

# Filling in Le Blanc

**Michel LeBlanc** As a graduate of the first class of Master of Sciences in electronic commerce at HEC Montréal and Université de Montréal, Michel is a coveted consultant for Fortune 500 companies, small businesses and government. His blog, [michelleblanc.com](#), is ranked by Wikipedia as one of the top 20 marketing blogs on the planet. He doesn't just riff about business: to help cure a medical condition, he bravely revealed plans to undergo a sex change operation this summer.

**Why he started blogging.** I needed a platform to express myself and to gain customers. And my blog was just the tool for that. But writing a blog is not enough. You have to go out to other blogs and make a comment there. For every post you write, you should at least make two comments on other blogs. It's a bit like being at school in the courtyard – if you speak to yourself over by the fence, everybody's going to think you're crazy. But if you're in the middle of the courtyard, you're talking to people, and you're going to make friends.

**The importance of variety.** Last year, my most prominent post was about my favourite restaurants in Montreal. One out of every five of my posts talks about something completely different than the main subject, which is e-strategy and e-marketing. By doing so, I let people know that I am a multi-dimensional person.

**A great blog.** Montreal-based online jeweller Ice.com has a blog called "Just Ask Leslie: Jewelry Tips," and it talks about questions you might have when you go into a jewelry shop. Why is this a good idea? Because when people search on search engines, they search for solutions to problems – they don't always search for products. And if you talk about your customers' problems, their questions and, even better, let your customers ask questions, those will be the same questions they will type into a search engine, and so they're going to find you and your product.

**On disclosing his sex change.** I'm an advocate of radical transparency – of being honest, of being truthful. And it's very hard to give speeches about how it is important to be truthful and [then] lie to people... So I talked about the fact that I do have a sickness, which is called gender identity dysphoria, and I explained it on my blog and what the treatment was. And the treatment is to change my sex.

**Client reaction.** It's been incredible. Actually, [the post] has increased my business. When the news came out, one customer, she said, "Michel, now you're going to be free. Now you are you going to be more productive and now we're going to be able to talk about dresses!"

**Being a woman, in the online world.** I was a woman on Second Life, and I was struck at how stupid men are with women. They came up to me and cruise me in such a rude and stupid way. I wondered, "Did I ever do that to women?.. But I'm very lucky, because my name is Michel LeBlanc. And my name will always be Michel LeBlanc, but instead of "Michel" and "LeBlanc" it will be "Michelle" and "Blanc." So I keep the same URL, same everything, just change the way I space the two words.

**The big idea.** If you have a big passion, it spreads like wildfire. And to me, passion is everything.

**On a recent big idea.** "Evaluate Me" from Monster, which is an online game where your friends evaluate what you're good at. It's done by a guy named Martin Oulette-Provokat, and he's one of my mentors, a genius. He also did the "Rate Your Boss" campaign for Monster that went worldwide.



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