



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

The Third Colourway Is Where the Shoot Stops Paying.

One catalogue of 12 products in 51 colourways, priced twice: photographed for \$27,450, rendered in CGI for \$22,005. Line by line, per SKU, with the colourway where the lines cross.

START HERE

Priced per product. Paid per SKU.

An online store does not sell products. It sells SKUs, and every one of them needs its own main image, its own angles and a close-up of its finish. A range of twelve products in four colours is not twelve photographs. It is forty-eight listings, each with six images, and a lifestyle scene for every product.

Quotes are usually compared per product, because that is how the brief is written. The bill arrives per SKU, because that is how the work is done. A camera needs every colourway in the room. A 3D model needs every colourway as a material, and a new material is an afternoon, not a booking.

	PHOTOGRAPHED	RENDERED IN CGI
01	Needs a finished sample of every colourway before the day is booked	Starts from CAD and a swatch, before the colourways are produced
02	Each colourway shot and clipped as six new frames	Each colourway is a material swap and six re-renders of set cameras
03	A colour added after launch is a new sample and a half day	A colour added after launch is three hours of work
04	Lifestyle scenes are a location day with a stylist	Lifestyle scenes are built once and reused for the next season
05	360 spins and AR files are a separate job	360 spins and GLB or USDZ files come from the same model

The cost lives in the colourways.

On one product in one colour, a good product photographer is usually cheaper than a render. The lines cross at the third colourway, and every colour after that widens the gap. That is the whole argument of this guide, priced.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE INVOICE

One catalogue, priced both ways

A composite of the catalogues online brands bring us: 12 products, 4 colourways each, 6 images on white per SKU, one lifestyle scene per product, and 3 colourways added after launch. Photography lines are priced at mid-market e-commerce studio rates; CGI lines use our own rate card, \$45 per hour. Infographic layouts cost the same either way and are left out.

LINE ITEM	BASIS	COST
01 Photo: samples of every colourway, freight and handling	48 x \$40	\$1,920
02 Photo: 6 frames on white per SKU, clipped and retouched	288 x \$35	\$10,080
03 Photo: lifestyle days with set, props and stylist	2 x \$4,800	\$9,600
04 Photo: lifestyle retouching, one scene per product	12 x \$150	\$1,800
05 Photo: 3 colours added after launch, sample, half day, 6 frames	3 x \$1,350	\$4,050
06 CGI: product models and materials from CAD	12 x 12 h	\$6,480
07 CGI: 6 set cameras on white, first colourway	12 x 9 h	\$4,860
08 CGI: 36 more colourways, material swap and 6 re-renders	36 x 3 h	\$4,860
09 CGI: lifestyle scenes built in 3D, one per product	12 x 10 h	\$5,400
10 CGI: 3 colours added after launch	3 x 3 h	\$405
Photographed, per SKU (51 SKUs)		\$538
Rendered in CGI, per SKU (51 SKUs)		\$431
Rendered in CGI, lines 6 to 10		\$22,005
Photographed, lines 1 to 5		\$27,450

\$5,445 on the first season. More on the second.

Next season the models are on file. Twelve new lifestyle scenes and eight new colourways cost about \$5,400 in CGI and about \$13,400 photographed, because the camera starts from samples again.

THE BREAK-EVEN

Where the lines cross, product by product

The same rates, for one product with six images on white per colourway and one lifestyle scene. Use it on your own range: count the colourways, not the products.

COLOURWAYS	PHOTOGRAPHED	RENDERED IN CGI	CHEAPER
1	\$1,200	\$1,395	Photo, by \$195
2	\$1,450	\$1,530	Photo, by \$80
3	\$1,700	\$1,665	CGI, by \$35
4	\$1,950	\$1,800	CGI, by \$150
8	\$2,950	\$2,340	CGI, by \$610
12	\$3,950	\$2,880	CGI, by \$1,070

Where a camera still wins

A quote that says CGI is always cheaper is selling. Keep the camera, or part of it, when:

- ☐ The range is one or two colourways of a finished product already in stock.
- ☐ A real person wears or holds the product and their face carries the image.
- ☐ The product is food, drink or anything that must look freshly made.
- ☐ The fabric or finish is the whole sale and a sample is on your desk: we match the render to it, but the sample is the reference.

Main image rules to brief either way

- ☐ Pure white background, RGB 255, 255, 255, for the main image on Amazon.
- ☐ The product fills about 85% of the frame, with nothing else in it.
- ☐ At least 1,000 px on the longest side, so the zoom works.
- ☐ One lighting and camera standard for the whole range, set on the first SKU.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE ONE PAGE

What online brands actually send us

The brands whose logos sit on our pages do not send specifications. They send something close to this, usually in the body of an email with the CAD attached, and it is enough to quote a catalogue from and to start work.

01	The products	CAD or STEP files. A sample or phone photos of one, if it exists.
02	The colourways	Names and references: Pantone, RAL or a photo of the swatch. Say which are final.
03	The image set per SKU	How many images on white, which angles, which close-ups.
04	The store's current style	Two or three live listings you like, yours or anyone's.
05	Where it sells	Your own store, Amazon, other marketplaces, retail partners. It sets sizes and backgrounds.
06	The lifestyle scenes	Where each product lives: a kitchen, a bathroom shelf, a desk. One line each.
07	360 and AR	Whether you need spins or GLB and USDZ files, and for which products.
08	Who approves	One person on your side, so each round reaches us as one list.
09	The launch date	The real one, and which SKUs must be live first.
10	The budget	A figure or a range per SKU. It is the fastest way to a fitting scope.

Start with one SKU

Send one product and one colourway first. We set the cameras and the light on it, you approve the look, and every other SKU follows the same standard.

Keep the photographs you like

If part of the range is already shot, we match the render to your existing images, so rendered and photographed SKUs sit side by side in the store.

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 colourway list

CAD or STEP files, a sample or photos of one, the colourway list, your store's current image style and the launch date, in whatever state they are in. We will reply with a scope, a price per SKU and the questions that decide it - as a reply, not a sales call.

The contact form	maverickframe.com/contacts/
E-commerce rendering	maverickframe.com/solutions/3d-rendering-for-e-commerce/
Or simply	reply to the email this guide arrived in.

Written by the people who read these briefs

Dim Kuzmenko is the 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.