SMU students win contest, offered jobs

By Jane Ng

FIVE students from Singapore Management University (SMU) performed so well in an international business competition, they walked away with not just the top prize of a trophy but also job offers.

The chief executive of French food and beverage giant Group Danone, Mr. Franck Riboud, was so impressed he offered them positions in the company’s offices in China and Indonesia on the spot.

The competition saw 12 teams from countries such as China, Italy and Russia competing to solve business cases.

SMU business management students were asked to help Biskuat, a brand of biscuits Danone sells in Indonesia, regain profitability and become a market leader.

One of the strategies they came up with was to get closer to the target market by exploring new distribution channels such as kiosks.

They also suggested promoting the biscuit’s health qualities, such as its calcium fortification, as many of those in the target market lacked calcium.

The competition, organised by Danone, was held in Paris two weeks ago, on April 7.

The team, comprising fourth-year student David Naidu, and third-year students Zhang Kaixiang, Jeremy Loy, Tee Yock Siong and Joel Teng, had won the Singapore leg of the contest in February.

Mr. Zhang, 24, said: “David’s always the one to start off the presentations because he’s a powerful speaker and impresses the judges right from the start.”

While all five will meet up with Danone soon to find out more about its job offers, only one, Mr. Naidu, will graduate this year.

The rest have a year more in school. They are thinking of an internship with the company instead.

“The overseas experience will be a great learning opportunity and it will be interesting to find out how a brand-name MNC markets its products,” said Mr. Loy, 23.

Undergraduates at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) have won similar competitions this year.

Four NUS students took the top prize in the Copenhagen Case Competition last month, winning a lamp by a Danish designer.

A group of NTU students won the Singapore Exchange-NTU Financial Games, and took home a $1,600 cash prize.