



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

We Priced a Door Shoot Against CGI. The Gap Was **\$50,200.**

Twelve doors, five finishes, six room scenes and one new finish mid-season, priced both ways, plus the honest list of pictures a camera should still take.

START HERE

One photo is cheap. A door range is not

The choice between photographing a door collection and rendering it is usually made on the price of one image, and on that basis the photographer often wins. A day rate divided by the shots taken looks modest next to a render quote. The cost of a door shoot sits around the camera, not in it.

Every finish has to exist as a real leaf before it can be photographed, so a range of twelve models in five finishes means sixty sample leaves built, crated and shipped. Room scenes need walls, floors and styling built around them. And the set is out of date the day a handle, a glazing option or a RAL colour changes, because a new finish means new leaves and another studio day.

WHAT THE SHOOT QUOTE SHOWS		WHAT THE SHOOT ACTUALLY NEEDS	
01	A studio day rate and a price per retouched image	A finished leaf, frame and hardware for every model in every finish, built before the camera arrives.	
02	The shots on the list	Crates, freight to the studio and back, and someone to handle leaves that weigh 20 to 40 kg each.	
03	Room scenes as a line item	Walls, floors, architraves and styling built and struck for every scene.	
04	This season's range	A reshoot, with new leaves, every time a finish, glass or handle changes.	

Compare collections, not images.

Price the whole range for a year, including the finish you will add in spring. That is where the two routes separate, and it is the only comparison that tells you what the images will cost.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE TWO INVOICES

The same collection, priced both ways

A composite door collection priced at mid-market rates: 12 models in 5 finishes, 60 images on white, 6 room scenes, then one new finish across the range mid-season. Both routes deliver the same 78 images.

PHOTOGRAPHING IT		BASIS	MID-MARKET
01	Sample leaves with frame and hardware, every finish	60 x \$300	\$18,000
02	Crating and freight to the studio and back	60 leaves	\$2,400
03	Studio days, photographer and assistant	7 x \$2,200	\$15,400
04	Room sets built for the scenes, two angles each	3 x \$3,500	\$10,500
05	Styling and props	3 sets	\$1,800
06	Retouch per image	66 x \$60	\$3,960
07	Reshoot for the new finish: leaves, freight, day, retouch	12 doors	\$7,320
Photographing the collection			\$59,380
RENDERING IT FROM PRODUCTION CAD		BASIS	AT \$45 / H
01	Modelling each door from STEP, 5 h	12 x \$225	\$2,700
02	First view on white per model, 4 h	12 x \$180	\$2,160
03	Other four finishes per model, 1 h each	48 x \$45	\$2,160
04	Room scenes, 6 h each	6 x \$270	\$1,620
05	New finish across the range, 1 h each	12 x \$45	\$540
Rendering the collection			\$9,180
The gap			\$50,200

\$35,820 of the shoot is leaves, sets and the reshoot.

The camera work itself is not the problem. The physical door in every finish is, and CGI never needs it: one model per door, and every finish after the first costs an hour.

LINE BY LINE

Where CGI does not win, and you should shoot

The invoice favours rendering for the range. It does not favour it for everything, and a studio that says otherwise is selling. These are the pictures we tell door brands to photograph.

STILL SHOOT IT WHEN	WHY
01 People are the subject	PR portraits, the founder at the factory, a family at the front door. Real people are faster and more believable in front of a camera than built in 3D.
02 It is installer training	Fitting a multi-point lock, adjusting hinges, sealing a threshold on site. Hands, tools and a real opening teach better than a perfect render.
03 The factory is the story	Veneer being pressed, lacquer being sprayed, a leaf coming off the line. Craft content needs the real workshop.
04 It is a finished installation	A reference project, a showroom opening, a dealer's display. The point is that it exists, so photograph it.
05 One hero door already in stock	A single model, no finishes, no scenes. A half-day with a photographer can beat modelling it.
06 There is no CAD at all	Modelling from photographs and a tape measure takes longer, and the gap narrows. Say so early and we will price both.
07 The leaves already sit in your warehouse	The \$18,000 sample line disappears and the gap falls to \$32,200. It narrows; for a full range it rarely closes.

Most door brands end up doing both.

Render the range, every finish, the room scenes and the configurator assets from one model per door. Book a photographer for the people, the factory and the installed projects. The two budgets stop competing once each does the job it is good at.



A room scene like this is about six hours of work from the door model: no leaf, no set, no freight.

THE ONE PAGE

What door brands actually send us

The clients whose logos sit on our service pages do not send crates of sample doors. For door and window rendering they send something close to this, usually inside the body of an email with the CAD attached, and it is enough to quote from and to start work.

01	The range	Models and sizes in one list, with SKUs. Say which are new this season.
02	The CAD	A STEP export per door, the native file if the export looks fused. Say which revision is final.
03	The finish list	RAL or NCS codes, veneer species and cut, lacquer gloss level. One line per finish.
04	A sample or a scan	A corner sample per finish in the post, or a material scan. Grain and gloss are settled in one look.
05	The hardware list	Handle, rosette, hinges, lock and threshold, with part numbers and finishes.
06	Glass and panels	Clear, frosted, fluted, panel layouts, sidelights and transoms, where they apply.
07	The views	Front-on on white, room scenes, hardware close-ups, cutaways. A number for each.
08	The channels	Catalog, dealer portal, door builder, AR. Each one sets sizes, layers and GLB or USDZ needs.
09	The date you need it	The launch, the trade show or the dealer preview. The real one.
10	The budget	A figure or a range. It is the fastest way to a fitting scope.

Keep the samples small

We do not need a full leaf. A palm-sized corner of each finish, or a good scan, matches veneer and lacquer on a close-up before any room scene is rendered.

Name the channels on day one

A model built only for catalog stills has to be rebuilt for a door builder or AR. One sentence on where the doors go next saves paying for the modelling twice.

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 the CAD and the finish list

A STEP export per door, the finish codes, a sample or a scan and the hardware list, in whatever state they are in. We will reply with what is missing, a price for the range and the questions that decide it - as a reply, not a sales call.

The contact form	maverickframe.com/contacts/
Door and window work	maverickframe.com/solutions/3d-product-visualization-for-door-brands-distributors/
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.