Time to get real

213 student teams put theory to practice in L'Oreal's Brandstorm and e-Strat Challenge

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L'Oreal continues its global search for the industry's brightest young business and marketing talents with this year's Brandstorm and e-Strat Challenge.

A total of 213 teams from the Singapore Management University (SMU), Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the National University of Singapore (NUS) have been working closely with L'Oreal over the past couple of weeks as they played the role of marketing brand manager for Vichy Capital Soleil.

Five teams from NUS, two from NTU and one from SMU have made the cut for the national finals.

They had to develop a campaign that warns teens and young adults about the perils of skin damage and were tasked with "creating a new protective sun care product range" for that target market.

This annual event gives students a chance to put textbook theories learnt in school into practice in a working environment.

"The competition has taught us to be realistic. We had big ideas but we also had to bear in mind real world constraints like technology," said Ms Alicia Ling, an NTU marketing student and a member of Team Winsome.

Come May 14, her team will be vying for a chance to represent Singapore in the international finals that will be held in Paris on June 10.

The top prize is an all-expense paid trip to anywhere in the world worth 10,000 euros ($20,950); while the first and second runners up will get trips worth 5,000 euros and 2,000 euros respectively. But, more importantly, it gives contestants a chance to prove themselves to the bigwigs at L'Oreal.

"The competition gives both participants and L'Oreal the opportunity to assess job fit, a great boon for anyone involved in the recruitment process," said Mr Nicolas Pauthier, human resource director of L'Oreal Singapore and Asean.

Ms Eliz Tan, a member of Team Singapore, the overall winner at last year's event, now works with L'Oreal Singapore as a management trainee for the Kiehl's brand.

But it's not just the undergraduates who get to show their talents. MBA students are also eligible to take part in the e-Strat Challenge.

In it, three-member teams are tasked with managing a portfolio of brands.

"Both the Brandstorm and e-Strat Challenge are some of the most challenging business games in their categories, compelling students to become acquainted with complex macro and micro issues," said Mr Pauthier.

"They have to think on their feet and offer creative strategies at the same time."

THREE'S COMPANY: Team Winsome from Nanyang Technological University comprising Nick Ling, Cheng Ching Chui and Alicia Ling.