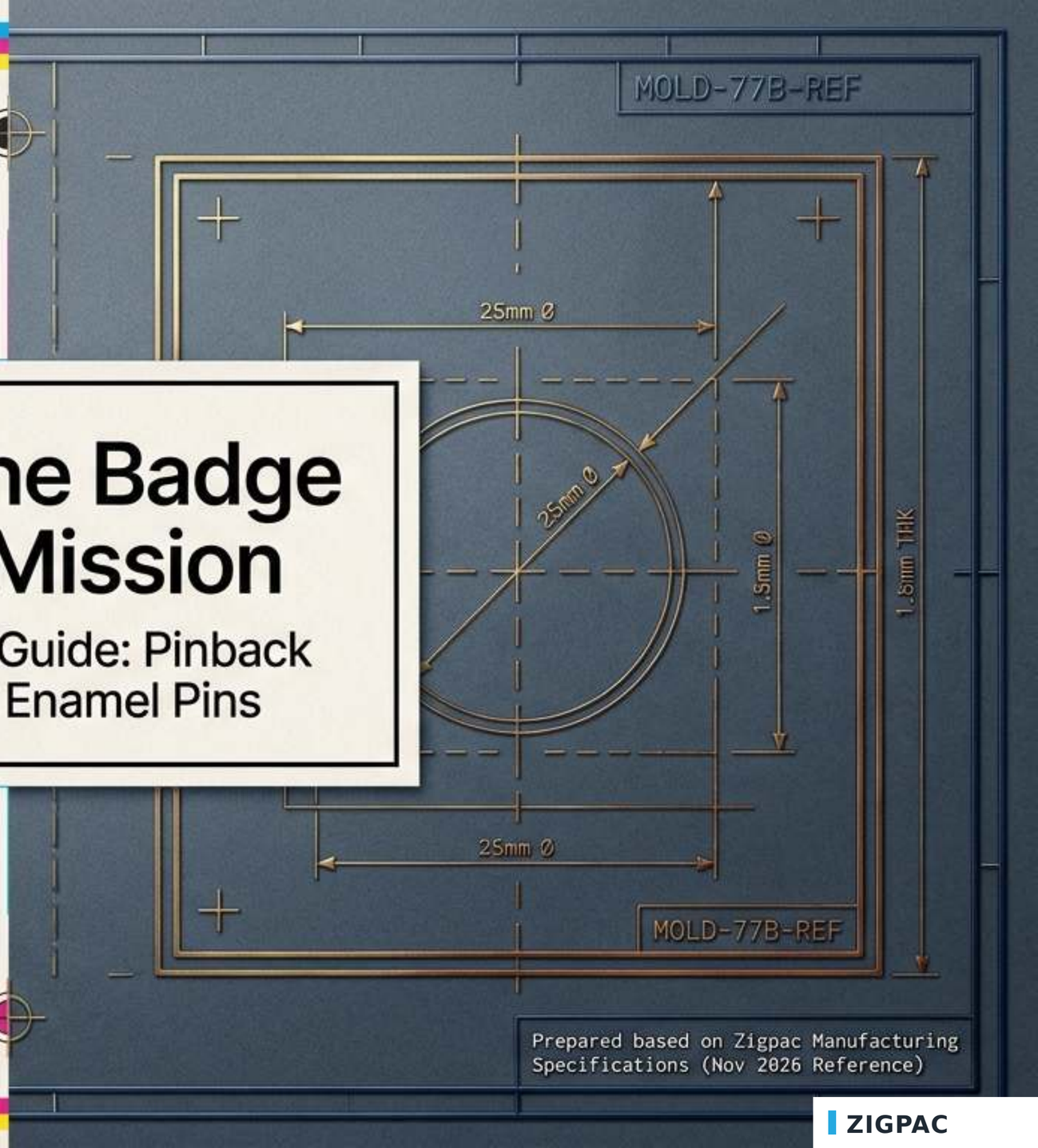
Match the Badge to the Mission

A Diagnostic Guide: Pinback Buttons vs. Enamel Pins



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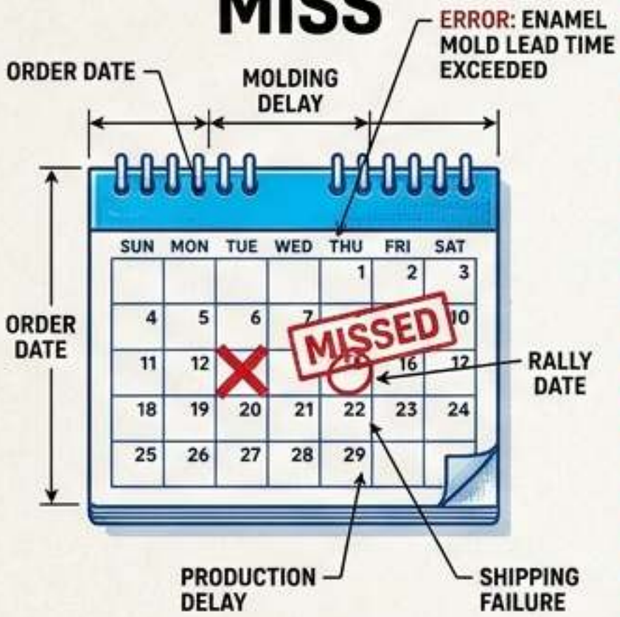
THE $26.6 BILLION PROMOTIONAL BLIND SPOT

FAIL

FAIL

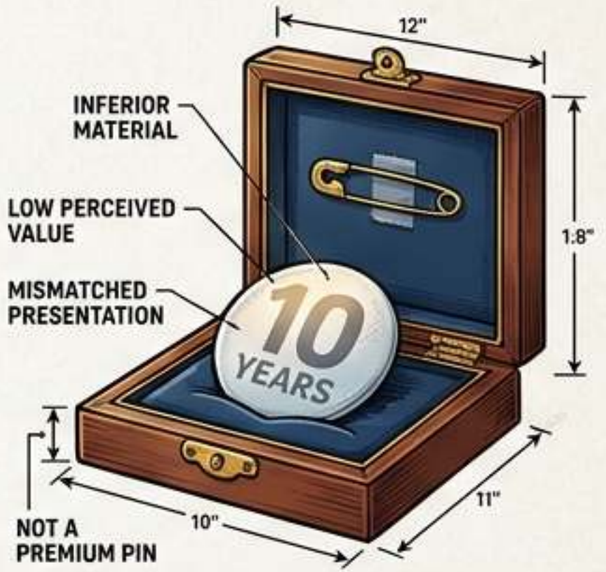
Advertising Specialty Institute
2024 US promo sales record

THE 10-DAY MISS



Ordered enamel for a photo badge. Molds took too long. Badges missed the rally.

THE DISPOSABLE DECADE



Handed a 10-year veteran a printed button. The milestone felt cheap.

BADGES LOOK INTERCHANGEABLE IN SEARCH RESULTS, BUT CHOOSING THE WRONG FORMAT CREATES PROBLEMS A UNIT PRICE CANNOT SHOW.

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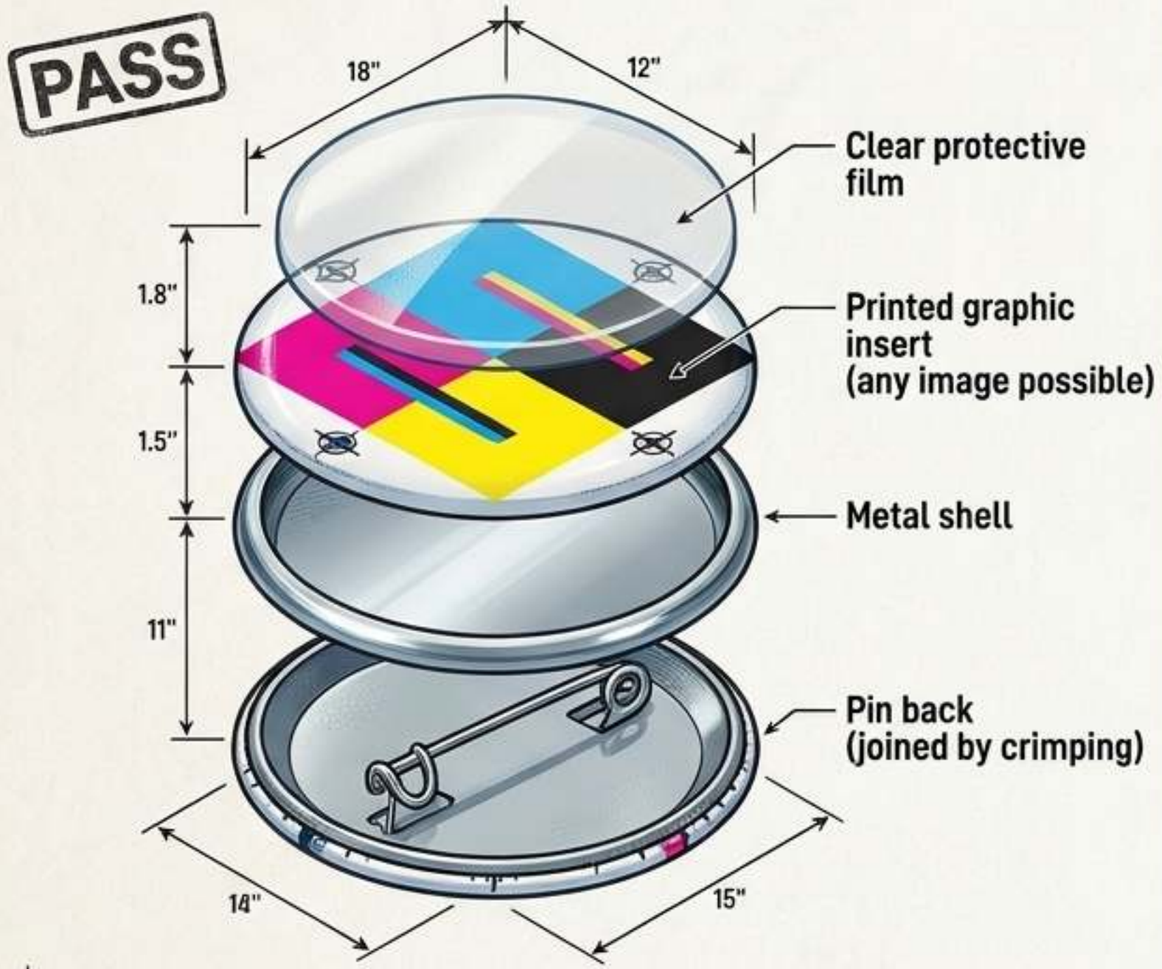
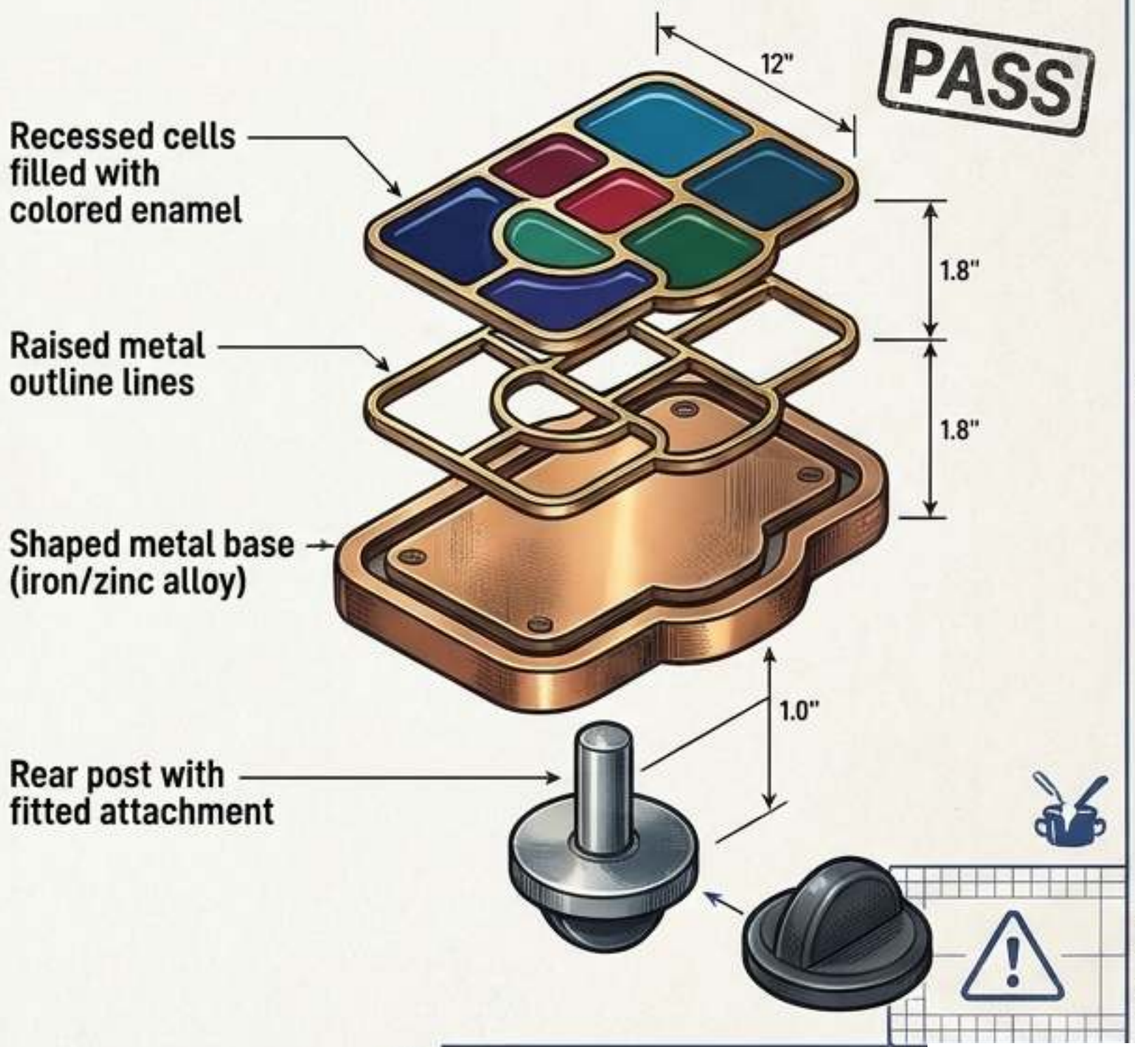
The Core Difference: Assembled Print vs. Molded Metal

Pinback Button – 1896 Patent Build



Soft Enamel Pin – SIC 3965



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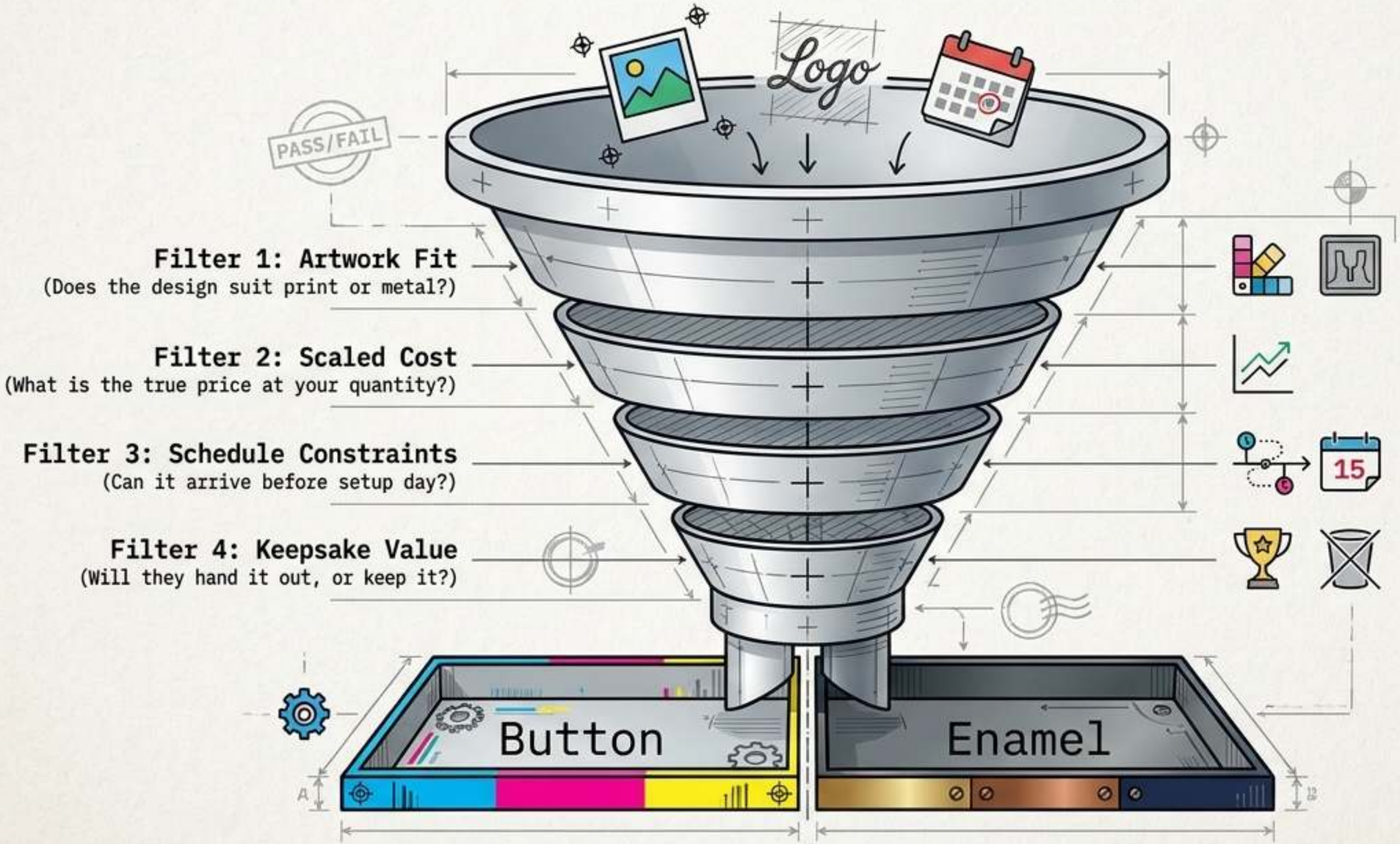
The Four-Check Diagnostic Funnel



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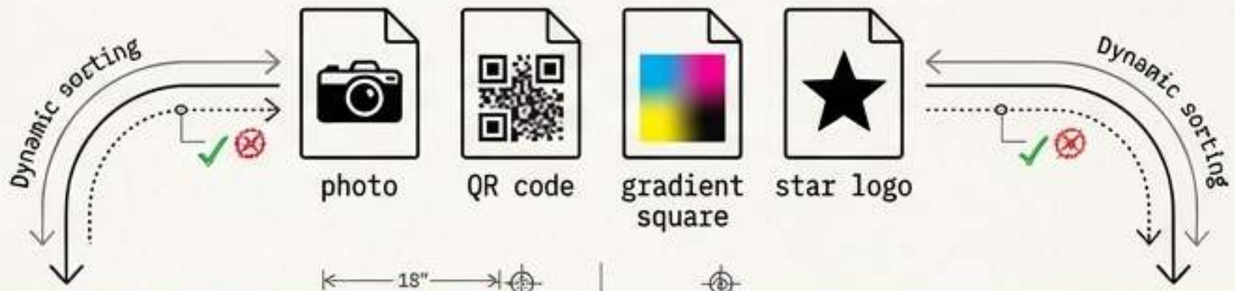
Check 1: Route Your Artwork



Route to Printed Pinback

18"

PASS

- Photographs
- Candidate Faces
- Gradients
- QR Codes
- Small Type
- Messages that change per event

29"

9"

(Rule: If a printer can print it, a button can wear it)

13"

PASS

28"

Route to Enamel Mold

12"

FAIL

- Closed color areas
- Bold outlines
- Solid color logos
- Mascots
- Emblems

29"

9"

(Rule: Tiny lettering and fine lines will fill in; gradients require print)

12"

PASS

28"

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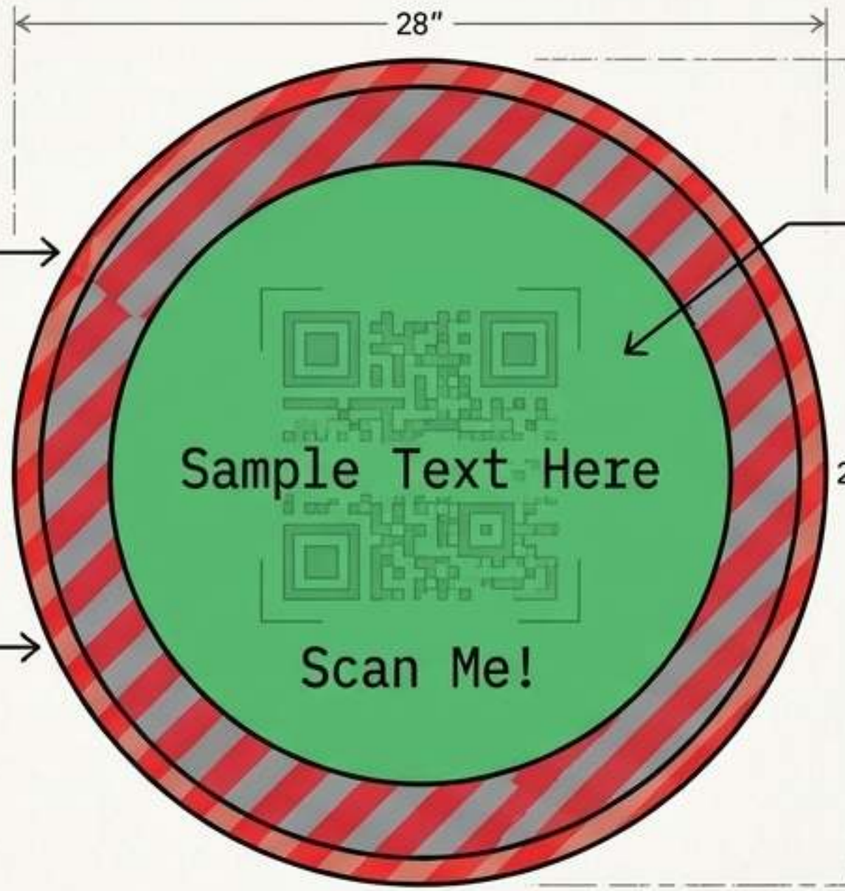
The Pinback Safe Zone



Bleed / Wrap Area
(Part of the printed sheet wraps around the curved edge)

Bleed / Wrap Area
(Part of the printed sheet wraps around the curved edge)

Confirmed Safe Area
(All critical content stays here)

⚠ Keep all text, sponsor logos, dates, and QR codes strictly inside the safe area to prevent them from disappearing over the edge during crimping.

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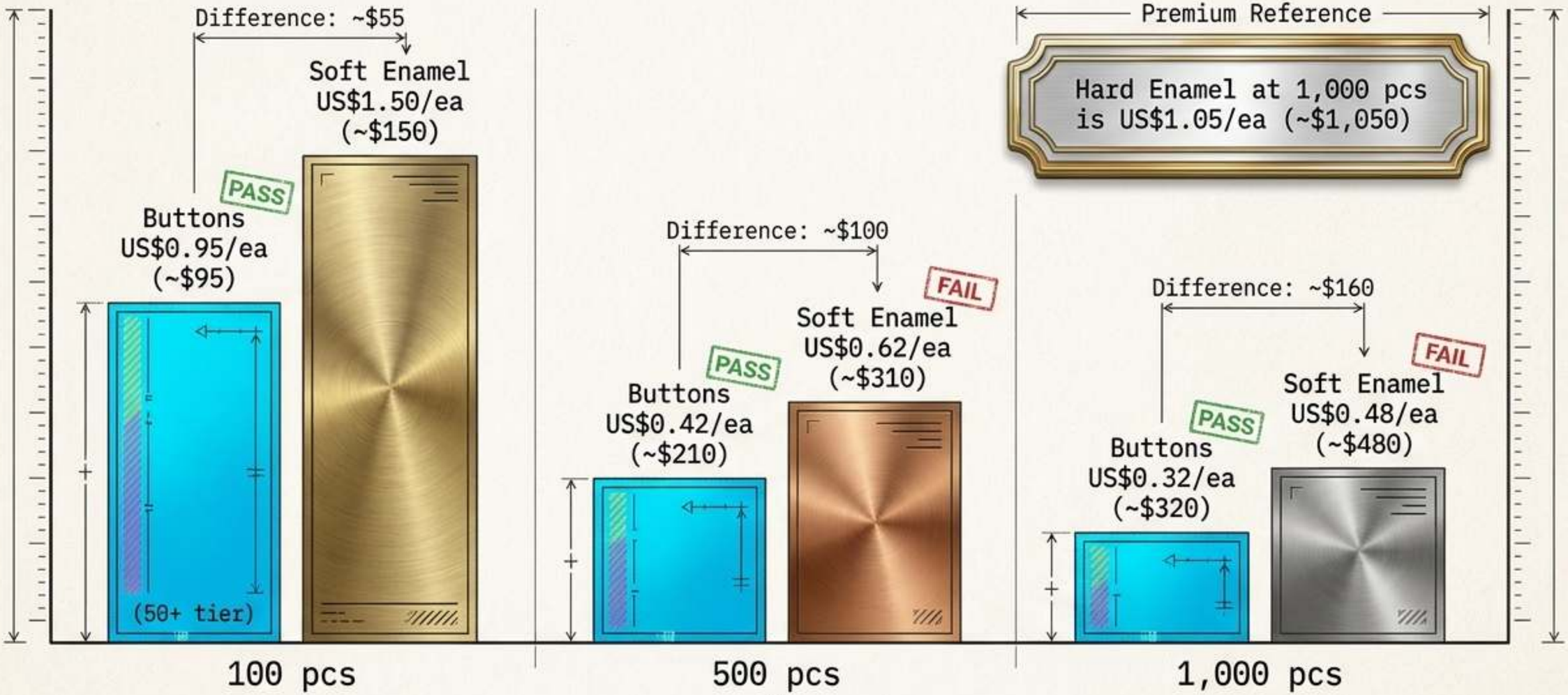
Check 2: Cost at Scale

Based on Zigpac listed tiers (Nov 2026). Final price is on custom quote.



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Tooling Lines and Tier Boundaries

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	SUBTOTAL
Pinback Buttons –	100 units –	$0.95	$95.00
Pinback Buttons –	200 units –	$0.58	$116.00

Insight 1: Watch the Break
200 buttons at $0.58 (~$116) is only $21 more than 100 buttons at $0.95 (~$95). Always price the next tier up.

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	SUBTOTAL
Soft Enamel Pin –	100 units –	$1.50	$150.00
Mold/Setup Fee –	1 unit –	$55.00	$55.00

Insight 2: The Mold Fee
Enamel quotes separate the mold/setup from unit production. Ask: Is the mold retained? For how long? Does a reorder trigger a new charge?

SUBTOTAL $55.00
Tax: $5.
TOTAL

Quote Variables:
Size, colors, plating, backing hardware, back cards, packaging.

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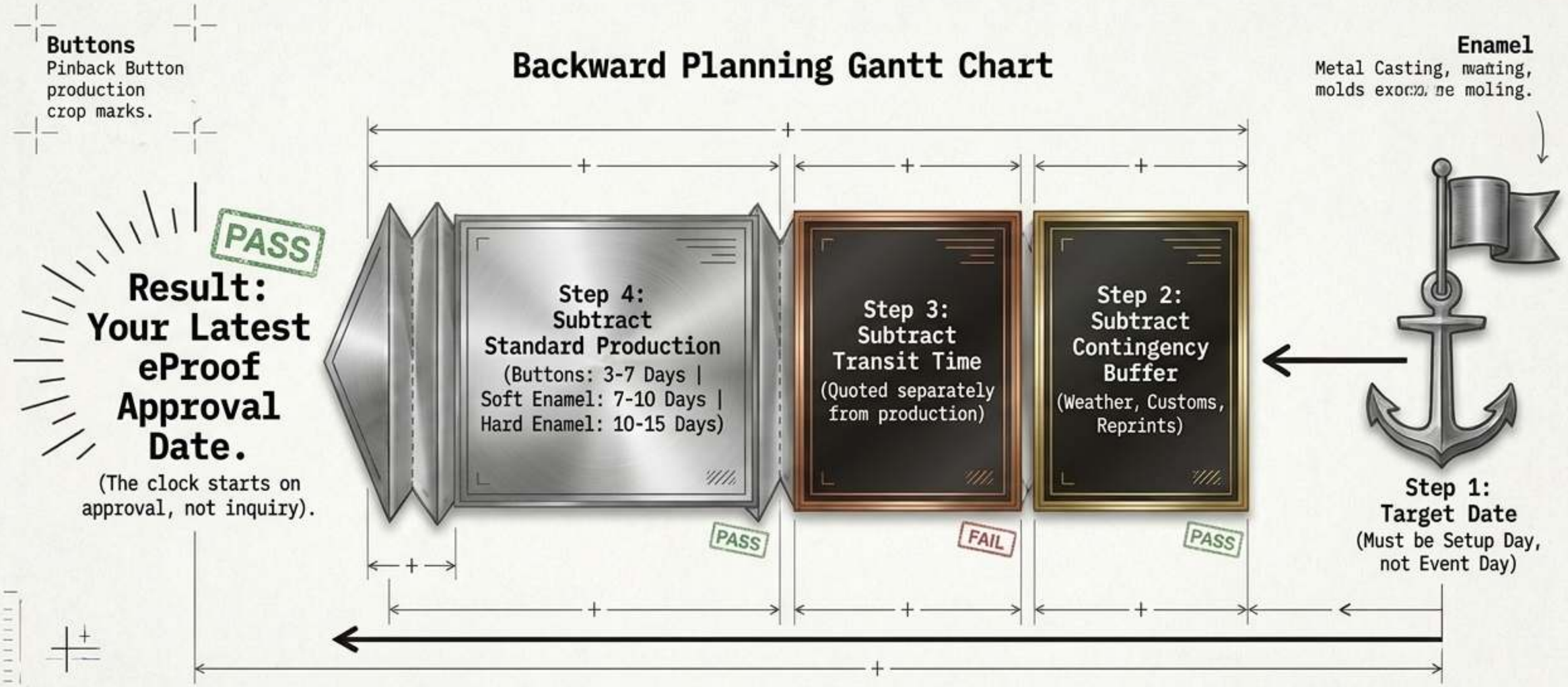
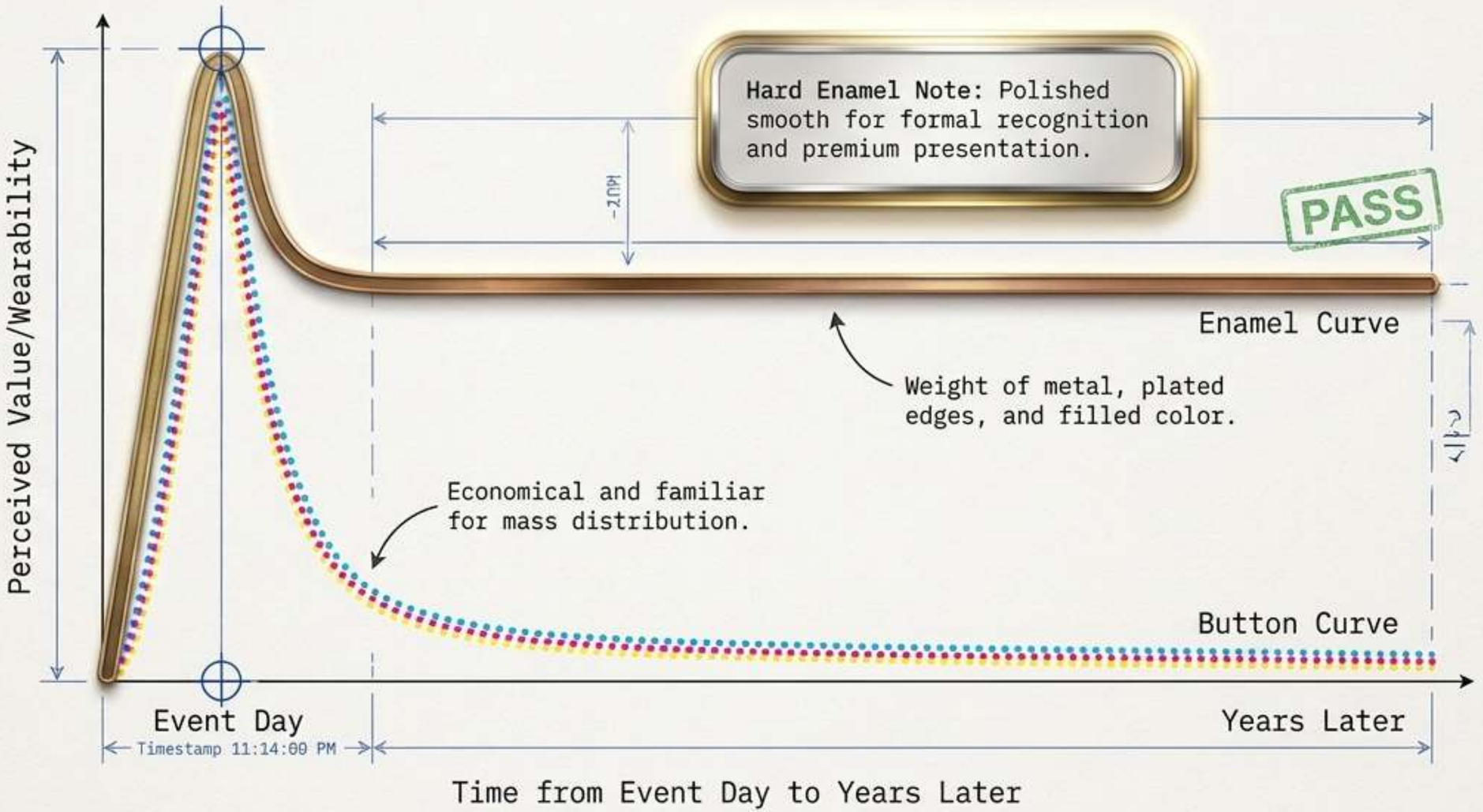
Check 3: The Backward Timeline



Check 4: The Lifespan Curve



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COMPLIANCE & SAFETY STOP



Both formats utilize sharp points.
Neither is child-safe by default.

RULE	METRIC	ACTION
If badges are intended for children, US CPSC rules apply. PASS	Total lead content limit is 100 ppm for accessible components. Products exceeding this are banned hazardous substances.	**Request compliance documentation before ordering, not after badges arrive. Do not rely on assumptions.** FAIL

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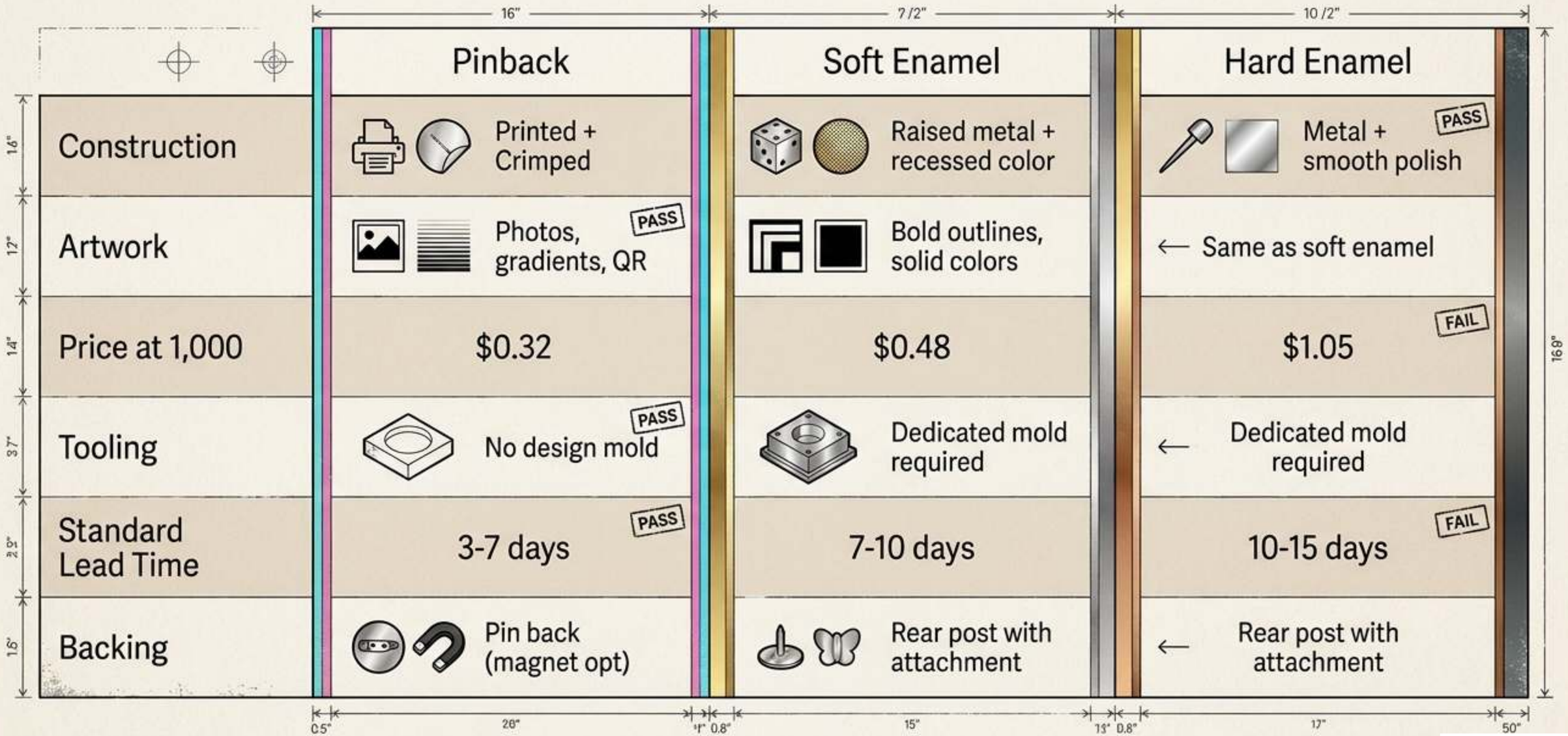
The Master Specification Matrix



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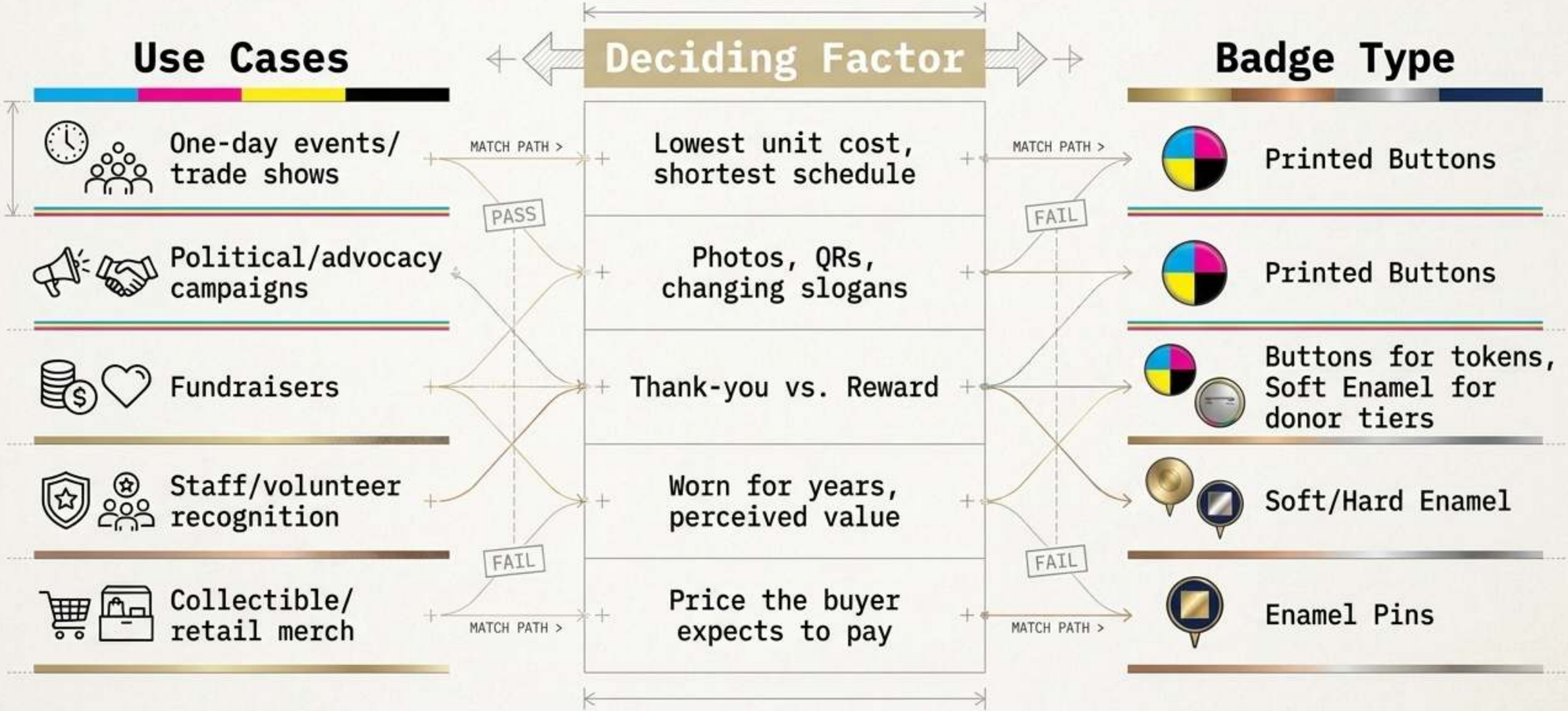
The Use-Case Matchmaker



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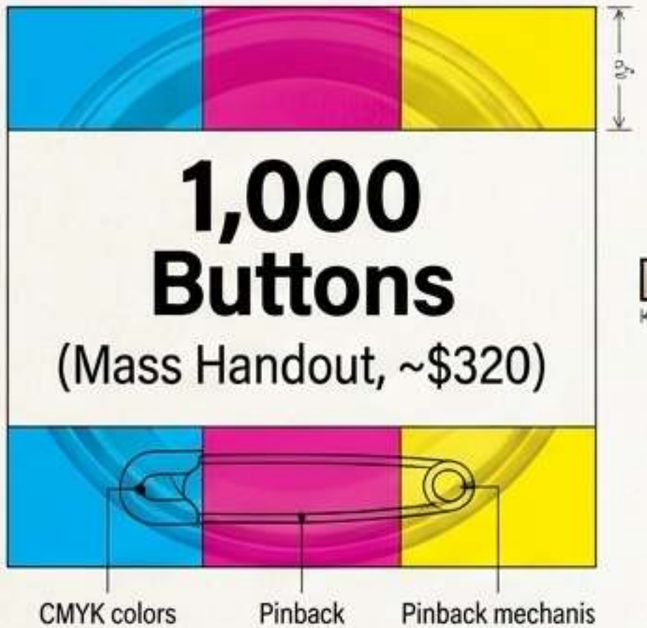
The Mixed Strategy: Buttons for the Crowd, Pins for the Core

MATERIAL SPECIFICATION



QUANTITY & COST BREAKDOWN



STRATEGIC OUTCOME



Strategic Insight

Compared to all-buttons (~$352), spending roughly $118 more gives your core people a permanent keepsake while keeping the mass handout on a fast schedule. (Each quoted on its own tier).

STRATEGIC OUTCOME

PASS

PASS

STRATEGY CONFIRMED

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The Quotation Spec Sheet

- [x] **Artwork files** (Flag any photos, gradients, or QR codes).
- [x] **Intended size** (2.25 inch is a common reference for buttons).
- [x] **Quantity split** (Detailing handouts vs. keepsakes).
- [x] **Backing preference** (Conventional pin, magnetic, or enamel post hardware).
- [x] **Logistics** (The "In-Hand" date, delivery address, custom packaging needs).

Note: Ask for printed buttons and soft enamel pins quoted side by side. Zigpac provides free eProofs and physical samples ($5-$30).



PRINTED BUTTONS



ENAMEL PINS

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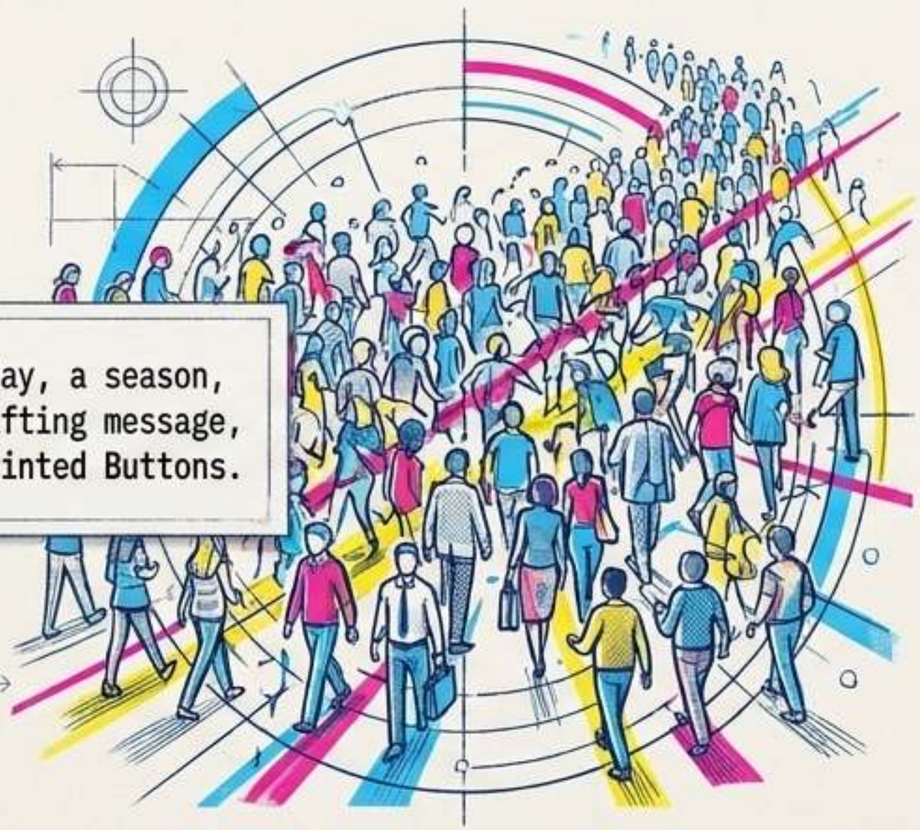
Match the Badge to Its Lifespan

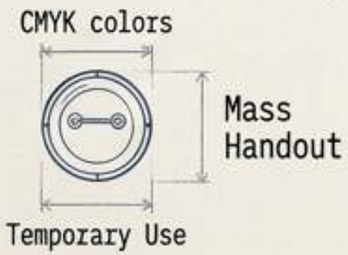
The Golden Rule: Hand it out? Print it. Keep it? Mold it.



For a day, a season, or a shifting message, order Printed Buttons.

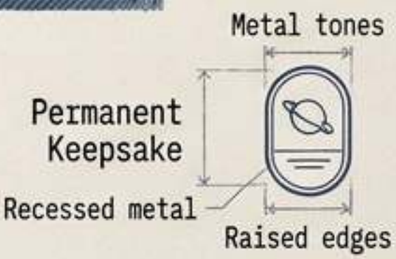


To mark service, reward a donation, or sell as merch, step up to Enamel.



PASS **Final Action: Split the order if you need both. Get them quoted side by side on the same basis.** FAIL

Quoting Strategy: Utilize both manufacturing tiers for optimal budget and lifespan.



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