okay – most of the time.

Mr. Ringier, you mentioned years ago that you would like Marc Walder to follow in your footsteps. What did it take to convince your sisters, who are also shareholders?

MR: That was not our main concern. **What was?**

MR: I needed to finally start thinking about my age. I realized – yes, I have grown older without noticing.

What did you conclude from this?

MR: We urgently have to address the issue of generational change. My sisters, Evelyn and Annette, did not need to be persuaded.

RL: This is not the result of negotiations. There was no quid pro quo. No «I'll give you this, you give me that.» You, Michael said, «We need to sit down at a table and talk about the succession.»

Then the family retreated, and Marc Walder sat waiting outside until white smoke appeared?

(General laughter)

MR: We approached this very professionally, by seeking out a moderator. He figured out everybody's interests and found that there was a lot of harmony. Within a short amount of time we settled legitimate individual interests.

Why did none of this get leaked?

MR: Leaks only occur when something isn't right. In our case, everything is.

Mr. Ringier, you were described to me as being to a degree someone «constantly striving for harmony».

MR: I quite vehemently deny this rumor. I've been married to my wife for forty years – evidence enough that I like to argue.

So I haven't got my research right?

MR: You haven't! My wife couldn't stand a single day with someone constantly striving for harmony.

All the same – how do you pull off a generational handover in such a harmonious way?

MR: That is this family's strength.

You are its head. How do you create such a climate?

MR: By means of shared experiences. Family must be important. None of us go away on vacation over the Christmas holidays. For Christmas, we all gather at the family home in Merlischachen. We have always done so and will continue to do so.

Is Marc Walder there, as well?

MR: No, this has nothing to do with the company.

RL: We never talk shop, instead we watch «Die Hard 3» for the seven hundredth time; I cook; we enjoy each other's company.

Marc Walder owning ten percent of the shares won't change that?

MR: There still is a company and a family. That is important. We keep the two separate. It would be embarrassing for Marc if he had to sing «Silent Night» with us. Sure, he has become part of the family during the past twenty-five years. That becomes apparent with the stake. But we draw the line at «Silent Night».

Until now, three shareholders owned a third of the shares each. If one of them wanted to sell, only the other two were available as buyers. How did you get around this rule?

MR: Suddenly, rules that used to make sense were no longer appropriate. When everyone agrees, you find a new consensus. At some point, the next generation will change the new rules again.

The weekly «Weltwoche» wrote that Annette Ringier was basically a kingmaker in this deal, because she wanted to sell her share of 33.3 percent within the family.

MR: Quoting «Weltwoche» as a source is already your second journalistic gaffe in this interview. **Is it true?**

MR: Nonsense. No one pushed, no one had to bend; it all went very quickly.

Is there a new rule with respect to selling shares? If so, what does it look like?

MR: The answer to your first question is yes; we will say nothing regarding the second question.

Marc Walder becoming a shareholder suggests a stock market launch. When

*Michael Ringier:
The serene one*

Michael Ringier (68) grew up in Zofingen as the youngest of four children and discovered his passion for journalism during a 1973 internship with the Munich Abendzeitung. In 1974, he completed the first course of studies at the Ringier School of Journalism. In 1984, he joined the family business; since 1991 he has been its Chairman of the Board. Under the aegis of this passionate art collector and enthusiastic golfer, the company transforms from a classic newspaper and magazine publishing house to an international, diversified media group. (Photo: Michael Ringier in 1987, in his office at the Pressehaus)



will Ringier get listed?

MR: As long as I am in this, Ringier will not be launched on the stock market.

RL: What we are doing right now – this is very important for our employees –, is a vote of confidence for Marc's work. It is a message of stability. We would like to keep running this company as a family enterprise. That is why I work for Ringier.

There is mention of certain figures regarding the company's increase in value under Marc Walder. The «Weltwoche» claims it has increased from 900 million to 1.5 billion Swiss francs. Is that true?

MR: On the wall behind you is a work of art by Anselm Reyle. How

valuable it is, is something I will only find out once I offer to sell it at an auction. If two people want it, the price will go sky-high. If only one person wants it, the price will go down.

RL: We hardly ever talk about money.

MR: We simply don't know how much the company is worth, but we are convinced that we have a much better business ever since Marc joined us. What's interesting isn't figures but people.

But Marc Walder was able to considerably increase the company's value with the investments he made?

MR: He has turned this company into something new.

RL: A new enterprise.

MR: He has made something with a future. That is invaluable.

Is making him a shareholder an acknowledgement of this achievement?

RL: Of course it is an acknowledgement, but not only that. It is also a confirmation that we want to continue on the path he has chosen. **Did the family gift Marc Walder the shares?**

RL: No.

MR: Gifts never work, not even in a marriage, unless they are backed up by something serious.

MW: Let me briefly talk about the shareholders, the Ringier family. Our business model had severely come under attack. Newspapers, magazines and printing plants were substantially weakened by digitali-

zation. That calls for shareholders with enormous courage. Ten years ago, we were talking about investing dozens of millions to acquire Ticketcorner, even hundreds of millions for Jobs.ch or Scout24. I witnessed what the people who dared to do this were told at the time.

What were they told?

MW: Many colleagues in publishing who take slower, less daring steps towards change were saying: «You are crazy, and the shareholders are even crazier, to run such high risks, investing in businesses you don't know.» So the praise should go to those who authorized these investments, not to the executives who implemented them. ►

A CHANGE OF GENERATIONS



Robin Lingg: The new hope

Robin Lingg (38) has been a member of the Ringier AG Group Executive Board since 2014 and heads the International Marketplaces division. Previously, he was CEO of Ringier Africa and Asia, and Head of Business Development. Robin Lingg is the son of Evelyn Lingg-Ringier, who owns Ringier AG together with her brother Michael Ringier and their sister Annette Ringier. Lingg studied languages, economics and cultural science at the University of Passau in Germany. Lingg is married, has three children and lives in Zurich. (Photo: Robin Lingg in 2014, at the Ringier offices in Ghana)

MR: Sorry, Marc, but it takes both. Our company is all we have. There are no secret fat accounts with umpteen millions. I don't want to play the pauper and denigrate my wonderful life, but whatever we do, we carry the risk ourselves.

MW: The beginning of the transaction was formative. It established a close tie between the shareholders and me. They trusted me to invest a lot of money in companies that we in management believed were the right ones. The risk has paid off. Many of these companies are worth many times their original buying price.

You have now bought ten percent of a much more valuable company. I don't know what your financial situation is, but I'm assuming you didn't pay cash for the shares. How were you able to afford this acquisition?

MW: Jointly we have found a solution to how I could take over a considerable share - ten percent is a huge amount to me - in this wonderful company. This solution will remain known only to the circle of the people who developed it.

So far, you have been a salaried employee. Now you are a partner bearing part of the risk. If anything goes wrong you might get saddled with debt. How

does that affect your mindset?

MW: I grew up with the pleasures and pains of an entrepreneur. My father had an architectural firm. It expanded from four to thirty-eight employees, and then it went downhill again. When things were going well, everyone was happy, when they weren't, we felt that, too. I have always been conscientious. Ever since my participation was announced, I have been giving even more thought to where we should invest.

Does it make you more or less willing to take risks?

MW: Good question. I'll be able to give you an answer in a few years' time.

MR: We'll find out when we make our next investment.

MW: But I don't decide on my own, we decide as a team.

MR: It has always been my ambition that we should not have to take a vote. In the thirty years that I've been with this company, we have always hashed matters out until everyone said yes or no.

MW: With respect to the almost two billion Swiss francs we have invested in technology and other companies, there has never been a need for a casting vote, we've always

reached a consensus.

On which everyone followed through?

RL: If we'd been hesitant we would not have managed the company's transformation. Once we've reached a decision, everyone follows through.

Mr. Ringier, two years ago, you said you were a publisher who gets involved, «or there would be no need for me.» Will there be no need for you soon?

MR: I remain a shareholder, and in that capacity I will continue to get involved and have my say. But I'll no longer walk through the editorial offices of «Blick» and poke my nose in. However, I'll still feel responsible for anything published in our name.

Mr. Walder, you are about to succeed Michael Ringier as Chairman of the Board. Will you remain CEO?

MW: What we have now is very

good: a chairman who is co-proprietor, who used to be CEO, who knows all our businesses inside and out. Now, the family has announced that I will eventually assume the chairmanship. And then there will be a new CEO.

RL: We have always made sure that the wind of change can blow and that we don't all march in the same direction. You simply can't be a shareholder, CEO and Chairman of the Board in one. Michael says you'd wind up talking only to yourself, you miss out on other influences.

MR: Opposing forces have always been important to me. The Deputy Chairman of the Board, Uli Sigg, chairs the meetings. My sisters may not be as much in the public eye, but inside the company they are very present. They know everything, they can be very stubborn and they're the opposite of yes men. Thanks to these kinds of opposing forces we manage to resolve everything in harmony.

You share power. What is its significance?

MR: I took a long time to appreciate that I was somewhat different, both inside the company and out - due to my position and my name. I used to feel I was the same as everybody else, until I had to realize: If everybody else sees that differently, it must be true.

You realized you had power?

MR: That's when I learned how to handle it. Power is tricky. It's necessary to make the right thing happen. But you have to be damn careful that you don't forget to get others on board. If decisions are made based solely on power, things usually go wrong.

RL: Power is not a constant.

MR: That is why we wanted Marc to become a shareholder. Now his position is different. It's more ... it's something other than a hired CEO, a Chairman. Everybody knows: He's a shareholder now.

MW: A media company exerts influence on society. That gives it power. Sure, we, too, have made mistakes. But if you consider how we've dealt with, say, the rise of right-wing populism in Switzerland and in Eastern Europe, I'd say we have used our power responsibly. Our responsibility to society had priority over our pursuit of profit. A media company has greater responsibility than a screw factory.

Mr. Ringier, you were part of the first Ringier School of Journalism class.

MR: Most of the alumni have done well for themselves

Would you recommend this career to one of your daughters?

MR: Yes, but their paths are taking them in different directions. Of course journalism remains a fascinating profession. Economically, however, it is rather less interesting than it used to be while becoming much more challenging.

You also used to be a journalist.

Mr. Walder, but now you seem to be more thrilled with digitalization. Will Ringier remain a journalistic company? Or is that interest dwindling?

MW: The company has certainly grown more independent of journalism. That's quite right. Nobody working in this industry today can say what will be in five years' time. That's why the transformation was a smart move. To conclude, however, that journalism no longer matters, is wrong. Michael has always said it is precisely because we publish journalistic product that we were able to change so much over the last ten years. Partners chose to create companies with us because we have major history in journalism.

RL: Neither the fascination for nor the interest in journalism is dwindling, but there is an increasing awareness that it has become more difficult to finance journalism.

You, Mr. Lingg, weren't trained as a journalist.

RL: Probably no one at Ringier has done more to create journalistic jobs and set up newsrooms at Ringier in the last five years than I have. Those who are worried about the significance of journalism at Ringier had better think about the problems we'd face without our non-journalistic businesses.

MW: I can appreciate why journalists ask whether they'll remain relevant to this company. Particularly since there's been increasing discussion of artificial intelligence and machine learning. To those journalists who wonder whether they're still in the right place I say: It is the best place to be precisely because the company has such a broad foundation.

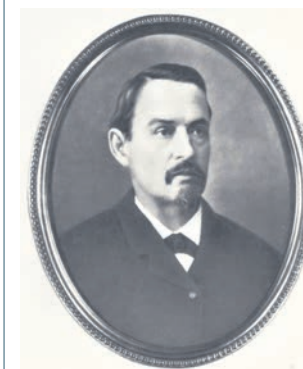
You made your mark in Mexico, Mr. Lingg. Is that more important than journalistic training?

RL: I guess my background gave Michael and Marc the idea that I could be an asset. I left Switzerland at twenty-one and spent thirteen years abroad, where I was effective ►

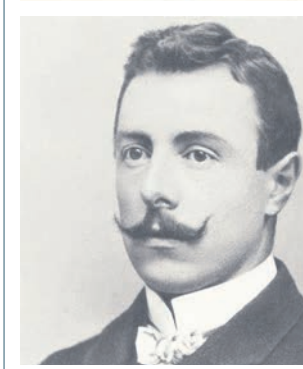
Five generations of Ringier - in business for 185 years



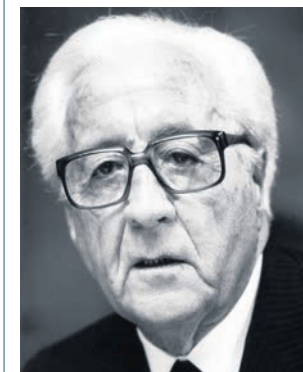
◀ In 1833, pastor's son Johann Rudolf Ringier buys a print shop in Zofingen. For the next 40 years, he primarily prints local gazettes, school syllabuses and speeches for public executions, as well as the weekly magazine Zofinger Wochenblatt.



◀ In 1874, his son, Franz Emil, takes over control of the company. Its main printing assignments are commercial documents and musical scores. In 1885, Ringier gives up publication of the Zofinger Wochenblatt. Ringier was late to recognize readers' new demand for news.



◀ In 1898, 22-year-old Paul August Ringier takes over the print shop after the sudden death of his father, Franz Emil. The print shop is strong with respect to technology but weak in terms of publishing. Ringier begins to cooperate with August Francke, the largest competitor in the region.



◀ Paul August Ringier dies at the age of 84. He had run the media company in a gruff, patriarchal manner - but with great success. In 1960, his only son, Hans, takes over the company and its now 2,000 employees.



◀ In 1985, Hans Ringier hands over the reins to his sons, Christoph and Michael. In 1991, Christoph Ringier leaves the company. Michael Ringier assumes sole responsibility as Chairman of the Board.

A CHANGE OF GENERATIONS

in up-and-coming markets. Our roots are in Switzerland, but Ringier is an agile international enterprise.

You were happy and successful living in Latin America. Now you're back in cloudy Switzerland. Why ...

MW: He's hardly ever in Switzerland.

Why would you want that? Nobody is obliged to go into the family business.

RL: It's the greatest thing. My wife and I were actually going to stay in Mexico. When Marc asked if I'd like to come back we didn't hesitate for a millisecond.

It's a big step.

RL: When you get the opportunity to contribute to something you have long benefited from, to keep a 185-year-old history going that to my mind certainly constitutes a highly valued model for our employees, there is nothing to think about. It is our family's mission in life.

Many things will remain unchanged for the time being. Why discuss it now?

MR: Today, more than ever, it is important for people to know who they're dealing with. The competition is tough. Others pay more or offer more interesting tech jobs. In our company, people know who they're dealing with. They may know Marc or me; now they'll meet Robin. They'll know what to expect. RL: We're doing away with speculation. We expect a lot of flexibility from our colleagues and employees; we keep asking them to adapt. Often enough, we turn everything upside down within eighteen months. Now we are saying two things. First: The path we have chosen is one hundred percent correct and we'll stay the course, with Marc, with Michael, with me.

And second?

RL: Despite many shifts and changes, the foundation is very solid. This house is standing up straight.

You call Mr. Ringier «my uncle». What is Michael Ringier to you, apart from an uncle?

MR: Probably his millstone!

RL: Michael has always been special to me. When I was a boy he kept picking on me. No kid under ten years of age can take that kind of sarcasm. I always loved my uncle when I was a child. He is a key figure in our family, along with my mother. We've always had a good relationship, we never argued. He is warm-hearted and is there when you need him.

Mr. Ringier, what is Marc Walder to you? A foster-son? A friend? An employee?

MR: Marc is some sort of Siamese twin. We hadn't met in person for a long time. I first noticed him playing tennis. You learn a lot about someone that way. Over the years we grew closer. What is pleasant now, is that our minds think alike which makes many things a lot easier. Where others take months to decide, we decide within ten minutes. Besides, we laugh a lot.

Humor is important to you?

MR: Even as a young man I swore to myself that I'd work with people who make me laugh. It's the same in my family. We laugh a lot at home! Of course, there are casualties. I ought to publicly apologize to Robin for saying he should go play the trumpet outside at Christmas. Robin, I am really sorry!

Mr. Walder, I suppose you still beat Mr. Ringier at tennis? What is he better at than you?

MW: He has great natural authority. He never needs to raise his voice or push things through by virtue of his position. The authority he exudes is quite enough. Michael Ringier becoming our Chairman of the Board was the best thing that could have happened to the company. He is away on business a lot, traveling between New York, Miami and London. And yet, he is unquestionably the head of the company.

What do you appreciate about Robin Lingg, Mr. Walder?

MW: It was a risk when Robin joined the company.

RL: Absolutely.

MW: Especially for Robin. He had a fantastic job in Mexico. His family liked it there. He moved them from the other side of the world to Zurich, to work in a company run by his uncle, in a line of business Robin didn't know, and got an assignment to establish something in Africa. It doesn't get any more difficult than that. And you know what? He has done an outstanding job, because he is self-sacrificing, efficient and exceptionally quick. Progress matters to him.

Mr. Lingg, what are you learning from Marc Walder?

RL: A huge amount. There is no bullshit, no politics between us. Neither has to pretend to the other. We openly lay our cards on the table, telling each other what we think. We learn from each other and with each other.

So this is the next generation of Siamese twins?

RL: Marc is a visionary. He takes a long view and he is an incredible networker. His enthusiasm even after twenty-five years is fantastic. One thing in particular characterizes our relationship: honesty. There are no filters.

Editor, Editor-in-chief, CEO of Ringier Switzerland, CEO, shareholder; Mr. Walder, how do you explain how to build such a career to your children?

MW: In the end it always boils down to applying yourself. I am convinced of that. No one has ever become a tennis champion without a lot of training.

MR: Nor an art collector.

MW: Not in a dogged way, but with real commitment.

Simply applying yourself is enough?

MW: The second thing is integrity. The people you work with should be saying: «I enjoy working with him.» There is a true saying: «People do business with people they know, like and trust».

Mr. Ringier, who has the better taste in art, Marc or Robin?

RL: I don't even know that I have one.

MR: That is a very callous question. It is not about taste, it is about the eye, seeing it. When I experience how they react to a work of art, I must say, each has a good eye. This is not something you can learn, but it is a requirement. Beyond that, everyone has to decide how far to go.

So the two will continue to run the collection?

MW: (laughs) I won't!

RL: (laughs)

MR: We will discuss the art collection succession at another time. My father lived to be ninety-seven. On the eve of my death I will buy another painting.

In your secretary's room I noticed an elephant sculpture by Rolf Knie.

RL: (laughs mischievously)

MW: The fact that you mention this is your third journalistic faux pas!

RL: It's the elephant in the room.

May we play the joker and not talk about it?

MW: May I tell the story?

Does the sculpture fit in with the collection?

RL: (laughs)

MW: We would not want to make headlines by allowing Michael to speak.

Too bad.

MW: I invited Rolf, whom I've known for thirty years, to lunch at



Marc Walder: The mover and shaker

Marc Walder (52) began his career with Ringier in 1991, in the marketing division. In 1993, he entered the Ringier School of Journalism. In the following years he held various positions, including Editor-in-Chief of Schweizer Illustrierte and of SonntagsBlick, and editorial manager of the Blick Group. In 2008, Walder is appointed CEO of Ringier Switzerland, and since 2012 he has been CEO of Ringier AG. Under Walder's management, the company has consistently pursued a strategy of diversification and digitalization. A former tennis pro, he is married and has two daughters. (Photo: Marc Walder in 2002, at Schweizer Illustrierte)

the Kronenhalle restaurant. At 12.30 I was sitting in the restaurant. By 12.45 I sent him a text message: «I am sitting in the front room, on the left.» At 1 p.m. I wrote: «Have you forgotten me?» At 1.15 p.m. I left the Kronenhalle, because he never showed. At 2 p.m. he wrote: «Shit, I completely forgot, so sorry.» Afterwards, being the kind person he is, he brought me the elephant. MR: Art must be tolerant. My wife also collects elephants. Mr. Walder's assistant asked me whether she might keep it.

RL: The assistant is leaving us!

MR: Her farewell present?

RL: She can take the elephant.

Michael. Marc. Robin. Is Ringier still firmly in male hands?

RL: No, we have very strong women in key positions.

MR: Two thirds are female shareholders.

RL: Correct, it is rather a coincidence.

MR: I think that answers your question. Anyone who knows our

women ...

RL: ... Ellen, Susanne, Myri ...

MR: ... knows that all of us sitting here are just decoys.

MW: The issue of women is important at Ringier. There are two women on the board and, key departments like Finances and Technology as well as Human Resources and Mergers & Acquisitions are run by women. A woman runs Blic Serbia, another Blick Online.

MR: A lot is happening, but there is certainly room for improvement.

You have two daughters. After Robin, there would be a possibility that a woman becomes the head of the family.

MR: We have never ruled that out. As to my generation, the question was justified. I didn't have to do the job because I am a man but because my sisters didn't want to do it.

Mr. Ringier, Marc Walder says coding is the new writing. You write trenchant speeches and sharp columns. Do you know how to code?

MR: It would be awful if I knew how to do everything. I understand what it is about, that's enough. I devote myself to contemporary art. Each day I find myself faced with something I don't understand. That keeps me young.

Each generation leaves behind a legacy. What is yours?

MR: Others will be the judges of that. I'm not bothered about it. I try to do my job as well as I can and according to my aspirations. I don't compete with others. I never use the term legacy. I am happy with the current solution. The rest will be up to Robin. 🌐



Feeling the Pulse of Kenya

For twelve months now, Ringier's African news portal «Pulse Live» has also been operative in Kenya. Whether there are political controversies to discuss or a street survey to be done in Nairobi – Pulse is there, live. To get users to like, debate and share items, the focus is on social media, a strategy that is paying off.

Text: Pauline Broccard, student at the Ringier School of Journalism Photos: Sven Torfinn

Caroline Njoroge, 26, stands holding a microphone surrounded by a dozen men. The «Pulse Live Kenya» presenter is in the field, conducting a survey in the streets of Nairobi between the neighborhoods of Satellite und Kawangware. «Which rules does your wife follow at home?» she asks a young man. «I don't think there are any rules. Nowadays it's more about communication and understanding,» he replies in Swahili. The other men are peering over the shoulder of video journalist Musa Chahare, 30, to see the camera's display, attentively listening to the interview.

The people in the streets of Nairobi know Caroline. They call her «The Pulse Lady». She and her cameraman Musa belong to the 12-person video team at «Pulse Live Kenya». Three times a week in the morning, the team is out shooting video material for a witty clip to be posted on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and You-

Tube. In the afternoon they are back in the streets of the Kenyan capital and live on Facebook with more (trick) questions like: What can you cook on a pancreas? (yes, the glandular organ - Ed.)

Meanwhile, in the Kileleshwa neighborhood: Here, at 36, Othaya Road, is the home of «Pulse Live Kenya». The Kenyan news portal has a similar structure to that of the Swiss website Blick.ch. The editorial team works in a residential building guarded by security. The house is furnished with tables and office chairs that are hard to move despite their casters. The team's mood is

While «Pulse Lady» Carolina is doing street surveys (left), managing editor Martin Wachira discusses the topics of the day with his journalists at the Pulse editorial offices.

productive, creative - and cheerful. On the first floor, the journalists, the social media crew and the sales team sit close to one another. The video team, the associated TV studio and the financial department share the second floor. Even in the mornings, there is the smell of a fire emanating from the first-floor kitchen. Dolly, 32, the cook, is preparing Ugali. This porridge made from cornmeal is a Kenyan specialty.

At the journalists' table, a heated discussion is taking place. A reporter and his female colleague lean across the table, fiercely gesticulating with their arms. They are debating in ►



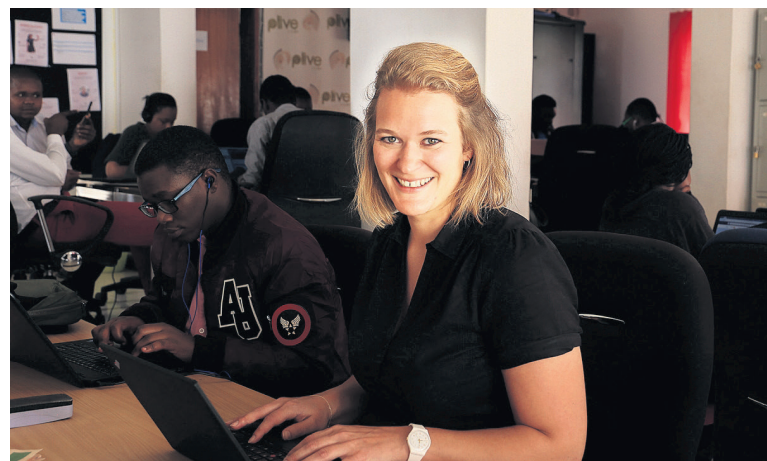
English and Swahili, loud enough to drown out the TV. Suddenly, the two squabblers double up and burst out laughing, only to continue their debate at full volume. Their argument concerns a post on Instagram, in which Zawadi Nyong'o displays herself in the nude. She is a (minor) celebrity in Kenya and the older sister of Lupita Nyong'o. In 2014, Lupita won an Oscar for best actress in a supporting role in the movie «12 Years a Slave». «If she showed herself in the nude for a good cause, it would be okay. But this is just grabbing for attention,» the journalist says. His colleague from the social media team retorts: «Let her show off her beautiful body, if that's what she wants.» Anyway. Sudden silence. As if they had pushed the pause button for a minute, the debate starts again. Laughter - shouting - gesticulating.

Every day here is like this; it's only the topics of discussion that vary. Sometimes it's politics, sometimes relationships or simply sex. Today is a rather quiet day, really. The journalists are concentrating on their articles, each writing a minimum of five pieces per day in the categories of news, politics, entertainment and lifestyle.

The following day, there is a particular buzz in the air. Opposition leader Raila Odinga takes his «oath of office», appointing himself the «president of the people». As a result, the government has shut down all private TV stations wanting to broadcast the event. This is a special day, not only for Nairobi, but for Kenya's entire media landscape. Live streams are the only channels still working, and that is exactly what «Pulse Live Kenya» offers. Cameraman Musa is on location as a video journalist, streaming the «opposition's inauguration» on Facebook. On this day, the news platform reaches an all-time

Dolly, the cook - and the heart and soul of the house -, preparing Ugali. This porridge made from cornmeal is a Kenyan specialty.

After working for Bild, Hamburg-born Leonie von Elverfeldt joined Pulse Live Kenya as Director Digital Publishing. «We produce for the mobile generation, which is much bigger here than in Europe.»



high in terms of user figures: 900,000 viewers are watching this controversial political event live! Even the joint-head of the social media team, Safina Okumu, 25, is impressed. «Because the TV stations are shut down, people are looking to social media for news. We are on air with Facebook Live. In addition, we are continuously publishing quotes from Odinga's speech, and the journalists are producing articles explaining and assessing these events.»

Safina Okumu was already on the

editorial team when the social media channels of «Pulse Live Kenya» were launched in January 2017 without a single follower to their name. «It's nice to see our medium grow so quickly. When we started out, we would celebrate even 17 likes. In the meantime, we have arrived at 500,000.»

Social media are one of the most important means of distribution for «Pulse Live Kenya». As much as seventy-five percent of their readers find the page through social media.

«Pulse»'s strategy is to let users participate as much as possible in what is going on. They should like, comment, share. On Facebook Live, we always talk to our viewers directly, because those people will join us again next time,» Safina explains.

Leonie von Elverfeldt, 33, is proud of her team. Originally from Hamburg, she was poached from the daily tabloid Bild, and moved to Nairobi last April. At that time, «Pulse Live Kenya» was in its infancy with just twelve employees. «Today, there are forty-five of us,» says von Elverfeldt, Director Digital Publishing East-Africa. Next to Nigeria and Ghana, Kenya is the third mainstay of the «Pulse» brand. «During the past year, we were able to ride on the coattails of those two pioneering countries. Particularly when it came to video formats, we were able to adopt a lot of material. Now we need to find our own voice.» They are supposed to come across as young and cool. Readers should be given new information but also entertained. The target audience is between 18 and 49. It is only fitting, then, that the editorial team consists of young people. The staffers working for



The liveliest discussions take place at the big table where journalists share work places (left). Meanwhile, Alan Mwangi, the expert for branded content, is discussing the latest strategies with his staff.

«Pulse» are at least twenty years old and no older than forty-three.

The users are currently 55 percent men and 45 percent women. The team features a similarly balanced distribution of males and females.

In its first year, the team was able to profit from the fact that the election of the Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta had to be repeated. «This really boosted our traffic very quickly,» von Everfeldt maintains. Besides «Pulse» Nigeria and Ghana, the Swiss news portal Blick.ch also serves as a model for the Kenyans, particularly in terms of its layout, content and the length of the texts. «We produce for the mobile generation, which is much bigger here than in Europe.» The platform's development is advancing day by day. «Pulse Live Kenya» is already cooperating with the American news website «Business Insider» as well as with «The New York Times». On one hand, the collaboration allows these media to reach a new digital audience, while on the other, the African readership benefits from award-winning reporting. «There will certainly be more. Many brands want to give Africa a try. In addition, we are considering various other business models,» says von Elverfeldt.

For the time being, «Pulse Live Kenya» is still receiving financial support from its mother company, Ringier Switzerland. In the future, however, the platform is meant to finance itself completely through advertising revenue.

«Pulse» articles need to be adapted for Kenyan customers. Both journalist Fred Kiarie, 30, and branded content expert Alan Mwangi, 26, agree on this. «Kenyans are mainly interested in local news, not so much in international news,» Fred maintains. That is the biggest challenge in the Kenyan market. «Just because something is considered cool in Europe, South Africa or Nigeria does not necessarily mean Kenyans will like it. We focus on our own identity,» says Alan. 🌐



With its main publication Pulse, the Ringier subsidiary Ringier Africa Digital Publishing offers information and entertainment, particularly in the categories of news, music, movies, events and sports, for the African mass market and for mobile users, reaching 135 million consumers per month. The platform is active in Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana, while also producing content in Tanzania, Uganda, Senegal and Ivory Coast. Within the terms of a cooperation agreement, Pulse also holds licenses to the «New York Times» as well as «Business Insider» in these markets.

Ringier's best photos of the last quarter

The best pictures and their story: While Roger Federer turns sports into an art form in Australia, soccer turns into a blood sport in Serbia.

STYLE
PIERLUIGI MACOR
SUSANNE MÄRKI

Photographer
Editor

«Would you be up for photographing the Zurich prima ballerina Yen Han?» The request from the fashion magazine **Style** comes in at short notice. Pierluigi Macor is up for it. He spent many years working as a fashion photographer in Paris. He does not feel like portraying the prima ballerina in a classic ballet pose. Macor is thinking of modern dancers. First, he scouts the location, because that is a given: The guild-hall Zur Meisen in Zurich, one of the city's most valued buildings historically, means a lot to the ballet dancer. When Macor tells her of his idea, «she immediately showed me which jumps she has mastered,» he recalls. For his photograph, he has the ballerina take about ten leaps. «That went quite quickly.» He says he was surprised at «how nicely and kindly she complied with all my requests.» Even when Yen Han jumps up into the air, she is not some diva with her head in the clouds but a prima ballerina.

BLIC
PREDRAG DEDIJER
MLADEN SURJANAC

Photographer
Editor

The story behind this photo by Predrag Dedijer, photographer for the Serbian tabloid **Blic**, is a sad one. The image shows the Ilic family of seven who live in the wreck of a stranded ship in the village of Susara, not far from the Romanian border. «How it ended up on this meadow, no one from the village could explain,» says Dedijer. He takes pictures of the father, Stevo, the mother, Gordana, and the children, Aleksandar, 17, Ivana, 13, Uros, 10, Ivan, 7, and Jovan, 4. They tell the photographer they had no home in Romania. In the ship that serves as a shelter to the village shepherds, they live in two rooms. Dedijer: «It was dirty, there were no sanitary installations, there was no electricity.» The refugees fetch water from their neighbors and firewood from the forest. The children used to be excellent students but because of the language barrier in Serbia they fell behind. Despite their precarious situation, none of them complain. Dedijer cannot forget the family's fate. When he goes to check up on them months later, they are gone. Thanks to the «Blic foundation» the family got a new and comfortable home.

L'ILLUSTRÉ
CORINNE DUBREUIL
JULIE BODY

Photographer
Editor

He is a living (sports) legend: Roger Federer, 36. So it's quite understandable that Corinne Dubreuil, on the job at the Australian Open for the Romandy weekly **L'illustré**, gets «a little nervous» when she is supposed to meet him, even though it is not her first shoot with King Roger; the thing is that the French photographer never knows whether he will show up or not. After his 20th title win in his 30th Grand Slam Final, the world press is scrambling to get to Federer. Dubreuil gets the go-ahead for a five-minute photo session at the Government House in Melbourne. While her colleagues in the garden have to share Federer, she grabs a chair from a corner in the house and puts it down in the middle of the room. When Federer enters the room, all she has to do is get him to relax, pose and smile. No problem for Corinne. Within less than five minutes she has her picture – plus a selfie with the star.

LANDLIEBE
NICO SCHAEERER
DENISE ZURKIRCH

Photographer
Editor

Nico Schaerer knows a thing or two about flying. The photographer used to paraglide, and he has shot pictures from helicopters and airplanes. This flight is something special to him. In a meadow near Herisau in the canton of Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Schaerer climbs into the wicker basket of a hot air balloon to fly across the Alps to the Italian village of Ruginello for the Swiss country-life magazine **LandLiebe**. His pilot is Stefan Zeberli, the world's best balloonist. «Crossing the Alps in this way is only possible on very few days of the year. The wind direction and many other conditions have to be just right,» says Schaerer. There is very little space in the basket, so he puts his camera backpack on the floor. Bending down to change his lens, he has to be mindful that none of the other passengers are leaning too much to one side. Near the Italian village of Gera Lario, high above Lake Como, he succeeds in shooting «his» picture. The yellow balloon seen in the distance started out at the same time in the same place. But, according to Schaerer, «It's hard to stay together.»

BLIC
OLIVER BUNIC
MLADEN SURJANAC

Photographer
Editor

Even though a fence protects the photographer of the hooligans that are beating each other to a pulp, the situation is not entirely devoid of danger for Oliver Bunic from the Serbian tabloid **Blic**. «They are not soccer fans but mostly professional boxers and kickboxers from Croatia paid to come here and cause trouble. They hate us photographers,» he says. As Bunic takes this picture during the local soccer derby between Partizan Belgrade and Red Star Belgrade, the Serbian riot police are just standing there, doing nothing. «I was more worried about those boys' lives.» In Serbia, hooligans are closely associated with the regime and operating as a sort of private army in the drug trade, says Bunic. «All of this has nothing to do with sports.»

LIBERTATEA
VLAD CHIREA

Photographer & Editor

Weeping people are standing on either side of photographer Vlad Chirea on the evening of December 13th, 2017, in the Romanian capital Bucharest, as he is working on assignment for the daily newspaper **Libertatea** along the route of the funeral procession for the former king, Michael I. «I only had a few seconds to take the picture as the vehicle with the casket was driving by.» As the mourners around him were throwing flowers in farewell to the monarch, Vlad Chirea released the shutter. What he has captured here is the end to a long chapter in history. Michael I, proclaimed king in 1940, was forced to abdicate by the communists in 1947. He had to leave his entire fortune behind and flee to Switzerland, where he lived in exile on Lake Geneva until his death. In 2016, he was diagnosed with cancer, dying just a year later at the age of 96. Many of his countrymen worshipped their former king. «Thousands saluted him one last time with flowers and applause during this funeral procession,» says photographer Chirea.





Inspiration for the future

Will artificial intelligence soon outwit humans? How do we connect the digital with the physical? How close to our customers are we really? Ringier management took on these questions at the Management Conference.

Text: Alejandro Velert Photos: Thomas Buchwalder

No other Zurich hotel exudes as much glamour and coolness as the Kameha Grand in Opfikon, the venue for this year's Ringier Management Conference, RMC for short. «Connecting the Dots» is the motto of the two-day conference. «Let's have 24 inspiring hours together,» says Marc Walder in his opening address to the approximately 220 participants who have come to Zurich from all nineteen Ringier countries. A full program with ten presentations from in-house and guest speakers awaits them.

One of these speakers is Klaus Hommels, founder and CEO of Lakestar. This German start-up investor put money into companies like Skype, Facebook and Spotify at an early stage and with great success. Hommels, a great champion of Europe as a center of technology, sees «his» continent lagging behind. «The share of European capital in the twenty biggest international tech companies amounts to a mere 1.44 percent. A fucking catastrophe!» He predicts: «The market power of Google, Amazon & Co. will continue to increase.»

Jessica Scholz is chief marketing officer for Ringier Africa and Asia. «How to prepare for the future of search» is the title of her presentation. Within thirty minutes she explains to everyone how search engine optimization works on Google. She also knows what Ringier needs to focus on in the future: «Visual search!» You take a picture of any product and the smartphone knows where you can get it. «Connecting the digital with the physical is the order of the day - in

marketplaces as well as in print,» says Scholz.

Morning Coffee with Michael Ringier is on the agenda at the top of day two. Former Blick head writer Peter Hossli interviews the publisher. Michael Ringier seems outwardly cool as usual, even though he has some major news to announce. Asked where the company is heading, he reveals to «his» management that the family have set the course for the future. CEO Marc Walder is taking over ten percent of the company's shares, and he is the designated chairman of the board. Michael Ringier will remain chairman of the board for the next few years. In the medium term, Robin Lingg will assume the leadership in the next generation of shareholders. The decision-making process within the family took place in an amicable atmosphere, Michael Ringier explains. «Only the paperwork was stressful.» This had to be dealt with while Roger Federer was playing the Australian Open. «We would run back and forth between discussions and the TV.»

One man whose ideas reach far into the future is Professor Jürgen Schmidhuber, scientific director of the Institute for Research on Artificial Intelligence (Istituto Dalle Molle di Studi sull'Intelligenza Artificiale, IDSIA). His research group has developed a learning algorithm used especially in voice recognition technology. If not for Schmidhuber there would be neither Siri nor Alexa.

Within 45 minutes, his lecture takes us into a future where self-replicating robots will conquer the galaxy, because artificial intelligence



Publisher Michael Ringier announces at the RMC how the company's owners have set the tracks for the future. «Only the paperwork was stressful, because Federer was playing in the final of the Australian Open.»

capable of learning would develop at a breathtaking pace. «What's coming is much more than the fourth industrial revolution. New life will emerge in ways we are unable to imagine now.» What a media company can take away from this here and now: «The big tech companies have diverted a lot of advertising money away from the media industry, because they know when which users go to which page and what they want to read or watch.»

After that, Felix Oberholzer from Harvard University gives a short seminar on business administration. «Stitch Fix» is his subject. This US company sends its customers hand-picked outfits. The customers' taste is not only determined by what they usually order, but also, for example, by analyzing their Pinterest profiles.

But the final selection for the customer is made by a person: «People are better than artificial intelligence when it comes to assessing the boundaries of a customer's taste and figuring out combinations,» Oberholzer main-



tains. A company like Amazon offers thousands of articles but no guidance. The customer, however, is striving for identity and individuality. Every single person in the conference room should ask themselves whether their product is personalized enough and as close to their customers as it can possibly be.

The last talk is an outstanding performance by Hannes Schmid, 72. He was already world famous as a photographer and artist when, a few years ago, he started to pour all of his energy into his relief organization

Smiling Gecko in Cambodia. Schmid's speech in the following forty-five minutes is a multi-media presentation that could not be bettered.

He talks about how, at the beginning of his involvement, he tried to help the people living on the mountains of trash in the metropolis of Phnom Penh. Schmid asked friends for support, bought water, rice and medicine. He came to realize that the effects were short-lived. Instead of giving up he expanded his involvement. He kept failing, but in the end, he managed to win over Swiss univer-

CEO Marc Walder opened the Ringier Management Conference at the Kameha Hotel in Opfikon, Zurich: «We want to be pioneers of our industry's digitalization.»



Top-notch RMC speakers: Jürgen Schmidhuber, Jessica Scholz, Jens Monsees, Felix Oberholzer and Hannes Schmid, who talked about Smiling Gecko.

sities, colleges and other organizations for his cause.

Today, after only three years, almost 30,000 people in the northern province of Chnang are living in a self-sustaining community with a village school, an agricultural family project, a chicken farm and a pig farm, a carpentry shop and a guest-house facility. Schmid's crowning achievement is the fact that the system continues to grow, promising to add numerous further locations all over Cambodia.

As Hannes Schmid ends his presentation he gets a standing ovation from the Ringier management. This is without a doubt the highlight of a two-day conference with plenty of strong presentations. 🌐

How I saved democracy day by day

Journalism is more than just a business for some corporations, a few journalists decided, and went on to create the online magazine «Republik». Ringier School of Journalism student Florian Wicki was there when the project was launched.

Text: Florian Wicki Photos: Gian Marco Castelberg

The glass shatters into a thousand pieces beneath my red suede shoe. Startled, I look down and realize: That was a beer bottle. The guy next to me on the sidewalk - who actually looks like someone trying to sell me some Crystal Meth or Crack - shoots me a weird glance before shaking his head and moving on. I'm in a looking-glass world. My workplace is at the Rothaus Hotel on the corner of Langstrasse, in Zurich's red-light district. Did I leave that bottle there myself after partying last night? I have no idea. But who cares: Today is the beginning of my internship at Republik. This platform has set out to do nothing less than to save democracy, according to the litany I heard over and over again this past year. That this was to be achieved amongst panhandlers, policemen and prostitutes is not devoid of a certain charm.

For me, the Republik story began some eighteen months ago with a message on Facebook. «Any plans for Monday night?» This was followed by an invitation to a quasi-conspiratorial meeting at a quiet little house in a residential part of town. The founding team at the time - or at least part of it - met with a group of sympathizers in a cozy little garden to hash out the



The former Rothaus Hotel (left) on Langstrasse, where Republik's editorial offices are located.

The founders of Republik: journalists Constantin Seibt (left) and Christof Moser (right).

concept for what is now Republik. Media representatives concerned about recent developments in the Swiss media landscape meeting afresco to plan a small revolution, assisted by wine, wit and workshops, all under a veil of secrecy, of course - imagine that, if you will.

But let's go back to Langstrasse, where Republik is about to launch. It is Sunday, January 14, 2018. As of today, we are finally going to save democracy - a day early, contrary to all

expectations and assurances. The official version is that we didn't want to make the publishers - i.e. the subscribers - wait any longer. Unofficially, starting early allows us to boot the machines without a demo effect and only draw attention to ourselves once everything is working smoothly. After several delays, we are finally good to go at 3 p.m.

«Are we online?»
«Yes!» «No!» «Sure we are!»
«Are we?»

At this point, nobody knows exactly, apart from the IT guys, who of course are working flat out in their office, disconnected from the outer world. Suddenly someone shouts: We're online! Whoops of joy, applause, people hugging. Ten minutes later, it emerges that this was a false alarm and the site is as yet only visible to the editorial team. An unintentional dry run, then, with the cameras running. But no matter, the joy is genuine. Another twenty minutes or so later, we are online for real. In the evening, media people drop in for a visit, there is plenty of music, booze and speeches - a traditional celebration, including a poetry slam, as is usual when journalists have something to fete.



Monday, January 15, 2018: How are we going to save democracy today? With less pathos, in any case, because from now on it is day-to-day business. This means fulfilling expectations that have been raised sky-high by this very pathos, since the crowdfunding started last spring. In practice, this is what it looks like for me: As the «Ring-

important» and «What will happen next». And then there is a coda, usually in tabloid style, to liven things up. In addition to this fixed format, I collaborate on various projects. The last one published (which I am hence allowed to mention here) was the series «Top Secret - Doping», an investigative report on doping at the Olym-

«Our goal, when we start out, is not perfection but perfectibility.»

Republik co-founder Constantin Seibt

ier exchange student» - a stigma I was kindly stuck with on my first day - I am in charge of the format «What was important last week». This is where readers find, as promised by the title, a summary of the past week's essential topics, divided into three categories: «What happened», «Why this is

pics by Republik in collaboration with journalists from Germany, England and Sweden. Side-by-side with the Republik team of reporters - consisting of Sylke Gruhnwald, formerly with Ringier Axel Springer's bi-weekly Beobachter, and Carlos Hanimann, formerly with the leftist weekly WOZ

Republik considers itself a collaborative project. The walls in the hallways are decorated with statements by subscribers and supporters, reminding us why they feel that Republik is necessary.



- I burrowed through hundreds of pages of data, minutes, testimonies by witnesses and documents leaked by whistleblowers. A journalist's life is punctuated by

REPUBLIK seit 2018

Republik is a digital magazine which focuses on political, economic, cultural and social issues. It contains no advertising. Since January 2018, one to three articles per day have been published behind a paywall. In a spectacular crowdfunding operation, over 15,000 people supported the founding of Republik in 2017. For 240 Swiss francs a year you become a subscriber as well as a member of the cooperative Project R. The cooperative and the editors own equal shares of the Republik AG: 47.4 percent. The rest is owned by investors and the magazine itself. Thus, every subscriber of the magazine is also its publisher, in a small way.

meetings, meetings and more meetings. At the end of the day - which naturally tends to be late at night - you are faced with the question of how exactly you were saving democracy. You start having doubts. By means of essay-style articles explaining how the world works, pieces about biology, American TV and technology? Articles that are often so long that people refrain from reading them on the train or the streetcar? Or do you save it through a daily newsletter which always begins with the stock gender-binary English phrase «Ladies and Gentlemen» - a salutation from way back in 19th century?

Yes, there is cause for criticism - which is actually a good thing. On December 5, 2017, in one of its mile-long newsletters, Republik wrote: «Our goal, when we start out, is not perfection but perfectibility.» That has made itself felt. Since the launch, all sorts of ideas have been tested and either scrapped or implemented. Besides, the texts are getting shorter, at least some of the time - or not at all, as the case may be. Still, the writers are also supposed to have the courage to tackle longer, in-depth pieces. The topics are growing more varied and the newsletter's authorship will change every three to six months, which makes for diversity.

Of course, none of this can ensure that democracy will be saved as prom-



In the former lounge of the Rothaus Hotel the Republik editorial team meets twice a week.

ised. But thanks to its curiosity, its agility and its independent mindset, Republik will nevertheless contribute to strengthening the media landscape. And if you care to believe the magazine's manifesto, that landscape is an important element of any democracy. However, what impressed me most in the time I've spent here was not the big-name journalists on the staff, nor the texts, nor the hip

Zurich urban revolutionary vibe on Langstrasse. No, it was the certainty that at the Rothaus Hotel you will never hear that infernal phrase: «That's the way we've always done it, and that is how it will stay.» Once I have typed the last letters of this text, I will leave the Rothaus. It is shortly before midnight. And tomorrow we will have another stab at saving democracy. 🌐



Co-founder and editor-in-chief of Mediapart, Edwy Plenel: «Freedom doesn't come cheap.»

«The first laboratory»

«Republik» the newly established Swiss online magazine wants to produce journalism that is independent from advertising. Edwy Plenel, former editor-in-chief of «Le Monde», has been doing that for ten years with «Mediapart» – his goal is to valorize news.

Interview: Vinzenz Greiner Photos: Renaud Creus

Domo: Monsieur Plenel, this March you'll be celebrating ten years of madness. How crazy are you today?

Edwy Plenel: Maybe a little bit. (laughs) I'd rather call myself enthusiastic. But indeed: When I started Mediapart ten years ago, all the experts and the French press said it was crazy and a foolish thing to do. **You were the editor-in-chief of Le Monde, France's most important newspaper. And you gave it all up for a startup with an uncertain future. Why?**

As editor-in-chief of Le Monde I suffered my first big defeat in my life as a journalist: The newspaper decided to put all the texts online for free. It was to be financed only through advertisements. But you cannot sell a print newspaper with one hand and give away everything for free on the web with the other. That destroys the value of information and the value of our work as journalists, too. As a response to this devaluation I founded Mediapart.

Wasn't it rather that Edwy Plenel had achieved everything in French journalism; now he wanted to have his own newspaper

where he could control everything, from the business plan to the articles?

I see myself more as a paperboy who hands out information. Although we introduced a new horizontal culture with hardly any hierarchy in the editorial staff and a lot of exchange with the readers at eye level, there is still this dark legend about Mediapart wearing a moustache (laughs). The whole project, however, was not so much a journalistic challenge as a business one. Admittedly, an idealistic challenge, but being idealistic doesn't mean that you have to be unrealistic. I am a serious entrepreneur.

You've chosen a financing model exclusively based on subscriptions at a time when subscription numbers are dropping worldwide.

We simply needed to challenge the advertising model of financing a newspaper or media outlet. We were the first laboratory to try it. Our motto has always been: Only our readers can buy us.

In other words: I'm not for sale.

It's about independence. And most of the media have lost this because of their

advertising clients. They have their very particular interests. For example, late last year we, along with a consortium of investigative newspapers, revealed that the luxury label Gucci evaded taxes. This brand belongs to the French company Kering. Guess what: None of the big French media outlets quoted our revelation.

You're saying the people at newspapers like Libération or Le Monde don't do their job properly?

No, that's not what I'm saying. There are many good journalists working for these newspapers. The problem is the ecosystem, which completely relies on advertising money – in this case the money from the luxury industry. The media needs to get out of this capitalist dependence. Ten years ago what made you so sure that you could create a media business without relying on advertising money?

Nothing. We knew we could do investigative journalism. But we didn't know if the financing model would work. But it did. We had our break-even in 2010. Last year we had revenues of 13.7 million euros. Our

profit was 2.2 million. Now we have 80 full-time jobs at Mediapart. In March 2008, we started with 3,000 subscriptions. At the end of last year we were at 140,000.

But that's still less than the «non-independent» newspapers in France.

Yes, it's less than Le Monde and less than Figaro. But it is more than Libération. Mediapart is a success story.

This success story required subscribers. Three months before the launch of Mediapart, you motivated them with an article entitled «Le prix de la liberté» – «The Price of Freedom». So, how much does freedom cost? Is it just the price of a subscription to Mediapart?

(Laughs) It means that freedom doesn't come cheap. You need to pay for it. The other meaning is that you have to fight for information and for liberty. We are in a battle for the right to information, for the value of journalism as a public service – and for democracy.

Republik intends to do nothing less than save journalism and democracy – as do you. Is the situation of democracy and journalism really so dire or do small media projects need to exaggerate with their choice of words for marketing reasons?

This is not about marketing! We are embroiled in a moral crisis to which more and more politicians are offering authoritarian solutions. Look at Russia or Turkey, where the right to knowledge and freedom of speech is in danger. Or even France, where some politicians want Mediapart to be barred from the public debate. Donald Trump symbolizes this new era where opinions, ideology, «alternative facts» and fake news seem to be gaining the upper hand over facts and objective information. We are now fighting for nothing less than democracy. I am not sure we will win this battle. I am saying this as a radical democrat.

Or as a leftist journalist. Republik was also created by people predominantly from the left wing of the political spectrum. On January 15, when Republik started, Le Média, an anti-racist and feminist web TV channel, went online in France. Why is it that leftists and critics of capitalism are coming up with new business models?

Once upon a time I worked for a Trotskyist newspaper, fair enough. But that was 40 years ago. Anyway, I think that our story sparked a movement. A new generation of journalists has come to see that they can become independent from company interests and do something against the devaluation of information.

So they offer their readers a leftist worldview. Isn't that paying for a filter bubble? I don't think so. The first obligation of a journalist is to be at the service of the truth of facts. It's a bit of a challenge to put



Mediapart's editorial offices in Paris. This is where the content for the now 140,000 subscribers is produced. In March 2008, their number was at 3,000.

information first in a time with a new form of entertainment: opinions.

Opinions are also important to you at Mediapart. You have «Le Club», where subscribers can contribute. Does that really work or are your readers just silent supporters?

We have one of the most active communities of French media outlets. We not only have «Le Club» for exchanges but also comment sections below the articles, which we moderate only after publication. We are dedicated to the tradition of free speech.

I imagine it as being quite easy to moderate these comments. After all, you once wrote that you wanted an «intellectual community». Sounds rather like a project for readers that have graduated from one of the French Grandes Écoles. You are creating an elitist bubble!

We have long articles, but we are not an elitist newspaper. We are following the tradition of the «université populaire». Our readership is socially, geographically and culturally diverse; more so than that of «Le Monde» when I was working there. I hadn't expected that. We have even extreme right-wing readers. We take this seriously as a challenge to a democratic debate.

What are your next challenges?

Within the next three years we want to build a new structure for the control of the capital – we want to lay it into the hands of the founders and the team to protect our independence in the future. Video is going to be a big challenge, too. We will invest more in it. Maybe this year, there will be Mediapart TV.

Are you gearing up to become a global media company? I mean, you already have articles in English and Spanish.

No, we don't want that. But as you know, the Internet knows only one border – language. That's why we translate our most important articles into English and

Spanish. Why not German, Chinese or Arabic in the future?

What about the future of the media you came from? Could daily newspapers adopt your financing model?

Maybe. But the dailies have one problem we do not have at Mediapart: the heritage of paper. At the same time, they need to make money with online journalism. That's the contradiction they have to deal with.

So paper as a medium is finished?

No. I think, for example, that magazines and books will survive. On the occasion of the ten-year anniversary of Mediapart, my book «The Value of Information» was published by Don Quichotte. 🌐

THIS IS MEDIAPART

Edwy Plenel is chairman of the board of Mediapart, and he is also its publisher. In 2008, he co-founded the project with first-rate people in French journalism. The co-founders hold six in ten Mediapart shares. Total economic independence is impossible. Just over 40 percent of the capital is held by two technology entrepreneurs and the «société des amis de Mediapart», the «friends of Mediapart». Mediapart's main focus is on investigative journalism and political coverage – all of it online. Mediapart also publishes big moving-image documentaries and podcasts – for example in collaboration with the TV channel Arte. Mediapart invites politicians, film directors and activists to the studio for live-streamed video discussions. The enterprise also implies participation: In the «Club», subscribers can write their own blogs or have exchanges in chats with other readers. The 140,000 subscribers pay 110 euros per year. The editorial team is comprised of forty people. With a few additional developers, the technical team is forecasted to grow to about twenty people.

My Night with James Bond

Ok, this title is open to misunderstanding. Our writer actually met 007 Daniel Craig twice. He remembers the secret agent for two reasons, a nerve-wracking, door-wrecking restroom episode – and, his polite British manner.

Text: René Haenig

The day the world breathed a sigh of relief was August 16, 2017. On this date, the man who, since 2006, has been saving the world from dastardly villains, ruthless rogues, cunning criminals and mad terrorists on her Majesty's secret service, appeared on the «Late Show with Stephen Colbert». When the host asked Daniel Craig, 50, «Will you return as James Bond?», he gave a typically Bond-like terse and cool reply: «Yes.» Only two years before, Craig had shocked his audience by claiming that he would rather slash his wrists than play James Bond again.

So, while the rest of humanity breathes more easily, I run down to the basement to dig around in some storage boxes, hunting for a photograph of the coolest agent since Sean Connery. I got it from 007 in 2007, on a visit to Los Angeles. It shows Craig on the set of his first Bond adventure, «Casino Royale», with director Martin Campbell. A 007 fan since my childhood, which I spent growing up in the «enemy» Eastern-bloc state GDR, I got a personal dedication on the photograph, written by the world's most famous drinker of Martinis, bedder of women and scourge of supervillains: «For René.»

A year later, I meet him again. At the festival hall in Bregenz, late at night – or in the early morning hours, to be precise. Outside the restroom. Inside the restroom is a dead body. It's quite obvious to me who killed the guy. 007 just grins. We're in for a murderous night. But first things first.

Bond breaks out at Bregenz

I'd really come to Lake Constance to meet star director Marc Forster. The Swiss filmmaker had been hired to shoot «Quantum of Solace», the second spy adventure starring Daniel Craig as James Bond. Bregenz was one of the locations. As usual with such high-end blockbusters, journalists would not be given one-on-one interviews on the set, just round-tables, at which you get 15 minutes max to ask your questions and glean some answers. So when a high-brow colleague from the arts section of the prestigious Swiss daily NZZ decides to rabbit on to actor Anatole Taubman (who plays the villain's flunky) about the psychological aspects of the narrative and the associated influence on the moviegoer, even someone with strict Eastern-bloc upbringing and diligently acquired Swiss restraint risks turning into a rude interrupter – or a Bond-worthy antisocial meanie.

At the round table with Marc Forster an hour later I no longer dare to do so. At the end of the 15 minutes with the director, I dejectedly shuffle out of the room behind my colleagues. Maybe too dejectedly, for Forster puts his hand on my shoulder as I am about to go out the door, saying: «René, you didn't manage to get any of your questions in. If you like, come to the set later, we'll be shooting till 5 a.m., so I'm sure we'll find time to talk during a break.»

I can hardly believe my luck. And so, around 2 a.m. I find myself outside a Bregenz Festspielhaus re-

stroom, in which a dead man is lying in the corner while James Bond is emptying the villain's pockets into the washbasin, picking out a listening device and sticking it into his ear – whereupon he intends to leave the scene of the crime asap. But all he ends up doing is running against the door. Apparently a member of the film crew has accidentally locked 007 in the restroom. Laughter all around.

The scene is repeated again and again. Eventually, the restroom door opens as planned, but now Bond suddenly finds himself clutching the door handle in his hand. He has snapped it off. After more than two hours this sequence, which will only last a few seconds in the film, is finally in the can.

Craig checks the result on the director's monitor. Forster takes this opportunity to introduce me. When I mention that we met a year ago at Martin Campbell's house and that he gave me a photo with a dedication, Craig grips my hand quite firmly, saying, with a grin: «Oh yes, I remember you!» The Brits really are an exceptionally polite race. I don't honestly believe that he would have recalled our meeting. In L.A., I'd been too nice to be memorable. But then, being nasty to Bond is hardly recommended – or is it? Even if Bond didn't exercise his licence to kill on me, the mere thought of that snapped door handle in the restroom ... Nope, can't let that happen to me!

Because: My name is Haenig. René Haenig. 🌐

He has embodied legendary secret agent James Bond since 2006: Daniel Craig, 50. Following «Casino Royale», «Quantum of Solace», «Skyfall» and «Spectre», he will save the world one last time as 007 in 2019.



Photo: CAMERA PRESS

Educate the heart



Michael Ringier, publisher

These images were seen around the globe. «Judges, Slobodan Praljak is not a war criminal. With disdain, I reject your verdict!» said the Croat general, who had just been sentenced to 20 years in prison. Then he drank cyanide and died. While this event might be dismissed as a curious anecdote in the annals of the Hague Tribunal’s history, it is worth taking a closer look. Praljak, after all, was not some dumb thug who had people massacred out of some religious mania, or a man who could not foresee the consequences of his decisions. Nor was he incapable of comprehending the correlations between social order, freedom and the exercise of power. Praljak was an educated man. He had obtained university degrees in electrical engineering, philosophy and sociology and graduated from the Zagreb Academy of Dramatic Art. His CV includes various teaching positions and jobs as a theater and television director. These are certainly not the credentials of your typical war criminal. After all, education is said to provide an essential foundation for democratic and constitutional intercourse with one’s fellow men. Or does it?

As Christine Abbt, teacher of philosophy at the University of Lucerne, Switzerland, recently wrote in the daily «Neue Zürcher Zeitung», even Denis Diderot, returning from a journey to Russia at the end of the 18th century, had grave doubts about that. Sobered by his conversations with the Empress Catherine II, the French philosopher of the Enlightenment began to compose his «Observations sur le Nakaz», while still on his way back to Paris, stating: «The realization of democratic freedom in common and mutual debate is not primarily a rational phenomenon but one of the senses.»

And «while he considers education an indispensable asset to processes of enlightenment», the professor writes, Diderot is also convinced that «without accompanying measures of other institutions its instruments would not be effective enough to cope with despotism and the willful rule of those in power.»

Lest there had been any need for proof of his point, the Nazis certainly provided it in the cruelest of fashions.

The idea of the superiority of the German race led to unimaginable acts of barbarity and the loss of millions of lives. The French writer Laurent Binet, who spent ten years doing research on Reinhard Heydrich, the head of the Gestapo, may refute the frequent allegation that the man was an intellectual («he had read a bit of Nietzsche, like everyone else, and misunderstood him»). But even so, Heydrich had been well schooled and respectably educated.

So what does that tell us? While we do need to continue investing in education, we should do much more to educate the heart. And that is something we can hardly leave to our schools.

Michael Ringier

Photo: Maurice Haas

Adetola Adegbite
Head of Finance Intelligence at
Ringier Africa Digital Publishing



MONDAY

My week starts on Monday. My colleagues in Kenya are two hours ahead of Nigeria so I am in the office at 6.30 a.m. My team and I update the weekly revenue reports based on the activities of the previous week. Accuracy and consistency is the goal, hence quality control is enforced with regards to the reported figures.



TUESDAY

On Tuesdays, I attend two meetings - one with the Sales team at Ringier Nigeria and the other with the RADP Creative Operations team. Both of these meetings are extremely insightful as I am able to keep track of current projects for immediate revenue recognition through the Creative Operations meeting, while information disseminated at the Sales meeting keeps me abreast of future deals for projections. At each of these meetings, I am given an opportunity to present the revenue status for better planning and strategizing.



THURSDAY

I conducted review sessions with my teams in Nigeria and Kenya. This allows me to judge their on the job performance over the past 6 months and to assign new Key Performance indicators (KPIs) for the next 6 months. It is also an opportunity to hear their views and ideas on certain topics relating to our enterprise.



WEDNESDAY

I chat with my teams in Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal and Kenya. I am also in constant communication with HQ Finance as regards the status of revenue and receivables. I have a funny picture on my cellphone to remind me of my last meeting with them.



FRIDAY

On Fridays, I tidy up loose ends and send an updated revenue report to the management team. In the afternoon, I have a Skype meeting with the RADP management team. After this, I ensure that my teams across Africa have completed their tasks for the week. This process informs the team of the plans for the new week; then I can unwind with my colleagues.

WEEKEND

My weekends are spent with my family. On Saturday, I'm attending a family party. It is an introduction ceremony for my cousin who is getting married. The families of both parties get to meet each other. On Sundays, I attend the 10 a.m. church service. It is a time to reflect and thank God for the previous week and to commit the new week into His hands.



Nadia's life from A to Z

Her roots extend all the way to Africa. And Nadia Cristina De Sousa's love for her family literally gets under her skin. Who is the woman behind the counter at the staff restaurant «Inside»? Her path led her from Angola to Zurich.

Photos: Geri Born/private

When Nadia Cristina De Sousa Barros, 41, known simply as «Nadia» to all visitors to Ringier's cafeteria «Inside» in Zurich, first came to Switzerland from Lisbon 22 years ago, she only spoke Portuguese. «I was 18 years old and came to Zurich with my then husband.» She trained as a cook and waitress, studying German - or rather: Swiss-German - after work. No wonder she can now speak the Swiss idiom almost perfectly, with just a hint of an accent.

Nadia was born in Angola, her mother's homeland. Three months after her birth, the family left this former Portuguese colony for her father's country. She grew up in Portugal's capital, Lisbon, with seven siblings: three sisters and four brothers. Nadia's family means everything to her. They talk on the phone every day. Even during this interview for DOMO, her cellphone lights up - one of her brothers is calling. Nadia was the only child to go abroad. Because it is too expensive for her family to travel to Switzerland, Nadia usually flies down to see them. But she has also been known to get behind the wheel of her car and drive more than 1,250 miles within 26 hours to see her parents, brothers and sisters. «They are what I miss most in Switzerland.» Then she rolls up the right sleeve of her sweater, proudly displaying the tattoo she had done on her upper arm last year - the names of all her siblings.

Nadia found her way to Ringier thanks to a female colleague she had worked with in her first years in Switzerland. At «Inside», she started out as a maid-of-all-work, preparing salads and sandwiches, doing sales, ladling food onto plates, standing at the till. Nowadays she is also in charge of arranging in-house drinks receptions at Ringier's headquarters. When she first began to work here, she would dish out 100 helpings at lunchtime; nowadays it's 300. Ringier staffers are not the only ones who appreciate the food at «Inside»; colleagues from the neighboring daily Neue Zürcher Zeitung also like to eat here. And what does Nadia do in her spare time? «I like to read, preferably in my mother tongue, Portuguese.» RH



Nadia Cristina De Sousa Barros has been standing behind the counter of Ringier's Zurich cafeteria «Inside» for ten years. To drive to the sea and the family's home in Portugal, Nadia is quite prepared to spend 26 hours behind the wheel of her car.



Editor's Choice

by Marc Walder

Ringier CEO Marc Walder tells you which books he has read and why they fascinate him.

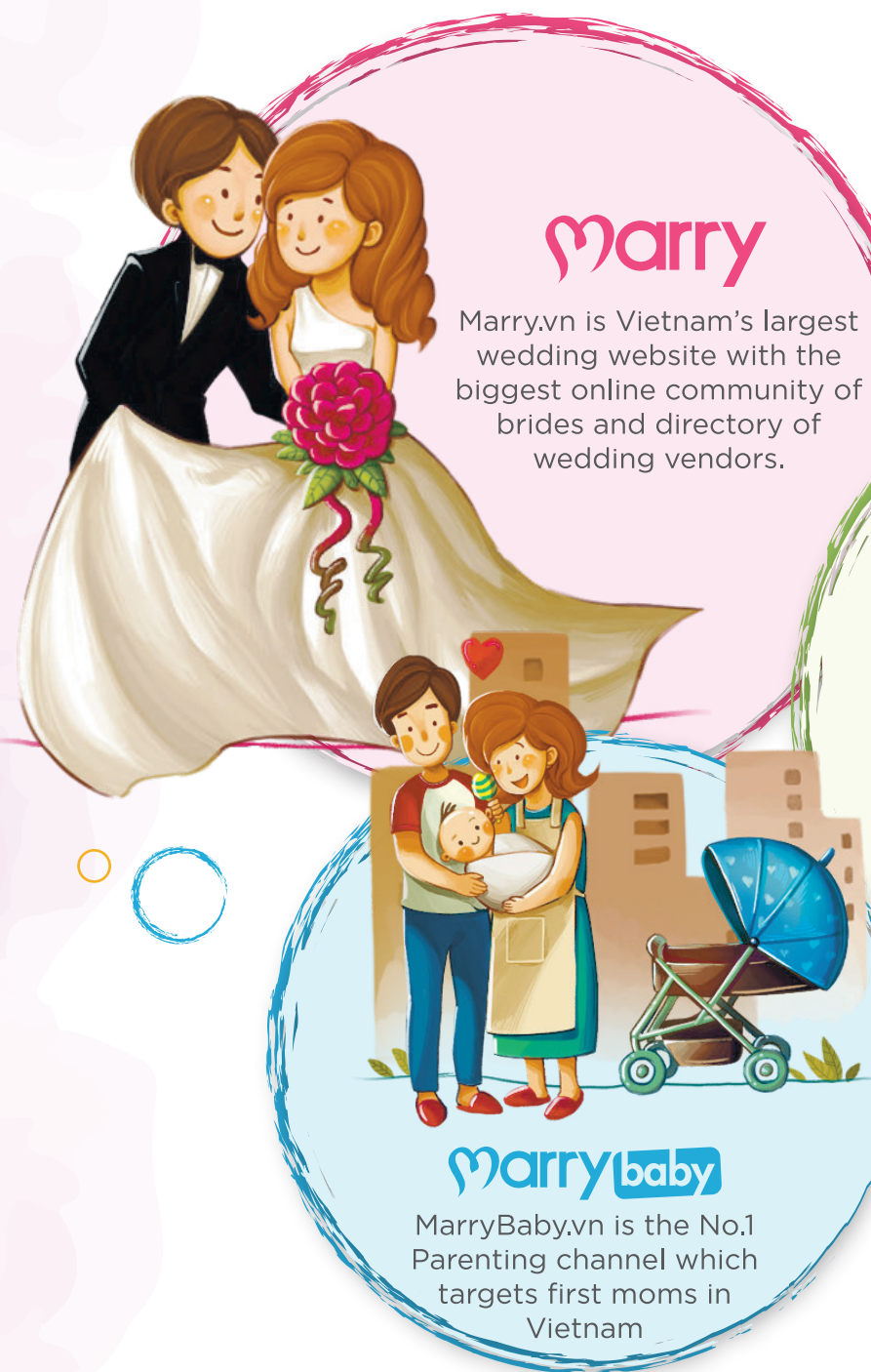
Bertrand Piccard
André Borschberg

MIT DER SONNE UM DIE WELT



The round-the-world voyage of Solar Impulse generated huge amounts of hype. An airplane that circles the globe without fuel! An airplane wider than a Boeing 747, yet no heavier than a car! But no matter how great this achievement was: The project's two chief developers, Bertrand Piccard and André Borschberg, were never primarily focused on the circumnavigation or on breaking world records. To Piccard, Solar Impulse was far more: an economic, ecological and scientific message. And a symbol of what is already possible. «If we don't want to give up our standard of living, investments in new technologies will be essential.» says Piccard. With enormous courage, passion and ambition, the two trailblazers successfully achieved their objective within 13 years. Between their first 400-yard flight in 2009 and the accomplishment of 4,350-mile flights across the Pacific they were faced with countless obstacles to overcome. The motto that Piccard talks, thinks and lives by is:

«If you can think it you can do it.» Piccard's grandfather and father, who experimented with balloons and submarines, had already pushed the boundaries of the imaginable in their own fields. Their son and grandson has now achieved as much with André Borschberg. To think that, as a child, Piccard did not even dare to climb trees! «But then, that sort of thing won't change if you stay put in your armchair.» So Piccard «healed» himself by learning to fly. One thing he'd gleaned from his ancestors was: «If you're faced with a crisis you can overcome it by setting yourself higher goals.» The book «Mit der Sonne um die Welt» (Around the world with the sun) chronicles the fascinating journey of an incredible project.



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