

THE VIRTUAL PRODUCTION BOOKLET



Start Saving Money
by Avoiding These
3 Problems with
Traditional Production

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The 3 Biggest Problems Film & TV Production Companies Have with Traditional Shoots that Lead to Stifled Creativity, Busted Budgets and Logistical Nightmares→And the Ways to Avoid Them While Future-Proofing Your Content

This booklet covers the 3 biggest problems with traditional production...

Problem #1: Traditional production is limited to the constraints of physical locations and studios→*And how your creativity is boxed in, making you frustrated and forced to compromise your vision.*

Problem #2: Traditional production is a time-consuming process that lacks flexibility→*And how the inefficiencies cost you money, pressures you to make radical cuts to scenes and rushing to finish, only to produce a mediocre product.*

Problem #3: Traditional production budgets are hijacked with logistical expenses ramrodding the quality of the final product→*And how your "better to have it and not need it" mindset is sabotaging your funds, stretching your stress level to the breaking point.*



By The End

...you are going to know exactly why you should avoid these 3 giant problems with traditional production→And what you should do instead while future-proofing your content.



TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION: PROBLEM #1

Traditional production is limited to the constraints of physical locations and studios.

→ And how your creativity is boxed in, making you frustrated and forced to compromise your vision.

Specifically:

- The reason your **creativity is boxed in**
- Why this problem leads to **frustration** and **increased costs**
- And how to overcome it





The Problem

Creative Limitations

One of the most frustrating things about finding a location is the process of finding a location.

Yes, there are location managers and film offices who have databases of previously used locations. But there are always issues or stipulations with any you choose. Nothing is ever perfect.

So, why not just build the exact set you want in a studio? Sure, if you want to break the bank. Just to have more limitations and issues ensued into the creative process.

Ultimately, accepting the constraints of physical locations and studios lead to...

Frustration – The time and effort you put in to finding the “perfect” location creates a sharp pain in your jaw from gritting your teeth in frustration. Why? Because all the compromises to your vision you’re having to make.

Lack of Flexibility – The issues and stipulations attached to physical locations make it difficult to make changes to set design and lighting easily or quickly. You’re first thought is “We’ll fix it in post.” But that creates more problems, costs and stress.

Increased Costs – When adjustments must be made to a location in order to “make it work,” that takes costly time and money. Signs, facades and other set décor that need to be constructed drain budgets. Covering any damages made to public or private property adds to the costs.

You’ve relegated
yourself to
accepting this as
just part of the
**production
process.**





The Reason This is Happening

Further Compromises

Any physical location is riddled with constraints. As much as production throws money at a situation, they can't control everything.

In the case of public locations where it's a challenge to cover every door or corner, you're constantly dealing with traffic and pedestrians making noise, entering the shot or looking straight at camera.

The physical attributes like walls and trees may obstruct camera angles as well. Although I've heard of instances where trees were removed then replaced. Ca-Ching!

Ultimately, you're completely boxed in creatively to whatever the location allows.

There's more as to why it's a problem to shoot at physical locations...

Inefficient Collaboration – For the director, DP and production designer to effectively collaborate, they must be at the physical location to discuss the creative plan. Inevitably, conflicting schedules will delay any decisions. Plus, any changes that arise or missed aspects could result in multiple scouts adding to the stress.

Bad or Extreme Weather will Happen – It's inevitable. Bad weather will happen causing delays and rescheduling. Plus, you must ensure you have the supplies needed to cover any type of weather conditions to protect equipment, crew and the location itself.

Stipulations – Certain public locations or businesses you wish to shoot in will sometimes require hard outs by a specific time. This type of stipulation may force production to eliminate scenes which furthers compromises your vision.



"Instead of thinking out the box, get rid of the box."

~ Deepak Chopra



How to Fix It

Unleash Creativity

Over the years, the film and television industries have embraced technology when it comes to resolution, software, cameras, sound and lighting. **Virtual production** is taking it a greater degree.

By mixing virtual and real worlds, the constraints of physical locations associated with traditional production are practically eliminated. You can create the “perfect” environment that brings your vision to life with the use of LED volume walls, augmented reality and software like **Unreal Engine**.

Quite frankly, the easiest way to avoid the headaches associated with physical locations is to create an environment with virtual production.

Increased Creativity – Push the boundaries and create environments that don’t exist in the real world for limitless storytelling. With the use of LED volume walls, you can experiment with different styles to find the best look for your content.

Greater Flexibility – Once you have created your virtual environment, you have the ultimate flexibility to make changes with ease. You can experiment with different camera angles, lighting and virtual sets in real time and see the changes immediately.

Boosted Collaboration – For production teams spread across the country, remote collaboration can be facilitated through virtual production. Ideas and changes for camera angles and set design are communicated efficiently using LED volume walls to visualize the scene.



*“If you can dream
it, you can do it.”*
~ **Walt Disney**



TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION: PROBLEM #2

Traditional production is a time-consuming process that lacks flexibility.

→ And how the inefficiencies cost you money, pressures you to make radical cuts to scenes and rushing to finish—only to produce a mediocre product.

Specifically:

- The reason inefficiencies are **costing you money**
- Why this problem leads to **making a mediocre product**
- And how to fix it





The Problem

Time is a Force

Everything about traditional production is time-consuming. However long you think something should take, bet on it to take twice as long.

Take, for instance, setting up a shot. The camera must be built and set. Lighting and set décor must be put in place. Then there's tweaking the shot manually. But you want to make sure you have coverage. So, you shoot multiple angles—CU, MED and Wide. Resetting lighting and camera each time...taking time.

All this eats into your day.

The inefficiencies of traditional production effects...

Budget – Nothing can suck up a budget more than time. So, in an effort to be more efficient, you rent more gear than you need (*The ol' "better to have it and not need it" concept*). And you hire a lot more crew to load-in and setup faster which increases payroll and OT.

Creativity – Sacrifices to the visual quality or action may have to be made because of the time to fix an issue or lack of the proper equipment. The *"make it work"* strategy comes into play which is rarely a fast fix.

Stress Levels – Everyone feels the effects when things take too long. The crossed arms of EPs and producers are the visual cues for directors who lose themselves too much in the creative process. The breathing fire from the micromanaging client sings the back of the neck. That stress emanates throughout the set and crew.

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."

~ **Albert Einstein**





The Reason This is Happening

Nature of the Beast

For too long, people have accepted the laborious process in traditional production. Moving lights, adding gels or screens, changing lens, etc. isn't efficient. But you accept it and thankful you've put in a 15% contingency in the budget.

But It's just the nature of the beast...right?

This beast is a lack of flexibility. And it creates pressure. Pressure into rash decisions to stay on schedule and minimize OT. Pressure to make radical cuts to scenes only to rush through it to finish.

Making changes on the fly can be quite challenging, specifically in these areas...

Camera – Experimenting to find the right camera angle using the right lens eats the clock. You plan as much as you can in pre-pro. But can't really visualize it until you get on set.

Lighting – Moving a light or adding gels can take 2-3 people depending on the size of light. But then, because of some obstacle, you might have to rig something. More time and energy just to see if it will work.

Set Design – The set is all ready to go. But the director wants to see if a different couch or car or some other set piece will work better. Sure, the production designer has multiple selections. But they have to buy it, transport it, store it then return it all after the shoot. It's exhausting.



*Ultimately, you end up producing a **mediocre** product.*



How to Fix It

It's Time to Get Real

Making adjustments in real-time is possible with virtual production. Because the LED volume wall and camera are synced, any changes to the environment are immediate. Experimenting with lighting, tinkering with lens and playing with set pieces for the perfect shot can be done quickly and easily—because it all in real-time.

Now your mind is blown.

Now you don't have to rush through scenes to stay on schedule. Now you don't have to just *"make it work."* Now you don't have to sacrifice the quality of your content.

You're back to having fun again!

By simply implementing virtual production into your project, you reap the benefits of...

Improved Visual Quality – The high level of resolution and brightness with LED volume walls allow for more detailed and realistic scenes. Through a combination of ambient and interactive light, you also get a more natural feel with realistic reflections and shadows.

Better Workflow – The whole *"fix it in post"* is not an issue anymore. Being able to see and make changes in real-time allows for fixes to be made during shooting which saves time in post. Compositing and visual effects are easily integrated reducing fixes and saving time in edit.

Future-Proofing Content – Advances in technology are constant. LED volume walls in virtual production allows you to future-proof your content to scale as technology progresses by adapting to how people consume media. This includes creating content for virtual and augmented reality or other emerging platforms where high-quality content is in more demand.



Production doesn't
have to be so hard.



TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION: PROBLEM #3

Traditional production budgets are hijacked with logistical expenses sandbagging the quality of the final product.

→ And how your “better to have it and not need it” mindset is sabotaging your funds, stretching your stress level to the breaking point.

Specifically:

- The reason your mindset is **sabotaging your funds**
- Why this problem leads to **stretched stress levels** and **sandbagging quality**
- And how to fix it





The Problem

We're a Bunch of Carnies

Once, a fellow coworker made the comment that film and tv production is like a carnival and we're a bunch of carnies. OMG that's exactly it!

Think about it. Depending on the location, you usually have to bring in most everything you need to function with traditional production. Food, shelter, production supplies, bathrooms, trucks, trailers, etc. All to breakdown and set up again at a different location at some point.

This crumbles your budget like milk bottles at a baseball-throw booth.

Other logistics of traditional production that must be planned and coordinated hijack even more of the budget. Specifically...

Crew – Because you must stay on schedule, you hire more crew than you need to keep things moving as efficiently as possible. Still, sometimes it's inevitable. But circumstances may cause OT or meal penalties to be implemented, hitting the budget hard.

Equipment – Again, more than what's needed or used with camera, lens, lights, grip and set design is brought in to cover any changes or adjustments. But you'd rather "Have it and not need it than need it and not have it." High price for peace of mind.

Travel/Accommodations – The cost to travel and accommodate crew and talent can be enormous. Not only with flights and hotel, but there's also per diem, rental cars, mileage, etc. which jack up the budget as well. That's for scout and principal photography. Yeow! Fingers-crossed that you don't go into extra shoot days.

Hopefully, your prize is more than a stuffed bear.





The Reason This is Happening

Over-Planning Kills Magic

There's a personal development article by Jacklyn Janeksela where she talks about the five side-effects of over-planning. She approaches it from the point of mindfulness. But two from the list really popped out to me as I have executed this practice of over-thinking throughout my career...

A. Increased Stress

B. Creates Worry

Your mindset is sabotaging your funds.

Yes, you saved yourself the headaches by giving everyone what they said they *"might"* need whether it was used or not. But after wrapping production, when you face the results of your budget, quality to the final product may have been sacrificed in the process.

It's like a bad hangover after a hard night of partying.

This kind of mindset in traditional production leads to...

Increased Stress – This stress is from fear. A fear that you're missing something that falls through the cracks. You want respect from your coworkers in that you're competent at your job. Ultimately, this adopted mindset comes from a fear of not only losing your job, but fear of *NOT* getting the next job.

Wasted Spending – Bottom line, when you're spending money on things you don't use, it's wasted spending. In certain areas, such as props or set décor, it's wasted time and energy to get and return it. Hopefully you won't need to schedule any re-shoots.

Reduce Quality – When sacrifices due to budget are made, quality can be compromised. Although it's standard practice, to meet a request or need from one department usually means taking from another. Budgets always have to be reworked even during shooting.



*"We create
monsters and then
we can't control
them."*

~ **Joel Coen**



How to Fix It

Leaps of Imagination

With the logistics of traditional production seizing a chunk of your budget, there's little left to produce the quality content you've envisioned. **Virtual production** practically eradicates absorbent and wild costs that traditional production assumes. The technology and efficiencies allow for better planning and more control.

You avoid re-shoots, additional shoot days and increased post-production work.

Here's the best part. You can streamline your workflow by visualizing the setup and look of your scene before principal photography. By utilizing in-camera VFX (ICVFX), real-time rendering and LED volume walls, you can tweak and experiment with angles, lighting and look without any risk before actually capturing it.

No more wasted time or money on shoot days.

Virtual production also brings more savings in forms of...

Less Crew and Equipment – The expense you incur from those complicated shots requiring a substantial crew and expensive equipment can be reduced. With virtual production, you are capturing those scenes in a controlled environment using LED volume walls. The savings can be allocated to areas of the budget where sacrifices were made.

Location Constraints – Release your inner-carnie! Because you can create and manipulate your environment with virtual production, you are not bound by locations constraints. With the use and flexibility of LED volume walls, you save money with travel expenses and location fees.

Post-Production Fixes – The battle cry "fix it in post!" is reduced to a whisper. The extensive post-production required by traditional production can be accomplished during filming with virtual production. No more removing or blurring unwanted elements in the scene. This goes for coloring, visual effects, compositing. Crucial savings to the budget!



"Budgeting isn't about limiting yourself. It's about making the things that excite you possible."

– **Unknown**



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Conclusion

I hope this series gave you some insight on problems Film & TV Production Companies have with traditional shoots.

My goal was to help you avoid these problems and explore the possibilities with **virtual production**. Furthermore, adapting virtual production in your project comes with...

- **Future proof concepts for changing technology**
- **Lower stress environments with streamline production and real-time adjustments**
- **Enhanced safety by working in less dangerous environments**
- **Environmentally friendly with reduced transportation expenses and carbon footprint**

I can help you produce content with virtual production. Let's create something that doesn't exist in the real world!!!

All The Best,
Tonia ~

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