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M6’s Wendy Bouchard receives Trophée des Femmes en Or award

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€20,000 for Médecins Sans Frontières

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"JUST THE USUAL CRAZINESS"

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Backstage looks back on 30 years of RTL Television
€20,000 for Médecins Sans Frontières
RTL Group
p. 8

Clipfish launches anime channel for smart TVs
Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland
p. 9

The Physician: exclusive screenings of an epic production
UFA Cinema
p. 10–11

Wendy Bouchard is pure gold
M6
p. 12

From pictured radio to undisputed market leader
RTL Television
p. 4–7

Big Picture
p. 13

SHORT NEWS
p. 14–15

PEOPLE
p. 16–17
On 2 January 1984, RTL Plus was “born”
At the time, only 200,000 households could even receive the first pictures transmitted by RTL. **Gust Graas**, former CEO of the CLT, recalls: “Since we were having success with Radio Luxemburg in Germany, it was obvious to me that we should do TV there too.”

Although new to TV – some were radio hosts simply put in front of a camera – the Luxembourgish programme makers were able to call upon decades of experience of creating popular programme concepts and producing live radio. Metty Krings was a pioneer of the first hour and witnessed the go-live on 2 January 1984 in Luxembourg at first hand: “It was as it always was at RTL: you were thrown in at the deep end and started swimming, but it started out as a ‘creeping’ transition. For instance, I was still presenting the cheerful early-morning wake-up call on radio until my growing TV work made it necessary to make a choice for television. RTL Plus must have seemed like radio with pictures to our first viewers. I do think that our radio popularity gave a lot of tailwind to the emerging TV

At the time, Bertelsmann teamed up with the Luxembourgish CLT to launch RTL Plus as a joint venture. Siegfried Luther, CFO of Bertelsmann from 1990 to 2005, recalls the decision: “We realised that the launch of commercial television meant a portion of the advertising pie would permanently migrate to television. We wanted to make sure we were part of that. It was a strategic decision.” A decision which later proved to be spot on.

The TV adventure continued with a small budget, lots of good humour and plenty of improvisation. If viewers listened carefully, they could even hear rain falling on the studio roof.

As with radio, the news programme **7 vor 7** – so named because it aired at seven minutes before 19:00, shortly before ZDF’s **Heute** news show – gave viewers news that actually interested them, as opposed to what the broadcaster felt should.

This new information initiative was a calculated breaking of a taboo and, even though a small number of viewers were able to watch at first, it soon gained attention. “There was a total sense of new ground being broken,” Krings recalls. “No one cared about the long working hours or days off. We enjoyed the creative freedom and improvised to our hearts’ content. The oft-touted, never-seen ‘spirit of Radio Luxemburg’ was clearly at work.”

At first, RTL Plus only transmitted into Germany as far as 150 kilometres past the border. Gust Graas: “I wanted to broadcast to all of Germany. Then our TV engineer came up with a list of frequencies in Germany that had apparently not yet been allocated, and since I knew the then Minister of Postal Affairs Schwarz-Schilling, I approached him
and asked whether we could have them.” After a few days, certainty was gained that the frequencies were still available – however, there would have to be negotiations with the various federal states.

On 23 September 1987, RTL Plus, launched Germany’s first breakfast TV show with *Guten Morgen Deutschland*. Then the channel attracted more than a million viewers for the first time with the film *Wer stirbt schon gerne unter Palmen* (Who’d like to die under palm trees), despite less than ten per cent of German households being able to receive RTL Plus at the time. It was two more years before half of German households were able to receive the channel.

In 1988, the channel relocated from Luxembourg to Cologne. RTL Plus was able to introduce more and better movies, attractive sports broadcast like Formula One, and finally, from 1990, as Frank Elstner had done earlier on radio, an information offensive. This included *Stern TV*, and provided a refreshing change to the official state news and political programmes of the public broadcasters. The pioneering spirit remained and programmes continued to reflect “just the usual craziness” – coinciding with the name of the first series ever broadcast on RTL Television *Der ganz normale Wahnsinn* – that they’d had from the beginning, and in 1991 RTL Plus finally became a fully-fledged 24-hour channel.

Showing that it considered itself no longer just a simple addition to RTL Radio, the channel abandoned the Plus suffix in 1992. Rebranded as RTL Television, the channel triggered Germany’s comedy boom with *Samstag Nacht*; Hans Meiser caused uproar with his afternoon talk show; Germany’s first daily soap *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* (Good Times, Bad Times) appeared (it’s still running today), and through TV exposure on RTL Television, sportsmen like Michael Schumacher and Henry Maske became popular heroes.

And it wasn’t just the individual programmes, series and programme elements that pushed RTL Television forward – by 1993, the channel had an audience share of 21.2 per cent in the key commercial target group of viewers aged 14 to 49. At the same time, RTL Television created event-scale television that was talked about all over Germany, through original formats as well as some from abroad. *Wer wird Millionär?* (Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?) with Günther Jauch is still largely in line with what was once referred to as ‘educational TV’. Talent shows such *Deutschland sucht den Superstar* (Idols) continue to captivate viewers with the search of the next big singer, while the audience of *Ich bin ein Star – Holt mich hier raus* (I’m A Celebrity – Get Me Out Of Here!) enjoy the combination of creepy thrills and amusement as the presenters poke fun at the contestants while they sit above the camp. RTL Television’s hit shows were repeatedly talk-of-the-nation events. In recent years, fiction such as *Hindenburg* or *Doctor’s Diary* captivated the viewers in millions.

In 1992, RTL Television became market leader for the first time. It is undisputedly the most-watched channel in the highly competitive commercial target group – and has been for 21 consecutive years. Since 1 March 2013, Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland and its advertising sales house IP Deutschland, has focused on the key commercial target group of viewers aged 14 to 59 (previously: viewers aged 14 to 49). This move recognises demographic changes in

Next >
the German population. Additionally, RTL Television has grown into digital: RTL.de is not only the most popular website of the German TV channel, the catch-up service RTL Now gives online and mobile users the opportunity to watch their favourite shows whenever and wherever they want.

Not only has RTL Television grown, the channel has also been joined by a series of other ‘family members’. The N-TV news channel, Vox, RTL II, Super RTL, the digital channels Passion, RTL Crime and RTL Living as well as the latest member RTL Nitro have all found their audience and niches in the German programming landscape – a landscape that has changed immeasurably thanks to that original bold little broadcaster from Luxembourg.

The anniversary on the air
Presenter Thomas Gottschalk will review the Cologne-based channel’s one-of-a-kind success story with many guests in two major anniversary shows, highlighting the best and most memorable TV moments of the past 30 years. 30 Jahre RTL – Die großen Jubiläumsshows mit Thomas Gottschalk will air on RTL Television at 20:15 on 3 January and 4 January 2013. Thirty female assistants, who are all exactly as old as RTL Television (born on 2 January 1984) will support Gottschalk in presenting the anniversary shows and tell the odd anecdote. Additionally, RTL Television will start broadcasting a special trailer on 27 December. It features the on-air faces of the channel and a specially recorded song.

The anniversary online
The channel has set up a big online special on RTL.de, featuring an extensive history of the channel, as well as video clips from RTL Television’s 30 years of history. Users can also test their knowledge about the broadcaster in a quiz: ‘30 questions on 30 years of RTL’.

On RTL Now, users are invited to choose from 30 programmes the ones they’d like to see again. The selection includes Alles Nichts Oder?; the very first episode of Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten; Tutti Frutti and Deutschland sucht den Superstar. The voting started already and runs until 6 January 2014. The users’ ‘Top Ten’ will then be available for free on RTL Now.

See the online special at RTL.de
On 13 December 2013 the RTL Group Corporate Centre in Luxembourg presented a cheque for €20,000 to Médecins Sans Frontières to help the victims of typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

Luxembourg – 16 December 2013

"During this festive year-end period, when we should all be thinking of others, the management of RTL Group has chosen to cancel its traditional year-end party for employees at its Corporate Centre and to donate the sum that had been allocated for this event, to Médecins Sans Frontières," said Romain Mannelli, EVP Human Resources and Chairman of RTL Group’s Corporate Responsibility Council, during a ceremony in which the cheque was presented to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) amongst RTL Group employees.

Paul Delaunois, General Director of MSF Luxembourg thanked RTL Group: “This donation, which is generous in both its amount and the commitment it expresses will allow MSF to act more independently without having to go through an institutional fund and to meet its priority objectives of rapidly addressing the needs of as many people as possible. To give you an idea, RTL Group’s donation will help us treat 333 injured people requiring emergency assistance,” Mr Delaunois added.

On the day after the disaster, MSF was one of the few associations able to reach the most isolated regions of the Philippines. Three weeks after the disaster, the death toll is 5,600, with 11 million people’s lives having been affected.

Several RTL Group companies have already mobilised viewers with special programming to help the victims, including Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland (via the Wir Helfen Kindern foundation), RTL Nederland, FremantleMedia and Atresmedia.
A new and free – meaning ad-financed – channel for internet-enabled TV sets has just gone live: ‘Clipfish Anime’. The new offer joins ‘Clipfish Music’ and ‘Clipfish Comedy’ as the third Smart TV Channel in the Clipfish family.

Germany – 17 December 2013

Its many anime series offer fans of Japanese animated series a varied selection from the world of anime. In addition to high-profile series like *Arcana Famiglia*, *Romeo x Juliet*, *Burst Angel*, *Speed Grapher* and *Rogue Hero*, the channel launches with classics such as *Saber Rider* and the *Star Sheriffs*, with a total of around 150 hours of programming available. The range will gradually be expanded to include other Anime formats. Clipfish Anime is receivable using the HbbTV (Hybrid broadcast broadband TV) standard.

Clipfish Managing Director Thorsten Sandhaus says: “With the new HbbTV service, we bring anime content to the big screen as well, and strengthen Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland’s video range on Smart TVs. The growing spread of Internet-enabled Smart TVs opens up other potential uses for our high quality content – both for users and for our advertisers.”

To access Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland’s Smart TV Offers, the ‘Red Button’ key on the remote is used to bring up the start bar on the respective channel. Requesting ‘Clipfish Anime’ brings up an overview page of the most popular anime series.
The world premiere of UFA Cinema-produced historical movie *The Physician* was held on 16 December 2013 in Berlin at the Zoo Palast venue. The following day, an exclusive preview screening was also organised in Brussels to promote the FremantleMedia’s subsidiary’s biggest movie project to date.

Germany – 19 December 2013

In the lead-up to the movie’s general release on Christmas day 2013, the world premiere provided a preview of the film’s epic production. The script of the historical film is based on the bestseller of the same name written by Noah Gordon. In the presence of the book’s author, 1,000 distinguished guests attended Berlin’s premiere, among them, RTL Group’s Co-CEO Guillaume de Posch, Senior Executives from Bertelsmann, Berlin’s mayor Klaus Wowereit, boxer Henry Maske, opera singer Placido Domingo and actress Maria Furtwängler. The film’s cast, including new-comer Tom Payne, Stellan Skarsgård, Olivier Martinez, Emma Rigby, Elyas M Bärek and Fahri Yardim also travelled to the German capital for the occasion.
Commenting on the book’s film adaptation, Wolf Bauer, CEO of UFA and producer, said: “One could have easily created 20 or 25 hours [of film] from the material Noah Gordon gave us in his international bestseller, but we wanted to see the film in movie theatres.”

Nico Hofmann, UFA Cinema’s CEO and producer, added: “I am all the more pleased and delighted that Noah (…) is here in Berlin today to witness the premiere screening of the very elaborate, high-end film his novel has been turned into.”

Commenting on the production collaboration, the bestseller’s 87-year-old author Noah Gordon said: “In the process, I learned to see things from the producers’ perspective, and had full confidence in them for the filming.”

Published in 1986, Noah Gordon’s book narrates the story of orphan Rob Cole, who makes his way from 11th century England to Isfahan in Persia to study medicine under Ibn Sina, “the Prince of Physicians”. Along the way, Rob encounters countless dangers and challenges, is forced to make sacrifices, and fights his way unconditionally.

The production of the movie was insured by RTL Group’s Luxembourghish service provider Média Assurances, whose CEO Pierrot Gieres also attended the premiere in Berlin.

Around 600 high-ranking political, media and European Union (EU) representatives accepted Bertelsmann, UFA and RTL Group’s invitation to the Brussels premiere of The Physician. Wolf Bauer welcomed guests to the historic ‘Grand Eldorado’ movie theatre in the heart of the Belgian capital. Among the attendees were officers of the European Commission and European Parliament, the German, Luxembourghish, Canadian and Italian Ambassadors, as well as representatives of the 28 EU Member States, India and the United States. The exclusively European production enticed positive reactions from the high-profile attendees.
At the 21st edition of the Trophée des Femmes en Or (“Golden Women Trophies”), the hostess of M6’s news journal Zone Interdite was awarded the trophy in the “Media Women” category.

France – 18 December 2013

The ceremony was held on 14 December 2013 in Avoriaz, France, and, once again, its goal was to recognise the talents of outstanding women who, in each of their fields, give greater weight to women in society.

In the “Media Women” category, which recognises “journalists, hostesses or columnists who have been outstanding in carrying out their work in investigation, news or entertainment,” Élisabeth Quin, Apolline de Malherbe, Anna Cabana and Nahida Nakad were also nominated. Wendy Bouchard succeeds Daphné Bürki, the 2012 prize winner.

Since September 2012, Wendy Bouchard has hosted the news and society magazine Zone Interdite broadcast every two Sundays at 20:50 on M6. She holds a three-year university degree from the Sorbonne and is a graduate of IEP Paris and the Centre de Formation des Journalistes (Journalist Training Centre).
17-year-old Lukas Pratschker and his dog scored 25.4 per cent of the phone-in votes with their ‘Dog Dance’ during the big live finale on 14 December, winning the Supertalent title, the €100,000 prize money, and an appearance in Las Vegas.
RTL Group backs young people in their search for a job

RTL Group

On 12 December 2013, the RTL Group Corporate Centre in Luxembourg hosted the ‘Café pour l’emploi’ (Job Café) – the first inter-company volunteer event in the Grand Duchy. Organised on the initiative of IMS Luxembourg and the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration, the event offered voluntary support to 36 young people who are seeking work.

Luxembourg – 13 December 2013

Promoting the Grand Duchy’s quality of life

BCE

Broadcasting Center Europe (BCE) recently won an award at the 25th Distinction of Masters Corporate Media for the promotional video production, Luxembourg’s new charm offensive, commissioned by the Luxembourg Government.

Luxembourg – 13 December 2013

New operation on 6play by M6 Pub Digital

M6 Publicité Digital

Coinciding with the release of the feature film Zulu, M6 Publicité Digital has created a Video Extension feature, a new function that helps to expand the broadcast of the channel’s brand content videos dedicated to the film.

Spain – 17 December 2013
Equal study and job opportunities for all
Atresmedia
Fundación Atresmedia and the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos have signed a three-year collaboration agreement aimed at promoting training activities for people with disabilities, starting in 2014.
Spain – 17 December 2013

IP Deutschland moves into external marketing of smart TV apps
IP Deutschland
IP Deutschland has laid out its course for the next marketing year. Beginning in 2014, the marketing agent will also market external content on smart TVs.
Germany – 18 December 2013

Second edition of “Fun Radio Social Day”
Fun Radio
On 19 December 2013 from 6:00 to midnight Fun Radio gives its listeners a chance at an original experience: to have a direct impact on how the stations programmes unfold, exclusively via social networks, with the hashtag #MoiBossDeFunRadio.
France – 19 December 2013
Barbara Thielen, Head of Fiction at RTL Television, is leaving the channel on 31 March 2014 at her own request to pursue new challenges.

In her role, she has supervised all of RTL Television’s in-house production of series and movies since August 2005. A Cologne native, Thielen has been responsible for outstanding productions such as the movies *Die Sturmfüt* (2006), *Prager Botschaft* (2007), and *Hindenburg* (2011), as well as the series *Doctor’s Diary* (2007 to 2010), *Countdown – Die Jagd beginnt* (2009 to 2011) and the successful further development of the classic series *Alarm für Cobra 11*.

Frank Hoffmann, Programme Director at RTL Television, says: “Barbara Thielen and her team have been formative in shaping the face of RTL in a programme genre that continues to be important for us. Her unconditional commitment, clarity and expertise have made her a highly valued colleague. I thank her for our past work together and wish her the very best for the future.”

Barbara Thielen, Head of Fiction, says: “Part of me is sad to leave, but I am really looking forward to trying something new. The past eight years have been a tremendously exciting and intense time. My team and I have brought strong film and series productions to the screen. I’d like to say a special thank-you to Anke Schäferkordt and Frank Hoffmann, who gave me full backing in our projects."

Before taking on the supervision of own-produced fiction at RTL, Thielen worked as a producer at Westdeutsche Universum Film between 1999 and 2005, as a producer at Pro GmbH, and then as a producer at Teamworx, now UFA Fiction. Prior to this, she had already worked for RTL Television in various capacities. Until a successor is determined, Jörg Graf, Head of Production Management & Programme Buying at RTL Television, will take on the interim management of the department.
Daniela Busoli has been promoted to CEO of FremantleMedia Brazil, while Adrián Santucho has been appointed the new CEO of FremantleMedia Mexico, US Hispanic and Pan-Regional Productions.

Both will report directly to FremantleMedia’s Chief Executive Officer, Cecile Frot-Coutaz and will be responsible for the overall management of the day-to-day operation of their businesses, driving the strategic vision for operations in their respective markets. They will be in charge of developing and producing programming for broadcasters in their territories and will work closely with FremantleMedia International’s licensing and sales operations.

Adrián Santucho adds: “It is a very exciting time to be working in this region, with enormous potential for growth. There are a number of opportunities for us to develop the FremantleMedia business further, not least in creating iconic shows that can connect and engage with audiences across the Spanish-speaking markets.”

Busoli and Santucho both come from Endemol in Latin America and have extensive experience in working across well-established formats in the entertainment industry.

Cecile Frot-Coutaz, CEO FremantleMedia, comments on the appointments: “I am delighted to have Daniela and Adrián leading our operations across Latin America and the Hispanic US. Both are well-respected executives, and their drive and experience will really help FremantleMedia exploit the many opportunities available to us as we look to grow our business in these incredibly vibrant markets.”

Daniela Busoli elaborates: “FremantleMedia has incredible brands in its catalogue and I’m really looking forward to continue exploiting these international blockbusters and also developing local content for multi-platforms – no matter how big or small – to see how we can bring the breadth and range of our shows to Brazilian audiences.”
Next Edition:

Thursday 16 January 2014

The Backstage Weekly Newsletter will be on Christmas holidays.

The first Daily Newsletter will be available on 6 January 2014 at http://backstage.rtlgroup.com

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**‘AT RTL GROUP, WE CARE’**

RTL Group is committed to effectively combine business success with socially responsible actions towards local communities and to protect the environment. Visit the Corporate Responsibility news section on Backstage (CR news) and find out how RTL Group aims to improve the societies in which we operate.

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For more information, don’t hesitate to contact the editorial team: Backstage@rtlgroup.com