

HOW TO PRODUCE A HIT RECORD

First, spend about a month on Pre-Production making sure that everything is planned out so that no spontaneity is necessary or even possible in the studio. If there are no hits there, make the band collaborate with outside songwriters - or better still cover an old hit! Line up extra studio musicians who are better players than the band themselves, just in case.

Next, book the most expensive studio you can find so that everyone but the band gets paid lots of money. The more expensive, the more the record label will take the project seriously, which is important - book lots and lots of time. You'll need at least 48 tracks to accommodate all the room microphones you'll set up for the drums, all of which will be buried by other instruments later anyway, and for the added keyboard tracks even if the band has never had a keyboard player, and for all the backing vocal tracks, even if the band only has one singer.

Then record all the instruments one at a time, but make the drummer play to a click track for every song so the music has no chance to breathe whatsoever. That way you can use lots of MIDI gear. Do multiple takes of each song. Use up at least 30 reels of 2-inch tape. Take the best parts of each take and splice them together. You might even use a hard-disk recording system like Pro Tools, then transfer it all back to analog 2-inch. Spend at least two weeks just compiling drum tracks like this. You'll need to rent at least half a dozen snare drums, and you'll have to change drum heads every couple of hours. If you really do it right, the entire band will never have to actually play a song together.

Now, start overdubbing each instrument, one at a time. Make sure everything is perfect. If necessary do things over and over until absolute perfection is achieved. Do a hundred takes if you must. If this doesn't work, get guest musicians in to help out. Don't forget to hire someone who is good with samples and loops so the kids will think its hip! Better get some turntables scratching on there too.

Be sure to spend days and days just experimenting with sounds, different amplifiers, guitars, microphones, speakers, basically trying every possible option you can think of to use up all that studio time you've booked. No matter how much time you book, you can use it up this way easily. Everyone involved will think they're working very hard. Make sure you rent lots of expensive microphones and expensive compressors and expensive pre-amps so you can convince yourself and everyone else how good it's sounding. Charge it to the band's recording budget of course.

Make sure you have at least two or three compressors *in series* on everything you're recording. Any equipment with tubes in it is a sure bet, the older the better. The best is early-1970's-era Neve equipment, old Ampex analog recorders, and WW2-vintage tube microphones since everyone knows that the technology of recording has continuously declined for the past 30+ years. Don't forget to add some old "ribbon" mics too. Make sure that by the time it's finished everyone is absolutely, totally sick of all the songs and never wants to hear any of them again. Oops! Now it's time to mix it! Better get someone with "fresh ears" (who's never heard any of it before) to mix it in a \$2000/day SSL room with full automation. Make sure he is pretty famous, and of course you have to fly to LA, NYC, or Nashville to do this, because there simply are no decent studios anywhere else. Make sure he compresses the hell out of everything as he mixes it. Compress each drum individually and then compress an overall stereo sub-mix of them. Make sure to compress all the electric guitars even though a distorting guitar amp is the most extreme compressor in existence. Compress everything else, and then compress the overall mix. Add tons and tons of reverb to the drums on top of all those room mics, and add stereo chorus on everything else.

Spare no expense. Spend at least two weeks on it. Then take it home and decide to pay for someone else to remix the whole thing. Then get some New York coke-head mastering engineer to master it, and make sure he compresses the hell out of everything again and takes away all the low end and makes it super bright and crispy and harsh so it'll sound really LOUD on the radio, too bad about all those people with nice home stereos.

Uh oh! Your A&R guy just got fired!! Looks like the record will never be released!