

**Felix Oberholzer-Gee, economist:** «Newspapers have great future prospects.»

# DOMO



# And: action!

More breaking news, more video-on-demand and new formats. How Blick TV achieved its breakthrough.





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**Cover collage:** Zuni Halpern, Valerie Stoll

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In the TV studio: Ramona Schelbert and her colleague Armando Flüeler are not only anchors in front of the camera. Schelbert also works behind the camera as a Blick TV live reporter, Flüeler as a video editor.

BLICK TV

# Blick TV is really picking up speed

Sandro Inguscio has been at the helm of Blick TV for ten months. Switzerland's first digital TV station is making good progress – not least due to continuous tweaking. That is essential in the digital world. The credo is: «If you don't take users seriously, you'll fall by the wayside.»

Text René Haenig Photos: Philippe Rossier, Siggj Bucher

**S**andro Inguscio, 35, is not only a dyed-in-the-wool journalist, he is also a numbers guy. Since he took over as editor-in-chief of Blick TV and Blick.ch last July, he has been preaching his credo: «Keep your eye on the numbers and don't sugarcoat them!» That's why he doesn't set too much store by whether and how many unique users who click on Blick.ch are watching the live TV stream. The «hard currency» that counts for Inguscio is: Who activates the full-screen mode, who turns on the sound? Because: «Those are the people interested in our content.»

The numbers prove the new boss right. During his tenure, the VoD (video on demand) figure has doubled. While Blick TV was averaging 350,000 video views a day until Inguscio took office last year, ten months later the figure is at 700,000, and rising. «Recently, we've had up to a million VoD views a day with our coverage of the war in Ukraine, the

Olympics, and the Corona thriller about tennis star Novak Djokovic,» says Sandro Inguscio, not without pride.

On the one hand, the video-on-demand strategy, which they adopted and consistently pursued ever since, is crucial to the growing success. «Before I took the job as head of Blick TV, I grappled intensely with the question: What works around the world in terms of moving images?» Inguscio quickly found the answer. «In terms of videos, it's portals like YouTube and streaming services like Netflix, but there are also audio services such as Spotify.»

## **All the news in just five minutes**

On the other hand, Inguscio and his team consider being up-to-date another important success factor. «We want to establish ourselves as Switzerland's breaking-news TV,» he says, outlining their goal, and gives three reasons why they should continue on this path: No one can do it better than we can. No one else is doing it. And the demand on the user side is clearly there. This has been particularly evident since the start of the war and the associated reporting, he said. «We have set up our structure in such a way that we are fast and flexible and can react within a very short time. From the day the Russians invaded Ukraine, we were on the air 14 hours a day for two weeks.»

The 48-strong Blick TV team created the news format «Der Tag in 5'» (The day in 5) from scratch. Every ▶

**«The video-on-demand strategy we have consistently pursued is proving successful»**

**Sandro Inguscio, Head of Blick TV**



day at 5 p.m., the editorial team delivers the most important news of the day in a five-minute video. Inguscio sums up the underlying idea in simple terms: «If someone has spent the whole day under a rock somewhere, when they click on our format and watch it, they should know what's been happening in the world.» The focus, he says, is on relevance. It begins with news about politics, goes on to business topics, foreign and sports reports, and ends with people news. «If the Queen is unwell and in hospital, you should know about it,» Inguscio says with certainty. Another new feature introduced at the beginning of the year is the talk show «Hier fragt der Chef» (Questions from the Boss) with Christian Dorer, 47, editor-in-chief of Blick Group.

### Revealing and emotional

Blick TV is not only ahead of the game in terms of news, and proves it with formats like «sichtbar» (visible). In this video series, which airs every other Tuesday at 8 p.m. on Blick TV, host Sylwina Spiess, 32, portrays people who live lives that are not necessarily standard. Whether it's drug use, alcohol abuse, bullying, anorexia, self-harm, or sexual harassment - the editorial team does not shy away from any topic, no matter how sensitive. «Sometimes, things get very emotional,» Spiess admits. She uses the example of «sichtbar» to illustrate how effectively the TV team at Zurich's Dufourstrasse implements ideas. The pilot episode, developed with TV producer Alexandra Stoll, was ready with a mere two weeks after the first brainstorming session. The show's concept is to tell stories with depth, to offer help, for example to relatives of anorexics - but also to break down prejudices and show that everyone has their place in society. «No one is redlined,» Spiess emphasizes. While she found the first protagonists of her series via her private Instagram account (52,000 followers), inquiries now come directly through the TV show. «And so, we're also expanding the Blick community.»

«Undercover» is also causing a stir. Recently, this investigative format uncovered drug use in the fan sectors of Swiss ice hockey and soccer stadiums. The reporters analyzed 80 samples in ten arenas. The conclusion: fans not only huff at their teams' defeats, they also snort plenty of cocaine.

«Achtung, Reto, los» (Reto, Steady,



Go!) is a new entertainment format launched at the end of April - alongside the already established «Glamour & Gossip» with celebrity maven Flavia Schlittler. The Blick TV editor-in-chief was inspired to launch this latest coup after scouring YouTube and some intensive brainstorming with the format team led by

Reason to be happy: Since Sandro Inguscio took over, Blick TV has been picking up speed. The new boss relies on having strong people in his team.

Dominik Stroppel, 54. And they soon found a protagonist for the new show: Reto Scherrer, 47. «He's a TV professional who can't be fazed by anything, even live. In the morning, he presents news, at noon he reports on the war, and in the evening, he interviews athletes. I was wondering what it would take to get him out of his comfort zone,» says Inguscio.

### New entertainment format

The audience will find the answer in «Achtung, Reto, los». On this show, Scherrer interviews Swiss celebrities. Because others can do that too, the Thurgau native and former star of a show on the Swiss national card game Jass, is always given an additional chore. For example, for his interview with the singer Gölä, 53, Switzerland's working-class hero, Scherrer has to go into the man's forest and cut up a tree with a chainsaw. And for his interview with former Bachelorette and TV host Adela Smajic, 29, Reto clammers onto a fully extended turntable ladder despite his fear of heights. «They make the interviews extra complicated,» Scherrer gripes with a wink. He will be on every other Tuesday, alternating with his colleague Sylwina's format «sichtbar». In addition to the lumberjacked interview with Gölä, several others are already in the can: fishing with Divertimento comedian Jonny Fischer, 42; picking up trash with pop star Francine Jordi, 44, and



## «Just two weeks after the initial brainstorming session, we had a pilot episode for our series «sichtbar.»»

Sylwina Spiess, Blick TV host

a milking competition on the farm with Swiss National TV host Jennifer Bosshard, 28. «My interview guests include Switzerland's top celebrities,» says Scherrer.

As far as the duration of the videos and the number of episodes in a series are concerned, Blick TV is relying on a continuous learning process, as do most startups in the digital world. «If I find that the average viewing time is three minutes, it doesn't make sense to produce 20-minute videos,» Inguscio emphasizes. So, this will also apply to the new entertainment vehicle: stick closely to the story and provide action fast. Even so, «Achtung, Reto, los» will start with seven- to ten-min-

ute videos. The idea is to see how these are received by users. Here, too, the motto is: learn - and tweak as required.

There are understandable reasons for postponing the release of the show and discarding the original moniker. «We didn't want to launch this entertainment format in the initial phase of the Ukraine war. That would have been wrong and insensitive,» Inguscio says, explaining why they slammed on the brakes. The editorial team also threw out the originally planned title «Reto sich, wer kann» (Reto for your lives). «Refugees who have run for their lives to escape from a war are streaming into Switzerland, so a title like that would have sounded like mockery.»

Speaking of refugees: Here, too, the Blick TV team has proven that it cannot only react at lightning speed, but that it also does not lose sight of human aspects, regardless of commercial interests. The idea to offer videos in Ukrainian came from the program management. One week after the proposal, the first video of this type was already online. With respect to this offer, there were no considerations of reach, marketing or sales, only the idea of a welcome to the more than 40,000 Ukrainians who have fled to Switzerland. Thanks to the Campax grass-roots campaign, a translator was quickly found. She will subtitle one video per day in the Blick TV studio.



Figureheads: Sylwina Spiess and her colleague Reto Scherrer are not only news anchors at Blick TV, they also have their own formats, «sichtbar» and «Achtung, Reto, los» respectively.

### Rekindled euphoria

In March, Blick TV scored a sports coup thanks to its partnership with MySports. The ice hockey games of the National League, Switzerland's top league, will be broadcast exclusively on Blick TV until 2027, among other events. «A landmark deal! The fact that we can offer not only live games but also all the game highlight clips underscores our claim to be a go-to medium when it comes to sports,» says Steffi Buchli, 43, Blick Group's Head of Sports.

Even if Blick TV's new editor-in-chief is looking back with satisfaction, sitting back is not an option for Sandro Inguscio. «The fact that we can now cover our budget almost entirely with VOD is important and a good thing.» And the new entertainment format with Reto Scherrer was the first time they ever had a sponsor come on board before they even had an episode of the format to screen, he adds.

«We are on the right track,» he says optimistically. He and his team are particularly pleased that their work in recent months has been able to spark even more joy and euphoria for Blick TV among the people in charge at Blick Group as well as in Ringier's top management. Dyed-in-the-wool journalist Inguscio will not only stay at the helm and adjust the course to the needs of their users, he will also be keeping a close eye on the numbers. 📊



# In her own name

Ellen Ringier's magnum opus is the parenting magazine «Fritz + Fränzi», created to help mothers and fathers raise their children and to give kids a better chance. Now, at 70, she is clearing out her office – but she is far from done working.

Interview: Nina Huber Photo: Maurice Haas

## When did you last feel you'd been treated unfairly?

I feel time and again that I've been treated unfairly. I give a lot of myself, including ideas. Most of the time, people will say: Here you go again! And soon enough, this very idea is discussed or implemented – and I think that's a sign of a lack of intellectual integrity!

## Is that also why you were so upset about an article in the Swiss financial blog «Inside Paradeplatz», which claimed that Ringier was cross-financing your magazine «Fritz + Fränzi»?

That was the greatest injustice I have experienced in the past thirty years and also a brash insult to my staff, who had provided the writer with all the figures in advance. So,

he made this claim even though he knew better. I founded this magazine 20 years ago to provide parents with a guide on parenting issues. The starting capital of 2.5 million francs was my own money that I had inherited from my grandfather. He wanted to help his granddaughters to be independent from our husbands.

## A progressive man!

He was a London banker and he asked himself: When you close the lid on your coffin, what will you want to have achieved? When he died, he bequeathed more wealth to the Weizmann Institute of Science for cancer research than to his own daughter. His credo was: «All life is about is to give other people a chance.» I have tried to live by this



## Personal details

In 2001, Ellen Ringier founded the foundation Elternsein, which publishes the magazine «Fritz + Fränzi». At the time, her daughters were eight and ten years old. She often worked through the night, she says. Ellen Ringier originally earned a doctorate in law. Since retiring from the legal profession at the age of 40, she has volunteered for various cultural and social organizations. She lives in Küsnacht ZH with her husband, publisher Michael Ringier.

## «Children benefit when their parents know about education.»

principle, not least out of gratitude for the many opportunities my life has offered me.

## Are you religious?

No, but I'm the typical product of a classical education. I attended the public high school for girls in Lucerne. There ought to be a world order where there is a place for everyone. Unfortunately, there is no real equality of opportunity in life, but we must work towards creating improved equality of opportunity for children.

## Was that one motivation for founding the magazine?

Absolutely! Children benefit when their parents know about education. Inequality of opportunity is most often apparent where parents do not or cannot take care of their children.

## Would parents who neglect their children consult a magazine like «Fritz + Fränzi»?

That was what the publisher, the foundation Elternsein («Parenting»), had in mind. That's why it was important to me that the magazine be distributed to parents free of charge by way of the schools. Meanwhile, many parents have come to pay for a subscription – but those are indeed people who generally like to read. But as we also want to reach educationally alienated parents, we have launched an all-new audiovisual product called «Elternwissen kompakt» («Parenting Digest»). Before I hand over the foundation to someone else, I would also like to reach the lowest base of the educational pyramid, where parents tend to have a completely different cultural background. ►



There, it's about issues such as girls' rights and the promotion of girls' education, which includes swimming lessons or the promotion of STEM skills (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) for girls. That's something I can only achieve together with immigrant organizations.

**The magazine recently celebrated its 20th anniversary - and its circulation is higher than ever. What does that mean to you?**

I am happy about that. About having worked for a cause that is necessary - more and more so. Parental education becomes more urgent the more difficult and complex the task of parenting itself becomes. Society as a whole has changed at breakneck speed and so have parenting issues. Twenty years ago, no one could have known how the digital offers on mobile phones and laptops would evolve. The possibilities of outside influence on parenting have increased dramatically, so that many parents are out of their depth and need help.

**In an interview with «Blick», you mentioned the principle of mindfulness as one of the most important success factors in raising children. Could you elaborate on that?**

There are two aspects: On the one hand, it is about being mindful with the child, i.e. trying to fathom the individuality of the child. Why, for example, does a child keep losing its temper at a certain point? However, I think it is even more important to promote mindfulness in children. We live in a highly complex, materialistic world where everything is available at the push of a button. We need to teach

**«My grandparents in England used to say: «Kindly ask permission to talk.»»**

children not to take this for granted, and get their take on things by asking them: How do you see this? My father liked to say that I should first earn my own money before expressing myself politically.

**Yet you learned to speak your mind well!**

I got that from my mother. She would say, «Speak up!» Speak up if you have something to say. Recognition came from my father especially in sports. On weekends, we'd get up at 6 a.m., go «up the mountain» and climb up to difficulty level 6, i.e. overhanging walls. No excuses such as a stomachache or a headache were accepted. That made me resilient, I could physically take a lot more than many of my peers.

**What were you like as a mother?**

With my daughters, I hadn't yet grasped something important, namely that you can't bring up different children the same way. Figuratively speaking, I shouldn't have bought them both the same dress, as one of them would have preferred to wear trousers.

**Was parenting very much your job? How did your husband get involved?**

He couldn't get involved as much because he was always travelling, as those were the years when Ringier Eastern Europe was being set up. Whenever he was at home, he was always the loving father, while I had to be the «witch in charge». I am glad that the girls had and still have such a nice relationship with their father. But I did feel he could have put his foot down once in a while.

**Do you enjoy being a grandmother and not having to bring up your grandchildren?**

I don't interfere in their upbringing. I never had any reason to. But if I saw that something was going completely awry, I would intervene.

**What goes through your mind when you observe today's parents?**

The pandemic adversely affected many of them, and two years is a long time, of course. A child should be able to get along by itself for two hours now and then. It is not beneficial constantly to play with



The Swiss parenting magazine «Fritz + Fränzi» is the most widely read parenting magazine in Switzerland. It is published ten times a year with a circulation of 102,000 copies. These covers are from October 2021, February 2021, June 2005 and August 2003 (from top).

**«I am looking forward to having more time for family and friends and for myself.»**

children, be it electronically or otherwise. A child cannot withdraw into itself if it is constantly exposed to stimuli. I think parents need to become stricter again with a view to the future.

**Do today's parents want too much?**

They always mean well. But the more toys a child has, the less he or she appreciates them. We adults also have trouble resisting distraction. Children need perseverance and resilience, the capacity to struggle through a task like schoolwork. But I am not an expert. I only established the foundation and stayed out of the operational side of things. Wait, no, for the first five years, I personally acquired advertisements.

**And after that, you had Ringier staffers do it for you, as that one article also claimed?**

Never! My mother taught me: «Be a woman in your own name». And for me, my own project is «Fritz + Fränzi», which has nothing whatsoever to do with the Ringier company.

**You recently turned 70. Was this milestone birthday a turning point? An opportunity to take stock?**

For a long time, I was stuck in a daily rut, feeling comfy in my own set-up. Then, Corona came and forced me home. Before that, I'd never really spent any time in my garden. Thanks to the pandemic, I got to know and appreciate my home anew. I officially gave up my office at the end of November and am now tidying up my home office, where thirty years' worth of paper has piled up. I am looking forward to having more time for family and friends, for my grandchildren and for myself. 🌍

## The numbers nerd

She says of herself, «I'm a scores freak.» A layout artist at «Blick», Irene Glaser loves tables and statistics associated with sports results. She herself holds an impressive personal record, having at one time knocked her weight down from 323 to 141 lbs.

Photos: Geri Born, private

She has never left «Wallisellen», as locals affectionately call the Zurich suburb of Wallisellen. «I grew up there and stayed,» says Irene Glaser, 57. And here's why she is wearing a lanyard with a skull and crossbones and St. Pauli logo around her neck: «My parents were soccer lovers and Hamburg aficionados. And I inherited their fandom.» For 21 years, this layout artist has worked for the sports desk at Blick. «There was never any other option for me, sports is my thing.» She is particularly fond of scores: ice hockey, soccer - since her youth, she has been compiling results, recording statistics, filling in tables. «I'm a scores freak.» Even in school, she loved numbers and math as a subject. Originally, she wanted to become an optician, but apprenticeships were only available every two years at the time. She did a brief trial apprenticeship at the typesetting shop where her mother worked, but she didn't want to work in the same company. Her grandfather was also a typesetter. «That must also have been passed down in our family,» she jokes. Glaser became a mother at a very early age. Her son is now 35, her daughter 34. «I became a grandma for the first time seven years ago.» That was when she decided to quit smoking. At that time, she was consuming one and a half packs a day. When Ringier offered the course «Take control of your smoking behavior», she spontaneously signed on and ended up going home never to touch a cigarette again. When her second grandchild was announced, she resolved to lose weight as well. Back then, she weighed in at 323 lbs. «At times, I could hardly move, the doctors put pressure on me to get surgery. I was afraid of that.» Again, she indirectly found support for her plans at Ringier: She spent her bonus for 15 years of employment on acupuncture therapy, and her weight dropped to 141 lbs. «During the pandemic, I unfortunately put on weight again, because sometimes no appointments were available.» When Irene is not on the late shift, she enjoys going to the theater or hiking. In 2019, she flew to New York for the U.S. Open. «Before that, I couldn't fit in an airline seat.» In Flushing Meadows, she saw Wawrinka play against Djokovic. «A highlight!» RH 🌍



**Irene Glaser working for the Blick sports desk at Ringier's Zurich headquarters. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking (here from Monte San Salvatore to Melide, Ticino) or taking a steamboat ride with her grandchildren June, 7, and Ben, 5. Her enthusiasm for soccer (here with Swiss all-time great Köbi Kuhn) runs in her family.**

## Recommended Reading

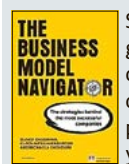
by Marc Walder



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

Oliver Gassmann, Karolin Frankenberger, Michaela Choudury

### THE BUSINESS MODEL NAVIGATOR



Success today is no guarantee of success tomorrow. You ought always to be prepared to rethink your business model. A book by Oliver Gassmann, Professor of Technology and Innovation Management at the University of St. Gallen, Karolin Frankenberger, Professor of Strategy and Innovation and Director at the Institute of Management and Strategy at the University of St. Gallen, and Michaela Choudury, expert in business model innovation and Head of Jobs, International Marketplaces Units at Ringier, serves as a compass for any change of direction: «The Business Model Navigator» (FT Publishing) explains 55 successful business models as potential examples to follow.

One key finding: the most lasting successes are not necessarily achieved by those who first came up with a groundbreaking idea. Pioneers often disappear again. But they can serve as a source of inspiration. The secret of success for imitators lies in clever cribbing and combining in new ways.

Other important insights: Digitalization brings lots of opportunities. And the better you know your customers, the more you can earn money with them. For by integrating the wishes and needs of your customers into the development of new products you will be rewarded with long-term loyalty. The Business Model Navigator of the University of St. Gallen is also nicely visualized in a YouTube video entitled «What is Business Model Innovation?»



## FOCUS ON RINGIER

# RINGIER'S BEST PHOTOS OF THE LAST QUARTER



**ELLE** Photography: Christian Tudose, photo editor: Ioana Ulmeanu, styling and art direction: Marian Pălie  
Cristina Ich is a Romanian Instagram star. In collaboration with one of the country's most talented designers, Medeea Ene, she has created a capsule collection. While the imposing coast of Etretat in Normandy serves as a stunning setting, the fashions are worn by Cristina Ich herself.

**CAMINADA. DAS MAGAZIN** Photography: Nico Schaerer, photo editor: Susanne Märki  
Antwerp's Museum of Fine Arts is scheduled to reopen in the fall of 2022 after ten years of renovation work. Swiss celebrity chef Andreas Caminada gets an exclusive sneak preview when he visits his friend and colleague Sergio Herman in Belgium.







**LIBERTATEA** Photography: Vlad Chirea, photo editors: Mihaela Radu and Ion Mates  
145 pairs of children's shoes symbolize the number of children who died in the war in Ukraine until April 2, 2022. Several hundred Romanians and Ukrainian refugees took part in the protest rally in Bucharest's University Square.





**SCHWEIZER LANDLIEBE** Photography: Thomas Marent, photo editor: Yvonne Schütz  
Butterflies are known for their aerobatic feats, and they symbolize hope and freedom. These photogenic specimens of black-veined whites (*Aporia crataegi*), which sometimes gather at night to form sleeping communities, have assembled in rough pasture in the Valais.



**BLIC** Photography: Oliver Buric, photo editor: Mladen Šurjanac  
Belgrade hosted the World Athletics Indoor Championships (March 18-20, 2022), where Sweden's Armand Duplantis set a new world record in the pole vault with 6.20 meters.



**BEOBACHTER** Illustration: Anne Seeger, Art Direction: Christof Auer  
The Swiss cross melts away like an ice cream popsicle in the summer sun. This illustration adorned the «Beobachter» cover of February 18, 2022 with the headline: «Stay cool! New ideas to counter the consequences of climate change.»



# What we mean by purpose

«We create interest in the world around you – and beyond.»

This is how Ringier recently coined its corporate purpose statement. Dr. Annabella Bassler, CFO, and Dr. Manuel Liatowitsch, Group General Counsel and Head of Corporate Center, discuss what the point of this purpose is and what Ringier must do to achieve it.

Interview: Nina Huber

## Why does a company need a purpose?

**Annabella:** A company's purpose statement describes its mission and its objectives. What does the company stand for, what is its drive, and what impact should it achieve? The key success factor here is that each individual employee lives the common cause, the common purpose. Offering work that makes an impact is crucial to attracting the best talent and thus making the company fit for the future. NASA already knew this in the 1960s. When US President John F. Kennedy visited the agency, he met a gentleman in the hallway with a broom in his hand. He asked him what he was doing at NASA. The man replied that he was the janitor and that he was helping to put the first man on the moon.

**Manuel:** At Ringier, we weren't trying to invent a corporate purpose but to identify it and to update it for our times. Ringier

has always had a purpose. Foregrounding it has now become more of a priority. This is not only the case at our company, but it has grown more important everywhere. A new generation of employees is taking an active interest in what lies behind the company they work for. On the one hand, they want a job that provides both pleasure and challenges; on the other hand, it is important to them to know what the company contributes to the world that they belong to. They want to be able to identify with it.

## So, the purpose is primarily aimed at (potential) employees?

**Manuel:** Employees who recognize a higher purpose in what they do are more motivated, more innovative, perform better, develop better products and carry this attitude into the outside world. This, in turn, is important for all stakeholders,

for customers, consumers, partners and shareholders.

**Annabella:** The core of any company is its purpose. It is not only the reason and motivation for every step the company takes, but also, consequently, the reason and motivation for becoming or remaining part of Ringier. The purpose gives our company a *raison d'être*. At the end of the day, it is about what makes it a valuable member of society.

## Ringier's purpose claims: «We create interest in the world around you – and beyond.» Why do you think employees can identify with that?

**Manuel:** For a company like Ringier with its multitude of brands and individual companies it is challenging to find an overarching concept. If you look at the individual brands, a platform like «JobCloud» has a different purpose than

an advice magazine like «Beobachter», for example. But no matter what area we are active in, we arouse interest. Be it in the media, in marketplaces or in tech & data – arousing interest is always a priority, running like a common thread through all our activities. Our purpose statement thus captures the core of our company. It is its common denominator.

**Annabella:** The purpose statement not only means something different for each area, it also means something different to each employee. The word «interest» has two different meanings for me personally. «Interest» in the sense of something that arouses attention suits me very well, because I'm a curious person who likes to ask questions and learn new things. Like Galileo Galilei, I am convinced that curiosity is always key to any problem that wants solving. «Interest», however, can also mean a share or profit. For me in my role as CFO, this is another sense of the word that plays an important part in my everyday work – in other words: what is the added value that is being provided? I am curious to know how you will interpret the purpose statement for yourself and how you will contribute in your daily work to advancing Ringier and jointly creating «interest in the world around you – and beyond». I'm looking forward to this journey.

**Manuel:** The addition of «and beyond» after the dash is also very important, by the way, because we're not catering to a bubble, as so often happens on social media, but deliberately awakening a broader interest, by also introducing people to things that are new to them.

## How did the claim develop?

**Annabella:** «Reshaping» the corporate purpose was a long-term project. In January 2021, there was a proposal to take another close look at Ringier's purpose and to position and phrase it clearly for all stakeholders. This was followed by



several workshops – virtual and physical – in order to discuss and jointly refocus Ringier's core points.

**Manuel:** We created a task force comprising employees from all areas and levels. Frank Dopheide, founder of the agency Human Unlimited, accompanied us on this journey expertly, entertainingly, and always full of energy.

**Annabella:** Afterwards, we presented the purpose statement to different people and collected their input. For example, I ran it past the Ringier finance team to find out if my crew shared the same understanding of our corporate purpose. In the course of this process, board member Felix Oberholzer-Gee (see page 16, editor's note) also challenged us.

## Is it fair to say that the purpose statement is a company's added value in a nutshell?

**Manuel:** For me, the purpose statement describes the mission, the inner drive and meaning. Added value has too many monetary connotations.

**Annabella:** Simply put, the statement encapsulates a company's «greater goals». But its meaning goes far beyond what the dictionary defines as purpose. A company's purpose defines what drives the people who work there. It also provides information about why they like to get up in the morning, why they are dedicated to their job and why they want to have an impact with their work.

## Purpose expresses an attitude. How does it convert into action?

**Manuel:** Ringier has been living this purpose for decades. We want to integrate the newly coined purpose statement «We create interest in the world around you – and beyond» increasingly in further training and workshops and in our communication, in order to raise people's awareness of it.

**Annabella:** We will be tackling this important task in the coming weeks, months and years. All of us – each and every one of us – must now bring our purpose to life. 🌱

«If a company cannot prove that it creates value for the common good, it simply will not survive. Purposiveness gives your company permission to exist and the means to do more.»

Frank Dopheide, founder of the agency Human Unlimited



# «Fast learners win»

Felix Oberholzer-Gee trains the future business elite at Harvard. This Ringier board member has good news for journalists.

Text: Fabienne Kinzelmann Photo: Fritz Hoffmann

«Few media companies are managed as professionally as Ringier.»

**R**ed brick buildings, high-ceilinged halls, portraits of former deans lining the walls. Even in the pouring rain, Harvard, this almost 400-year-old university, does not fail to impress. The word with which one of the professors here greets us, however, is not often heard on campus. «Grüezi,» says Ringier board member Felix Oberholzer-Gee, folding up his black umbrella.

The Zug native has been a professor at Harvard Business School since 2003. His focuses: a China program, a digital strategy program - and an executive education program for upcoming top CEOs. Here, he makes executives fit for the future. Marc Walder has been one of his students. «All the participants already have

great careers and then take the next step - for example, from head of marketing to country manager.» That's why it's his favorite program, he says. «These people are hungry. They want to know: What's next? What really matters?»

And Oberholzer-Gee is the go-to guy for this: a kind of business studies whiz kid with broad knowledge and even broader enthusiasm. Instead of sitting in an ivory tower, he keeps his finger on the pulse of the world; he has received several awards for his practice-oriented teaching. Instead of dry academic papers, he mainly writes case studies, personally consumes numerous media every day, from Blick («my window on Switzerland») to the Wall

Visiting Boston at Harvard Business School, where Ringier board member Felix Oberholzer-Gee is a professor.

Street Journal and from Reddit to Netflix («I just watched 'Squid Game'»), and discusses current headlines from business to pop culture on the weekly TED podcast «After Hours». He can explain the hype around TikTok recipes just as well as the effects of Trump's economic policy. His latest book, much praised by experts, is called «Better Simpler Strategy». In it, he shows what distinguishes the world's most successful companies from their competitors: they have radically simplified their business. On our nine-member board of directors, he helps Ringier do just that. «The big issue for Ringier is strategy and development - that's exactly what I teach here.»

In the Harvard Business ►



# PORTRAIT

School's lounge, Oberholzer-Gee offers us espresso. Comfortable upholstered furniture, oatmeal and fruit for teachers and students alike are also available. «We are well taken care of on campus,» Oberholzer-Gee tells us.

Since 2003, he has held the professorship named for the German industrialist Andreas Andresen here. He lives in New York with his wife, a florist, and commutes weekly to Boston. He spent a year at Columbia University, known for innovative journalism programs among other things, but he was drawn back to Harvard: «Columbia is fascinating because there is a lot of foundational research going on there. But I like the practical side, at Harvard you have great access to companies.»

Originally, however, he wanted to go neither into science - nor to America. He studied history, sinology and economics at the University of Zurich, had a faculty position at the University of Pennsylvania, but then preferred to go run an electronics company in Switzerland. «As a student, I also chose to go to China for an exchange, for example, when all my friends went to America.» But when the Wharton School persistently courted him, he and his wife - an American - went for it after all. «We considered it an adventure.» Almost twenty years later, he is still in the U.S.

Oberholzer-Gee soon realized the importance of digitalization. «Back then, my colleagues still considered it a niche topic. But once you were able to exchange music files over the web, I got interested.» He is also interested in decisions. «Especially those where the market doesn't work the way it should.»

## Personal details

Felix Oberholzer-Gee, 61, is a professor of business administration at Harvard Business School, where he heads the MBA program and predominantly teaches the top executives of the future in executive education programs. He received his first professorship at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and before that, he was CEO of Symo Electronics. He has been on Ringier's Board of Directors since 2016. He lives with his wife in New York City.



As in this «kindergarten study» from Israel: Some parents regularly picked up their children too late, so a kindergarten introduced a fine for the latecomers. But instead of more parents picking up their children on time, the opposite happened - more parents started coming late. «Because they felt: now I'm paying for it, so now it's okay,» explains Oberholzer-Gee. «For example, if you ask people waiting in line nicely to be let in, most people let you in - if you offer to pay for it, that also works, though most people won't take the money. But if you try both, it usually doesn't work.» He is obviously fascinated by «all these strange correlations». They also touch on the basic questions of broad-based media companies like Ringier: How do you get people to pay for journalistic content, for example?

«The interesting thing about newspapers is that they have always been subsidized by advertising. In the digital age, however, advertisements and newspapers are breaking apart,» says Oberholzer-Gee. Ringier is right to concentrate on the largest possible marketplaces. But this does not make the newspaper a mere sideline. «With online, print and a completely new kind of advertising business, the newspaper of our day is totally different from what it used to be. But if you get it right, newspa-

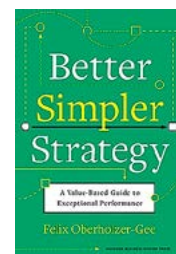
pers have great future prospects with corresponding profit margins.»

There are already plenty of successful examples of this in Oberholzer-Gee's adopted country. The New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, for example: these big American newspaper publishers with their sophisticated content. «But there are also an incredible number of media that are successful in local business. Because, at the end of the day, everyone wants to know what national politics means for their own family, what the quality of their schools is like, or what job opportunities there are in their area.» The Boston Globe is a good example of this, he says. «It's a really successful medium-sized-city newspaper that there's almost no getting around.»

He sees Ringier as being well positioned for these challenges. Above all because of its corporate culture: «The great thing about a family business is that it doesn't work like Wall Street. It's not the next quarter that matters, but whatever will secure the longer-term future opportunities of the company.»

His «favorite case» at Ringier: the merger of the digital marketplaces for real estate, vehicles and financial services in Switzerland, among others. Ringier, TX Group, La Mobilière and General Atlantic founded a joint venture for this last August. «It's fantastic, like a huge shop,» enthuses Oberholzer-Gee. That's what makes the marketplaces really competitive, he says. «And then, I'm thrilled that we were able to buy most of the Eastern European media out of the Axel Springer joint venture, because that further increases our ability to act.» It would make things faster, more direct. «You rarely see anyone taking steps like these in the media landscape. Few media companies are managed as professionally as Ringier or have such a good eye for new opportunities to create additional added value.»

There is no Holy Grail for media companies, says Oberholzer-Gee. «Nobody knows what the future holds. All that matters is how fast the organization learns.» Many people had pronounced the death of newspapers 20 years ago. Since then, the readership of certain titles has actually grown thanks to online. «The demand for reliable information is greater today than it used to be. So, I'm not at all pessimistic about the future.» 🌐



In his book «Better Simpler Strategy» (Harvard Business Review Press, 2021), Oberholzer-Gee argues for simplifying business. A Swiss native, he is a specialist in the digital transformation of companies.

# INTERVIEW IN NUMBERS

How long have you been working for Ringier?

For **5** years.

How many emails did you send during that time?

**31,751**

How many employees do you have?

**5**

After three years of being responsible for Data Protection by myself, we now have 3.5 FTEs.

How many careers have you had?

I did **3** trainings: First, the hotel business school, second, I studied translation while working at a lawyer's office to finance my studies. I found that sideline so interesting that I went ahead and also studied law. At Data Protection, I benefit from my experience in all these fields and can apply my skills in law, languages and communication. I feel right at home here.

What is your favorite speed to drive a car?

**112 mph**



Chantal Imfeld-Mátyássy is head of Data Protection, thereby serving the entire Ringier Group. She answers 13 questions for DOMO in numbers.

How much does your lunch cost on average?

Between **2.50** and **25 francs**.

I regularly bring my lunch with me or grab a salad somewhere.

How many characters does the perfect password have?

I would have to ask Simon Schlumpf, Head of Group Information Security (laughs). I usually use the minimum number requested.

What's your average screen time?

**9 to 10** hours on weekdays.

How many people do you talk to in a week on average?

About **50** different people. What I love about my job is that I have to deal with so many different people and topics.

What percentage of people mispronounce your last name Mátyássy?

**99.9 percent**.

It is Hungarian and is correctly pronounced Maatyaashi.

How much was your highest speeding ticket?

Only **100 francs**. It happened a month after my driving test because I missed that I'd moved from a 50-mph to a 40-mph zone as I was talking to my sister. That's almost 30 years ago now.

What was the total number of hours worked by the DPO (Data Protection Office) in 2021?

About **3,980** hours.

Do you have a favorite number?

**13**. I was born on a 13th, this is a lucky number for me.



# Hexagon Hotshot

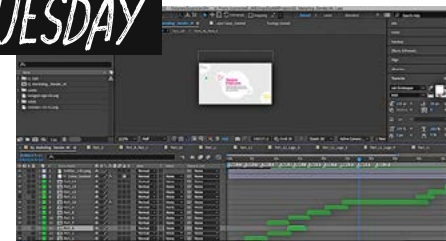
Her week usually starts with iced coffee in Durban and frequently and happily ends with a picnic in Cape Town. Mishka Rasool, the junior graphic and brand designer at Ringier South Africa, knows every angle of Hexagon.

## MONDAY



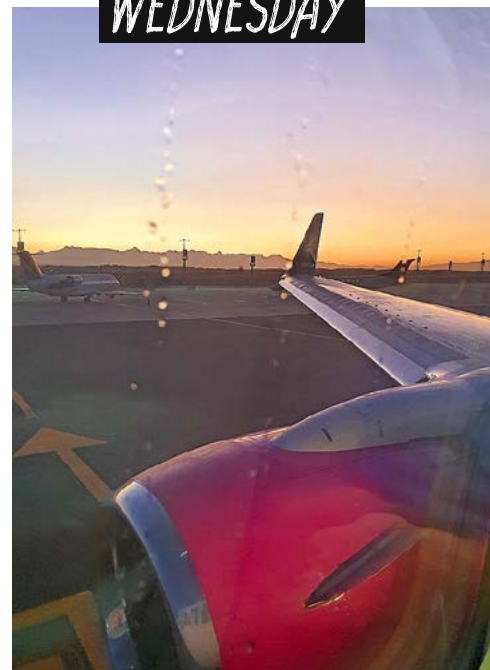
Sadly, my home-office work setup only looks this neat and tidy on Monday mornings. Between the usual Slack check-in and answering messages, emails and requests, it usually turns into a bit of a mess. Monday is definitely not my favorite day of the week, so I make sure that I do whatever it takes to make it better. Hence the iced coffee for breakfast!

## TUESDAY



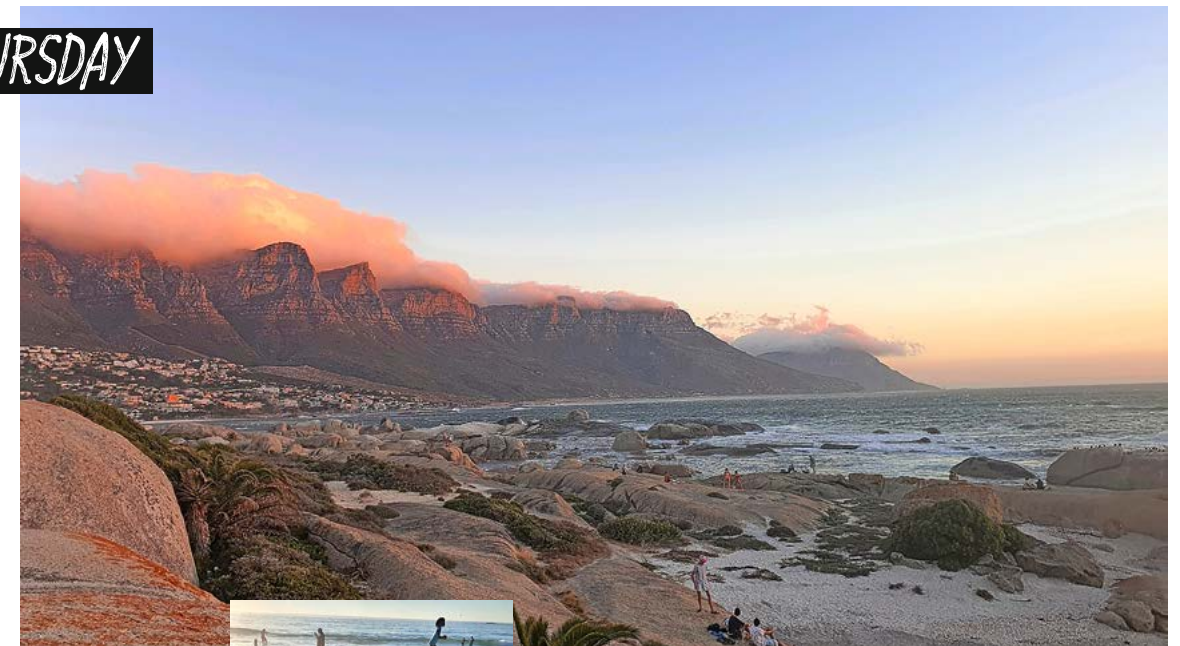
Tuesday is my busiest day. I usually meet with my design chapter team to discuss what the coming days will bring. This week, I'm working on some video designs on the animation software After Effects.

## WEDNESDAY



On Wednesday, I continued working on my Hexagon video project. The Hexagon initiative is championed by Ringier South Africa. Hexagon comprises a set of legal, financial, data protection and technical regulatory frameworks that enable Ringier companies to license their services easily and securely. The explainer videos we are currently working on will be posted on the website. After work, I take a plane to Cape Town. It's my second home, I spend a lot of time here, and I love this city! My favorite things to do are hiking and spending time on South Africa's most beautiful beaches.

## THURSDAY



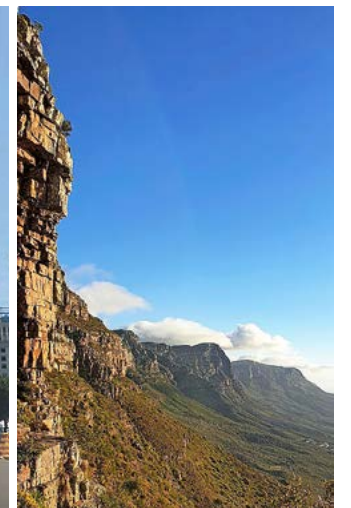
I round off the day with some sun and sea – my favorite combination. Today, I visit the beach at Camps Bay, it is one of the many beautiful beaches in Cape Town and a popular tourist attraction. We decide to picnic and watch the sunset.

## FRIDAY

This Friday is specifically a good one! Our Head of Product, James, treats my colleague Matt and me to a Korean meal. Super cool of you, thank you so much, James! One of the perks of «Mobile Office» is that you can work from anywhere, Durban, Cape Town or anywhere in the world! I am really grateful to be able to work in different cities.



## WEEKEND



On weekends, I have breakfast at a crepe place called «Swan Café» and then stroll around town. Later in the day, my friends and I take a hike up Kloof Corner. It begins close to the top of Table Mountain, the landmark of South Africa. Our reward for this exertion? An amazing sunset from way up high.





MICHAEL RINGIER

# The arbitrariness of goodwill

**I**t took some effort, but eventually my wife and I decided to spread out «Inventing Anna» over three evenings instead of watching the entire Netflix production in a single night of serial bingeing. This film about Anna Sorokin, who was convicted of major fraud, is absolutely addictive. I had recently read the latest news about Anna in the renowned art magazine «Art Newspaper». That publication celebrated her as the star of an exhibition in a New York gallery. The works on display were drawings she had done in prison. Their price according to «Schweizer Illustrierte»: 10,000 USD and up. Whether this was really art was not really a matter of discussion.

Another criminal was artistically ennobled by journalists, who affectionately dubbed him the «master forger». Wolfgang Beltracchi - sentenced to six years in prison for professional gang fraud - enjoyed great success after his early release. There were, for instance, several TV documentaries about him and his forgery manager and wife Helene. VIPs like the actor Christoph Waltz, the German comedian Otto Waalkes or the extreme mountain climber Reinhold Messner had their portraits painted by him - in the spotlight and filmed by the cameras of the German arts channel 3sat.

But even alleged or convicted murderers can certainly count on sympathy from the media. O.J. Simpson was an American football superstar and even made it into the cult comedy «The Naked Gun». For lack of evidence, an American jury acquitted him of murdering his ex-wife in the mid-1990s. In the subsequent civil trial, he was con-

demned to pay more than thirty million dollars to the surviving dependents. However, this did not prevent him from appearing on television and writing a book entitled «If I Did It». The publication was prohibited, but the online version can still be downloaded today.

In the case of Patrizia Reggiani, on the other hand, the evidence seemed clear. That's why she was sentenced to 29 years in prison at the end of the 1990s for the contract hit on her ex-husband Maurizio Gucci. After her release for good behavior in 2016, she gave several interviews. From downplaying her crime to joking about it, everything was published without too much questioning and a photo of her with a parrot on her arm was frequently printed. The film about her and her crime, starring Lady Gaga as the murderer, has already grossed over \$150 million.

All these stories were going through my head as I was reading the coverage of former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder over the last few days. He is still one of the most successful German politicians of recent decades, and Angela Merkel says she benefited greatly from his reforms.

He was being called Putin's errand boy and a joke, the tabloid «Bild» referred to him as «Gazprom Gerd» and insinuated that he had merely traveled to Moscow to collect his board member's fee from Putin in person. Kevin Kühnert, former Chairman of Germany's Young Socialists and current Secretary General of the Social Democratic Party, whose life's work so far has mainly been mouthing off, proudly announced that

the mugs bearing Gerhard Schröder's picture had been removed from the SPD store.

At the time of this writing, there are discussions to exclude him from the party, he himself has returned his honorary citizenship of the city of Hannover, and his honorary membership of the German Football Association is also a thing of the past. The pressure on his staff, including the threat of losing their pensions, was immense, and the continual harassment by journalists, which does not spare his children, has probably become part of his everyday life.

So, this is what the media's reaction to someone sitting on the supposedly wrong board of directors looks like. Of course, it is perfectly okay to criticize and condemn Gerhard Schröder for the role he has played. But anyone who denies him all honorable intentions and makes him out to be nothing more than a money-grubbing pariah is devoid of all political and journalistic decency - especially in view of the fact that, in the first weeks of the war, Gerhard Schröder was probably the only person able to communicate with both sides not as a politician but as a friend. But the digital world demands attention, not deliberation. «Thinking is difficult, therefore let the herd pronounce judgment!» This statement by psychiatrist C.G. Jung is unfortunately more pertinent than ever.

*Michael Ringier*

Photo: Maurice Haas

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