

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND

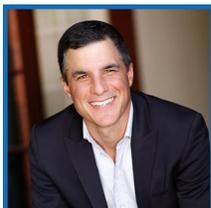
PRO

MARCH 2017

VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 1

In This Issue

WELCOME	1
UPCOMING EVENTS	1
WRITING FOR PROS: COPS, ROBBERS, AND DOCTORS, OH MY!	2
LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE: IS THIS ANY WAY TO RUN A BUSINESS?	2
MARKETING FOR PROS: THE EMAIL TRILOGY YOU SHOULD BE SENDING	3
UPDATES FROM PROS	3
THIS MONTH ON THE PODCAST	3
PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH ...3	
RAISING MONEY FOR PROS: WHERE ELSE COULD THEIR MONEY GO?	4
OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY	4
ON THE BLOG	4



WELCOME

Happy Birthday, PROs!

This edition of the PRO newsletter is lucky #13! That means, The Producer's Perspective PRO is officially one year old!

Throw confetti, blow horns, and eat cake and ice cream like a two-year-old (that means get it all over your face).

A year ago, this site was just a site...and thanks to you, especially the so many of you who have been around since the beginning...it's now a community. And my promise to you is to help keep this community thriving with more information, more perks, more networking opportunities, and just more fun.

One perk we've just added to your membership is the *other* newsletter I write, *The Recoupment Report*. I started this newsletter to send exclusively to my investors, to help them make smarter decisions with their theatrical investments. I'm a big believer that the smarter my investors, the better the business becomes.

Before today, you had to write a pretty big check to get this newsletter. But now, you'll get it, just for your continued PRO membership. Enjoy!

And thanks again for being a PRO. We'll see you for our 2nd birthday.

Best,

Ken

P.S. The first Literary Agent Workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, March 7th at 7pm with Ally Shuster of CAA. Register online and use code **agent97** to save \$97!

UPCOMING EVENTS

3/7 @ 7PM: Literary Agent Workshop with Ally Shuster (CAA)

3/8 @ 7PM: Monthly Webinar: How to Get Producers to See Your Show

3/22 @ 7PM: Free Town Hall Teleseminar

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

WRITING FOR PROS: COPS, ROBBERS AND DOCTORS, OH MY!

I was trudging up 8th Avenue a few weeks ago when I spotted a billboard around Penn Station for *APB*...a brand new TV show about, yep, cops.

Original, right?

Cop shows have been on the airwaves since TV was first rolled into a living room. *Dragnet*, *Columbo*, *Hill Street Blues*, *Law & Order*, *Bluebloods*, etc. are just a few of the procedural crime dramas produced by Hollywood to keep us entertained.

You know what else Hollywood has been pumping out for years? Medical dramas. *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, *St. Elsewhere*, *ER*, *Chicago Hope*, *Grey's Anatomy*.



Oh and legal dramas too. Go on, how many TV legal dramas can you name in 10 seconds? A lot, right?

Every year, there is at least one new cop show, doc show, or legal eagle show. They just keep producing 'em, like they were going out of style...except they obviously are NOT going out of style! Because as much as I'd like to say that the decade upon decade of similar programming shows just how much Hollywood lacks originality, audiences obviously keep falling in love with these stories. Otherwise, they'd just turn 'em off and try something else.

So as a Writer, you have to ask yourself, "What is it about these settings that make Producers and Audiences keep coming back?"

Every single one of these settings. . . a police station, a hospital, or a courtroom, is life or death. . . every day. That means the stakes are SUPER high. . . before the story even begins.

It's a great reminder that for a drama to be successful, you can't deal with the everyday problems that you or I deal with. Oh no, you have to raise those stakes to the heavens. . . literally. And Hollywood takes the easy way out of starting off with a setting that has life/death built into its daily activities.

Much harder to get your stakes super high in a suburban neighborhood or a high school, right? (But so much more rewarding.)

The takeaway here is a simple one, and no, it's not if you want to be a TV writer then you should write a police, medical, or legal drama.

It's that whatever you write, you best make sure your stakes are so high, your characters can just barely leap over them.

LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE: IS THIS ANY WAY TO RUN A BUSINESS?

The Super Bowl, The Academy Awards, and the bitter cold temps take a bite out of Broadway business each February.

Luckily, the frigid month also has a nice week-long holiday break for public schools around the country (thanks Presidents' Day!). This year, we also had some spring-like temps (almost 70 degrees!) to help get people out and about, which helped a bunch of shows exceed their expectations for the month.



But when you compare this February to last February, it's easy to see a trend that always makes me nervous. Grosses remained flat. And attendance dropped like a rock, with another rock strapped to its back.

There were over 15% FEWER people in seats this month compared to last February. Now, we had fewer shows on the boards, which accounts for part of the drop, but it ain't the whole reason.

Variable pricing (and specifically *Hamilton's* \$3mm grosses) is artificially keeping the grosses high, but you can't have variable attendance.

And fewer people means fewer folks spreading word of mouth. . . which is really what goeses the grosses.

I'm hopeful that we will recover from this drop over the next few months as the new shows start previews (and there are a lot of new shows), but my alarm bells went off after seeing these February figures.

Because no business likes fewer bodies and the same dollars.

This February's Broadway Gross: \$90,674,727.82
Last Year's February Broadway Gross: \$90,701,128.68
Increase/Decrease: -0.03%

This February's Broadway Attendance: 801,223
Last Year's February Broadway Attendance: 945,818
Increase/Decrease: - 15.29%

*You can get the weekly grosses by subscribing to my blog.

MARKETING FOR PROS: THE EMAIL TRILOGY YOU SHOULD BE SENDING

It wasn't too long ago that people thought marketing was just about getting a customer to the cash register. Once you captured the sale, conventional wisdom said, you were done. That's when the product took over and word of mouth was what it was.

With the new era we're in (where the consumer has a voice that can reach much farther than just around his local water cooler), half of your job as a marketer *begins* after your customer makes a purchase.



That's why I believe in an Email Trilogy that every show should implement. (Some ticketing companies make this difficult, but there are work-arounds, and I advise you to find a solution that works for you.)

What is the Email Trilogy? Here goes.

Email #1:

Right after your customer buys a ticket, you should send an email thanking them for their purchase. This is NOT just the e-confirmation (those are boring). This should come from the Producer or Artistic Director or someone from the production, and it should just say "thank you." Maybe there's a soft call to action to see some material from the show in advance, or 'like' the show on Facebook, etc., but the primary purpose is just to recognize that your customer had lots of options and chose you. And you're grateful.

Email #2:

As your customer gets closer and closer to their curtain time, they are going to have questions; "Where is that theater again?"; "What time is the show?"; "How do I get there?"; "Are there restaurants nearby?" That's where Email #2 comes in.

This email should be all about logistics. Answer their questions before they ask them! (You'll look like you read minds!). And it will make getting to your theater easier. If the experience is easier, they'll enjoy the show more.

Email #3:

Word of mouth is the hottest the closer to the actual experience. You're more likely to recommend a book right after you put it down, or a movie right after you walk out of the theater. Same with a show. So hit them with an email as soon as you can after that curtain comes down and thank them again for coming and give them the tools to help spread the word of mouth that they hopefully are primed to spread.

Give them a discount to give to friends, or write out a social media message they can copy and paste, etc.

I like these emails to come from a star or a writer or someone of merit. There will be good will for this person, and the email recipient will therefore be more likely to help him/her.

Marketing is twice as hard as it was before. But the good news is that all of the above is free...and more effective than many paid advertising initiatives out there.

Just take care of the people who have paid for your show. You'll find they'll take care of you in return.

UPDATES FROM PROS

Here is what your fellow PROs are up to:

- Congrats to Lead Producers David and Brenda Mauk for their show, *The Time Machine*, getting accepted into NYMF!
- Charles Yurick and Nancy Paris sold out their reading of *Radio 930*, which featured a cast that included Broadway vets Dee Hoty, Jennifer Damiano, and Stephen Lee Anderson.
- Gayla Morgan struck a deal with Stage Rights and The Marton Agency to license her show *A Dog Story* domestically and internationally.

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:

- Sean Flahaven, CEO of The Musical Company



PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Frugality doesn't mean doing less. It means doing as much or more with less."

– William S. Marth

RAISING MONEY FOR PROS: WHERE ELSE COULD THEIR MONEY GO?

When raising money, it's easy to forget that your investors have many options for their money. Yours isn't the only one! In fact, when you have reached a certain level of net worth, you have even more options (and more people asking).

And those options are all different types.

The investment you are asking for could go into the stock market.

It could go into a new kitchen.

It could go towards a kid's college education.

(By the way, these aren't random examples...I've heard each one of these excuses from potential investors as a reason why they couldn't invest in a show of mine.)

Too often, I see people new to the money-raising game pitch to potential investors thinking that the investor is either going to give them money or stick it back under a mattress. They often get frustrated if the potential investor says no, thinking, "I don't understand why they wouldn't just give it to me! They've got the cash!"

Yes, of course they do. But they also have a lot of options.

It's your job to understand what those options are *before you ask*, and structure your ask so it presents your prospect with a better opportunity than your competition (without promising something you can't deliver, of course).



You need to preemptively strike at these alternative investments *before* they, your prospect, can voice them.

This is a great reason why you should "role play" before going into a big pitch. Here's the exercise:

- Get a friend to play your prospect.
- Make your pitch.
- Have your prospect say "No", and then have him/her improv what else he/she is going to do with the money instead.
- You have 15 seconds to respond as to why your show is a better experience.
- Have your friend rate your responses from a 1 to a 10.
- Do this 10 times. Add up your score. You need to get an 80 or better to be ready to raise.

Just understanding that your investors have alternatives is the quickest way to get them to forget about those alternatives and focus just on you.

OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

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

- We hear a certain beautiful waitress will be taking a ride on a carousel next spring, playing opposite Joshua Henry.
- *The Band's Visit* will be visting Broadway in the fall, most likely at The Booth.
- Charles Isherwood is out at *The New York Times*, having been sacked for what was reported as a too cozy relationship with some Broadway producers. But we hear from two sources that money changed hands (not necessarily with the producers that have been made public).



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:

- Do You Know When The First Ever National Broadway Auditions Are?
 - Top 10 Tips from Top Broadway Literary Agents
 - Confessions of a Broadway Ticket Phone Operator
- Make sure you don't miss a single blog. Subscribe today.

CONNECT WITH KEN



www.facebook.com/kendavenport



www.twitter.com/kendavenport



www.linkedin.com/in/kendavenport



www.instagram.com/kendavenportbway



ken@theproducersperspective.com