

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND



Hello PROs!

Ahhh, October. You gotta love it. No matter where you live, the air is just a bit more crisp. I always find this to be a perfect time to work on my projects as the laziness of summer is past and the freeze of the winter isn't upon us yet. It's just easier to have a little more spring in your step. Things are really kicking over here at Pro headquarters. We're gearing up for our first

conference on November 11 and 12, which is just about a month away! I can't wait! Not only do we have such a jam packed line up of star speakers, but I just can't wait to meet all of you. I know so many of you are coming in from all over for a chance to learn, network, and be inspired to take your show to the next level. And you will be. You're going to hear amazing stories of many incredible artists—how they were able to quit their day jobs and work on theater full time—and specific action items on

how you can get to where they are today. If you haven't got your ticket yet, sign up at TheProducersPerspective.com/conference. And remember, as a PRO you save money. Just use code: **earlypro**. I'm looking forward to seeing you there! And until then, enjoy October, and... Go get 'em!

[Handwritten signature]
Ken

WRITING FOR PROS

The Most Important Thing to Remember When You Are Writing

You're not writing a novel, a poem, or a contract. Most writers who forget this end up overwriting their scripts.

Read more on page 2.

MARKETING FOR PROS

Your Most Important Marketing Tool

Guess what is going to be mentioned more times than anything else when people talk about your show?

Read more on page 3.

RAISING MONEY FOR PROS

One Simple Tip to Raise the Money You Need Twice as Fast

Of all the tips and strategies I teach for raising money, if you can do just this one, you'll immediately improve your close rate.

Read more on page 4.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, October 16, 2017 | 7 pm ET
PRO Office Hours Call

Thursday, October 26, 2017 | 6:30–8:30 pm ET
PRO Monthly Mixer, Social Bar and Lounge (795 8th Ave)

Saturday, November 11–Sunday, November 12, 2017
The Producer's Perspective Super Conference

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.

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE
SUPER CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 11 & 12, 2017
NEW YORK CITY
REGISTER TODAY AT
www.theproducersperspective.com/conference

November 10 • Super Conference Kick Off Happy Hour • Details TBA

The Most Important Thing to Remember When You Are Writing

Here's the thing about writing for the theater. We're one of the few written forms that wasn't meant to be read.

We're not a novel. We're not a poem. We're not a contract (thank God!).

You are writing something to be seen.

And as you write, you have to constantly remind yourself that your words aren't going to be read by an audience, they are going to be heard by an audience. And, more importantly, they are going to see your characters right in front of their eyes, living and breathing your words and emotions.

What does that mean for you as you type each word?

Most writers who forget this concept end up overwriting their scripts. They write something that could be conveyed by an actor's turn of a head or some other physical gesture.

For example, these two things "say" the same thing:

ALEX: Tim, I'm leaving you.

TIM: Why are you doing this?

Or...

ALEX goes to the closet. He grabs a suitcase and begins packing.

TIM: Why are you doing this?

Which one is more interesting to you?

The old adage of "show don't tell" was taught to me when I was learning how to write short stories. But this theatrical fundamental is even more true for writing for the stage.

Two tips to ensure your work is designed to be seen:

1) After you write a scene, read it out loud, either by yourself or with a friend. Does it



sound natural? Like dialogue? Or is it over-written?

2) Get a Director aboard your project early. Their job is to transform your text into a visual art form.

Need a Director? Check out the Director Database on PRO, free for all members. There are tons of Directors waiting to work with you!

FEATURED PRO MEMBER



Name:

Derrick Byars

Where You're From:

Huntsville, Alabama, but I now live in Brooklyn

PROfession: Theater

Composer/Writer and Director.

What projects are you currently working on?

DB: I am directing an immersive production of Andrew Lippa's *The Wild Party* running October 31–November 17, music directing *Once On This Island, Jr.* at the school where I work, and lighting designing/tech directing a new show at the riverside theater by one of my fellow PRO members, Kevin Davis, titled *One*

In a Million. I am also an auditor (composers) for the BMI Musical Theater Workshop.

Why did you join PRO?

DB: I did a couple consulting sessions with Ken on a show I am writing, *A Little Light*, before I moved to the city and Ken suggested that I join. I am very glad I did because it has not only opened up a lot of amazing opportunities but it has also put me in direct contact with other people that are ambitious and self driven to create great theatre.

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

DB: I look for someone who will bring a different background and eye to a piece than I can. Someone who is not afraid to voice

their opinion but still understands the power balances in theatre. So far I have yet to have to hunt for creative partners, they have thus far "fallen in my lap." Most people I meet working on other jobs, and when something comes around they would be good for I bring them on.

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

DB: I would have to say the networking and tools provided to us on the blogs, website, etc. There are endless possibilities with all of the priceless info and connections that we get. I would not be as successful as I am right now if it were not for the resources provided by Ken and his AMAZING team.

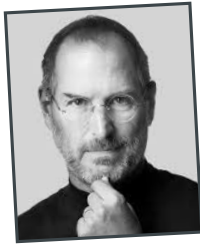
OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

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

Another new ad agency is being formed on Broadway specializing in digital advertising only. #NotShocked
 "And I am telling you . . . I'm not coming to Broadway this season," said a certain London revival.

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

PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH



“The only way to do great work is to love what you do.”

~Steve Jobs

MARKETING FOR PROS

Your Most Important Marketing Tool

Do you know what is the most important marketing tool in your arsenal?

It's not your logo. It's not your tagline.

It's your title.

Word of mouth is the #1 driver of ticket sales . . . well, guess what is going to be mentioned more times than anything else when people talk about your show? That's right, your title!

In the theater, the choice of the title is always left to the Author. And while I believe it should be, that Author should make sure they not only weigh the artistic importance of that choice, but they also need to value the marketing importance.

Because a bad title can kill a great show.

My second show was *Altar Boyz*, which I thought was a great title. Until I started pitching it to people while I was raising money...and I



realized that they couldn't see the "z"! And I didn't understand why they couldn't imagine the show was funny!

And this is the most common mistake I see

Writers and Producers make when choosing a title. They choose a title based on what THEY know about the show instead of communicating what it is about to a person who knows nothing about it.

That's why I changed the title of *Garage Band* to *Gettin' The Band Back Together!*

Which one says what the show is about? Which one conveys a sense of energy, fun and a journey? (Which is what the show is about?)

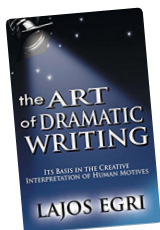
Before you lock your title, make sure you test it with friends, through surveys, on Facebook, with practice pitches, etc.

Because picking the right title will make marketing your show so much easier.

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 Art of Dramatic Writing

by Lajos Egri

Among the many "how-to" playwriting books that have appeared over the years, there have been few that attempt to analyze the mysteries of play construction. Examining a play from the inside out, Egri starts with the heart of any drama: its characters. All good dramatic writing hinges on people and their relationships, which serve to move the story forward and give it life.

LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE

Maybe it wasn't so bad after all.

September is known to be one of the most difficult times on Broadway, thanks to back-to-school, Jewish holidays, and the end-of-summer blues. It's like everyone shuts themselves inside and says, "I just took all those summer Fridays and went to all those weekend BBQs, I can't leave the house for any fun now! I have to store chestnuts for the winter!" And it happened again this summer, as a bunch of shows shed their millions off their summer highs. (Although a few shows ran a little longer in the fall than usual, as you might have read on my blog.)

But, when you look at the industry as a whole, we still were up a considerable amount over last year. So industry health is still very positive. Although, if you look closely you'll notice that attendance was up less than one percentage point, which means that the gains are mostly due to variable prices . . . a few shows making a lot more rather than the entire Broadway slate all doing better.

SEPTEMBER 2016
BROADWAY GROSS

\$110,680,470.48

...

SEPTEMBER 2017
BROADWAY GROSS

\$125,314,511.19

Increase/Decrease: +13.22%

...

SEPTEMBER 2016
BROADWAY ATTENDANCE

1,091,112

...

SEPTEMBER 2017
BROADWAY ATTENDANCE

1,101,311

Increase/Decrease: +0.93%

...

Get the weekly grosses
by subscribing to my blog.

One Simple Tip To Raise The Money You Need Twice As Fast

This is as close to a silver bullet as you can get. And it's super easy.

Of all the tip and strategies I teach for raising money, if you can do just this one, you'll immediately improve your close rate, and your dollar per close (those are sales terms, y'all, because remember, that's what you're doing.)

To raise the money you need for your show faster, here's what you do when you're asking a prospect for money.

Ask for twice as much.

I told you it was simple.

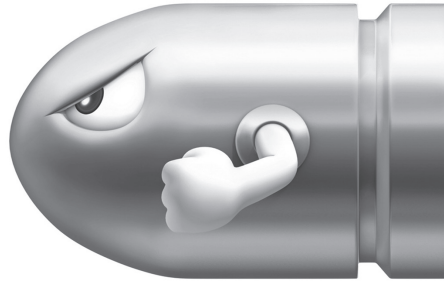
But this @#\$\$% works.

If you were going to ask for \$10k, ask for \$20k. If you were going to ask for \$50k, ask for \$250k! Aim much, much higher than you think!

Why?

Two reasons:

1 - You might get it. You never know. Don't



judge your prospects. Some of the biggest checks I've received have been from people you'd think didn't have the money for a ticket to the theater, never mind a six figure investment!

2 - If you don't get it, you can drop back and all of a sudden that 2nd investment doesn't look so bad compared to the first. (Re-read that example above again...see how \$50k looks like pennies compared to \$250k? That's how your prospect will see it too!) This is standard pricing strategy. So you may not get the \$250k. But you'll get more \$50ks.

This will take more confidence. It takes a lot to ask for five times what you need. But isn't your show worth it? Don't you believe your investor is going to make it all back and then some? Or don't you believe, without a doubt in your mind, that the world is going to be a better place with your show in it?

No? Then stop raising money right now, and don't start again until you do.

And when you do, ask for more.

(For further reading, check out Grant Cardone's *The 10X Rule*. The link is in the resources section of Pro!)

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UPDATE! *Raise It* is now on PRO! My complete course on raising money including lots more strategies like the above is now on PRO! It's available for Co-Pros and Lead Pros only. If you're not a Co or Lead Pro, email summer@davenporttheatrical.com to upgrade today and get the money you need tomorrow!

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:

- 10/16 Pat Cook

ON THE BLOG

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

- If you read only ONE blog of mine this year, make it THIS one.
- Are There Rules to Writing? This Oscar Winner Thinks So.
- What Whole Foods and Broadway have in common

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

CONNECT WITH KEN

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UPDATES FROM PROS

Doug DiVita

is close to completing first drafts of two new scripts: *Godness Of The Hunt* (a light comedy about dark people living private lives in very public spaces) and *Complicity* (a drama about a scandal that took down the French government in 1848).

Deborah Saville

is creating a new musical about free will choices—how we choose to think. But if you listen closely, destiny draws you to the most important energy of all—love.

Susan Griffin

is producing *The Apple Boys* at Ars Nova Wednesday, November 8.

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