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## Werbow's first agent gets paid

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[BERNADETTE MORRA](#)

Who should win when a model hits the jackpot?

The local agent who introduced her to star-makers in New York? The powerful international agents who negotiate her multi-million dollar contracts? Or the pretty young wisp herself?

Reigning superwaif **Daria Werbowy** of Mississauga must be wondering the same thing herself.

Werbow's earnings have been the centre of a three-year battle between her first Toronto agent, **Susan J. Burych** and IMG, one of the world's largest entertainment groups whose clients include golf star **Tiger Woods** and musician **Itzhak Perlman**.

Burych and IMG settled last week for an undisclosed sum that Burych would only say, made her "very happy."

Burych, whose daughter is a childhood friend of Werbowy's, first twigged to the Warsaw native's potential in 1998.

"I could see she had something special and I couldn't provide her the kind of service to take advantage of it," Burych told me in an interview in July 2004, shortly after filing papers in Ontario court.

So she accompanied Werbowy, then 15, and her parents to New York where they checked out different modelling agencies, finally settling on IMG. Burych signed a commission agreement with IMG to provide Werbowy with representation. In exchange, IMG agreed to pay Susan J. Model and Talent Management 10 per cent of its commission from Werbowy for five years, so long as she didn't sever ties with IMG.

Werbow's debut as a professional didn't go smoothly.

She was booked for eight fashion shows when the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks cut New York fashion week short.

Two years later, however, Werbowy was back on track. During the fall 2003 season, she walked 30 runways in New York, Milan and Paris including top fashion houses Prada, Gucci and Gianni Versace.

Two of the modelling world's holy grails came shortly after: A Prada ad campaign and two covers of *Vogue's* Italian edition.

Since then, the lanky brunette and former Port Credit sailing camp counsellor has starred in campaigns for Louis Vuitton, Chanel, and Prada. She is currently a "face" for Lancôme.

With **Kate Moss** pulling in \$50,000 a day from commercial clients, Werbowy's earnings wouldn't be far behind.

Last week in Milan, she only did one show, Roberto Cavalli, and this week in Paris is scheduled to walk only for Chanel. Such exclusive arrangements normally result from intense bidding wars or are a condition of an advertising contract. Either way, the sums involved can be stunning, with agencies typically taking a 20 per cent commission from both the model and the fashion house.

IMG claimed that no commission was owed to Susan J. since Werbowy had left IMG in 2001 to join another agency, however returning to IMG in 2003, at which time her career finally took off.

Following repeated refusal of Cleveland-based IMG to pay up the commission and to supply an accounting of Werbowy's gross earnings, Burych began her pursuit. The firm tried to pacify her with a cheque for \$70. "I saw fire," Burych recalled yesterday.

Not just because she felt she was out thousands in commissions. Burych says that it was she who convinced Werbowy's parents, whose interests are more intellectual, that their daughter should give modelling a chance.

"I told them, 'Something special is going to happen to your daughter,'" Burych says. "They couldn't see it. But they humoured me and they trusted me." And so off they all went on that first agency-hunting trip to New York.

"I'm glad to put this to rest," Burych adds. "But I'm also glad I didn't back down."

Werbow, whose Canadian representative is now Elmer Olsen Models, has never commented on the matter.

Smart.

**MORE MONEY MATTERS:** Breast cancer awareness month is upon us and so is a mountain of pink fashion and beauty products, all boasting a portion of the proceeds to breast cancer research. But how much of a portion? In the case of **Shania Twain's** limited edition pink bottle for Shania by Stetson eau de toilette, \$1 of the \$27 retail price goes to Rethink Breast Cancer. That's less than 5 per cent.

Holt Renfrew appears to fare far better with 100 per cent of net proceeds from a limited edition cashmere T-shirt going to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. The short sleeve turtleneck from the store's private brand sells for \$98.

The Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation will receive 100 per cent of net sales of HBC's Think Toque, a black, pink and grey acrylic knit cap priced at \$9.99. The Bay's historic point blanket has been recoloured with a soothing candy pink stripe. The limited edition of 800 blankets are each numbered and priced at \$350 with 10 per cent going to the foundation. Blanket #1, which normally goes into the HBC archives, will be auctioned on eBay. See [hbc.com/thinkpink](http://hbc.com/thinkpink).

**Veronic Tran**, owner of a new Toronto-based online store, <http://www.prettyinthecity.ca>, offers 10 colours of lip glosses for \$12 each, with 100 per cent of the proceeds going to the Canadian Cancer Society. Tran also offers free permanent eyebrow tattooing to cancer survivors who have suffered hair loss from chemotherapy in her King St. W. studio. Call 416-629-6936 for more information.

Retailer **Ron White** is raising the bar even higher. The owner of six Ron White, The Foot Shoppe stores, is donating the entire \$20 selling price from his chocolate brown cotton T-shirts to the Canada Breast Cancer Foundation. In doing so, White hopes others will increase the portion of sales they are donating to the cause.

**Bernadette Morra** is the Star's

fashion editor.

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