



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Twelve Questions Before the Plunge Pool Is Poured in Concrete.

Ask them before you sign with a spa design or visualisation studio. A studio worth hiring answers all twelve in one email. The wrong one goes quiet when you ask whose sauna is in the layout.

START HERE

Every failure was visible before you signed

Spa projects rarely fail on the portfolio. Every studio has a glowing sauna and a calm treatment 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 AFTER YOU SIGN
01	"Lovely mood images for the business plan"	Investors ask how many guests the club holds and why members will pay. The images show a feeling, not a business.
02	"The sauna supplier drew a free layout"	The layout is built around one brand's cabins and plunge tubs. The guest route and the ritual come second.
03	"We render it once the design is final"	The cold plunge sits next to the reception and the steam room has no cool-down. Nobody walked the plan in 3D before the build-out.
04	"Each room is styled by its own expert"	The reception, the recovery rooms and the wet areas look like five different brands under one roof.
05	"Photos once the club is open"	Founding memberships have to sell months before opening, and there is nothing of your own club to show.

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: design and layout

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

ASK THIS	A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE	WALK AWAY IF
1. Can you design the spa if we only have an empty space?	Yes: a layout, a palette and materials shown in 3D, refined with you before anyone renders the final views.	"Send us the design and we will render it."
2. Which images would you make for the business plan?	The reception, one signature therapy and the floor plan, chosen to show capacity and the guest experience.	"A few nice mood shots."
3. How do you plan the route from dry to wet and from public to private?	A walk through the 3D layout: reception, changing, thermal zone, plunge, rest, back to the lounge.	No mention of the guest route at all.
4. Is the layout tied to any sauna or equipment brand?	No: the design comes first, and the cabins, tubs and devices you choose are fitted into it to scale.	The layout arrives with one supplier's catalogue numbers on it.
5. How do you check the cool-down, the drainage and the slippery floors?	They flag them in the 3D layout and leave the engineering to your architect and contractor.	"That is for later."
6. What do you not do?	Construction drawings, plumbing, ventilation and pool engineering stay with the architect and engineer.	"We handle everything."

Why questions 3 and 4 matter most

A spa is a sequence, not a set of rooms. The order of heat, cold and rest decides how guests feel and whether members come back, and it is the first thing a supplier layout gives away.



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THE TEST, PART TWO

Questions 7 to 12: one look, every channel

ASK THIS

A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

WALK AWAY IF

7. How will twelve different rooms look like one club?

One palette and one lighting approach fixed for the whole spa before rendering.

Each zone briefed and styled separately.

8. Who exactly will design and render my spa?

Named roles on the studio's own team, and who you will talk to day to day.

"Our partners" or "our network".

9. Can the same model give us website images, social posts and a short film?

Yes, new views and cuts from the same scene, without building the spa again.

"Marketing visuals are a separate project."

10. When can we start selling memberships with your images?

As soon as the first views are approved, months before the opening.

"Once the club is finished."

11. Who keeps the scene files, and for how long?

The studio archives the working scene and can reopen it for new rooms or a second location.

Only the final JPEGs exist after delivery.

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

A short list: the floor plan or photos with dimensions, your treatments, a few references.

A thirty-page questionnaire before a quote.

10 - 12

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

7 - 9

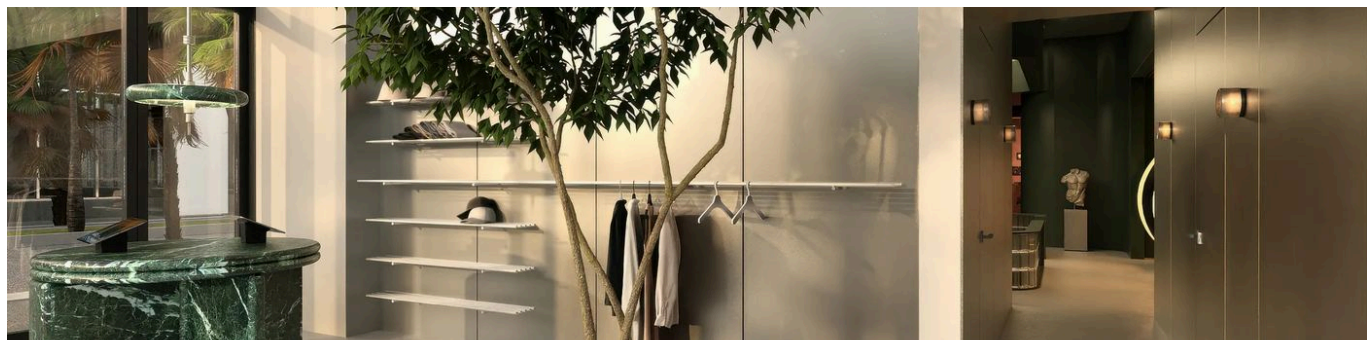
ASK FOR ONE PAID TEST VIEW BEFORE COMMITTING THE PACKAGE

0 - 6

WALK AWAY, HOWEVER CALM THE PORTFOLIO LOOKS

The question studios dodge most often is number 4

Free layouts from suppliers are a fine starting point. The problem is a design that quietly follows a catalogue. Ask it plainly and see whether the answer starts with your members or with a product.



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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. The difference between the replies is usually obvious by the second paragraph.

THE EMAIL TO SEND

01	Subject	Spa design and renders for [club name], quote and twelve questions
02	Line 1	We are opening a [recovery club / day spa / bathhouse] of about [size] in [city], planned to open in [month].
03	Line 2	Attached: the floor plan or photos with dimensions, our list of treatments and two references we like.
04	Line 3	Please answer the twelve questions below with names and examples, 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 with a layout approach, name the people, and ask you one or two questions back about your treatments and your members.

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/
Spa and wellness design	maverickframe.com/solutions/spa-wellness-design/
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.