Kering holds hackathon in Paris to develop sustainable luxury solutions

By Chenu Alexis - October 8, 2019

On the week-end of October 4-6, the Atelier Richelieu venue in Paris was fizzing with digital energy. It was the first hackathon organised by the Kering group, attended by 80 developers and digital tech experts - 70% of them professionals and 30% students - from around the world, picked among the 250 who applied to participate. The goal was to develop software solutions applicable to the fashion and luxury industry.

The participants were bleary eyed - many had little or no sleep at improvised facilities on site - as they presented their apps centred around fashion and its environmental impact to an attentive jury which included, among others, Patrick Pruniaux, CEO of Girard-Perregaux, Antonella Centra, general counsel at Gucci and Pavan Sukhdev, president of WWF International.

In the last few years, hackathons have been regularly staged by LVMH for its various labels, but this was the first organised by Kering. According to Marie-Claire Daveu, Kering’s chief sustainability officer and head of international institutional affairs, the event was “part of the general action plan for 2017-2025. In June, we launched a first digital platform called EP&L Kering, featuring a host of downloadable data available to the general public; we needed to go through that stage first and make the data safe before organising this kind of event.”

Team Core run the gauntlet of a series of presentations and rigorous questioning and won the hackathon, with its forecasting and recommendation website aimed at designers, merchandisers and clients. It won a €10,000 cash prize, while the two other finalists respectively pocketed prizes worth €5,000 and €3,000.

“Eventually, some of these highly interesting solutions may be implemented within the group, and inspire the work of our internal teams. [The hackathon] was also the opportunity of demonstrating that sustainable development has been a priority for the group ever since François Pinault became president, and how our strategy is both business-oriented and ethical,” said Daveu.