The luxury industry seeks to attract young people to craftsmanship

By Dominique Muret - 15 March 2022

The shortage of workers and experts in craftsmanship worries the luxury industry. Last week, three major industry players have launched initiatives that aim to attract these professions to the young generation, most specifically to high school and university students: LVMH with its "You and me" tour, the Strategic Committee of the Fashion and Luxury Sector with its "Savoir pour faire" campaign, and Altagamma with its "Adopt a school" project.

The leading luxury conglomerate is touring different cities in France to raise awareness among "schoolchildren, high school graduates, students and people in conversion" about professions linked to creation, craftsmanship, and customer experience as it has done every year since 2015. The goal is to "present a wide range of work experiences and internships to as many people as possible, as well as job offers, in more than 30 professions including as a stylist, couturier, furrier or even sales consultant," said LVMH in a press release.

For its eighth edition dubbed "You and Me" and sponsored by basketball player Tony Parker, the group will offer 1,200 internship and apprenticeship opportunities and 600 fixed-term and permanent contracts until the end of April. The program kicked off on March 9 in Clichy-sous-Bois and will continue in Reims on March 18, in Valence on March 23, in Orléans on April 1 and ending in Paris on April 6.

The Strategic Committee of the Fashion and Luxury Sector, chaired by Guillaume de Seynes from Hermès, is carrying out another operation aimed at seducing young people. This National Industry Council brings together industry experts, public administrations, and trade unions. Through the "Strategic Sector Contract" signed together with the government in 2019, it promotes French production, particularly in terms of training and employment.

With its "Savoir pour faire" campaign and a dedicated website (savoirpourfaire.fr), the organization offers leads and all kinds of information and tools to help students find their way in the fashion and luxury industry, which is particularly useful for students’ crucial orientation period in their final year of high school. The services range from virtual coaching to meetings with schools and teachers, visits to workshops, and podcasts uploaded to their YouTube channel.

Across the Alps, Altagamma, the foundation that brings main luxury companies together, has just launched the "Adopt a School" project to encourage "active collaboration between companies and schools to allow greater
involvement of young people in the manual trades of the new generation, which is an essential element for the Made in Italy excellence.” The idea is to identify training courses that are more in line with company’s needs and which in turn aim to reduce the gap between the skills sought and the educational programs. Bottega Veneta, Brioni, Bulgari, Fendi, Herno, Isaia, Loro Piana, Moncler, and Salvatore Ferragamo are just some of the names that have joined the initiative.

“The initiative also intends to improve the perception of these trades through brand appeal. With a youth unemployment rate of 28%, manufacturing jobs are a great opportunity for young people. The training of new talents is essential in giving impetus and continuity to the high-end sector, which nearly 2 million people in Italy, both directly and indirectly,” said Altagamma. According to the latest published figures dating back to 2018, the fashion and luxury sector accounted for more than 600,000 direct jobs in France.

At the same time, Altagamma is publishing the second edition of its book "I Talenti del Fare", which identifies the future needs of the Italian production industry. According to the publication’s estimates, "about 346,000 techno-professional profiles will be sought after in the fashion, design, furniture, food, hospitality and automotive sectors" in the next five years.