

# Right on the Wrong End

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I recently saw an old photo of two youngsters, possibly four or five years old, who were attempting to take a photograph with their father's camera. It was one of those big old ones that had a large viewing box and sat on a tripod. The photo perfectly captured the curious, aspiring character of children—one had taken a glamorous pose and the other was leaning in to take the photo. The interesting part is that they were both at the wrong end of camera.

How true this is of us at times. We view our circumstances, people, and even ourselves through a filter determined by our past experiences and viewpoints (the wrong lens). Whatever comes through that

filter is affected, either for good or for bad, keeping us from seeing what really might be the truth.

“Our experiences are much less important than how we choose to think about them. The way we interpret our experiences shapes our beliefs about the past. Furthermore,

our interpretations either limit or enable our future success. Facts are facts, but the view you take is your choice.” (Lee J. Colan)

It is only in tearing down the filters, looking through the appropriate lens of the camera, and viewing our situations with “new eyes” that we are free to create, discover new ways of doing things, and generate change.

Don't allow past perceptions to halt your progress for a better future. Choose the best option for your situation and make the most of your time shaping young lives and advancing the love of music.

of results and boredom, this may indicate it is time for a change. Just because you have “always” written your own show or “always” had a certain designer write your drill, doesn't mean it is your best solution today. With other viable options available it is good to examine

which method will best accelerate the achievement of your goals and dreams.

## Options for Show Planning

- Write your own show
- Hire someone or any number of individuals to arrange, design, choreograph, and write percussion parts, etc.
- Purchase arrangements and pre-designed drill

For the creative types, the thought of coming up with a stunning new theme each year energizes them from the moment the dust settles from the previous season. Taking control of your options and developing your own plan tops the list of benefits for the self designer. The down side is the amount of time needed to complete all the phases of designing and planning. Everyone is not an expert at everything and the amount of time needed to write a show directly corresponds to the level of ability (or the lack thereof). Even if you enjoy writing drill and are fairly good at it, doing it once a year is hardly enough to compete with the experts. Stick to your strengths and hire professionals for those duties that zap your time and energy.

Many directors find more satisfaction and success in collaborating with others.

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Brainstorming with professionals and hiring others to write your field show is almost a win-win. You're free to contribute ideas and the experts have the ability to bring them to life. It's not quite a total win-win because of the expense and risk incurred when trusting others to complete the job accurately and on time. Juggling various individuals to do different aspects of the show can be very stressful, however, and often is self-defeating when energy is needed to keep everyone on track.

Finally, many directors are stretched in so many directions, the convenience of simply selecting a professionally designed completed show and running with it is like a gift from heaven. Though price and convenience may rank as the greatest benefits of pre-designed shows, the music and drill quality has developed to the point that many of these shows are imperceptible from the nation's finest "custom shows." The music is comprised of percussion and wind parts and often includes a related percussion feature. From beloved patriotic themes to musicals, or classics to original contemporary works, the musical choices are

endless. Still, the area these shows allow groups to really shine is in the drill. You can benefit from the talent and creativity of the nation's best designers and provide students with drill design far beyond what would typically be affordable if you were to hire the designer him/herself. Though some may consider the need for adjustments as a downside, tailoring a show to fit any group can be easily accomplished with drill design computer software.

In addition, many pre-designed shows are accompanied by flag choreography and visual suggestions which make it almost like having a virtual staff of fifteen top notch professionals on your home field. Add regional protection and it is hard to find a disadvantage, if you're looking with unfiltered eyes.

Maybe it's time to switch sides and look through the right lens of the camera. Don't allow past perceptions to halt your progress for a better future. Choose the best option for your situation and make the most of your time shaping young lives and advancing the love of music.

Best wishes on a great season!



*Randy served ten years as a nationally recognized high school band director and assistant marching band director at West Chester University. Over the past 21 years Randy has developed Marching Show Concepts as a nationally known company for quality marching band products and exceptional one-to-one services. Randy exemplifies an expertise and standard of excellence that is well known and respected throughout the music industry. He is an accomplished clinician, adjudicator and drill designer who continues to display his talents in the MSC collection of products and services.*