THE PACKAGING BLUEPRINT

Matching Laminated and Kraft Bags to Retail Strategy, Budgets, and Compliance.

A practical decision-making guide for boutique owners and retail buyers.

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GLOSSY BLACK



KRAFT BAG

The Season's Most Expensive Guessing Game

Every boutique owner starts here: a glossy black bag in a competitor's window, or a clean kraft bag at a local café. You need to pick one before the next season's stock lands.

COST:
Picking wrong costs more than the initial unit price gap (roughly 60–60–70% at low tiers).

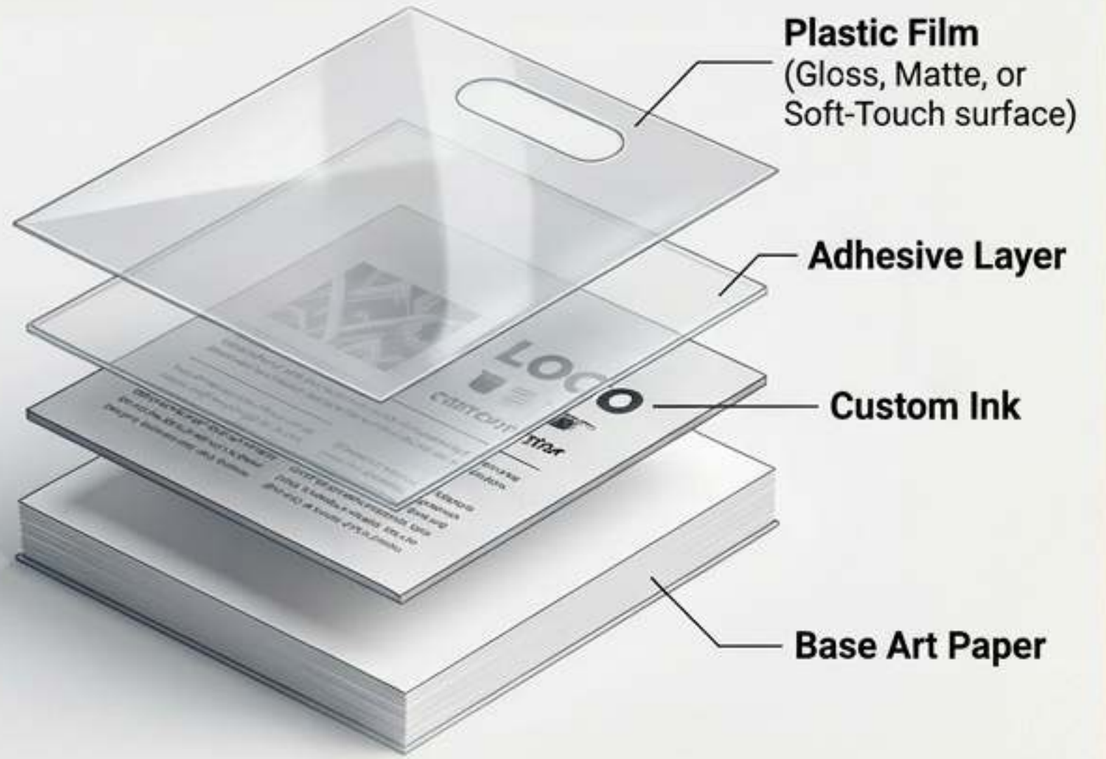
PERCEPTION:
A kraft bag can look underdressed beside a US$200 scarf, while a scuffed glossy bag ruins a premium unboxing.

COMPLIANCE:
Printing 'recyclable' on the wrong bag is a marketing claim regulators can test and penalize.



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The Material Anatomy of a Carrier Bag





Key Insight: A “water-based coating” is a different finishing approach entirely, not another name for film lamination. **Always verify specifications** on your quote.

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Light, Touch, and the Illusion of Digital Proofs



Gloss Film:
Deepens saturated colors, throws back light. Reads as bold and glossy-magazine.



Matte Film:
Cuts glare. Makes dark, full-coverage designs look calmer and more deliberate.



Soft-Touch Film:
Adds a velvety hand. The go-to finish for jewelry and beauty to signal extreme care.

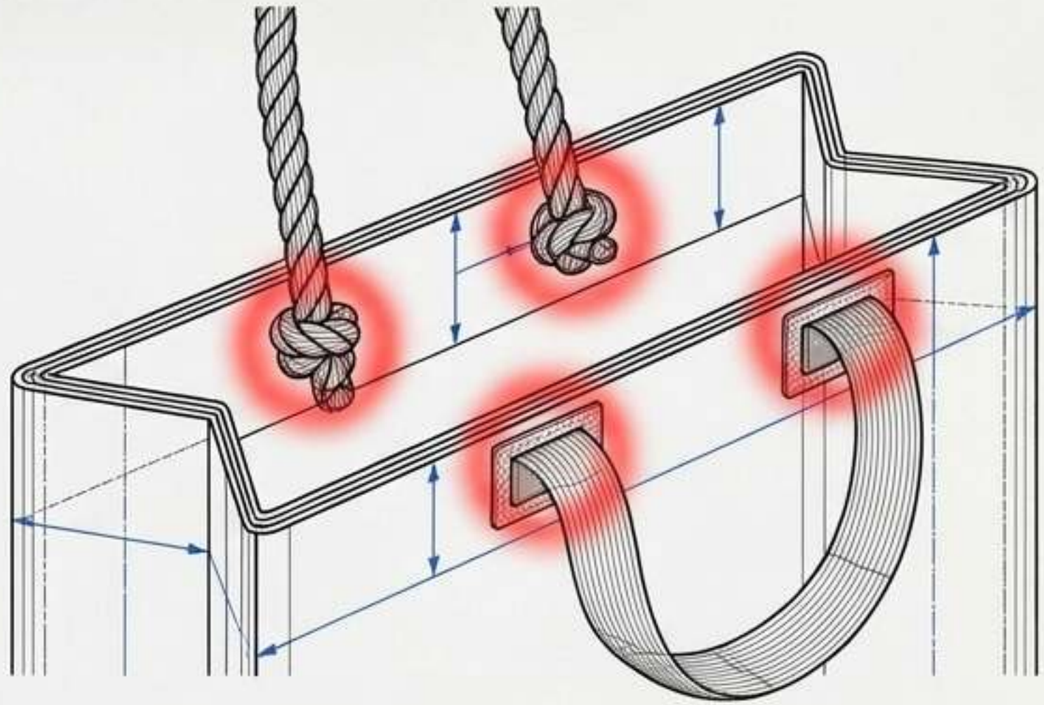


Uncoated Kraft:
Premium feel achieved through restraint. A neutral background where branding relies on a calm, natural texture.



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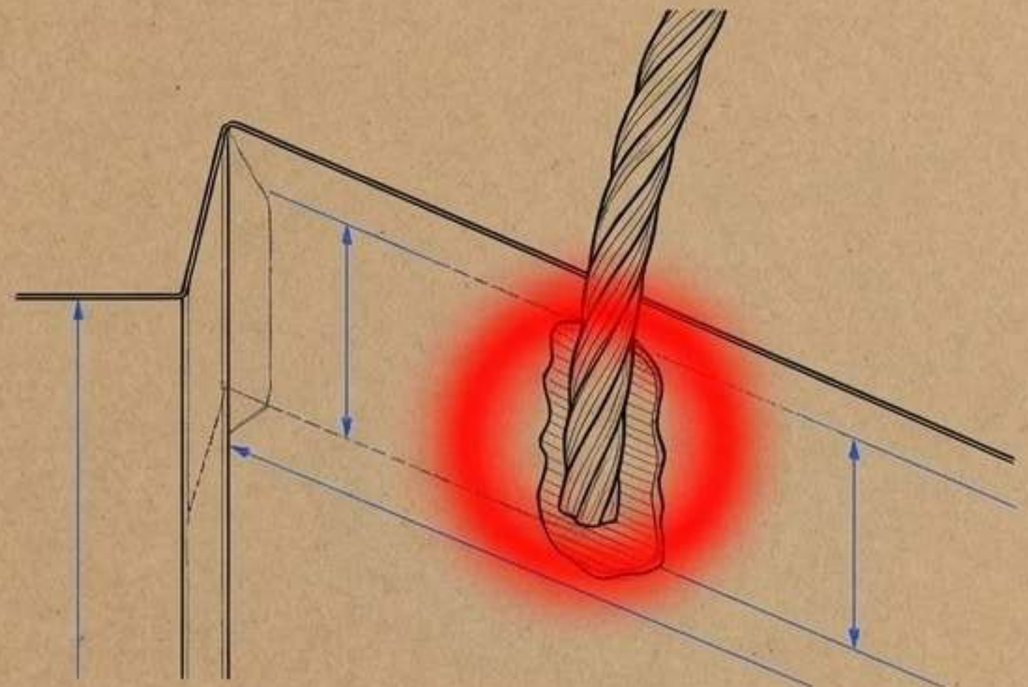
The Anchor Blueprint: Where Bags Actually Fail



LAMINATED ANCHORS

Detail: Anchored either knotted through a punched hole or glued under a reinforcement patch inside the fold.

Rule: Rope/ribbon are design requests subject to construction review, not simple catalogue switches.



KRAFT ANCHORS

Detail: Glued directly to the inside of the unlaminated paper.

Rule: Switching to flat handles or cotton ribbon creates a fundamentally different configuration requiring a new quote and sample.

GOLDEN RULE: Paper weight (g/m²) is not a load rating. Load your sample with your heaviest item, carry it, set it down, and lift again.

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The Shop Floor Stress Test

	Gloss	Matte/Soft-Touch	Kraft
1. Fingerprints & Smudges	●	○	○
2. Stacking Friction (Transit/Counters)	○	●	◑
3. Moisture (Damp Hands)	○	○	●
4. Scuffs & Marking	○	◑	●

● High vulnerability | ◑ Moderate | ○ Resilient

Inspector's Note: Neither a film name nor 'kraft' establishes scratch resistance or waterproofing. Treat any promise as a test you must run on a physical sample.

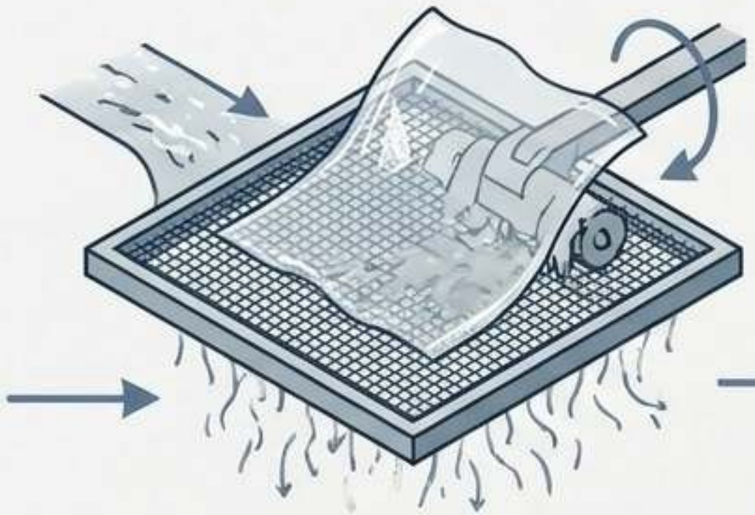
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The Recyclability Trade-Off: The Repulping Reality

Step 1: The Vat: Laminated film adds a non-paper layer. During repulping, this film does not break down.



Step 2: The Screen: The film must be physically screened out of the pulp mixture.



Step 3: The Score (CEPI Method): Under Europe's standard CEPI recyclability test, laminated particles left in sheets count against the result. To pass, fiber yield must reach at least 80%.

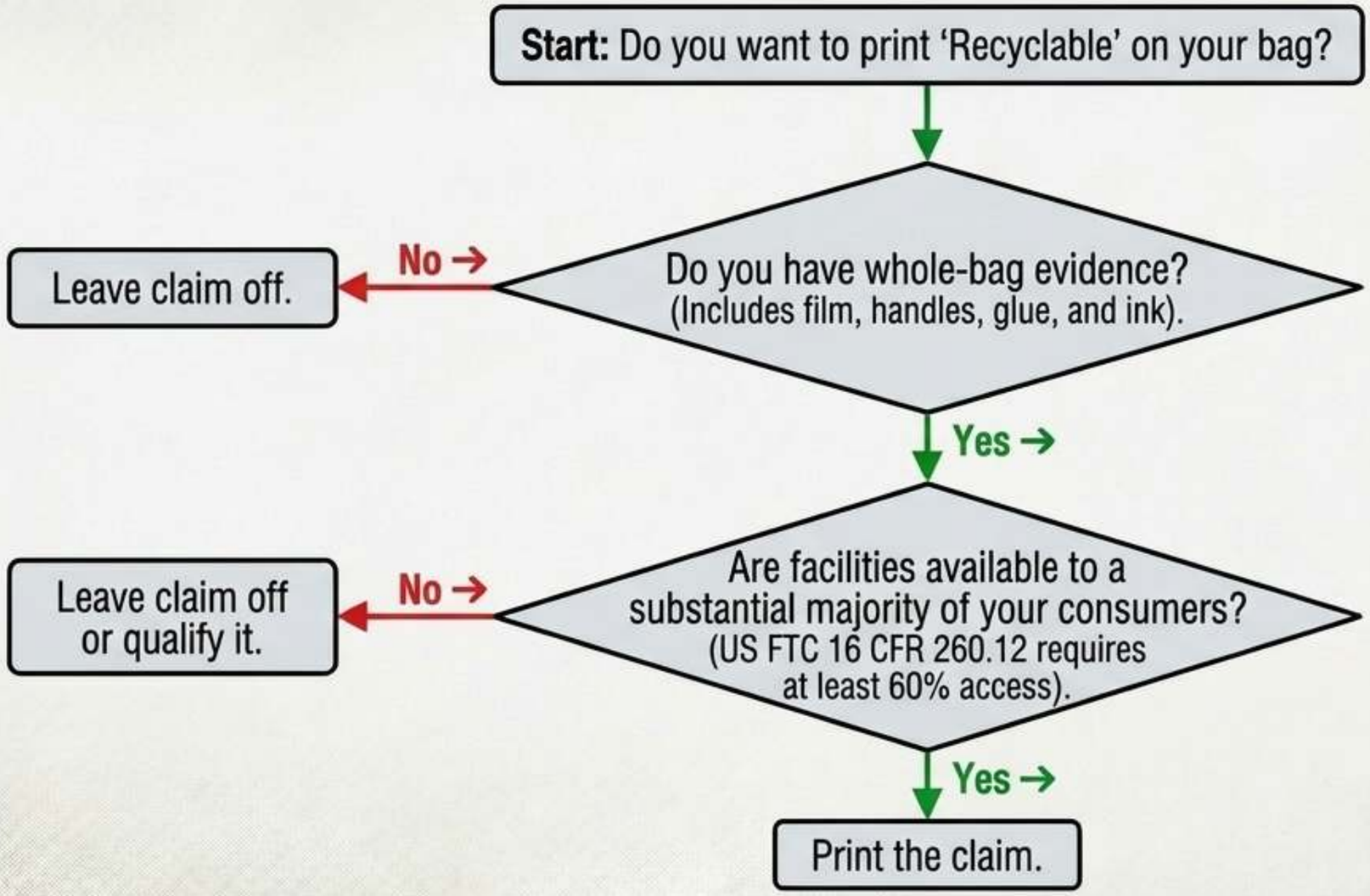


The Global Reality

In the UK, government recycling methodologies list plastic-lined fiber composites as "not widely collected at kerbside." The EU's Packaging Waste Regulation applies as of August 2026, with strict recyclability grades gating market access by 2030.

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The Eco-Claim Decision Tree (FTC & Global Rules)

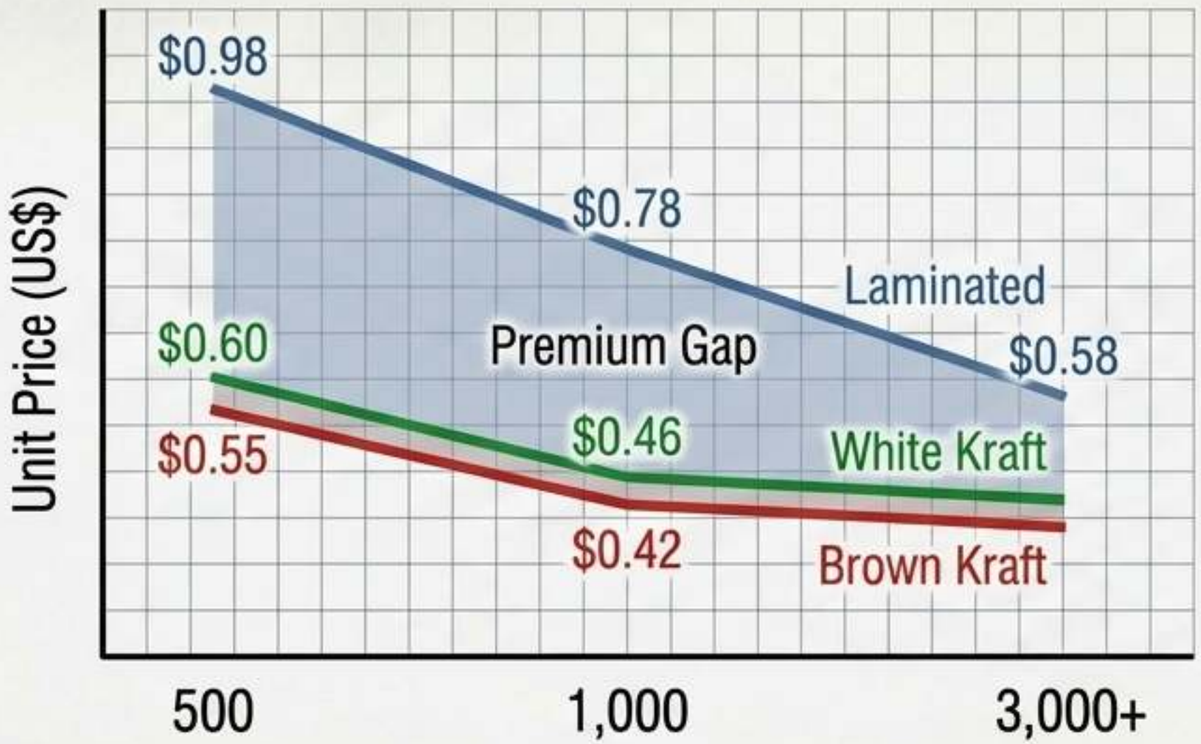


Mythbuster

- Brown color does NOT prove recycled content.
- 'Kraft' does NOT prove certification.
- Water-based ink does NOT establish local recycling acceptance.
- FSC logos certify fiber sourcing, NOT recyclability.

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Unit Economics & The Volume Curve



Data Points (Based on Zigpac Nov 2026 Tiers):

- **500 pcs:** Laminated (US$0.98) | White Kraft (US$0.60) | Brown Kraft (US$0.55). Gap: ~$190 per run.
- **1,000 pcs:** Laminated (US$0.78) | White Kraft (US$0.46) | Brown Kraft (US$0.42). Gap: ~$320 per run.
- **3,000+ pcs:** Laminated (US$0.58) drops below the starting tier of White Kraft.

The Volume Paradox

Volume narrows the unit price. However, 3,000 laminated bags commit ~$1,740 in cash and require significant physical storage space.

Disclaimer: Prices are illustrative listed tiers; size, print, finish, packing, and final MOQ dictate the final quote.

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Calculating the True Cost of a Carrier Bag



Inspection Checklist

The "Usable Bag" Equation

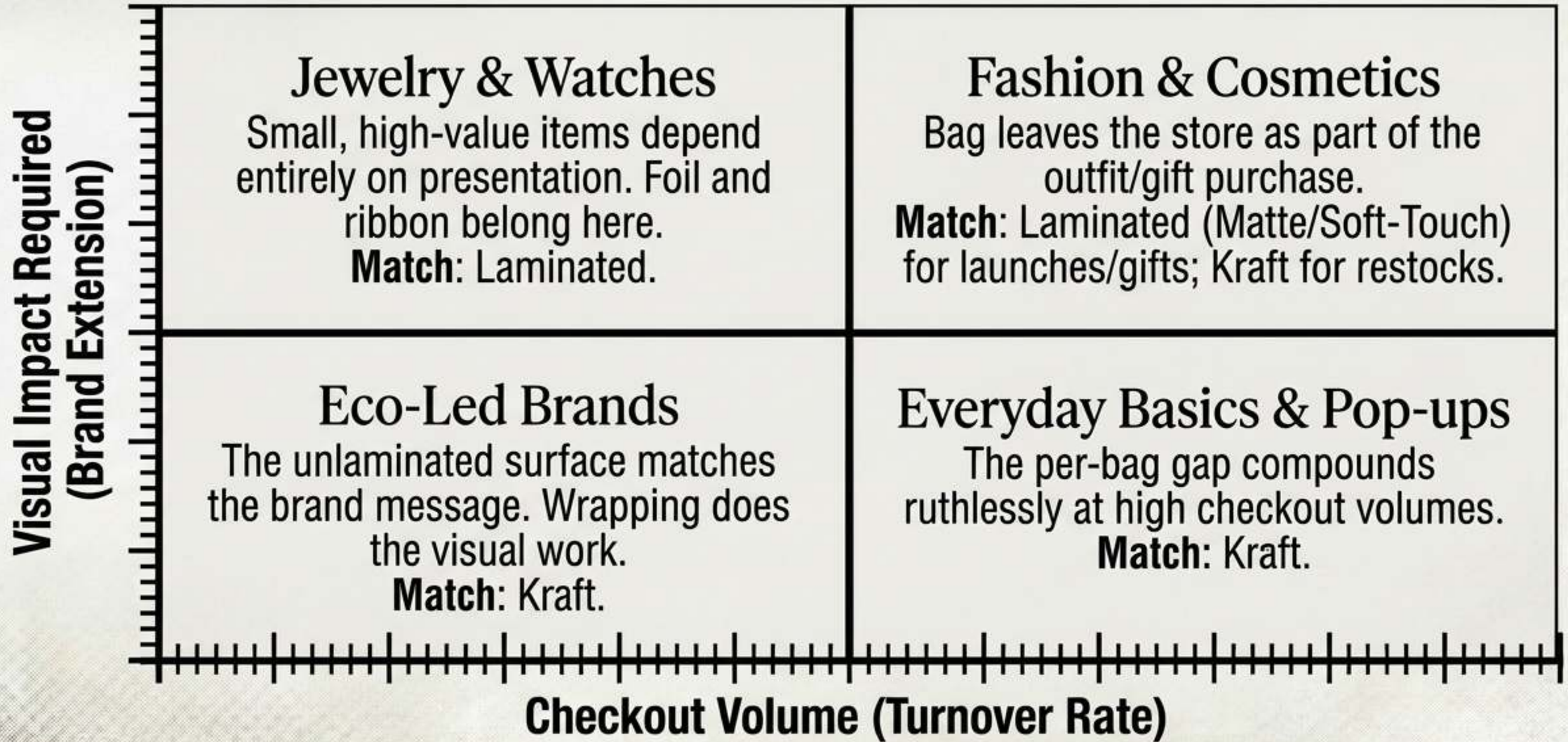
- ☐ Divide your total run cost
- ☐ ONLY by the bags that
- ☐ pass your physical check
- ☐ (clean face, secure
- ☐ handles, square bottom).
- ☐
- ☐ A cheaper bag that arrives scuffed and cannot be handed to a customer is <u>not</u> cheaper.

Landed Cost Variables

- **Transit Damage:** Ask how finished bags are packed. Bags rubbing together in transit arrive marked.
- **Duties:** US importers must check if the 2024 duty determinations on certain paper shopping bags apply to their origin. Duty is a landed cost, not a per-bag tier price.
- **Sampling:** The cheapest way to settle a debate. Physical samples ship for US$5–30. Budget for them.

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The Strategic Alignment Matrix



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The Master Specification Matrix

Feature	Laminated Art Paper Bag	White or Brown Kraft Bag
Construction 	Printed art paper + film	Unlaminated kraft paper
Surface 	Gloss/Matte/Soft-touch	Natural uncoated texture
Print Capacity 	Full coverage art (color shift risk)	Logo on white/brown base (base affects ink)
Handles 	Rope/ribbon/paper (requires construction review)	Twisted paper standard
Eco-Status 	Adds non-paper layer (whole-bag evidence needed)	Simpler description (still needs evidence for claims)
Production Schedule 	Standard 7-10 days (final schedule on quote)	Standard 7-10 days (final schedule on quote)

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The Side-by-Side Quote Checklist

If you are still split, order one sample of each. When you are ready, send Zigpac one brief and ask for laminated and kraft priced on the exact same basis.

Provide these 6 parameters:

- ☐ 1. Packed-item dimensions _____
- ☐ 2. Total quantity required _____
- ☐ 3. Finish preference (Gloss, Matte, Soft-touch, or Unlaminated Kraft) _____
- ☐ 4. Handle type _____
- ☐ 5. Vector artwork _____
- ☐ 6. Delivery destination & required arrival date _____



Zigpac confirms final MOQ, price, and schedule on the quote. Every order gets a free eProof.