



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

What You Actually Own When You Buy a **Model**

The file formats, the difference between a picture and an asset, and the eight questions that decide whether you can use your model again next year.

START HERE

A render is an output. A model is an asset.

Most people commission images and receive images. The model that produced them stays with the studio, and eighteen months later, when the same product needs a new angle for a new campaign, the job starts from zero at full price.

That is not usually anyone behaving badly. It is a question nobody asked at the start. This guide is the question, in eight parts.

What you paid for

- A set of finished images at agreed sizes
- Usually a licence to use them in stated places
- Sometimes a layered file for small edits

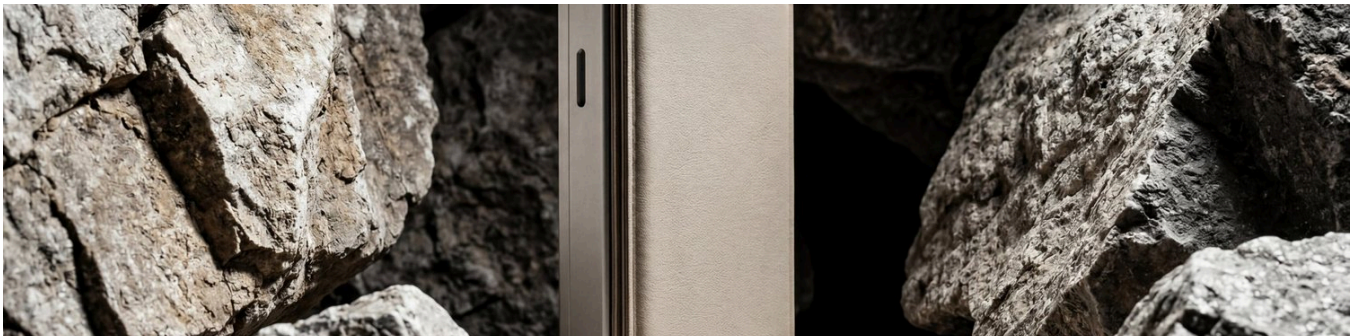
What you may not have

- The geometry itself, in a format anyone else can open
- The right to hand it to another studio
- Any guarantee it still exists in a year
- The materials, which are often the expensive part

The tools that promise a finished render straight from your drawings read construction drawings badly. AI is a genuinely useful assistant, and nothing like the populist marketing version — modelling isn't there.

DIM KUZMENKO, FOUNDER, MAVERICK FRAME STUDIO

Which is the practical reason the model matters: it is still the part that cannot be regenerated cheaply, and it is therefore the part worth owning.



Maverick Frame production render.

STEP 01

The formats, and what each one is good for

Ask for the working file **and** a neutral exchange format. The first is editable by a studio using the same software; the second is openable by anyone, forever.

FORMAT	WHAT IT CARRIES	USE IT FOR
Native working file .max .blend .c4d	Everything — geometry, materials, lights, cameras, modifiers.	The only file another studio can pick up and continue properly. Ask for it by name.
STEP / IGES	Precise engineering surfaces and solids. No materials.	Anything manufactured. The format your engineers and tooling suppliers already use.
FBX	Geometry, materials, rigs and animation.	Handing a scene between packages, and into real-time or game engines.
OBJ	Geometry and UVs. Simple, universal, lossy on everything else.	A safe archival fallback. Almost nothing cannot open it.
glTF / GLB	Geometry and materials, optimised for the web.	Product configurators, AR viewers, anything running in a browser.
USD / USDZ	Full scene description, increasingly the interchange standard.	Large scenes, multi-studio pipelines, Apple AR.
Textures, separately	The image maps the materials point at.	Always ask for these as a folder. A model without its textures is a grey shape.

The last row is the one that catches people. Models are routinely handed over with materials that reference files still sitting on the studio's server. Open the model on your own machine before you sign anything off.

STEP 02

Why “it looks fine” is not a specification

Two models can produce the same image and be worth completely different amounts. The difference is invisible in a render and obvious the moment anyone tries to reuse it.

01	Polygon count, matched to use	A model built for a print hero shot may be far too heavy for a web configurator, and one built for the web will fall apart in close-up. Say what it is for, and ask whether you are getting one version or several.
02	Clean topology	Evenly distributed geometry that can be edited, deformed and animated. Messy topology renders fine once and then resists every change you ask for afterwards.
03	Real-world scale and origin	The model should be its actual size, sitting at a sensible zero point, in stated units. Wrong scale is the single most common reason a delivered model is useless to the next person.
04	UV layout	How textures are mapped onto the surface. Bad UVs mean no one can change a label, a finish or a colourway without redoing the work.
05	Named, organised parts	"Handle", "lid", "body" — not "object_047". This is what makes variants and exploded views cheap later.
06	Separated materials	Each finish its own material, named. Without this, "same product, matte black" is a new job instead of a five-minute change.

The cheapest sentence you can put in a brief

"Delivered model to be at real-world scale, in stated units, with named parts, separated materials and textures supplied as linked files." One sentence, written before work starts, and it is the difference between owning an asset and owning a picture of one.

STEP 03

Eight questions before you commission

- ☐ **01** Do we receive the model itself, or only the rendered images?
- ☐ **02** In which formats — native working file, and which neutral exchange format?
- ☐ **03** Are textures and materials included as separate linked files?
- ☐ **04** May we give the model to another studio to continue?
- ☐ **05** Is it built at real-world scale, in which units?
- ☐ **06** Are parts named and materials separated for future variants?
- ☐ **07** If you keep the file, how long, and what does a new angle cost in a year?
- ☐ **08** What licence covers the model as distinct from the images?

Owning it is not always right

Full ownership usually costs more, and if you will never touch the file, that money is better spent on the images. The mistake is not choosing one or the other. The mistake is not knowing which one you chose until the moment you need the model.

The middle option most people want

The studio keeps and maintains the file, you have a written right to request it at any time, and a stated rate for future work from it. Cheaper than buying it outright, and it removes the risk that matters — the file quietly not existing when you come back.



Maverick Frame production render.

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

WRITTEN BY

Dim Kuzmenko

Founder



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