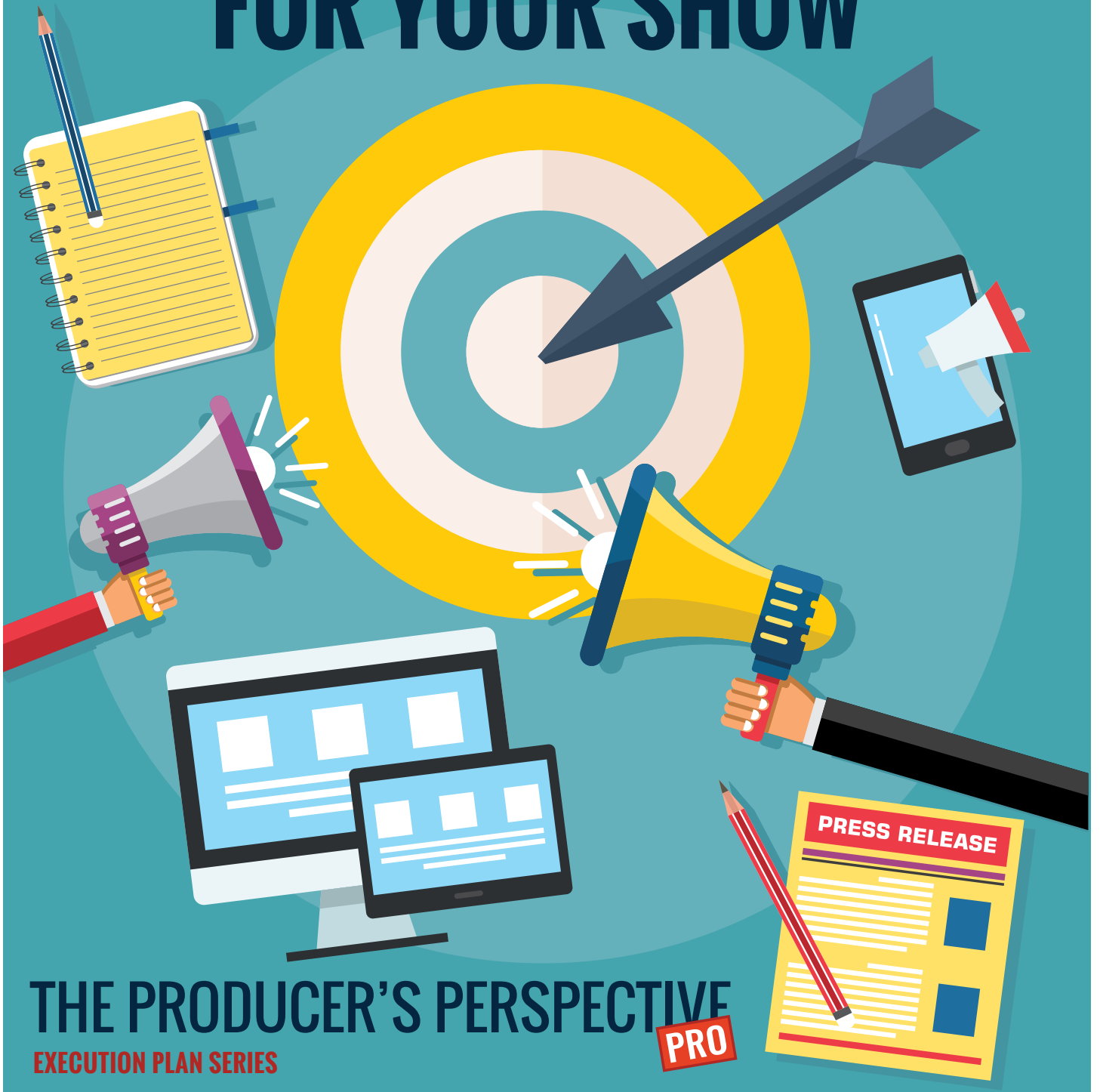


HOW TO CREATE A MARKETING PLAN FOR YOUR SHOW



THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

EXECUTION PLAN SERIES

PRO

INTRODUCTION

**“PEOPLE DON’T BUY WHAT YOU DO,
THEY BUY WHY YOU DO IT.”**

- SIMON SINEK

It bears repeating, “People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it.”

So, why did you buy this Execution Plan? Really think about it. What made you fork over your hard earned cash? Was it the marketing copy?

Maybe.

Was it the promise that you’d get practical advice on how to market your show?

Perhaps.

But, I bet I know the real reason....



ACTION EXERCISE: Ha! You weren’t expecting an action exercise in the introduction, were you? Well, I’m not going to sugar coat it, marketing is a lot of hard work. So, let’s get right to it.

In the space below, write down exactly why you bought this Execution Plan. Don’t cheat and look at my ideas on the next page, this is about YOUR ideas.

I BOUGHT THIS PLAN BECAUSE:

So, what did you come up with? Why do YOU think you bought this Execution Plan?

Let me know why you bought this book by tweeting @KenDavenport using #MarketingExecutionPlan. I'm curious to see what you came up with, and maybe you'll teach me something!

Now, I'm going to tell you what I think I know.

You didn't buy this plan because of all that marketing copy you read or the ads you saw. You bought this plan because you know how much I care about marketing. I am so passionate about marketing that over 500 of my blog posts are written on the subject. Marketing is so "my thing" that I've been writing a frickin' BLOG for over 10 years! That's not me TALKING about marketing, it's me DOING it.

And now I'm really going to blow your mind. You didn't buy an Execution Plan. Nope. You bought over a decade of experience and dedication to an industry we both love, and I can't wait to help YOU get butts in seats!

Now, let's do it.

WHAT IS MARKETING?

**MARKETING IS MATCHING THE RIGHT MESSAGE
TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE RIGHT TIME
ALL WITH THE GOAL OF GETTING BUTTS IN SEATS, AND FAST!**

This means that you are targeting a specific group of people, with a message (and messages can include images!) that relates uniquely to them.

Here's how to craft a marketing plan that works for your show:

Step 1: Figure out who your audience is.

Step 2: Figure out what to say to them.

Step 3: Figure out how to say it.

...then say it!

Sounds simple, right? Well, if it was that easy you wouldn't have bought ~~this plan~~ 10+ years of experience.

Let's dig into how it's done!



FINDING YOUR NICHE

Every show has an audience, and as a marketer it's your job to figure out who might be interested in seeing your show.

And it's not enough to say, "people who like theater" will come see my show! Not good enough. You are up against every other show out there who are all also targeting those folks, and—let me tell you—it's a competitive market. Every show could potentially appeal to "people who like theatre," so you need to dig deeper to figure out who EXACTLY would be interested in *your* show as opposed to another one.

I call this "niching."



PRO TIP: You must identify and seek out NICHE AUDIENCES.

So, how exactly do I whittle down my audience into bite-sized chunks that I can easily find and target?

Host a Marketing Scrum!

"Scrum" is a rugby term for "at the beginning." I don't watch rugby so don't quote me on this, but they all kind of huddle together, and that's exactly what we do. We do the marketing scrum.

The first thing I do whenever I scrum is put the name of the show big and bold at the top of our white board. Then I ask the question, "what group of audience members do you think are going to want to see this show?" Then I listen to all the ideas. There are NO WRONG ideas. This stage of the game is all about volume, so get as many ideas out there no matter how outlandish they may seem.



ACTION EXERCISE: Using your own project make a list of 10 different groups of people that might be interested in seeing your show. No idea is a bad one, just get down as many as you can.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Great! Now you have your Top 10 list!

Step Two of the Marketing Scrum is to identify the top five niche groups. Time is money, right? It takes a lot of time to go through each of these groups of people. So what we try to do next is identify the top 5 niche audiences that would get the most butts in seats the fastest, and that's the key.

If you think about the sales funnel, then the people we've identified in our scrum are closer to the bottom of the sales funnel and therefore the easiest/cheapest to target and convert into butts in seats.



ACTION EXERCISE: Narrow your Top 10 list down to a Top 5 list below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Will ya look at that? A few pages ago we had no idea what we were doing, and now we are whittling away at a plan! Now that we have our top 5 niche audiences that are most likely to get butts in seats, and quickly, we can do the fun part...

For each of the 5 niches you've identified, come up with 5 ways you can reach each niche. Are there organizations that these people belong to, places they hang out, Facebook groups they're in?

Now that you know WHO you are speaking to with your marketing messaging, the next step is to figure HOW best to speak to them.



CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE

Everyone loves a good story. And, fortunately for us theater folk, storytelling comes naturally.

Two of the most important elements of your messaging will be:

1. Your show blurb
2. Your tagline

Your tagline and show blurb are often the first impression a potential audience member has of your show, and a conversation with your target market.



ACTION EXERCISE: Write a 2-4 sentence show blurb that describes what your show is about and captures the essence of why your target audience should want to see it.

It might help to think about your show's strengths when crafting your message. Do you have any notable members of your cast or creative team that could appeal to your audience? Is your subject matter particularly relevant to a specific demographic?

Now, can you distill those 3–4 sentences down into 1 single line, or even just a few words to be used as your tagline?



ACTION EXERCISE: Write 3 different taglines. Each tagline should be 1 sentence, or even just a few words and appeal to a different one of your niche audiences!

Now that you have some of your show copy, it's time to test it and see what audiences respond to best!



PRO TIP: A great and relatively inexpensive way to test different messages is through Facebook ads. You can run a Facebook ad campaign for as little as \$5/day, and within a campaign you can run as many ads as you like. Each ad should use different copy and the one with the most clicks after 3 days wins!



The messages you've crafted in this exercise will stand as the base of all your marketing.

CREATING YOUR PLAN

Just like any great buffet, there's a smorgasbord of options when it comes to marketing and advertising. And just like a buffet, there are many ways to fill up...you could eat a lot of one thing, or you can have a little of this and little of that. The media mix is a combination of different communication channels that you can use to achieve your marketing goals.

And remember, it takes someone approximately 7 times of seeing your message to remember or register it! So, try to find different ways to reach the same audience with your messaging. Here are a few ideas to explore:

Email Marketing - Sounds old school, but it works. You could consider purchasing an email blast from a company like Playbill or Theatremania, but that will cost you a pretty penny.



PRO TIP: If you decide to purchase a blast, ask for “remnant” rates. Often you can get up to 50% off for a last minute blast that hasn't sold!

Alternatively, consider building your own list with these techniques:

- Reach out to Friends & Family
- Collect emails at the show & readings
- Have a newsletter signup on your website (giving away something for free is usually a good incentive for someone to give you their email)
- Collect business cards
- As for recommendations/referrals

Direct Mail - This too can sound a little outdated, but direct mail is still a great way to get butts in seats! Consider sending supporters a postcard or letter with information about your show and invite them to attend! You can also put out postcards at local coffee shops, restaurants and rehearsal spaces.

Social Media - Social media is all about awareness and brand building, not as much about conversions. Building an active social following takes time, and requires engaging content. Things that tend to work well are photos from rehearsal and behind-the-scenes looks into the process of creating the show, and videos and interviews with cast/creative team. As a general rule photos and video outperform text posts, and are much more “shareable.” Do your best to create authentic conversations with your followers.

Try to focus on one or two social platforms that you know your audience hangs out on, and forget the rest. You could spend all your time on social instead of creating an incredible show!



PRO TIP: Create a sharable “in theatre” experience. Perhaps have a fun prop or set piece in your lobby for people to take photos with, or add interactive elements that would be worth talking about. Photo opps with the cast can also be good “shareable” content.

Digital Marketing - Facebook advertising is a great and relatively affordable way to target specific audiences with specific messages. Using the Facebook Ads Manager you can get very granular in terms of audience segmentation, and if you serve them compelling messages then it can be a slam dunk!



PRO TIP: If Facebook advertising isn't "your thing" consider hiring a freelancer on Fiverr or Upwork. You can have them create Facebook ads and setup your full campaign very affordably.

Deal Sites - Deal sites like Goldstar and Groupon are essentially glorified advertising platforms. They advertise your show to their millions of members in exchange for a hefty commission. But, you don't pay anything upfront, so this can be appealing to those on a budget!

Partnerships - Partnerships are also a great free way to help get word out about your show. Are there any organizations that share your same audience? Can you work with a company that can give you something to offer your audience? A free drink after the show? Extended happy hour prices? Discount on parking? Then ask them to tell their subscribers and patrons about your show!

Listings - There are tons of online event sites that list shows, both Broadway and beyond. It's often free to get listed and just extra exposure!

Show-Score is a relatively new site that brands itself as the "Rotten Tomatoes" of the theatre world. Give audience members incentive to review your show on Show-Score! Trending shows get free press! You could also host a Show-Score member night, which gets ~50 in the door (for free, but hey, it's butts in seats early in your run)!

TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUR CAST AND CREW

One of your best assets as a marketer are the people involved in your show. Find creative ways to activate your cast, crew, creative team, investors, etc.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY CODE

Make it easy for them to share about the show. Creating ready-to-send emails is one of the best ways I've found to engage my team. Offer a special "friends and family" discount code that's included in the email that people can then just forward along to their networks.

GROUPS

Capitalize on any group potential by offering special group discounts and asking team members to share any leads they may have with you (their schools and offices are always great places to start!).

BRAND AMBASSADORS

Creating a Brand Ambassador program is an easy way to get butts in seats based on referrals. Figure out who your most avid fans are, then offer them commission for any tickets they sell using a special discount code you create for them. You could even go as far as creating codes for your cast and printing them show-branded business cards to hand out. Then they get commission on their sales and you get more butts in seats!

If you don't want to offer a straight commission check, consider offering merch items or special opportunities that money can't buy (attend the opening night part, a private rehearsal, etc)!

BUILD WORD OF MOUTH

Word of mouth is one of the most valuable forms of marketing currency money can't buy. If people are enjoying your show, do everything you can to get them talking about it!

Create show branded hashtags that people can share online, ask them to review your show on Show-Score, give them a coupon when they leave to come back with a friend for free!

MARKETING MUST-HAVES

It doesn't matter how great your show is, if you don't have any marketing then it's going to be tough to get butts in seats. And, while you don't need a ton of money to market your show, there are a few "must-haves" that will help:

- **Website** - your online calling card
- **Email Lead Capture** on Your website
- **Professional Photos and Video** - it elevates your brand and helps tell the story
- **Marketing Intern!** (post a listing on Playbill and get some extra help!)
- **Google Analytics** - analyze who's visited your website.
- **Good show copy and tagline** - should give the audience a sense of tone, the story and characters, and "What's in it for them"

STILL FEELING STUCK ON MARKETING YOUR SHOW?

Join The Producer's Perspective PRO to access my training courses on "How to Market Your Show with No Money," "How to Get Press for Free," and "Breaking Down a Broadway Marketing Campaign." Plus, members of The Producer's Perspective PRO also get access to my live office hours calls where they can ask me anything they want each month!

For exclusive marketing resources, join The Producer's Perspective PRO at

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