



Reinhard Mohn

Founder

In his career spanning over 40 years, Reinhard Mohn, a fifth-generation member of the founding Bertelsmann family, displayed outstanding commitment to developing a company that now ranks at the very pinnacle of global media companies. His courageous attitude to corporate risk, coupled with his farsightedness and good grasp of business, helped him create a life's work with a workforce of more than 98,000 today.

Social and corporate considerations were put on an equal footing when the Bertelsmann Stiftung was founded in 1977. The foundation not only continues the long-standing tradition of socio-political, cultural and social commitment of the Bertelsmann and Mohn founding families, but also aims to safeguard the company's future.

Therefore, Reinhard Mohn transferred 68.8 percent of his capital share in Bertelsmann AG to the Bertelsmann Stiftung on September 16, 1993. However, this transfer of capital shares did not entitle the foundation to exercise voting rights. The voting rights relating to around 90 percent of the share capital, to which solely Reinhard Mohn was entitled, were transferred to the newly founded Bertelsmann Verwaltungsgesellschaft mbH on July 1, 1999. Today, the Bertelsmann Stiftung holds a share of 76.9 percent.

Mohn's decision to give majority ownership of the company to the non-profit foundation was largely the result of his firm belief that the social responsibility accompanying ownership, as set out by the German constitution, takes precedence over amassing great wealth.

Curriculum Vitae

- June 29, 1921: Born to Heinrich and Agnes Mohn in Gütersloh, Germany, the fifth of six children
- 1939: After completing his secondary education, he enters the Reichsarbeitsdienst (National Labor Service) and later performs his required military service.
- 1943: Captured by U.S. forces in Tunisia; held prisoner of war
- 1946: Begins an apprenticeship as bookseller
- 1947: Takes over management of the family printing and publishing business (C. Bertelsmann Verlag)
- 1971: Appointed chairman of the Bertelsmann AG Executive Board
- 1977: Establishes the nonprofit Bertelsmann Stiftung in Gütersloh; serves as the foundation's director
- 1981: Becomes chairman of the Bertelsmann AG Supervisory Board on his 60th birthday
- 1991: Steps down as chairman of the Bertelsmann AG Supervisory Board on his 70th birthday; continues to serve as sole director of the Bertelsmann Stiftung
- 1993: Transfers the majority of the capital shares in Bertelsmann AG to the Bertelsmann Stiftung; becomes chairman of the foundation's Executive Board
- 1998: Relinquishes the chairmanship of the Bertelsmann Stiftung to Dr. Mark Wössner; remains a member of the foundation's Executive Board
- 1999: Relinquishes sole voting rights from 90 percent of the capital shares in Bertelsmann AG by transferring them to the newly founded Bertelsmann Verwaltungsgesellschaft mbH
- 2000: Restructures the governance bodies of the Bertelsmann Stiftung following the departure of Dr. Wössner; becomes chairman of the foundation's five-member Steering Committee, which is part of and heads up the foundation's Board of Trustees

- 2001: Relinquishes the position of chairman to Dr. Gunter Thielen; remains a member of the Steering Committee
- 2002: Asks Dr. Heribert Meffert to serve as chairman of the Steering Committee following Dr. Thielen's departure to become chairman of the Bertelsmann AG Executive Board
- 2005: Reorganizes the foundation's governance structures; the duties of the Board of Trustees and Steering Committee (now the Executive Board) are separated to reflect standard corporate practices; the Board of Trustees now serves as the foundation's supervisory and advisory body

Honors

- 1994: Awarded the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany
- 1994: Made honorary citizen of the city of Gütersloh
- 1996: Awarded the European Founder's Prize
- 1997: Awarded Vienna's Schumpeter Prize
- 1998: Receives the Gold Medal of the Association of German Foundations
- 1998: Recognized as "Entrepreneur of the Century"
- 1998: Awarded Spain's Prince of Asturias Prize
- 1998: Awarded the Great Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany
- 1999: Awarded the State Prize of North Rhine-Westphalia
- 1999: Awarded the Hanns Martin Schleyer Prize
- 1999: Awarded the Spanish Grand Cross
- 2000: Receives the Bernhard Harms Medal of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy
- 2000: Receives the Jakob Fugger Medal of the Association of Bavarian Newspaper Publishers
- 2001: Awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Münster
- 2001: Awarded the 2002 Future Prize of the CDU Social Affairs Committee
- 2003: Awarded the Teddy Kollek Prize
- 2005: Made honorary citizen of the city of Alcudia
- 2007: Deutscher Gründerpreis (German Founders Award) for lifetime achievement

Memberships

- 1996: Made honorary member of the Club of Rome