



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Twelve Questions Before the Brand Sends It All Back.

Ask them before you sign a hotel rendering contract. A studio worth hiring answers all twelve in one email. The wrong one goes quiet when you mention the brand standards.

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START HERE

Every failure was visible before you signed

Hotel rendering projects rarely fail on image quality. Beautiful pools and lobbies are 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 THREE
01 "We know hotels"	The operator's brand review returns the set: wrong signage, a lobby that ignores the standards, rooms missing the specified FF&E.
02 "Stunning sea views from every room"	The view out of the window is a stock sea. The first guest who books that room sees a car park and a neighbour's roof.
03 "A signature look for your property"	The rooms could belong to any hotel in any city. Nothing in the images says where the guest actually is.
04 "Revisions are no problem"	The layout moves twice before opening. Each change is quoted as a new render, and the model lives with someone else.
05 "Ready for the pre-opening campaign"	The images land after sales has already launched on floor plans, and the booking pages open with placeholders.

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 view, the budget

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 the operator before modelling starts?	The brand manual, the FF&E schedule and the signage guidelines, asked for up front rather than after the first review.	"Just send the drawings" and nothing about the brand.
2. How do you get the real view from the rooms and the pool?	Site photographs, a drone survey or surveyed terrain, with the camera placed where the room actually sits.	"We use a nice sea backdrop."
3. When would I see the first draft, counted from a complete brief?	A number of working days, 3 to 5 for a still, and what "complete" means for drawings and finishes.	"As soon as possible" or no number at all.
4. What happens if the pre-opening launch 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.
5. Once the rooms are built, what does another room type or a dusk view cost?	Noticeably less than the first view, because the model, materials and lighting already exist.	Every extra view priced as a new render.
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". It means nobody has priced them.

Why questions 1 and 2 matter most

The brand review and the first guest are the two audiences a render cannot fool. The operator checks every detail against the standards, and the guest checks the view from the balcony. Both are decided by what the studio asks for before it starts.



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THE TEST, PART TWO

Questions 7 to 12: the team and the files

ASK THIS

A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

WALK AWAY IF

7. Who exactly will model and render my hotel?

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 any part of the work passed to another company?

"No", or an honest "yes, the vegetation library" with the reason.

A pause, then "we have a trusted team".

9. When the layout or the FF&E changes, what do you update?

The existing scene: materials and furniture are swapped in the model, not rebuilt from drawings.

A new quote for each change, from scratch.

10. Is the working scene archived after delivery?

Yes, so a rebrand, a new wing or the next season's campaign starts from it.

Only the final JPEGs exist after delivery.

11. Can you produce stills, a flythrough and booking-site images from one model?

Yes, from the same model, so the film and the room gallery do not start from zero.

"We'd bring in a partner for that."

12. What would you need from me to start this week?

A short list: drawings, the brand manual, the FF&E schedule, site photographs, the views you need.

A thirty-page questionnaire before a quote.

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 PACKAGE

0 - 6

WALK AWAY, HOWEVER STRONG THE PORTFOLIO LOOKS

The question studios dodge most often is number 8

Subcontracting is common and not always bad. Hiding it is the problem, because you cannot fix a brand issue or a missed date with a team you are not allowed to talk to. Ask it plainly 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	Hotel renders for [property], quote and twelve questions
02	Line 1	We need [number] views of [resort / city hotel / serviced apartments] in [location] for [financing / the brand review / pre-opening] by [date].
03	Line 2	Attached: drawings, the brand manual, the FF&E schedule, site photographs 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, and ask you one or two questions back about the operator and the views from the rooms.

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/
Hotel work	maverickframe.com/solutions/hotel-rendering/
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.