

# Unique experiences for learners.

Charles Sturt University attracts new students with targeted ads and keeps them engaged with personalized digital experiences.



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*Jennifer Galloway, Head of Strategic Development, Charles Sturt University*

## SOLUTION

Adobe Experience Cloud, including Adobe Advertising Cloud, Adobe Target within Adobe Marketing Cloud, and Adobe Analytics within Adobe Analytics Cloud  
Adobe Sensei

## RESULTS

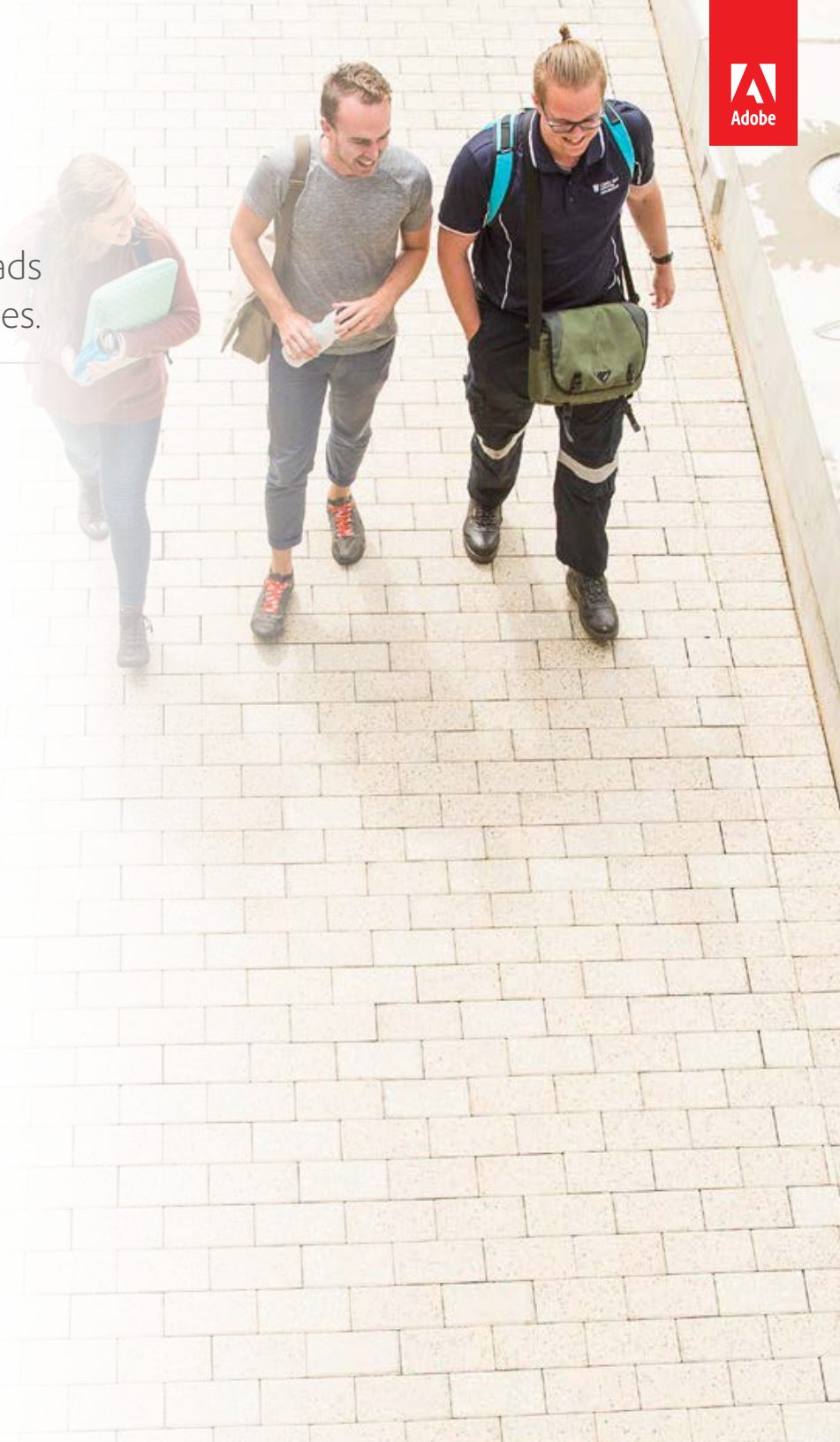
**346%** Increase in **CONVERSIONS** with more personalized digital experiences for prospective students

**32%** **LOWER** cost per acquisition with more effective ad targeting and personalization

**127%** Boost in online **APPLICATION COMPLETION** with smart search marketing strategies



**CONNECTED** data and technology supports engagement with existing and prospective students and alumni



## Charles Sturt University

Established in 1989

Total Enrollment: More than 43,000

New South Wales and Victoria, Australia

[www.csu.edu.au](http://www.csu.edu.au)

### Partner

Accordant

[www.accordant.com.au](http://www.accordant.com.au)

## CHALLENGES

- Bringing disparate digital teams together through centralized data and insights
- Increasing personalization using consistent branding and messages
- Driving student acquisition, engagement, and retention with improved digital experiences

## USE CASES

- Digital Foundation
- Customer Intelligence
- Customer Acquisition
- Personalized Experiences

## Making university experiences personal

Charles Sturt University (CSU) is a millennial of universities. It was founded in 1989, is passionate about its mission to bring higher education to new communities, and is tech savvy. The university also understands that higher education is becoming increasingly competitive, so it uses a mix of data, innovation, and some creativity to stand out and be successful.

The university's desire to attract new students drove it to take cues from unlikely sources—like telecom and financial services companies—to find ways to create more personalized experiences for students. The vision required a centralized analytics platform and data, personalization capabilities, and advertising solutions that could offer students unique experiences.

The first step for CSU was to reach out to one of Australia's top experience-driven firms, Accordant, to take inventory of its technology footprint and initiate a digital transformation. To deliver the personal interactions that the university wanted, Accordant quickly identified Adobe Experience Cloud—including Adobe Advertising Cloud, Adobe Target, and Adobe Analytics—as the end-to-end solution to replace multiple point products, including Google DoubleClick and RadiumOne.

"As a top partner that has achieved early wins with CSU, the team trusted us and our vision for bringing the right platform and strategies to the university's digital marketing ecosystem," says Scott King, Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer at Accordant. "We positioned ourselves as an extension of the university team that can bring in the right resources from Adobe for success."

## Smart solutions for lofty goals

At the outset of its digital transformation, CSU set its sights high for student experiences and delivering value to the university. In addition to boosting satisfaction and engagement through personalization, the university wanted to leverage new capabilities to double the number of students applying while decreasing costs by one-third.

At the top of its student acquisition funnel, CSU uses Adobe Advertising Cloud and insights collected with Adobe Analytics to engage students through paid search and programmatic advertising campaigns. Using Advertising Cloud, the university can engage directly with students via search engines and on the websites that they use most.



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With Adobe Advertising Cloud Search, CSU uses algorithms for bid and budget management based on previous keyword performance. Ongoing, the university can refine its strategies by balancing keyword inventories, cost, budget, and performance with KPIs for each new campaign. For example, if student engagement is higher on its list of priorities than student acquisition within a timeframe, CSU can adjust its bid strategies and resources for maximum effect. After launch, this approach helped to not only more than double online applications—a 127% lift—but also optimize budgets.

"Implementing Adobe Advertising Cloud was the first step in our digital transformation," says Jennifer Galloway, Head of Strategic Development at CSU. "When we saw an immediate uplift in conversion, we knew we made the right choice and were encouraged to move forward with the rest of our plans." Galloway also notes that CSU uses Advertising Cloud to review conversion and revenue data to find the largest opportunities and inform advertising priorities.

## Student-centered digital experiences

Once students reach the CSU website, the university relies on Adobe Target and Adobe Analytics to personalize landing page and website experiences according to current and prospective students' preferences. CSU also partners with Accordant and uses Adobe Experience Cloud to engage with students at each step of the student lifecycle, from application to becoming a student and then an alumnus, to enhance the university experience.

For example, CSU and Accordant are launching a targeted personalization initiative for its admission offer landing page. Once a student receives an offer letter from CSU, the student can click through the letter sent via email and arrive on a personalized landing page. That page displays the student's name, university course applied for, a unique hero image, and banner text formulated for that individual.

The university also uses Adobe Target to launch AB tests to improve site creative, content, design, and navigation. During tests, CSU can capture intent and behavioral information at each level of its conversion funnel to enhance onsite interactions, as well as retarget students at optimal times through media.

Year over year, the combination of more targeted advertising and personalization has boosted conversion by 346% sitewide, while reducing cost per acquisition by 32%.

"We doubled year-on-year new student enrollments while actually reducing the cost to acquire them by a third by using Adobe Analytics, Adobe Advertising Cloud, and personalization strategies," King says. "Now, we're extending into onsite and owned digital assets and looking at how to use additional data points across CSU's first-party data sets, such as their CRM, LMS, and modelled data to drive an ever greater level of understanding of students' needs and wants as they engage with the university."



## SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Adobe Experience Cloud, including:

Adobe Advertising Cloud

- Search
- Spend Recommendations, powered by Adobe Sensei

Adobe Marketing Cloud

- Adobe Target
- AB Testing

Adobe Analytics Cloud

- Adobe Analytics

### For more information

[www.adobe.com/experience-cloud.html](http://www.adobe.com/experience-cloud.html)

[www.adobe.com/advertising/adobe-advertising-cloud.html](http://www.adobe.com/advertising/adobe-advertising-cloud.html)

[www.adobe.com/analytics-cloud.html](http://www.adobe.com/analytics-cloud.html)

[www.adobe.com/marketing-cloud.html](http://www.adobe.com/marketing-cloud.html)

[www.adobe.com/sensei.html](http://www.adobe.com/sensei.html)



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## Energizing digital teams

Standardizing on a single, flexible platform has also transformed how CSU teams work together. In addition to providing access to consistent data and a common toolkit, there's now a common understanding of how data and capabilities can be used together. From reporting to running tests, digital teams are more confident in the insights generated, driving adoption.

"Adobe Experience Cloud was the perfect solution for bringing our teams together. The solutions are intuitive to use and flexible so we can use them across several projects and departments," says Galloway. "It supports a more holistic approach to student acquisition and retention, as well as the university's growth."

"CSU, Accordant, and Adobe have come together as one team," King says. "Through this approach, we have realized a lot of mutual success and we've had a lot of fun doing it."

Strategic partnerships with Accordant and Adobe are also helping to instill confidence in the CSU team and their joint vision for digital marketing. This is leading CSU down the path to expanding its digital capabilities and continuing to drive innovation, including expanding which channels it's optimizing and leveraging automations to scale marketing activities. To enhance yearly budgeting and performance forecasting, CSU also relies on Spend Recommendations, powered by Adobe Sensei, Adobe's artificial intelligence and machine learning technology.

"We have grand plans for completely transforming the student experience, but that's going to take more than just the marketing team," says Galloway. "It's a cultural change, continuing to look at our processes and systems, and examining our expertise. It's an ambitious goal. With our partnerships with Accordant and Adobe, and the right solutions at our disposal, we can test, learn, prove, and adapt."