Magazine ad
Warum konnten wir eine so schöne Schreibmaschine bauen? – Darum. – IBM

Karl Gerstner
1963

Werbeinserat, Warum konnten wir eine so schöne Schreibmaschine bauen? – Darum. – IBM, 1963
Konzept, Gestaltung und Text: Gerstner, Gredinger + Kutter, Werbeagentur AG, Basel, CH / Karl Gerstner, Paul Gredinger, Markus Kutter
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The Basel advertising agency Gerstner, Gredinger + Kutter, known as GGK, was a trailblazer above all in the 1960s, when its advertising style was still novel and fresh and the three partners Karl Gerstner (1930–2017), Markus Kutter (1925–2005), and Paul Gredinger (1927–2013) were managing the company. Together with their photographer Alexander von Steiger, they designed numerous campaigns for IBM Switzerland, including one for the IBM typeball typewriter, particularly memorable due to its concise play on words and images.

For the Basel advertising agency Gerstner, Gredinger + Kutter, known as GGK, it wasn't easy to land big accounts in Switzerland in the early 1960s, since many clients were already being catered to elsewhere. As a result, the firm often worked for German companies, including Holzäpfel, Krupp, and Volkswagen. This, in turn, brought them important international clients such as IBM Switzerland. GGK received its first advertising commission from that firm in 1962, which would be followed by others over the decades. One of them was for the new typeball typewriter IBM Electric 72, which came onto the market in 1963. The technical innovation here was a moveable typeball that replaced both the individual typebars and the moving carriage, accelerating typing speed within a compact machine format. GGK focused in its advertising campaign on depicting the product and its advantages. This was done in the form of a witty dialogue in word and image, with detailed commentary relegated to three text columns at the bottom margin of the advertisement. In this ad, we see the IBM Electric 72 in three-quarter profile floating in the upper half and, beneath it, "Why are we able to build such a beautiful typewriter?" As a reply, the small typeball in profile responds, "This is why." The details are set out in the text at the bottom of the page. As the typewriter soon became a cult object, GGK also reached out to secretaries in later campaigns, presenting them the gift of the typeball as a piece of jewelry. (Barbara Junod)

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