



News

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Philadelphia University senior business students win \$4,000 first place prize in Toys“R”Us case competition

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 26, 2010 – Five senior business majors at Philadelphia University won the \$4,000 top prize for their online birthday party planning service as part of a four-day business plan competition sponsored by international retailer Toys“R”Us, Inc.

The winning team included Tiffany Taylor, Stephanie Santana, Gloria Curry, Samayra Rivera and Abigail Epstein, whose plan to enhance the retailer’s existing “Geoffrey’s Birthday Club” took first place following several hours of presentations Oct. 25.

“This competition shows the educational power of close collaboration between Philadelphia University and the leading consumer goods company Toys“R”Us,” said Harvey Lermack, interim dean of PhilaU’s School of Business Administration. “By involving students, faculty, and industry leaders, the students had an opportunity to use their knowledge and skills to solve a real-world problem, and provided the company with ideas to further their business opportunities – a true win-win situation for all.”

In all, 48 PhilaU senior business students on 10 teams competed in the fast-paced weekend-long competition, which started with an Oct. 22 trip to the retailer’s headquarters in Wayne, N.J. After a first round of presentations on Sunday, the four top teams advanced to the finals the next day, which were judged by Toys“R”Us executives Paul Draeger, regional vice president Northeast, and Wellington Fonseca, director of marketing, loyalty, registry and credit card.

This was the first student case competition ever sponsored by Toys“R”Us, the world’s leading dedicated retailer of juvenile products and toys. “The case competition provided an opportunity for students to gain real-world experience by applying classroom knowledge to a business scenario provided by the company,” said Jane Baczynski, Toys“R”Us manager of university relations.

Toys“R”Us competition/ page 2

“Students developed leadership skills, project management experience and built their resumes, while showcasing their talents to peers, faculty and executives of a Fortune 500 global corporation,” she added.

Following Monday’s final presentations, the second-place team won \$2,000 for their “Just Because” plan to encourage friends and relatives to send gifts to children for no particular event. This group included Rachel Bills, Shawn D’Andrea, Kim Baker, Siobhan Williams and Sydney Farrell.

Third-place winners Courtney Neiderer, Sara Wenner, Marissa Watson and Deena Weaver won \$1,000 for their plan to provide trade-in opportunities throughout the year for bicycles, books, costumes, toys and other items.

The fourth-place team of Gabriella Moyer, Ashley Evans, Megan Harding, Shauna Cope and Jessica Fung won \$500 for their marketing strategy built around promoting books and other learning opportunities.

“Toys“R”Us, Inc. is impressed with the quality of recommendations and may consider implementing some of the ideas in the future,” Baczynski said.

The competition was an intensive business case analysis developed by Toys“R”Us executives and PhilaU marketing professors Sam Bradley and Chae Mi Lim. The students had to come up with a plan to increase the toy retailer’s U.S. market share in the juvenile and toys industry throughout the year, focusing on out-of-season strategies and tactics, indentifying new strategic marketing and branding programs, including identifying new programs or suggesting enhancements of existing programs. Students also were asked to analyze and improve existing distribution channels.

The ten teams included students from senior capstone classes in business policy, taught by Lermack, and textile retail and apparel policy, taught by Associate Professor Steven Frumkin.

Philadelphia University, founded in 1884, is a private university with 3,500 students enrolled in more than 50 undergraduate and graduate programs. As part of its core mission, the University focuses on professionally oriented programs that prepare students for successful careers, with a strong foundation in the liberal arts and an orientation toward interdisciplinary collaboration. Philadelphia University includes Schools of Architecture, Business Administration, Design and Engineering, Liberal Arts, and Science and Health.