

DESIGN & PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

CASE STUDY

2026

FASHION
SCHOLARSHIP
EST FUND 1937

Fashion Crosses Industries

Objective: Create a collaborative collection between a fashion brand and non-fashion brand that distills fashion's influence in external industries.



2026 CASE STUDY

The borders between industries are narrowing and fashion brands are finding new collaborations that enable them to reach broader groups of customers and create long-term business value. According to the State of Fashion 2024 ([BOF Team and McKinsey & Company, 2023](#)), fashion brands will increasingly partner with adjacent industries to enrich consumer experiences and increase engagement. Collaborations provide an opportunity for brands to engage a broad array of consumers with their story, expanding their reach. Subsequently, collaborations drive revenue. Collaborations are not new to the fashion industry, but as the boundaries between industries narrow, a broader array of collaborations has emerged. Fashion brands are partnering with museums, universities, airlines, and car companies to bring beauty, comfort, and luxury to a broad array of consumers.

In the 2026 case study, you will explore how fashion brands can partner with companies in external industry, such as entertainment (music, gaming, film), technology (computers, software, technical instruments), transportation (automotive, air), hospitality (hotels, restaurants), or service industries (sanitation, postal delivery) to create intriguing and intentional collections. You will explore a collaboration between two businesses, not between a business and an individual.

Design applicants must design a collection from the perspective of a fashion brand and their non-fashion partner.

Industry Examples

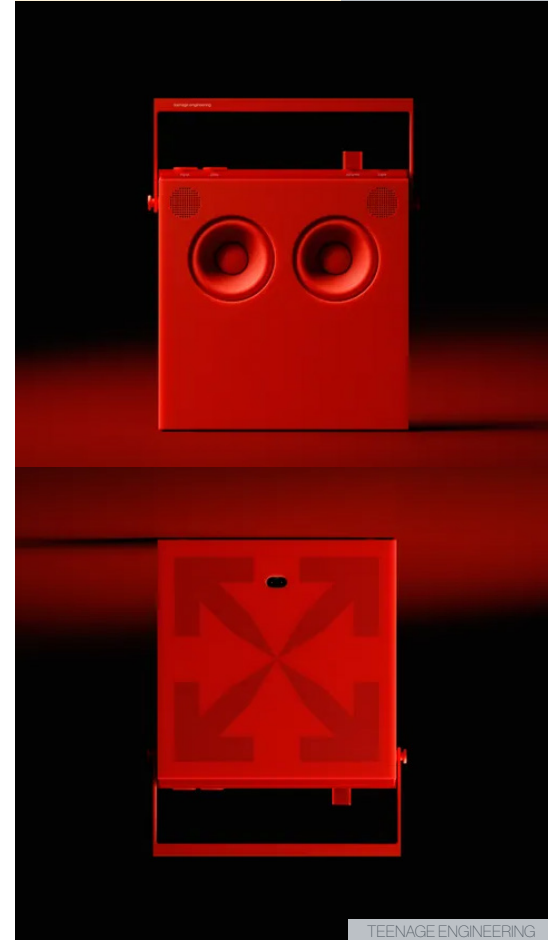
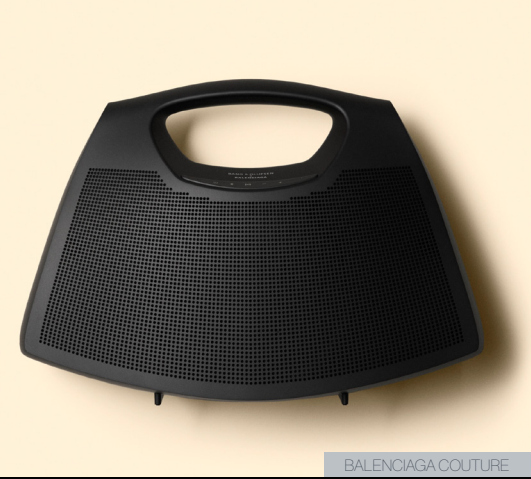
Consider examples of fashion brands collaborating with external industries.

Balenciaga partnered with Bang & Olufsen to create a limited-edition hybrid bag with powerful portable speakers. The fully functional bag (and portable speaker) resembled Balenciaga's mainstay handbags ([Bang & Olufsen, 2024](#); [Balenciaga Couture, 2023](#)).

Off White™ partnered with Stockholm-based synthesizer company Teenage Engineering to create a reimagined OB-4 Off White™ designed with the brand's aesthetic and logo ([Teenage Engineering, 2022](#)).

In 2016, Heron Preston collaborated with New York City Sanitation employees to create UNIFORM, a ready-to-wear collection that debuted at New York Fashion Week ([Neuhaus, 2024](#)).

A classic example of a cross-over between fashion and external industry occurred in Season 1 of Project Runway when fashion designers created uniforms for the United States Postal Service ([IMDb, n.d.](#); [YouTube Movies & TV, 2005](#)).



Design & Product Development Case Study

Designing Fashion Across Industries

Your objective is to design a collection for an existing fashion brand/retailer in collaboration with a non-fashion company/organization. The collection should demonstrate fashion's influence on an external industry. Your collaborative collection should align with the brand ethos of each partner organization. It should serve a purpose, addressing a specific challenge or opportunity of one of the companies or their target customer. Therefore, you should address which company/organization your collection will primarily serve and design your collection accordingly.

Demonstrate how you will bring the collection to life by showcasing your design process, creative designs, and technical flats. Based on your primary goals for the collaboration, the collection may include fashion products (e.g., apparel, accessories, footwear) or products associated with the non-fashion collaborator (e.g., headphones, computers, car interior, etc.). If creating non-fashion products, consider the design application for the product category and include the product or packaging design.

Your Role:

Design Director

You are the Design Director for an existing fashion brand/retailer of your choice or for a collaborating business in an external industry. As Design Director, you bring new concepts and design ideas to the brand/retailer's fashion collections while maintaining the brand ethos and heritage. Your designs should move the company forward while aligning with the company's priorities and goals. While your focus lies with your own brand, in the task at hand, you must ensure your creative concept also adheres to the priorities and goals of the collaborating business.



Brand & Retailer Selection



[01]

Generally Well-Known

The brand/retailer(s) that you select should be generally well-known.

[02]

Fashion or related industry

The fashion brand/retailer that you choose must be a fashion apparel, accessories, footwear, home, beauty, or health & wellness brand.

[03]

Publicly Traded

It is suggested (not required) that you choose a company that is publicly traded so that information regarding the company is easily accessible.

[04]

Non-Fashion Collaborator

The collaborator cannot be another fashion brand. For instance, collaborations between a designer brand (e.g., Diane Von Furstenberg) and a mass fashion retailer (e.g., Target) would not fit the requirements.

[05]

A Company, Not an Individual

The collaboration cannot be with an individual, such as a celebrity, influencer, designer, or politician (e.g., Pharrell Williams, Gwyneth Paltrow, Taylor Swift). However, either brand can belong to a designer's namesake brand (e.g., Jessica Simpson, Rachel Zoe, Rachel Ray, Martha Stewart), the collaborator brand must be an existing, fully formed business.

Checklist: Required Case Study Content

Case studies must be submitted as a **17–22-page slide deck** including title, body, appendices, and references (suggested breakdown included below). The slide deck should be 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.**

Need extra guidance? Access 'Step-By-Step Directions' in the FSF student Dropbox.

☐ Section 1: General Introduction (2-3 slides)

- ☐ Title slide
- ☐ Executive summary
- ☐ (Optional) Table of contents

☐ Section 2: Establish Your Brand (1-3 slides)

- ☐ Introduction of two chosen brands (fashion brand, non-fashion collaborator)

☐ Section 3: Research-Driven Background (2-4 slides)

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

☐ Section 4: Conceptual Direction (1-2 slides)

- ☐ Introduce your concept and collection
- ☐ Address which company your collection will primarily serve and why
- ☐ Demonstrate how your collaborative collection aligns with both brand's ethos

☐ Section 5: Targeted Consumer (1-2 slides)

- ☐ Consumer and lifestyle research
- ☐ Target Market

☐ Section 6: Design Development (3-4 slides)

- ☐ Concept board or mood board
- ☐ Documented design process (development sketch work, iterative strategies, etc.)
- ☐ Color and fabric board

☐ Section 7: Creative Collection Presentation (2-3 slides)

- ☐ Creative designs of the 10-15 items that will make up your collection

☐ Section 8: Technical Collection Presentation (1-2 slides)

- ☐ Technical front and back flat sketches for three of the products in your collection including design callouts and construction details

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

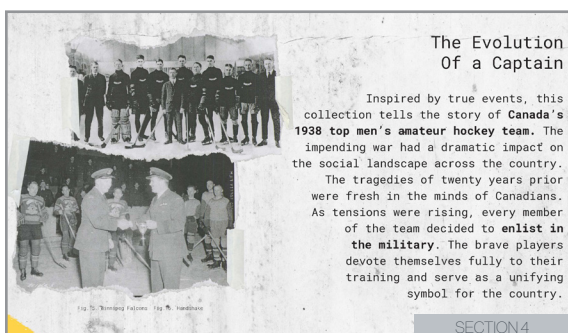
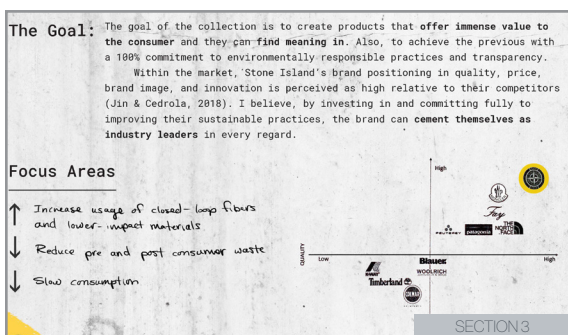
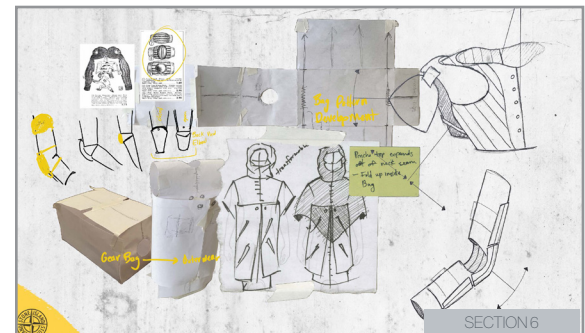
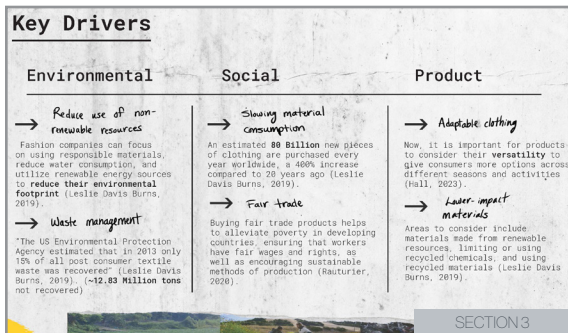
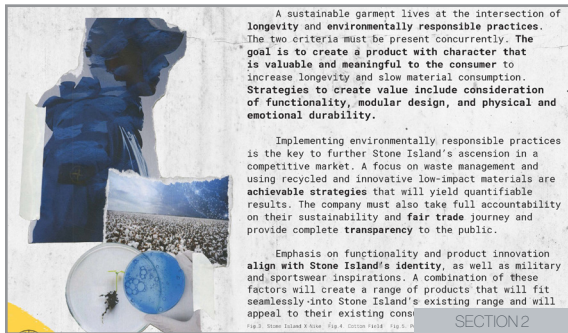
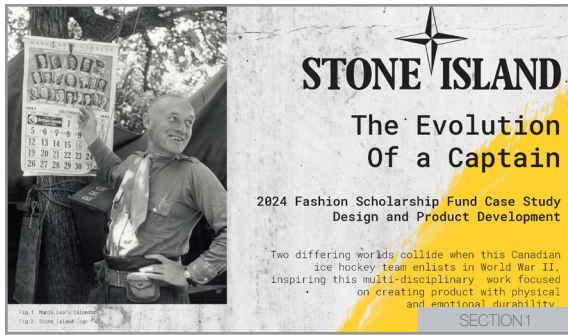
- ☐ Outline plans to scale or exit your collaboration depending on its success

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

- ☐ Conclusion
- ☐ Bibliography (also known as, references, works cited)

☐ (Optional) Section 11: Appendix (0-5 slides)

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



General Guidelines

Exclude College / University

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.

Your name should be included on your resume and unofficial transcript; those documents are not a part of the case study judging process.

Format Your Way

No specific font or format will be enforced. 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.

Stick to the Page Length

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.

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.

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.

Judging Criteria

Your case will be reviewed by industry professionals including the FSF Board of Governors, FSF Mentors, and FSF Alumni.

Creativity & Feasibility (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(s)/ retailer(s)?

Research & Development (20%)

- Has the applicant researched the selected companies (i.e., brand/retailer and collaborator), 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?

Collection Presentation (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 (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 (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?

Getting Started with Research

A variety of tools and supporting files are available in the [FSF Student Dropbox](#). Research-specific resources are available for all case study tracks in the subfolder: [FSF Student Resources](#).

(1) Start by getting familiar with this year's theme.

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(2) Dig into insights specific to your discipline, Design & Product Development.

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