



How we at Ringier see ourselves

The initiative came last year from publisher Michael Ringier: the time was ripe to pause for reflection, to draw up an interim balance sheet, and to define our position. The following text is the result of intensive thought by numerous people, including the group management, a working group headed by communication consultant Prof. Walter von Wartburg, and numerous employees. The first draft was placed on the Intranet at the beginning of the year and everyone was invited to add comments and suggestions. In March of this year at a workshop with over 20 committed employees from all areas of the company, the subject was re-examined intensively, voices and opinions were recorded, and key statements crystallised.

«How we at Ringier see ourselves » is nothing fundamentally new, and in no way replaces our existing models and editorial statutes. Rather, its purpose is to remind us once again of who we are and what we want. That can change over time. However, these changes mean fine tuning, not changes to our core principles.

«How we at Ringier see ourselves» is published in this DOMO especially for you, our valued employees. Your thoughts and suggestions have helped us to develop an up-to-date picture of Ringier. We thank you sincerely for your efforts. And let us never forget: the words written here should live and be lived.

«How we at Ringier see ourselves» – or individual extracts from it – will in the future appear in company brochures and files, as well as on our website.

For the working group and on behalf of the group management
Fibo Deutsch and Eva Keller



A media company

We are a media company. We produce information and entertainment. On the one hand, we are aware that we seek to satisfy the needs of our readers, television viewers, electronic services users, printing clients and advertising customers. On the other, we also recognise our responsibility to safeguard the public interest. We can only achieve our aims if we succeed in managing our company successfully in economic terms.

- We prepare information and entertainment in text and images as appealingly and understandably as possible. To do so we utilise both print and electronic media: newspapers, magazines, books, TV and the Internet. This reflects the diversity of our business, one that is oriented towards both domestic and international markets.

- We also have a public role. We are part of a platform that – together with the voices of politicians, bu-

siness representatives, the scientific community and a wide range of social organisations – helps shape public opinion.

- We like to get involved, but we maintain a critical distance. Where the facts appear to be incomplete, we investigate further whilst respecting the integrity of the individual. We analyse when it seems to us that the picture is not fully clear, while striving to remain objective. We comment where our point of view contributes to clarification. But in doing so we remain fair. And we are insistent where we think it necessary, especially when it is a matter of helping the disadvantaged to obtain their rights.

A wide range of products

Ringier has been in existence for 170 years. During this time the media market has repeatedly evolved with new technologies and products. The result is the wide variety of media products which Ringier currently offers.

A Swiss base

Our roots and our main focus lie in Switzerland. This is a solid foundation for our image in foreign markets.

- We have become strong in Switzerland, continue to earn the largest share of our sales volume here, and are the largest private media company in the country. Tradition and market position link us closely to our home base.

- Our identity also includes a belief in traditional Swiss values such as democracy, federalism, tolerance towards minorities and social commitment.

International involvement

We wish to grow in international markets.

- We have a relatively small home market and have therefore become involved in other markets, with special emphasis on the growth markets of central and eastern Europe and Asia. We do so either alone or jointly with partners, provided that the partner is compatible with us. Compatibility me-



ans having comparable products, sharing our journalistic view, pursuing a similar company philosophy and respecting our particular characteristics.

A family business

Our company is rooted in the tradition of a business family. Although this imparts a feeling of solidarity, it also has its ups and downs.

- Being part of a family means obligations. This also applies to family businesses. At Ringier, the identification and commitment of the management are not the result of an employment contract, but are to a large extent the result of the family's tradition and ethos.

- A sense of family is part of our corporate image. This applies to our employees as well. As a result, our employees have an additional personal relationship with the company and all its components, including trust and the willingness to criticise.

- Yet, a family is somewhat different from a company. In a company, each person must have a very specific role. We want our employees to contribute their own «family» skills like identification and commitment, mutual support, openness and perceived loyalty.

- Art and culture are of great importance to us. This characterises our image to the outside world and accompanies the staff's everyday work life.

- The Ringier family categorically rejects a narrow orientation towards shareholder value.

Our success

We must be successful financially. This includes staying in the black and fostering a productive working environment.

- Financial success provides the basis for our existence. Ultimately, financial success always means making a profit. All services and projects must be measurable against this economic yardstick.

- For us, successful and sustainable profitability means considering both hard factors – such as

growth, sales and profitability figures – and soft factors such as the ability to innovate, ecologically sound behaviour and social responsibility. We regard the satisfaction of our employees and our reputation as part of our corporate values.

- All employees contribute to the success of the company. They benefit from this through a good salary and comparative job security.

Our work

Our employees are expected to take on responsibility. They are given the necessary freedom of action to do so.

- We attach great importance to a responsible attitude. In return, we give our employees the freedom to make decisions. We rely on the individual employee's ability and willingness to use this freedom for the benefit of the company.

- From our journalists, we expect first and foremost curiosity, love of language

and responsibility towards our public commitment. The human being is always at the centre of attention. And where human beings are concerned, a passionate approach is allowed. For us, journalism is also a matter of the heart.

- Here the editors decide on their texts, pictures and layouts. Journalistic management lies with the publisher. However, a dogmatic publishing-house line is unimaginable at Ringier. The result is a wide and varied range of media products.

Customers

Our customers are our livelihood. This is an obvious statement, but it is sometimes overlooked. The satisfaction of our readers, viewers, advertising clients and printing customers is decisive for our success.

- Satisfied readers and viewers are our «share capital». Without them there is no advertising or sponsorship involvement. This must not be forgotten in the hust-



le and bustle of everyday business. Achieving reader and viewer loyalty is a management responsibility.

- We look after our advertising and print customers with the same care as our readers and viewers. Both groups together ensure our success.

- Our articles, book texts, TV broadcasts and Internet information can only be considered well produced if the end result is relevant to the reader and easy to grasp. They must reflect his life situation and interests. Moreover, they must be produced, both editorially and technically, in such a way that the reader willingly devotes his attention to them.

Our journalism

Our media products are of particular public interest and they are fast-moving. Therefore, our work is always somewhat hectic.

- The key quality criteria in media work are relevance, news value, topicality and customer-oriented presentation.

- Even when «events» are a scarce resource, we refrain from stage-managing them ourselves. We seek to stay close to real life.

- The media market changes at breakneck speed. Providers appear on the market in ever-new formations, and technologies are developing constantly. We must be alert for changes in the market, examine them critically for their importance, and be flexible when adopting new paths.

Our credibility

Credibility is our share capital, and it yields interest in the form of trust.

- We are not immune against making mistakes. But we correct our mistakes visibly and clearly, and we make every effort to prevent them from being repeated. At Ringier, we also attach great importance to fairness.

- Credibility is a special value. We can maintain this value only if we strive for truthfulness every day and convince our readers of our technical competence.

Our political responsibility

Our products make a major contribution to social and political life because we help shape, weaken or strengthen opinions. Our responsibility is correspondingly high.

- The media inform, create social identity and stimulate people to take part in democratic decision-making. Their importance continues to grow. Because societies are becoming bigger, more complex and more open, orientation becomes increasingly difficult and the communication of information and values ever more important.

- We know that we are able to influence opinions and moods. For precisely this reason, sound self-control and alertness to external criticism are of great importance to us.

- However, media influence is subject to close scrutiny by the reader and viewer. Surveys make it increasingly apparent that citizens' loyalty to opinion leaders (be they parties, associations or individuals) is

steadily declining, and that he or she turns to alternative sources for advice. We see this as a positive trend.

- We take readers' and viewers' concerns seriously and make ourselves their advocate when the need arises. We speak out when fundamental moral attitudes are flouted, especially by people who take on a public role and should act as role models.

- We want to help shape our society in specific ways, and when possible, we use our influence to achieve this. Rightly, we believe. We are against everything that smacks of racism and anti-Semitism.

- A media market can only flourish where freedom of the press prevails. This freedom is the foundation of our business.

Further copies of this text are available in German, French and English from

Ringier Corporate Communications
Dufourstrasse 23, CH-8008 Zurich

Phone +41 1 259 68 39,
Fax +41 1 259 86 35
info@ringier.ch Zurich, 1 October 2003