



MAVERICK
FRAME
STUDIO

FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Twelve Questions Before the Brand Reviews Your Showroom.

Ask them before you sign with a dealership design or rendering studio. A studio worth hiring answers all twelve in one email. The wrong one goes quiet when you ask about the image program.

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START HERE

Every failure was visible before you signed

Dealership projects rarely fail on image quality. A glossy car under track lights is in every portfolio. 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 WEEK TWO
01 "We know the brand standards"	The facade, the portal and the finishes drift from the image program, and the manufacturer sends the set back with a long list of comments.
02 "Nice images for the business plan"	The bank asks how many cars the showroom holds and how the service side pays. The images show a mood, not a dealership.
03 "The elevations will do"	The planning board and the neighbours picture a glass box, a pylon and floodlit parking at night, and nobody has shown them the real thing.
04 "The layout is the builder's job"	Too few display bays, a reception that cannot see the door, a service drive across the customer path. You find out after the slab is poured.
05 "We'll show it after the remodel"	The image update runs around a working showroom. Your team and your customers see months of dust and no picture of the result.

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: the brand, the layout, the date

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. What do you need from us to start: a site, drawings or the brand manual?	A site plan or photos of the building, the brand's image program manual and a few showrooms you like. No finished design is needed.	"Send us your architect's final drawings first."
2. How do you keep the facade, the portal and the finishes true to the image program?	The manual is the source of truth: materials, colours, portal and pylon are built to it and checked on previews before the brand sees them.	"Every brand looks the same, we use our library."
3. How many cars, desks and service bays fit, and how do you show it?	A 3D layout on your plot: display bays, the customer path, desks, the handover area and the service drive, from above and at eye level.	"We place the cars where they look good."
4. When would I see the first draft, counted from complete inputs?	A number of working days, 3 to 5 for a still, 2 to 3 weeks for a package of 5 to 8 views, and what "complete" means.	"As soon as possible" or no number at all.
5. What happens if the brand review or the bank meeting moves forward by a week?	A rush option with a price, roughly half the time for around 40% more.	"We'll make it work" with no price attached.
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.	"Unlimited revisions."

Why questions 2 and 3 matter most

A dealership is judged by people who know the brand manual and the floor. A manufacturer's reviewer sees a wrong portal or finish at once, and your general manager sees a missing display bay before any customer does. Both are decided by how the studio builds the model before it starts.



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THE TEST, PART TWO

Questions 7 to 12: permits, service, remodels, files

ASK THIS

A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

WALK AWAY IF

7. Can you render the facade, the pylon and the site at night for the planning board?

Yes, from the same model: the building in its real street, day and night, with signage, lighting and parking where the plans put them.

"We make it look nice; accuracy is the architect's job."

8. Can you plan the service drive, the workshop and a car wash on the same model?

Yes: service reception, workshop bays, a car wash or EV charging, planned with the showroom so the site works as one.

"We only do the showroom."

9. Can a remodel be shown over our existing building, phase by phase?

Yes: the existing building is modelled from your plans and photos, and the new look is rendered over it for each phase.

"We need a clean site to start from."

10. Which formats do you deliver for the brand review, the bank, the permit file and the opening?

Presentation and print sizes, a permit set of street views, and social, billboard and ad formats for the opening, agreed before cameras are framed.

"We send JPEGs, you resize them."

11. How do you price a second location or the next image update?

Lower than the first: the model, cameras, light and materials are reused, so each new site or update costs less.

Every site quoted as a new project.

12. Who exactly will design and render the project, and is any part passed on?

Named roles on the studio's own team, an NDA before drawings change hands, nothing published without approval.

"Our network", a pause, or silence.

10 - 12

GOOD ANSWERS: HIRE, AND ASK FOR THE FIRST DRAFT DATE IN WRITING

7 - 9

ASK FOR ONE PAID TEST VIEW BEFORE COMMITTING THE SET

0 - 6

WALK AWAY, HOWEVER STRONG THE PORTFOLIO LOOKS

The question studios dodge most often is number 12

Subcontracting is common and not always bad. Hiding it is the problem. A dealership plan the brand has not approved yet should not travel to people you never signed an NDA with, and a wrong facade cannot be fixed by a team you are not allowed to talk to.



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SEND IT

One email, three studios, one day

Copy the email below, fill in the brackets and send it to three studios on the same day. Compare the replies side by side: the differences show up in the first answer, not in the portfolio.

THE EMAIL TO SEND

01	Subject	Car dealership design and renders for [project], quote and twelve questions
02	Line 1	We need [a new dealership / a remodel to the new brand image / a used car showroom / a service center or car wash] for [the brand review / the bank / the permit / the opening] by [date].
03	Line 2	Attached, or after you sign our NDA: the site plan or photos of the building, the brand's image program manual, any drawings and two references.
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, offer an NDA and ask you one or two questions back about the brand and the site.

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/
Car dealership work	maverickframe.com/solutions/car-dealership-design/
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.