

Vocal Recording Checklist

Step

1

- Schedule a time for the session – even if you are the vocalist. Assemble items that will make the session comfortable such as water, a legal pad, pencil or pen, a table for holding drinks, a chair, a music stand, etc.

Step

2

- Determine everything that is needed for the session such as any special microphones, preamps, rental outboard gear, mic cables, mic stands, baffles, pop filter, etc.

Step

3

- Setup the microphone(s) – try to have more than one available if possible so that you can choose the best match for the voice.
- Hook the mic up to the preamp, computer interface, or mixing console. Use phantom power if needed and test for signal. Don't patch in any outboard gear until after you've tested the mic.

Step

4

- Setup the headphones and get a great headphone mix of the song to inspire the vocal performance.
- Make sure that you setup the control room with the same headphones that the vocalist is using so that your mix is the same as theirs.

Step

5

- Setup at least one reverb and one delay for vocal effects.
- Setup the auxiliary sends for the effects.

NOTES:

Step

6

- Learn the song structure and setup location markers for navigation.
- Use a pencil and paper to write down the start times of each section.

Step

7

- Check the recording levels going to your computer, tape, or whatever.
- Use a loud "Hey" to check for the loudest level on the meter without peaking or overloading. Stay out of the red.
(shoot for around the -12dB to -6dB area as a good safe average range.)
- Check for 'plosives ("P"s, "B"s, "T"s, "K"s)

Step

8

- Once the singer is on the mic, have them sing the most intense part of the song to get levels (don't ask them to sing too hard to save their voice).
- RECORD EVERYTHING – even when getting levels.

Step

9

- Have an EQ and a compressor patched in and ready, but in bypass mode.
- Determine if you need EQ and/or compression.
- If you must record with it, use VERY subtle settings to stay out of trouble.
- Remember – RECORD EVERYTHING

Step

10

- Try to have a lyric sheet available if possible. Learn the lyrics.
- Learn the dynamics of the lyrics and ride the vocal during each section.
- Make notations on a comp sheet for doing a vocal composite.

NOTES:
