



**CREWS  
CONTROL**



**AGENCY DECOUPLING:  
HOW TO BUILD VIDEO PRODUCTION  
OUTSIDE THE AGENCY MODEL**



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## What is Agency Decoupling?

How do companies create ambitious multimedia marketing strategies to reach their target audiences? Traditionally, a single creative agency has taken on every part of the process, from ideation through production and media placement.

**In recent years, however, companies have chafed at the costs and restrictions of this model. To unlock new levels of creative oversight and savings, these businesses have started breaking up production responsibilities. This process is known as agency decoupling.**

On a decoupled model, a creative agency or agencies are often still involved, producing ideas and master content for a business's marketing and advertising efforts. Then the finished content is produced by a studio or combination of studios — some use in-house facilities, others hire trusted third-party partners and still others turn to hybrid models, with a combination of internal and external production.





## Why are Companies Pursuing Video Agency Decoupling?

Businesses today have more competitors than ever for customers' eyes and attention. With so many organizations creating content, it's no longer enough to have multimedia — these materials must be the best, produced efficiently and delivering impressive results.

Potential motives for decoupling<sup>1</sup> include:

- **The potential for savings:** Rather than incurring fees and dealing with opaque cost structures, companies that have decoupled can clarify their budgets.
- **A need for speed:** The creative agency model traditionally works on a billable-hours model, whereas production houses and in-house teams are incentivized to provide turnaround times as quick as possible.
- **A desire to localize:** Companies with decentralized marketing teams can produce videos locally, taking on local nuance rather than being handed content made at a single agency.
- **The appeal of visibility:** Especially when handling production in-house, businesses working with decoupled models can check up on every step of content creation.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.miketeevee.com/blog/2019/1/10/what-is-decoupled-production>



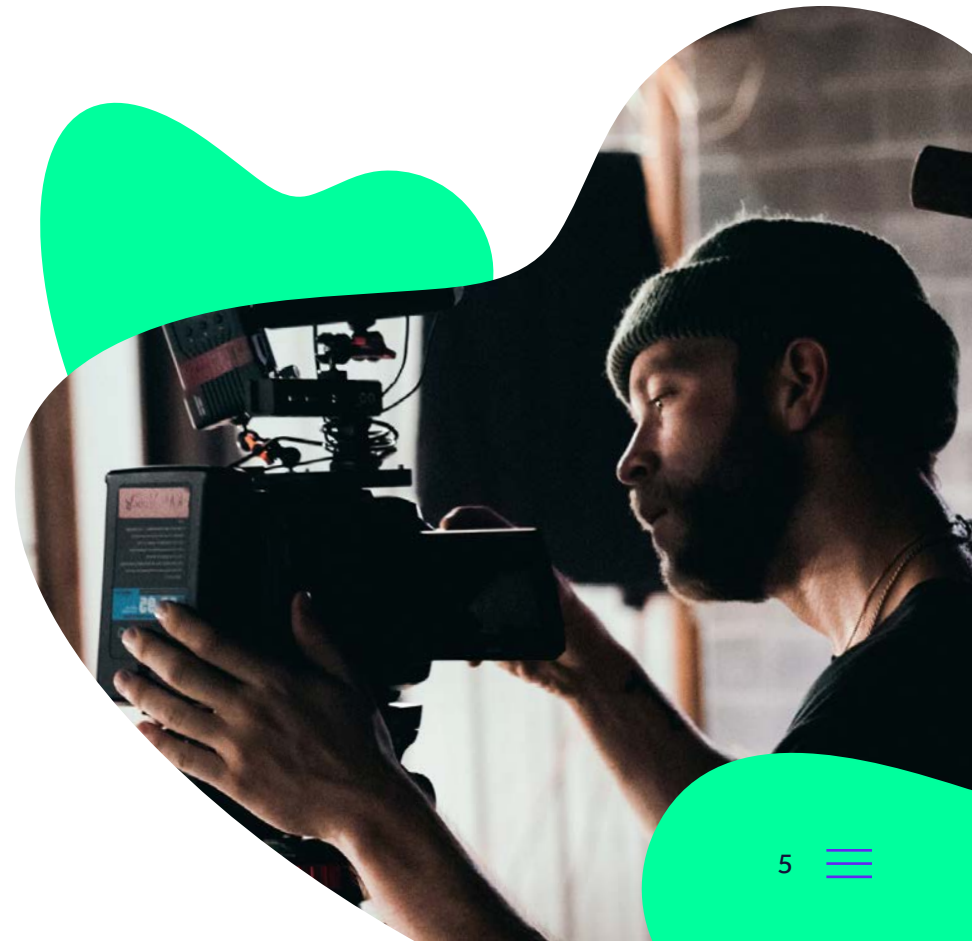
## What Forms Have Creative Agency Decoupling Taken?

Businesses of all sizes and industries can engage in creative agency decoupling. They may, however, end up with very different approaches to production after they've disconnected from their respective agencies.

- Small brands that don't have the budget or the desire to create their own production teams can partner with reliable third-party production and localization houses that can create consistent materials and become a "source of truth" for branding.<sup>2</sup>
- Larger companies are building their own production capabilities. This allows them previously unavailable levels of control and visibility over the whole process. Businesses that have found success with this model include:<sup>3</sup>



Content created in-house or by production partners can range from seconds-long social media clips to full-length documentaries with Hollywood production values, all based on ideas from agencies, consultants or companies' own marketing teams.



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.miketeevee.com/blog/2019/1/10/what-is-decoupled-production>

<sup>3</sup> <https://blog.ipv.com/so-you-want-to-launch-an-in-house-content-studio.-heres-what-you-need-to-know>





## What Are Some of the Benefits of Agency Decoupling?

Businesses today are facing a different media landscape than existed even a few years ago. More high-quality content is coming from brands than ever before. To stand out, deliverables such as video have to be polished and relevant.

Agency decoupling allows a few particular advantages in this climate:

- On the creative side, companies no longer working with single, monolithic creative agencies can build their strategies out of ideas generated by third party consultants or in-house creative teams alongside their agency partners, potentially building in localized, regional nuances. Then they can produce those concepts in consistently high quality, using trusted production partners or in-house facilities.<sup>4</sup>
- Financially, these businesses may save up to 20% from their marketing budgets by using a decoupled model. This comes from not using high-overhead creative agencies for the technical side of production.<sup>5</sup>



**20%**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.miketeevee.com/blog/2019/1/10/what-is-decoupled-production>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.incitemarketing.co.uk/marketing-blog/bid/261696/What-is-decoupling-in-advertising-and-marketing>





## What Are Some More Benefits of Agency Decoupling?

The advantages of agency decoupling don't stop with creative independence and financial savings. Today's organizations have also gained consistency and quality-control benefits from using a "garden and factory" approach.<sup>6</sup> The garden is where ideas grow and the factory is where they're produced.

When these processes are separate, positive changes are free to take hold:

- While the ideas created on the "garden" side of the organization may be varied, the "factory" that produces them ensures consistency. This means videos and other pieces of multimedia will be recognizable as coming from the same company.
- There is also quality oversight baked into the "garden and factory" model, especially when businesses build out their own studios in-house and can monitor every step of the media generation process.



<sup>6</sup> <https://www.spectra-agency.com/blog/what-is-production-decoupling/>



## What Are the Potential Drawbacks of Agency Decoupling?

While the concept of agency decoupling is popular today, agencies initially resisted efforts to limit their role to the creative side of media production.<sup>7</sup> This uneasy evolution points to the fact that businesses and their agencies have typically had in-depth relationships, and upsetting the balance could come with some speed bumps.

Why might businesses find it uncomfortable to decouple from the traditional agency model?

- Handling ideation, production and media buying through a single entity is a simple and streamlined approach. Dealing with a multimedia strategy via a single contract and one point of contact puts light demands on employees' time and effort.
- After decoupling production, companies have to build out the content creation capabilities that used to be handled by their creative agencies. This may mean signing new contracts with production partners or going with in-house studio space and crew.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-decoupling-advertising-nick-page/>



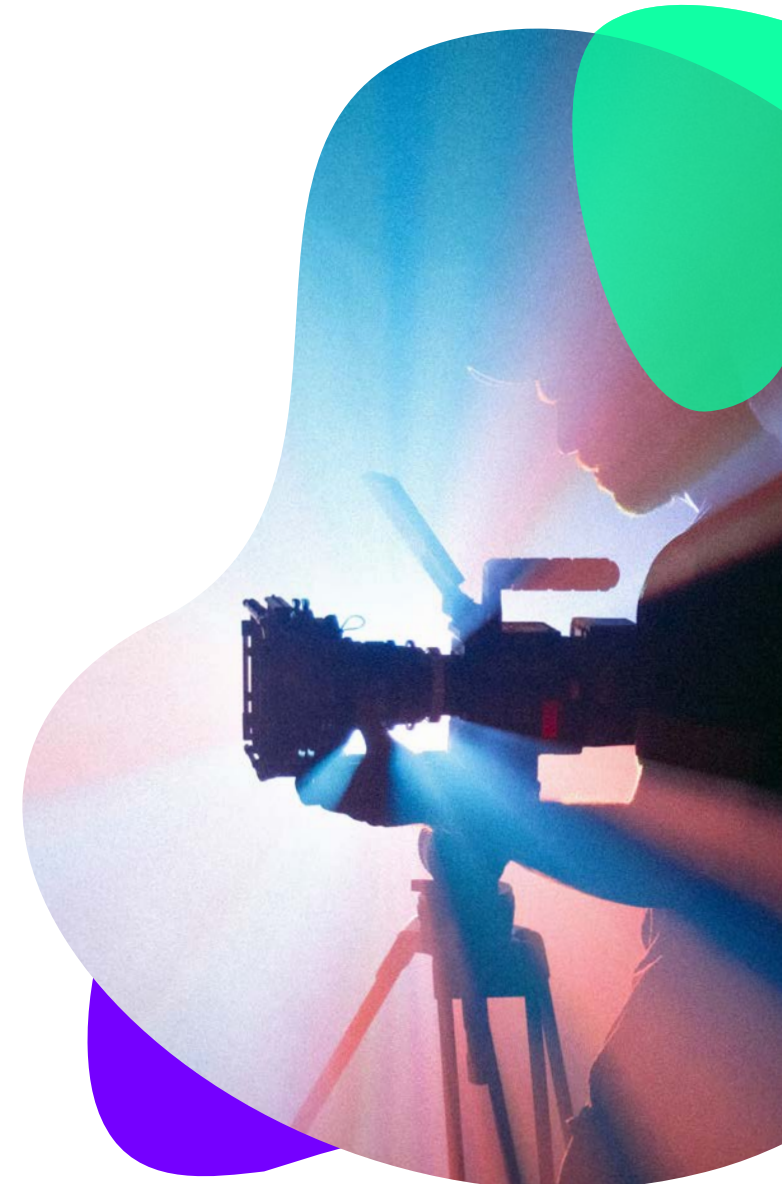


## How Do Businesses Get Started with Agency Decoupling?

Being ready to embrace agency decoupling means finding partners to carry out all the production work that was once handled by the creative agency. Businesses don't have to handle this alone, and can reach out to expert third-party consultants for guidance.

Important considerations for companies delving into production decoupling for the first time include:<sup>8</sup>

- **Implementing transparency and visibility:** One of the main differences between decoupled and agency production is the increased possibility of transparency around costs and progress. It's important to make sure the new process lives up to these values.
- **Creating strong relationships between all parties:** Decoupled production means more teams — agencies or creative marketers to come up with ideas, expert personnel to create the content and more. These groups need to stay in touch.
- **Getting technology up to speed:** How will the deliverables be shared, accessed and stored? This is an important consideration — every piece of content must be visible to the essential stakeholders through effective tech systems. Investment in effective content management systems allows secure access to shared materials and assets.



<sup>8</sup> <https://www.spectra-agency.com/guides/Production-Decoupling-Creative-Production-Spectra-guide.pdf>



## How Do Businesses Lock in Success After Decoupling?

The objectives for all parties involved in agency decoupling are still the same. These groups are still in the business of creating the best content possible to reach their target audiences. All that has changed are the business relationships that led to the creation of the deliverables.

This means companies have to make sure they are still delivering where it counts:

- **Quality of finished products:** Today's audiences demand impressive, professional-quality content. Are the company's videos and other multimedia releases relevant to audiences? It's worth tracking responses to campaigns.
- **Speed and efficiency of production:** One reason to decouple from an agency is to become free to shorten timelines and produce content with less turnaround — leaders have to ensure they have the processes in place to actually reach this goal.





## What Type of Video Projects Can Businesses Pursue After Decoupling?

There's no reason to focus on familiar marketing deliverables once a company has started using a decoupled model. In fact, with the ability to take inspiration and ideas from more teams, departments and agencies than ever before, it can be a great time to branch out.

Organizations that have decoupled ideation from production may have an especially promising time creating:

- **Large campaigns that span regions:** A campaign that requires assets in multiple languages, a high volume of material or both is best handled by a specialized production team, rather than the production arm of an agency.<sup>9</sup>
- **Creative deliverables based on internal ideas:** When companies have their own production options, whether maintained internally or owned by a partner, they don't have to go through agencies to generate all their ideas, and can try out experimental campaigns.



<sup>9</sup> <https://www.flock-associates.com/thinking/decoupling-production/>



## Who Can You Turn to for Agency Decoupling Advice and Production Assistance?

If you're ready to investigate agency decoupling and seek out more creative freedom to create video and other advanced digital media, it can pay to speak with professional consultants. An infusion of advice and guidance at the right time can put your business on the right path.

Whether your ideal post-decoupling strategy involves an in-house video production team or a close partnership with a third-party production house, the end results can be impressive — cost savings, visibility, speed, creative flexibility and more.

To design an optimal third-party solution for your decoupled production needs, or to learn all you need to know about building in-house production infrastructure, [reach out to the Crews Control consulting team](#). These experts can help you pursue creative agency decoupling in a bespoke way that makes sense for your organization.



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