

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Kering Americas partners with Black in Corporate on virtual mentorship program

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Kering Americas is partnering with BIC on a virtual mentorship program. Image credit: Black in Corporate

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

French luxury conglomerate Kering is establishing a mentorship program with its Americas business to expand opportunities for Black professionals.

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Kering Americas and Black in Corporate (BIC) have announced a **virtual summer mentorship program**, pairing participants with employees across Kering Americas and its houses, with involvement from several departments. The initiative aims to help cultivate relationships between fashion professionals and the BIC network, as luxury looks to improve diversity within its ranks.

"We are both honored and excited to partner with Black in Corporate on this mentorship program," said Laurent Claquin, president of **Kering Americas**, in a statement. "As a leader in the luxury industry, we have a responsibility to set standards and enact change beyond trends.

"Through this partnership, we can support and empower a generation of talent that's essential to our industry," he said.

Black in Corporate

Applications for mentees are open through July 2, with the month-long mentorship program taking place in August.

Mentors will represent several departments, including marketing and advertising, project management and operations, human resources, financial services, media and communications and technology. Featured maisons include Gucci, Saint Laurent, Brioni, Bottega Veneta, Balenciaga and Alexander McQueen, as well as Kering Americas.

"My hope for this collaboration is to open doors for other Black professionals who are eager to explore this realm, and to mitigate many of the obstacles that I dealt with in the beginning of my career in a sustainable, long-lasting way." Candace Marie Stewart [@blckincorporate](https://twitter.com/blckincorporate)
pic.twitter.com/aoc3phpXf9

Kering (@KeringGroup) June 24, 2021

Kering announced the program on social media

The program will include skill development workshops and speaker events with Kering executives. Participants will also have weekly, hourlong sessions with their assigned mentors via phone or video conferences.

According to this year's "State of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Fashion" report from the Council of Fashion Designers of America, there are several structural obstacles that must be addressed for the fashion industry to have a more representative and equitable workforce.

Black employees report greater inaccessibility to the fashion industry, at a rate of 68 percent to 37 percent of white employees. While 48 percent of respondents received referrals for their current roles, the racial disparity was stark with 57 percent of white employees being referred compared to 23 percent of Black employees ([see story](#)).

"The majority of my experience working within corporate spaces has been in the luxury fashion sector so to celebrate BIC's first anniversary with our debut partnership with Kering feels like a full circle moment," said Candace Marie Stewart, CEO and founder of BIC, in a statement. "My hope for this collaboration is to open doors for other Black professionals who are eager to explore this realm, and to mitigate many of the obstacles that I dealt with in the beginning of my career in a sustainable, long-lasting way."

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