



Press Release

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International final of the 'Henkel Innovation Challenge'

European students thrive on competition

In the fall of 2008, Henkel launched its second international student competition under the name 'Henkel Innovation Challenge'. Now the finals in Brussels have just come to an end. The eleven best student teams from throughout Europe presented their ideas before an international jury comprised of Henkel managers. As 'business development managers', they elaborated a concept for a Henkel product in the year 2050. The winners were the team representing the Netherlands studying at the Rotterdam School of Management. These upcoming talents presented a compelling concept for an innovative, environmentally compatible detergent able to function without water.

At the end of 2008, Henkel launched its second international innovation competition for students under the 'Henkel Innovation Challenge' banner. And once again with great success, with over 2,100 students from eleven European countries submitting their ideas. The theme underlying the competition was life in the year 2050 and the question as to what kind of innovative product ideas and business solutions are likely to take hold in the future. Henkel invited the best team from each country to take part in the international final in Brussels' Atomium. Over two days, the students presented their ideas and concepts to a jury comprising experienced international Henkel managers, prepared business and marketing plans and negotiated budgets with the other international competitors – just like in real business life. They impressed their judges with their creativity and professionalism, exhibiting confident presentation skills underpinned by self-produced videos and specially manufactured products.

"It is important for us to engage in a personal dialog with such committed, motivated students. The 'Henkel Innovation Challenge' provides us with a good opportunity to present ourselves as a company and employer while also getting to know top talents from throughout Europe," explained Jessica Thiel, global head of Talent, Leadership and Learning and responsible at Henkel for, among other things, the recruitment of young graduates.



And the winner is ...

“The competition was very practical in its make-up. We have learned more here than we would have done even after hours of marketing lectures and seminars at university. And it is also a great opportunity for interacting with professional business managers”, commented Wibe van de Vijver from the winning Dutch team. He and his two colleagues Maria Louise Schuerman and Dorothea Sepopo Attiogbe convinced the jury with a highly polished presentation, a well conceived product idea and great negotiating skills. “We are both happy and proud to get this reward for our hard work of the last few months – particularly in the face of such a tough group of competitors”, enthused the 25 year old business student. In addition to winning the title, the team will also be rewarded with a trip to the Caribbean. Second place was taken by the student team from Spain, with Italy, Turkey and Belgium tying for third spot. All the teams making it to the first three positions also win a personal meeting with Henkel CEO Kasper Rorsted.

Talent search

The competition provides the students with an opportunity to forge valuable ties with a major international employer. At the same time, Henkel has the chance of getting to know a number of highly qualified and motivated talents from throughout Europe. Selected Henkel managers had been assigned the task of supporting and assisting the student teams as mentors, not only at the local venues during the national finals but also in the preparatory phases. “Over the months, therefore, both sides have become very well acquainted. And we intend to stay in contact with many of the students, even though the competition has ended,” confirmed Ailie Kraus, recruitment manager and head of project management for the ‘Henkel Innovation Challenge’.

Of the 18 students who took part in last year’s finals, 13 have now completed an internship at Henkel. Some have also now graduated from university and taken up a permanent post in the company.

For more information on the ‘Henkel Innovation Challenge’, please go to www.henkelchallenge.com.

For more than 130 years, Henkel has been a leader with brands and technologies that make people's lives easier, better and more beautiful. Henkel operates in three business areas – Home Care, Personal Care, and Adhesive Technologies – and is ranked among the Fortune Global 500 companies. More than 60 percent of Henkel's sales are in consumer goods, while the industrial business accounts for almost 40 percent of the company's total sales. In fiscal 2008, Henkel generated sales of 14,131 million euros and an adjusted operating profit of 1,460 million euros. More than 55,000 employees worldwide are dedicated to fulfilling Henkel's corporate claim, “A Brand like a Friend,” and ensuring that people in more than 125 countries can trust in brands and technologies from Henkel.

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For further information go to www.henkelchallenge.com