

Auckland Business School Students win Silver at Montreal

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A University of Auckland Business School team has won silver at the Montreal Business Case Competition, a prestigious competition where business students from around the world present competing strategic plans for real-life business cases.

The team competed against eleven universities from North America, Asia and Europe including the University of California at Berkeley, Quebec's McGill University, the Copenhagen Business School, Peking University, Singapore Management University and Thailand's Thammasat University - the eventual winners.

The competition final was to present a new strategy for a non-governmental organisation, the Rainforest Action Network, to a panel of international judges. The judges praised the clarity of the Auckland team's presentation, their focus on the big picture and commitment to implementation even if it meant abandoning an existing campaign because it didn't fit the strategic direction.

"The strategies we were taught at the Business School really put us in great stead," says team member Rachael Germann.

"Going into the final we had no idea what style of case we would face. The case concerned a not-for-profit, which fit the Auckland model perfectly. The Auckland model focuses on looking at what value drives the business, what the core business is and the value it creates for stakeholders. This big picture thinking was ideal for the Rainforest Action Network.

"Many of the other teams were used to financial analyses, like net present value, which just weren't applicable."

The team of Rachael Germann, Paul Dou, Tessa Gould and Mark Russell spent weeks with coach Peter Smith practicing sample cases and presenting them to a panel of Auckland University Business School alumni.

Buoyed by the international successes of 2005, Business School students are hoping for an even bigger case competition 'season' in 2006.

"The students' success at Montreal is a great start to the year. Participating in case competitions is unbeatable experience for our students and promotes the Business School's world-class standing. Our ambition is to win three of the six competitions we're entering this year," explains Brendon Potter, the Business School's Director of Student Development.

In order, the competitions will take place in Copenhagen, Montreal, Seattle, Sydney, Bangkok, and Hong Kong.

Competing internationally requires a significant investment in time, preparation and travel. Macquarie Bank and Zeus Management Group support the teams' travel costs and training with \$15,000 sponsorship each.

The Business School's impressive record last year included a repeat win in Seattle, second place in Hong Kong and third in Sydney.

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