

Young New Zealanders come out on top

Six senior secondary students from New Zealand proved that they have what it takes to compete in the international arena – winning the top two awards in Singapore at the FedEx/Junior Achievement International Trade Challenge (ITC).

In the space of only 48 hours, the students were faced with the challenge of exporting carpets to Egypt, developing a detailed market strategy and delivering a 10-minute presentation to judges.

First place and a prize of US\$4,000 went to Paul Minors and Chuck Slogrove for their value-added prayer mat. Their presentation, including a simulated radio ad, really captured the judges' attention.

"The experience was awesome," says Paul. "To be honest, it was an achievement in itself just to get there. To come so far and win was incredible."

"I learnt how to deal with great time pressure," says Paul, "and just what you can achieve in a short space of time."

The idea behind their transportable prayer mat was to provide an easy way for Muslim people to pray using current technology, and it included an inbuilt compass and clock.

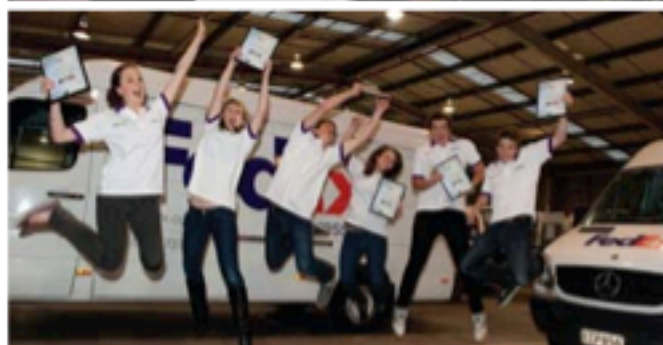
Paul and Chuck were part of Team NZ, which included Aimee Groom, Talman Madsen, Danica Burghout and Anna McDonald.

Second place and US\$3,000 was awarded to Aimee and Talman for their project, Pieces – a modular carpet system with limited edition panels designed by contemporary Egyptian artists.

Being a member of the only boy-girl team in the competition didn't faze Aimee, as she and Talman impressed the judges with their presentation style.

"We wanted to present in our own style rather than the style we thought everyone else would bring to the competition," says Aimee. "We were confident, friendly and had fun. We didn't list the features of our product; we knew the features of our product."

Adding that Kiwi flavour definitely paid off, as the experience taught Talman a valuable lesson. "It shows us that you have to believe in yourself as a Kiwi and not be afraid to do things a little differently and you can compete on the world stage," says Talman.



Team NZ achieved a level of success that is unprecedented in the history of the event. It was the first time a New Zealand team has entered the competition.

On their return from Singapore, they were given a welcome that is normally reserved for the All Blacks. They were greeted with a kapa haka, performed by Tāmaki College, and a cheering crowd of family, friends, Young Enterprise Trust and FedEx staff, teachers and principals – all very proud of their achievement.

Young Enterprise Trust manages the process for the New Zealand entries into the ITC competition, and the final six were selected from over 4,000 students participating in the Trust's Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme.

Robyn Borne, National Director of the Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme, accompanied the students to Singapore and says what stood out was the approach the students took to the competition.

"The way they problem-solved and worked in a team was certainly a factor in their overall success," says Robyn.

It was no easy feat getting into the international competition. Young New Zealanders had a competitive pathway to the finals, with 80 students from around the country competing for a place on the teams to represent New Zealand in the international challenge.