



From left: Event emcee with Krystal Ng, Lee Wei Ren and Elyena Lee of Team X, which won the national round of L'Oréal's Brandstorm competition. PHOTOS: L'OREAL SINGAPORE

L'OREAL BRANDSTORM

Storming into the global arena

Team X beat 88 other teams and will fly the Singapore flag in Paris

It's no mean feat to stand out among a global cast of dozens of outstanding marketing teams. And yet, Singapore teams are known to perform very well in the beauty giant L'Oréal's Brandstorm competition, which is targeted at university students. Since 2000, Singapore teams have been among the top three International finalists six times, going on to win thrice.

First, though, the team will have to get through a national-level competition to secure the right to represent Singapore. This year's winner is Team X from the National University of Singapore (NUS), which comprises marketing students Krystal Ng, 23, and Elyena Lee, 23, and finance student Lee Wei Ren, 25. The trio beat 88 teams — the highest number of participants ever in Singapore — and will go on to compete against participants from 45 countries in Paris in June. The winning International team will walk away with a €10,000 (S\$17,595) prize.

Ms Lee said: "Brandstorm has been a very challenging and exciting journey. During the competition, L'Oréal's managers gave us a lot of information regarding the business and the industry; we got to work with a real design agency to bring to life our ideas."

EXCELLING IN THE REAL WORLD

The L'Oréal Brandstorm competition is no walk in the park and the opportunities are also immense. Participating teams work on a real-world case, are mentored by L'Oréal Singapore's senior management team and work with professional communication agencies to execute their ideas.

Managing Director for L'Oréal Singapore Chris Neo said: "Our aim is to give students a real marketing challenge — one that covers all aspects of beauty marketing from product development to consumer insights and integrated marketing communication; plus they live like a marketer at L'Oréal throughout the weeks of this competition."

This year's challenge was to devise a comprehensive multi-channel strategy to recruit and retain male customers for skincare brand Kiehl's and to increase brand awareness. Teams had to "generate ideas for a new men's only in-store experience and develop a product that brings incremental sales to the current geography", explained Irene Goh, General Manager, L'Oréal Luxe Division.

Because Kiehl's brand philosophy rules out the use of traditional advertising methods and paid spokespersons, participants had to get extra creative.

Team X won with their idea for a product focused on convenience for men that did not compromise on efficacy and innovation. The campaign utilises a combination of digital

communication, corporate social responsibility, outdoor sampling at concerts and gyms, attractive in-store displays and generous sampling.

RECRUITING NEW TALENT

L'Oréal Brandstorm also serves as a platform for the company to tap into the young, creative minds and to suss out fresh talent. Finalists are often recruited into the company's local management trainee programme and many have gone on to build international careers within the company.

PARTNERING MEDIACORP

For the second year, MediaCorp has partnered L'Oréal for the competition to give out an award. This year's MediaCorp Excellence Award for Best Presenter went to Grace Teh, 23, of team Triple Kiehl's from NUS.

Ms Teh said: "(The award recognised) how hard our team worked to rehearse and put our presentations together. Without the team's support, I wouldn't have been able to present or answer the questions the way that I did."

Last year, MediaCorp presented the MediaCorp Excellence Award to a winning team from Singapore Management University. Two of the three, Yang Zheng Han, 26, and Denise Leong, 24, joined MediaCorp in product marketing positions and as part of the company's Fresh Graduate Programme last year.

Mr Yang said: "As part of the programme, we are given opportunities



From left: Grace Teh, winner of the MediaCorp Excellence Award for Best Presenter, with Christina Chua, Senior Vice-President, Marketing & Sales Planning, MediaCorp.



Brandstorm showed us what it's like in the real working world. It's all about working closely with your team to embrace the challenges and difficulties that come your way.

Denise Leong
 LAST YEAR'S MEDIACORP EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNER

to meet with senior management on a regular basis. The highlight for me was the chance to participate in a brainstorming session involving senior management from both MediaCorp and a client company.

"It helped me understand the way organisations function from a broader perspective and the difference I can make even from a junior position."

This year, MediaCorp will also be tapping on the L'Oréal Brandstorm pool of finalists to identify and recruit undergraduates with relevant skills and competencies. **PRODUCED BY THE TODAY SPECIAL PROJECTS TEAM**