

# THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



**Happy November, PROs!**

November is the month of thanks...so let me start by saying *thank you* to all of you—not just for being Pros—but for being committed to the great tradition of the theater.

The theater is one of the oldest storytelling methods in the world (*We've got thousands of years on film and TV!*). And for those people who think that the theater is under attack from new forms of entertainment media? Well, to

them I say...we survived the invention of the radio and the TV, we'll be just fine. :-)

In fact, it has always been my belief that as more forms of two dimensional entertainment pop up everywhere (including on that device in your pocket), the three dimensional, live form of storytelling becomes more rare. And what is more rare becomes more valuable.

That's one of the reasons Broadway is booming right now!

So thank you for your commitment to this great

art form. Because it would NOT exist without passionate people like you working hard to make sure the stories you want to tell are heard. And at PRO, we're here to help you do just that. This month, take a moment to be thankful for something in your life...the gratitude will come back to you in a positive energy that will help fuel your next action.

Go get 'em!



Ken

**WRITING FOR PROS**

***What Do You Do When An Idea Stalls Through No Fault Of Your Own?***

*So many people keep banging away at an idea that has been halted instead of moving on.*

*Read more on page 2.*

**MARKETING FOR PROS**

***You'll Never Guess Who Your Best Focus Group Is***

*There is a direct correlation between how easy it is to raise money and how easy it is to sell tickets.*

*Read more on page 3.*

**RAISING MONEY FOR PROS**

***Sometimes I Want People to Say No***

*I ask everyone for money. Everyone. You never, ever know who has more cash than you can count.*

*Read more on page 4.*

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Tuesday, November 14, 2017** | 7 pm ET  
Free Monthly Webinar: Getting Press for Your Project

**Monday, November 20, 2017** | 6:30–8:30 pm ET  
PRO Office Hours Call

*As a member of PRO, you're automatically registered for the Monthly Webinar! To sign up for other seminars or events, visit [www.theproducersperspective.com](http://www.theproducersperspective.com).*

**Save the Date!!!**

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE  
**SUPER CONFERENCE**  
NOVEMBER 10 & 11, 2018

# What Do You Do When An Idea Stalls Through No Fault Of Your Own?

I have a folder on my computer called “Stalled Shows.”

It’s chock full of over thirty fantastic ideas for musicals, plays, interactive extravaganzas... and even one restaurant concept.

You know what the one thing that all of these concepts have in common?

Despite my copious amounts of action, they each hit a wall.

Maybe that wall was the rights being sold to another party before I got in touch, maybe there had already been a theatrical adaptation and it failed, or maybe I realized that what I thought was a fantastic idea was so difficult to execute that I’d be better off focusing on other ideas that could give me a better ROTI (return on my ‘time’ investment).

Whenever an idea you’ve had hits a wall, it’s hard not to get super frustrated. You believed in it! You can see it on a stage! You just know

it will work if you could just get past this stage, am I right???

You know what you should do when you hit one of these walls?

Move on to your next idea.

Sounds easy, right?

It is.

I’m here to tell you . . . if you had one great idea, you will have another one.

So many people keep banging away at an idea that has been halted instead of moving on—partly out of belief in that idea and partly out fear that they’ll never come up with something as good.

You will.

Trust yourself.

It’s just impossible to open up your creative



mind when it’s so focused on something else.

What’s funny is the moment you let go of one idea and spend time on another one, that first idea sometimes has a way of freeing up.

And there’s nothing like moving a show out of your “Stalled Shows” folder to your “In Process” folder.

## FEATURED PRO MEMBER



**Name:**  
Michael DiGaetano

**Where You’re From:**  
Mamaroneck NY, about 20 minutes away in Westchester

**PROfession:** After 25 years in LA writing and producing film and TV, I moved back to NYC to write plays and musicals.

**What projects are you currently working on?**

MD: Just finished the “Lab” draft of a big musical comedy, *Miss Humanity*, with my writing partner Daniel Lincoln, and after a

successful workshop at the Midtown Festival in July of my musical *Reverend Jackson Regrets*, I will be looking to get that produced Off-Broadway.

**Why did you join PRO?**

MD: To meet like-minded individuals. I find theatre people are not only more dedicated to their craft than most TV and film people, but they’re more open to helping each other because it’s a small community and we’re all in this together.

**What do you look for in a collaborator, and how do you seek out creative partners?**

MD: I look for collaborators who are fun to be in a room with 15 hours a day, and who can think out of the box while also agreeing to what should be inside the box to make something work.

**What have you found to be the most valuable part of being a PRO member?**

MD: To meet the BEST people, be it as a PRO or as a member of the BMI Musical Theatre Lyricist Workshop. But I’ve also learned so much from Ken’s monthly Webinars and other assets he gives us like the “Get Your Show Off The Ground” seminars.

## OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

### Here are the rumors people are whispering about these days...

The documentary-turned-Simon-McBurney-penned-play, *The Kid Stays In The Picture*, will open on Broadway in the spring at a Shubert theater to be announced. (It’s a brilliant doc, by the way.)

With Russia-US relations reminding everyone of the cold war years, it’s no surprise that producers are going to give *Chess* another go. It has never quite worked, but we’ll see what happens in the spring in the West End.

*Got a rumor? Send ‘em to me at [ken@theproducersperspective.com](mailto:ken@theproducersperspective.com).*

PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH



“The first step in solving a problem is to recognize that it doesn’t exist.”

~Zig Ziglar

MARKETING FOR PROS

# You’ll Never Guess Who Your Best Focus Group Is.

I don’t do a show without doing research. I survey my audiences after readings. I do quantitative studies online. I do in person focus groups.

But one of the most powerful research tools I have is...raising money.



You know what the one thing that all investors in the theater have in common?

They all go to the theater!

So when you’re asking them for money, you’re really asking them to buy a ticket... with a lot more zeroes attached! (And you thought *Hamilton* tickets were expensive.)

How they respond to your

pitch and to your ask can tell you a ton about how you need to position your show to ticket buyers. And it will tell you how easy your show is going to be to market!

Because let me tell you, there is a direct correlation between how easy it is to raise money and how easy it is to sell tickets.

Now, let me be clear. Just because you have trouble raising money does not mean that your show won’t work (*Hello Spring Awakening*, *Gentlemen’s Guide*, etc.). And just because it’s easy to raise money doesn’t mean you should buy a villa in France.

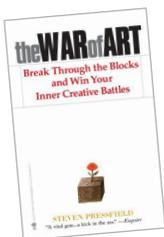
But the ease in which people respond to your ask will give you an indication on the level of interest in a potential ticket buyer later.

So when you’re raising money, try different types of asks until you find the one that unlocks someone’s wallet. That same pitch will most likely be what works to sell a ticket as well.

## Are you following Ken on Instagram?

He posts a new inspirational quote on his whiteboard every morning!  
Follow him @kendavenportbway

WHAT KEN’S READING THIS MONTH



### *The War of Art*

by Steven Pressfield

Since 2002, *The War of Art* has inspired people around the world to recognize and knock down dream-blocking barriers and to silence the naysayers within us. *The War of Art* identifies the enemy that every one of us must face, outlines a battle plan to conquer this internal foe, then pinpoints just how to achieve the greatest success. Though it was written for writers, it has been embraced by business entrepreneurs, actors, dancers, painters, photographers, filmmakers, military service members and thousands of others around the world.

LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE

## “When October Goes...”

If you don’t know that Billy Joel tune, Youtube it. It’s a goodie.

And honestly, I’m happy to see this October go as well. While grosses were up in the double digits, attendance was down over 4% compared to last year. How does that happen?

Pretty simple. We just charged more for tickets.

Scratch that. Let me be more specific. *Some* shows charged more for tickets.

In a month that was down as much as this October in terms of butts in seats, the only reason our grosses didn’t take a similar tumble is because of the mega hits: *Hamilton*, *Hello Dolly*, *Dear Evan Hansen* and now even *Come From Away* has started charging ultra rates to maximize their income.

So this month, all of those shows did great. The rest struggled.

But here comes November, with a holiday weekend and a big ol’ Turkey Day—one of Broadway’s most anticipated weeks of the year.

I wonder if Billy ever wrote a song about Thanksgiving?

OCTOBER 2016  
BROADWAY GROSS  
\$129,287,515.31

...

OCTOBER 2017  
BROADWAY GROSS  
\$146,693,148.08  
Increase/Decrease: +13.46%

...

OCTOBER 2016  
BROADWAY ATTENDANCE  
1,229,894

...

OCTOBER 2017  
BROADWAY ATTENDANCE  
1,175,738  
Increase/Decrease: -4.04%

...

Get the weekly grosses by subscribing to my blog.

# Why Sometimes I WANT People to Say No.



I ask everyone for money. Everyone.

You know why?

Two reasons.

First, you never, ever know who has more cash than you can count. Some of my wealthiest investors are people who you might see sitting right next to you in coach on a flight to Florida who bring their own

snacks because the ones on the plane are too expensive.

And I've gotten turned down by billionaires who could use \$1,000 bills as a kleenex.

So I ask everyone, leaving no stone unsolicited.

The other reason I ask everyone for money and why I'm fine when they say no is that just

the ask is warming them up for my NEXT offering. Sometimes people are surprised to be asked to invest in a show. They've never heard of it before. It's confusing. They think it means a definite loss. So often they say no just because they are ignorant.

But once they've gone through the process of being propositioned, the next time they are asked they'll feel a little more secure that they know what they're talking about. And that means they'll be just a little bit closer to a yes.

On top of all that, it is proven that if someone says no to you, they are more likely to say yes to your next request. (It's guilt!) That's why I'll sometimes ask people to invest in something that I KNOW is not their type of show only to have the next project, that IS their type of thing, ready to go as a fast follow up.

A no can be a way to get to yes, but the only way for this to work is if you ask everyone to invest.

## ON THE PODCAST

The Producer's Perspective Podcast has become a veritable who's who of Broadway insiders. As a member of PRO, you're the first to know who's coming up:

- 11/13 Mark Hoebee

## ON THE BLOG

A couple of top read articles on the blog last month:

- Why I'm giving away two FREE tickets to Bruce Springsteen on Broadway.
- One question to help make your show stand out.
- How a concert crushes a Broadway show when it comes to marketing.

Make sure you don't miss a single blog. Subscribe today.

## CONNECT WITH KEN

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 [ken@theproducersperspective.com](mailto:ken@theproducersperspective.com)

 [www.linkedin.com/in/kendavenport](http://www.linkedin.com/in/kendavenport)

## UPDATES FROM PROS

### Holly Reed

is getting great response after a recent table read of her Christmas musical *Come Find Me*.

### James Chetz Keegan

is working on finishing a 16 song concept/demo recording for his musical *SHY*.

Got a project update? Email me at [ken@theproducersperspective.com](mailto:ken@theproducersperspective.com)