

Prof. Dr. Andreas Hoffjan (*1967), has received the
He holds the Chair of Corporate Accounting and Controlling at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences. He lives in Bochum with his wife and three sons (*2001, *2003, *2008).



Source:
private

The organizer

Not only a face, but also an office can say a lot about a person. The office of Prof. Dr. Andreas Hoffjan is evidence of a lot of work. It is a meeting room and a workplace at the same time. There are a few thick theses on the conference table, and a large box of sweets next to them.

- presumably nerve food for examinees. Obviously, the professor of management accounting and controlling is well prepared for everything. So too on our interview, which we start quickly due to his tight schedule...

In the evening still time for the family

His current workload is "enormous," says Andreas Hoffjan soberly, spending at least 60 hours a week between application deadlines, meeting dates and research work. But he admits that "the advantage of the academic world is that you can distribute work-peaks." That gives him a certain amount of flexibility. Last year, for example, he was able to create some free space for a private move, he says. "That means there's already the possibility of balancing out private peaks that you have by also shifting what can be shifted." However, carefully weighing his options, he adds, "Unfortunately, that doesn't work with our industrial business, because we have a lot of industrial funds. It also often doesn't work with competitive third-party funding, where certain application deadlines have to be met. So, the flexibility is certainly there, but it has decreased with the size of the chair."

But although his everyday life is very much focused on work at the moment, he still manages to find time for his family every day. Since his wife also works, he takes care of the family during the day - and has been doing so for around ten years. a nanny to look after the three sons, but the evenings are parenting time. At least to a large extent. "If there are no more evening appointments, I'm home at 6:30 or 6:45 for dinner together. Then you have one or two hours with the family until the children are in bed," she says.

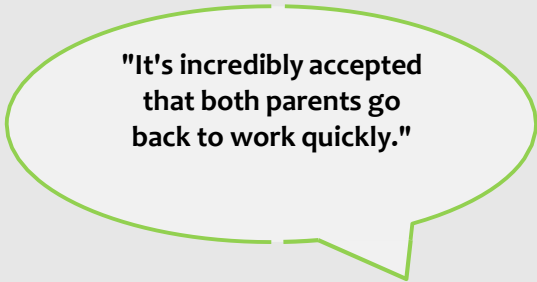
At 8:15, 8:30." He pauses briefly and then laughs, "And then I tend to read another thesis." Complete free time doesn't arrive until about half past nine, "and then you still have the opportunity to drink a glass of wine in comfort."

In comparison with Chicago

This everyday life may sound like a lot of stress, but Andreas Hoffjan seems very content. And he can be, because he and his family have experienced very different times. Shortly after the birth of their eldest son Matthias in 2001, the small family moved to Chicago. At the memory of it, the otherwise tough professor groans in a managed manner and lets himself fall back. "That was an insanely stressful time. I didn't expect it to be like this." He admits, shaking his head. "You arrive in the U.S. with five suitcases and have to organize a completely new household," he continues. "The first 14 days were just shopping and they can't do that at a pace they're used to either because the little guy needs his breaks. So that was really brutal."

Fortunately, the new parents quickly found contacts, especially through frequent visits to the Playground. This quickly led to the hiring of a childminder and both parents being able to return to their jobs. "I can say for my wife,

that she has felt extremely comfortable during this time in terms of balancing her career and family life,"" Andreas Hoffjan emphasizes.



"It's incredibly accepted that both parents go back to work quickly."

"Simply through these playground meetings, you could get in touch with so many people. That also solidified the decision for the childminder, that it was less German organized, but more informal, because it was self-evident. We found that extremely pleasant." They had not found this tolerance and acceptance everywhere in Germany before, the father of three reveals. "Along the lines of 'Hm - you're going to Chicago, you're both working, and you have a 4 ½-month-old son...'" The father gives a stilted groan, rolling his eyes. "Well - there's been one or two who haven't been quite so friendly." He thinks about it for a moment and says, "Maybe you can imagine that, if you grew up in a very traditional way."

But he himself can only uncomprehending about it shake your head.

Condensed time

When the small family returned to Germany from Chica- go two years later, the move again turned out to be more complicated than expected. The economist reports: "When we came back, it was so that my wife - with our eldest and heavily pregnant - with her parents and I with my mother, because we didn't have our own place to live yet. As a result, we bought a semi-detached house in Bochum out of necessity relatively soon, namely 14 days after we landed." Andreas Hoffjan laughs briefly.

As he continues, he raises his arms apologetically. "Well, American thinking. So according to the motto 'Good, will be ver- again in two years. But we have a problem to solve, after all. Our oldest was also quite distraught at the beginning," he recalls thoughtfully. "He spoke more English and then came into a completely new environment, his daycare mother was no longer there, his reference group was gone, father was gone, so it was not an easy time, because of which he only wanted fries in terms of food. That's when I really knew how to use the freedom I had in my job." He used his post-doctoral fellowship and the free space available to him to move into half of the house. "sprucing it up," as he says. "So that just under 2 ½ months after we returned from the U.S., we were able to move in there and were together again as a family."

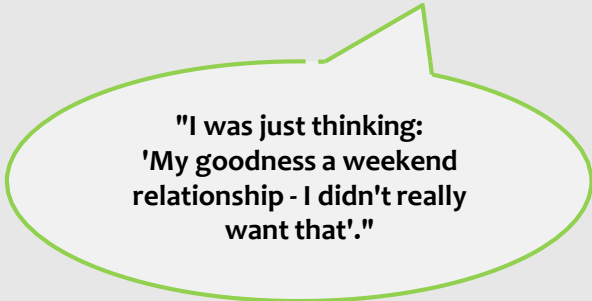
But the house didn't make the worries disappear. Andreas Hoffjan remembers gloomily that the situation became even more tense afterwards, "because then my position in Münster gradually expired. And if the Habil doesn't make the progress you want, then you get nervous, that's for sure. That was a tense time. You're under pressure to publish, you've casually bought a semi-detached house, you've got two kids, and you've got to figure out what to do next. Thank goodness everything worked out.

But that was definitely harder for me. And I think the family also suffered from the final phase of Habil, because ultimately that's where all the energy and power goes."

But the "worst time", says Prof. Dr. Hoffjan resolutely, came afterwards, with the first professorship in France. "That means flying out on Sunday evening and then back on Friday evening," because the family did not want to move again. "My wife also had the possibility to work in France. But then we said it was far too expensive, we couldn't afford it, 2000 euros net cold rent. You can hardly imagine that, professor and doctor, but it was very expensive. Then German Kindergarten, German school, there would have been immense contributions again."

The 46-year-old smiles wryly. "The deal was that I would commute for now and my wife would be responsible for the bulk of it with the kids. That's fair to say. I took the job

in March 2005, habilitated in July, but then already had a first call to Germany, so it was clear relatively quickly that France would only be a year."



**"I was just thinking:
'My goodness a weekend
relationship - I didn't really
want that!'"**

Andreas Hoffjan takes a breath. "The time was really very exhausting, because family life is condensed into 48 hours. That's really brutal, because by 5 p.m. on a Sunday at the latest, you're mentally already back on the plane."

Organizer and local player

Hearing this, it comes as no surprise that Andreas Hoffjan, for himself as a father, has chosen the type of "organizer" selects. Although he was due to the vol-
tion and, with three boys, he naturally also has to play the role of adventurer father. "It's clear that with the more daring actions, especially with three sons, you're a little more challenged as a father. But that's not the whole role," he says resolutely and explains expertly: "I'm very well organized. I think that's also due to my profession. In controlling

we proceed in a very structured and systematic way. I see my role as an organizer who efficiently implements the family's decisions. That was the case with the move last year and it is often This is also the case with vacations, where we say, 'That's where we're going,' and then I try to make it as affordable as possible."

Since 2007, Andreas Hoffjan has been a professor at TU Dortmund University and, as he says, has become a "local player". The international phase is clearly over, he admits without regret. "With one child, it still went quite well, but since the second at the latest - now there are three - I have clearly taken a step back, also at the congress level. Because I say I can no longer expect my family to expect me to be at an international conference for a week and then come back exhausted. If I do, then I reduce it to the European level or German conferences. Going abroad is simply not compatible with the family, because I don't want to tear the children out of their environment." Although his career has shifted as a result, it has not been affected in any way, says the father conciliatorily.

Prefers to play locally on the trampoline today: Prof. Dr. Andreas Hoffjan with his three sons.

The compromise with three children is to cut back on international activities in order to be more available locally, which he finds just as fulfilling in terms of content.

"My role has changed: from researcher to research manager."

"I got to know the world, which was exciting, but now I'm doing other things, and they're super exciting, too." His open-minded look confirms that he means it sincerely.



Source: Private

The Couple Career Lie

For him, a career means first and foremost self-determined work, he adds. And that's what he found at the TU: "It's this combination of freedom and working with a young and motivated team that makes him feel at home.

team, so the opportunity to really create something here, which I find very appealing." He has experienced problems professionally less because of his fatherhood than because of the "couple career lie," as he calls it. "A lot of colleges, after all, claim to do a lot for couple-careers," he explains with raised eyebrows. "I've had two calls in the last three years - I turned them both down, in part because they failed to offer my wife an adequate job. Even though both universities have medical schools. My point is that there's a lot of fig leaf behind which, when push comes to shove, not much happens materially." Compared to America, this was a very disappointing experience, explains the chair holder sadly, because there they also wanted to hire his wife.

"I think it's a real shame that it's so much harder to reconcile that in Germany."

He now lives with his family in Bochum and has the feeling that he has arrived. When he looks to the future, his father's features relax.

"We're out of the woods with the kids. The nights have not been sleepless for a long time. The hard years when the children were small and we were abroad on business, which were also brutal for my wife, are over. There are always things that set you back, but we've reached a stage where joy prevails." And the cheerful expression on his face confirms this without a doubt.

The interview was conducted by Debora Rahma in July 2013.

Prof. Dr. Andreas Hoffjan (*1967)



Source:
private

The Update Interview 2017

On an early day in March with nasty drizzly weather and gray clouds, I fortunately have only a short way to Andreas Hoffjan. Just once quickly across Martin-Schmeißer-Platz and I'm standing in his office in the Math Tower. Before this, my first father interview, I'm still a bit excited.

Everything as always

In fact, everything is still the same as it was four years ago when he gave his first interview. His wife still works 75% of the time as a research assistant in Bochum, and he works full time as a professor. In 2013, his children were cared for by a childminder. "Our childminder retired after 12 years," he says calmly about that time. That was in the summer of 2015, he says. This step fit into his family's plan quite well: since then, his youngest has been going to an all-day school, where he is looked after until 4 p.m. His older two sons are now looked after by a childminder anyway. His older two sons are now at an age when they no longer need daycare. However, the parental task of "shuttling three soccer-playing sons from A to B" remains, he grins knowingly.

Games and excursions

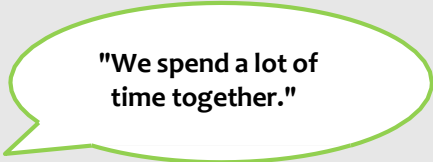
"We spend a lot of time together," he emphasizes. That starts with the family playing together a lot, he says. "The game of the year is basically set for us, on the Christmas shopping list," he reports enthusiastically, "because it's important to us that the children don't lose themselves at the console or while gambling." Many card games, for example Doppelkopf or Wizard, are also part of the Hoffjan family's range of games.

In addition, the family does a lot in the region. For example, the Ruhr Topcard is actually part of the package every year, "to take in the cultural sights, but also all the swimming pools and leisure facilities." This

However, they decided against the top card in the second year because his eldest son is currently spending a few months at school in Australia.

He had planned a visit to the World Table Tennis Championships for the family as his next venture and had already bought tickets for it. But you also notice that the children are getting bigger now. When he visited a climbing park with his sons the other day, they were

his sons were very quick. "I couldn't keep up with them - they should have asked my permission beforehand - and I couldn't get them in," he laughs, torn between the two.



**"We spend a lot of
time together."**

For the future, he often asks himself the question: "What else do I want to do with my kids, as long as they still want to do something with us?" He laughs briefly, shaking his head.

Light vacation focus

Even if, when asked, he could not explain the role of the "organizer father" that he chose in 2013, he admits that they have already still fit. Due to the many undertakings in his daily life, however, Andreas Hoffjan sees himself increasingly as an "explorer" father. He elaborates on this idea by talking about his numerous trips with the children. An annual city trip is among them. "In one day, you can then explore such a city yourself via hop-on and hop-off buses." They have also taken some cruises with their sons. "Because we can discover a lot there in a relatively short time, many new countries. Yes, that's not enough to really get a deep impression, but the kids find it totally exciting," he explains in an excited voice. "Sure, you're right, there is a certain vacation focus," he then admits.

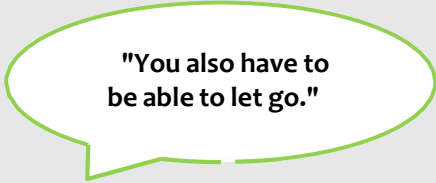
It is important to him to spend as much time as possible with his children, but he emphasizes that the family also does as much as possible together in everyday life.

No look back

When asked if he would do anything differently if he were to become a father again,

he is thoughtfully silent for a few moments. He seems strained. "That's an extremely difficult question," he sighs. First, he's not really the kind of person who looks back and asks himself what he did.

had done everything wrong. Secondly, he hopes to be able to spend a lot more time with his children. He talks about the USA planned for the summer -round trip. "This may be the last chance," he comments somewhat melancholically, because his sons are slowly taking flight. The family is planning this trip as the next big family project. "On your own, too! You have to work for it a little bit, that's what I like," he says, describing the planned trip.



"You also have to be able to let go."

In closing, he says he prepared the interview request for himself and considered it a self-reflection. Looking at his notes, he emphasizes that two things in particular are important to him. are important. "Especially in times of helicopter parents: you also have to be able to let go," he leads

first, describing how he and his wife "extremely encouraged" their eldest son to complete a semester of school in Australia.

ren. Secondly, Andreas Hoffjan thinks it's important to take his children with him as much as possible:

"Grad when our middle one loves playing Pokémon Go immensely, you just do your walk so he goes along because he knows there are any arenas or whatever, so you bond on that level."

👤 The interview was conducted by Stefanie Raible on 25.04.2017



Source:
Private