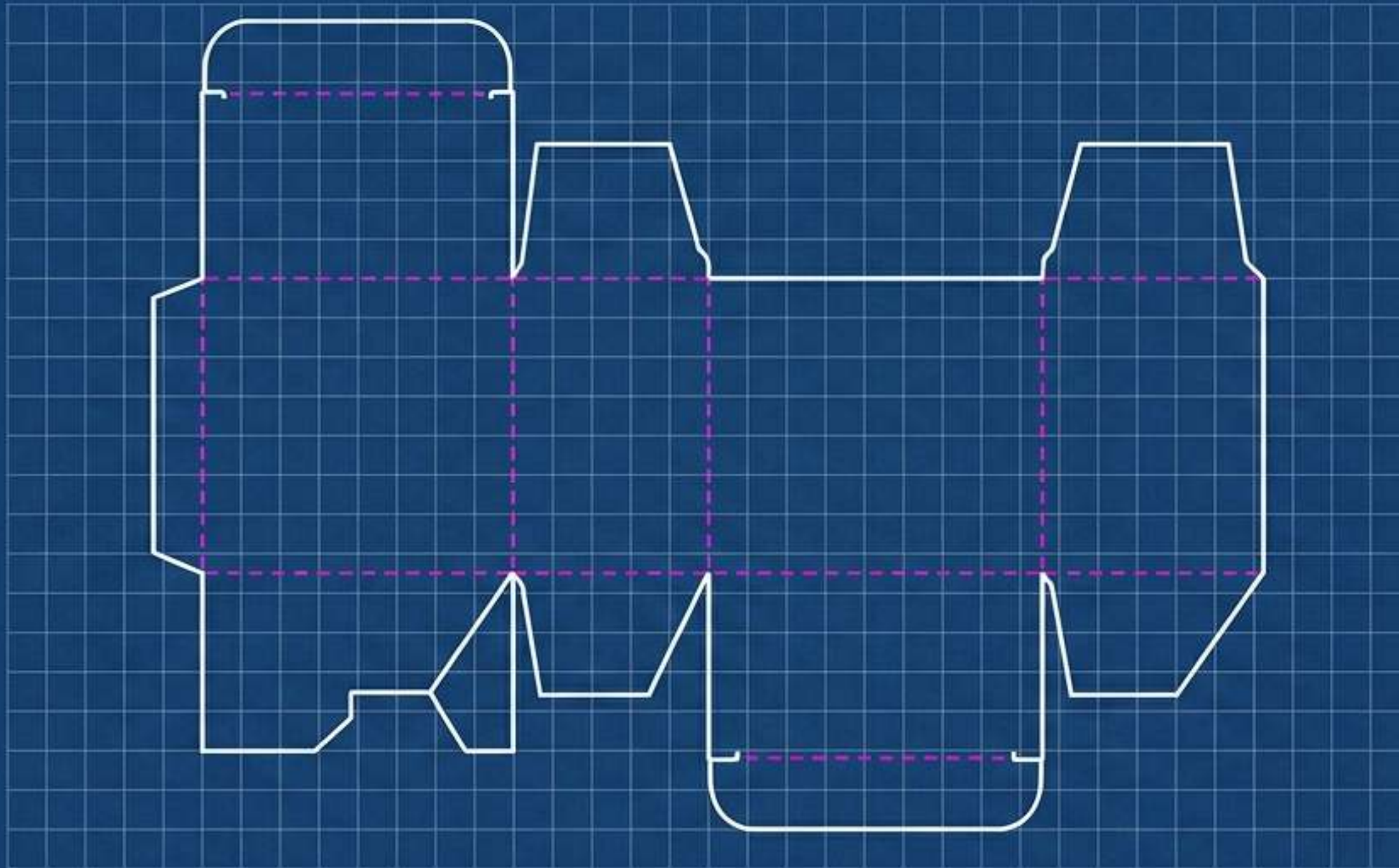
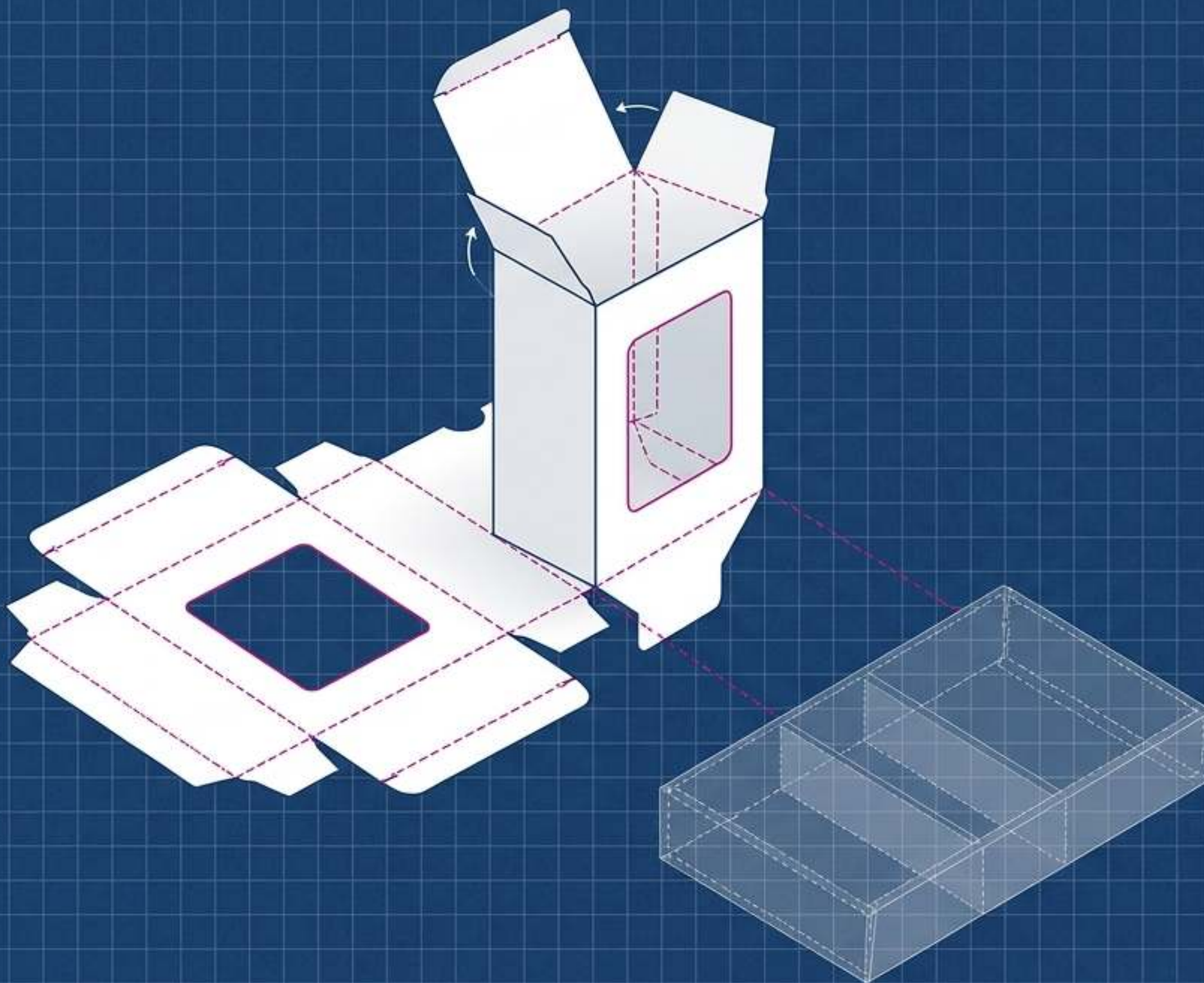




The Procurement Blueprint: Custom Folding Cartons

A technical specification and sourcing guide for retail packaging.



CATEGORY DEFINITION & PURPOSE

Custom folding cartons are paperboard-based structures formed from a die-cut flat shape. They are designed primarily for branded product-unit packaging and shelf communication, commonly serving as retail unit packs, sleeves, or secondary packaging.

CORE FUNCTION

Retail presentation & shelf communication.



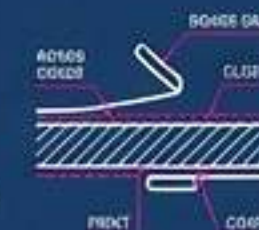
DEPENDENCY WARNING

May require a separate shipper, insert, tray, or barrier depending on product fragility.



CATEGORY RULE

The term folding carton does not dictate board grade, closure, coating, print process, or product protection level.



The Diagnostic Matrix: Selecting the Right Format

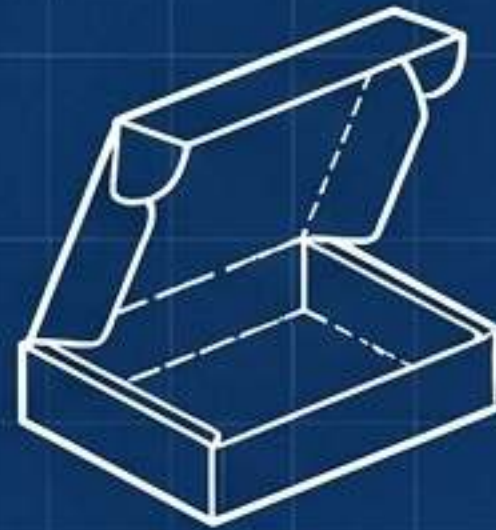


Folding Cartons

Focus: Retail Presentation

Function: Unit packaging & shelf communication

Outer Shipper Required:
Usually Yes

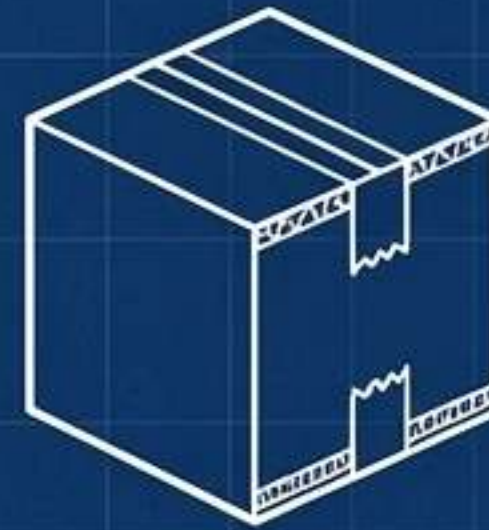


Mailer Boxes

Focus: Fulfillment

Function: D2C unboxing and integrated shipping

Outer Shipper Required:
No



Corrugated Boxes

Focus: Distribution

Function: Transit protection and bulk handling

Outer Shipper Required:
No



Rigid Gift Boxes

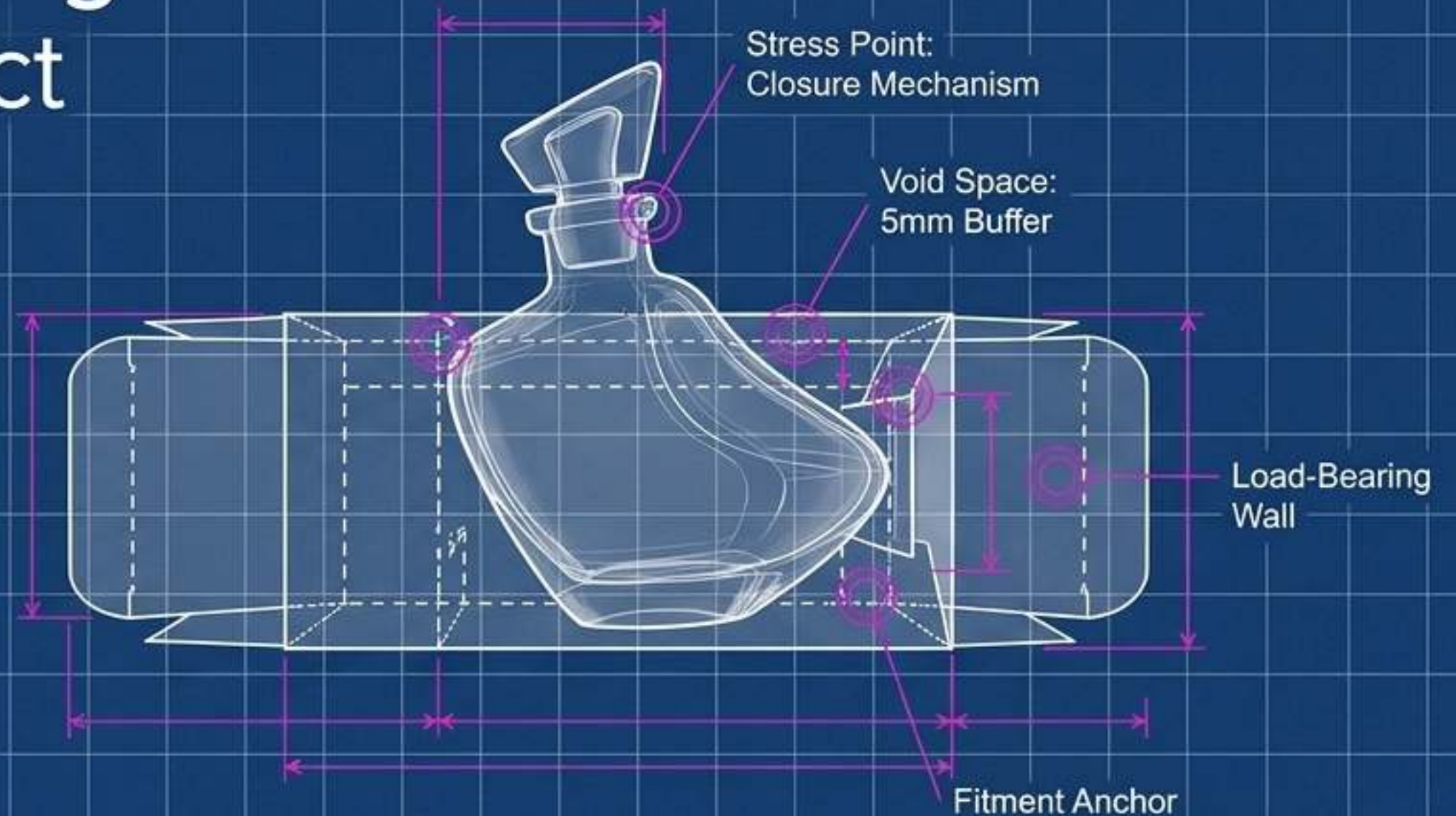
Focus: Premium Unboxing

Function: High-end, presentation-led opening experience

Outer Shipper Required:
Usually Yes

Structural Engineering: Form Follows Product

A carton must be specified around the physical realities of the item it contains, its shelf orientation, and its route to market.



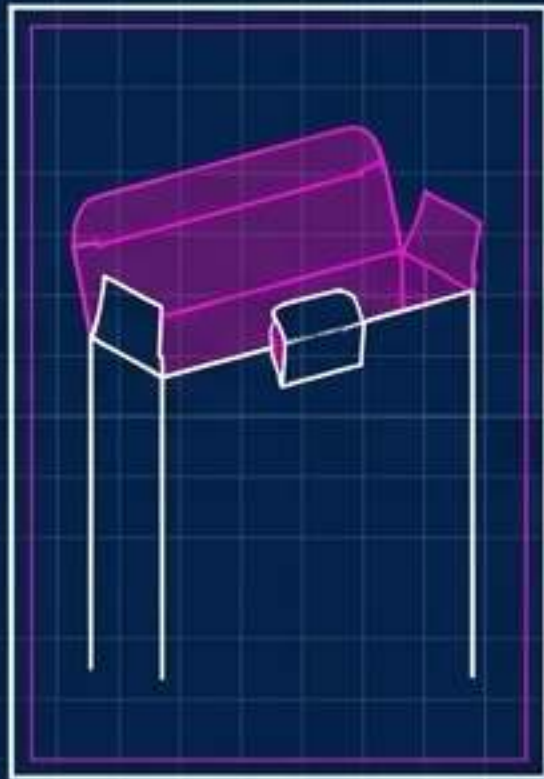
Physical Variables

Shape, weight distribution, fragility, and surface sensitivity.

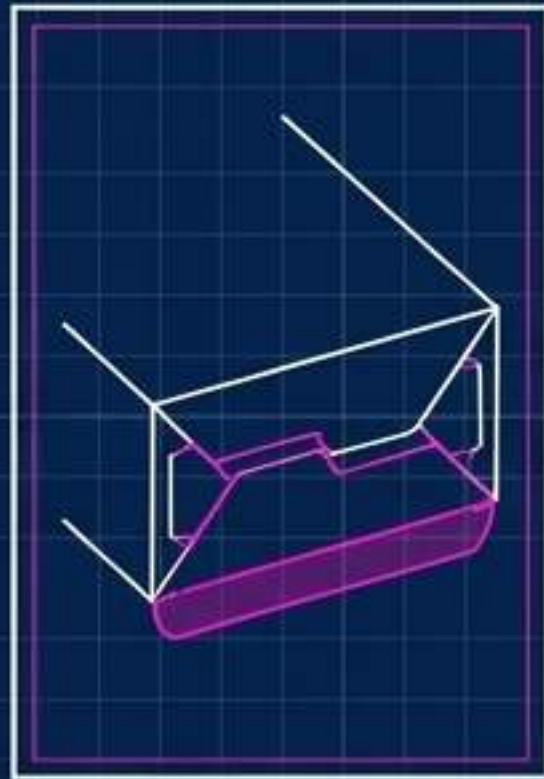
Functional Variables

Required orientation and the exact mechanism of how the product enters the carton.

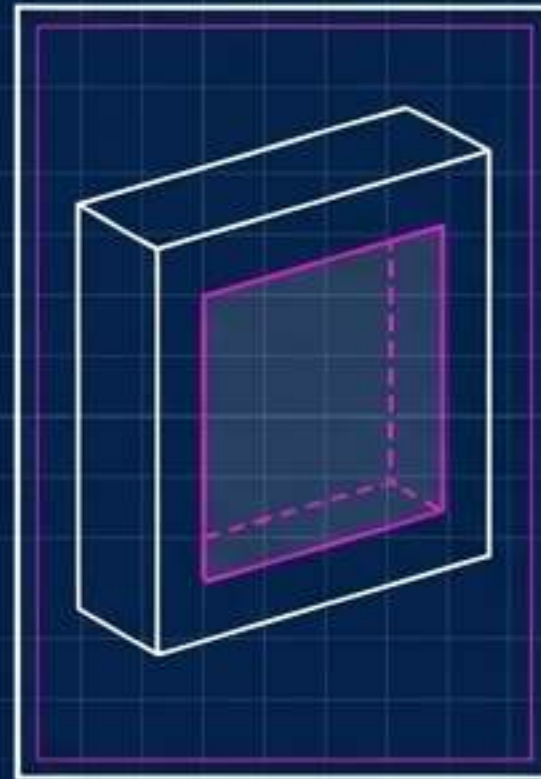
Structural Variables & Hardware



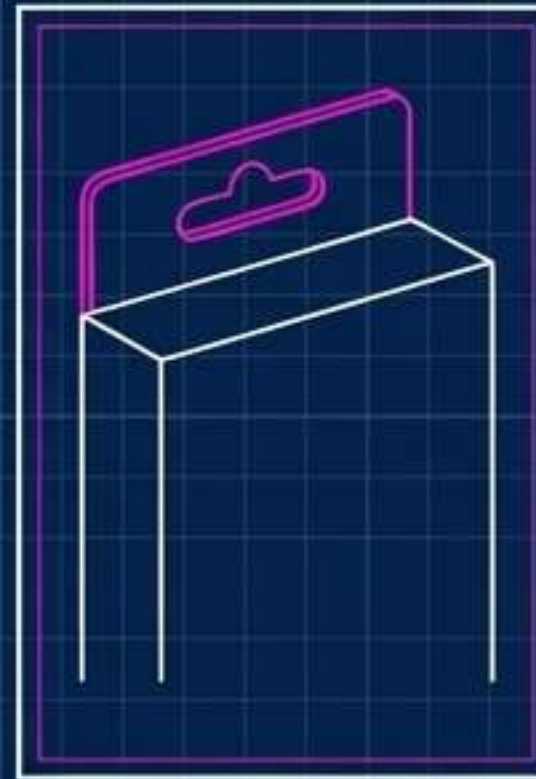
1. Tuck Closure



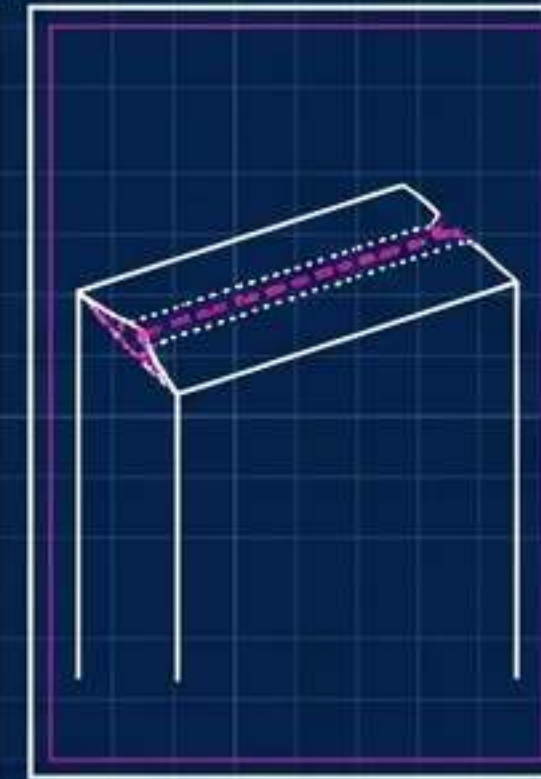
2. Locking Feature



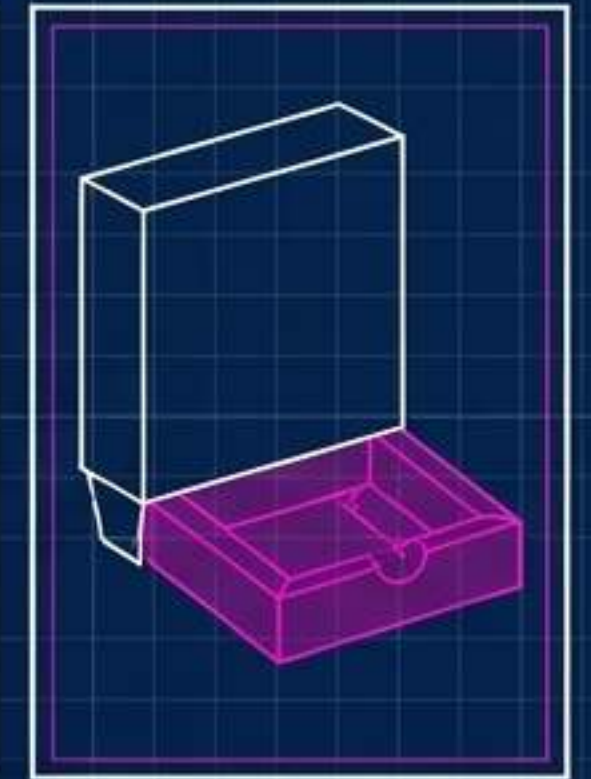
3. Window Provision



4. Hanger Provision



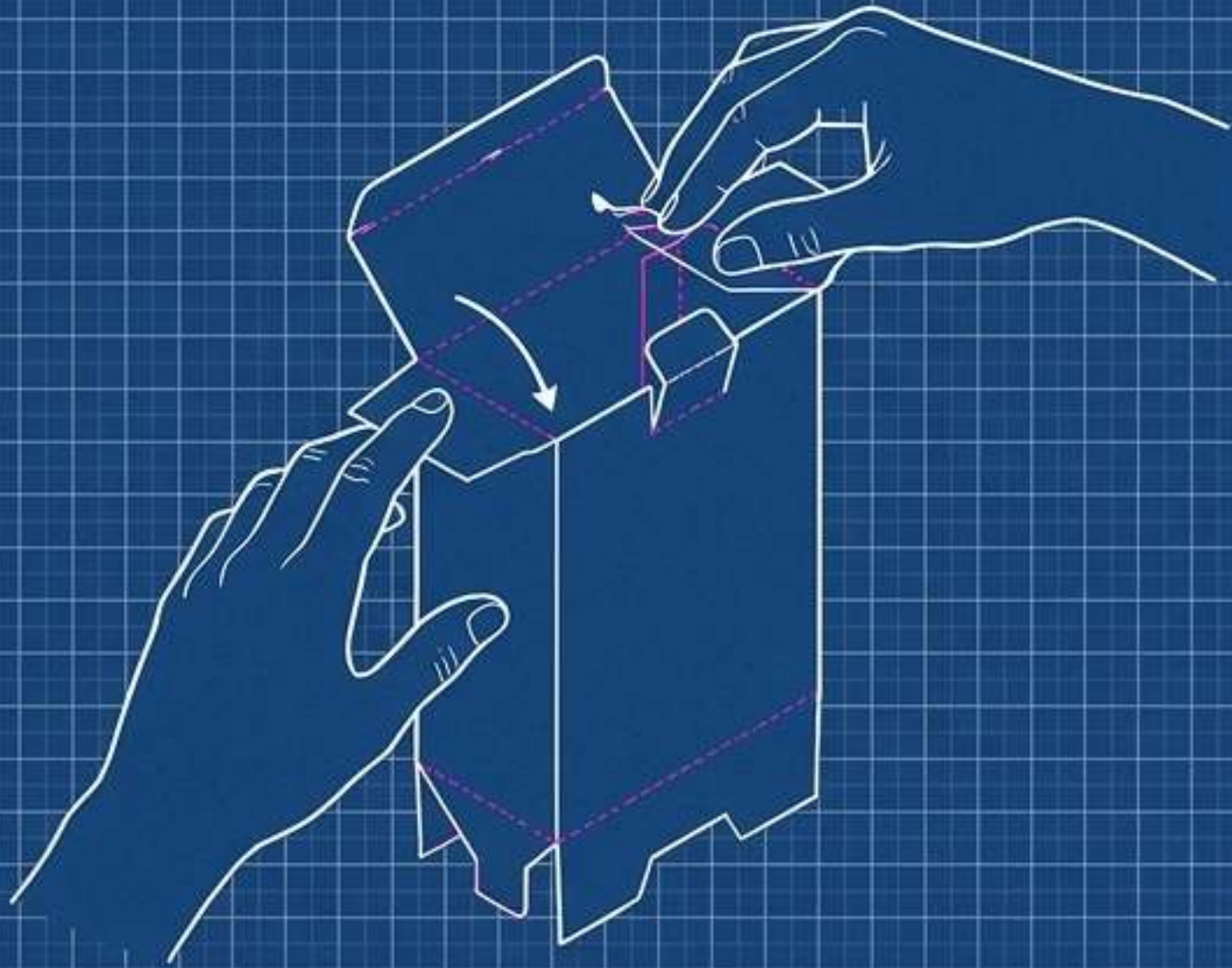
5. Tamper-Evident Element



6. Inserts & Sleeves
[Display-Ready Forms]

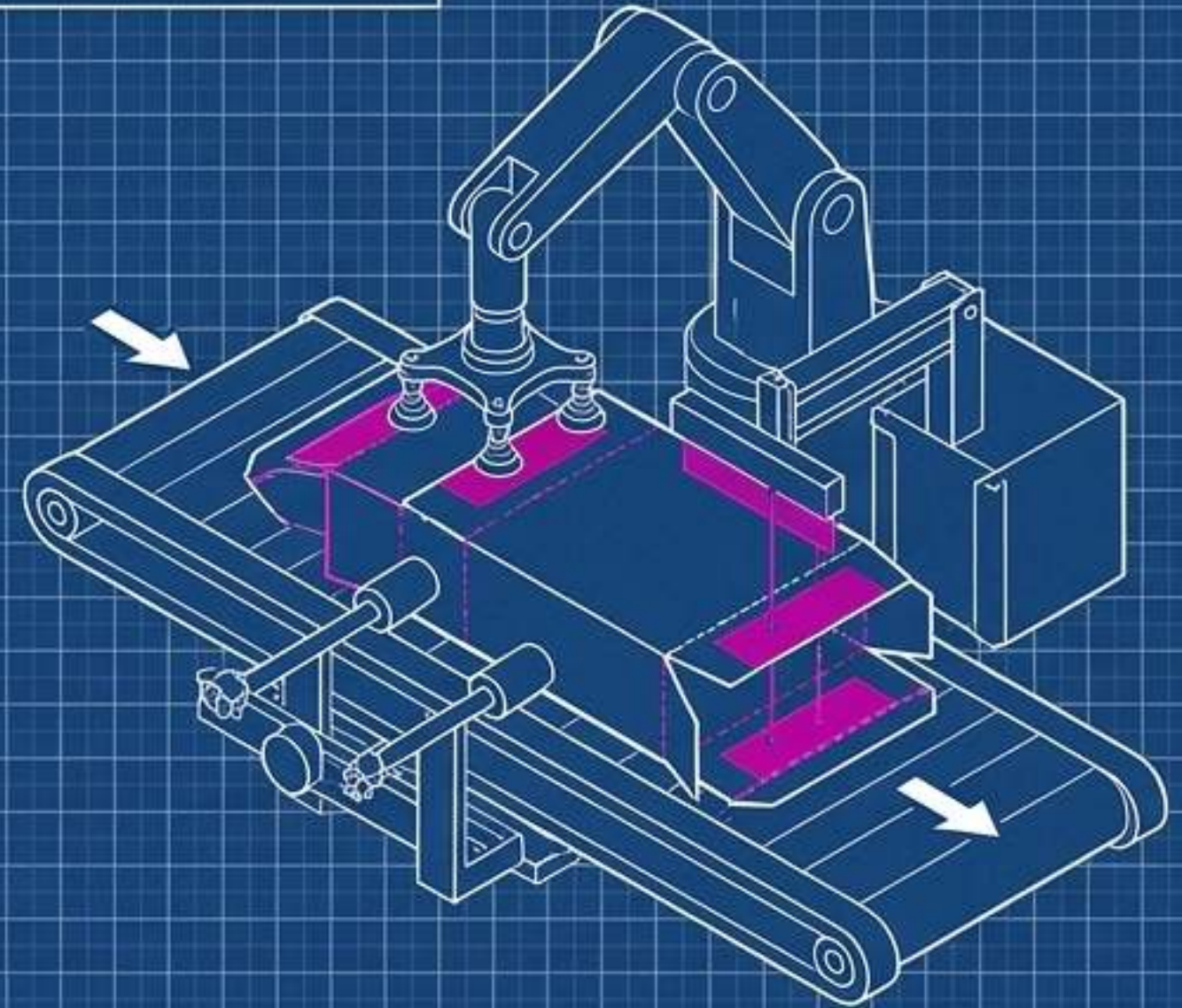
The Workflow Dichotomy: Manual vs. Automatic Packing

MANUAL WORKFLOW



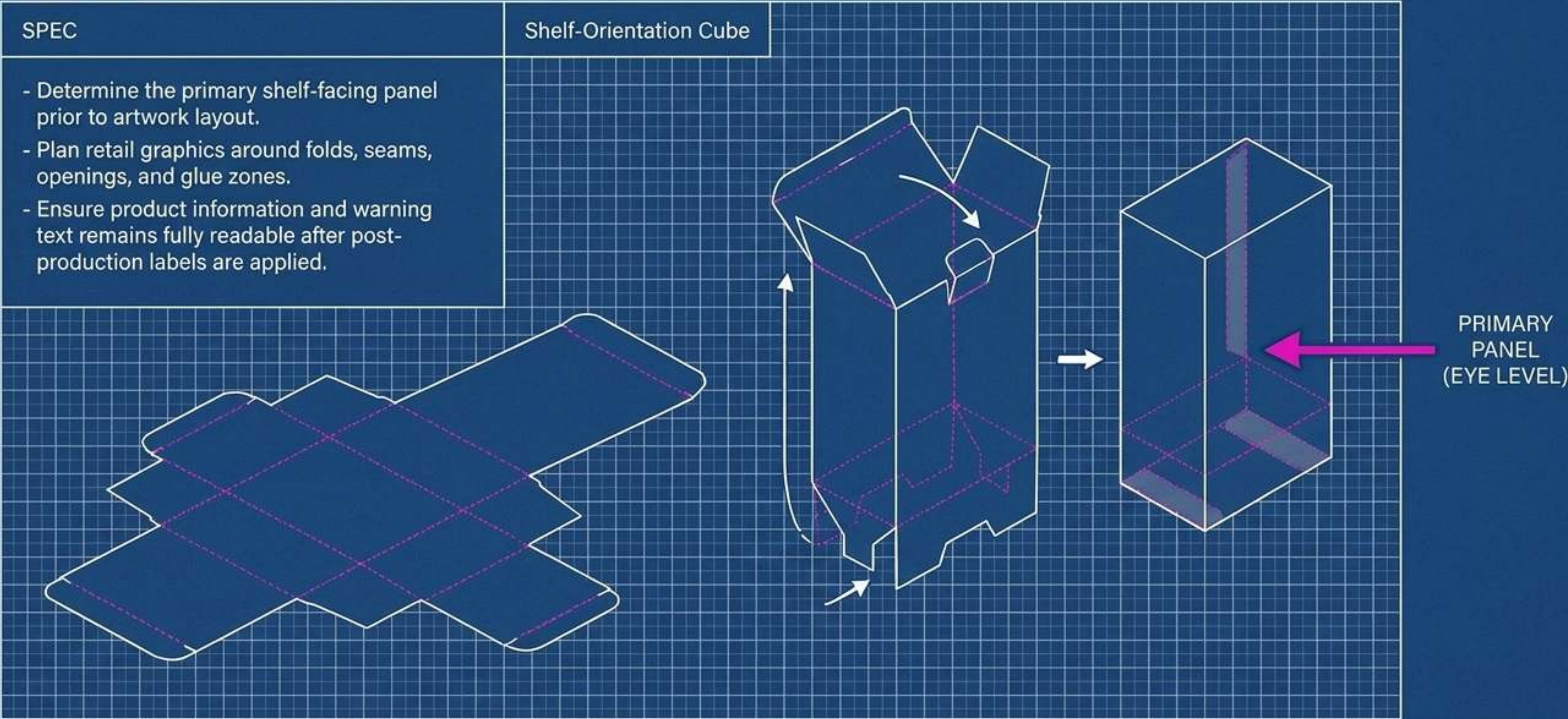
Manual Workflow: Carton structure designed for human dexterity. Requires easy folding, tab insertion, and intuitive assembly.

AUTOMATIC WORKFLOW

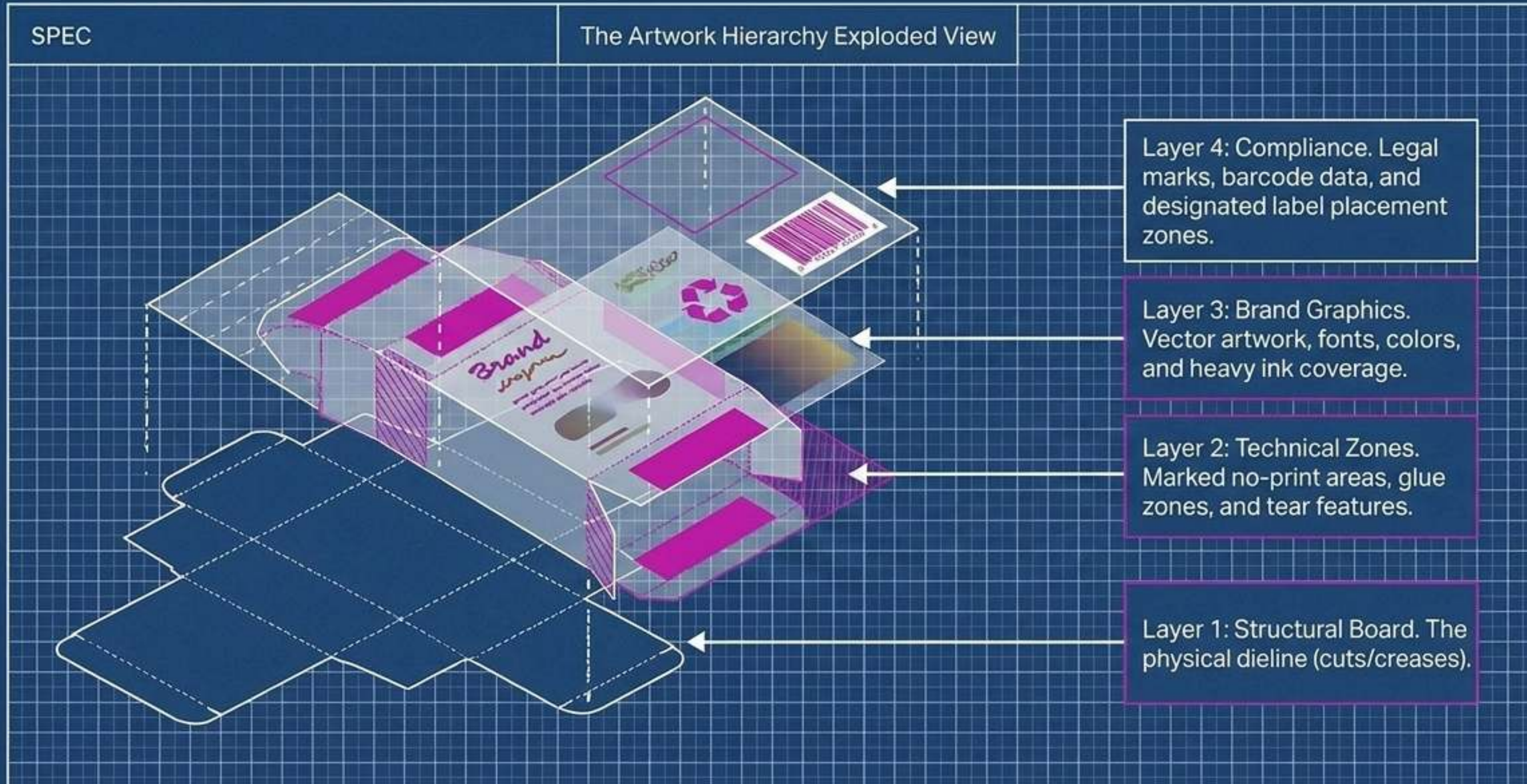


Automatic Workflow: Carton structure designed for machine tolerances. Dictates precise glue zones, standardized flaps, and strict board rigidity.

Panel Hierarchy & Shelf Orientation



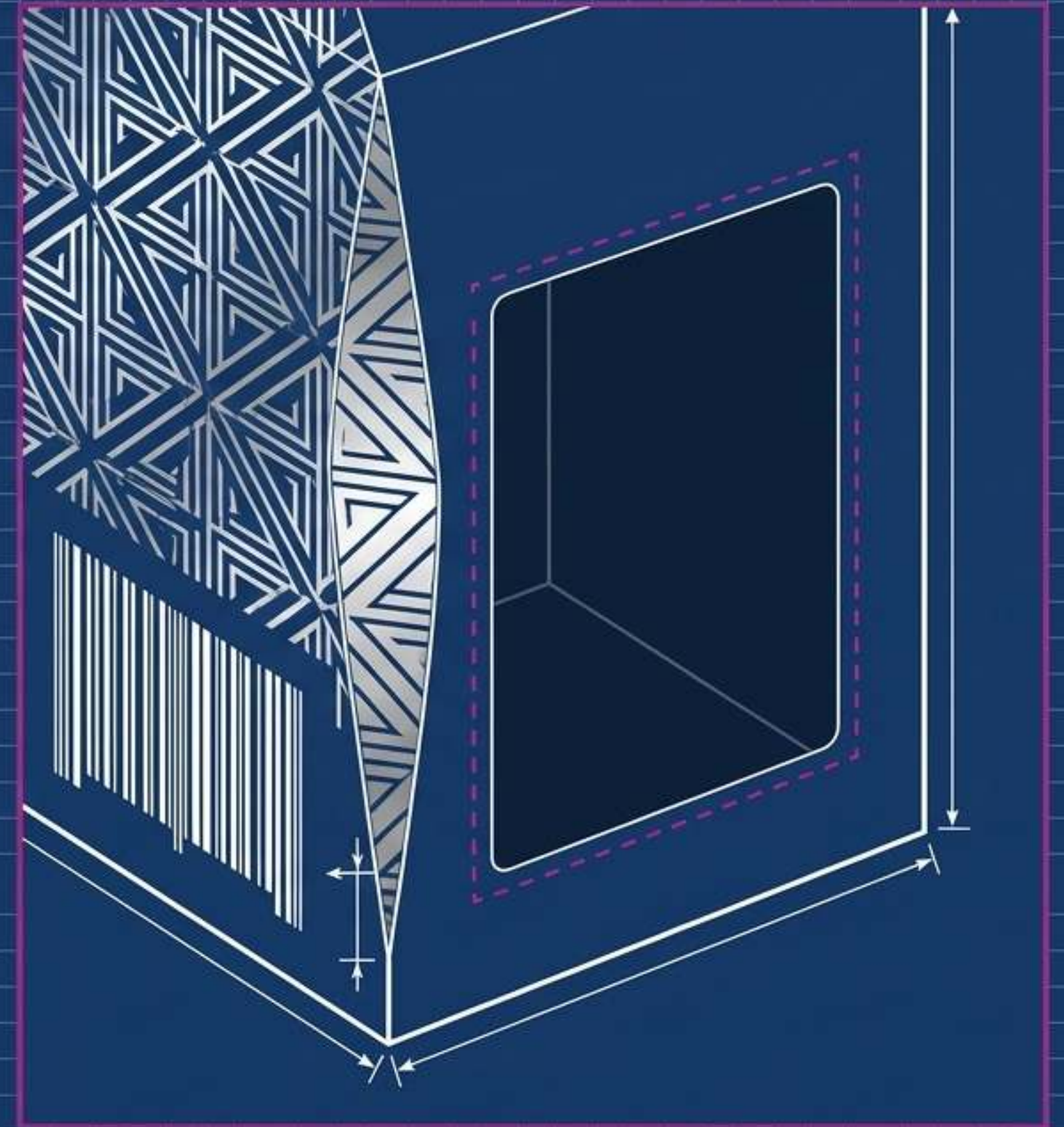
Artwork as a Technical Layer



Print Execution Triggers

Final technical and commercial commitments require rigorous quotation and artwork review, especially when these elements are present:

☐	Color-critical branding & exact color references
☐	Fine text & product copy
☐	Metallic-like effects & heavy ink coverage
☐	Complex window integrations



Compliance Integration & Regulatory Gates

State all legal and market-specific requirements clearly for review before requesting quotes.



Material Safety: Food-contact, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and child-safety regulations.



Data Requirements: Ingredient text, warning text, translations, and barcode data.

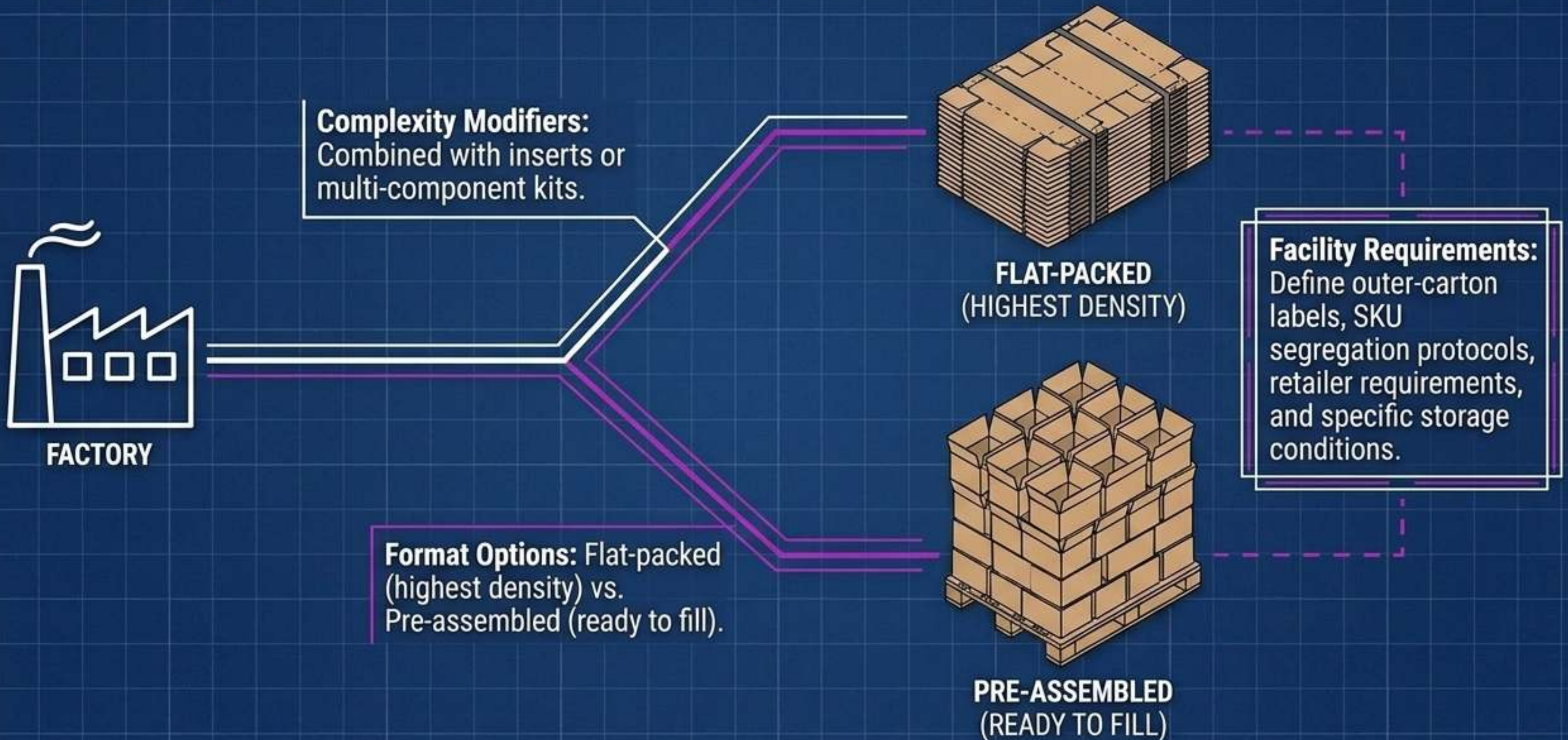


Market Compliance: Regulated labeling, legal marks, and recycling mandates.



Testing Review: Critical surface, material, or performance requirements demand physical sample and testing review.

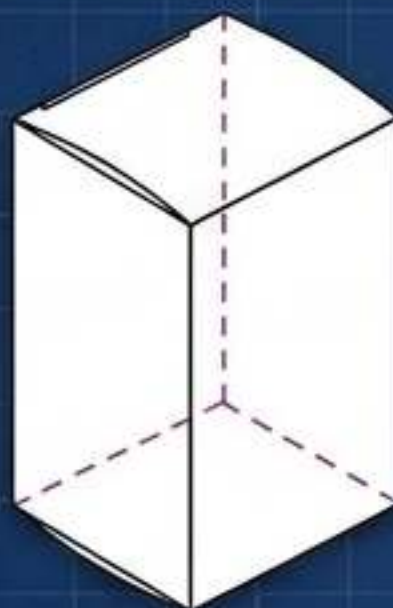
Supply Chain & Delivery State



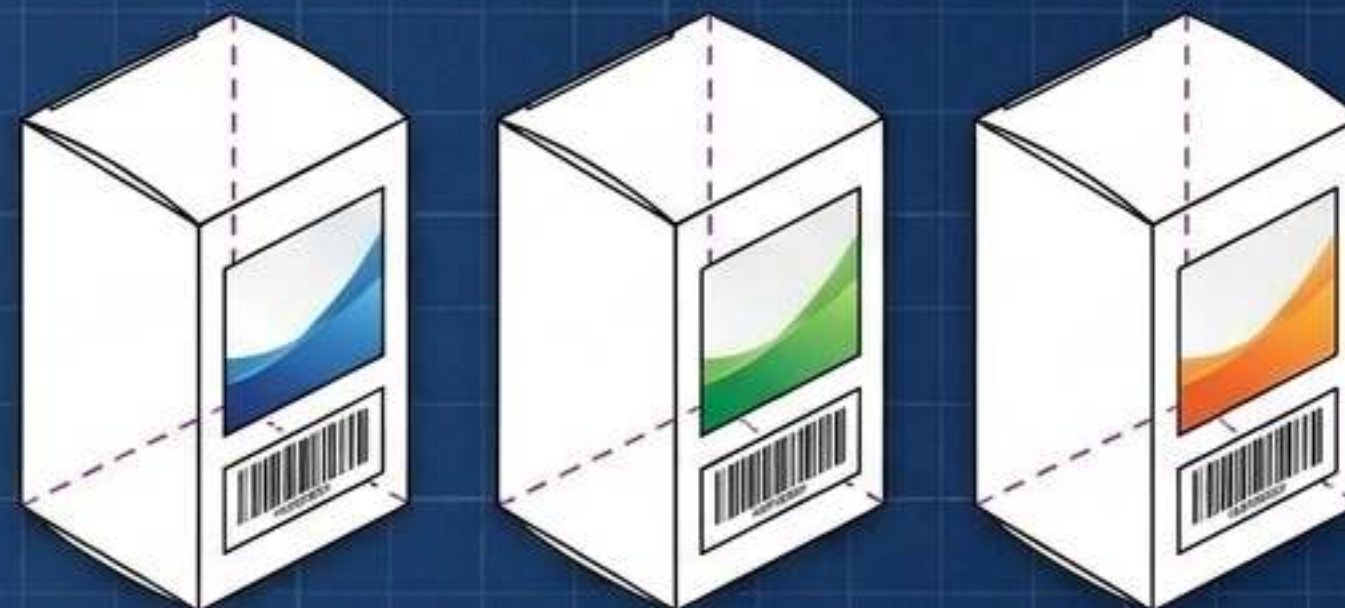
Scaling the Order: SKUs & Assortments

Separate artwork changes and variable data from stable carton elements to drastically reduce sourcing ambiguity.

Stable Elements: Structural Shape & Board



Variable Data: Artwork & SKUs



- State absolute quantity by SKU.
- Define quantities by language version.
- Specify exact assortment structures and final geographic destinations.

Quality Assurance Gates

Select the final structure only after product fit, packing workflow, graphics, and compliance needs undergo quotation and material review.



Pre-Production Authorization Checklist

Confirm carton fit with physical product.



Validate closure function and tolerances.



Approve print quality and color accuracy.



Verify placement and scannability of required marks.

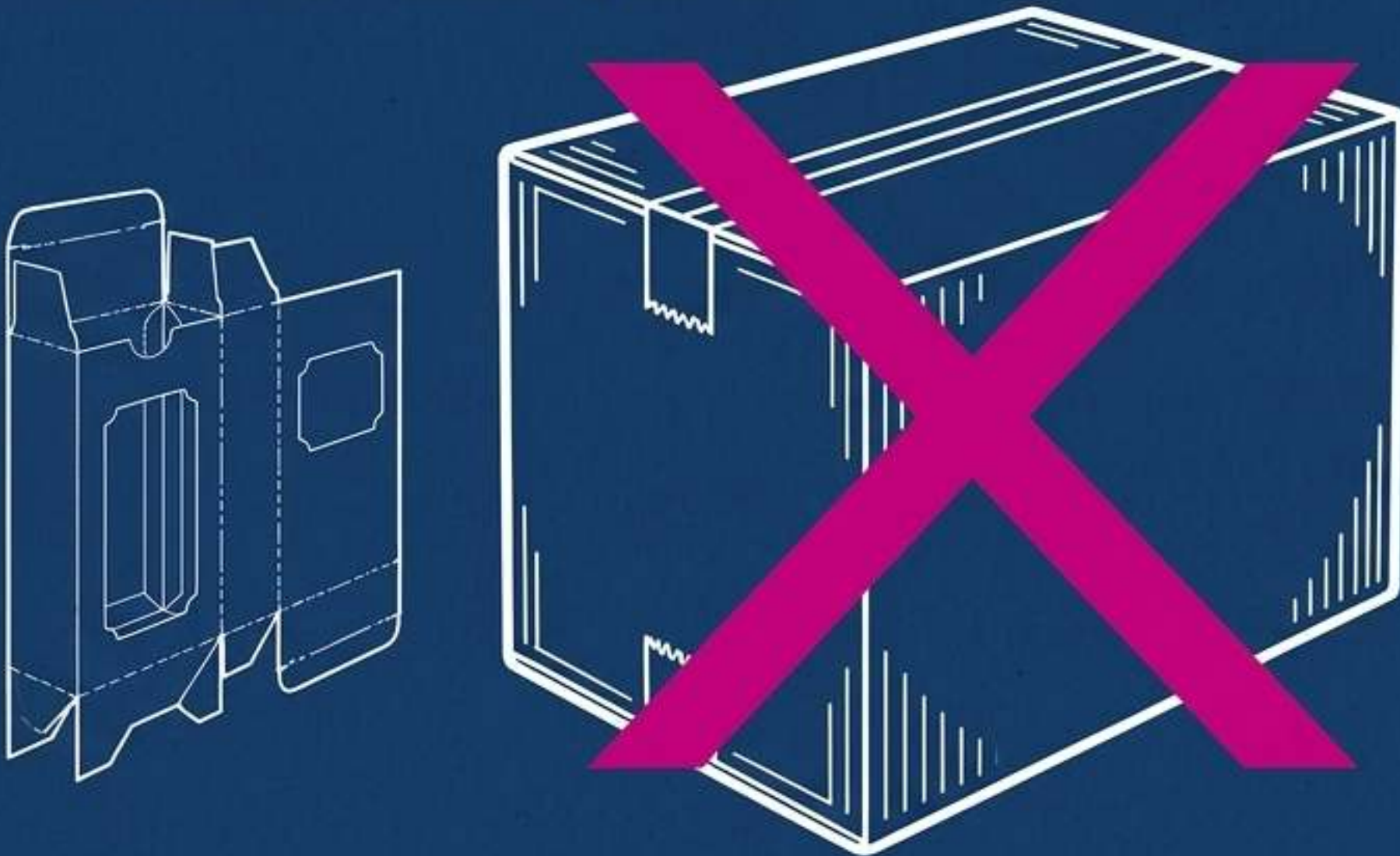


Synthesis: The 7-Point RFO Engine

1.	Describe the contained product, fill method, shelf use, and distribution route.
2.	Provide dimensions, orientation, carton style, closure, inserts, and display needs.
3.	Supply dielines, print artwork, colors, barcodes, legal text, and translations.
4.	Identify fold, glue, window, label, and critical-branding constraints.
5.	Flag regulated content, contact, safety, recycling, or testing requirements.
6.	Give quantities by SKU/version, packing format, destination, and retailer needs.
7.	Request structural and print samples/testing for critical requirements.

Scope Boundaries & Limitations

This framework ensures precise specification prior to quotation, but sets strict boundaries on execution assumptions.



No Commercial Guarantees:

This brief does not promise board grade, structural performance, finish, certification, Minimum Order Quantity (MOQ), price, lead time, or tolerance.

Distribution Warning: Do not imply or assume that a folding carton is a substitute for a shipping box without dedicated distribution review and testing.