

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND

PRO

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WELCOME

Hello Pros!

Happy Independence Day!

While of course this month we will celebrate the independence of our nation (even in these odd political times - but I'll save that for ThePoliticalPerspective.com), I like to think of Independence Day as a celebration of the Independent Producer . . . and the Independent Artist!

Even as more and more corporations rush into our business every week (check out the blog for my perspective on Hasbro and other publicly traded companies joining the Broadway producing fray), this will always be an industry that depends upon the independent artist.

Corporations could never have created *A Chorus Line*, *Rent* . . . *Hamilton*. You know who created them? People like you. People with strong, unique visions and unquenchable passion to get their shows on a stage, in front of people . . . and in front of the world.

So as you toast to America this month, toast to yourself . . . because you are going to show us the future of the theater.

P.S. This month's webinar is all about getting a Broadway theater. Tune in on July 20th at 7 PM ET!

UPCOMING EVENTS

7/16 @ 3 PM: Get Your Show Off the Ground Seminar in Los Angeles!

7/20 @ 7 PM: Monthly Webinar: How do you get a Broadway theater anyway?

7/26 @ 7 PM: PRO Networking Event!

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.

LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE: DID JUNE BUST OUT ALL OVER AT THE BOX OFFICE?

June is one of our “tweener” months.

As I talked about last month (if you're new to PRO, make sure you visit the archives section of the site to access previous months' newsletters), May is one of the toughest times of the year for Broadway and Off Broadway shows. There is more product on the street than ever before (thanks to the Tony Awards deadline at the end of April) and fewer people seeing them (thanks to graduations, Confirmations, dance recitals, and all the other familial responsibilities that pop up).

Traditionally, things pick up a little bit in June as the public schools let out, and some of the summer tourist trade starts to drive/fly/sail into the city. Also, of course, the Tony Awards put a big ol' spotlight on all the shows on Broadway, so grosses usually climb.

But not so much this year. Problem #1 is that the show that benefits the most from the Tony Awards is the show that wins Best Musical. And, well, *Hamilton* didn't have any tickets left to sell.

Additionally, because there was so much product on the street, any increase got diffused among the many remaining shows.

And some shows couldn't even make it all the way through June. Usually, shows that fail to get attention from the Tony Nominations or fail to build after the Tonys try to get to July 4th. This year, shows like *Tuck Everlasting* and *American Psycho* pulled up stakes early.

This disappointing June has me and all of my peers wondering what July, which is one of the strongest months of the year (once we get over that pesky July 4th), will bring.

We've already seen more closings announced . . . and if the summer isn't strong, I'd expect a few others.

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

This June's Broadway Gross: \$112,649,824.21
Last year's June Broadway Gross: \$137,540,117.78
Increase/Decrease: -18.10%

This June's Broadway Attendance: 1,101,130
Last year's June Broadway Attendance: 1,297,272
Increase/Decrease: -15.12%

*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!



MARKETING FOR PROS: PACKING YOUR MARKETING TOOLBOX AFTER A PRODUCTION

'Tis the season of festivals!

I have a number of coaching, consulting and PRO members with shows in various festivals around the city . . . from NYMF to the Fringe to the Midtown International Theatre Festival . . . and even the Edinburgh Festival Fringe all the way in Scotland.

Whenever you have a production of your show, whether that's a festival production or a regional production or even just a reading, there's a tremendous amount of information you can take away to help improve the show for the next “stage.”

Most people just worry about the creative takeaways.

But you're not most people. You're Pros.

What I've been telling all my clients with productions coming up is to not only come up with a punch list of changes you want to make to the show creatively, but to make sure that you come away with marketing tools that you can use to help sell the show.

What's in that marketing toolbox?

Glad you asked.

Every time I do a show, I make sure that I walk away with the following to help me with the next step:



Tool #1: Photos

Make sure you get some high quality (high resolution) photos of your show in performance, as well as some set-up shots. You'll use this for your website and to service with press releases for your next announcement (you're much more likely to get some “ink” for your show if it comes with good photos).

Tool #2: Video

You should shoot the whole show if you can get union approval. It's always good to have an archival copy of the show, but in addition, having a full video will allow you to edit a 1-3 minute montage of the show. I'm a much bigger fan of montages rather than complete songs. Since high quality video is harder, and since video also exposes more flaws, a montage can show you off even better, and give future audiences, investors, etc. a sample of all your show has to offer. Check out my montage of *Gettin' The Band Back Together* on www.GettinTheBandOnBroadway.com.

Tool #3: Demos

When you spend money and time rehearsing an entire cast and musicians on all that music (for those of you doing musicals), you should also throw them in a studio and get at least a few songs recorded for a demo (one of the uses for one of those songs can be for the montage in Tool #2!). Remember, “music” is the root word of “musicals” . . . so that means it's a damn important part of what you're selling. Get some good recordings that you can put on your website, etc., and use it to get people on the hook for your show.

Tool #4: Surveys

This is the tool most often forgotten! You should do everything you can to survey your audience about their experience at your show. Ask them what they thought about the show, what their favorite song/character/moment was, what they thought the show was about before they sat in their seat, etc. And most importantly, ask them, would they “go out of their way to recommend it to their friends and family?” (Notice the “out of your way” language – it’s very important.) We’ll post a sample survey in the PRO resources in the coming weeks. Check it out. You’ll use this to help answer creative issues and marketing issues as well.

Tool #5: Emails

Your #1 goal should always be to increase your email list, and this is a great opportunity to find more fans! Do whatever you can do to build your list. Have a business card drop, pass around a clipboard, etc. These are people who came to your show . . . which means they are more likely to go to your next show, invest in your next show, etc.

You’re spending a lot of time and money on your production. Packing your toolbox with all of the above and anything else you can think of will guarantee you get the most return on your investment.

WRITING FOR PROS: DO YOU HAVE A WRITING BUDDY?

Do you have a writing buddy?

I love me some deadlines.

When someone tells me I have to finish something by a certain day, it gets done. Period. And I’ve got this feeling that if you’re a PRO member, you’ve got that same “give me a date, and I’ll get it done” mentality.

The challenge with being a writer is that you have to impose your own deadlines. You are teacher and student. You say when the homework is due and you also have to complete the homework. You are boss and employee. You say when the presentation has to be finished, and you have to finish the presentation. You’re both ends of the loop.

And that’s hard.

That’s why I encourage you to enlist someone to help you. This person can be a coach, a mentor, a mastermind group . . . or it can also be what I call a “Writing Buddy.”

Here’s how it works.

1. Find a friend.

Make this someone who cares about you enough to make sure you do what you need to do and also someone you care about enough to respect what they ask of you.



2. Create your deadline.

Pick a date that you need to do something by. Tell your “Writing Buddy” what you have to have done by when (e.g. I have to complete Act I of my new play by 8/1/16) and how you will deliver it (e.g. I will email/hand/send it to you by 11:59 PM on 8/1/16).

3. Have your friend email you reminders.

Tell them to check up on you and your deadline . . . once a week, random texts, mentioning it during phone calls, etc. Let them be annoying.

4. When the deadline comes . . .

. . . deliver it as promised, and then have your friend take you to dinner/drinks/an amusement park/whatever makes you happy. Want to do the advanced version of this? Make a pact with your buddy that YOU will take him/her out to wherever they want to go if you do NOT deliver. Or need more motivation? Give your buddy \$100 or some amount that you can afford but means something to you and tell him/her . . . if I do NOT make my deadline, donate this to NAME OF POLITICAL CANDIDATE or CAUSE . . . and make it someone or something you hate (e.g. staunch liberal? Make it Trump or the NRA. Get it? Now that’s motivation!).

The act of writing can be a lonely task. Hemingway said, “Writing at its best is a lonely life.” When the task is such a lonely one, it is that much harder to be accountable for the completion of your work. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Bring in a buddy to help you accomplish what you need to accomplish. I promise that this little bit of friendly pressure will have you writing more stuff than you could ever have on your own.

How do I know? Because I’m a proud user of the buddy system myself.

(Need a buddy to keep you on task? Let us know, and we’ll try and help you find one.)

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:

- Bartlett Sher - Tony Award-Winning Director
- Sue Frost and Randy Adams - Broadway Producers and founders of Junkyard Dog Productions
- Michael Paulson - Theater Reporter for *The New York Times*
- Steven Pasquale - Lucille Lortel Award-Winning Actor

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

ON THE BLOG

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

- My Top 5 Favorite Moments of the 2015 Tony Awards.
- How *Hamilton* Will Change What Audiences Expect From the Theater.
- Fun on a Friday: An A Cappella Mashup of All 2016’s Tony-Nominated Musicals.

PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Did I face any obstacles? It’s a business of obstacles, actually. It’s nothing but obstacles. And that makes it hard. How do you deal with it? Well, you gotta be . . . a weeble. Remember those? Weebles wobble, but they don’t fall down.”



– Stephen Schwartz

RAISING MONEY FOR PROS: THE BEST MONEY RAISERS ON THE PLANET ARE AT IT AGAIN!

I hate politics.

But I can't help but admire politicians . . . for one thing, anyway . . . their ability to raise money.

These guys and dolls have to raise millions and MILLIONS of dollars to fund their campaigns. And right now, as we're gearing up for one of the most interesting presidential elections in history, is a great time for you and I to learn from some of the best.



Political campaigns put lots of money into developing the best strategies for raising money because there is so much on the line. Every single one of their messages, whether that comes through direct mail, email, text or social media (lesson #1 – ask through several sources), is finely tuned and finely crafted . . . designed within an inch of its life to not only convert but to get the most money out of you as possible. (A recent fundraising letter from Hillary Clinton mentioned Donald Trump's name over 10 times within the body of the letter – it was clear that research demonstrated that every time a Democrat read his name, he/she got more and more mad, and more willing to donate.)

All of these messages are also precisely timed, making sure they hit you at a time when you are most likely to whip out that credit card.

So, my advice to you this month as you continue to work towards money raising mastery is to sign up for the email lists, direct mail lists, and social media accounts of Donald Trump (I know that's a hard one), Hillary Clinton, and all the Senators looking for a seat this year. See what in their communication, whether it's the timing, the delivery, or the message itself,

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gets you intrigued . . . especially if it's from someone who you wouldn't vote for!

And then, ask yourself how you can apply what is working for them in your own money raising campaigns.

*Want more tips on raising money? Get *Raise It* – My course guaranteed to raise you the money you need, when you need it. Associate Producers Pro Members get 10% off. Co and Lead Producers get 25% off. Sign on to Pro to get your exclusive discount code and visit www.RaiseMoneyForYourShow.com today.

UPDATES FROM PROS

Here is what your fellow Pros are up to:

- Megan Kingery is preparing for NYMF with the show she's producing, *Remission!*
- Gayla Morgan's *A Dog Story* has secured a theatre for its Off Broadway debut this fall!
- The Wheelhouse Theater Company is producing *Romeo & Juliet* this summer directed by Jeff Wise!

Got a project update?

Let me know at ken@theproducersperspective.com.

OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

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

- We hear that a certain cartoon character who is bobbing around in Chicago ain't too happy that he hasn't been given a home in New York City yet. Maybe a certain circus will leave town and make room?
- Word from early performances of *War Paint* in Chicago is that there's something good going on. Expect it to arrive at the Nederlander Theatre on Broadway this spring. Oh and if you plan on seeing it, don't even bring your cell phone. It stars Patti LuPone after all.
- Remember all that hub bub about the actors in *Hamilton* wanting a piece of the profits? That has started a domino effect with the union and the Broadway League starting official discussions with how to handle future development and actor participation.



Got a rumor?

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

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