

GUIDE

How to Choose a Video + AI Search Partner

The questions to ask before you sign with any agency or freelancer. The capabilities that matter, the red flags that don't.

By **Digital Accomplice**

A pretty video isn't the deliverable. A citable asset is.

Most video agencies sell you something to be watched. For AI search, you need something to be read and cited. The real deliverable is a transcript dense with quotable statements, a question-shaped landing page, and presence on the platforms LLMs trust, all working together. Judge a partner on that, not on their reel.

What a modern partner should own

A real AI-search video partner does four jobs at once, not just production: genuine B2B fluency, a GEO and citation focus, an expert-interview model, and distribution onto platforms LLMs trust like YouTube and LinkedIn. Production alone leaves you with footage and no citations.

FACT: 85% of AI citations now come from third-party platforms rather than brand-owned properties. A partner who only embeds video on your own site is missing where the citations actually live. (AirOps data, cited by Kaleigh Moore)

Red flag: footage that gathers dust

The wrong agency produces beautiful video your buyers never see and AI engines never cite. If a provider talks only about views and engagement, they are making the old kind of video. Ask one question and watch them answer: how does your work get cited by ChatGPT or Perplexity?

Red flag: polish over substance

Production quality matters less than you would think, because AI engines read the transcript, not the visuals. A clear expert answering a real question beats a glossy promo with nothing quotable in it.

"It did, and I was really mad about it because it was a day I had a bad hair day. And, like, here it is in the AI Overview and it stayed there for months." — Cassie Clark, fractional content strategist

"I can appreciate an iPhone selfie, like, if you are saying something compelling." — Morgan Short, Content and marketing leader

Red flag: slop at scale with no point of view

Anyone can produce mediocre content at scale with AI now. A partner pushing volume without a human point of view is the easy-button trap, and it is exactly what AI is trained to ignore.

"If you're just clicking on a button and it's producing video and it's easy, you're doing it wrong. Because that doesn't have your soul." — Jason Barnard, Kalicube

"People want to hear from people still." — Morgan Short, Content and marketing leader

In-house, agency, or hybrid?

The gap most companies have is not another camera operator. It is someone who can connect video to every team's goals and steer you around expensive mistakes, like building a studio or betting on AI avatars. You do not need a studio to start, you need the right strategist at the table.

"Someone who's almost like that creative Swiss Army knife who can really speak to all those audiences, because you're seeing the full vision. It's not the same as just hiring someone who knows cinematography or someone who knows how to edit." — Meg Dalessandro, Content producer at Wistia

FACT: 96% of B2B companies produce thought leadership, but fewer than 5% of headcount typically participates. The white space is experts on camera, and most firms are not filling it. (Content Marketing Institute, cited by Kaleigh Moore)

How to evaluate: audit first

Before you bet a strategy on any channel, run an AI visibility audit. Use a tracking tool that runs your prompts and reports how often your brand shows up versus competitors, and which domains get cited. The cited-sources list is the gold: if YouTube ranks high there for your prompts, you have evidence to invest in video. If not, pick a different channel.

"Don't assume that because X website is the number one cited source across all LLMs that that's where your strategy should be." — Adrian Dahlin, founder, searchtosale.io

The vendor scorecard

Run every finalist through five checks:

1. Do they run expert interviews, not just product shoots?
2. Do they build GEO-structured pages with quotable transcripts?
3. Do they distribute to platforms LLMs trust, not just your site?
4. Do they actually understand B2B and your technical buyer?
5. Do they have a repurposing pipeline, so one hour of expert time becomes a quarter of assets?

Then ask each one how they measure AI-search results. The answer separates strategists from production shops fast.

What should it cost?

Expect three pricing models: a one-time audit (free to a few thousand), a fixed-scope project, and an ongoing monthly retainer. GEO costs more than plain SEO because expert-led video, distribution, and real citation tracking take effort. The biggest cost driver is whether you are buying advice alone or advice plus content production.

Start small. Get an audit, scope a fixed project, and only move to a retainer once you have seen results worth sustaining.

"Can my current video agency just do this?"

Maybe, but most cannot. A typical agency makes video to be watched, not read and cited. The tell is in their answer to one question: how does your work get cited by ChatGPT or Perplexity? If they only have view counts, they are the wrong fit.

"Is a free audit actually useful?"

Yes, when it is specific to you. A weak free audit is just a templated lead magnet with your logo on it, and the tell is specificity. If the findings could apply to any company in your industry, they are worthless. A real one shows where you appear in ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini today, and where competitors get cited instead.

Want to discuss your situation?

If you are evaluating partners and want a second read, let's talk it through. No pitch, just an honest take on what to look for and what to avoid.

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Digital Accomplice is a video-first, AI-search studio for B2B.