

# CONCERT AND BUSINESS: TWO-PART HARMONY

Commercial strategies gleaned from a Keith Urban show

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Merrill Dubrow



I recently had the opportunity to attend a Keith Urban concert. I had never attended one of his concerts and I'm not a huge fan of country music, but I thought it would be fun and an enjoyable night.

As the concert started, I was pleasantly surprised at how much I enjoyed the experience and how much I learned about business during the show. Let me explain the comparisons that I see between a Keith Urban concert and a successful business:

■ **Communicate:** Urban addressed the crowd a bunch of times during the night with a fun story and a clear message.

■ **Use surprises:** Urban walked into the crowd playing his guitar. In fact, he did this with security to the other end of the stadium. Lots of performers do this — but I have never seen one give away his guitar. At the end of the song, he gave his guitar to a fan!

■ **Use the latest technology:** Urban had some cool video screens behind him that reinforced his message and kept everyone's interest for the entire concert.

■ **Highlight individuality:** Urban did an amazing job introducing his band members and their talent. Every lead singer will

do this, but Urban really personalized them and genuinely looked like he was having a great time.

■ **Flexibility:** Urban jumped around and was very flexible. OK, maybe this is a reach, but don't we want our businesses to be flexible?

■ **Leave your customers wanting more:** Urban did two encores, and at the end of the second one, not one person out of the 20,000 people in the audience wanted to leave. Clearly, everyone left wanting more.

■ **Create raving fans:** Urban did just that. The tweets, the posts on Facebook and the discussions that everyone had because of that night will pay enormous dividends in the future. I'm sure most of the younger attendees downloaded Urban's songs from iTunes that night, and the older ones went to Best Buy the next day and bought a CD.

■ **Use PR:** Everything Urban did was highlighted on the video screens. He gave away his guitar; it was highlighted. He walked into the crowd; it was highlighted. He brought someone up on stage; it was highlighted.

■ **Engage the audience:** Somehow, some way Urban seemed to notice everything in the crowd — a sign in the top deck of the stadium, a shirt that someone was wearing, two

people dancing to his music. I'm sure his staff worked very hard at this. Who knows, maybe some of it was staged, but it was well done and it made people feel special. Isn't that the exact message we want our business to convey to our clients?

■ **Involve the past:** During the evening, Urban highlighted and spoke about Waylon Jennings and The Beatles. He mentioned how much they helped him with his music and how much he respected them. In business, we should all be doing this with former leaders or influencers of our companies.

■ **Have fun:** I'm not sure who had more fun, Urban or his audience. He was engaged with what he was doing the entire time he was on stage. Clearly, it was his goal to give everyone a memorable night, and his goal was accomplished.

Keith Urban is a great talent but probably a better showman and businessperson. His concert was an amazing night. He gave so much of himself during his performance. Every aspect of his show was about his fans and ensuring that he delivered a picture-perfect performance and experience.

I took away so much from his concert. I hope this piece enables every reader to take away at least one good idea or tidbit of information to help their business. <<



**MERRILL DUBROW** is president and CEO of Dallas-based M/A/R/C Research, one of the top 25 market research companies in the U.S. Dubrow is a sought-after speaker and has been writing a blog for more than four years. He can be reached at [merrill.dubrow@marcresearch.com](mailto:merrill.dubrow@marcresearch.com) or at (972) 983-0416.