DONNY’S DOMAIN.

The triumph of Donny Deutsch is one of unusual success. He is that rare second-generation agency leader who has led his shop to new heights. In a recent conversation, the spiritual leader and corporate captain of Deutsch Inc. shares his views of the domain he commands.

On beginnings:

"My interest in advertising began at the kitchen table. I was all of seven listening to my father tell war stories about life in the agency world. At the time, he was head art director at McCann-Erickson. In 1969, he started his own agency, David Deutsch & Associates. He did it without clients, or even promises of business, but with a reputation for superb print. As a result, he attracted high-end clients -- like Louis Vuitton and Oneida Silversmiths. After gaining some experience at Ogilvy & Mather, I came to Deutsch. Working with my father went very well. While we shared common goals, we had different skills. But he gets all the credit for having the courage to start an agency. Without that start, I wouldn’t have anything to build on."

On the people of Deutsch:

"We have a staff of some 230 people with offices in New York and Los Angeles -- and it's growing. They are distinguished by their diversity: ex-journalists, ex-teachers, some ex-psychologists, people from all walks of life. We look for people that we think of as 'Deutsch people'--people with very large brains, very big hearts, very thick skins -- who are two or three degrees off center. We hire people with a hunger to win; people on the upward part of the curve, people who want to make their mark."

On the art of campaign-building:

"We have an exciting, collaborative method of working on campaigns. Rather than present clients with storyboards, we present 'handles,' a single sentence that combines strategic vision and creative execution. We want 'honest intrusions,' in the belief that good work is a conversation with the consumer. The end object is to humanize the brand. Our over-arching principle is humanity."

On landmark events:

"Looking back as I approach the big four-o, there are several landmark events that were important to our success. In 1989, we won the IKEA business -- obviously a threshold win. We’ve done some of the best advertising in the industry for IKEA. In 1994, we were named Advertising Age Agency of the Year. It was quite a thrill. Over the past few years we’ve attracted a group of some of the most prestigious clients anywhere. Our newest client, Bank of America, brings us to $420 million in billings. It has been an amazing story. I have to pinch myself that it’s really happening."

On the political beat:

"We worked on Clinton's '92 campaign. We shot tens of thousands of feet of film and contributed the campaign slogan. We enjoyed having a prime seat on the political scene. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience -- but the energy expenditure probably makes it a just once-in-a-lifetime experience."

On The Wall Street Journal:

"Our clients include a remarkable list of top-drawer, blue-chip companies. To effectively serve such clients, you need a listening post on the world -- and that is The Wall Street Journal. The Journal is tough, it's human, it's smart, it's no bull, it's brain food. At first, I initially saw The Journal as a piece of my wardrobe, something that told the world about me. But The Wall Street Journal has become an essential part of my life, not simply nice but necessary. At my age, I think about settling down and starting a family. One of my requirements is that any woman I marry should, ideally, be a Journal reader!"