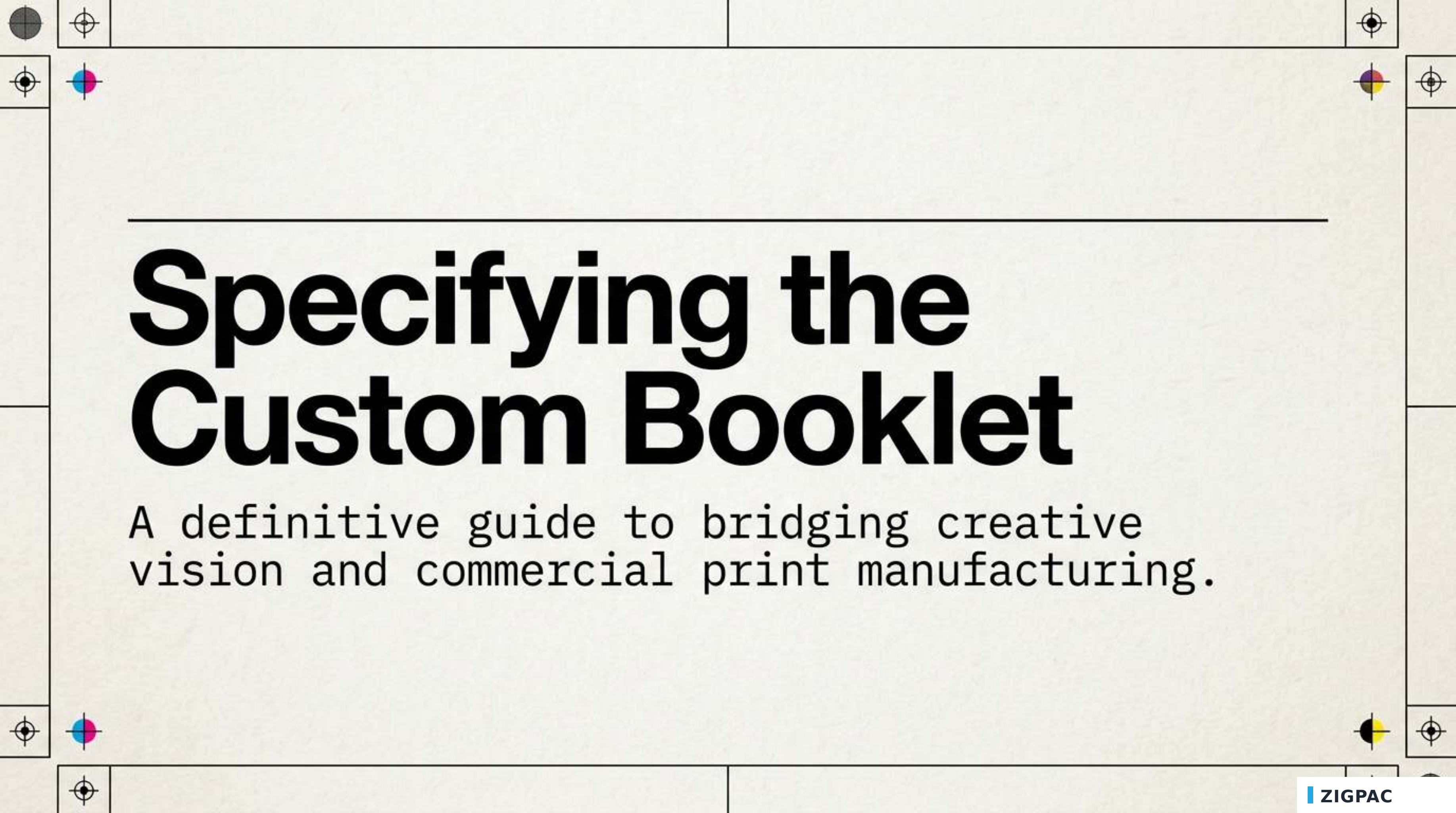


The image features a white background with a black border. At the corners and midpoints of the border are registration marks (crosshairs) and color bars (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black).

Specifying the Custom Booklet

A definitive guide to bridging creative vision and commercial print manufacturing.

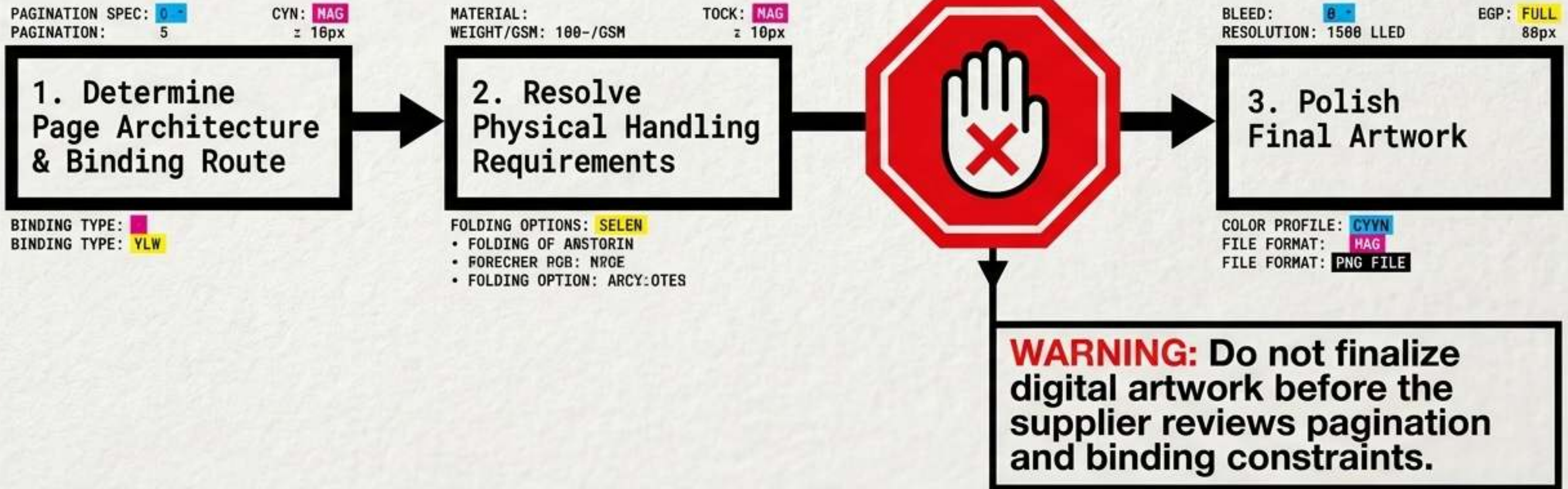
Defining the Format:

Is it actually a booklet?

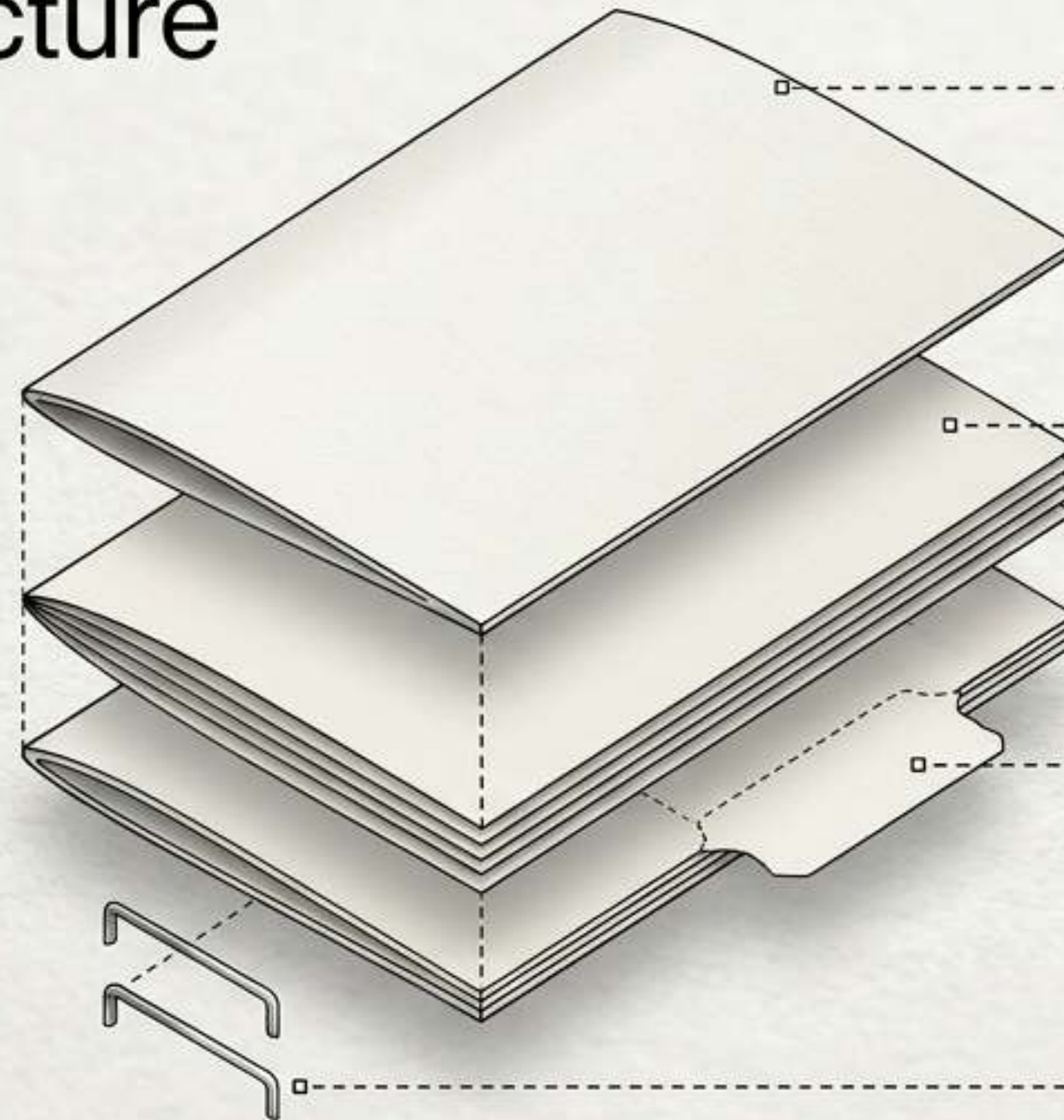
Format	Binding Needs	Revision Frequency	Key Differentiator
Booklet	Defined reading order, bound	Low/Static	Separates cover from text pages; used for instructions, reports, promos.
Brochure	Little or no binding	Low/Static	Often just folded sheets.
Catalog	Organized around product selection	High/Frequent	Requires indexing or frequent revisions.
Magazine	Bound	Low/Periodic	Follows a recurring editorial issue format.
Book	Heavy-duty / Long-form	Low/Static	Requires sturdier binding mechanisms.

The Golden Rule of Booklet Production

The most comparable quotations begin with an agreed page architecture and binding route.



Deconstructing the Physical Architecture



The Cover Stock: Specified separately from text pages, even if using the same material. Dictates stiffness, opacity, and initial feel.

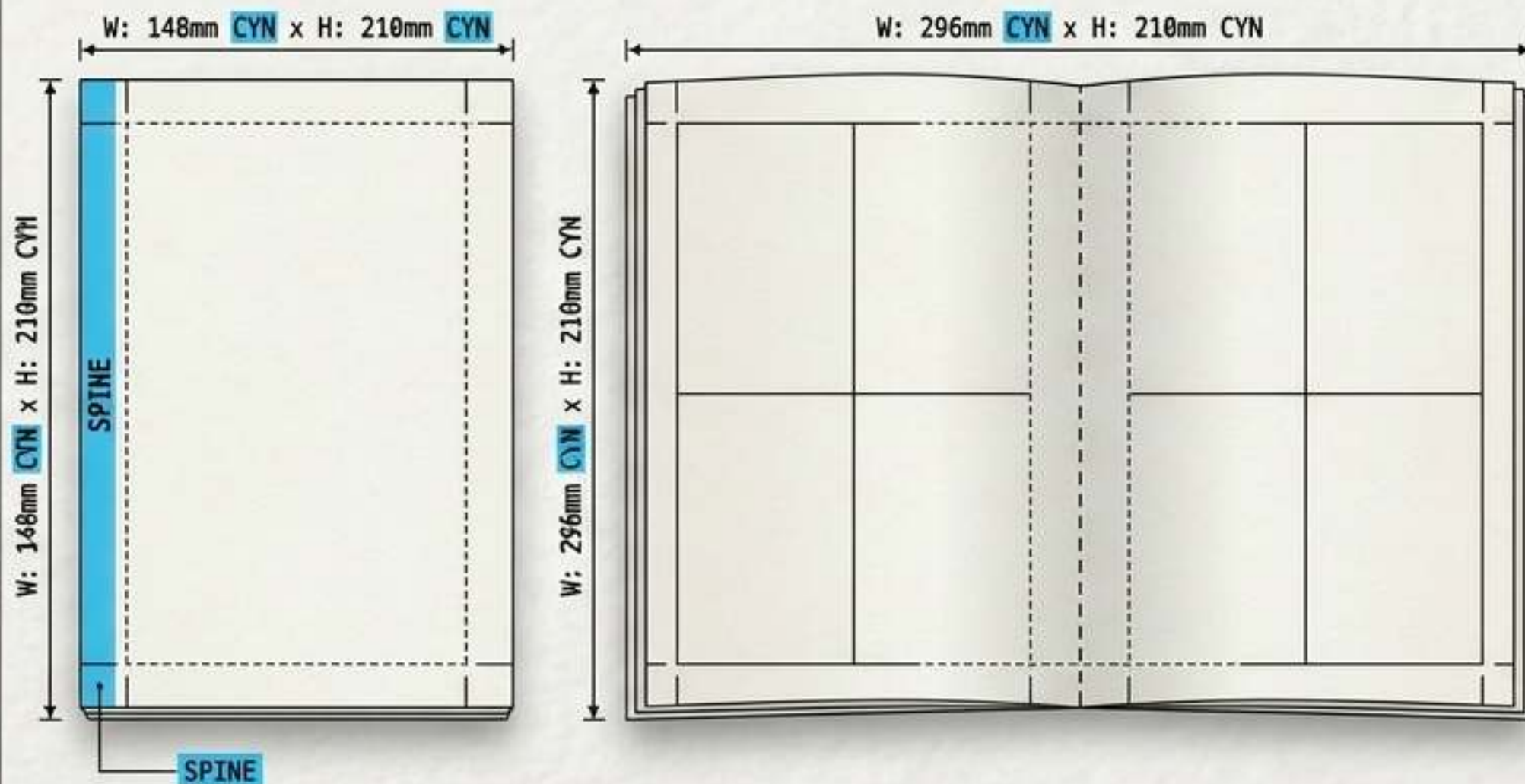
The Text Pages: Multi-page printed publication assembled into a defined reading order.

Finishes & Inserts: Tear-out forms, pockets, tabs, drilled holes, or separate inserts (must have exact locations mapped).

The Binding Mechanism: Imposes specific page-count and spine constraints. Dictates whether the booklet can lie flat or present a printable spine.

Dimension and Pagination Physics

$$\text{Total Pages} = \text{Cover Pages} + \text{Text Pages} + \text{Blank Pages}$$



Size & Orientation: Define the finished closed size and orientation (portrait/landscape).



The Page Count Formula: Clearly state if the total page count includes the cover pages. Explicitly confirm how blank pages are counted.

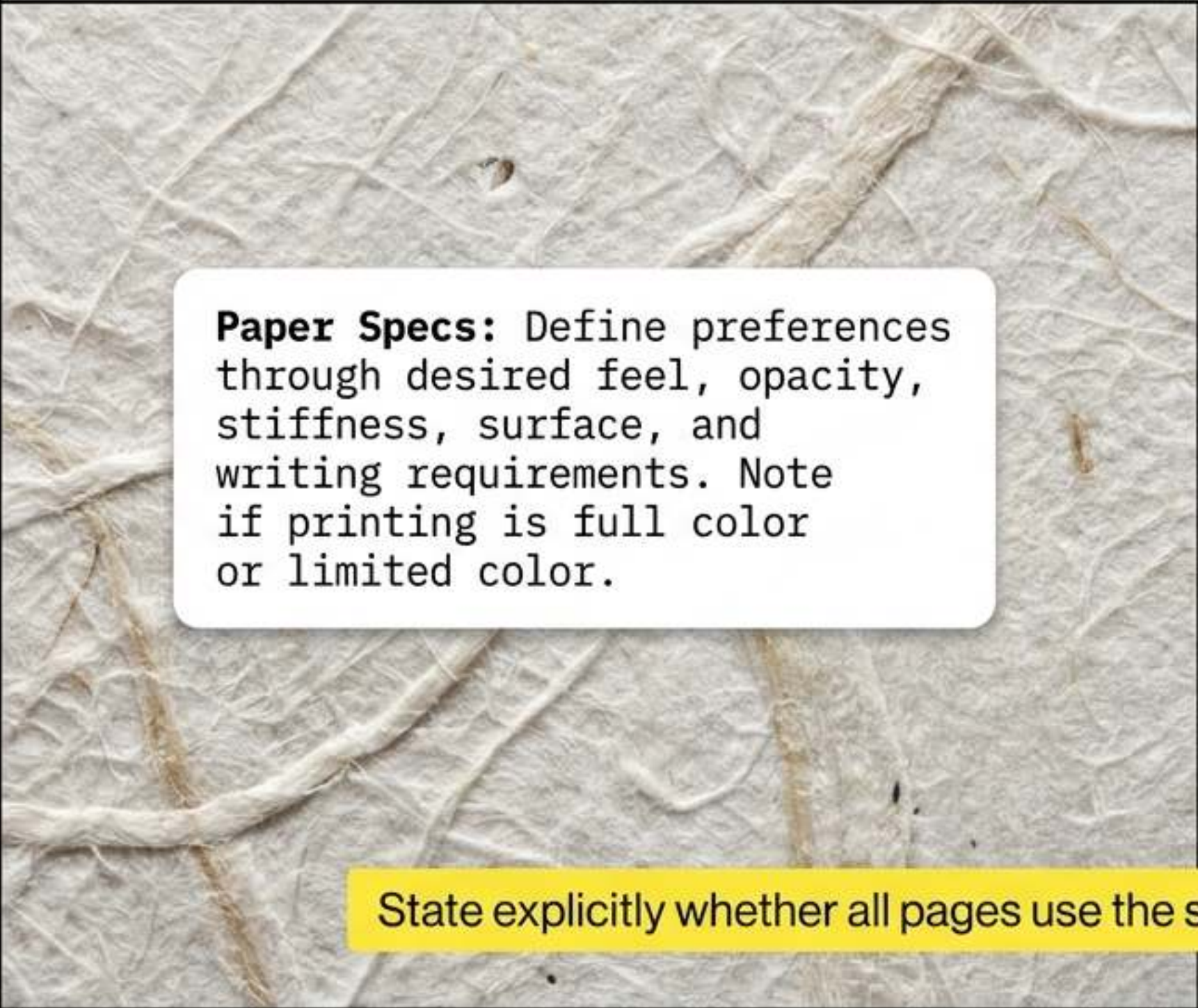


Binding Constraints: Binding choices dictate page-count math (e.g., multiples of 4). Always ask the supplier to review pagination.



Usage Constraints: Must it fit a specific mailing envelope?

Specifying Stocks and Surfaces



Paper Specs: Define preferences through desired feel, opacity, stiffness, surface, and writing requirements. Note if printing is full color or limited color.

Coatings & Laminations

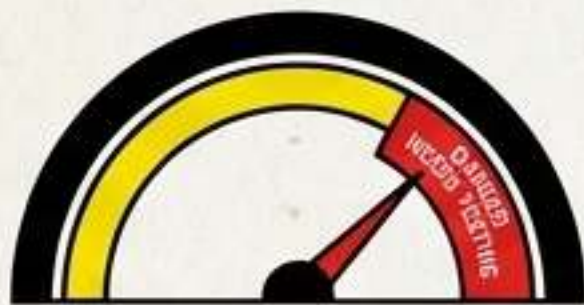
Apply coating or lamination only where it supports expected handling or appearance.

- ☒ Gloss / Matte Lamination
- ☒ UV Spot Coating
- ☒ Aqueous Coating
- ☒ Soft Touch Finish

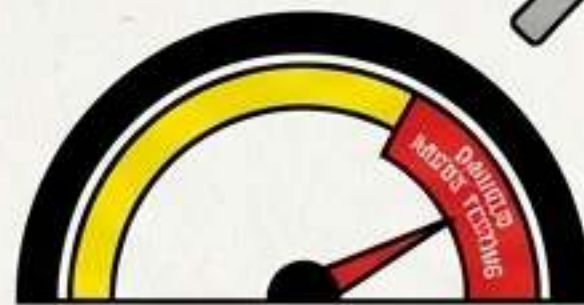
State explicitly whether all pages use the same treatment or if specific sections differ.

The Reality Check: Never Infer Suitability

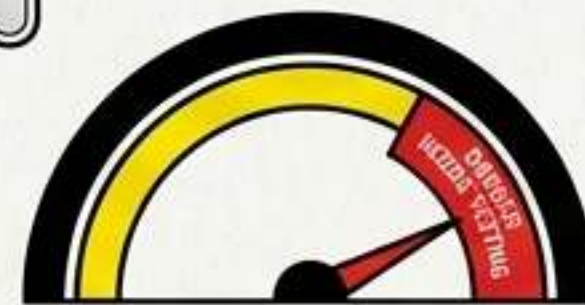
Do not infer suitability from a generic material name. Critical requirements require physical sample and testing review.



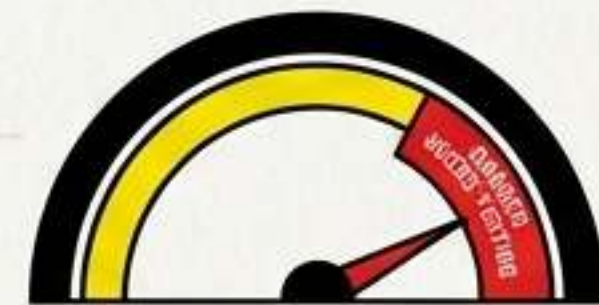
Rub Resistance
(Ink offsetting)



Binding Performance
(Will the spine crack?)



Legibility
(On colored/textured stocks)

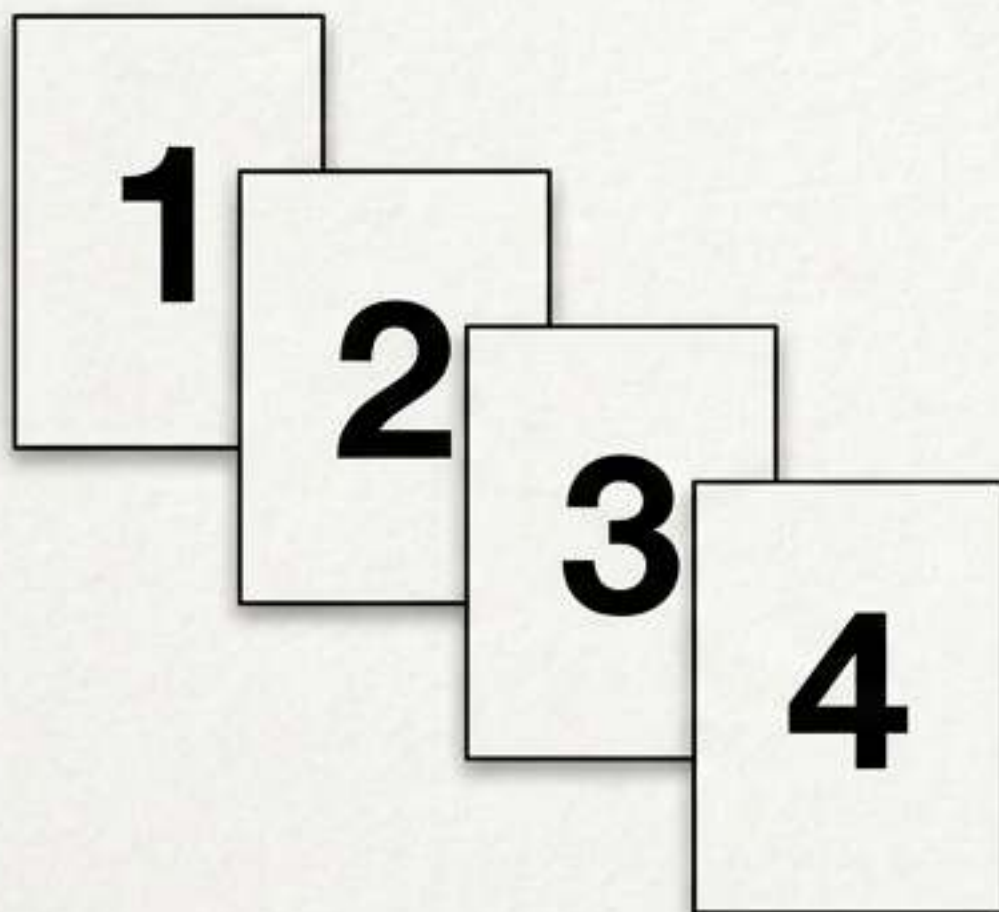


Compliance
(Environmental & Safety)

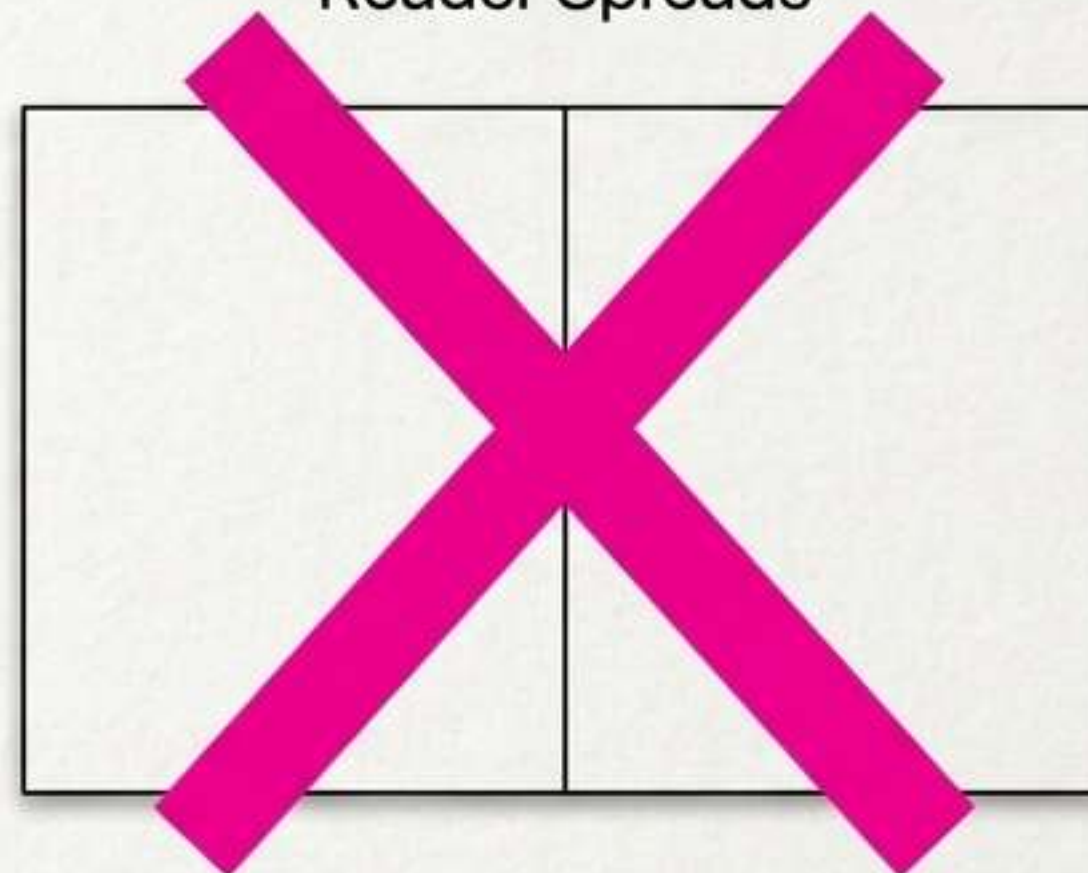
Artwork Preparation and Preflight

Main Rule: Prepare individual pages in reading order, not reader spreads (unless specifically requested by the supplier).

Reading Order



Reader Spreads



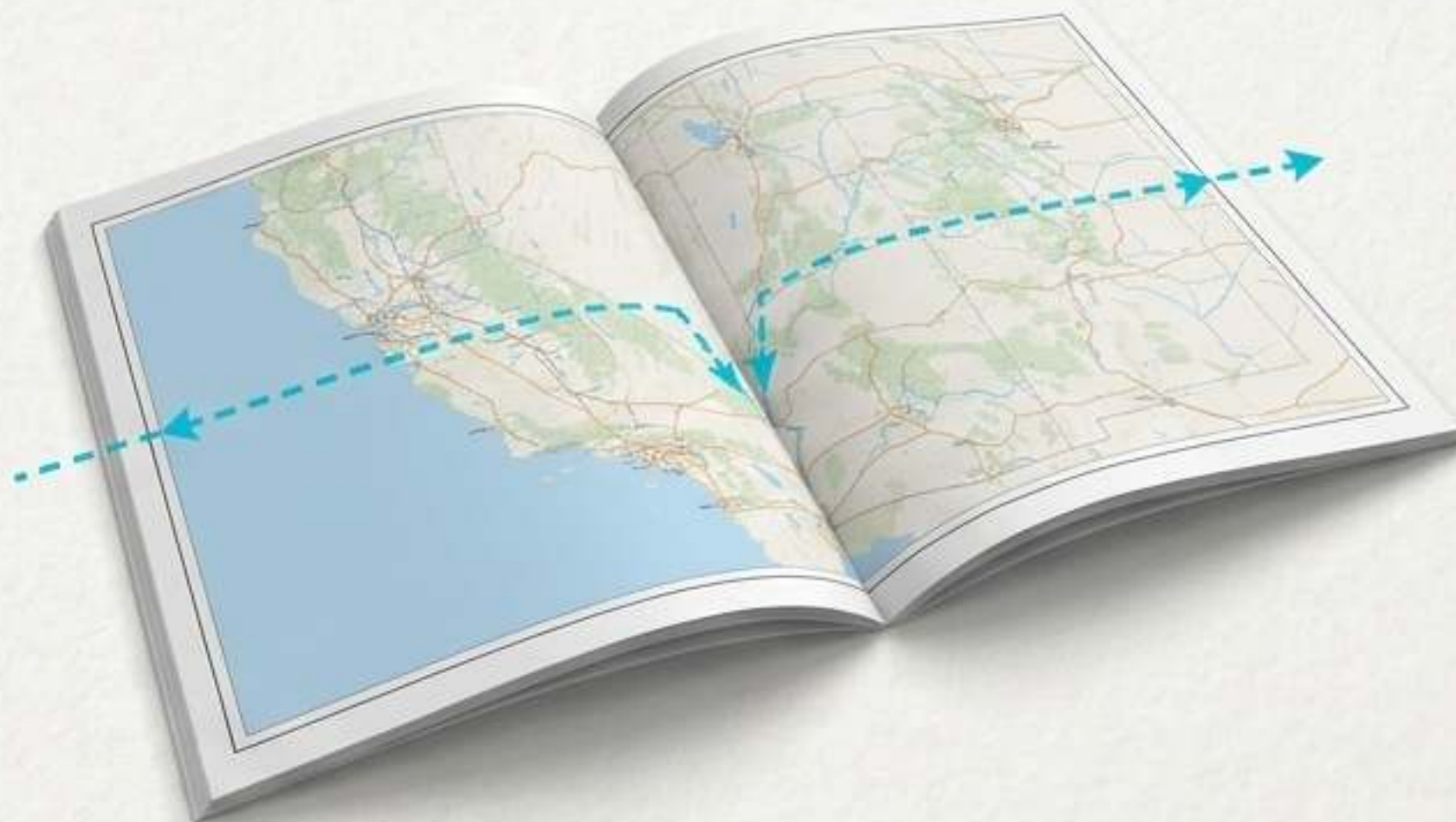
File Submission: Submit a standards-compliant print PDF after preflight, or package all fonts and linked images.

The Safe Zone: Keep page numbers, rules, and essential text safely away from trim lines and binding areas. Use supplier-provided templates for final-size, bleed, margin, and spine guidance.

Navigating the Gutter (Crossovers)

When maps, tables, or continuous images run through the center fold, you risk severe content loss or visual interruption at the binding.

The Gutter Threat



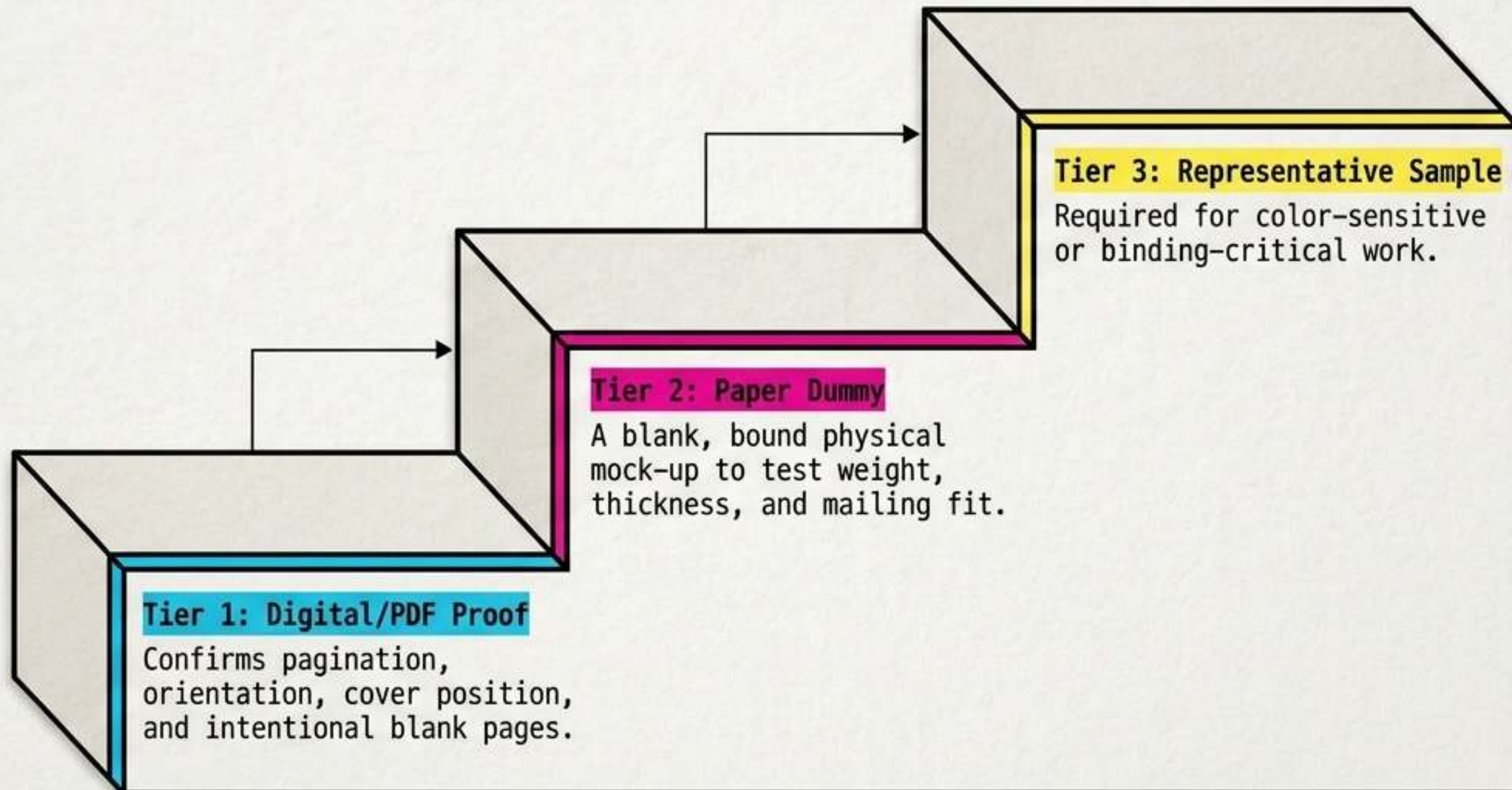
Actionable Advice:
Anticipate the spine gap.
Adjust critical design elements away from the center fold.



Callout: Foldouts and inserts must be identified separately from standard pagination.

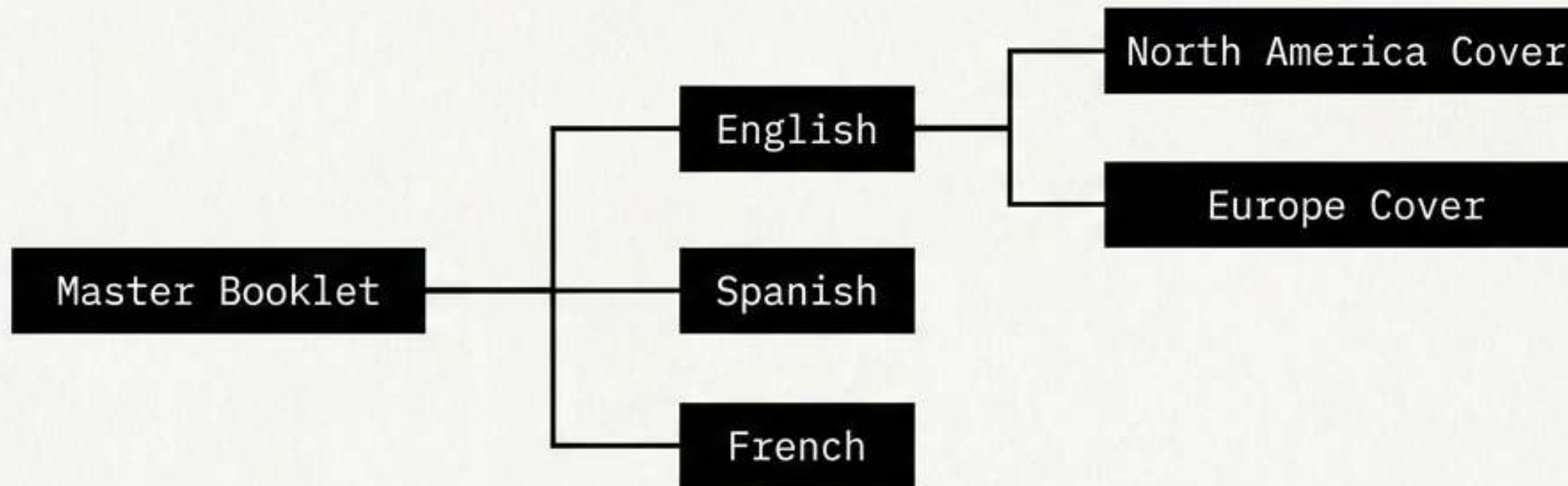
Validating the Execution: Proofing Tiers

Annotation: Define your exact proof and color-review requirements before production starts.



Versioning Logic and Unit Economics

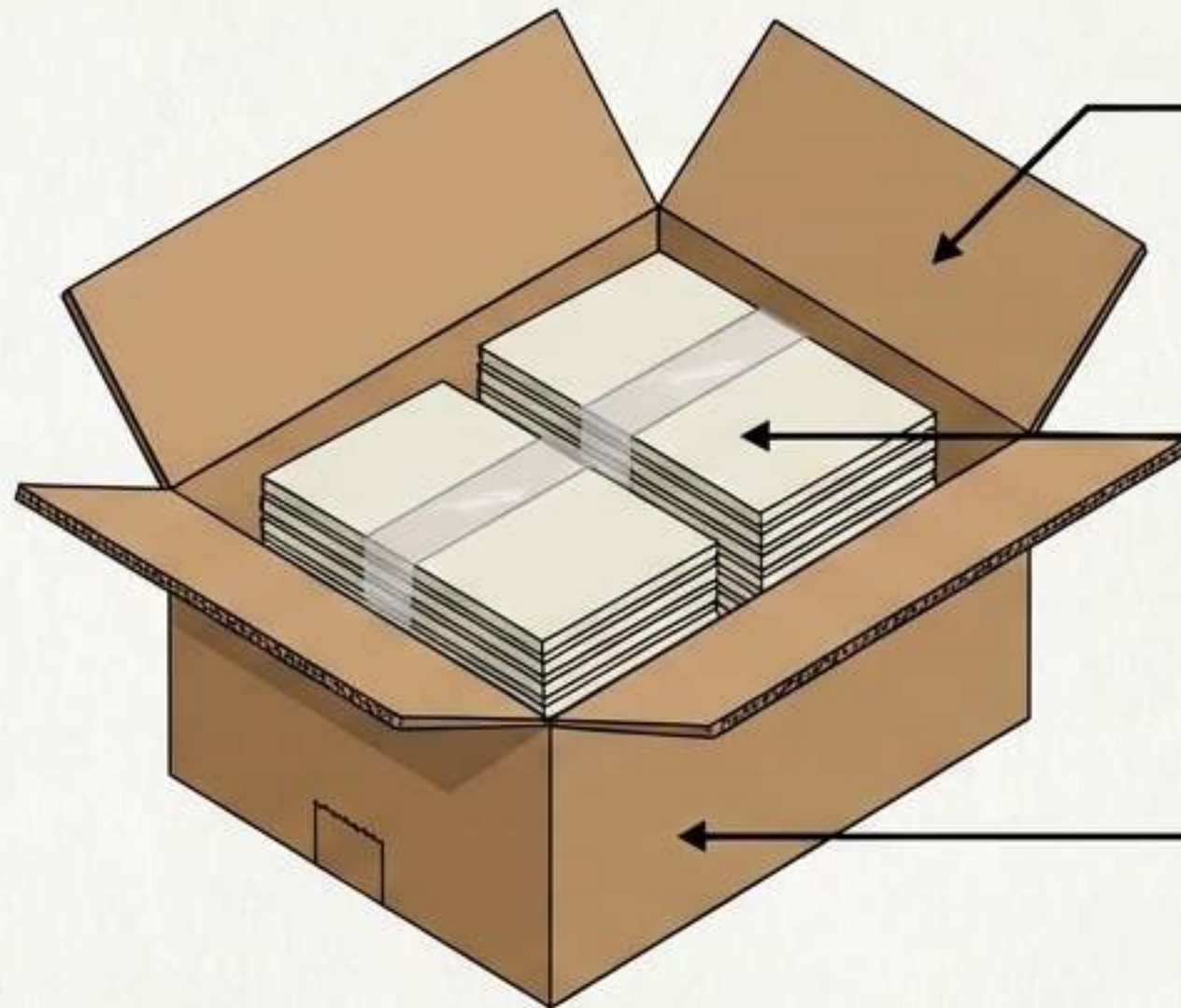
State total copies and explicitly map any version splits by:
Language, Cover design, Region, or Internal content.



The Financial Impact: Versioning affects setup time, collation, and unit economics.

Action: Request separate and combined quotation scenarios where relevant to find the most cost-effective production path.

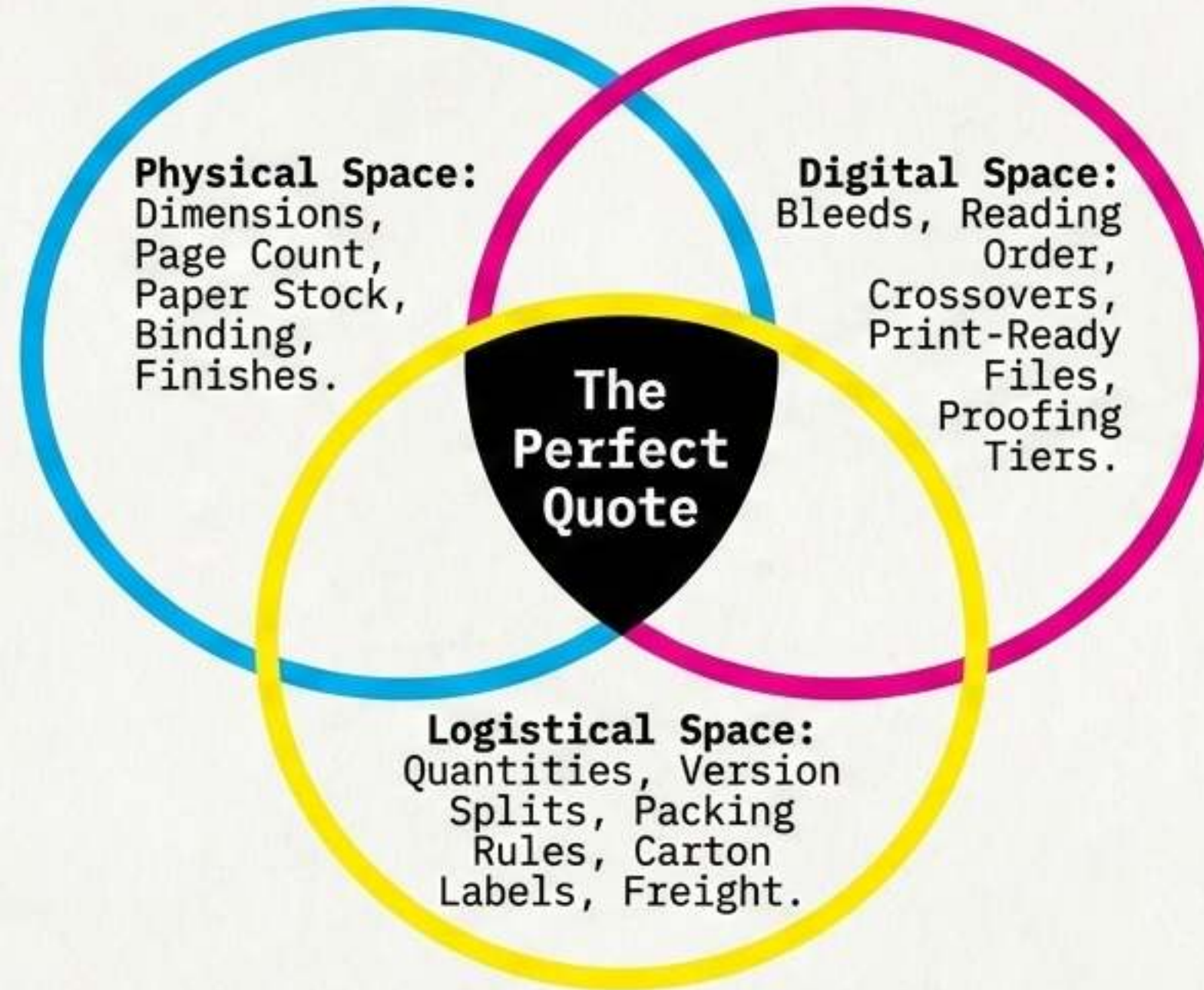
Packing, Fulfillment, and The Final Mile



- ☐ **Carton Specs:** Define copies per inner pack, carton labels, and maximum practical handling weight.
- ☐ **Preparation:** Specify if booklets require individual wrapping, mailing preparation, barcode labels, bundles, or inclusion in kits.
- ☐ **Distribution:** List delivery addresses and freight basis.

Warning Callout: Advance Copies & Overs. State if advance copies, staged releases, or overs for internal distribution need separate identification. Do not assume they will be automatically separated.

The RFQ Architecture



Takeaway: A flawless specification lives at the exact intersection of physical feasibility, accurate digital prep, and strict logistical rules.

Master RFQ Checklist: Physical Attributes

- ☐ 1. Give closed size, orientation, page count, and confirm whether cover pages are included.
- ☐ 2. Specify cover and text appearance, feel, opacity, and writing needs.
- ☐ 3. Request an appropriate binding recommendation and explicitly confirm pagination rules.
- ☐ 4. Describe use, expected handling, mailing constraints, and desired opening behavior (e.g., lay-flat).

Master RFQ Checklist: Execution & Validation

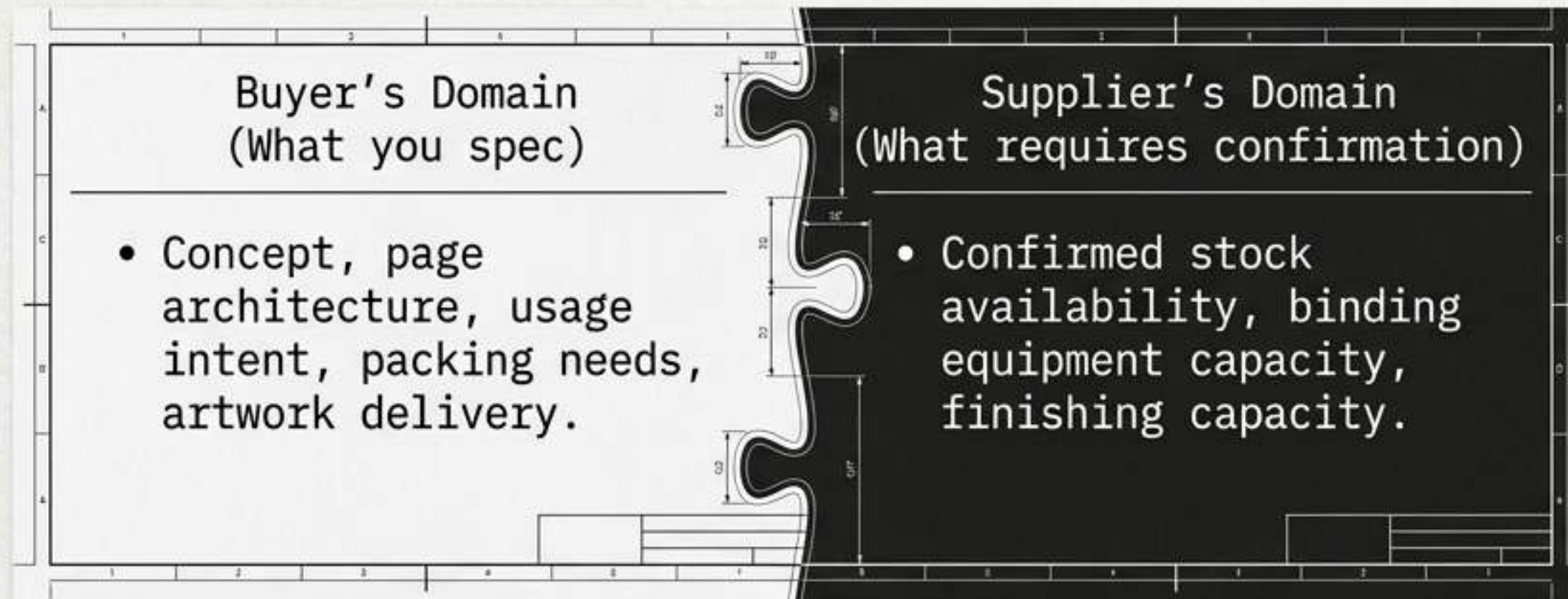
- ☐ 5. List coatings, lamination, perforations, inserts, holes, tabs, or other finishing elements.
- ☐ 6. Provide print-ready files and request supplier templates for margins, bleed, and spine width.
- ☐ 7. Define exact proof, paper dummy, sample, and color-review requirements.
- ☐ 8. State total quantity and detail every language, cover, or internal content version split.

Master RFQ Checklist: Logistics & Terms

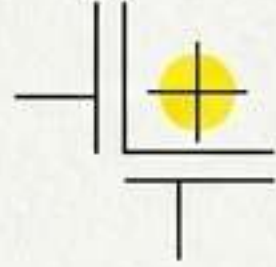
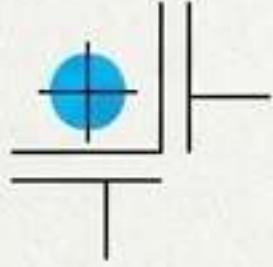
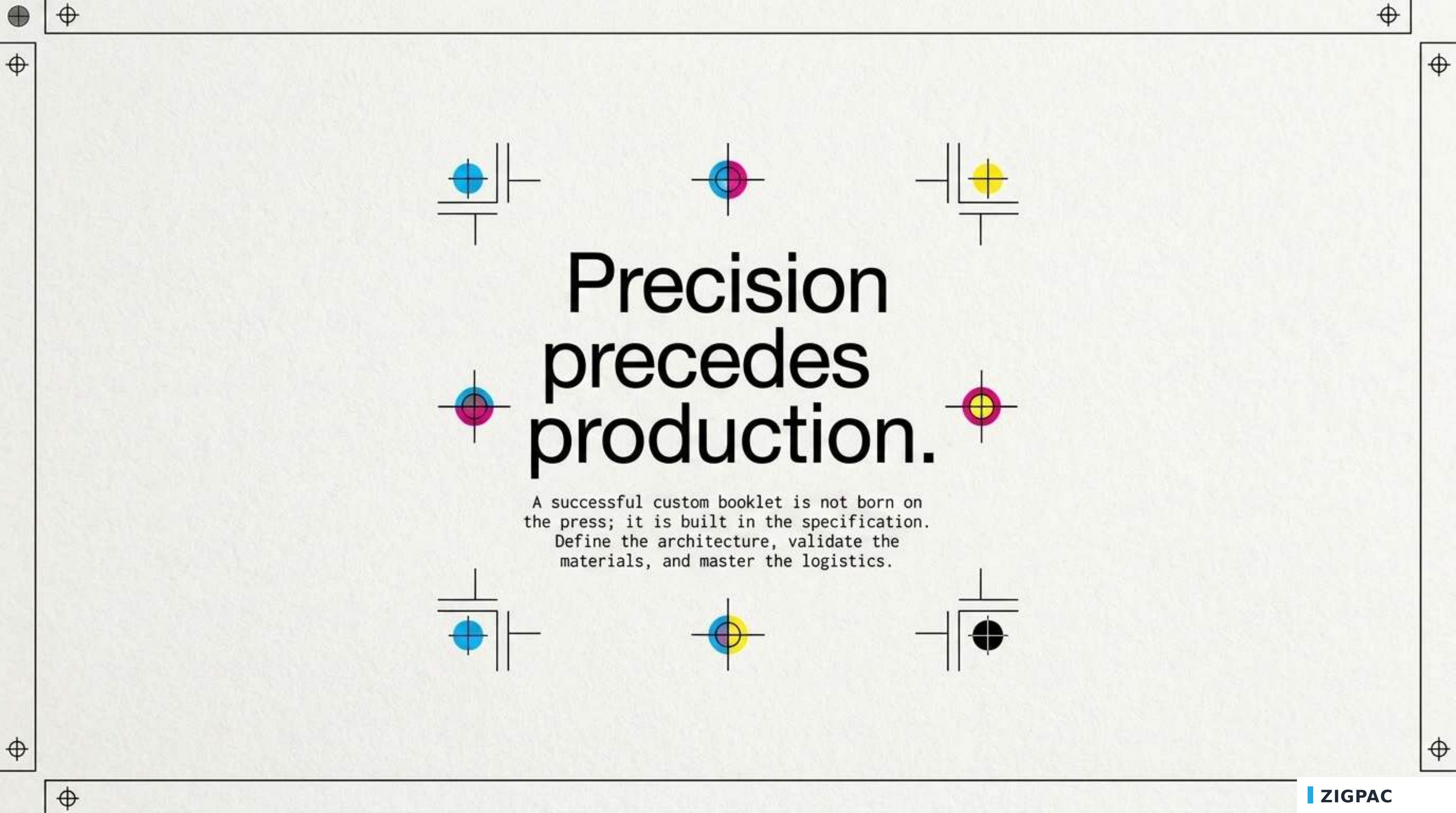
- ☐ 9. State bundling, individual protection, carton labels, kitting needs, and all final destinations.
- ☐ 10. Request an itemized quotation, production schedule, freight basis, and delivery terms.



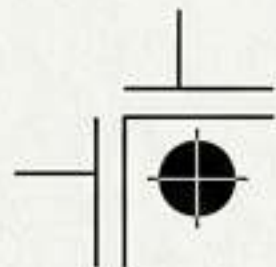
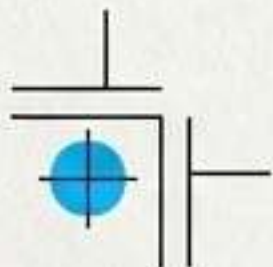
Boundaries of Specification



The Final Rule: Do not claim confirmed capacity or promise exact minimum quantities, prices, schedules, or tolerances without supplier confirmation. Final technical and commercial commitments require quotation, artwork, and material review.



Precision precedes production.



A successful custom booklet is not born on
the press; it is built in the specification.
Define the architecture, validate the
materials, and master the logistics.