

The Cast & Crew Interview



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SANTA FE -- Payroll Companies play a large and increasingly critical part of the production industry, and are often the “unseen heroes” that really help a film tick. In this interview with our New Mexico clients, Cast & Crew Entertainment Services Senior VP of Client Services Shardell Cavaliere explains about the role of the Payroll Company in the modern production landscape.

What are the core services Cast & Crew provides to the film industry?

As a leading Entertainment Industry services company, Cast & Crew offers a turnkey solution for the Industry's payroll and production needs. Our suite of services includes specialized payroll and residuals processing, Cast & Crew's own proprietary software products: PSL production accounting software, (the most stable in the industry), onBudget, (Cast & Crew's premier production budgeting software) and onSet, (Cast & Crew's Purchasing and Procurement Company.)

Most people would be surprised at how large and diverse a role payroll companies play in the production of feature films. In addition to payroll, what services and/or logistics does Cast & Crew provide to the industry?

Cast & Crew has a suite of proprietary technology solutions for production from budgeting via our onBudget software to our production accounting software, PSL. For our clients, Cast & Crew facilitates all areas of Worker's Compensation, provides access to our extremely knowledgeable Labor Relations group and provides state-by-state production incentive advice. Additionally, through our onSet service, productions are able to procure goods and services through Cast & Crew to take advantage of various state incentives.

As production continues to decentralize from LA to “incentive” states, what challenges or opportunities does that present for a company like Cast & Crew,

and how do you stay on top of it all? Is that the benefit of having offices nationwide?

At Cast & Crew, we look at every change in the industry as an opportunity to increase both our knowledge base and our role in the ever changing industry. We work directly with film commissions in all US and Canadian jurisdictions and participate in numerous panels and discussions all year long. Through these relationships, Cast & Crew is kept abreast of proposed changes and is able to work proactively with our clients to ensure that they get the most out of the individual incentives.

While traveling to take advantage of incentives is beneficial to the productions, are there areas where it makes things more difficult or less cost effective? How does working with a company like Cast & Crew minimize those challenges and help maximize incentives?

Cast & Crew's relationships with various state agencies only benefit our clients. The ever changing world of incentives poses a challenge to all productions but, by utilizing our services, they do not need to be worried that they are missing out. We all know that it is not practical for a production to purchase and own all of the equipment that is necessary. From the expense of traveling that equipment across the country to the expense of storing it until it is liquidated at the end of production, the viability of owning just does not make sense. This is where Cast & Crew onSet provides an amazing service. Productions are able to procure their equipment from onSet and take advantage of the state incentives. No need to store or transport equipment and they get credit for incentive purposes. This is a double win for productions!

Productions are increasingly mobile, going from New Mexico to New Orleans or beyond. Do you follow along and provide services throughout, regardless of the location? What about overseas locations? What's one of the most exotic places your staff has traveled to?

When a production starts with Cast & Crew, they may begin working in the US and soon find themselves across the country or the ocean. Cast & Crew currently has offices across the United States and Canada and we are pleased to be opening our first overseas office in London this spring. Cast & Crew will be with them every step of the way. We have had productions in various parts of the world, including remote parts of Africa. We are able to process US nationals working anywhere in the world and, with the opening of our London office, will be able to process payroll across Europe as well.

Does Cast & Crew help productions navigate all the State incentives to help them decide where to shoot? Or do your services begin once the locations are set and the project is green-lit?

Cast & Crew is available to work with any of our clients to get the most out of the state incentives. We are not in the business of keeping our clients out in the cold and that philosophy extends to production incentives. A client simply needs to call and let us know where they are going and we are ready to assist them with the most up-to-date information available. We provide monthly email updates and twice yearly we publish a physical version of our TIP Guide which details the incentives on a state-by-state basis. These tools and the personal relationships that we have with state agencies enable us to provide up to the minute information to our production partners allowing them to maximize their return.

New Mexico remains one of the top production locations in the US. What is it about New Mexico that continues to keep it so successful in light of aggressive competition from other States?

New Mexico has state-of-the-art stage facilities, a good crew base and no per project cap except for the \$20M aggregate cap on performing artists' salaries. In addition, the incentive is fully refundable, a short commute from Los Angeles for weekend trips home, and good weather, all of which provide a very competitive landscape.

What are some of the more notable New Mexico productions Cast & Crew has worked on?

Cast & Crew has been privileged to work with many productions in New Mexico such as The Lone Ranger, Game Change, Longmire and The Lying Game, to name just a few.

Tell us about your New Mexico crew. What makes them the best in the industry?

Our New Mexico office is led by a seasoned team of industry professions. The majority of the team has also worked on the production side which adds to the client experience.

Cast & Crew uses "the most stable and sophisticated production accounting software available on the market." Explain a bit about the system, what it enables Cast & Crew to do, and how it gives you an edge over other Payroll companies.

PSL was designed to track production incentives efficiently and effectively. In addition, the user friendly interface makes it the go-to software for the biggest films ever produced, most recently THE LONE RANGER filmed in New Mexico. The flexibility of PSL allows for customized reports to be created effortlessly, allowing productions to maximize their return and speed up the incentive process. Combine that with the 24/7 customer support, PSL has become the choice of production accountants everywhere.

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