

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



Whew! What a month!
I'm going to admit it. I'm writing this welcome late. It was due three days ago. Luckily, I'm the boss, so Summer can't yell at me too much.

The reason things are a bit behind here is that in December, we opened *Once on this Island* (to some fantastic reviews and some fantastic box office business), and we did a reading of *Gettin' The Band Back Together*.

So things are a bit busy.

But we got it all done. Including this "Welcome."

(And honestly, my deadline for the newsletter is always one week earlier than it needs to be to account for any unforeseen emergencies - I call this the "snooze" method. I set my alarm clock for 15 minutes before I need to get up, just in case I snooze through it.)

You know, now that I think about it, it was almost two years ago to the day that Michael Arden and I talked about doing a revival of *Once on this Island*. I remember the moment exactly. And if there were a film of it, we would just seem like two musical theater fans raving about how much we loved the show.

But then we figured out the steps we needed to

take to make those thoughts a reality. And two years later . . . poof! It happened.

I tell you that to let you all know that your ideas, your passion, CAN happen. You just gotta put one foot in front of the other smartly and with a strong intention. And you'll get there. Maybe it'll take you two years, or ten years, or maybe only one. But you will get there. How do I know? Because I AM one of you. And what I can do, you can do too.

So go get 'em.



Ken

WRITING FOR PROS

Why a Play is Like a College Paper

When writing a new piece, I channel my inner college student and make sure everything in my play relates to this...

Read more on page 2.

MARKETING FOR PROS

Does Your "House" Need to be Remodeled?

You don't want your site to feel like yesterday's website. Because your show is tomorrow's show, right?

Read more on page 3.

RAISING MONEY FOR PROS

What Happens If My First Show is a Flop?

The first "anything" always seems to have higher pressure. So what happens if your first producing venture doesn't work?

Read more on page 4.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, January 22, 2018 | 7 pm ET
PRO Office Hours

Thursday, January 25, 2018 | 5 pm ET
PRO Monthly Mixer - Social Bar and Lounge (Pub Room)

*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.*

Why a Play is Like a College Paper

I just finished my yearly reading of *The Art of Dramatic Writing* by Lajos Egri, a classic textbook about playwriting written in 1946. While some of it is outdated and written in a hard-to-follow format, the heart of the book contains lessons on the most important fundamentals of writing for the stage.

My favorite section discusses how every play should have a “premise” that the playwright establishes to set out the theme of the piece. I’ve always thought of the premise a little differently, so when I’m writing a new piece, I channel my inner college student and come up with a THESIS.

A *thesis* is a statement the author of a paper sets out to prove by the end of the document.

All plays should have one, and the playwright should prove it by the end of the play.

For example, the thesis to my musical *Somewhere in Time* was: “True love transcends time.” My new musical *Gettin’ The Band Back Together* has one as well: “True success is about doing what you love with the people you love and the people who love you.” Maybe the audience doesn’t believe that at the beginning. But they better by the end or I haven’t done my job.

Once I establish my thesis, I have a through line theme that has to pull through the entire piece. Every character, scene, and line of dialogue has to somehow relate to proving my thesis. If it doesn’t? It gets cut.



Just like a college paper!

Your challenge this month is to come up with the thesis for your piece. If you’re writing in Microsoft Word or Final Draft, put your thesis in your header so it’s on every page.

Without one, your show will drift, and so will your audience’s attention. But prove your thesis, and you’ll end up with an “A” from the critics and the crowds.

FEATURED PRO MEMBER



Name:
Doug DeVita

Where You’re From:
New York, NY

PROfession: Playwright

What projects are you currently working on?

DD: I’m always juggling at least 3 scripts in various stages of development. Right now I’m almost done with a revision of my play *Phillie’s Trilogy* (formerly known as *The Phillie Trilogy*), close to finishing a draft of *Complicity*, a political/historical drama based on a true crime that rocked Paris in 1847, and I’m about to start work on a new script focusing on how LaGuardia’s “morality laws” in the 1930s ruined the career of early 20th century female impersonator Jules Eltinge. I was asked to write this by and for David Sabella (Mary Sunshine in the revival of *Chicago* on Broadway), who starred in *The Phillie Trilogy* last summer at the Fresh Fruit Festival. But my biggest project is working on raising the funds to move three of my already produced scripts, including *Phillie...* to runs in

either commercial or not-for-profit venues in the next year or so.

Why did you join PRO?

DD: I’m quite shy, and left to my own devices I’ll sit in a dark room by myself and write all day. I joined PRO for two reasons: force myself to get out and meet people and take my writing career into my own hands

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

DD: My first three plays were written with a co-writer, and the most important thing I learned to look for in future collaborators is a sense of mutual trust. Without trust, it doesn’t matter how good the final product is because the process is tainted, and if productions of those scripts come about, well, when the collaborators don’t trust each other it becomes an unnecessarily stressful time for all concerned. It’s better to leave the drama on the page, right?

As far as working with directors, it’s not only trust, but—like any playwright—I want to feel that my work is a priority for

him or her. I test people out on readings to see how they treat the actors, me, and most importantly, the script. I’m currently working with one director who has made me his priority (at least when we’re working on one of my shows), and I met him through one of the writer’s groups to which I belong, which is an excellent way to meet potential collaborators. And since he has won awards for the direction of two my shows (we’re still waiting to hear if we’ve won anything for *Phillie...*), I think it’s safe to say our working relationship is terrific.

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

DD: The sense of responsibility it’s given me. No one is fooling around here, we’re all pros, so it’s either put up or shut up. It’s a structure I need, because otherwise I would, as I stated earlier, be far too willing to stay at home in the dark, writing and dreaming quietly. It’s much better to dream out loud in a room full of like minded dreamers, sharing our successes, failures, and everything in between. Don’t you think?

OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

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

Will the recently released movie *The Greatest Showman* become a musical? That’s the early word on the street.

The Donna Summer musical is coming to Broadway earlier than expected. Why? Partly because the creative team, which was also behind *Jersey Boys*, has another bio-musical that could come in the following year! Can’t compete against yourself!

Alec Baldwin is prepping a Donald Trump one man show for Broadway. “Gonna be huuuuuuuge!”

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

PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH



“Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it.”

~Henry David Thoreau

MARKETING FOR PROS

Does Your “House” Need to be Remodeled?

If you own a house or an apartment for a good chunk of time, then you know that at some point it’s going to need to be renovated.

Whether that’s to update technology with a new TV system, upgrade with a new coat of paint or carpet, or add a whole new room, you’re going to want to make some changes.

It keeps your place modern, attractive to guests, and comfortable for you to live in.

You know what else needs to be remodeled every so often?

Your website.

Technology changes fast. Web aesthetics change fast. And since a show’s primary marketing tool is its website, it’s essential that your website be modern, attractive to guests, and comfortable for you to update. :-)

We’ve all been to websites that in a nano-second you can tell have been built years ago, on older technology. What do you think of them when you see them?

That’s what I thought.



You don’t want your site to feel like yesterday’s website. Because your show is tomorrow’s show, right?

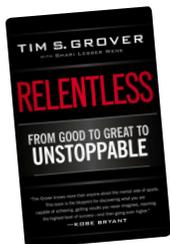
Getting a website is an essential part of developing a show for production. But keeping it up to date is almost just as important.

(Need a web designer? Email me at ken@theproducersperspective.com and we’ll give you a recommendation of some designers who will build or remodel your site for a reasonable price - with a discount for Pro members! And don’t forget to watch the webinar on Websites in the archives!)

Are you following Ken on Instagram?

He posts a new inspirational quote on his whiteboard every morning!
Follow him @kendavenportway

WHAT KEN’S READING THIS MONTH



Relentless
by Tim Grover

Direct, blunt, and brutally honest, Grover breaks down what it takes to be unstoppable: you keep going when everyone else is giving up, you thrive under pressure, you never let your emotions make you weak. Relentless shows you how to trust your instincts and get in the Zone; how to control and adapt to any situation. Grover gives you the same advice he gives his world-class clients and shows you that anything is possible.

LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE

What a Difference a Year Makes!

This past December broke a few records on Broadway. We had our biggest one week tally ever, raking in over \$50mm in the week between Christmas and New Year’s. And *Hamilton* alone broke yet another record when it did \$3.8mm in a week. That’s over 7.5% of the TOTAL Broadway gross!

This huge take from the big hits on Broadway like *Hamilton*, *Hello Dolly* and *Springsteen on Broadway* helped us beat last year’s December by almost 10%.

However, the downside is that we slipped in attendance almost 7%.

These grosses going up and attendance going down has been something we’ve seen over the last few years as the big hits have mastered premium pricing, but it’s even more evident in months like December, when there is such a demand for our limited inventory.

We’re doing a masterful job at getting folks to pay premium prices for the big hits. Now we just have to get more to come to pay the average price. Seems easy, right? If it was, these numbers would look different.

**DECEMBER 2016
BROADWAY GROSS**
\$142,023,304.20

...

**DECEMBER 2017
BROADWAY GROSS**
\$155,769,996.95

Increase/Decrease: +9.69%

...

**DECEMBER 2016
BROADWAY ATTENDANCE**
1,141,900

...

**DECEMBER 2017
BROADWAY ATTENDANCE**
1,072,983

Increase/Decrease: -6.85%

...

Get the weekly grosses by subscribing to my blog.

What Happens If My First Show is a Flop?



I was recently asked a question by a Lead Pro Coaching Client: “What happens if my first show right out of the box is a flop?”

I’ve gotten this question a few times before, and frankly I remember asking it to myself.

The first “anything” always seems to have more pressure, higher stakes and oodles of anxiety (shoot, I made a show about one of those firsts: *My First Time*).

So what happens if your first producing venture doesn’t work? Does that mean

you’re dead in the H20? Does that mean you hang your head and go back to WhereverYou’reFrom, USA to work at the local bank (if it hasn’t gone under)?

You can, I guess. Or you can do what I do.

Whenever I feel nervous about failing with a show, I play a game called “FIND THE FLOP!”.

Wanna play? You can’t win an iPhone with this game, but you can win some confidence and perspective.

Here’s how to play:

Go to ibdb.com.

Search for any producer that you admire and respect.

Scroll down and look at the beginning of their career . . . and FIND THE FLOP!

Then scroll UP and look at what they’ve done since then.

And then ask yourself the same question that got you to this game and you have your answer! By the way, this game works great for every industry—even Lincoln, Gates, Truman and Disney had flops.

One of the hardest things about being

a theater producer ain’t union deals or authors agreements, or even the *New York Times*. The hardest part about being a producer—or any business owner—is that we hire ourselves. So if we fail, we’ve got to get up and do it again, because no one is going to do it for us. If we don’t hire ourselves, then we don’t work. And we have to find something else to do. Or we don’t eat. Period.

How do I stay motivated to hire myself? (Can you smell a sports story coming? Here goes . . .)

Baseball players strike out all the time. And even if they “backwards K” three times in a row, if the team cycles through the lineup, they have no choice but to step back up to the plate again. It’s how the game is played.

So teach yourself that you have no choice. You’re a producer. It’s what you do. If you had a choice you’d be doing something else. You don’t. So call me “Coach” if you want, but I’m not pulling you from the game. You’re staying in, flops or not.

And have confidence that if you take enough swings, sooner or later you’re gonna hit one out of the park—maybe even the next *Hamilton*. ;)

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:

- 1/22 Sheryl Kaller
- 2/12 Danny Burstein

ON THE BLOG

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

- WARNING to all underlying rights holders: Look at our history.
- My Top 5 Broadway Moments of 2017
- We’ve got lots of Stars, so why not a Broadway All-Stars?

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

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ken@theproducersperspective.com

www.linkedin.com/in/kendavenport

UPDATES FROM PROS

Kurt Johns

is working on getting his production of *Churchill* produced around the country and in London.

Carrie Bodell

recently had a read through of her show *Produce, The Musical* and is currently working on rewrites.

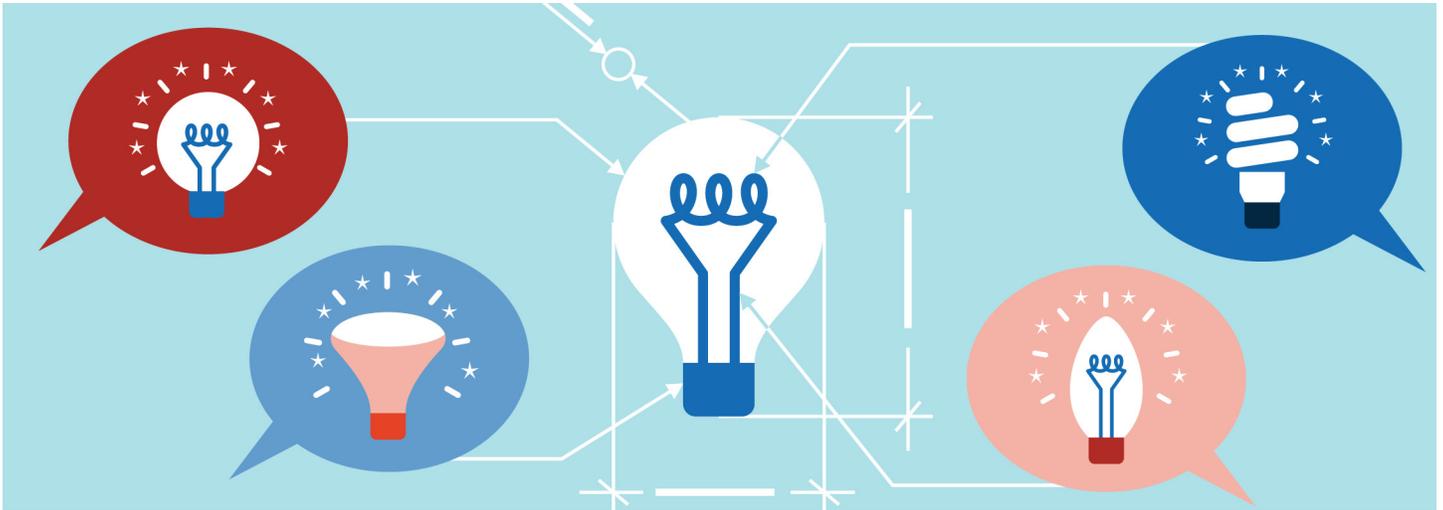
Elizabeth Appell’s

play *Sqawwk! the Musical* just got accepted into the Theatre Accelerator program.

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

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



Hello Pros and Happy February!

I'm writing this from Mexico, where I'm finishing up a two-day Mastermind that I participate in four times a year.

And boy is my head exploding, but in the best way possible. Because it's full of ideas on how I can market Broadway shows, improve my productivity, and help you reach your goals as well.

In fact, this month's newsletter is filled with many ideas that I got at this Mastermind!

I can't tell you how exciting it is to be with a group of other people who want to achieve the things you want to achieve, and who not only want to learn, but who also want to help others.

If you don't know what a Mastermind is, take a Google, or better, read the famous book, *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill, who coined the phrase about a hundred years ago.

And then, find yourself one. It can be as official as one of ours that are available free to all Co-Pro members, or it can be something you start on your own (just make sure it has rules, schedules and accountability or it'll crash and burn).

As collaborative as the theater can be, creating theater can be quite lonely. But it doesn't have to be.

February is the month of Valentine's. When people connect and share their love. It's a great month to share your love of the theater with other people who love it as much as you do.

Go get 'em.



Ken

P.S. If you're looking for a Mastermind, email summer@davenporttheatrical.com and she'll set you up asap.

WRITING FOR PROS

Go Public!

Do you know what Andrew Lloyd Webber, Lin-Manuel Miranda and Bobby Lopez have in common?

Read more on page 2.

MARKETING FOR PROS

You May Not Be There Yet, But You Will Be.

Both consumers and advertisers are enjoying success on social media. When both sides of the buy-sell equation are satisfied, the business has to grow.

Read more on page 3.

RAISING MONEY FOR PROS

A Surprising Way to Make Raising Money Easier

It's often easier to raise larger amounts of capital than smaller amounts, especially when you're seeking commercial investments.

Read more on page 4.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, February 22, 2018 | 5:30-7:30 pm ET
PRO Monthly Mixer

For more information or to sign up for other events, visit www.theproducerperspective.com.

Go Public!

Do you know what Andrew Lloyd Webber, Lin-Manuel Miranda and Bobby Lopez have in common?

Their first shows—the shows that got them started on the road to the fame and fortune they all have—all shared a similar characteristic that is undeniably one of the reasons why they were able to do what they do, and become who they are.

Know what it is?

All of them were in the public domain. *Joseph, In The Heights, Avenue Q* . . . these were shows that these authors came up with (with others) but that didn't require the permission of estates, high royalties,



approvals over the director, etc. etc.

I wrote a blog recently about a change in the attitude of many underlying rights holders (especially those movie studios) and how they are getting greedier, not only in terms of payments due for their material, but also in their control of the material you want to make.

That made be look at some of our more

successful writers and notice that the super-successful often started with something that they didn't need the rights in order to write.

This allowed them to take more control of their own destiny instead of waiting around for permission to create a show—especially since new writers have a hard time getting the rights to source material anyway.

I recommend all new writers start with an original idea or something in the public domain. It'll get you produced faster, and when it's a hit, you'll have a much easier time of getting rights in the first place.

Who would have given ALW, Lin-Manuel or Bobby the rights to their material now?

FEATURED PRO MEMBER



Name: Amy Drake

Where You're From: Columbus, Ohio

PROfession: I play with words. I am a playwright, author, academic speaker and

writer, and published poet. I also direct stage plays and act in commercials.

What projects are you currently working on?

AD: I am writing a play about the life of St. Margaret of Cortona, a thirteenth-century Italian saint who led a colorful life. This project came about when I was asked to write a piece as the entertainment for a charity fundraiser. This play is also part of the #365WomenAYear project. The 30-Day Script Challenge has been very helpful in keeping me on track with this script.

I am also sketching out an adaptation of *The Belle's Strategem*, an eighteenth-century play

by Hannah Cowley. Seeking out works by early female playwrights has been a mission of mine. I directed a staged reading of the original play at Madlab and discovered there was sufficient interest in the play to consider it for another project. Last week's Office Hours with Ken gave me the impetus to think seriously about writing an adaptation.

A longer-term project is a play on the life of composer/conductor Gustav Mahler. During the summer of 2016 I staged a scene from this work in the Midtown International Theatre Festival Short Play Lab, and it was voted Most Popular Play. I found this very encouraging and continue to work on a full-length version between remunerative projects. I am a big fan of Mahler's work and a member of the Gustav Mahler Society of New York.

Why did you join PRO?

AD: I joined to learn more about all facets of theater, to network, to view the webinars,

to pick Ken Davenport's brain during Office Hours, to take advantage of script consultation, and to attend the conferences and special events. All great resources.

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

AD: The qualities I would look for in a collaborator are: a solid work ethic and commitment to a project, possessing the ability to clearly communicate concepts, skill, creativity, optimism, and a sense of humor. I am not currently seeking a creative partner, but would consider working with someone, provided a solid game plan and contract were in place before putting pen to paper.

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

AD: The camaraderie, getting to know like-minded theater professionals to seek advice, provide mutual support, and share success stories.

OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

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

Even though she'll be up for a few awards of her own this year, word is The Tonys are already hoping Tina Fey will host the show. (Nominees have hosted before – do you know who?)

We hear Emma Stone wants to do a play on Broadway and currently has seven offers in front of her.

There has been talk of a Broadway musical version of the recent film, *The Greatest Showman* . . . but that talk is going nowhere fast. "It won't happen," says my source.

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

PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH



“You always have two choices. Your commitment versus your fear.”

~Sammy Davis Jr.

MARKETING FOR PROS

You may not be there yet, but you will be.

In 2008, I wrote a blog post called, “Twitter is about to tip,” where I predicted that the tweetin’ social network was about to blow up. And it did.

Ten years later, I’m seeing another trend in social networking, and my spidey sense is going off once again. I felt pretty validated when several sessions at my latest Mastermind were focused on the network that I believe is going to continue to grow well beyond where it is today. Which means you have to be on it.

That network is Instagram.

I know, another social network for you to join? Well, yes (although there are some ways to consolidate your social networking and make it easier to run several at once, like I do).

Why is Instagram becoming the new Twitter? And even the new Facebook?

Well, first, Facebook owns Instagram. So any company that Mark Zuckerberg buys that is in the same world as his, you know has to be worth watching.

Second, right now both consumers and advertisers are enjoying amazing success. And when both sides of the buy-sell equation are satisfied, then the business has to grow.

Lastly, if you think about the evolution of



social networking, it has gotten more and more bite sized. From Facebook posts to 140 characters on Twitter to simple, get-it-in-a-second images or video. Instagram is easily digestible, and that makes it very popular.

So if you’re not on Instagram yet, join today. Follow me to see what I do, as well as other big names or companies in the Broadway space. You can learn a lot by just seeing what engages you.

But don’t ignore it. A lot of people thought Facebook was only going to be for college kids. Even Mark Zuckerberg. And we all know how that turned out.

(If you need help setting up Instagram or developing a strategy on this or any social network? Email chris@davenporttheatrical.com in our office and he’ll help you get started.)

Are you following Ken on Instagram?

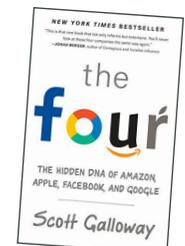
He posts a new inspirational quote on his whiteboard every morning! Follow him @kendavenportbway

WHAT KEN’S READING THIS MONTH

The Four: The Hidden DNA of Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google.

by Scott Galloway

Just about everyone thinks they know how these four highly influential companies got their success. Just about everyone is wrong. In his characteristic irreverent style, Galloway deconstructs the strategies of the Four that lurk beneath their shiny veneers. He shows how they manipulate the fundamental emotional needs that have driven us since our ancestors lived in caves, at a speed and scope others can’t match. And he reveals how you can apply the lessons of their ascent to your own business or career.



LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE

January Schmanuary.

Who says January is a rough time for the theater?

This January, Broadway shows proved weather resilient as we posted significantly higher grosses than in previous years. Sure, sure, some of these dollars are from the mega hits, but I notice a lot fewer shows in the red during this usually difficult month. In fact, we had fewer shows close this January than we had in the last ten years!

All of this can be attributed to Broadway getting a lot smarter about pricing (not to mention the huge Broadway week promotion, which moves millions of dollars of inventory). So if shows make it to December, they are now making it to February.

February, however, is another story. See next month’s article. :-)

JANUARY 2017 BROADWAY GROSS

\$118,078,672.70

...

JANUARY 2018 BROADWAY GROSS

\$145,232,550.65

Increase/Decrease: +23%

...

JANUARY 2017 BROADWAY ATTENDANCE

1,055,577

...

JANUARY 2018 BROADWAY ATTENDANCE

1,152,835

Increase/Decrease: +9.21%

...

Get the weekly grosses by subscribing to my blog.

A Surprising Way To Make Raising Money Easier



Often first-time money raisers try to keep their capitalizations to the micro-level, thinking the lower it is, the easier it is to raise. It makes sense. But the truth is, it's often easier to raise larger amounts of capital than smaller amounts of capital, especially when you're seeking commercial, for-profit, investments.

Yes, that's right. I'm telling you, often it's easier to raise \$1,000,000 than \$100,000.

There are a couple reasons this is true.

First, the higher the capitalization, the more legit and large-scale the project looks to the potential backer. And someone leading a \$10mm project seems somehow more important than someone leading a \$1mm project. (Notice that I didn't say this was TRUE, it just feels that way.) And when something feels more substantial, it's easier for some folks to get behind it.

Second, investing in a show can be a pain in the you-know-where. There's a ton of paperwork. And much of it reads like it was written in another language. Investors get tax forms at the end of the year that are often delayed, causing delays in tax filings, etc. Investors often don't want to be bothered with all this paperwork when investing very small amounts of money. I can't tell you how many times I've heard people say, "It's not worth the headache," sometimes even after they'd said yes! Small investments yield smaller returns, which can make them harder to close.

That's why there's an argument that you should look at raising more for your show than less. While the amount you are raising will depend on the size and scope of your production and the capitalization should be fixed after conversations with your General Manager or Executive Producer, don't be afraid to add a zero to the amount you're after. You just might get it faster than you thought.

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:

- 2/26 Sergio Trujillo

ON THE BLOG

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

- Well, this will change things for the Secondary Market
- Who went to see Broadway shows in 2016-17? Demographics study results revealed!
- 3 Keys to Setting New Year's Resolutions...that you will KEEP.

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

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UPDATES FROM PROS

Ed Ballou's

playwriting e-diary

What The Hell With The Hat has been published on Google Play.

Lauren Taslitz's

Regretting Almost Everything, will be making it's NYC debut at Feinsteins/ 54 Below on April 12 at 9:30pm.

Kevin Davis

was named "Producer of the Year" at the Synergy Black Tie Gala presented by Synergy Worldwide.

Diane Uniman's

full-length version of *Triangle146*, a musical about the Triangle shirtwaist factory fire in NYC in 1911 was 1 of 4 Finalists at Garden State Film Festival.

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

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



Hello Pros! It's March Madness!

Here at PRO headquarters, March Madness doesn't have anything to do with the NCAA tournament. (Let's face it, there isn't a lot of crossover between theater fans and basketball fans!)

For us, March Madness is about the march

towards production and the madness that happens along the way. I've produced a bunch of shows in my career, and each time I decide to put another one up, I think, "I've done this before. This will be a breeze."

And it never is. Because every show is different. That's one of the reasons I love the theater, because each show is so unique with its own set of challenges. And with each new show comes something I've never dealt with before

(on *Once On This Island* it was goats and sand!).

But not only do these challenges help create a better show, they also help you grow as an artist and an individual. So as you march towards your goals, remember, the madness is what makes the theater so damn special.

Go get 'em.



Ken

WRITING FOR PROS

You're Not Just a Writer.

When you come up with ideas for new plays or musicals, it's important to remember you're not just a writer. You're a theater writer.

Read more on page 2.

MARKETING FOR PROS

The One Question Survey

Working with large marketing agencies is quite an education in how the big boys market shows. I am constantly stealing stuff I've learned and bringing it back to our business.

Read more on page 3.

RAISING MONEY FOR PROS

The First Step to Overcoming Objections

Someone expresses interest and then asks a ton of questions expressing their concerns. In the sales world (that's what raising money is, right?) these concerns are called objections.

Read more on page 4.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, March 22, 2018 | 5:30-7:30 pm ET
PRO Monthly Mixer - Social Bar and Lounge 2nd floor

Wednesday, April 4, 2018 | 8-9:30 am ET
Breakfast with Ken

Wednesday, April 4, 2018 | 7-9 pm ET
Producer Pitch Night Session 2

Saturday, May 19, 2018 | 3-6 pm ET
Spring Strategy Intensive (*Spots still available!*)

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE
SUPER CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 10 & 11, 2018

For more information or to sign up for other events, visit www.theproducerperspective.com.

You're Not Just a Writer.

When you come up with ideas for new plays or musicals, it's important you remember that you're not just a writer. You're a theater writer.

One of the mistakes I see many writers make is thinking that every good idea is a good idea for the theater. Sure, every idea can be made into a theater piece. But that doesn't mean the theater is the most effective medium for the expression of that idea.

That's why, when you come up with an idea, you must ask yourself the simple question, "Why on the stage?" There must be some

theatrical conceit that makes the stage the best place to express your ideas. If there isn't, then maybe the idea is better off as a book or a movie or even a painting!

These conceits can be as simple as music being the root of the story, like *Phantom of the Opera* (we're watching an opera about an opera) or comically complicated like *Gentlemen's Guide to Love and Murder* which has one actor playing multiple roles and changing costumes faster than Clark Kent turns into Superman.

But you must have at least one compelling

reason that your show must be told on a stage. Because the theater is a complicated art form and a very difficult one to pull off. So, as I like to say, if your idea can be anything else besides a play or a musical, then that's what it should be.

If there's nowhere else it should be but on a stage, then that's when you know you've got something special.



FEATURED PRO MEMBERS



Sally Rosenberg

Name(s):
Sally Rosenberg
and Jill Lesser

Where You're From:
Chevy Chase, MD

PROfession:
Sally: Partner, Deputy General Counsel, McDermott Will & Emery LLP and author of middle grade novel, *Invincible* (Imagination Stage Press 2006).



Jill Lesser

Jill: President, Women Against Alzheimer's (an advocacy organization), trained lawyer, daughter of a playwright, mother to an aspiring stage actor, turning a lifelong passion for theater into her next professional adventure.

Sally and Jill are forming Ladybug Stages LLC, a theatrical production company.

What projects are you currently working on?

SR & JL: We are working on *Invincible the Musical*, a stage adaptation of Sally's novel. The family-oriented fantasy adventure features 16-year-old identical twin princesses: Lena who is physically disabled and adventurous and Meg who is able-bodied and riddled with

anxiety. It's a story about challenging limits, facing fears and discovering possibilities. Our creative team is Mark Sonnenblick (music and lyrics), Maggie Herskowitz (book) and director/choreographer, Jeff Whiting. The project began in 2012. At present, we are polishing a full script while working towards a 29 hour reading in 2018.

Why did you join PRO?

SR & JL: We had determined that we wanted to bring *Invincible* to fruition. Jill discovered the Producer's Perspective Super Conference. We were blown away by the substance of the programming and the talent assembled across the life cycle of a production. We are passionate about realizing *Invincible* on stage and are now bolstered to learn the business of theater as a next full chapter in our lives. The suite of growing online content and evening or weekend office hours/masterminds/conferences make it possible for us to gain a deep, practical and insightful graduate level education around our other responsibilities. Living in the DC area, the ability to listen to PRO's content as we exercise, commute to work or get our nails done is amazing (and a great use of our downtime). Ken's (and his team's) spirit and goodwill are also major influencers. Simply put, it feels good to be

around the welcoming and responsive energy of the Producer's Perspective crew with Ken at the helm. He is substantive, a skilled presenter, generous and supportive. We are constantly remarking how worthwhile are the PRO programs. We are beyond grateful that we are able to partake and also start to build our theater biz network.

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

SR & JL: We seek collaborators who share our passion for a particular project. We seek our partners through our networks, including unexpected ones. We found Mark and our original playwright Charlie Polinger through Charlie's mom, and we found Jeff through one of Sally's legal clients. And then Jeff found us Maggie. So, our creative team proves Ken's adage that you should talk about your project wherever you go!

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

SR & JL: On a practical level, the quantity and quality of PRO resources, ever growing, are stunning. On a visceral level, the value is in feeling inspired and empowered on a daily basis. There isn't a day when The Producer's Perspective and Ken Davenport's name isn't in the inbox...and it's all good!

OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

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

The highly anticipated Moulin Rouge will open on Broadway in the summer of '19 (meaning it will be eligible in the '19-20 Tony season) at a theater that has been renamed in the last decade or so.

Look for our ticketing companies to start making deals with secondary market sellers (aka brokers). The great standoff may be over.

A certain funny lady could have extended her run in a Broadway show to help get it into the black. But she opted out instead.

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

PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH



“The goal isn’t to live forever, The goal is to create something that will.”

~Chuck Palahniuk

MARKETING FOR PROS

The One Question Survey

As part of my gig with Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Really Useful Group, I work closely with a global ad agency called Digitas. In addition to School of Rock, Digitas handles Delta Airlines, Under Armour, American Express and some other powerhouse brands.

As you can imagine, working with them is quite an education in how the big boys market shows. And as you can also imagine, I am constantly stealing stuff from those big boys and bringing it back to our business.

Recently, Digitas sent me an email asking me to answer a “one question survey” on their performance. And in this one email, there were three big takeaways that I had to pass on to you.

1. You want people to do something? Make it quick, easy and TELL THEM it’s going to be quick and easy. How could I not take 2 seconds to answer one question? I clicked the link within 30 seconds of getting the email.

2. That one question? They didn’t tell me what it was in the email. And since there was only one question, I couldn’t help but wonder, “Wow, this question must be a special one. What could it be?” I was curious. You want people to act? Make ‘em curious.



3. You want to know what the question is, don’t you? I told you curiosity works! It was this: “On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend us?” Did you guess it? This question is by far, the most important question you can ask in your surveys. It measures Word of Mouth. And Word of Mouth is what sells everything. And a business, any business, whether it’s ad agency or a musical is only as good as it’s referral engine.

Try the one question survey on your next production. See how you do. I won’t tell Digitas you stole it from them. And I’m sure they stole it from someone anyway.

Are you following Ken on Facebook?

He posts a new LIVE video every day as part of his new series #EveryDayIsDifferent www.facebook.com/KenDavenport

WHAT KEN’S READING THIS MONTH



Creativity, Inc: Overcoming the Unseen Forces That Stand in the Way of True Inspiration

by Ed Catmull

Creativity, Inc. is a book for managers who want to lead their employees to new heights, a manual for anyone who strives for originality, and the first-ever, all-access trip into the nerve center of Pixar Animation. It is, at heart, a book about how to build a creative culture—but it is also, as Pixar co-founder and president Ed Catmull writes, “an expression of the ideas that I believe make the best in us possible.”

LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE

The February Freeze

This winter has been a peculiar one.

We started off January hotter than ever, and many (me included) wondered if we were breaking the winter curse. But nature and Broadway has a way of balancing itself out, and the last couple of weeks in February were chillier than expected.

All in all, however, it’s still practically balmy compared to last season. Overall grosses were up over 10% this year and attendance was up almost half that as well.

We’ll continue our downward trend into March (which has, surprisingly, one of the worst weeks of the year . . . if not the worst!) until we get to the ides, when spring breaks start to warm up our box offices.

Until then, here’s how last month’s financials looked like on Broadway.

FEBRUARY 2017 BROADWAY GROSS \$114,497,624.41

FEBRUARY 2018 BROADWAY GROSS \$126,589,256.99

Increase/Decrease: +10.56%

FEBRUARY 2017 BROADWAY ATTENDANCE 1,027,441

FEBRUARY 2018 BROADWAY ATTENDANCE 1,071,764

Increase/Decrease: +4.31%

Get the weekly grosses by subscribing to my blog.

The First Step to Overcoming Objections

Every yes you get (and you will get them) won't be easy. Sure, every once in a while someone will just say, "Where do I sign?" and throw some money in your show. But I've raised money from thousands of investors, and I can count those experiences on one hand.

What usually happens is that someone expresses interest—and then asks a ton of questions expressing their concerns.

In the sales world (and we all know that's what raising money is, right?) these concerns are called objections.

And to be a successful money-raiser, you're going to have to learn to overcome them. They might be, "You don't have a star," or "Your show is too expensive," or "I'm concerned about the economy!"

I've heard them all.

And you know what the first step to overcoming these objections is?

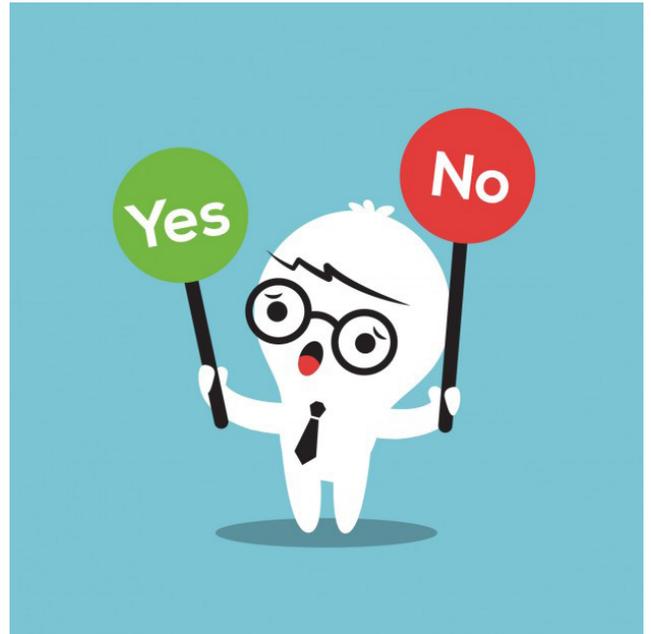
KNOWING WHAT THEY COULD BE!

Before you ask for a dime for your show, do this exercise:

Write out the Top 10 Reasons why an investor would NOT invest in your show. And don't tell me there aren't any! There are. You have to be honest with yourself and your investors. So be objective and make this list.

Did you do it?

Great. Now, once you identify these issues, you can come up with a rebuttal. And when the objection gets raised in the pitch process do this . . . AGREE with the investor (never disagree) and then explain why it doesn't concern you.



You'll get objections. It's part of the process. It's what you do with them that will determine how fast you get to your fundraising goal.

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:

- 3/26 Michael Korie
- 4/9 Warren Leight

ON THE BLOG

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

- What The Theater Crunch Could Mean For The Subsidiary Market.
- How Many Women Do This on Broadway?
- Stats Revealed: Fewer Shows Close This January Than In The Last 10 Years.

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

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UPDATES FROM PROS

Kurt Johns

is looking for co-producers for upcoming productions of the Off-Broadway hit *Churchill the play* starring Ronald Keaton. Portable, self-contained production. Particular interest in LA and DC. Easiest producing gig you'll ever have. Contact kurt@solochicagotheatre.com for more information.

Diane Uniman's

Triangle 146 got another official selection of BEST SCREENPLAY at the Beverly Hills Film Festival!

Amy Drake

has been re-elected to the Board of the International Centre for Women Playwrights, to serve from 2018-2020.

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