

RETAIL

Galleries Lafayette sets sights on sector's future via startup incubator

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Image courtesy of Galleries Lafayette

By STAFF REPORTS

French department store chain Galleries Lafayette is championing retail and fashion technology startups with a new strategic partnership.

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Galleries Lafayette announced May 23 that it has entered a partnership with global innovation platform Plug and Play, which has invested in brands such as PayPal and Dropbox, to support and accelerate the development of startups in the retail and fashion sector. With an industry-wide move toward omnichannel, Galleries Lafayette is likely to directly benefit from the startups working, and the technologies developed, within its innovation incubator with Plug and Play.

Retailing for tomorrow

The French retailer will open the application process to startups beginning on June 1 and ending Aug. 22. Applicants will be vying for a spot in Galleries Lafayette and Plug and Play's first three-month mentorship.

Applications will be judged by a jury of Silicon Valley technology experts and senior executives from Galleries Lafayette and Plug and Play. The jury will announce the 10 finalists on Sept. 26.

Operating out of a dedicated office in Paris, the "Lafayette-Plug and Play Accelerator" will offer the finalists entrepreneurial services, workspace, contracts and capital investments. As to not curb any creativity, the workspace will be open to outside mentors as well.



Galleries Lafayette's interior

Edoardo Manitto, vice president of innovation and development at Galleries Lafayette Group, has acknowledged that as a retailer, collaborating with "high-potential" startups will benefit Galleries Lafayette, allowing the department store to maintain a competitive edge within the fashion and retail business of tomorrow.

In a similar move, Yoox Net-A-Porter Group partnered with Bologna Business School to launch a Center for Digital Business Education, combining their collective ecommerce expertise to help train managerial candidates for an increasingly digital world.

The first managerial education program focusing specifically on digital business will offer master's degree programs aimed at both new graduates and those with some years of on-the-job experience. Luxury brands have identified technology as a key area where finding qualified talent is especially hard, making this initiative a means to ensure that both Yoox Net-A-Porter and other business navigate the digital shift ([see story](#)).

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