

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Tapestry files claim against employee who led to creative director departure

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Coach is one of Tapestry's brands. Image credit: Coach

By STAFF REPORTS

Premium goods maker Tapestry is stirring up controversy after firing and suing an employee who filed a complaint against the company.

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The company, formerly known as Coach Inc., is suing Thomas Gibb for unrelated reasons after the man filed a lawsuit in regards to sexual harassment from creative director Giovanni Morelli. Tapestry's suit claims the employee violated the conflict of interest part of his contract.

Filing suit

Last month, Mr. Gibb filed a suit against the company, which led to the departure of Mr. Morelli ([see story](#)).

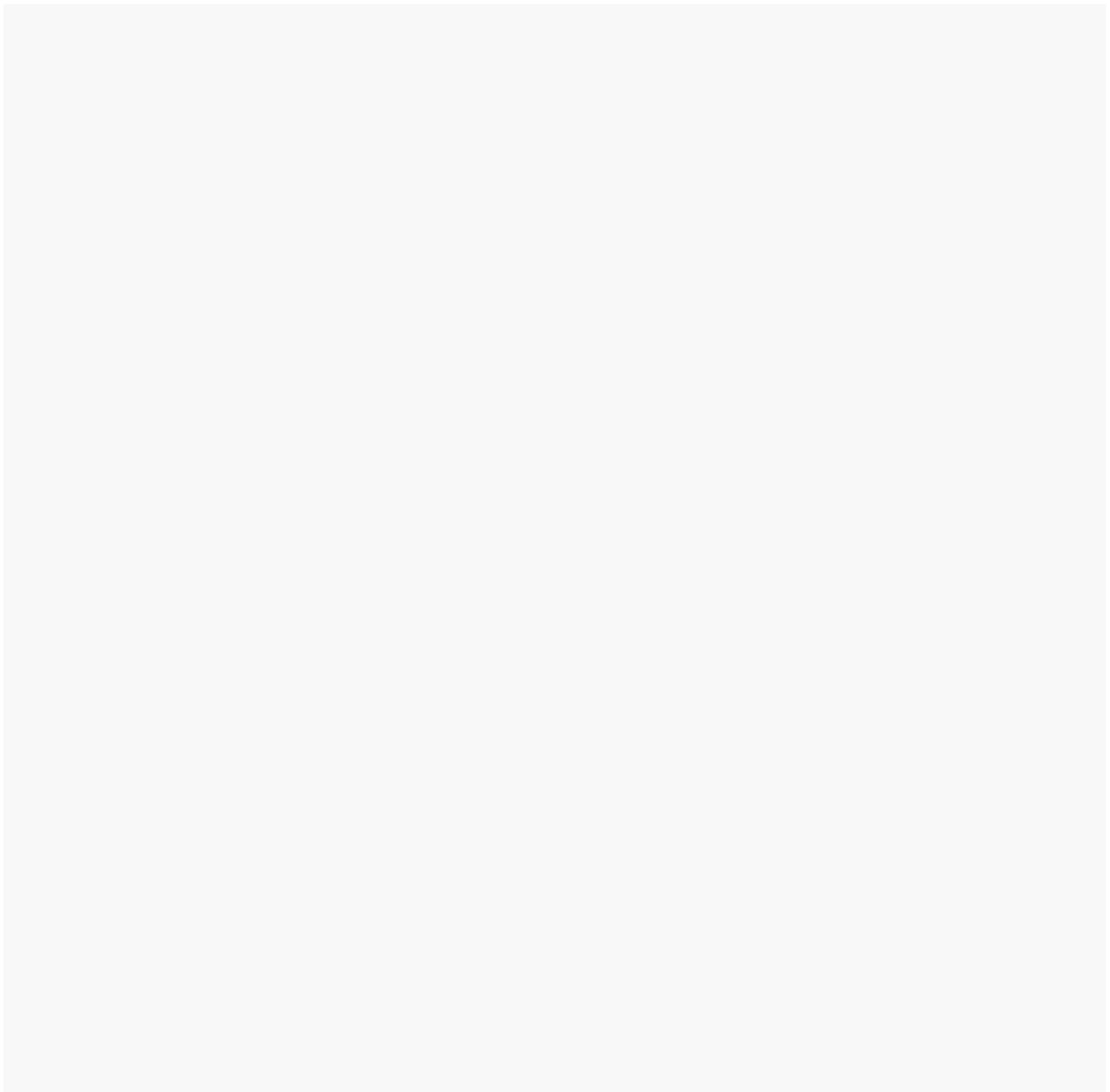
On Monday, Mr. Gibb was let go, according to a statement from his lawyer reported on by Women's Wear Daily. He believes the suit from Tapestry is a retaliation tactic in regards to the sexual harassment suit.

"It's pretty transparent this is nothing other than an act of retaliation against our client for bringing claims of harassment and discrimination two weeks ago," said David Gottlieb, Mr. Gibb's lawyer. "After two years with the company, he's been nothing but an ideal employee and received nothing but positive feedback and accolades and was always completely transparent in his interest in Tidal."

Tapestry's charges include breach of contract, duty of loyalty and diversion of corporate opportunities. The claims are in regard to his involvement with flip-flop manufacturer Tidal, saying he harmed Tapestry's business by taking plans for a new footwear line.

"Gibb devoted significant time to furthering the business interests of Tidal and/or Homegrown that should have been devoted to Tapestry's business," Tapestry said in the complaint, which was filed with New York State's Supreme Court.

The company maintains that the two lawsuits are separate matters and are unrelated.



A little rivets or a lot? You decide with our new-season Charlie carryall. #CoachNY

A post shared by Coach (@coach) on Jun 19, 2018 at 11:07am PDT

To many, Tapestry, formerly known as Coach Inc., is considered the first American luxury goods group, but its CEO prefers not to define its three-brand portfolio by nationality.

Instead, Tapestry, which owns Coach, Kate Spade and Stuart Weitzman, prefers being recognized as the first New York-based house of luxury brands, which just happens to own brands from the U.S. While Tapestry's brands may have been founded in the U.S., nationality is not a focus due to the brand's global presence, including its corporate team, its real estate footprint and importantly, its consumer base ([see story](#)).

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