



Presents

2024-2025 Case Competition

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## Introduction

Adobe Express aims to revolutionize the creative technology platform space by making professional-grade design accessible to college students. As the leading edge of Adobe's commitment to fostering creativity, Adobe Express bridges the gap between industry-standard tools and the fast-evolving demands of the college market. Its intuitive interface and seamless integration with Adobe Creative Cloud make it a cornerstone for students entering the creative industry. Currently, the college market has adopted creative tools to enhance their classwork by creating presentations, reports, and digital art, which helps them communicate complex learning material more effectively and engage with their peers across various disciplines. Most importantly, much like how their colleges hope to prepare them for the professional environment, the creative tools used set the trend and the students' preference for tools they will use for the rest of their careers.

College students demand ease of use and affordability in their creative software, as many are juggling tight budgets and demanding schedules. Services targeting the 18-24 age group often cater to these needs by offering free trials, discounted student plans, and flexible pricing options. Additionally, an intuitive mobile app is a must, as students frequently work on the go and rely on their smartphones and tablets for quick edits and seamless collaboration. Features like cloud storage, offline access, and compatibility across multiple devices further enhance appeal, making the software more accessible and practical for the dynamic lifestyles of college students.

Adobe is challenged by the current college market's preference for competitors, namely Canva, who accomplishes these demands most effectively. Adobe Express has largely failed to position itself correctly for the college student audience. This plan serves to be the solution through new targeting strategies that the target audience of students 18-24 can resonate with. To accomplish effective inclusion of this vital part of the market, the following techniques are critical:

- Positioning Adobe Express as the professional tool that can prepare students for their careers
- Equipping students with educational resources to learn Adobe Express
- Building on the existing infrastructure that allows Adobe Express to be free for college students
- Competitions that foster collaboration and usage with Adobe Express

It is clear that Adobe Express has one major advantage over any potential services currently preferred by the 18-24 segment: industry standard status. No other software in the creative space has the market share that Adobe does, at over 80% (Litman, 2024). However, Adobe has thus far failed to capture college students early on with the mobile app being subject to many more competitors. By leveraging its existing popularity in the professional space, Adobe can follow this new marketing rollout where students are eager to adopt a software that can set them up for success.

### **Executive Summary**

Integrating industry-standard software at the beginning of a student's college career sets them up for success in their future roles because they become proficient in the required software and can explore innovative ways to use it throughout their education. If a student is reliant on non-industry grade resources and design software, they may fall into the trap of repetitive work and will lack the ability to rise to their full potential throughout their educational careers, which will leak into their professional careers. The knowledge and fluency within industry-standard software is critical to the future of businesses and the creative industry as a whole. Through equipping future professionals with the ability to use such software, businesses will thrive in the future and have a plethora of qualified candidates available for their positions, reducing training costs in said industry-standard software.

Our extensive marketing strategy isn't simply a nudge to guide students in the right direction when it comes to digital fluency - but an academic integration into their daily lives that drives change in the creative industry as a whole. This form of strategy is intended to spark creative inspiration, foster a learning environment, and lead into a world where Adobe Express is second nature to our audience; it establishes Adobe Express in an immersive, executional experience that the students and universities can use to flesh out their creative projects and take on knowledge without limits. It sets the precedent for the skills it takes to be creative and paves the way for a world full of students empowered with expertise in industry standard software.

At the heart of this plan is a multi-pronged approach that intertwines academic excellence with the future of professional-grade design technology. The catalyst for our plan is the integration of Adobe Express in the classrooms across various universities,

in tandem with the thrilling and motivational nature of the competition leading up to the Adobe Summit. This will garner excitement and place Adobe Express as the pinnacle of creative learning and professional development across the youth. Through collaborating with artists and creating a spectacle surrounded by learning experience, our audience will see Adobe Express as not only a thrilling, inspirational platform, but one that leads to success that they can take with them throughout their professional journeys. This is enhanced with our school-year round “Design Days,” where students can interact with Adobe Express experts in real time to create small, frequent projects. In short, our plan incentivizes learning that builds confidence in creation and drives our audience to envision how they can leave their mark on the future of design.

Through integrating Adobe Express into the muscle memory of students, our strategy is meticulously tailored to use academic curiosity alongside creative fluency to bring awareness to students and potential designers - as well as establish the fluency to maintain them as consumers of the product. When the audience overcomes the learning curve and becomes fluent in the software, Adobe Express will be the only option they turn to when creating. Our strategy’s framework is not only there to increase brand awareness and loyalty from students, but brings all parties to become involved with the software. This includes professors, faculty, and anyone with an interest in design. Through partnerships with universities and art institutions, students will be forced to engage with Adobe Express as their only design software option. Once the students become familiar with the software, it will be second nature to them. Via interactive events, engaging competition, and incentives throughout the year, students can enjoy the community that Adobe Express has to offer. This approach not only builds skills within the audience, but solidifies brand loyalty in the form of community, credibility, and the pursuit of professional development. Our goals are to generate excitement, engagement, and brand loyalty through the relaunch campaign which can be easily measured through user acquisition, user engagement metrics, and customer satisfaction. Our plan isn’t to simply teach students how to use Adobe Express, but to lead them down the path to harness the entire Adobe Creative Suite. Thus, paving the way for what it means to work at a professional grade guides them towards workplace efficiency. A world where students are fluent in Adobe Express is a world where future design professionals can thrive and create without limits, fostering unique ideas and visuals.

## Situational Analysis



### Strengths

Adobe Express is trusted by many of the world's leading businesses including ABB, Havas, and IBM, making Adobe Express the best choice for professional content creation. With its simple, user-friendly interface, even beginners are able to create professional, high-quality content with ease. The platform offers a wide variety of creative tools and customizable templates allowing users to create striking designs and professional-looking content. Unlike its competitors such as Canva, which charges \$15 monthly, Adobe Express offers a better value for prices as low as \$9.99 monthly, without having to compromise on quality. In addition, Adobe Express provides free trials for both individual and team accounts which gives users the opportunity to be able to test out the platform's features before they fully commit. The platform's seamless accessibility across both web and mobile devices ensures that users everywhere are able to create content they are proud of. And since Adobe Express is integrated with Adobe Cloud, it makes for a smooth transition for users of other Adobe platforms. These strengths combined make Adobe Express stand out as an industry standard.

## **Weaknesses**

While Adobe Express has many advantages compared to other platforms, it does have some notable weaknesses. One main challenge Adobe Express faces is that among young professionals and those between the ages of 18 to 24, it is not as well known as its competitors, like Canva. Additionally, there is a perception that Adobe Express is costly which may deter consumers to more budget-friendly or even free alternatives. Despite its easy-to-use design, Adobe Express does have some limited advanced features which could discourage users who are looking for more sophisticated tools that can be found in other Adobe products such as Illustrator or Photoshop. Lastly, its subscription-based model may be unappealing to users who are looking for a one-time-payment option. These factors may limit Adobe Express from reaching a larger audience.

## **Opportunities**

Adobe Express is an excellent platform and has room to grow in many different ways. First, the growing demand for social media content gives Adobe Express many opportunities to be exposed to a broader audience. It can engage with small businesses and individuals looking for quick, high quality and easy-to-use tools to create eye-catching graphics, videos, and posts. Adobe Express also has the opportunity to expose itself to different audiences through collaborations and partnerships. Collaborations with social media influencers, celebrities, other platforms, and even tech companies can allow Adobe Express to reach and be known by a younger fanbase. Adobe Express can also play into current content creation trends by showing off all of its incredible features that can be used to create trendy short-form content. Another opportunity on the rise is offering a student discount to current and incoming college students. This is a great way to make Adobe Express known by its target audience and gain long-term user loyalty. Finally, the new AI features that have been integrated into Adobe Express allows it to stand out from its competitors and make it more appealing to both future and existing users. If done properly, these opportunities can give Adobe Express the ability to become the leading content creation tool on the market.

## **Threats**

Adobe Express faces several threats in the rapidly evolving and highly competitive market. Due to its brand presence and user-friendly interfaces, platforms such as Canva have continued to dominate the market, particularly among young professionals and small businesses. Other competitors such as Pixlr and Figma offer tools similar to Adobe Express which makes it hard for it to continue to differentiate itself in such a fierce industry. Additionally, constantly changing technology means that in order for Adobe Express to stay relevant in the competition, it will need to be continuously evolving and updating which can be resource intensive. Furthermore, shifts in user preferences also poses a threat as Adobe Express will need to keep adapting in order to keep its relevance in the market. Lastly, free alternatives provided by other platforms could cause Adobe Express to become less enticing to potential customers looking for more budget-friendly options. These threats highlight the challenges Adobe Express could face in the highly competitive and ever-changing market.

### **Primary/Secondary Research**

After conducting a survey to a market of ages 18 to 24 with a result of 114 responses, in which 93.3% were in the college student market. 50% of respondents do not utilize Adobe Express. Given the choices of why respondents utilized Adobe Express, which were for school-related purposes, work and job projects, and personal projects, 79.3% of respondents used Adobe Express for school and the second leading answer was for projects, which is 37.9%. However, 61.5% of respondents have access and are using Adobe Express through their university plan. Additionally, 72.5% of respondents noted that they are not willing to pay for premium features in design tools and that the largest category of factors that influence users to purchase a subscription is price. The second category of factors that influences respondents is the need for a certain subscription, which is This is an emphasizes that the college market has awareness of Adobe Express' presence in the creative technology market, but a vast majority only utilize the application due to its perks of being free through college programs.

Overall, when it comes to making decisions in paying for subscriptions and purchases, the market of ages 18 to 24 tends to prioritize affordability and flexibility. This age group is highly price-conscious, often looking for the best value or seeking free options where possible. They are drawn to subscription models that offer low upfront costs, student discounts, or freemium services that allow them to try products before committing to a paid plan. Peer recommendations, promotions, and limited-time offers

also play a significant role in their purchasing behavior, as they seek to make informed decisions without breaking their budgets. Furthermore, another important aspect found in the survey is a competitor that plays a significant role into the design tool technology space; Canva. When respondents were asked what other design applications that they use that are similar to Adobe Express, 67.4% noted that they use Canva. With Canva, because the college market is new to online design tools and is known for its simple and easy-to-use design interface, this makes it easier for ages 18 to 24, in which most are beginners, to resort to Canva. Furthermore, the free plan with a variety of features and no need for expensive software also brings in users to Canva. However, with the premium feature plan, Canva Pro, which offers a larger library of templates, design tools, and features, it costs \$15 monthly and \$10 for Teams monthly with a 30 day free trial period. This is more expensive than Adobe Express, which costs just \$9.99 a month and can even be as low as \$4.99 for Teams, as well as a free 14-30 day trial for both. Adobe Express also offers a more professional set of design tools that although it takes more time to learn, these design tools are important to integrate into as an industry standard and are utilized more in the professional realm.

### **Marketing Strategy**

Educate and engage students aged 18-24 through a dynamic, interactive experience that integrates university collaborations, online workshops, out-of-home billboard advertisements and exciting competition elements. Strategy leverages email marketing campaigns to offer exclusive online workshops that teach students how to make the most of Adobe Express, while also encouraging creativity and skill-building. Additionally, Adobe will host a competition where the grand prize is an all-expenses-paid trip to Adobe Summit 2026, providing students with opportunities to connect with industry leaders. Variety of campaigns are designed to not only showcase Adobe Express as an essential tool for students but also to inspire a deeper connection with the product through education, creativity, and real-world rewards.

## **Marketing Tactics**

### **'Design Days' Initiative**

In Q3, Adobe will prioritize university outreach with the “Design Days” initiative, scheduled to launch on August 1, 2025. As this quarter is characterized by Back To School, this campaign should include interactive, step-by-step workshops hosted both online and in-person at target universities known for their focus on innovation and design. These workshops, led by Adobe staff, will focus on teaching students how to use Adobe Express effectively for both academic and personal projects. Additionally, a mass email campaign targeting incoming college freshmen and sophomores will introduce Adobe Express’s free plan and highlight its seamless integration with Adobe Creative Cloud tools. These efforts will aim to increase awareness of Adobe Express, drive first-time usage, and position it as an essential tool for academic success throughout the student’s college life and beyond. University partnerships will also include discounted enterprise plans and ready-to-use lesson templates for faculty, reinforcing Adobe Express’s value in educational settings. The logic here is that through creating a foundation for students to learn and incorporate Adobe Express into their workflows, the product will be stronger and have longevity as a trusted creative tool that the students can use later as they become professionals.

### **Design Competition Campaigns**

Adobe must strategically position Adobe Express as an essential education tool, focusing on its integration into classroom settings with tailored content and accessibility features. By October 1st, 2025, one main objective is to identify and prioritize key features that resonate with the target demographic, such as collaboration tools, templates, and integrations with educational platforms. Adobe’s platform will be marketed as a solution specifically designed for students and educators, offering an entire user interface redesign, educational video pop-ups, streamlined templates, and accessibility tools that cater to diverse learning environments. There will be an integration of branding messages into Adobe Express’s campaign that emphasizes how it is an industry standard and it is important for our target market to learn how to work it. With branding messages like “Start Creating Like An Expert,” “Pro Design, Made Simple,” and “Crafted for Creators.” and the opportunity of a growing social media demand in the creative space, Adobe Express will curate a marketing campaign including a series of promotional videos, influencer endorsements, and student

engagement efforts, all targeted at building awareness and driving adoption of our product redesign recommendation in how-to video pop ups and user interface redesign. Adobe will launch a marketing campaign on October 15, 2025, in partnership with prominent creative industry figures who will co-host a competition challenging students to create their own content using Adobe Express. Adobe will monitor user engagement and adoption through analytics tools, aiming for a 25% increase in active users by December 31, 2025. These insights will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign, ensuring Adobe Express continues to meet the evolving needs of the education sector.

12 Days of Adobe is the highlight of Q4 and will focus heavily on their newsletter. This is where they will be announcing discounts, and new updates as well as their contest winner. This contest will be held on December before 12 Days of Adobe begins. On the final day of the 12 Days of Adobe campaign, Adobe will be announcing their winner who will receive an all-expenses paid trip to Adobe Summit. To lead people well into the New Year, Adobe Express will engage with their social media audience and urge them to share their New Year vision boards that were made with Adobe Express. Adobe Express can also use this as an opportunity for posts that tailor towards a “Year Wrapped”. Adobe will ask its audience and users for their “Year Wrapped” and any work they created throughout the past year with Adobe Express. This will encourage connection with its users and enhance Adobe Express’s community. This will also push brand engagement via social media to track how Adobe’s reach to its audience is at the start of the new year.

### **Adobe Summit 2026**

Adobe Express will feature a huge billboard to celebrate New Years in New York - a hotspot for tourism and consumer reach on January 1st. This way, Adobe Express will be one of the first things people see when they start the new year. It will allow not only their audience to, “Dive Into the New Year with Adobe Express”, but also new potential customers to be aware of Adobe Express’s features. The audience of Adobe Express covers a wide range from business professionals to students and even content creators. Through combining the excitement of the New Year and the new and improved Adobe Express, brand awareness will increase and catch consumer’s attention during an integral time of the year. By positioning Adobe Express as an industry standard, potential consumers will continue to align Adobe Express with goals and “Start Creating Like An Expert.”

Adobe will continue to build momentum for Adobe Express by inviting key leaders in the creative space to speak at the Adobe Summit scheduled for March 17th - 20th, 2025. This appearance will be a key component of a larger marketing campaign aimed at increasing brand awareness and engagement, while positioning Adobe Express as the go-to tool for students and professionals. These speakers will give Adobe Express the opportunity to connect and engage with their audiences and amplify brand visibility to an even larger group that may not have been previously familiar with Adobe Express. Connecting the brand with well-known creative figures will increase the brand's credibility and show their audience that Adobe Express is what the professionals use and is an industry standard. People will associate success with Adobe Express, setting it apart from its competitors and leaning into its standard of quality. Additionally, the marketing campaign will be pushed out across social media platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, highlighting student success stories and showcasing how the platform shapes creative careers, particularly as it is "Crafted for Creators." Through this campaign, Adobe will conduct a number of impressions generated from this marketing campaign to see the reach of their awareness campaign. Through understanding engagement, Adobe Express will examine the audience the campaign is targeting and continue the efforts to turn brand awareness into brand loyalty. Displaying students' success stories will create motivation for the target audience and showcase Adobe Express as a success indicator. Thus, being able to navigate the Adobe Platforms will be a display of knowledge and a way that students can show their determination when it comes to using the tool.

### **Expansion of University Plan**

To expand brand loyalty and retention, Adobe will launch a targeted campaign on June 1, 2026, aimed at encouraging students to continue using Adobe Express post-college, highlighting the tool's status as an industry standard for professionals in creative fields. Lastly, Adobe will continue its university engagement plan, expanding outreach to additional institutions starting on June 7th, 2026 and preparing for a broader rollout in 2027, ensuring sustained adoption and integration into academic curricula.

### **Budget**

- To support the execution of Q3 initiatives, \$3 million will be allocated. This budget accounts for the costs associated with developing and hosting workshops, producing promotional materials, executing the email campaign,

and collaborating with universities to offer enterprise plans. The higher budget allocation reflects the labor-intensive nature of these activities, including the need for trained staff and customized content for each target institution.

- A budget of \$2 million will be allocated for influencer partnerships, digital advertising, and content creation. The platform will officially roll out to schools and educational institutions starting in Q3 2025
- A budget of \$1.5 million will be allocated for the speaker's participation, event production, and promotional activities surrounding the Summit. Connecting the brand with well-known creative figures will increase the brand's credibility and show their audience that Adobe Express is what the professionals use and is an industry standard.
- A \$1 million budget will be dedicated to digital advertising, influencer partnerships, and social media content, starting on May 1, 2026, leading up to and following the event.
- A budget of \$1.5 million will be allocated for the speaker's participation, event production, and promotional activities surrounding the Summit.

## **Conclusion**

Adobe Express has a significant opportunity to position itself as the leading creative tool among college students and young professionals. Although there is some competition from platforms such as Canva, Adobe Express's status as an industry standard gives it a clear advantage in differentiating itself. By emphasizing its professional design tools and its seamless integration with Adobe Creative Cloud, Adobe Express will be able to serve students not only as an academic resource, but also as a valuable tool in leading students into their professional careers. Through partnerships with universities, the addition of student discounts, and exciting interactive workshops, Adobe Express will be able to foster long-lasting relationships with students and drive higher engagement in this crucial demographic.

In order for Adobe Express to achieve this long-term success it must focus on earning student loyalty by positioning themselves as the tool that will support them throughout their academic and professional careers. By offering competitive pricing, creating content tailored to students, and launching interactive competitions that focus on

benefiting students, Adobe Express has the chance to become the #1 choice for both students and industry professionals.

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