



What You Can Do To Make Sure Your Producer/Mixer Does The Best Job Possible

Have you ever sent your raw tracks to a producer/mixing engineer and just said something like: “hey Dr. Med. Dre, here are the stems 🙌 make it into 🎧🎵 LOL can't wait to hear the result 😊”?

You if have, then you f*** up.** And not because of the amount of emojis.

There are infinite ways to produce and mix a song. You shouldn't expect that your producer/engineer will magically know **exactly** what you want. This might work when you are in a tightly-knit team, or when you hire a producer who is known for that **one thing** they do best and you know exactly what the results will be. Otherwise, you are risking getting something you didn't want, because you both had different visions, and you didn't even know it.

Ideally, the producer/mixer you hired will take the initiative upon themselves and ask you to do all the things I am talking about on this checklist.

But if they haven't, and if you want your project to go as well as it possibly can, then you've got some work to do.

You need to prepare even before your producer/engineer gets a hold of your stems. This will ensure the that your collaboration will deliver the best possible results.

My checklist will help you with this preparation.

How To Prepare Your Song For Production

1 Create a Vision.

Here are some questions to get your brain juices flowing:

- When you close your eyes and imagine the end product of your song, what do you “hear”?
- What feeling/emotion/vibe does it bring across?
- What instruments/rhythm elements/background vocals are there?
- What are they playing/singing?
- How expressive are they?

If you have trouble defining your vision, ask your producer if they can help you paint that picture.

2 Envision the song's beginning.

Zoom into the development of your vision over the course of your song:

How should the song begin? What do you want your intro/first verse to sound like? Are there only a couple of instruments playing, leaving plenty of room to make the arrangement bigger and BIGGER as the song progresses? Or do you want the song to “EXPLODE” upon entering? Or anything in between?

What instruments/rhythm elements/background vocals are there?



3 Envision the song's culmination.

Where should the BIGGEST part/culmination of your song be? How exactly does it culminate? How much energy does it carry?

What instruments/rhythm elements/background vocals are there?

4 Describe your Vision. In detail.

Write it ALL down in as much detail and with as much specificity as you can. Remember, your words should paint a clear picture, leaving as little room for guessing as possible.

5 Find Reference(s).

Are there existing songs you love that you think have production (or parts of it) that is very similar to what you are trying to accomplish? Showing these songs to your producer and pointing at exactly what you love so much about them production-wise (and consequently what you want to have in **your** track), could save you a LOT of time, and help you approach your vision even better.

6 Are you happy with your song's structure?

Ask yourself these types of questions:

Is your song unnecessarily long? Can you shorten/cut some sections out without compromising your message/vibe/enjoyment of the track? Does the flow of your track's sections (verse, pre-chorus, chorus) feel natural to you? Are you missing a second pre-chorus? Or do you have a purposelessly long bridge? Write it all down.

If you have trouble with this, ask your producer if they can help you by providing feedback.

7 Check these notes with your producer.

It may be that the vision you came up with is flawed in some ways. For example, the choice of your instrumentation might not be the best at bringing across the vibe/feeling you are going for; or you are missing something really important. Make sure to organise your notes well and send them to your producer. Ask them their opinion on your ideas.

8 Who should do what?

Which parts of your Vision can you create yourself and which ones are you delegating to your producer? Do you want to sing and record all those lush vocal harmonies yourself, or should the producer create them artificially? Do you want to play the bass or would you rather not touch that?

Communicate with your producer and make sure you are both clear on your respective tasks.



How To Prepare Your Song For Mixing

1 What is your Vision for the mix?

Much like with production above, you have to know what you want your mix to sound like. Should it be clean, bright and punchy, or should it be warm and saturated, like an old recording with a modern twist? Should the kick and bass be the king of everything? There is a million ways of mixing a song, so you should be very specific about what you want.

If you have trouble defining your vision, ask your producer if they can help you paint that picture.

2 Describe your Vision. In detail.

Write it ALL down in as much detail and with as much specificity as you can. Remember, your words should paint a clear picture, leaving as little room for guessing as possible.

3 Your specific preferences for specific instruments/vocal tracks.

Here you have a chance to zoom into each part of your production and give their role and sound in the mix more definition.

Do you want your drums to sound soft and dark, and simply give a “backbeat” to the track, or should they punch through the roof? Do you want your vocal to be clear, bright and upfront, or ambient and dark?

Again, your producer can help you with finding out what you need.

4 Find Reference(s).

Most of the time your production reference can also be your mix reference, but not always. So, if your mix Vision differs from the mix sound of your production reference, make sure to find another one that fits.

5 Check these notes with your mixing engineer.

Much like with production, your vision could potentially end up not being something that will necessarily sound good. Make sure to send your notes to your engineer to get their opinion on your ideas.

I hope this was helpful. Just shoot me an email and let me know! :)
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