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ceo

The magazine for decision makers

Trust in society

pwc

Trust in society

Trust is essential from a personal, social and economic point of view. How does trust come about? Who and why do we trust? Companies cultivate trust with very different peer groups and are challenged to constantly prove their trustworthiness anew. But what happens if that trust is broken?

In this issue of ceo, we delve into these fascinating questions and their economic, psychological and social impact by speaking with renowned personalities as well as representatives of small and large companies from a variety of industries.

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Trust is one of those rare things that proliferate when you give them away. Because trust evolves and deepens over time – and is completely based on reciprocity. This, provided that both parties take on the great risk involved in trust: namely, being disappointed.

Andreas Staubli
CEO, PwC Switzerland

In this issue of ceo magazine, we explore the many facets of trust. We ask personalities from corporate communications, environmental protection, trust research, behavioural psychology, economic policy, aviation, the manufacturing industry and extreme sports what trust means to them both personally and professionally. And what they do to win it, multiply it, and capitalise on it.

Their answers and the food for thought they offer are as complex as the concept itself. But what they share in common is the realisation that trust sets free positive forces, be it in the private, business or public sphere. Trust is the basis for peak performance and fruitful togetherness; it provides order and helps in decision-making; it solidifies relationships and fosters the achievement of mutual goals; it hones self-awareness and strengthens self-confidence; plus it opens doors and attracts talent.

Science defines trust as “Engaging with one’s counterpart and demonstrating one’s own vulnerability”. This encompasses, firstly, faith that the other person will not take advantage of the trust; secondly, the feeling that one can rely on the other’s promise; and thirdly, the hope that this trust ultimately pays off in one way or another.

Granted, abstract notions such as vulnerability, faith, feelings and hope are not exactly indigenous to the vocabulary of our data- and fact-driven world. Nevertheless, we really do desire more in personal and business life than just data and facts. We want to sense closeness with our families, friends, customers, investors, employees, ecosystem partners, comrades-in-arms, companions, team colleagues, role models and opinion leaders. We seek their trust – and thus a satisfying way of dealing with our own vulnerability.

It takes more than just a façade to get there. It takes the courage to give and receive constructive criticism. It requires the open-mindedness that allows one to make mistakes and to learn from them. It calls for the patience needed to listen carefully and also to understand what’s being said between the lines. It takes the tenacity to dissect a complicated subject in all of its component parts. It requires transparent and unvarnished communication, especially in crisis situations. And above all, it takes ongoing dialogue.

The following discourse will inspire you and pique your grey matter. You can trust our word – we certainly won’t disappoint you!

Andreas Staubli

Current PwC studies on the topic

Sicherheit in einer vernetzten Welt (2019)

Trust in the police
The latest situation and developments relating to security in Switzerland

Digital trust insights (2018)

Trust in digitalisation
10 ways to engender trust in digitalisation – vis-à-vis people, technologies and processes

Global blockchain survey (2018)

Trust in blockchain
The latest status of blockchain companies, and four valuable strategies for the future

Global consumer insights survey (2018)

Trust in trade
Challenges for brands and merchants in gaining authenticity and trustworthiness

Workforce of the future (2018)

Trust in the workplace
Four possible "Worlds of Work" for 2030

Vertrauen in Medien (2018)

Trustworthiness of the media
People's trust in the German media

Current external studies on the topic

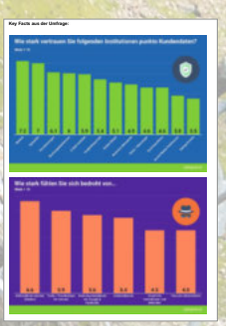
Switzerland

ETH security study (2019)

Trust in public institutions and authorities
Trends in shaping public opinion on foreign, security and defence policy

Data trustworthiness study (2019)

Trust in data
The ramifications of divulging personal data on the Internet



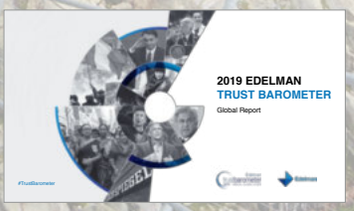
Worry Barometer (2018)

Trust in institutions
Concerns and national identity factors from the viewpoint of the Swiss populace

Global

Edelman Trust Barometer (2019)

Trust in governments, NGOs, the economy and media



Digital news report (2019)

Trust in news sources
News site usage by people with Internet access

Trust involves evolving

Trust plays a key role at PwC Switzerland – so much so that it is even embedded in the company's mission statement: "Build trust in society and solve important problems". Stefan Räbsamen, the new Chairman of PwC Switzerland, provides details on the scope of this claim. He explains the value that is added to society and why he considers trust essential to the evolution of any relationship.

Stefan Räbsamen
Partner and Chairman,
PwC Switzerland

Mr Räbsamen, what does trust – or perhaps I should say confidence – mean to you personally?
Semantically, the two words are essentially synonymous but differ depending on the context in which they are used, whereas the one can engender the other. But to answer your question in general terms, I view the trust/confidence concept as meaning three things: first, standing tall in life with both feet firmly planted on the ground. Secondly, it means to have faith in one's own abilities and those of one's fellow human beings. And third, I equate it with the courage to question oneself – because this opens up unique opportunities for personal and interpersonal development.

What does your mission statement "build trust in society and solve important problems" mean for the Swiss public?
As auditors, we provide society with assurance that the financial statements of examined companies are complete and accurate. The public perceives this as a value contribution, and rightly so. Moreover, through our other services, we help solve problems and create economic value that ultimately accrues to the benefit of society as a whole.

It is also important to us that we contribute to society in ways that go beyond PwC's core activities. We consider it part of our corporate responsibility to pursue a wide variety of initiatives, such as Equal-Salary certification, the reduction of our ecological footprint, the Alaya volunteer platform, support for social entrepreneurs as part of the Social Entrepreneurship Initiative and Foundation (SEIF) coaching programme, and our project partnership with "Schweizer Jugend forscht" (i.e. Swiss Youth in Science).

In which situations is trust especially important; when is control better?
Trust is of central importance wherever growth, development and evolution are concerned, be it in people, organisations or economies. Controlling is appropriate when you want to know how quickly or successfully decisions are implemented. Controls can set signposts and guardrails. From this point of view, controlling is not a negative thing; rather, it reinforces trust.

How do managers foster trust within their teams?
There's no cut-and-dried success formula here. It has a lot to do with personality and charisma. In a crisis situation, for example, an instructive top-down management style can create a sense of security and engender trust – because the team is glad, and relieved, that they can rely on the straightforward instructions and skills of their boss.

In daily business life, employees want to understand why they should or shouldn't do something. That's where an integrative management style comes into play; one in which supervisors involve employees in the decision-making process and are at their side as a coach. In this way, they tap the full potential of their people in support of the company's success and the further development of its employees. That's what I mean with an "unbossed company" – a company where there are coaches instead of commanders. Unfortunately, the term is often misinterpreted these days and equated with a lack of leadership.

What are the characteristics of a trustworthy company?
It has a resolute, convincing corporate mission that sends a message of reliability and predictability to its employees. It also offers those people the opportunity to develop professionally as well as personally. After all, a company has to look beyond the boardroom door in order to gain the trust of its employees. That's the only way it can feel the pulse of the times and meet the needs of its stakeholders.

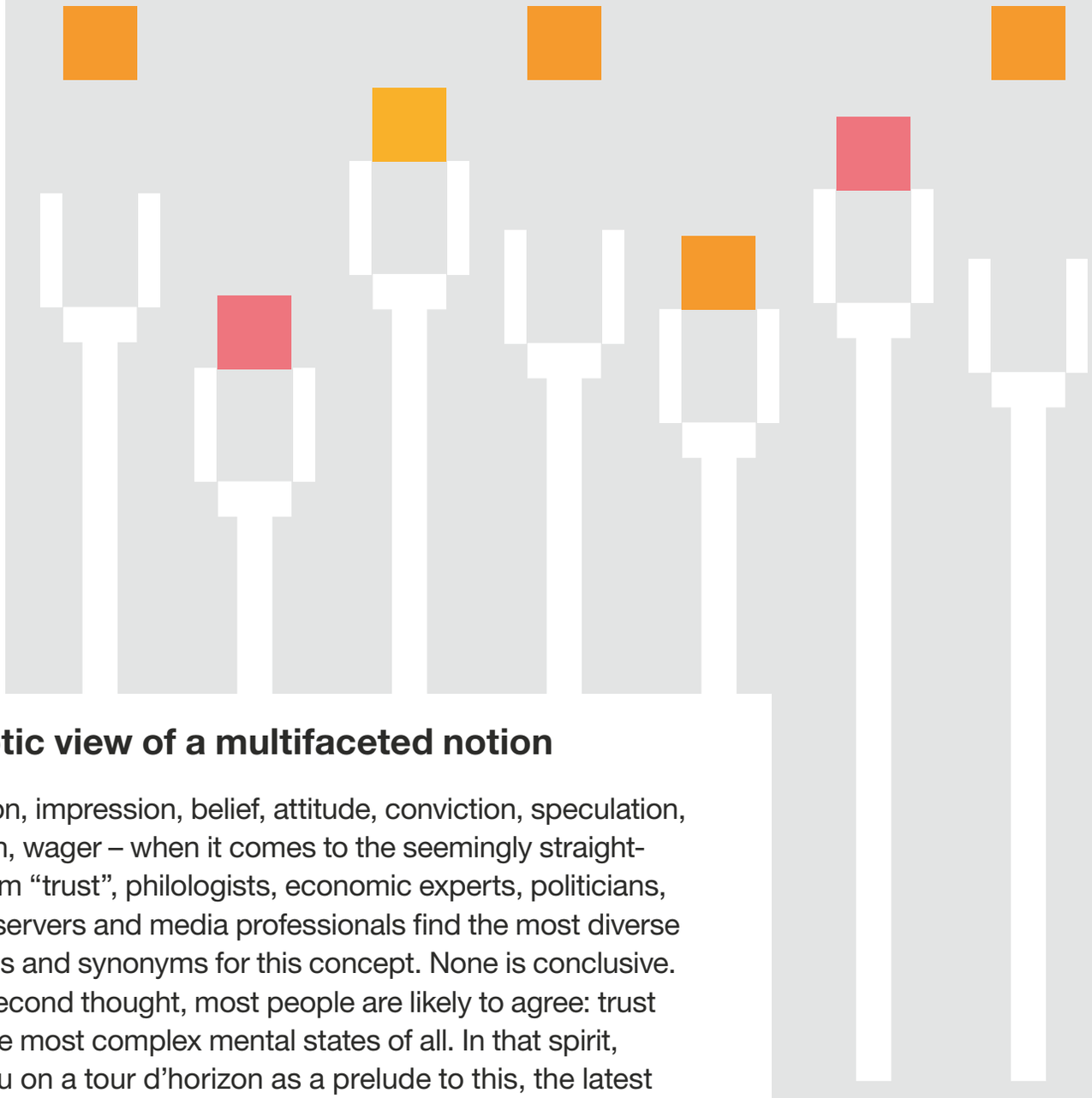
Stefan Räbsamen, thanks for your thoughts.

“In spite of all the deplorable things going on in the world, there’s also the other side of life: for example, when you stand at the bow of a ship and 50 dolphins criss-cross right in front of your nose or leap joyfully port and starboard, then you know precisely: This is right what I do.”

Iris Menn
CEO Greenpeace Schweiz

Essay on trust

Part 1



A panoptic view of a multifaceted notion

Presumption, impression, belief, attitude, conviction, speculation, expectation, wager – when it comes to the seemingly straightforward term “trust”, philologists, economic experts, politicians, cultural observers and media professionals find the most diverse descriptions and synonyms for this concept. None is conclusive. Yet upon second thought, most people are likely to agree: trust is one of the most complex mental states of all. In that spirit, we take you on a tour d’horizon as a prelude to this, the latest issue of ceo magazine.

The noble art of vulnerability

"Trust is the feeling that you believe a person while knowing that you would lie if you were in his place." Thus sayeth American writer and cultural critic H. L. Mencken. Researchers in this field, however, define trust as "the willingness to reveal oneself as vulnerable". This involves: 1) the conviction that the other guy is not an egoist or that a company is not just in it for the profit; 2) the intuition that one can rely on promises; and 3) the hope that trust will ultimately pay off at some point. Then comes the scientific definition of trust, which is inherently controversial in that concepts such as feelings, irrationality, vulnerability, faith and hope have little sway and even less say in the economic world of hard numbers – despite the fact that trust-based relationships are vital for survival here as well.

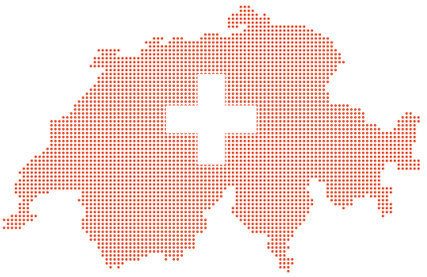
Sources: Prof. Dr Antoinette Weibel, Institute for Work and Employment Research, University of St. Gallen; Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998

Those who trust are optimistic

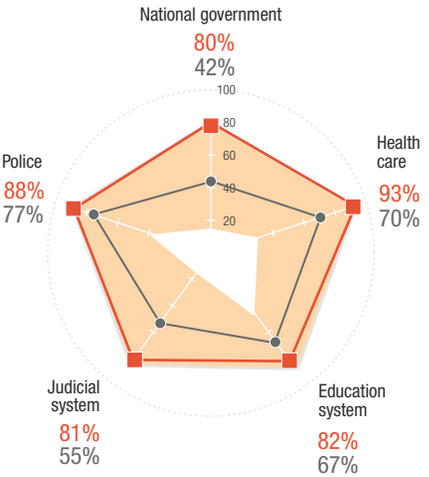
Trust engenders a sense of security. It gives people the feeling that those at the helm or down in the engine room "are doing things right". The Swiss people trust the public sector like no other folk. And interestingly, a positive correlation between trust in the authorities and people's optimism is to be observed in Switzerland. It should also be noted in this regard that the Swiss Federal Constitution does not provide for the possibility of a parliamentary vote of no confidence against individual government members or against the government as a whole.

Source: "Security 2019. The Trend of Opinions on Foreign, Security, and Defence Policy", ETH Zurich, 2018

A trusting nation



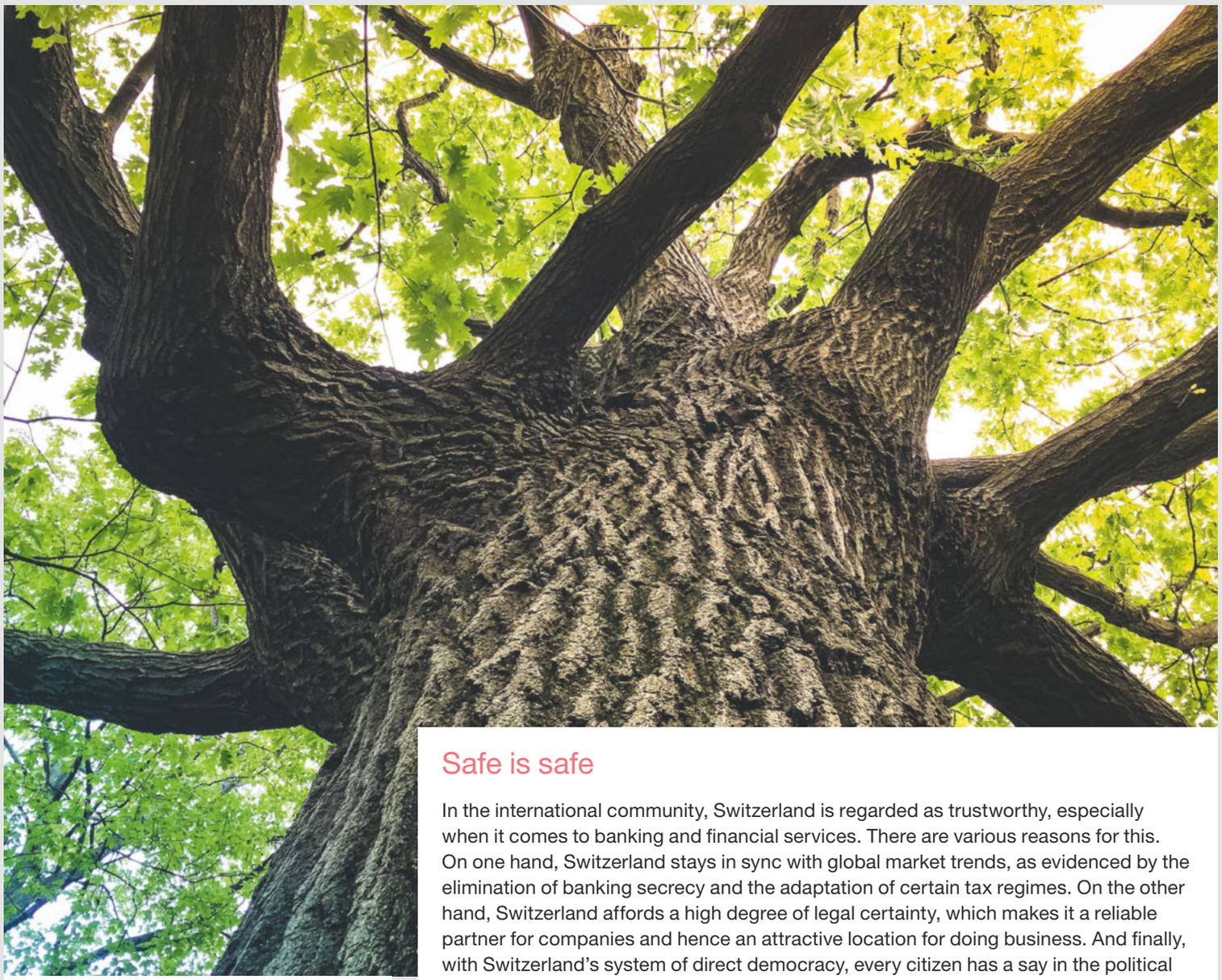
The Swiss have greater trust in their government and state authorities than any other OECD member nation.



% of citizens expressing confidence/satisfaction (source: Gallup World Poll)

Switzerland is culturally heterogeneous, and the will of the individual or group carries considerable weight. Nevertheless, many people accord the same characteristics to the identity of the country. These include a high level of prosperity, reliable political institutions, a good education system, a stable business location, a strong financial centre and a beautiful landscape. Neutrality also plays an important role in this identity and is inextricably linked with the ideological mindset of the nation.

Sources: Government at a Glance 2017, OECD; Credit Suisse Worry Barometer 2018



A word about the word

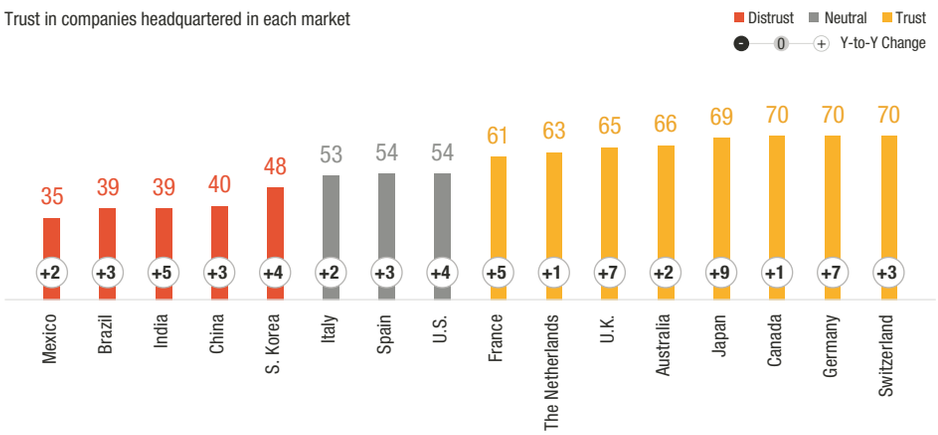
The first known use of the word “trust” was in the 16th century. It derives from the Old Norse “traust” (cognate with the German “Trost”, i.e. comfort). The Middle High German “triuwe” describes characteristics such as loyalty and sincerity. It has its origin in Old High German terms like “triuwa” and “gitriuwi”, which in turn evolved from the Indo-European root “deru”. Their meaning is associated with words like “tree” and “oak”, connoting inner solidity. Grammatically, “trust” is a “weak” verb.

Sources: PwC own research and the NZZ series “Vertrauen”, October 2018

Safe is safe

In the international community, Switzerland is regarded as trustworthy, especially when it comes to banking and financial services. There are various reasons for this. On one hand, Switzerland stays in sync with global market trends, as evidenced by the elimination of banking secrecy and the adaptation of certain tax regimes. On the other hand, Switzerland affords a high degree of legal certainty, which makes it a reliable partner for companies and hence an attractive location for doing business. And finally, with Switzerland’s system of direct democracy, every citizen has a say in the political decision-making process.

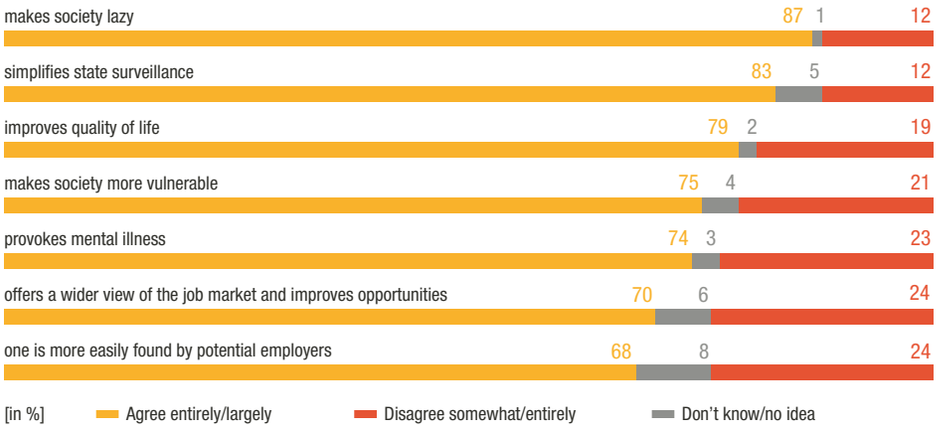
Trust in companies headquartered in each market



Trust in companies headquartered in Switzerland is a top priority.

Sources: 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer; exchangemarket.ch, August 2018

Digital ambivalence



The opportunities afforded by digitalisation in daily life far outweigh the disadvantages but concerns remain.

The Swiss electorate is divided on the social impact of new technologies. Despite the threat of job losses as a result of technological progress, 75 per cent consider it unlikely that their work function will be automated in the next 20 years. Digital technologies make it possible to gain an overview of the labour market and improve working conditions. They also facilitate creativity in the workplace. However, there is the growing fear that employees will be expected to remain reachable at all times. A majority believes that digitalisation will make society more lax and vulnerable, devalue interpersonal communication and provoke mental illness.

Source: Credit Suisse Worry Barometer 2018

A vicious circle

The term "mistrust" is not the oldest in the dictionary, but it remains somewhat controversial. Does it mean the opposite of trust, or instead a low level of trust, or does it have nothing to do with trust? Behavioural researchers explain mistrust as "the unwillingness to accept vulnerability due to a pervasive negative perception of the other person's motives, intentions or behaviours". Mistrust reinforces itself in that mistrustful thinking and action reinforces mistrustful attitudes and behaviours. According to the latest findings, mistrust is an independent state of mind, as it is caused by other factors than those associated with trust. Studies in neuroscience and neurobiology show that different brain regions are activated and different hormones are released, depending on whether a person trusts or mistrusts.

Sources: Prof. Dr Antoinette Weibel, Institute for Work and Employment Research, University of St. Gallen; Bijlsma-Frankema et al., 2015; Dimoka, 2010; Zak, Kurzban, & Matzner, 2005

“What we’re seeing these days is society’s increasing mistrust of traditional institutions like the media, corporations, politicians and the government.”

Prof. Antoinette Weibel
University of St. Gallen

Trust is good; more trust is even better

"Trust means having the guts to engage with one's opposite and show vulnerability," says **Antoinette Weibel.** The professor, lecturer and researcher at the University of St. Gallen (HSG), initially pays trust forward in her interaction with others.

Text: ceo magazine editorial staff
Photos: Markus Bertschi

It's regarded as a fundamental prerequisite for collaboration, indeed for all things in business life – trust. A fascinating topic for economist Antoinette Weibel; something she's been delving into since her student days. "Trust is the grease that makes transactions possible in the first place," says the busy professor and director of the HSG Institute for Work and Work Employment Research in an initial attempt to define this otherwise multidimensional concept.

But trust is also an "enabler" that opens up leeway in negotiations and saves resources. And ultimately, trust is the backbone that supports companies in their efforts not only to perform well, but also to attract and retain highly talented people – an issue that has a lot to do with emotions and hopes.

It goes almost without saying that a person who places their trust in someone hopes that this person will not take advantage of it. Both parties need to engage with each other and be willing to show their vulnerability, notes Weibel in our discussion. The character of the participants plays an important role here, as do integrity and personal values. In this regard, Weibel refers to an insight from game theory, a method that models decision-making mechanisms in social conflict situations: "Trust depends on the intensity of the relationship – the better you know one another and the more intense the dialogue, the greater the inclusion of both parties is in the decision-making processes."

The search for reliable sources

"What we're seeing these days is society's increasing mistrust of traditional institutions like the media, corporations, politicians and the government – even NGOs, for that matter," Weibel has determined. This is also evidenced by the Edelman Trust Barometer, an annually published study by the PR firm of the same name, in which 33,000 people in 27 countries were recently surveyed on the subject of trust. People are on the search once again for what they consider reliable, trustworthy sources. Generally speaking, though, the most recent survey does reveal that the loss of trust in institutions has slowed to a certain extent, and in some regions the figures have actually risen modestly. "The free fall is over," concludes the 19th edition of the Trust Barometer, which was published in January 2019.

Research project Stakeholder Distrust

Antoinette Weibel's current research project, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), deals with the topic of "Stakeholder Distrust". Its focus is on an integrated management approach aimed at avoiding mistrust in the first place and building prosperous trust-based relationships between the stakeholders and the management of a company. The project, carried out jointly with Prof. Dr Sybille Sachs of the University of Applied Sciences in Zurich (HWZ), is scheduled to run until 2021.

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> “The aim of our research is to make mistrust measurable with the help of indicators.”

Drawing on studies like this, Antoinette Weibel and her team are also researching the subject of trust versus its counterpole, mistrust (see box). Whereas: “Mistrust is not simply the opposite of trust, but a category in its own right,” she says. While trust has to be developed over time, mistrust often comes unexpectedly and quickly.

Making mistrust measurable

For companies, mistrust primarily means added headaches, this in the form of increased controlling costs or efforts to nurture the firm’s reputation. Mistrust triggers stress and defence mechanisms in those affected, and can ultimately lead to hostilities and conflicts. She personally had to come to grips with the fact that mistrust can even be felt physically: “It gets you in the kidneys, can cause stomach pains and sleep disorders,” says Weibel. Suddenly it became clear to her that she needed to continue her research in this field.

In describing her current project, she points out that “the aim of our research is to make mistrust measurable with the help of indicators, as well as to show how this phenomenon arises and the effect it has”. One of the questions is: How can lost trust be regained and what should companies do in the event of a loss of trust? Especially when stakeholders’ expectations of a company are high, they can be dashed in an instant. Here, transparency is always the best prescription. Technical problems, for example, are usually easier to explain than deliberate, premeditated misdealings. “Don’t keep the incident under wraps, and don’t simply shift the blame down the line of command,” advises Weibel. “One should own up to the problem, atone for it, seek dialogue with the affected stakeholders, and offer more than just an ‘Oops, so sorry.’”

It doesn’t hurt to be a little generous in such instances and to express self-criticism. The offender needs to take the other side seriously and be sensitive to their concerns. “Those who want to preserve their agility and gain room for manoeuvre should thoroughly war-game cases like this, draw conclusions and prepare the necessary measures in advance,” says the professor.

Listen carefully, show courage

In business dealings, contracts – as impersonal as they are – can be used to achieve trust. They should be designed in such a way that they steer the behaviour of the partners in a desirable direction, Weibel adds. Suppliers ask themselves: How reliable is a company; does it pay on time? How does it treat me; does it give me any reason for doubt? Also employees – who as individuals feel even more vulnerable in this regard due to concerns about their career, salary development and their own self-image – give serious thought to: How loyal is my employer to me? How valuable are my skills to the company? Supervisors should be able to listen, understand the person, and have the courage to address also delicate topics. Why? Because this, too, engenders trust.

HR personnel, with their modern tools and methods, can foster trust or, alas, mistrust. An example of this is performance-based management, a widespread approach in the corporate world which is usually bonus-relevant and based on pre-agreed objectives, metrics, results and periodic evaluations. Here, the implicit signal to employees is: The work I do can be measured and my motivation is driven “extrinsically” by means of financial incentives. Some employers tend to forget that in the minds of many employees there are other criteria than just money as a token of appreciation; for example, feeling that trust

is placed in them, being assigned to demanding tasks, or having an attractive work environment.

Behind any organisation there are always people, with all their strengths, weaknesses and peculiarities. And the roles of the actors alternate: sometimes they perform as individuals, sometimes they represent the organisation as a whole; yet they always act within the framework of set norms and rules.

Today, leaders – CEOs in particular – are also expected to step up and take a stand, especially on socially relevant issues such as climate change, workplace equality and the future of labour.

They shouldn't shy away from public appearances, however not appear narcissistic or heroic in doing so. And they should have the fortitude to decide spontaneously, despite all the requirements attendant to compliance and political correctness. Weibel emphasises that it is important afterwards to actually deliver on these principles rather than just talk the talk. As Roman poet and satirist Horace already knew: "Too many promises lessen trust." And how does she herself, as director of a scholastic institute, go about fostering trust within her team? "I give my associates a lot of headroom," she assures us.

Antoinette Weibel is a professor at the University of St. Gallen and Director of the Research Institute for Work and Work Environments. Her current fields of investigation include the influence of institutions on the motivation of employees, trust in one's company, stakeholder trust and the well-being of people at their place of work.

Weibel completed her studies in economics at the University of Zurich in 2002 with a doctoral dissertation on "Trust and Control in Strategic Networks". In 2008, she habilitated to professorship with a thesis on "Voluntary Work Engagement". In the same year, she assumed the Chair of Management at the University of Liechtenstein, and in 2010 the Chair of Human Resources, Leadership and Decision-making in the Public Sector at the German University of Administrative Sciences Speyer. In October 2010, she was called to the University of Constance to become holder of the Chair of Public Administration. From 2014 to 2016, she has been Director of the Institute for Leadership and Human Resource Management at the University of St. Gallen as well as Professor of Human Resource Management.

Antoinette Weibel is a member of several foundation boards, president of the First International Network on Trust (FINT) and a member of the steering committee of the European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS). She is married and lives with her husband and two cats in the outskirts of Zurich.

“Trust is a must”

For **Gunnar “Gandalf” Jansen,** trust is key to survival. It’s the only way the Patrouille Suisse aerobatics team can perform their precision manoeuvres at speeds of up to 1,000 kilometres per hour. To achieve this kind of mutual trust, squadron leader Jansen invests countless hours in preparing, fostering team spirit and talking things over.

Text: Roberto Stefàno
Photos: Andreas Zimmermann

Gunnar “Gandalf” Jansen (1983) has been a member of the Patrouille Suisse since 2010 and its leader since 2017. A major in the Swiss Army Air Force, he has been a professional military pilot since 2004 and flew the F/A-18 with Flight Squadron 18 in Payerne. As a pilot, he has logged more than 2,500 flying hours. Following Air Force basic training in Ticino, this graduate in polymechanics gained certification as an airline pilot at Swiss Aviation Training. Jansen is married (no children) and lives in the canton of Zurich.

How familiar are you with “The Lord of the Rings”, in which one of the protagonists is Gandalf, namesake of your own “code name”?
Gunnar “Gandalf” Jansen: the nickname has stuck with me since pilot school, apparently because I already had more white hair than my senior flight instructors. I didn’t even know who Gandalf was at the time.

What’s with these flyboy “handles”?
They’ve always been a tradition in aviation. In terms of my Patrouille Suisse engagement, it acts as an alter ego, separating my work and private life.

The Patrouille Suisse flies spectacular air shows at home and abroad. Other than the “Wow!” effect, what purpose does it serve?
We’re a PR instrument of the Swiss Army Air Force. We show people far and wide what Switzerland and its armed forces can do, while also conveying typical Swiss characteristics like precision, punctuality, security and dynamism.

Which role within the formation do you take on as squadron leader?
I’m the point man – the other five pilots don’t look straight ahead during the flight, but instead orient themselves either on me or on their immediate wingman. So if we perform for example a backward loop and end up rushing towards the ground at 600 kilometres per hour, it’s up to me to assess the flight path correctly. My teammates have to trust me 100 per cent – because they can’t see the ground.

Blind faith in the truest sense of the word.
The squadron leader is chosen by the team – and the guys have entrusted me with this task. That kind of trust surely doesn’t come from one day to the next; it takes time. We also need to gain trust in the flight programme for a given show. To that purpose, we conduct a two-week training camp each year. At the outset, we fly the new routine at high altitude, far away from mountains or other obst acles. As soon as we’ve got the programme down pat, we go through it closer to the ground. Then our commander selects a high mountain plain as a kind of practice fairground – but there’s still 1,000 metres of airspace underneath so that nothing disastrous happens in case of a glitch. We practice again and again until everyone is totally prepared. Only then do we fly over the “actual” terrain.

Who decides whether or not someone suits up for the flight?
Basically, every pilot on his own. If for some reason a guy can’t fly or isn’t up to it, no justification is needed. I trust his judgment entirely.

What role does the commander play?
He’s responsible for all administrative matters and is the titular boss of the team. The commander creates an environment in which we can fly freely. It may sound ironic, but he doesn’t give instructions – only feedback.


“If a mechanic confirms
that a plane is ready
to fly, I would never
question that decision.”

Gunnar Jansen – up close and personal

When was the first time you flew an airplane?
When I was 16, in a friend's homemade plane. He briefly handed over the yoke to me while we were flying in Ticino. At 19, I completed my first flight in a military machine during basic training. It was a PC-7.

What was your dream job as a kid?
I wanted to be an astronaut. My fascination with space has remained, but today I'm glad I don't have to fly that far above terra firma.

What rituals do you uphold in the Patrouille Suisse?
We always fly wearing white socks. It's kind of a thing we have, you know, about being 100 per cent ready on the day of the performance. If you forget to put them on, you have to go barefoot in your shoes. Oh, and we also clap each other's parachute as moral support before a flight; then when it's all over, we shake hands. And lastly, we fête a pilot once he's flown his first fair-weather programme in a foreign country before a crowd of 100,000 people: he somehow happens to go for a swim …

Which aircraft type is your favourite?
The F-16. That bird has fascinated me ever since I was a kid. Never flew one, though.

Which air show do you like the best?
The one above the Lauberhorn downhill race venue in Wengen, mainly due to the breathtaking setting. Pulling off a full loop right in front of the Eiger north face is … what can I say? … sweet indeed.

How fast are you under way in private life?
I have a thing for superb engines and go for a spin on the racetrack from time to time.

How do you gain some privacy otherwise?
By doing the exact opposite of my everyday routine. I like fishing and astrophotography – both help me to recharge my batteries. And I appreciate just being alone for once, not having to talk.

Your favourite holiday destination?
If it's got a beach, I'm a happy man.

Which personal goal do you still want to achieve this year?
Basically, my aim is to inspire as many young people as possible to embrace aviation. Since 2019 marks the 55th anniversary of the Patrouille Suisse, there will be a celebration with many former pilots in attendance. I hope to offer them a particularly beautiful demonstration.

What would you like to pass along to our readers?
Never be satisfied to rest on your laurels. This also applies to trust: you need to work on it every day and not simply lean back and take it for granted.

How do you go about planning the shows?
I start with a detailed map in order to get a feeling for where the public will be situated as well as the precise location of nearby cities, towns, mountains and any obstacles. Afterwards, I analyse which flight acrobatics are suitable in such an environment and draw them on the map. When the entire team gets together for the presentation, I explain my plan. Then the discussion starts – everyone can freely express their opinions and reservations. Ultimately, we decide on the final programme.

Is there no additional safety authority that approves the programme?
There is. At the beginning of the year, we present the entire programme we plan to fly in the following months to the Display Control Committee. During the presentation, we point up the particular obstacles at the various demonstration locations and highlight them on the map. If the committee is in agreement with the analysis, we're granted approval for the programme.

How do you practice the manoeuvres before performing at the various venues?
We fly the programme first without an audience and record it with a camera from the perspective of the audience. After the training flight, we analyse it on a computer display and can still make necessary corrections on the day of the performance.

What's of particular importance to you as squadron leader?
Trust is a must; it always has to be there. What's more, all of the team members need to fully understand that it takes each and every one of us for the formation to succeed at the end of the day. Sometimes you have to swallow your ego for the sake of team performance. You need to cultivate this mindset and address it from time to time. It doesn't help if four of the five guys can fly very close together, but the fifth for whatever reason needs a bit more distance. Then the group has to orient itself to this guy so the aerial "picture" is right. That's not always a simple thing.

How do you sense the trust of your teammates?
When the team seems laid back. That feeling comes when I radio them or look back during the flight. As long as everyone is calm and collected, trust is there. If I get a different impression, I naturally have to do something about it.

Meaning you change something during the flight?
Yes. For example, I can slow us down a bit. This of course makes the programme longer, but nobody on the ground notices that.

How do you get along with each other in private life?
We know each other extremely well and frequently get together after work – even with our ladies.

But of course tensions can arise.
In such cases, I have to put on my leader's cap. It's a technique I call "aggressive listening": zeroing in on a conversation to get a sense of what's going on overtly and between the lines and also to pick up the nuances. It's my job to ask questions and talk straight with people. The whole thing takes time and can be exhausting, but it's enormously important.

And if somebody doesn't exactly fit with the team?
We select all our team members ourselves – including our boss, the commander. We don't "have to" take anybody in; we just hope that someone fits the bill.

As the pilot, how much do you rely on the ground personnel?
We're undoubtedly one of the few countries where the team members don't control their aircraft themselves. We have a very close relationship with our technicians. If a mechanic confirms that a plane is ready to fly, I would never question that decision.

What is your basic attitude towards technical aids in aviation?
You've got to trust them. However, when it comes to avionics, there's always a backup. We never rely on a single system. Anyway, the F-5E Tigers we fly for demonstration purposes have relatively little technology in them.

Some would say that your jets are a bit long in the tooth.
They're totally antiquated – for military use at least. But we need these babies for our shows, and for that they're still in full swing.

In 2016, you lost for the first time one of the Patrouille Suisse Tigers in a tragic crash. Does this event still go bump in the night for you?
The aftershock was enormous. In the meantime, the investigation is drawing to a close so we now have the ability to assess which immediate measures need to be taken in order to avoid such an incident in the future.

And for your team?
We talk a lot today about potential incidents like that so we're mentally prepared to take the proper action. The disaster in 2016 was a profound experience, a shock that changed all of us – also in the way we involve our families, our loved ones, in our work.

To what extent has the trust factor suffered in the aftermath?
Not flying together again or not trusting each other anymore was never up for discussion. In our profession, the risk of an accident comes with the territory.

And to what extent is fear your constant co-pilot?
I have no fear when I'm flying on my own. But I still have a kind of stage fright before performances. Like with any actor, it's a reflection of my respect for the task ahead. And it also helps me to stay focused. The stage fright disappears as soon as the afterburners kick in.

Which manoeuvre would you never fly at an air show? Where's the limit?
Our programme needs to be up and running flawlessly within the space of two weeks. That's not much training time. We frequently try new manoeuvres, but we have to have them down pat after just a few flights, otherwise they don't make it into the programme. Foreign teams, who have considerably more time available, occasionally do an upside-down formation flight, which is extremely difficult to pull off. I'd never do that – not least because I'm convinced that the audience doesn't really catch the nature of that feat.

How do you perceive the public's cheers, the pride, the trust they place in you?
We get a lot of that. It feels good.

Has this changed since the climate discussion got its start?
Amazingly enough, not. Of course there's the one or the other inquiry. But we don't fly enough as a team to have a big impact on the emissions question.

How long will you still be flying for the Patrouille Suisse team?
42 is the maximum age limit, and then you're kindly asked to hand over your wings. But like many others before me, I'll leave before then. After all, I've been with the team for ten years now. At some point, one should make room for younger flyboys … or girls!

The **Patrouille Suisse** is the aerobatics squadron of the Swiss Army Air Force. It was founded in 1964 with the aim of demonstrating at home and abroad the performance, precision and operational readiness of the Swiss air defence force. The Patrouille Suisse is stationed at the Emmen military airfield.

www.vtg.admin.ch
→ Patrouille Suisse

“A starved polar bear or an oil catastrophe in the Arctic – that still has an impact, but unfortunately not as long as it used to.”

Iris Menn

Born in Hesse, Iris Menn studied in Marburg, Braunschweig and Hamburg and holds a doctorate in marine biology. In 2002, she joined Greenpeace, where she worked as a campaign and team leader for 11 years and participated in many initiatives. Subsequently, as Director of International Programmes and Political Work for the Christoffel Blind Mission (CBM), an international development assistance organisation, she collaborated in the strategic and operational management of projects, amongst other places in Africa. Iris Menn has been managing director of Greenpeace Switzerland since July 2018. She lives in Zurich.

“What we demand from others is also the way we need to live our own lives”

When **Iris Menn** is on the high seas with dolphins frolicking on each side of the ship, her heart beats faster. The managing director of Greenpeace Switzerland has been fighting on behalf of Mother Nature for many years – most recently from her office in Zurich.

Text: ceo magazine editorial staff
Photos: Marc Wetli

Don’t they ever need a break? The tireless devotion of these champions of the environment can be felt in Greenpeace’s headquarters, even there where in other offices a coffee machine and couches invite you to chat and relax.

Granted, coffee is actually available in the kitchenette, and on the pinboard hangs the typical array of birth announcements, for-sale notices and handwritten letters. But instead of comfortable seating, a 3-metre-long bistro table has been set up that can also be used for meetings – or, more precisely – standing sessions. And next to the post office on the wall are sticky notes with keywords such as “Climate”, “Energy” and “Fundraising” as well as a poster with a kind of ladder game. “This is where we develop ideas for our new organisational system,” says Iris Menn. “The overarching concept is ‘holocracy instead of hierarchy’. For our team, this means more self-organisation and more co-decision.”

Last summer, the 49-year-old moved from Frankfurt am Main to the outskirts of Zurich and since then has held the post of managing director of Greenpeace Switzerland. Compared to the internal organisational tweaks, the boss’s main mission is of course a much bigger deal. “Our current focus is on the climate,” she says. In this regard, the team’s efforts are centred firstly on the Swiss banks, which continue to facilitate investments in fossil fuels; secondly on agriculture due to its overproduction of meat; and thirdly on the new CO_2 law, which is finally poised for introduction.

Is Greenpeace already benefiting from the Green wave that has lately swept onto the political stage? “These things always have a delayed effect,” admits Iris Menn. So far, no significant increase in membership has been observed. Nevertheless, Greenpeace has closed ranks with today’s young demonstrators. “Almost every day they sit in our office; we can support them logistically and materially,” Menn is pleased to say. This extends from helping them to paint the posters and banners, to offering concrete tips on how to steer masses of people so that things don’t get out of hand or degenerate into violence. “Greenpeace has almost 50 years of experience in these activities, and we sense the trust people have in our competence.”

www.greenpeace.ch

Greenpeace

This political non-profit organisation was founded in 1971 by peace activists in Vancouver and today is headquartered in Amsterdam. Its aim is to actively safeguard nature, yet in a non-violent way. The organisation has close to three million supporting members and offices in some 55 countries worldwide. Greenpeace Switzerland was founded in 1984 as a non-profit foundation and is a member of Greenpeace International. In Switzerland alone, the organisation has around 145,000 members.

"You have to deal with the matter; there's no way to avoid it."

"Greenpeace has almost 50 years of experience in these activities, and we sense the trust people have in our competence."

Menn knows what she's talking about. Apart from a four-year stint in the world of development assistance, this holder of a doctorate in marine biology has devoted her professional life to the protection of the environment, quite a few of those years as a Greenpeace campaign leader and, "naturally", as an activist.

She really gets going when the discussion turns to actual campaigns: "I've been on many a ship, and hundreds of images are etched in my brain." For example, that of several enormously long fishing nets as they were pulled to the surface, crammed with fish, eyes turned outwards in panic – or in which hung corals that had grown for 150 years only now to meet an abrupt end. Even today, in times of Internet visual overload, Iris Menn continues to believe in the power of such emotional images. "A starved polar bear or an oil catastrophe in the Antarctic – that still has an impact, but unfortunately not as long as it used to." The half-life of these "mind bombs" that Greenpeace has used to denounce environmental wrongdoings ever since the 1970s and which repeatedly sensitised the global populace to green issues, is waning noticeably.

Nevertheless, Iris Menn remains the optimist, as she resolutely points out. Of course, there are other sources, but she draws the lion's share of her strength from nature, where she spends as much time as possible swimming, hiking or cycling. "In spite of all the deplorable things going on in the world, there's also the other side of life: for example, when you stand at the bow of a ship and 50 dolphins criss-cross right in front of your nose or leap joyfully port and starboard, then you know precisely: "This is right what I do."

Ever since her youngest years, Menn has been committed to nature. Raised in a village in Hesse, she spent most of her childhood outdoors. At the tender age of 13 – a time when the Green Party in Germany had just gained seats in the Bundestag – she donated her first pocket money to Greenpeace. Their actions greatly impressed her. The early campaigns of this NGO, founded in 1971, were directed against nuclear weapons testing and whaling. Later, topics such as global warming, deforestation, atomic energy and genetic engineering were added to its causes célèbres.

Iris Menn's sense of responsibility, an urge to get involved, grew rapidly. "I bought a T-shirt from the 'Nuclear Free Seas' campaign. It didn't make me exactly hip at school, but to my way of thinking it was also a kind of youthful rebellion." In our interview, the otherwise calm, serious tone with which Iris Menn talked about Greenpeace's visions and goals gave way to a smile about this particular recollection. As a young biology student at the rather left-leaning University of Marburg, she and her comrades allegedly sat "day and night" in front of the local armoury and protested against the Vietnam War. She chuckles briefly. Apparently, notwithstanding the seriousness of the matter, it must have been a hell of a lot of fun. Menn spent many subsequent years as a Greenpeace activist, often on the high seas. She organised and risked her neck in actions that at times were reckless, but always non-violent – an integral element of Greenpeace's credo and mission.

With this derring-do behind her, Iris Menn has been spending much more of her time this past year in the open-plan office of the Swiss Greenpeace headquarters

Iris Menn – up close and personal

Who do you trust?
I'm basically a trusting person. For me, trust is something I bestow upon others as well as in myself. The ability to trust someone else is simultaneously a sign of courage, because you can always end up being disappointed.

How do you recharge your batteries?
I often spend time at what was once a monastery but today is a centre for meditation and mindfulness, replete with a beautiful Zen garden. There, I feel imbued with strength and peace. I also meditate daily for ten to twenty minutes.

What message would you like to pass on to our readers?
Have trust in yourself and others that, together, we can straighten out our planet and make it a green and peaceful world.

situated in the building of the Kalkbreite Cooperative. Nobody has a fixed workstation here, not even the boss. Office paraphernalia are stored in boxes equipped with carrying straps and placed at the entryway when work is done. There's no room in them for a lot of paper. But then again, what for? Networking and information gathering – two of the most important ingredients of a campaign – are anyway conducted on the Internet. This is what Iris Menn admires about the new generation of Green troopers. "They're crazy fast once they've come to a decision; they play the keyboard like Mozart, search for information on the Web and organise themselves deftly. That wasn't feasible in the older days."

What's stayed the same, though: the claim to one's own credibility. It's the cornerstone of the trust that members have in Greenpeace. "Of course, people keep a very sharp eye on us – and rightly so. What we demand from others is also the way we need to live our own lives. And if we make mistakes, we have to fess up to them."

Finding trustworthy "green" companies has become quite a complex undertaking these days. Many corporations "greenwash" themselves and wear the "sustainability" pin on their lapels, even though they fail to meet the standards. It's also easy to lose purview over the purported quality seals. So what does Iris Menn advise consumers to do? "You have to deal with the matter; there's no way to avoid it," she admits. "But you should set priorities and not necessarily want every criterion fulfilled by everything, only to end up doing without everything." Even simple things like choosing food circumspectly can achieve a lot.

"If you buy bio, local and seasonal products – hopefully unpacked – then you've already made an important step in the right direction."

So does she actually have trust in mankind that we can still get climate change under control? "Yes, but we need prohibitions and legal regulations to alter the course of things," Iris Menn is convinced: "We can't do this on a voluntary basis alone, like many politicians and companies still believe."

The task is Herculean, and time is of the essence – and there's precious little of that for coffee breaks.

“Taking on responsibility has never really put me under pressure, not even in my younger years. That’s probably because I know my craft like the back of my hand.”

Evelyne Binsack

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“With me, people initially get the benefit of the doubt in terms of trust”

Extreme is perhaps the best word to describe the expeditions that **Evelyne Binsack** has been undertaking for many years. And the self-confidence of this Hergiswil native is also extreme: she knows precisely what she wants and what she does.

Text: Erik Brühlmann
Photos: Marc Wetli

Evelyne Binsack (1967) was born in Stans (canton of Nidwalden). After an apprenticeship as a sports equipment salesperson, she earned her diploma as a mountain guide in 1991 and seven years later obtained a licence as a helicopter pilot. She has repeatedly drawn broad public attention for her unparalled athletic accomplishments. In 2001, she was the first Swiss woman to climb Mount Everest, and in 2007 she travelled on foot, by bike and on skis from Innertkirchen (canton of Bern) to the South Pole. She trekked to the North Pole in 2017 and today works as a mountain guide and lecturer.

www.binsack.ch

Evelyne Binsack, you’re often referred to as an adventurer, extreme athlete or even pioneer. Which descriptor do you like best?
They all apply to me, but none of them gives a full picture of who and what I actually am.

You did an apprenticeship as a sporting goods salesperson. Why did you leave this relatively “safe” environment?
My apprenticeship in Engelberg was merely aimed at getting me admitted to the sports school in Magglingen. Then, everything came out differently than planned. To think, as a teenager I always weaselled my way out of going hiking with my parents!

Yes, hard to imagine …
… but true. Once, I even ate soap so I could throw up and stay home. Prior to Christmas when I was 15, my father told my sister that he’d be giving her ski touring equipment as a present. I snuck away to the furthest corner, hoping to high heaven that this particular chalice would pass me by.

Tossing plans out the window and daring to undertake something completely new takes courage. Are you a self-confident person?
I’ve managed to develop an extreme degree of self-confidence. I always made rapid progress in whatever I did, so as an impatient person I also wanted to put that knack straight to work on the mountain. Coupled with my iron will, urge to win, stamina and boundless enthusiasm, this made me unbeatable on the cliffs for years. I was quite aware of that, and anyone who wanted or claimed to be better than me had to prove it first. Needless to say, I was also sincerely miffed when others started to catch up with me over time and ultimately pass me by. Today, I can chuckle about it. In all honesty, though, I don’t have this kind of self-confidence on all levels of life.

Can you trust others as well?
With me, people get at least the benefit of the doubt rather quickly when it comes to trust. Whether that’s justified or not only becomes apparent once we’ve travelled a certain distance together. To stick with the mountain motif: when I make the initial ascent to the hut with a guest, the climb gives me all the information I need to correctly assess the guest’s abilities for the next day on the mountain – namely, their endurance, surefootedness, experience and so forth.


Evelyne Binsack

Can you also read people that well in your private life encounters?
It takes longer. I can easily recognise the basic characteristics of a person, but in order to really get to know someone, it takes the shared journey I was talking about. Nobody can avoid that. And I have to confess that sometimes I'm wrong in my assessment.

As a mountaineer and helicopter pilot, you also need to have trust in your material. Is this to some extent blind trust, coupled with the hope that the material will actually hold up if things go awry?
Be it on the mountain or in a helicopter: when something goes wrong, it's rarely the case that the material is at fault. You gain trust in this material also by repeatedly running through emergency procedures in your head and, during rescue exercises and so-called check flights, by reviewing everything that can, yet should not, happen in actual practice.

So, is trust in oneself more important than trust in one's material?
Indeed, because you absolutely cannot panic in an emergency. This is one of my major strengths: in dire situations, I can still call up 20 to 30 per cent of my energy reserves even though most of them have already been drained or become apathetic due to the dilemma. At that point, my body and brain switch to autopilot and I function whatever way the situation requires.

How do you acquire that ability?
You can't. It's either there or not there. Training or simulations are of little help. It took me some time to wake up to the fact that I have this talent – even in the most precarious situations, it turns out that I simply did what had to be done. And I felt it was completely normal. Only afterwards did I come to the realisation that this emergency autopilot thing is not normal; it's extraordinary. It's a raw will to survive that I can instantly switch on not just for myself, but also for the other people involved.

Another one of your extraordinary achievements occurred back in 2001 when you became the first Swiss woman to summit Mount Everest. Did that give you the feeling of having "made the grade"?
No, I had that feeling when I climbed the Wetterhorn spire for the first time at the age of 20. And then again after ascending the Eiger north face in winter when I was 22. I had the feeling that nobody could teach me anything now. Atop Everest, it felt more like the reward for a lot of hard work, know-how and skill. Only when I was back in Switzerland and everyone was lauding my achievement did I realise that I had accomplished something extraordinary.

Today, mountaineers on Everest are trampling on each other's feet. Doesn't this kind of take the shine off your performance from back then?
That's like comparing apples and oranges. Nowadays, practically anyone can go "glamping" on Everest. What those mountain tourists can't really appreciate is the guts it took for Reinhold Messner, the first person to summit Everest without bottled oxygen, or even me, with my solo assault on the peak, to have actually accomplished those feats. Reinhold Messner has long been hot under the collar about this mass mountaineering trend; for me personally, it's none of my business.

You're not really keen on the phrase "conquered the mountain" …
Because it reflects an arrogant attitude. If you want to conquer a mountain, you have to cart it away. The mountains stand and will continue to stand whether we climb them or not. As the saying goes: Regardless of what happens, the Eiger doesn't care.

Evelyne Binsack – up close and personal

Which goal have you set for yourself this year?
A very personal one: to take more care of me.

What "extreme" goals do you still have?
Actually none anymore. I can't walk backwards to the South Pole. But I do have a project in mind – several mountains I'd still like to climb – and that could turn out to be a bit on the extreme side.

How do you stay fit?
I don't have to – it comes automatically. My body is like a puppy that needs to get out and about every day.

Can you simply spend a weekend doing nothing?
Nope, no way. That doesn't work.

Which place is the most beautiful on Earth to your way of thinking?
Switzerland from November through late May – when there are practically no tourists around.

Are you afraid of growing old?
Not at all. The wrinkles are somewhat annoying, though.

Are you a loner?
Yes, I am. Of course that's not appreciated very much in today's society, but hey – I simply need a lot of time for myself. Others have to go to seminars to learn this. Me, I'm just that way.

What advice would you like to pass on to our readers?
The most important, yet most difficult, thing in life is to remain true to yourself.

You were under way to the South Pole for 484 days – on foot, by bike and on skis. Did you have to conquer yourself?
The entire route of more than 25,000 kilometres, through 16 countries and the Antarctic, was extremely exhausting at times and not just a beautiful and exciting cake-walk with Mother Nature. What's more, I didn't know whether the money would hold up or whether I was sufficiently prepared despite the four-year planning phase. Sometimes, I also had difficulties motivating myself. But all these obstacles make you suddenly realise how exhilarating small things like a moonrise can be. All the highs and lows, ups and downs merge to become an extremely rich experience. And when you witness a weird weather phenomenon at the South Pole where you think you can see four suns at the same time, you know: Yep, that's exactly why I took all this torture. No luxury round-the-world trip can beat that.

Why then the subsequent trek to the North Pole?
Originally, I'd had enough after the South Pole adventure. The expedition had drained me to the core. But somehow the North Pole kept knocking around in my head, and in the end this particular expedition also helped me to get over a bad private situation.

Those who seek the extreme can find the abyss. That's what happened to Ueli Steck, who died in Nepal two years ago …
Sure, something unforeseen can always happen. And the risk of a fatal self-made mistake increases the longer you do something at this nosebleed level.

There's a fine line between self-confidence and overconfidence …
Very, especially at a young age. With Ueli Steck, it became obvious that his focus was gradually shifting away from himself and his expeditions, to more and more on the public eye. The pressure on him grew steadily, and there were an increasing number of factors that distracted him from what's so essential to endeavours like his: namely, the absolute concentration on oneself. This was probably at least one of the reasons for what happened.

Does one take death into account before leaving base camp?
I've always updated my last will and testament before each major undertaking. Because at latest when the first of your colleagues doesn't come home from their expedition, you become totally aware of all the crap that can happen.

You, too, have taken some heavy hits in life. How do you regain confidence in yourself and your body afterwards?
Through targeted training, the body quickly returns to its usual self. But on the mental side it can get more difficult, depending on which factors are involved. Fortunately, I have a small circle of friends with whom I can discuss my worries and problems – because eating everything into yourself doesn't get you anywhere. A second thing is to be honest with yourself, allow for weaknesses and fess up to them.

Sometimes, you also need to take tough decisions, for example when you have relationships that, if you think about it twice, don't do you well. These days, I'm ready to break off such contacts. This has nothing to do with egoism – it simply means taking good care of yourself.

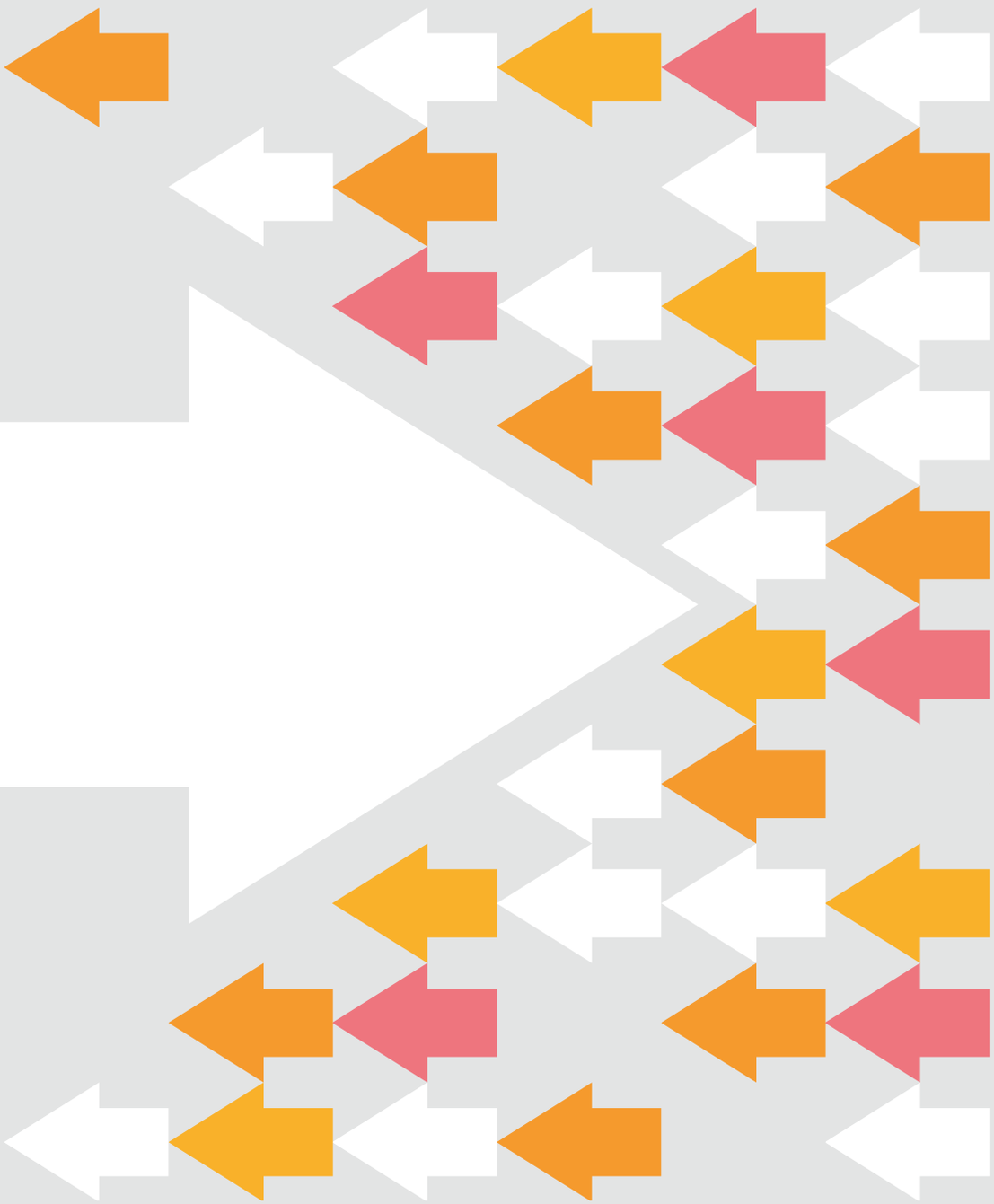
Your customers today place their trust in you as a mountain guide. How do you go about dealing with this responsibility? Taking on responsibility has never really put me under pressure, not even in my younger years. That's probably because I know my craft like the back of my hand. But I also don't shy away from asking other people for advice if necessary – even on the mountain. You should never be too shy for that!

"Sometimes, I also had difficulties motivating myself. But all these obstacles make you suddenly realise how exhilarating small things like a moonrise can be."

Evelyne Binsack

Essay on trust

Part 2

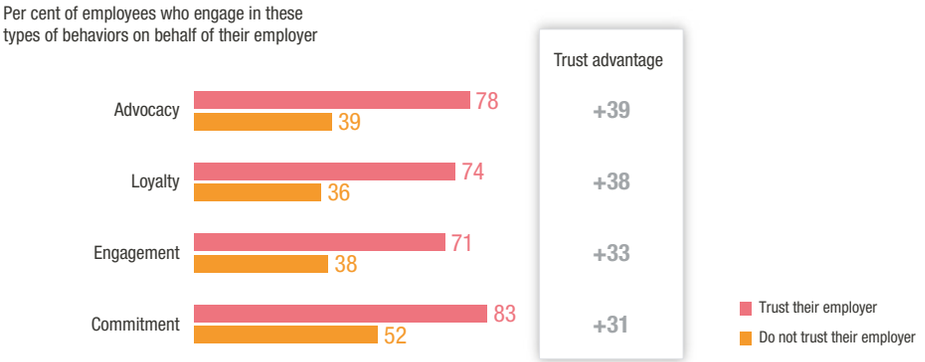


Faithful everyday companions

From getting up in the morning to going to bed at night: brands accompany us every day. Some we love, some we hate, some we trust, some we mistrust and some we're totally indifferent about. Numerous factors determine the success and staying power of a brand: quality, value for money, image – and the list goes on. The brands that Swiss people trust most include Coop Bau+Hobby, Volkswagen, Ticino, Raiffeisen, Ricola, Die Mobiliar, Nivea, Fielmann, Burgerstein or Emmi.

Source: study "Trusted Brands 2019", Reader's Digest

Far-sighted investment



Those who invest in winning the trust of their employees ultimately realise the benefit on their bottom line.

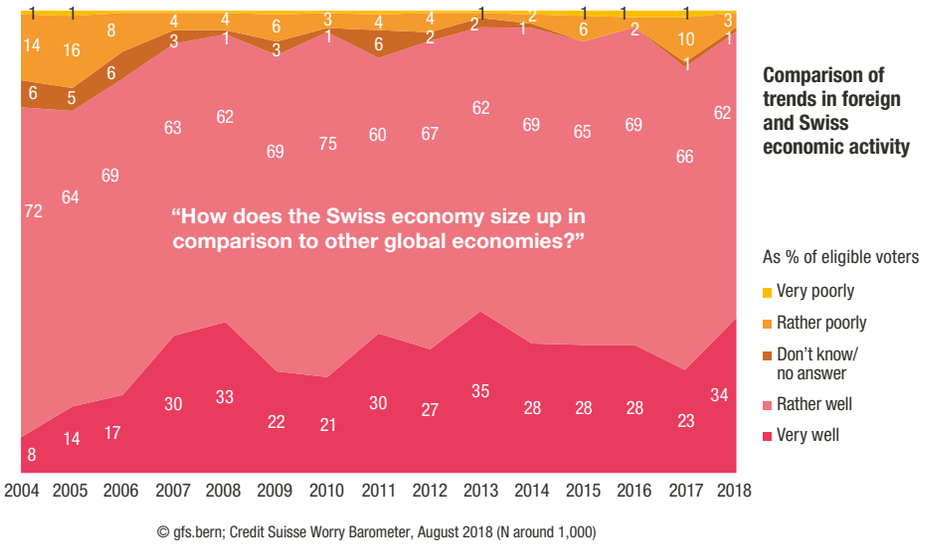
How a company goes about handling its human capital is one of the best indicators of its trustworthiness. There is enormous potential for trust between employers and employees. In a sense, this can be capitalised as added value – provided the company takes the concerns of its workforce seriously and fulfils its part of the deal. Trust gives managers the courage to delegate decisions, foster personal responsibility and help shape change within the company. Trust also acts as a cement in teams that frequently need to be remanned or become more heterogenous in order to achieve a competitive advantage. And not of least importance, trust strengthens human resilience and creates the gumption necessary to bear up under a heavy workload in an increasingly demanding environment.

Sources: 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer (chart); "Trust rocks! Aktives Vertrauen als Grundstein für das Gelingen der Neuen Arbeit" (Active Trust as the Foundation Stone for the Success of New Work) by Prof. Dr Antoinette Weibel, Simon Schafheitle and Margit Osterloh

Good grades for the economy

In the eyes of the Swiss electorate, the domestic economy cuts a fine figure compared to others across the globe. And this perception corresponds to the reality of the hard numbers: Switzerland holds second place on the IMF's list of countries ranked by per capita GDP. Nevertheless, 41 per cent of those voters still feel that the Swiss economy frequently comes up short.

Sources: Credit Suisse Worry Barometer 2018; International Monetary Fund (IMF), April 2018; Federal Statistical Office

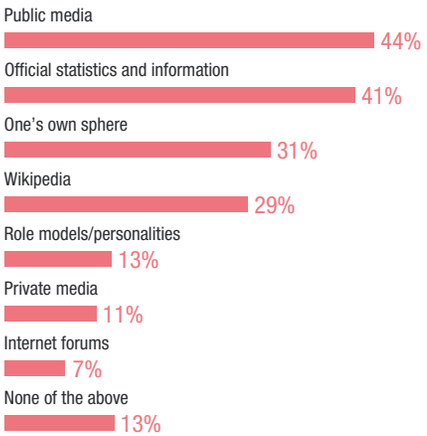


© gfs.bern; Credit Suisse Worry Barometer, August 2018 (N around 1,000)

Swiss per capita GDP in 2017: CHF 79.10.

Yearning for truth

Many Swiss believe that the Internet has made it easier to disprove lies and misleading statements. However, most people are also convinced that the proportion of untruths in the traditional media has increased since the advent of the Internet. Although there is a high degree of trust in official and government sources, when it comes to everyday decisions, people prefer to rely on their gut feeling rather than on a purported specialist's say-so. The spreading of falsehoods and so-called fake news is seen as a real threat to direct democracy and social cohesion.



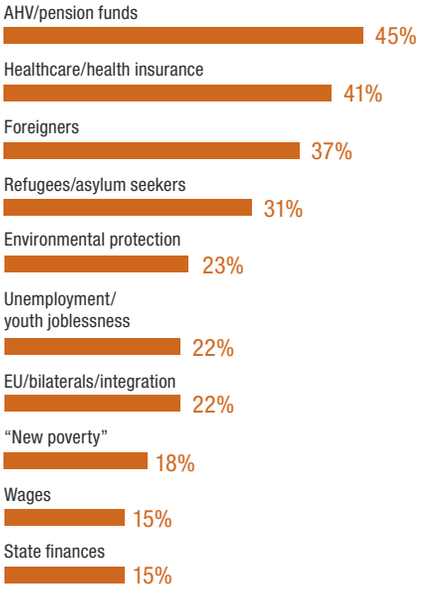
Public media and official bodies are considered to be particularly reliable sources of facts.

Source: "Wahrheit und Lüge in Zeiten von Fake News – Einstellung der Schweizer Bevölkerung" (Truth and Lies in Times of Fake News – Attitude of the Swiss Populace), sotomo opinion research institute, at the behest of Stapferhaus Lenzburg, October 2018

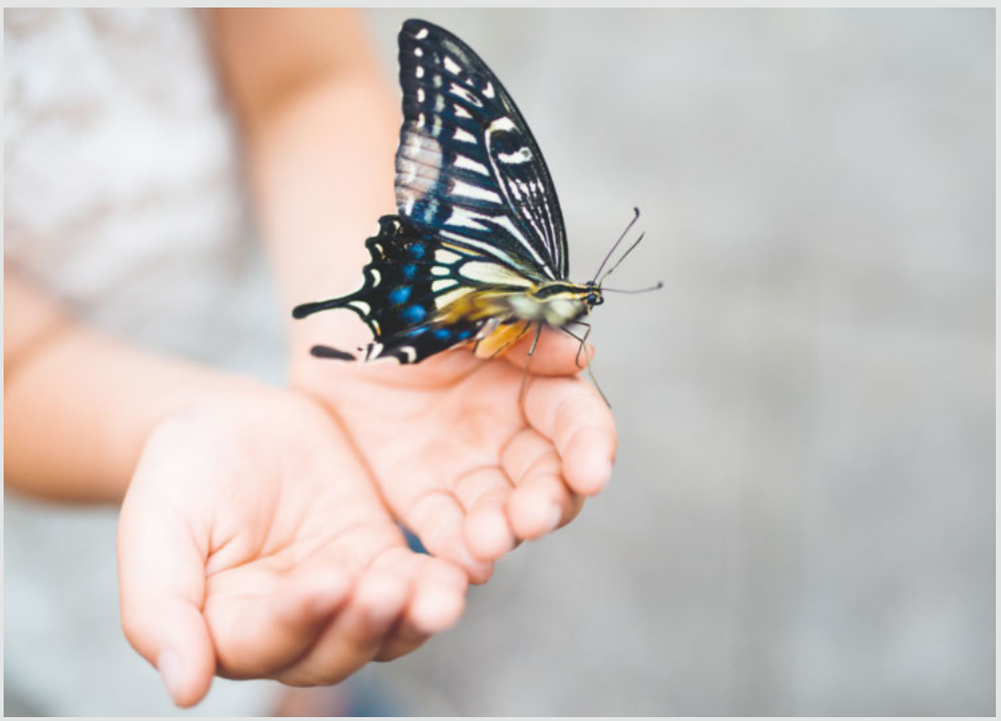
Old topic, new concerns

Mr and Mrs Schweizer are satisfied, at least by international comparison. A major concern in previous years – unemployment – is losing importance as digitalisation is causing fewer fears of job loss. Still, much remains to be done. The most pressing problems facing the Swiss population are pensions, health and migration. Every sixth interviewee is concerned about material issues: worries regarding wages and new poverty are on the rise. The wealth gap in society is widening and the number of so-called working poor is on the rise.

Source: Credit Suisse Worry Barometer 2018



The top ten worries of Swiss in 2018 (as % of all qualified voters)

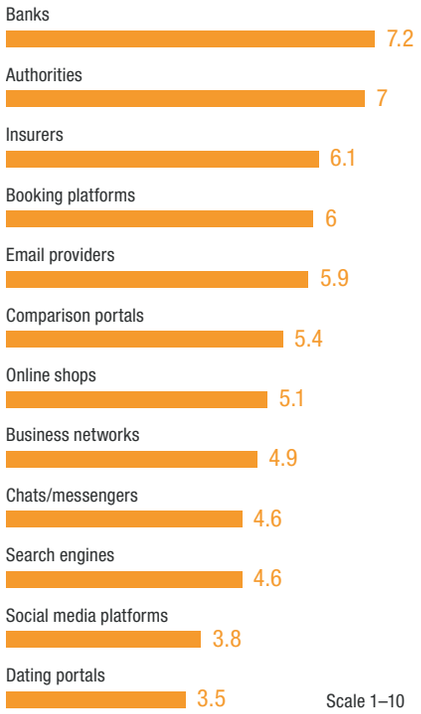


Hold your nose and jump in

Social psychologists view "blind faith" as a surrendering, submissive act which, as a form of trust, increases one's own vulnerability vis-à-vis the trusted party – because only those who literally "jump into the deep end" will ultimately find out whether their trust was justified. Trust therefore always also means giving up control, not being able to know, explain or justify everything – and is thus all the more pivotal in its significance. Accordingly, companies would do well to allow for intuition and gut level decisions and to encourage them as part of their corporate culture. But then comes the hard part: namely, embracing irrationality as a key component of successful collaboration.

Sources: Prof. Dr Antoinette Weibel; Institute for Work and Work Employment Research, University of St. Gallen; Möllering, 2006; Zand, 1972

No data, no deeds



A considerable number of online providers in Switzerland are deemed to be trustworthy, but there is latent mistrust of digital payment methods.

There are growing concerns amongst the Swiss about putting personal data on the Internet. This scepticism is most pronounced when it comes to the disclosure of account numbers, the publication of personal videos or photos, the disclosure of illnesses, as well as the posting of status reports on social media. Mr and Ms Schweizer feel increasingly threatened by digital companies such as Google or Facebook. The growing scepticism in regard to online payments is heightening awareness of the necessity for password upkeep. Nonetheless, most Swiss believe that data protection is well regulated in Switzerland.

Source: data trust study 2019 by comparis.ch

A hard currency with soft attributes

Money is fragile. The value of a currency depends on the trust we place in it. Switzerland is heavily dependent on the development of the Swiss franc. It has long been regarded as trustworthy and is the number one safe-haven currency in times of uncertainty. This has to do with, amongst other things, the pronounced confidence in the Swiss rule of law and the high degree of price stability in Switzerland. Money can only function as a stable unit of account and store of value if society assumes that it will continue to fulfil those purposes in the future.

Sources: PwC own research and “Zerfällt das Vertrauen in Geld, zerfällt auch die Gesellschaft” (If Trust in Money Breaks Down, Society Also Breaks Down), NZZ of 12.10.2018

9 rules for the credible CEO

1. Take charge in the event of changes
2. State a clear position on key issues
3. Show yourself inside and outside the company
4. Offer personal information, such as your values or your success story
5. Remain accessible and speak the language of your people
6. Take decisions based on data and facts
7. Communicate regularly and directly
8. Put the spotlight on your people, not yourself
9. Personify the company’s values

Source: 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer

For the sake of the environment

For some 20 per cent of the Swiss population, one of the most crucial issues relates to their concern about the state of the environment. Never since 2006 has this reading on the Worry scale been as high as it was in 2018, partly because of the exceptionally hot summer of 2018. The “Fridays for Future” movement is likely to have spawned awareness of climate protection and the onward march of global warming.

Sources: PwC own research and Credit Suisse Worry Barometer 2018

“Trust is trust”

Be it on the mountain or in professional life, trust is a must for economiesuisse president **Heinz Karrer.** In terms of the business world, he views trust as a key contributing factor to the success of any organisation. Karrer believes that people’s trust in our economy, our political system, and the future of Switzerland is thoroughly intact.

Text: Roberto Stefàno
Photos: Markus Bertschi

Heinz Karrer (1959) has been president of Switzerland’s industry and commerce umbrella federation economiesuisse since 2013. He was previously CEO of energy services group Axpo for 12 years. He started his career in the sporting goods industry before joining Ringier and later Swisscom in senior executive positions. Karrer studied economics at the University of St. Gallen for two years. In earlier years, as a handball player, he made his way into the Swiss national team and with it to the Olympic Games in Los Angeles. He is married in second marriage and the father of three adult sons.

As an enthusiastic alpinist, what role does trust play when you’re on the mountain?
It’s absolutely crucial. For years and years I’ve been climbing our majestic peaks and going on high alpine tours – always accompanied by the same two mountain guides. We know each other extremely well by now. I have trust in their abilities, and they in mine.

How does this kind of trust differ from the trust placed in you as president of economiesuisse?
Actually, not at all – trust is trust. People basically go on the assumption that they can rely on someone. For example, when I was elected president of economiesuisse, the member organisations entrusted me to represent their economic policy concerns in the best possible way.

How important is it that you can really sense the trust of those members?
Very. Because without trust, you can’t get anything done. That’s why I work hard to earn it and seek dialogue with others. This is particularly important when it comes to conflict situations.

And especially since there’s never a lack of criticism out there – for instance, from opponents or the media.
Criticism comes with the territory when you’re the chief proponent of a federation like economiesuisse. If you can’t handle it, you’re in the wrong job. What’s much more important is to take that criticism seriously and include the valid points in future decision-making processes.

How do you manage to interact with the membership of the federation? After all, you represent the interests of almost 100,000 Swiss companies.
That’s mostly accomplished by 100 or so industry associations and 20 regional chambers of commerce. When we’re addressing an economic policy proposal, the exchange first takes place in working groups. Later, the matter goes in front of the commissions and executive committees. It’s crucial that all affected members are involved in the process to the best possible extent and that conflicts are thrashed out in a timely manner. Only through mutual understanding can a clear majority be achieved in cases of disagreement. More than 90 per cent of the time, we find an amicable solution – despite the huge number of members and their heterogeneity.

… even though the interests of those companies can differ widely in certain instances?
Yes. One reason for this is that a proposed parliamentary bill often doesn’t affect all sectors to the same extent. The companies that are impacted directly then need to get more deeply involved, while those from unrelated sectors hold back. But there are also other situations. Take for example the Swissness bill: there, members’ opinions and attitudes diverged for quite understandable reasons. What I mean is, it’s simply not reasonable to treat a food product the very same way as a machine or a watch when it comes to stipulating the parameters of Swissness.

“Today, it is much more difficult to make one’s voice heard.”

www.economiesuisse.ch

economiesuisse represents the interests of around 100,000 companies from all sectors and regions of Switzerland, firms which collectively provide jobs for around two million people. As an umbrella federation, economiesuisse is the link between business, politics and society. Its efforts are aimed at fostering optimal conditions for Swiss companies – from SMEs to large corporations. The federation advocates liberal concepts such as personal responsibility, free trade and less state intervention. In the year 2000, economiesuisse became the successor organisation to the Swiss Trade and Industry Association (Vorort).

What are Switzerland's three greatest challenges at present?
First and foremost is to maintain a stable relationship with the European Union. This revolves around the bilateral treaties which, at the behest of the EU, are now to be couched in a framework agreement that achieves greater legal certainty for all parties involved. The latter pact is key to Switzerland's ability to reinforce its existing relationship with the EU and pave the way for future bilateral negotiations. This issue is essentially undisputed in the business community, but there are still a number of domestic and foreign policy matters to be debated before it can be put to a popular vote. Another challenge is the climate topic. So far, the economy has clearly exceeded the goals set for CO_2 emissions. An important reason for this were the target agreements reached with the federal government, which were, however, applicable only to companies of a certain size. In the new CO_2 Act, we want all companies to be in a position to take that route. And thirdly, we need to create a sustainable social security substrate. The AHV and BVG pension funds have to be stabilised and financed in a way that accounts for future demographic developments.

As to your first point, the current relationship between Switzerland and the EU doesn't appear to be a very trusting one, does it?
I wouldn't go that far. The big question of course is where the majority of Swiss voters stand in terms of the bilateral agreements. Polls are showing clear support amongst the populace for the bilateral path, even though the EU is viewed critically and Switzerland's self-determination is sacrosanct. This makes it all the more important that light be shed on the opportunities as well as the potential threats, and that the relationship with the EU be discussed soberly, as important votes will soon be held.

Is the business community the right messenger here? After all, the public's trust in captains of industry also seems to be rather sketchy these days.
Not always do the loudest critics reflect the actual opinion of the broad public. According to surveys, people's trust in the business community was quite high until the financial crisis struck. After that, it suffered a bit, but now the readings are even higher than they were before the 2008–2009 crisis.

How then do you explain the defeat of Tax Proposal 17?
According to a follow-up analysis, voters were of the opinion that the proposal wasn't sufficiently balanced. But to speak of fundamental mistrust is wrong. For example, a recent study by the ETH Zurich on the public's confidence in our institutions showed the highest reading since the survey was initiated in 1992.

Digitalisation is currently the source of additional uncertainty amongst the population. What's your take on this?
Basically, change is part of life. What's new, however, is the tremendous speed at which these changes are taking place. Just think of the smartphone and how it's turned our lives upside down. Many people wonder where this all will end up. Quite often, though, these jitters are simply due to a lack of insight or the will and ability to deal with the topic.

How are you responding to that?
We've published a variety of articles on digitalisation and hold events to discuss the issue with the public. Digitalisation offers incredible opportunities, but it is understandably also a source of concern. For example, permanent, lifelong training is necessary to keep pace with these developments, but how do people of a somewhat advanced age manage to change their job or retrain? So digitalisation raises many economic and sociopolitical questions.

Here, economiesuisse could once again pave the way – as it has frequently done quite successfully in the past. There's even talk of an eighth Federal Council member …
That's somewhat of a myth: if we take the voting results as a benchmark, we win nine out of ten ballots relating to economic policy. This was no different 20 or 30 years ago. But what does hold true is the fact that, today, it is much more difficult to make one's voice heard. One of the reasons is that our public institutions have lost some of their shine, and a constantly growing number of organisations and people are voicing their opinions for all to hear. Social media have made this easier than ever before.

Trust that's been built up over years can quickly be demolished. How important is risk management at economiesuisse?
We take two approaches in this regard: the one is aimed at the medium to long term with the intent of keeping an open eye and ear out for social issues that subliminally concern the population. We need to wrap our heads around these trends and keep them in mind when dealing with and questioning economic policy issues. In the short term, communication is what's called for. How do we communicate? How do we react to a disparaging report? That's our daily work. And good preparation is necessary here because, as you say, trust is indeed quickly lost.

Heinz Karrer – up close and personal

The view from this summit impressed me the most.
All 4,000ers in Switzerland are splendid. But I was particularly impressed by the view from the Breithorn in Zermatt. There, I met the famous mountain guide Ulrich Inderbinen on a stunningly beautiful day. He led me to a vantage point with a panorama that extended all the way to the Pyrenees on the horizon. I couldn't believe this at first – but it was true.

Which peak would you still like to surmount?
Piz Badile. It's a beautiful climbing mountain, but was difficult to access recently because of a rockslide.

And even higher mountains abroad?
I climbed 6,000ers in the Andes and last year one in Georgia that was over 5,000 metres. But I have no ambition at all to try an 8,000er.

So you're not seeking even higher highs?
In the past, sheer altitude was more important to me. Today, I find less lofty but more difficult climbing routes just as interesting.

A personal goal that you'd like to achieve before the year is out?
Taking as many beautiful mountain tours as possible.

How and where do you recharge your batteries?
Above all in nature, in combination with physical activity: hiking, mountain and rock climbing, jogging, skiing or ski touring.

Your favourite holiday destination?
We spend a lot of time in Mürren in the Bernese Alps where we have an apartment. It's also a frequent meeting point for the entire family.

Where do you prefer to meet the one or the other Federal Council member?
On the slopes while skiing with former Federal Councillor Adolf Ogi. Otherwise, most meetings take place in the Federal Councillors' own offices in Bern.

What's currently at the top of your shopping list?
I really like to read. Frequently, I stop by a bookshop on the spur of the moment and simply purchase whatever looks interesting. That'll likely be the case again soon. And oh, I also need some new carabiners.

Which book rests on your bedside table right now?
I was recently in the Bernese Jura and visited the Camille Bloch chocolate factory. Company boss Daniel Bloch presented me with his book, which I've finished reading in the meantime.

Which film hero do you find the most compelling?
For me, Gandhi was the most impressive personality in recent history – perhaps together with Nelson Mandela.

What would you like to pass along to our readers?
I hope that they will stand up for a successful and innovative Swiss economy – because it is the very foundation for the prosperity of our country.

"Even in cases of differing viewpoints, mutual understanding is of tremendous importance."

For example, when it comes to excessive manager pay.
Excessive salaries are a matter regulated in the Compensation Ordinance enacted following the 2013 popular vote. As a result, shareholders now bear more responsibility, which in turn has led to increased transparency and significantly fewer executive pay aberrations. But what's important here is that the state doesn't get involved in wage policy.

Nevertheless, a scandal at one company quickly besmirches the entire economy and, by definition, economiesuisse as well.
That's correct, but by no means justified. Because then, 500,000 businesses in Switzerland are unfairly painted with the same brush. Day in, day out, those companies do an excellent job, something for which Switzerland has repeatedly gained international acclaim.

What gives you confidence that this will continue to be the case in future years?
This question has undoubtedly been asked countless times in the past decades, given that we've somehow always managed to keep on doing so well. For whatever reason, Switzerland has regularly succeeded in being one of the most innovative and competitive countries in the world. Trust plays a major role here: Switzerland and its companies stand for reliability, high quality, predictability and legal certainty. These are our success factors, and I'm confident that we can continue to benefit from them in the future.

“It’s like being in love”

Trust, according to psychology professor **Martin K. W. Schweer,** is based to the greatest extent on reciprocity: those who don’t feel trusted don’t trust others. A conversation about the importance of formative years and trust as a resource for companies.

Martin K. W. Schweer

The psychologist (1965) is Professor of Pedagogic Psychology at the University of Vechta, where he also heads the Center for Trust Research he co-founded in 1996. He also counsels athletes and advises companies. In addition to many specialised scientific publications, he has also written books of appeal to the broad public, namely “Facetten des Vertrauens” (Noack & Block) as well as “Vertraut euch!” and “Wer aufgibt, wird nie Sieger! 40 Lektionen zur Steigerung der mentalen Fitness” (Frank & Timme).

www.schweer-info.de

> “Trust takes a long time to unfold – but it is very quickly destroyed.”

Text: Regula Freuler
Photos: Getty Images / Prof. Martin K.W. Schweer

Children are said to have an “instinctive trust”. Is trust something we’re born with?
A newborn baby has no alternative other than to confer trust; after all, it is defenceless and unable to survive on its own. But you can’t speak solely of experience-based trust, because trust is something that develops over time. It’s the result of various factors: one’s individual character, previous contacts and the conditions in any given situation. Attempts are always made to filter out these individual disposition/environmental factors, but the decisive element is always the complex interplay between all of the relevant determinants.

Are you referring to the hypothesis of behavioural geneticist Robert Plomin, who argues that genetic testing can determine the cognitive abilities of a newborn and, on that basis, predict the child’s educational potential in later years?
Presumptions like that are problematic in my opinion. Rather, of pivotal importance is that the attempt is made to give people the best possible support according to their individual potential. In this respect, we in Germany still have a lot of catching up to do. When it comes to trust, the sense of security – the bond – experienced by children in their immediate personal environment is very decisive. This can be with the parents, but also conceivably with other caregivers.

How does the willingness to enter into trusting relationships interrelate with self-confidence and self-esteem?
These three characteristics take shape from an ongoing symbiotic process. When one enters into trusting relationships, the probability of having positive experiences increases, which in turn strengthens one’s self-confidence and self-assertiveness. People with high self-confidence are more likely to take a risk – and trust is always a risk.

> “Trust takes courage.”

You can be disappointed at any time. This doesn’t mean, however, that a person will necessarily remain equally trusting or mistrustful throughout their life. Ultimately, that depends entirely on the successive experiences this person collects in the various stages and areas of life.

Can you give us an example?
Take for instance a baby boy who experiences a loving and stable relationship with his parents at home and develops a healthy degree of self-confidence. Then he goes to primary school and is terribly disappointed in his teacher. Trust takes a long time to unfold – but it is very quickly destroyed. Conversely, someone with a low level of self-confidence due to family socialisation issues can gain self-confidence and self-esteem from experiences in school or during leisure time. There’s no doubt, however, that the environment at home is of course a very important cornerstone for one’s start in life.

Today’s teenagers are being labelled “Generation Careful”: they drink less than their parents, are less inclined to take drugs, fight less – they’re generally not risk-takers and seem less self-confident. Is this the result of helicopter parents?
Nowadays, people are much more sensitive to behaviour that poses a risk to their health; this is also the result of educational influences and targeted awareness measures. For example, smoking is no longer “cool” these days. Overly cautious parenting, on the other hand, is in my opinion a learned collective behaviour, fed by partly irrational fears, the genesis of which can be traced to the media and its headlining of negative individual cases.

Can trust also function unilaterally?
Only if one doesn’t realise that it’s one-sided. After all, trust stands or falls on perceived reciprocity. Those who trust another person assume that they, themselves, are equally trusted. It’s like being in love: if people love and are convinced that their love is reciprocated, this reinforces the relationship. In our culture, reciprocity is an important social norm. For example, it’s not without reason that we invite to our birthday party those who have previously invited us to theirs. If we suddenly catch signs that our trusting ways are not being reciprocated, we

experience this as a breach of trust. Consequently, our own trust in that person will wane.

Why for most people is sexual fidelity the touchstone for trust in a love relationship?
Because most people consider the sex dimension to be the essential line of demarcation between a love relationship and just any other interpersonal relationship. For instance, in the doctor-patient relationship, professional competence plays a crucial role in trust. In many other cases, the "fidelity" aspect is completely insignificant.

You're also a psychological consultant to management. What advice do you have for managers who are working to create a trustworthy image?
Winning the trust of others shouldn't be the primary goal; first, you need to personify it. Then it will inevitably radiate, and not just be perceived as a strategic marketing ploy. Accordingly, companies need to understand that, in and of itself, trust is an important resource both internally and externally; companies must strive to engender a culture of trust. For that reason, a compelling question right at the start of development measures frequently centres on how the company's postulated guiding principles and corporate philosophy compare to the "actual" daily life within the company.

Most corporate captains probably don't like to hear that, do they?
It's ultimately a question of management's fundamental attitude. But especially in view of today's complex challenges and need for innovation, organisations are increasingly willing to take the risk of trust.

What risk?
That one commits to participation and transparency and ultimately also to bearing any consequences. If, for example, in a family-owned company it ultimately boils down to the patron taking every decision on his own, basic impact factors can't gain traction in building trust; rather, they merely provoke disappointment and frustration. In my opinion, highly paid managers who are not interested in fostering a culture of trust within their own company are today no longer tenable in their positions.

You also look after athletes. Where are the sticking points?
Many people assume that top athletes have a high degree of self-confidence – but they often do not.

Why not? They get a lot of positive reinforcement from their success.
There's a huge difference between conditional and unconditional appreciation. Top athletes are people who have defined themselves through their performance since their early youth and today are defined from outside. Through this form of conditional appreciation, they learn how important it is to be continuously successful. Hence, the fear of failure can increase considerably. Conditional appreciation is not negative per se, but there also needs to be the experience that you're valued regardless of your performance, for example by family or very good friends.

You speak of the "soccer mom" or "tennis dad" phenomenon – in other words, drill sergeants, right?

Not necessarily. Frequently, these are very subtle and unintended processes. Take for example the behaviour of parents after their own child has had a tournament success – or has failed. The howls of let-down speak for themselves, although in the vast majority of cases, these parents have no wish to punish their children by their expression of disappointment.

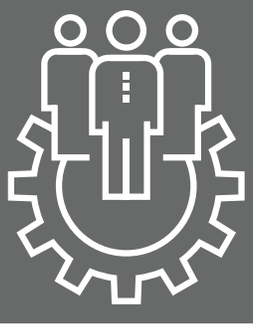
How does an athlete get out of such a blue funk?
The first step is to sensitise the person to these psychological processes, combined with the realisation why possible failures are so frightening. Ideally, this should be combined with constructive collaboration with the parents and trainers.

"Winning the trust of others shouldn't be the primary goal; first, you need to personify it."

Martin Eisele (1967) has been the owner and CEO of door factory Brunegg (Brunex) since 2008. At that time, he acquired the company shares previously held by his management colleague Martin Schmid, which they had bought together in 2003 as part of a management buyout. Born in Germany, he studied wood technology at the Rosenheim University of Applied Sciences. Eisele is married and father of three children (8, 10, 12 years).

“A good door inspires trust”

The boss of door factory Brunegg describes in layman’s terms the unexpectedly complex manufacture of doors, the changed circumstances in his business – and why a door can definitely be compared to a piece of fine furniture.



Text: Roberto Stefàno
Photos: Andreas Zimmermann

To your knowledge or recollection, what was the most unusual order for a door that Brunex has executed in its 65-year history?
Generally, our orders are not too out of the ordinary. However, I do remember two in particular: our first delivery of a door to Shanghai, and the five millionth door we ever produced. The latter marked the start of a new era for our company back in 2001.

Why a new era?
Before that, several specialised companies were involved in the value chain of the door business: one produced the basic panel, another processed it, and another was responsible for installation. But this changed once some of our customers started producing their own panels. So we, too, had to vertically integrate our production and reorient our approach.

What makes for a proper door?
Two things: it needs to function impeccably as well as meet the taste of the buyer. The first factor is frequently given short shrift. But the truth is, a door can be compared to a piece of fine furniture. It is by no means a negligible investment for homeowners, so they have a right to expect that it will remain in perfect condition for 15 years at the very minimum.

How important is a door as the visiting card of a dwelling?
As I said, a door represents a considerable investment and leaves a certain impression. When a property is up for sale, a door can play an important subliminal role in whether or not the transaction is concluded.

Can a door instil trust?
Take for example an automobile: if a car door squeaks or rattles when you close it, you know immediately that you’re sitting in a cheapo. So yes, a good door inspires trust. Also, there are various “resistance classes” (RCs) that offer different levels of protection against intruders. These most definitely engender trust and are increasingly in demand in certain customer segments.

How do your doors differ from the less expensive foreign versions?
Let’s get one thing straight: the price difference between our products and an equivalent door from abroad is marginal. But otherwise, a lot depends on the size of the market. In Switzerland, we’re the leading manufacturer and produce some 500 doors a day in Brunex’s highly automated factory. Our foreign competitors can produce 10 to 20 times as many doors in the same time. This is due to the fact that the markets there are much larger, so mass production pays off; that’s not the case here in Switzerland. We deliberately concentrate on manu-

Door factory Brunegg, situated in the village of the same name in the canton of Aargau, was founded in 1954. The company, today known as Brunex, employs around 63 individuals and is the Swiss market leader in the door business. As a full-range supplier, Brunex supplies carpenters throughout Switzerland with custom-made door panels and the related elements, as well as wall systems and room dividers. In 2019, Brunex was awarded Zürcher Kantonalbank’s SME prize.

www.brunex.ch

facturing fewer doors, but ones with higher quality and greater durability since it is impossible for us to keep up with the price war in such a tight market.

Do you feel that buyers have greater trust in your company because it's a local supplier?
Our customers attach great value to a Swiss product, and our proximity to the actual construction sites often plays an important role. If a problem arises, we're quickly at their doorstep, so to speak. Our customers appreciate this very much.

Your doors are made to measure, but when producing them you have to rely on someone else's specifications. Does that pose a problem?
No. If doubts arise or we realise that an ordered door simply can't function according to spec, we approach the customer. Our project manager discusses the problem with the buyer so that ultimately everything fits perfectly. In the same vein, it's also important for the craftsmen that they have a partner they can count on. Doors are becoming increasingly complex, and installers need to rely on their ability to meet the precise requirements of the supplier.

You've mentioned that your responsibility goes beyond the mere manufacture of the products. What do you mean by that?
Before a door is manufactured, the needs of the ordering party have to be clearly defined, as doors can have very different characteristics. The question is: What does the customer actually want and need? This is where we perceive ourselves as the ones bearing responsibility: we have to assist our customers in selecting the right components. At the same time, we regularly try to train the carpenters who carry out the order, show them the latest innovations, and inform them of today's most commonly applied standards.

You've made it your cause to ensure that Brunex treats natural resources with the utmost care. What is the significance of sustainability in your business?
All of the wood we use for the production of our doors is FSC-certified. This guarantees that it comes from sustainably managed forests – especially in terms of the tropical timber we process. It's been clearly demonstrated that this is a better way to protect a forest than the methods used in the past. The local people earn a living from their forest areas without sacrificing them entirely.

To what extent do you associate sustainable resource management with trust?
Trust comes into play at different levels. On one hand, trust in the future is a must; and that requires a clear vision. On the other hand, you need to trust your team, especially in an owner-run company. Then comes trust in the product and the business per se. And in the end, customers have to trust you – something that can only be achieved by their communicating openly and transparently with you and you with them.

Brunex has meanwhile produced over eight million doors. How has your product changed in the 65 years since the company's founding?
The change has been astonishing. In the past, we had a classical "seller's market", so much so that quotas were allocated. There was hardly any demand for creativity in the production of doors, as only three or four door types were built at the time. Today, we're in competition with dozens of foreign manufacturers and offer 27 door types and entry systems. The change is also clearly evident in terms of our employees: in the meantime, they've had to learn how to do more than just perform the same old monotonous work steps – innovative and entrepreneurial thinking is a top priority for us.

How did your people cope with that change?
It wasn't an easy process, because at the same time we also had to involve our customers. Thanks to transparent communication, we managed to pull this off to everyone's satisfaction. Today, customers can contribute their own ideas, as can our employees.

Martin Eisele – up close and personal

How would you characterise yourself most accurately?
I'm a maker with a vision.

What type of door would you be?
A straightforward one; clearly structured and sustainable.

Sliding door or hinged door?
Definitely a hinged one. A sliding door is daintier, quieter.

Glass or wood?
No question, wood. I'm a trained carpenter and have a degree in wood engineering from Rosenheim. Wood is my element!

What clubs are you a member of?
Besides my job, there's very little free time left. I prefer to spend those hours with my wife and our three kids, who are already 8, 10 and 12 years old. But together we're members of a mountain bike club in the region.

Which encounter have you had in the past five years that impressed you the most?
A meeting with former Brunex Chairman Kurt Streif. He's retired now, but I learned a lot from him. It all started the first time I met him – originally, I had signed up with the company for just a two-year stint. He showed me back then that I could have a great future at his firm. Or that I'd soon be far and gone.

Which personal goal do you still want to achieve in 2019?
I want to take part in the Rothaus Bike Giro and finish faster than I did last year.

This is how I recharge my batteries …
By biking with my family.

My favourite holiday destination …
The main thing is, it's got to be with our motorhome – first in the mountains, then by the sea.

What advice would you like to pass on to our readers?
You have to believe in goals and stand by them.

“Digitalisation has simplified many aspects of our work and made them more dynamic.”

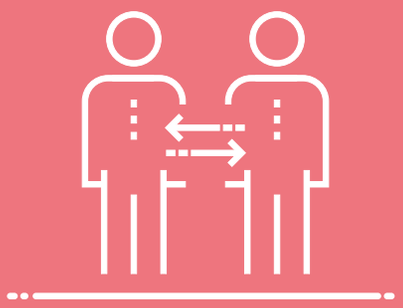
These days, doors are manufactured just in time. How far do you go with this approach?
98 per cent of our doors are contract work carried out on a just-in-time basis. We maintain only a small inventory of the most popular versions at our forwarding agent. The raw material stocks at our supplier are also streamlined to two or three days’ worth of drawdown. Pre-production is practically impossible, as most Brunex doors are individual custom-made products.

How has digitalisation affected your production processes?
A good example of this can be seen with our employees, who today work with tablets or computers at their machines. The parameters for making a door are compiled just once and the related data are then automatically and continuously transferred to the various stations. With myBrunex, we’ve also developed a tool for our customers that they can use to configure, calculate and order the doors themselves. And not least of all, our sales representatives are now equipped with digital devices that display our products to customers on-site, thereby eliminating the need to carry around heavy paper files. Digitalisation has indeed simplified many aspects of our work and made them more dynamic.

You’ve outsourced the distribution of your doors. Why do you prefer this route rather than marketing them yourself?
This approach has certain drawbacks but lots of advantages. We’re very close to our customers. We maintain long-term partnerships with dealers and carpenters and enjoy the mutual trust. That’s why we don’t intend to change anything, along the lines of “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

Which trends are currently shaping the door business?
Flush-mounted doors are in demand, as are frame-free products and soundproof doors for the living room. What’s more, the need for security has increased, which is why we’re seeing a growing number of RC (Resistance Class) doors being installed. Not to mention the fact that customers have come to want environmentally friendly, toxin-free doors these days.

You won the 2019 Zürcher Kantonalbank’s SME prize. What does this commendation mean to you?
Its significance became clear to me only after we had actually won the award. We’re very proud to have been honoured this way – especially our employees. The commendation confirms that we’re on the right track and gives us the drive to continue along this path. We used the prize money to create a beer garden next to the plant so our employees can also toast the award!



Silence is golden? Not.

Text: ceo magazine editorial staff
Photos: Markus Bertschi

If there were something like a Swiss Trust Award, Beatrice Tschanz would be the hands-down winner. Probably many times. But for sure in 1998 when Swissair Flight 111, an MD-11 under way from New York to Geneva, went down off the eastern coast of Nova Scotia taking all 215 passengers and 14 crew members to their death. A human catastrophe by any stretch of the imagination, but equally so a corporate one. Beatrice Tschanz was Communications Head of Swissair at the time. What she accomplished in the hours, days, weeks and months after the crash remains etched in the memory of everyone who followed the event.

"Look at any of the past statistics you want – all show that after a crash like this, bookings are down by 40 per cent," says the Zurich native. "But the unbelievable thing about Swissair was that we didn't have a single cancellation." Even today, more than 20 years later, she's still impressed by the trust the nation had in its flag carrier.

We meet at the Goethe Bar. Beatrice Tschanz's strong, clear voice has no trouble drowning out the coffeehouse soundscape of rattling dishes and chattering voices. How did she do it? How was it possible that Swissair customers didn't lose their trust in the company? "We already said on the second day that we would publish every confirmed fact," recalls Tschanz. "That was a paradigm shift." The rule until then in similar cases: silence; walls; slow-walking the issues; only admitting what's been proven unquestionably. "But we did the exact opposite. And the customers noticed that." For their part, the SAir lawyers were anything but pleased, fearing the company would face even more claims for damages. But Tschanz was convinced of her all-cards-on-the-table strategy – and rightly so, as things turned out.

This particular communications expert doesn't think highly at all of the widely applied "salami tactic", where the public is supplied with nothing more than thin slices of information; sound bites. "You've seen it used so often, and it doesn't do any good – in fact it makes matters worse." The media annals are full of such examples. Often they have to do with environmental disasters like Deepwater Horizon, or sexual abuse cases in the Catholic Church, or the Oxfam aid organisations. As to Switzerland, Tschanz mentions the UBS case and its former Chairman, Marcel Ospel. In the midst of the exhaust scandal Volkswagen Group brought on itself, Tschanz was asked to act as a consultant in "sub-areas", as she puts it.

"I recommended to then VW Group Chairman Martin Winterkorn that he man up and take responsibility."

Beatrice Tschanz

Born in Zurich (1944), Beatrice Tschanz studied history and philology before starting her career as a journalist and then changing to communications in 1987, ultimately to hold a variety of management positions. From 1997 until shortly after the Swissair grounding in 2001, she was Head of Communications at SAirGroup. From 2001 to 2003, she held the same post at Sulzer Medica Centerpulse, where she also became a member of the Executive Board. She then went into business on her own as a communications consultant. She is Chairwoman of "Oase Holding Wohnen im Alter" and active as a personal counsellor. She will remain a member of the Swiss Federal Commission for Space Affairs (EKWF) until the end of 2019. Beatrice Tschanz is married and lives in Rapperswil-Jona.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“Beeing trusted like that makes you absurdly strong.”

She sighs and raises her eyebrows: “But you could forget that. And today, we know where the whole thing has led.”

Her special brand of frankness and candour is something Beatrice Tschanz learned already in her own family circle. “My father used to tell me and my sister: ‘If you’ve botched something up, come home and we’ll talk about it.’ Being trusted like that makes you absurdly strong.” She’s seen what the opposite has meant in friends who as kids were constantly badgered and not trusted to do anything right. “They only managed to build up a semblance of self-confident straightforwardness much later in life. I, on the other hand, was spoon-fed giant portions of it already at an early age.”

Beatrice Tschanz grew up in a well-to-do family home on the Zürichberg. Her father was strict, she says, but always fair. She nevertheless felt the urge to spread her wings. She wanted to go to Brazil. As a student of history and philology, she was an avid reader of the job adverts in the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung”. One day, she ran across a listing from the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) – they were seeking an assistant for a small new branch in Brazil. “Of course, they wanted a man, but I realised: That’s my job!” Instead of submitting a written application, she went to the bank’s head-quarters and trotted directly to the cubicle of the newly named manager of the foreign rep office. “He thought I was pretty cheeky, but somehow he liked my brazen way.” Naturally, at home dear Dad went nuclear at first. “But then he heard ‘UBS’ and decided in his supreme wisdom: ‘You can handle that.’” Fourteen days later, Beatrice Geiser (her maiden name at the time) was sitting on a plane to Brazil. Once there, instead of taking dictation from her boss,

Beatrice Tschanz – up close and personal

Your basic principle?
You are stronger than you think. Women in particular often have too little trust in themselves, which is a pity.

What’s your favourite holiday destination?
My feel-good place is Sardinia. I love the wildness there, paired with wondrous places and inlets. The sea is very important to me – after all, I’m a water sign. What’s more, there’s always a breeze in Sardinia, and the food’s outstanding.

What goal do you still want to achieve this year?
Why just one? I’ve got a whole bunch of them! This year for example …

she travelled the country with Swiss investors. “They just trusted me,” she says, “which of course spurred me on to do my absolute best.”

Upon her return to Switzerland two years later, she started her career as a journalist – all of 18 years with Ringier. But she didn’t want to “grow old” writing articles her whole life, so it was an easy decision when Michael Ringier offered her the job of Communications Head for the company. Ringier financed her advanced training at UC Berkeley. “A newspaper doesn’t really need a communications department,” says Tschanz, “but for me it was an ideal opportunity to practice my act.” And boy did she make mistakes! For example, by announcing the discontinuation of the “Blick” for women with a look on her face as if she were attending a funeral, or overenthusiastically trumpeting Ringier’s participation in the federal government’s first “Stop Aids” campaign. “Wrong. Totally wrong,” she hollers and then laughs herself to tears. “Later, I showed my employees video recordings of these monumental press conferences as examples of what a no-go is all about.”

But if you’re allowed to make mistakes – like Beatrice was as a young girl – you become stronger and more self-confident. And that’s the basis for others trusting you. She benefited from this again with her next employer, Jelmoli AG, where she experienced her first thorny professional situation; namely, the “streamlining” of her 157-member team.

“That was hard. But I learned that you have to communicate clearly and honestly, not with crocodile tears and false promises.”

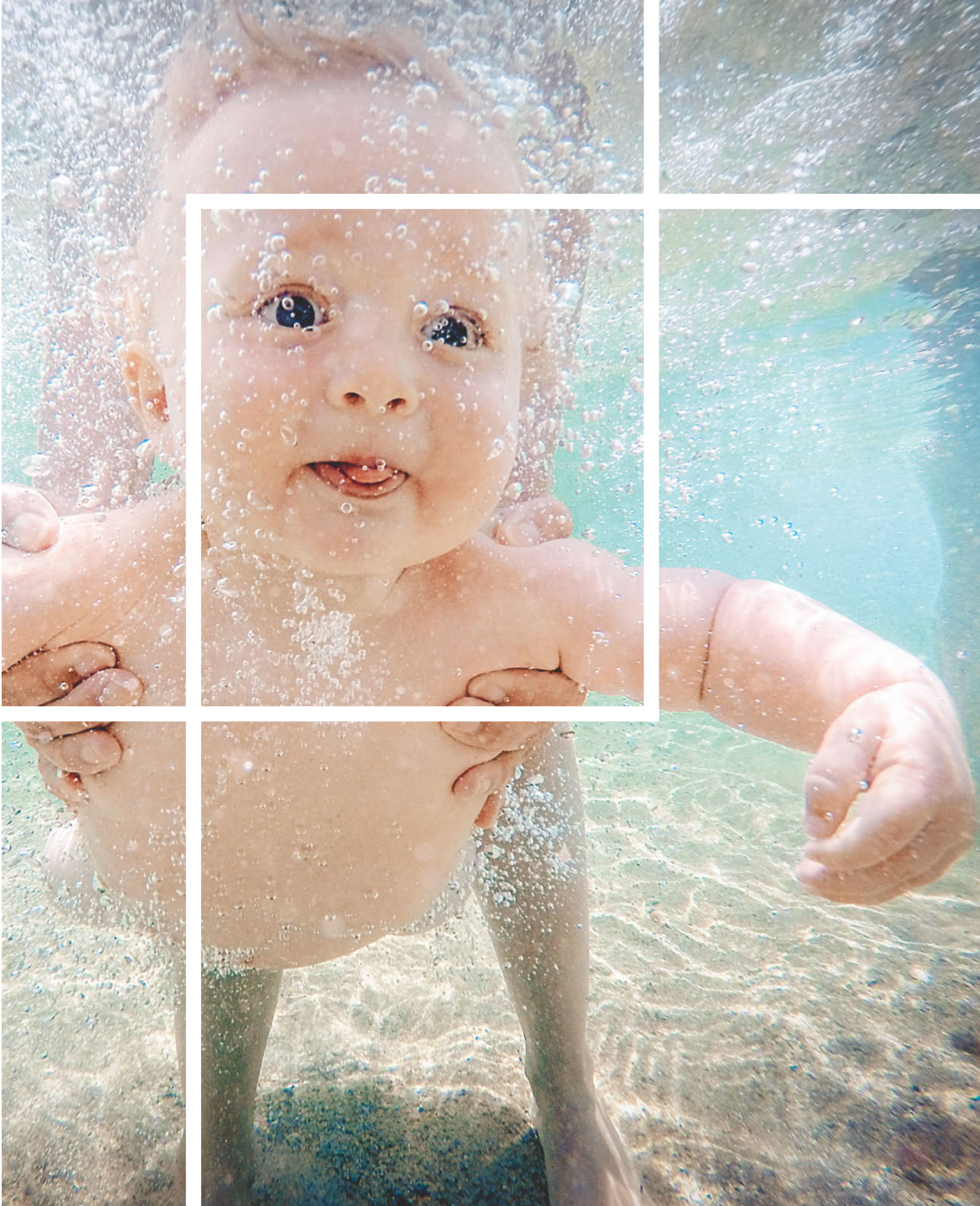
Because one thing always holds true: communication is important, but the job’s not finished with just that. Communication is only authentic when it is followed by actions and adherence to what has already been communicated.

Staunchly upholding this principle, she gained international renown and respect as SAir’s communications head. After the airline was permanently grounded in 2001, she was taken on board by Sulzer Medica. The company was in a severe crisis at the time: in the USA, its sale of faulty hip implants had led to multimillion-dollar class action suits being filed. Indeed a challenge for Tschanz, but also a major step: she was appointed to the Executive Board.

Alas, as illustrious as her career has been, this communications expert has also suffered heart-wrenching moments. Like when she learned she couldn’t bear children of her own. When in 1985 she was diagnosed with cancer, or in her late 50s lost her first husband after 25 years of marriage. Not to mention when Sulzer Medica was sold in 2003, resulting in her being granted a sizeable severance payment only to then be criticised as a rip-off artist, even though the amount was much smaller than the sums received by her male colleagues. “But I always knew that I’d just keep on keeping on,” she says. “The solid fundament I got from home helped me a lot.”

As we say goodbye and she goes to get her jacket, she’s approached by someone at a neighbouring table. Tschanz responds with her typical warmth. Afterwards, she chuckles: “That happens to me to this very day. Total strangers walk up and greet me.” Trust grows slowly; it’s lost quickly. But if carefully nurtured, it clearly lasts a long, long time.

Trust grows slowly; it's lost quickly. But if carefully nurtured, it clearly lasts a long, long time.



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