



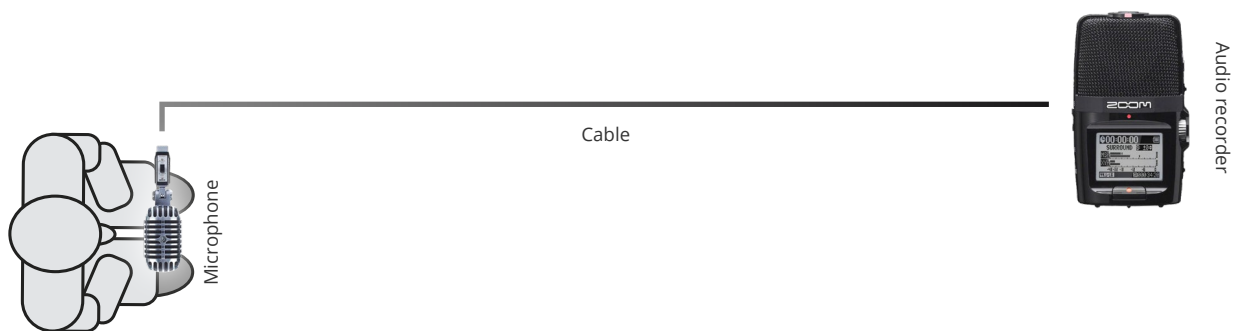
# SOUND LIKE PRO

Detailed instructor for perfect  
sounding in your interview

- 3** | Introduction – Recording audio for video
- 5** | Recording audio
- 6** | My audio technology
- 7** | Common audio recording errors
- 8** | Setting values
- 9** | MP3 vs. WAV
- 10** | Wiring diagram and audio settings
- 11** | 6 additional tips for clear and  
and high-quality sound

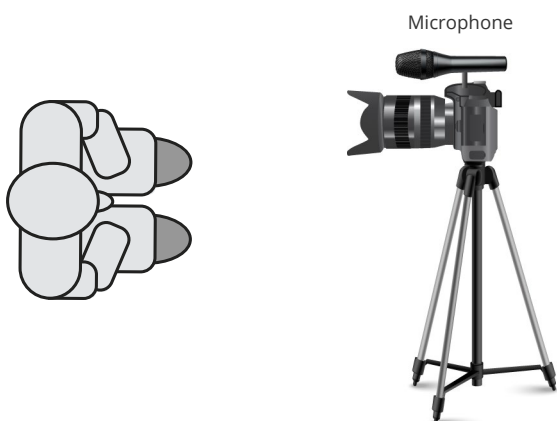
## AUDIO

The sounds that are recorded during an interview are basically electronic signals. The sound into these electronic signals is transformed by microphone. The signal is carried via analogue cable from the microphone to the audio recorder, in which it is converted from analogue to digital.



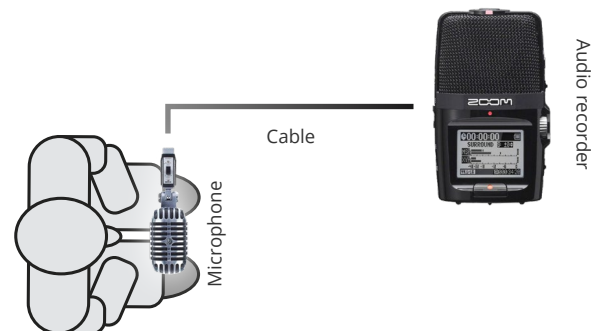
## SINGLE SYSTEM

„Single System” refers to simple audio recording from the microphone directly to the camera or DSLR. The audio is recorded with the picture, so there is no need for audio synchronization in the post-production.



## DOUBLE SYSTEM

„Double System” refers to recording audio to an audio recorder. It is subsequently synchronized with the camera sound in the post-production.



Video sound is one of the most important things, however, it is still underestimated by many advanced filmmakers. It deserves as much attention as the visual aspect of the video. When you have good sound, your videos will go up a few levels.

**High-quality audio is one of the things that tells the difference between the video of a beginner and professional.** In the Sound Like Pro you will find a way to achieve great audio even if you are not a sound.

Let's have a look at it.

## **FOR VIDEO (INTERVIEW), AMONG OTHERS, THE FOLLOWING AUDIO RECORDING OPTIONS ARE OFFERED:**

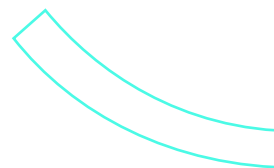
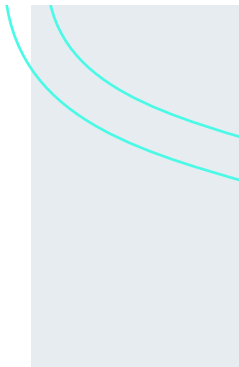
- ① Plugging an external microphone into your DSLR camera or camera.
- ② **Recording audio separately to an external audio device (zoom) with a directional microphone – this is my most favourite method which we are going to address in Sound Like Pro.**
- ③ Audio recording using wireless kit with lapel microphone.

There are, of course, more ways to record audio in your video. **My goal is to give you a simple guide – a direct way to have quality sound in your interview.**

## 1 DIRECTIONAL MICROPHONE

The directional microphone („shotgun”) has a narrow characteristic and records the sound directly from the direction of the sound source and eliminates surrounding noise. It is also one of the most used microphones in film. It was named „shotgun" because the sound engineers are always aiming it at their (sound) object. The directional microphone captures the sound from only one direction, in our case it is our actor and by eliminating the surrounding noise, you get clear sound when recording.

The microphone is placed on a tripod or a Boompole pole (below you will find the exact wiring diagram).



### THIS WORK-SAVING TIP THAT HAS PROVEN TO WORK GREAT:

*I focus most on filming and film-editing. I am not a complete professional when it comes to audio postproduction. I can do the basics, but that is obviously not enough for a professional interview. I got in contact with one student who studies film and works in the film industry as a sound engineer with postproduction. When I record the interview, I send him the materials - the recorded audio with the background music and get a finished product that is accurately and correctly mixed. This saves me a lot of time and I get a great result for little money. You can try to find a similar contact, too.*

## 2 ZOOM

The Zoom Recorder is an external audio device into which you can record the audio from your interview. The sound is recorded to the SD card and then it is synchronized with the camera sound in the post-production. You will then remove the audio from the camera and use the audio from the recorder.

Audio synchronization varies among different programs. On the internet and on YouTube you can find many quick tutorials that will show you how to synchronize audio in the program that you use.

**ZOOM H2**

140 EUR / 3600 CZK

**CHEAPER OPTION**

ZOOM H1 / 85 EUR / 2200 CZK

Another popular recorder brand you can use is TASCAM.

**RODE VIDEOMIC PRO**

150 EUR / 3870 CZK

**CHEAPER OPTION**

RODE VIDEOMIC GO / 60 EUR / 1500 CZK

Other brands of directional microphones: HAMA, CANON, PANASONIC, SARAMONIC.

**RODE BOOMPOLE**

95 EUR / 2450 CZK

**CHEAPER OPTION**

RODE BOOMPOLE MICRO / 50 EUR / 1300 CZK

Other boompole brands: SARAMONIC, K-TEK, MARANTZ.





# COMMON AUDIO RECORDING MISTAKES

## 1 THE MICROPHONE IS TOO FAR FROM THE ACTOR

It often happens that the filmmakers-beginners record sound either directly to their camera (or DSLR camera) or to an external microphone that is installed on their camera. The camera (together with the microphone) is too far away from the actor, thus the sound loses its quality, is weak, bland and contains surrounding noise.

## 2 THE MICROPHONE IS, ON THE CONTRARY, TOO CLOSE TO THE ACTOR

When recording an interview the actor should be natural, relaxed, ideally without feeling all tenses up. There exists the so called natural distance which determines the distance the microphone should be placed away from the actor. If the microphone is placed 5 cm (2 inch) away from his head, it is an uncomfortable and unnatural position. Just like when we are talking to someone or to friends, we are not too close to each other either. We keep a natural distance, and this principle applies equally to the microphone distances.

**An ideal distance between the microphone and the actor should be between 15 - 35 cm (6 - 14 inch).**

## 3 IN VS. OUT OF SHOT

Depending on what interview you are recording (the type of story, emotion, visual, etc.) you can decide whether or not to show the microphone in your shot. When you have a nice scene and a tripod with a microphone fits your shot, you can use it there (it will be visible in the shot). It will reveal your backstage slightly and give the video a nice authenticity.

If you decide you don't want to show your microphone in the shot, check your camera to see if it really interferes with your image. If so, adjust the height of the tripod.

## TEST

To set the audio values on your recorder correctly, always do a sound test. Let the actor take his seat and ask him to start talking as usual.

It often happens that the actor's sound test looks like the actor only says, „test, test, test...”

However, such a test is not a relevant basis for a good audio setup. Ask the respondent to tell you something about himself or about what day they had to get different voice intensities. This will allow you to adjust the sound values while the respondent is speaking.

## RELIABLE SOUND LEVELS (VALUES)

### PEAK

-6 db

### ⏏ PEAK

Peak is the sound that with the highest intensity, that occurs during an interview when the respondent is speaking. For example, your actor laughs louder. **This sound (at its highest intensity - volume) should not exceed the value of -6 db.**

### LOW END

-12 / -18 db

### ⏏ LOW END

This value applies to the lowest voice intensity. It often happens that the actor decreases his voice intensity when the sentence ends. This value should not fall below -18 db on the audio recorder.

In general, it is better to record the sound quieter and increase it in the postproduction. If the audio is too loud and there are possible sounds „going beyond”, it is hard to do something with it in the post-production. With the values that are mentioned above, you will get the right sound for your interview.



1



MP3 is a compressed audio recording that removes the information which we do not hear or do not realize, and its aim is to reduce the file size. However, this is inappropriate for our needs as we need to record the highest quality sound.

With compressed audio of speech, the output will be significantly worse. Suppressing different tones causes that the initial or an ending syllable of the speech may be suppressed. The pauses between the individual words can also be shortened. This may give the spoken word a disruptive effect.

2



In general, for better quality output, it is better to record the audio to WAV format. WAV is an uncompressed version of the recorded audio, which is easier to work with in the post-production.

You can think of a WAV audio recording as a photo or video shot in RAW format. It is a file that contains every single piece of information – every single pixel of the image, or every single sound of the audio that was made during recording. The sound is much better quality and it offers many more different ways to process the audio recording in the cutting room.

Below there is an example of a recorder connection that is mounted on a tripod and a Boompole pole. It is an inexpensive setup with will help you get high quality audio for your interview. If you do not own any of these things (tripod, boompole, recorder), you can borrow them for little money. It's definitely worth it. You will see the difference in the quality of sound between this form of recording and, for example, recording directly to a DSLR camera without an audio recorder.

## AUDIO WIRING DIAGRAM



## HOW TO DO THE AUDIO SETUP

- 1 Place the tripod in place.
- 2 Attach the microphone to the boompole and then attach it to the tripod.
- 3 Connect the microphone with the audio recorder using the cable (it is good to have a cable that is long enough to wrap it around, or lightly grip in the boompole pole).
- 4 Connect the headphones to your audio recorder to be able to hear the sound that you are recording. The headphones help you check if there are any unwanted sounds in the recording.
- 5 Do a sound test, set the sound values that we discussed above, and adjust the microphone height to be at the right distance from your actor (15 – 35 cm, 6 – 14 inch).

# 6 ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR CLEAR AND HIGH-QUALITY SOUND

## 1 FIND A SUITABLE LOCATION WITH AS LITTLE SURROUNDING NOISE AS POSSIBLE (THIS IS IMPORTANT)

This tip is the first and I think, also the most important. If you are searching for a place for your interview, and it does not matter to you, whether it is interior or exterior, it is best if there is no unnecessary noise around.

Avoid river, cars and the like within the proximity of the exterior. So that no distracting elements get into your sound. Once it happened to me that I left the choice of the place to the client and when we arrived at the location it was one floor just above the extra busy bar with kitchen. The premises were nice, but absolutely useless due to continuous sounds just from the bar and the kitchen.

Therefore, it is equally important, when it comes to the interior, to find a location where there is absolute silence.

If you happen to be recording your interview in a hall or similarly wide and large spaces, it is good (you can do it or not) to "overlay" the actors either with acoustic foams from the right and left side or use a bigger sheet on tripods. This is to avoid the sound unnecessarily spreading into space (thus creating an echo), but directing it as far as possible to the camera, respectively to the microphone.

Sheets or acoustic foams must then be placed at a suitable distance from the actor so that they do not get into the scene. Usually this trick can be used when shooting an interview on one camera.

## 5 AUDIO CONTROL ON DIFFERENT DEVICES

Before sending your conversation to the world, make sure your audio is properly heard on various devices such as a mobile phone, computer speakers also on studio speakers when available and so on.

Now let's look at the situation when you hear the audio perfectly on your computer, but on the mobile phone the voice of the actor is too silent. In this case, you can again get help from the sound engineer (student) to set up your audio correctly.

If you make the sound yourself, don't forget to check these things.

## 2 WIND PROTECTION

If you're filming your interview in exterior, don't forget to put on wind protection on the microphone. It eliminates the surrounding wind and gives you a much clearer sound.

## 3 SAME VOICE INTENSITY (POST PRODUCTION)

For the resulting audio, it is important that the intensity of the actor's voice does not drop. Make sure they do not speak too loud at one moment and too quiet after a few seconds.

I recommend that if you manage to find a sound engineer (student), give them all the sound recording along with the underlying music and they will mix the sound exactly.

## 4 RECORDED AUDIO PEAK VS. BACKGROUND MUSIC PEAK

As we said above, peaking (the highest sound/voice intensity) should not exceed -6dB. In order for your actor's voice to be heard correctly, the peaking of the background music should be between -15db and -30db. Of course, it also depends on the volume of the background music itself. Audio, especially during interviews, is almost the most important thing that will make your video look professional. So if you do not dare to do the post-production sound yourself, I recommend the sound engineer/student again. But if you're fine with sound processing, these types will help you get quality and clear sound.

## 6 ADDING A LAPEL MICROPHONE

If you have the option, or the budget allows so for your interview, you can record audio on two microphones at the same time – a directional microphone that is located on a boom pole and a lapel microphone.

The ideal distance of the lapel microphone is about 15 cm from the actor's mouth, i.e. on or under their collar of a T-shirt, shirt and so on. It depends whether you want the microphone to be visible in your conversation or not.

Using two microphones will give you more options and a wider choice of post-production sound.

If you have any further questions or questions about wiring and audio settings, please write me to [martin@thecinemadeck.com](mailto:martin@thecinemadeck.com).