



Press Release

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Xathon goes into fifth round

Start of application phase: Henkel invites women in AI to Open Innovation Challenge

- **In two challenges, this year's Xathon encourages female-led startups to solve real-life business problems in the field of AI**
- **Prize fund of 25,000 euros to build a proof of concept with Henkel**
- **Application phase open until October 13, 2023**

Düsseldorf – The Xathon, Henkel's business hackathon for early-stage female entrepreneurs, has expanded its vision and has developed into an open innovation challenge with a focus on AI, retaining its commitment to empowering female founders in tech.

"In its fifth edition, the Xathon has evolved to meet two of Henkel's real business demands in the space of AI combined with our ambition to support female-led startups and foster more gender diversity in the tech startup industry. This way, women in AI can demonstrate their capabilities and make a tangible impact in the dynamic tech ecosystem," says Michaela Bessell, Head of Venture Ecosystem and Partnerships at Henkel dx Ventures. Participants can win a prize fund of 25,000 euros to build a proof of concept with Henkel. **Applications can be made [here](#) from now on until October 13, 2023.**

And these are the challenges startups can apply for and showcase how they reshape the way businesses operate:

1. **Venture vision AI challenge: Revolutionizing investment decision-making**
Develop AI-powered algorithms to enhance the identification of companies with high potential for investments or M&A opportunities. The application should provide solutions on optimizing one of the elements of due diligence, valuation or deal structuring processes.



2. Label workflow AI challenge: Transforming packaging label management

Develop AI-driven tools to streamline the entire packaging label workflow within marketing / brand management. The application should address the optimization of either translation processes, article data maintenance, or legal and regulatory checks.

Engaging with real business challenges and collaborating with Henkel, participants can demonstrate their skills, build invaluable connections, and propel their ventures forward. The final pitch event is planned for October 27 in the Henkel dx Innovation Hub in Berlin, where the top six startups have the opportunity to secure a budget of 25,000 euros for a proof of concept with Henkel and additional prizes provided by Henkel's Xathon partners.

Empowering the next generation of female entrepreneurs

In the ever-evolving technological landscape, Xathon remains steadfast in its dedication to empowering female founders driven to disrupt and innovate. Henkel dx Ventures, the corporate venture capital arm of Henkel's consumer goods business, launched the Xathon five years ago to empower visionary female-founded or female-led startups (with at least one female at the C-Level) and female entrepreneurs that are ready to pioneer in this rapidly growing field and redefine industry standards.

How to participate

All female founders or mixed-gender co-founder teams who are looking to make a difference are invited to submit their solutions to the two distinct challenges until October 13 [here](#). Participation is free. Applications are carefully reviewed based on Henkel's specific business needs and potential impact in the field of AI. Further information can be found at www.henkel.com/xathon.

About Henkel

With its brands, innovations and technologies, Henkel holds leading market positions worldwide in the industrial and consumer businesses. The Adhesive Technologies business unit is the global leader in the market for adhesives, sealants and functional coatings. With Consumer Brands, the company holds leading positions especially in hair care and laundry & home care in many markets and categories around the world. The company's three strongest brands are Loctite, Persil and Schwarzkopf. In fiscal 2022, Henkel reported sales of more than 22 billion euros and adjusted operating profit of around 2.3 billion euros. Henkel's preferred shares are listed in the German stock index DAX. Sustainability has a long tradition at Henkel, and the company has a clear sustainability strategy with specific targets. Henkel was founded in 1876 and today employs a diverse team of more than 50,000 people worldwide – united by a strong corporate culture, shared values and a common purpose: "Pioneers at heart for the good of generations." More information at www.henkel.com

Photo material is available at www.henkel.com/press

Contact Kathrin Ernst
Phone +49 211 797-8605
Email Kathrin.ernst@henkel.com

Hanna Philipps
+49 211 797-3626
hanna.philipps@henkel.com

Henkel AG & Co. KGaA