MAVERICK
FRAME
STUDIO



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Twelve Questions Before Your Launch Waits for a Prototype.

Ask them before you hand your CAD to any render studio. A partner worth the launch answers all twelve in one email. The wrong one goes quiet around question three.

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Co-Founder, Maverick Frame Studio

START HERE

Every failure was visible before the CAD went out

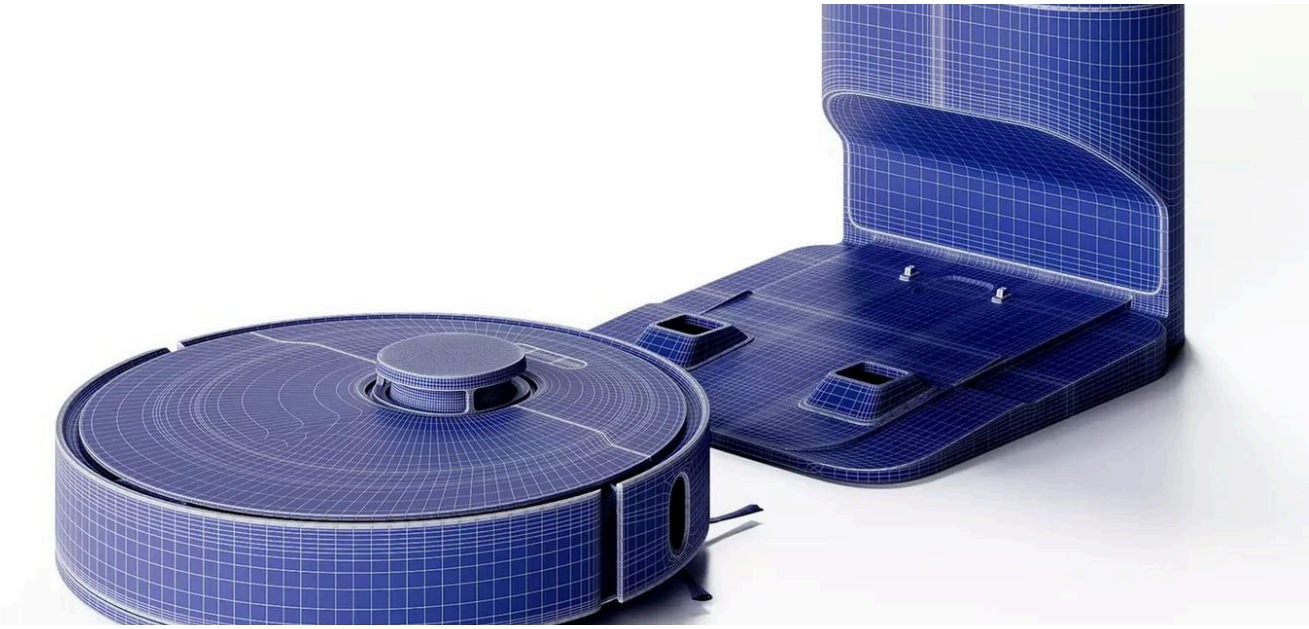
Renders for a new machine rarely fail on the portfolio. Every studio has a good one. They fail on the five things below, usually a few weeks before the catalogue or the show, and every one of them could have been spotted in the first email, if anyone had asked.

The reason is ordinary. Launch dates are set by the sales plan and the show calendar while engineering is still changing parts. The studio is briefed late, with whichever file was to hand, and the questions that would have caught these failures get asked in week three instead of in the first email.

	WHAT THE SALES CALL PROMISED	WHAT YOU FIND OUT IN WEEK THREE
01	**"We can work before the prototype"**	The studio asks for photographs of a finished unit to match. There is none yet, the catalogue deadline passes, and the show opens with a spec sheet.
02	**"Just send us the STEP file"**	The export arrives fused, thousands of parts and no finish list. The first week goes on repair nobody quoted, and the render still looks like a drawing.
03	**"We will show it working"**	The machine stands on a grey floor with a stock backdrop behind it. Nothing moves, the scale is off, and dealers go back to the old brochure photo.
04	**"Variants are no problem"**	Every option, attachment and colour is priced as a new render, and the configuration dealers sell most is the one that never gets shown.
05	**"An animation will explain it"**	A long turntable of the closed machine. The mechanism is never opened, and the sales team still explains it with their hands.

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 before the first render is due.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE TEST, PART ONE

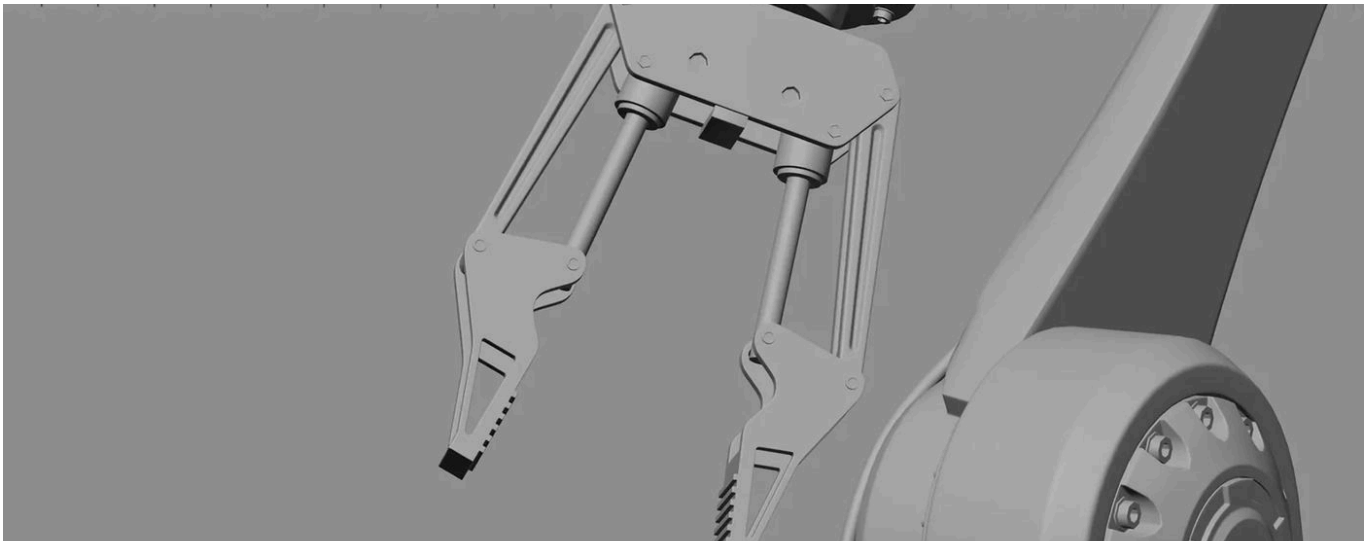
Questions 1 to 6: the date, the CAD, the site

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. Can you start before the first unit exists, and from what?	Yes, from the current CAD or STEP, a finish list and photographs of an earlier model, with a list of what is missing in the first reply.	"Send us photographs of the finished product first."
2. When would I see the first draft, and what if the launch date moves forward?	3 to 5 working days for a still from a complete brief, and a priced rush: about half the time for around 40% more.	"As soon as possible", or a rush with no price attached.
3. What happens if our CAD arrives as one fused export of thousands of parts?	A file check before the quote, and repair priced as its own line. Repairing a raw export can cost more than the model itself.	"No problem" and a fixed price before anyone has opened the file.
4. How do you keep the model true to our dimensions and finishes?	Geometry kept from the CAD, finishes from your list or a sample, and a clay preview you sign off before any lighting.	"It will look right."
5. How is unreleased CAD handled, and who can open it?	Your NDA signed, access limited to the project team, delivery through controlled channels.	Files passed around by personal email or to unnamed freelancers.
6. How will you show a machine this size working, and where does the setting come from?	The site, plant or terrain built in 3D to scale from your references, with the machine at a real task.	A stock backdrop behind a static model.

Why question 4 protects the launch

A render that shows a proportion or a finish you do not make ends up in a dealer quote, a tender and a trade press story. A clay preview signed by your engineer costs an hour. Correcting a published image costs a round with every channel that printed it.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE TEST, PART TWO

Questions 7 to 12: motion, variants, mechanism

ASK THIS	A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE	WALK AWAY IF
7. Who checks that booms, arms and attachments move within real limits?	Moving parts set at the CAD pivots, and poses signed off by your engineer at preview.	Poses set by eye: "nobody will notice".
8. Once the master model exists, what does a new option or colour cost?	Noticeably less than the first view, because the model, materials and light already exist. Priced per variant in writing.	Every variant priced as a new render.
9. Can next year's model come from the same files?	The studio archives the model and scenes, you send the changed parts, and only the changes are quoted.	Only the final JPEGs exist after delivery.
10. How would you show what is inside the machine?	An exploded view and a cutaway from the same model, with the part order agreed with engineering.	An exploded view redrawn by hand from the manual.
11. How long should the explainer be, and when do we see it move?	A length set by the job, a storyboard and a preview before the final. Up to a minute takes 4 to 6 weeks.	No storyboard: straight to the final render.
12. Which screens and formats will you deliver for?	Every one named at the start: booth LED wall, dealer deck, product page, social, each framed in the scene.	One master image and "you can crop it".

10 - 12

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

7 - 9

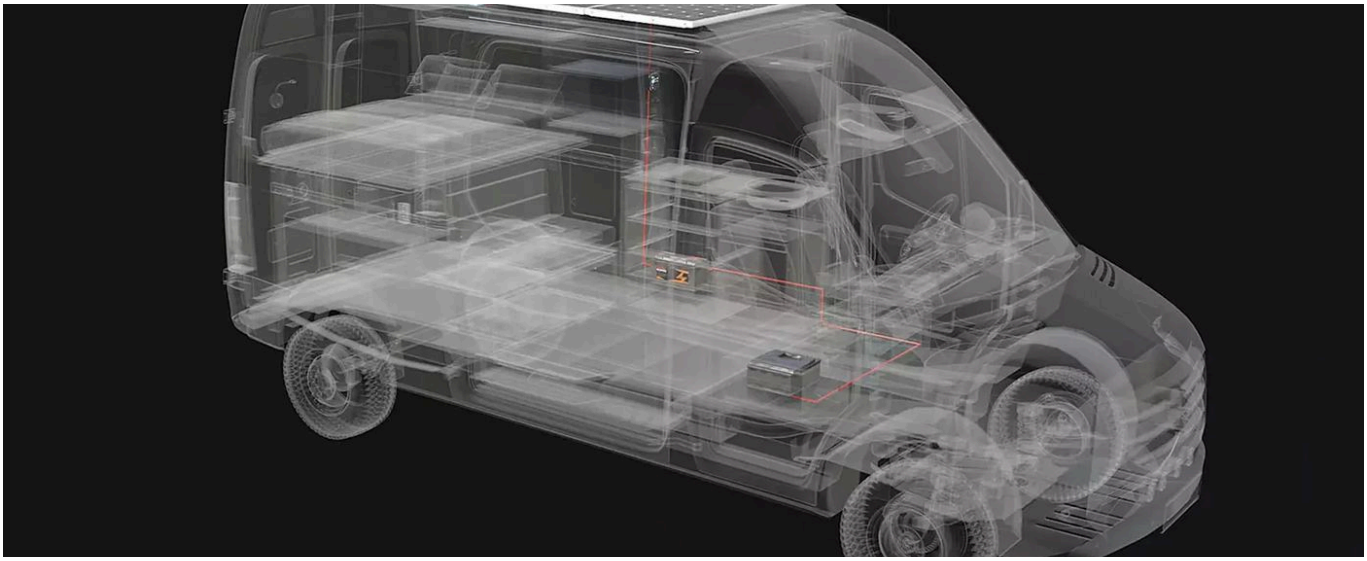
ASK FOR ONE TEST RENDER OF A REAL PART BEFORE THE LAUNCH SET

0 - 6

WALK AWAY, HOWEVER STRONG THE PORTFOLIO LOOKS

The question studios dodge most often is number 3

Engineering files are built for the factory, not the camera. A studio that quotes before opening yours will either absorb the repair and cut corners, or bill it in week two. Ask what the file needs and listen for a line item.



Maverick Frame production render.

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**	Renders for [product] ahead of [launch / show], quote and twelve questions
02	**Line 1**	We need [number] stills and [number] animations of [product] for [catalogue / show / dealers], first date [date].
03	**Line 2**	Attached: a STEP export, the finish list and photographs of [the previous model / the prototype].
04	**Line 3**	The product is unreleased. Our NDA is attached; please answer with numbers and names.
05	**Line 4**	Paste questions 1 to 12 from pages 03 and 04.
06	**Line 5**	We will decide within [number] working days of receiving all three replies.

What good replies have in common

They are short. They answer in working days and dollars, say what your file is missing, and ask you one or two questions back about the setting and the date.

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.



Maverick Frame production render.

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 launch date

A STEP export or the native file, a finish list, photographs of an earlier model and the dates of the launch or the show, in whatever state they are in. We will reply with what the file is missing, a price and the questions that decide it - as a reply, not a sales call.

The contact form	maverickframe.com/contacts/
Manufacturing CGI	maverickframe.com/solutions/3d-rendering-for-manufacturing/
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.