

# The Custom Coaster Sourcing Playbook

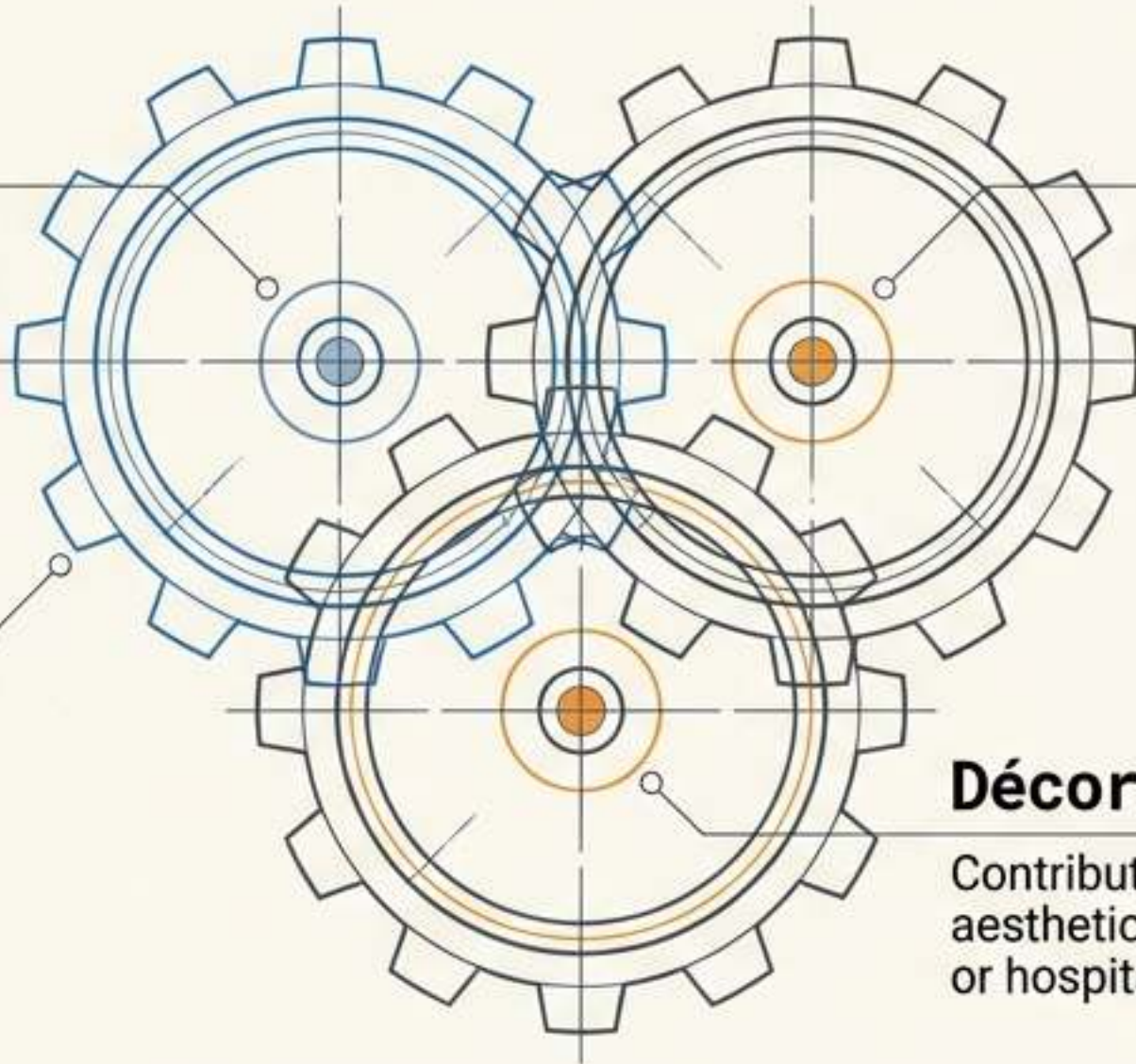
Translating material specifications and performance demands into flawless RFQs.



# Defining the Category Constraints

## Tabletop Protection

Guarding against beverage rings and heat



## Brand Display

Carrying a logo, illustration, or event message

## Décor

Contributing to the aesthetic of a retail design or hospitality setting

NOTE: Small format makes material choice, edge treatment, artwork scale, and set packing especially important.



A coaster path is **NOT** automatically the same route as a mouse pad, placemat, bar mat, silicone trivet, drink sleeve, or promotional card.

# Deconstructing Coaster Anatomy

## Top Layer

Specify the surface feel and visual finish.

## Bottom Layer

Identify the specific backing concept.

## Core

Define the distinct substrate thickness class.

## Perimeter

Explicitly request the shape, corner radiuses, and edge treatment.

All physical anatomy variables—shape, corners, edges, thickness class, and surface feel—must be requested explicitly in the RFQ.

# Mapping Environments to Performance Demands



## Cold Drinks & Hospitality

**Threat:** Condensation pooling & frequent wiping

**Test Required:** Absorbency, cleanability, and staining behavior



## Warm Cups & Restaurant Service

**Threat:** Thermal transfer

**Test Required:** Heat exposure expectations and table-contact behavior



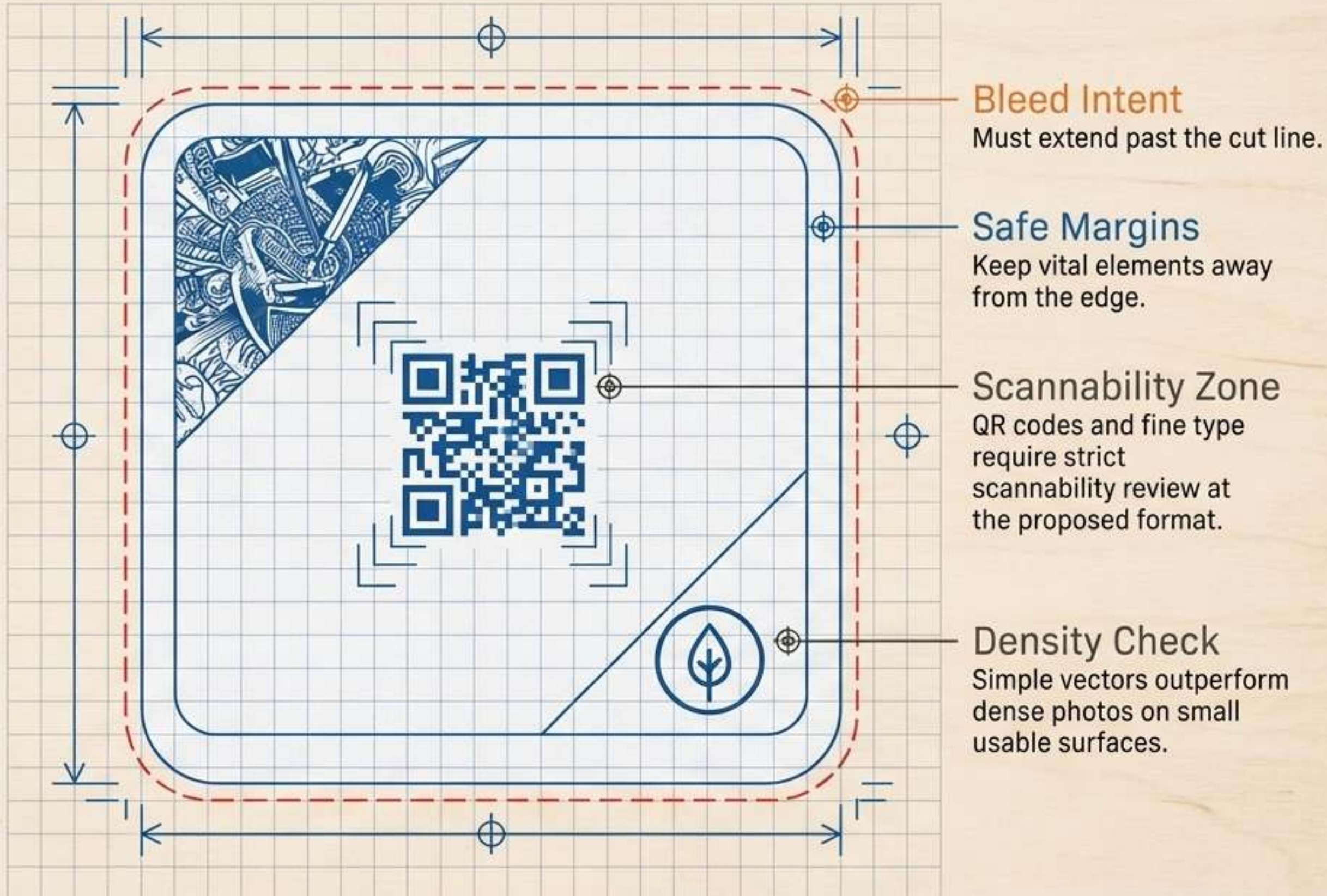
## Event Giveaways & Outdoor Use

**Threat:** Environmental degradation & repeated washing

**Test Required:** Durability and surface integrity

**WARNING:** Do not promise absorbency, heat resistance, stain resistance, dishwasher suitability, non-slip performance, or food-contact status **without evidence/testing.**  
Do not invent material grades, thicknesses, certifications, or guarantees.

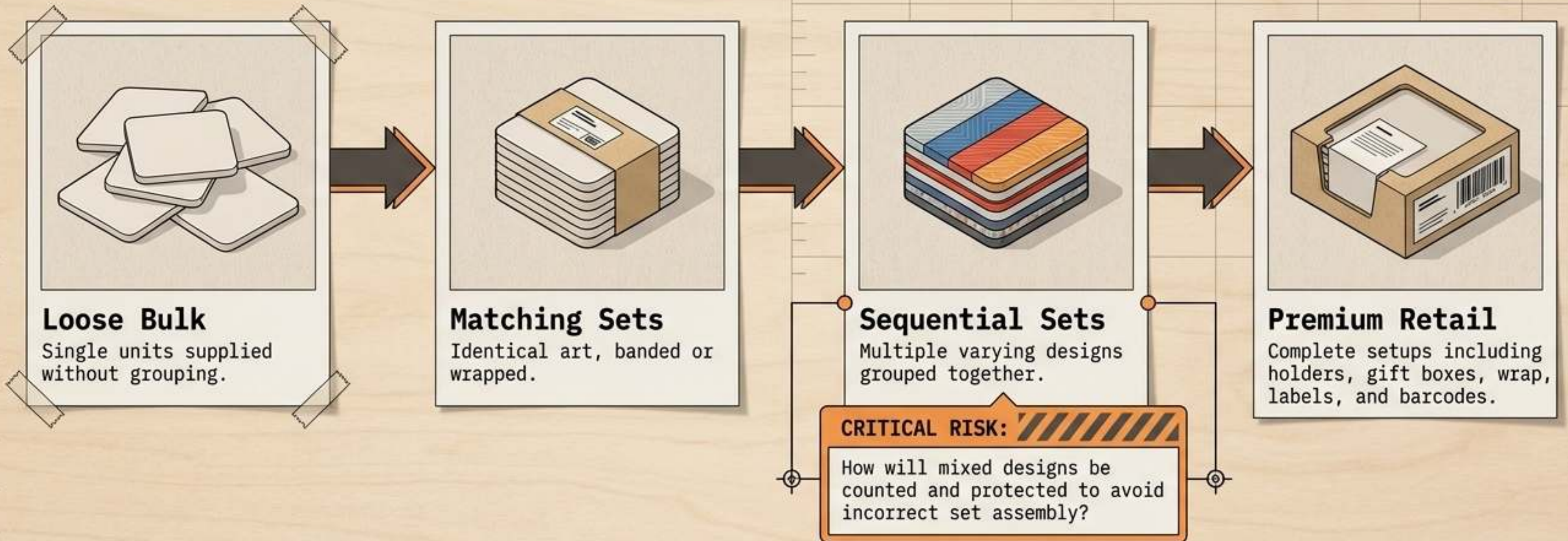
# Artwork Topography and Scannability Limits



## Delivery Checklist

- ☐ Print-ready vector logos
- ☐ Color references
- ☐ Image files
- ☐ Image files
- ☐ Layout for each side (1-sided vs. 2-sided)
- ☐ Shared vs. varied artwork instructions for sets

# Managing Sequences and Packaging Logistics



## FOUNDATIONAL RULE

**Quotation Rule:** Always quote quantities by design AND by set configuration.

# Physical Validation and Market Compliance

## Market & Contact Compliance

If the coaster will be used near food or beverages, explicitly state all relevant destination-market and contact considerations.

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## Physical Sample Testing

Digital proofs cannot substitute for physical interaction. Evaluate print clarity, surface cleanability, staining behavior, heat exposure, and table-contact behavior with representative samples.

|  | Clarity | Cleanability | Stain | Staining | Heat Exposure | Contact |
|--|---------|--------------|-------|----------|---------------|---------|
|  | ✓       | ✓            | ✓     | ✓        | ✓             | ✓       |
|  |         |              |       |          |               |         |
|  |         |              |       |          |               |         |

Final artwork must be reviewed against the chosen physical substrate and its printable area.

# The Master RFQ Synthesis

## 1. Context & Environment

- Setting and expected drink use?
- Sourcing single units, matching sets, or a gift-box component?
- Cleaning, condensation, heat, or table-protection testing needs?

## 2. Physical Construction

- Surface, backing, shape, edge, and finish requirements?

## 3. Creative & Compliance

- Artwork on one side or both sides?
- QR codes, fine type, photos, or mixed designs involved?
- Destination-market or food/beverage contact requirements?

## 4. Commerce & Packing

- Unit and set packing required (holders, retail wrap, kits)?

Final technical and commercial commitments require quotation, artwork, and material review.  
Do not invent material sizes, prices, minimum quantities, or lead times.