

# Globi – a national favourite

Interview with Gisela Klinkenberg, Head of Globi Verlag / Children's Book Brands, on the 90th anniversary of the Globi brand

*Gisela Klinkenberg, how does Globi Verlag contribute to the success of the Orell Füssli Group?*

Our team generates annual revenue of about CHF 2 million with Globi products, royalty income, events and more. Globi Verlag has sold a total of more than 9 million books and 3.3 million audio books since it was formed. The most successful book, "How Globi became a farmer", has sold about 285,000 copies. But it seems to me that the most important thing is the intangible value

and the appeal of Globi. He is a sympathetic character and he is recognised by 98% of the population of German-speaking Switzerland.

*So Globi is well connected?*

Very well connected. We work with institutions such as the federal parliament, the police, the fire brigade, ETH and the post office, with companies and experts from all areas, in sales, in licensing, in the development of book content, in the organisation of events and many other activities. The list of partners is long.

*You achieved a real coup with "Globi and Roger". How did the partnership with Roger Federer come about?*

The Roger Federer Foundation contacted me about four years ago. It wanted to get involved in the topic of family poverty. I recommended the family of Papa Moll because in my view it was a better fit with the topic than Globi. For various reasons, the project did not come about. I was told that Roger really wanted to work on a Globi book. Of course, I was happy to do so, and we developed the story with Roger in conversations and written exchanges.

*What makes Globi books so special?*

Their place in Swiss society. In addition to children, they are also read by collectors and fans. Globi books are bought mainly by parents, grandparents, relatives, friends and acquaintances. Globi books can be found in doctors' offices, at hairdressers, in libraries and schools, and in many other places, including home bookshelves, of course.

*Globi's presence is felt in society like almost no other character.*

Yes, that's true. Globi is often quoted. He receives birthday wishes from adults and children and a lot of drawings. The national bird was an important role model in the

Gisela Klinkenberg



childhood of leading figures such as Federal Councillor Kaspar Villiger and WEF founder Klaus Schwab. Globi appears in unexpected places in everyday life: on the cover of business magazines and on stamps, and boats are named after him as well. Globi has penetrated our culture and our language. Think about the Swiss-German expression "Bisch en Globi" ("You're a Globi").

*"With more than 9 million books sold, Globi is celebrating 90 years of success in 2022."*

*You have overseen the brand as Head of Globi Verlag since 2000 and you have worked at the publishing house since September 1995. What is the secret to the success of Globi?*

The character is passed down from generation to generation. When our young readers find other interests at about the age of twelve, Globi remains a positive force in their hearts, one that is reawakened when they have children of their own.

I think it's a combination of durability and adaptability thanks to continuous development that makes this character so strong. Globi was created as a promotional character for the Globus department store chain in 1932. In Switzerland, this type of customer loyalty was unprecedented at the time. The first book, "How Globi became a farmer", appeared in 1935. A Globi magazine appeared 30 years later. There were Globi clubs for kids before there were books. The easygoing bird offered a glimmer of hope for many in economically and politically troubled times. And so this sympathetic character, whose adventures corresponded to the spirit of the time, continued to be passed on.

*How did you come to join Orell Füssli?*

In 2006, Migros acquired a majority stake in the Globus Group. It was expected that such a large company would have no room for a small business unit such as Globi Verlag. That was the moment we decided that the publishing house should be placed in other hands. Together with the then-CEO Thomas Kern, I led the sales negotiations. Ultimately, Orell Füssli's bid won out over several competitors. With SNB as a shareholder and the 500-year history of the publishing house, Orell Füssli Verlag was a good, solid and very safe choice, and we were confident that the house would be able to handle the tradition well.

*What are the future plans for Globi? Will we see him on our mobile phones sometime soon?*

That's entirely possible. Discussions with providers are always ongoing. To date, however, the costs have been too high. There are also ideas concerning digital possibilities that we are discussing with ETH, among others. Perhaps a project will be ready for implementation soon.

## Activities during the 2022 anniversary year

In addition to a number of campaigns at points of sale, events with licensing and other partners, as well as bookshops, will take place. From April 2022, a Globi "experience tram" will run on various routes through Zurich and the surrounding area for three months. The event will be accompanied by a multimedia campaign and all our partners will be involved in one way or another. An exhibition about Globi's history will be open at the Toy Worlds Museum in Basel for children and adults from May to October. Information about all activities can be found at [www.globi.ch](http://www.globi.ch).