



Just Add 1 Drop Of This Household Item To Any Dark Spot and Wait 3 Minutes

HealthClubJournal

times. “Change Agent” sounded like
1 2005 when I set this up. It sounds

pretentious to me now but c’est la vie.

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229 COMMENTS

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9 Ways a Theatre Degree Trumps a Business Degree



Some of you may know this about me, some may not. Despite having spent the last 15 years as a PR & communications professional, my college degree is in theatre. I have never in my life taken a marketing class, or a journalism class, or a business class. Yet, by most measures, I’m enjoying a successful career in business. “So what?” you ask... read on.

I was having a conversation with my friend Sara (<http://www.sarajstuckey.com>) this week. She’s an actress. Like most actresses, she also has a Day Job that she works to pay the bills between acting jobs. This is the reality for most working actors in LA, New York and the other major centers of the entertainment industry. She was pointing out to me that she viewed her theatre background as a weakness in her Day Job career field, and that it was holding her back. She asked for my advice.

My advice? **There IS no weakness in having a theatre background. There is only strength.** Here are just a few skills that a theatre degree gave me that have served me enormously well in business:

1. **You have advanced critical thinking and problem solving skills:** taking a script and translating it into a finished production is a colossal exercise in critical thinking. You have to make tremendous inferences and intellectual leaps, and you have to have a keen eye for subtle clues. (believe it or not,

this is a skill that very few people have as finely honed as the theatre people I know. That's why I listed it #1).

2. **You're calm in a crisis:** You've been on stage when somebody dropped a line and you had to improvise to keep the show moving with a smile on your face, in front of everyone. Your mic died in the middle of a big solo musical number. You just sang louder and didn't skip a beat.
3. **You understand deadlines and respect them:** Opening Night is non-negotiable. Enough said.
4. **You have an eye on audience perception:** You know what will sell tickets and what will not. This is a very transferrable skill, and lots of theatre people underestimate this, because they think of theatre as an ART, and not as a BUSINESS. I frequently say (even to MBA-types) that theatre was absolutely the best business education I could have gotten. While the business majors were buried in their books and discussing theory, we were actually SELLING a PRODUCT to the PUBLIC. Most business majors can get through undergrad (and some MBA programs, even) without ever selling anything. Theater departments are frequently the only academic departments on campus who actually sell anything to the public. Interesting, isn't it?
5. **You're courageous:** If you can sing "Oklahoma (<http://youtu.be/mrDVzbeDzRk>)!" in front of 1,200 people, you can do anything.
6. **You're resourceful:** You've probably produced "The Fantasticks" in a small town on a \$900 budget. You know how to get a lot of value from minimal resources.
7. **You're a team player:** You know that there are truly no small roles, only small actors. The show would fail without everyone giving their best, and even a brilliant performance by a star can be undermined by a poor supporting cast. We work together in theatre and (mostly) leave our egos at the stage door. We truly collaborate.
8. **You're versatile:** You can probably sing, act, dance. But you can also run a sewing machine. And a table saw. And you've probably rewired a lighting fixture. You've done a sound check. You're good with a paintbrush. You're not afraid to get your hands dirty for the benefit of the show. In short, you know how to acquire new skills quickly.
9. **You're flexible:** you've worked with some directors who inspired you. Others left you flat, but you did the work anyway. Same goes with your fellow actors, designers and stagehands... some were amazing and supportive, others were horrible and demoralizing to work with (we won't name names). You have worked with them all. And learned a little something from every one of them.

These are the top reasons I've found my theatre degree to be a great background for a business career. What are yours?

(The Change Agent is Brian Sibley. [Follow him on Twitter @bsibley](http://twitter.com/bsibley) (<http://twitter.com/bsibley>))

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229 thoughts on "9 Ways a Theatre Degree Trumps a Business Degree"

1. *Assingments % - Theatre Skills in the Real World: Applying Performance-Based Strengths to My Future Career* says:
May 5, 2025 at 1:35 am