



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

A 60-Second Film Is 1,440 Rendered Frames. This One Cost **\$19,740.**

Where an architectural animation budget really goes, priced line by line, and the storyboard that brings the same building to screen for \$4,600.

Dim Kuzmenko
Founder, Maverick Frame Studio

maverickframe.com

START HERE

Nobody renders a minute. We render 1,440 frames.

A still is one image. A minute of film at 24 frames per second is 1,440 of them, each lit, rendered and checked, and every one of them sees the building from a slightly different place. That is why an animation brief that reads like a short list of wishes can price like a small building.

Most animation budgets are not decided by length. They are decided by what happens inside the frame: how many shots, how the camera moves, whether people walk through, whether the light changes, and how many versions of the edit have to come out the other end. Each of those is a choice, and each has a price that nobody sees until the quote arrives.

WHAT THE BRIEF SAYS		WHAT IT MEANS IN PRODUCTION
01	'A cinematic 60-second film'	1,440 frames, plus the shots that were rendered and cut. Length is the floor of the cost, not the cost.
02	'Lots of variety in the shots'	Every new shot is a new camera, new lighting checks and often new modelling behind the camera.
03	'People and life in every scene'	Animated figures, each one cast, rigged, placed and checked frame by frame.
04	'Versions for all channels'	A vertical 9:16 edit is not a crop. The camera has to be re-framed and the shots rendered again.

The storyboard is the budget.

Once the storyboard is signed, the price is mostly fixed. Change a camera move after rendering and those frames are rendered again. Every decision is cheapest on paper and most expensive on a finished frame.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE INVOICE

What it costs if we take it literally

Below is a composite of the animation briefs we have received, priced at mid-market studio rates. The film is 60 seconds long, as asked. What makes it expensive is everything else in the brief.

LINE ITEM	BASIS	AT STUDIO RATES
01 Storyboard and animatic, fourteen shots	14 shots	\$700
02 Exterior and three interiors modelled for motion	model	\$1,800
03 60 seconds rendered at 24 fps	1,440 frames	\$5,000
04 Day-to-night transition inside one shot	1 shot	\$900
05 Animated people in six shots	6 x \$250	\$1,500
06 Moving water, wind in the trees, passing cars	effects	\$800
07 Aerial opening over the surrounding district	context	\$1,200
08 Vertical 9:16 version, re-framed and re-rendered	re-render	\$1,200
09 30- and 15-second cut-downs	2 edits	\$400
10 Licensed music and a professional voiceover	audio	\$600
Subtotal		\$14,100
Rush: three weeks instead of six, about 40% more		+ \$5,640

What the brief asks for	\$19,740
What the same building needs	\$4,600

The \$4,600 film is not a cut-price version.

It is 40 seconds, eight shots, one lighting state and one edit, with a model we would build anyway for the stills. It shows the same building. It just asks the frames to do one job each.

THE STORYBOARD

Seven decisions to make before frame one

Settle these on paper, in this order, and the storyboard becomes a price you can control rather than a price you discover.

DECIDE	WHAT TO WRITE INSTEAD OF 'CINEMATIC'
01 Where the film will play	Name the channel first: a sales suite screen, a website header, a social feed. It decides the length, the aspect ratio and whether sound matters at all.
02 Length	Give a number in seconds. A sales film can usually say what it needs in 30 to 45; longer is a choice, not a default.
03 Shot count	Aim for one idea per shot and four to six seconds each. Eight shots in 40 seconds is a calm film; fourteen in 60 is a trailer.
04 Camera moves	Slow, simple moves render cleanly and read well. Fast orbits and drone dives need far more of the scene built and checked.
05 People	Decide whether figures carry the story or just fill space. Two shots with people often do the work of six.
06 Light and time of day	Pick one lighting state. A day-to-night change inside a shot is a second scene rendered frame by frame.
07 The edit and versions	Name every version you will publish. A 16:9 master with cut-downs is cheap; a separate vertical film is a second render.

Our standard for animation up to one minute is 4 to 6 weeks, storyboard and preview first. The preview is a low-resolution pass of every shot: the last cheap moment to change a camera.

THE ONE PAGE

What brands actually send us for a film

The clients whose logos sit on our service pages do not send us a shot list or a treatment. They send something close to this, usually in the body of an email, and it is enough to quote from and to start the storyboard.

01	The building	One line, plus drawings, a model or the stills if they exist.
02	What the film must do	Sell apartments, win a planning hearing, open a launch event.
03	Where it will play	The screen or channel, and whether it plays with sound.
04	Length	A number in seconds, or 'as short as works'.
05	The three things to show	The moments a buyer must remember. We build the shots around them.
06	People	None, a few, or a lived-in feel.
07	Time of day	One. Name it.
08	Versions	The formats and aspect ratios you will actually publish.
09	The date you need it	The real launch date, not the comfortable one.
10	The budget	A figure or a range. We will tell you what fits inside it.

Order the stills first

If you also need stills, commission them first. The model, materials and lighting are then settled, and the film starts from a building everyone has already approved.

Let us propose the shots

Tell us what the film must achieve and let the storyboard come back to you. Choosing cameras is the part of the job we do every day.

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/
Animation work	maverickframe.com/services/3d-architectural-animation/
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.