

FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Why It Takes as Long as It Takes

Duration is a property of the job, not of the studio. The seven variables that set it, a worksheet to score your own, and an honest answer on going faster.

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START HERE

Nobody is slow. The job has a shape

The question behind “how long does rendering take” is almost always “can I promise this to somebody on Friday”. The honest answer is that duration is not a fixed property of a studio you can look up. It is a property of your particular job, and a surprising amount of it sits on your side of the table rather than theirs.

Time the studio controls

- Building and checking the model
- Lighting, materials, dressing the scene
- Machine time to render
- How quickly a round comes back once comments arrive

Time you control

- How complete and current the source material is
- How long comments take to come back
- Whether they arrive as one list or as eleven emails
- How many people have to agree before a round closes
- Whether the design changes while the images are being made

On most jobs the right-hand column is the larger and more variable of the two. That is not a complaint; it is useful, because it is also the column you can shorten this afternoon without paying anybody anything.

A note on why there is no benchmark table in this guide: we do not publish turnaround figures, because ours vary too widely by project type to state as a number anyone could plan against, and an invented figure would be worse than none. What follows is the structure underneath the figure, which is the part you can act on.



Maverick Frame production render.

STEP 01

The seven variables that set the clock

VARIABLE	SHORTENS THE JOB	LENGTHENS IT
Model source	A clean 3D model, or a coordinated drawing set at a stated revision.	PDFs, scans, sketches, mismatched revisions, no dimensions. The model gets rebuilt from inference and then checked twice.
Distinct scenes	Several cameras inside one space that is built and lit once.	Several separate spaces. Each is its own build, its own lighting, its own dressing — angles are cheap, rooms are not.
Context	An isolated object, a studio backdrop, an invented setting.	A real street, real neighbours, a survey to match, a photograph to sit inside.
Named products	Generic equivalents the studio chooses to suit the frame.	Specified items that must be exact, with no supplier geometry available. Each one is modelled from photographs and then approved.
Approvers	One person with authority to say yes.	A client, an architect, an agent, a marketing team and an investor, none of whom see the images at the same time.
Comment form	One merged, de-conflicted list per round, marked up on the image.	Individual messages over several days, some contradicting others, some arriving after work has restarted.
Outputs	One master size per image.	Print, web, social crops, portrait versions, stills pulled from animation — several of which are re-renders, not exports.

Two of these are free to fix

Approvers and comment form cost nothing to change and are, on a large share of jobs, the two biggest lines in the table. Name one person who consolidates and decides. Agree that comments go to them, they merge and de-conflict, and one list goes out per round. Doing only this often changes a programme more than any amount of money spent elsewhere.

STEP 02

Score your own job

Fill this in before you ask anybody for a date. The total has no unit and is not a number of days — it is for comparing two jobs, and for finding the line you can change.

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SCORE EACH LINE 1, 2 OR 3          1 = easy   3 = heavy

  Model source
    1 clean 3D model    2 full drawing set    3 PDFs / sketches     ___

  Distinct scenes to build and light
    1 one     2 two or three     3 four or more                     ___

  Context
    1 none / invented   2 modelled surroundings   3 matched to site ___

  Named products that must be exact
    1 none / generic    2 a handful   3 a specified schedule        ___

  People who must approve
    1 one     2 two or three     3 four or more                     ___

  How comments will reach the studio
    1 one merged list   2 one person, several messages   3 everyone ___

  Output sizes and formats required
    1 one master   2 a defined set   3 open-ended, decided later    ___

                                                          TOTAL  _____
```

TOTAL	WHAT IT MEANS, IN RELATIVE TERMS ONLY
7 – 10	A job whose duration is set mostly by machine time and one round of comments. This is the shape that moves quickly, and the shape people wrongly assume every job has.
11 – 16	A normal commercial job. Most of the programme is spent on build and on the comment cycle, roughly in that order.
17 – 21	A job where the schedule is set by coordination, not by rendering. Expect the approval chain to be the critical path, and plan the diary around it rather than around the studio.

Use the score on two jobs side by side and it explains, without anyone being blamed, why the one that looked simpler took longer than the one that looked hard.

STEP 03

“Can you do it faster?” The honest answer

Yes, and mostly not in the way the question expects. Some things genuinely compress a schedule. Others only move the cost from one column to another, and it is worth knowing which you are buying.

Genuinely compresses

- Cutting the number of distinct spaces, not the number of angles
- Handing over a clean model instead of a folder of PDFs
- Naming one approver with real authority
- Freezing the design before work starts, and saying so in writing
- Accepting studio-chosen generic products where exactness does not sell anything
- Agreeing cameras and light on a grey test before anything is dressed
- Reducing the output list to what is actually published
- Using real-time rendering where motion is involved

Only moves the cost

- A rush fee on an unchanged scope
- Adding artists to a single scene — one person lights it, and the coordination is real
- Buying more machine time when the delay is decisions, not rendering
- More revision rounds inside the same window; rounds need thinking time between them
- Starting before the drawings settle, then paying to rebuild

> *An animation that took about a week to render in a production renderer can come back in minutes in real time. That is where the schedule genuinely moved. It did not move because anybody started working faster.*
>
> DIM KUZMENKO, CO-FOUNDER, MAVERICK FRAME STUDIO

On any schedule you are given

Treat a sequence from a studio as a typical shape for that kind of work, not as a promise, and ask which line of the table on page 03 it assumes. A date that assumes one approver and one merged list is a different date from the one your project will actually run to — and the gap between them is visible in the worksheet you just filled in.

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

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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

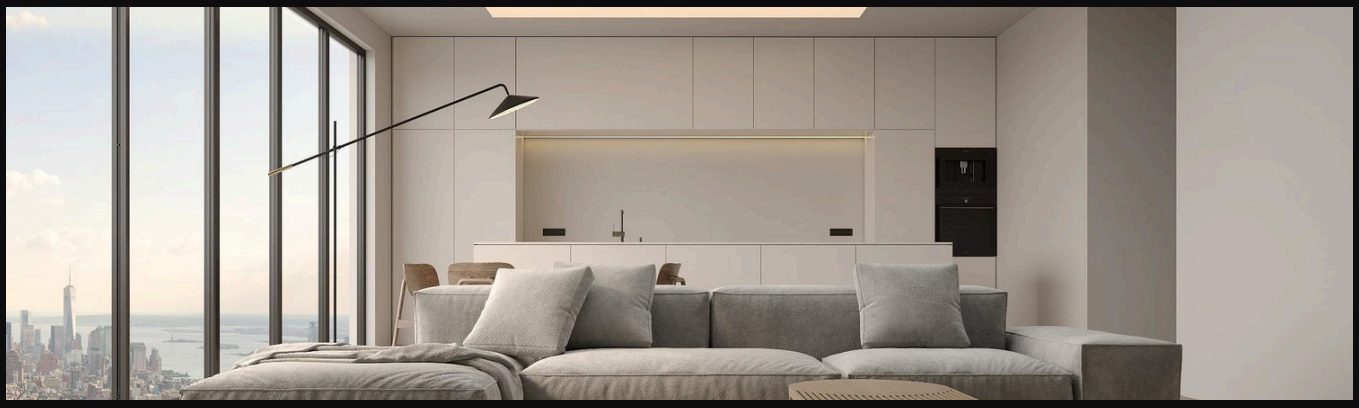
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SEE THE WORK

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