FASHION SCHOLARSHIP FUND
EST 1937

BUSINESS STRATEGY
2027 CASE STUDY

2027 Theme

Learn more about the topic of the 2027 Case Study, **Unlocking Hidden Potential: Identifying High Value Consumer Groups,** and the importance of this topic in the fashion industry.

General Guidelines

There are specific requirements in how your case study is completed. This section will explain general expectations.

Business Strategy Focus

Each discipline takes a unique approach to the annual theme to most directly align with the needs of the discipline. In this section, **learn about the expectations for Business Strategy.**

Required Content

Specific content is required within your case study submission. Use the required content as a checklist to ensure you have included all necessary components within your case study.

Judging Criteria

Judging is a blind process following specific criteria. Checkout the criteria to understand what considerations are most important in case study development.

Getting Started

Once you have an understanding of the expectations and layout of the 2027 FSF Case Study, use the resources provided in this section to get started with your own case study concept.

Unlocking Hidden Potential: Identifying High Value Consumer Groups

The fashion experience is rapidly changing. According to the State of Fashion 2025, "a new era of brand and product discovery is on the horizon." Industry-wide, both major fashion brands and emerging micro-brands are evolving to be ever-present, meeting consumers wherever they are, at each moment of the day. This change is helping consumers to find brands that fit their unique lifestyles. Yet, the plethora of choice and availability in fashion commingles with a critical challenge; "fashion shoppers are overwhelmed with choice, which negatively impacts their engagement and conversion rates with brands." While consumers are demanding more utility from each brand experience, they are also exhausted. As a result, many consumers feel they are overlooked and underserved, with their needs not being focused on by brands. As brands seek to build deeper connections to consumers, understanding the needs and wants of unique consumer groups is critical to establishing brand staying power (Napoli & Rees, 2025).

In the 2027 Fashion Scholarship Fund Case Study, you will explore how a fashion brand or retailer of your choice can unlock hidden potential and build a connection with the unmet, overlooked, and underserved needs of a specific, unique consumer group that has the potential to be highly valuable to the brand. You will identify and define the specific consumer group, proposing an opportunity for the chosen brand or retailer to meet the demands of their lifestyles. Your consumer group may be aligned by factors such as generation, region, lifestyle, or hobbies. Further, they are likely to be affected by shifting societal and cultural priorities, generational or intergenerational trends, emergent communities, and/or shifting manners of living. The consumer group you select can be a small microcosm or a large entity.

You must demonstrate how the identified consumer has been hidden, overlooked, or underserved and why the consumer group presents high value to the brand going forward. The identified consumer cohort must logically align with the priorities of your selected fashion brand or retailer. The consumer group must also benefit from the brand serving them in an intentional manner. Given the diversity of consumers within the United States, your case study must focus on a consumer group within the USA. However, your selected brand may be based in the USA or another country.

You will need to bring this theme to life in the case study you present.

Topic Selection

You wil develop a case study exploring the current challenges and future opportunities for an existing fashion brand or retailer as they relate to high value consumers. The following guidelines will support your selection of a suitable fashion brand/retailer and how your ideas are presented in a creative and professional format.

Brand & Retailer Selection

1. **Fashion or related industry.** The fashion brand/retailer that you choose must be a fashion apparel, accessories, footwear, home, beauty, or health & wellness brand.
2. **USA-based consumer.** Given the diversity of consumers within the United States, your case study must focus on a consumer group within the USA. However, your selected brand may be based in the USA or another country.
3. **Generally well-known.** The brand/retailer(s) that you select should be generally well-known. Given the diversity of consumers within the United States, your case study must focus on a consumer group within the USA. However, your selected brand may be based in the USA or another country.
4. **Publicly traded.** It is suggested (but not required) that you choose a company that is publicly traded so that information regarding the company is easily accessible.
5. *For Business Strategy Applicants:*
   Alix Partners Consumer Sentiment Index. While it is not required, it is suggested that you select one of the brands/retailers highlighted in the Alix Partners Consumer Sentiment Index for Fashion, Beauty, or Home (available in the 'Resources' section). These reports provide insights to what is driving brand performance and consumer desire, allowing you to maximize your insights and knowledge as a foundation for your case study.

Case Study Slide Deck

Case studies must be submitted as slide decks in landscape orientation, with slides sized for on-screen show 4:3 or 16:9 display (approximately 10" x 7.5"). Files can be created in any software of the applicant's choosing, such as PowerPoint, Keynote, Adobe InDesign, or Adobe Illustrator. However, all cases must be submitted in a flat PDF format without video or sound.

Format Your Way

Your case study must be presented as a slide deck, however, there are no specific requirements regarding visual design or text format. You are encouraged to utilize visuals throughout your presentation. It is advisable to not overload each slide with information, and to keep your presentation concise and to the point: each slide should take no more than 1-2 minutes to absorb by the reader.

Unsplash

References

All references should be included within a references/ bibliography page at the end of your slide deck or annotated in footnotes visible within the slide. Do not use hyperlinks in a footnote as the content cannot be accessed once the case study is uploaded.

Stick to the Page Length

The slide deck should be 18-22-pages in length including title, body, appendices, and references. A breakdown guide is provided alongside each section to help you determine the cadence of information. However, it is your responsibility to ensure you do not exceed the maximum allowed slides. Do not exceed the page limit. Ensure your content connects from section to section to tell the story you are trying to convey. This is the first time judges will be exposed to your case study, and they should be able to fully interpret your intended plans.

Exclude Your Name and School

Your name should NOT be included in your case study. Do not include your name or college/university affiliation on the title page or anywhere in the case study as the review process is anonymous. However, your name will be included on other required documents including your resume and unofficial transcript; those documents are not a part of the case study judging process.

Proofread

Be sure to proofread your case study. Points will be deducted for not following format directions, as well as for grammar and spelling errors.

AI Disclosure

You may use AI programs (e.g. ChatGPT) for brainstorming and help in generating ideas. However, note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be properly cited like any other reference material.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

BUSINESS STRATEGY
MEET CONSUMERS WHERE THEY WANT TO BE

Discord / Louis Vuitton

Objective: Build brand appeal by engaging an existing consumer group in a new way, meeting them where they are by expanding to a new channel or platform.

Your Role: Director of Strategy

You are the Director of Strategy at a fashion brand or retailer of your choice. You are responsible for developing your brand's strategic mission including driving change within the organization, and provoking commitment to strategic plans across the organization. Within your role, you must institute solution-oriented strategies that will appeal to consumers, business partners, and employees within your organization.

@under_r_tokyo

Expanded Objective Explanation

Your object is to develop a strategic plan that will engage an existing or expanding customer segment through a new channel or platform. The new channel may be something like direct-to-consumer sales, e-commerce, brick-and-mortar retail, in-game shopping, or other channels. If you pursue a new platform for engagement, this may be a specific online selling platform, such as TikTok Shop or an in-game shopping experience with an established platform/game. The chosen platform or channel does not need to be a method of shopping, it may serve other purposes such as experiential engagement meant for relationship building or education. You may develop your own platform or partner with an existing entity.

@clot

Your strategy is intended to meet specific consumer needs and brand opportunities. You must clearly outline how the channel/ platform will meet the needs of the identified consumer segment. Additionally, the need to appeal to this existing or expanding consumer segment should be clearly explained. The strategic plan should align with the brand's mission and vision, presenting long-term value. To maximize impact, it is suggested that you build upon consumer insights garnered through the Alix Partners Consumer Sentiment Index (Alix Partners, 2025).

As an example of a brand expanding to a new channel, H&M launched an innovative concept store in Seoul's Myeongdong District that incorporates smart fitting rooms with interactive screens. The brand recognized young, tech-enabled consumers who were demanding a fully integrated omni-channel experience. The brand enabled channel-switching as shoppers increasingly use their smartphones in-store, creating an experience that enables shoppers to order products from the retailer's website while shopping in stores.

BUSINESS STRATEGY
REQUIRED SECTIONS

Section 1: General Introduction *(1-2 slides)*

☐ Title slide

☐ Executive summary

Section 2: Establish Your Brand *(2-3 slides)*

☐ Introduce your chosen fashion brand/retailer

☐ SWOT analysis of your chosen fashion brand

☐ Current brand/retailer strategies, challenges, and/or marketing activities

Section 3: Case Study Research *(2-4 slides)*

☐ Research in suggested areas: Industry landscape, society, consumer and lifestyle, macroeconomics

Section 4: High Value Consumer *(2-4 slides)*

☐ Consumer research

☐ It is suggested that you integrate Alix Partners Consumer Sentiment Index

☐ Provide a summary of your existing, target customer segment as they relate to broader society/consumers

Section 5: Purpose and Objective *(1-2 slides)*

☐ Introduce the customer expansion objectives in relation to company goals

☐ Propose the advantages of the expansion plan as it relates to new and existing consumers

Section 6: Strategic Plan *(2-4 slides)*

☐ 3-5 years integration roadmap of platform/ channel (milestones, timeline)

☐ Specific expansion activities (products, services, experiences)

Section 7: Financial Investment *(1-2 slides)*

☐ Financial investment

☐ Key performance indicators (KPIs, min 3)

Section 8: Risk Assessment *(1-2 slides)*

☐ Financial and non-financial risks presented to the fashion brand/retailer

Section 9: Future Growth *(1-2 slides)*

☐ Outline plans to scale or exit your collaboration depending on its success beyond the 3-5 years

Section 10: Conclusion & References *(2-4 slides)*

☐ Conclusion

☐ Bibliography (also known as, references or works cited)

***(Optional)* Section 11: Use of AI** *(1 slide)*

☐ Address advanced technology, such as AI, will be used within your proposed strategy. For example, you may address if it will support the customer experience, platform integration, or other aspects of your proposed plan.

☐ Alternatively or additionally, you may address how advanced technology, such as AI, was used in the creation of your case study.

☐ In addition to the 'Use of AI' section, please be sure to clearly reference any use of AI in your case study in text or within the reference list.

***(Optional)* Section 12: Appendix** *(0-5 slides)*

☐ Present additional, supplemental ideas that support your project and add significant value

Important: The recommended slides per section are suggestions only. It is your responsibility to ensure your total slide deck, from the very first to very last slide, falls within the 18-22 slide requirement.

Slide 1

Business Strategy

FSF

Smart React.

Leveraging AI and biosensitive technology through online platforms to deliver personalized skincare solutions, combining convenience and sustainability for today's consumers.

The Ordinary.

2025 Fashion Scholarship Fund

Slide 2 — Strategic Objective

Lack of Personalization — Users will upload skin photos regularly, and AI will analyze these images over time to monitor improvements or emerging issues. This will trigger personalization via site merchandising and interactions.

Hyper-personalized product recommendations

Cart Abandonment — AI will dynamically offer personalized product bundles based on customer buying patterns, demand, and inventory, optimizing revenue while enhancing the shopping experience.

Long-term value through refill optimization and dynamic pricing

Customer Retention — Incentivizes users to follow their skincare routine with The Ordinary products via Web application. Create a social component that shows users with the highest streaks and points.

Increasing long-term customer retention

The primary objective of The Ordinary's Smart Reactive Skincare line is to revolutionize skincare by using *biosensitive technology* and AI-driven solutions to provide real-time, *personalized skincare recommendations.*

"Welcome back Erik, glad to see your hyperpigmentation is improving!"

O.

The Ordinary.

Slide 3 — Executive Summary

The Smart React initiative leverages AI-driven biosensitive technology and a Progressive Web Application (PWA) to revolutionize skincare personalization for The Ordinary. By integrating real-time feedback through color-changing indicators, users can monitor hydration, oil production, and pH balance, receiving personalized skincare recommendations tailored to their unique skin conditions. This strategy addresses key industry challenges like cart abandonment and low active user rates, aiming to increase revenue, consumer engagement, and loyalty.

The initiative enhances The Ordinary's online presence by offering seamless e-commerce experiences through PWAs, eliminating the need for app downloads while providing offline functionality, quick load times, and personalized recommendations. It also extends to in-store interactions, where sales associates can access clients' skincare recommendations for customized consultations.

The integration with Estée Lauder's AI Innovation Lab provides scalable opportunities for growth across Estée Lauder's portfolio, enabling the brand to develop localized and data-driven products. Future collaborations, licensing, and data monetization strategies open new revenue streams by selling anonymized skincare data to retail partners, reinforcing The Ordinary's leadership in AI-driven beauty solutions. By blending transparency, efficacy, and innovation, the Smart React strategy positions The Ordinary at the forefront of tech-driven beauty.

"The innovation in scientific skincare is limitless which is exciting, and continually keeps myself and our lab team on our toes..."

Nicola Kilner, The Ordinary's Co-Founder and CEO

The Ordinary.

Slide 4 — Development + Launch Roadmap

Identify	Design	Develop	Pre-Launch	Launch	Post-Launch
Month 1-6	**Month 7-19**	**Month 20-24**	**Month 25-28**	**Month 29-31**	**Months 32+**
• Conduct market research • Gather customer data to understand specific user needs and preferences • Identify key technical partners • Create a high-level roadmap for PWA integration into systems • Ensure adherence to global data protection regulations like GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) when collecting, storing, and processing personal data	• Define technical specifications and data security measures for skincare recommendations • Collaborate with UX/UI designers to create wireframes and user flows for the PWA • Develop a prototype of the product • Implement strict data encryption and user consent protocols to safeguard customer information • Test initial designs with a small group of users for early feedback	• Develop core AI and machine learning algorithms ensuring non-discriminatory practices • Conduct alpha and beta testing • Gather comprehensive feedback from beta users to refine algorithms, design, and overall experience • File for patents related to the biosensitive technology and any proprietary AI algorithms to protect competitive edge	• Finalize PWA and AI integration ensuring technical issues are resolved and test for AI bias • Train in-store associates on AI and product • Conduct clinical trials and gather evidence for safety and efficacy claims to meet requirements for product labeling and marketing in different regions • Ensure compliance with international skincare product safety regulations	• Roll out the PWA and product across online store and brand-owned physical locations • Implement customer support systems for troubleshooting • Launch comprehensive marketing campaign emphasizing the benefits • Provide post-launch monitoring and real-time adjustments based on feedback and performance • Provide clear disclaimers regarding the limitations ensuring consumers understand recommendations are not medical advice	• Continuously track KPIs to assess product and AI recommendations • Ensure that the AI system can handle increasing volumes of data as the customer base grows continuously to meet the demands of users • Regularly audit the AI system for ethical and data compliance, ensuring that the algorithm remains unbiased, safe, and non-discriminatory

Slide 5 — SWOT

S — Strengths
- Known for transparency, affordability, and efficacy. Brand has garnered a **loyal customer base** due to its straightforward, science-backed products (DECIEM, 2024).
- Partnership with significant resources and industry expertise. This enables The Ordinary to leverage Estée Lauder's extensive R&D capabilities, global distribution network, and **AI Technology partnership with Microsoft**.
- Differentiates itself by focusing on **high-potency formulations** that often feature single active ingredients in higher concentrations than competitors.

W — Weaknesses
- Simple formulations make it vulnerable to "dupes," like Walgreens' new in-house skincare line, which offers affordable alternatives, such as a $9 Azelaic Acid Suspension that mirrors The Ordinary's $13 product (Lobad, 2024).
- Despite efforts towards sustainability, the brand still faces challenges with **reducing plastic waste** and is not near its 2025 goal of making 85-100% of its packaging recyclable, refillable, reusable, or recycled (DECIEM, 2024).
- Some consumers may perceive The Ordinary as a **"budget" brand**, which could make it challenging to introduce higher-priced, technologically advanced products.

O — Opportunities
- Skincare market is highly **competitive**, and major competitors like L'Oreal and Procter & Gamble (Olay) have significant resources and are **also investing in AI technologies**.
- **Stricter regulations** on cosmetics, ingredients, and packaging materials could increase production costs and require significant adjustments.
- **Economic instability** can affect consumer spending on non-essential items like skincare, potentially impacting sales.
- Changes in consumer priorities during **economic downturns** can lead to a preference for lower-priced or multi-functional products.

T — Threats
- Increasing presence in **emerging markets** can drive significant sales growth. Estée Lauder has seen double-digit growth in regions such as EMEA, driven by stronger sales in Asia travel retail (Estée Lauder, 2024).
- **Leveraging AI** for personalized skincare recommendations aligns with current consumer trends towards customization.
- **Expansion into body care** and hair care presents an opportunity to leverage its approach in new categories. This move also allows the brand to compete with established players in the broader personal care market while maintaining its reputation for affordable, ingredient-focused products.

The Ordinary.

Slide 6 — Key Performance Indicators

Sales
- The most immediate measure of success. Sales data will be tracked monthly and analyzed across both retail and online channels to understand which distribution methods drive the most success.

Reorder Conversion Rate
- Customer loyalty and repeat purchases are key to long-term profitability. This will be tracked through e-commerce platforms and retail loyalty programs. Personalized AI reminders for refills (as part of the product strategy) will help boost these rates.

Active User Rate
- Engaged, active users are critical for a product line that integrates AI and personalization. This will be tracked through AI-enabled interactions, website traffic, and the frequency of engagement with skincare suggestions.

Profit Margin
- (Gross Margin) 25% in first 6 months, 30% by 12 months. (Net Profit Margin) 10% at 6 months, 15% at 12 months.
- As the brand invests heavily in marketing and technology development, achieving profitability will be a major objective. Monitoring gross margin and net profit will reflect the financial health of the initiative and overall success.

Goals: $5M / $10M

First 6 Months: 25%, 35%, 10%
By 12 Months: 35%, 50%, 15%

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Slide 7 — Technology + Ecommerce Drivers

E-commerce sales are projected to surpass $8 trillion by 2027, underscoring the importance of creating an innovative and efficient product discovery experience. By the end of 2024, one in six skincare purchases is expected to be made through digital channels, generating over $30 billion in revenue (Statista, 2023). Consumers are increasingly shopping for skincare products on **mobile devices**. In 2023, referrals from **social media** accounted for approximately 10% of all website visits to e-commerce sites selling skincare (Statista, 2023).

@_skincarewithroyco, @trendinguyd, and @dermdoctor on TikTok via (We Tried AI, the Men's Skincare TikTok Trends, n.d.)

Challenges in AI Adoption

L'Oréal's AI-powered **skin diagnostic tool**, developed with ModiFace, provides skincare recommendations by analyzing selfies to assess signs of aging (L'Oréal, 2020). While this technology has potential, its adoption by older generations may face challenges. Among **89%** of adults 50 and older own smartphones, many take a "wait and see" approach to new tech, with **67%** preferring to delay adoption. Furthermore, only **31%** of adults over 50 are excited about AI, and just **9%** have used generative AI, largely due to **concerns about online scams, security, and privacy breaches**. This reticence may limit the effectiveness of AI-driven skincare tools targeting older consumers (Kakutz, 2023).

Social Commerces

In 2023, over 33% of the world's population were online shoppers, with 60% of U.S. consumers viewing retail website search functions need significant upgrades (E-Commerce Strategy: Discovery & Search - WGSN Insight, n.d.).

43% of global consumers use social media platforms to search for products, making **social commerce** a vital touchpoint in brand building, targeting younger demographics (E-Commerce Strategy: Discovery & Search - WGSN Insight, n.d.).

Online Shopping

With **73%** of global consumers feeling **overwhelmed** by too many choices when shopping online, streamlining the shopping journey through product recommendations and reducing **decision fatigue** is essential (E-Commerce Strategy: Discovery & Search - WGSN Insight, n.d.).

73%

52% of U.S. customers **abandon their cart** if they can't find an item easily, highlighting the importance of a smooth, intuitive search and discovery experience (Statista, 2023).

More than **85%** of online shoppers order **visual information** over text when making purchasing decisions, especially for products like skincare and beauty (E-Commerce Strategy: Discovery & Search - WGSN Insight, n.d.).

34% of U.S. consumers feel that retailers treat them like strangers by not offering personalized recommendations, making it crucial to invest in AI-driven personalization (E-Commerce Strategy: Discovery & Search - WGSN Insight, n.d.).

Designed to reduce the look of pain irritation/redness.

The Ordinary.

Slide 8 — Financial Investment

Goals: $5M / $10M

First 6 Months: 25%, 35%, 10%
By 12 Months: 35%, 50%, 15%

Time Period	Marketing Expenses	AI Development	Operations & Distribution	COGS	Gross Margin	Net Operating Profit
First 6 Months	$2.5 million*	$1 million	$500,000	$3.5 million	25%	10%
12 Months (Marketing Decrease)	$1.5 million*	$750,000	$500,000	$5.5 million	30%	15%

Estimated Expenses (Breakdown for First 6 Months)
- **Marketing:** Heavy upfront investment in digital, social media, and influencer marketing campaigns across platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. This includes partnerships with key influencers, social commerce initiatives, and targeted ads. Decrease in marketing expenses as product awareness grows and organic reach increases.
- **Technology & AI Development:** Development of the biosensitive technology, AI integration for personalized skincare recommendations, and ongoing product R&D. Beta testing and feedback loops to refine the technology before full launch. After the initial development phase, technology and AI maintenance costs will lower.
- **Operations & Distribution:** Costs associated with manufacturing, packaging, and distribution across multiple channels (direct-to-consumer, retail, and social commerce). As operations scale and the process becomes more efficient, these costs are expected to remain relatively stable. To maximize profits and limit AI liabilities, Smart React collection will be limited to brand-owned distribution channels.
- **COGS:** This includes all direct costs tied to the production of the line including raw materials, manufacturing, packaging, and freight. This assumes increased production to meet demand as the product line scales, with potential savings on unit costs due to bulk ordering.

*Marketing expenses will comprise 40% of overall revenue, significantly higher than the industry standard of 5-10% (Shewale, 2024) but this investment is essential to introduce the new technology, which will not only drive sales within the Smart React line but also boost revenue in other product categories through personalized recommendations.

The Ordinary.

Slide 9 — Target Demographic

Meet Sarah
Age: 34
Occupation: Registered Nurse
Location: Suburban, New Jersey
Income: $160,000 annually
Marital Status: Married, with two children

Values
- **Safety and transparency.** She prefers non-toxic ingredients.
- **Convenience and time-saving** solutions, especially when they integrate with her tech-driven lifestyle. Part of the 57% of U.S. households expected to own smart home devices by 2025 (Thomasdson, 2023).
- **Family health** and she seeks holistic products that cater to both her needs and her children.

Shopping Habits
- Relies heavily on **customer reviews**, as 51% of skincare users find reviews crucial in their decision-making.
- Frequently purchases online, taking advantage of **fast delivery and integration** with smart devices.
- **Price-conscious**, seeking good value without compromising on safety and quality. With 37% of skincare users having high household incomes, she is willing to invest in effective products.

Meet Jaden
Age: 22
Occupation: HR Analyst
Location: Los Angeles, California
Income: $45,000 annually
Marital Status: Single

Values
- **Individuality and self-expression** are core, and he prefers brands that embrace **inclusivity**.
- Is values **technological innovation**, especially products that use cutting-edge solutions.
- **Sustainability and ethical practices** are important to him; he seeks brands committed to reducing their environmental impact.

Shopping Habits
- **Shops directly from social media** platforms like Instagram (63%) and TikTok (60%), where he follows beauty influencers for product recommendations.
- He is an **early adopter** of new technology, such as AI, and seeks products that offer personalized recommendations.
- **Price** is a concern for Jaden, as he often looks for affordable yet effective alternatives to higher-end skincare products.

What They Want
- Products that deliver **visible results** with **minimal effort**. Sarah wants efficient skincare that fits into her hectic schedule, while Jaden values simplicity in his routine.
- Both value **personalized skincare** that caters to their individual needs. Sarah is focused on safety for her family, preferring non-toxic, eco-friendly products, while Jaden looks for innovative, personalized skincare solutions that address **specific concerns** like breakouts and oiliness.

The Ordinary.

Slide 10 — Risk Assessment

Privacy + Security Concerns
Risk: Collecting sensitive personal data, including facial images, raises privacy issues, especially for younger users.
Mitigation: Implement strong encryption, consent protocols, and enforce 18+ user restriction.
Reward: Ensures legal compliance and builds trust in data security, enhancing The Ordinary's reputation as a privacy-conscious brand.

Brand Reputation
Risk: Some customers may find AI-based tools complex, leading to reduced trust in the recommendations and a potential negative brand perception.
Mitigation: Provide user-friendly tutorials and in-store demonstrations, and continue refining AI for accuracy and personalization.
Reward: An engaging, accurate AI system increases customer satisfaction and trust while reinforcing The Ordinary's reputation as a transparent, tech-savvy brand.

Integration + Execution Challenges
Risk: Integrating AI technology across all digital and in-store channels may require significant infrastructure changes.
Mitigation: Phased rollout and close collaboration with partners (e.g., Microsoft) for a smoother implementation.
Reward: Successful integration positions The Ordinary as a leader in innovative, tech-driven skincare.

The Ordinary.

BUSINESS STRATEGY
INDUSTRY EXAMPLES

Consider examples of assortments created by existing fashion brands and retailers to target consumer segments.

E.L.F. Cosmetics

E.L.F. Cosmetics

As the beauty marketplace diversifies, brands like E.L.F. Cosmetics are leaning into TikTok Shop to reach the Sephora Tween consumer (Flora, 2025).

Zara

Zara launched a new functionality to the retailer app, Store Mode, to integrate the omni-channel experience for shoppers. Store Mode enables shoppers to find the in-store location of products, book a fitting room, or order products to collect in that store within two hours (Zara, n.d.)

Chain Store Age

Crocs

Crocs new store, Icon, emphasises engagement for the multigenerational, family shopper. Its larger format feels like a small-concept department store while the Jibbitz bar offers playful fun for kids and adults alike (Young, 2025).

Harbour City

10
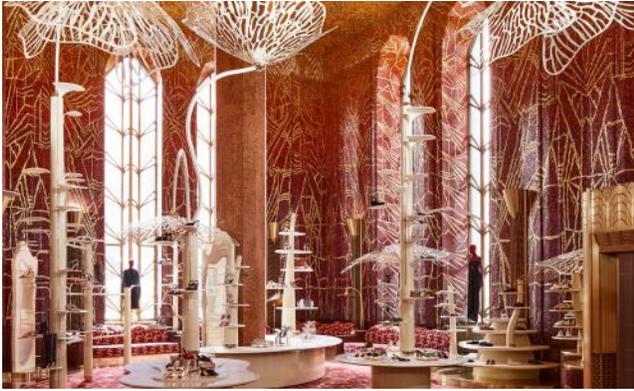
Printemps

Printemps

To capture a new urban consumer, luxury fashion department store Printemps entered the USA with its first department store on Wall Street in Manhattan. In line with the brand's existing experiential strategy, the store is highly experiential with minimal, curated merchandise and designed to allow customers to linger and enjoy the third space (Printemps, 2025).

Learn more about how businesses can use new platform and channel strategies to meet consumer demand.

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Scholarship winners are showcased at the annual FSF Live Gala

Learn more about the Live Gala and other Fashion Scholarship Fund events on the website, www.fashionscholarshipfund.org

Industry leadership are also honored at the annual FSF Live Gala

12

JUDGING CRITERIA

Your case will be reviewed by industry professionals including the FSF Board of Governors, FSF Mentors, and FSF Alumni. The percentages below represent the portion of the score that will come from each respective category.

Creativity & Feasibility

Merchandising, Marketing, Business Strategy (40%)

Design & Product Development (20%)

- Is the applicant's idea unique, inspiring, and innovative?
- Is the applicant's idea well-thought-out and conceivably executable?
- Is the applicant's idea clearly connected to the selected brand/ retailer?

Research & Development

Merchandising, Marketing, Business Strategy (40%)

Design & Product Development (20%)

- Has the applicant researched the selected brand/retailer, demonstrated depth of knowledge of the company's activities and competitive positioning as relevant to the presented concept?
- Has the applicant conducted thorough research regarding the retail landscape and the attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyle traits of the intended consumer?
- Has the applicant addressed how consumers will benefit from their proposed concept?
- Has the applicant clearly demonstrated the quantifiable business benefit of the creative concept?

Collection Presentation

Design & Product Development ONLY (40%)

- Has the applicant presented their concept development in a manner that is clear and supports the final collection design?
- Has the applicant presented a final collection that conveys a strong presentation of design and is fitting to the intended concept?
- Has the applicant presented technical design details (through tech flats) that are easy to understand and show how to execute the concept?

Clarity

All Disciplines (15%)

- Does the applicant clearly and consistently tell their story, aligning direction from executive summary, through core content, and into the conclusion?
- Does the applicant's case follow logical development and a clear structure; is it easy to follow and summarize?
- Did the applicant clearly complete each portion of their prompt?
-

Format

All Disciplines (5%)

- Did the applicant use correct grammar and spelling?
- Did the applicant include a title page with one sentence to summarize the case?
- Was the applicant's name and school kept anonymous?

Wondering Where to Begin? Get Started By Researching This Year's Theme

Use the below resources to begin building your understanding of the consumer and brand opportunities relating to this year's case study topic.

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Use the below resources to support your identification of important consumer groups.

Coresight Research. (2025, September 21). Analyst Corner: Understand Who Shops Where in US Retail, with John Mercer. https://coresight.com/research/analyst-corner-understand-who-shops-where-in-us-retail-with-john-mercer/

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Deloitte Insights. (2025, July). Deloitte Global Sustainable Behaviors Survey. *Deloitte*. https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/environmental-social-governance/deloitte-global-sustainable-behaviors-survey.html

Deloitte Insights. (2023, June 28). Financial well-being and consumer resilience. *Deloitte*. https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/retail-distribution/consumer-behavior-trends-state-of-the-consumer-tracker/consumer-resilience-financial-wellbeing.html

Deloitte Insights. (2023, July 31). Global anxiety levels in polycrisis. *Deloitte*. https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/retail-distribution/consumer-behavior-trends-state-of-the-consumer-tracker/global-anxiety-levels-polycrisis.html

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Google Trends. (n.d.). Explore what the world is searching for right now. *Google*. https://trends.google.com/trends/?geo=US

McKinsey & Company. (2025, October 16). How today's consumers are spending their time and money. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/how-todays-consumers-are-spending-their-time-and-money

McKinsey & Company. (2025, June 9). State of the consumer trends report 2025: When disruption becomes permanent. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/state-of-consumer

McKinsey & Company. (2024, November 11). The state of fashion 2025: Challenges at every turn. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/state-of-fashion

National Association of Convenience Stores. (2025, September 30). Millennials and Gen Z contribute 32% to consumer spending. https://www.convenience.org/Media/Daily/2025/September/30/3-Millennials-and-Gen-Z-Contribute-32_Research

Porch Group Media. (2025, October 13). Consumer shopping trends and statistics by the generation: Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Boomers. https://porchgroupmedia.com/blog/generational-consumer-shopping-trends/

VML. (2025, September 18). The Future Shopper 2025: Key trends shaping e-commerce. https://www.vml.com/insight/future-shopper

Have you familiarized yourself with the
How to Apply Guide?

Be sure to read it carefully! It outlines
additional requirements and the available
resources to support your Fashion
Scholarship Fund scholarship application.

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