



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

The **6 Weeks** Nobody Plans For

What happens week by week on a rendering project, what you owe on which day, and the five points where projects slip — with a schedule you can print.



START HERE

Projects do not slip at the studio's end

In our experience the overwhelming majority of late rendering projects are late for one of two reasons: source material arrived incomplete, or a decision that had to be made in week two got made in week four. Both are on the client side, and both are preventable with a schedule that names them.

WEEK	STUDIO IS DOING	YOU OWE
Week 1	Reading drawings, listing queries, starting geometry.	Everything, on day one. Drawings, references, the shot list, named specifications.
Week 2	Building the model. Queries come back to you.	Answers to queries within 24 hours. This is the week that decides the programme.
Week 3	Grey-box or clay views issued for approval.	Sign off geometry and camera. The most important decision point in the project.
Week 4	Materials, lighting, draft renders.	One consolidated round of comments on look and feel.
Week 5	Final renders, post-production.	Final comments — wording, labels, small fixes only.
Week 6	Delivery at all sizes, handover, archive.	Check files open, at the right sizes, before you sign off.

Six weeks is a typical shape for a modest set, not a promise; ours vary too much by project type for us to publish a benchmark. Use the shape and the ownership, not the number.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE GATE

Week three is the whole project

The grey-box or clay stage — untextured, unlit geometry from your agreed cameras — is the cheapest moment to find every expensive error, and the stage most often skipped because it looks unimpressive.

What to check at grey-box

- Storey heights against the section
- Window and door count on every elevation
- Roof form and pitch
- Stair direction and going
- Camera positions — is this the view you want?
- Context extent — is the right neighbour there?

What it costs to find these later

At grey-box: an afternoon. After lighting and materials: the lighting and materials again. After final render: the lighting, the materials, the render time and the post-production, on every affected image in the set.

This is why a studio that offers a clay stage is telling you something about how it runs projects.

The sentence to put in the programme

"Geometry and camera positions are signed off at clay stage. Changes to either after that point are a variation." Harsh-sounding, entirely standard, and it protects your date as much as their fee — because the alternative is not a cheaper project, it is a late one.

THE SLIP POINTS

Five places it goes wrong

01 Drawings arrive in pieces

A plan on Monday, the elevations on Thursday, the section "next week". The model cannot start properly until the set is coherent, so a three-day dribble is a three-day delay, and nobody records it as one.

02 Queries sit unanswered

Week two generates a list of questions. Every day one sits in an inbox is a day the model waits. Nominate one person who can answer or escalate within 24 hours, and say who it is at kick-off.

03 Comments arrive one at a time

Four people sending four separate emails over three days is four rounds of work, not one. Consolidate into a single numbered list per stage, from one person, even if ten people contributed to it.

04 A decision-maker appears in week five

Someone senior sees the images for the first time near the end and changes the direction. If they have to approve, they have to see the clay stage. Getting them into week three is free; getting them in week five costs the project.

05 The specification changes quietly

The cladding was value-engineered and nobody told the studio. Images are then wrong in a way that looks like a rendering error and is not. One line in the weekly note prevents this entirely.

The pattern

Four of the five are communication, not production. Which is good news: they are the cheapest class of problem to fix, and fixing them costs nothing but agreeing who does what, before work starts.

PRINT THIS

The kick-off sheet

Fill it in at the first call. Five minutes, and it removes four of the five slip points opposite.

People

SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT, OUR SIDE

WHO ANSWERS TECHNICAL QUERIES

WHO SIGNS OFF CLAY STAGE

WHO SIGNS OFF FINAL

ANYONE ELSE WHO MUST SEE IT, AND WHEN

Dates

FULL DRAWING SET ISSUED BY

QUERY RESPONSE TIME AGREED

CLAY STAGE ISSUED / SIGNED OFF

DRAFT RENDERERS ISSUED / COMMENTS DUE

FINAL DELIVERY, AND THE DATE IT IS NEEDED FOR

Scope

NUMBER OF IMAGES AND ANGLES

LARGEST END USE AND RESOLUTION

REVISION ROUNDS INCLUDED

WHAT COUNTS AS ONE ROUND

The two lines that matter most

"Single point of contact" and "what counts as one round". Between them they prevent the two failure modes that account for most late and most over-budget rendering projects.

Neither costs anything. Both are awkward to raise in week four and trivial to agree in week zero.

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

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

maverickframe.com/contacts

SEE THE WORK

maverickframe.com/gallery

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