

How to... be brilliant at blogging

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Charity Writing and Communications
Training Days
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3rd Sector Mission Control
Focus | Strategy | Fundraising

I didn't write this session title! I wouldn't say I was brilliant at blogging. But I enjoy it and have found it works well for me.

Posted my 96th blog last night!

It's a sideways look at the world of charities.

This presentation contains 10+ tips from what I've learned along the way.

About me

- [@richardsved](#)
- 20+ years in charity sector
- Have led the fundraising function of four national charities
- Fundraising experience includes Corp., Events, Govt., Lottery, Major donors, Trusts
- Serial volunteer and Trustee
- Freelance consultant and interim manager (NCVO, 3rd Sector Mission Control)

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Finding my voice



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Before I started my 3rd Sector Mission Control, I got writing in other ways, including:

A blog about being a club runner who wasn't really that good but loved it! Became about my interior monologue while running, as well as about pride, passion, self-improvement, and teamwork.

Finding my voice

+ Armstrong and Miller, Alban Arena, 20 November 2010 - review by herts critic

If you're not the parent of a tweeny, or if you don't like middle of the road music or dance to The Alban Arena. Among the many top comic names, Armstrong and Miller are arguable tour.

It's their two most recognised characters who open the show, the two World War II airmen comedy but the twist in this sketch is that the airmen speak with 1940's Queen's English. Many of the favourites from the series make an appearance: the pair of musicians whose inevitably destroys a 'quite literally priceless' piece of antiquity, the husband who returns his wife is having an affair with his boss and best friend, and the regency dancers whose

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Herts Critic – anonymous theatre critic for a local website.

First real blog! March 2013



CHARITY MANAGEMENT | GOVERNANCE

SHOULD WE FARM OR FIGHT? THE SMALL CHARITY'S DILEMMA

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Know your audience!

My interests are primarily in working with small charities.

"Breakthrough" blog



COMMUNICATIONS | FUNDRAISING

WHY WE SHOULD ALL BE ASKING "CAKE OR MUFFIN?"

BY RICHARD SVED / MAY 28, 2013 / 1 COMMENT

The other day, I was in a branch of a well-known high street coffee company. (It's not the one you're thinking of, so stop trying to guess.)

I placed my order – for an Earl Grey.

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A sideways look

Simple concept – one message! About charities upselling.

Going viral

WHY WE SHOULD LISTEN TO JAMES, THE STATION ANNOUNCER

BY RICHARD SVED / JANUARY 24, 2014 / 0 COMMENT

Commuting can be pretty horrible. You don't need me to tell you that.

But this blog is a tribute to one man who makes it a little better for hundreds if not thousands of people. I want to tell you about how much I've learned from him.

He's called James, and he is the announcer at a station I use most days. He begins every announcement with the words "Hello, my name's James."

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Doesn't have to be humorous. This one tapped a local nerve and was shared widely in St Albans.

Going viral

“PART OF WHO I AM!” – WHAT CAN CHARITIES LEARN FROM PARKRUN?

BY RICHARD SVED / AUGUST 3, 2015 / 9 COMMENTS

I've been writing this charity blog for over two years now, and there's a passion of mine I haven't yet mentioned. Can you believe it?

Today, I want to tell you about the phenomenon that is **parkrun**, and what I believe charities can learn from it.

At 9am *every* Saturday, in parks **up and down the country** and **round the world**, people young and old,



(c) Richard Underwood

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Linking passions – this one was shared across the parkrun network and beyond, round the world.

Using the form

1. Bring strength, bring trust, bring harmony


(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace Love and understanding?




*So where are the strong? And who are the trusted?
And where is the harmony? Sweet harmony.*

You're not essay writing and you can use other media. You can even play some tunes!

Bringing people in



SEPTEMBER 16, 2016
Why charities need to consider
four day old lasagne



SEPTEMBER 13, 2016
Fundraisers: think 'Snog, Marry,
or Avoid?"



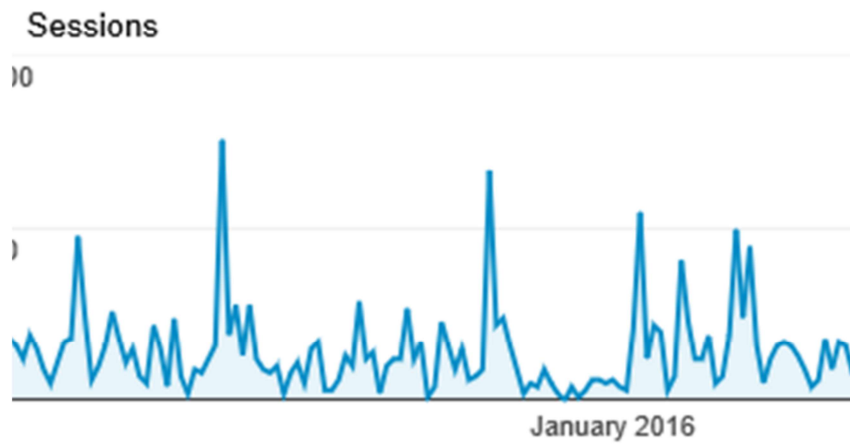
**FUNDRAISERS: THINK ABOUT CUTE
KITTEN POSTERS!**
Charity fundraisers may well feel a little like the kitten in this
poster. It's often pretty tough, isn't it? Well, [...read more.](#)

[READ MORE](#)

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The title is so important. It brings people in. A call to action.

Does it work?



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Yes. Each one of these spikes is when I posted a blog. Keeps me in the forefront of people's minds. Keeps my site current. Gives me content for a regular newsletter, again to stay in touch with lots of contacts.

Blogging tips

1. Make it personal
2. Think laterally
3. Make people smile

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Also look at the free download about blogging on www.lucidity.org.uk.

1. Make it personal

Everybody likes talking about themselves, right? Well, don't overdo it. But I've found that the best blogs have an authenticity that's derived from being from the author's indisputable perspective. Don't make it too introspective though – think about how the reader might relate to your observations.

2. Think laterally

Blogs are a great medium for the lateral thinker. I've written blogs relating aspects of the charity sector to [glorious train stations](#), [self-cleaning bridges](#), [dancing](#), [yoga](#) – you name it. My main aim is to get people to say to themselves: "I hadn't thought of it like that before!"

3. Make 'em smile

Careful with this one. Jokes can be misinterpreted. But I've found gentle humour (yes, that's how we spell it here) works quite well. I like puns and wordplay, but that might not be your style. What makes you smile?

Blogging tips

4. Have a conversation with yourself
5. Link to something topical
6. Full sentences? Not necessary.

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4. Have a conversation with yourself

Why does this work? I'm not sure, but it seems to. Should we move onto the next point? Yes, we've not got much time.

5. Link to something topical

I don't do this so often, but when I do, for example in [this blog about football sticker collecting](#) just ahead of the World Cup, there seems to be quite a lift in readership.

6. Full sentences? Not necessary...

Grammar rules can go out of the window in your blog. A blog can be more conversational, and so can mimic dialogue, rather than be an essay. Short sentences rule.

Blogging tips

7. Share it on social media
8. The title's the thing
9. Lists work
10. Keep it short

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7. Share it on social media

Many people seem to write blogs and leave them there in the ether, hoping that people will magically be drawn to them. Share them! LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook have all worked well for me.

8. Don't underestimate the importance of your title

Don't be too vague. That's just annoying and won't draw people in. But do make it clear that you may have an interesting angle.

9. Make it in list form

This is an example of one. It's easily digestible, and helps people to know how long your blog will be. We're all busy, you know?

10. Keep it short

Get in. Make your points. Get out.

Thank you

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