The methodical guide to properly
work on a project like Pro. Colorists

For the best use of this doc, download it to your phone, and put it out once you need to start grading or... setting up the first thing, wich is: **your studio setup**.

There are few things that you need in order to properly see things the way they are, and few things that it might be better to have, in order to properly monitor/control you workflow.

Don’t listen to gurus that will tell you that you don’t need calibrated monitors or to monitorize the way your colors move...

Some things just need the proper amount of attention, no matter what!

Studio Checklist

Things you must have and things you better have

- Calibrated Reference Monitor (must have)
- UltraStudio HD (must have to truly see those 10bit)
- One GUI (Graphic User Interface) monitor for Scopes.
  You can use Davinci Scope but I highly recommend Omniscope
- One GUI (Graphic User Interface) monitor Davinci Resolve
- D65 LED Stripe beyond your monitors (and D65 bulbs for all the light emitter you might have on the room)
- 18% Grey walls
- BlackMagic Mini Panel
- StreamDeck XL (extention to the Mini Panel)
- Client Monitor (Linked to the UltraStudio output)

Before you start...

Few things for the greatest working experience

- Dress Black, always. A colorful shirt/dress could cause problems with your monitors (like having them reflected).

- Have a clear Idea of what you're going to grade, if not,take a step back and have it cleared.

- Remember that you are working FOR the project. Creativity is a thing that will need to work on a specific direction: the one your project require.

- Remember that the 'Look' of your project, it's already there.
  The DP and the whole art departements worked hard in order to let you finalize the bautiful work done on set: respect it.

...is your client there?

Few things to know in order to create a beautiful experience.

Working remotely? Hear this...

- Your client's time is gold: be sure to prepare the projects before you jump in a call with them. You don't wanna let them watch you conforming things around for minutes.
- Give them the best possible. My suggestion is to stream you signal using Omiscope for the max accuracy in therm of Color Space and data loss. If you can, sending a calibrated iPad or a monitor to your client, is another great option!
- Don't let them passively watch you working, interact with them, explain the process behind the creative vision, and why you are doing what you are doing. Thay want to be active with you!
- Don't forget that they're human being: like you, they need coffe breaks, and little pauses time by time (this is a valuable point also if your client is there with you!).

Is your client there with you?

- A dedicated calibrated monitor with a comfy couch is my personal starting point: they need to feel like being at home.
- A fridge with every necessity, water snacks and few drinks!
- Create the proper space for them: you don't wanna to have you Director, DP and Producers sitting on your left and right sides!

Strategic Checklist

Things you should do when starting your project

- Import all your clips into organized Bins and rename them with the Camera Specs
- Make Optimized Media or Proxies of the imported Media on a separated HD
- Import/Create your timeline and get everything done on the edit part... then
- With the final Editing timeline locked, start creating Groups of Clips (or cameras, or scenes) for a better organization inside the Color Page.
- Decide if working Display Referred (set the Main Color Space from project settings and get everything Transcoded) or Scene Referred (in this case, choose to use: A - the Color Space Transform OFX Plugin selectively on Post-Clip groups, to translate your Color Space selectively. B - Conversion LUTs. C - External Plugins that take care of your CST, like LookDesigner.

  Take an extra eye/set the INPUT-OUTPUT-TIMELINE Color Space needed and have it applied automatically (Display Referred) or manually to your project (CSTs as Input/Output Device Transform, or LUTs, or external Plugins that works as the CST).

  PS: I personally go for Scene if I'm up to 50/60 cuts MAX.

- Create a Fixed Node-Tree you're going to paste on your whole project. Every Colorist has his own Node-Trees, I have few of mine that I use on different scenarios (I deep dive into this on chapter 6 of the Professional Colorist Masterclass) but to make it simple, create a structure that by starting with WB and BASE adjustmenst (exposure/contrast) will let you have everything needed on it!
- Balance the White Balance of your Clips on the first Node of the Pre-Clips Group if you can made them 'all in once', or directly on your 'BASE' first corrector (node).

- Balance the Exposure on the second node and get the whole project to the same 'feel' or the right (desired) mood in terms of exposure, for the project.

- Once everything is normalized, realize Versions of the desired Look/flavour (if you haven't made a ShowLUT before) for the whole Project on the first Post-Group Clip.
  Receive feedbacks by your Client/s, and then fine tune it selectively on the project.

- Start buiding a strong Dodge & Burning / Relighting (bad word but needed) Structure around selective Clips or in the Pre-Clip group if needed, and take advantage of the Fixed Node-Tree structure you choosed to have!

- Add OFX or fine tune tools on the last Post-Group nodes, or in the Timeline Nodes section the blend everything together.
  You're Ready to make it reviewed and than, exported!
  Always remember to save an extra 4444XQ (in a wide Color Space) as an extra backup!

- Build at the end of your structure the desider number of parallels in order to be ready to make you extra pass for different Color Spaces.

An important thing to know: don't rush it (well... if you can).

This all Check list has been thinked by splitting all his parts in different working days. It's important to understand each single phase, in order to know when to stop, when to rest your eyes, and when to accelerate a bit.

Moments like the Look Creation or the whole Normalization phase might take whole days... so it's great for you to know how to structure the whole workflow, and have it done in the proper way!

Hope this PDF helped you perfecting with your workflows during the finishing process inside (and outside) Davinci Resolve

If you're still feeling some Lacks, be sure to check the Professional Colorist Masterclass, my personal Methodical working path .

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