

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND

PRO

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WELCOME

It's back to school time, Pros!

There was a time when I dreaded September. Who wants to get up early and head back to school, and studying, and homework . . . and cold? (I grew up in

Massachusetts.)

But now? I look forward to it.

Except the cold part.

I don't know about you, but September feels like the start of a new year for me. The crisper temperature gets you walking just a bit faster, and you're ready to take on the world.

And now, as an adult, all of a sudden the thought of studying and learning (when you don't HAVE to) is awesome.

September is a great time to set goals, or re-evaluate the goals (or resolutions) that you set last New Year's and ready yourself for a last push to the finish line.

So when you get back from wherever you're going or whatever you're doing on Labor Day weekend, take an hour to take stock of where you are and where you want to go.

And let me know what we can do to help get you there.

Best,

Ken

UPCOMING EVENTS

9/14 @ 7 PM: Monthly Webinar: How to Make a Living Through Licensing

9/20 @ 7 PM: Meet an Agent Workshop with Beth Bickers

As a member of Pro, you're automatically registered for the Monthly Webinar!

To sign up for other seminars or events, visit www.theproducerperspectivepro.com.

LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE: WAIT! WAS IT EVER SUMMER?

Summer is usually a time when grosses surge on Broadway. Some shows stay open through the tricky times of May and June, just to get to the richer month of August.

But August was a big disappointment this year, as it looks like the “market correction” I predicted last fall is coming true.

There were a few factors that contributed to the disappointing grosses this month, but one of the



biggest reasons the numbers fell was the Olympics. The Olympics are an event that captures the world’s attention. It’s filled with drama (especially when frat boyish swimmers get sauced up and make fools of themselves in a foreign land) . . . and it’s free. Why go out? Why travel? You’ve got everything you need at home.

Will we rebound in the fall? Not likely, says I. Because we’ve got another dramatic event coming up . . . it’s called a presidential election. And this one is a doozy. Why go to the theater when you can stay at home and watch one of the debates?

Tough times ahead . . . but the good news is, for Broadway, and for all of us . . . it’s over in 2 months.

Here are this year’s August Broadway grosses and attendance as compared to the year before.*

This August’s Broadway Gross: \$116,344,252.99
Last year’s August Broadway Gross: \$124,407,852.07
Increase/Decrease: -6.48%

This August’s Broadway Attendance: 1,114,856
Last year’s August Broadway Attendance: 1,150,887
Increase/Decrease: -3.13%

*You can get the weekly grosses by subscribing to my blog or by getting the The Producer’s Perspective app! Download it today in the iPhone or Android store!

ON THE BLOG

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

- 10 Shows That Stand Out At The New York Fringe Festival 2016
- This Could Be The Issue That Divides Off Broadway
- This Could End the Secondary Market As We Know It

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

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:

- Charles Isherwood - Theatre Critic for the *New York Times*
- Lynne Meadow - Artistic Director of Manhattan Theatre Club
- Chris Stasiuk - Box Office Treasurer at the St James Theatre
- And more to come!

Make sure to check out my blog each Monday to hear the podcast!

MARKETING FOR PROS: MAKE YOURSELF A BETTER MARKETER WITH THIS GAME

I was never a big football fan. In fact, when my friends played football during recess (wow . . . I almost called it intermission) . . . I chose to “ref.”

And watching football on TV was worse. Except for one thing.

At least once a game, the network had a feature called, “You Make The Call!” They showed you a play from a previous game and you had to decide whether it was a penalty or not. It put you in charge in a real life situation (except no 300 lb linebacker would get in your face if you



made the wrong call).

It was fun. And I learned. I became a better ref at recess/intermission because of it.

I still play “You Make The Call!” and you should too.

I don’t play it while watching football though. I play it while watching Broadway. I play it while watching Broadway Producers, Ad Agencies and even Authors.

If a show gets announced for Broadway, let’s say, oh, *Hamilton* . . . but let’s pretend it’s going to open cold without the ginormous buzz it had. I’d say, “Ok, what call would I make in the marketing of that show?”

I’ll got through a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats), I’ll figure out what media I’d want to use, where I’d want to use it. I’d come up with some guerrilla ideas, some stunts, and more.

I’d make the call.

It keeps me fresh. It keeps my marketing muscles in shape. See, Broadway Producers don’t get the chance to produce on Broadway that often. Maybe 1-2 times a year, right? That’s not enough to sharpen your skills. So this “simulator” style of training can help tremendously.

The next time you see a show ask yourself how you’d market it. Then go home, and write out a plan. The same for you writers out there. Have you ever seen a play that you thought had some flaws? How would you fix them? Don’t just talk about it at a bar afterwards. Go home, come up with the three biggest issues with the play, and tackle them.

Putting yourself in real-life situations is the only way you’ll be ready to succeed in the same situations when your real life is on the line.

WRITING FOR PROS: GETTING IN THE HABIT

We just started a Davenport Theatrical book club in my office, and our first book is the *New York Times* bestseller, *The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg.

While reading it and thinking about all my habits, good and bad, I couldn’t help but wonder . . . how is your writing habit?

That’s right. Not how is your writing? But how is your habit of writing?

Do you write only when you “want” to or when you feel inspired? If you do, you’re making the process of writing harder than it should be.

You need to get in the habit of writing . . . when you want to, when you don’t want to, when you’ve got a cold, and yeah, even when you’re on vacation. Because the more it’s a habit, like brushing your teeth, or, well, EATING, the more you’ll produce, the faster you’ll produce, and the better a writer you’ll become.

How do you create a habit?

Personally, I set time in my calendar to write every day. I block it off. My assistant knows to not book any meetings during my writing block. It’s my habit. Same time. Every day. As regular as the 11 o’clock news.



Try it. Set a time for yourself. And write every day. Don’t worry if it’s not perfect. Don’t worry if it just plain sucks. That’s not the point. The point is to create a habit of writing, so that you do it all the time, whether you want to or not. And you’ll be amazed at how quickly your mind and body will adjust to your writing time. Human beings are creatures of habit. But we have to tell ourselves what that habit is first.

Waiting to get inspired, or waiting until you want to write, is a sure way to write nothing at all.

UPDATES FROM PROS

Here is what your fellow Pros are up to:

- Composer Larry Little produced *Numbers Nerds, or the Almost All-Girl Math Challenge* at the Chicago Musical Theatre Festival!
- Illusionist Rob Lake will be touring Europe this fall with his show!

Got a project update?

Let me know at ken@theproducersperspective.com.



PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination are omnipotent. The slogan ‘press on’ has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.”
-Calvin Coolidge

RAISING MONEY FOR PROS: WHY RAISING MONEY IS LIKE IMPROV

Have you ever taken an improv class? If you haven't, do. It's a great lesson in . . . well, everything, from how to create characters, to how to be the life of the party, to yep, how to raise money.

If you have taken an improv class then you know that one of the principle rules of doing an improv scene is saying, "Yes and . . ."

What that means is no matter what your partner says, you never say, "No." Why? Well, that ends the scene. Curtain. It's over.

When raising money it's essential you follow this same axiom.

No matter what your prospect says, you have to be able to say, "Yes and . . ." No matter what! In other words, you can't fight with your prospect. You can't argue with them. You have to agree with their objectives so they know they are being heard, and then walk them towards your way of thinking.

For example . . .

Prospect: "You don't have any stars in it. Shows without stars don't work. Too risky."

You'd never say, "That's not true."

You say, "Yes, that's true. Shows that don't have stars are riskier."



(This is where the prospect will probably start to nod.)

You continue, "But shows with stars tend to be more expensive and they may not make as much money. And just because a show has stars, doesn't mean it's going to work. Do you remember *The Pajama Game* with Harry Connick Jr.? Or *Women on the Verge* with Patti LuPone?"

(This is where the prospect will probably continue to nod.)

You continue, "And did you know that of the top 10 longest-running shows of all time, not one of them had a star?"

Yes and . . .

Now, this means you have to be ready for every objection and every scenario that you can imagine before you ask for money.

People want to be agreed with. They want to be listened to.

So you must . . . and when you do, you'll have a much better chance of getting them to listen to you.

OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

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

- We hear that *Harry Potter* is revving up his broom for a Broadway run (but probably not for a while). Where will he land? Owls are a-hooting that he's interested in a theater currently occupied by a high-heeled Tony winner.
- There's been a lot of personnel changes at the ad agencies in town lately. And the latest rumor is that a NEW agency is about to be born. Competition is always good in this area in my opinion, and since there are more shows than ever, we need more agencies than ever.
- Two of the most daring shows set to open on Broadway in the 2016-17 season were fully funded before they even went on sale. Could this mean Broadway Investors are craving more risk these days?



Got a rumor?

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

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