



Northumbria Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor John Wilson with winning students

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Risky pitch wins Greggs Challenge

Business students at Northumbria University have won this year's Greggs Marketing Challenge with a cheeky pitch to develop a "naked bake" campaign inspired by the growing appetite for healthy eating.

Now in its seventh year, the Challenge is aimed solely at marketing students and has become one of the region's most prestigious student competitions. Undergraduates from Northumbria's Newcastle Business School were competing against post-graduate students from Newcastle, Teesside, and Sunderland Universities. They were asked to develop a campaign entitled "*Greggs by Night: Keeping the Brand Contemporary in the Evening*", aimed at

raising the number of customers using Greggs between 5pm and 9pm.

Team Northumbria students, Jordan Strachan, Harry Ash, Natalie Drinkwater, Emily Hardwick, Emily McKee and Jordan Seddon, came up with a “*naked bake campaign*”, spearheaded by the cheeky caption #getnaked. Based on their own extensive market and consumer research, the team recommended removing pastry from favourites such as steak bakes, and instead serving them in a box with a healthy choice of rice, beans or salad. They were able to demonstrate to the judges that this offering was more substantial, more evening marketing friendly and would appeal to more health-conscious customers.

Natalie Drinkwater explained: “We opened our pitch to the judges by saying Greggs should get naked. It was quite a risk, but I think because we were able to deliver a presentation based on our research and as a focused and unified team with a clear message, it worked.

“We didn't reinvent the wheel; we took something traditional to Greggs but offered a healthy alternative – the company's biggest growing area - and created a product that was more suitable for the Evening Market. We utilised Greggs' current channels and digital strategy and applied them to be evening market appropriate. Some of the feedback from the Judges was that it was so cost effective by keeping it simple, incorporating current strategies and not trying to implement massive changes.”

Each student team in the Greggs Marketing Challenge had to deliver a 15-minute presentation in front of the judging panel, which included senior directors. There were also around 170 guests in attendance. Announcing the award, the judging panel identified Team Northumbria as the unanimous victors, hailing their customer insights, campaign ideas, execution and professionalism.

Professor John Wilson, Pro Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Business and Law at Northumbria, added: “The Greggs Marketing Challenge is one of the region's top student business competitions, and we are extremely proud of our students' achievement. Winning emphasises the quality and talent of the students we have here at Newcastle Business School, and the value they clearly offer to future employers. The team demonstrated creative thinking with their slightly cheeky and eye-catching campaign, and they backed this up by putting theory into practice delivering a presentation of a standard any professional agency would be proud.”

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