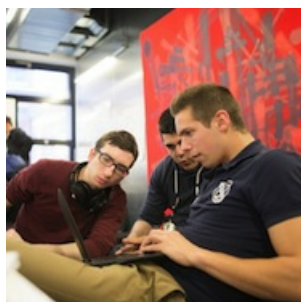SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

Louis Vuitton asked student hackers to upgrade its already efficient supply chain

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Student hackers during Louis Vuitton's 2016 hackathon, Unlock Supply Chain

By STAFF REPORTS

LVMH flagship brand Louis Vuitton is celebrating the success of its second hackathon held last weekend in France.

Louis Vuitton's "Unlock Supply Chain" hackathon was in partnership with smart business platform Anaplan and BeMyApp at Ecole 42. The 48-hour hackathon invited student teams to work on developing a future supply chain model for Louis Vuitton using the Anaplan platform.

Hacking the supply chain
The hackathon presented the student teams with a strategic challenge, as Louis Vuitton's current supply chain is considered "one [of] the best supply chains in the world, if not the best." The objective for the hackathon is demonstrative of the potential Louis Vuitton sees in Anaplan.

Students who participated in the weekend hackathon had to base their projects on a new technology they had never seen before. The success rate shows how versatile and user-friendly Anaplan's platform is.

Participants included more than 50 students and post-graduates from French business and engineering schools. Students represented education institutions such as HEC, Centrale, Ponts et Chausses, Ecole 42, Efrei, Epitech, Kedge, Etna, ESSEC and Arts et Metiers, among others.

Louis Vuitton sales associates

The supply chain hackathon concentrated on 13 suppliers, seven workshops, 500 product references, a central warehouse and six distribution centers.

"The results are stunning; it is incredible to see what can be the output of several intelligent brains working together during less than three days," said Franck Le Moal, information system director at Louis Vuitton, in a statement.

Vincent Barale, supply chain and logistics director at Louis Vuitton, shared Mr. Le Moal's excitement, saying, "It has been tough for the jury to decide on the winner. We are amazed by the solutions brought up in such a short period of time. Some of the students had never even heard of the supply chain before the challenge."

The first place winners, PLAN!T, answered how to anticipate production needs according to daily sales levels. As first place winners, the team won a trip to Los Angeles and a selection of Louis Vuitton goods.

The PLAN!T team won Louis Vuitton's Unlock Supply Chain hackathon

In second place was Make It Easy, who focused on simplifying the supply chain while taking into account demand and the environment. Third place winners, Supply the Future, worked to use new technologies such as RFID, to anticipate real-time sales at Louis Vuitton shops.

Louis Vuitton held its first hackathon in October of 2015, with an aim of altering luxury's relationship with the technology world.

Held on September 25, "Unlocking the Future of Luxury" brought together 58 developers, who were asked to work in teams for 48 hours to create an application that would enable the brand to better understand its consumers and where the luxury industry is headed. Seeking this outside input and expertise may help Louis Vuitton innovate within its company, as well as give data engineers an inside look at the company (see story).