



All about trust . . .

What does it mean to have produced shows / expositions for over two decades?
– To be in business that long?

Here's what it means to me . . .

I believe it's evidence of a commitment. I believe it's proof of a deeper understanding of the exhibitor's business. I believe it means trust in our leadership – the kind of leadership that's fair and honest.

Everyone experiences rough periods in their careers. There are times that challenge us financially, emotionally, and intellectually. Downturns in the market, financial tightening, and employee difficulties (*and we've had ours*) – all test the tenacity of any business-person. Add to that, other business activities (because it's in our nature to want to expand), and you can easily be overwhelmed.

If things go poorly, you may have to file suit and have the powers of justice sort out the remains. I've had a couple. (Litigation is much like adding another whole business to the pile of paperwork (crap) on your desk, and I don't recommend it to anyone, IF it's avoidable. If it's unavoidable, then seek justice with a vengeance and maybe you'll reach an "amicable settlement," as we did.)

Then there's the emotional issues and baggage you collect. Divorces are another personal obstacle about half the population experiences with the odds of a coin toss. Add to that problems with kids (health, school, divorce, and so on) and the soup gets pretty thick.

To succeed, you have to overcome the challenges to your business and continue to 'produce.' No matter what your experience, everyone expects you to meet the hardships and still do the dance. That's "trust."

TRUST.

Trust – where does it come from? Trust – how's it produced? Trust – what is it worth?

I see "trust" as an expectation of an outcome that others vest in you. Trust is created when earned, and it's only earned when the expectation of the outcome is proven time and again. That's how you create it and how you receive it.

What's trust worth? Everything. It's the backbone of every civilized society and all business activity. So, when someone vests trust in a show producer by agreeing to exhibit, they do so with expectations that the producer will manage the activities of the larger group (setup, takedown and show administration), and promote the show with enough advertising to assure the success of the exhibitors. Do that long enough and you become an "industry leader."

What is a "leader"?

That question came up when someone wanted to prove another point – that a 'leader' was a producer with the most shows. What a uniquely ignorant thought that was, especially from a so-called educated man – an attorney.

Leaders become 'leaders' because they do more than expand. The concept of 'mass' has little to do with the acts and actions of leadership. Leaders have responsibilities and goals that take into account everyone they are allied with – those who've trusted them to do the right thing. It's the ethical and equitable decisions that count toward a "leadership" role. There are other categories and appliques of "leadership," but that's the most outstanding to me.

When this lawyer attempted to hold up the *Other Guy* as an example of "leadership" by stating he was ahead in show productions – more shows than us – I had to question my understanding and my impression of the term. Did I convey some limited perspective, or values that I didn't believe in?

I answered as thoughtfully as I could,

"Leaders are more than big.

Only those who've proven they are ethical and responsible can be leaders."

The lawyer had nothing to say.

Imagine that.

Lil' Johnny

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