

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND

PRO

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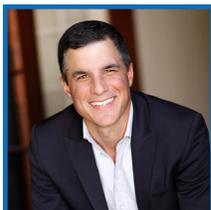
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WELCOME

Happy January, Pros!

I love me a New Year. Fresh start, clean slate, an open road ahead.

Apart from goal setting and resolution setting, I'm a big believer in "New Year's" cleaning! I purge a lot of the crap I've accumulated over the last year, and get ready to start on my quest to accomplish the things I want to accomplish in the New Year feeling lighter and less encumbered. I clean my apartment, my office . . . and most importantly, my desk.

I've always found that I'm able to accomplish so much more when I've got less stuff in my way, and more order to the stuff I have. Maybe that's the OCDer in me, but hey, something tells me there are some TYPE As getting this newsletter, am I right?

So as you enter this New Year, take a moment to get your workplace in order. As you'll see in this month's "Writing for Pros" column, Creative people must be business people too. Set up an orderly place to do your work (no matter what that work is), and you'll find you actually get more work done.

Here's to much success in 2017! Go get 'em!

Best,

Ken

P.S. Don't forget to set goals for the year! See your "Tip of the Week" email on January 2nd for some help on how to set goals that you can actually accomplish!

P.P.S. Hope to see you all at our networking event on 1/21!

UPCOMING EVENTS

1/11 @ 7 PM: Monthly Webinar: The Art of Negotiating...in the Arts

1/21: The Producer's Perspective PRO Social. Stay tuned for details!

As a member of Pro, you're automatically registered for the Monthly Webinar! To sign up for other seminars or events, visit www.theproducersperspectivepro.com.

WRITING FOR PROS: WHY THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO THIS YEAR IS NOT TO WRITE

As I mentioned in the welcome of this newsletter and as I talked about in my December 26th “Tip of the Week” email, you are running a business, no matter if you’re a Writer, Director, Producer . . . or all of those combined!

Unfortunately, what I’ve discovered in my research of the hundreds of theatre artists I’ve worked with over the years, is it’s the Writer that has the hardest time understanding and implementing this concept.

And ironically, it’s the Writer who needs the most marketing help of all the different theatrical occupations.



One of the most important parts of any business . . . including all you Writers . . . is your marketing plan.

And this is the year we’re going to make sure you focus on it . . . even if that means you write less. Because let’s face it . . . the best play ever written doesn’t do anyone any good if no one ever sees it!

So this year, I want you to take a cue from Pareto and his family Principle (or the so-called 80/20 rule*), and I want you to take your writing time and spend 80% of it writing . . . and 20% of it on the business of writing.

What does that entail? Networking, submitting to festivals, attending workshops and lectures, more networking, volunteering at theater companies who do work similar to yours, and so on.

So for every eight hours of writing, spend two hours on marketing (that also sounds like a good weekly schedule to me).

No business can spend 100% of their time solely on the creation of their next production.

And neither can should you.

** Haven’t heard of the 80/20 rule? Google it, it’s amazing. If you’re like me, you have a to-do list, meticulously crafted, that’s full of “very important things” you must get done right away. Instead, focus on the top few things that you think will produce the largest result. You will expend the same amount of effort, but get more out of your time. And that’s the name of the game.*

LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE: RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH NEW RECORDS

Well, Santa came down the chimney this year and brought a whole bunch of money!

Grosses on Broadway this December were up a pretty decent 1.6%, mostly due to the \$50mm gross Broadway raked in the very last week of the year when many shows do 9 performances per week. (The 26th of December through the 1st of January are the biggest grossing performances of the year.)

Unfortunately, attendance was down a very significant amount (over 4%).

Yep, less people, more money. While that’s good in the short run, that’s not the best overall indicator of an industry’s health. Ideally, you want more and more people coming (because more people generates more word of mouth for theatergoing in general).

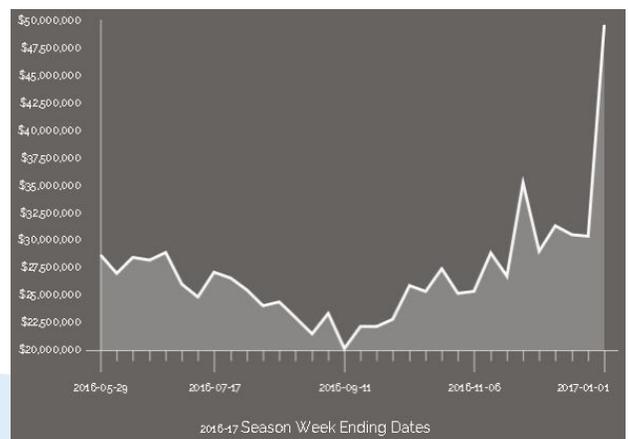


The 1% who are paying premium prices for shows are who are driving the Broadway economy right now. If we don’t watch this trend closely, we’ll become an even more exclusive industry than we already are.

This December’s Broadway Gross: \$171,026,295.27
Last Year’s December Broadway Gross: \$168,323,588.85
Increase/Decrease: + 1.61%

This December’s Broadway Attendance: 1,421,337
Last Year’s December Broadway Attendance: 1,490,893
Increase/Decrease: - 4.67%

*You can get the weekly grosses by subscribing to my blog or by getting The Producer’s Perspective app! Download it today in the iPhone or Android store! See below for a graph of 2016 trends courtesy of the Broadway League.



MARKETING FOR PROS: WHY NOT TO ASK FOR YOUR SCRIPT BACK

Here's a true story from the front lines of a Writer who is looking to get produced.

Several months ago, one of my coaching clients submitted their script to a Director for her consideration (this Director was also in charge of a theater department at a local university – so our strategy was to offer this woman the directing gig with the hopes that this would also get us a reading/workshop or even full production).

A couple of weeks after submitting, we heard nothing.



So, I advised my client to create a multi-faceted follow-up plan (or “drip” campaign) over the next several weeks. An email. Then another. Then a phone call. Then attending the Director’s current show and running into them after. Etc. (Getting someone to read your script is just like a big brand trying to get a consumer to make a purchase – it takes several “impressions” to get the job done.)

A few months later. Nothing.

My client was frustrated. His ego bruised. So much so that he wanted his script back.

I advised him against it. It wasn't like the paper it was printed on was gold leaf. And odds were that if the Director wouldn't respond in the first place, she wasn't going to return the script either! And why waste time on that, when we could spend that same time submitting to someone else.

Besides, I said . . . you just never know.

My client realized that it would be his artist's ego doing the asking, so we moved on to another person.

And wouldn't you know it, over six months later, he got a call from that same Director with an invitation for the show to participate in a reading series, at no cost to the author.

Bam! The lesson?

It takes more than one impression to make an impression.

And second. Just because someone doesn't respond when you want them to, doesn't mean they won't ever respond.

And never, ever, ask for your script back.

UPDATES FROM PROS

Here is what your fellow Pros are up to:

- Cheryl Kemeny and her husband finished and published their book, *The Fourth Level Trilogy*, now available on Amazon.com!
- Gayla Morgan is currently in negotiations for a licensing deal for *A Dog Story* after receiving multiple offers! (The show closes on January 15th – support a fellow Pro and catch it while you can!)
- Charles Yurick and Nancy Paris are readying their show *Radio 930* for a reading in New York City on February 23rd. Watch Playbill.com for an announcement of the cast!

Got a project update?

Let me know at ken@theproducersperspective.com.

THIS MONTH ON THE PODCAST

Since I started the Producer's Perspective Podcast last year, the guest list has been a veritable who's who of Broadway insiders. As a member of PRO, you're the first to know who I have coming up:

- The Rego Brothers - Broadway Producers and Merchandise Designers
- Natasha Katz - Four-Time Tony-Award Winning Lighting Designer
- Beth Williams - Broadway Producer and Partner in Grove Entertainment
- Beowulf Boritt - Tony Award Winning Set Designer
- Stacey Mindich - Broadway Producer of *Dear Evan Hansen*



PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Entrepreneurship is living a few years of your life like most people won't, so that you can spend the rest of your life like most people can't.”

– Kevin Hart

RAISING MONEY FOR PROS: THE IMPORTANCE OF FACE TIME (AND NOT THE APPLE VERSION!)

Do whatever you need to do to get in front of an investor.

In today's era of electronic communication, it's easy to sit at home and try to raise money by sending out email after email. It feels like you can get a heck of a lot more done that way, doesn't it? And yes, it's true, you can get a ton more "asks" out if you're doing your asking electronically. But the fact is, while it's easier to ask via email, it's much more difficult to close.



The best way to close a deal is by getting some face time with your potential investor. Electronic means just can't show how passionate you are about your project. And remember, getting an investor to invest in your project is really getting an investor to invest in you. Seeing you face to face, hearing why this show is important to you in person can be the difference between a yes and a no way.

In fact, when I'm emailing with a potential lead who seems a little "iffy," my goal isn't to close the deal. My goal is just to get the investor to sit down with me face to face. (A common mistake new money raisers make is to just focus on getting the investor to write a check - think about setting smaller goals that get the investor closer to his or her checkbook - having a phone call, meeting for coffee, etc.)

Want some specifics of this theory in action?

Years ago I was in conversations with someone who I knew would love to be a Broadway investor, but he just wouldn't pull the trigger. I pushed hard for a meeting but

he resisted. Until finally he said the only way we could meet is if I met him at Grand Central and walked with him on his daily commute to his office. You can bet your bottom-line I met him the very next day and walked his twenty block commute to his office (in February!). He invested then . . . and he still invests today. Even better, he has become a close friend.

Yet another time I was talking to a woman who lived on the other side of the country, who I had a feeling could be a major player on Broadway. "I'm not so sure," she said, when I pitched her a show on the phone, "But maybe we could meet someday." "Well, it just so happens I'm going to be in your area next month, are you around?" "Why yes! That would be great!" I hung up the phone and then I booked my flight.

Guess who has invested with me a ton of times since?

Email is a great way to gather leads. But getting your face in front of those leads is the best way to gather investments.

OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

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

- We hear that there is already a George Michael musical in the works. So much for RIP!
- We hear that one of the reasons *Harry Potter* chose ATG's The Lyric Theatre was because their ticketing system is superior to Telecharge and Ticketmaster, especially when it comes to battling the secondary market.
- Will *Hairspray* make it back to Broadway? The telecast was a success, and a revival was supposed to follow. But we hear that the show that closed only 8 years ago can't get a theater.



Got a rumor?

Send 'em to me at ken@theproducersperspective.com.

ON THE BLOG

Just in case you missed it, here were the top read articles on the blog last month:

- My Top 10 Favorite Broadway Moments from 2016
- Does a Revival's Success Depend on the Success of the Original?
- What *Harry Potter's* Theater Choice Means for Independent Producers

Make sure you don't miss a single blog. Subscribe today or download the iPhone or Android app.

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