

## Right name, right time

### Rye's HiTechPR promoting new microchip that enhances color TV

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RYE

Mark Bruce of Scarsdale was given one of his biggest professional challenges in March 2004 when he received a call from an executive of an Israeli high-tech start-up who found his name with a Google search.

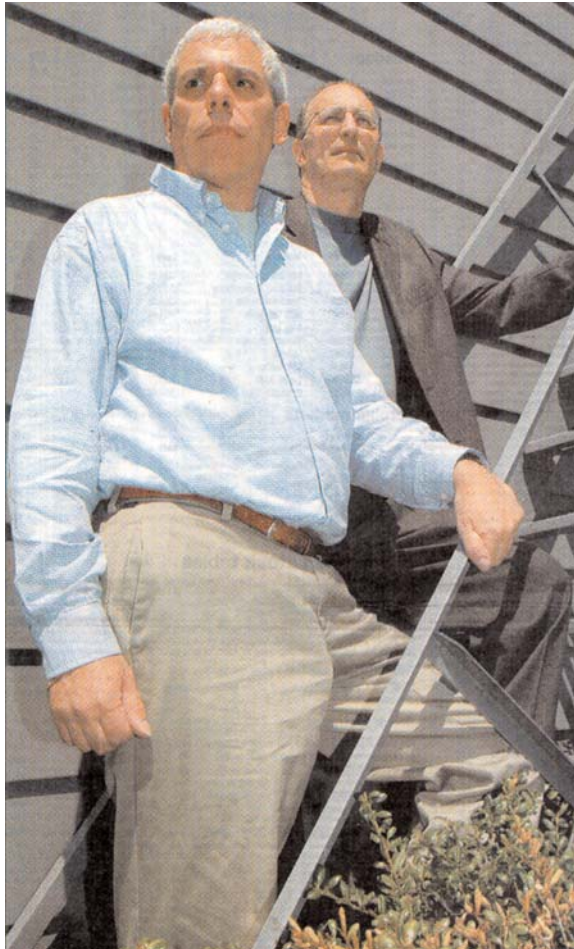
Bruce, president of HiTechPR, a public relations firm that specializes in small high-tech businesses, met Simon Lewis, vice president of marketing for Herzlia-based Genoa ColorTechnologies.

Genoa Color had invented a microchip-based technology that it believed had the potential to revolutionize the TV production industry, and was looking for a public relations company to bring its "Colorpeak" technology to the attention of major TV manufacturers.

The primary colors used to broadcast color TV had long been red, green and blue. ColorPeak broke that barrier by adding three colors to the mix: yellow, magenta and cyan. As a result, ColorPeak expanded the visible color gamut on a TV screen from 55 percent to up to 95 percent and increased picture brightness by as much as 40 percent.

Lewis had met with one firm that specialized in Israeli high-tech firms but he still wanted to talk to another before awarding a contract for the job. That's when he did a search on the computer, and learned about HiTechPR.

"I had never heard of them," Lewis said. "It seemed like this was the right company to deal with Genoa. I didn't want to deal with a large agency. I learned that small clients in large agencies get billed large fees and get to work with junior people. I wanted someone who would treat me as an important client that I'd get the attention of senior people."



Mark Bruce, right, president of HiTechPR in Rye, and Steven Green, creative director, have been working with Genoa Color of Israel to promote Genoa's new ColorPeak TV technology.

Bruce's portfolio of work impressed Lewis. It included stories he had pitched about his clients published in trade journals as well as in The New York Times and Business Week, among other national media. A contract was signed, and Bruce faced a formidable task.

Genoa Color was an unknown company that had no patents on its invention, no customers and a "klutzy" prototype — which included a circuit board with blinking lights and three office projectors — to demonstrate how the microchip worked. Also, Bruce said Genoa Color had "very high expectations and a very modest PR budget." There was no guarantee that the TV industry would be interested.

Bruce said the situation resembled the story of David and Goliath. He said a major obstacle was that the TV

manufacturers controlling the industry were "international Goliaths" while Genoa Color was "David tweaking his slingshot." HiTechPR had seven employees; Genoa Color, 20.

On the other hand, if Genoa could interest TV manufacturers in the chip the financial results could be staggering. Bruce said Genoa could make "tens of millions" at first from the microchip and if the technology is adopted worldwide by major TV manufacturers it could mean "hundreds of millions."

Bruce said the year before Lewis contacted him, Netherlands-based Royal Philips Electronics — which has its Philips Research USA unit in Briarcliff Manor — had used the ColorPeak technology at a trade show exhibit. Genoa had signed an agreement that gave Philips exclusive rights to use ColorPeak in its new "LCOS" sets.

But Bruce said in 2004 several manufacturers, including Philips, changed their minds.

It had nothing to do with Genoa's technology, he said. It was just that some industry analysts believed there would be thin margins and ongoing manufacturing problems with the LCOS sets.

Bruce had worked in the PR industry for more than 30 years and drew upon his contacts and ideas to promote ColorPeak.

"The key thing in my mind is how do we position this?" he said. "New TV technology comes out every day. You have high-definition, you have TiVo, you have flat-screen."

Bruce began by researching TV technology going back to the development of the cathode ray tube in 1897. Through his research he learned that 2004 was the 50th anniversary of the first commercial color TV sets shipped by RCA. The campaign's "linchpin message" became "Genoa reinvents color television 50 years after its introduction."

The next step was to find the right contacts, make press kits and promotional materials. Steven Green of Manhattan, Bruce's partner and HiTechPR's creative director, worked on the research, on HiTechPR's Web site and wrote many of the news releases.

"We must come up with something that will be easily understood by technical editors as well as mainstream editors," Green said.

In addition, Bruce and Lewis went on a tour of six cities across the country to give private demonstrations for editors to explain how the technology worked. He compiled a list of leading industry analysts, journalists and bloggers that reporters and editors could call.

The campaign worked. Articles about ColorPeak were in The New York Times, The Washington Post, Fortune, Consumer Electronics Daily and TV Technology. Bruce said they hit "the jackpot" when ColorPeak was selected as the 2004 Grand Award winner in the home

entertainment category in Popular Science's annual "Best of What's New" issue. Bruce said Genoa Color beat companies such as Sony and Microsoft for the recognition. Further, Genoa was just named one of "4 Upstart Companies" poised to affect the world of high-tech by Fortune magazine.

And Genoa Color recently received its first U.S. patent for ColorPeak. About 50 more are pending.

HiTechPR has also received industry recognition for its work on the Genoa Color account, winning three first-place public relations awards in two international competitions.

They won the 2004 gold Mercury award from Ossining-based MerComm Inc., in the "product launch" category. HiTechPR trumped Edelman, a global public relations firm with much deeper pockets, which won the second-place silver award for its campaign for Hershey Foods'.

Hershey Kisses filled with caramel. MerComm is an independent awards organization founded in 1987 to promote excellence in corporate communications.

Separately, in the Bulldog Reporter communications competition, HiTechPR won gold awards in the "business" category for "new product launch" and "technology." The Bulldog Reporter is owned by Infocom Group in Emeryville, Calif., and helps PR professionals increase their effectiveness.

Bruce said that today "Genoa is on the brink of major contracts with a number of the world's largest TV manufacturers," he said, adding he expected at least one would sign on by the end of June. But, because ColorPeak could be seen as a key competitive edge, they might have to wait to make the announcement until the set becomes available, which could take until Christmas.

Bruce is counting the days.