Mannequin-model idea helps SMU team clinch retail award

BY JOYCE TAN

A CLEVER blend of out of the box thinking and specific audience targeting helped an all-female team clinch the top prize at the CapitaLand Retail Marketing Award held last Friday.

The competition, which started in April, was designed to select a Singapore Management University (SMU) team with the best ideas to promote shopping at any CapitaLand mall.

The triumphant team, which comprised third-year marketing students Fanny Ang, 21, Mary Yeo, 21 and Carrie Chen, 22, beat 26 other teams to win a six-week internship with CapitaLand Retail in Beijing.

For their marketing campaign, they chose to use Raffles City as their case study, and came up with various ideas, including the use of a person pretending to be a mannequin to model clothes from the mall.

"Everybody does redemption and bonus points, but this team really came up with ideas that are not only innovative, but also very doable," said one of the judges, Mr Kenneth Tan, managing director at Golden Village.

What they had over the other teams was that they were very focused, and they knew their target segment very well," added another judge, Associate Professor Thomas Tan from SMU.

Indeed, the senior manager of group marketing communications at CapitaLand Retail, Ms Therese Chew, said all ideas from the groups will be considered. The mannequin idea may be implemented at Raffles City.

This idea is meant to appeal to the "mid-career woman aspiring to be successful and living the high life," said Ms Ang.

The team’s specific knowledge of the mall’s demographics was what impressed Mr Tan, who advises that teams in future should not stage activities that do not fit with the mall’s image.

"For example, if your mall caters to the affluent crowd, you should not have a flea market there. It’s not only important to bring in the crowds, but also to bring in the right kind," he said.

Bad retail management can prove costly, warned Prof Tan.

"A lot of malls in the United States are dying. They are no longer building them like 10 years ago."

During their internship in Beijing, the trio will be attached to one of CapitaLand’s three malls.