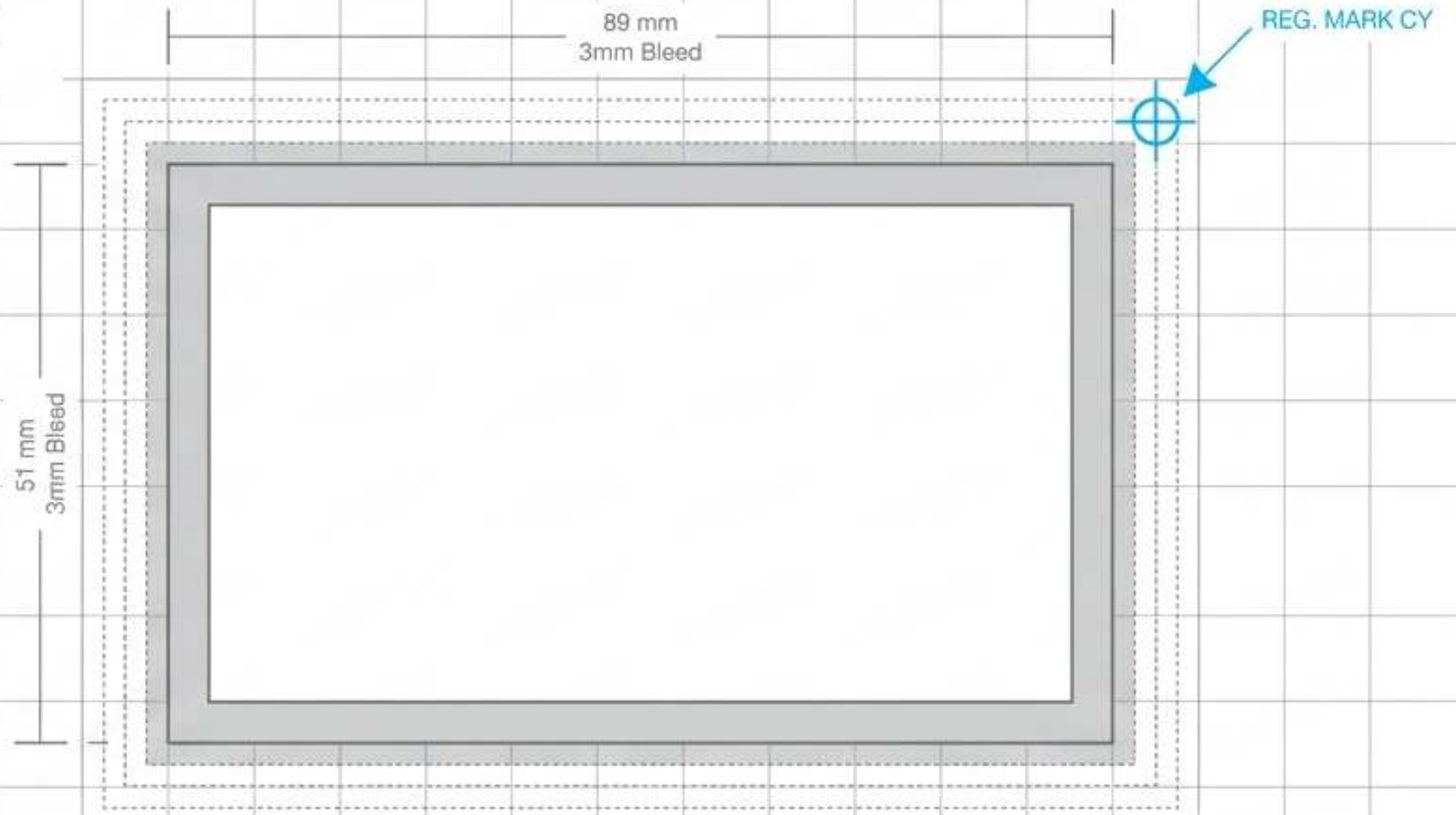
Custom Business Cards: The Specification & Buying Guide

Making Your Next Introduction Count (SKU: ZPCCP0003)

A practical guide to defining layouts, selecting materials, preflighting artwork, and navigating procurement for custom commercial printing.



ZIGPAC

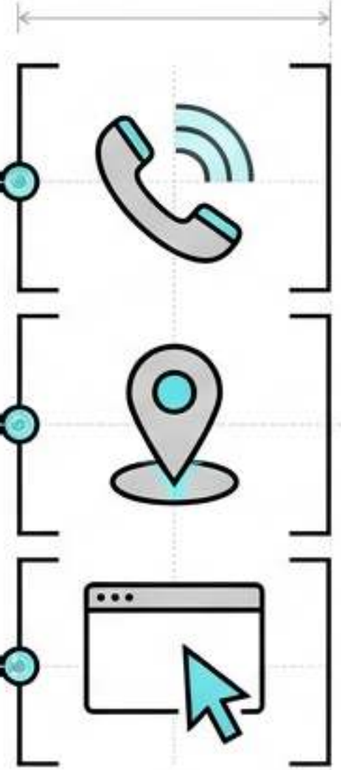
A Bridge to the Next Action

Not a brochure:
A card is a compact introduction, not a comprehensive company profile.



A card is a compact introduction, not a comprehensive company profile.

The Core Job:
Identify yourself, clarify your relevance, and provide a practical route to reconnect.

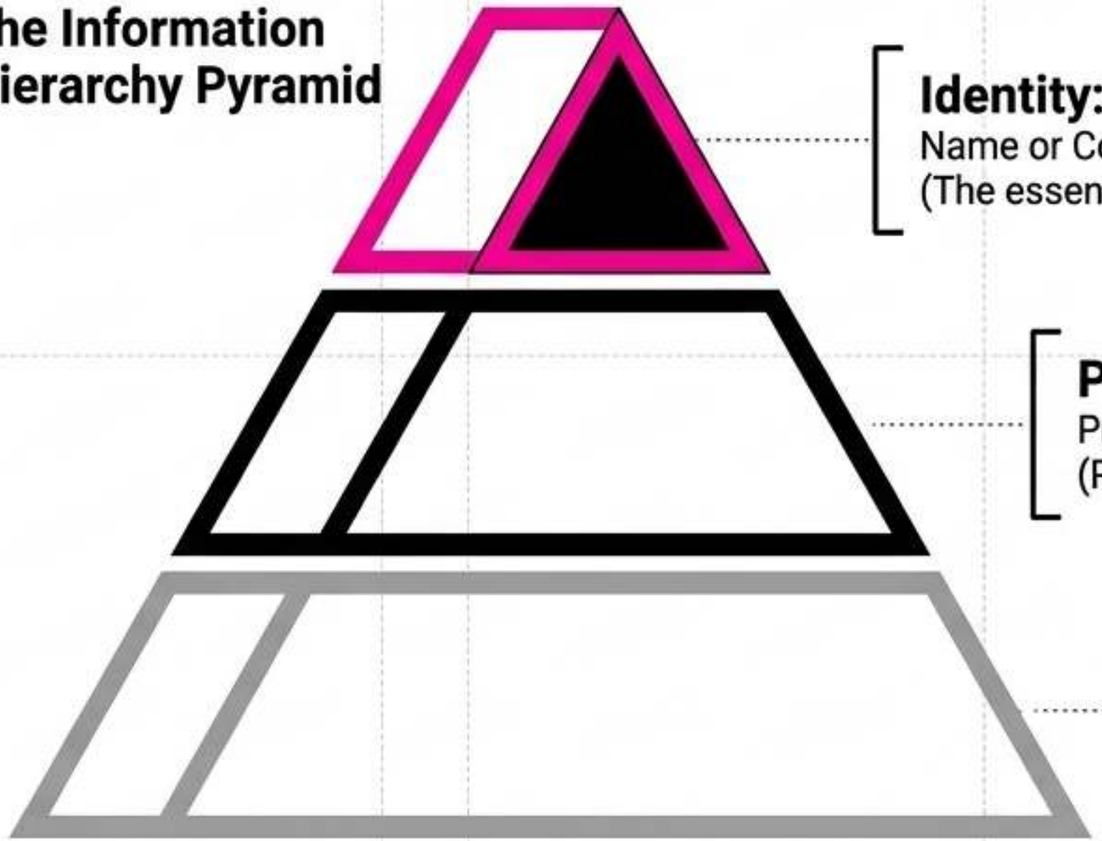


The Crucial Decision:
Before choosing finishes or layouts, decide exactly what the recipient should do next.

ZIGPAC

Structuring the Information Hierarchy

The Information Hierarchy Pyramid



Identity:
Name or Company Name, Role.
(The essential anchor).

Primary Contact:
Preferred route to reconnect
(Phone, Email).

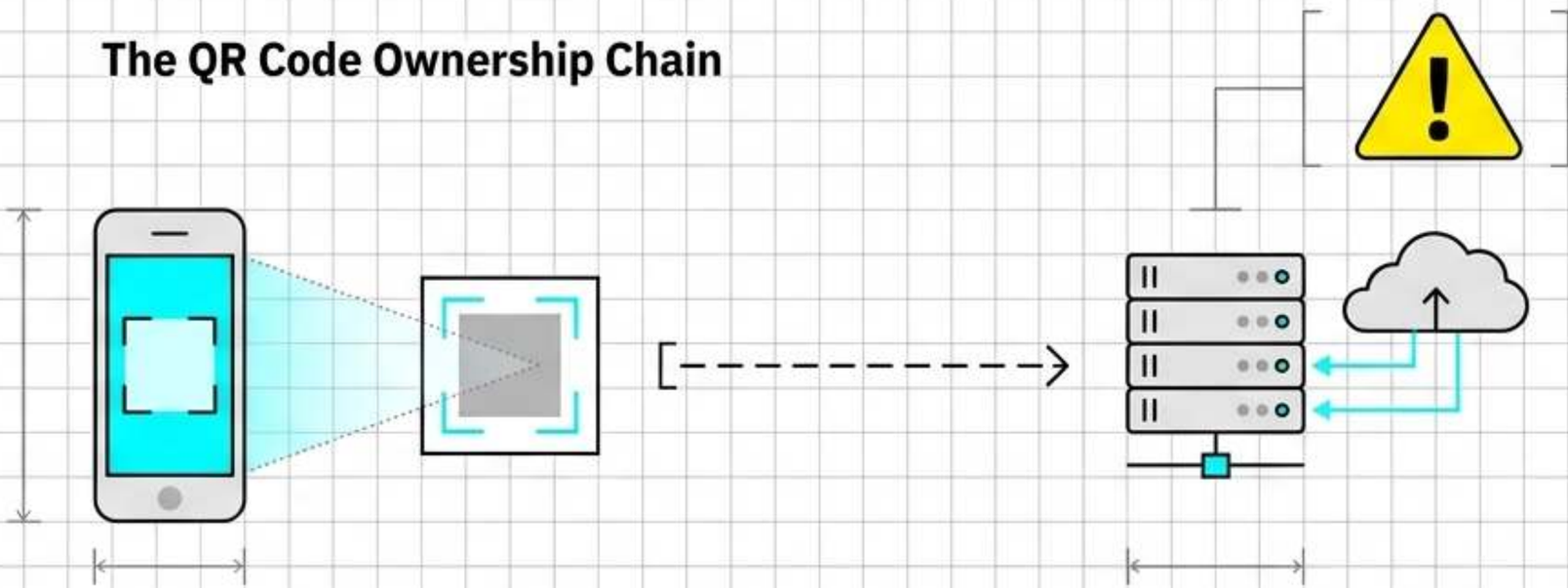
Context:
Destinational elements
(Service summary, physical address, website).

Only add elements that contribute to the intended use.

A short service description clarifies; a long list competes with the details people actually need to contact you.

The QR Code Reality Check

The QR Code Ownership Chain

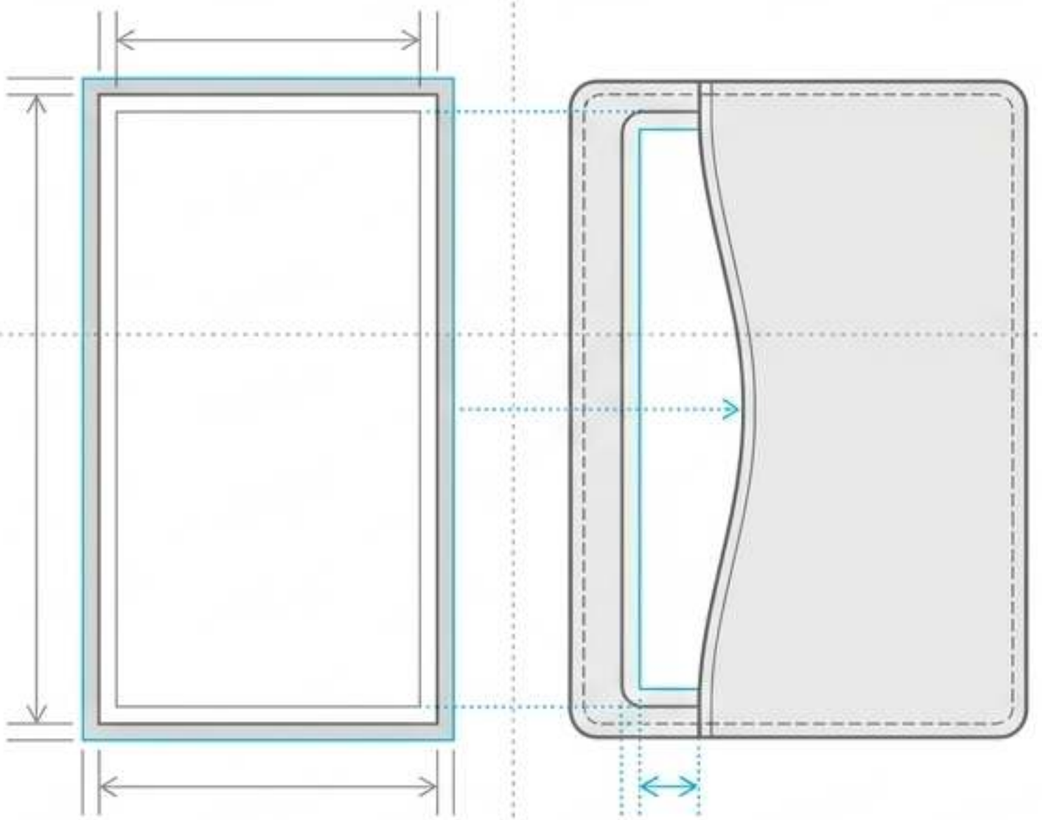


1. The Printed Ink:
Bridges physical print to a digital destination.

2. The Destination Control:
Specify who controls and maintains the target URL. An editable page adapts, but a printed URL cannot be corrected once manufactured.

3. The Infrastructure Caveat:
Printing a code does not include NFC hardware, hosting, analytics, or digital subscriptions. Ensure ownership before printing.

Finished Dimensions vs. Market Assumptions

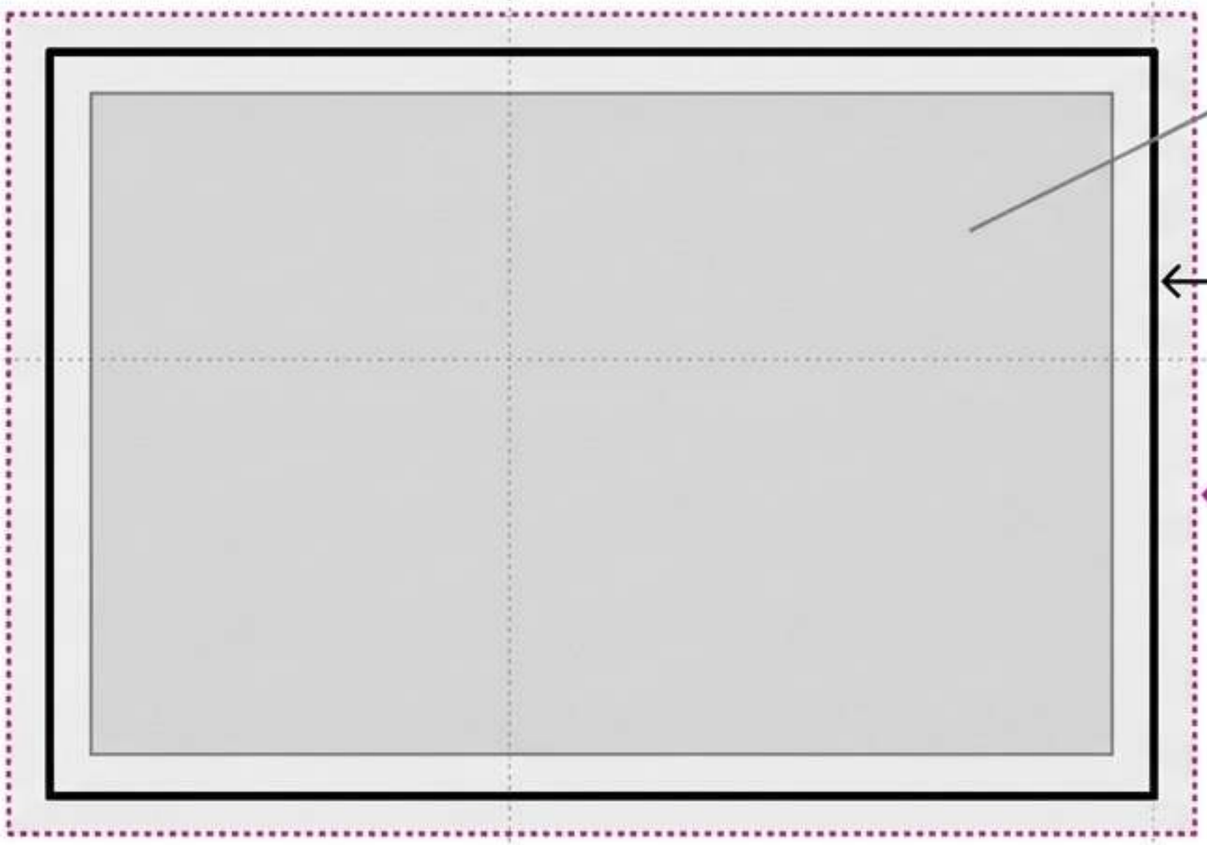


1. **Never ask for standard:** A common US reference is 3.5 x 2 inches (88.9 x 50.8 mm), but this is a market reference, not a confirmed manufacturing specification for this SKU.

2. **Specify explicitly:** State required finished dimensions directly in the brief.

3. **Validate the fit:** For square, rounded-corner, or custom formats, test fit and carrying capacity with a physical sample in the intended wallet. Do not rely on product photographs.

The Anatomy of the Print Canvas



Safe Area: Keeps critical text and logos safely away from the cutting blade.

Cut Line: The defined finished size of the product.

Bleed Area: Extends background artwork beyond the cut line to prevent unexpected white edges.

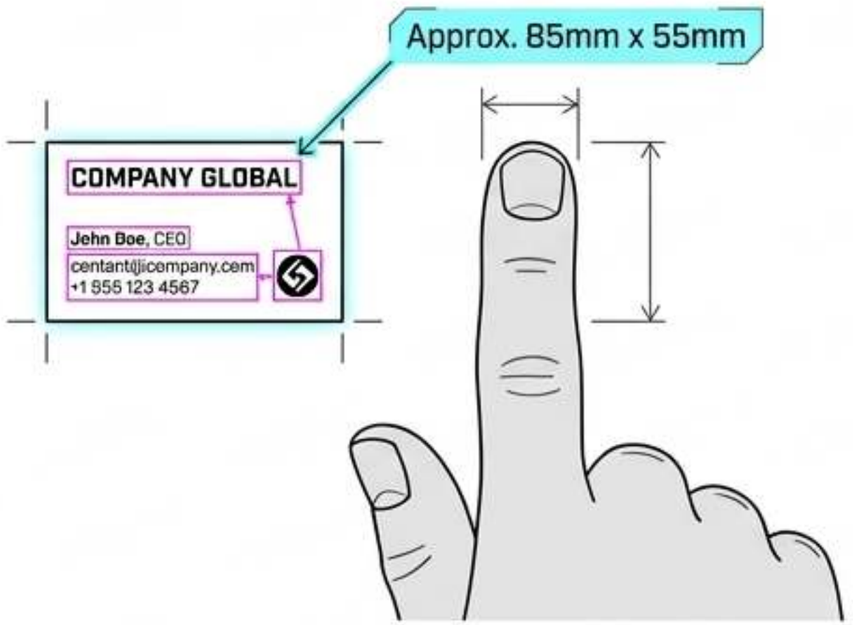
Note: Use the supplier's approved template for the actual order. Do not transfer another printer's settings simply because finished dimensions match.

Designing for Physical Reality

Screen Scale (Deceptive)



Physical Scale (Reality)

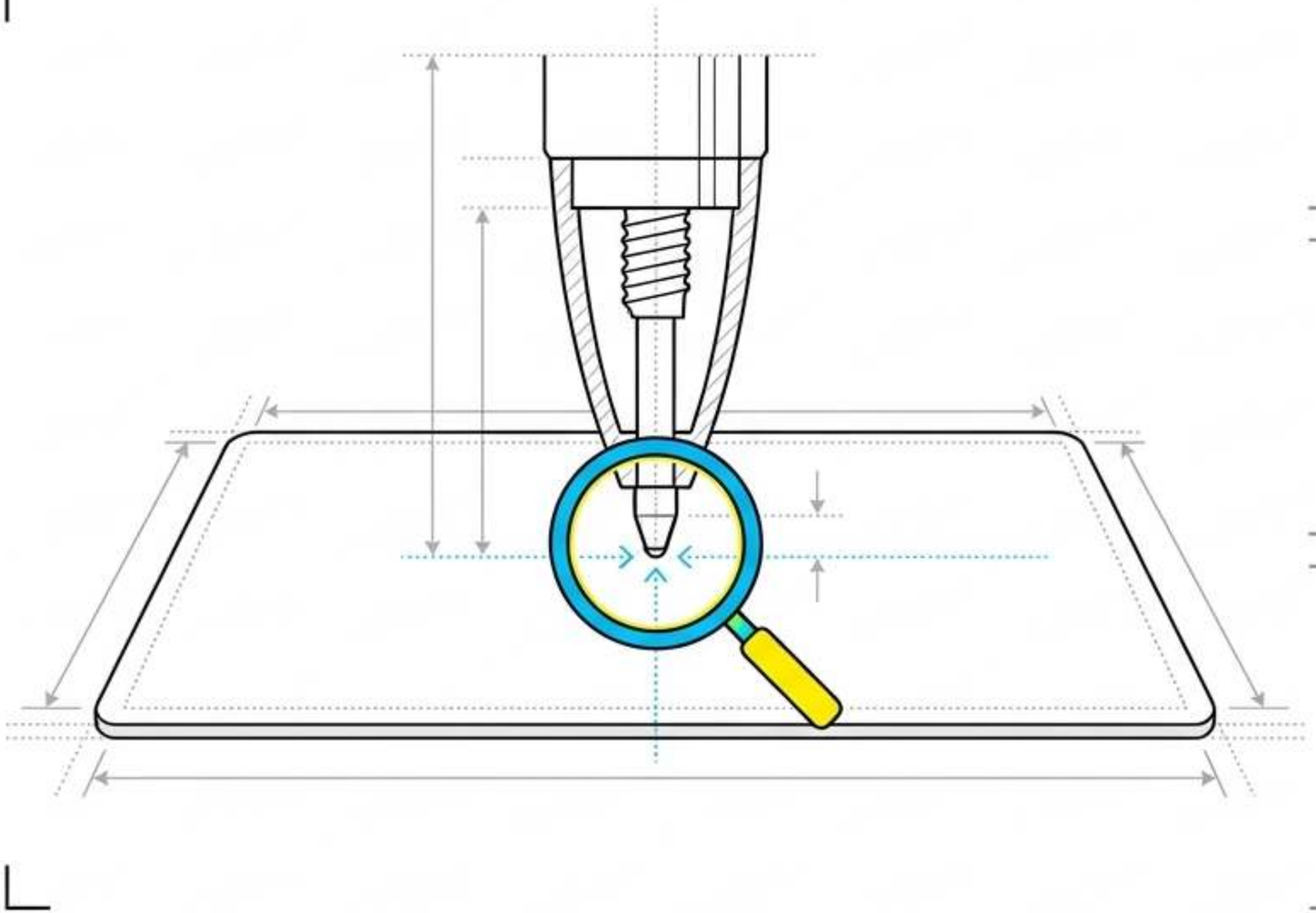


- Assess layouts at their intended physical size, not just enlarged on a 27-inch screen.
- Check the longest email addresses, smallest contact lines, logo details, and text-to-background contrast.
- If an important element is difficult to read at physical scale, simplify the layout before adding decoration. Narrow borders require special attention during trim review.

Surface Options: A Diagnostic Matrix

Proposed Direction	Purpose to Evaluate	Approval Requirement
Matte	Restrained presentation for text-led branding	Review actual finish and printed contrast
Gloss	Image-led or reflective presentation	Check readability under intended lighting
Uncoated/Textured	Tactile surface or space for notes	Test intended pen and inspect fine details
Soft-touch	A particular surface feel	Approve physical sample; agree to handling test
Foil/Spot UV	Selective emphasis on a design element	Confirm artwork separation, placement, cost, and feasibility

Evaluating Tactility & Performance

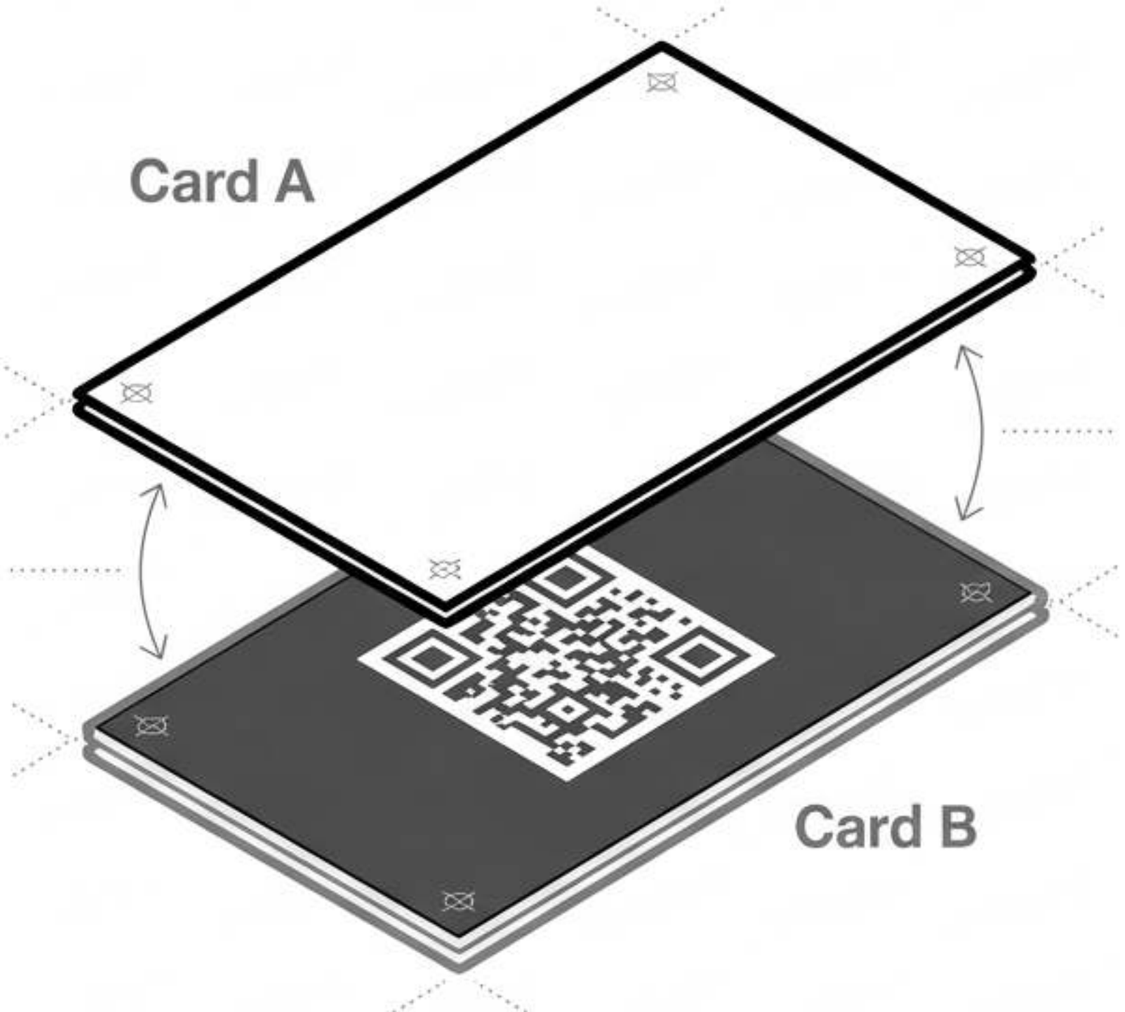


Finish names (e.g., Premium, Matte, Soft-touch) are directions for quotation, **not interchangeable upgrades.**

Do not assume matte or soft-touch surfaces are automatically writable, scratch-resistant, or suitable for all graphics.

Where performance matters (e.g., writing appointment times), define the **use case** and request physical testing on the proposed construction using the intended pen.

The Reverse Side Strategy



Choose the reverse independently of the front.

Blank Reverse:

Best for supporting handwritten notes.

Printed Reverse:

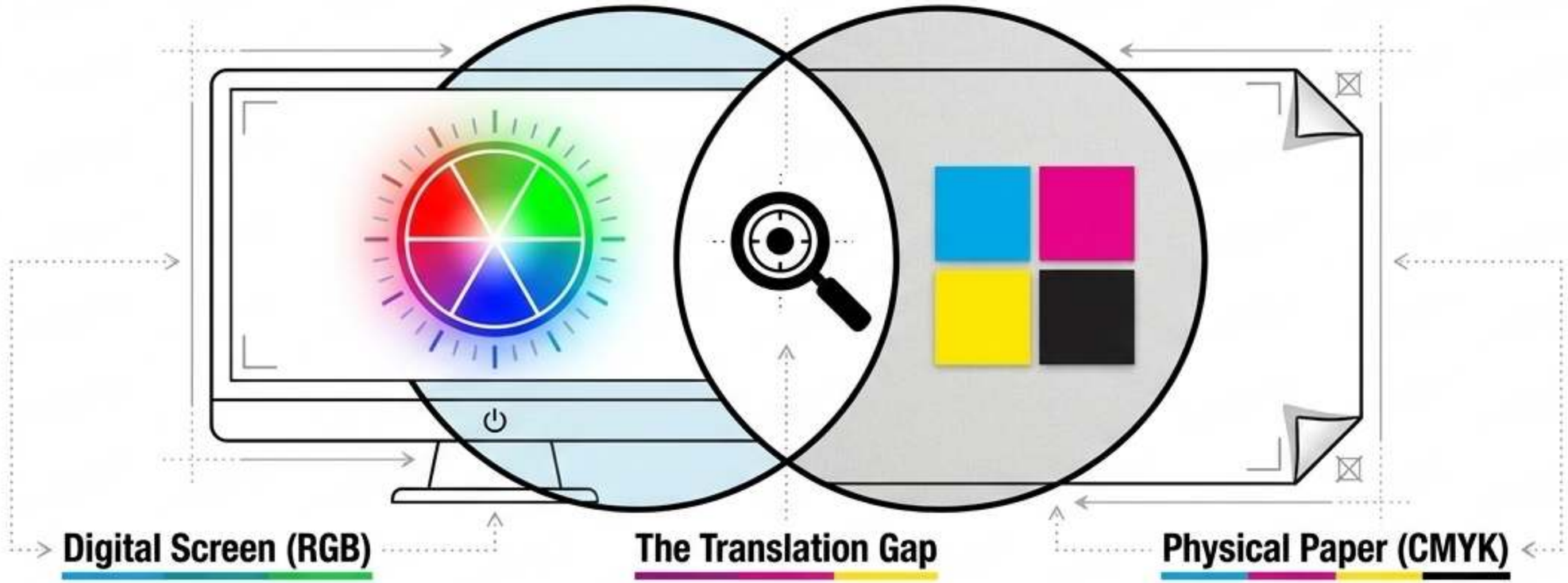
Best for portfolio images, service messages, or QR destinations.

Order Clarification:

Explicitly confirm if the order is single-sided or double-sided. Confirm if different names or reverse designs require separate artwork version costs.

Note: No badge pins or magnetic backings are specified for this paper product.

The Screen-to-Print Gap



A screen preview does not establish an exact printed color match.

Visual mockups of foil or spot UV are merely directional; they are not production approvals.

If brand color fidelity is critical, a physical reference and an agreed acceptance method must be established before production begins. No measured color tolerance is supplied automatically for this SKU.

Preflight: Bridging Design and Specification

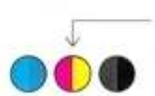
1. Content

Verify names, titles, phone numbers, emails, and URLs against the buyer-approved source. Label front/reverse clearly.

2. Geometry

Confirm finished dimensions, orientation, bleed lines, safe areas, and proposed corner treatments against the order template.

3. Color Handling



Follow CMYK preparation requirements. Identify specific brand colors requiring physical review.

4. Digital Destinations

SCAN CHECK



Verify QR links. Ensure a physical scan check is performed on the sample at intended print size.

The Purchasing Workflow



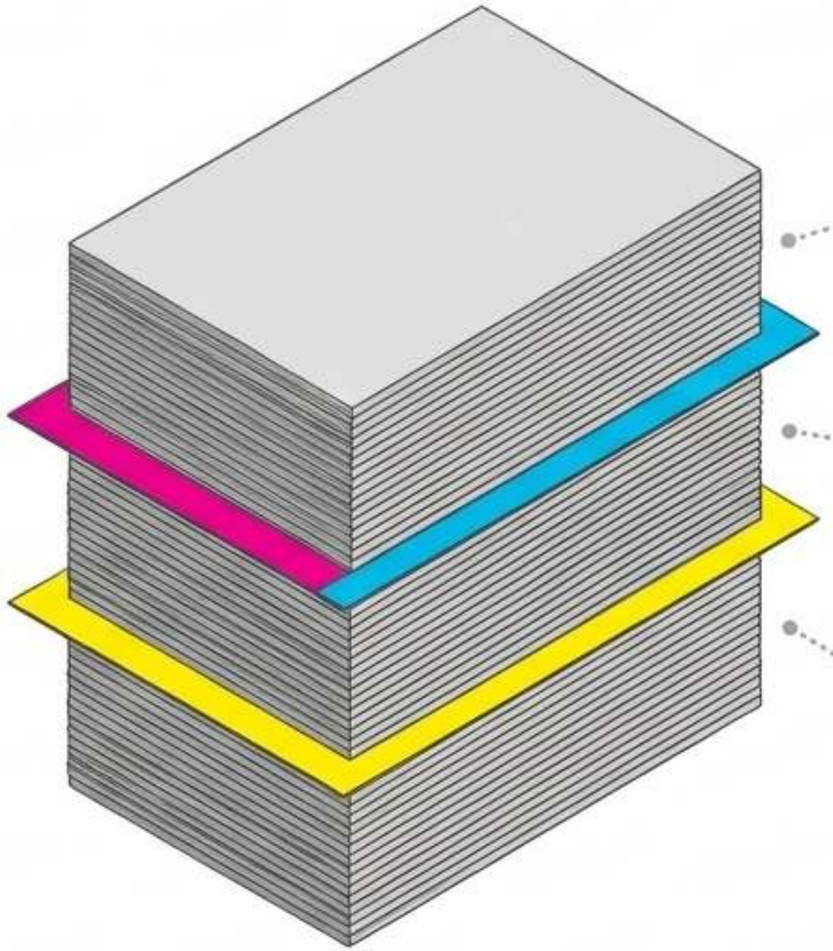
- This is a recommended purchasing sequence, not a guarantee of included services. The quotation must explicitly establish who handles each stage.
- Clarify sample purpose: an existing stock sample compares paper; a custom printed sample evaluates layout.

Compare Specifications, Not Headline Prices

The Buying Approach Configurator

Buying Approach	When to Consider	What to Confirm
Simple, text-led	Routine introductions	**Confirm legibility**, paper feel, delivered cost.
Texture / Special-finish	Brand presentation where tactility matters	**Confirm finish feasibility, placement**, sample cost.
Double-sided portfolio / QR	Creative work or online follow-up	**Confirm reverse artwork**, scan performance, link ownership.
Small initial trial	Unproven designs or uncertain materials	**Confirm trial** availability, minimum quantities, relevance to final production.

Handling Mixed-Name Orders

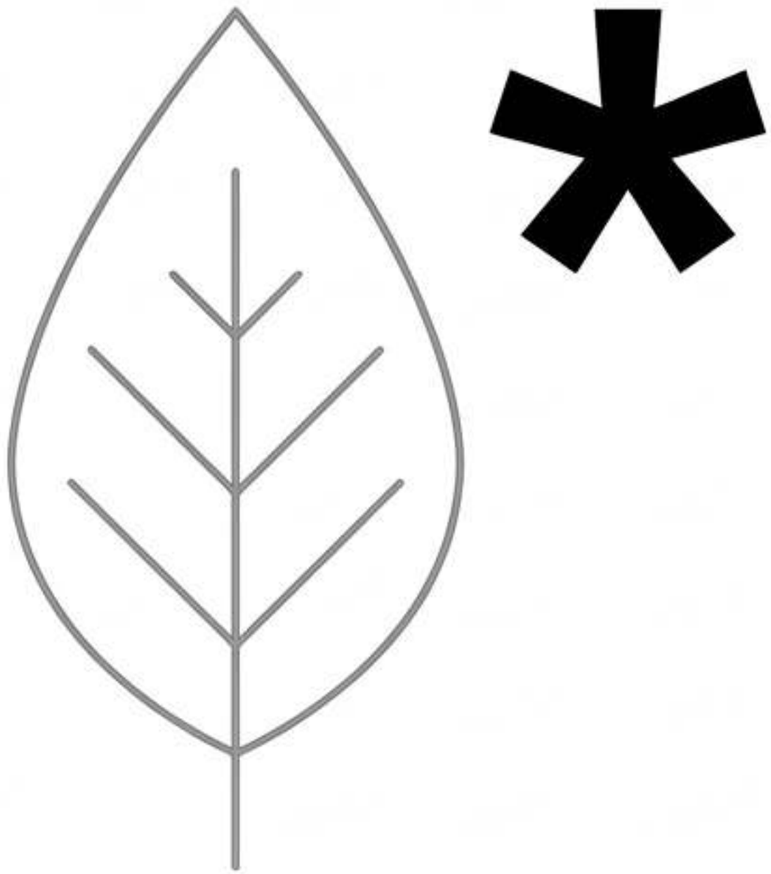


For **multiple employees** or **locations**, include a complete **version list** with the quotation request.

Resolve whether **minimum quantities** are assessed per person, per artwork version, or across the combined order.

Confirm exactly **how different versions** will be **identified** and **separated** during final packing.

Environmental Claims & Certifications

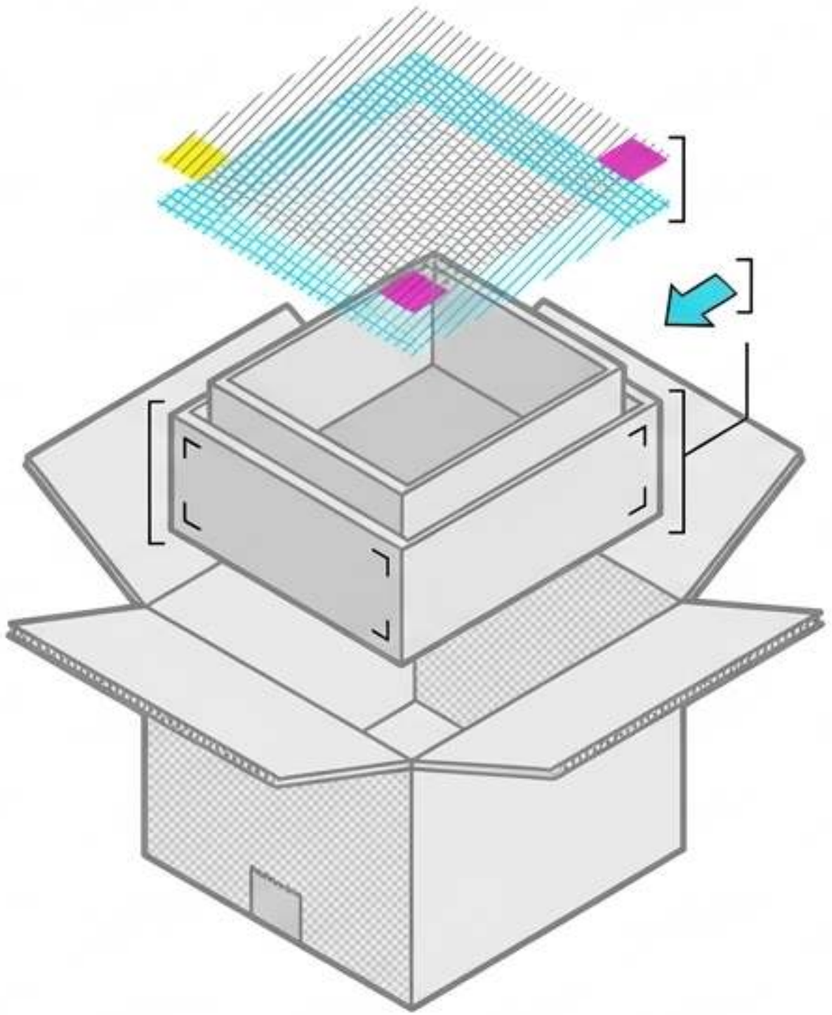


- Recycled content percentages and FSC certification are **unconfirmed** for this base product.
- Another supplier's certification is **not evidence** for these cards.
- If environmental sourcing is a requirement, you must **request project-specific evidence** tied directly to the proposed paper and your specific order.
- **Do not assume or claim recyclability** without substantiation.

Order Acceptance Protocol

Inspection Area	Practical Check	Record to Retain
Content	🔍 Match details/sides to files	Retain artwork revision & discrepancy photos.
Trim/Alignment	🔍 Inspect centering, edges, corners	Retain edge/front/reverse photos.
Color/Surface	🔍 Compare to physical reference	Retain reference ID and defect description.
Paper/Handling	🔍 Check stock, creasing, surface	Retain sample ID and test observations.
Completeness	🔍 Check version quantities	Retain packing list and shortage records.

Protecting the Shipment



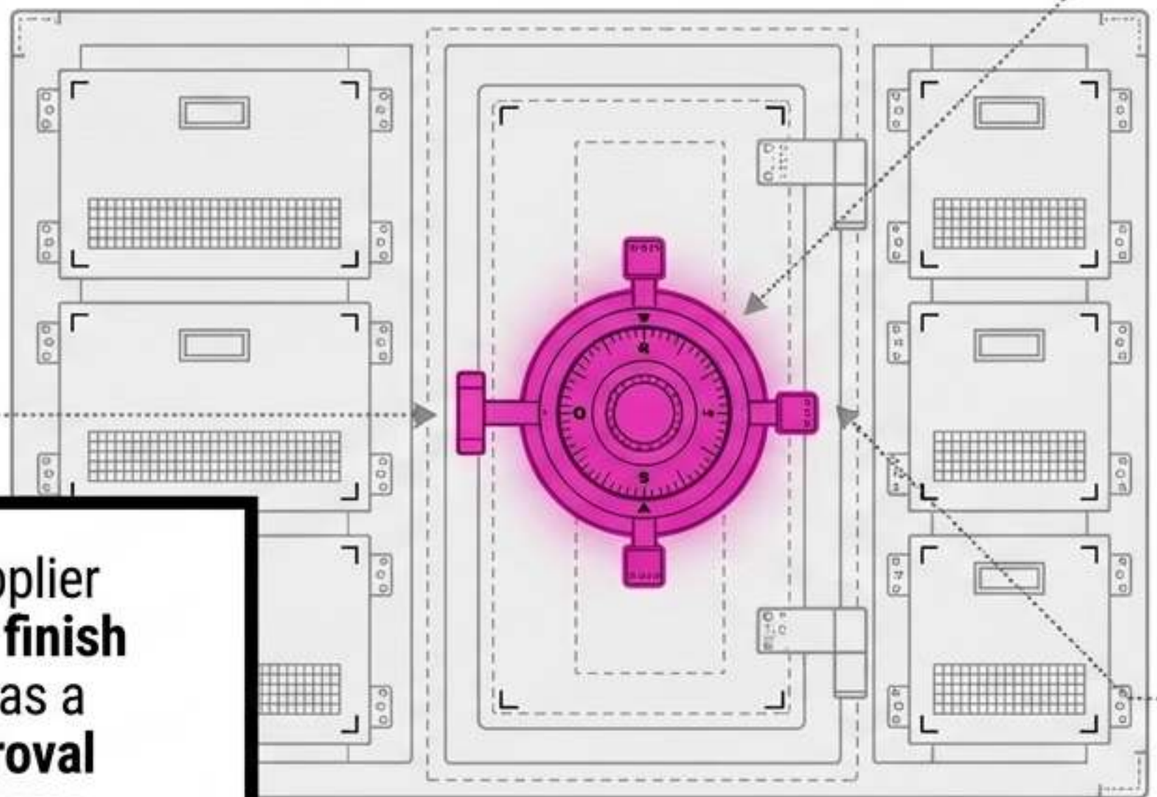
Ask how proposed **packing protects edges and printed surfaces** during transit.

Package fit and **packing quantity** depend on specific **physical dimensions** and load validation.

Unit weights and **packed shipment weights** are **not standard**; request relevant measurements before accepting a transport estimate.

Distinguish **required arrival date** from dispatch date. **Expedited shipping** does not mean expedited production.

Managing Repeat Orders



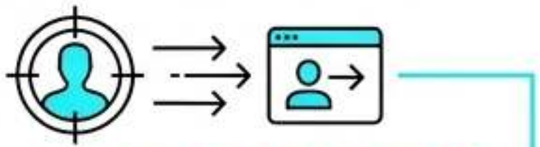
Retain your **approved artwork revision, paper description, finish specifications,** dimensions, and **physical reference samples**.

Recheck every contact detail and QR link function before reordering.

Crucial Rule: If a supplier proposes a **paper or finish substitution**, treat it as a completely **new approval decision**. Do not assume previous results will carry over.

Synthesis: Turn Your Brief into an Order

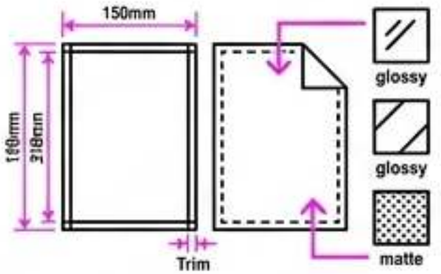
1. Audience & Purpose



Focus on the recipient's next action.

Determine the primary user and their desired outcome.

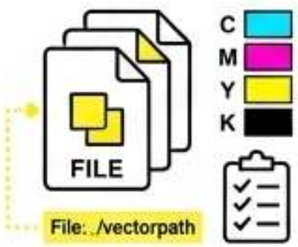
2. Physical Specs



Explicit dimensions and specific finish requirements.

Specify stock weight, coating, bindery type, and exact dimensions.

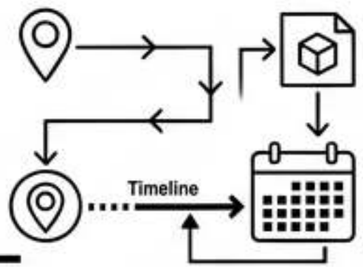
3. Artwork Details



Preflighted files, distinct versions, and color requirements.

Define bleed, resolution, spot colors, and versioning needs.

4. Logistics



Sampling needs, delivery destination, and timeline.

Outline sampling milestones, final delivery date, and shipping location.

The strongest start is a focused brief. Keep unverified claims out. Separate design approval from physical approval. Request a specification-based quote for ZPCCP0003 detailing your exact artwork, preferred dimensions, physical finish, testing needs, and delivery destination.