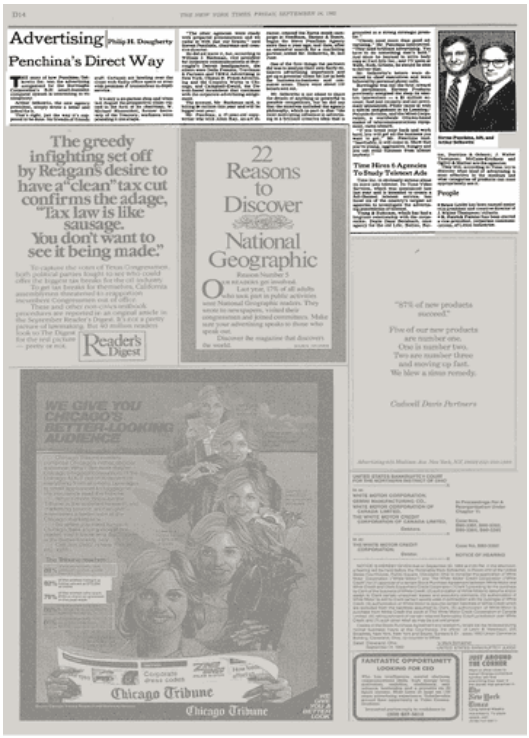
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Advertising; Penchina's Direct Way

By Philip H. Dougherty

Sept. 24, 1982


Advertising Philip H. Dougherty

Penchina's Direct Way

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THE story of how Penchina/Selkowitz Inc. won the advertising assignment for the Burroughs Corporation's B-20 small-business computer system is interesting in its simplicity.

Arthur Selkowitz, the new agency president, simply wrote a letter and asked for it. That's right, just the way it's supposed to be done. No friends-of friends stuff. Certainly not bowling over the client with flashy office space or even with promises of tremendous in-depth service.

It's only a six-person shop and when last August the prospective client visited in the form of its chairman, W. Michael Blumenthal, former Secretary of the Treasury, workmen were pounding it into shape.

''The other agencies were ready with prepared presentations and we came in with just our brains,'' said Steven Penchina, chairman and creative director.

He did not know it, but, according to William J. Beckman, vice president for corporate communications at Burroughs's Detroit headquarters, the others were Della Femina, Travisano & Partners and TBWA Advertising in New York; Clinton E. Frank Advertising and the Creative Works in Chicago, and Campbell-Ewald, the Detroit-based incumbent that continues with the corporate advertising assignment.

The account, Mr. Beckman said, is billing $4 million this year and will be bigger next year. Mr. Penchina, a 37-year-old copywriter who with Allen Kay, an art director, created the Xerox monk campaign at Needham, Harper & Steers, began the Steve Penchina Agency more than a year ago, and then, after an extensive search for a marketing partner, added Mr. Selkowitz, 39, last June.

One of the first things the partners did was to analyze their own fairly extensive advertising experience and get up a potential client hit list in both the business-to-business and consumer areas. There were about 110 letters sent out.

Mr. Selkowitz is not about to share the details of anything so powerful to possible competitors, but he did say that the missives included the agency philosophy, which in part is that ''the most motivating influence in advertising is a brilliant creative idea that is grounded in a strong strategic premise.''

''Clients need more than good advertising,'' Mr. Penchina interjected. ''They need brilliant advertising. You have to do something that's bold.'' And since he learned to write body copy at Carl Ally Inc., and TV spots at Wells, Rich, Greene, he should be able to deliver that.

Mr. Selkowitz's letters were directed to chief executives and were followed by personal phone calls. Burroughs was not the first reward for persistance. Hermes Products previously assigned the shop its electric typewriters - a $1 million account. And just recently and not previously announced, Pfizer came in with a special assignment in its Leeming/ Pacquin division, and the Mitel Corporation, a worldwide Ottawa-based maker of telecommunications equipment, came aboard.

''If you break your back and work hard, you will get all the business you want to get,'' Mr. Penchina said. ''Inevitably, it will come in. Show that you're young, aggressive, hungry and you can steal business from almost anybody.''

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