

# 2026 Fast Food Restaurant Operating Budget

**\$60,500**



Graphik  
Projected standard  
monthly operating  
budget required to  
sustain operations.

**4 Months**



Graphik  
Aggressive operational  
break-even target.

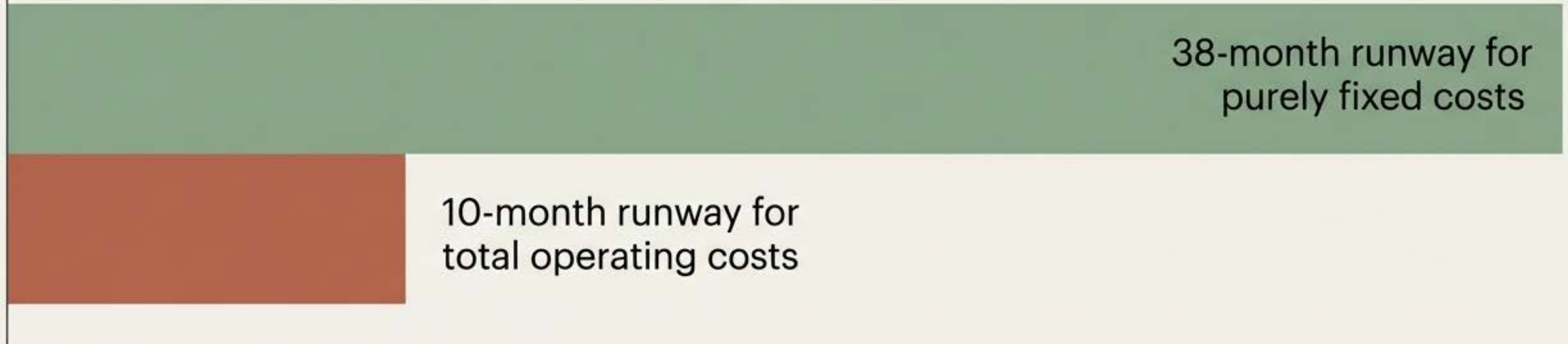
**\$603,000**



Graphik  
Total minimum capital  
requirement to cover  
initial expenditures and  
operating deficits.

# Surviving the ramp-up phase requires a secured \$603k capital buffer

Timeline comparison is based on May 2026 secured capital



→ Variable costs eat cash quickly.

- If the operational ramp-up takes longer than 10 months to reach steady state, working capital will run short.

# Establishing the absolute minimum \$34,376 baseline budget

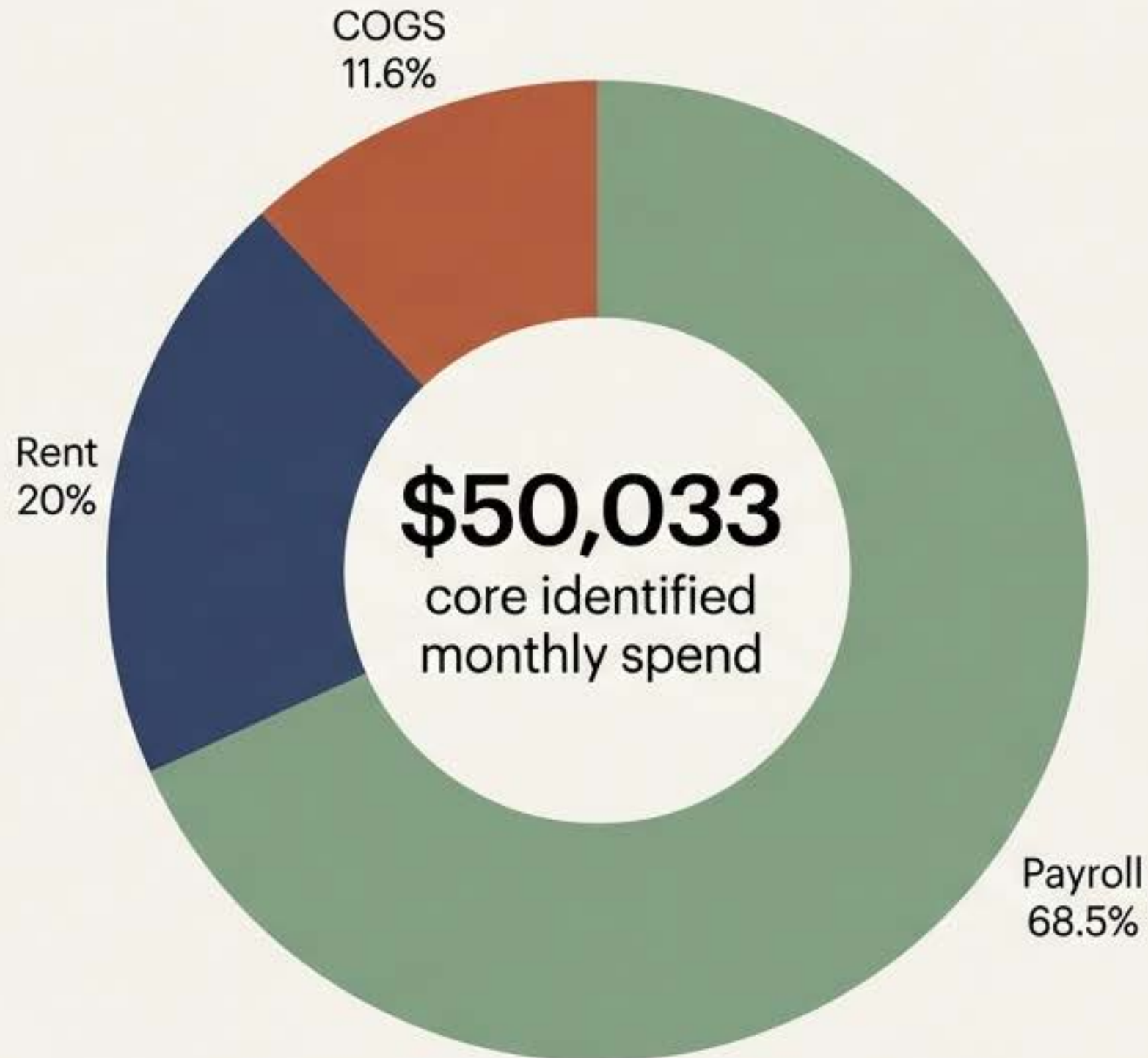
**\$18,576 Variable Expenses**  
(COGS and packaging, running  
at 43% of revenue).

**\$15,800 Fixed Floor**  
(covers rent, base salaries,  
and utilities paid regardless  
of sales).

**\$34,376**  
**minimum monthly**  
**operating budget.**

Note: Variable calculation assumes a baseline revenue of \$43,200 monthly, driven by 80 orders per day at an \$18 Average Order Value (AOV).

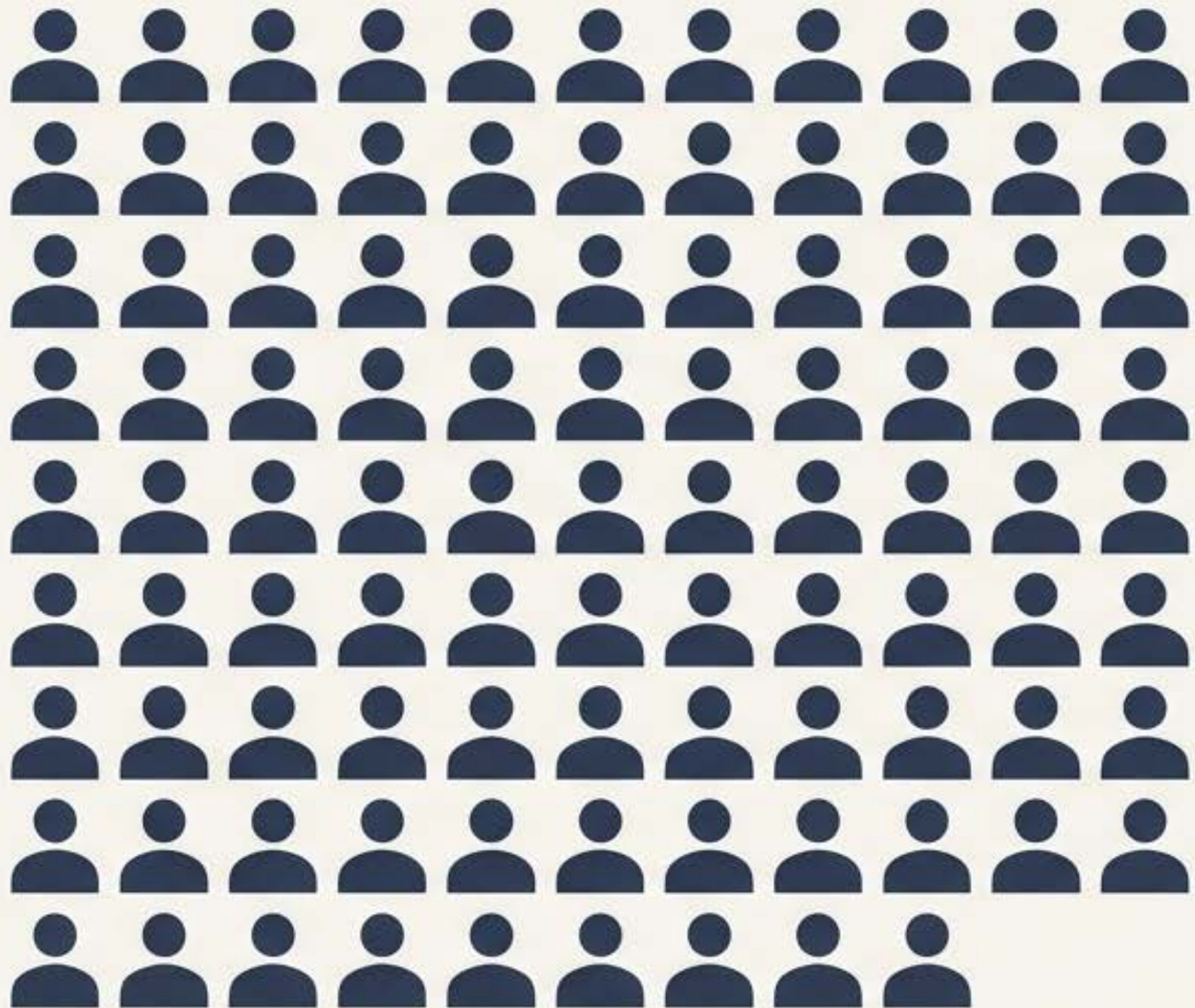
# Deconstructing the core expense ecosystem



## Management Focus

Payroll and Rent together dictate over 73% of the fixed operating base. Controlling these two levers dictates the immediate margin profile.

# Payroll dominance demands consistent volume to offset high fixed bases

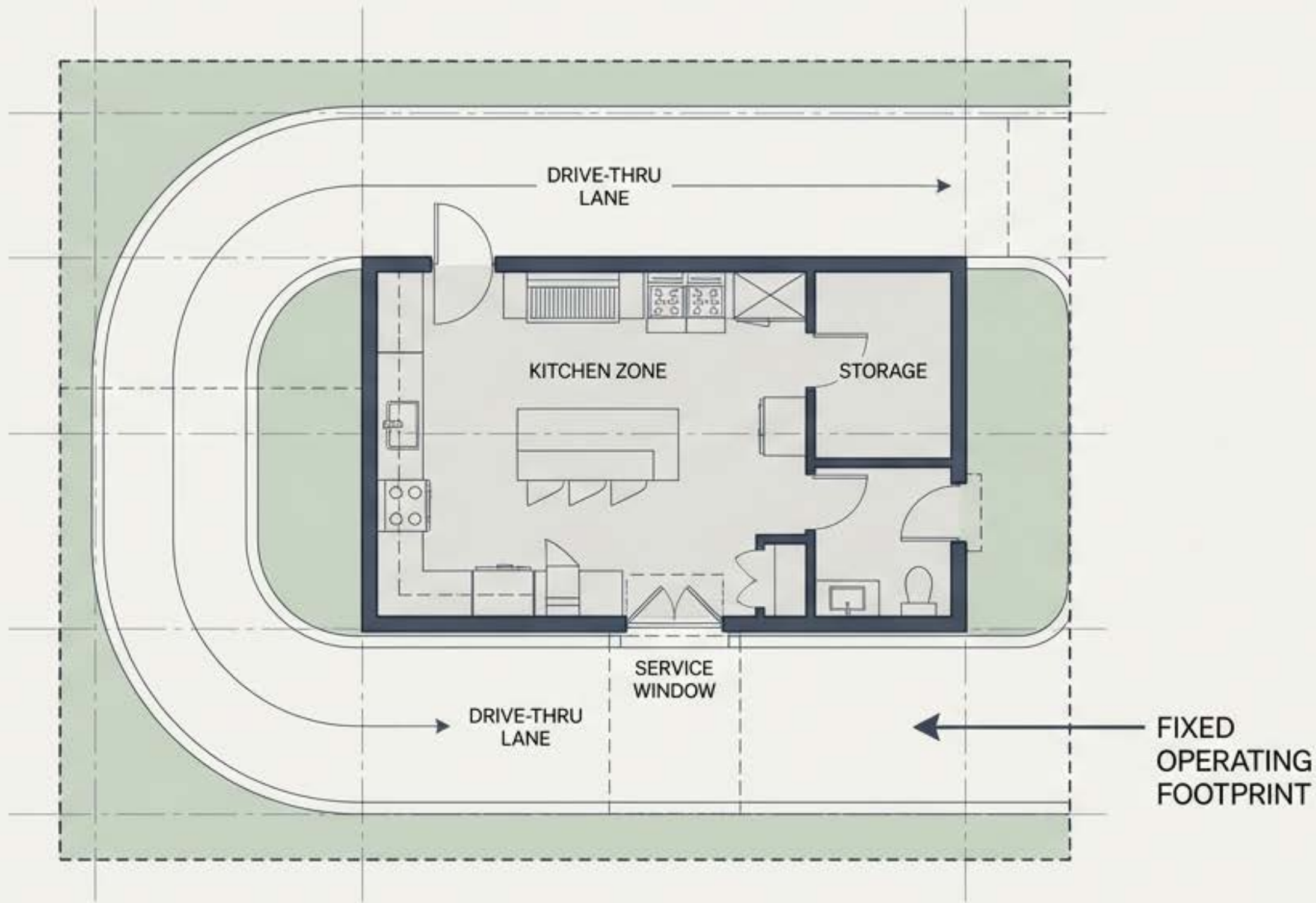


The Base: \$34,250 guaranteed base compensation for management and kitchen roles.

The Hidden Multiplier: The true labour burden is 20% to 35% higher once employer payroll taxes (FICA, unemployment) and benefits are added.

Operational Lever: Optimise shift scheduling and cross-train staff. Relying heavily on higher-paid managers for routine tasks severely damages the cost structure.

# Rent establishes the non-negotiable baseline to clear before profit



## Zone 1: Cost Structure

- \$10,000 monthly liability. Stacks directly against payroll to set the minimum operating threshold.

## Zone 2: Lease Management Lever

- Avoid leases longer than projected runways without exit clauses. Negotiate tenant improvement allowances and carefully evaluate subleasing unused space if underperforming.

Cost of goods sold scales directly with revenue volume

**Projected Total Revenue: \$92,920**



**Operational Focus:** Audit spoilage rates weekly and standardise portioning across all shifts. Given the 55% margin profile, focus intensely on beverage purchasing efficiency.

# Customer acquisition must be managed ruthlessly to protect margins



## The Rule:

Spend scales directly with sales performance.

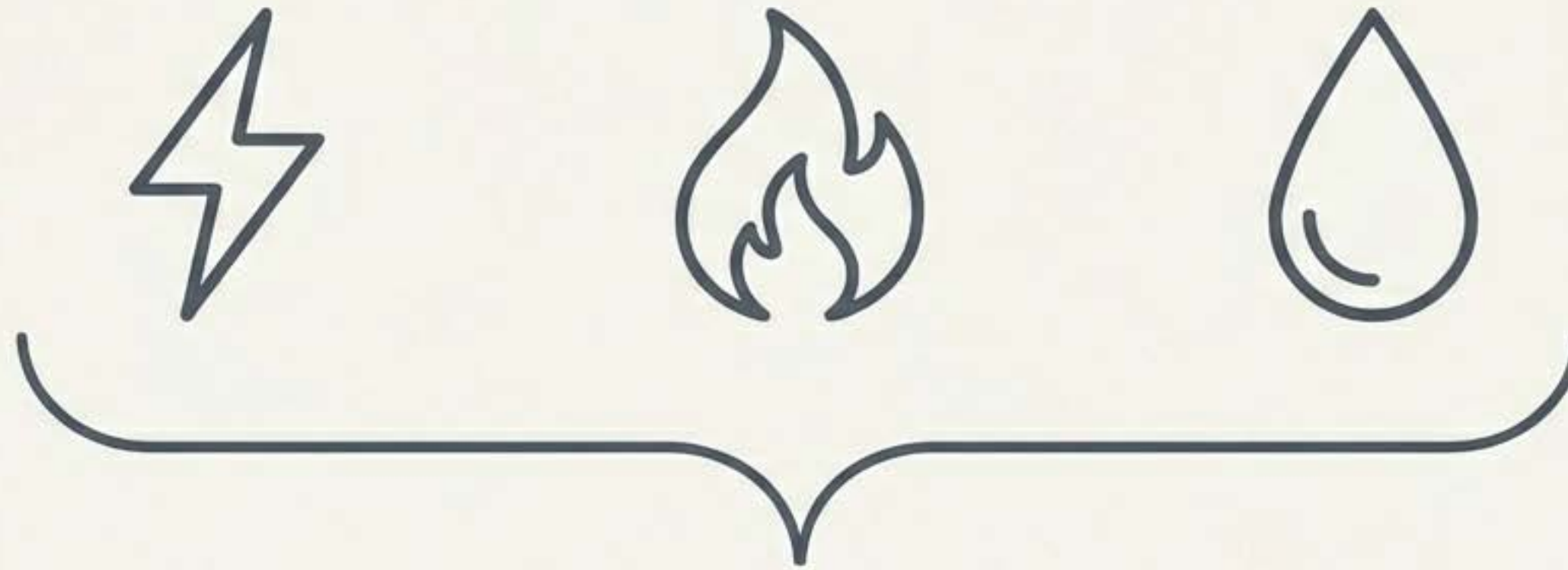
## The Guardrails:

Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) must never exceed \$8.  
Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) must be measured religiously.

## Action:

Cut underperforming channels rapidly and avoid deep discounting on popular items.

# Utilities represent a predictable fixed infrastructure cost



**\$2,000 fixed monthly tag**

## **The Reality:**

This cost must be absorbed even on slow days before profit begins.

## **Operational Lever:**

Management must focus on efficiency. Audit off-hours equipment draw, ensure strict shutdown procedures, and negotiate fixed-rate energy contracts. Older equipment drives consumption; plan for higher energy-rated upgrades.

Total Overheads: \$2,150

# Property and operational overheads require rigid compliance



## Operations: \$950 total

\$350 POS software

\$600 licences and regulatory fees



## Property: \$1,200 total

Property taxes and specific liability insurance

## Overhead Leverage:

Combined, these represent just ~2.3% of the projected \$92,920 gross revenue. Ensure compliance, shop insurance quotes yearly, and negotiate annual billing for POS systems to save 5% to 10%.

# Triggering the stress test for a 20% revenue drop



## The Threat

If average covers or order values fall 20% below the 2026 forecast, sustained lower average order value will erode the contribution margin rapidly.

## The Imperative

Immediately execute a 30-day cost containment plan focusing on non-labour variable expenses and dynamic scheduling to protect cash flow.

# The 30-day contingency containment playbook

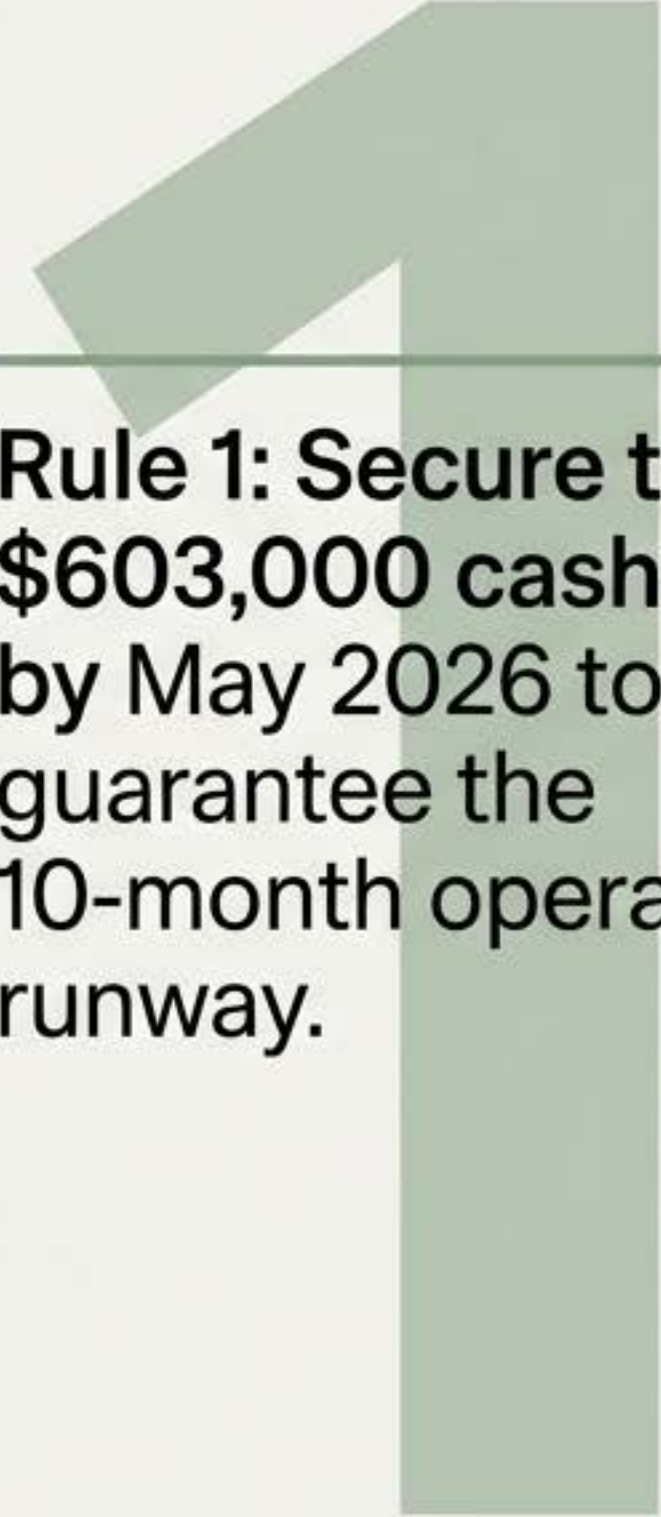
## Variable Squeeze

- Mandate a 7-day review of raw ingredient contracts targeting a 2% COGS reduction.
- Freeze all non-essential external marketing.
- Pull high-cost, low-margin items from the menu.

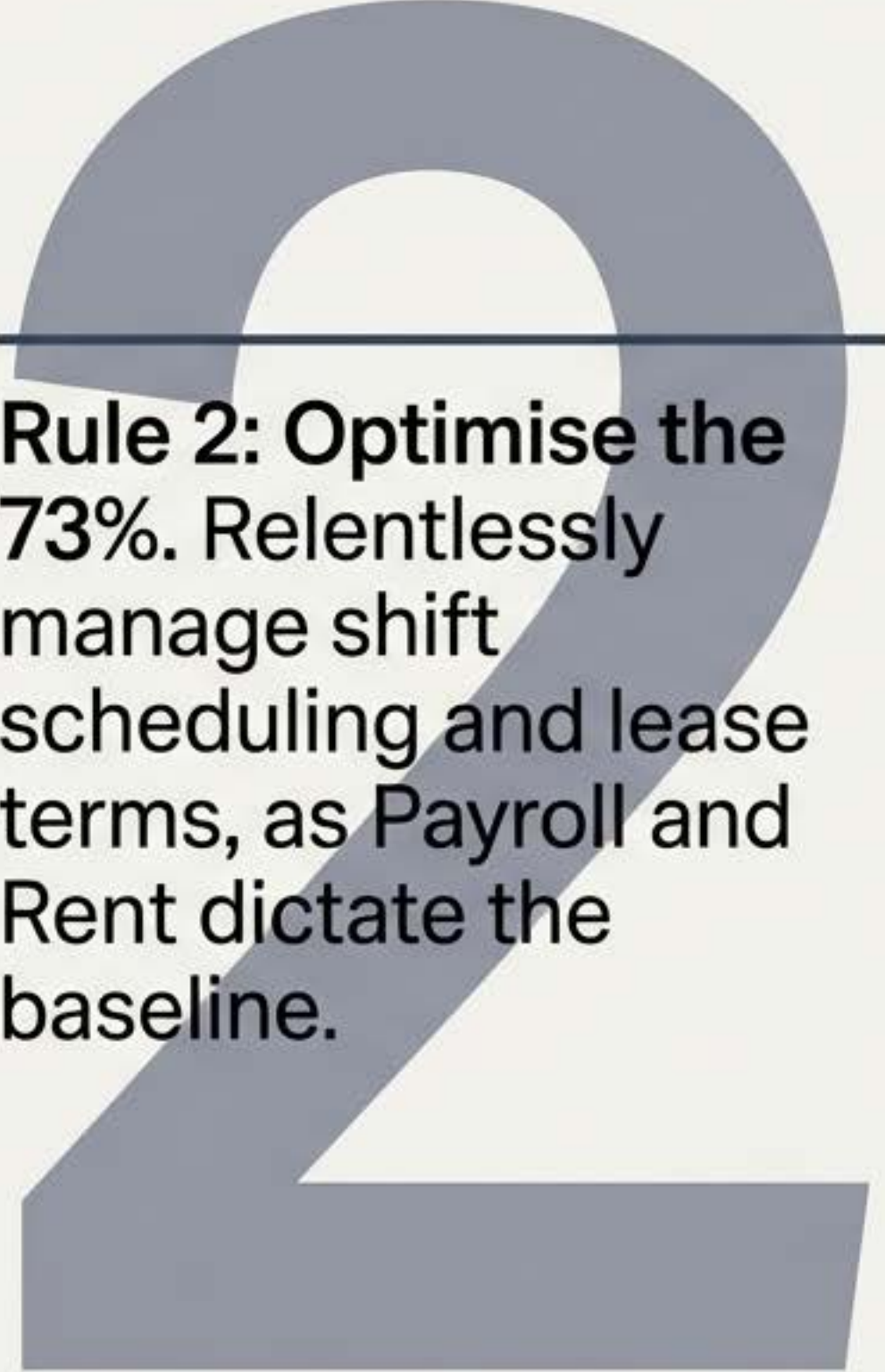
## Staffing Guardrails

- Recalculate FTEs based on lower transaction counts.
- Implement dynamic scheduling by cutting the 2 PM to 5 PM shifts first.
- Protect front-of-house staff to maintain drive-thru speed and takeout accuracy.

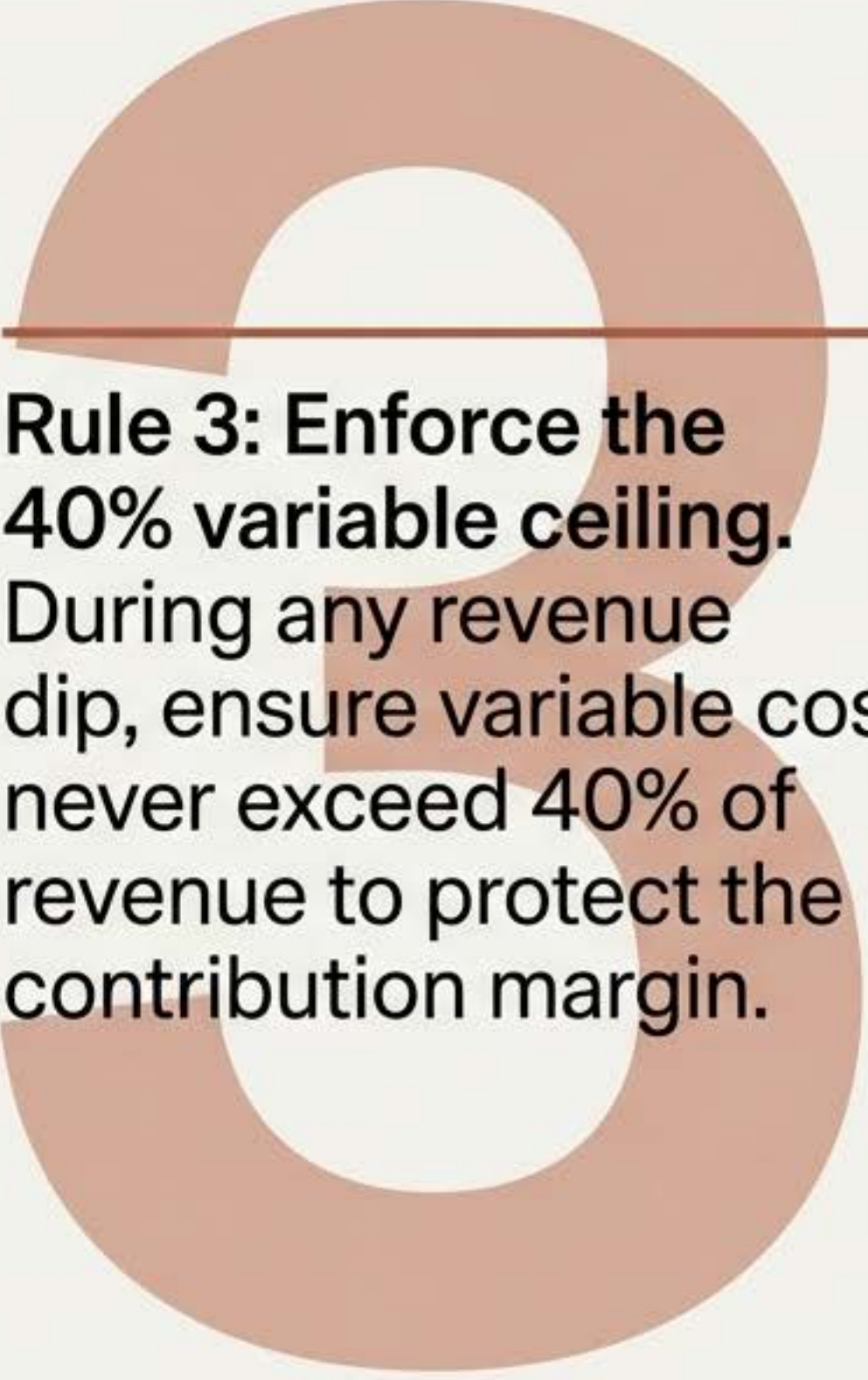
# Strategic imperatives for 2026 profitability



**Rule 1: Secure the \$603,000 cash buffer by May 2026 to guarantee the 10-month operational runway.**



**Rule 2: Optimise the 73%. Relentlessly manage shift scheduling and lease terms, as Payroll and Rent dictate the baseline.**



**Rule 3: Enforce the 40% variable ceiling. During any revenue dip, ensure variable costs never exceed 40% of revenue to protect the contribution margin.**