



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

A Configurator Is Not a Project. It Is a **Commitment**

Why the option matrix multiplies faster than anyone budgets for, what the model must have from day one, who maintains it, and when not to build one at all.



START HERE

Most configurators are built once and then quietly go stale

The launch is the easy part. It is funded, it has a deadline, somebody is excited about it. What nobody scopes is the two years afterwards, when the range changes twice a year and every change is asset work that has to be commissioned, checked and published by a person who has other things to do.

The failure is recognisable. A configurator with last season's colourways, one option greyed out because the model was never made, a finish that looks nothing like the current sample, and a sales team who have stopped sending customers to it. It still works. It is simply no longer true, and a configurator that is not true is worse than no configurator, because it produces orders that do not match what ships.

The arithmetic nobody does before approval

DIMENSION OF CHOICE	HOW MANY	WHAT EACH ONE COSTS IN ASSETS
Finishes and colourways		Material only. The cheap axis, and only if materials were separated from the start.
Sizes and widths		Geometry. Some scale cleanly, some do not — a wider unit may need a different leg count or an extra door.
Components and modules		Geometry, plus the rules about which module can connect to which. Frequently the largest hidden cost.
Hardware and legs		Geometry, small each, and they multiply against everything above.
Views or camera angles		If images are pre-rendered rather than live, this multiplies the whole matrix again.
Multiply the column		That is the number of states your configurator must be able to show correctly, and the number somebody must check after every range update.

Fill the middle column in for your real range before you commission anything. Most people are surprised by the total, and the surprise is the useful part — it is much cheaper to discover it now than after the build is contracted.



STEP 01

What must be true of the model on day one

A configurator is only as maintainable as the asset underneath it. Everything below is nearly free if specified before modelling starts, and a rebuild if it is asked for afterwards.

01 One master model, parametric where the range is parametric

If products come in four widths, the model should be driven by a width value, not saved as four unrelated files that drift apart at the first revision.

02 Every finish a separate, named material

Named to match your product data, not to match how it looks. When marketing renames a colour, you want to change a label, not hunt through a scene.

03 Naming that matches your SKUs exactly

The configurator has to map a visual state to something orderable. If the model calls it oak_02 and the system calls it OAK-NAT-S, somebody maintains a translation table by hand forever.

04 Components separated and pivoted correctly

Each swappable part its own object, with its origin at the point it attaches. This is what makes a new leg style a one-day job instead of a re-model.

05 Real-world scale and consistent units

Non-negotiable if the same asset will ever feed AR, a room planner or a dealer tool. Retrofitting scale breaks every camera and every placement rule already built.

06 Sensible geometry weight, with a plan for the web

A configurator running in a browser has a budget. Ask what it is before modelling, and ask for the optimised version and the high-detail version as two deliverables from one source.

07 A written rules document for what can combine

Which module attaches to which, which finish is unavailable in which size, what is discontinued. This is a business document, not a 3D one, and it is the thing most often missing.

08 Source files and textures in your possession

If the configurator outlives the relationship with the agency or studio that built it — and it will — the assets need to be somewhere you control, in a format another team can open.

The test

Ask your supplier one question: **what happens when we add a new finish next spring?** A good answer describes a small, defined piece of work with a rate attached. A vague answer means it will be a project, and you will have one of those every season.



STEP 02

Scope version one smaller than you want to

The instinct is to launch with the whole range, because a partial configurator feels like an unfinished one. It is the reverse. A small configurator that is accurate and current beats a complete one that is six months out of date, and it tells you which options customers actually use before you pay to model the rest.

Version one, deliberately

- Your best-selling product family, not all of them
- The finishes that account for most orders
- One or two views, not a full turntable
- Everything else shown as a static image with a note

What that buys you

- A live thing to learn from, at a fraction of the cost
- Real data on which options are configured and which are ignored
- A maintenance routine proven on a small matrix first
- The ability to stop, if it turns out nobody uses it

Somebody has to own it

Not a committee. One named person, with these four jobs written into what they are responsible for.

01	Knows when the range changes	Sits close enough to product and merchandising to hear about a new finish before the catalogue prints, not after a customer reports it.
02	Holds the asset list	A simple register: every product, every option, which assets exist, which version, where the source file lives, when it was last checked.
03	Checks against physical samples	Screen colour drifts and so do suppliers. Somebody has to compare the rendered finish to the actual sample periodically and raise it when they diverge.
04	Owens the budget line	An annual figure for asset updates, agreed in advance. Configurators die because every small update needs a new approval and eventually nobody bothers asking.

If you cannot name that person today, that is the finding. Build the configurator when you can, and spend the money on better product images in the meantime.



STEP 03

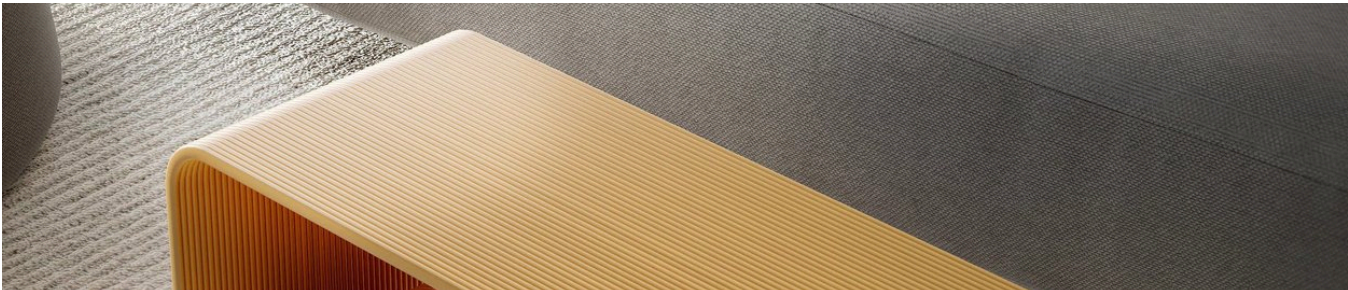
When not to build one

This page exists because the honest answer for a lot of ranges is a good image set and a better product page. Work down the table and be strict with yourself.

IF THIS IS TRUE OF YOUR RANGE	CONFIGURATOR	IMAGE SET AND A GOOD PRODUCT PAGE
Fewer than roughly a dozen meaningful combinations	Overkill, and the customer has to work to see something you could have shown them.	Better. Photograph or render every combination and put them on one page.
The range changes several times a year	Only with a named owner and a standing budget.	Safer. A stale image is embarrassing; a stale configurator produces wrong orders.
Customers buy on look, not on specification	Weak fit. Choice paralysis is real, and a wall of options sells less than three good scenes.	Better. Curated styled sets do the selling.
Truly large matrix, modular, made to order	Better. This is what configurators are for, and images cannot cover the space.	Impossible — you cannot photograph the matrix.
The buyer needs to check it fits their project	Better, if it outputs dimensions, a specification sheet and a saved configuration.	Insufficient on its own.
You want it because a competitor has one	The most expensive reason there is, and the most common.	Better. Their configurator may also be out of date.

The middle path most brands should take first

Build the asset properly — master model, separated materials, SKU-matched naming, real scale, in your possession. Then launch a rendered image set generated from it, with a simple finish swatch picker on the product page. You get most of the customer benefit immediately, you find out whether people use it, and the day you decide to build the real configurator the expensive half is already done and does not have to be redone.



Maverick Frame production render.

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



MAVERICK
FRAME
STUDIO

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.

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SEE THE WORK

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

