



# **JOURNEY OF A LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN COMPETITION**

**KIT THONG, REUBEN CHEN & CH'NG CHOR BAN**

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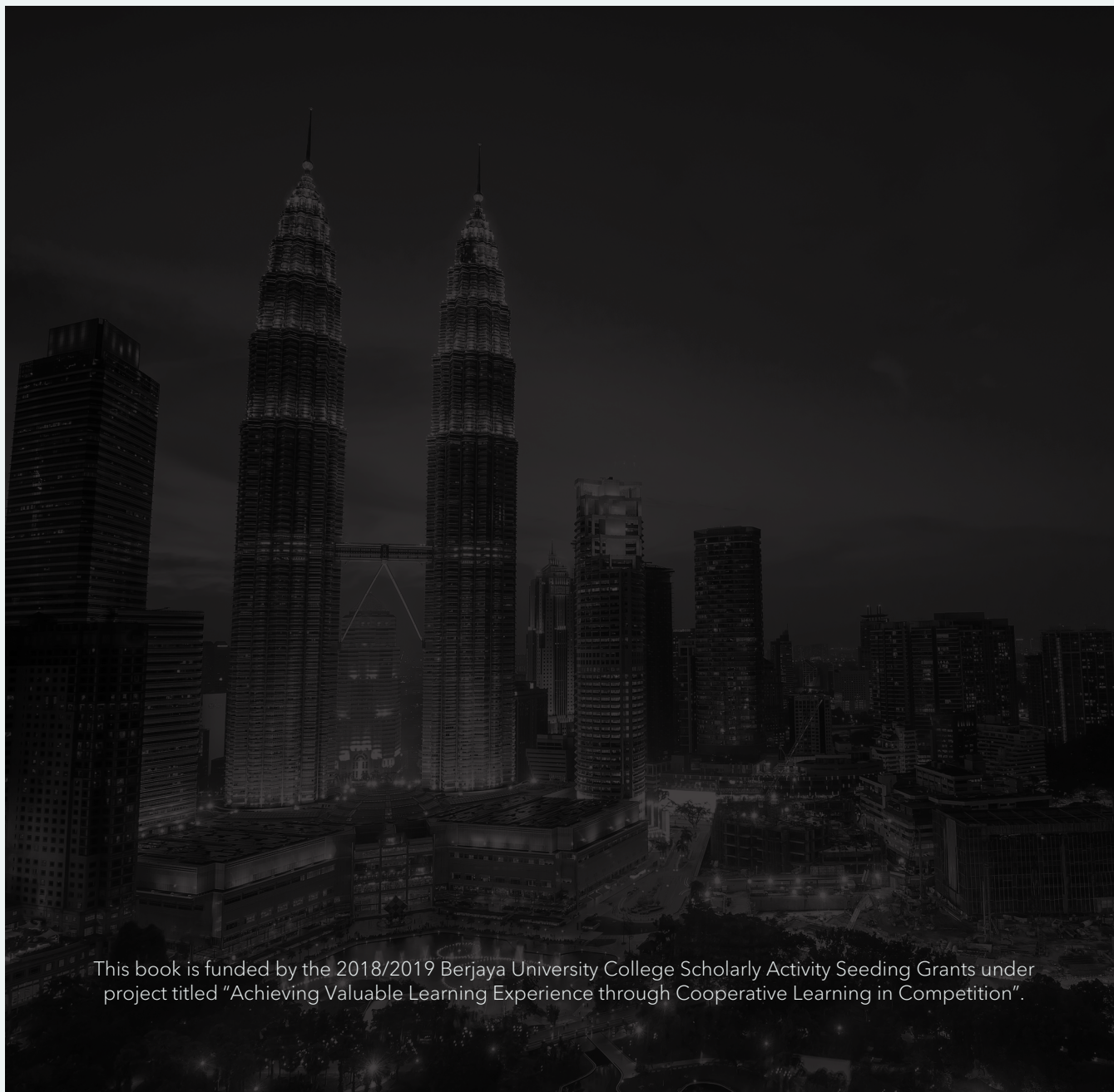
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# CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b>	5
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	7
<b>CHAPTER 1</b> Our Journey of Discovery	13
<b>CHAPTER 2</b> The Learning Experience	23
<b>CHAPTER 3</b> Coaching Towards Victory	29
<b>CHAPTER 4</b> Building Fruitful Collaboration	37
<b>CHAPTER 5</b> The Value of This Learning Journey	43
<b>GALLERY</b>	
Malaysia	49
Putrajaya	50
Sarawak	51
Penang	52
Sabah	53
Langkawi	54
<b>IN THE NEWS</b>	55

## **FOREWORD BY**

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & VICE-CHANCELLOR

I am pleased to congratulate all our students who have put to practice cooperative learning that is a version of the BERJAYA Immersion Methodology of pedagogy throughout their studies at BERJAYA University College (BUC). It is 'learning by doing' to immerse themselves in a hands-on competitive setting that they are able to gain a deeper understanding on their studies.

BUC's participation in the annual MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) Destination Marketing Contest in Taiwan as well as their winning of the overall championship title four years in a row have proven that the pedagogy has been well conceived by the academic staff in guiding students with a winning formula to execute their plans and activities successfully.

I am delighted that we were given this opportunity to witness the successful journey from the lenses of the students and lecturers. BUC is deeply honoured to receive favourable comments from the judges at the MICE Destination Marketing Contest in Taiwan, as well as the industry partners, on the outstanding performances of Team Berjaya.

We acknowledge and celebrate partnerships – internal partnerships between departments in assisting and supporting the participating students, as well as our partnership with the industry experts.

We take pride in the success of our students and I hope you will be just as inspired, as we are, by the amazing world of the events industry.

Dr. See Hoon Peow  
Chief Executive Officer & Vice-Chancellor



“

Cooperative Learning  
is not simple,  
but the rewards  
can be great

by Dr. Robert Slavin

# INTRODUCTION





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book would not have been possible without the support from the management and staff of BERJAYA University College. We would like to give special thanks to all the students who have dedicated tremendous amount of time and effort into the Taiwan MICE Destination Marketing Competition. Although this journey of learning has been long and bumpy, it also has been extremely inspirational as the students opened our eyes to their deep passion for knowledge in Business Events, their efficient development of strategies to overcome the many difficulties encountered, their wide-ranging creativity and their strong desire for greater achievement in the MICE competition. The work displayed in the booth and presented to the judges for each of the competitions were masterpieces. The students are truly the shining stars who stole the show! To them, a big thank you for sharing a part of their journey of learning with us.

A critical step in the structuring of the team's learning was the coaching sessions conducted by accomplished Business Events and tourism professionals. They included Mr. Kenneth Fong, Honorary Secretary from the Malaysian Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers (MACEOS); Yg. Bhg Datuk M. Ali, Honorary Secretary of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA); and Mr. GP Subramaniam, Executive Secretary of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA). We would like to express our sincere thanks to them for the valuable guidance given to the team. In addition, we would like to wholeheartedly express our gratitude to Madam Gracie Geikie, Director and Principal Consultant of Place Borneo Sdn. Bhd., who had tirelessly found the time to coach and guide the various teams despite her busy schedule. Her involvement was instrumental in shaping the teams' thinking and putting them on the path of success.

Apart from sharpening specific technical Business Events knowledge, the team also had to be equipped with other important skills. For that, the students were fortunate to receive coaching from distinguished toastmaster Mr. Mohamed Syairoz, Charter President of the BERJAYA U.C. Toastmasters Club. As the team built up on their presentation skills, their level of confidence grew significantly. We are also immensely thankful for the continued and faithful support given by Mr. Jaston Ng, Vice President of Inbound, Meetings and Events of Holiday Tours and Travel Sdn. Bhd. and Mr. Mohd Yusno bin Mohd Yunus, Chief Executive Office of Y Us Sdn. Bhd. Their consistent backing was a great source of comfort that never failed to uplift the team's spirit.

We are truly grateful to all the amazing individuals whom we had the honour and pleasure to work with throughout the years. A big thank you to all of them who gave us their unfailing support and valuable guidance, without which Team Berjaya would not be able to enjoy continued success in the Taiwan MICE Destination Marketing Competition.



**OUR SPECIAL THANKS GOES TO:**

Holiday Tours and Travel Sdn Bhd  
Kota Kinabalu Marriott Hotel  
Langkawi International Convention Centre  
Le Meridien Kota Kinabalu  
Lembaga Pembangunan Langkawi  
PATA Malaysia Chapter  
Penang Convention and Exhibition Bureau  
Perbadanan Putrajaya  
Sabah International Convention Centre  
Sabah Tourism Board  
Sarawak Convention Bureau  
Sarawak Tourism Board  
Setia SPICE Convention Centre  
The Ritz-Carlton Langkawi  
The Westin Langkawi Resort & Spa  
Tourism Malaysia  
Y Us Sdn Bhd  
Yit Foh Tenom Coffee

Lastly, we would like to express our special thanks to Associate Professor Wong Kok Keong, Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts for his tireless work in editing the chapters of this book and most of all, for being so patient with us, even when given a short time frame!



# INTRODUCTION

**M**ilestones are triumphant events that are meant to be celebrated. The aim of this book is to record the collection of our most celebrated moments, the glorious victories that could only be achieved through the power of team work and collaboration with key industry players. Just as important, this book is also a testament of the struggles that the team faced and the difficulties that had to be overcome to score every win in the Taiwan MICE Destination Competition.

The chapters in this book are collective opinions from lecturers who had led a particular team to the competition, students who participated in the competition and the professionals who contributed to the team's success at the competition. Each party in this tripartite relationship performed a critical role in generating the vision, the will, the effort, the confidence and the creativity for the team to succeed. The experience gained from our participation in the competition has taught us that success is definitely built upon the bedrock of fruitful synergies with the various government agencies and business events professionals.

While we competed with rival universities in the competition, it was most encouraging and heartening to witness all of us competing universities also worked together as a whole--happily, willingly and generously for the resounding success of the competition that it was.





“

Success is walking  
from failure to failure  
with no loss of  
enthusiasm.

by Winston Churchill

# CHAPTER 1: OUR JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY





This valuable learning journey began in the year 2012 on a fateful day when we received an invitation letter from Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs Bureau of Foreign Trade and Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) requesting us to send a team of students to compete in the MICE Destination Marketing Competition held in Taipei. The letter informed that the competition was organized with the intention of putting theory into practice for students majoring in MICE or Business Events, and it comprised two components: **Marketing Presentation** and **Booth Production and Promotion**. It concluded that only two teams were to be selected to represent a country.

Since TAITRA intended to provide a platform for the young generation around the world to practice and implement their innovative ideas in the Business Events industry, not only local universities in Taiwan were invited to participate but students from countries such as Germany, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, India, Indonesia, Vietnam and China were also asked to take part in this competition annually. To increase the awareness of the Business Event industry in Taiwan, this competition is opened to the public free of charge and has recorded more than 2,500 visitors yearly.





Globalisation has led to a gradual increase in cross culture awareness amongst the younger generation hence one of the main objectives of the competition is to allow students to experience cultural diversity through exchange of ideas with their peers from other parts of the world. The friendly rivalry and mutual respect would keep the competition healthy but the thrill of fighting with worthy opponents would make the competition interesting.

The decision to use competition as a platform for teaching and learning was met with much anxiety by the lecturers as it was truly an uncharted territory for all of us. Participating in Business Events management related competition was a new challenge that none in the country had any experience with, meaning there were no expert to guide us! The prospect presented to us was filled with fresh learning opportunities promising great rewards.

Looking back, we are glad that we decided to take the plunge and dive into this challenge wholeheartedly. No words could describe the joy of witnessing our students winning the awards and getting the recognition they deserved. Seeing the students gradually transformed from curious individuals into confident young professional, and, finally, poised to take on the working world definitely fill us with immense pride and make our efforts all worthwhile. Yes, taking up the MICE challenge was the best decision we ever made, a wonderful learning journey for students as well as the academic staff.



In the early years of the Taiwan MICE Destination Marketing Competition, participating teams were only required to present a destination in their country as the preferred MICE destination. In 2018, the organisers decided to heat up the competition by asking participating teams to pitch for the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Annual Summit of 2019. The following year, the teams competed for the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) Global Conference 2020. With a panel of distinguished international judges scrutinizing every detail in the Marketing proposal and information presented in the booth, the work submitted had to be concise, but with an abundance of creativity.

Needless to say, there were a lot of trial and errors in the first few years of our participation. At the early stages, we mainly concentrated on putting basic information about the destination at our booth. Students found the presentation challenging as it was unnerving to deliver in front of key industry professionals.

Former student of Berjaya University College, Ms Jolyn Soh, who is currently working as Project Executive at Perspectives Design Pte Ltd, observed: "I was very nervous but the practice and training helped us a lot. The biggest confidence booster was the fact that we had deep understanding and knowledge of the destination, therefore, we knew we were well equipped to face the judges".





Another student, Ms Aemy Chia who presented last year said that the memory was still very fresh in her mind. She found it difficult to hold her nerves when looking at the judges but knowing it was important to make eye contact during presentation, she mustered her courage to engage the judges with frequent visual contact.



The idea behind this competition is to promote meaningful learning among students studying Business Events Management. Therefore, the feedback session with the judges was regarded as one the most valuable take away for the students. While positive comments are always heartening, it is the criticism that helped to direct the team to address their weakness and improve on their performances. Mr. Yap Meng Chun, student team leader for 2018 and 2019 commented that the team dreaded bad comments but taken constructively, those comments were the most useful to the team. Mr. Teo Rui Guan, student head of booth production in 2018, commented, "I feel so proud when the judges liked our work and gave positive feedback on what we presented. The recognition from the judges made the weeks of hard work worthwhile".

Gradually, we paid more attention to how the information about the selected destination at the booth was to be displayed and creatively enhanced our presentation by adding in videos and moving images. The students also took the initiatives to come out with interesting interactive activities in an attempt to secure votes from the exhibition attendees. The first encouraging moment came in 2014 when our team grabbed the 2nd Runner-up Award in the Engaging Visitors Category. Although it was a small accomplishment, it gave us the boost we needed to push on for greater achievement. The following year, the team went on to win the bronze medal for the MICE Destination Marketing Plan.

Our most momentous win came in 2016 when our team set the new and still unbeaten record in the history of the competition, bagging a total of seven awards out of eight categories. Yet another benchmark we set was winning the prestigious Grand Champion title for the next three consecutive years, another historical feat never as yet achieved by other higher education institutions in this region. This period of success was unprecedented, achieved through sheer determination and hard work by students and academic staff. These record achievements that we had fought for with intensity, were celebrated with pride and defended with honour.

It is fair to say that the Taiwan MICE Destination Competition is equivalent to a sacred pilgrimage performed yearly by the students from the School of Tourism. The annual schedule from preparation to post-mortem for the competition has been fine-tuned into a systematic programme that now appears to be almost ritualistic.

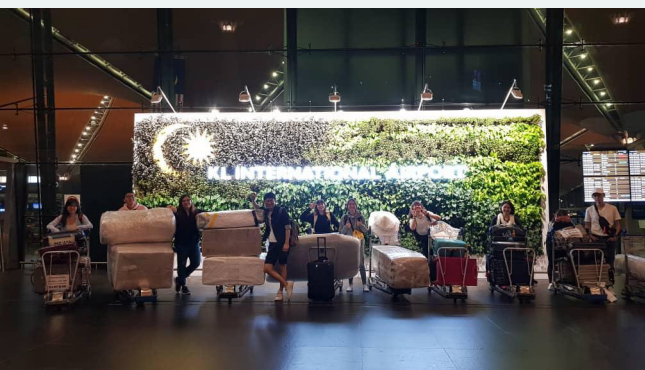
Preparation for the competition would begin as early as March with the staging of an audition in search of talented students to participate in the competition. The invitation letter from TAIRA usually would arrive by early May. This means we would have approximately four months for planning and producing material for the booth as well as slides and videos for the presentation.







Knowing that the main focus of the Taiwan MICE Destination Marketing Competition is the destination means that the selection of the destination is one of the most important decisions that the team have to make at the beginning of the planning phase. Therefore, a lot of effort was put into analyzing the attributes of each destination to determine its suitability and attractiveness. Malaysia is blessed with thirteen beautiful states with each state possessing distinctive culture and fascinating landscape. We are indeed lucky as we are spoilt for choices! But selection of the destination could at times be quite tricky; it could take the team as fast as a day or, as long as three weeks to decide.



Once the destination is fixed, team members will have to put on their thinking hats and roll up their sleeves to dig deep for information and data on the destination. A lot of ground work have to be covered before a site inspection to the destination can be arranged. Conducting site inspection of the meeting venues, accommodation and attractions at the selected destination is fundamental for the team's learning. This is gained through self-discovery and discussions with experts in the local tourism industry.



Needless to say, the expectation to bring home the trophies became higher after the remarkable win in 2016. To be able to retain the Overall Champion title, the team must eliminate the competitors by distinguishing our proposal from our strongest opponents. We had to continuously challenge ourselves to come up with innovative ways to present the destinations. The team had to muster the audacity to be different in their creative application of ideas, dynamic in presentation of inventive solutions to problems and professional in executing concepts with a new twist or two.

We knew in our hearts that keeping the title required a lot of hard work and we were probably our own worst enemy when judging the quality of our own work. From creating a jungle experience in the "B.E Sarawak", constructing a double storied frontage for the booth in "Experience Penang", producing a glow in the dark forest in "100% Sabah: Indulgence of Infinite", and to building a free standing wall from pipes and cupboard boxes in the booth for "Dazzling Langkawi: Exquisite Charm, Priceless Memories" are some of our proud examples where innovation was applied and executed to the max and best of our ability.

Mr. Yap Meng Chun, student leader of 2018 and 2019 competitions, reflected that it was hard for the team to top their best work year after year but it was precisely this factor that pushed the team to think outside the box. He added that the team was not willing to repeat what was presented the year before, therefore, a lot of time was spent on developing the right concept for that particular year.



Mr. Yap Meng Chun





Ms Luo, Director of TAITRA, shared that the judges were truly impressed with Team Berjaya's performance as they did not expect such professional standard of work to be presented at a student level competition. She added that the panel of judges believed that Team Berjaya should continue to improve on their proposal and aim to use it for a real bidding in the future.

Our experience has taught us that the key ingredients to the recipe of success is the concerted effort in giving full commitment to achieve the ultimate goal. The competition will always be intense, as each team is under enormous pressure to win. However, the quest for excellence should never cease. Kit Thong, Lead Lecturer of the 2019 competition, acknowledged that the competition created a fertile ground to train leaders of tomorrow. However, it is only in embracing the challenges of the competition can the team take the giant leap in reshaping their thinking to emerge as champions.

# **CHAPTER 2: THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE**



A woman with dark hair, wearing a dark floral-patterned dress, is singing into a microphone. She is positioned on the right side of the image. The background is a dark, out-of-focus scene of a city street with buildings and a car. The entire image is framed by a thick green border.

“

Education without  
application is just  
entertainment

by Tim Sanders

Learning can happen everywhere. We learn best when we are immersed in learning experiences that are active, engaged, meaningful and interactive. It is unwise to undermine learning in a classroom, however learning in other settings, such as this MICE Competition, allows us learners to collaborate, make connections and integrate knowledge into real-world application.

Our MICE Destination Competition journey began months ahead of the competition when we, as individuals, went through a series of auditions and the team was handpicked by a panel consisting of lecturers and participants of the previous years. After which, months and months of preparation was in place for the competition.

### **PARTICIPATING TO GAIN REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE**

Having heard from senior students about the plentiful experiences gained and also having witnessed the bond developed amongst team members, the competition attracted, if not inspired, many to participate. It provided, according to a few of the students, a sense of honour and pride being able to represent Berjaya University College in this prestigious competition.







Ms Michelle Yip

**Teo Rui Guan:** *I've heard much of this competition, and the aim for me to participate is to learn the process involved from conceptualizing to production.*

**Michelle Yip Sze Yuen:** *I was really excited because I could finally represent Berjaya University College for the competition. Since the competition is an international competition, I hope to discover more things that are different from Malaysia and learn more from the participants from other countries.*



Ms Nicole Yo

**Nicole Yo AnQi:** *My aim in participating is to learn as much as I can because it's not very often we get this opportunity to participate in competitions like this.*

### **KNOWING WE HAVE A SHARED VISION**

Group dynamics can make or break a team. As each member of Team Berjaya was made up of individuals handpicked specifically for their strengths, we hear them share how they overcame their challenges to have a shared vision and unified aim - to win the competition.

**Sally Yap Choy Ying:** *Communicating my ideas is my challenge. As we have different ideas to what we think is best, this makes convincing my teammates more challenging. However, having given the opportunity to explain myself and being able to brainstorm each other's ideas make this challenge more manageable.*



Ms Sally Yap

**Jolyn Soh Kher Shien:** *Teammates' way of operating is my challenge. No doubt most of us, if not all, are majoring in events, however with our various backgrounds and the prior lack of opportunity in collaboration makes synergizing a challenge. However, we acquired the skills to be adaptable, and, later, even supported each other in areas outside our responsibilities because we want to ensure that we win the competition.*

## **BROADENED HORIZONS, CHANGED MINDSET, RENEWED ATTITUDE**

Every participant encountered and cultivated growth in one or more areas as an aspiring event management professional. These skills, knowledge and experience will be embedded in them and assist them in their career as event management professionals.

**Teo Rui Guan:** *I learnt to be open-minded when facing problems and importance of teamwork.*

**Michelle Yip Sze Yuen:** *I am proud to be part of the winning team and this has taught me to also be modest and humble as I still have many areas to improve.*

**Nicole Yo AnQi:** *In class, the lecturers always emphasise and teach us on communicating and teamwork in assignments, but through this competition, communication and teamwork has brought me to a whole new level and I'm grateful for it.*

*"I have developed a better understanding of the process and the subject matter and all that has enabled me to relate and apply what I have learnt in class to the real world of managing events."*

**- Jolyn Soh Kher Shien**

## **IT'S ALL WORTH IT WHEN WE WERE THE OVERALL CHAMPION**

The best memory to date was hearing the words uttered by the judge: The overall champion is Berjaya University College.

**Sally Yap Choy Ying:** *Winning!!! 2016 was the best because that was the first year we won 7 out of 8 awards.*

*"The bond of our friendship. We worked so hard together for months and finally became the champion of the competition. "*

**- Teo Rui Guan and Michelle Yip Sze Yuen**



Mr. Teo Rui Guan



Ms Jolyn Soh

## GO FOR IT, YOU'LL BE HAPPY YOU DID

Should future events students still wonder whether this MICE Destination Competition is for them, let's hear from the seniors again:

**Jolyn Soh Kher Shien :** *Just go for it. For me it was a very good experience which I don't think I can get from other places. Not as much as this Taiwan competition at least.*

**Teo Rui Guan and Michelle Yip Sze Yuen:** *Participate with an open mind! No doubt it can be competitive and your teammates can be blunt, but it's never about you personally. So join with an open mind. Everyone makes mistakes, more importantly is for us to learn from it and do better.*

**Nicole Yo AnQi:** *Participate to find your passion! After participating in this competition, I felt like this is where I needed to be, this is where I belong and my passion lies in this industry.*

**Sally Yap Choy Ying:** *Just go for it. Besides enhancing your skills and knowledge, you will also get to build your network and get to know people in the industry.*

**Yap Meng Chun:** *My sharing to those interested in joining will be to go for it. Because after this competition, you will have great confidence in your abilities and you will become fearless.*



# **CHAPTER 3: COACHING TOWARDS VICTORY**





The route to victory is never clearly sign posted; there are usually more than one road leading to the same destination. However, in the end, it really does not matter which path one decides to take because it is always the journey that makes the experience memorable.

The path for the lecturer to lead the team to the Taiwan MICE Destination Marketing Competition is far from easy as there isn't any fail-proof formula of beating the odds of the competition served as navigation reference. The only certainty that a lecturer knows very well is that every year a new challenging course is added, giving an increased pressure to bring home the awards.

Although the lead lecturer bears the principal responsibility, other lecturers in the School of Tourism equally contribute their knowledge and skills in coaching the team. The strength of the group lies in the diverse expertise and knowledge that each lecturer brings to the team, resulting in a strong multi-skills Team Berjaya.



Angie Tung, Lead Lecturer for 2015, recalled "I could

really feel the meaning of "it takes a village to raise a child" when I was leading the team. The lecturers in the School of Tourism were committed to coach the team for months, either to improve on their technical skills and knowledge or to acquire new skills. It was comforting to have the support; one simply cannot carry the whole project alone".



Jaston Ng, Lead Lecturer for 2016 and 2017, shared that getting everyone committed to the competition created a win-win outcome because the team needs a strong support system to thrive. The collective coaching from different lecturers and encouragement from the University's management team proved to be a powerful boost to the student's confidence.





Learning from those who has experienced leading the competition previously is a quick and familiar method of acquiring knowledge for lecturers and students. Leveraging from other's blood, sweat and tears definitely improve the odds of success for the team. Ch'ng Chor Ban, Lead Lecturer for 2018, commented that by accessing the wisdom of the previous lead lecturers and students, the team gained a deeper level of understanding of the competition and avoided common pitfalls.

Kit Thong, Lead Lecturer for 2019, pointed out that those who have gone through previous competitions are a great source of information that is not available anywhere else. Nothing can substitute their experiences. We were able to gradually fine-tune our method of training based on the accumulated knowledge passed on year after year by lecturers and students. She added that the worst experiences were often the best lessons because only through reflecting on mistakes that we would be able to find a way to overcome obstacles and move forward.



Ms Kit Thong

## STRATEGIES IN ACHIEVING THE COMPETITION GOALS

"It is important to make the team understand the positive aspects of the competition from the very beginning," observed Angie Tung. The lecturers need to be able to show students, at least, a rough roadmap to success. Students work better when they know what is expected of them.

Chor Ban also stressed the importance of assessing each team member's strength and weakness so that they can be assigned to take on a role in which they can take complete ownership of all the responsibilities.



Mr Ch'ng Chor Ban

"When the time comes, they will know exactly who is going up the stage to receive the award", he believed.



Inspiring the team to explore and discover new possibilities with the aim of injecting innovation into every category of the competition is one of the strategies often employed by lead lecturers. Kit Thong noted that competition spurred the team to strive for new heights. It is, therefore, important to know how to turn their desire to win into motivation to search for fresh ideas and solutions to problems. "It is amazing to see how quickly the students evolve and improve themselves. Sometimes, instead of one solution to a problem, the team came up with a few".

The ever bubbly Jaston Ng emphasised that the trump card had to be the provision of an immersive destination experience for the visitors at the booth. Believing that it is possible to deliver a total destination experience onsite, he worked hard to train students to think out of the box in creating a unique total destination experience, one that was also well received at the competition.



## VALUABLE LESSONS LEARNT

The MICE Destination Marketing Competition provided a good opportunity for lecturers to learn alongside their students. In supporting the competition, lecturers get to update their knowledge as well as making discoveries through their collaboration with the students. Chor Ban commented that the most positive outcome resulting from this journey is that it encourages the academic team and students to learn together and with each other in their search for innovative ways to solve problems. This was a way of learning never experienced before by lecturers and students alike. It may not always be a walk in the park for both parties but it is well worth the effort invested.

Angie Tung agreed wholeheartedly, citing her own experience of studying the destination with students as the most rewarding. "It is fascinating to uncover the hidden "jewels" in our country and together, we were able to package an interesting Business Event experience."

Looking back, Kit Thong believed that amongst the things that she learnt, the most valuable lesson was to leave no stones unturned. It is important that the students dive deep into researching every aspect related to the destination and meticulously go through every detail. Through this process, students as well as lecturers get to know new discoveries about the destination and the latest trends in the industry. "When armed with knowledge about the destination, the team will be confident to take on questions from the judges and public at the competition," she added.

Competing overseas imposed another layer of complexity, and it is best not to be caught off guard at the destination. The advice that holds true for Chor Ban is that even when the team competed abroad, it is crucial to remain resourceful because it is always the quick-thinking actions that will promptly save the day. "Well, sometimes, when we went overboard in trying new ideas, the outcome might require a bit of fixing" he chuckled.

Jaston Ng maintained that the art of staying positive in the midst of chaos is one of the critical lessons to learn. "Yes, there will be heaps of deadline to meet and, not to mention, keeping to a tight budget; but the lead lecturer has to remain calm especially when getting nearer to the date of the competition with anxiety level rising," he continued.



## BEST MOMENTS TO CHERISH

Reliving the best moments of this learning journey brought back great memories for all those who had taken part in the competition. Tracing back, there were indeed many cherished exchanges, capturing not just the struggles but also the fun and laughter which will be treasured forever.

Angie Tung has fond memories of seeing the students presenting onstage. "I was anxious but, at the same time, feeling so proud of them because I know they are putting up their best performance to impress the judges. It was really thrilling for us to receive an award at the end," she said with a smile.

Chor Ban recounted that witnessing students shedding tears of joy on stage as the moment he will treasure. "It is very touching to see such display of emotions and this could only mean one thing, the award means a great deal to the students as it is taken as a symbol of recognition from the panel of international judges," he said.

When asked about his best moments, Jaston Ng gave a quote from the philosopher, Lucius Annaeus Seneca, stating that "the things hardest to bear are sweetest to remember". He reckoned that enduring the hours of brainstorming and tireless preparation formed a solid foundation of lasting friendship with fellow lecturers and students. With a glint in his eyes, he added "I love this tough period because this is where the lecturers get to polish the gems (students) and turn them into shining diamonds!".

Without hesitating, Kit Thong proudly answered her best moment "is the moment we saw the look of surprise and awe on the judges' face when they approached our booth. It was priceless! To think that our team can make such an impression on the judges gave us a real sense of pride. It validates the months of hard work put in by the team". She further added that it truly reflected the motto of "Go big or go home" used by the team to motivate themselves.



Chor Ban shared that his heart missed a beat when he was once approached by a judge to collaborate in submitting the Destination Marketing proposal used for the competition for actual bidding. "This indicated that the standard of our proposal was good. Imagine how happy we were and how proud that made us feel as lecturers".

In the end, it is Jaston Ng who made the most appropriate conclusion: ***"our mission was clear, to train students for the competition today while preparing them to join the industry's workforce tomorrow."***



“

Many ideas grow better  
when transplanted into  
another mind than the  
one where they  
sprang up.

by Oliver Wendell Holmes

# **CHAPTER 4: BUILDING FRUITFUL COLLABORATION**





Our journey of learning was enriched with many trial and tribulations that the team had to overcome. These setbacks were necessary challenges that taught the team to be more resilient and resourceful in finding solutions to the problems. As the African proverb goes, "Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors". However, it is also critical to have experienced coaches to advise on the best course to navigate out of a storm. Our friends in the industry are the best coaches as they provided unfailing support to build a stronger team and give it better odds of winning the competition.

One of the most challenging parts of the competition is to be able to present our chosen destination in an innovative way to a panel of international judges comprised of key Business Event professionals from Canada, Australia and Asia. To be able to impress these judges, the team were well aware that they had to give the destination a new twist compared to our winning entry in the year before in order to wow the judges.

Before the team could think of innovative destination presentation, every team member had to be familiar with the chosen destination. The best way to get the team to learn about the destination was for them to experience the destination through a detailed site inspection that included in-depth discussions with local convention bureaus or tourist boards as well as tourism and accommodation operators. Sessions with these key industry players were paramount and extremely useful as each of the professionals had vast experiences and deep understanding of the local tourism offerings and hence able to provide the team with comprehensive facts and knowledge about the destination. As always, after these stimulating discussions, the team not only gained clarity in their thinking and therefore able to

improve on their strategies but, more importantly, the show of support from the industry players often encouraged them to push themselves even harder in the competition. The engagement with these selfless professionals was a wonderful way to inspire the team and definitely helped them to stay motivated.



Mr. Dylan Noel Redas

Mr. Dylan Noel Redas, Head of Industry Development at the Sarawak Convention Bureau, attended the competition in 2019 and he was impressed with the work presented by Team Berjaya. He commented that Team Berjaya definitely raised the bar with the display of high quality work. Mr. Redas continued, "Despite limited resources, the students managed to show their creativity in every aspect of the destination presentation". He concluded, ***"At that moment, I was proud to see our Malaysian team leading in the competition".***

Mr. Kenneth Fong, Honorary Secretary of the Malaysian Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers (MACEOS), was also impressed with Team Berjaya's performance. He added that the Taiwan MICE Destination Marketing Competition was regarded as one of the tougher competitions, therefore it was commendable for Team Berjaya to hold the overall championship record for four consecutive years. Mr. Fong strongly believed that the competition was a good platform for students to harvest experience and knowledge about the regional Business Event industry as the students would get exposure from meaningful engagement with key international industry players, as well as peers from participating universities.



Another important support that motivated the team tremendously was the coaching sessions given by experts from local Business Events and tourism organisations. These sessions were extremely effective in addressing specific skills such as bidding, design and presentation which require local expert input. It was evident that when team members became more competent, their level of confidence increased. Under the skilled guidance of the coaches, the team showed remarkable improvement in their performance as their learning took on a fast track mode. At the end of each coaching session, without fail, the team was energized with a refreshed sense of pride and excitement.



Madam Gracie Geikei, Director and Principal Consultant of Place Borneo Sdn. Bhd., who has been guiding the team since 2014 commented that she always enjoyed the sessions with the students as it was very rewarding to nurture these young enthusiastic minds and get them ready for the industry. She was pleased that ***Berjaya University College viewed participating in competition as another method of learning*** as the students who had gone through the rigorous process of the competition would be polished into true gems for the industry.



We are truly grateful to have these proactive industry professionals as mentors to the team. Without them, it would not have been possible for the team to achieve the record of success. Their dependable support definitely helped to nurture these young individuals, instilling a high standard of professionalism that would enable them to excel in their chosen profession.

Our four consecutive victories at the MICE Competition were really the testament of the fruitful collaborations with various industry partners, without which we would not have recorded such a commendable feat. The competition not only created champions of Berjaya University College students but also lasting partnership that will always be cherished.







“

Coming together is  
a beginning,  
staying together  
is progress, and  
working together is  
success.

by Henry Ford

# **CHAPTER 5: THE VALUE OF THIS LEARNING JOURNEY**



“

Talent wins games,  
but teamwork and  
intelligence win  
championships

by Michael Jordan



Embarking on this journey of learning had revealed a new platform to teach students: cooperative learning. However, instead of classroom setting, this was applied in a competition environment that has stricter standards and considerable tension. By definition cooperative means a group of people working together towards a common goal (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1986). According to the Cooperative Learning Institute, “within cooperative situations, individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all other group members.” The institute also shared five essential elements for cooperative learning to take place.

Positive interdependence occurs when each team member accepts that the only way to achieve success is through accumulated effort and commitment. Participating in a team-based competition, the team member is acutely aware that success depends on one another. Only by embracing that “we’re in this together” that the team can grow stronger. The sense of interdependence serves as motivation to provide support to each other while the desire to win bind them together.

Accountability is another element cited as a requirement for effective cooperative learning. Students would be accountable for their contribution towards the team as seen in the way they took full responsibilities of their assigned area while committed to helping others so as to complete their tasks within the timeline.



It is also suggested that students should learn to share their resources and form their own support system to overcome difficulties. This element is termed “promotive interaction”. Team Berjaya created a strong support system, thanks to the seniors who were devoted to guide the juniors not only to work on solving technical problems but also extend their emotional support. The team even go as far as organising fundraising activities to help ease financial burden for team members while juggling between preparation for the competition and fulfilment of academic obligations.

Cooperative learning also stresses on acquiring teamwork skills as one of the most desirable key competencies in the 21st century workplace. Students who participated in the Taiwan MICE competition got to deal with the inherent challenges of group dynamics. It would have been an uphill battle to compete at the competition, let alone winning it, if team members did not trust each other to work collectively.



The last element of cooperative learning is group processing. It is about team members analysing and reviewing decisions made to determine the next course of actions. When students work cooperatively, they have to learn to accept different ideas to work out the best solution amicably. Team Berjaya’s creative booth display and innovative presentation were the results of member contribution of different ideas. At times, the process could involve heated arguments to arrive at consensus-based decisions. But it is through questioning and justifying reasons to solutions that cooperative learning can actually occur.

The Taiwan MICE Destination Marketing Competition provided the perfect setting for Team Berjaya to apply cooperative learning. Through this journey of learning, we have gained an invaluable experience that has changed our perspective on how effective teaching should be and how learning within a competitive context can be productive and satisfying. It has given us an education of a lifetime.

**GALLERY**



# 2014

Destination: Malaysia

Theme: Eco Adventure Tourism in Malaysia

Lead Lecturer: Ms. Lah Wan Yee

Team Members:

- Shoo Lik Fang (Leader)
- Lee Kui Hock
- Lim Hui Lek
- Ng Sze Cin
- Yen Lee Cheng

## AWARD:

*2nd Runner-up award in the Engaging Visitor Category*





## 2015

Destination: Putrajaya

Lead Lecturer: Ms. Angie Tung

Team Members:

- Tan Yoke Kwan (Leader)
- Eunice Goo Joo Xin
- Karen Kum Li Lin
- Lim Wei Kang
- Yap Choy Ying
- Yap Meng Chun

### **AWARD:**

*2nd Runner-up MICE Destination Marketing Plan*





# 2016

Destination: Sarawak

Theme: B.E. Sarawak

Lead Lecturer: Mr. Jaston Ng

Team Members:

- Yap Choy Ying (Leader)
- Chee Cheng Yee
- Lim Wei Kang
- Michelle Yip Sze Yuen
- Nicole Yo Anqi
- Yap Meng Chun

## AWARD:

*Winner for Marketing Plan Award*

*Winner for Creativity Award*

*Winner for Booth Design Award*

*Winner for Reception Award*

*Winner for Best Popularity Award*

*Honourable Mention for Marketing Presentation Award*







# 2017

Destination: Penang

Theme: Experience Penang

Lead Lecturer: Mr. Jaston Ng

Team Members:

- Soh Kher Shien (Leader)
- Logeswaran A/L Muniandy
- Low Heu Yee
- Michelle Yip Sze Yuen
- Nicole Yo Anqi
- Rachel Liew Keh Xin
- Yap Meng Chun

## AWARD:

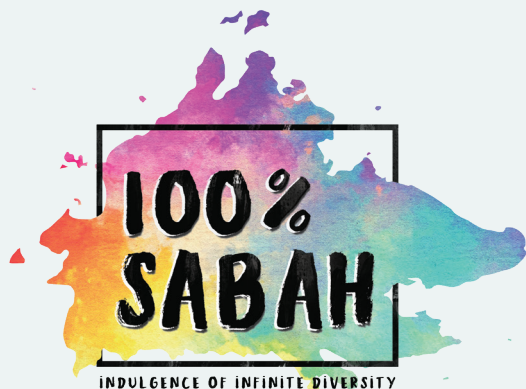
*Winner for Mandarin Presentation*

*Winner for Exhibition Award*

*2nd Runner-up English Presentation*

*Best Popularity Award*





# 2018

Destination: Sabah

Theme: 100% Sabah: Indulgence of Infinite Diversity

Lead Lecturer: Mr. Chn'ng Chor Ban

Team Members:

- Yap Meng Chun (Leader)
- Alex Liew Lit Khang
- Chan Mun Fwai
- Crystal Lee Mei Jing
- Lau Hui Hui
- Rachel Liew Keh Xin
- Teh Wei Hsing
- Teo Rui Guan

## AWARD:

*Winner for Exhibition Award*

*Winner of MICE Star Award*

*1st Runner-up English Presentation*







# 2019

Destination: Langkawi Island

Theme: Dazzling Langkawi: Exquisite Charm,  
Priceless Memories

Lead Lecturer: Ms. Kit Thong

Team Members:

- Yap Meng Chun (Leader)
- Chia Hui Min
- Crystal Chua Chor Huan
- Kee Lee Kai
- Liew Sook Yan
- Ma Zhen Yin
- Soh Kher Shien
- Yit Chin Ru
- Yong Kai Qian

## AWARD:

*Winner for Exhibition Award*

*Winner of MICE Star Award*

*1st Runner-up English Presentation*





Opinion Generation Next



## More mentors

Berjaya University College student Jolyn Soh Kher Shien says millennials need better ways to connect with industry leaders.

I love to be around people who are passionate about what they do and I find business events professionals totally enjoy their work and possess a great zest for learning new things, which is a quality that I admire.

My aim has always been to build a strong network in my chosen field and I believe that learning from good mentors is a very important building block to my career.

Hence, in my opinion, it would be good to establish a mentorship programme where young professionals have the opportunity to connect with prominent industry leaders. A programme like this would allow mentors to share and guide young professionals. Such a platform would also break down barriers and encourage us to seek clearer career progression. I believe this industry needs more prominent role models (like Steve Jobs) to really inspire young professionals.

I recently competed in the 2019 MICE Destination Marketing Contest in Taiwan with a team of fellow students from Berjaya University College. This is an annual contest organised by the Taiwan External Trade and Development Council (TAITRA) for university students all around the world to showcase the culture and MICE landscape of their country.

As team leader, this was a great platform for me to build my communication skills and test my creativity.

Being the overall champion for the past four years meant that we had to challenge ourselves to come up with more innovative ways to present our destination. It was tough, but we managed to take home the top prize again this year at the MICE Destination Marketing Contest in Taipei.

The most enjoyable part of the contest is the friendly rivalry and mutual respect among the participating teams. The competition will always be intense, as each team is under enormous pressure to win. However, it is important to remember that it is primarily a platform for learning and making new friends.

As I am passionate about designing experiences, I have no doubt that my career lies in the business events industry. I am excited to challenge myself further by taking up managerial responsibilities and in leading interesting projects.

Furthermore, I am keen to develop a mentorship programme with my University so that I can encourage and guide my junior peers in their career development.

I've had the good fortune of connecting with key business events players through a recent internship programme, but not everyone has the same opportunities. I can see there is a gap and a need to establish a digital platform where senior students and new graduates can reach out and connect with the good mentors. ■

Jolyn Soh Kher Shien is a student in Berjaya University College in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

“This industry needs more prominent role models.”

## BERJAYA UC Students Win MICE Destination Marketing Contest for the Fourth Straight Year

QS WOWNEWS

Latest Higher Education News



**Kuala Lumpur:** On the 17<sup>th</sup> of September, BERJAYA University College (BERJAYA UC) students representing the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism ventured to Taiwan to defend their title as champions of the MICE Destination Marketing Contest. The students have been working hard for the last few months, having frequent meetings, brainstorming the concept, planning the proposal, fabricating displays and rehearsing their presentation. Long hours on campus became an increasing occurrence. However, their efforts were not in vain. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, BERJAYA UC emerged as the grand champion for the fourth year in a row, scooping first place in the Star of Mice Award, Marketing Plan Award, the Booth Design Award and second place in the English Presentation Award.

The 2019 MICE Destination Marketing Contest is a platform for aspiring students to practise and exercise innovative ideas for the MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions) industry. This contest is hosted by the Ministry of Economic Affairs Bureau of Foreign Trade, Taiwan and Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA). Students are encouraged to use their knowledge, skills and creativity to market their cities. The theme for the contest was “Bidding for Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) Global Conference.” Using the concept, “Vitalising Incentives with Dazzling Experiences,” the students presented Langkawi as their marketing destination. Riding on four tracks; ‘Be Authentic,’ ‘Be Dynamic,’ ‘Be Green-Centric,’ and ‘Be Magnetic,’ the team projected



“

Today I will do what  
others won't so  
tomorrow I can do  
what others can't.

by TempoFit





成功大学学院礼和湖与服务系的学生代表学校，前往台湾参加2019年MICE国际大学学院会展城市行銷竞赛，连续4年获得大奖。

# 成功大学学院再获MICE总冠军

成功大学学院 (Berjaya University College, 简称 Berjaya UCL) 礼和湖与服务系的学生，日前前往台湾参加2019年MICE国际大学学院会展城市行銷竞赛，连续4年获得总冠军。在「MICE之星」、「营销计划奖」、「展位设计奖」等得第1名殊荣；「英语演讲比赛」第2名，两次扬名海外。

该竞赛是由台湾经济部国际贸易局和台湾对外贸易协会 (TAITRA) 主办，旨在鼓励学生以自己的所学知识和能力，创意设计、营销和推广自己的城市城市，以「台湾有无限可能」为主题 (Slogan: Taiwan has infinite possibilities) 为主题，鼓励学生通过该平台提出创意构想。

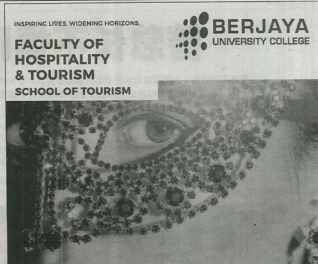
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该校学生在此竞赛的几个月，曾有一度，在参赛人数众多、竞争激烈、全球各大城市同台竞技的情况下，该校学生一直稳居前列，并多次在决赛中夺冠。

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# Victorious once more

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# higher education: cross border experience



# Triumphant achievement

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