

# Entrepreneurs they are



Timothy Tiah, the founder of [www.nuffnang.com.my](http://www.nuffnang.com.my). His gets paid to surf blogs!

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PICTURES BY DAPHNE ONG LAI PENG

TO GO on about how popular blogging is, despite how seemly trivial the online activity may be, has become a cliché. What is interesting, however, is how some people make use of blogs to benefit themselves. One such person is Timothy Tiah, co-founder of Nuffnang, a blog advertising website.

Coming from a family of businessmen active in investment banking, even Timothy was surprised at his own decision to set up a blog advertising company.

The 23-year-old blogger who goes by the name of Boss Stewie decided to stay away from banks after working on a little project

with his friends several years back called Tuitionhamster. The site 'match made' tuition teachers and their potential students to ensure a perfect and almost conducive teacher-student relationship. It was that little project that gave him enjoyment could not buy. Motivated by the success of Tuitionhamster, he decided to delve deeper into this line.

A couple of months prior to their final exams, Timothy and his business partner Cheo Ming Shen, or Ming, were laying down the foundations of the business.

"It was the day immediately after our exams when Ming came over to my place and we drew up the business plan and decided on everything else. We were that excited!" added the University College London graduate.

"If it wasn't for Ewe Tiam," said Ming referring to Timothy, "I would have gone bankrupt already. You see, I have very ambitious plans and what I dreamt of would cost us millions. That amount of money we did not have, unfortunately."

The 24-year-old Singaporean explained that Nuffnang meant 'very good' in Jafaikan, a slang which is gaining popularity in central London. The reason such a non-conventional name was chosen was because Nuffnang (the website) aspired to be different, while taking a lighter approach in running a business.

The method which sets Nuffnang apart from other blog advertising companies is the way they take to handling their clients. Nuffnang is not an 'all talk no action' company. To high-

light this, the founders themselves personally meeting the heads of organisations who advertised with them. Both Tim and Ming agreed that this gave the business deal a more personal touch, rather than just being clinical and functional.

"Beats having a representative coming to talk with another representative because no one knows what both companies actually want!" said Ming.

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.

"We are not a money making company. Of course we do have to make money, but we derive so much enjoyment from this business that money seems irrelevant to this business," Ming said.

The two said that their company's progress was strong. However, like all new companies, Nuffnang faced many ups and downs. Timothy stated again that it was the ups that gave them the satisfaction of running the business, very much like the Tuitionhamster project which they did at a financial loss. The downs of the company encourage them to work harder to overcome problems previously faced.

One can't help to wonder, though, that it is Timothy's popularity in the blogosphere that Nuffnang has become so successful. But the two pointed out that they were not relying on Timothy's name to propel the company forward. They feel that their personal touch is the key selling point of their company.

As if to highlight the team spirit which binds the Nuffnang team, Timothy made sure that the photos taken for this article included all his team members, as opposed to just him and Ming as "the directors/founders".



Timothy and Cheo Ming Shen (seated, left) with the Nuffnang team.

□ Nuffnang is available at [www.nuffnang.com.my](http://www.nuffnang.com.my) while Boss Stewie's blog is located at <http://timothytiah.blogspot.com/>.