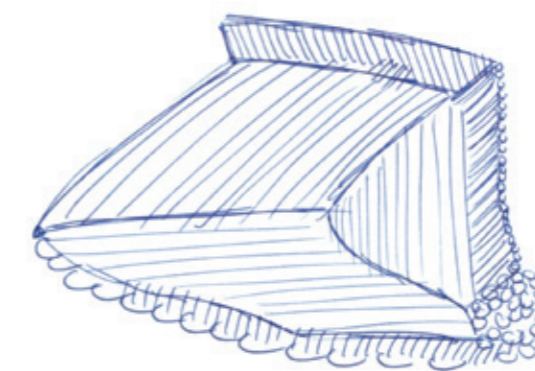


IF A MARRIAGE WORKED AS WELL AS OUR TANDEM, IT WOULD BE A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN!

Under the joint name of CaN (derived from the first letters of their first names), Nadine Bartenschlager and Catherine Niebuhr share the position of Marketing Director at Nivea. In an interview with Karin Maria Schertler, Serviceplan's Chief People & Culture Officer, they reveal why it is a win-win situation for everyone involved and how a tandem can evolve into a successful team.

*James Mangold,
why are you creative?*



James Mangold

WHY ARE YOU CREATIVE, JAMES MANGOLD?

US director James Mangold ('Walk the Line') took the baton from Steven Spielberg, creatively continuing the 'Indiana Jones' franchise.

Los Angeles, 2005

**NADINE BARTENSCHLAGER
CATHERINE NIEBUHR ALIAS CaN**
Marketing Director, Nivea Beiersdorf

KARIN MARIA SCHERTLER
Chief People & Culture Officer, Serviceplan Group

As a management tag team, they even share an e-mail account: Nadine Bartenschlager and Catherine Niebuhr, Nivea.

KARIN MARIA SCHERTLER: *You've been sharing the position of Marketing Director Germany at iconic Beiersdorf brand Nivea for almost a year now. How's it going?*

NADINE BARTENSCHLAGER: Even though the honeymoon period is over, it still feels good. Our tandem collaboration is working out really well – not just for the two of us, but also for the company and the teams.

CATHERINE NIEBUHR: We always say that it's a win-win situation. A win for us and a win for the company – that's also how we originally pitched it. But the unexpected cherry on the cake was that our team really loves it too.

What made you decide to pitch the idea of a management tandem?

(CN): We actually came up with the idea around five years ago, but it didn't work out for all kinds of reasons. Around a year and a half ago, Beiersdorf hosted the Women in Leadership conference, an internal, global networking event. It was there that the Executive Board stressed that the company was taking gender balance very seriously and was very ambitious about meeting its targets, including top management. From the event, we sent each WhatsApps saying it was now or never!

Did the company react positively from the outset, or would you say that they were hesitant?

(NB): The tandem model has already been in place at Beiersdorf for more than ten years; we currently have 40 tandems in the company. But on a top management level, we were the first. Catherine and I have worked in tandems before and always say that they paved the way for the partnership we have now. This is because we showed that this model can work, regardless of gender, age and position. So in our case, the company was already open to the idea of trying it out at top management level as well.

What are the actual benefits of it for everyone involved?

(NB): For Catherine and me, the main benefit is definitely being able to strike a healthy balance between work and family life as we both have children under the age of 10. Right from the start, the team decided that they would report to both of us, saying: "We want to harness your complementary strengths." That's why our direct reports aren't assigned to either me or Catherine – our team reports to us both. They can approach us both about anything – and they do. In feedback sessions, they like getting feedback from Catherine in her areas of expertise and feedback from me in mine.

(CN): The fact that we complement each other in this way is also beneficial for the company as job sharing is clearly a good way to achieve your gender balance targets more easily. This is because this model makes it easier to get women in top management positions since it allows them to manage work and family life. But a particularly great advantage for the company is the way we complement one another in terms of our strengths and skills. We have created a kind of virtual ego for us both, which we named CaN. CaN pools both of our strengths and because we really augment each other, it would be difficult to find one person who boasts all of those skills in real life. It's highly unlikely that one individual would have such a wide range of strengths covering the most varied of areas. So job sharing makes it possible to bring together people who have expertise, strengths and knowledge in the most diverse fields and to combine them all in one position. This enables you to react very differently to the challenges that come with increasingly complex jobs, both now and in the future.

So you could say that job sharing opens up whole new opportunities for employees...

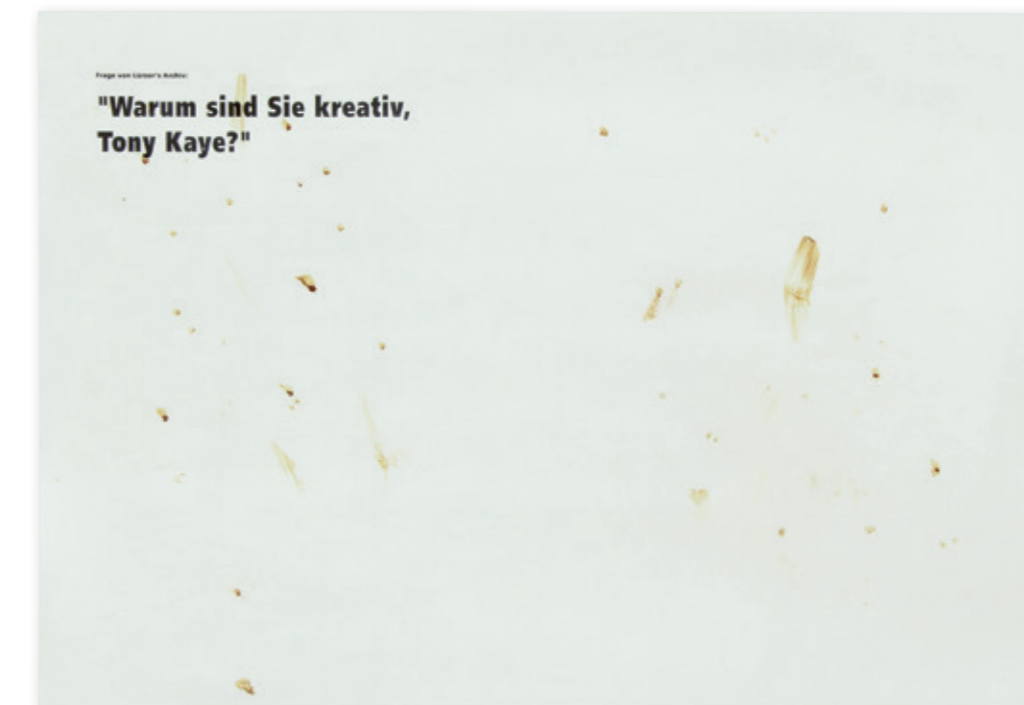
(NB): Yes. Take partial retirement for instance: the tandem model gives you the chance to pair younger employees with older ones. They can complement each other, and tasks can be handed over more effectively. And you also have a gentle onboarding, but also a gentle outphasing, which people really appreciate. Another example is personal development. With job sharing, companies can offer younger employees the chance to develop themselves further and, for example, to pursue further studies – as is the case with one of our current tandems. This allows the company to retain its younger employees and further build on their skills. So both sides benefit.

(CN): And at the end of the day, it's great PR for the company, both internally and externally. Although we already have 40 tandems in the company, the fact that we now also have a tandem at top management level makes a big difference. It sends out a very clear signal to the people at Beiersdorf that New Work models and flexible working are actually happening all the way up to high-end management. And this also has the same effect for the outside world. Our model is a poster child for the company and its attitude to modernity, flexibility and New Work.

WHY ARE YOU CREATIVE, TONY KAYE?

Tony Kaye was the star among the British advertising film directors. In Hollywood he made a creative splash with 'American History X'. These days he makes art, including with art dealer Vito Schnabel. Creativity is in his blood.

London, 1995



THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WHEN ENTERING INTO THIS 'WORKING MARRIAGE' IS THAT YOU NEED TO BOTH AGREE ON YOUR COLLECTIVE EXPECTATIONS, GOALS, AMBITIONS AND MOTIVATIONS.

THE TANDEM MODEL

Are there also tandems with male employees?

(NB): We don't have a male-only tandem yet. We're still waiting to see who'll take the first step. But there are a few mixed gender tandems.

What are the biggest challenges facing managers who opt for a tandem model?

(CN): The most important thing when entering into this 'working marriage' is that you need to both agree on your collective expectations, goals, ambitions and motivations. If you're not clear on those, then the model won't work. That's so important because you need to be willing and able to surrender a bit of your ego. A new ego emerges, but it's just a 'partial ego'. Joint leadership demands a completely different definition of 'Who are we?' and, more than anything, it requires you to have a much smaller ego. But this is something that teams actually find very inspiring. These mega egos, which mainly focus on themselves and their own benefits,

are not exactly inspiring, especially for the younger generations. For us it all comes down to joint goals and a joint mission. Nadine and I act in the interest of our teams and aren't just trying to make ourselves look good.

What can cause a tandem to fail?

(CN): In one case at our company, trust was an issue. That's because the two people in question didn't want to share an e-mail inbox. But as most tandems don't allocate different areas to each person, sharing a joint e-mail account is the way to go. Otherwise you will soon lose sight of the tasks you're working on. Nadine and I also have a joint inbox as CaN. But when a tandem splits up, it's not the end of the world – at least not in our company. We always say that a tandem is not a dead-end street. There are a lot of reasons why it might only be the right working model for you temporarily. And then you just move onto something else.

How do you share the working hours and tasks between you?

(NB): One of us works Monday to Wednesday, the other Wednesday to Friday. Our 'Magic Wednesday', as we call it, is the day when we are both together under one roof. This is the day when we hold team meetings with our direct reports, meet our boss together and also have 'tandem time' for a half an hour, or sometimes even a full hour, where which we talk about new and strategic topics. We don't allocate specific areas to each other – we both work on everything together. That means that one of us works on Monday and Tuesday, and the other works on Thursday and Friday. And in the evening, the person who is on duty leaves the other one a voice message summing up the day's events. We have a joint inbox and whoever is working that day is responsible for replying to the mails that come in.



Expertise to the power of two: "There's no problem that we couldn't solve together," say Nadine Bartenschlager and Catherine Niebuhr.

WE ARE
ONE PERSON.
REGARDLESS
OF WHEN OUR
COLLEAGUES
ARE WORKING,
THEY ARE
ALWAYS JUST
SPEAKING TO
THE MARKETING
DIRECTOR FOR
GERMANY.

*Because I am what I am
Y.O.*

**WHY ARE YOU CREATIVE,
YOKO ONO?**

"Because I am what I am"

Together with her husband John Lennon, Japanese performance artist and musician Yoko Ono contributed an explosion of creativity. Countless solo shows followed between the MoMA and the Biennale in Venice.

New York, 1996

*Zaha,
Why are you creative?
Because it could have an impact
no matter how minimal.*

**WHY ARE YOU CREATIVE,
ZAHA HADID?**

"Because it could have an impact no matter how minimal."

Iraqi-born Zaha Hadid was the world's top female architect. Everything she did was avant-garde creativity, from the Fire Station on the Vitra Campus to the Wolfsburg Art Museum.

London, 2000

And how do you communicate with the team as CaN without information getting lost along the way?

(NB): We have a joint e-mail account. And on Teams we also have a joint chat system with all our employees and our superiors, which we've called CaN + XY, so that no information gets lost, and the other person is always in the loop. The other members of the team shouldn't be able to tell that they are working with a tandem. That's also why we rotate our days every six months, so everyone in the office gets to see us. We are one person. Regardless of when our colleagues are working, they are always just speaking to the Marketing Director for Germany.

On the days when you're only catching up with what's going on in your evening voice messages, do you ever read the latest e-mails in the CaN inbox?

(CN): No!

(NB): No!

And how does that feel?

(NB): Great! Because we simply work really well as a tandem.

(CN): We usually write our mails in the 'we' form and sometimes we can't even remember which one of us wrote what. And our teams often can't remember which one of us they spoke to. But that doesn't feel strange at all, it's a really good feeling!

Does sharing a role mean that you also have your salary reviews together?

(CN): We had our initial salary negotiations separately, but for this year's appraisal we sat down together.

(NB): We believe in absolute transparency in that regard. We are sharing a job, we have equal responsibility – for successes and failures – and we want our performance to be assessed the same.

(CN): Of course, we are very similar in that we both have 20 years of experience. There are other models – like with an age gap, for example – where one of the pair has a lot of experience and the other is really young. If that's the case, you cannot expect to both earn the same salary. And you will need input from the company's HR team to define certain processes and framework conditions.

You trust each other blindly. How do you achieve this level of trust? What are the most important dos and don'ts?

(NB): The most important thing is providing your tandem partner with ongoing feedback. Throughout my entire professional career, there isn't a single person who has given me as much feedback as Catherine did last year. That's the most important thing for us. We always say that if a marriage worked as well as our tandem, it would be a match made

in heaven! Openness and honesty, I think. They are the biggest secrets to success. And no one has to know that we stay in constant contact to help each other develop in the best possible way.

(CN): Exactly. Talking to each other about your strengths and weaknesses and clearly saying upfront what you want and what you don't want is incredibly important. Sometimes when we're sitting together in meetings, I might get a WhatsApp saying: "Smile!" if I happen to have a stern look on my face.

Have you ever been really angry with each other?

(NB): Not in front of others.

(CN): Never for very long, no. There have been moments when I've said or done something that came across badly and caused Nadine to react angrily. And then she sent me a message that evening, saying: "I really didn't like it when you did that."

(NB): Or vice versa.

Thank you very much for taking the time to talk to us.