



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

The Same Car, Modelled Five Times: **\$20,800 Too Much.**

Which images and films to order from design review to model year refresh, what the car model carries over, and the budget split, priced at mid-market studio rates.

START HERE

Five stages, five vendors, five car models

Most car programmes do not overspend on any single render. They overspend in the gaps between stages: the review model from the design studio is not the one the agency uses for the reveal, the launch commercial is built by a third team, and the configurator vendor asks for the CAD again.

Each of those handovers means someone rebuilds the car: surfaces, panel gaps, lamps, badges, wheels and trims, set up again for a new renderer. It is weeks of work that produces nothing new to look at. The second leak is timing. Reveal teasers get ordered after the press date is fixed, and the configurator set gets briefed when dealers are already asking for it, so every stage runs as a rush.

	BOUGHT STAGE BY STAGE	PLANNED AS ONE ROADMAP
01	A new vendor rebuilds the car at every stage	One vehicle model, built from CAD once and kept with the studio
02	Colours and trims matched by eye to the last agency's images	One paint and material library, from design review to dealer set
03	Reveal film briefed after the motor show date is fixed	Reveal cameras and lighting planned while the design is in review
04	Configurator ordered when dealers start asking	Every colour, wheel and trim set up in the scene from the start
05	Facelift treated as a new car	Model year changes made as edits to the existing model

The expensive part of car CGI is the car, not the image.

A photoreal vehicle model built from CAD is the largest single line in any automotive project. Build it once, with the later stages in mind, and every set after it is lighting, cameras and rendering.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE ROADMAP

What to order at each stage, and what it keeps

The five stages below are the ones on our automotive page. For each: what to order, who looks at it, and what the next stage inherits instead of paying for it again.

STAGE	ORDER THESE VISUALS	WHO USES THEM	CARRIES OVER
Design	Photoreal review stills of surfaces, colours and trims; turntables of the shortlisted options	Design studio, engineering, management boards	The vehicle model, paint and material library
Reveal	Teaser stills with the car half in shadow; a reveal film for the motor show and press kit	Press office, motor show team, pre-order page	Camera moves, lighting set-ups, studio environment
Launch	Hero stills in environments; a launch commercial; social cuts in vertical and square	Agency, paid media, website	Environments and the hero camera angles
Dealer	Configurator images of every colour, wheel and trim from fixed angles	Dealer sites, showrooms, brochures	The full variant matrix, ready for updates
Refresh	New colours, model year changes and special editions in the existing scene	Website, catalogues, facelift campaigns	The updated model for the next model year

Start where you are

If your car is already at the reveal stage, order the reveal set now but ask for two things in writing: that the car is built to production CAD rather than a styling proxy, and that the model, materials and cameras stay on file. That is what lets the launch stills and the dealer configurator reuse it rather than start again.



Maverick Frame production render.

WHAT IT COSTS

One car, five stages, priced line by line

A composite of a full automotive programme, priced at mid-market studio rates. The vehicle model is built once, at the design stage. The rows marked as reused cost less because nobody has to rebuild the car before rendering it.

LINE ITEM	BASIS	AT STUDIO RATES
01 Design: vehicle model from CAD, surfaces and trims	build, once	\$5,200
02 Design: review stills of colours and trims	8 x \$350	\$2,800
03 Reveal: teaser stills	4 x \$400, model reused from Design	\$1,600
04 Reveal: reveal film	1 min x \$6,000	\$6,000
05 Launch: hero stills in environments	6 x \$500, model reused from Design	\$3,000
06 Launch: launch commercial	1 min x \$7,500	\$7,500
07 Launch: social cuts from the commercial	6 x \$250	\$1,500
08 Dealer: configurator set, 8 colours x 4 wheels x 3 trims x 3 angles	288 x \$25, scene reused from Launch	\$7,200
09 Refresh: facelift parts modelled	update	\$1,600
10 Refresh: new colours and edition stills	12 x \$300, model reused from Dealer	\$3,600
Design subtotal		\$8,000
Reveal subtotal		\$7,600
Launch subtotal		\$12,000
Dealer subtotal		\$7,200
Refresh subtotal		\$5,200

Planned as one roadmap \$40,000

The same visuals bought stage by stage, from scratch \$60,800



From scratch means the same lines plus \$20,800: the \$5,200 vehicle model built again at Reveal, Launch, Dealer and Refresh, because a new vendor at each stage starts from the CAD. Shares above are of the \$40,000 planned total.

THE ONE PAGE

What to send us at each stage

The teams whose logos sit on our service pages do not send long specifications. At each stage they send a few things like these, usually in the body of an email, and it is enough to quote from and to start work.

01	Design: the data	CAD or surface data, and which release it is. Say whether a styling proxy will do for now.
02	Design: the options	The colours, wheels and trims under review, and who signs them off.
03	Reveal: the date	The motor show or press date, and how much of the car the teaser may show.
04	Reveal: the film	Length and where it will play: stand screens, press kit, pre-order page.
05	Launch: the campaign	The agency's key visual or script if there is one, and the markets it runs in.
06	Launch: the formats	Which cuts you need, horizontal, vertical or square, and their lengths.
07	Dealer: the matrix	The full list of colours, wheels and trims, and which combinations cannot be ordered.
08	Dealer: the angles	The fixed camera views your configurator or dealer platform expects, with pixel sizes.
09	Refresh: the changes	What is new for the model year: parts, colours, editions. The rest stays as it is.
10	Every stage: the budget	A figure or a range per stage. It is the quickest way to a scope that fits, and it is not a weakness.

Change stage, keep the scene

If we built your car at an earlier stage, reopening it takes one email: name the stage, the new deliverables and any CAD changes since. The model, materials and cameras are on file, so the quote starts from rendering, not modelling.

Our terms are on the next page

Market rates, timelines and what counts as a revision round are set out on page 06. The composite on page 04 is priced at the same mid-market studio rates.

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/
Automotive work	maverickframe.com/services/car-rendering-services/
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.