

10 Golden Rules to Prepare your Track for Mixing

by Thorsten Müller, www.Soundmatters-audio.com

1. While recording, please stick to the following project specifications to ensure maximum signal quality.

- Music productions: 44.1 or 88.2 kHz Sample Rate
- DVD and Video Projects: 48 or 96 kHz Sample Rate

use the highest **Bit Depth** available on your DAW

- Cubase / Nuendo: 32Bit floating point
- Logic, Protools etc: 24Bit

2. Provide the project in a state which is "ready to mix". The editing of mistakes, pops and clicks, and the layering strategies of the instruments should be completed at this stage, since they fall into the category of "editing work". Of course we can do the editing in-house at soundmatters. See the separate section on Music editing for information about this service.

3. Avoid using dynamic processing and EQing of channels unless required for artistic sound shaping. Most likely, the mixing engineer will remove any dynamic processing plugins from the virtual signal chain and substitute it with his own setting.

you can, however, export your compressed tracks and provide them clearly marked, along the unprocessed track in the project as a reference for the mixing engineer.

4. Avoid applying automation, Volume changes and Envelopes on Parts and fade-outs of the song, since it is time consuming to undo Volume fluctuations in the mixing process.

5. Refrain from applying gain structure. This is part of the mixing process itself.

6. Avoid using 3rd party plug-ins, but try to use the plugins natively provided with the Multitracking Software to ensure compatibility with our mixing workstation.

if 3rd party Plug-in are required, please export the Plug-ins' output as a separate audio file.

provide presets in a separate folder within the project folder, if any Vst/AU are used in the project to ensure compatibility to our DAWs.

7. Provide audio files of effects' outputs with soundshaping qualities, such as distortions, vocalizers, if they are used in your project.

provide presets of these plug ins, with descriptive names, in a separate folder within the project folder to enable the mixing engineer to tweak and adjust your settings.

8. Basic panning may be applied, please avoid automation of panning at this stage. If certain panning automation is necessary for expressive purposes, please specify these in a separate text file, stored inside the project folder.

9. Try to achieve sufficient gain while recording analog signals without clipping at 0db(FS). This will ensure the proper usage of the full Bitdepth for the best sonic results.

Attn: This is NOT the same as the "normalizing" function!

10. Take Great Care to insure all necessary files are included in the project

Cubase: open the Pool, right-click, select the option "Remove Unused Media", then "Conform Files", then "Prepare Archive"

Logic: make sure the "Include Assets" option is ticked when saving the project. In case of Movie work, make sure the option "copy movie files to project folder" is ticked. Prepare the project by going to menu "File -> Project -> Consolidate"

This little guideline was compiled by Thorsten Müller, sound engineer at www.soundmatters-audio.com, Goa, India.

While copyright is reserved, the document may be printed and distributed freely without prior consent for non-commercial purposes, provided the above mentioned author is credited.