

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND

PRO



Hello PROs!

Yep, it's that time of year...it's back to school, baby!

I know, the majority of you aren't in school anymore.

Well technically, anyway.

See, school has such a negative connotation. It just sounds icky. But the educational part of it? That's awesome.

One of the most amazing things about being an adult is that you can study anything you want. And if you're like me—and I know you are—you are constantly studying, especially if you've got goals you want to achieve. Because

you know it's through education that you obtain mastery. God-given talents can only take you so far. And if you don't have God-given talents, through study you can become as good as the people who are so-called "born with it."

Just this month I've been studying Broadway comedy by reading and analyzing the "Top 10 Funniest Broadway Shows" (email me for the list).

I'm also taking the Aaron Sorkin masterclass (visit MasterClass.com).

And on the other side of my life (because you need other sides), I'm taking putting lessons from a putting expert (golf is the one thing I do besides theater).

You're studying already...by being committed to being a Pro. And I praise you for that.

And now, this month, take yourself back to school and study something else. Watch a YouTube "How To" video on ventriloquism. Take a pottery class. Or read a book on an area of theater you know nothing about (I never really understood lighting design).

You may not get a degree from all this study, but I promise you the results will be much more valuable.

Go get 'em!

Ken

WRITING FOR PROS

How To Be As Rich And Famous As John Grisham

John Grisham is super rich and super famous. But that's not why he started writing.

Read more on page 2.

MARKETING FOR PROS

You Can Learn About Selling Your Show From Watching Shark Tank

Launching a show is like having a kid...it seems like everyone has advice on how to "raise it."

Read more on page 3.

RAISING MONEY FOR PROS

5 Ways to Keep Your Investors Investing

One of the greatest complaints I hear from investors is not that they lost money. It's that they didn't feel like they were a part of the process.

Read more on page 4.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, September 28, 2017 | 6:30 pm ET
PRO Monthly Mixer

Wednesday, October 11, 2017 | 7 pm ET
Monthly Online Workshop: *Management for Artists*

Thursday, October 16, 2017 | 7 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.

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SUPER CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 11 & 12, 2017
NEW YORK CITY
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www.theproducersperspective.com/conference

How To Be as Rich and Famous as John Grisham



John Grisham is super rich and super famous. But that's not why he started writing.

John wrote his first novel with no dreams of making \$9 million a year, or of selling 235 million copies of his books worldwide, or of having six baseball fields on his property. (Nice life, huh?)

Why did he write his first novel?

Just so he could say he wrote a novel. Period.

He just wanted to be able to point to a stack of white paper on his desk and say, "Look! I wrote a novel." He ran across a subject that he felt needed to be written and wrote it, even though he had never written before.

He wrote it by getting up at 5 a.m. every morning for three years—while he was working 60–80 hours a week as a state representative.

How the @#\$\$ did he do that? An interview with CNN described his method:

When he first started writing, Grisham says, he had "these little rituals that were silly and brutal but very important. The alarm clock would go off at 5, and I'd jump in the shower. My office was 5 minutes away. And I had to be at my desk, at my office, with the first cup of coffee, a legal pad and write the first word at 5:30, five days a week." His goal: to write a page every day. -CNN.com

When he finished that novel, two things happened:

1. He was rejected by 15 publishers.
2. He started writing *The Firm* the very next day. The movie rights sold before he even found a publisher, and he was on his way.

And now, after all of the success, he still squeezes out a novel a year.

Doing something, anything, to "be famous" or to "be rich" is fine, but it's not art. There are a zillion ways to "be famous" or "be rich" and they're a lot easier than what we do.

Write, act, produce, or design because you have to do it and for no other reason. If you're diligent and harder on yourself than any boss could ever be, all the other stuff will come.

So, how can you put this idea into action? Set your writing schedule. Put it in your calendar. And show up. Do the work, and you will get the rewards. I can't tell you exactly when they will come. Maybe it'll take you longer than it took John Grisham. But they will come. And hey, there's just as much of a chance that they will come quicker!

FEATURED PRO MEMBER



Name:
Kimberly Marable

Where You're From:
Brooklyn, NY

PROfession: I'm an actor in *The Lion King* on Broadway and also teach performance workshops as well as do voice-overs.

What projects are you currently working on?

KM: I just produced a concert for the musical theater songwriting team Lyons & Pakchar at Rockwood Music Hall that played to a sold out audience! I am also Associate Producing a play for which we are currently shopping the script for an out-of-town theater.

Why did you join PRO?

KM: I joined PRO so that I could have access to ongoing seminars and other educational resources and a support network of other producers all looking to fight the good fight in creating meaningful and profitable art.

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

KM: I look for people who are kind, self-motivated, communicative, and open to risks/new ideas. Someone who—like me—seeks to diversify the overall narrative of commercial theater (both onstage and behind the table) as something more reflective of the world today. I've taken

advantage of my background as an actor to seek creative partners. I've met, auditioned, and worked with so many talented people, and I'm excited to be supporting all aspects of their artistry.

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

KM: There's so much information! I'm still trying to take advantage of all of the resources of being a Pro between the databases, the online workshops, the emails, the Facebook page, the books... there's so much. And I love that if ever I don't know how to approach a task, the answer is out there waiting for me if I ask.

OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

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

An investor told me that the company of *Hamilton* that started in San Francisco returned its investment AND profit in one month.

Got a rumor? Send 'em to me at ken@theproducersperspective.com.

PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH



“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”

~Nelson Mandela

MARKETING FOR PROS

You Can Learn About Selling Your Show From Watching Shark Tank

Part of my commitment to you is to make sure I’m keeping up my “continuing education” and learning from thought leaders from all industries.

If you’re not following me on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram, make sure you take a moment right now to link up with me, because I’m starting to share a lot more content from some of the smartest and most inspirational entrepreneurs out there. Just last week, I retweeted a quote from that real estate super-woman and Shark Tank jurist Barbara Corcoran. While I’m sure Barbara typed it thinking that it would only apply to organic shampoo startups and such, I think it’s perfect for emerging shows, especially Off Broadway shows, shows in festivals, showcases, or any kind of premiere production. Barbara said . . .

“When your business is young, spend money ONLY on the things that directly lead to sales.”

Launching a show is like having a kid... it seems like everyone has advice on how to “raise it.” You’re going to get marketing tips from your cast, your investors, and even your audience (they may have the best advice).

When you are a “startup” (which is what all new shows are, even Broadway shows!), it’s important that you hyper-target your advertising, and focus solely on direct response marketing initiatives that deliver sales.

You don’t need branding. You don’t need

general awareness. You need ticket sales. And you need it fast! Without butts in seats, you won’t be able to pay your bills, and more importantly, you won’t have paying patrons spreading your great word of mouth (a paid customer spreads much better W.O.M. than a comped customer).

So forget about print ads, TV and radio. (And if you watch how I advertise *Once On This Island* this fall, you’ll see that I’m following this strategy even though I have \$100k/week to spend!)

Here are my top three marketing initiatives I suggest you focus on when rolling out your show:

- Email:** The strongest sales tool you have. Create a list, grow that list, and market to that list.
- Social Media:** As long as you’re careful about not selling too hard here, you can build a big audience and fast (watch our *How to Sell Tickets with Social Media* online workshop in the archives).
- Partnerships:** Where else does your target demographic gather? Partner with orgs to borrow their audience, and make sure you return the favor!

And if you don’t have a show right now? That’s even better! You can start building your email list now and you’ll be ahead of the game when you do have a show. The best marketers of “startups” not only focus on sales, but they also start thinking about marketing before they have anything to market.

LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE

If Broadway was a stock...I’d be buying!

Just look at this double percentage point growth! Grosses are up almost 25% and attendance is up over 11% (that’s the much harder figure to increase year over year). We’ve never seen anything like this kind of increase in the modern era. It’s truly historic. And if any other industry were to experience similar growth, buyers would be all over it.

What does this mean for you and me? It’s a great time to raise money or invest in the theater...because you can point to the success in the overall industry. The appetite for theater is up, big time. Use that to your advantage.

Will it last forever? Nope. But I don’t think we’ll ever return the where we were just a few years ago. Like the Dow, we just continue to trend higher.

So buy Broadway!

AUGUST 2016 BROADWAY GROSS

\$116,344,252.25

...

AUGUST 2017 BROADWAY GROSS

\$144,889,693.25

Increase/Decrease: +24.54%

...

AUGUST 2016 BROADWAY ATTENDANCE

1,114,856

...

AUGUST 2017 BROADWAY ATTENDANCE

1,244,091

Increase/Decrease: +11.59%

...

Get the weekly grosses by subscribing to my blog.

“The appetite for theater is up, big time. Use that to your advantage.”

WHAT KEN’S READING THIS MONTH



See You At The Top by Zig Ziglar

Offering advice on how to succeed, Ziglar teaches how to build a solid attitude foundation, promoting the value of a healthy self-image and showing how to build such an image. It clarifies why goals are important and advises how to set and reach them.

5 Ways to Keep Your Investors Investing

Believe it or not, one of the greatest complaints I hear from Broadway investors is not that they lost money, it's that they didn't feel like they were a part of the process. They felt used.

It's not possible to involve your investors in every part of your business, and they shouldn't even want you to, because frankly your time is best spent working on selling your show. However, there are quite a few things you can do to make sure that they know they are more than just a walking/talking checkbook.

We pay a ton of attention to Investor Relations here in my office. Why? The few, proud people that are Broadway investors are the gasoline in the Broadway engine. And treating them with the respect and admiration they deserve is the best way you can ensure you never have a shortage.

Here are five ways you can better your investor relations:

1. Communication is the key.

Seems simple, but keeping your investors up to date on the goings on with your show is essential, especially at the beginning of a run (and especially if your investors are out of town).

You don't want your investors finding out any news about your show on Playbill.com. And here's the big tip: tell them good news and the bad news. If your show is struggling, be honest. Investors are smart people and they

know the risks of Broadway Investing. They just want the truth. And, to give you a reverse-Aaron Sorkin, "They can handle the truth."

BONUS TIP: Keep your communication going even when you don't have a show you're selling.

2. Everyone likes free stuff.

T-Shirts, Cast Recordings, Opening Night Gifts, etc. Small tangible things that remind people that they are on the "team" go a long way. Broadway investors invest in shows because they love them. So a physical reminder of that show, whether it's a window card, or a notepad, are a great and simple way to give them a sense of ownership and pride in your project.

3. Be available.

I've had a ton of investors tell me that they can't get their Producer on the phone, or that he/she won't respond to their emails. WTF? In my Broadway investing seminars I always recommend that you ask how available the Producer is before you invest, so you can manage your own expectations. But if you're on the Producing side, and you've accepted money from an investor in a risky venture, then answer your f'in email and return an f'in phone call. 'Nuff said.

4. Be a concierge

We offer our investors a host of other services including setting up 'house seats' for other

shows, dinner and hotel recommendations and reservations...and I've even recommended (or not recommended) that my investors invest in other shows when they ask! Treat your investors like your friends, and they'll do the same. Help them, and they'll help you. Relationships are built on reciprocity.

5. Make them money.

Easier said than done, of course...and what I really mean is "take care" of their money. Tell them your motives for each project. Do you believe it can make money? Is it an art project? Have you worked that budget over to make sure it's the leanest it can be without compromising the art? Yes, people know that investing in Broadway is risky, but that doesn't mean they want to just give their money away. And making an investor money is a sure-fire way to get them to invest in something else, and recommend to their friends that they invest with you as well. The odds of financial success on Broadway are about 1 in 5. Show your investors why the odds are better with you.

It's one of your many jobs to keep your investors happy. However far you want to take that is up to you. But I do believe that all of us have a responsibility to the strong and stalwart folks who support what we do. Treat them well.

Our business depends on it.

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:

• 9/25 **Kelly Leonard** *Executive Vice President of The Second City & President of Second City Theatricals*

ON THE BLOG

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

- Case Studies: Why Audiences Love When You Do A Lot With A Little
- From The Front Lines: Why The Battle Between Broadway & Brokers Rages On
- What Toothpaste Has To Do With Budgeting, Which Has to Do With Life

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

CONNECT WITH KEN

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UPDATES FROM PROS

Return to Grace
written and directed by Pro

Rob Asselstine

will run at Fallsview Casino,
Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada
September 6-20.

*Got a project update? Email me at
ken@theproducersperspective.com*