

Book's Face

Iris Blatterer, born in 1966, has a degree in Economic Sciences from the Vienna University of Economics and Business and has successfully completed two apprenticeships (as a bookseller and wholesaler for publishing companies). She was working for software companies (Business Standard Software and HR Software) and XEROX before she joined Verlag Jugend & Volk, an Austrian educational publishing house, as Managing Director in 2010.



1. Can you please describe your job in 100 words?

As the Managing director of an educational publishing house I am responsible for the whole organisation and its activities, operationally and strategically. Jugend & Volk's work is extremely embedded in Austria's educational system and dependent on political decisions. So I have to be in close contact to our market: I negotiate with the Ministry of Education, visit schools and school authorities, and talk to teachers in order to meet their requirements. With our products we permanently have to adapt rapidly to the changes of the curricula. I also have to plan marketing activities and I am part of the Management team of the publishing group. On top of that I participate in national meetings of the Hauptverband des Österreichischen Buchhandels and in international meetings with other publishers of the Federation of Educational Publishers or within the IPA. One issue dominates my job very much: digitization in education – a task/challenge very time consuming and exciting!

2. What did you want to do when you were five years-old?

Nothing spectacular and extraordinary: I wanted to become a kindergartener/kindergarten teacher; at primary school a primary school teacher and during my first years in secondary school a veterinarian. Knowing me now, nobody can imagine me being a veterinarian! At least, my first two visions fit very well to my current position: our products support teachers with their job/work. During my years at University and my first years in the software industry I actually worked as a teacher: for 7 years I taught accounting including ERP-Software at an educational institute for adults. It was a lot of fun and extremely satisfying seeing how my students improved their skills and understanding.

3. Can you describe a typical working day?

I am very lucky – my working days are full of variation. Something like that could happen:

- Arrival at the office – check Intranet, e-mails and various information sources. Discussions with colleagues about several topics via my "open door".
- Meeting with our programme director to discuss decision by ministerial authorities and find solutions.
- Meeting with the service team to discuss customer's requests and prepare next steps..
- Write the monthly report for the company's owner.
- Business lunch with contact person who might broker possible authors.
- Board meeting of the Publisher's board of the Hauptverband des Österreichischen Buchhandels (Association).
- Work on digital strategy concept.
- Several telephone conferences regarding new marketing activities.

4. What would happen to the book if you were not there?

It is as simple as that: It would lose its driver.

5. What is the most exciting /striking thing that ever happened to you in your job?

In 2014 I became part of the task force for Educational Publishers within the Federation of European Publishers, where we work together to get an optimized framework for the European Publishers within the EU. I knew before that the 28 countries are very diverse in terms of their Educational systems, but now I can understand it even better. Normally I am a fan of simplifying processes and rules, but now I realize the importance of the differences and the cultural richness of Europe.

