

Sourcing the Custom Magazine

The Buyer's Blueprint for Editorial,
Production, and Distribution.

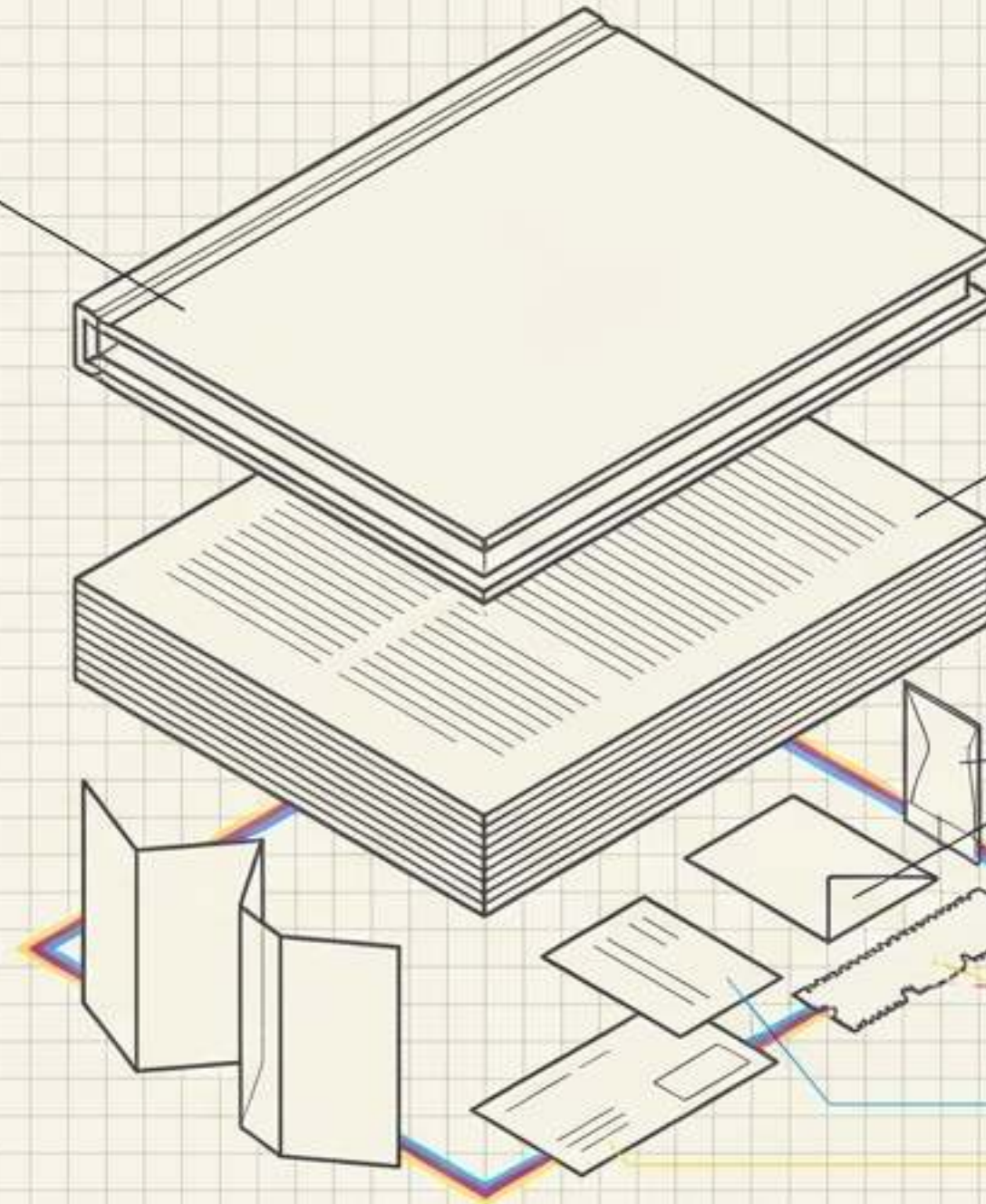
Defining the Custom Magazine

	Custom Magazine	Catalog	Booklet	Book
Primary Function	Brand, event, or institution readership	Product selection and ordering	Shorter functional purpose	Long-form reading
Structural Logic	Deliberate sequence of departments/features	Grid-based inventory display	Linear informational flow	Chapter-based narrative
Longevity / Binding	Repeated issues requiring consistent trim/paper	Seasonal lifecycle	Temporary utility	Prioritizes archival longevity expectation
Reading Pattern	Issue-based, combined editorial/images/ads	Skim and search	Quick reference	Sustained immersion

INSIGHT: Buyers must describe the actual reading, circulation, and release pattern rather than selecting a label alone.

The Anatomy of the Publication

THE COVER
Define desired
surface and
stiffness.



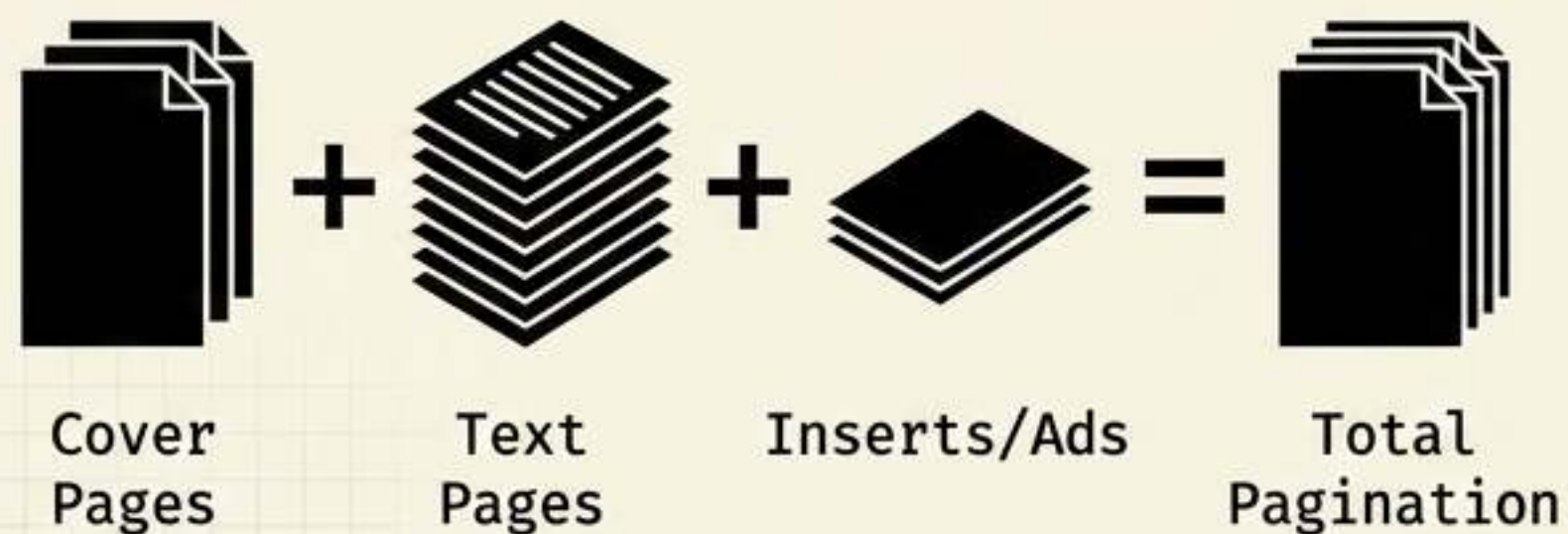
TEXT PAGES
Define opacity and
bulk requirements.

SPECIAL ELEMENTS
Gatefolds
Tip-ins
Subscription Cards
Perforated Offers
Inserts
Variable Covers
Address Panels

RULE: Every special element requires separate drawings and independent quotation lines.

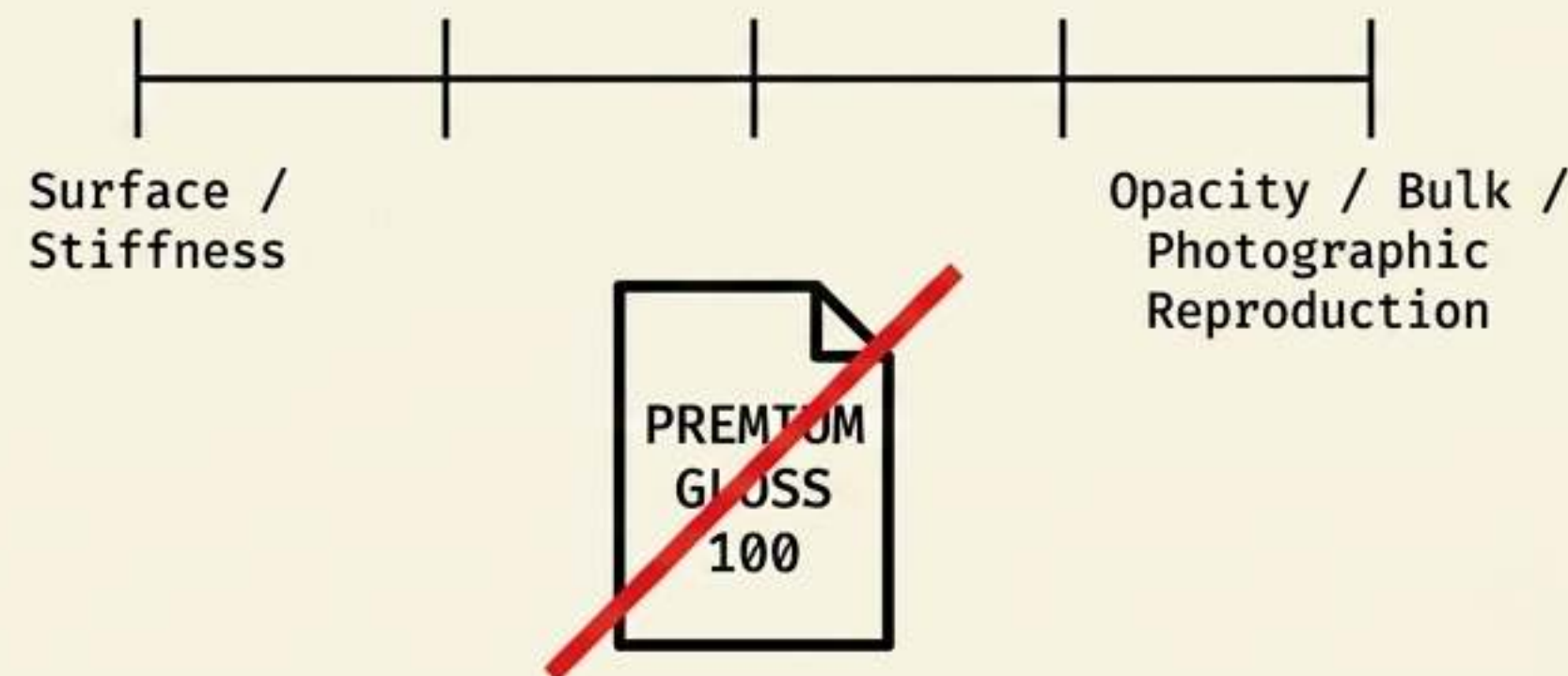
Paper & Pagination Variables

Pagination Mechanics



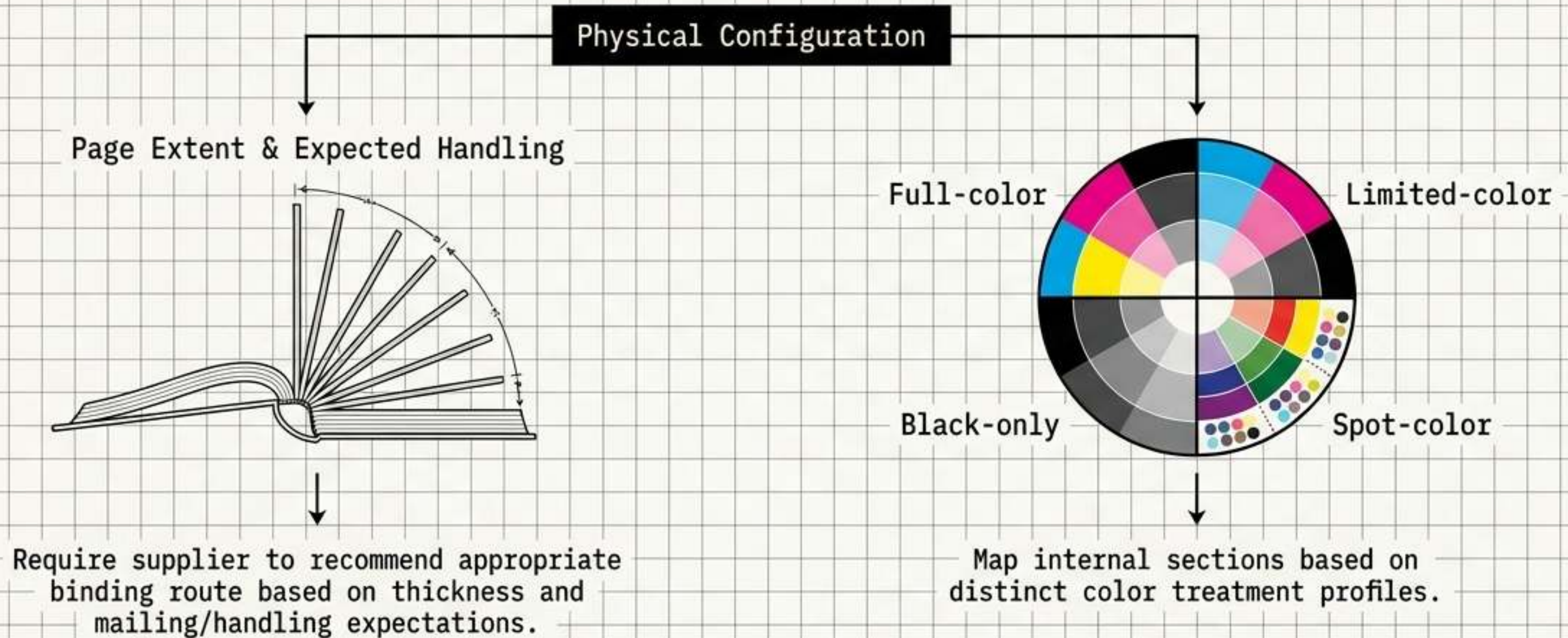
WARNING: Confirm whether page count includes covers and how advertising/inserts affect total pagination.

Paper Specification Spectrum



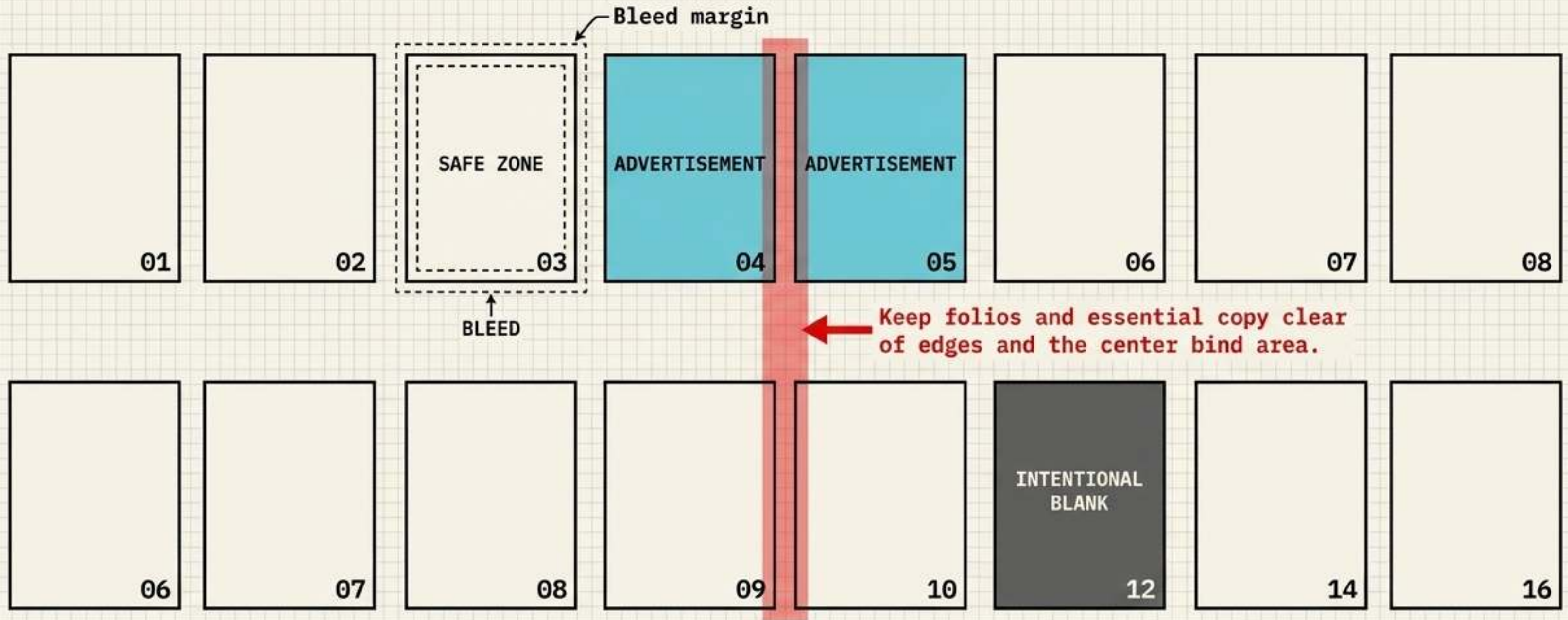
RULE: Avoid specifying paper solely by a trade name unless equivalents are acceptable. Describe by physical attributes.

Binding & Color Dynamics



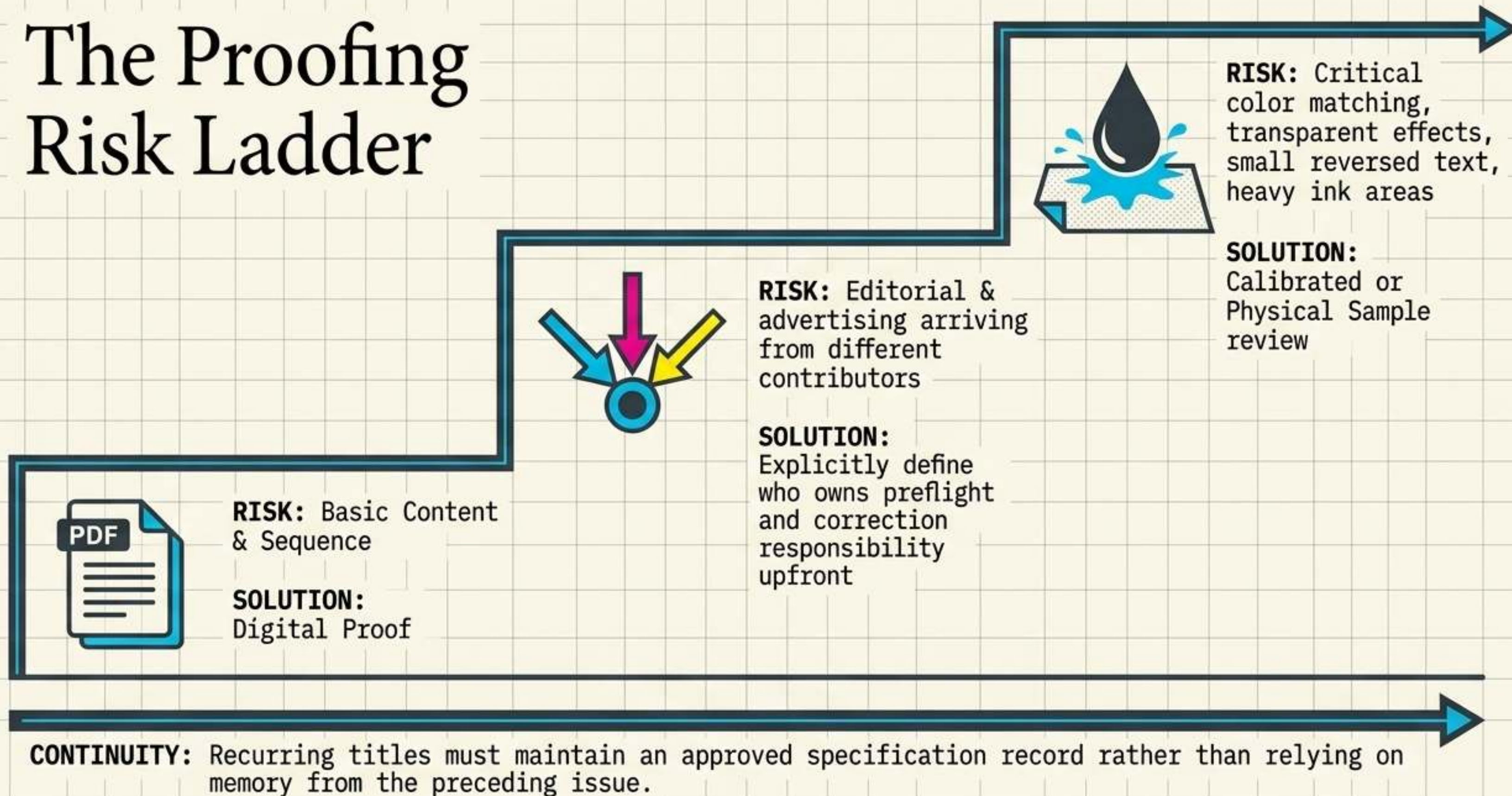
TESTING PROTOCOL: Critical color, paper interaction, rub resistance, environmental compliance, and mailing performance require physical sample and testing review.

The Master Flatplan

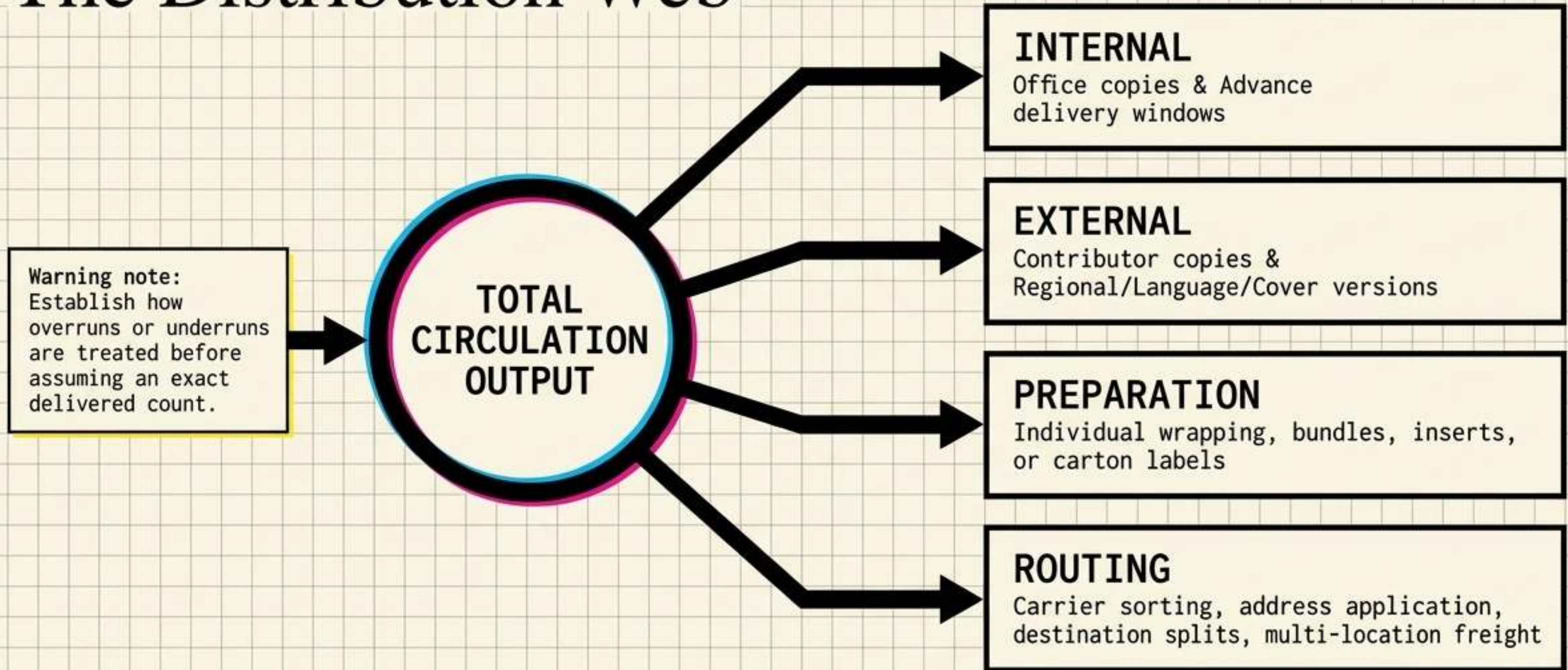


DIRECTIVE: Supply pages to printer standards—normally as individual pages, not imposed spreads. Maintain controlled image profiles and sufficient effective resolution.

The Proofing Risk Ladder



The Distribution Web



FINANCIAL RULE: Always separate print manufacturing from postage, data processing, fulfillment, and freight when comparing offers.

The 10-Point RFQ Dashboard

STRUCTURAL SPECS

1. State trim size, orientation, cover format, page count, and circulation.
4. Describe cover and text paper appearance and handling priorities.
5. Request binding recommendations based on page extent and use.
6. List gatefolds, cards, tip-ins, perforations, variable covers, or address panels.

LOGISTICS & VERSIONING

2. Provide issue date, delivery deadline, frequency, and future-issue outlook.
9. Detail versions, mailing data, wrapping, bundles, cartons, and destinations.

ARTWORK & WORKFLOW

3. Supply a flatplan showing editorial, advertising, inserts, and blank pages.
7. Define file intake, preflight, correction, and proof-approval responsibilities.
8. Identify color-critical pages and physical proof or sample requirements.

COMMERCIAL FRAMEWORK

10. Request itemized production, fulfillment, freight, and commercial terms.

Critical Caveats & Content Restrictions



THE APPROVAL RULE

Do not state that any format, paper, binding, mailing service, or schedule is confirmed until it has been formally reviewed by the supplier.



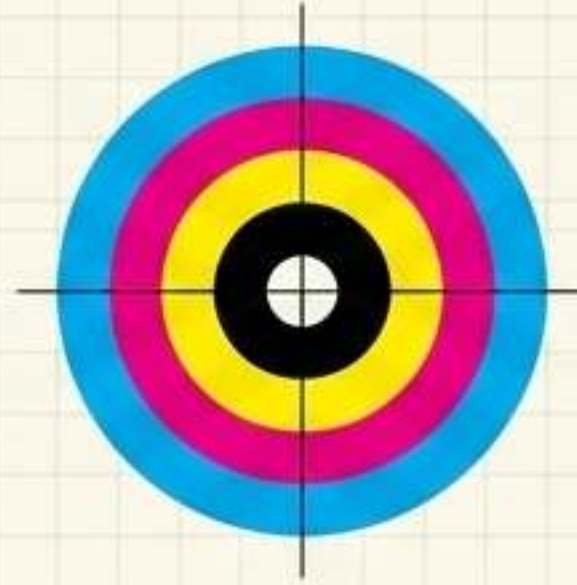
THE ASSUMPTION RULE

Never promise exact quantity, price, lead time, tolerance, material grade, reproduction result, mailing outcome, or certification guarantee without a finalized quote.



THE TESTING RULE

Critical surface, material, performance, and compliance requirements are never assumed—they strictly require physical sample and testing review.



**A magazine must be quoted
from a controlled flatplan, not
from a page count alone.**

Final technical and commercial commitments require
quotation, artwork, and material review.