

HOW I MAKE IT WORK

MADELEEN KLAASEN

Madeleen Klaasen, 47, has been chief marketing officer at Bugaboo for 10 years, helping the company to grow its annual revenues from £1.8m in 2001 to £62m in 2010. She lives in Amsterdam with her husband, Martino Latupeirissa, a songwriter and producer, and their two dogs and two cats

◉ IT'S UNUSUAL TO STAY IN ONE JOB FOR SO LONG. WHY HAVE YOU?

I arrived as CMO as number eight of eight. Now there are 212 employees in our offices. It's nice to start from the beginning, to create a brand. You become part of the company culture. There's enough work for me to stay another 10 years. My last job was at Nike Europe for eight years – I stay if I continue to see opportunities.

◉ WHAT IS IT LIKE FOR A NON-MOTHER TO WORK WITH BABY BUGGIES?

It's a nice industry, because kids are a great moment in people's lives. I always said I didn't want kids before I was 36 – not for my career, but for independence. Then I met my husband when I was 40 and we thought children would be nice. But after trying and initial disappointment, I realised I didn't want to live with expectation. If you don't have children, then you never know whether life would have been happier.

◉ WHAT IS YOUR MODUS OPERANDI?

I manage 15 people at HQ in Amsterdam. We also have marketing teams in Germany, France, Spain, America, Britain, Sweden, Australia and Asia. I'm tough on deadlines, but I give a lot of positivity and inspiration. I do that by asking questions, facilitating people to reach a higher level. I visit people at their desks to talk and maintain an energy. And I prefer to plan ahead – preparation means I can enjoy the moment.

◉ HOW DO YOU BOOST PRODUCTIVITY?

I never have meetings before 10am. And, rather than talking for the sake of talking, I ensure the objectives are achieved. We even have an online template that everyone fills in before, so we can track where we are.

◉ ARE YOU ALWAYS ON?

During the working day, I need moments of peace – on my bike, or five minutes before a meeting, when I'll do some deep

breathing. These moments help me to stay positive, in control and patient. I have a rush mode, too, where I'm very energetic. My laptop comes everywhere – visiting friends, on holiday. I am more relaxed when I can scan my emails – some issues need solving today, not tomorrow.

◉ IS CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT VITAL?

Celebrities being seen pushing a Bugaboo in a magazine really helps, so I have my eyes on all the cool celebs – they're part of our aesthetic, because the Bugaboo can never stand by itself. I like stars who are no-nonsense, but with a personality. But if your product doesn't perform, you're gone after the first-year hype.

◉ WHAT ABOUT NEGATIVE PRESS?

It doesn't make me nervous; it makes Bugaboo more human. We have a Facebook page, and some people say they hate us. I have to laugh about it. We have to allow it – it's about transparency. If we make sure the product concept is really good, then it doesn't matter. And if we keep listening and maybe changing, it can only help.

◉ WHAT LIFE LESSONS DID YOUR MOTHER TEACH YOU?

That I should always listen and look around, but ultimately that I should stay true to my path. I have strong instincts, personally and professionally. If something doesn't feel right, I won't do it. When building a brand, I find myself saying "no" more than "yes".

◉ WHERE DO YOU FIND INSPIRATION?

I love running. I get lots of ideas and always have to text them to myself. And if I'm in a bad mood, 30 minutes of running banishes all negativity. I've got to be moving, though – meditation and yoga just get me thinking about grocery shopping.

◉ HOW DO YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND SUPPORT EACH OTHER?

We're from opposite backgrounds – Martino is a percussionist from Indonesia. He's so positive, which keeps me calm. During the week he goes into his studio at 1am, so we have the evenings together and coffee in the morning. In the evening he might be playing a conga while I'm on my laptop. I find hearing that other world so refreshing. It's inspiring to be surrounded by creativity. ◉

MY STUFF

Rick Owens slouchy leather boots, £1,620. 'A punk statement for a plain outfit.' Chanel Black Pearl nail polish, £17.50. 'I love dark colours for that chic/tough combination.' Balmain leather biker jacket, £3,235. 'An outfit doesn't need much more than this.' Erich Zimmermann Princess ring, £4,000. 'My wedding ring, the only jewellery I wear.' Trek 7.9 FX road bike, £2,000. 'Cycling is one of my day's relaxing moments'

