SMU team wins L'Oreal's marketing competition

BY JOYCE TAN

AN ALL-FEMALE team from the Singapore Management University (SMU) has clinched top spot in the Singapore finals of the L'Oreal Brandstorm marketing competition.

The event – part of a global competition – saw 43 teams from SMU, National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University face off in devising a new product range for L'Oreal, the giant French cosmetics firm.

They also had to come up with packaging for their product, and work with an advertising agency on a marketing campaign.

The competition, part of an international recruiting strategy for L'Oreal, gave the students an opportunity to apply their textbook knowledge to the real working world.

The SMU team named La Difference, which comprised final year students Lavinia Tan, 24, and Kuik Xiao Shi and Wong Li-Jun Rebecca, both 23, took a two-pronged approach.

"Firstly, they really did their research and had a very good sense of what the consumer wanted. And secondly, their packaging was clear and got the message across," said Ms Jill Klein, a judge and associate professor of marketing at INSEAD.

Ms Wong added: "We talked to women of all ages and we held focus groups. We found they want products which work and can be incorporated into their daily lives."

The results of their research was a product line called Lancome Crystal, which when applied to the skin, enhanced other products, be it slimming gels or moisturisers.

To showcase their approach, they produced a video where women on the street were interviewed about their beauty concerns.

Ms Klein felt that the students did not commit the common error of overloading advertisements with information.

"The strategy for an effective ad campaign is to figure out your key message and then keep repeating it," she said.

On June 15, La Difference will compete with other finalists from over 30 countries in Paris with the chance to win a £10,000 (£29,000) round-the-world trip.