

Column by Renzo van Riemsdijk (Masterenzo):

The attended mastering session

The English language is strongly represented in mastering. Mastering itself is English, as well as outboard, gear, engineer, dithering and so on.

Attended is also such a vastly used term in mastering. Attended means that the mastering session is being attended by the client (or its representative).

The biggest advantage of an attended session is that the client has direct influence on the end result of the mastering session. And because of that same influence there's a lesser need for revisions of the master.

Another advantage is that a client can learn something by attending the session. Especially producers or mix engineers can benefit from attending the session in order to improve their mixing or producing skills.

Mastering is still surrounded by myths and many have no idea what's actually being done to the audio during mastering. All that can be done to open the mystery curtain of mastering.

Mastering engineers can be split into two camps. The first camp like it when their clients attend the session. More influence and less revisions is their main reason to allow clients to sit in during mastering.

Besides, the profession of mastering engineer can be quite lonely from time to time. Being all by yourself in a studio (sometimes without daylight) can sometimes be a bit alienating, so having people around you might enlighten this.

Right next to the group of pro-attenders there's the group of mastering engineers that prefer to work completely solo. There's also an advantage to this: when working solo, it's easier to come to a complete and utter concentration and focus.

No possible distraction by a client who gently points you to the sloppy bass area of the song, right at the moment you want to work on that specific area.

Communication is key in this case. When a client attends a session I'll make a deal: only when I finish the first round of twisting and turning gear knobs I will get back to you and you can extensively comment or discuss the decisions made.

You might have already guessed: I'm a pro-attender. At my studio the client is welcome to join the mastering session. The influence and learning curve weigh more than the focus of working solo. The price of an attended session at my studio is exactly the same as a non-attended session. I find it strange to ask more when a client attends the session. As if I'd put in less effort when a client is not present.

Unless a client has eaten badly the night before and decides to fully use three rolls of toilet paper during the mastering session. In that case I'm forced to charge another three euros (excluding 21% value-added tax).

Renzo

*Renzo (Masterenzo) is a Rotterdam based Dutch mastering engineer. He has worked for Gery Mendes (GMB), The Legendary Orchestra Of Love and the John F Klaver Band.
More info about mastering and about Masterenzo can be found on his [website](#).*