

# Voice-Over Home Studio Expansion - a guide to improving your setup as your career grows

Chances are that your first home studio setup wasn't state of the art in many ways. As your career grows and your income grows with it, you should consider investing some of that money back into your home studio gear and equipment. Here are some of the ways to do so, in order of how you should prioritize them:

## 1. Your Recording Space

If you're recording environment is less than ideal, this is the first place to invest. VO Studios should be as acoustically "dead" as possible. Here are some additional elements you can consider purchasing, to upgrade your recording space.

- **Proper Absorptive Foam:** If you've been using homemade options for acoustic absorption like Pillows, Moving Blankets, Comforters, etc... A good first upgrade step would be to purchase Foam panels from a reputable brand like Auralex or NextAcoustics.
- **Microphone Add-Ons:** Another option to improve your space is through the use of add-on products such as Mic Shields or the Kaotica Eyeball. These are products that go either on your mic stand or on the Mic itself and can provide additional isolation and absorptive qualities to your recordings. While they should not be used as the only method of acoustic treatment, they can be a powerful supplement to an already treated space.
- **VO Booth:** A more expensive option that can come in further down the line is to acquire a professional VO booth. Whether this is a readymade product such as a WhisperRoom Booth, or something you construct in your home specifically for the purpose of VO, this is the pinnacle of a professional recording environment.

## 2. Your Microphone

Your Mic obviously has a large impact on the quality of your recorded audio, and if you have a great recording space already and have been using a low-cost budget option, this is a good place to upgrade next.

- If you've been getting away with using a USB mic, your first choice should be to move on to a proper condenser mic (or even dynamic such as the Shure SM7)
- If you've been using an entry level condenser in the \$100 or so range, then a move to the next tier of \$300-500 microphones is a good option. Brands like Audio Technica and Shure offer good options in this range.
- If you're looking for an even higher tier product beyond this, you can begin to look at Mics in the \$1000 and above range from top quality brands like Neumann.

### 3. Interface

Your recording interface will also play a large role in your audio quality, although arguably less of one than your space and microphone. Here are some considerations for upgrading your interface.

- **Better Pre-Amp:** Most interfaces have a built in preamp. A Mic pre will raise the signal from the mic up to a usable level, and different quality pieces of hardware will do this job differently. Whether it be an external preamp or a new interface with a better internal preamp, this is a worthy consideration when upgrading your recording chain.
- **Better Converters:** A new interface can also offer better analog/digital converters which take the analog signal from the mic and translate it into a digital signal usable by the computer and software.
- **Better Sample Rate/Bit Depth:** Your current interface may limit you in terms of the sample rate/bit depth you can record at, and a new interface can afford you the option to record at higher values which translates to better audio quality. 48khz sample rate and 24 bit depth are a high quality standard commonly used, although there are values beyond this that many high end interfaces are capable of recording at.

### 4. Software/Processing

While the audio software you use to record generally doesn't have a direct effect on the sound of your audio, it does have an effect on your workflow, and the plugin/processing options you have available which will influence your audio quality. Here are some considerations:

- Professional recording software such as Pro Tools, Logic, or Adobe Audition.
- Third Party Processing Plugins for EQ, Compression, Limiting and other types of processing from companies such as Universal Audio, Waves, and IzoTope.

## **Parting Words**

Your VO studio should grow with you as your career progresses, you don't need to start with a top tier setup or equipment, but you should aspire to work your way there as you move forward. Use this guide as a sort of roadmap to help direct you to the areas you should upgrade in your own setup, as you begin to make more money and advance as a talent. Best of luck!