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EDUCATION

Columbia, Parsons students envision selling solutions for luxury brands

December 13, 2016



Carolina Herrera's bridal experience was reimagined by students

By STAFF REPORTS

Audemars Piguet and Oscar de la Renta were among the Luxury Education Foundation members that opened up their marketing and retailing operations to educational innovation this fall.

In a semester-long master-level course, teams of students from The New School's Parsons School of Design and Columbia Business School took on a luxury company as a client, working with executives to tackle a key goal or challenge from an outsider's perspective. After this semester-long collaboration, the teams presented their suggestions to the companies on Dec. 7, providing food for thought.

Luxury lessons

Out of the five brands in this annual LEF program, four are first time participants.

For Carolina Herrera, students were asked to position the label's bridal collection for the bride of the present and future. Wanting to present the house as the go-to for feminine, modern weddings, the students laid out actions that catered to two key personalities of the contemporary bride—the princess and the jetsetter.

For both the local and international client, the team deemed ease of getting to the salon important, setting up an online appointment booking tool and video chat capabilities so the sales consultant is easily reachable.



Carolina Herrera bridal look

The students also suggested changing the layout of the store to resemble a church to play up the emotional appeal of a dress try-on. While at the appointment and beyond, Carolina Herrera could transition the bridal customer and her party into the ready-to-wear collection through content such as honeymoon style posts on the brand's wedding blog or a look book available during the wedding dress appointment.

Departures was also interested in courting a younger, modern crowd. Tasked with increasing engagement among the 25-44 set, the Time Inc. magazine's student team looked to make the travel resource more friendly to an audience that is not as fond of prepackaged, lengthy tours.

The students curated trips with specific personalities in mind, turning the magazine's Web site into a "search engine" for high-end travel. These shorter trips might be staycations, such as a hotel crawl or supper series.

Creating a more active digital community around Departures, the team also suggested using influencers on Instagram and launching Podcasts.



Audemars Piguet timepiece

Audemars Piguet gave its team the objective of increasing its brand awareness and traffic to its stores. The students devised a plan that included experiential events both in-store and outside, such as an artist collaboration or a four-day sailing excursion, which play to the interests of the watchmaker's target audience.

Additionally, the group laid out the idea for pop-ups in key cities where Audemars Piguet is lacking a physical presence. These temporary stores would feature elements that mimic a chiming watch, in theory placing consumers inside the body of a watch.



Audemars Piguet team with Xavier Nolot, president and CEO of the brand

The group working with stroller maker Maclaren also devised a series of pop-ups for the brand, envisioning modular panels that would allow the space to morph to fit its environment. Inside

would be features such as interactive screens and a personalization bar, where a child's handprint can be sent to the parent via email or used to customize a stroller purchase.

Oscar de la Renta's team took the brand's changing creative direction ([see story](#)) as an opportunity for a logo change. They decided the label's logo, which for years has been the eponymous founder's signature, was due for an update.



Oscar de la Renta's logo

Combining a modern font with elements of the signature, their design was made to fit into a square label or a round button. As noted by the students' research, reactions to changes in fashion label logos, such as Fendi and Dior, were less severe than the response to altered logos for platforms such as Uber and Instagram.



New logo for Oscar de la Renta designed by the students

LEF, which just celebrated its 10th year, brings together young talent and industry leaders to create a program that educates students and provides them with real experience in the world of luxury

The organization was founded in 2005 with the goal of educating students by providing them with practical experience in the industry. It is a nonprofit educational foundation that allows students at Columbia Business School and Parsons The New School for Design to learn about the creation and marketing of luxury goods ([see story](#)).

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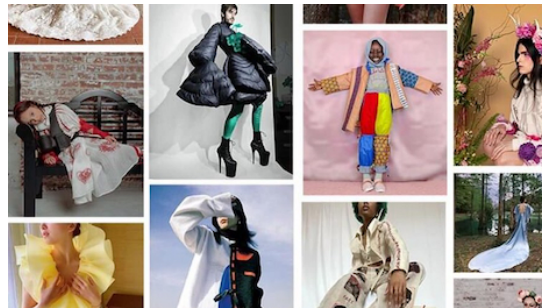
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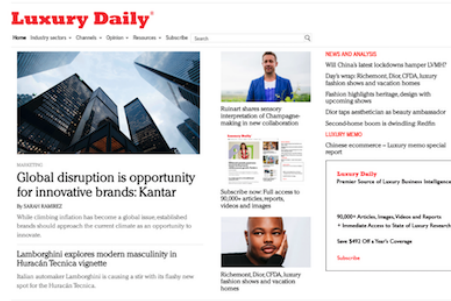
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