

Entertainment Partners**Next Generation Production Management**

From the creation of breathtaking 3D movies to lifelike animated features and continuous streaming drama series, technology has steadily transformed the entertainment industry. However, while onscreen innovation has known no bounds, behind the scenes production management has not evolved accordingly. Back office tasks have remained burdened by repetitive, cumbersome processes and stacks of paperwork. As a service partner to the entertainment industry for over 40 years, California-based Entertainment Partners (EP) understands the needs of the industry and continually evaluates how it may assist in increasing productivity and efficiency. “We focus on the operational and capital needs of production communities in the entertainment industry and offer them technology solutions to complete their projects—on time and within budget,” says Mark Goldstein, President and CEO of EP.

Over time, the legacy paper-driven approach has created challenges for productions striving for compliance in the onboarding and paying of large numbers of project-based workers and real-time monitoring of costs. With a production’s most significant expense typically being labor, EP’s origins were in providing payroll and accounting management services. As their clients focused on bringing stories to life in newer and more exciting ways, EP became dedicated to modernizing comprehensive financial management and invested heavily in automating the backend functions and the end-to-end workflow of projects. By supporting the real-time collaboration of creative and finance teams, EP is providing visibility to crucial production factors more broadly and immediately.

The Digital ‘SmartStudio’

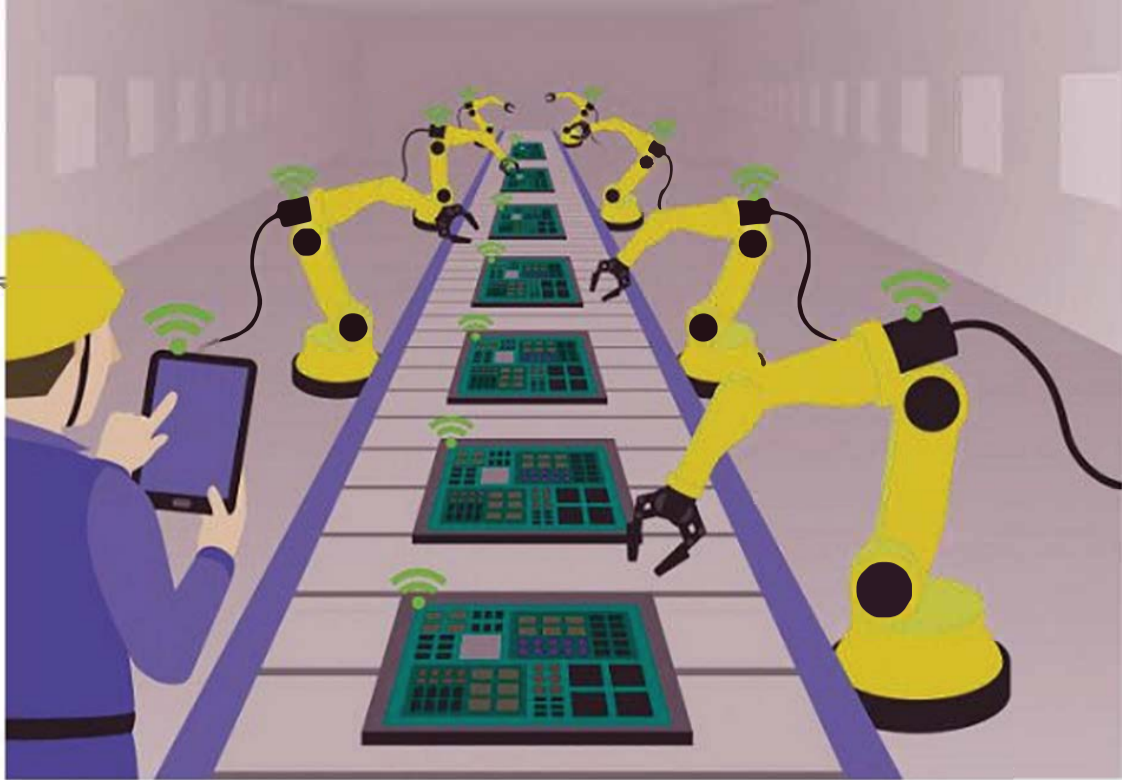
To tackle the decentralized and paper-driven back office processes of production, EP undertakes a digital approach through its comprehensive production management platform, SmartStudio. SmartStudio’s offerings address the needs of production from the initial stages before pre-production through shooting, and on through payment of residuals.



Mark Goldstein,
President & CEO



Darren Seidel,
CFO & EVP



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Hiring and payment management of crew has caught up to modern times with the advance of SmartStart and SmartTime. Onboarding a new hire previously involved a flood of forms, some requiring overlapping information, none of which were reusable from project to project. Now, SmartStart allows personnel to process crew hires much more quickly, eliminates the human error created by illegible handwriting, and stores employee information securely in the system for hire on subsequent projects. Meanwhile, SmartTime removes the need for paper time cards by allowing crew members to input time on their mobile devices. It also serves as a smart calculator for payroll accountants. Accuracy is improved, and the time savings are notable for both crew and production office personnel.

Production executives are often overseeing many projects at once. The platform's Scenechronize SmartHub provides secure, easily-searchable document management. With the SmartHub, real-time production updates are available on customizable personal dashboards accessible by email or mobile device. Physical storage costs have significantly reduced and retrieval time exponentially decreased. "With this technology, any specific document of a project can be searched and located within seconds," highlights Goldstein.

Tailored Accounting Solutions

Coming from enterprise corporate and studio backgrounds, the Executive leadership at EP knows that financial visibility and transparency are imperative. They aim to deliver a 360-degree view of real-time expenses across multiple projects. With this in mind, SmartAccounting was developed to integrate production data with the ERP systems of studios.

Because many of EP's employees have worked out in the industry and due to the collaborative nature of the relationship with its clients, EP can deliver new, versatile, intuitive, and customizable features to meet the demands of today's productions. Further, to assist with the international nature of filming, the system can manage multiple currencies and even take into account fluctuations in exchange rates. Users can create custom views, quickly generate cost reports, or create a variety of reports on the fly—by account, location,

or episode. Users can drill down to each line item, even an individual invoice from a vendor. Particularly crucial to individual departments working on a project is the ability to view over and under budget items with the push of a button. For instance, if a Construction Coordinator is concerned that he does not have enough funds left to complete a specific set in time for shooting, the production accountant can provide full visibility to his expenses immediately so he can plan accordingly. Over 150 different production cost management reports are also available, from which users can create thousands of customized report packages.

Incentives Consulting and Financing

EP also counsels clients on the most cost-effective ways to do their projects. A vast number of U.S. states and foreign countries offer financial incentives to lure productions due to the economic benefits a Hollywood production brings. "Having completed tens of thousands of projects, we have a rich history of helping clients find the shooting locations that are best suited to their budgets and requirements," remarks Darren Scidel, CFO and EVP. EP also offers administrative services to monitor and track all the production expenses to determine eligibility for, and to ensure maximum benefit from, the incentive. Because they are compiling all details of the qualified spend and know the total amount of the costs that will return to production, EP will lend against the incentive and finance projects when they need it the most: during production.

Additionally, EP claims ownership of the legendary Hollywood company, Central Casting. Established in 1925, Central Casting is the leading provider of background talent. Not only does Central Casting have the most extensive database of background actors, but it is also the only one-stop casting shop that performs payroll services as well.

A 100 percent employee-owned company, EP provides not only exceptional experiences and benefits to its employees/shareholders but also delivers maximum value to its customers. EP strives to be the complete solution provider for the entertainment industry by reinventing how its clients work and interact to make production simple. **CT**