



## LIFESTYLE

# Here's the ingredients of the perfect marketing proposal

Original and intriguing concept makes NUS team clinch branding title

ANDREA ONG

**D**ISTANCE and time differences did not deter three National University of Singapore (NUS) students from creating the perfect marketing proposal.

This they did for the L'Oreal Brandstorm 2008 marketing competition, and yesterday, their tireless efforts paid off when they were crowned national champions of the contest.

The annual international competition, introduced here in 2002, challenges tertiary students to come up with a marketing strategy for a L'Oreal brand.

This year, teams were tasked to create a sun care product range targeted at teens and youths for Vichy Capital Soleil.

Ms Lydia Tay, Ms Jenalyn Liu and Ms Avril Tan, all 22-year-old business students, emerged tops among the 213 undergraduates here who flocked to take part.

Their team, which they dubbed The Pinnacle, won an all-expenses-paid trip to Paris, where they will compete in the international finals on June 10.

It has been an arduous six months leading up to yesterday's triumph.

They had to come up with their strategy while two members were abroad in exchange programmes in December last year - Ms Tay was in Shanghai while Ms Tan was away in Sweden. In order to make their deadline, they communicated online.

They also had to contend with managing school work and exam preparations. But they "wanted our strategy to be per-



**PARIS BOUND:** Hardworking victors (from left) Ms Jenalyn Liu, Ms Lydia Tay and Ms Avril Tan, who will bring their winning product and marketing plan all the way to France. (PHOTO: JAMIE KOH)

fect," said Ms Tay.

Which meant that they spent countless hours consulting dermatologists and a general practitioner regarding the scientific aspects of their product. They also visited Vichy counters to study the brand's product range, and surveyed 100 youths in a bid to understand consumer needs.

While they cannot reveal much about their product and strategy as they want to keep it under wraps until they present it again in Paris, judges at yesterday's finals were impressed.

The team's "original and intriguing" concept made them stand out from the other seven finalists, said Mr Jean-Francois Couve, managing director of L'Oreal Singapore & Malaysia, who was one of the judges.

The girls, however, have a

tough act to follow. Last year's team, which was also from NUS, won the international title for their design of a new range of Redken hair products for men. In 2003, a team from Nanyang Technological University won the top prize for developing a hair care line for Garnier.

Mr Couve thinks this year's representatives may well win, too. The team had "a concept that was original and viable with a global perspective".

The trio can also look forward to the prospect of employment with L'Oreal, which has recruited six Singaporeans from previous L'Oreal Brandstorms.

The competition is "the best example" of L'Oreal's focus on recruiting fresh graduates to stay ahead in Singapore's competitive job market, said Mr

Nicolas Pauthier, human resource director of L'Oreal ASEAN.

This is good news for Ms Liu, who graduated earlier this month. Ms Tay and Ms Tan will graduate next year.

"This is one of the jobs I'd really love to do," said Ms Liu.

[andrea@sph.com.sg](mailto:andrea@sph.com.sg)

### HELPDESK 我的字典

**Time Differences:**  
时差 shí chā

**Proposal:**  
倡议书 chàng yì shū

**Prospect:** 图景 tú jǐng

## Press Clippings

L'Oréal News

Tuesday, May 27, 2008

Brandstorming a path to success, TODAY

**NUS team, The Pinnacle, will represent Singapore at the L'Oréal finals in Paris**



**ALL SMILES:** Mdm Ho Geok Choo (MP for West Coast GRC), Lydia Tay, Jenalyn Liu, Avril Tan (The Pinnacle, NUS) and Mr Jean-Francois Couvé (managing director, L'Oréal Singapore and Malaysia).

Lydia Tay, Jenalyn Liu and Avril Tan could possibly look forward to an exciting career at beauty giant, L'Oréal, when they graduate from the National University of Singapore.

On May 14, they were crowned champions of the Singapore leg of L'Oréal Brandstorm, an international marketing competition that gives undergraduates a chance at becoming brand managers to revamp an existing L'Oréal product. Their team, The Pinnacle, will represent Singapore in the international finals to be held in Paris next month.

This year's competition features Vichy Capital Soleil, one of the pioneers in sun-care technology and protection. The participants were tasked with playing public health advocates, creating a campaign aimed at educating teens and young adults about skin damage.

"The case study included a big challenge, namely the public health component. The Pinnacle deserved the title as they had an in-depth understanding of Vichy Capital Soleil and an original and viable concept with a global perspective, and more importantly, a call to action that was compelling to youths," said Mr Jean-Francois Couvé, managing director, L'Oréal Singapore and Malaysia.

The teams were evaluated by a panel of industry judges, and were judged on a variety of factors, including coherence with brand values, market analysis and creativity.

For the three members of the winning team, the competition was a crash course in what it is like to be a marketing advocate for one of the biggest names in the business.

"In Brandstorm, we had to go through the entire marketing process, from creating a new product, to designing it, to pricing, to selling. Every detail is covered, right down to the text on the box, so it prepares us very well for the real marketing world," said Ms Lydia Tay, one of the members of The Pinnacle.

The competition also provided a chance for participants to put themselves on the shop window, as the annual competition is used by L'Oréal to talent spot. Ma Eliz Tan, a member of Team Singapore, the overall winner of Brandstorm 2007, currently works as a marketing operations executive at L'Oréal Asean, Kiehl's.

It's a possible career path for the members of The Pinnacle, as they've ticked all the right boxes for Mr Nicolas Pauthier, L'Oréal Asean's human resource director.

"We look out for individuals with a passion to be in the beauty business, with a good fit for the industry and culture, a sense of adventure, and great communications and interpersonal skills," he said. "The Pinnacle showcased these attributes, and that is why they are representing Singapore at the international finals in Paris."

But for now, members of The Pinnacle are gunning for the title of L'Oréal Brandstorm International champion. Along with the bragging rights, they will also win 10,000 euros (\$21,000) for a trip to anywhere in the world and a third championship title for Singapore.