

Polytechnic University students won awards at The Fresh Connection global student competition

Some time ago, we wrote about the second-year students of the [International business development](#) Master's degree program taught in English (Institute of Business Management, Economics, and Trade) Sergey SMIRNOV, Tatyana PRIBYLOVA, Khristina TERYOKHINA, and Vasanthan Deva INBARAGES who [became participants of the Global Final of The Fresh Connection](#), which had taken place in the city of Zwolle (the Netherlands).



Among the 30 teams from all over the world, the Polytechnic team demonstrated high standards of professionalism in the sphere of supply chain management and won the honorable third place in the final of the business game. We sincerely congratulate our students and their coach, D.A. GAVRILOV, Higher School of Business Management and Economy, and are eager to let you know the interview in which team members Tatyana PRIBYLOVA and Khristina TERYOKHINA shared their impressions on the competition which had taken place.

- Tatyana, Khristina, we are so glad to see you! Let us congratulate you one more time with your outstanding results. Please tell us about The

Fresh Connection business simulator. Do you believe that such business games should and would be included in the educational process?

Khristina: Participation in that sort of events is an invaluable experience for students, while the possibility to solve rounds of the business game within the frame of the educational process in addition to theoretical lectures produces an amazing effect. However, the most important thing is to really get interested in the simulator and understand how it works. It is not an easy thing, and it is necessary to understand the principle of how its parameters function. There are many terms in the game. And all this takes quite some time to understand.

Tatyana: One can absorb no more than 5% of a theory on the basis of class lectures. Such business simulator allows to comprehend the terminology, the way all the parameters are used in the supply chain, their interconnections. More than that, you start having a holistic vision of the entire process, starting from purchasing components and up to sales of ready-to-go goods, which in practice embraces operation of several company's departments.

- For how long has your team been in existence? Had you decided to take part in The Fresh Connection competition right away?

Tatyana: Our team came in existence in the early September 2017. By then, we had been studying together for nearly a year. I believe that we have complete concurrence within our team.

Khristina: I agree with Tatyana. Members of our team perfectly interact with each other, and all of us, with no exceptions, have agreed to take part in the world student championship.

- In your opinion, what helped your team to get to the global final of The Fresh Connection? How difficult it was to reach such result? Did you have any doubts in your success?

Khristina: Enthusiasm of all team members helped us to get into the final. We had been spending quite a lot of time and effort on going through the rounds. We had been doing many calculations in order to find the optimal approach. This is why we cannot say that it was an easy way to go.

Tatyana: The literature on team work and project management has many indications that the team should be multifaceted. From that point of view, we are an ideal team: we have different genders ages, and countries of origin (Vasantan Deva INBARAGES is from India, Ed. note); we all have different experiences and characters. I believe that we are a nice complement to each other. Also, the role of the leader is vital: someone in the team should be a true fan of the business, charge the rest of the team with the aspiration to work and not let to relax. The leader of our team, Sergey SMIRNOV, was focused on getting to the final from the very beginning, which after all we had achieved.



- What did you expect from the global final? What sort of impressions did the city of Zwolle produce on you?

Khristina: We were expecting an intensive program and a challenging final, not without surprises, of course. The city of Zwolle is very tidy, with typically Dutch architecture. It is exactly there that the University of Windesheim is located, on the campus of which all contest participants had been staying.

Tatyana: Besides the final competitions, our program included visits to the Scania Company and a tour of its facilities, and also a trip to Rotterdam. We also had a chance to communicate with representatives of various companies including such ones as Heineken, Scania, ASML, Henkel, Amgen, KPMG, Campina and others. What's more, our visit to the Netherlands coincided with the flowering season of tulips, and this is something absolutely unbelievable!

- Please tell us about the final competition. How difficult were the tasks?

Khristina: The final included 6 rounds: 3 rounds of The Fresh Connection business game, in which our team had participated, and 3 rounds of The Cool Connection game (this is another business game within the frame of which you could get to the final; Ed. note). The tasks were quite complicated, while the time for their

solution was strictly limited. We had held real negotiations with suppliers of logistic services in the second round; in the process of the negotiations we should have found out all information about the suppliers and, based on the data gathered, choose the best candidate for particular candidate criteria.

Tatyana: Complexity degree of the rounds was by far higher than that in the preliminary competitions. Organizers introduced new functions and new parameters. We had only 8 minutes for the negotiations with suppliers. Within this time, we were to introduce ourselves and the company and clarify all the conditions of signing the contract; and all that had to be done in English. It was not easy, but it was interactive and interesting at the same time.

- Are you satisfied with your results? What opinion do you have on your rivals?

Khristina: No doubt, we are happy about our results. Altogether, 114 finalists from all over the world came to Zwolle; we have counted 20 nationalities. All guys were very friendly and open, but the competitive spirit was there, of course.

Tatyana: We are happy with our results. Our team became a sort of Polytechnic pathfinders to the Global Final. We had no detailed information about where and how this event would be taking place. Having come to Zwolle, we met with team-winners from the universities which had already been presented there in the previous years. For this reason, the next SPbPU team will go to the final already much better prepared (laughing).



- Please, let us know, how the experience of participation in The Fresh Connection student competition will be beneficial for you in the future? Would you recommend other students to take part in The Fresh Connection competition?

Khristina: The benefits are quite obvious: this is new experience, new acquaintances, and corporative contacts all over the world. The way to the final was quite long, and during this time, each of us has got a much better understanding of the supply chain management sphere, production, and logistics.

Tatyana: I absolutely agree with Khristina's words. I would also point out that participation in that sort of events gives valuable experience of team-working. An, no doubt, for those who are thinking if they should or not take part in The Fresh Connection competition, we say our absolute "Yes!"

- Khristina, Tatyana, thank you very much for your interesting interview! We wish you and other members of your team all the success in your educational and professional careers!

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