

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO SELL TICKETS TRANSCRIPT

Ken: Hello, everybody. I am Ken Davenport. Welcome to the “How to Use Social Media to Sell Tickets . . . or Anything” webinar. I’m thrilled you’re all here with me tonight. If you are looking for the webinar on dog grooming you are in the wrong place. That’s as good as the jokes get so we should probably move on pretty quick, although I’m sure you’re all laughing, it’s just that you’re on mute so I can’t hear you. That’s what I’ll keep telling myself.

Okay, seriously, thanks for joining me. As you all probably know, social media is near and dear to my heart. I’ve been a part of it since the social media revolution began. A lot of you may have seen the link I put in one of my early e-mails about this webinar to me talking about Twitter tipping, way, way back in the day. *I3*, which I was a producer on, was one of the first shows to have actors using Twitter. We had all of those teenagers in the show tweeting, and even they didn’t know what it was at the time. So I am very excited about this subject and I am thrilled you’re all joining me tonight, so thank you for that.

A big shout out to all the international participants in the house – give it up for the folks out there participating tonight from Australia, South Africa, Argentina, England, Ecuador, the list goes on and on. I’m thrilled you’re here with me tonight, especially since, for many of you, it’s probably in the wee hours of the morning. And a super big shout out to all the Producer’s Perspective Pro members who are enjoying this webinar for free as part of their monthly membership in the Producer’s Perspective Pro. If you’re not a member of Pro, do visit TheProducersPerspectivePro.com or just go to the blog and sign up today to get free access to the monthly webinars I’m doing, every single month a new topic, and lots of other cool stuff. So sign up today and get all of this stuff for free.

Now, before we get into the guts of tonight’s webinar, a few housekeeping reminders. Again, this webinar will be emailed to you tomorrow, no later than 24 hours from this very moment, so that you can listen to it at any time. I know a lot of folks like to listen to it again and again, I get a lot of emails about that. It will be available for you in your email, so do check for that, for your downloading pleasure within 24 hours from now. For all you Pro members listening right now, it will be in your archives earlier than the email goes out, so it will be in the archives along with all the other webinars – Broadway Investing, etc. – tomorrow as well, so be sure to check that out. Secondly, if you have any technical difficulties tonight or tomorrow, like you don’t get the email, just email my lovely associate Kayla . . . lindsay@davenporttheatrical.com, the email right on the screen there. She is there waiting in the next room to answer all of your questions. We’ve never done this before but I feel like a few of you may think Kayla is like my girlfriend from Canada in *Avenue Q* in that she doesn’t really exist. She really exists . . . it’s not just me answering all of Kayla’s emails . . . so we’re going to prove that she exists. Kayla, say hi to everybody.

Kayla: Hey, everybody.

Ken: That’s Kayla, everybody. She’s a woman of very few words but a woman that does a lot of work for me so I’m really thankful for her. So if you have any issues just e-mail her, and now

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



here we go. Now that I've embarrassed Kayla, I feel like my work is done for the day, so let's get to the good stuff.

Tonight we're going to talk about something that every person out there in marketing and working on shows all know about but very few people know exactly what to do with it, and of course I am talking about social media. Specifically tonight, we're going to talk about how to use it to sell tickets for your show, or to sell anything – yourself if you're a playwright, if you're a small business – I know I have a small business owner on the webinar tonight, looking to harness the power of social media for their own use. So we're going to teach you how to monetize that, the tricks and tips that you can use to build a following and monetize it, because that's the key, right? This is the entertainment business. Like it or not we've got to sell tickets. We've got to sell stuff so that we can do it again, that's why most of us are in the business.

Ask anyone working in theatre today why they got into it . . . it's because they love the theater. That's usually why they do it, certainly why I do it. I could get all the producers in the room and I guarantee not one producer out there would say they got into the theatre to make money. No, we got into it because we love the theater. So you shouldn't feel guilty about wanting to sell tickets, about wanting to make money. Sometimes that gets a bad rep in the business but you shouldn't feel guilty about it because what making money does is it actually allows you to make more theater. Making money allows you to make more theater, so don't feel bad about it, and we all have to work very, very hard to figure out ways to do that because the theater is a tough business. Listen, you're on a webinar with me right now, you've plunked down some hard-earned money and we're going to teach you ways to recoup that money, get ten times, a hundred times on your investment, for sure, but I want you to know that I do the same thing. I am a part of a whole bunch of newsletters and webinars and I study this stuff like crazy because I know I want to make more theatre in my life and the only way I can do that is to monetize my efforts, so don't feel bad about it.

Let's look at the agenda for this evening, since we are talking about all those lovely icons on there, social media. Here's what we're going to do . . . we're going to talk about what is social media, we're going to define it for everybody. We're going to go through the history of social media and the future – you can't know where you're going until you know where you've come from. We're going to talk about who is on social media, the audiences that are there, who exactly is it, especially on the different networks, we're going to break that down a little bit. My strategy for growing a following on social media, some of the tips and tricks that I use and some of the overall broad themes that I use whenever I'm trying to come up with a campaign – and I've run some pretty successful ones, thankfully. Then we're going to go into how to turn your followers into ticket buyers. This is the most important part, of course. And then I will take some time for some questions and I will give you some answers. Okay! Everybody ready? Let's get social!

Okay, what is social media? Let's look at a very simple definition of social media. Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. A fancy, fancy definition, right? I'm sure you can all understand what it means, but that's a lot of words up there so I like to distill it down. The key words in this definition that make social media different from every other form of

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



media out there are “interactions,” “share,” “exchange.” These are the key things you need to remember as you think about creating a social media campaign for your show, your business, yourself, whatever it is. Interaction, share, exchange. Now, why are they key words for me? I’m sure you can figure it out but, all three of these words, it’s about two way, three way, ten way, whatever you want to call it . . . it’s the communication between more than one party. Sharing, exchanging information, interaction, it requires a community, it requires more than one party – two parties, three parties or more – and this is a big difference, the massive difference between social media marketing and all other marketing.

Most big marketing is what I call push marketing. Television pushes out a message and hopes that you respond. Direct mail, even, which is one of my favorite forms of media, or direct response email, is push marketing. You push it out, you hope that they respond. Direct mail or email is much more quantifiable – you can track, you can record results. With television it’s hard, it’s more broad message marketing, but it’s all push, push, push, push, push. Social media, again, is about interacting, sharing, exchanging – that’s very different to old fashioned push marketing and this is why social media marketing was such a revolution when it came about. It’s about two parties, at least two parties, exchanging ideas. Oh, look at that nice stock photo of those two people exchanging a handshake, but that’s what it’s about.

This is the kind of communication and building relationships – when a brand buys a \$100,000 TV buy in a week they don’t build relationships, they just plaster it in as many places as possible to try to get the biggest number of impressions possible in the hopes that some of their customers will be listening and will respond, a big push. Social media is the opposite of that. It’s really about, like this beautiful little stock photo right here, how two parties that are equal – that’s another big part of this, that these two people are equal in this exchange of information, it’s not a big brand looking down on a customer, “You should buy this!” No, social media is putting people on the same level and there’s a level of respect there in social media that doesn’t exist in other forms of media, which is another reason why I love it.

I believe that the 21st century is the age of the consumer. The consumer has a lot of power, frankly, thanks to things like social media, because if we want to write a letter about bad customer service, which is what we used to do back in the ’80s and early ’90s, like “I’m upset at JetBlue! I’m going to write them a letter and hopefully they’ll give me something off.” Well, now, you do that on social media and the world knows. The consumer has real power through social media, putting big brands, medium brands and small brands on equal footing, or putting the big brand a little under the power of the consumer. The 21st century is the age of the consumer and social media is a big part of that. That’s why you, as a business owner, can’t have any ego when engaging with social media. You can’t, because it’s not about you. In fact, the key to social media, when engaging in social media, the key is this – ask not what your followers can do for you but ask what you can do for your followers. You can exchange followers for friends but just listen to that again. You’ve all heard this quote before. Ask not what your followers can do for you but ask what you can do for your followers. Again, they have the power now so we want to assist and we want to help them.

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



Before we go into too much detail about some of the strategies, because already we're starting to talk about some of the things that I use and the theme of how I built these campaigns, let's talk about the history of social media and, again, where I see it going. There were lots of early attempts at social media sites, including a site called SixDegrees.com, which is a derivative of the Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon game, even Classmates.com, a lot of people may know that site, that actually started a lot earlier than you think, so there were some early attempts at this but the first social network to gain any traction in the market was, anybody who can guess? Everyone come up with your guess. 3, 2, 1 . . . Friendster! Who remembers Friendster?

Friendster was quite revolutionary. I'll never forget that email I got . . . I remember exactly where I was at the time . . . I got an email from my assistant director on *The Awesome '80s Prom* saying, "Hey, you should join this site!" And I did, and I was glued to whatever computer I had, a Mac PowerBook, I don't know what it was, trying to connect with other people. That was the first one, Friendster. Now, Friendster was a bit of a mess, partly because it got popular so fast. It was super slow, had a bunch of tech problems, you couldn't sign on all the time, so people were quick to jump when a new social networking site was born. That social networking site, everybody, was Myspace.

Oh, Myspace. Myspace was another one, revolutionary at the time, you looked at it and you were like, "Oh my God, this is the most technologically advanced website I've ever seen." It was quickly made to look like an antique in about a year and a half but this was the first one that really dominated the space, of course. In fact, Myspace eventually sold for \$580 million, one time valued at \$12 billion. That's how big Myspace got and that's how fast it got there. It was also the first social network that was used by both people and businesses. This is where businesses, including mine, *The Awesome '80s Prom* was actually one of them, started to say, "How can I use this to market my business?" You couldn't even set it up with a business account, it was very clumsy, but brands started to do this a little bit and it blew up, there's no question about it.

Now, just to follow the history, after Myspace started to attract a more widespread audience another social network was born and that site was, you guessed it, Facebook. Facebook was the next incarnation, if you will, and iteration of a lot of social networking sites. Now, look, for those of you who really know the history, lots of other social networking websites were bobbing up around this time. Google had their own called Orca, there was a site called Ning.com which was all about people developing their own niche special networking sites. I actually had one called BroadwaySpace.com, which I'm sure you can realize was based on Myspace. By the way, a little tip, whenever you're naming a company, don't name it after something that is hot for the moment, you just never know where it's going to go, because very quickly Myspace was gone and people were wondering what BroadwaySpace was, they were actually wondering if it was some kind of real estate thing. So, lots of other things going on at the time and social networks starting to pop up but Facebook was the next big one and we're just focusing on the big ones in this quick little history lesson.

Now, Facebook was an interesting site from the beginning, the first one of these sites that was exclusive because it was only for college students. Only college students were allowed, you had

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



to identify which college you went to, you had to have a college email, it was a smaller site just for those people. Those of you who know the history, it was started in Harvard, it was just for Harvard, and then they pulled in other colleges. Can you imagine if Facebook had stayed that way? If they had just decided, “Eh, we’re just going to make it for universities.” Obviously Mark Zuckerberg, the genius that he is, it slowly did expand but not too fast, which is what happened with Myspace, they went too fast. Facebook slowly, slowly grew and it grew into what it is today and, while it did, it destroyed the competition. Destroyed them. To give you a specific example – Myspace, remember when I said it was valued at \$12 billion and sold for \$580 million? It sold a few years ago again. Purchase price? \$35 million. Less than 10% of the original purchase price. Man, that is not a good ROI. In fact, Broadway shows get better ROI than that.

Now, this is where we get to the really interesting part in the history of social media, when Facebook came into play and started to dominate and the other sites fell away. Other networking sites started to pop up even while Facebook was there and many of us in the business said, “Here we go, Facebook will go away as well,” but here came sites like Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Periscope, these are all social networking sites, they all came in and many people thought, just like Myspace was obliterated by Facebook, we thought one of these might overtake it. But they didn’t. They didn’t, and that’s a very key part, as you start to think about a marketing campaign going forward, that Facebook did not go away and that’s how good Facebook has been at keeping its customers. All of these other social networks are used in conjunction with Facebook now. There’s a way to hook up your Twitter and your Instagram, all of this stuff you can link, you can make it automatic so anything you post on Twitter automatically posts to Facebook, there’s a way to loop all of that stuff in. But Facebook has not disappeared. In fact, it is the social network. It’s The Social Network – capitalized The. It’s the one, and that’s why . . . this is the first big tip about building a campaign for social media . . . the foundation of your social media campaign is Facebook.

You have to think about your foundation as Facebook. It’s the rock on which you’re going to build it all. I’ve seen some small shows especially, they don’t have websites they just have Facebook pages, because it’s the easiest way to find your audience. They have the most demographic information on Facebook. Facebook ads . . . by the way, I just wrote a blog about this, we’ll include it in the wrap up email tomorrow . . . Facebook advertising is a fantastic and very inexpensive way to reach a very specific targeted audience. If you are a small show, especially, you should be investing in Facebook ads. It used to be Google AdWords . . . I’m a huge fan of Google AdWords, of course . . . but Facebook ads can actually get deeper targeting because of all of that data.

Again, what’s amazing about Facebook is, look, they’ve had a bumpy road. Their IPO wasn’t great, there were all of these privacy concerns, they kept changing their look, they kept changing their settings. “Oh, you want too much information, we don’t want to reveal this. What are you doing with all of this information?” And, throughout it all, it grew and grew and grew to 1.5 billion people or something on Facebook all over the world. They have not gone away, that’s why they’re going to be the foundation of any campaign you have. This doesn’t mean you won’t have Twitter, Instagram and all the other stuff you want to have . . . we’ll get to the point in this webinar where I talk about how you fix that . . . but you start with Facebook because it’s where

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



the majority of your customers are. That's where they are because most people these days, they're on Facebook.

Let's talk about those people. Let's talk about who is on social media. Now, I'm going to trickle back through a little bit of the history that explains who is on each social networking site, especially as it pertains to when those sites are born, because remember how I talked about people jumping from one to another, like when there were tech problems with Friendster, etc.? In fact, let's go back to that site. Friendster led to Myspace led to Facebook, Twitter and all of that stuff. So Friendster started in 2002, and I don't know if you remember what computers and, more importantly, what internet access was like in 2002. DSL wasn't even everywhere. A lot of people were still on dialup, believe it or not. To put it in perspective, the iPhone didn't come out until five years later in 2007, and you're still talking about serious early tech adopters there.

So as you can probably imagine Friendster started and the first early adopters on it were younger folks. Here's the thing about younger people – when things get “old” they jump to the newest, latest thing like fleas on a dog. That's how I think of them in the history of social networking. So, as Friendster didn't work out so well, they jumped to Myspace. Here's where it gets really fascinating – Myspace gained traction, so much so that it started to reach an older audience, so it's no coincidence that, when Myspace released that its average user was in their 30s, Facebook started to get more attention and more excitement. Or, as I like to say, when the moms joined Myspace the kids left. When things get “old” they go. Think about it, social networks are like nightclubs. No kid wants to be in the nightclub where their parents are, so like a flea on a dog they jump to Facebook.

The Facebook proof of this theory is that Facebook was only for young people at the time, remember? They were like “Oh my God, it's like an under-21 club, it's just for us, mom can't join.” Then, mom joined. Facebook broadened its audience and mom joined Facebook and everyone again expected the kids to jump like fleas on a dog, but Facebook was so good at retention that they stayed. Now, they did join Twitter. Most moms didn't right away – some are starting to creep there – and when Twitter started to build up and get a broader appeal, the kids jumped to Instagram and now they're jumping to Periscope. So watch them – the early adopters, which is usually the younger set, they tend to go where the new networks, the new nightclub – again, using the nightclub analogy – the new nightclub in town, that's where they're going to go.

A big tip here, just to remember – the younger the social network, the younger the user. A very general term, so let's just look at it in terms of actual stats pulled right from the internet. Facebook, 1.5 billion people. Remember when I said that's why it's going to be your foundation? It's got the most people on it. It's got the biggest amount of potential customers for you and you also know the most about them. That's why it's the foundation of all social networking marketing campaigns. And you can track this all the way down – 33.9 average in age. 32, 25, 28 on Periscope – that I actually feel is a little skewed, these statistics are a little hard to grab for some of these social networking sites, but you can see how it goes down slightly. Now, the largest percentage of people on Facebook are actually an older set, above 40. The largest percentage of users, that's amazing, because you know what's really interesting about that stat? The average Broadway theatergoer is 44 years old and female. 44 and female. Huh, which social

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



network is most like the average theatergoer for Broadway? Facebook. See that, you can even see it over in the male-female ratio, 64% women, 36% men.

Your customers, theatergoers, or in other words your mom, is on Facebook. That's my mom, everyone, right there in the middle. That's me, that's mom, my stepfather, my mother-in-law, my father-in-law, my beautiful wife on the left hand side. Mom, see her there, she's on Facebook. She's a traditional theatergoer through and through, she's a suburban grandmother now – not mine just yet – so she comes in for the summer, she sees a few shows a year, she is on Facebook, she is not on Twitter, she is not on Instagram, she is not on Periscope. Again, why you need to be on Facebook first. Say goodbye to my mom, everybody. Bye, mom!

Again, this doesn't mean you're not going to be on the other social networks, it just means that you need to look at the audience for your show and where you want to focus. Is it younger, is it like my audience for *Spring Awakening*? If you noticed, on *Spring* we did a ton of Twitter marketing. That's because that's where my audience was. Again, I started with *I3* back in 2008, I had teenagers on the show. The big lesson from this – how do you choose where to focus your attention with social media? Find out where your audience is, use the demographic data from your show, survey your audience, figure that out and focus your social media efforts on the network where your core audience is. That's the key. Facebook is going to be your foundation and if you think you're a younger show that's where you're going to start getting a little more granular and a little more specific and put more activity into Twitter. Facebook can still be your foundation, we're going to send everybody back there, we're going to put more stuff there, but we're going to do more rapid-fire Twitter stuff to get a little bit of a younger audience.

Okay, now onto the good stuff: my strategy for growing a social media following. Now, look, everyone wants more friends. I mean, it was such genius marketing to call Facebook followers "friends" or "likes." How do you not want that? Facebook wanted, Myspace wanted, people to go out there and use the site. That's what websites are about – traffic, traffic, traffic. They knew that if everyone was obsessed with getting connections there would just be more people on the site so they, in a stroke of genius, named these connections friends and Facebook took it another step further and added "likes." Everybody wants to be liked, it's like basic human instinct. I remember on Myspace it was a competition – you looked at a number, "Oh, I have 150 friends, my friend has 195," in fact we just spammed the heck out of people to try to get more friends. They had programs – they still have these roaming around but nobody uses them like they used to – that were like a friend adder to add followers to your account, add friends to your account, and for \$5.95 a month or whatever you would get all of these people, "Look at me! I've got 87,542 friends today and I'm growing at the rate of 1,000," but it didn't really spread your message any further and actually this idea, of just generating massive numbers, was one of the reasons Myspace fell apart, because they just kept everyone focused on the numbers and didn't focus on the user experience of the site which, by the end of it, was pretty damn ugly.

I know some of you are probably Googling "are there friend adding sites for Facebook?" There probably are – do not use them, okay? They're focused more on numbers instead of the types of people. We'll go back to the nightclub analogy – do you just want tons of people in your club or do you want the right people in your club? And that is the first rule of social media marketing.

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



As hard as it is, you should not focus on the number of friends, followers or likes. You don't want a lot of them, you want the right lot of them. Just like in real life, you want to focus on the quality of your friends, not the quantity of your friends.

This is very important because, again, we love to think "Oh, look how many followers I got this week!" I do it all the time myself, I look at my number of likes, but it's not about that. I've seen shows with a massive number of followers and likes that flop and I've seen shows with smaller amounts that do unbelievably well. It's about the quality of these people. Spend time trying to get the right type of people, not just the highest number. Think about it in terms of your own life – would you rather have ten friends who come to visit you in the hospital if you're sick, God forbid, or help you move or be at your birthday party, or a hundred friends who don't even return your calls? Social networking is the same.

So the question isn't really how to build a following, it's how to build the right following – I should retitle this section. You want to build the right following, not just any following. We're going to continue this idea that you're sick in the hospital, even though that's very depressing – the key to getting lots of friends in real life is the same as getting lots of friends and followers on social media. How do you get lots of friends? The easiest way is you be a great friend, it's that simple. So when you're setting out to build a social following you have to start by being a good friend and a good follower to others. We're going to get more specific now and we're going to talk about seven ways to be a good friend in order to get good friends and these, you're going to see, could be in a friendship webinar but it is exactly the same thing for social media, it's just how you apply that online versus offline.

So let's go to the first one – be funny. Humor is one of the best ways to get retweets, the best ways to get followers. Some people have no huge notoriety but have a huge following because they just post very, very witty things. Look at comedians out there – comedians have massive numbers of followers. Why? Because they tell a quick joke with every tweet. That's what humorists do, right? It's quick and you laugh and you move on. Twitter was built for comedians, so being funny and witty is a great way to build a following. In fact, I'll give a shout out to one of the *Spring Awakening* cast members, Alex Wyse. His Twitter account is fantastic because he just tweets these very funny, simple things. I love him – check him out, follow him, he's a great example of how to use social media to, again, be a good friend. People like to hang out with people that are funny.

Be friends with other people – simple, follow other people. For example, if you look on my Twitter account you will notice that I am following all of the big Broadway people out there. I am trying to get connected to all of those people. You should do the same – if you want shows to follow you then you have to do the same thing for them. This is showing up for other people and that is a very quick way to build a following, by connecting. It's a basic principle of reciprocity and it works in social media. "Hey, I'm following you, hopefully you'll follow me." Very simple, and it doesn't take too much to get a click and, remember, the right clicks, you're not going to just follow anybody, that was the old spam way. No, using my example I follow the right Broadway people, I follow that community in the hope that their network will become a part of my network, that's how you want to build it. Again, quality not quantity.

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



The third way to be a good friend – you provide information that your friends don't have but need, want, like. This is exclusive content. So, an example – my blog is an example of this. You'll notice that I tweet my blog out every day because I'm providing information that hopefully the right type of people, not just anybody, will want to see. Today I wrote about where I think Broadway theaters are going to be in 20 years and how I think we're breaking down fourth walls, we're going outside, we're doing 360 degree theatres. Not everyone is going to be interested in that subject but the right type of people are, so that's an exclusive point of view, it's an inside point of view and its content that not everyone is talking about. Another thing – gossip, people love gossip, any kind of insider info like that. It's trying to come up with what types of information can you provide – if it's a show, is it backstage information? Is it a peak in the dressing room of your stars? Is it what it's like for your artistic director when he shows up for a day at work? That kind of stuff.

By the way – these are great for Instagram features, doing stuff about rehearsals and showing an Instagram shot a day from rehearsal. That's not only going to build a following, that's going to build the right type of following because it's going to be people who are interested in what it takes to put a show on – and, by the way, people who buy tickets are interested in that – and, because it's looking behind the curtain, it's the right type of people again. So think about, as you're building, what can I do, what can I give to people that they wouldn't normally get but would love to have access to? Again, you're opening a door to a world that they haven't seen before. It's great stuff for social media.

Another way to be a great friend – give things to your friends. Just give stuff. Again, reciprocity. There's a great book, by the way, *Influence* by Dr. Robert Cialdini, which I will include a link to, one of my favorite marketing books, it certainly applies to special media as well but it's really broad based in terms of its themes. We'll include a link in the email tomorrow. It talks a lot about reciprocity. How do you give things to your friends? One of the simplest and greatest ways to build a social media following is through contests. Contests – we do it every week. Every week we have a contest and it's great, I will tell you the tools that we use, it's a piece of software that you can get online called King Sumo, it's a contest app, it runs it for you, it makes it very simple and actually has built-in technology to help grow your social media following, but you can do everything from “Hey, retweet this ten times and you'll win a backstage tour!”, “Hey, if this reaches 2,000 retweets the first ten people that respond will get a \$1 ticket!” Anything you want, but giving things away on social media is a great way to build a following and spread the word about you're doing. Just like a friend – you give a friend something, they'll want to help you when you ask.

Next way to be a great friend – have parties. How do you do that online? You don't, and this is a super important part of building great social media followings. You're trying to sell tickets, right? You're trying to get people to show up to an actual in-theater experience. They're going to show up. That is why I am such a preacher that online marketing has to include some offline event. You have got to incorporate into your marketing something that says, “Hey, get out of in front of your computer screen and show up at this place.” Remember, that's what you want them to eventually do. You want them to buy a ticket so doing an offline event – we call it a party here- it can be anything, it can be a meet and greet with the cast, it can be a backstage tour, no

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



matter what it is. It can be “The cast are performing at this event, come and see it!” Broadway in Bryant Park or “At this book signing anyone who’s a social media follower is going to get a free CD there instead of having to buy it.” What have you done there? You’ve incorporated an offline event and giving things, number four. So there’s lots of stuff you can do but you have to incorporate it – don’t just do online marketing. I know it’s so “easy”, I’m just going to sit in front of my computer and I’m going to bang away at social media all day long.

You’ve got to incorporate offline marketing into whatever it is you’re doing because what I’ve found is every time I have offline marketing two things happen – at the offline event social media traffic spikes, because what’s everyone doing at this specific event? They’re tweeting about it, they’re taking pictures, putting them on Instagram, they’re talking about it on Facebook, they’re checking in on Foursquare – God, remember that one? Talk about another social media site that Facebook ate up, by the way. Facebook put that one out of business by allowing people to check in, that didn’t take long. So you can meld these things together and figure out ways to make it offline and online, so social media traffic spikes and, of course, when people are in the same room with other people like them they get super excited. They go home and, again, social media traffic spikes, there’s a residual spike from the offline event, it happens all the time, and the other people following and all of their followers – remember, it’s the domino effect, you have one follower you’re going to get the others – they go “Hey, what was this exclusive piece of information or exclusive party and how can I get that? I’m going to follow them to so I can be part of that!”

Social media followings from friends to followers, whatever you want to call them, they are a different segment of fans. They’re not just your general fan – this is a more passionate fan, someone that follows you, someone that likes you, this is a more passionate person. In exchange for that passion, in exchange for them following you, they’re going to want to feel like they’re part of a different subset of your audience. You’ve got to treat them that way, right? And by doing these offline events, by giving things away to them, by providing all of this stuff, you’re going to build that following because you’re treating them just a little bit different than anyone else.

Okay, let’s go on to the next one – listen to what your friends say about you. This is a very hard thing about being a friend but a very, very important one. You need to be trolling for comments about you on social media. You need to be looking at what people are saying. There are very simple tools – we’re going to look at one of them I like to use, Hoot Suite, it’s great, you can add a stream under Hoot Suite that will search for your name, your play, your stars’ names, just to get a sense of when people are talking about that person so that you can see what people are saying about you, and this works for building a following in two ways – one, I’m doing a show tomorrow with Hugh Jackman. I’m going to have a stream of when anyone mentions Hugh Jackman, whether they use his actual Twitter or when they just say “Hugh Jackman”, which is a very important tip – don’t just search for the @, a lot of people refer to these people using their actual names because they’re- we’ll call it too lazy- to look up the @. It’s actually not being too lazy, it’s just easier for them. “I’m in love with Hugh Jackman”, they just write “Hugh Jackman”, so a big tip, do not just search for whatever Hugh Jackman’s Twitter is, which I’m trying to find out right now so that I can use the actual example here. It’s @RealHughJackman.

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



So I'm not going to set up a stream for @RealHughJackman alone, I'm going to set it up for "Hugh Jackman" as well, and I'm going to do it in conjunction with my show, 'I caught Hugh Jackman and Ken Davenport's show last night and this is what I thought – the bathroom line was too long,' or whatever those things are, you need to listen so you can respond.

This is extremely important. It has to do with what I talked about before, about this being the age of the consumer. Consumers don't just expect responses, they feel entitled to one and they are. They paid money and they went to see your event, they follow you or they're thinking about following you, they're passionate enough to talk about you. If they mention you, you need to respond. We have one little must in all of my social marketing campaigns, all of them – if anyone mentions us, they get a reply. Every single person that mentions one of my shows gets a "Hey, thanks!" if they said they loved it or "You're welcome!" if we treated them well or "Sorry about that," if a blizzard came in January and made us cancel a show on the weekend of Comic-Con. "We're so sorry, here's what you can do..." You need to do that. Every single one of my shows gets a response and yours should too. I know, you've got to sit there, you've got search for it, but that is the key – they'll think you're listening. It's also, by the way, the big secret, the quicker you respond to criticism online, to a tweet where someone is calling you out or wants your attention, "Hey, so-and-so!", the quicker you respond the quicker you quell them, the quicker you quiet them, the quicker that they're more likely to not continue to go at it and at it. They want a response, that's why they're using your @ sign, that's why they're tweeting at you, because they want you to respond. It's very sensitive, you have to be very careful, but they deserve a response.

The second way we talked about setting up a stream – this is a great way to build up a following because many people that are perhaps talking about Hugh Jackman right now may not know that he's in a show of mine – by the way, this is a fantasy of mine, to have Hugh Jackman, of course who wouldn't want Hugh Jackman in a show, so this is like Ken's fantasy webinar – so Hugh Jackman's in a show that I'm producing and I am searching for people who are talking about Hugh Jackman because I want them to know he's in a show of mine. I will then respond to them – "Hey, do you know about this? Follow us here," "Oh, well I love Hugh Jackman..."- if you like Hugh Jackman, you will like the show that Ken is producing with Hugh Jackman. This is a very easy way and this works with all different types of people – that's the great thing about social media, it's not just the star, if you're doing a play, you better make sure you search for any play, I don't care if it's Off-Broadway or Off-Off-Broadway, and the actors have Twitter accounts and followers, you'd better be setting up streams for who's talking about those people because you can go to them – "Hey, do you know Megan McGinnis is starring in my production of *Daddy Long Legs* right now? It's on 45th Street, I know you're a fan of what you just saw of her on YouTube – you should come and see her live!" It's an easy, great way to build your following, making sure you're listening to what your friends and your future friends may be saying about you.

Number seven – don't be that friend. You know what I'm talking about, don't be that guy. No one likes a friend who's pushing them all the time, who's testing them, "Hey, what's going on? What's going on?" You can't be that guy. You have to be very careful of not overdoing social media. You don't want to talk about what you had for breakfast, you don't want to be "I, I, I,

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



here's what I'm doing," it can't be all about you. Remember that paraphrased presidential quote – it's about what you can do for your followers, what you can do for your friends. How many posts a day is a big question; you have to think about this.

If you've noticed, I don't overdo it; I'm a person who does one to three a day. My blog is posted, I'll do one other, maybe two, it depends on the day. Today I did a few because we had this webinar coming up and I did want people to know about it, but if you look at how I tweeted it out it was in a very "What I can do for you" kind of way. The same thing, you don't want to overdo it. People will become numb to your posts and numb to your tweets if you're doing too much and not providing them with enough value. You've got to think, "How is this valuable to my people? Is this funny? Does it have interesting content? Is there something free? Is it about an offer? Is it of value to them?" That's what I try to think about before I press "Post." Is this of value? Who is this going to help when I post this? If you can do that all day long and provide incredible value then go for it all day long, but if you're only talking about what you just ate or how someone just annoyed you on the street, well you want to tone that down. Don't be that guy, don't be that friend, because it's not the best type of friend to have.

So once you've built this following we want to turn these followers, these friends, into audience members, right? We also want to turn them into ambassadors. That's the tricky part but it can be done so let's have a talk about how we turn your following into ticket buyers. Now, look, the hard part about this is we need to look at the subject of this webinar as a whole first. It's called "Social Media." Social media. It is not sales media; it is social by nature. Again, it's about friendship. It is not direct response sales. This is not direct mail, this is not television. We talked about this at the beginning – push, push, push. This is not push media, this is an exchange, interaction, sharing media. Again, that's why they call them friends; it's about friendship. The biggest mistake I've seen people make with their social media campaign is that they have a show, they start a Facebook page, start a Twitter account and the first thing out of their mouth is like, "Hey, we're doing a show! Buy tickets for \$25!" and that ain't going to work, my friend, because, look, put it in a real life context – and you'll see the continued theme here is that friends on social media need to be like friends in real life.

Imagine you and I meet on the street, first time, you've never met me, you don't know anything about me, I say, "Hey, hi, how are ya? My name's Ken, buy this from me, buy this from me, buy this from me!" What would you do? You would not only not buy anything from me, you would run the other way and if you ever saw me coming down the street again you would walk around me, you would avoid me like crazy, because who wants a friend like that? He's just pushing something onto you the whole time. Social media is social – that's how your marketing campaign has to be built. When you're thinking about developing your campaign I don't want you to think "I'm building a following so people will buy things from me." Yes, of course we need it, we talked about it at the beginning, I don't want to apologize for the fact that we have to sell stuff, but in social media specifically we're looking for friends to support you. How they're going to support you is they're going to buy tickets. How they're going to support you is they're going to get other people to buy tickets, but in looking at how to build it and looking at how to turn them into that, we need the mindset of "I'm looking to build these friends to support me because that's what friends do."

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



Selling on social media is a slow game, you can't come out of the box like "Buy these tickets for \$25! Buy, buy, buy from me! Buy from me!" To do it right you have to start early and build what I call social trust. Do a lot, again, for your friends and followers first before you can sell. You will drive people away from you if you jump out and sell too fast on social media. It's different in direct mail – something arrives in your inbox, that's where people go, and a lot of that stuff gets thrown away. Television advertising is built that way. That was not why social media was invented and because the advertising, because the marketing is so mixed in with a message it has to appear to be social in general. It can be done. Look, with *Spring Awakening* we sold over \$50,000 worth of tickets on an Instagram offer. How did we do that? Do you think we announced the show and we said, "Buy tickets for \$50!?" No, that was much later in the game, it was after we had built up content, after we had earned people's trust and, more importantly, the reason the social media campaign was so successful on *Spring Awakening* was because that cast was so active on social media, not only about the show itself, and we were delivering all of this exclusive content.

We had these fantastic Instagram takeovers where we allowed one cast member to take over the official @SpringBway Instagram account and then we let another one and then another one so we slowly built followers each time where you got to know the cast, not only their characters in the show and how they were going to participate in the show but also their stories – how they got to work every day, their life stories – and obviously, if you know about *Spring Awakening*, the actors in that show had very interesting and unique lives and so many of them were experiencing their Broadway debuts, etc. It was after we had gone out with all of that information that we said, "Now let's try an offer," and it worked tremendously well because of the social trust that we had built up. Don't offer it too quickly, you will blow it.

The other important thing to do in order to sell on social media is remember these people are your friends and that means they do more for you than the general public and you have to do more for them. This is, again, going back to that – you've got to offer them the insider access, special seats, unique experiences, things they can't get elsewhere. Again, using a *Spring* example, but we did this on *Godspell* as well, we did this on *Macbeth*, and *Macbeth* is a show you would not think would be a social media show, it's Shakespeare for goodness sake. People would say, "Social media accounts on Shakespeare, why would you do that?" Well, one, I had Alan Cumming who is very active on social media and, two, we wanted to get a younger audience into that show as part of the mission of doing that show. We looked at the top social media followers and we invited them to a special party where they got to meet Alan Cumming. Man, you couldn't believe the attention we got from that.

With *Godspell* we took our top tweeters and we gave them Tweet Seats. This was at Rock Center and it was talked about in three major publications, the Wall Street Journal, all over the place, where I put twenty of our top tweeters, top social media followers, in seats in the theatre and allowed them to tweet while the show was going on. They were called Tweet Seats. We'll send an article about this tomorrow as well, I think there's a video we can show you. Again, we treated them special. What did they do? Of course Twitter blew up that night. It actually blew up both ways, by the way, there was a big controversy about it. All press good press, right? Or almost all press is good press, I should say, but we got a tremendous amount of social media

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



response from that because we offered a unique experience that they couldn't get elsewhere and if you weren't following us – and, in the *Godspell* case, promoting us – you couldn't get that experience anywhere, you couldn't say, "I was the first person to sit in a Broadway Tweet Seat," and that's what those twenty people did and still say to this day. You're rewarding them for being special.

To speak specifically about discounts, this came up at an advertising meeting I was at recently, they wanted to do an offer and they built up some good trust and there was some good stuff going on on social media and they we talked about doing an offer and they said, "Well just tickets, we don't have any special experience, we're just going to throw out a ticket", "What's the discount?", "Oh, well these guys are our fans, let's charge them more money because we know they'll definitely come, they'll want to see the show," and I was like "Are you kidding me? You can't charge them more if you're just giving them the same experience." If you're giving them something else, sure, you can add a few bucks to it, you're providing them with more value and you have more costs, but you'd better be giving them better than the lowest discount in the market, don't take advantage of your friends. Again, you wouldn't do that in real life, you cannot do it on social media. You want to be a good friend, you offer your friend something that you wouldn't offer to anybody else, because your goal is not only to get these people to buy, your goal is to get these people to be your biggest ambassadors.

You want them to be your biggest proponents of online word of mouth because, look, the truth is, especially for Twitter followers, they may not buy thousands of dollars' worth of tickets. Why? Because they may not even be here. This is one of the other reasons why we talk about quality of followers as opposed to quantity. "Look at all the followers I have!" I've got news for you – if those followers aren't within a three-hour commute to New York City you're going to have a very hard time turning them into ticket sales unless you can push button number two on social media marketing which is getting those people to promote for you, using them as your ambassadors. To give some specifics on this, early on in the *Spring Awakening* campaign we had a huge number of Twitter followers, compared to other new musicals at the time, and we weren't selling tickets early to that group, it was an early thing, so I said to my associate Kayla, who you all know is a real person now, "Let's survey these people. I want to know if they bought a ticket, if they haven't, why they haven't, blah, blah, blah." You know what we found? Of the 13,000 followers we surveyed 41% were from out of town, *Spring Awakening* was literally, they said, too far for them. We've got people on this webinar right now from Ecuador, Argentina, Australia. They ain't coming to see a show of yours any time soon, unless they're super, super fans.

So if we can't get them to show up we have to use them to promote, so that's what we did on *Spring*, we changed our campaign. Yes, we provided offline activities for the core fans, we did all sorts of things for them to get them to eventually buy more, but we also got the others, that 41%, to help promote. In fact, we used an ambassador campaign where we gave part time jobs to those people. We said, "Hey, listen," and I believe I'm the only producer that has done this and I've done it three or four times, it actually started back on *Altar Boyz*, I said, "Listen, you're a super fan of this show, would you like a part time job? Here, here's your own unique discount code for the show, go out there and promote it and we'll pay you. We'll give you a commission

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



on every ticket that you sell.” So we activated those people that couldn’t actually buy a ticket. Two buttons to push there – it’s about getting them to buy but it’s also about getting them to promote. You can use the cash but there are many ways to do it without cash. You always want these people to buy but, again, there’s this bifurcated approach of getting them to buy but then there’s also getting them to get other people to buy for you. Just because your following doesn’t buy doesn’t mean they can’t get those other people to do it.

Getting people to be your ambassadors, that’s what social media is, it’s social. Sales will result for sure, but it’s actually easier to get that promoting and it could be more valuable because getting a friend to tell a hundred of their friends to buy tickets is a lot more meaningful to you than them just buying one ticket. Does that make sense? I’m going to repeat it – getting a friend to tell a hundred of their friends to buy tickets is a lot more meaningful than them just buying one ticket. Of course, you’re getting a third party promotion, you’re getting word of mouth – word of mouth is the number one driver of ticket sales, we see this time and time again, so activating them to promote for you is the easiest way to get bucks into your box office.

Okay, before we get to the questions and answers, let’s do a quick recap of all the stuff we’ve talked about tonight so that you can go out there and build your own social media campaign. Facebook is going to be your foundation. You’re going to use Facebook as a foundation and build it from there. How you build it from there, you’ve got to focus on the social network where your audience is. You’ve got a younger show, you’ve got an older show, you’ve got to figure it out. If you’ve got a show that’s very visual, maybe you’re going to go to Instagram, etc. But remember, big Instagram shows, or shows that are focusing on an older audience which, again, especially Broadway, average age 44 years old and female, right? If your audience is not on Instagram, don’t spend a lot of time on Instagram – biggest mistake. You may love Instagram, a lot of advertising agencies, marketing directors may be on Instagram, especially if the marketing people are younger, that’s where they are, that doesn’t mean that your audience is there. Focus on the social network where your audience is and don’t let people say, “Oh, it’s free.” Time is money. Which would you rather spend? This is a question to ask yourself – which one is going to get you more ROI? Spending an hour on Instagram or spending an hour on Facebook? Focus on the social network where your audience is.

It’s the quality of your friends, not the quantity. I don’t want you looking at those numbers anymore, I want you to look at the people, the types of people that are on. I don’t care how many likes or followers, I want to make sure that you have the right ones that are then spreading the word to the right networks.

To get better friends you’ve got to be an even better friend. This is, again, the concept of giving exclusive information, offline events, parties, listening in to what people are saying about you so that can respond to them. Listening to what people are saying about you – one of my favorite things to do as a producer is stand outside the women’s bathroom during an intermission of a show, literally physically me going “What are people saying?” Or stand at the exit doors as people are leaving. You need to do that online and social media allows you to do that, unlike any other form of media there is. You need to listen, not only to friends and followers but also to people that are generally talking about you. And, by the way, this is not chatrooms or chat boards

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



– those are different things, although I peruse them for sure, I look for general things, but that's not exactly what I'm talking about here, I'm talking about social media in general because social media has a way to be much broader in reach.

Selling on social media – social media is not sales media, it's social. Social. Don't say "I'm going to start a Twitter campaign because I want to sell lots of tickets!" No, you've got to think "I'm going to build a following and then the ticket sales will come." If you build it, they will come for sure. Selling on social media is a slow game. You can't jump out of the box and just say "Buy, buy, buy, buy, buy!" Sell them something special that the general public cannot get – insider access. Treat these guys different, they will then treat you different to every other show out there. They will return the favor if you are good to them first.

And, finally, just because they don't buy doesn't mean they can't get other people to buy. Remember, bifurcated approach, get them eventually, offer them a chance, especially with insider special experiences, and make sure you're getting them to promote for you as well, give them the tools to do it. Over time they will naturally start to do it if you've been a good friend, in the meantime they will talk about you.

Before we get to some questions let me give you some tools to help you market on social media. These first two or three are all social media monitoring tools. Hoot Suite is what I use. Sprout Social is what some more agency types use. Tweet Deck. These allow you to monitor several things at once, several accounts. On Hoot Suite I can take a look at my accounts for my shows, it's like a stock ticker on my screen. I have it on my screen every single day – I have three screens in my office. For any of you who are consult or coaching clients, you know I've got all of these screens. One of them has Hoot Suite on it all day long so that I can see things in real time, just like a stock broker, and I can also post at certain times, that's another big thing that these three will do – you can automate posts for you that will go at certain times so you don't have to do it. Hoot Suite especially will actually optimize the sending of your tweet at time when they think you're going to get the most traction so use one of these, you shouldn't just be tweeting straight out of Twitter, there's all sorts of tools that you can use to do it. King Sumo is the contest site that I talked about. Bitly is the URL shortening tool, there's Ow.ly and all of these other ones as well, because with Twitter, of course, you're limited to 140 characters.

Facebook advertising, if you want to take social media advertising to the next level, Facebook has great ads that you can do for as little as \$5 a day for whatever you want and test a lot. Again, you're going to learn a lot from this blog, if you didn't see it a couple of weeks ago we're going to send it to you tomorrow, about how you can use Facebook advertising to test lots of stuff very, very cheaply. There's a ton of this stuff out there. If you want to do something, just Google it, you will find it, but, again, these are the ones that I use for all of the campaigns that we do here and for all of my shows and I stare at them every single day.

Okay, I figured we would go a little over because there's a lot of stuff we just talked about in the webinar but let's get to your questions. I want to take as many as we can get through. If you have a question today, here is the process for it – *6, just like that. You will electronically raise your hand, Kayla will call on you and go ahead and when you're unmuted say your name, where

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



you're calling from and your question. Okay, let's see if we've got any questions on social media and building a following and turning that following into ticket sales.

Question: Hi. Ryan here. How have you seen the recent changes? Instagram has just changed how they post things onto their feed. How do you see that affecting the referrals of your posts and turning them into ticket sales and influencers and those kinds of things?

Ken: If I'm following this, I just want to repeat it, how Instagram has changed and you gave something very specific, how they appear in your feed, is that what you said?

Question: Yeah, how they decide how things appear in your feed. Before it was based on time but now it's based on impressions and various different things that they've thrown in there. I don't know if you've seen that.

Ken: Yes, we have. Here's the thing – I've not only seen this on Instagram, I've seen this on Facebook, I've seen this on Google. Every time the social media sites or any website changes their algorithms or changes their methods of delivery, it happens all the time, and where it's affected small businesses the most, of course, is Google, because Google, you rely on those search directory rankings. I can tell you, *The Awesome '80s Prom*, which ran for ten years here in New York City, a big hit with thrived on bachelorette party traffic – if you search for “bachelorette party” in this area, *The Awesome '80s Prom* came up first. They changed their algorithm at one point and we dropped from the first page to the fourth page and literally sales started to drop. All of the sites do this constantly.

There are tons of people out there that are trying to figure out the right algorithm – “Here's what you do, here's what you do, here's what you do,” – and here's what I've found: every time Facebook has changed it, every time Instagram has changed it, we're still new at it so we're still getting through right now, Google has changed it, I remain consistent to my strategy of giving value to the customers because that's generally why they're changing their algorithm, because someone has cracked it and are delivering messages that don't have a lot of value, they're starting to get a little spammy and they start punishing the spammers and rewarding more the people that are delivering true value to their customers. So your traffic will drop, your likes will drop, these things may happen in the short term but if you remain consistent to the core strategy then you will get through the little dip and you will go back up and start to build.

These reconfigurations, or recalibrations I should say, of all the sites out there, they're designed to filter out and shake off the people who are taking advantage of the system. That's why so many of the tools and tips that I use are broader and general, all of that stuff, because that stuff never gets old. Yes, they make shake you up a little bit, you may see a little drop, but remain consistent and you'll be good for the long term. Okay, let's see if we have any other questions out there. Go ahead.

Question: Hi, Ken. I wanted to know how you can figure out how many posts you should do and if the posts should be equal on every social media?

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



Ken: That's a very good question. So the number of posts, one of the things that I do when I'm introducing new campaigns is you have to watch that activity very closely. Ogilvy said it best – if you want your advertising to get better, you test. Testing is in social media as well – post one thing one day, post three things the next day, post ten things the third day, see how the activity goes. Are people engaging with everything you do? Again, this also depends on the quality of your posts. If you have great things to say then you can do ten. The president of the United States can get away with ten posts – he's an authority figure, he's got a lot to say, people are very interested. I mean it took him a long time to build up that authority, right? It depends on the quality of your posts, so it's about the things you're saying and how much interaction you're getting. Not only watch people who are following you, watch people unfollowing you – why do they stop? Too many people are focused on the number of increases in likes, they forget that people are unliking them. On Facebook, specifically, you can see that – unlikes, defollowers, that stuff. You need to look at that because then you can see what's turning people off as well. So test different things, try one, five, three, four, seven, all sorts of things and see which one benefits you the most.

To talk about the second part of your question, some things are great for all social media accounts, others are not. Things that are photo-centric are great for Facebook, Instagram, maybe not so much Twitter. I wrap most of my stuff up altogether and there are ways, of course, you can click and post to the other social media sites. I think, for the most part, having that happen is harmless as long as it's quality content. Again, as long as it's quality you can have multiples at once. Sometimes, if I have lots of messages, I'll take it off of Facebook and I'll do five tweets in a day. Retweets and these things, you're not going to put retweets on Facebook. Facebook, because it's a foundation, because so many people are on it, because so many people check it constantly throughout the day, you want to make sure that it's less cluttered than Twitter and Instagram. Think about it, it's your foundation, it's your garage, you want it less cluttered. You want it strong and clean. Okay, let's take another question.

Question: Hey, Ken. It's Brock in New York. How are ya?

Ken: Great, Brock. Go ahead.

Question: Okay, first of all I wanted to thank you for the Producer's Perspective Pro because I've joined that and you're adding even more value. Just when I thought you couldn't add any more, you did, saving me money while adding more value and content for me, so thank you for that.

Ken: My pleasure. I'm glad you're a member; thanks for signing up.

Question: Okay, now I'm going to turn the table a little bit on you and I want to ask you the Genie Question – what is the one thing that you would change about social media to make it more effective for us, not only for theatre but the business in general?

Ken: It's a great question. So my answer is actually what is going to happen organically, and we've already seen it. Look, everyone in life is attracted to the new and shiny and sexy thing

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



that's all over the headlines, and certainly I'm one of those people, especially when it comes to tech. So when Facebook was blowing up, when Twitter came along, I was one of the first early adopters for all of this stuff. I'm the tech guy on Broadway, I love looking at how we can incorporate tech, I just live streamed *Daddy Long Legs*, I'm trying to drag us a little bit into the 21st century, because we're ten years behind, everyone knows this, Broadway is ten years behind.

But there is a reason Broadway is ten years behind – our audience is ten years behind. So after Facebook and Twitter blew up I would go to every meeting – we're talking ten years ago now – and people were like, "We've got to have a Facebook page, we've got to be on Twitter, we've got to be doing all of this stuff!" and we would be working on a traditional play, a drama, for a traditional theatre-going audience, a quiet drama, a very good drama, I'm thinking about one specifically, and they wanted to spend all of this time and all of this money on all the social media marketing and I had to raise my hands and say, "Don't do that," and there was a gasp at the table because everyone's like "Ken, you believe in this stuff," and I was like "Yeah, I do, but my mom isn't there. My mom is not there." So the biggest change that's already happening is my mom is on Facebook.

Slowly but surely we're getting into the next generation. Ten or twenty years from now what's going to change is that the next generation is going to be there and that's why I want you to start this stuff now, because slowly but surely that age, that's just going to increase, Facebook is continuing to build, continuing to grow, continuing to be a foundation of everyone's daily life, so what I want to change is what is changing which is that traditional theatergoers are starting to be attracted to social media on a daily basis.

I keep saying the average theatergoer is 44 years old and female, I forget I'm 43 now, I'll be 44 this summer, so I'm an average theatergoer. Yes, I'm an early adopter average theatergoer but give it five or ten years and the average theatergoers are going to be all over the social media sites, which is why, if you are listening and you are not involved in social media campaigns or not building a following for yourself as well as your show, you're behind. So let's get with it and get started today, because the quicker you get started, you're going to take that following with you, your friends will follow you wherever you go. My following, my personal following on Facebook or Twitter, when I go to producer another show, they all go "Oh, look, Ken's doing another show." I have the opportunity, hopefully, to pull some of them into the show. So it's about the average theatergoer – I want more of them on social networking but it's going to happen whether we like it or not. Okay, let's see if we have another question out there.

Question: Hey, Ken. Rick in Sarasota, Florida. How are you?

Ken: I'm great, I'm great.

Question: I'm doing well. I appreciate you looking at the script. I've got two questions. By the way, the picture of your mom is so cute and your dad, his goatee looks great, what a great picture that was. Ken, I'm going to ask you a couple of quick questions here – one is I love social media, I love what it has to offer but I'm confused about a couple of things. The hashtags on Twitter, to

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



retweet, for example if I want to tweet something that will take you there, like from “Somewhere in Time”, or if I want to tweet something and a hashtag with something, is that branded or can I take that with the names from my show and my musical and start hash tagging the brands out there and try to signature and brand something with the Twitter?

Ken: I’m glad you brought this up. So hashtags on Twitter is a very good discussion. Hashtagging has become a thing, and I am the biggest offender here, but it’s usually because I’m not trying to build when I’m doing these things, but hashtags have become a bit of a joke. #ohmygodcanyoubelievehejustsaidthat – they’re just like a tag-on, it’s a little bit of humor. Being funny, being humorous, being witty is a way to build followers so I try to add that in the hashtag, it’s like a little button of a joke and a lot of people do this and that’s great, however that’s a very different strategy to when it comes to building a following.

When you’re building a following – remember when I was talking about being friends with other people – that’s not only just attaching yourself, tweeting at, following other people, that is also making sure your conversation is included in other conversations about big topics. So hashtags are best used, of course, and this is why they were invented, because people couldn’t communicate with other people or didn’t even know they were out there. With a hashtag they could get them into the conversation, so on the Academy Awards night anyone tweeting #Oscars, if they were searching for anyone involved in that conversation – imagine a big room, here’s the room where people are talking about Oscars – you get to go in and just hear all of the conversation. Hashtags are a great way to build your following when there is a right following.

If you’re talking about a Broadway show and you’re going to use the hashtag #WorldSeries you’re not going to do so well, in fact you’ll probably get thrown out of that room if you start marketing that show. Now, if you’re doing a baseball paly and you want to talk about the World Series and you can intelligently talk about the World Series in a very confident, funny way, providing value to those people, you will build your following and then slowly – remember, it’s a slow game – eventually they’ll follow you. “Wow, he’s doing a play!” So using hashtags for big events, big occurrences, is a great way to build your following. It can also be used as the button of a joke but you’re not going to grow your following that way. You can hashtag whatever you want, try all sorts of things, there are no copyright issues or any of that stuff. Hashtags are a great way to build a following. Okay, we’ve got a few more questions so let’s try to get through them. Go for it.

Question: Hi, Ken. This is Taylor. I work at the Durham Performing Arts Center in Durham, North Carolina, and I wanted to ask you a question about targeting on Facebook. I liked your point about it’s better to get 100 people to tell someone about something than just sell one ticket but I wanted to ask how you determine how targeted to do your ads and I have a specific example. For example, this show *Million Dollar Quartet* that has a much older audience but if you target it to just 44, and above then people like me who are 24 and know that “Oh, my mom would love to see that show,” won’t see that ad. How much value do you think you’re losing by doing such a targeted ad?

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



Ken: Well what I would do in that case, if you decide – and of course this goes for your budget as well – if you decide in your marketing meeting, I don't know if you know about my marketing scrum – we'll put a link to this video in the e-mail – I do this scrum before I do every show where all my staff get in a room and we decide who the niche audiences for shows are, who's more likely to come, and then we go after them. If you scrummed like we do and you said, "Okay, people that are going to come to *Million Dollar Quartet* are fans of Elvis," so that's going to be an older group. Okay, other people that might buy tickets – daughters, sons of people who saw this in concert and may want to get it as a present for their parents or grandparents or whoever that is. Well, that's a different campaign so I would 100%, and I love the idea of having two campaigns going, but the key is not in the segmentation of the campaign, the key in there is the ads running to the different segmented campaigns because you are not – and it's very easy, a lot of people make this mistake – you cannot serve the same ads to every group of people. You cannot serve *Million Dollar Quartet* live at the Durham Performing Arts Center, \$55 tickets next weekend. That ain't going to work to the younger set. It might work to the older ones, it might, if they know what *Million Dollar Quartet* is. I'd probably do something like "Elvis lives at Durham!" and they're like "Oh, what's Elvis lives?" or something like that, or "See the recording session that no one got to see," that kind of stuff, real headline type things work very well on Facebook, but you're not going to do that with the younger audience because they don't care about seeing Elvis or the recording session, they don't care so much, but "The birthday present that your Elvis-fan dad would love," that ad, that segmented to the right group, that gets clicks.

So, again, the great thing about social media advertising, with Facebook and AdWords and that kind of stuff, it's so cheap to have different ads for different groups of people. You can't do that with direct mail. I mean you can, but it's expensive, you have to have a different piece of mail for the younger audience and a different piece of mail for the older audience. That's expensive, postage isn't cheap, it's all sorts of things. So I love the segmentation idea but you have to make sure you have different ads for each one – and test them. Which one's doing the most? In fact, what you really should do is have two ads for the older audience and two ads for the younger audience, split test and see which ones are doing best, then pick the one that's doing best and then come up with a second ad and see which one does better for that. So it's all about split testing but if you're going to segment audiences you've got to segment ads. Okay, next question.

Question: Hello?

Ken: Hi, go ahead with the question.

Question: Hi, this is Rose, I'm calling from People's Light, we're a regional theatre in Malvern, just outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Going forward in the next few years we're going to be producing a lot of new plays, so world premieres of various kinds of plays, so I was wondering if you had any kind of insight into how to market brand new plays that maybe don't have the title recognition, nobody's necessarily heard of these titles before, on social media. Right now we're doing *Richard III*, that's been very easy to do on social media, everybody knows Shakespeare, there's lots of jokes that we've been making and we've had lots of success but we've got a world premiere coming up in a couple pf months and I'm kind of stumped as to

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



how to get tracking about that on social media so I was wondering if you could maybe have any experience with new plays and marketing those.

Ken: That's obviously more challenging when you have unknown brands. That's most difficult to market, when you have anything that's unknown, so you need to figure out a way to get that information to be attractive and interesting. As I think about it, what I will probably play with is this unknown quantity, this mysterious quantity. I was talking about this recently with someone who was asking about raising money. So *Richard III* had a premiere at one point, or *Proof* had a premiere, *Rent* had a premiere. All of these shows had premieres so it's about trying to get your audience, like "Imagine if you were the first person to see *Proof*. Click here to see what could be the next *Proof*." Try to get their interests and let them know that they're getting in on something very exciting and very different that could be the next big thing.

The other thing I would try to do, if you're going to do new stuff and you don't know what they are, is about the mystery of it, the idea of it, that it's new and exciting and what's going to be mysterious about these new plays. Of course there is a group of people that go to new plays and that's what they love. They're out there but they're hard to find. They're hard to find because they're risk-takers. The bigger the risk, the harder the people are to find, whether that's in raising the money or whether that's finding an audience, so you're going to have a harder time locating those people. So what we really need to focus on is finding those people and getting them super active in finding other people like them and when you get them don't let them go. So I would try to do something, like the first one you're doing, really do something special for these people. In fact, one of the offline events, the party ideas that I might do, is I would do a special reading of the new play for free for subscribers or for free for the public, and whoever goes to the free event, those people are interested in new plays. I wouldn't charge them a penny, I would have a talk back, I would do that kind of stuff to find these people. You need to throw a big net out there, throw some great bait in it, get them to come and make sure you get all of that information and get them to help you grow that group.

Also, one of the keys to building social media campaigns for new plays is about the playwrights themselves – encouraging your playwrights to have big social media followings and push to their social media followings. You can drip out a line a day, a scene a day – this is another great thing. "When was the last time you saw this?" which I think would be awesome. We don't even do it in our advertising – maybe I should on the next play, actually. When you see a trailer for a movie, you see scenes from the movie. When you see a trailer or something for a new play, you don't see it, you don't hear it. Maybe you'll see some b-roll but more likely you'll just see a headshot of a person or a voiceover, "This month, starring on Broadway in the new David Mamet drama, blah, blah, blah." What if, online, you said, "Read this scene from this new play?" Whet their appetite, give them a couple of pages. American Theatre Magazine, I think, used to do this. I don't know if they still do but they used to put scenes from plays in there. What if you did that?

We did something like this on *Daddy Long Legs* on social media – we offered sheet music for free for "The Secret of Happiness." We wanted more people singing that and that thing got out there like crazy and actually that dovetailed into the contest we're running right now which has been one of the most successful social media campaigns I have had on one of the smallest shows.

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



Daddy Long Legs, a beautiful two-person music, we live streamed it, but other than that it's a beautiful traditional 150 seat theatre, gorgeous traditional show, it had one of the most successful social media campaigns I've ever had in terms of it gave a girl her chance, definitely Google it, we'll include a link tomorrow, 180 submissions, and literally 50,000 votes on who will win this contest. 50,000. You know what that means? 50,000 emails that we just got that we can promote thanks to all of these incredibly talented young ladies recording their videos, sending them out, using them as our ambassadors and, remember, just to recap at the end, I'm not selling them a thing, I'm giving them an opportunity, that's all that I'm doing. In the process I have built this massive following.

So it's getting those playwrights to drip some stuff out. I love this idea of releasing a scene. I think that's a really cool thing, especially for new plays. You don't have brand recognition – give people some brand recognition, give people a reason. They know *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, they know this, they know it's good, and they don't even know the play. "God, I love that scene, I love this," they don't know that, so give people that on your website. Anyone who reads it, clicks, signs on, "Follow me to get a free scene", that is part of your new play contingent. Okay, next up. I think we have one more question.

Question: Last one, Ken. It's Brock again. I couldn't help it. For you, what is it about musical theater that sets it apart from any other entertainment experience on Earth? To wrap it up, what is it about musical theater that sets it apart from any other entertainment experience on Earth?

Ken: Wow, a big, broad question to wrap it up. Well, look, I wish I could come up with some big, intelligent answer to this but the simple fact is when I go see a really great musical, it reaches into my heart and gives it a little squeeze. It just chills me. I'll get choked up, or there's something about it. Of course that's what music is designed to do, it gets into our soul. I just did a podcast interview with John Doyle, it's not going out for a few weeks, and he said that. He just said he loves musicals because music gets under your skin and seeps into your heart and soul and just gets you emotional, and great musicals just do that.

The fancier answer to this is one of the greatest quotes about art there is, I believe, is "Art is meant to disturb," and it doesn't mean disturb in a gothic horror kind of way, it just means disturb as in push you off your axis, just make you think about things in a different way, and because music can be so emotionally chilling and emotionally affecting and really get into your heart and soul more than the spoken word, because musicals can use both so we get the power of the spoken word and then, when the spoken word isn't enough, we can take it to another heightened form of expression, the music, when we can do that, it just makes us think more. *Les Mis* makes you think about people living in the streets who aren't given enough attention and a voice. *Hamilton*, it's all these things. *Kinky Boots* is a great example of a musical that has you cheering in the aisles – "Everyone say yeah!" And you realize that a lot of people from other parts of the country that didn't know what the story of *Kinky Boots* was are like "I can't believe who I was just cheering for," and that's when theatre is at its best, that's when art is at its best and that's when musical theater, which is, without a doubt, my favorite art form on the planet, is at its best. So that will about wrap it up.

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



Before we do go, though, I want to tell you about next month's webinar – How Do I Get the Rights to the Book/Movie/Music. One of the most popular questions I get from consulting clients, coaching clients, from people that email me – “I’ve got a great idea, Ken, a great idea, but I need the rights to the book, the movie, music, all of them, one of them, anything. I need to get the rights. How do I do it?” That’s what we’re going to talk about Wednesday May 4th at 7pm. We are going to go through all of that, I am going to talk you through the steps that I use to get the rights to everything I’ve done, from revivals like *Godspell* to original novels like *Somewhere in Time* to music catalogues that I’ve gone after. We’re going to talk about all of that stuff, we’re going to talk about the people that you may need to get involved and the strategies on how to get those rights holders, whether it’s a living author, whether it’s an estate, whether it’s a company, how we get them to give them up to you. Wednesday, May 4th, 7pm, \$149 just like all my webinars, they’re all the same, or free, absolutely free, for Producer’s Perspective Pro members. Sign up, get a seven-day trial and check it out. We’re getting great feedback on it.

I hope you join Producer’s Perspective Pro today, you’re going to love it. We actually have – remember the offline marketing idea? We’ve got a networking event coming up, it will be really cool to get all the Pro people in a room and talk about what you guys are working on and let you help each other and let you all build your own social media following. Thank you so much for joining me tonight, great to have you all, especially all of you from all over the world. We’ll see you next time.