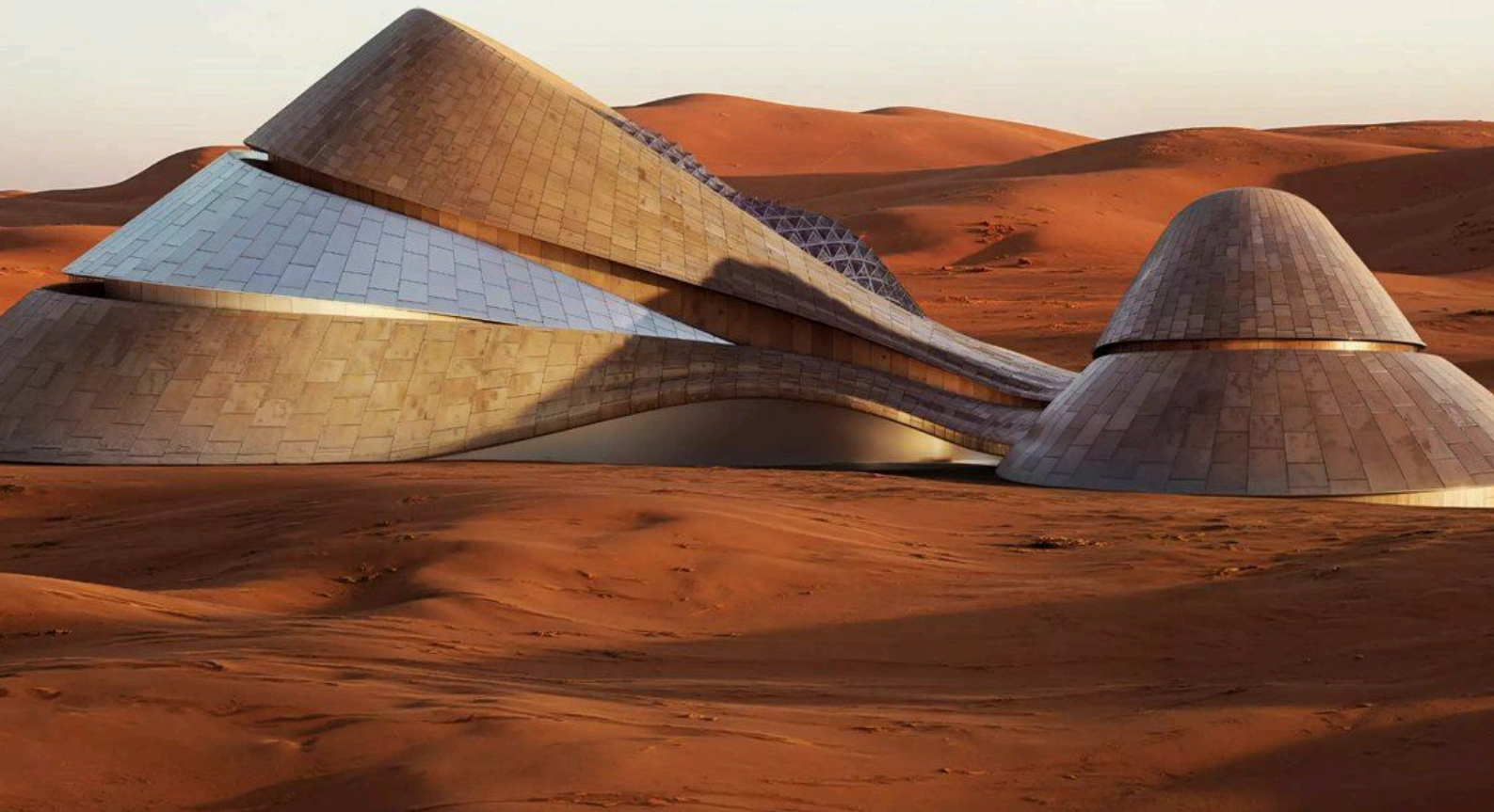




FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

One Image Wins. Nine Go on the Boards. \$2,262 in Rush.

How a competition team buys renders: the hero the jury remembers, the board views and diagrams, a timeline back from submission and a priced set, with the brief to send.

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START HERE

The entry gets the leftover hours

A jury reads a wall of boards in minutes. One image carries the entry, the rest support it, and the diagrams explain what the image cannot. The design keeps moving until the last week, and the renders are expected to keep up.

Most of the overspend we see comes from timing. The competition lands while the team is at capacity, the studio is briefed once the design is frozen, two weeks out, and the whole set goes into rush. The hero angle is chosen from a finished render rather than from clay tests, and the diagrams are drawn at night by the people who should be refining the plan.

WHAT THE TEAM PLANS AROUND		WHAT ACTUALLY SETS THE COST	
01	The design, frozen as late as possible	The day we receive a model that can be rendered. Every week after that comes off production.	
02	A hero 'like last year's winner'	The camera, the light and the one idea the image must prove, fixed before rendering.	
03	Nine images for the boards	Their order. The hero gets the hours; the supporting views are ranked behind it.	
04	The submission date	The board size, the resolution and the portal's file limit, known from the first week.	

Book the studio when you register.

Not to commit the fee, to hold the time. A massing model sent in the first week gives you the hero angle in clay while the design is still moving.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE COMPETITION SET

One entry, priced line by line

A composite of the competition entries architecture studios bring us, priced at our published rate of \$39 an hour. One building: camera tests, a hero view, the board views, an interior, an aerial and three diagrams. The last line is the same set, briefed two weeks before submission.

	DELIVERABLE	BASIS	AT \$39 AN HOUR
01	Competition model: clean-up of your Rhino, Revit or ArchiCAD file, site context massing	18 h	\$702
02	Camera tests in clay: four hero angles for the team to choose from	4 x 2 h	\$312
03	Hero view, the image the jury remembers, large and complex	1 x 24 h	\$936
04	Supporting exterior views for the boards	3 x 16 h	\$1,872
05	Interior of the key space	1 x 10 h	\$390
06	Aerial in context, the site and its edges	1 x 16 h	\$624
07	Diagrams from the same model: massing, circulation, exploded axonometric	3 x 7 h	\$819
	Planned eight weeks out, standard schedule, 145 hours		\$5,655
	Briefed two weeks out: rush on the whole set, about 40%		+ \$2,262
	Booked at registration		\$5,655
	Booked after the design freeze		\$7,917

WEEKS TO SUBMISSION	IN PRODUCTION	WHAT THE TEAM DECIDES
8	Brief, massing model in, four clay camera tests	The hero angle
6	Style frame for the hero: light, season, grade	The look of the entry
4	Hero draft, supporting views, diagrams drafted	One round of comments
2	Finals, interior and aerial, last design changes	The board layout, with real images
1	Exports at print size and to the portal's limit	Nothing new, only checks

Short of budget? Cut a view, not the hero.

Drop a supporting view or the interior before you take hours from the hero. The jury forgives a missing angle sooner than a weak lead image.

MISTAKES

Mistakes from your side of the table

These are lines we read in competition briefs almost every month. Each is reasonable in a busy studio and expensive two weeks before submission.

WHAT COMPETITION TEAMS WRITE	WHAT TO WRITE INSTEAD
01 'We will send the model when the design is frozen'	Send the massing now and the frozen model later. We test the hero angle in clay while you design.
02 'A hero image like the winning entries'	Say what the hero must prove: the approach from the street, the roof against the sky, the public space in use.
03 'Nine views, angles to be confirmed'	Rank them. The hero first, then the views that support it. If time runs short, the ranking decides where the hours go.
04 'Diagrams in our style'	Send one diagram you like, with your line weights and colours. We build diagrams from the render model, so they match.
05 'Submission on the 14th'	The upload date, the board size and resolution, and the last day the design may change. We work back from all three.
06 'Dramatic dusk lighting'	The time of day and season that suit the site. Dusk flatters most buildings; a school or a park often reads better by day, in use.
07 'Anonymous entry'	Say it in the brief. We render with no watermark or credit anyway and name the files to the organiser's rules.

The entry stays yours.

We sign your NDA before the files arrive, put no credit on the images and do not show the work anywhere unless you tell us we may. Comments reach us from one person on the team, as one list per round.

Before the hero goes to render

- ☐ The camera, chosen from clay tests rather than from a finished image.
- ☐ Time of day, season and weather that suit the site and the idea.
- ☐ Who is in the image and what they are doing.
- ☐ The materials of the facade the jury sees first.
- ☐ The crop on the board: landscape or portrait, and where the title sits.

THE ONE PAGE

What competition teams actually send us

The studios whose logos sit on our service pages do not send competition specifications. For an entry they send something close to this, with the model attached in whatever state it is in, and it is enough to quote from and to hold the time.

01	The competition	The organiser's brief, or its one-page summary, and the judging criteria.
02	The model	Rhino, Revit, ArchiCAD or SketchUp, and what is still moving.
03	The site	Photographs, a survey, the context model or a screenshot of the aerial.
04	The hero	The idea it must carry, and a sketch of the angle if you have one.
05	Board views	How many, ranked behind the hero.
06	Diagrams	Which ones, and one example in your graphic style.
07	The boards	Size, count, orientation and where the images sit.
08	The dates	Design freeze, first drafts, submission.
09	The reviewer	The one person who consolidates comments.
10	The budget	The figure the studio has set aside for the entry.

Clay before colour

Four camera tests in clay take a day. The team picks the hero angle before any light or material is spent on it.

One model, every image

The hero, the board views and the diagrams come from one scene. If the entry wins, the same model carries into design development.

WHAT THINGS COST

Market rates and our terms, so you can check any quote

Ranges seen across the market in 2026, freelancer to studio. Use them to sanity-check any quote, including ours.

DELIVERABLE	FREELANCER	STUDIO
Single exterior still	\$100 - 300	\$250 - 600
Single interior still	\$120 - 350	\$300 - 700
Package of 5 - 8 views	\$600 - 1,500	\$1,500 - 4,000
Animation, per minute	\$1,000 - 3,000	\$3,000 - 8,000

Our standard timelines and revision terms. They are what we quote unless a project needs something else, and we say so before work starts.

STAGE OR DELIVERABLE	MAVERICK FRAME STANDARD
First draft of a still	3 to 5 working days from a complete brief
Finished stills, package of 5 - 8	2 to 3 weeks, drafts included
Animation, up to one minute	4 to 6 weeks, storyboard and preview first
Revision rounds included	Two at draft stage, one on the final image
What counts as a round	One consolidated list of comments, sent at once
Rush delivery	Half the time for about 40% more, when the schedule allows

Line up a studio before the deadline is on fire

The most expensive projects we see are not the badly briefed ones. They are the ones briefed in a panic, after the first supplier failed and the launch date did not move. Vet one or two studios while nothing is urgent.

A note on in-house: one artist needs around ten software subscriptions, a workstation and a stack of adjacent skills - modelling, lighting, post-production and client communication. It pays off only when that person is busy every day. Below that, the arithmetic favours outsourcing on its own.

NEXT

Send us the model and the deadline

The competition brief, the model in whatever state it is in, site photographs and the submission date. We will reply with a scope, a price and the questions that decide the hero - as a reply, not a sales call.

The contact form	maverickframe.com/contacts/
Studio rendering	maverickframe.com/solutions/3d-rendering-for-architecture-and-design-studios/
Or simply	reply to the email this guide arrived in.

Written by the people who read these briefs

Dim Kuzmenko is a co-founder of Maverick Frame Studio. The figures in this guide come from our own inbox and our own rate card, not from an industry survey.