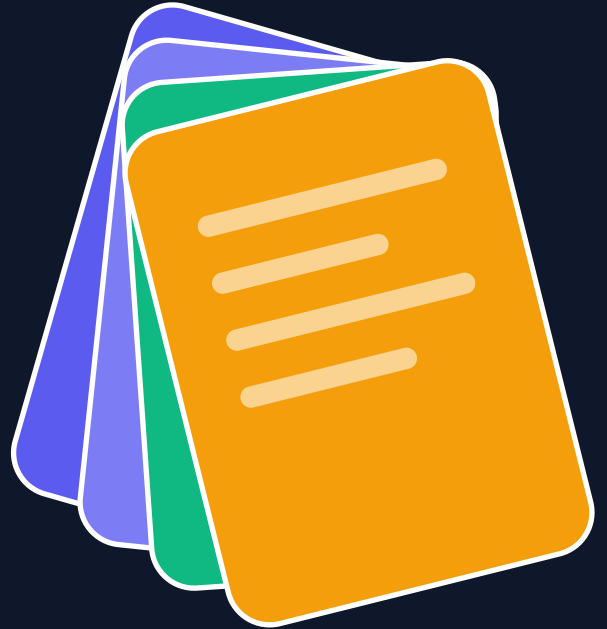




PRODUCT STRATEGY REVIEW · OCTOBER 2026

From clipboard manager to the context layer of work.

Market analysis, competitive teardown and five scalable growth bets for Paste: Mac, iPhone and iPad.

An independent product analysis prepared for the Paste founders.

Based on public information as of 19 October 2026. Estimates and assumptions are labelled as such.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Paste is loved. The core feature is being commoditised. The opportunity is bigger than the clipboard.

10 yrs

on the App Store; a category pioneer [S1]

4.5 / 5

across 16K+ ratings, praised by Zapier, MacStories, Macworld [S1]

2.5 B

active Apple devices, growing ~150M a year [S10]

3 fronts

where clipboard history is now free or bundled [S8, S13]

Where Paste stands

- **Strong franchise.** Unlimited history, visual pinboards, iCloud sync across Mac, iPhone and iPad, and a privacy-first stance (clipboard data stays on-device and in the user's private iCloud) [S1].
- **Already moving on AI.** Intelligent Clipboard (on-device, Apple Intelligence) and Paste MCP, which lets Claude, Codex and Cursor use clipboard history as context [S1, S4].
- **A real B2B seed.** Shared Pinboards (Paste 5.0) and a Teams plan sold outside the App Store [S3].

The strategic problem

Clipboard history is no longer scarce. Apple put a clipboard history into Spotlight in macOS Tahoe [S8]. Raycast includes clipboard history and snippets in its free plan and is expanding to iOS and Windows [S12, S13]. Maccy is free and open source [S14]. Paste's remaining edge on the basics is **unlimited history, cross-device sync and organisation**: valuable, but a defensive moat on its own.

The thesis

Reposition from "clipboard manager" to "the context layer of your work"

Paste owns something rivals do not: a ten-year habit and a private, cross-device record of what people are working on, minute by minute. In an AI-first world that record is the missing context. The growth plan is to make it **retrievable** (semantic recall), **actionable** (smart actions), **shareable** (guest links, teams) and **AI-ready** (a safe context layer).

Five bets

#	Bet	One-line value	Impact	Effort
F1	Paste Memory: the Context Layer	Safe, scoped, cross-device clipboard context for any AI tool, plus on-device Ask Paste and recaps	Very high	Med-High
F2	Teams 2.0 + Trust Layer	Self-serve admin, SSO, policies and team libraries: a procurement-ready team product	Very high	High
F3	Guest Links + Pinboard Gallery	Every shared pinboard becomes a viral acquisition loop (and Paste Wrapped for December)	High	Low
F4	Smart Actions	Transform content as you paste it, privately on-device; an Actions ecosystem	Medium-High	Medium
F5	Semantic Recall + OCR	Find anything by meaning; turns "unlimited history" from storage into a moat	Medium-High	Low-Med

Numbered by strategic weight; F3 and F5 are the fastest to ship. Plus one option to validate before committing: a Windows/Web companion (F6). Detail, evidence, KPIs and risks for each bet follow.

PRODUCT TEARDOWN

What Paste is today, and what the public record says about the gaps

Everything below is drawn from Paste's website, its App Store listing, help centre, GitHub and press coverage. The team will know the internal picture far better; treat the gaps as hypotheses to test.

Area	What exists today	Strategic read
Core	Unlimited clipboard history, visual cards, search, pinboards, paste stacks, rules to ignore sensitive apps; Mac, iPhone, iPad via iCloud [S1, S2]	Best-in-class basics. This is the category's table stakes, now matched on the Mac by free alternatives.
Pricing	\$3.99/mo, \$29.99/yr, \$89.99 lifetime (US App Store); 7-day free trial on the web; also on Setapp [S2]	Healthy price point. The lifetime plan equals three years of annual and carries no recurring revenue.
AI	Intelligent Clipboard suggests what you will paste next, on-device with Apple Intelligence [S1]; Paste MCP (Paste 6.6+, macOS) exposes history and pinboards to Claude, Codex, Cursor [S4]	Ahead of most Apple-native rivals. But MCP is Mac-only and aimed at developer tools (Claude Code, Codex, Cursor, VS Code), so iPhone, iPad and mainstream assistants are out of reach. [S4, S5]
Collaboration	Shared Pinboards since Paste 5.0, billed as the first clipboard built for collaboration [S17]; Paste for Teams: per-user plan with volume discounts [S3]	Proven idea, thin operations: seats are assigned by contacting support, with no self-serve dashboard. [S3]
Privacy	Clipboard stays on-device and in private iCloud, never on Paste's servers; ignore rules for passwords and sensitive apps [S1]	A genuine brand asset, and a design constraint for any cloud feature. A public launch question asked whether MCP inherits the ignore rules. [S6]
Distribution	Press and word of mouth, 10-year App Store presence, affiliate programme, blog and use-case pages [S1]	Strong organic reputation, but no obvious in-product loop that turns usage into new installs.

Observed gaps (hypotheses to validate)

Growth and revenue

- Sharing stops at the edge of the Paste user base: a non-user cannot receive a pinboard in a way that sells Paste.
- Teams cannot scale self-serve: no seat dashboard, SSO, central policy or audit trail [S3].
- ARPU is flat: one price tier for individuals, with AI features not yet monetised.

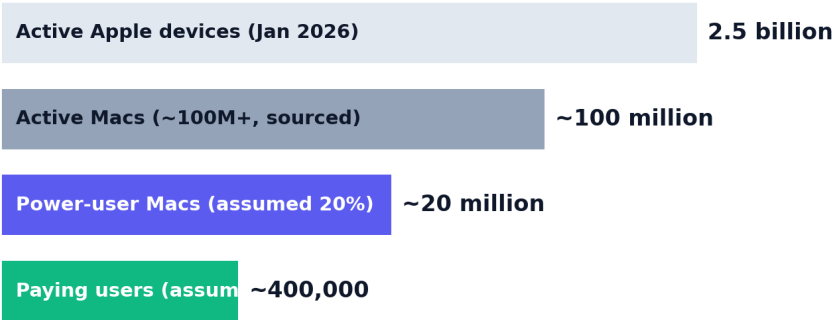
Product and defensibility

- The AI context story stops at the Mac; iPhone and iPad, where Paste is unique, are excluded [S5].
- "Unlimited history" is only a moat if retrieval stays good after thousands of items; images and screenshots are opaque to text search.
- Apple-only reach leaves mixed-OS teams and Windows workplaces to Raycast, which is shipping on Windows [S12].

MARKET ANALYSIS · 1 OF 3

Market size: a healthy niche that needs bigger levers

Method: sourced anchors at the top of the funnel, clearly labelled assumptions below. These are modelling assumptions to show order of magnitude, not Paste's actuals.



Sources: Apple Q1 FY26 (2.5B active devices) [S10]; Mac installed base of roughly 100M+ (Apple reported 100M in 2018; third-party estimates ~100.4M in 2024) [S11]. The 20% and 2% steps are assumptions.

Sensitivity: paying users (annual revenue at today's \$29.99)

Power-user share of Macs	1% paid	2% paid	3% paid
10% (10M Macs)	100K (\$3.0M)	200K (\$6.0M)	300K (\$9.0M)
20% (20M Macs)	200K (\$6.0M)	400K (\$12.0M)	600K (\$18.0M)
30% (30M Macs)	300K (\$9.0M)	600K (\$18.0M)	900K (\$27.0M)

Mac-only, annual-plan view. It ignores iPhone/iPad-only users, lifetime buyers and Teams, so treat it as a rough ceiling for the individual Mac segment.

So what?

On these assumptions, personal clipboard management on the Mac is worth roughly \$3M to \$27M a year: a comfortable niche, not a venture-scale category, and Spotlight is now competing for its entry-level end. Growth therefore has to come from two directions at once: **raise revenue per user** (an AI tier, team seats) and **widen the category** from "clipboard history" to "context for you, your team and your AI tools".

Who pays: customer segments

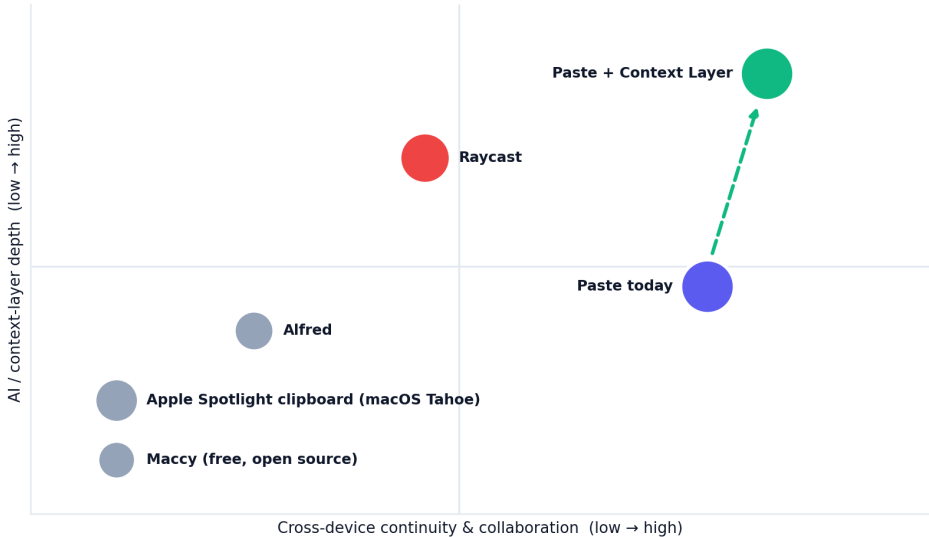
Segment	Why Paste fits	Willingness to pay	Best lever
Developers and AI power users	Snippet reuse, paste stacks, MCP context for coding agents [S4]	High	F1, F4
Support, sales and ops teams	Macros, templates and links reused hundreds of times a day	High (seats)	F2, F3
Legal and professional services	Named in Paste's own listing; clause libraries and a privacy-first stance [S2]	High	F2, trust layer
Designers and creatives	Colours, icons, assets, visual history	Medium-High	F4, F5
Everyday Apple users	Cross-device history; but Spotlight now covers the basics [S9]	Low-Medium	F3 (acquisition)

MARKET ANALYSIS · 2 OF 3

Competitive landscape: free alternatives below, a funded challenger alongside

Player	Platforms	Clipboard pricing	History and sync	AI / context	Threat
Paste	Mac, iPhone, iPad	\$3.99/mo, \$29.99/yr, \$89.99 lifetime [S2]	Unlimited; iCloud sync across devices	Intelligent Clipboard; MCP (Mac) [S1, S4]	-
Apple Spotlight (macOS 26)	Mac	Free, built in	Window of 30 min, 8 h or 7 days; stays on the Mac; Universal Clipboard items not saved [S9, S15]	Siri/Spotlight only	High
Raycast	Mac; iOS companion; Windows (beta) [S12]	Clipboard history and snippets free; Pro ~\$8/mo, AI add-on ~\$8/mo [S13]	Mac-led; cloud sync is a Pro feature	Strong: AI chat and AI-enabled extensions [S13]	High
Maccy	Mac	Free, open source [S14]	Local only	None	Medium (price anchor)
Alfred	Mac	One-time Powerpack; clipboard needs Powerpack [S13]	Local only	Workflows, no native AI	Low-Med
Quip, PastePal and other Apple-only entrants	Mac, iPhone, iPad	Paid (pricing not verified here)	iCloud sync	Quip: local AI clean-up and text expansion [S7]	Medium

Positioning map (analyst judgement, directional)



Reading the map: Paste is already the strongest on continuity and collaboration but sits mid-chart on AI/context depth. Raycast is the only rival with real momentum on AI. The proposed roadmap moves Paste up the vertical axis while widening the lead on the horizontal one: territory Spotlight, Maccy and Alfred cannot follow into quickly.

MARKET ANALYSIS · 3 OF 3

Threats and tailwinds: the same events cut both ways

Threats

- **Apple Sherlocking.** Spotlight in macOS Tahoe now holds a searchable clipboard history [S8]. It is short-lived (30 min to 7 days), Mac-only and unsynced [S9], but Apple can extend it at any WWDC.
- **Raycast bundling.** Clipboard, snippets and AI in one funded product (Series B of \$30M, over \$45M raised in total) that is moving to iOS and Windows [S12].
- **Free anchors.** Maccy and the built-in option reset price expectations for the entry level.
- **Agents that see the screen.** AI tools are acquiring their own ways to see what you do, for example Appshots in Codex for Mac [S5], which could bypass clipboard context.

Tailwinds

- **Spotlight educates the market.** Putting clipboard history in front of millions of Mac users who never searched for it is a top-of-funnel gift; analysts expect power users to outgrow it and look for third-party depth [S8].
- **MCP is becoming plumbing.** Ordinary utilities are turning into context sources for AI assistants [S7].
- **On-device AI.** Apple Intelligence lets Paste add smart features with near-zero marginal cost and no privacy compromise [S1].
- **Growing base.** The Apple installed base is up ~150M devices a year, and Mac unit shipments grew 9% year on year in Q1 2026 [S10, S11].

What the evidence says about winning

- **Do not fight on the commodity layer.** The part of the product Spotlight replaces ("what did I copy a few minutes ago?") is the part least worth defending.
- **Compete where the platform will not go:** long-term memory, cross-device continuity, team knowledge, privacy-grade AI context. Apple's own history is device-local and short by design [S9].
- **Make history more valuable the longer it is kept.** That converts unlimited storage from a feature into a switching cost.
- **Own trust.** Clipboards carry passwords, keys and one-time codes. The brand that handles AI access to them transparently wins the enterprise and the cautious power user alike [S6, S7].

Assets worth protecting

TEN-YEAR TRUST

A decade on the App Store and 16K+ ratings; reviewers call it the clipboard manager Apple might make [S1]

PRIVACY POSTURE

On-device and private iCloud, never Paste's servers; a rare, credible position for AI-era features [S1]

CROSS-DEVICE DEPTH

Mac, iPhone and iPad history in sync; Spotlight's version stays on one Mac [S9]

AI HEAD START

On-device Intelligent Clipboard and an open-source MCP bridge already shipped [S1, S4]

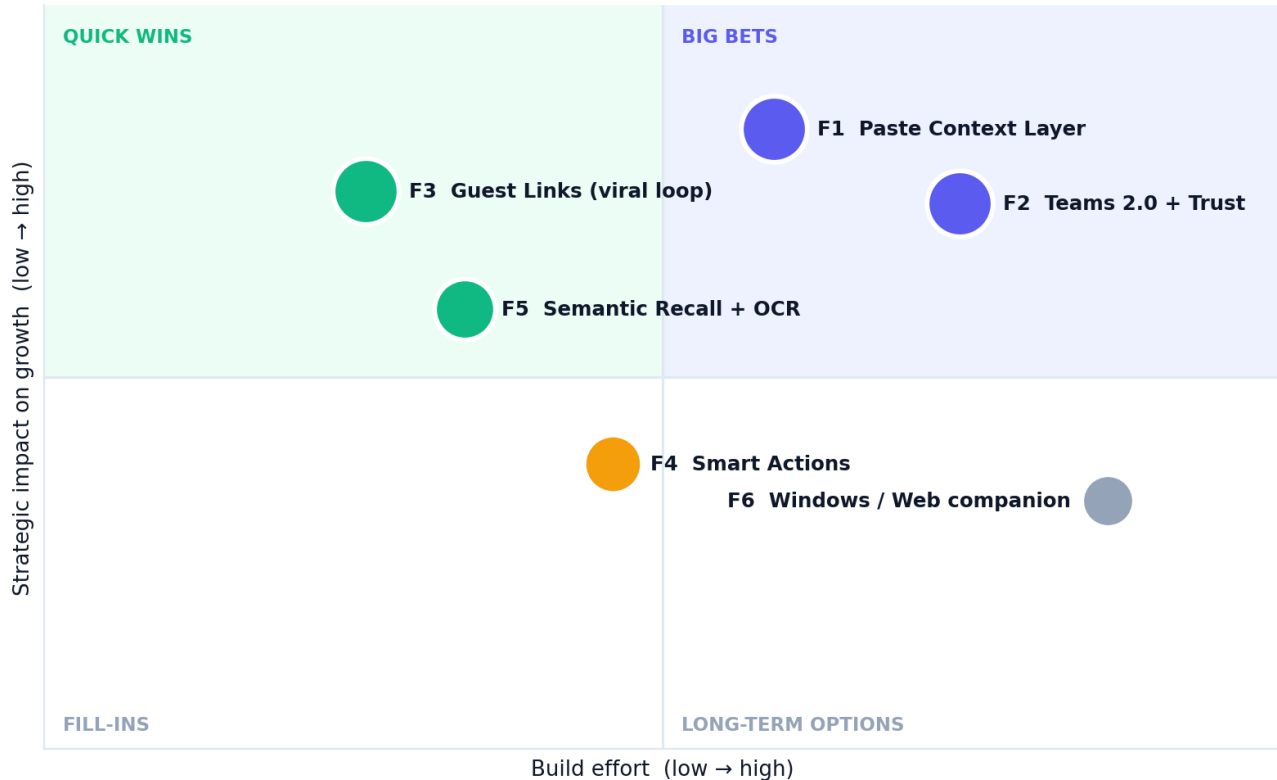
Net assessment

Paste's position is strong but not static. The window to turn a beloved utility into a platform-grade product is open for the next 12 to 18 months: before Spotlight matures, before Raycast ships full cross-device parity, and while MCP adoption is still forming habits. The proposals that follow are sequenced to use that window.

STRATEGY

Five bets, prioritised by impact and effort

Scoring weighs: impact on growth and retention, defensibility against Spotlight and Raycast, fit with Paste's privacy brand, build effort on a small team, and how well each bet compounds with the others.



Bet	Why it ranks here	Compounds with
F3 Guest Links + Gallery	Smallest build for the biggest acquisition effect. Starts a loop that pays back every other feature.	F2 (team invites), F4 (shared actions)
F1 Paste Memory	Most differentiated. Turns the MCP head start into a category position, and monetises AI.	F5 (better retrieval), F2 (team context)
F2 Teams 2.0 + Trust	Largest ARPU and retention lift, but the heaviest lift. Sequence: self-serve first, SSO later.	F1 (guardrails), F3
F4 Smart Actions	Visible daily value and a natural Pro upsell. Keep scope tight to avoid sprawl.	F1, F5
F5 Semantic Recall + OCR	Built largely on Apple frameworks. Makes long history searchable: the real answer to Spotlight.	F1, F4

Placement on the matrix is analyst judgement, to be refined with Paste's usage data and engineering estimates.

Feature bet 1

F1

Paste Memory: the Context Layer

Make the clipboard the memory every AI tool can safely plug into.

IMPACT Very high
EFFORT Med-High
HORIZON Now to Next

The problem

- AI assistants are only as good as the context they receive [S7], so users re-paste notes, links and screenshots by hand.
- Paste already holds that context, but MCP today is Mac-only and aimed at developer tools, shipped as an npm bridge [S4]. iPhone and iPad, where Paste is unique, are excluded [S5].
- Clipboards carry passwords, API keys and 2FA codes. The first public question at launch was whether MCP honours the ignore rules [S6]. Trust gates mainstream adoption.

The solution

- Mainstream-grade connect:** build on the existing in-app Connect AI Tool flow [S4], bundle the bridge so setup has no Node.js dependency, and cover consumer assistants as well as developer tools.
- Context Packs:** grant an AI tool one pinboard, one project or a time window ("last 2 hours"), with expiry. Least privilege by default.
- Built-in guardrails:** secret and PII redaction before anything leaves Paste, ignore rules always honoured, and a visible audit log ("Claude read 3 items at 14:02").
- iPhone and iPad:** expose history through App Intents and Shortcuts so Siri and Apple Intelligence can ask "what did I copy about the Lisbon trip?".
- Ask Paste and Recaps:** on-device natural-language Q&A plus daily and weekly digests, with no third-party AI required.

SCENARIO (ILLUSTRATIVE)

Maya, a product lead, has spent the week copying research notes, links and screenshots for the Q4 launch. She opens her AI assistant, grants it the "Q4 Launch" Context Pack for two hours and asks for a stakeholder update. The draft comes from her own material; the audit log shows exactly which 14 items were read, and an API key and a one-time code were redacted automatically.

MVP SCOPE, ROUGHLY 6 TO 8 WEEKS

- Audit log and automatic secret and PII redaction in the existing MCP bridge
- Per-pinboard and time-window access scopes with expiry
- iOS Shortcuts action: "Search Paste"
- Bundle the bridge in the app so setup needs no Node.js and covers mainstream desktop assistants

Why it should win (evidence)

- Press already frames the idea: ordinary utilities quietly become context sources for AI [S7], and the launch drew mainstream Mac coverage [S5].
- Distribution:** every MCP-compatible tool becomes an acquisition channel. Developers adopt first and pull their teams in (F2).
- Defensibility:** years of history, cross-device and a privacy posture are hard for Spotlight to copy. Spotlight's window is 30 min to 7 days [S9].

HOW IT SCALES

- Pro tier anchor: Raycast charges ~\$8/mo plus ~\$8/mo for advanced AI [S13].
- On-device processing keeps cost of goods near zero.
- Context Packs become shareable units for teams (F2) and the gallery (F3).

SUCCESS METRICS

- % of paying users with 1+ AI tool connected
- Items retrieved by AI per connected user per week
- 90-day retention: connected vs not
- Pro attach rate

RISKS AND GUARDRAILS

- Default off, scoped, audited, local-first.
- Prompt injection:** copied text can contain hostile instructions. Label MCP results as untrusted data and flag suspicious items.
- iOS API limits: start with Shortcuts, then deepen.

Feature bet 2

F2

Paste for Teams 2.0 + Trust Layer

Turn a loved personal tool into a procurement-ready team product.

IMPACT Very high
 EFFORT High
 HORIZON Next to Later

The problem

- Teams is bought on the website and seat changes go through support; there is no self-serve seat dashboard [S3]. Fine for 5 seats, a blocker at 500.
- Shared Pinboards proved the collaboration idea [S17], but IT buyers need SSO, device policy and auditability before approving anything that touches the clipboard.
- Paste's own listing names lawyers and support teams as users [S2]: exactly the roles with the most repeatable content.

The solution

- **Self-serve admin console:** invite links, seat management, billing portal and invoices.
- **Identity and deployment:** SSO (SAML/OIDC), SCIM provisioning, and MDM profiles (Jamf, Kandji, Mosyle) to push org-wide settings.
- **Org policies:** central ignore-rules, auto-expiry of sensitive items, secret-detection warnings and an AI-tool allow-list.
- **Team Libraries:** permissioned pinboards with variables (for example {{customer_name}}) for support macros, sales snippets, legal clauses and prompt libraries; roles and version history.
- **Admin insights:** which libraries are used and by which teams. Counts only, never what individuals copy.

SCENARIO (ILLUSTRATIVE)

A 40-person support team. The admin invites everyone from a single page, pushes a profile through MDM that makes Paste ignore the password manager, and publishes a "Refunds and Billing" library with {{customer_name}} variables. New hires paste approved answers on day one; the admin sees which macros are used and which are dead.

MVP SCOPE, ROUGHLY 6 TO 8 WEEKS

- Self-serve invite, seat and billing page
- Roles on shared pinboards: admin, editor, viewer
- Org-wide ignore-rule profile deliverable by MDM
- Library variables; SAML SSO follows in the next phase

Why it should win (evidence)

- Seat-based pricing raises ARPU and lowers churn versus personal plans; volume discounts already exist [S3].
- **Architecture:** keep the "never on our servers" promise [S1] with a metadata-only control plane (identity, seats, policy). Content stays on device and in iCloud.
- Procurement readiness is where free rivals like Maccy cannot follow.

HOW IT SCALES

- Land and expand: a developer or support lead starts, the team follows, IT standardises.
- Annual contracts and MDM distribution through IT channels.
- Team Libraries create switching costs that personal plans lack.

SUCCESS METRICS

- Teams and seats per team
- Net revenue retention (seat expansion)
- Time to first shared library
- Admin activation of policy features
- Trial-to-paid for Teams

RISKS AND GUARDRAILS

- Start with SMB (10 to 200 seats) and self-serve; defer enterprise services.
- Ship SAML SSO first; add SCIM and audit exports next.
- Shared boards rely on Apple IDs and iCloud sharing; document limits and plan a fallback.

Feature bet 3

F3

Guest Links + Pinboard Gallery

Let every shared pinboard recruit its next user.

IMPACT High
EFFORT Low
HORIZON Now (quick win)

The problem

- Collaboration is Paste-to-Paste [S17]. A pinboard sent to someone without Paste is a dead end, so the product's best moments never reach new people.
- Acquisition leans on reviews, press and word of mouth [S1]. There is no built-in loop that converts usage into installs.

The solution

- **Guest Links:** publish any pinboard or item as a read-only web page with one-click Copy buttons, optional expiry and password, and a "Get Paste, free for 7 days" call to action.
- **Privacy-first by design:** opt-in per link; end-to-end encrypted with the key in the URL fragment so Paste's servers cannot read it.
- **Pinboard Gallery:** curated starter packs (AI prompt packs, developer snippets, support macros, design tokens) installable in one click; community submissions later.
- **Paste Wrapped (December):** a local-only, shareable "your year in clipboard" card, timed for year-end.

SCENARIO (ILLUSTRATIVE)

A design lead shares a "Brand Kit" pinboard (hex codes, logo links, boilerplate text) with an agency. The agency opens a clean web page, copies the exact hex code in one click and sees "Made with Paste". Some of the agency's staff start a trial that week, and the next brief they receive from the client lands in a shared board of their own.

MVP SCOPE, ROUGHLY 6 TO 8 WEEKS

- Read-only, end-to-end encrypted link for a pinboard; expiry and optional password
- Copy buttons and an install call to action
- Six starter packs in onboarding and the gallery
- Paste Wrapped card, computed locally

Why it should win (evidence)

- Copying is an inherently shareable action, and the audience (developers, designers, support teams) already shares links, prompts and assets.
- Opt-in public boards can double as indexable landing pages for organic search, building on the existing blog and use-case pages [S1].
- Very low cost of goods: static, encrypted pages.

HOW IT SCALES

- A loop that compounds: users create, guests visit, some install, new users create.
- The gallery becomes a content moat and, later, a creator ecosystem (template marketplace).
- Feeds F2: guests become team invitees.

SUCCESS METRICS

- Guest links created per 100 weekly active users
- Visitor-to-install click-through
- Install-to-trial and trial-to-paid
- K-factor (target above 0.1 to begin)
- Wrapped shares

RISKS AND GUARDRAILS

- Abuse and phishing via public boards: nothing public by default, link scanning, report flow, expiry.
- Privacy: end-to-end encryption and explicit consent per link.
- Brand: clear terms and takedown process.

Feature bet 4

F4

Smart Actions

Transform what you paste, as you paste it: privately, on-device.

IMPACT Medium-High

EFFORT Medium

HORIZON Next

The problem

- Most pasted content needs a second step: reformat, clean, translate or summarise. People bounce to another app and break flow.
- Competitors are moving: Quip cleans the clipboard with local AI and doubles as text expansion [S7]; Raycast sells AI commands [S13].

The solution

- **Content-aware action bar:** Paste detects type (JSON, URL, address, table screenshot, code, colour, long text) and suggests actions.
- **First eight actions:** prettify JSON, strip tracking parameters, summarise, translate, rewrite tone, extract a table from a screenshot to CSV, redact PII, convert units or currency.
- **Chainable and shareable:** combine steps with Shortcuts; share actions through pinboards and the gallery.
- **Snippet triggers:** turn any pinned item into a text-expansion trigger.

SCENARIO (ILLUSTRATIVE)

Sam copies a messy JSON payload from a log, taps the action key and picks "Prettify". Later he copies a screenshot of a table from a PDF and chooses "Extract to CSV". No app-switching, no cloud upload, and the result lands back on the clipboard ready to paste.

MVP SCOPE, ROUGHLY 6 TO 8 WEEKS

- Eight actions, mostly deterministic (parsers), a few using on-device language models
- Action key in the Paste panel
- Shortcuts hook for chaining
- Pro-tier gating and usage telemetry (opt-in)

Why it should win (evidence)

- Intelligent Clipboard already proves Paste can ship on-device AI [S1]; actions sit exactly in the paste moment, where Paste already lives.
- On-device processing is a privacy and cost advantage over cloud-AI competitors.
- Most actions can be deterministic (parsers, regex) and only a few need a language model, which keeps quality high and cost near zero.

HOW IT SCALES

- An Actions SDK and community library create an ecosystem and a reason to stay.
- Natural Pro-tier upsell with visible daily value.
- Actions can be bundled into Team Libraries (F2).

SUCCESS METRICS

- % of pastes that use an action
- Actions per daily active user
- Pro conversion for users with 3+ actions per week

RISKS AND GUARDRAILS

- Feature sprawl: ship eight excellent actions, not eighty.
- On-device model quality: fall back to deterministic transforms.
- Maintain Apple Intelligence availability checks across supported devices.

Feature bet 5

F5

Semantic Recall + OCR

Find it by meaning, not by memory.

IMPACT Medium-High

EFFORT Low-Med

HORIZON Now to Next

The problem

- Paste's headline promise is unlimited history [S1], while Spotlight keeps 30 min, 8 h or 7 days [S9]. But storage only wins if retrieval scales: after a year, keyword search over thousands of items turns noisy.
- Images, screenshots and PDF snippets are opaque to text search.
- The App Store listing already mentions intelligent search [S2], so this extends it; benchmark current behaviour first.

The solution

- **Natural-language search, on-device:** "the Zoom link from Priya's call", "invoice screenshot from March".
- **OCR and visual understanding** (Apple Vision) so text inside images becomes searchable.
- **Smart filters:** source app, date, content type, device; "related items" and "on this day" resurfacing.
- **Auto-collections:** cluster copies by project and offer one-tap pinboards, feeding Context Packs (F1).

SCENARIO (ILLUSTRATIVE)

Priya remembers "that Zoom link Raj sent, sometime in March". She types it as a sentence. Paste surfaces the link, the note she copied alongside it, and an invoice screenshot whose text it read through OCR, all from on-device indexes.

MVP SCOPE, ROUGHLY 6 TO 8 WEEKS

- Natural-language query over existing metadata: date, source app, type
- OCR index for images and screenshots on the Mac
- "On this day" resurfacing in the panel
- Benchmark and baseline today's search success rate first

Why it should win (evidence)

- **Raises switching costs:** the longer you use Paste, the more valuable your searchable memory becomes.
- **Turns the Spotlight gap into a moat:** a 7-day history cannot compete with a year of retrievable context.
- Built largely on platform frameworks, so it is cheaper than it looks, and it improves every other bet.

HOW IT SCALES

- Every retrieval improvement lifts retention across all plans.
- Underpins Ask Paste, recaps and Context Packs (F1).
- Natural fit for the Pro tier.

SUCCESS METRICS

- Search success rate (search leading to a paste within 30 seconds)
- **North star:** pastes of items older than 24 hours per active user per week
- Image-item retrieval rate

RISKS AND GUARDRAILS

- On-device indexing cost and battery: index incrementally, Mac first.
- Privacy of the OCR index: local-only and encrypted.
- Set clear expectations on accuracy for handwritten or low-quality images.

OPTIONS AND QUICK WINS

One option to validate, and seven things that can ship in weeks

F6 (option): Windows and Web companion, validate before building

Paste is Apple-only [S1], while Raycast is shipping on Windows [S12]. Mixed-OS teams cannot standardise on Paste. But a full port conflicts with the iCloud-based privacy model and would absorb a small team. **Recommendation:** run a waitlist and demand test first. If it validates, start with a browser extension and read-only web viewer (reusing Guest Links infrastructure from F3), then a lightweight Windows companion with optional end-to-end-encrypted sync.

Quick wins (2 to 8 weeks each)

Quick win	Why now	Links to
Paste Wrapped ("your year in clipboard", computed locally and shareable)	December is only six to eight weeks away; a privacy-safe shareable moment drives retention and installs	F3
In-app "Spotlight keeps 7 days, Paste keeps everything" moment with an "on this day" resurfacing of an old copy	Turns the Tahoe threat into a visible daily-value demonstration [S9]	F5
MCP audit log and secret redaction (before wider promotion)	Answers the most public trust question on day one [S6]	F1
Teams self-serve invite and billing page	Removes the manual seat step [S3]	F2
Starter pinboards in onboarding (prompt pack, dev snippets, support macros)	Faster activation; seeds the future gallery	F3
User-to-user referral (a free month each) alongside the affiliate programme [S1]	Builds a loop without any new infrastructure	F3
"Paste for AI" landing page with five ready-made prompts and one-line setup	Captures search and developer interest around MCP [S4, S5]	F1

Pricing and packaging (price points to be A/B tested)

Tier	Contents	Price hypothesis	Rationale
Paste	History, sync, pinboards, rules	\$29.99/yr (unchanged)	Protect the entry point against Spotlight and Maccy
Paste Pro	Context Layer, Smart Actions, Semantic Recall	+\$20/yr (test \$39.99 to \$49.99 total)	Raycast AI sits near \$8 to \$16/mo [S13], so a few dollars a month is a bargain
Paste Teams	Admin, SSO, policies, Team Libraries	\$4 to \$6 per seat per month	Seat-based, annual, volume discounts
Lifetime	Core features only, version-capped	Keep at \$89.99 [S2]	AI features stay in subscriptions so ongoing cost is covered

ROADMAP AND IMPACT

A sequenced plan that compounds, and an illustrative model of what it is worth

Now: 0 to 90 days	Next: 3 to 9 months	Later: 9 to 18 months
Prove the loop and fix trust - Guest Links MVP (end-to-end encrypted) - Paste Wrapped for December - MCP guardrails: audit log, redaction, scoped access - Teams self-serve invite and billing - iOS read-only context via Shortcuts and App Intents - Starter pinboards and referral	Launch Pro and deepen value - Paste Pro tier launch - Smart Actions v1 (eight actions) - Semantic Recall + OCR (Mac, then iOS) - Ask Paste and weekly recaps - Teams: roles, SAML SSO, audit exports - Pinboard Gallery v1	Build the platform - Team Libraries with variables and insights - SCIM and MDM policy profiles - Actions SDK and community library - Context Pack sharing between teams - Windows/Web companion (only if validated) - Template marketplace

Illustrative impact model (per 100,000 paying personal subscribers)

A placeholder model to show the shape of the opportunity. Replace each assumption with Paste's actual numbers. Base revenue at \$29.99/yr: **\$3.0M**.

Lever	Assumption (low / base / high)	Annual revenue (low / base / high)
Pro tier (+\$20/yr)	Attach rate 8% / 15% / 25%	\$0.16M / \$0.30M / \$0.50M
Teams (assumed \$4/seat/mo, 8 seats avg)	250 / 600 / 1,200 paying teams	\$0.10M / \$0.23M / \$0.46M
Retention (F1, F5)	1 / 2 / 3 points of annual churn avoided	\$0.03M / \$0.06M / \$0.09M
Viral loop (F3)	0.5% / 1.5% / 3% extra paying users a year	\$0.015M / \$0.045M / \$0.09M
Total uplift		\$0.30M / \$0.64M / \$1.14M
Versus base revenue		+10% / +21% / +38%

How to read this

On these assumptions the combined levers add between a tenth and over a third of revenue (base case: about a fifth), with Teams and Pro compounding over time as the loop in F3 grows the base they apply to. The model deliberately excludes the larger prize: becoming the default context layer for AI tools, a category the clipboard-only market does not measure.

Suggested delivery structure (illustrative; sequence rather than parallelise if the team is small)

Squad	Owns	First 90 days
Growth loop	F3, referral, Wrapped, onboarding	Guest Links MVP and Wrapped; ship before December
Intelligence	F1, F4, F5	MCP guardrails and iOS Shortcuts action; baseline search metrics
Teams and Trust	F2, org policies	Self-serve seats and billing; roles on shared pinboards

MEASUREMENT AND RISK

What to track, and what could go wrong

Proposed north-star metric

Retrieved-memory pastes per active user per week: pastes of items older than 24 hours. It measures the one thing Spotlight cannot match, rises with every bet (F1 to F5), and ties directly to retention and willingness to pay.

Input metric	Question it answers	Primary bets
Activation: first pinboard within 7 days	Do new users reach value fast?	F3, F5
Day-90 retention; trial-to-paid	Is the habit sticking and converting?	F1, F4, F5
Pro attach rate; AI tools connected	Is the AI tier earning its keep?	F1, F4
Seats per team; net revenue retention	Is Teams expanding?	F2
K-factor; guest-link-to-install rate	Is the loop compounding?	F3

Risk register

Risk	Likelihood	Mitigation
Apple extends Spotlight clipboard history [S8]	High	Invest where the platform will not go: long memory, cross-device, teams, AI context (F1, F2, F5).
Privacy backlash over AI access to the clipboard [S6, S7]	Medium	Default off, scoped access, audit log, redaction, local-first. Treat clipboard content as untrusted input to agents.
Small-team bandwidth	High	Sequence quick wins first; self-serve Teams before enterprise; lean on Apple frameworks (Vision, App Intents, Foundation models).
Lifetime plan cannibalisation and support cost [S2]	Medium	Cap lifetime to core features by version; keep AI and Teams in subscriptions.
Platform dependence (iCloud limits, App Store rules for Teams sold outside the store) [S3]	Medium	Metadata-only control plane; follow platform guidelines; maintain a fallback sync path for Teams.
Raycast reaches cross-device parity [S12]	Medium	Out-depth on Apple-ecosystem integration (iPhone and iPad) and on the privacy brand; move first on Context Packs.

RECOMMENDATION

What I would do in the next 90 days

The pitch in one paragraph

Paste has earned the most valuable thing in this category: a decade of trust and a daily habit. Clipboard history itself is becoming a commodity, but the **private, cross-device record of what people are working on** is not, and AI has just made that record far more valuable. The plan is to stop selling a clipboard and start selling **memory**: searchable for individuals, shareable for teams, and safely usable by AI tools.

Proposed next steps

When	Action	Outcome
Weeks 1 to 2	Validation sprint. Pull usage data: share of users on Shared Pinboards, MCP adoption, search behaviour, churn by plan and tenure, Teams pipeline.	Confirms or corrects the gap hypotheses; sets baselines for every metric above
Weeks 2 to 4	Customer discovery. 15 to 20 interviews across developers, support leads and one IT admin; test Context Packs and Team Libraries concepts.	Evidence for F1 and F2 scope and pricing
Weeks 3 to 10	Ship the quick wins: MCP guardrails, Guest Links MVP, Teams self-serve page, Paste Wrapped.	First loop live before December; trust story in place
Weeks 10 to 13	Pro tier pilot with Smart Actions v1 and Semantic Recall; A/B test pricing.	Pricing evidence and a decision on the AI tier

Decisions I would ask the founders for

- Agree the repositioning: **"the context layer of your work"** as the narrative for product, site and pricing.
- Approve a metadata-only cloud control plane for Teams and Guest Links, preserving the "clipboard never touches our servers" promise [S1].
- Allow a subscription-only AI tier, with the lifetime plan capped to core features.
- Adopt retrieved-memory pastes per active user as the north-star metric.

Method and caveats

This analysis uses only public sources as of 19 October 2026. It cannot see Paste's users, revenue, churn or roadmap, so market sizes and the impact model rely on stated assumptions, and feature gaps are inferred from public materials; the team may already be working on some of them. Third-party pricing and competitor details come from secondary sources and should be re-verified before any external use.

APPENDIX

Sources

Tag	Source and what it supports	Where
S1	Paste homepage: features, testimonials, privacy, Intelligent Clipboard, MCP, platforms	pasteapp.io
S2	Paste on the App Store: pricing (\$3.99/mo, \$29.99/yr, \$89.99 lifetime), feature summary	apps.apple.com/app/id967805235
S3	Paste help centre: Paste for Teams billing, seat set-up, no self-serve seat dashboard	pasteapp.io/help/paste-for-teams
S4	Paste MCP repository: local MCP server, requirements (Paste 6.6+, Node 18+), tools supported	github.com/pasteapp/paste-mcp
S5	iGeeksBlog: coverage of the Paste MCP launch, Mac-first scope, privacy considerations	igeeksblog.com/paste-mcp-ai-clipboard-history
S6	Product Hunt: Paste MCP launch thread (community question on ignore rules)	producthunt.com/p/paste/paste-mcp-ai-tools
S7	MacSparky: "Paste Meets MCP" and the Quip sponsor feature description	macsparky.com/blog/tag/clipboard
S8	AppleInsider: Apple has again sherlocked developers with clipboard history	appleinsider.com/articles/25/06/09/...
S9	Paste blog: macOS Tahoe clipboard history (history windows, Mac-only, no sync). Vendor source; cross-checked with MacMost and AppleInsider	pasteapp.io/blog/macos-tahoe-clipboard-history
S10	9to5Mac: Apple reveals 2.5 billion active devices (January 2026)	9to5mac.com/2026/01/29/...
S11	Mac installed base: TechCrunch (100M active Macs, 2018); third-party estimate of ~100.4M in 2024; IDC Q1 2026 shipments of 6.2M (+9%)	techcrunch.com ; xtendedview.com
S12	Raycast Series B announcement (\$30M; Windows and iOS expansion); funding totals	raycast.com/blog/series-b ; techfundingnews.com
S13	Raycast and Alfred pricing and feature comparisons (secondary sources, 2026)	tech-insider.org/raycast-vs-alfred-2026 ; textexpander.com/blog/alfred-alternatives
S14	Best clipboard manager for Mac, 2026 (Maccy, Raycast, Alfred, Paste). Vendor-authored, read with that bias	pasteapp.io/blog/best-clipboard-manager-for-mac
S15	MacMost / AppleInsider guides: Spotlight clipboard history behaviour and limitations	macmost.com ; appleinsider.com
S17	Paste 5.0 and Shared Pinboards: update notes and launch coverage	pasteapp.io/updates ; hunted.space/product/paste-5

Note: pricing and plan details change frequently. Figures here reflect the cited pages as read on 19 October 2026.