

**Case Study:
Modernizing and Upgrading
a Content Production Unit
for a Mid-Sized Agency**



Issue:

The CFO of an award-winning mid-sized ad agency had just signed a fresh lease on a large space, and the agency wanted to upgrade their internal production capability in the new office. The CFO engaged us to give him a plan for the new creative studio.

The plan would need to address the studio build-out - space planning, technology, equipment, workflow, and asset management - and provide studio business management practices. Once the plan was accepted and approved, we would work with the agency's head of production and operations to implement the plan.

Challenge:

The initial scope of the studio would be limited to the agency's internal needs - new business pitches, awards videos, non client-billable work. However they hoped internal production would grow organically, and eventually graduate to doing client work internally.

The challenge was to build the studio economically according to our remit, but also to build a solid foundation that could allow the studio to scale over time.

Discovery:

The agency had a one-room studio operation in the old space, and as part of our discovery we worked with the agency IT department to do an audit of all studio/production equipment and technology, what technology was currently being used by the agency, and with the HOP and CFO how the studio had been running, from a management, workflow and billing standpoint.

We realized in order for us to deliver on our promise - to create a new internal studio on a reasonable budget but also to be able to provide the ability to scale - the agency would have to build the studio modularly and lean into very tight studio business and asset management practices from day one.

Solution:

We presented our "Building Internal Studio Production" plan to the CFO and Head of Production and Operations. The plan was approved, and included the following:

- initial space planning
- recommendation to hire a full-time steward
- job description of studio manager
- asset management plan:
 - system map
 - naming protocols
 - process maps for initiating work, retrieving assets
- recommendation for an asset management repository using tech they were already paying for
- recommendation to use a piece of technology already in use in agency to log and track physical hard drives
- new server (with scalable technology) recommendation and recommendation for augmented use of existing server

Pandemic:

The pandemic occurred and the agency decided to delay their move into the new space for 1.5 years.

In the meantime, the physical build-out of the space continued.

Resumption and Implementation:

Once work on the studio project resumed we worked with the head of production to implement the studio plan:

- we sourced the studio's first two hires, an assistant editor who would also run the studio, and an asset manager
- the head of production assigned an EP, who would be the new head of the studio. We created a task force with the EP, and set an agenda and a schedule for the launch of the studio, with weekly status meetings

- we provided recommendations for equipment - cameras, lighting, post production software, 3D printers
- we provided a rate card and billing template for the new studio
- we worked with the assistant editor and asset manager to operationalize the protocols we had recommended, and worked as advisors as they stood up the program
- the equipment was purchased, the management practices are in place, and the studio is open for business.

Results:

The agency has upgraded its studio capability to the newest technology and can perform, with select augmentation, state of the art work.

The studio has a set of management practices that will allow it to scale but to also present a fully professional offering from day one:

- rates
- billing
- talent sourcing
- asset management