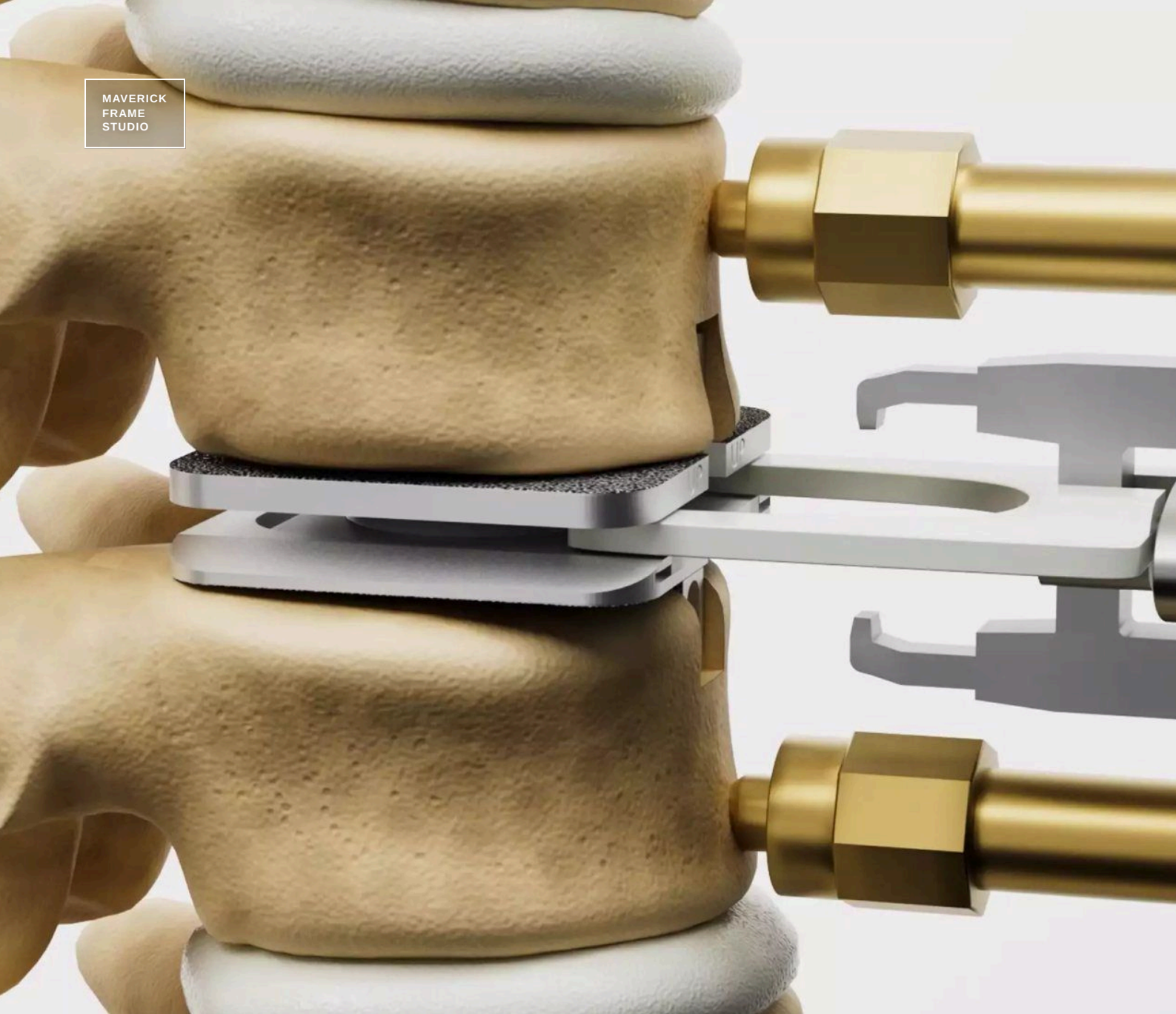




FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

60 Seconds, 12 Shots. Five of Them Carry the Whole Idea.

A technical explainer priced shot by shot at \$8,100: the five shots that do the explaining, the four you can cut, and the CAD, cutaways and approved claims to send first.

START HERE

Nobody reads how it works. They watch it.

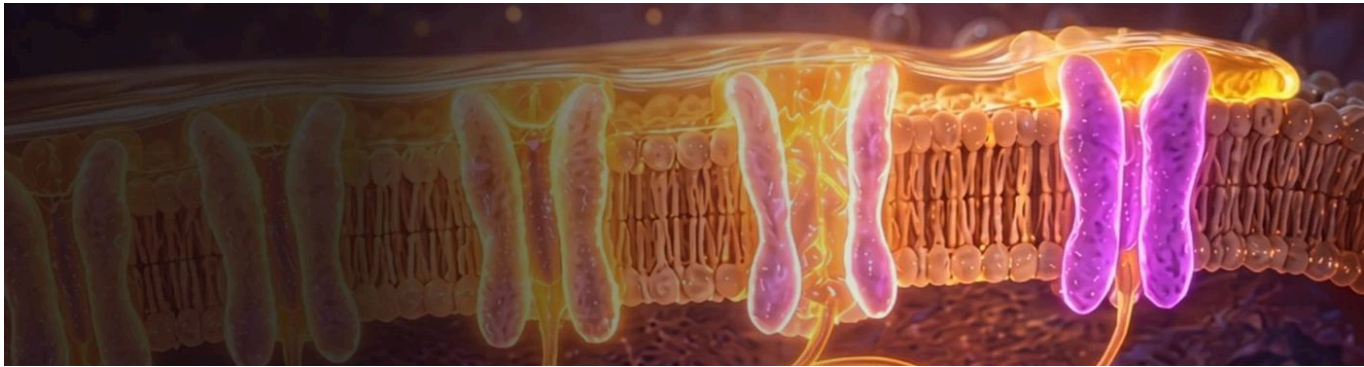
Engineers and medical teams describe a mechanism the way they would defend it: completely, in the right order, with every qualifier. That paragraph belongs in the manual or the instructions for use. A buyer at a stand, a clinician at a congress or an investor gives the same mechanism about a minute, and understands it only if they see the moment where it works.

So an explainer is not the paragraph with pictures. It is a short chain of shots, each showing one step the next one depends on. When the brief arrives as the paragraph, the storyboard tries to illustrate every sentence, and the film fills with orbits, logo reveals and close-ups that look expensive and explain nothing.

WHAT THE BRIEF USUALLY SENDS	WHAT THE STORYBOARD NEEDS
01 The full technical description, as written for the manual	The three to five steps a viewer must see, in order, one sentence each.
02 Every component, named	The parts that move or change during those steps. The rest can stay closed and simplified.
03 Claims from the whole sales deck	The claims already cleared by regulatory, legal or medical affairs, word for word. Only those go on screen.
04 'Show the whole product in detail'	Which part to cut open, and where. A cutaway is a modelling decision, not a render setting.

Understanding happens in a few shots. The rest is framing.

In the composite on the next page, five of twelve shots show the problem, open the object and follow the mechanism to its result. Everything else frames them. Plan those five first, and the rest becomes easy to cut when the budget or the edit needs it.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE SHOT LIST

Sixty seconds, priced shot by shot

Below is a composite of a 60-second mechanism explainer, the kind a device, machine or medical brand orders for a launch, a trade stand or a sales team, priced at mid-market studio rates. The second column gives each shot's length and the job it does for the viewer.

	SHOT	LENGTH, JOB	AT STUDIO RATES
01	Opening: the device or machine where it is used	5 s, frames	\$500
02	Logo and title card	3 s, cut	\$150
03	The problem, shown rather than told	6 s, carries	\$700
04	The casing opens into a cutaway	5 s, carries	\$900
05	The mechanism, first step	6 s, carries	\$800
06	The mechanism, second step	6 s, carries	\$800
07	Slow orbit around the assembly	6 s, cut	\$600
08	Close-up of fasteners and cable routing	4 s, cut	\$450
09	The result: before and after, same camera	6 s, carries	\$700
10	Second hero turntable	5 s, cut	\$450
11	One approved claim on screen	4 s, frames	\$350
12	End card with product and address	4 s, frames	\$200
	Twelve shots, 60 seconds		\$6,600
	Storyboard and grey animatic, before any rendering		+ \$600
	Cutaway-ready model prepared from clean CAD		+ \$900
	The 60-second explainer		\$8,100
	The 42 seconds that explain the same		\$6,450

5 of 12

29 s

\$1,650

SHOTS CARRY THE EXPLANATION

OF THE 60 DO THE EXPLAINING

IN SHOTS YOU CAN CUT

\$1,650 of it explains nothing.

The title card, the orbit, the fastener close-up and the second turntable look good and are easy to love in a storyboard. Cut them and the film runs 42 seconds and explains exactly as much. Keep them if the film also has to sell; just know which job each shot is doing.

THE INPUT

What to send before the storyboard

Most of this already exists inside engineering, R&D or medical affairs. Gathered before the storyboard, it replaces the guesswork that otherwise turns into correction rounds on rendered shots.

SEND THIS		WHAT IT DECIDES
01	CAD or technical drawings	A STEP export plus the native file. Say which revision is final. Moving parts separated at the start cost little; split later, they cost a rebuild.
02	The steps, in order	Three to five sentences, one per step. This becomes the storyboard almost unchanged.
03	Where to cut it open	The section plane or the part to show transparent, marked on a drawing.
04	How it moves	Strokes, angles, speeds, directions, and which parts move together. Guessed motion is the correction we see most.
05	The medical reference	For procedures and mechanisms of action: the anatomy, imaging or illustrations your medical team accepts, and whether the film is schematic or anatomical.
06	Approved claims, word for word	Only cleared wording goes on screen. A new claim after the edit means a new approval round, not just a new title.
07	What stays hidden	Internal parts, unreleased components, anything under IP protection. Said before modelling, it costs nothing.
08	Where it will run	A stand screen without sound, a website, a sales call, a congress. Decides captions, voice-over and format.

SHOT ROLE	THE TEST	IN THE COMPOSITE
Carries	Remove it and the viewer cannot follow the next shot	Problem, cutaway, each step, result
Frames	Remove it and the film still explains, but loses context or the next action	Opening, claim, end card
Cut first	Remove it and only polish is lost	Title card, orbit, close-up, second hero

Approve the animatic, not the render

The grey animatic shows every shot at its real length before anything is lit or rendered. Order, timing and cuts are cheap to change there. After rendering, the same change means rendering the shot again.

THE ONE PAGE

The short brief for a technical film

You do not need a script or a specification to start. For a mechanism or procedure explainer, this is enough to quote from and to begin the storyboard, and it usually fits inside the body of an email with the CAD attached.

01	The product or procedure	One line and the model or procedure name. Say which revision goes to market.
02	The one thing to understand	A single sentence: what the viewer must get by the end.
03	The steps	Three to five, in order, one sentence each.
04	The files	CAD or drawings. For medical films, the anatomy reference your team accepts.
05	The cutaway	Which part to open or show transparent, marked on a drawing.
06	Approved claims	Word for word, as cleared. Nothing else goes on screen.
07	Where it will run	Stand, website, sales call or congress, with or without sound.
08	Who signs it off	The engineer or clinician who reviews each round, in one consolidated list.
09	The date you need it	The real one, not the comfortable one.
10	The budget	A figure or a range. It is the fastest way to a fitting shot list.

Send the steps, not the script

A voice-over written before the storyboard describes everything and shows nothing. Send the steps; the script is easier to write once the shots exist, and it comes out shorter.

Let the engineer check, not write

The people who designed it are the best reviewers of a storyboard and rarely its best authors. Their corrections, sent as one list per round, keep the film accurate and on schedule.

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 CAD and the steps

A STEP export or drawings, the steps in a few sentences, the claims already approved and the date that cannot move, in whatever state they are in. We will reply with a shot list, a price and the questions that decide it - as a reply, not a sales call.

The contact form	maverickframe.com/contacts/
Technical animation	maverickframe.com/services/3d-product-animation/
Or simply	reply to the email this guide arrived in.

Written by the people who read these briefs

Dim Kuzmenko is the 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.