

ovatoyou's mobile research app takes a snapshot of life as a blogger

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In an effort to better understand South African bloggers, *ovatoyou* - an intuitive mobile app that captures insight via photo or text - recently ran a dipstick survey to find out more about their personal likes and dislikes, blogging habits, as well as to find out how brands and marketers can work (better) with them.

Amanda Reekie, *ovatoyou*'s founder says, "There are plenty of really good blogs in South Africa, each offering a glimpse into the minds, desires and opinions of everyday, passionate people. And while bloggers are often type-cast as trendy hipsters with a fondness for new tech, by getting up-close-and-personal with a handful of them by using the *ovatoyou* app, we found that in reality, these virtual voices are often professionals who have regular 9 to 5 jobs and something poignant to say."

Highlights of the mobile research include:

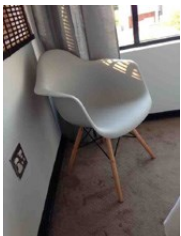
- They blog because they love it and, if lucky, earn something for it, be it in money or in kind.
- Like traditional media, they promote their content to draw in the crowds. But when they have lots of eyeballs, they need to manage advertisers' expectations about what they can, and can't, do for them.
- This often isn't their day job and they blog because they're passionate about fashion, food, fitness, travel, trends or whatever - not necessarily to promote a new pair of running shoes or advertise a getaway trip for two.
- If brands can weave their stories into a blogger's content, instead of asking them to cut and paste a press release, then it's more likely that they'll have good creative chemistry and a reciprocal relationship.



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Have idea, must blog:

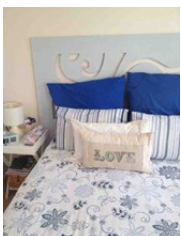
"Among those who we spoke to in the *ovatoyou* survey, over a quarter have serious blogging cred with over two years' experience behind them. And while over a third have considered changing their blog's name since they first went live, they're clear on who they're blogging for (over two thirds) and what their writing about," says Reekie.



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Bloggers also tend to be seasoned night-owls with a third saying they prefer to blog late into the night. "This also explains why they sent photos of their favourite caffeinated beverage when asked what gets them through the day and why most blog in their PJs. Bed is also their favourite place to blog from if their pics are anything to go by!" suggests Reekie.

Despite after-hours behaviour being the norm among over two thirds of those surveyed, a few said it is serious business and their blog is run like a newsroom during working hours, in clothes, not PJs.



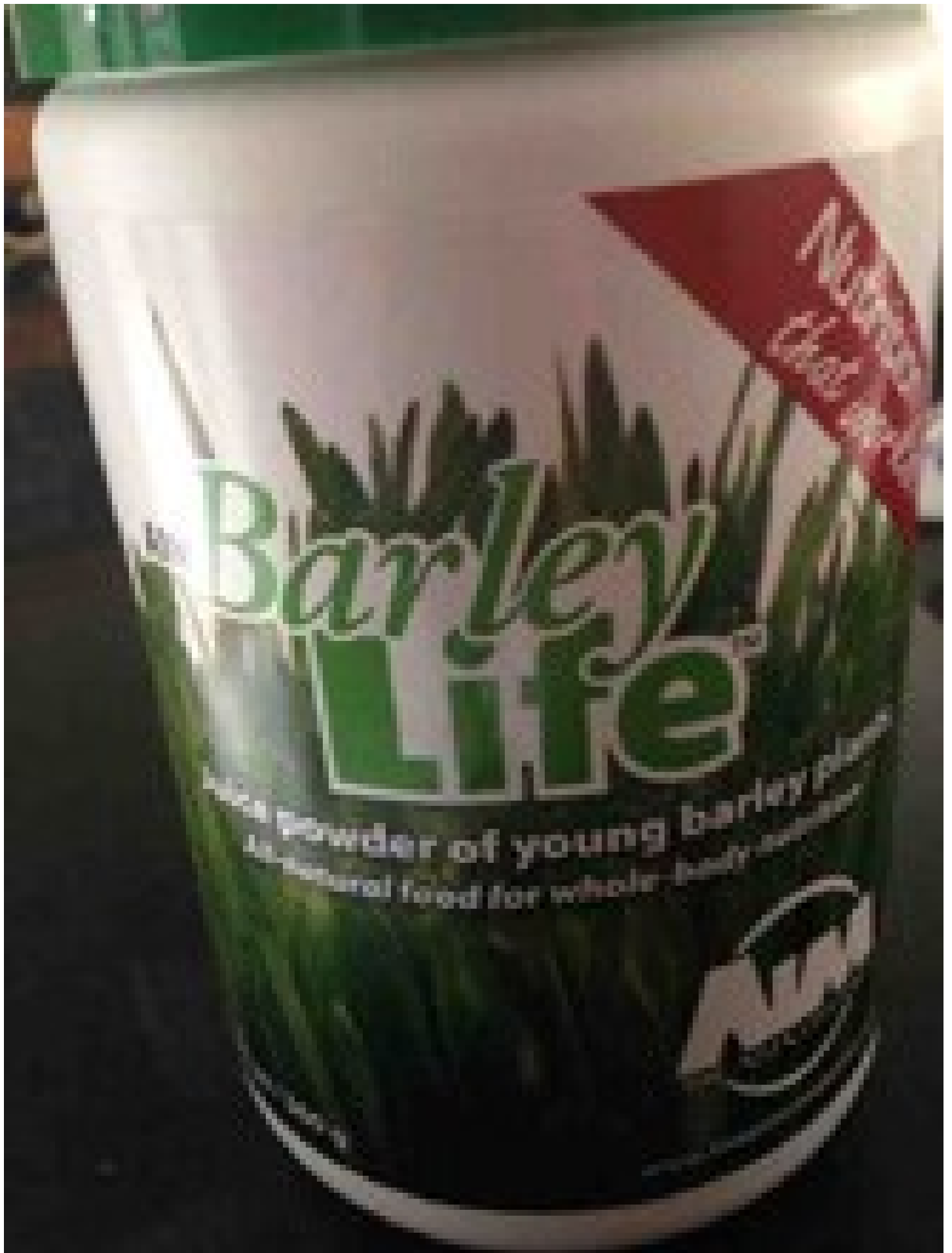
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Super fans:

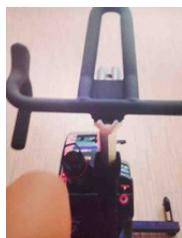
While the majority share their thoughts on average about twice a week, they all feel really guilty if they aren't able to submit a post. So, to keep inspiration high, they turn to things they love: Friendly faces, yummy treats, working out or exotic locations. "This keeps them and their fans happy with most saying their readers are "very" engaged, albeit it's generally from a core group of loyalists" says Reekie.



Keep 'em coming!

Fact: Simply posting great content isn't enough to sustain their readership. Bloggers also have to promote their musings via social media. Twitter is the firm favourite with over a third affirming they tweet about their latest share, followed by Facebook (a quarter). A good dose of Facebook ads, giveaways, Pinterest punts or free media exposure also doesn't hurt.

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"Some said that social media makes it easier to connect with fans as commenting is easier via Facebook than their blog. But it also has a side-effect," says Reekie. For instance one blogger said, "My readership has grown as the web has grown, but as more social media channels have popped up, commenting on the site declined. Now I just share great content."

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There were mixed reviews when it came to working with brands, their marketing agencies or PRs. Simply put: some got it, others didn't. "Expecting free exposure or advertising for nothing seems to be the norm," says Reekie. "But this makes them feel like they're being taken advantage of, while others pleaded for more interesting campaign ideas instead of simple giveaways. Expecting them to publish a press release voetstoots was also a common gripe," shares Reekie.

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To overcome this, it was suggested that marketers take the time to get to know the real influencers and understand what their blog is about and if it's relevant. "Agencies can also invite us to meet with their clients to find ways of working together to promote their brands," said a blogger.

And while the majority blog because they love it, it also pays the bills. Almost all said they earned some form of revenue through their blog: A quarter earn between R10k and R25k a month while a lucky few brought in even more. But money's not everything as while a quarter don't earn a dime, they are given really cool stuff and invited to one-of-a-kind things to do.

"This dipstick survey is a snapshot into life as a blogger. By using the richness of photos in our research we're able to better understand them, and see what they see with our own eyes. We think this makes them more human, and hopefully, encourages those in marketing to treat them with a little more empathy. They are after all just telling their story, and if the shoe fits, they may just tell a brand's story too," concludes Reekie.

For more information about *ovatoyou* visit www.ovatoyou.co.za.

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