The Benefits of De-Coupling:  
A direct relationship between a client and a production company

There are four models of de-coupling used most frequently; each model works slightly differently but all essentially mean more communication between the client and the production company directly. The basic outlines of these models have been described as thus:

1. Client owned and client managed
2. Client owned and agency managed
3. Agency owned and agency managed
4. Client owned and 3rd party managed

The experience with a de-coupled process began when clients started going directly to production houses after perhaps previously feeling distanced from the final product. Their complaints are all too common:

Common complaints of companies in the standard Client – Agency – Production relationship.

- Miscommunication as messages gradually filter through to the production team.
- A lack of relevant experience among the Creatives.
- Feeling sidelined during the production process.

When a client goes directly to a production house they know that they're going to a team with years of experience in making the exact sort of films they want to make, where the emphasis is usually specifically on the product without the worry of how it can fit into a storyline or overall marketing campaign. They get a 'team-work' process where they're closely involved in the whole process and the budget isn't wasted in a long, slow chain of communication and (more often) miscommunication.

The ethos is to make sure the client is involved from the beginning and keep the procurement team front and centre throughout.

This has so many benefits:

- **Clear briefing and avoiding wasted work.** No Chinese Whispers.

- **Honesty about the achievability of the client's objectives.** Start with the budget and think, 'What can be done? How can we be clever?'. We can do this FROM EXPERIENCE.

- **Involving the procurement team in a collaborative process.** Helping them learn how a film is made, firsthand – the nature of the creative industries – and where money can be saved. They'll only learn it by being on set. Makes procurement partners in the process.

- **Decision makers as an on-set presence.** No time or money is wasted shooting 10 versions of everything – there can be fast approval on shots and edits THERE AND THEN.

- **Building a long-term relationship.** Getting to know a client and their products.
They get to know the production process. Production houses know the product more than any agency – you get the same people working closely on it, every time.

- **Bundling of services.** One place to come for everything. If you’re a multinational you’re conceivably working with agencies across several different countries – which doesn’t streamline the production process in the slightest.

As is well known, the triangle says you can pick two of the following qualities: Cheap, Fast, Good. When there is a close relationship between production and client, you avoid delays in communication and you get closer to having all 3.

It's not complicated – it's just good sense:

- Working collaboratively rather than at arms length.
- Involvement in the whole process rather than the 'big reveal' at the end.
- Learning about the nature of the film industry – and how to manage budgets efficiently - rather than seeing it as a mysterious world where money disappears rapidly.

This direct relationship between client and production company is proven to be an economical way of ensuring your message is communicated to its fullest potential.

**DO** – Ask questions. We can help you learn how a film is made and where money can be saved.

**DON'T** – Be afraid of giving feedback. One of the key benefits of this direct relationship between client and production house is that we can respond quickly and efficiently to your ideas.

**DO** – Ask your production company what they think of your briefing. They’re experienced in this area and might be able to point out creative ways that ensure you’re getting the best possible production for your budget.

**DON'T** – Worry about the end result being different than you had in mind. With a direct client-production relationship you can be involved in the whole process, rather than just the big reveal at the end. We actively encourage you to be on set - approving shots and edits straight away.

**DO** – View this as a partnership. We're very keen on developing long-term relationships with our clients. We want to work collaboratively – rather than at arms length. It helps us get to know you and your needs, and helps you get the best productions possible.
DON'T – Spread your resources and your energy as thinly as possible. A direct relationship with a production company allows you to come to one place for everything.