

COMMERCE

LVMH hires from Apple to boost digital potential

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Fendi collaborated with Beats by Dr. Dre on headphones

By STAFF REPORTS

French conglomerate Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton is looking to innovate the digital presences of its brands with the appointment of a new chief digital officer who most recently worked at Apple.

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Ian Rogers has been working in the digital space since 1993, with tenures at Yahoo and Beats Music among other tech companies. With luxury brands looking to tighten their hold on digital, bringing in talent that has worked exclusively within the tech world may provide a new perspective.

High-touch meets high-tech

Mr. Rogers graduated with a computer science degree from Indiana University. He began his career in tech working as a Web master for the Beastie Boys and Nullsoft.

He founded Mediacode in 2001, which was then acquired by Yahoo, and he subsequently was named vice president and general manager of music at Yahoo. A few years later, he joined Topspin media as CEO followed by a tenure at Beats Music as CEO. When Beats was acquired by Apple, he joined the company's iTunes team as senior director, where he

recently oversaw the launch of Apple Music, the brand's digital streaming channel.



Louis Vuitton's pass app for iPhone

This is the latest move between the luxury world and Apple.

Apple tapped former Burberry CEO Angela Ahrendts in 2014 and Paul Deneve, previously Saint Laurent Paris CEO, in 2013.

Apple has been creeping into the luxury sector in recent years, most recently with the launch of its smartwatch.

Back in 2013, L2's founder predicted that technology giant Apple will be venturing into luxury categories in the near future to capitalize on enormous profit margins and its pristine brand image at the L2 Forum.

During the "7: The Forces Shaping Prestige in 2014" session, L2 Think Tank boss Scott Galloway pointed out that Apple's acquisition of CEOs from Burberry and Saint Laurent indicates that the brand is forcefully moving toward the luxury sector. The founder also warned that luxury brands will begin to face increasing disruption from outsiders (see

story).

In this case, LVMH is taking the expertise from a potential disruptor and using it to its advantage rather than detraction.

In a brand statement, Bernard Arnault, chairman and CEO of LVMH, said, "I am happy to welcome Ian into our group to strengthen our digital ecosystem. He will build on the foundations laid by Thomas Romieu, take the Houses to the next level and explore new opportunities for the Group in the digital sphere. Ian will bring his extensive experience in high-end digital ventures and his innovation-driven spirit to develop LVMH leadership in the digital luxury field."

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