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by Mitch Stark

Creativity Disclaimer: You don't have to be a tech professional to make projections work for you. The quality of your equipment, and your tech expertise, only matter so much—the most important thing is storytelling. With projections, your only boundaries are the limits of your creativity and vision.



Cover photo courtesy Theatre Avenue

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THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRITY IN FUNDRAISING

by Rachel Clevenger

Integrity in fundraising is about more than ensuring your show choir members are approaching the fundraising event with a seriousness of purpose and commitment to following through. Integrity in any fundraising event starts when you choose a fundraising company to align with your choir and your own reputation, thus making the right choice in a fundraising company is a crucial decision.

editor's letter

I believe that most of us have been raised on some version of the concept that suggests you should treat people as you wish to be treated. Whether people are raised in homes that taught religious values specifically, or ethical values from a more secular stance, I like to believe most of us were instructed to be fair, truthful, and trustworthy.

I also think we each interact with others in the world assuming they have a similar baseline of honor—similar to our own, that is. When we start small businesses, especially family-owned businesses, we bring those value systems into the corporate world and conduct our business affairs with the same degree of honesty and truthfulness with which we conduct our home affairs.

Larger corporate identities likely do not warrant that same level of crossover, from the personal self to the business self. However, the brand of small businesses is one that was dreamed up in someone's home, maybe by a solo entrepreneur or a couple or perhaps by an entire family. That brand is therefore intertwined with their family's code of ethics and passed down from generation to generation.

When we started our publishing business, Flaherty Media LLC, we chose the name Flaherty because that is my maternal grandmother's name. She died when my mother was a toddler, so all we know of her is gleaned from a few stories my mother heard growing up and a handful of photographs. The same year we started our business, early in 2012, I was invested in family genealogy and spending hours online trying to learn what I could about the Flaherty name (O'Flaherty technically).

Marian's parents had come from Ireland to New York. When my grandfather was in NYC visiting an army buddy who was married to Marian's sister, Helen, he asked her: "Are there any more at home like you?" When my mother visited Ireland a few years ago, she learned firsthand of the O'Flaherty reputation; they were a fearless and fearsome bunch, not to be trifled with. I remember thinking, "Yep, that sounds like my people."

Though the Flaherty name isn't connected to my husband, he knew Marian had been on my mind a great deal that year. As we were tossing about company names in our kitchen, names that felt meaningful to us, he is the one who suggested Flaherty Media. I chose a logo that depicted a tree with strong roots because I believed we carry our family values into our family business; I think it is impossible not to do so.

That's why we have been distressed at times over the years to run into other small businesses—most often fundraising companies—who lack integrity. Some of those people are still in our older issues, because we keep all of those in our archives, even though they never paid for an ad. Worse, they made excuses about being low on funds to ensure we ran three ads before we had to cut them off, and then they basically dared us to sue them if we wanted to be paid. We had a choice to either turn these people over to a collection agency or just shake our heads and move on. Fundraisers aren't the only ones, of course; they have just been the worst offenders with *Productions* clients.

Though I'm sure none of our readers expect advertisers to be vetted by magazines where their ads appear, I felt deeply responsible that some show choirs may have seen a company in our magazine and tried them based on that exposure, only to be similarly misused; that caused some sleepless nights for me. It was about more than principle, though principle was part of it. I worried that our family-based brand was being tainted by people who did not seem to have any values at all.

What a tremendous relief it is for us now to know that every single fundraiser you see in this issue is a company we have worked with for years; they are people running companies that have longevity earned from decades of strong partnerships and quality products. They are companies we have heard from boosters and directors run great fundraiser from start to finish, and that makes us proud to be a platform that is helping promote companies that deserve your business.

We have learned hard lessons, but all we can do is move forward, confident that the people we are doing business with now are working from the same place we are at Flaherty Media—and from the same mindset the amazing people of show choir operate from every day: a place of trust, honor, and integrity.



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Photos courtesy Theatre Avenue



CREATIVE SET DESIGN FOR SUMMER MUSICALS

by Mitch Stark

Creativity Disclaimer: You don't have to be a tech professional to make projections work for you. The quality of your equipment, and your tech expertise, only matter so much—the most important thing is storytelling. With projections, your only boundaries are the limits of your creativity and vision.



When combined with your other design elements (actors, lighting, costumes, set, props, etc.), projections can expand your ability to tell your story, even if you don't have state-of-the-art equipment in your booth.

Using Vision, Passion, and Creativity to Compose Striking Images

Take photography as an example: you can own the most basic and inexpensive polaroid camera, but with the right vision, passion, and creativity you can compose beautiful, striking images. We also know that even with the most expensive camera equipment, it's possible to shoot mediocre pictures. Your vision is what matters most, and your commitment to bringing it to life on stage.

That being said, there are certain requirements to make projections work well in your space, but the best way to discover these is to get in there and try it. Be creative! Get your hands on the best projector, screen and laptop you can, set it up in your theater, and play.

Tweak projector settings, try different images, adjust your theater lighting. You can research online all day and take other directors' advice, but there is no substitute for seeing projections in your own space and making adjustments based on what you see.

Don't be afraid to delegate to a student, volunteer or tech to try it out for you. You will keep learning and discovering ways to make it look better for the next show; but you have to start somewhere.

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Jeffrey Bowen

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It all begins with a song...

Finding a Projector Screen

Screens are everywhere. Anything can be a screen. Anything. Generally, you want it to be light-colored (like a white, cream or very light gray) and reflective. But you can use everything from walls to ceilings to curtains to bedsheets to professional-grade material from Rosebrand.

There are multiple opportunities and options, from low-budget to high-end:

- A blank wall
- Sewn-together sheets
- Sewn-together shower curtains (for rear-projection)
- A surface painted with Screen Goo (a special paint that makes any surface a projection surface)
- Your existing cyclorama
- Fabrics like muslin from Rosebrand, Roscoe, or Gerriets
- Material specific to projection from the same companies

Hang the material or stretch it around a frame. Some groups have even built their own frames out of wood or PVC piping. There are a lot of decent DIY (Do It Yourself) videos on YouTube that can help.

The quality of your equipment, and your tech expertise, only matter so much—the most important thing is storytelling. With projections, your only boundaries are the limits of your creativity and vision. When combined with your other design elements (actors, lighting, costumes, set, props, etc.), projections can expand your ability to tell your story, even if you don't have state-of-the-art equipment in your booth.

Choosing a Projector

The truth is, many projector types will get the job done. What do you need to make it work? If you are purchasing a new projector, there are lots of specs to consider, and so many levels of pricing, it's like buying a car.

However, when you get right down to it, all you really need is a projector of basic-to-good quality. You can always level-up later, as your productions' value (and budget) grows and your tastes become more refined.

Brightness is Key

The most important thing with projectors is BRIGHTNESS. Brightness is key. Buy, rent, or borrow the brightest projector you can. This will help the image show up in the presence of ambient and stage lighting in your theater.

Technically speaking, projector brightness is measured in 'lumens.' If you're in a small space, and you can control your lighting, you can get away with 2,500 to 3,500 lumens in your projector. For mid-sized to large spaces

IT ALL BEGINS WITH A SONG...

Jeffrey Bowen has been arranging show choir music since the late 1980s and is still creating 80 to 90 charts a year for winning show choirs all over the country. The goal of a winning arrangement is to produce a chart that is first and foremost "singable". He takes great care to maintain proper vocal ranges, wide use of dynamics, thoughtful band scoring during the vocals, and highly dance-worthy instrumental breaks.

2018 marks his 25th year in adjudication of not only show choirs but theme park productions as well. He still uses the advice of a legendary show choir director, "The group that sings wins".

In 2012, Jeffrey's business was incorporated, becoming Music Arrangement Services, Inc. The fundamentals never changed – provide a quality product and the best customer service possible. This business practice helped Jeffrey to achieve providing arrangements to show choirs in 35 states as well as Canada, Germany and Australia. Currently, he has arranged over 2,000 charts, including 28 original songs performed by various show choirs around the country.

Jeffrey also stays busy as a performer and singer-songwriter, promoting his CD and YouTube videos.

Music Arrangement Services, Inc.

www.showchoirmusic.com jeff@showchoirmusic.com 615-491-2187



like a high school or auditorium, you'll need a minimum of 5,000 lumens. Our motto is always "the brighter the better."

When it comes to other technical specs, just use common sense, or ask someone technical you know. There are customer reviews to look at, and also a lot of other schools, universities, and theatre companies that can offer up ideas and advice from their own experience.

Here are a couple of projectors that come highly recommended in a lower price range. (If you want to go all in and purchase any 10,000+ lumen options, you'll want to consult a projection professional first.)

For Smaller Spaces:

- Optoma GT1080 (Short-throw projector) — 2,800 Lumens

For Mid-Sized Spaces:

- Optoma X600 XGA — 6,000 Lumens
- Panasonic PT-VX600U XGA — 5,500 Lumens

Keeping the Projection from Washing Out

Your best bet is to keep ambient light and stage lighting from pointing directly at your screen. Focus your lamps about 5 ft off the screen if

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possible. You can do this by adjusting them down or using the barn doors to control the light spread. You can try using light trees in the wings as well, as an alternative to overhead lamps. Or use any combination of these things—whatever works best in your space to give you the brightest picture.

And don't forget, a bright projector is key! Even traditionally painted backdrops start to wash out if they are saturated with too much light, so don't worry about it too much. Just try to balance the amount of light and the direction of your stage lighting.

Keeping Performers' Shadows Off The Screen

Keep your projector up high and tilt it down toward the screen—the closer to the screen the better. You can mount your projector from a light bar, or house ceiling in some cases. You'll need to use your projector's 'keystone' setting to correct the image in this case.

Also, consider a short-throw projector or lens. It cuts down the distance that the projector has to be from your screen, while still displaying a large backdrop image. If you have room backstage, try rear-projection, which means placing the projector at the back

The truth is, many projector types will get the job done. What do you need to make it work? If you are purchasing a new projector, there are lots of specs to consider, and so many levels of pricing, it's like buying a car. However, when you get right down to it, all you really need is a projector of basic-to-good quality.

of the stage and projecting forward on your cyc or screen. Your screen will have to be a little transparent for this to work, like a normal cyc, but not so much that you see the projector light through it.

How to Project Your Chosen Images

Put your images into a slideshow software like Powerpoint or Keynote on a laptop. (QLab is a professional option if you want to level up.) Connect the laptop to the projector. If you use a long cable, you can keep your laptop up in the tech booth so that the student or technician running it can collaborate with the lighting and sound technicians.

You may want to put black slides in between your images for blackouts or even use the software's built-in fades for smooth transitions between scenes. You can also drag animated movies or videos into Powerpoint or Keynote as a part of your presentation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Mitch Stark is the Founding Creative Director at TheatreAve.com and an Artist at Mitch Stark Design. He has designed digital projection backdrops for theatre and ballet companies internationally, for productions such as *Willy Wonka*, *Swan Lake*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Annie*, *Lion King*, and beyond. Learn more at www.theatreave.com.



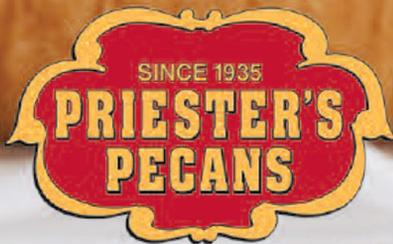
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THE IMPORTANCE OF

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TEAMWORK

STRATEGY

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Trust as a Critical Component of Running a Successful Fundraiser

Carey Aron, VP of The Pasta Shoppe, shares how critical the component of trust is when running a successful fundraising event; trust comes only with a successful partnership. Aron notes that they have developed strong relationships over the years in order to support them throughout the entire fundraising process, because they recognize the directors and boosters or stretched for time and have a multitude of responsibilities.” Aron adds that they view their job as one to not only simplify the fundraiser, but to minimize the stresses on the booster, directors, and show choir members. They want to be the trusted “friendly voice on the other end of the phone.”

Additionally, in terms of keeping integrity in any fundraising partnership, Aron notes the value in backing up a “solid and seamless” system with a high-value product. She explains, “No one wants to open up the box and be disappointed in the size or quality of the item.”

Aron also suggests show choirs should partner with companies who make their products in America. She shares, “Supporting your fundraiser is also supporting hard working men and women and the communities where they live.” When you are selling products made in America, you are not only helping your group and your community; you are simultaneously supporting American workers.

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Honesty as the Cornerstone of the Fundraising Partnership

Debbie Hohman, founder and owner of School Spirit Coffee, Inc., suggests that when a show choir is choosing a fundraising program, they are best served by looking for quality products that can be gained at a fair price while, of course, offering the highest possible profit margin. Hohman notes, "The best way to achieve that is to choose a Direct Sale company that doesn't have regional Sales Representatives who take a margin of your profit."

Running a family-owned business gives Hohman the opportunity to regularly interact with her customers and share in their lives in meaningful ways, carrying over the same things that drive her interactions with her family members—honesty, caring for others, and integrity.

Hohman does suggest that boosters and directors may want to be wary when it comes to considering fundraisers that offer rewards for the student-sellers because, as motivating as that might be in the short-time, those rewards are coming out of the show choir's overall profit margins. She suggests

Jeff Ellenberger, founder and owner of Dutch Mill Bulbs, has watched the powerful relationships that develop among boosters and the fundraising companies they choose to align themselves with long-term. That energy created from a core of positive values builds momentum that inevitably leads to achieving whatever goals they have set for themselves, including the financial rewards resulting from any successful fundraiser.

creating internal rewards for participants, so the profit margin is untouched. She concludes, "If you do it right the first time, you won't create fundraising fatigue among your students or parents."

Longevity Establishes Integrity

Melissa Geatches with Country Meats, a family-owned and operated company established in the 70s by Jeff Geatches, believes integrity is a natural part of any small business started by family members. Though most companies claim they care deeply about customer satisfaction, the proof is found in

the daily interactions clients have with their fundraising partners. Words come cheap, but loyalty does not.

Geatches explains that this direct contact with their customers, and treating clients as part of the family, has been a principle of the company since it began. She knows that the "personal touch" offers an immediate response, where people feel heard and valued.

Geatches notes, "Customer satisfaction is what has kept our company going for over 40 years now. We feel that each and every customer is a part of our family." This

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“Supporting your fundraiser is also supporting hard working men and women and the communities where they live,” says Carey Aron, VP of The Pasta Shoppe. When you are selling products made in America, you are not only helping your group and your community; you are simultaneously supporting American workers.

devotion is why new customers immediately feel comfortable doing business with them, Geatches explains, because Country Meats “will always do what is right and take good care of them.” They want every customer to feel proud of the product they are selling for their fundraiser, confident in the knowledge their supporters will not be disappointed.

Geatches goes on to explain that in a company populated by family members, respect and integrity are a given; obviously, those principles apply across all of their interactions, whether with their employees of customers, and this offers a difference that people can both sense and see for themselves.

Fairness Breeds Loyalty While Creating Financial Success

Jeff Ellenberger, founder and owner of Dutch Mill Bulbs—a company that has been in business for over half a century now—is also focused on providing personal attention to each customer’s needs. He believes customer loyalty is not something to be taken for granted, but something that is earned by a company that runs their business in such a way that every customer feels appreciated, important, and confident they are doing business with a company that can be trusted.

As a family business, Ellenberger notes, the values inherent in a strong family dynamic

are the same values they bring to their company: honesty, fairness, and loyalty. He sees these qualities as integral to living and working with integrity.

Treating people with respect, he adds, leads to loyalty in a natural and organic way; furthermore, with his small business being like a second family, he has a personal connection to the employees that larger companies are unlikely to enjoy. Dutch Mill is also focused on being environmentally responsible and is careful to work only with reputable growers, those who share the same dedication to service and to quality.

Ellenberger—as the father of three boys who have all been active in a variety of school activities—has watched the powerful relationships that develop among boosters and the fundraising companies they choose to align themselves with long-term. That energy created from a core of positive values builds momentum that inevitably leads to achieving whatever goals they have set for themselves, including the financial rewards resulting from any successful fundraiser.

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Finally, Sarah Ellis of Priestler's Pecans is part of a family-owned company that has been around for over seven decades, making gourmet gift tins, pecan pieces, and candies.

They have a commitment to shipping the freshest, top-grade crop of pecans available, ensuring recipients will be delighted by the product, and choir members will be proud of what they have sold. They have a 100% Satisfaction Guarantee, in fact, to be certain no one is disappointed.

Ellis stresses the "importance of doing things the way they way they've always been done"—by hand in small batches. Ellis adds, "We are now into our fourth generation of employees and passing the torch on to ensure the next generation provides the same level of care presented in the beginning."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. Rachel James Clevenger earned her B.A. and M.Ed. degrees from Mississippi College. After finishing her PhD in Composition and Rhetoric, she taught and served as the University Writing Center Director for Birmingham Southern College and University of Alabama at Birmingham. Most recently, she taught Business Communications at Samford University.



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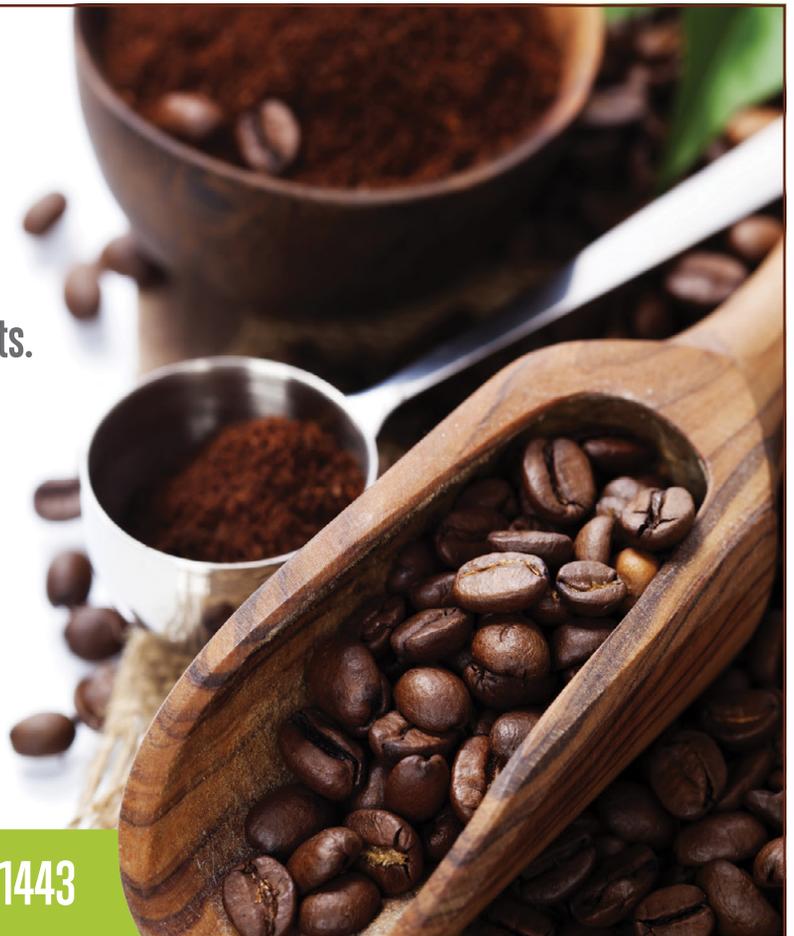
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2019 DATES & LOCATIONS

FAME New York	March 7-10
FAME Orlando	March 14-17
Show Choir America (Orlando)	March 21-24
FAME Chicago	March 28-31
FAME Branson	April 4-7
FAME Hollywood	April 11-14
Show Choir National Finals	May 4

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The **Show Choir National Finals**, held April 22, 2018 at the Genesee Theater in Chicago, presented the annual **Aspire Awards** to the following industry professionals:

Lifetime Achievement Award	Michael & Randie Parks
Vocal Vanguard	Zach Bjornsen (Millard West HS)
Visual Vanguard	Kevin Chase
Best New Director	Thomas Young (Millard West HS)
Best New Choreographer	Dallas J Pritt
Best Arranger	Nick Brockamp
Best Costumer	Gail McInnis Productions
Spirit of Service	Damon Brown (Thirst Project)
Most Promising New Program	Sheridan Northern Stars (Beth McClain)
Best Regional Competition	Central Wisconsin Spectacular (Colby HS, WI Kevin Spidler, director)

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