



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

What Commercial CGI Has to **Prove**

Commercial images are read by a tenant, an agent and an investor doing sums. The six things they have to prove, and the shot list that proves them.



START HERE

The buyer is a business, not a household

A residential image sells a feeling to somebody imagining their own life in the room. A commercial image is read by people doing arithmetic — an occupier working out whether their operation fits, an agent working out the smallest unit they can quote, an investor working out what it lets for and how fast. They look at different parts of the picture, and they ask questions a beautiful image usually does not answer.

WHO IS LOOKING	WHAT THEY ARE ACTUALLY CHECKING
Prospective occupier	Does my operation fit. Where do staff, customers and goods come in. What does it look like on a Tuesday afternoon with my people in it.
Their fit-out designer	Floor-to-ceiling height, the void above it, the column grid, where a partition can land, where services run.
Letting agent	How it subdivides. What the smallest lettable unit looks like, and whether it still looks like a place somebody would take.
Investor or lender	Evidence that it lets, and that it re-lets. Flexibility over a fifteen-year hold, not a single perfect moment.
Your own board	Whether the scheme reads as the asset described in the paper they are approving.

The empty render problem

An empty, pristine residential interior reads as aspirational — a life not yet started. An empty, pristine office floor reads as a building nobody has taken. The same restraint that flatters a flat makes a commercial scheme look unlettable. Populate it, at a stated and defensible density, and say in the caption what that density is.



Maverick Frame production render.

STEP 01

Six things the images have to prove

Residential CGI has one job: make somebody want it. Commercial CGI has six, and a set of images that does the first one brilliantly and ignores the rest will be politely admired and then not used in a single letting conversation.

01 That the floorplate is efficient

Show the whole plate, wide, not a flattering corner of it. Core position, column grid, depth from the core to the glass. An occupier is mentally laying out their own desks, racking or covers on it before they finish looking.

02 That it subdivides, and still works when it does

The same floor as one occupier and as two or three. Agents lose deals because nobody can picture the half floor. If the smallest lettable unit exists in your letting brochure, it should exist as an image.

03 That it works full, and works half empty

Two occupancy states of at least one key space. Full proves capacity. Quiet proves the space is not dependent on a crowd to look alive — which is what a cautious occupier is privately worried about.

04 Which product you are selling — shell, or fitted

Shell-and-core, a base build, or an indicative fit-out are three different offers at three different rents. An image that blurs them creates an expectation you then have to walk back in a negotiation. Page 04 is the decision.

05 That servicing and access are solved

Loading, refuse, deliveries, plant, cycle stores, the back-of-house route. Nobody frames a hero shot on a bin store, and every operator asks about it. One honest image saves three meetings.

06 That a tenant can put their name on it

The signage and frontage zone, shown as a zone with real dimensions rather than as a logo. An occupier is buying visibility as much as floor area.

Order matters. The first three are about the space. The last three are about the deal, and they are the ones most commonly missing from a set that cost a lot of money.

STEP 02

Shell or fitted? Decide before anyone renders

This is the single decision that most often goes unmade, because it is a commercial question rather than a visual one and so nobody in the image conversation owns it. Make it, write it down, and put it in the brief.

WHAT YOU ARE SELLING	WHAT THE IMAGE SHOULD SHOW	THE RISK IF YOU GET IT WRONG
Shell and core	Structure, core, glazing line, raw soffit, services capped. Clean, lit, unapologetic. People in it for scale.	Showing it furnished sets an expectation of a fit-out you are not funding.
Base build / category A	Finished floor, ceiling, lighting, blinds, basic services. Empty of furniture, but complete as a product.	The most misread of the four. Say in the caption what is and is not included.
Indicative fit-out	A plausible occupier layout, clearly captioned as indicative. Generic furniture, neutral palette, real density.	Taken as a specification. Label every image, not just the first one.
Fully branded scheme	A named or invented occupier, signage, brand colours, their way of working.	Only for a signed tenant or a pitch. Never for open-market letting material.

Rules for an indicative fit-out

- Furniture generic and current, never a signature designer piece that implies a budget
- Show the **grid and the density**, not your taste in chairs
- One caption line on every image: indicative layout, not a specification
- Keep a furnished and an unfurnished export of the same camera — the second is what the fit-out designer wants

The tenant who does not exist

Do not dress a speculative scheme with a real company's marks. You are unlikely to hold the rights, and a recognisable brand on an unlet building is read as a claim rather than as an illustration.

Use a neutral invented wordmark, and commission a **blank-signage version of every frontage shot**. That second version is the one an interested occupier asks for, and having it already rendered is worth more than it costs.

STEP 03

The shot list, and how it differs from residential

A residential set is built around desire. A commercial set is built around objections. Each shot below exists to close one.

	THE SHOT	THE OBJECTION IT ANSWERS
01	Arrival and address	Can my clients and staff find it, and does it look like a business address worth my name.
02	The whole floorplate, wide	How much usable space is there really, and where does the core eat into it.
03	The same plate, subdivided	Does the half unit still work, or am I being sold a floor I cannot fill.
04	Occupied at working density	What does a normal day look like, with my headcount in it.
05	The same space, quiet	Does it hold up outside peak hours, or does it need a crowd to work.
06	Servicing and back of house	Where do deliveries, waste and plant go, and will it disrupt my operation.
07	Shared amenity	What do I get that I am not paying rates on, and what do the service charges buy.
08	Frontage and signage zone	Where does my name go, how big, and who sees it.
09	Section or cutaway	Floor-to-ceiling, the void, the grid. The one image the fit-out designer keeps.

What to hand the studio with the brief

- ☐ Measured areas per floor, and the smallest lettable unit
- ☐ Column grid, core layout, floor-to-ceiling and void dimensions
- ☐ The letting strategy in one line — single occupier, or split
- ☐ The density you want shown, stated as a number of people
- ☐ Which product each image represents: shell, base build, indicative
- ☐ The caption text you need on every image, written by you

WORKING WITH A STUDIO

Cost, and how to brief it

Two things people ask us before anything else. Both answers are short.

COMMISSIONED WORK	FREELANCER	STUDIO
Single exterior still	\$100 – 300	\$250 – 600
Single interior still	\$120 – 350	\$300 – 700
Package, 5–8 views	\$600 – 1,500	\$1,500 – 4,000
Animation, per minute	\$1,000 – 3,000	\$3,000 – 8,000

Market ranges we are willing to publish. Turnaround and revision-round figures are deliberately not in this table: ours vary too much by project type to state as a benchmark, and an invented number here would be worse than none.

How to brief it — shorter is better

This is the opposite of what most people assume. Four things:

- What you need — **how many images, and of what**
- The plans and elevations, as they are
- A few reference images for mood and light
- One clear line on what the images are *for*

Inflating a small job into a fifty-page specification backfires: taken literally it comes out ugly, and it misleads the people doing the work. Tell them the intent and let the team that does this daily handle the detail.

The mistake that costs the most

The biggest failure we see is not choosing the wrong vendor. It is **timing**. People start looking only after the first supplier has already failed and the deadline is on fire, then choose in a panic.

Line up and vet rendering partners **before** you need one. One, ideally a few, briefed and ready to take work. It costs an afternoon now and saves a project later.

10+

YEARS RENDERING
VISUAL STORYTELLING

350+

BRANDS & AGENCIES
EMPOWERED GLOBALLY

95%

CLIENT
SATISFACTION RATE

40%+

OF OUR COMMISSIONS NOW
INCLUDE MOTION OR 360

When the image has to hold up, **talk to us**

We are a CGI studio: architectural and product rendering, 3D modelling, animation, 360 tours and VR. Ten years, 350+ brands and agencies, and the kind of work that still looks right when somebody counts the windows.

Send us the plans and a line on what the images are for. You get a scope and a price, and no obligation to use either.

START HERE

maverickframe.com/contacts

SEE THE WORK

maverickframe.com/gallery

WRITTEN BY

Dim Kuzmenko

Co-Founder



Maverick Frame production render. · Cost ranges are market ranges as of 2026 and are not a quotation.