



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

What the Investment Committee Needs to See Before It Signs.

The campus views an investment committee checks before it commits: load, power, phasing.
Priced at studio rates, with the frames decks pay for and nobody reads.

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START HERE

The committee reads load, not looks

An investment committee is not buying a building. It is buying power, cooling and a schedule. A render of a handsome box in a field answers none of its questions, and the first one in the room is usually whether the picture shows the site it is being asked to fund.

Decks for data center projects tend to fail in the same two ways. Either they borrow a server room from another facility, or they commission one glamorous aerial, late, from the marketing side, with the substation and the cooling yard cropped out because they looked untidy. Both leave the committee with the impression that the engineering is still somewhere else.

WHAT DECKS USUALLY SHOW		WHAT THE COMMITTEE CHECKS	
01	A stock server room from another facility	Your own hall, with pod counts and spacing taken from your layout.	
02	A sunset aerial with the yards cropped out	The substation, generators and cooling yard in the same frame as the hall.	
03	One image of the finished campus	Phase 1 as funded, then phases 2 and 3 from the same camera.	
04	A flythrough before the numbers are fixed	Stills first. Animation once the layout stops moving.	

Show the load the site can carry.

The committee checks first that the site, the power and the building can carry the planned load. The aerial that shows the yards does that work. The one that hides them invites the question you did not want asked.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE SHOT LIST

Seven lines carry the committee pack

Below is a composite for one AI campus with a single hall, priced at mid-market studio rates. Rows 01-07 are the models and frames an investment committee actually reads. The lines under them are what a pack tends to gain before anyone asks what the committee needs.

	IMAGE OR MODEL	BASIS	AT STUDIO RATES
01	Campus model from the site layout and elevations	1 x \$1,800	\$1,800
02	AI pod module, modelled once from the pod drawing	1 x \$900	\$900
03	Campus aerial with substation and cooling yards	1 x \$600	\$600
04	Phase 2 and phase 3 from the same camera	2 x \$300	\$600
05	Power and fibre context view, site to grid	1 x \$550	\$550
06	Data hall at full capacity	1 x \$550	\$550
07	Close-up inside one AI pod	1 x \$500	\$500
	The committee pack (rows 01-07)		\$5,500
	Sunset and night versions of the aerial, 2 x \$350		+ \$700
	A 60-second flythrough before the layout is fixed		+ \$4,500
	Five eye-level street views, before planning needs them		+ \$2,250
	The pack as usually ordered		\$12,950
	The pack the committee reads		\$5,500

Order by stage, and keep the model.

The aerial, the context view and the phases first, for the committee. The hall and the pod next, when partners or tenants join. Eye-level views at entitlement, from the same model, once the viewpoints are agreed.

MISTAKES

Mistakes from your side of the table

These lines turn up in most briefs from developers and funds. Each is reasonable on the day it is written, and each adds frames or rounds to the invoice.

WHAT DEAL TEAMS WRITE	WHAT TO WRITE INSTEAD
01 'Campus renders for the deck'	Say who signs and what they check: load, power, phasing. We frame the aerial around the yards, not the roofline.
02 'Something like this', with a stock image	Send your own site layout, even a 2D one. A hall that is not yours is spotted the moment someone asks.
03 'Show all phases'	Say which phase is funded now. It is rendered in full; later phases share its camera with less built.
04 'Make it look like a hyperscaler'	Name the equipment you will install. Dry coolers and transformers should match your schematics, not another site.
05 'Final images, layout still moving'	Say which parts are fixed. A pod count that changes after the draft is a new image, not a revision.
06 'Needed for the IC next week'	Send the committee date. A first draft takes 3-5 working days; rush is half the time for about 40% more.
07 'Comments from the deal team'	One consolidated list per round, from one person on your side.

Put an engineer on the first call.

Twenty minutes with the person who drew the yard layout saves a round. A technical adviser on the lender's side spots a missing transformer as quickly as an operator does.

THE ONE PAGE

What developers actually send us

The teams whose logos sit on our service pages do not send specifications. For a data center pack they send something close to this, usually in an email with the site layout attached, and it is enough to quote from and to start work.

01	The site	Name, location, planned capacity in MW, and the site layout.
02	The committee	Who signs, and the date of the meeting.
03	What they check	Load, power, phasing, timeline. The pack is framed around it.
04	The yards	Substation, generators, dry coolers: schematics or a marked plan.
05	The hall	Layout with pod or rack counts, and which numbers are fixed.
06	Phasing	How many phases, and what is built in each.
07	Context	Grid connection, fibre route, neighbours, if the deal depends on them.
08	Where it runs	IC deck, data room, lender pack, website. Sets resolution.
09	Confidentiality	NDA first, and who may see the drafts.
10	The budget	A figure or a range for the first pack.

A 2D layout is enough

In our published data center case, a campus, its hall and an AI pod were modelled from a site layout, a pod drawing and dry cooler schematics. Final images arrived seven days after kickoff.

Keep the model for the next site

Once the pod and the yard equipment are modelled, the next campus reuses them. A second site costs less than the first, and its pack matches the one the committee has already seen.

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 what you already have

Plans, a model, photographs or a draft brief, in whatever state they are in. We will reply with a scope, a price and the questions that decide it - as a reply, not a sales call.

The contact form	maverickframe.com/contacts/
Data center work	maverickframe.com/solutions/data-center-rendering/
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.