Eye for high life reaps rewards

By CRYSTAL NEO

WHILE others concentrate on the now, Fanny Ang, Mary Yeo and Carrie Chen are planning ahead. They wanted a shopping mall that caters to the professionals, managers, executives and businesswomen, or PMEBs — a breed that they all aspire to be in the future.

That was also probably why this all-female team from Singapore Management University (SMU), which won the inaugural Capitaland Retail Marketing Award, decided on Raffles City for their marketing campaign.

Said Ms Ang, "We are all going to be PMEBs, we can associate with them and we want to be like those women who are living the high, sweet life."

Blending their ideas with real-life examples, the winning team modified their ideas to suit the context of Raffles City. One of their ideas, for example, was to have a human mannequin as a walking advertisement for the shops at the mall. And this idea — inspired by a performing artist on Orchard Road — may eventually be implemented at Raffles City.

"We may actually adopt some of them because we find some of their ideas pretty innovative and we can actually look at fine tuning them and rolling them out," said Therese Chew, senior manager of group marketing communications at Capitaland Retail.

Another idea that impressed the judges was the suggestion to give out fortune cookies which communicated the mall’s brand to the high proportion of single female shoppers. Each love note from the mall will be signed off as "Yours exclusively, RC (Raffles City)".

Identifying their target segment right from the start was also the winning formula for this team. "We really knew what our target segment was and we really expounded on that," said Ms Ang.

After two weeks of research, the group came up with the demographics of Raffles City shoppers: PMEBs, mid-career, aspiring to be successful, an annual income of $20,000 to $40,000.

It was this aspect that impressed the judges. "They really did a lot of background research to understand the psyche of people who go to Raffles City, as well as the kinds of people and patronage that Raffles City wants to attract," said one of the judges, Kenneth Tan, managing director of Golden Village.

Coming up with a concept that introduced novel ideas and yet maintained the image of Raffles City helped them win the top spot in the inaugural Capitaland Retail Marketing Award. The synergy shown by the team during its presentation was also noted by the judges. "They were clear and systematic in their presentation style," said another judge, Thomas Tan from SMU.

For a proposed campaign that is both creative and doable, as well as convincingly written and convincingly presented in a face-to-face form, it was that combination that made us choose this team," he added.

The team beat 26 others to win a six-week internship with Capitaland Retail in Beijing, China.

But it wasn’t just their marketing proposal that won over the judges. The synergy shown by the team during its presentation was also noted by the judges. "They were clear and systematic in their presentation style," said another judge, Thomas Tan from SMU.

While they did not refer to any textbook throughout the competition, the team attributed part of their success to what they learned in advertising and retailing class, as well as to the experience gained from previous internships. Between them, the team members count Cycle & Carriage, Lego Singapore and Suntec City Development Pte Ltd in their resume. Ms Ang and Ms Chen have also set up their own online businesses.

Although this is the first time the team participated in a marketing competition, it will not be the last. Looking ahead, the team has their eyes on the L’Oreal Marketing Award next and they plan to put their experience gained in this competition to good use.

Said Ms Ang: "This has taught us to focus on our target segment, then direct our marketing efforts at it. . . . This will definitely prepare us not only for future competitions but also the real marketing world."

"Hyping on price promotions is obviously not what the judges want to see," Ms Yeo added.

But right now, the trio are excited about their upcoming internship in Beijing. Said Ms Ang: "It is going to be a totally different environment and experience since it’s overseas, so we can learn a lot."