

HUMAN RESOURCES

# KPMG Case Competition

Competition in preparing and presenting case studies

KPMG CZECH REPUBLIC

The winner of the national round of KPMG Case Study Competition 2006 – the team of University of New York in Prague went to Lisabon to defend last year's victory of Czech students in international finals. What was the overall result?

Every year, KPMG Czech Republic organises a number of events for university students. The KPMG Case Study Competition is aimed at students who want to test their presentation and analytical skills.

During the competition, four-member teams compete to find the best solution to real-life case studies.

The competition consists of two rounds:

- **The national round**, in which six teams composed of students from Czech universities take part.
- **The international finals**, for which the winners of the national rounds qualify (eleven European countries were represented in this year's finals).

In both rounds, all teams had the same task: they received the economic, marketing and financial data of a real company and within three hours they were required to digest the information and prepare a strategic development plan. The results of the individual teams were assessed by an expert jury made up of KPMG partners, which evaluated the overall level of the prepared plans, the students' ability to work as a team and to deliver a presentation in English. Each team had 20 minutes to deliver their presentation. During the final 10 minutes the jury, in front of which the competing teams had to defend their proposed solution, had the opportunity to ask questions.

## **National round, 20 February 2006 (National Case Study Competition)**

Following the success of the Czech team last year – victory in the European finals – we decided to hold another national round of the competition this year. The interest was very high: 18 teams applied to take part, comprising 72 students from which just six teams would be selected to take part in the competition. It was very difficult to choose only six teams, however, based on their motivation letters, the following



teams were eventually selected: VŠE CEMS and VŠE (two teams each), VŠE AIESEC and the University of New York in Prague (UNYP).

As last year, the competition was held at the Prague offices of KPMG Czech Republic. The first case study concerned the low-cost airline company AIR ASIA: Southeast Asia's Most Successful Low Cost Airline. Two teams made it through to the afternoon's finals during which they presented their solution to the ZARA: Responsive, High Speed, Affordable Fashion case study in front of all the other participants.



The jury, composed of Andreas Hoefinghoff, Pavla Slabihoudková, Oldřich Šulák, Kateřina Chytráčeková, Marek Šťastný (KPMG Czech Republic) and Helena Hružová (VŠE CEMS) did not have an easy time making their decision. In particular, in the finals, the teams from VŠE CEMS and from the University of New York in Prague both delivered outstanding performances.

In its final evaluation, the jury considered the equal participation of all team members, the teams' success in meeting the time deadline, the students' financial-analytical skills, their presentations skills, the originality of the proposed measures, the level of the students' English, their ability to answer the questions posed and many other criteria. Finally, the winner was announced: the bachelor-degree students of the University of New York in Prague. In addition to the accolades and experience gained, they received digital cameras, traveller's cheques worth EUR 500 and most importantly of all, they qualified for the international finals in Lisbon.

### International finals, 5 – 8 April 2006 (International Case Study Competition)

The international finals of the KPMG International Case Study Competition were held from 5 to 8 April 2006 in Lisbon. This year, eleven four-member teams competed in the third year of the event. As in the previous years, representatives from the UK, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Italy, South Africa, Luxembourg, France the Czech Republic and Poland participated.



In the first part of the international finals, the teams worked on case studies related to AMNESTY International and ADIDAS versus PUMA – the marketing war for the football World Cup 2006. The presented solutions decided which teams would compete for victory in the second round – France, Sweden, the Czech Republic and Poland. The performances of the individual teams were assessed by a professional jury composed of KPMG partners from the participating countries. The Czech Republic was represented on the jury by Andreas Hoefinghoff.



The winner of the competition was determined based on the teams' presentations relating to the APPLE COMPUTER, Inc, IPODS and ITUNES case study. The announcement of the winner was awaited in an atmosphere of suspense and expectation, followed by both enormous pleasure and disappointment. The jury reached its decision based on the most original solution, a clearly structured and professionally delivered presentation, a professional performance, adherence to the time limit and excellent English. In the end, it was the French team that enjoyed the pleasure of victory.



How did the students of the University of New York (UNYP) representing KPMG Czech Republic describe the finals in Lisbon and the competition as a whole?

Day one – Wednesday 5 April 2006

Destination Lisbon

To get up at four in the morning is difficult, but we are in good humour and looking forward to the trip. We land in Lisbon around noon but have no time to rest, as the other students and representatives of KPMG from the other ten countries are impatient to meet and to get to know each other. The competition does not start until tomorrow so we spend the first evening enjoying some good food and drink.



Day two – Thursday

We go to the finals

Our preparation for the case study starts at nine in the morning. We are nervous and speculate about how difficult the case study will be and how strong our competitors are. We have three hours to draft measures to improve the financial position of Amnesty International. We deliver a twenty-minute presentation before two members of the jury, which is followed by ten minutes for discussion. During lunch, we receive the first brief feedback on our performance. The second case study involves proposing measures to be adopted by Puma to improve its position in the global market for sportswear from its current seventh place to third place. The teams from Sweden, France, Poland and to our great joy, the Czech Republic, all advance to the finals!

Day three – Friday

Fighting for first place

We are all nervous. At nine, we receive the final case study. The task is to prepare a strategy to ensure the dominant position of Apple iPod in the market for MP3 players and to increase its profits in a period of growing competition from multiple-function mobile phones. We all work flat out to prepare our solution. We present our solution in front of a four-member jury, KPMG representatives and the other students who did not make it to the finals. We are satisfied with our performance and look forward to a well earned rest afterwards.



The awards ceremony and gala dinner take place in a lovely Portuguese palace. We finish third, together with the Polish team, Sweden is second and France takes first place. We are naturally disappointed that we could not defend last year's victory of the Czech team, but we console ourselves with the knowledge that third place is an excellent result.

Day four – Saturday

Admiring the beauty of the city

We dedicate Saturday to sightseeing in the city. The weather is lovely so nothing stops us from discovering the beauty of Lisbon. We take the metro and head for the Discoveries Monument where we climb to the top to admire the panoramic view of Lisbon. The view of the nearby Belém Tower, Jerónimos Monastery and the 25<sup>th</sup> April Bridge is particularly spectacular. We return to the centre by tram and change to the Gloria Funicular which takes us to the historic Santa Justa Elevator. We then enjoy a hearty lunch in the restaurant with a nice view to the sea. After lunch, we purchase some gifts for our closest and then head back to the hotel. We are tired, with sun-burnt faces, but it was an unforgettable day.





*The winners of the national round of the KPMG Case Study Competition with Andreas Hoefinghoff, partner with KPMG Czech Republic*

Day five – Sunday 9 April 2006

**We leave with a wealth of experience**

Unfortunately, Sunday is the last day of our Portuguese pilgrimage. Before taking off for Prague, we squeeze in a visit to the Oceanarium in the former EXPO venue. There, among the skates, we begin to realise how much we've seen and lived through in Portugal and how valuable it was to be able to test our ability to work as a team and to find creative solutions under time pressure. We would like to thank KPMG Czech Republic for this fantastic experience.

### **Final summary**

Exercises based on case studies have always been our favourite ones as they hone your ability to solve real issues in practice and provide experience of applying theoretical concepts to real-world situations. Simply put, they turn "grey theory" into "real action". Our decision to take part in the KPMG Case Study Competition brought us experience that we would not want to have missed.

We also learnt much from the performances of the other teams during the training and the competition. In particular the feedback that we received during the course of the competition was very useful.

Before the competition, we knew how to analyse problems, how to work as a team and how to present our opinions. By participating in the competition we were able to find out more about ourselves and our ability to perform under pressure. Where better could we learn this than in the KPMG Case Study Competition alongside the best students from all over the world?

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