



STUDIO DESIGN WORKSHEET



Getting Started with Hendrik on your Studio Design

Working with a studio designer requires being able to answer many questions about your proposed dream studio. There's a lot of detail that needs to be considered. This document should get you started thinking in the right direction about these details. Ask questions as you think of them and talk through any issues or concerns you might have in the design stage.

The more openly we communicate, the better the end result will be!

Site and Location:

Will the studio be a purpose-built free standing structure or will it be part of another building or facility? What are the dimensions and shape of the site or the room in which the studio will be built? How high is the ceiling? What materials are used in the existing construction? How much demolition will happen if any?

What is the climate in the area? What kind of humidity can be expected? What ranges of temperatures can be expected? How many people will be in the rooms creating more heat and humidity? What type of HVAC is going to be needed in the space?

Do you already have the site chosen? Do you own or rent the location? Are there rules or regulations concerning the types of changes that can be made to the existing structure? In the current jurisdiction, what are the implications of building codes, either commercial or residential, that apply to this project?

What are the anticipated acoustic problems with your current site? Examples of issues are: Traffic or railroads outside, the building is on top of an active subway tunnel, site is close to a radio station, a baby is trying to sleep in the adjacent apartment, etc.

What types of audio or music work are anticipated for your studio? Only production and mixing work, tracking work, and overdub work all have very different needs.

Is the room mainly for listening (control room) or for tracking (live room) or both?

Construction Questions:

Are you planning on doing construction like building or destroying walls, adding electrical circuits, doing permanent installations or acoustic treatment? Or....Are you planning on having a studio that can pretty much be disassembled later to move to a different apartment. Or something in between?

Have you thought about your budget requirements for new cabling/patching, new acoustic treatment (possibly custom work), furniture, construction materials and labor, etc. Are you planning on doing the work in stages or all at once? Do you still need to use the studio while you are working on it?

The Construction Team

Are you planning on hiring a general contractor, hiring your own sub-contractors or doing the work yourself? Studio construction is not like other construction and most contractors instincts for saving time and money will hurt the performance of your new space.

Do you have qualified electricians and HVAC installers locally that can do the work that is required? What are the local building codes that are relevant to your project?

The carpenters, gypsum, plaster and taping pros, HVAC installers and electricians all need to work together and follow exact detailed directions to ensure adequate isolation, avoid safety issues and to create a comfortable, creative and ergonomic work space.

On larger projects, architects and structural engineers are often required in addition to a studio designer. For commercial spaces or high-end residential studios, there is usually an interior designer that is retained to keep design features and palettes under control.

Isolation:

How many and what type of isolation rooms (e.g. drum room, vocal booth, amp closet) are going to be needed? How large do the isolation rooms need to be?

Are there going to be extremely loud instruments, like metal guitars, sub bass, and aggressive drums?

Are there going to be incredibly quiet acoustic instruments, like strings, singing bowls, or quiet vocals?

Personnel and Clients:

How many people will need seating in the control room? (e.g. engineer, producer, singer, drummer, entourage, etc.)

How many people will need to perform at the same time? Will they need to have line-of-sight with the engineer, producer or other musicians?

Are there regulations governing the capacity of the space in which you are building?

Furniture and Fixtures:

What is the anticipated desk size and how much racking will be required?

How much counter top, shelving, guitar hangers are required?

What other furniture will be in the control room, the lounge, the live rooms?

What are the anticipated lighting needs?

Audio and Video Systems Questions:

Will there be a console? Will there be a computer system? Is an isolated machine room required?

How many and what type of studio monitors (e.g. nearfield, midfield, soffit-mounted) will be used? Do you already have monitors and what brand/model are they?

How many channels will be required for each isolation room? How many returns? How many speaker level sends will be required? Is audio going to be sent analog, digital (AES), digital (Audio over Ethernet) or digital (MADI)?

How much gear needs to be in the room and how does this usually change over time? For instance do you accumulate new/used gear or do you mostly replace existing gear with nicer stuff? Do you need storage in the space for instruments/books/recordings?

What kinds of patching and connectivity needs to be exposed in the racking?

Managing the Project

As the client for a project like a studio design and build, you need to decide how much you want to manage the project yourself and how much you want to delegate to your team. Talking about how everyone works together and who is responsible for what deliverables is essential and needs to happen during the design phase.

Please feel free to contact me at anytime to discuss questions, concerns or ideas!

Best regards,

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