

# Share Your Thoughts

## How to Publish a Blog That Boosts Your Business

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## Introduction

There's a real buzz about using a Web log, also known as a "blog", in your business.

It's true that a blog can be a very powerful tool, but it can also be a monumental waste of time. This guide shows you how to create an **effective** blog **cheaply** and **easily**.

This is a practical guide with "how to" information about creating a blog, inserting pictures, adding audio clips, and adding links. But it's also a "why to" guide, explaining the benefits of blogging. And it's a "what to" guide as well, showing you what to blog about in order to maximise its effectiveness as a marketing tool.

As you read this guide, remember that it's called "Share Your Thoughts". I chose that name deliberately. It's not "Share Your Ideas", "Share Your Expertise" or "Share Your Insights". Blogging – in a very broad sense – is about sharing your thoughts – even if they're brief, fleeting, incomplete or unpolished – with the world. Of course, this isn't to say you should be sloppy; but it does mean you don't have to be perfect.

## The Quick Start Guide to Blogging

If you're an experienced Internet user who's familiar with the concept of blogging, and would just like to know how to maximise the effectiveness of your blog, here's a quick reference guide.

Create your blog at [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com). Optionally, get a domain name for it at [www.domaindiscover.com](http://www.domaindiscover.com) and point it to the blog.

Sign up for Google News Alerts at [www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts) on topics of interest.

Sign up at [www.hipcast.com](http://www.hipcast.com) so you can upload audio and video clips.

Then start blogging! Here are some things to blog about:

- ⇒ When Google News Alerts sends you something relevant, write a blog post. The post is a one-paragraph summary of the news story (including a link to it), followed by your one-paragraph commentary on it.
- ⇒ When you reply to a question by e-mail, consider whether it's worth copying that question/response to your blog.
- ⇒ Whenever you publish an e-mail newsletter, copy the articles and paste them as blog posts.
- ⇒ Read your newsletter articles out loud, record them at [www.hipcast.com](http://www.hipcast.com), then post

them to your blog.

- ⇒ Whenever you read a book, blog about it. Write a one-paragraph summary of it, followed by your one-paragraph commentary on it.
- ⇒ When you release a new product or service, blog about it, with a link back to your Web site.
- ⇒ If you're writing a book, use short extracts as blog posts.
- ⇒ Take digital photographs of interesting and relevant things, and post them to your blog.
- ⇒ When you make a presentation, blog about it – the organisation, venue, client and main theme of your presentation.
- ⇒ When you get a testimonial, blog it, with a link to something relevant.

For search engine positioning, focus on the title of your blog posts. That's the best place to put your most important keywords and phrases.

Promote your blog everywhere – from your Web site, from within your e-mail newsletter, in your e-mail signature, and in blog directories.

Find other relevant blogs and link to them from your blog. Ask them to link to you in return. Be selective – don't spam!

That's it!

## What is a blog?

Briefly, a blog is a Web-based diary or journal. The earliest blogs were in fact just created by people recording their random thoughts and ideas on the Web. However, as “blogging” has become more sophisticated, blogs have evolved to much more than just a place to publish your diary. Here’s a better way to think of blogs now:

**A blog is a specific kind of Web site with an easy publishing system.**

In other words, a blog is just a Web site. Blog pages **are** Web pages. They have text and pictures, links to other pages, and appear in search engines.

However, a blog is a particular kind of Web site. A typical Web site has a fixed home page and navigation links to other pages:



When you add new content (such as an article), it usually goes somewhere deep in the site, and is accessible through the navigation links.

A blog, on the other hand, has a constantly-changing home page that reflects the most recent additions to the site:

## Magnetic Messages

Although your message might be the most important thing in your world, it's just one of the hundreds your audience will receive that day – so it's easily forgotten. When you craft a magnetic message, it has deeper impact, a wider reach and a life of its own long after you've gone.

### How to resist attempts to manipulate you

I strongly believe that when you use the principles of creating magnetic messages, you must use them ethically. However, not everybody agrees, and you might find yourself in the position of being manipulated unethically by somebody. [This collection of techniques](#) can help you resist these manipulative attempts and throw the con artist off their pitch.

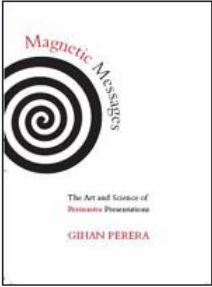
Date: [Saturday, September 29, 2007](#) [0 comments](#)

Labels: [ethics](#), [influence](#), [manipulation](#), [reframing](#)

### One Red Paperclip, by Kyle Macdonald

I've just finished reading the book "One Red Paperclip", where Kyle Macdonald tells the true story of how he traded a paper clip for a house. Well, not in one trade, but in

Magnetic Messages - The Program



Get Updates By E-Mail

KYLE MACDONALD  
*"A Home we'll build our Daily MySpace"*

ONE RED  
PAPERCLIP

Because a blog's home page changes constantly, any permanent text appears above, to the left or to the right of the main blog text:

**Magnetic Messages**

Although your message might be the most important thing in your world, it's just one of the hundreds your audience will receive that day – so it's easily forgotten. When you craft a magnetic message, it has deeper impact, a wider reach and a life of its own long after you've gone.

**How to resist attempts to manipulate you**

I strongly believe that when you use the principles of creating magnetic messages, you must use them ethically. However, not everybody agrees, and you might find yourself in the position of being manipulated unethically by somebody. [This collection of techniques](#) can help you resist these manipulative attempts and throw the con artist off their pitch.

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**Magnetic Messages - The Program**

**Get Updates By E-Mail**

E-mail address:

Instead of a navigation menu, blog entries (known as “posts”) can be “tagged” with various labels, which appear in a list on the blog:

This story is the perfect illustration of selling value. People trade their money for your products. If they think your product or service is worth more than their money, you've got a deal. But if they don't - for whatever reason: No deal. So your job is to convince them that you've got something of value.

**Every** sale boils down to this simple principle. Don't worry about the competition. Forget about building rapport. Ditch all those closing techniques. If you've got a \$20 widget, your customer is asking this question, "Is that worth more to me than the \$20 bill in my wallet?" You've got to get them to say, "Yes".

A paperclip for a house? Crazy, right? Well, it depends. He starts by trading it for a novelty pen, which somebody gave him just for the fun of it. The first few trades are just for fun. And then it gets serious. He gets something rare, and finds a collector willing to trade

**Document Vault**  
 Visit the [Magnetic Messages vault](#). If you have a password, use it for full access, otherwise, just browse the resources.

**Labels**  
[authority](#) (25)  
[benefits](#) (1)  
[blogging](#) (1)  
[book reviews](#) (1)  
[commitment and consistency](#) (3)  
[community](#) (6)

When you add new content to the blog, it automatically gets added to the top of the home page, and other items move down the page.

After a while, the older articles get moved off the home page into an archive:


**Facebook protest demonstrates power of the people**  
 Students protesting the introduction of fees by banking group HSBC have used the social networking site Facebook.com to register their protest. They created such a storm that [HSBC was forced to back down and cancel the fees](#).

What does this mean for you in terms of managing your messages? First, recognise the power of the Internet now for individuals to create change by massing together. Second, realise that just

**Blog Archive**  
[September](#) (10)  
[August](#) (24)  
[July](#) (21)  
[June](#) (19)

Most Web sites are reluctant to link to other Web sites, because of the danger of losing site visitors forever. However, bloggers have a culture of linking to each other, on the basis that they're building a community, not an island. So a blog usually has a list of related blogs – known as a “blog roll”:

it will tend to stick to their belief. Second, be aware that if you're trying to refute something - e.g. by holding a media conference - you have to work extra hard to get your message across. It's not fair, but that's life!

Date: [Saturday, September 22, 2007](#) [0 comments](#) 

Labels: [authority](#), [commitment and consistency](#), [media relations](#), [overcoming objections](#), [PR](#)

[writing](#) (1)

#### Related Blogs

[Reputation Matters](#)

[So What's Next?](#)

[The Public Speaking Blog](#)

[Under Currents](#)

As you can see, although blogs are Web sites, they are less flexible than a general Web site. The blog software dictates where new content appears, how it looks, when it gets archived, and where permanent text must appear.

However, the advantage of this inflexibility is that it's extremely easy to update your blog. You simply fill in a form with the new content, press a button, and the blog software takes care of the rest.

The other advantage of using a blog is that it's cheap to create. In fact, the main blogging software I'll describe here is free; and even paid blogging systems are relatively cheap. Contrast that with most professional Web sites, which typically cost thousands of dollars to build and maintain.

## What's in a Blog?

In this section, I'll describe some of the most common and most useful types of blog entries – particularly as they relate to you as an expert.

### Report on news

The first, and most common, use for a business blog is to report on news in your area of expertise. You watch what's happening, report it and add your opinion. Here's an example where I report on some recent research (thus demonstrating the depth of my expertise):

#### **Be first, be believed**

A University of Michigan study has found that [people tend to believe information the first time they hear it](#), even if they are later presented with contrary information. In fact, the contrary information might even reinforce the original - wrong - message.

What does this mean for you and your messages? First, be aware of the power of being first with a message; those who are persuaded by it will tend to stick to their belief. Second, be aware that if you're trying to refute something - e.g. by holding a media conference - you have to work extra hard to get your message across. It's not fair, but that's life!

Date: [Saturday, September 22, 2007](#) [0 comments](#) 

Here's an example where I report on a news item (demonstrating the currency of my expertise):

### **Facebook protest demonstrates power of the people**

Students protesting the introduction of fees by banking group HSBC have used the social networking site Facebook.com to register their protest. They created such a storm that [HSBC was forced to back down and cancel the fees](#).

What does this mean for you in terms of managing your messages? First, recognise the power of the Internet now for individuals to create change by massing together. Second, realise that just because you think you have power over individual customers and clients, they also have new avenues for flexing their muscles.

Date: [Saturday, September 22, 2007](#) [0 comments](#) 

Labels: [community](#), [Facebook](#), [influence](#), [media relations](#), [Web 2.0](#)

### **Make it personal**

Another common use for a blog is to report on events in your own life, adding your commentary to make it relevant for your readers. In fact, the whole area of blogging started this way, with ordinary Internet users telling the story of their life.

As a business blogger, your job is not just to tell the story, but to explain how it's relevant and meaningful.

Here's an example:

### Fraser's Restaurant

I'm going out to dinner tomorrow night, and chose one of Perth's nicest restaurants, Fraser's. I went to their Web site to make a booking, and I was particularly impressed with [their reservations page](#).

Not only does it make the reservation process easy, it adds this reassuring comment:

**Please note that all online reservations will be confirmed via email, if you do not receive an email within 1 hour of sending your on line reservation request please call 9482 0100 to ensure we have your reservation.**

Is that really reassuring, you might ask? After all, isn't that admitting that the system might fail? Yes, **but ...** Internet users often worry that on-line messages get lost or ignored. Fraser's Restaurant is doing the right thing by acknowledging that concern and then addressing it. Smart!

### Rant!

Don't be afraid to state an opinion, even if it's controversial. In fact, the best bloggers take a stand, and are willing to rant. Blogs are more "opinionated" than typical Web sites and articles.

For example, I weighed in to the global warming debate by presenting a blog post critical of Al Gore:

### **Al Gore's own highly inconvenient truth**

Al Gore, worldwide standard-bearer for climate change environmentalists, [doesn't practise what he preaches](#), according to the Tennessee Center for Policy Research. According to their report (using figures from the Nashville Electric Service), Gore's elaborate mansion in Nashville consumes more electricity each month than the average American household in an entire year!

This is not about the global warming debate. It's about the integrity of you, the messenger, when presenting your message. If you promote yourself as an authority - and you should - be willing to back it up when people examine your life. People now have more access than ever to information, and better ways of sharing it than ever before.

Date: [Saturday, July 21, 2007](#) [0 comments](#)  

Labels: [authority](#)

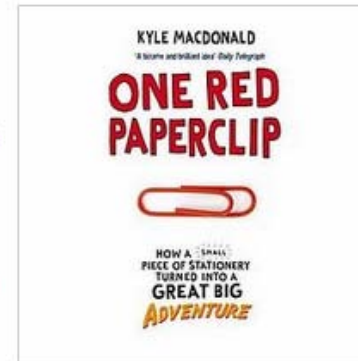
### **Review a book**

Read a good book about your area of expertise? Blog about it! This shows you're staying abreast of other material, giving you credibility. As with your other blog posts, remember to add your opinion and interpretation. Here's an example:

### One Red Paperclip, by Kyle Macdonald

I've just finished reading the book "One Red Paperclip", where Kyle Macdonald tells the true story of how he traded a paper clip for a house. Well, not in one trade, but in a series of trades that took him back and forth across North America.

This story is the perfect illustration of selling value. People trade their money for your products. If they think your product or service is worth more than their money, you've got a deal. But if they don't - for whatever reason: No deal. So your job is to convince them that you've got something of value.



This also gives you a small extra opportunity to tap into the people searching Google for the book title. It's not a big factor, but it could get you some unexpected site visitors. To maximise this opportunity, make the book title and author the blog post title - as I've done in the example above.

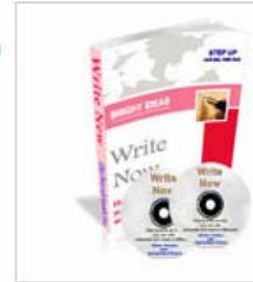
### Promote your stuff

Don't be shy about promoting your products and services. When you launch a new product or service, blog about it! As long as your blog isn't **only** self-promotion, your readers won't mind:

### Is your writing letting you down?

Even in these days of information overload, a clean, crisp well-written piece can cut through the clutter and create lasting impact. Unfortunately, most people think they're poor at writing, which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The good news is that you don't have to be a Hemingway, Shakespeare or Jane Austen to write a compelling article, report or even a book. [Learn how to express yourself in writing](#) - clearly, concisely and in a compelling way.



To do this in a more subtle way, if a story naturally leads to a product/service you offer, link to it. For example, this blog post about telling stories relates naturally to my book/CD product "Write Now", so the last line of the blog post links directly to that product page on my Web site:

### Who are the heroes in your stories?

Storytelling is one of the most powerful ways of creating magnetic, memorable messages. And one of the reasons stories work is because they have a hero, who we can identify with. Use [this list of heroic characters](#) to understand the different types of hero, so you can incorporate them into your stories for greater impact.

[Learn how to craft powerful stories here.](#)

## Refer to experts

Link to other experts - other bloggers or other Web site owners. Here's an example:

### **Rachel Green's media tips for speakers**

When delivering a message as an expert, it's important to be credible and authoritative. One of our clients, Rachel Green, has published a list of [10 media tips for professional speakers](#). Use this checklist before any media opportunity, to ensure you create the best impression.

Date: [Sunday, August 05, 2007](#) [0 comments](#)  

Labels: [authority](#), [media relations](#), [PR](#)

## Copy material from others

If you see something particularly relevant written by somebody else, you might prefer to paste it in directly – with their permission, of course! For example, after reading one of my clients' books, I asked her for permission to include an extract in my blog:

### Goodbye, dear brand - I knew you well

I've just finished reading "*Forced Focus - The Essence of Attracting and Retaining the Best People*", by a client and colleague, Penny Burke. It's not just a great read for organisations looking to attract and keep employees; it also has value if you're working on your own organisation's brand. This is an essential concept for delivering a consistent message inside and outside your organisation.



### Insert pictures

It's easy to write blog posts as just plain text, and there's nothing wrong with that. But you can add an extra dimension to your blog by using pictures as well. You've seen a couple of examples already; they have been mainly decorative. Sometimes you get the opportunity to include a picture that adds to the blog content - as in this example:

### How NOT to use the scarcity principle

For years, *Readers Digest* has been sending junk mail to anybody and everybody. Presumably their marketing works, but some of it makes me cringe.

Their latest package to me had this stupid phrase "Deadline Compliant", as if **that** would make me more inclined to respond!



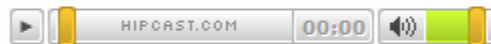
Look for things you can photograph or scan for your blog.

### Record an audio clip

You can also include audio clips in your blog, in a way that most Internet users can listen immediately by simply clicking on the blog page - for example:

### Expert Gold: Don't Sell Too Soon

Most people visiting your Web site are looking for information, not (yet) for products. Lead with value and show your expertise - before jumping in with your sales pitch.



Date: [Saturday, August 25, 2007](#) [0 comments](#) 

Labels: [authority](#), [reciprocity principle](#), [value](#)

Audio (and video, which we'll see next) used to be difficult to produce and use, but it's now got much easier.

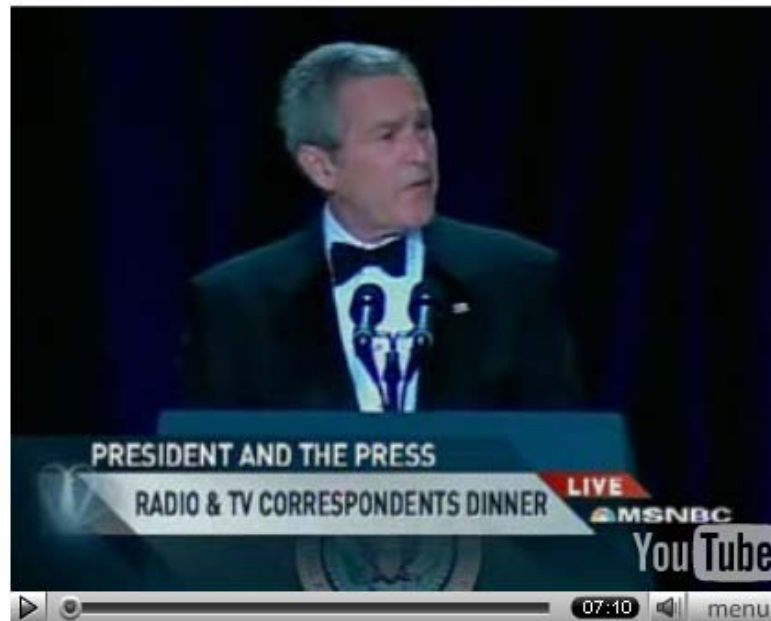
### Insert a video

The next obvious step is video, and sure enough that's easy to add to your blog as well.

The simplest way to add video is to search a Web site like YouTube [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) for video clips in your area of expertise. YouTube gives you permission to embed these clips in your blog – in fact, it helps you to do it. Here's an example:

### George Bush is funny (intentionally, I mean)

Even George W. Bush can be funny, given enough time and the right speech writers. In this speech to the Radio and TV Correspondents Associations, he starts with a very humorous segment:



A more sophisticated option is to record your own video clips, publish them to YouTube and then embed them - for example:



Date: [Wednesday, September 26, 2007](#) [0 comments](#) 

Labels: [book reviews](#), [value](#)

## Link to reports


Your blog is a starting point for readers to discover more about your area of expertise. It's not necessarily the entire body of knowledge about that subject, but it's a starting point. So when you find reports, e-books or white papers about this topic, link to them from your blog.

Here's an example:

### **Always be persuading**

In public speaking courses, beginners are taught that a speech has one of three purposes: To entertain, to inform or to persuade. But what if you looked at **every** presentation as an opportunity to persuade - even if you're informing or entertaining as well?

In this free report, [To Inform Or To Persuade?](#), David Brenner makes exactly this point. It's a quick and easy read, and particularly relevant for you if you make presentations in the workplace.

Date: [Friday, October 05, 2007](#) [0 comments](#)  

Labels: [delivery](#), [influence](#), [presentation skills](#)

When linking to other people's material, be sure you understand the copyright in that material. They will usually prefer that you link to their Web site rather than linking directly to a downloadable document.

## Final Words

I hope you've enjoyed this program. I really do believe that blogging is going to be a huge benefit for businesses. And because most businesses aren't taking advantage of it yet, you're way ahead of the pack. I hope you make the most of blogging. I would love to hear what you think about blogging when you get it going. Feel free to e-mail me [gihan@gihanperera.com](mailto:gihan@gihanperera.com). I'd love to hear your comments, your case studies, your success stories, your failure stories and any questions that you have. Best wishes for taking advantage of what I think is going to be one of the most exciting opportunities you'll have for marketing your business.



## Subscribe

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## About Gihan Perera

Gihan Perera is a business consultant, speaker, author and entrepreneur – with clients throughout Australia, and in New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore, the U.K. and Canada. He works with professional speakers and trainers, consultants, business owners, CEOs and strategic leadership teams to improve their marketing, sales and persuasion skills in one-on-one meetings, group presentations and on the Internet.

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