

Editorial · How We Work

The Company.

How Nemea operates internally. How we hire, how we decide, how we give feedback, how we fight, how we grow. The operating system of a small, author-led production company built to last.

The Philosophy.

Most independent film companies are either too loose — personality-driven, chaotic, dependent on one founder's energy — or too corporate, imported from studio systems that crush the qualities that make independent film worth making. **We aim for a third path.**

Nemea is a small company by design. We believe that the best production companies are **ten to twenty people who know each other's work, respect each other's judgment, and can hold a difficult conversation in a single room.** Scaling past that without losing the culture is one of the hardest things to do in this industry, and we don't intend to try until we have to.

This document is how we work when nobody is watching. It is what we share with a new hire on their first day. It is what we point to when we disagree about how to handle a situation. It is not a handbook — handbooks are written by HR departments to limit legal exposure. This is written by us, for us, to describe the company we're trying to build.

What we are.

Author-led. The creative voice comes from directors and writers. Our job is to protect that voice, fund it, and place it in the world.

Operationally disciplined. We treat budgets, schedules, contracts, and tax incentives with the same care we treat scripts. Sloppiness in operations kills more independent films than bad scripts do.

International by default. We operate across Mexico, Canada, and the United States. We think in three languages, three legal systems, three time zones. This is not a burden — **it is our competitive advantage.**

Slow on the slate, fast on the decisions. We build the slate over years. We make individual decisions in days. Deliberation happens before commitment, not after.

OPERATING PRINCIPLE

A production company is not the films it has made. It is **the relationships, judgments, and practices that produce the next film.** The catalog is a lagging indicator of the company. The culture is the leading one.

Roles & Rhythms.

The cadence of how the company meets, thinks, and acts. **Rituals beat resolutions.** A company that meets weekly on the right things will outperform a company that has monthly resolutions it forgets.

WHEN	WHAT	PURPOSE
Daily	Async Updates	Short written standups in a shared channel — what each person is working on, what is blocked, what needs another pair of eyes. No meeting needed. Respects time zones across CDMX, Vancouver, and LA.
Weekly	Slate Review	Every Monday. One hour. Every project in development, in production, or in festival cycle — one sentence of status, one sentence of next-action. If a project has nothing new to report for four weeks in a row, it gets an honest conversation: is this still alive?
Weekly	Creative Conversation	Every Thursday. 90 minutes. One project gets deep focus — a script read, a cut review, a director's treatment. Rotating. Not a status meeting — a working session.
Monthly	All-Hands	First Friday. Everyone in the company. State of the business, slate overview, open questions, wins and losses. No filtering. If something is true internally, it is said internally.
Monthly	Financial Review	Third Wednesday. CLO and Financial Controller walk through actual spend versus budget, incentive status per film, SPV cash positions. No surprises at quarter-end.
Quarterly	Greenlight Committee	Three founders plus board advisors where appropriate. Decides which projects move from development to financing. Slow by design. A greenlight is a 2-year commitment of capital, team, and reputation. It deserves the deliberation.
Quarterly	LP Update	Written quarterly letter to investors. Honest, specific, no spin. What happened, what is happening, what is worrying us, what to watch.

Annually	Retreat	Three days offsite. No screens after 6pm. We review the year, challenge our assumptions, reread our editorial documents, and argue about direction. The calendar year gets its container.
Annually	Document Review	The Voice, The Manifesto, The Festival, The Contract, The Company — every internal editorial document is re-read, marked up, and revised every January. Doctrine that doesn't evolve becomes dogma.

03 How We Decide.

Every decision in a small company is a forcing function. Who decides, how, and on what timeline — **this is the substrate of the culture.**

Bad decision-making corrodes trust even when outcomes happen to be good. Good decision-making builds trust even when outcomes are bad. We design our decision processes to produce trust, not just results.

<p>TYPE 01</p> <p>Creative Decisions</p> <p>Who to develop with, which script to option, which director to sign. Head of Development leads. CEO and CLO consulted. Board advisors weigh in on pattern matching. Decision maker is clear; input is wide.</p>	<p>TYPE 02</p> <p>Greenlight Decisions</p> <p>Whether to commit capital to produce a film. Three founders must agree. No unilateral greenlights. If one founder blocks, we either answer their concern or we don't proceed. This is intentional friction.</p>	<p>TYPE 03</p> <p>Financial Decisions</p> <p>SPV structure, incentive strategy, deal terms. CLO leads. CEO signs off on anything material. Financial Controller keeps the records. Speed matters here — we decide quickly, within a structured framework.</p>
<p>TYPE 04</p> <p>Operational Decisions</p> <p>Who to hire, what tools to use, office logistics, vendor relationships. Whoever is closest to the work decides. Consulting happens if needed, but we do not turn operational choices into group debates.</p>	<p>TYPE 05</p> <p>Reputational Decisions</p> <p>When to publicly comment, when to stay silent, how to respond to criticism. CEO leads; all three founders consulted. These are slow, deliberate decisions. We do not respond to news cycles — we respond to questions.</p>	<p>TYPE 06</p> <p>Partnership Decisions</p> <p>Major co-productions, long-term partnerships with other studios or funds. All three founders plus relevant board advisors. These decisions shape what Nemea becomes.</p>

Every decision gets written down: **what was decided, who decided, what alternatives were considered, what we expect to learn.** We review these quarterly. We don't use them to assign blame — we use them to calibrate our judgment. **A company that reviews its decisions gets smarter. A company that doesn't, repeats its mistakes.**

04 **How We Give Feedback.**

This is where most small creative companies fail. **Niceness kills more films than cruelty does.** A note not given honestly in the script stage becomes a reshoot. A disagreement not surfaced in development becomes a public fight in post.

01 Notes are specific or they are not notes.

"I didn't love the second act" is not a note. **"Around page 47, I stopped caring what happens to the protagonist — and I think it's because the stakes the film established in the first act got dropped"** is a note. Specificity is respect.

02 Separate observation from prescription.

Our job is to identify what isn't working, not to solve it. **The writer's job is the solution.** We surface the problem clearly, then step back. Prescriptive notes ("she should say X instead") disempower the writer and usually produce worse work than the writer's own solution.

03 Honesty without cruelty.

We say what we think. We do not soften a note so much that the recipient can't hear it. We do not dress an opinion as a fact. **We do not confuse kindness with cowardice,** and we do not confuse honesty with brutality. The test: would we say this in the same words, in the same tone, if the person was our peer and not a subordinate?

04 Public praise. Private criticism.

When someone does good work, we acknowledge it where others can see. When someone has missed the mark, we take it up in private first — always. **Public criticism of a colleague is nearly always a sign that the private conversation should have happened sooner.**

05

Disagreement is data, not disloyalty.

If someone on the team thinks a project is wrong, a deal is wrong, a decision is wrong — **we want to hear it**. Yes-culture kills companies. A working disagreement that makes it into a meeting makes the decision better. A silent disagreement that shows up later as sabotage is the real problem.

06

When we're wrong, we say so.

This is the harder one. Founders and senior partners make mistakes too. When we've made a bad call, given a bad note, or handled something poorly, **we say it plainly and we correct it**. Admitting error costs much less than pretending it didn't happen — and it's the single biggest signal to junior colleagues that honest feedback is safe.

THE FEEDBACK STANDARD

If you have feedback you haven't given someone, **ask yourself why**. If the answer is that you don't think they can hear it, that's a separate conversation you owe them. If the answer is that you're worried about the relationship, the relationship is already compromised by the unsaid thing. **Say it.**

05

Hiring Principles.

A ten-person company cannot afford to be wrong about who it hires. One bad hire in a small team is a tax everyone pays every day.

Who we hire.

We hire for **taste, judgment, and craft** — in that order. Taste can be developed but cannot be taught. Judgment comes from experience and reflection. Craft is the baseline we assume. We will take a person with strong taste and medium craft over a person with strong craft and weak taste, every time.

We hire people who have already done something real. A showreel, a script, a film, a body of work, a track record. **We do not hire potential.** We hire evidence.

We hire people who are kind to people they don't have to be kind to. The interview is not where we learn this — we learn it from references, from how candidates treat our production coordinators, from how they talk about people who wronged them.

How we hire.

Referrals first. The best hires come from people we already trust. We ask our network before we post publicly.

Paid work trials for senior roles. Rather than long interview loops, we do short paid projects — a script coverage, a production budget review, a development memo. We see how the person actually works. They see how we actually work.

Consensus hire. Three founders must be enthusiastic. "Lukewarm" is a no. If anyone is hesitant, we take it seriously.

Reference checks are real. We call multiple references — not just the ones the candidate provided. The most useful calls are with people who've managed the candidate through a hard moment.

Candidates who are insistent on title. Candidates who negotiate aggressively before they've done any work. Candidates who talk about former colleagues in ways that suggest they'll eventually talk about us the same way. Candidates who are credentialed but cannot describe anything they've actually made. **These are consistent tells.**

06

Onboarding.

The first thirty days shape the rest of a person's tenure. We take onboarding seriously because a person who understands the company from day one makes better decisions from day thirty.

WEEK 01

Read Before You Do

Every new hire is given all seven internal editorial documents — **The Voice, The Talent, The Image, The Manifesto, The Festival, The Contract, The Company** — plus the Business Plan and Strategic Report. They read everything in week one. **We do not want them making decisions before they know what we believe.**

WEEK 02

Shadow, Don't Lead

Second week: attend meetings, sit in on calls, watch how decisions get made. **No decisions yet.** The goal is pattern recognition — how Nemea actually operates, not how it is supposed to operate on paper.

WEEK 03

First Real Project

Third week: they own something small and real. A script coverage, a production recce, a festival submission.

Something that matters but isn't catastrophic if done imperfectly. They present their work to the team.

WEEK 04

Feedback, Both Ways

End of month: structured two-way feedback conversation.

What have they seen that confuses them? What do they think we're getting wrong? New eyes are the most valuable asset a company has — we use them while they're still new.

07

Red Lines.

Things we do not do — as a company, ever. These are not guidelines. They are conditions of continued employment.

01

We do not tolerate harassment or abuse on our productions — of any kind, at any level.

Not from directors. Not from actors. Not from department heads. Not from producers. Not from founders. One incident, credibly reported, is investigated immediately and decisively. **We have terminated productions over this before and we will again.**

02

We do not lie to investors.

Not about financials, not about a film's status, not about festival prospects, not about market conditions. If something has gone wrong, they hear it from us first. **The day we start spinning is the day the company stops being worth investing in.**

03

We do not cut corners on safety or legal compliance.

Insurance, union standards, child-labor rules, tax compliance, IP clearance, permits. **No exceptions, no shortcuts, no "we'll fix it in post."** If a production would require cutting these corners to work, the production doesn't work.

04

We do not take a film away from a director in post.

This is stated in *The Contract*. It applies here too. **The director's cut is the film.** If a film fails commercially because of that, we absorb it.

05

We do not speak publicly against filmmakers we've worked with.

Even when the relationship ends badly. Even when we're being publicly attacked. **We absorb it and move on.** Our reputation is not built by retaliation. The industry is small and long-remembered — and filmmakers who work with us should know that if things go wrong, we will not become their enemy in public.

06

We do not let quarterly pressure change who we are.

A bad year does not mean we compromise the slate. A great year does not mean we stop saying no. **The editorial discipline is the point,** not a luxury we maintain when times are good.

08

Internal Communication.

How we talk to each other inside the company. **Clear communication is a multiplier on every other capability.**

Default to writing.

Most decisions are better discussed in writing first — it forces clarity, it creates a record, and it respects the fact that we work across time zones. A two-page memo that precedes a thirty-minute meeting is worth ten status-update calls.

Shorter, sooner.

A short message today beats a polished email next week. **Rough beats late.** If we hold information because we want to present it perfectly, we've usually chosen the wrong priority.

No hiding behind the group.

"The team decided" and "we all felt" are phrases we avoid internally. **Individuals decide.** Individuals have opinions. If a decision was made by the three founders, we say so. If a concern is yours, own it — don't hide it in a group voice.

Language switching.

We work in English and Spanish. Meetings default to whichever language serves the work — not a fixed rule. **Inclusion matters more than uniformity.** For meetings with only Spanish-speakers, we speak Spanish. For mixed groups, we default to English but don't punish anyone for switching languages when it serves the conversation. For written documents, we deliver in the language most useful for the recipient.

Growth Philosophy.

Most companies grow themselves into irrelevance. We would rather stay small and excellent than grow fast and become ordinary.

We do not grow unless we have to.

Every new hire is a decision to dilute the culture. That doesn't mean we don't grow — it means **we only grow when a role is clearly missing and the work suffers without it**. Not because we have the budget. Not because it would feel more official. Because the work demands it.

We do not chase scale.

A production company that makes fifty films in five years is a different company than one that makes ten excellent films in the same period. **We have chosen ten**. If Nemea ever has the opportunity to make fifty — through success, scaling, acquisition — we will make the explicit choice about whether that is still the company we want to be.

We do not hire to fix cultural problems.

A "head of operations" does not fix operational chaos. A "director of people" does not fix management problems. **New roles solve specific functional gaps**. Cultural problems are solved by the existing team taking them seriously.

We do not grow horizontally before we grow vertically.

Before Nemea opens a second business line, a second genre, a second country of production, we make sure the first one is excellent. **A studio that does one thing at a high level is more valuable than a studio that does five things acceptably**.

THE GROWTH TEST

Before we add a role, a project, a geography, or a capability, we ask: **does this make the next film better, or just the next year busier?** If the answer is the second, we don't do it.

What We Do, What We Don't.

A summary of the choices that define how the company operates day to day.

DO

What We Do.

- Write everything important down — decisions, memos, retreat notes, editorial doctrine.
- Hold the weekly slate review religiously, even when nothing seems urgent.
- Give specific feedback, in private, quickly.
- Admit when we're wrong, especially as founders and partners.
- Hire only when the work demands it, and only people with evidence of craft and taste.
- Read our own editorial documents every year and revise them.
- Talk to our LPs honestly, in good times and bad.
- Default to writing; default to short; default to sooner.
- Fight about ideas openly; handle personal tensions privately and quickly.
- Protect the three founders' ability to say no to each other.

DON'T

What We Don't.

- Grow for the sake of growth. Every hire dilutes the culture.
- Soften notes until they can't be heard.
- Criticize colleagues in public. Take it up in private first.
- Hide bad news from investors or from each other.
- Let quarterly pressure erode editorial discipline.
- Hire potential. We hire evidence.
- Let meetings substitute for writing, or writing substitute for decisions.
- Speak publicly against filmmakers we've worked with, even when it hurts us.
- Tolerate harassment, safety shortcuts, or legal corner-cutting.
- Confuse being nice with being kind. Kindness requires honesty.

The Reality.

This document describes the company we are trying to be on our best days. No company lives up to its operating principles every day — and the places where Nemea falls short of what is written here are more interesting than the places where it succeeds. **Culture is not a static document. It is a running argument between the company and itself.**

When someone joins Nemea, we hand them this document and we tell them: the way you improve this company is by noticing where we fall short of it. The new perspective, honestly offered, is how we stay worth working at.

The measure of whether this culture works isn't whether we follow every line. It's whether — five years from now — **the people who worked here still want to work with each other**. Whether they describe the company in the same way we describe ourselves. Whether the best filmmakers in our orbit come back a second time, and a third.

That is the only test. Everything else is notation.

FINAL STANDARD

A company is the sum of the decisions nobody sees. **The culture shows up in how we act when nobody is grading us.** This document exists to make those invisible decisions visible — to ourselves, first. Because if we can see the choice we're about to make, we can make a better one.