

# The Full-Service Production Handbook

*Running an end-to-end independent studio — from first concept to final delivery*

*Lockett Productions — First Edition — July 2026*



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*This e-book is editorial and educational commentary published by Lockett Productions in July 2026. It reflects the operating practices of a founder-led, full-service film and new-media production company in the Los Angeles area; it is not legal, financial, tax, or distribution advice, and it does not guarantee any commercial, festival, or search-ranking outcome. Production incentives, platform terms, and industry conditions change frequently — confirm current rules with the relevant film commission, guild, or platform before relying on them. Nothing here should be read as a promise of financing, representation, or results.*

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## Foreword

Plenty of studios can shoot a scene. Fewer can carry a project all the way from a napkin idea to a delivered, distributed, findable piece of work without handing it off three times and losing something at each handoff. That end-to-end capability — one team, one standard, from concept through delivery — is what "full-service" is supposed to mean, and it is what this book is about.

Lockett Productions is an independent film and new-media production company founded by filmmaker Devin Lockett, working out of the Los Angeles area with a team of seasoned production professionals. We produce auteur-driven film and new media, and we do it end to end: development, principal photography, post, web video, websites, SEO, and the finishing that ties it together. This handbook explains how a founder-led, full-service studio operates and why the model is a good fit for the market in 2026.

It is written for producers, founders, and clients who want to understand what a real full-service partner does — and for filmmakers building toward that capability themselves. Read it through once, then keep the checklists nearby. They are meant to be adapted to your own operation.

## Chapter 1 — What "Full-Service" Actually Means

"Full-service" is one of the most abused phrases in production. Used honestly, it means a single studio that can take a project from first concept to final delivery without the client having to assemble and manage a chain of separate vendors. Used dishonestly, it means a company that will happily quote for anything and subcontract the parts it cannot do.

The difference matters because every handoff between vendors is a place where quality, schedule, and vision leak. A project that moves from a development shop to a production company to a post house to a web team passes through four sets of assumptions, four invoices, and four opportunities to misunderstand what the client actually wanted. A genuinely full-service studio absorbs those handoffs internally, where they can be managed by people who share a standard and a memory of the original intent.

For Lockett Productions, full-service means two disciplines under one roof — independent film production and new media — handled from first concept through final delivery. That is not a menu; it is a pipeline. The same team that develops the idea shoots it, cuts it, finishes it, and helps get it seen. Continuity of ownership is the whole value proposition: the people who know why a choice was made are still in the room when it is time to defend or extend that choice.

The honest limit of full-service is capacity, not capability. A focused studio should be candid about what it does directly and what it brings in specialists for — and it should manage any outside help so tightly that the client never feels the seam. The promise is not that one company does literally everything; it is that one company is accountable for the whole result.

## Field Checklist

- Map every handoff a project would otherwise require
- Absorb those handoffs under one accountable team
- Be honest about capacity versus capability

## Chapter 2 — Founder-Led Without Being Founder-Limited

A founder-led studio has a decisive advantage: someone with a clear creative vision is directly responsible for the work, and that vision does not get diluted by committee. It also has a characteristic risk: the founder can become the bottleneck through which everything must pass. Building a durable full-service company means keeping the advantage while engineering out the risk.

The advantage of founder leadership is coherence. When the person who set the studio's standard is in the room, decisions are faster and more consistent, and the work carries a recognizable point of view. Clients feel it too — they are dealing with a principal who can actually commit, not an account manager relaying decisions made elsewhere. Lockett Productions is built this way on purpose: founder-led, with the filmmaker's vision at the center of every project.

The risk is that a studio which cannot function without the founder in every meeting cannot scale, cannot take on parallel projects, and cannot survive the founder having a bad week. The answer is a seasoned team that carries the standard independently. When collaborators genuinely understand the studio's approach, the founder sets direction rather than executing every task, and the company can run more than one project at real quality at once.

This is why a standing invitation to production professionals — reach out with your credentials — is more than courtesy. A founder-led studio grows by adding people who can hold the standard on their own, so the founder's judgment scales through the team instead of being consumed by it. The goal is a company that is unmistakably shaped by its founder and yet not dependent on the founder's presence in every decision.

### Field Checklist

- Keep the founder setting direction, not doing every task
- Build a team that carries the standard independently
- Grow by adding people who can hold the bar alone

## Chapter 3 — The Pipeline: Concept to Delivery

The core of a full-service studio is a pipeline that reliably converts an idea into a delivered piece of work. Understanding that pipeline as a single connected system — rather than a series of departments — is what separates a studio that finishes from one that stalls.

The pipeline begins in development, where an idea is shaped into something worth producing: concept, script, and a plan for how the finished work will look and feel. It moves into pre-production, where the plan becomes a schedule, a budget, a crew, and a set of locations. Principal photography executes that plan, and here the full-service advantage shows: the crew is shooting toward an edit the same company will cut, so coverage is captured with the finish in mind rather than hoped for later.

Post-production then shapes the raw material into its final form — editorial, color, sound, and finishing — and delivery formats it for wherever it needs to go, whether that is a festival, a broadcaster, a streaming platform, or a client's own channels. In a full-service studio, delivery is not an afterthought; the required formats and specifications are known from the start and built backward into every earlier stage.

The value of owning the whole pipeline is that intent survives it. In a fragmented process, the reason behind an early choice is often lost by the time a later vendor needs it, and the work drifts. In an integrated one, the studio remembers — because the same people who made the choice are still there to carry it through to delivery. That institutional memory is the quiet engine of quality, and it is only possible when one team owns the pipeline end to end.

### **Field Checklist**

- Treat the pipeline as one connected system
- Shoot with the edit and the finish in mind
- Build delivery specs backward into every stage

## **Chapter 4 — Production in the Los Angeles Area**

Where a studio is based shapes what it can do efficiently, and being in the Los Angeles area is a real operational advantage in 2026. Production has been returning to the region as California's expanded film and television tax incentive draws work back, which means more work, more locations, and more experienced collaborators within reach of a locally based team.

The concentration of talent and infrastructure in the Los Angeles area is the practical benefit. Crew, gear, post facilities, and permit-ready locations exist in a density found in few other places, which lowers the friction of every production day and lets a full-service studio staff up and equip a project quickly. For an end-to-end operation running multiple stages of work, that local depth is not a luxury — it is what makes the full-service model efficient rather than merely ambitious.

The incentive environment rewards planning. Tax credits and rebates come with specific eligibility rules, deadlines, and documentation requirements, and the productions that actually capture them are the ones that plan around the program from the start. A full-service studio is well positioned here because it controls the whole budget and schedule, and can build incentive eligibility into both from day one. Always confirm current terms with the relevant film commission before relying on them; incentive rules change, and the details in force when you shoot are the ones that count.

Being based in the region also strengthens client and collaborator relationships. Proximity makes in-person work, location scouting, and hands-on collaboration practical, and a studio that clients and crew can actually meet with builds trust that remote arrangements struggle to match. In a business still built on relationships, being present where the work happens is an asset worth using deliberately.

### **Field Checklist**

- Use local infrastructure to staff and equip quickly
- Build incentive eligibility into budget and schedule
- Confirm current film-commission rules before relying on them

## Chapter 5 — Web Video and New Media as Core Business

For a full-service studio, web video and new media are not a sideline to feature work — they are core business, produced with the same care and often on faster, more sustainable cycles. Treating them seriously is both a creative and a financial decision.

New media production means storytelling built for the platforms audiences actually watch: web series, short-form content, and streaming-ready programming. Each of these has its own grammar — its own expectations for pacing, length, framing, and sound — and the full-service advantage is bringing cinematic craft to that work without ignoring the format's rules. A studio that shoots social video the way it shoots a feature produces content that feels out of place; a studio that respects the format produces work that belongs where it lives.

Web video — promos, brand films, social video, concept through edit — is where full-service capability pays off most visibly for clients. A single studio that can concept, shoot, and finish a piece, then help the client get it seen, removes the coordination burden of stitching together separate vendors for each stage. For the client, that is one point of contact and one accountable partner; for the studio, it is a steadier stream of work that funds the more ambitious projects and keeps the team sharp between them.

New media also feeds the larger creative practice. Short-form and web work lets the studio develop ideas, test approaches, and build audience relationships at a fraction of a feature's cost and risk — and a following built through consistent digital work is exactly the audience a future film will need. Handled with intention, new media is not the thing a studio does instead of film; it is part of how a modern full-service studio sustains itself and grows.

### Field Checklist

- Produce web and new media to the same standard as film
- Respect each platform's native grammar
- Use short-form work to sustain the studio and build audience

## Chapter 6 — Websites, SEO, and Getting the Work Seen

A distinctive feature of a truly full-service studio is that its responsibility does not end when the cameras stop. Websites and search-optimized digital presence — so the work actually gets found once it is finished — are part of the offering, and they close a gap that fragmented production chains routinely leave open.

The problem this solves is common: a beautiful piece of work that no one can find. A film, a brand video, or a campaign is only as valuable as the audience that reaches it, and in a search-driven world, being findable is a production discipline, not an afterthought. A studio that can build the website, structure the content for search, and present the work well is handing the client a finished asset that works — not just a file that sits on a drive.

Websites and SEO for artists, brands, and productions extend the creative work into how it is discovered and remembered. The same point of view that shapes the film should shape how it is presented online: the site, the metadata, the descriptions, the way the work is framed for the people searching for exactly this. Done well, this is not marketing bolted on at the end; it is the final stage of a

full-service pipeline, carrying the work the last mile to its audience.

The strategic value for the studio is that it deepens the client relationship. A studio that produces the work and then helps get it seen is a partner for the whole lifecycle, not a vendor for one stage — and that continuity is exactly what full-service is supposed to deliver. Getting the work seen is not a separate business; it is the natural end of the pipeline this whole studio is built around.

### **Field Checklist**

- Treat findability as a production discipline
- Carry the point of view into how work is presented online
- Own the last mile from finished work to audience

## **Chapter 7 — Post as a Service and a Standard**

Post-production is both the final stage of the studio's own pipeline and a service the studio can offer to outside filmmakers. Excellence in post is therefore two things at once: the standard that finishes the studio's own work, and a capability worth trusting others with.

For the studio's own projects, post is where a great deal of the final quality is decided. Editorial finds the rhythm, color sets the emotional register, and sound and the final mix determine what the audience notices and what they simply feel. In a full-service pipeline this stage benefits enormously from continuity — the people finishing the film understand why it was shot the way it was, so the finish serves the original intent rather than guessing at it. That continuity is the difference between a polish and a compromise.

Offering post as a service to outside filmmakers is a natural extension of that capability. Editing, color, and sound finishing are exactly the stages where independent filmmakers most need a partner they can trust, and a studio with a real standard can be that finishing partner. The requirement is discipline: outside work has to meet the same bar as in-house work, or the service dilutes the studio's reputation instead of extending it.

The unifying principle is that post is where a standard becomes visible. A studio's finishing work is a public statement of what it considers good enough, whether the project originated in-house or arrived from a client. Holding that standard consistently — on every project, from every source — is what makes "full-service" a promise worth trusting rather than a phrase on a website.

### **Field Checklist**

- Use pipeline continuity to make the finish serve the intent
- Hold outside work to the same standard as in-house work
- Treat every finish as a public statement of the studio's bar

## **Conclusion: One Roof, One Standard**

A full-service studio is a promise that one team, under one roof, holding one standard, will take a project from first concept to final delivery and help get it seen — without the client managing a chain of vendors and without the vision leaking at every handoff. Everything in this book serves that promise: the honest definition of full-service, the founder-led team that scales its own judgment, the

pipeline that carries intent from development through delivery, the local base that makes it efficient, the new media that sustains it, and the websites, SEO, and post that carry the work the last mile.

The moment favors this model. In 2026, production is returning to the Los Angeles area, the independent market is growing, and modern tools put studio-grade capability within reach of a lean, integrated team. A founder-led, full-service studio is positioned to turn those conditions into finished, findable, distinctive work.

But conditions are only conditions. What actually makes the model work is the discipline to hold one standard across every stage and every source of work — to be as careful with a social video as with a feature, as accountable for the website as for the color grade. Do that consistently, and "full-service" stops being a claim and becomes a reputation. That is the whole job, and done well, it is a durable advantage.

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