



Hedy Pang, Northumbria student, Kirk Dodds, Assistant Professor at Northumbria University, Kieran Healey-Ryder, Whyte and Mackay, Lisa McLauchlan, DMA, Yamini Singh and Nongnaphat Bousai, Northumbria students.

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Northumbria students triumph in national marketing competition for leading whisky maker

Students from Northumbria University have come out on top in a national competition to find the cream of the country's marketing talent.

Hedy Pang, Alpo Usno, Nongnaphat Bousai and Yamini Singh formed the winning team, Inffour, which beat off stiff competition from around the UK to triumph in this year's Digital Marketing Association (DMA) Talent Challenge.

They were tasked with creating a 12-month integrated marketing campaign for global exporter and leading whisky maker, Whyte and Mackay. At the heart of this challenge was a drive to help the company acquire 10,000 subscribers and help its award-winning collection of single malt brands stand-out from the competition at the popular annual London Whisky Show. Successful entrants were invited to pitch to an expert industry panel from the DMA, multinational software company Sage and UK independent media agency, Republic of Media.

Not only did this give the students the chance to showcase their marketing prowess, it also provided an opportunity for them to work on a real-life industry project to supplement their academic studies.

Inffour created a campaign, “Whisky of the day”, which connected with whisky explorers in a joyful and exciting way. The team gamified the experience to generate immersive engagement in the tasting of single malt whisky.

Their game featured a spinning wheel to excite the consumer with a variety of whisky taste profiles and serving suggestions – supporting Whyte and Mackay’s belief that there is “a whisky for everyone”. This demonstrated an insightful approach to the industry-leading London Whisky Show, as well as consideration for execution online via digital marketing.

It was a double success at this year’s DMA Talent Challenge, with another team from Northumbria, Breeka, being awarded second place. Members of both teams are enrolled on Northumbria’s [MSc Digital Marketing course](#), which is widely regarded as one of the most successful digital marketing programmes in the UK.

Northumbria has been a regular finalist in the challenge and in the last five years has had a team in the final pitches every year – winning twice and taking runners up prize three times.

Dr David Hart, Associate Professor of Marketing at Northumbria University, said: “Congratulations to Inffour and Breeka on their success in this year’s DMA Talent Challenge.

“The IDM (Institute of Data & Marketing) /DMA partnership is central to our marketing degree offerings at both undergraduate and postgraduate level at

Northumbria. We use the DMA Talent Challenge as an official assessment every year, and use it as a vehicle to practically apply data and digital marketing concepts.

“Each year the challenge gives students an entirely different context in which to creatively respond to a client brief, and provides them with opportunities to hone a host of skills that are critical for their career readiness. These range from market insights through to idea creation, channel integration, metrics and, of course, pitching to a high-profile judging panel.

“This is a central component of our work with industry to ensure our marketing degrees are distinctive and set up our students for the jobs market.”

The panel included Simon Crunden, Founder and MD of UK independent media agency, Republic of Media; Lisa McLauchlan and Kate Burnett from the DMA; Laura Charlton from Sage, a Northumbria graduate and former winner of the challenge; and Kieran Healey-Ryder, Global Head of Communications at Whyte and Mackay, who led the competition. The judging took place at Northumbria’s Newcastle campus.

Kieran Healey-Ryder said: “To host this national competition was an incredible opportunity to witness first-hand the creativity coming through in the next generation of marketeers. As whisky makers we are committed to encourage careers in our industry.

“Scotch Whisky is a fantastic product to market; a true ‘spirit of Scotland’. However, it’s a competitive market and at Whyte and Mackay we know first-hand that it takes true creativity to stand out in this category, not least at the London Whisky Show, which was at the heart of our challenge.

“As whisky makers we are entrepreneurial; we take pride in what we make and know it takes a strong creative idea in order for brands to stand out. In a highly competitive competition, each of the three finalists demonstrated that shared sense of ingenuity. We wanted to invite candidates to demonstrate an inventive approach to communicate the brilliant breadth of flavour that Scotch Whisky offers the consumer.

“The panel agreed that Inffour presented a strong, engaging idea, which

considered how to connect with the consumer online and offline. We felt it was a really disruptive idea, which had potential to be made bigger and gave us great confidence that the cost of the campaign would be effective and efficient.

“At Whyte and Mackay, we believe there’s a whisky for everyone and this proposal demonstrated a creative approach to bring that to life. For that reason, we selected Inffour as the winners of the competition.”

Kate Burnett, General Manager at DMA Talent, said: “The three groups all had very different ideas, which is great for the client to review, and it is always tough to choose the strongest entry. The Northumbrian teams always deliver highly creative solutions with a really strong grounding in marketing knowledge, which consistently earns them a place in the final pitches.”

The DMA accredits several undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by Northumbria University, including MSc Digital Marketing, which has been successfully rolled out at the University’s Newcastle and London campuses, and via distance learning. The course covers a wide range of themes such as location-based marketing, user experience, customer journey mapping and mobile marketing.

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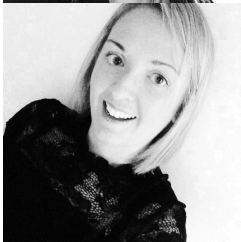
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