



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Twelve Questions. One Sphere. No Bent Walls.

Ask them before you order 360 panoramas. A studio worth hiring answers all twelve in one email. The wrong one goes quiet at the first question about projection.

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START HERE

Every failure was visible before you signed

360 panoramas rarely fail on the render itself. Every studio can make a nice room. 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 WHEN IT GOES LIVE
01 "A full 360 of every room"	Verticals bend, the ceiling bows and the door frame leans, because the view was stitched from flat renders rather than rendered as a sphere.
02 "Crisp, high-resolution panoramas"	Each file is so heavy that the listing stalls on a phone, and visitors leave before the room appears.
03 "One panorama covers the whole room"	The camera sits in a corner at the wrong height, the island hides the kitchen, and a second point is quoted as a new render.
04 "It will match your renders"	The panorama is warmer than the stills and the oak floor reads a different colour. The brochure and the tour look like two buildings.
05 "Ready to share anywhere"	You receive one oversized image and no link. The portal will not display it, and nobody knows how to open it in a headset.

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: geometry and weight

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. Do you render each panorama as a true sphere, or stitch it from flat images?	Rendered with a spherical camera to an equirectangular image in a 2:1 ratio.	"We stitch several renders together."
2. How do you keep verticals straight and the ceiling flat?	A levelled camera at eye height, checked in a 360 viewer before delivery.	"You won't notice it in the viewer."
3. Can I check a draft in a 360 viewer before the final render?	Yes, a low-resolution draft link, a number of working days after a complete brief.	You only see the finished file.
4. What resolution and file size will the web version be?	A stated pixel size and a file size target for the web, plus a full-resolution master kept separately.	One huge file for every use.
5. How fast does it open on a phone over mobile data?	They have tested it and can tell you the file weight or load time they aim for.	"That depends on the portal."
6. Do you deliver a separate version for headsets?	Yes, sized for the headset you name, and they say whether it is mono or stereo.	The same web image, renamed.

Why questions 1 and 4 matter most

Projection and weight are fixed at render time. A stitched or oversized panorama cannot be repaired by the portal or the tour platform later. It has to be rendered again, and that is where the second invoice comes from.



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THE TEST, PART TWO

Questions 7 to 12: angles, match and sharing

ASK THIS	A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE	WALK AWAY IF
7. Where will the camera stand in each room, and can I approve the points first?	The points marked on your floor plan, with the eye height, before rendering starts.	The camera position is decided after rendering.
8. What does one more camera point in the same room cost?	Noticeably less than the first, because the scene, materials and lighting already exist.	Every point priced as a new panorama.
9. Are the panoramas rendered from the same scene as the stills and the animation?	Yes, the same model, materials and lighting set-up for every asset.	A different team or tool for the 360 views.
10. How do you check that colour and light match across stills and panoramas?	A side-by-side check of the same room in both formats before delivery.	"We'll adjust it in post if needed."
11. What exactly do I receive: file, link or embed code?	A master file, a web version, a shareable link and embed code, and a note on where each one works.	A single image file and nothing else.
12. 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.

10 - 12

GOOD ANSWERS: HIRE, AND ASK FOR THE CAMERA PLAN IN WRITING

7 - 9

ASK FOR ONE PAID TEST PANORAMA BEFORE COMMITTING THE REST

0 - 6

WALK AWAY, HOWEVER STRONG THE PORTFOLIO LOOKS

The question studios dodge most often is number 1

Stitching is quicker and cheaper to produce, and it can look fine as a flat thumbnail. It only shows once somebody looks up at the ceiling. Ask it plainly and ask for a draft link you can open yourself.



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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	360 panoramas for [project], quote and twelve questions
02	Line 1	We need [number] 360 panoramas of [rooms / spaces] at [project] in [city] for [listing / virtual tour / headset] by [date].
03	Line 2	Attached: floor plans, the finish schedule and one panorama 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 projection and the file sizes, and ask where the camera should stand.

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 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/
360 panorama work	maverickframe.com/services/panorama-360/
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.