

The International Business Machines Corporation, better known as IBM, is one of the largest technology companies in the world. Today, IBM is headquartered in Westchester, New York, and has nearly 400,000 employees across 170 different countries. However, IBM has only been named such since 1924 - when it was founded on June 16th, 1911, it was called the Computing-Tabulating-Recording Company (CTR). CTR was created in Endicott, New York when Charles Flint merged three manufacturing companies -- the International Time Recording Company, the Computing Scale Company of America, and the Tabulating Machine Company. The tabulating machine, developed by Herman Hollerith in the late 19th century as a way to process census data for the U.S. government, proved to be the most influential technology CTR had acquired.

In 1914, Flint hired Thomas J. Watson, Sr. to run CTR. Watson had previously worked for the National Cash Register company, where he was highly successful until being fired suddenly not long before he began working for CTR. Thanks to Watson's leadership and the international success of the tabulating machine, CTR started to become very successful, and Watson changed its name to International Business Machines in 1924. IBM became such a powerful company that while the U.S. economy was in ruins during the Great Depression in the 1930s, they only flourished. Businesses and organizations everywhere were using IBM's tabulating machines -- even the U.S Government itself, which had a contract with IBM to aid in enacting the Social Security Act, which was part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal legislation.

IBM continued to put forth new technological innovations for decades to come, including the UPC barcode, magnetic stripe technology, the hard disk drive, and dynamic random-access memory. One field they had yet to venture in, however, was the home computer. In 1977, Apple Computer released their Apple II, an 8-bit home computer that proved to be a big hit. In an attempt to keep up with this competition, IBM created a task force to develop their own home computer. In 1981 the IBM Personal Computer was released, thus commencing the technology war between Apple and IBM.

IBM hired the advertising agency Lord, Geller, Federico, and Einstein (LGFE) to come up with an advertising campaign for their new personal computer to rival against Apple. In advertisements such as their 1984 "Big Brother" ad, Apple attempted to portray IBM as being very corporate and impersonal, and themselves as exciting and fun. In response, LGFE wanted to find a new spokesperson who would give IBM an image of being more friendly and entertaining. After considering many options such as Kermit the Frog and Alan Alda, they decided on Charlie Chaplin's "Little Tramp" character.

Chaplin's "Little Tramp" character donned an iconic suit, bowler hat, cane, and small mustache. He is friendly, silly, and good-hearted. After buying the rights to use the Little Tramp character, LGFE auditioned more than thirty Chaplin imitators and eventually chose Billy Scudder to play the role. Before landing this job, Scudder spent his days at Knott's Berry Farm amusement park in California working as a Charlie Chaplin impersonator. IBM spent \$36 million on the marketing campaign, and it was not to waste, as the ads proved to be highly successful, even winning awards from the advertising industry. Suddenly, the IBM personal computers were selling out of stores very quickly. In one year, the IBM PC went from a zero market share to 28%, and only continued to grow.

Our group decided to recreate one of IBM's "Little Tramp" advertisements. The advertisement chosen featured Scudder in the classic "Tramp" outfit, sitting atop a very tall pile of books and papers, typing on the IBM PC. Neyshmarie and Abigail gathered the appropriate clothing to recreate this look, and brought that as well as dozens of books to the Innovation Lab in Harriman Hall. Because we figured some computer editing would be necessary to recreate this advertisement, we set up in front of the Innovation Lab's green screen. Neyshmarie put on a button-down shirt, black jacket, black pants, and black shoes, and sat atop a tall pile of books while pretending to type on a computer. Orel and Abigail

helped her perfect the pose and took the photograph. Afterwards, Orel used gimp to add the elements of the advertisement that we didn't have access to or would be impossible to recreate in real life.



References

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