

Diversity & Inclusion: Diversity becomes a strategic goal at Ringier

DMO

Ringier

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Why Alexander Theobald,
CEO of Ringier Axel Springer
Switzerland, is optimistic
about the future.

«I believe in
the future of
magazines»

CONTENTS

- 4 «I'm convinced that we are correctly positioned»**
Alexander Theobald, Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland CEO in a big interview with DOMO. «I believe in the future and the success of magazines,» he says.
- 7 «We are living in pseudo-normality!»**
Psychiatrist Katja Cattapan knows why we are having trouble with normality despite the freedoms we have regained. «The coronavirus pandemic is a huge psychological experiment.»
- 10 First boss lady**
Nina Siegrist calls the shots. After more than 100 years, Schweizer Illustrierte has its first female editor-in-chief.
- 12 Focus on Ringier**
The best photos of the last quarter.
- 14 Fibo: a special case**
Eight pieces by Karl Lüönd about Fibo Deutsch, who has spent 60 years working for Ringier and now (allegedly) retired at age 80.
- 18 «It goes further»**
Ringier is creating a new board for developing diversity and inclusion within the company. Ringier CFO Annabella Bassler explains why diversity is a strategic goal for our enterprise.
- 19 Journalism as elixir**
Publisher Michael Ringier on how well journalism has performed during the Corona crisis. «A big hand and a big pat on the back for media people.»
- 20 Shots and Vampire conversations**
From sauce syringes to vampire conversations: Creative Director of the Ringier Brand Studio, Mathieu Gilliard's jam packed week.
- 22 A finger on the public pulse**
Anniversary: Walter Noser / Recommended reading by Ringier CEO Marc Walder

Cover photo: Maurice Haas

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4



12



14



20



18

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«I believe magazines have a future and can be successful, otherwise I wouldn't be here,» says Alexander Theobald, CEO of Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland.

«I'm convinced that we are correctly positioned»

«Creativity is the driver for success,» says Alexander Theobald. «That's why the best ideas usually come from the editorial offices.» The Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland CEO talks about cost-cutting programs due to Corona, his involvement in Diversity & Inclusion – and how he wants to lead the company into the future.

Interview: Alejandro Velert Photos: Maurice Haas

Alexander Theobald, when you were young you wanted to become a journalist and at one time, you worked at Blick to pay for your studies. One can't find all that many articles with your byline in the media database. Although I did write articles, as a news editor I was mainly a rewriter in the traditional sense of the term. And I was also working as a semi-professional musician, which was my other source of income.

Which instrument do you play?

Bassoon, a woodwind instrument. My goal was always to become a musician. But I had to realize that I'm not good enough. It was only then that I wanted to become a journalist. At some point, a well-known German journalist told me that my writing was okay, but that I wouldn't go very far with it. So, I moved into the publishing business and I think it's worked out quite well.

Do you still make music today?

No, towards the end of my humanities studies, when I was studying for my exams and had to write my master's thesis, I couldn't find the time to practice every day. So, I put the instrument away from one day to the next and I've never touched it again.

What are your hobbies today?

Food and drink. And I do get some physical exercise so you don't notice it too much (laughs). I like good wine and, as you know, every Saturday for ten years, I have been going to the Restaurant Zum Bären in Birmenstorf with my wife. That's a luxury we treat ourselves to.

During the week, you don't treat yourself to much and you are apparently always the first person to enter the Media Park. How many hours do you work on a normal weekday?

I get up early, at 5 o'clock. I am at my office by 7 o'clock, at the latest. But this does not make me the first person to arrive at the Media Park. My assistant, Patricia Buck, makes sure I don't stay too long. I clock off around 6 pm.

Only to have your cell phone permanently at the ready at home?

I have gotten into the habit of putting the thing away by 8 pm and not looking at it anymore. That works out pretty well. I go to bed shortly after that, anyway.

You started working at Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland AG (RASCH) when the corona crisis began. How hard was it to get to know the company under these circumstances?

Things are slowly getting better, because people are returning to their workplaces, at least partially. But the Media Park still feels very empty. This is particularly difficult for me, because I like meeting people. Video calls cannot replace personal contact.

In July, you said in an interview that the RASCH enterprise was profitable, earning money and that the fall looked promising.

The advertisement booking levels were positive. The summer was also good, given the circumstances. We were earning money. When you read what's happening elsewhere in the business world, this is already an achievement. Obviously, we are nowhere near what would be possible under normal circumstances. Now, we

have to ask ourselves what will happen next year.

The Corona crisis has hit RASCH hard – as it did the worldwide media industry as a whole – and made a cost-cutting program necessary. The fashion and lifestyle magazine Style even had to be cancelled, because its production was no longer economically justifiable. Was Style not profitable enough or was it in the red?

It was in the red. And economically, it was going downhill fast. The Corona crisis effectively boosted this situation. Even without Corona, we would have had to act because there was a structural problem. Style did not fail because of its content. The editorial staff always did a great job. The luxury industry has changed its advertising behavior dramatically and the loss of advertising volume cost Style about half of its advertising revenue in the last four years.

Could you have turned things around with a different strategy?

Not likely. And perhaps this type of product reaches the end of its life cycle at some point. Women's magazines all over the world have experienced a market shakeout. These very high-quality products live on advertising revenue, not user market revenue. And if the advertising revenue fails to materialize, things get tough.

Is the cost-cutting program taking effect? Are you now optimistic about the future?

We have had to take painful measures. But I am convinced that they were necessary and appropriate, and they will give us ▶

Personal

Alexander Theobald (born in 1964) has been CEO of Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland AG, the joint venture founded by Ringier and Axel Springer Switzerland in 2016, since April 1, 2020. Previously, he had been responsible for Operations and Business Development at Ringier since 2014, and as of 2016, he had also been CEO of Blick Group. Alexander Theobald grew up in Germany and Switzerland, where he studied humanities (General History, Journalism and Political Science). In 1992, he got his master's degree. He is married and lives in Baden in the Canton of Aargau.

peace of mind for the coming years. Now, it is important to me that we focus strongly on our users and conduct intense discussions with the editorial staff about the quality of our products. That is the first point.

And the second point?

People increasingly subscribe to fewer magazines and they no longer read as many. This is a trend we need to counteract.

How will you achieve this?

I am convinced that magazines will continue to exist for many years to come and that they can be successful. Otherwise I would not be here. Everything we do at RASCH we can do even better. I see potential for improvement in every area, in products, marketing and sales.

Will that be enough?

No. That is why it is my ambition to develop and launch innovations. So far, the main focus has been on making the content of print products available online in a more or less attractive format, or to provide online supplements. But this has only met with limited success.

So, you need new sources of revenue.

And new ideas. In every area, we need to ask ourselves what skills we have, what we can digitize or where we can build up new business areas, beyond what we have done so far. We can do that, and we are working on it.

Can you be more specific?

Let me give you an example. In the case of Beobachter magazine, we have a very high level of consulting competence with a lot of service properties. We will increasingly digitize this area. That's why we also bought the «GetYourLawyer» platform, the digital Swiss lawyers' platform. Here, we can build a business model that is related to our competencies. Our business and finance platform Cash is also a highly interesting model. The platform is profitable, thanks in part to our close cooperation with «bank zweiplus». We benefit from leads and new account openings.

Does that also work for the business media?

It was absolutely right to bank on the paywall for the HZ+ business platform. Business media are under a lot of pressure right now and our quality standards are high. These titles are of great value to us because they have great appeal. RASCH without BILANZ would be a different company. But here, too, we don't want to lose money.

The paywall alone, i.e. paid content, will probably not be enough.

Yes, that's true. Here, too, we're taking a close look at how the market works and what opportunities are available. By the end of this year, we will present appropriate approaches.

Do you think the model of merging editorial offices - as practiced by other media companies - is a good solution?

No, I don't care for that. You cannot have the same people produce the «Schweizer Illustrierte» and «Glückspost» magazines when it comes to their core subjects. The same holds true for «Handelszeitung» and «BILANZ». Each product has its own identity, its own soul. That's what a brand lives on. This individuality is essential.

In interviews, you like to emphasize that new ideas need to originate with the editorial offices. Isn't that the job of media executives? After all, journalists are mainly supposed to deliver good stories.

Creativity is almost invariably the driver for success! I don't believe there are any niches left to find with market analyses. At RASCH, we are currently working on a new magazine project for the TV sector. And where did the idea come from? From the editorial office. Media executives can assess opportunities, make calculations and implement projects. But the good idea usually comes from the people who engage with their product on a daily basis.

Let's shift the focus. In addition to your job as CEO of RASCH, you have also been Chief Operating Officer of Ringier Switzerland for four years. In this capacity, you are responsible for the new marketing unit «Ringier Advertising», which has just begun its work. Marketing is an area that has been in constant turmoil in recent years.

The upheaval in advertising marketing has been significant, and change is almost inevitable. When Ringier AG took over 100 percent of Admeira in February 2020, we announced that the marketing of Ringier and RASCH's own print and digital products would henceforth be managed by ourselves and that Admeira would focus on TV marketing. The corresponding teams have moved to the newly founded print and digital marketing unit Ringier Advertising. It took several months to complete this complex process. I'm convinced that this new constellation allows us to be correctly positioned and that Ringier Advertising will quickly establish itself in the market.

What advantages do you expect from this new solution?

The crucial point is that our marketing is once again much closer to our inventory.

Third-party marketers will always keep an eye on their commission, whereas inventory providers aim to maximize their turnover. It's quite simple: If a third-party marketer can make a million more in sales, they will hire a person to do so. An inventory provider can hire four people for one million in sales. That's why it makes sense that the marketing of digital and print is again very close to the inventory provider.

You are involved as a member on the newly created Diversity & Inclusion Board of Ringier AG. How high is the ratio of women executives at RASCH?

We are in fairly good shape, but the ratio could be higher still. Schweizer Illustrierte has a uniquely high share of women, I'm pleased to say. To promote more women in all other areas as well is very important to me personally.

Why?

Because women function differently in the workplace than men. In my professional life, I have repeatedly worked with impressive women. For instance, with Maili Wolf, who used to be my boss at Ringier. Women bring a different perspective and different working methods to the table. You should never make the mistake of only wanting to surround yourself with people who think the way you do.

Recently, the first workshops on Diversity & Inclusion were held, and three issues were discussed in greater depth: part-time work, gender relations and age structure. Which of these issues means most to you personally?

The issue of age structure. This concerns me directly because I am 56 years old. And at this age, you start to think about certain things differently.

In what way?

Your values change, your perspective changes. I will give you an example, even if my boss will not like reading it (laughs). I would like to take a sabbatical sometime; I would love that. Ten years ago, my interests were completely different. Also, when you get older, you ask yourself if your current job is going to be your last one or not. In my case, I hope so, because I've only just started as CEO of RASCH. But here, too, perspective and thinking change with age.

No matter what people ask you, you never seem to get flustered. So, to conclude our interview, what makes you flustered?

In business: bad figures.

And in your personal life?

When my wife is mad at me. 🌐

«We are living in pseudo-normality»

Life after lockdown is fraught with challenges: conspiracy theories, super-spreaders and post-lockdown anxiety. Despite certain freedoms we have regained in everyday life, the «new normal» causes unease. Why that is, how to deal with it, and where the pitfalls lie – Professor Katja Cattapan knows what uncertainty does to our psyche.

Interview Bettina Bono



Prof. Dr. med. Katja Cattapan, FMH-certified specialist for psychiatry and psychotherapy, works as Deputy Medical Director and Principal Consultant Private Wards at Kilchberg Sanatorium.

Ms. Cattapan, hairdressers, restaurants and our workplace - everywhere bids us welcome again. But many people don't feel that way. Why is that?

In objective terms, it is a pseudo-normality. At the beginning of the lockdown, we felt we were retreating into our apartments - and when we'd come out again, the threat, the virus, would be gone. Or there would be an effective therapy, maybe even a vaccine.

Which is not the case. The virus is still there, invisible.

Precisely. Unless you're really great at repressing, going to the hairdresser, the gym and the office will feel different now. I am very surprised how often I hear the word «normality». It's as if people wanted to conjure something that doesn't exist. Because the danger of infection persists. Our task now is to find a way to prevent further contagion without neglecting

factors like the economy, social contacts and pleasure. It helps to rejoice in our regained freedoms. Like being able to buy flowers again and have a drink in an outdoor restaurant.

Despite these freedoms, many people wish they were back in lockdown.

Some of us had epiphanies during lockdown. I know fathers who had hardly ever seen their children because they ▶

were always on business trips. These men don't want to go back to the way it was before. The same is true for people who had severe sleep disorders due to their hectic lifestyle and have found more rest and recuperation during lockdown.

So, deceleration and restricted mobility had an upside?
Absolutely. Besides, almost everything was regulated during lockdown. If you followed the rules, you were quite safe from infection. Now, after lockdown, each person pretty much bears the responsibility for the way they want to live their lives.

Personal responsibility is something we knew before Covid-19. Why do we find it so hard?
The danger of infection still affects practically all areas of life. Nobody could have foreseen anything on this scale. On top of which there is no end in sight to this situation. In our culture, where everything was so orderly and secured, uncertainty and loss of control are hard to bear.

The same goes for social distancing. Kissing people hello and shaking hands were ingrained in us.
They are part of our culture, a ritual. Shaking hands, hugging and kissing are signs of intimacy. People still catch themselves automatically reaching out their hand in greeting, only to withdraw it abruptly. It is also irritating to talk to people wearing masks. A major part of their facial expressions is lacking. That creates distance. Human contact is vital, but now it is always tinged with the shadow of a potentially dangerous infection. In times of Covid-19, however, we need to rethink the ways we interact. On the whole, I find the term «physical distancing» more appropriate, actually. Socially, we should continue to feel connected. Friendship and solidarity are important values, especially in times of crisis. If these are neglected, insecurity and fear can gain ground.

Is a queasy feeling already a first sign of post-lockdown anxiety?
If this feeling applies to all areas of life, it might be a harbinger of that. Post-lockdown anxiety stands for a persistent and impairing fear reaction. The typical signs are similar to those of health-related fears: worry loops, high excitability, irritability and tension with various physical symptoms.

What are health-related fears?
We generally distinguish between real

fears and pathological anxieties. The former are essential for survival. They protect us. For example: We don't jump off a cliff if we don't know whether the water below is deep enough. On the other hand, there are anxieties that are akin to diseases. These take on such proportions that our lives are severely affected. The worries associated with these anxieties no longer bear any relation to the real threat. If such anxieties persist, they become chronic and impair everyday life and work, family and leisure. The consequential damages may be sleep disorders, pain, depression and substance abuse.

At what point in times of a pandemic does an anxiety become more than just a fear?
We currently need a certain degree of fear in order to keep being careful. Anyone whose fear of infection prevents them from leaving the house, going to work or sleeping and makes them very tense and irritable, should consider this an indication of an anxiety that requires treatment.

So, Covid-19 even makes non-infected people sick, or at least their psyche?
The coronavirus pandemic is indeed a huge psychological experiment. I meet many people who cope very well with it. But what consequential damage the pandemic will do to the psyche is something we'll probably only really be able to say after a few years. In any case, there are people who had been very stable so far and have now developed an anxiety disorder or depression.

One person is plagued by existential fears, another is happy about the seats that are on the morning commuter train. Are some people simply more resistant to crises?
Resilience - mental resilience, that is - depends on genetic, epigenetic and biographical factors such as the type of upbringing and experience with previous instances of uncertainty. It also depends on the general level of stress, the ability to adapt to new situations and the availability of social support. Some people who are normally very stable in life but who have had childhood experiences of defenselessness and exposure to danger, now fall into an abyss. Other people, whose life is always very controlled, find themselves unable to adapt to the new situation.

What does healthy fear management look like?
We distinguish between «hot» and «cold» thoughts. The «hot thoughts» lead to worry loops with the associated anxiety dominating all areas of life. They mostly appear in conjunction with vegetative

symptoms such as rapid breathing, increased pulse rate and restlessness. The goal is to transform the «hot» thoughts into «cold thoughts». To this end, we ask ourselves the following question: Is my assessment of the danger and the threat level realistic and am I able to reassess and mitigate my worries based on facts? At the end of the day, wearing a mask and washing one's hands helps more than having sleepless nights because of catastrophic fantasies. It has also been proven that we can positively influence our tension very well by means of regular relaxation and mindfulness exercises. (see our book suggestion at right)

So, deceleration is more important than ever?
That's right. Taking short breaks in everyday life and having exchanges with colleagues at the office helps. It is important to be aware that we are living «in special times». We have to be mindful with ourselves, precisely because the situation will probably last for a long time to come.

Is there anything employers can do to help?
Clear instructions regarding hygiene and safety regulations are essential. The return from the home office to the workplace should be accomplished incrementally if possible. It also helps to set up the new «coexistence» deliberately in positive terms. And it is important to discuss the following issues: What was

The Backwards Corona Forecast

How will the coronavirus change our lives, our society? Futurologist Matthias Horx has taken a short trip through time and written an essay about it: «At the moment, I am often asked when Corona 'will be over' and when everything will return to normal. My answer is: never. There are historical moments when the future changes direction. We call them bifurcations. Or deep crises. These times are now. The world as we know it is dissolving. But behind it comes a new world, the formation of which we can at least imagine. For this I would like to offer you an exercise with which we have had good experiences in vision processes at companies. We call it the RE-gnosis. In contrast to the PRO-gnosis, we do not look 'into the future' with this technique. But from the future BACK to today.»
Did that make you curious? Read the whole essay here: https://www.horx.com/en/post.php?page_id=5423



Around the globe, people maintain distance. As they do here in Peru on 29 April, 2020 in front of the local market hall in the city of Piura.

better during lockdown, in the home office? What do we not want to go back to? Lots of exciting points that need to be examined! Now, it makes more sense than ever to do appraisal interviews in order to assess the situation of each individual. One important issue that worries many people is the possibility of losing their job. If the employer can provide clarity and transparency in this regard, it will bring relief to the staff.

The fact remains that our «old» life was much nicer and easier. The watchword now is: Hang in there. That's exhausting - from a psychological point of view as well?
Absolutely. Calling for perseverance is not suitable for extended periods of time. If you know that a recovery lies ahead, it may work for a short while. Now, it makes more sense to me to think about how we can face this new situation by changing our behavior: Instead of eating in the crowded cafeteria with distancing rules, get some take-out for lunch and go to the nearby park. Or if I want to meet friends, I might go on a walk with them or see them on the terrace.

You are appealing to our creativity.
People who find creative, flexible solutions for themselves are happier than those who hanker after the «old life». I am also sure that many people have had positive experiences during this special time. And it is worth focusing on these. An

essay by trend researcher Matthias Horx entitled «A Backwards Corona Forecast: Or how we will be surprised when the crisis is 'over'» has met with great approval. Looking at the situation from a different angle like that can mobilize positive forces. (see box at left)

The prospect of a personal advantage has always been an incentive to change one's behavior. One's own health does not seem to be motivation enough for many people.
Not getting sick is a prevention goal. Rather like not smoking or eating less. Prevention goals are often not very effective when it comes to their implementation.

Does this also relate to people's apparent reluctance to observe hygiene and distancing rules?
That is an nonrational and irresponsible persistence in the «old normality». People who don't personally know anybody who is seriously ill are particularly successful at repressing the situation. But at the end of the day, we will all suffer the consequences.

Times of crisis are the heyday of conspiracy theories. Do we go looking for simple truths when the world becomes too complicated for us?
When people have no control over the situation they are in, they are susceptible to conspiracy theories. There is an

Recommended reading

Mastery of Your Anxiety and Panic If only it were so easy to get rid of one's worries. People afflicted with anxieties feel helpless, and their mind spins like a merry-go-round. This workbook for patients explains causes and background, provides case histories and offers all the important exercises, protocols and worksheets you need.

by David H. Barlow and Michelle Genevieve Craske

Oxford University Press
ISBN-13: 978-0195311358

exciting experiment on this subject, published by psychologists Whitson and Galinsky in the journal «Science» in 2008. They discovered that loss of control makes our brain search for structures that don't exist. This can lead to fatal errors of judgment and, more generally, to conspiracy theories - by connecting things that are not really related, e.g. 5G antennas, Bill Gates or condensation trails in the sky and the coronavirus.

If we could hear the comforting words «everything will be ok», things would be quite easy?
Yes, our «inner child» naturally wishes to be comforted. But I expect that we will be dealing with this issue for some time to come. So, we'll need stamina and sound strategies to deal with the stress. It is important that we concentrate on basic, existential values that are important to us personally. 🌍

Katja Cattapan

Prof. Dr. med. Katja Cattapan, 51, studied medicine in Germany. For the past 25 years, the psychiatrist has been living in Switzerland and she has worked as chief resident at the University Hospital of Psychiatry Bern et al. She is currently employed as Deputy Medical Director and Principal Consultant Psychotherapy and Private Wards at Sanatorium Kilchberg, a private psychiatric hospital near Zurich, and she is an honorary professor at the University of Bern. Her clinical work focuses on the therapy of stress-processing disorders, depression and anxiety disorders. Ms. Cattapan is married and lives in Horgen with her partner and her son.



First boss lady

For over 100 years, men were in charge at «Schweizer Illustrierte». Since July, Nina Siegrist has been co-editor-in-chief of this celebrity magazine. Starting out, she had to cut several jobs. «It left me quite shaken!» She will now merge print with online.

Text: René Haenig Photo: Geri Born

This woman is good for man(ly) a surprise. When Nina Siegrist, 41, the new co-editor-in-chief of Schweizer Illustrierte, arrives at a client meeting on one of Zurich's public rental bikes shortly after taking office at the beginning of July, some males make remarks. «That is unworthy of an editor-in-chief.» The comment makes her roll her eyes, but that's all.

The new and first female boss of the Swiss celebrity magazine will not be measured by status symbols such as a company car or a chic office. People may smile at her unpretentious appearance. But they should never underestimate her, as a top banker once did at his peril. When this Credit Suisse executive was interviewed

by Siegrist, he replied to one of her questions: «That's where the leverage effect comes in.» Adding provocatively: «But I don't suppose you know what that is.» Nina still laughs when she remembers the look on his face. Because, in her broad Schaffhausen dialect, she answered succinctly: «I do, actually. You're referring to effect of debt on the return on equity.» Just because she is «the woman» from Schweizer Illustrierte doesn't mean she's stupid, she says with self-assurance.

This confidence is something the journalist acquired from her «rather hippieish, public-spirited, but also very Swiss parents. At home, any conflict would be thrashed out.» Her father was a school administrator, her mother a teacher. «If a teacher made me step outside the classroom, my father was bound to know. And when my mother subbed for our teacher, she would never pick me because she didn't want to favor me – it was frustrating.» Although she was a good student, Nina was determined not to follow in her parents' footsteps. The guidance counselor, seeing her good grades, advised her: «Go to medical school.» But that was out of the question for Nina. After graduating from high school, she wanted to «go to work», so she did what she calls a crash course at business school and got a job as a secretary with Baker McKenzie, one of Zurich's leading commercial law firms. «Until I realized that this wasn't it either.»

She began studying journalism, economics and film in Zurich and Hamburg («I love that city.»). «I was interested in media. Besides, it was hip at the time,» she says. She decided on economics «because business administration is something solid.» And film was her great passion. To finance her studies, she wrote for the daily Schaffhauser Nachrichten – mostly about theater, art and music. «At first, I had to google everything,» she remembers with a smile. But soon, Nina took over the reins at the weekly supplement «Express» and from there went on to work for Swiss Television's celebrity show «Glanz & Gloria». But writing was more her style and in early 2008, she ended up at Ringier. For her first story on an avalanche drama, she interviewed the legendary ski expert Art Furrer for Schweizer Illustrierte.

Nina Siegrist's refreshing manner and her determination made people notice. Anyone who works with her appreciates her analytical and struc-

Nina Siegrist (center) and Werner de Schepper (right) are joint editors-in-chief of Schweizer Illustrierte magazine. «She is someone you can count on,» says Stefan Regez, Head of Magazines Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland about his 41-year-old colleague.

tured approach to tasks. Siegrist's strengths include thoroughness and reliability. Stefan Regez, Head of General-Interest Magazines at Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland AG, who got to know her as business news editor at SI, remembers that Nina, in the very first week she worked there, stated clearly what she expected of the editor-in-chief. «She is determined, reliable and committed – both on the professional and the human level. She doesn't talk about pie in the sky, she delivers on her promises. In short: She is a person you can count on,» he concludes. Urs Heller, 67, who was Ringier's longtime Head of Magazines, is also full of praise. «Nina is gifted. As a writer, as a mover and shaker, as a leader,» he enthuses – and adds: «We discovered her early on and supported her. The fact that she is now editor-in-chief makes me proud.»

Nina Siegrist shares the editor-in-chief's job with Werner De Schepper, 55. They each have an 80 percent workload. Nina is the mother of three-year-old twin daughters; her colleague has a small two-year-old son in addition to two grown-up children. When Werner De Schepper first met Nina at SI in 2015, he is said to have called her «a tough customer». That was meant as a compliment, she says, since Nina had caught Werner's eye because she «clearly expressed her opinion and stood up for herself». A quality he appreciates enormously, says De Schepper, and one that is vital for a boss, male or female. Especially when it comes to discussions about headlines on the cover, it shows, time and again: «Nothing gets past Nina that feels corny or is not gender-appropriate.»


The editor-in-chief's job demands a lot from Siegrist right from the start. Due to cost-cutting measures, the editorial teams of Schweizer Illustrierte and SI online are reduced and merged. Nina is obliged to conduct termination interviews with several colleagues. «I tried to be very well prepared and then act on the spur of the moment,» she says and admits: «In some instances, it left me quite shaken. Her greatest wish: «Not having to put the team through such a process again.» She now has to build a convergent editorial team, «at full throttle» and with fewer staff. The new online strategy is supposed to be in place by the end of the year. Her plea: «Everyone needs to keep their cool now, be patient and ready to improvise. That way, we can do it!»

Ringier's best photos of the last quarter

Five pictures and their stories: Corona poverty, Corona anger and Corona gluttony. Plus a tough job in a gravel pit and short work on a mountaintop.

SCHWEIZER ILLUSTRIERTE
NICOLAS RIGHETTI
NICOLE SPIESS

Photographer
Editor

 René Huonder used to be an architect. «Until I lost my grip on life.» Now, the 79-year-old lives alone in a condemned building in the former industrial quarter of Zurich. And he lines up daily for food at the Salvation Army's Hope House in Zurich. During the Corona pandemic, the Salvation Army distributed free lunches to the homeless and other people on the margins of society every day – because other social institutions were closed due to Corona. For René Huonder, the social contact at the food counter is the best moment of the day. «I have no one else,» he says. In the bag: a portion of Älplermagronen (Swiss mac and cheese) and salad, an apple and a bottle of mineral water. Photographer Nicolas Righetti photographed Huonder for **Schweizer Illustrierte** as part of a report on the Corona crisis. An image that gets under your skin.


BOLERO
KIPLING PHILLIPS
SUSANNE MÄRKI

Photographer
Editor

 «May the wind be always at your back,» says an Irish blessing. But the wind was stormy and all over the place during the shoot for the fashion spread «Dark Moves» in **Bolero** magazine. The production took place in a gravel pit near Cape Town on a red-hot day. «Shade? No such luck. And the wind was blowing in a way you rarely see in this country,» says editor Kristin Müller. During a momentary lull, photographer Kipling Phillips was able to launch his drone and shoot model Ashley in her tight-fitting, frilly, calf-length Miu Miu dress. «We had to shout stage directions to Ashley from a distance. All in all, a hard day,» said Müller.

SCHWEIZER ILLUSTRIERTE
KURT REICHENBACH
NICOLE SPIESS

Photographer
Editor

 Photographer Kurt Reichenbach had prepared himself for a long working day on the 6,440 ft Mt. Niederhorn. For the **Schweizer Illustrierte** he was supposed to take pictures of Switzerland's most beautiful mountain lakes, and the little gem at the summit of the Niederhorn was to be one of them. After all, Kurt Reichenbach lives nearby and knows all about the breathtaking panorama. «I started out by taking a few pictures with some hikers. But the real plan was to take pictures at sunset and to make my way back down into the valley at night with my headlamp.» But after only ten minutes, Reichenbach saw an ibex strolling into his viewfinder. «I had never experienced that in this place! I realized at once: a mountain lake with the mountains Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau in the background plus an ibex – it can't get any better than this.» And so, Reichenbach's working day – thanks to a stroke of luck – was already over after just a few minutes.

BLIC
OLIVER BUNIC
MLADEN SURJANAC

Photographer
Editor

 In the thick of it instead of merely on the spot. Photographer Oliver Bunic was caught between the lines in Belgrade when he took pictures of the riots in front of the parliament building for the daily **Blic**. This was anything but safe. Because emotions ran high when the Serbian government announced a weekend curfew to control the rise of Covid 19 infections. On the third day of marches against the government of Aleksandar Vucic, a group of protesters managed to enter the Serbian parliament building. The police responded with truncheons and tear gas – and pushed the demonstrators back. They in turn threw stones, fireworks and bottles. «It was hard and risky to stand in the midst of the turmoil. Several colleagues were badly injured,» says photographer Bunic.

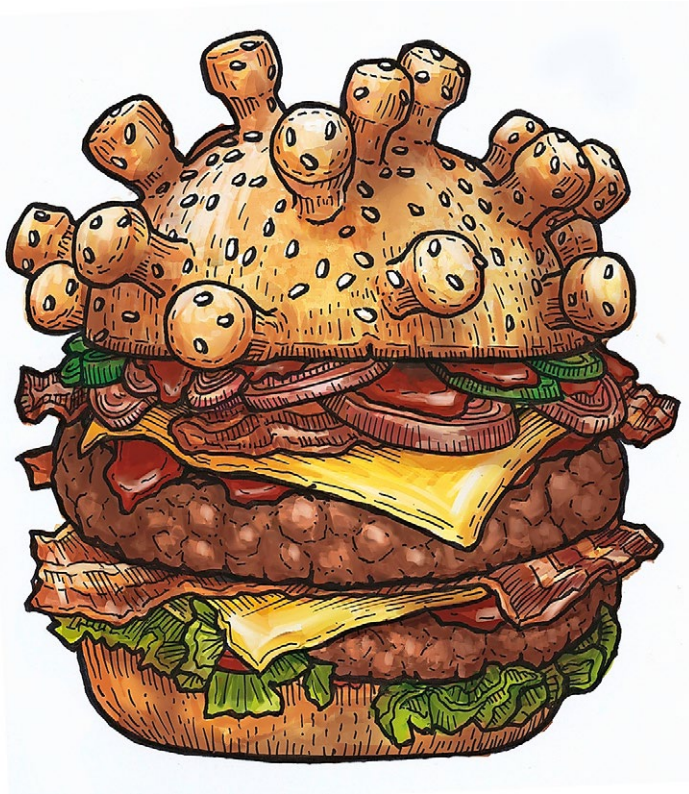
BEOBACHTER
ANNE SEEGER

Illustration

 Is it okay to cook up something funny for readers during the Corona crisis? Yes, thought Anne Seeger at **Beobachter** magazine, when during the lockdown, they read a text entitled «How not to gain weight in your home office». After all, (almost) everyone has the same problem during lockdown: You work hard from home, but you don't take more than five steps a day – so, you gain weight. «I first sketched out a few ideas and also considered spaghetti on a plate in the shape of the coronavirus,» said graphic designer Anne Seeger. But the hamburger with a Corona roll on top wins out. «The visual effect of this meat tower was very good, and the combination of junk food and Corona was also apt. And a little humor in hard times never hurt.»

In this feature, DOMO regularly presents the best photographs published by Ringier titles in the past quarter.





Fibo: A Special Case

At barely 20, he got his first job with the fledgling tabloid «Blick». Answering letters to the editor at 2.5 Swiss francs an hour. His career led all the way up to group management. Eight pieces for Hans Jörg «Fibo» Deutsch, who has (allegedly) retired at 80. By Karl Lüönd

How Fibo became Fibo

Sixty years ago, there were various ways to become a journalist. Feeding on a glut of advertising, newspapers grew fatter and fatter. The editorial offices followed suit. Many of them would hire anyone who could write a straight sentence. This included typesetters with ambitions, teachers bored with their job and photographers capable of composing captions.

«Blick», the daily paper people loved to hate in the early 1960s, became a refuge for oddballs: runaway priests, former Foreign Legionnaires, graphic artists down on their luck. An erstwhile wrestler with good connections in the red-light district covered the police beat.

And time and again, you'd get college dropouts! This had to do with the fact that there wasn't any formal training for journalists to be had at the time. To become a journalist, you simply had to want to be one.

Fibo, too, got started in journalism mostly by accident. He had gone to school with one of the sons of «Blick» editor-in-chief Werner Schollenberger and was about to fulfil his father's wishes and embark on medical studies. At the same time, he needed to earn money on the side. Schollenberger junior got him the job handling letters to the editor at «Blick».

Afflicted with mobility problems due to an early bout of polio, the young man proved to be quick off the mark, friendly with everyone and happy to do what nobody else wanted to do. He would replace the paper roll in the telex, type out TV listings and help with developing urgently needed sports photos in the eve-

A black and white photograph showing a group of about a dozen people, likely students and professionals, gathered around a large table in a workshop or classroom. They are working on a project. In the foreground, a newspaper titled "Blick Geschändet!" is spread out on the table, along with various papers, maps, and materials. One person is holding a large sheet of paper. The room has a clock on the wall, a camera on a tripod, and various posters and notices pinned to the walls. The atmosphere appears to be one of collaborative work and learning.

nings. One day, a motherly colleague told him: «Basically, you're our Fibo.» The man himself has no illusions about the origin of his nickname: «They were simply casting about for a word for a dogsbody who would always fetch anything. So, a dog's name: Fibo!»

Working at «Blick» was definitely more entertaining than his studies, so he dropped out of medical school.

Fibo has long since become a brand in Swiss journalism. In his sixty years with Ringier, Fibo aka Hans Jürg Deutsch has been a gofer, a police reporter, head of news, edi-

Fibo Deutsch (3rd from left) reading the news overview of the day at an editorial conference in 1968. The meeting is transmitted live by TV cameras to an adjoining room where 30 guests from the Northwest Switzerland Press Association are watching.

tor-in-chief, a newspaper creator, a troubleshooter in any number of crises; he went on to become group spokesman, a member of corporate management, a pioneer of medical journalism and commercial television - a man of many facets: always full of surprises and on the ball, a man of unerring instincts and unshakeable loyalty, yet constantly ready to venture an opinion.

When he was supposed to retire, Michael Ringier promised him: You can stay with us for as long as you like. This gesture was a great gift not only to Fibo but also to his company!

When Fibo was Seline Kalberer

Whenever there was a lack of juicy letters to the editor, Fibo would tickle his typewriter and dream up some women's issues. For example: «My husband is a dear on the whole but he's ashamed to push the stroller on our Sunday walks. What should I do?»

The answer would be given by Selina Kalberer. That was Fibo's pseudonym for «Blick's» life coach, who didn't exist at the time. Half a century before the advent of Facebook and the invention of the shitstorm, virtual Seline would moderate heated discussions among readers and happily fan the flames. Until female readers began to turn up at «Blick's» editorial offices on Dianastrasse in Zurich and insisted on pouring out their hearts to this Mrs. Kalberer. Rosy Weiss, a former editor with the protestant magazine «Kirchenbote», eventually took over the role as she was the only woman on the editorial team.

Telephone virtuoso

During his tenure as head of news, Fibo would sit there like a spider in his web and chase reporters all over the place. When Swiss star cyclist and heartthrob Hugo Koblet suffered a fatal car crash, Fibo established his legendary reputation as a telephone investigator. He called dozens of farmers residing between the towns of Uster and Mönchaltorf. Then, despite his disability, he set out in his car. He drove up and down near the crash site until he found an eyewitness who confirmed: «That's exactly the way Koblet was driving to and from yesterday before he raced deliberately into a tree.» When «Blick» published this sensational news, the authorities were obliged to confirm the suicide of this highly popular sportsman who was saddled with financial and domestic trouble.

In a Munich hotel room by night

Ten years went by before «Blick» was in the black. Even before the tabloid's continuous financial success was



certain, Fibo, then head of news, urged everyone to fill niches in the market. The biggest niche yawned on Sundays. More and more sports events, especially soccer matches, would take place on Saturdays, but most publishers shied away from the strict regulations prohibiting trading and sales on Sundays. As early as

The "Blick" issue of November 3rd, 1964. The day before, star cyclist Hugo Koblet had crashed his car. Fibo Deutsch revealed: It was deliberate.

1969, Fibo fathered a novel form of newspaper. Over a single weekend in a hotel room near Munich's central station, he and consultant Fred Baumgärtler came up with the first «Sonntagsblick»: tabloid format, no hardcore yellow journalism but full-color magazine stories and lots of service sections, playing up the ►



strong points that Ringier publishing was famous for. Due to problems with color printing, however, the Sunday paper was soon converted back into a normal seventh issue of the week in broadsheet format. By 1978, the new offset print center at Adligenswil made it possible to give it another shot, and this time, the Sunday magazine worked out. Since then, «Sonntagsblick» has become an essential fixture in the Swiss media-escape.

The world's fastest magazine

In 1972, Heinrich Oswald became president of Ringier Group. His first major project was to merge «Schweizer Illustrierte» with its emaciated competitor «Sie & Er». Fibo Deutsch and Peter Balsiger were appointed co-editors-in-chief of the new «Schweizer Illustrierte». They introduced narrative forms and formats that were familiar only from foreign magazines, such as so-called home stories focusing on celebrities' domestic lives. Federal Councilor Nello Celio gave away his recipe for risotto.

A 1984 attempt to make commercial television together. Fibo Deutsch (at left) with pirate radio pioneer Roger Schawinski and publisher Michael Ringier (at right) launch the local TV channel ZüriVision with a five-day trial program from Oerlikon.

Foreign Minister Pierre Graber, who had a reputation for being aloof, showed off his holiday house in Valais. And SI became the «world's fastest magazine». Deutsch and Balsiger motivated the expert gravure printers at the Zofingen plant to work night shifts, allowing them to feature the soccer cup finals on eight color pages mere 18 hours after the final whistle. If a Swiss citizen was kidnapped somewhere, SI journalists would chase the news all around the globe. Reporter Rudolf Rohr once flew to Japan carrying no luggage but his camera, to interview a sailor from the Emmental valley, who had been on a hijacked plane, at Tokyo airport and head home on the next flight with the latest coverage. And Federal Councilor Ernst Brugger, coming back from an official visit to Russia, was astonished when Peter Balsiger, who had tagged along on the trip but returned early, greeted him at Zurich airport with the new issue of SI, fresh from the press, full of up-to-the-minute color pictures from Moscow.

Failed family planning at «Blick»

A realistic portrayal of Fibo needs to include his missteps. Such as his repeated failures to create an entire family of newspapers around the two successful titles «Blick» and «Sonntagsblick». Two attempts to win over additional readers with a regional edition of the daily did not succeed. In 1976, «Blick Zürich» failed because it failed to score with advertisers; the low-price policy of the top dogs in local media at the time prevented the paper from entering the market. In 1988, Fibo Deutsch directed a much more methodical and well-funded approach to launch «Blick Basel», but here, too, the advertising business would not fly. «Auto-Blick» was a short-lived attempt to move into profitable topics, following the example of the German tabloid «Bild». «Blick für die Frau», a women's edition established in 1989, managed to achieve its objectives in terms of circulation but not with respect to advertising revenue. Fibo was not involved in these two latter projects; however, he was always called in whenever there was a fire to put out in the dynamically growing publishing company's portfolio. Following

one of the biggest launch campaigns in Swiss publishing history, the weekly news magazine «Die Woche» and its French-language sister publication «L'Hébdô» were released. After editor-in-chief Hanspeter Lebrument's premature departure, Fibo Deutsch took over the reins at «Die Woche» – too late. After a year, the title was cancelled, with a huge loss. «It wasn't money that killed it», as one insider later said, «but unrequited love and the egos of the people involved.» When «Die Woche» went under, while «L'Hébdô» lasted until 2017, Fibo had long since embarked on new projects. Commercial television became a big issue for him, as the future was multi-media.

Television – the limited conflict

Men's social existence determines their consciousness. This phrase may have been coined by Karl Marx, but it is true nevertheless, as exemplified by Fibo Deutsch. His lifelong personal illness, which he coped with thanks to his enormous self-discipline, motivated him to get involved in health journalism, at times very intensely, and to support the great social service provided by the Swiss Paraplegic Centre and its Foundation at Nottwil. The second half of his career with Ringier – from around the mid-1980s onward – was devoted to a medium that brings the world into the homes of disabled people more than any other: For more than thirty years, Fibo directed many commercial television and video ventures for Ringier.

Even back in the 1930s, old Paul August Ringier had pursued the strategy of a limited conflict with SRG, the public monopoly broadcaster of the day. He played the local patriotism of the regional SRG associations for Zurich, Basel and Bern off against each other for so long until he was appointed main contractor for the «Schweizer Radio-Zeitung» (Swiss Radio Magazine) as of 1936. This was the foundation for subsequent decades of publishing successful program guides (most recently «Tele» and «TV Star»). The publishing rights remained with the regional SRG honchos; the earnings from the subscriptions and advertising business went to Ringier.

When local radio was permitted in the 1980s and the liberalization of



audiovisual media in Switzerland tentatively got underway, Ringier proceeded with extreme caution, as chronicler, critic, partner, competitor, program supplier and client of SRG all at the same time. On SRG's second German-speaking channel, using the «Presse-TV» construct, Ringier produced special-interest programs connected to print media, such as «Motor-Show», «Gesundheit Sprechstunde» or «Konsum TV». At the same time, it established a commercially important foothold with the pay-TV channel Teleclub.

For decades, Fibo Deutsch was one of the crucial masterminds of Ringier's television strategy. He was one of the few people who had direct access to German media mogul Leo Kirch, which led to Ringier's 50 percent stake in Sat.1 (Switzerland) AG in 1999. March 2000 saw the launch of the Swiss program window on Sat.1, which was meant to rely heavily on current football coverage. After some initial disappointments, Ringier's involvement in Sat.1 proved to be «positive all round», according to a Ringier statement in 2008. As early as 2005, Ringier achieved a turnover of 46.5 million Swiss francs with television, mainly with productions. While other publishers repeatedly lost money by launching expensive rivalling projects against the politically privileged public broadcaster SRG, Ringier

A unique career: From sandwich-gofer to group management member. Now, at age 80, Fibo Deutsch is retiring. After 60 years with Ringier.

made money through programming co-operations. Ringier later withdrew from the joint venture with the German private broadcaster. Fibo would always have liked to make more Swiss programming. He was the driving force in this small market. That the Swiss market eventually proved too small for ambitious programming projects was hardly his fault.

Fibo in Future

80 years of Fibo Deutsch! A special and heartfelt thank you goes to his longtime companion Ruth Deutsch-Naegeli!

It has been a steep and sometimes stony road from sandwich-gofer to TV executive dealing at eye level with captains of the industry.

A good nose, intuition, perseverance, discipline – and the famous willingness to go that extra mile, be it on foot or in a wheelchair!

A career that would not have been possible in just any company. Ringier gives you leeway. This family-run firm allows so much sovereignty and enables achievements that are not in the rule book. Chapeau!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FIBO!

You will continue to surprise us. Let's say: until you're 120! 🌐

«It goes further»

Ringier has created a Board for Diversity and Inclusion. «It is right and proper for us as a company to take our social responsibility seriously,» says CFO Annabella Bassler.

Interview: Alejandro Velert

Annabella Bassler, issues like «Black Lives Matter», equality or homosexual marriage have people taking to the streets. Now, Ringier has created a Board for Diversity and Inclusion. Is this a new strategic goal?

It certainly is. We have to address these topics just as much as we discuss the right strategy for Tech&Data or our activities in Africa, for example. We cannot take up the cause of EqualVoice and not follow our words with action inside our company. Diversity and Inclusion goes further than EqualVoice; it is about the diversity of our employees as a whole.

Diversity stands for the variety of difference; inclusion stands for the appreciation of that difference. Age, gender, nationality, disability or sexual orientation are no longer a factor. So much for the textbook. What form should Diversity and Inclusion at Ringier take in concrete terms?

It would be completely wrong for us to define it top-down in our company. We all have to deal with it and engage in a dialog. This has already begun in the shape of workshops. For me, the starting point is the wide range of our readership and our users. Not only in Switzerland, but also in Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa.

And we want to do this because they are very good people or because we want to make money with it at the end of the day?

I was asked this same question again and again with respect to EqualVoice. It can be both. It is right and proper for us as a media company to take our social responsibility seriously and work together to achieve something for the better. We are convinced that one day we will also succeed in achieving economic benefits from it, but this must not be



the first or only motivation for our commitment.

Do you personally have an idea where the journey should lead?

Equal opportunities are of crucial importance. And that they are really a fact. And now, you probably want to know whether we'll need to introduce quotas.

Well?

First of all, we need to define together what Diversity and Inclusion means at Ringier and to analyze where we currently stand. Then we can set goals and see if and how these can be measured and whether quotas might help.

You are German, a woman and Chief Financial Officer of Ringier. Have you ever been disadvantaged?

No. But I wish I could speak Swiss German. My little son says the problems begin in my throat, so I think I'll leave well enough alone (laughs).

What about the percentage of women in management at Ringier?

We are doing fine at the employee level, and the same goes for lower management. But in middle and upper management, we are not positioned well enough. And then there are some areas where the

A new committee has been created to promote diversity and inclusion within Ringier. The members of this board are Annabella Bassler (photo), CFO Ringier, Ladina Heimgartner, Head Global Media & CEO Blick Group, Alexander Theobald, COO Ringier and CEO Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland, Susanne Jud, Human Resources Ringier, Christian Dorer, Editor-in-Chief Blick, Patricia Franzoni, Human Resources Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland and Jan Konjack, COO International Marketplaces.

surplus of men can be explained, for example in Tech&Data. There, you have to be able to accept a difference. It's hard enough to get the right talent in this area.

What about equal pay?

An important issue. Equal pay has been achieved at Ringier and Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland. We have had this analyzed by external experts and been awarded the Fair-ON-Pay+ certificate.

First EqualVoice, now Diversity and Inclusion. Where does your motivation to champion such issues come from?

I grew up in Belo Horizonte in Brazil and lived there for six years. When you grow up with so much inequality and such a glaring gap between rich and poor, you are sensitized for the rest of your life. When I was four years old, I would sometimes throw my shoes over the fence because the children on the other side didn't have any. My mother wasn't all that enthusiastic about my civic engagement (laughs).

You were the initiator of EqualVoice. Did you experience a lot of resistance?

A few people said there was no need for such initiative. In the meantime, the initiative has developed a dynamic that I am very pleased with. The EqualVoice idea permeates all areas and hierarchical levels in the company.

Will Diversity and Inclusion sell itself? The more, the better?

No, definitely not. Diversity and difference of opinion can be quite wearing. It requires leadership, communication and the commitment of all of us. That's why I think it's so important that these initiatives are not prescribed, but that they are supported by everyone and can be developed step by step. 🌍

Photo: Thomas Meier



Michael Ringier, Publisher

Journalism as elixir

When you get right down to it, it's embarrassing for our profession. But it probably took this crisis to show us journalists how good we could really be. Because what those who are in the business of reporting delivered in the months of the Covid-19 crisis is one of the best journalistic achievements I can remember. I am deliberately talking not only about our company; I am talking about everything I was able to read or hear or see in a language I understand. A big hand and a big pat on the back for media people, please.

You know these words come from someone who has taken an increasingly critical look at our profession and its protagonists in recent years. But suddenly, almost everything I always complained about had vanished. The petty squabbling amongst competitors, the scandalization of trivial matters, the ballooning stories on Sundays that tended to burst by Monday, the persistent and judgmental know-it-all attitude and the kind of blinkered reporting that barely looks beyond the regional or national horizon.

Instead, I experienced a highly professional struggle for facts, for the approximation of truth; there was this sense of responsibility, of fair-

ness, of honesty. And - almost unbelievably - I read many small or bigger stories or saw videos in which the journalists - given the lack of current events - came up with something exciting and interesting. As far as I'm concerned, journalism has passed this maturity test with flying colors.

And the readers, listeners and viewers thanked us for it. In the best currency - it's called attention. We should all go on keeping these past months in mind, especially because at some point, perhaps even soon, we'll run the danger of falling back into old habits and routines.

And we should try to impress on our remaining advertising clients more than ever what they have in us: credibility, perhaps the greatest asset of any message. Do you know Ernst Wolff? You don't need to, he is a writer of books and a disseminator of conspiracy theories like many others. In his opinion, virologists produce fears, politicians foster panic-mongering, the WHO does not serve health but special interests, particularly those of Bill Gates, the financial system is totally parasitic, and hedge funds are taking over the world. All this and other rubbish may be heard on a YouTube video that has been

clicked over two million times and probably forwarded even more.

The social media hardly distinguish between foolish contributions and relevant, researched, serious information. And the latter usually comes from professional journalists anyway.

What would Facebook have been without its links to our work? And what, may I ask, do all those influencers on Instagram stand for when their photo in front of a waterfall or a divine bay is suddenly of no interest to anyone, nor is the shampoo someone uses or the clothes someone wears. Family or pets had to stand in so people could post anything at all. Professional journalism, on the other hand, is like the old advertising slogan from 1925 for Klosterfrau Melisengeist, a popular German elixir: «It has never been more valuable than today». Klosterfrau Melisengeist still exists today. But only because consumers are willing to pay for it.

Michael Ringier

Photo: Maurice Haas

Shots & Vampire Talk

The jam-packed week of Mathieu Gilliand, Creative Director of Ringier Brand Studio. Filming with gravy basters, flying in masks, editing by night and fun conversations with his boys.

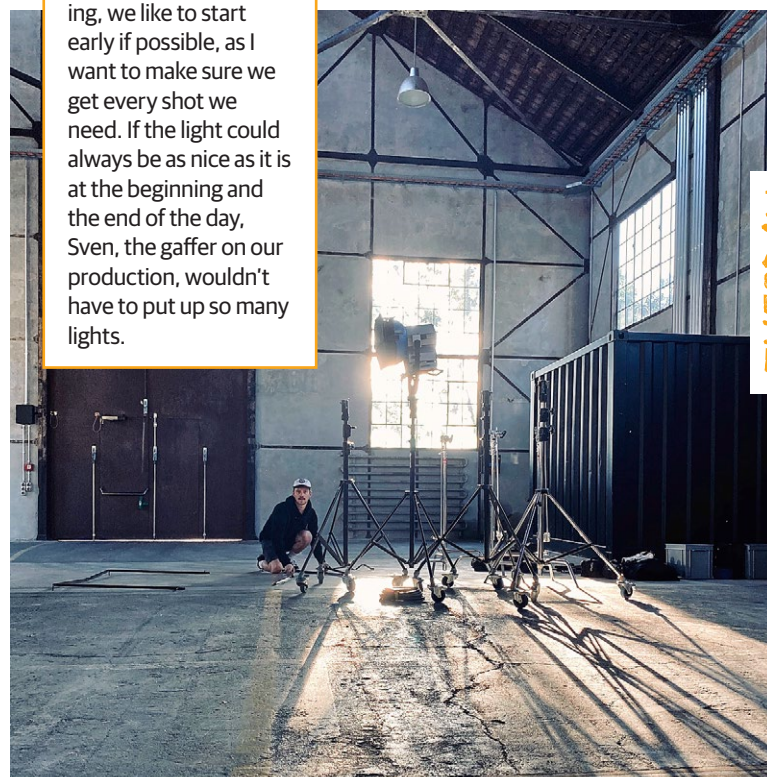


I take my son Eddie (7) to school on the bus. Mandatory mask wearing on public transport is actually quite funny to him.

MONDAY



We need food props! Tomorrow will bring a huge video production for the Swiss food brand Thomy, and there are a bunch of props I have yet to find. Our store holds all kinds of stuff we can loan out. You can easily waste a lot of time in there. Because a plate isn't simply a plate, it needs to be a visual match for the dish.



When we are producing, we like to start early if possible, as I want to make sure we get every shot we need. If the light could always be as nice as it is at the beginning and the end of the day, Sven, the gaffer on our production, wouldn't have to put up so many lights.

TUESDAY



Although I prefer to do the filming myself, there are shoots where I'd rather leave it to others. With four recipe videos that we need to produce for Thomy today, I have to keep track of everything and can't also take care of the technical side. Here I am discussing the shot we are about to record with my cameraman Philipp. A macro shot - I use a baster to squirt the sauce into the plate so it will ripple like waves in the sea. The shot is a success!



WEDNESDAY

After returning the equipment I repair to my home office at the end of the day to do the editing. I like working in the evening when the house is quiet, and the surrounding darkness allows me to see the colors better on the monitor.



THURSDAY

It feels good to blow off some steam after a day's work. Having left my racket on the shelf for almost 30 years, I have rediscovered tennis for myself this year. I really can't explain why I didn't play for such a long time... Now, though, I hit the courts at least once a week!



FRIDAY

We are shooting a video on the topic of «Flying for Corona» for Swiss airlines. We zip down to Valencia and right back again on the same plane. Now I know what the cabin crew feels like.



WEEKEND

Whenever possible, I spend as much time as I can with my family. Hikes like this one on the Globi path near Engelberg do us good. I enjoy everything about it: the panorama, the fresh air and the interesting and sometimes slightly offbeat conversations with the kids: for instance, what it's like to be a vampire...



In the evening, Eddie and Wilhelm (at left) get papa's special porridge, which they have well deserved, out on the picnic blanket in the garden. That's all we're good for because we're all pooped.

A finger on the pulse of the public

Walter Noser has been working for Beobachter magazine for 20 years. He is also managing director of the «SOS Beobachter» and «Humanitas» foundations and writes books. All the more reason to look forward to cocktail hour: «The best time of the day.»

Whoever wants to know the result of a vote in advance can come to him, as he is usually right, says Walter Noser. «Every day, I talk to our nation on the phone. So, I really have my finger on the pulse of the public.» The 57-year-old works on Beobachter's advisory team and as an editor – and has done so for 20 years.

«On the advice line, my colleagues and I learn every day how little it takes to destroy an entire existence.» As a specialist in social issues, adult protection, educational problems and family law, he tells the people seeking advice what their options are. «But the people have to make their own decisions.»

The fact that he is often confronted with human tragedy and misery is not a burden to him, says Noser. «But it does make me humble. I was born healthy, got a good education, I've never been unemployed or had a serious accident. So, like most of us, I have mostly had one thing: good luck.»

Walter Noser has a second job. He is managing director of the SOS Beobachter Foundation and the Ringier Humanitas Foundation. «Both foundations support people living in poverty. And Humanitas also helps employees of the entire Ringier Group,» he says. If, for example, the partner of a part-time employee loses his salary because of Covid-19, help can be provided quickly and unbureaucratically.

As if all this were not enough, Walter Noser also writes books. His name has already adorned ten book covers in the Edition Beobachter. His latest opus «Alles über die KESB» is all about the Swiss child and adult protection agency – and selling very well.

Noser says that when he joined Beobachter magazine in the year 2000 it was like an autonomous cooperative. «Everyone got involved as if it were their own outfit.» Today, the cooperative groove has gone. «Instead, you hear a lot of English management jargon and you spend too much time sitting on some project team or task force,» says Noser.

What has remained, however, is everyone's great commitment. «That's why I still enjoy going to work every day.» AV



Out and about: In his spare time, Walter Noser likes to put on hiking boots (at right: exploring the Julier pass region). Apart from that, cocktail hour is his favorite time of the day, says Noser: «Your working day is over, and you have the whole evening ahead of you.»



Editor's Choice

by Marc Walder

Ringier CEO Marc Walder tells you which books he is reading and why they fascinate him.



Reinhard K. Sprenger

MAGIE DES KONFLIKTS

Reinhard K. Sprenger is the most widely read writer on management in the German-speaking world. Rightly so – and surprisingly so. A Ph.D. in philosophy and an expert on business administration and psychology, he not only excels at entertaining and informing, he is also provocative and irritating. In his new book «Magie des Konflikts» (The Magic of Conflict), he posits the initially somewhat jarring hypothesis that one should exchange solutions to conflict for conflicts as solution. To put it a little more simply: conflict is not the problem, it's the solution. Because a conflict does not divide what was previously united. It brings together what was previously divided.

This, however, requires a deeper understanding of conflicts and an appropriate mental attitude. Chapter by chapter, Reinhard K. Sprenger leads his readers closer to this goal. For Sprenger, the key issue is tolerance of ambiguity. In other words, the ability not only to tolerate ambiguities, uncertainties and contradictions, but to appreciate their value. Or as Sprenger puts it in a nutshell: «You're right, but so is the other guy.»

Once you acknowledge that a complex and globalized world cannot be split up into black and white or right and wrong you will not see your counterpart in a conflict as an adversary or an enemy. And thereby you will gain the courage to walk right through the middle of a conflict.

«Conflicts. Everyone has them. Nobody wants them.» These are the first three sentences of Sprenger's new book. Everything that follows is smart, entertaining and educational. For your personal life as well as your workplace.

Photos: Geri Born, private

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