Many of our teachers have advised us to think out of the box, but when you’ve managed to beat teams from all over the country in the prestigious annual L’Oréal Brandstorm competition, that’s just storming out of the box.

Get power took on a new meaning on 14 May 2008, when the all-girl team The Pinnacle walked away with the coveted title of L’Oréal Brandstorm National Champions 2008 after a gruelling six-month journey. As the country’s most prestigious marketing competition, L’Oréal Brandstorm engaged this year’s teams in a health education approach to sun protection for the VICHY Capital Soleil range. Students were challenged to apply their creative talents and cutting-edge ideas to develop a long-term international marketing strategy and formulate a new range of protective sun care products targeted at teens and the youth market.

This year saw more than 1,500 students registering for the competition, but 5 teams from National University of Singapore (NUS), 2 teams from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and 1 from Singapore Management University (SMU) heated things up as they vied for top honours at the National Finals held at The Asian Civilisations Museum. With brief but informative presentations on each of their proposed ideas, we were given a good insight as to what our youths these days had in their head. (And it’s definitely good stuff!) The event was graced by Madam Ho Geok Choo, Member of Parliament for West Coast GRC and President of the Singapore Human Resources Institute. The judging panel consisted of Mr. Jean-François Couturier, Managing Director, L’Oréal Singapore and Malaysia, Ms. Julie Chiang, General Manager, Active Cosmetics Division, (L’Oréal ASIAN) and industry experts such as Dr. Cheong Lai Leng, Consultant Dermatologist, LL Cheong Skin & Laser Clinic, Ms. Jane Ngiam, Editor, ACP Magazine Pte Ltd and Mr. Charlie Blow, Executive Creative Director, Euro RSCG Worldwide. The teams were judged on creativity, market analysis, coherence with the brand values, communications skills and their team dynamics.

The Pinnacle, consisting of Lydia Tay, Jenalyn Liu, Avril Tan, who are all 22-year-old students from NUS managed to pull away from their very close competitors with their unique and yet feasible product ideas. Without giving too much away, let’s just say that even I would buy their products without a moment’s hesitation. The trio won an all-expense-paid trip to Paris and will visit Singapore at the International Finals in June. Amidst the fanfare, flashing lightbulbs and congratulatory handshakes and hugs, Choices managed to get a few minutes aside with these newfound talents.

So what are your thoughts now? We’re definitely very excited! Although we were hoping to win, we were always very confident. We focused on giving a good presentation. (To us,) it was always the process that mattered, as we didn’t want to let people or ourselves down.

Why did you decide to participate? L’Oréal Brandstorm is an internationally renowned competition, and we were extremely excited about this year’s task, which involved VICHY. Participating in this competition adds value to our portfolio. In addition, we had a lot of faith in our team synergy, since we’ve worked together previously in numerous projects. We’ve got a great team here.

Every team has its dynamics and working methods. Tell us about yours.

Well, Lydia is always the organiser. She always sees the big picture and is very analytical, especially when we get all excited over our ideas. Jenalyn is very detailed and meticulous, whilst Avril takes care of our design aspects.

And we definitely agree – because all eight teams present there had fantastic ideas and were all winners in their own rights. We can’t wait for next year’s batch of finalists to see what other winning formulas they have.

ABOUT L’Oreal Brandstorm

In the last six years of participation, Singapore has proudly taken home the international champions title for L’Oréal Brandstorm in 2004 and 2002 respectively and the second placement in Asia in 2005. L’Oréal Brandstorm serves as an annual opportunity for students to hone their marketing skills and gain insight into the business world by simulating life as a Brand Manager and being challenged to develop a winning global marketing strategy for a designated brand.

The competition also allows L’Oréal to talent spot high caliber undergraduates who exhibit a passion for beauty and outstanding traits, skills and competencies that fit into the Company’s business culture.

The L’Oréal group has 100 years of experience in the beauty industry, with diverse yet complementary portfolio of 19 international brands sold in 130 countries. L’Oréal is also the cosmetics industry’s largest investor in research with a hi-tech industrial approach that guarantees innovative, high-value-added products. The company reported consolidated sales of €17.1 billion euros (US$35.91 billion) in 2007 and has a global workforce of over 60,000 employees.

Today, L’Oréal’s international brands include L’Oréal Paris, Garnier, Maybelline New York, Laboratoires Vichy, La Roche-Posay, L’Oréal Professionnel, Kerastase, Redken, Matrix, Lancôme, Biotherm, Kiehl’s, shu uemura, Helena Rubinstein, as well as Cacharel, Diesel, Giorgio Armani and Ralph Lauren perfumes and The Body Shop, which are available in Singapore. For more information, please visit www.loreal.com.sg.

ABOUT VICHY

VICHY Capital Soleil is the sun protection range from VICHY Laboratoires. Specialized designed for sun allergic or sun-intolerant skin, the Capital Soleil range features the innovative active ingredient Eperuline, highly effective UVA & UVB filters (such as octocrylene, Mexoryl SX, Parsol 1789, MexorylXL and Titanium Dioxide) that provide for a broad and photostable protection against the whole UV spectrum and Capital Soleil’s signature High-Coverage Technology.