

FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Twelve Questions Before Your Tour Goes Live Broken.

Ask them before you sign a 3D virtual tour contract. A studio worth hiring answers all twelve in one email. The wrong one goes quiet around the question about hosting.

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START HERE

Every failure was visible before you signed

Virtual tour projects rarely fail on the renders. Portfolios are good everywhere. They fail on the five things below, and every one of them could have been spotted in the first email, if anyone had asked.

	WHAT THE SALES CALL PROMISED	WHAT YOU FIND OUT IN LAUNCH WEEK
01	**"We can have the tour live quickly"**	The tour goes live after the sales launch, with hotspots still pointing at the wrong rooms and no time left to fix them.
02	**"Priced per tour, all in"**	The listing also wants stills, a short walkthrough clip and a social teaser from the same rooms, and each is quoted as a new job.
03	**"I'll look after it personally"**	A year later the layout of one unit type changes, the freelancer has moved on, and nobody can reopen the tour.
04	**"Our in-house tour team"**	The rooms are rendered by a subcontractor and the player is set up by a third company. Every fix travels through three inboxes.
05	**"Just send us a model"**	The model from your other visualiser does not open cleanly. You pay for the apartment twice and lose two weeks.

You are not choosing a portfolio. You are choosing a process.

The twelve questions on the next two pages test the process. Each one maps to one of the failures above, and each has an answer you can check.



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THE TEST, PART ONE

Questions 1 to 6: time and money

Send these as they are. You are not looking for enthusiasm; you are looking for numbers, names and dates. Vague answers are an answer too.

ASK THIS	A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE	WALK AWAY IF
1. When would I see a first clickable draft, counted from complete plans and finishes?	A number of working days, what it is counted from, and a draft link with a few rooms before all of them are finished.	"When the whole tour is ready."
2. What date would the full tour go live, and what could move it?	A date, plus the two or three things that would push it: late finish schedules, a changed layout, hosting set-up.	A date with no conditions, or no date.
3. What happens if the deadline moves forward by a week?	A rush option with a price, roughly half the time for around 40% more, or the key rooms live first.	"We'll make it work" with no price attached.
4. Once the scenes are built, what does one more room or viewpoint cost?	Noticeably less than the first, because the model, materials and lighting already exist.	Every extra viewpoint priced as a new panorama.
5. What do stills, a short clip or a social teaser from the tour cost?	A small fee each, since they come from the same scenes.	Each one quoted as a separate project.
6. How many revision rounds are included, and what counts as one?	A fixed number, typically two at draft and one on the final, with a round defined as one consolidated list, and moving a hotspot is not a round.	"Unlimited revisions". It means nobody has priced them.

Why questions 4 and 5 matter most

A tour is rarely the only thing the sales team needs. The listing, the brochure, the ads and the social feed all want pieces of the same rooms. The price of those pieces decides your real budget more than the price of the tour.



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THE TEST, PART TWO

Questions 7 to 12: people, files and hosting

ASK THIS	A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE	WALK AWAY IF
7. Who exactly will build the scenes and set up the tour?	Named roles on the studio's own team, and who you will talk to day to day.	"Our partners", "our network", or silence.
8. Is the rendering or the tour platform handled by another company, and whose account is it on?	A plain answer, the platform named, the account in your name or transferable, and the yearly cost stated.	The tour lives on their account and stops when they stop paying.
9. If my contact is away, who picks up the project?	A second person who already knows the file.	It depends on one person being available.
10. Who keeps the scene files, and can you add a new unit layout in a year?	The studio archives the working scenes and can reopen them for new rooms or finishes months later.	Only the exported tour exists after delivery.
11. Will the tour open on a phone, in a browser and in a headset, and how heavy is it?	Tested on all three, with a stated file size per panorama for the web and a link plus embed code for you.	"It works on our demo page."
12. Can the same model give us stills, an animation and floor plans?	Yes, from the same model, so a later film or brochure does not start from zero.	"We'd bring in a partner for that."

10 - 12

GOOD ANSWERS: HIRE, AND ASK FOR THE GO-LIVE DATE IN WRITING

7 - 9

ASK FOR ONE PAID TEST ROOM BEFORE COMMITTING THE WHOLE TOUR

0 - 6

WALK AWAY, HOWEVER STRONG THE PORTFOLIO LOOKS

The question studios dodge most often is number 8

Hosting is where tours quietly die. If the tour sits on the vendor's account, your marketing depends on their invoices. Ask whose name is on the account and what renewal costs, and listen to how long the answer takes.



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SEND IT

One email, three studios, one day

You do not need a call to run the test. Paste the email below, attach what you already have, and send it to the three studios on your shortlist at the same time. Replies arrive within a working day, and the difference between them is usually obvious by the second paragraph.

		THE EMAIL TO SEND
01	**Subject**	Virtual tour for [project], quote and twelve questions
02	**Line 1**	We need a virtual tour of [number] rooms / [unit types] at [project] in [city] for [off-plan sales / listing / website] by [date].
03	**Line 2**	Attached: floor plans, the finish schedule and two tours we like.
04	**Line 3**	Please answer the twelve questions below with numbers and names, not ranges.
05	**Line 4**	Paste questions 1 to 12 from pages 03 and 04.
06	**Line 5**	We will decide within a week of receiving all three replies.

What good replies have in common

They are short. They answer in working days and dollars, name the people and the platform, and ask you which rooms matter most to the buyer.

What we would answer

Our own numbers are on the next page, in the same format, so you can score us with the same test.



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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/
Virtual tour work	maverickframe.com/services/3d-virtual-tours/
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.