

FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Your Margin on Renders Is Real. Three Lines in the Brief Eat It.

How an agency buys CGI for its clients: volume, turnaround, versions and white-label, with a priced campaign set and the three brief lines that turn a markup into a loss.

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START HERE

The margin is made before the quote

Agencies mark up rendering like any bought-in production, and on paper the margin is healthy. It disappears later, and rarely because of the unit price. It goes on rounds the client was promised, formats nobody listed and a turnaround the agency agreed to before asking the studio.

The pattern is the same from campaign to campaign. The client's brief is forwarded as it came, the client comments directly and in instalments, and the final placements are confirmed after the images are finished. The studio charges for each of those honestly, and the agency cannot pass the cost on, because the client's price was fixed weeks ago.

	WHERE AGENCIES LOOK FOR MARGIN	WHERE IT IS ACTUALLY DECIDED
01	**The unit price per image**	How many rounds the client gets, and who consolidates them.
02	**A volume discount**	Versions: crops, formats and variants planned before production, not after it.
03	**Negotiating the turnaround**	Your own schedule. Rush is half the time for about 40% more, and the agency usually pays it.
04	**White-label as a favour**	White-label in writing, so the work is yours to show and to pitch with.

Three lines eat the margin.

'The client will review directly.' 'Final formats to be confirmed.' 'Tight turnaround.' Each is harmless in a brief and expensive in a project. Page 04 rewrites all three.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE CAMPAIGN SET

One launch campaign, the margin line by line

Below is a composite of a residential launch campaign an agency buys for its client, priced at mid-market studio rates, with an example 30% markup. The last three lines are what the three brief lines cost when the agency has already fixed its price.

	DELIVERABLE	BASIS	AT STUDIO RATES
01	Hero exterior at dusk	1 x $550	**$550**
02	Exterior views, daylight	3 x $425	**$1,275**
03	Interior views: living, kitchen, bedroom	3 x $475	**$1,425**
04	Amenity views: lounge and gym	2 x $475	**$950**
05	Aerial location view	1 x $650	**$650**
06	30-second social animation	0.5 min	**$2,500**
07	Crops for portal, print and social, planned up front	10 x 3 formats	**$300**
	Studio cost		$7,650
	Your markup at an example 30%		+ $2,295
	'Client reviews directly': two extra rounds		- $1,800
	'Formats to be confirmed': ten images re-framed		- $800
	'Tight turnaround': rush on the set, about 40%		- $3,060
	Billed to your client		**$9,945**
	What the agency keeps		**- $3,365**

Fix the three lines and 30% stays 30%.

Nothing in the studio cost changes. The same ten stills and the same animation, briefed with one reviewer, a list of placements and a real date, leave the markup intact.

MISTAKES

Mistakes from your side of the table

The first three rows are the lines from the cover. The rest are smaller, and they add up across a year of campaigns.

	WHAT AGENCIES WRITE	WHAT TO WRITE INSTEAD
01	**'The client will review directly'**	All comments come through one person at the agency, as one list per round. Two rounds at draft, one on final.
02	**'Final formats to be confirmed'**	List every placement now: portal, brochure, hoarding, social. Crops are planned into the camera, not cut afterwards.
03	**'Tight turnaround'**	The client's real launch date. Booked early, rush is rarely needed; booked late, it is half the time for about 40% more.
04	**'Match the attached mood board'**	Say which reference is for light and which for styling. Twelve references pull in twelve directions.
05	**'No studio credit'**	White-label terms in writing, including whether you may use the images in your own pitches.
06	**'Volume discount for the year'**	Share the pipeline: how many projects and roughly when. A steady flow is easier to price well than a promise.

Keep the studio out of the client meeting.

White-label works best when the client hears one voice. We answer the agency, the agency answers the client, and the comments reach us as one list per round.

THE ONE PAGE

What agencies actually send us

The agencies whose logos sit on our service pages do not send specifications. They send something close to this, forwarded with their client's drawings, and it is enough to quote from and to start work.

01	**The client and project**	One line each, plus drawings or a model.
02	**The campaign**	Launch, relaunch, leasing or planning.
03	**Stills and motion**	How many images, and the length of any animation.
04	**Placements**	Every format the images will run in.
05	**The reviewer**	The one person who consolidates comments.
06	**Style**	One or two references, and what to take from each.
07	**White-label**	No vendor name, and your right to pitch with the work.
08	**The dates**	Your internal review, then the client's launch.
09	**The budget**	Your buy price, not the client's.

Quote us before you quote them

Send the brief before you price the campaign. A studio quote in hand turns your markup into a number rather than a guess.

Agree a rate card once

For repeat work, fix a per-image rate and turnaround with one studio. Each new project then needs only the list of views.

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/
Rendering for agencies	maverickframe.com/services/3d-exterior-rendering-services/
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.