

In My Opinion:

By DEREK FUNAYAMA

What makes up a community? Is it the people, services provided, or the basic infrastructure? Clearly without the people, a city or town is a mere collection of structures, empty and lifeless. Cities are built for a purpose: an intersection of crossed-paths with goods and services interchanged. The roads and rail (not here, not yet anyway) provide the connections to other places. A city is your place of residence and perhaps employment.

What happens when we want everything to happen all at once? We have competing forces focused to give us the convenience of a typical city right now. A big-box home improvement outlet, movie theaters, shopping center, etc., are all right here in Kapolei. Admittedly, these are

good to have and a long time in coming.

In past articles, I've pointed out that our roads are lagging to support the current level of vehicles in use here. Ideally, the system should be replete with roads and other means of transportation to get people to their intended destinations. Bottom line is we don't, and traffic is an issue (a ubiquitous one at that).

Well, guess what? Someone else wants in—Wal-Mart. Not your regular one, mind you, but a “bambucha” super store. What is it about super-sizing everything these days? Anyway, the proposal is to put one in Kapolei. Now then, is this an improvement or a detriment?

At this point, there's space to build it wherever they want. To maximize its effectiveness, the

store would be close to residence as a convenient community member. Once established, Wal-Mart will undoubtedly be busy. We'd have employment opportunities in being part of the Wal-Mart family. Forgetting for a moment about our traffic woes, it would be most welcomed. A win-win situation.

Having Wal-Mart here now is like being a kid getting that Christmas gift with the “some assembly required” tag. Who do you suppose put it together? Your parents. They want to try (“try” being the operative word here) and put it together, while you exhort them to hurry with an enthusiasm only a child could muster. As a parent, try that with a case of morning pre-coffee mind-fog and see how you do.

In short order, you either have

Wal-Mart: A Big-Box Burden?

the miraculous perfect put-together or something that had a better chance of being a modern art exhibit. In the former, everybody's happy (or at least relieved) that it went smoothly, while the latter leads to frustration and the need for caffeine, which leads to the Wal-Mart situation.

Recently, on a Handi-Van ride home, we passed through Kapolei. It was just past noon and there was car congestion. I don't know, but maybe the cause was lunch hour or the fact that it was a Friday. Anyway, I overheard a fellow passenger negatively remark on traffic and putting a Wal-Mart here. I agree that our priorities are skewed. Transportation must be improved!

However, I wish to neither

bury nor praise Wal-Mart for wanting to set up here. It's more that the city is willing to consider putting the cart before the horse. We're apparently okay with enhancing Kapolei's economy while sacrificing people's convenience. The “we” is everybody wanting this city to make it happen yesterday.

Okay, let's back up a bit and consider what Wal-Mart has to offer. I already mentioned employment. Many of us have seen those Wal-Mart commercials of a family-oriented atmos

phere and friendly service. If Wal-Mart employs hundreds of people, that's hundreds less unemployed.

Furthermore, that much

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Dawn's Databytes

By DAWN SANDERS

Many executives seek traditional methods of staying in touch with their client base or to conduct market research for new product ideas. Press releases are developed by those experienced with creating them, brochures and postcards are designed, printed, and mailed, and smartly worded letters are written and periodically sent out. Have you considered blogging? Here are some tips on making blogs work for your company or organization. It is easy and very cost efficient!

I am sure you have heard this word, but let's define it. A blog is simply a web log, journal or diary that is available on the web. Blogs are updated frequently, intended for public view and generally represents the author's personality or website with which it is associated. For the younger folks that are already blogging, please be careful not to give out too much personal contact information or daily schedules. Yes, your friends are reading it, but remember the blog is publicly-accessible, and you want to be very careful about not giving out too much information.

The great thing about blogs is that you do not need to be experienced as is a journalist who disseminates company or organization news. As a matter of fact, many journalists scour the web for blogs to do their research and find story ideas.

Here are some tips for getting started today:

Use a blogging service. There are some great (and yes, even free) services that can get you started right now. The free services are available at Blogger.com and WordPress.com. TypePad.com offers very reasonable pricing with customization options. Do your research and find which service works best for you. Once you establish a blog presence, typing a blog entry is as simple as writing and sending email messages.

Establish an identity for your blog. For businesses and organizations, your blog site does not necessarily need to reflect the exact look and feel of your corporate site, but it should, at a minimum, be complementary in color scheme and font styles.

What is your niche? Focus your blog on a subject that will appeal

to buyers. The blog is not valued as high when it is just about your company or organization. Whether you discuss a unique market or product, make sure that it is something that you can “own,” or reflects an area where you are the expert, i.e. what can you tell us about a market that makes you the undisputed leader? Do not try to cover too much. Start very narrow and then broaden your subject as appropriate.

Be yourself. People read blogs because bloggers tend to be passionate about their topics and are real, natural and reachable. If you are writing a corporate blog, it is better if it is written by the same person. Organizational and corporate blogs should be free flowing. Remember, you are not writing a press release or corporate newsletter. More importantly, offer your opinions. If you are interesting and authentic, readers will continue to return.

Interact with your readers. This is a terrific idea for corporate blogs to gain valuable feedback. (Remember that market research idea?) Some blogs offer a comment/feedback component while others have methods of tracking visitors such as tracking bloggers that link to you or blog

sites to which you place links. This is a great method of making your blog interactive and offers much exposure.

Take time to build your audience. It takes time to build your audience, especially for corporate and organization blogs. A great way to get the word out is to place a link to your blog site in your email signature, e-newsletters, print literature, and in your e-signature of other blog sites you may visit.

Update frequently. You do not have to update your blog daily, but be consistent. Two to four monthly entries is better than entering daily and then falling off the radar. Keep your content fresh.

The side benefit. The phenomenon of blogs has created a great side benefit; the blog acts as a great search engine marketing tool! Rankings or placement on Google, Yahoo! and other search engines can increase when bloggers incorporate the words and phrases web surfers use in searching topics. When setting up your blog, use your organization's particular search word or phrase in your blog categories and throughout your content.

Finally, and worth repeating, is

Reach Out Through a Blog



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to keep your content fresh and interesting. You want to keep 'em coming back!

Happy Computing!
Dawn