Working on client projects

This page is written from the view of the music team. However, it is equally applicable for the relatiob between the client facing team and the client.

> Successfully mastering a project involves understanding what is needed and what is possible for a project and how we can push the boundaries. Often we are asked for one specific option, but the solution is a different one.

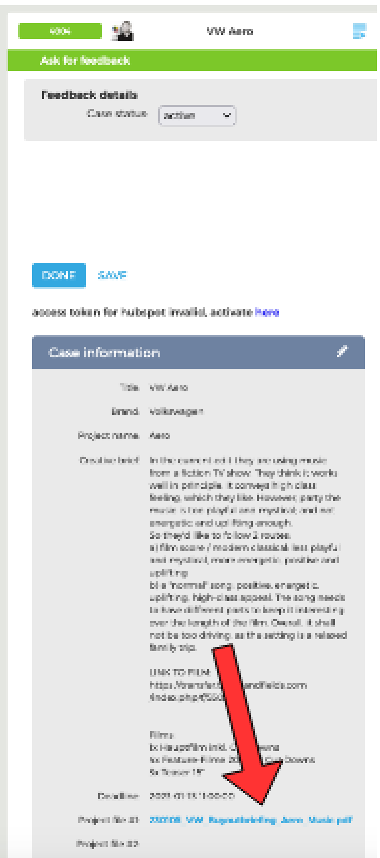
Typically, you have to deliver what the client needs. Mostly this is taken down in a creative brief (which may be more or less extensive). In order to successfully deliver results, we have to match the requirements in different dimensions:

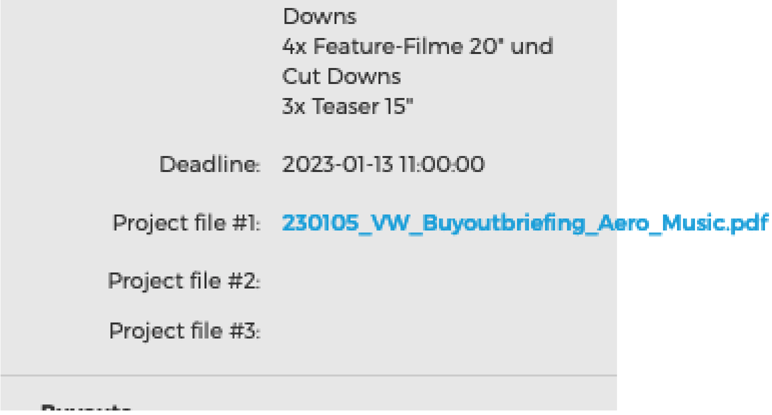
A) Creative match

In order to deliver the right music, reading, listening, watching and understanding is the key to success.

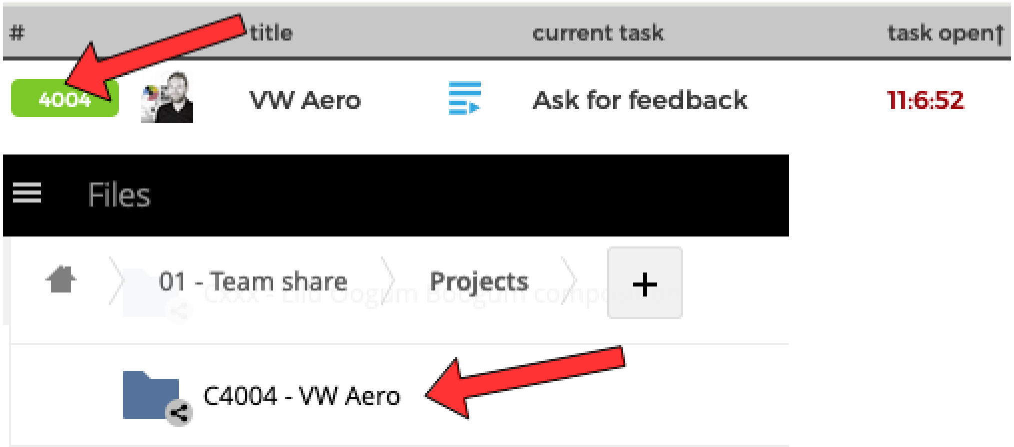
- read the brief
- read any accompanying material
- check the reference tracks
- watch the mood film, work in progress film, rough cut (or whatever we got delivered)
- obtain an understanding of what the client wants, what the film shall convey, as this gives you a hint of why the client e.g. likes this specific track (or what part of it)
- check if you received all material and information
- if something is unclear, also double-check with the client

Usually the information is stored in the workflow to the case...





... or (if the files are too big), on transfer.tracksandfields.com in a shared folder named after the case id (e.g. C4004 - VW Aero)



> Watch the mood film in loop when selecting/shortlisting the tracks. It will help you to understand if the track works in terms of mood, tempo etc. It will also help you to put some wildcards (= tracks, that fit well, but are off brief).

> We need to fulfil the creative brief 100%. On top of that, add some "wildcard", out of the box ideas that really bring the visuals forward, although they are not (much) matching the brief.

B) Legal match / business match

In most cases, you have to make sure that each song is cleared for the payout and buyouts (i.e. matching the clients budget). There may be exceptions when e.g. the search is for a famous track and the budget is big (and flexible). For requests, when users submit to the request, they approve the terms and budget. So, unless it is from users that often pitch material that is not (or only partly) cleared, submissions by users don't need to be double-checked. For playlists, usually every track needs to be cleared ("TBC phase").

So, to sum up:

- requests: check the users of the tracks being shortlisted. If there are any unreliable ones, double-check with them or - if in doubt - rather remove them from the shortlist
- playlists: typically every track needs to be cleared. Make sure that you pass on the correct buyouts and payout, as sometimes we create several playlists for different payouts

Also, check the songs, if there is anything suspicious which might hint to uncleared copyright (e.g. use of a famous sample, reading from the title that it might be a cover recording of a copyright the user does not represent, etc.). Sometime it is just by listening to the song that a particular part (or the whole song) rings a bell. Otherwise, check on Google about the song to see if e.g. it is cover recording.

> If the business parameters are "mission impossible" we need to find ways to offer a solution to the client. There should always be at least one option available for the client/project. You can also check for different rights constellations that may offer a solution.

There are plenty of options available, depending on the parameters of the project. In most cases, the budget is the decisive factor.

- licensing a hit
- using a digital remaster
- licensing an affordable song
- using an existing cover/re-recording
- producing a cover
- producing a bespoke track
- clearing a fallback track
- compromising on the buyout scope (if budget is too small)

C) Time match

Every project or task has a deadline which you have to follow.

In creative projects we strive to follow the procedure below :

1) case owner/client team member briefs you on the project and let's you know the deadline

2) you do the search, shortlist the songs and let the client team member check the interim status. It's important to see if the search results are in the right direction and also to judge how difficult the search is. It also gives the client team member the confidence that everything is running well, if e.g. another music team member needs to be added, or he/she him/herself needs to add songs to the request.

3) once the interim feedback is there, you finalize your search, do the shortlisting and hand it to the client team member

4) the client team member does a final check, maybe adjusts the shortlist a bit

5) You check for any TBC (meaning, clearing any tracks that need to be cleared).

6) Once the clearance is done, all cleared tracks remain on the list (sometimes also the uncleared ones, if clearance is just a matter of time).

7) Client team member sends out the shortlist.

We strive to keep it in this process, as it is the basis of you (as member of the music team) being responsible for the creative output. If e.g. both, client team member and you would start working on the list at the same time and/or the client team member would be the only one shortlisting, it would dilute your power and responsibility.

Please make sure to speak with the clien team member during the briefing phase to keep this order, to establish and strengthen the habit of doing it this way.

With the deadline at hand, obviously you need to split the time frame available to account for the different steps.

That being said:

- account for the time of the steps explained above (e.g. account for time of doing the TBCs --> It doesn't help to have a shiny list with hardly any song being cleared once the deadline is reached)
- If you hit the wall with a certain brief, think about how to achive the result in a different way. Often there are different ways/alternatives you can go for. Once you have these, get in touch with the client team member to check if he/she agrees that this is the way to go (you should always come up with a solution, as it is your responsibility to deliver the result). Don't procrastinate that process as it could jeopardize the timing as being set by the steps of the process and the deadline given.

D) Presentation match

The list that is being sent over shall convey the value that you put in to create it. A suboptimal presentation deteriorates the perceived value. However, it can be fixed with little effort.

- check that the metadata is right (e.g. missing artist, typo in title)
- check that the owner of the track is set correctly (e.g. we have a user called "TBC music" as a temporary home until a track has been assigned to the right owner. We should trive to have it assigned correctly before sending the list out)
- If the song is of poor audio quality (e.g. low bitrate, low volume level), try to find a better version. Often we already have it in the system, so you could just merge these tracks (the merging process will automatically keep the track with better audio quality)