

1. Make the effort to talk with your team

Workplace Culture is a massive buzz-term right now. And when we're locked away in our studios it can be very easy to go days without really talking to anyone about anything other than work. Sometimes I come in a little earlier and have a chat to people about life and the universe. You feel better for it, and it makes it easier to work with people when you feel like you have a relationship with them. It's easier to row in the same direction, or sort out issues with a piece of content if there are any.

2. Grabs, Grabs, Grabs

As a show producer, grabs of your talent are king. They work in everything. And you never know what you might use years down the line. Even something as simple as Billy Brownless saying 'YES JIM!' has worked for me in many ways. Always be listening for little one liners or phrases your talent says, and make a big folder of them. Save laughs as well. They make your promos sing – especially if they didn't laugh 'good enough' at the punchline you're using.

3. 3 words per second

I don't know when or where I read or heard this, but the average speaking speed is about 3 words per second. Use that as a guideline when writing scripts. 30 second promo – no more than 90 words. Ideally even less so you have room to play.

4. It's never too early to start

Don't wait for a VO to come back to you on a script. If you have the time, voice it yourself and make whatever it is you're making. Then just replace your voice with the VO at the end. Always think about song hooks/grabs/sfx you might use and start saving them into your session. Wherever you have any sort of time in your day, and an upcoming project you think you can't get started on, there's always SOMETHING you can do to take pressure off when the deadlines roll in.

5. Make your own Workparts style library

Most of the music in my promos comes from finding rock songs on Spotify and roll-recording them, skipping lyrics. Do this whenever you have 20 minutes, you'll find soon enough you have a huge library of different musical styles, with cool drum fills, guitar slides, wicked riffs and all the rest of it.

Also whenever you have to use the hook of a song, roll record the intro/instrumental part and the hook. Save these too. Whenever you're doing hook montages, suddenly you've saved yourself 10 minutes searching for them. And the intros work well if you're doing an Artist ID before the hook.

TIM HAMMOND – HIT NETWORK NATIONAL DRIVE PRODUCER

#1 - Always boost 2k

As I'm always saying ABB2k

Always be boosting 2k. Makes everything better.

Too muddy? boost 2k. Mix needs to be brighter bright? Boost 2k!

- Editor's note, this is terrible advice. There is no be all and end all EQ tricks. Use your ears and go from there.

#1 (For real this time) - Pay it forward

Both with people you work with and work in general.

At least for me, the reason I know anything about production is the kindness and generosity of other producers already in the industry who took time out of their day to teach me what's what. Now, I'm trying to do the same to new producers, but somehow, I'm still the one learning.

Pay it forward when it comes to your own work as well.

Do the small things now, so the big things later on are easier.

I find cutting up lines from the show each day and keeping a large and ever growing library of short moments is invaluable. While it takes ages to go through and cut out random lines "Hello_1 & What are we doing next_22 etc" you'll be so grateful when you get to the end of the day and need to whip something up. Then it's just a case of playing audio lego to throw something together. If you don't have 110 isolated laughs in your system you're just kidding yourself.

Put in the time early and it will pay back 10 fold later on.

#2 - Back up

But seriously. Do it. Like right now!

Late last year I was staying back to smash out the promos for new year's break.

It was about 10pm and an error pops up, "ProTools Can't save" or something like that...

Hmmm, a restart will fix this, it's not like I'll lose much.

3 is 2, 2 is 1 and 1 is none in the world of backups.

Matt Nickolic has a great set up. He has two external hard drives. His work drive mirrors to back up HD1, and HD1 mirrors to HD2. And each day, when he's finished he runs a program that checks for changed or updated files and copies the files across.

Hard drives can be expensive, but I'd pay the few hundred bucks every few years to make sure that never happens again.

#3 - Toys aren't everything

Plug-ins aren't going to make you great.

David Kinsky's C4 present isn't going to make your promo.

All the wipes in the world won't make up for poor writing (Although I wish it would)

I need to remind myself this most days to take a second, and make sure I'm focusing on getting the point across, rather than massaging my 'super-hot shot producer' ego.

#4 - To-do lists

Tim's making a list, he's checking it twice, he's gonna find out what he forgot to do tonight.

Everyone should make use of lists.

They help you when you're busy, they me feel alright.

The feeling of crossing things off, is really very nice

Lost the tune towards the end of that, sue me

BT put me onto a 3 list system, Do today, do tomorrow & do this week..

Once you've finished everything in the must do today file, get out of there!

#5 - You don't just make the production, you're a part of the show/station

You might be the audio producer, but that doesn't mean that should be all you do.

Take part in shaping the show or station as much as you can, and take pride in it!

I look at my job description as the minimum requirements, "cut lols into short 30sec snippets with space for a sponsor credit". Anything I can do beyond that is what will get you noticed. I try to contribute ideas to Hughesy and Kate as much as I can. We've all got our lane to some respect, but it doesn't mean ideas aren't welcome. (Unless of course, we're talking about someone having feedback on your production, in which case they don't know anything and who even asked them any way!!!!)

1 - Stay organised

The number 1 thing I've learned from my short time in radio is to stay organised. There's so many things flying around at once that it can become hard to keep track of. I was serially unorganised before I started here, I never set goals or kept journals or diaries or anything like that, I never even wrote down my to do lists or shopping lists unless I absolutely had to - but now my notepad is the most important thing in my bag every morning. There's so many things flying around at once, so many tasks that might need doing, that it can be really hard to keep your head wrapped around it all; once you write it down you can't forget about it. This has been key for me staying on top of things over my time here.

2 - Don't overthink it

The first time I had to put a Triple M promo together, I sat there in front of the brief and had absolutely no idea how to tackle it, without even considering calling on what made any of the dozens of promo's I'd put together for HIT any good. It took me dragging BT in (thanks again legend), to basically tell me that, it's really not that much different, the key elements are exactly the same, it's just small stylistic changes here and there; things I absolutely could've and should've told myself when I first sat there wondering how the hell to tackle it. I put it together, sent it off to the big man and all was right with the world. Just because something is different, or it might be more of a challenge, doesn't at all make it impossible. The simplest solution is far more often than not the right one.

3 - Be honest with your expectations

I mentioned before how fast things can move and how wild things can get working around a station, and it goes without saying that obviously these tasks can build up in a heartbeat. It's important to be honest and realistic about what you can and can't achieve in a given timeframe, to the people around you and in your team, but also to yourself. It's an easy mistake if you're trying to do too much in too little an amount of time, and especially in an industry as time sensitive as radio can be it's important to be realistic with your expectations. I still find myself guilty of this to this day, we all think we're superman at times and can do a million things at once, but it's better to tell someone that you can't/don't have the time to do something, than to commit and not get it over the line for them.

4 - Don't be afraid to ask for help - or to seek it out

I owe so much of what I've been able to achieve here to the incredible people around me, people who were willing to take me under their wing, the likes Dom Evans, Konsky, BT, Tim Hammond, Buzz etc. etc. Plain and simply it wouldn't be possible without the help they've given me, and the number one thing that stuck with me about them is how WILLING they were to give me that. If you're stuck, if you want to learn, if you want to improve and just plain be better at your job, go ahead and ask for the help. Whether that's specific advice, or even just to sit in on a session and learn, see how your peers work and go about their business, I'm yet to meet someone at SCA who would say no. Everyone has something to teach, however big or small it might be, there's always something you can learn or something you can do better - and you can learn from anyone. The best student doesn't take after any specific teacher, but takes away the best parts of all the teachers he has.

5 - You belong here

Sonder introduced us all to a term one product meeting that she hosted that we instantly all found ourselves relating to: "imposter syndrome." In a nutshell, it's a the fear and doubt in the back of a person's mind about themselves and their accomplishments, that they're not good enough or skilled enough to be where they are and that they might've lucked their way into the position. I have absolutely 110% felt this way on many occasions, particularly since joining SCA and sharing the space with some incredibly talented individuals, people I really look up to; which is why it came as such a surprise to see those same people raising their hand when asked who else had felt this way before; and to hear someone as experienced and respected as Sonder speaking about this topic was really powerful. None of us lucked into these roles, we may have been in the right place at the right time at some point or another, but that doesn't change the fact that we're here because we deserve to be, we're here because we're the right person for the job. So don't doubt yourself, don't stress that this is over your head or that you don't deserve what you have, because you belong here just as much as anyone else.