

# Tiah turns blogging into business venture

He forms Malaysia's first blog-advertising community

By LEONG HUNG YEE  
hungyee@thestar.com.my



MOST bloggers will tell you that blogging for them is purely a hobby. However, it is a different story for Timothy Tiah Ewe Tiam. He has turned his passion for blogging into a paying proposition.

During his university days in Britain, Tiah blogged to earn some extra money. Two years ago, Tiah and a friend ran a humour-themed blog using the advertising system AdSense by Google which became quite popular.

"Our earnings were low then and Google made you wait till your account generated US\$100 before you could start cashing out. We waited forever to get something out of it," Tiah told *StarBiz*.

Buoyed by the small success, Tiah decided to delve deeper into this line. Upon graduation, he teamed up with partner, Cheo Ming Shen to set up Nuffnang Sdn Bhd – a blog-advertising community, the first of its kind in Malaysia.

»In the next 12 months, we hope to have at least 20,000 members«

TIMOTHY TIAH EWE TIAM

flyers is not effective," Tiah said, adding that any blogger who has a blog with 20 or more unique visitors a day was eligible to sign up.

Apart from just advertising, Nuffnang is committed to forming a strong and united blogging community in Malaysia. There are some activities in the pipeline for bloggers to congregate to get to know each other better.

"Nuffnang is not an all-talk-no-action company. We personally meet the heads of organisations who advertise with us," Tiah said, adding that they wanted to give the business a more personal touch.

Confident and articulate, Tiah said Nuffnang's progress was strong. Despite having been launched for just a short period, Nuffnang has been gaining popularity in the bloggers fraternity.

"There are about 100,000 bloggers in Malaysia. About 3,500 bloggers have registered with us. In the next 12 months, we hope to have at least 20,000 members," Tiah said, adding that the growth of Nuffnang was not limited to getting more bloggers but also advertisers to join their community.

Tiah said it would be very interesting for the company over the next few months as it was also on an expansion mode.

"Over the next one year, we believe we should be able to get the right products – from banners to video advertisements – to our advertisers," he said.

Tiah believes Nuffnang will grow exponentially in the next few years.

Nuffnang set up a branch in Singapore early this year. Tiah is hoping the branch will emulate the success of Nuffnang Malaysia.

However, like all new companies, Nuffnang faced many ups and downs. Tiah said the downs encouraged them to work harder to overcome the problems.

"There will be times when you are faced with problems but you'll just have to try very hard to find new strategies to overcome them," he added.

Hard work and setting goals have paid off handsomely for Tiah, who hails from Penang.

A firm believer of open management, Tiah's team consists of a bunch of young and energetic people who he feels are keen enough to get creative and push themselves.

"I have to force my colleagues to leave the office as they refused to, even after office hours.

"I have never encouraged them to call me boss and we have regular criticism sessions. During these sessions, we do nothing but criticise," he said,

adding that the company also organised regular movie and ice-cream sessions.

He said although work could be tiring at times, he still loved his job as it was very satisfying.

Tiah finds joy in the simple things in life – spending time with family and friends, blogging, playing the Nintendo Wii and regular movie outings.

He may already be considered a successful businessman to many, but he is not going to rest on his laurels and will continue to strive for more.

Timothy Tiah Ewe Tiam says Nuffnang has set up a branch in Singapore early this year which it hopes will emulate the success of Nuffnang Malaysia

