

The Blogging Secrets of Our Awesome Planet The Definitive Professional Blogging Guide to become a Maven in your Niche

Dear Maven Friend,

An awesome greetings from Our Awesome Planet!

I always wanted to give back to the community, so on the 4th anniversary of Our Awesome Planet (OAP), I would like to share my blogging secrets behind OAP so that *you* can start your own journey to mavenship.

I remember when [I started last January 2005](#), I didn't know how to blog, how to generate traffic or how to earn online. I made a LOT of mistakes and learned a lot along the way. I discovered that there actually *is* a formula for blogging success. The exciting part is you can reapply it to your own process.

In this eBook, I outlined 10 steps on how you can launch yourself from being a Blogger Wannabe to becoming a respected Internet Maven in your niche or industry. These are specific steps so that you don't have to guess what strategies work best. You can benefit from my 4 years of learning from the best mentors, testing optimization strategies and experimenting on my personal blog.

It took me 4 years to get from zero to 3 million page views, 1.5 million unique visitors and 4,000+ subscribers in [Our Awesome Planet](#). I believe that with these strategies I'm sharing with you, you can jumpstart your own journey in a much faster way.

I could easily charge \$37 for the information in this eBook, but I decided to share it for FREE. I got this idea from an OAP reader who responded to my blogging survey and suggested that this is one way I can pay it forward.

My sincerest gratitude for following my OAP adventures!

Live an Awesome Life,



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Step #1 Define Your Advocacy.

This is the most critical step.

Advocacy is the pro-active support of an idea, cause or your personal convictions. You need to determine what **value** you will provide to the online community. What is your **advocacy**?

Here are some guide questions to help you determine this:

1. Do you want to **solve a problem** that you personally believe you have a solution to?
2. Do you want to **promote** your business, your passions or even a politician in the elections?
3. Are you **angry** about certain habits, personality traits, characteristics or common practice? Do you vow to do whatever you can to address it?
4. Do you want to **become a recognized expert** in a particular field?
5. If you die tomorrow and the future generation is reading your blog, what do you want to be **remembered** for?

Write down your Advocacy: (65 Chars max)

Write a sentence about your Advocacy: (150 Chars max)

Step #2 Brand Yourself Online.

On Day One, you have to build your own personal brand.

It takes time -- so the earlier you do it, the faster you will become an expert in your chosen field. Most people are building the brands of big companies by promoting them in their email address (antondiaz@gmail.com) or website (antondiaz.multiply.com)

Here is a Maven Secret: **Branding yourself online starts with your email address and the unique name of your website.**

Two ways to brand your email address:

1. **Get a surname domain** by registering <firstname>@<surname>.<country domain>. As an illustration, I registered diaz.ph, which means Diaz Family in the Philippines. I then redirected anton@diaz.ph to my gmail account. By the way, you can do this for all members of your family (like aidan@diaz.ph, etc.)
(*\$45 for an email forwarding plan from Maven.* [Domains.ph](http://Maven.Domains.ph))
2. **Get an email address for your unique domain:**
<name>@<uniquedomain.com>. For example, I can set up the email address anton@ourawesomeplanet.com from my domain registrar. The domain registrar (like Godaddy.com) can be your email host, but I would recommend forwarding it to your gmail account (FREE with your domain usually). Set up your email address in [GMAIL](https://GMAIL.com). (FREE)

Step #3 Buy Your Virtual Real Estate.

Two ways to choose a Unique Domain Name for your Brand:

1. **Leverage on an existing Brand.**

If you already have a column in a newspaper or you are known already in your industry by a particular name, I would suggest that you use that name and register .COM domain.

Our Awesome Planet is a positive twist on *Lonely Planet*, the respected travel guide of the world.

2. **Get a Unique Domain with the Right Keywords.**

If you are starting from scratch, here is the maven secret for choosing a domain name:

- a. Go to [Google Keywords Tool](#) to find relevant keywords.
- b. Enter your advocacy name in the “**Descriptive Words or Phrases**” box and click on “**Use Synonyms**”.
- c. Add all the keywords based on your personal preference, on advertiser competition or on Approx. Search Volume. (Get a minimum of 20, no maximum limit.)
- d. Download these keywords via text file.
- e. Go to www.YourVirtualEstate.com powered by GoDaddy to find your unique domain and cheapest .com prices.
- f. Click on Bulk Registration below the Domain Name Search.
- g. Cut and paste the downloaded keywords into the Bulk Domain Registration Box. (This should give you the unique .COM domains options based on the relevant keywords.)
- h. Finally, register the .COM domain that you like.

(*< \$8 for one year*)

Step #4 Build Your Home Online.

There are three types of virtual real estate developers:

1. Virtually Free Estates (FREE)

I would recommend **Blogger.com** because:

- it is easy to use;
- you can use your unique domain name (instead of the default blogspot.com);
- it is owned by Google; and
- it allows advertising in their sites.

Other developers are:

- Wordpress.com but you cannot use ads in their estates.
- Multiply.com but you cannot use a unique domain name.

Multiply is very good for generating traffic in Manila.

2. Managed Hosting Virtual Estates (Paid)

I would recommend **Typepad.com** because:

- it offers the easy interface of Blogger and the flexibility of Self-Hosted platforms like Wordpress;
- you don't have to worry about hosting issues, upgrades and bandwidth;
- you can use your unique domain name; and
- it allows advertising in their sites.

For Advanced Users, I would recommend **Prologger.PH**

- [Semiologic Pro Hosted Versions](#), the most powerful SEO optimized Wordpress platform

3. Self-Hosted Virtual Estates (Paid)

I would recommend Wordpress Platform because:

- it is the most popular and powerful platform;
- most pro-bloggers use it;
- it has a lot of FREE templates available online;
- most web designers support it so you can have a customized design at an affordable price;
- it has ease of support because all common problems have been documented online; and
- the software is FREE.

Hosting Providers

You need to pay for hosting where you install your Wordpress platform. I would recommend the following providers:

- Dreamhost – It is the leading pioneer of domain hosting.
- Host Gator – Most Internet marketers use hostgator for their sites and resell their hosting services.
- Ploghosts - It is the leading domain hosting for bloggers in the Philippines.

Maven Secrets | Get the Following Hosting Specifications:

2GB or Unlimited BW, DON'T Get Windows Hosting,
100MB or Unlimited Disk Space, with FTP Accounts

Step #5 Optimize for Search Engine Superhighway

Two key concepts for optimizing your Virtual Home:

1. Usability Recommendations:

- a. **Use a nice Hero Shot as the header image.** A hero shot is a picture that communicates your brand and the key benefits for people visiting your website.
- b. **Use a 2- or 3-column layout, with the sidebars on the right.** With this layout, the headers will be loaded first, then the contents, and lastly, the sidebars and footer.
- c. **Use Navigation Headlines on your sidebars.** You need to help visitors navigate your site with those headlines.
- d. **Ensure Website Load Time** is less than [10 seconds](#).

2. Search Engines Crawlability Recommendations:

- a. **Ensure you have a Title Tag and Description Tag** for the home page and each of your blog posts.
- b. **Internally Link to all your Blog Posts.**
- c. **Create a Google Site Map for your Website** using [Google Webmaster Tools](#).
- d. **Ensure your code does not have an encoding error** using the [W3C Markup Validation Service](#).

Step #6 Integrate Your Home in Your Virtual Social Community.

Here's a checklist for building your online community:

1. **Carefully set up your RSS Feed and Email Feed via [Feedburner](#).**
2. **Set up a [Twitter Account](#)** and post your twits on the blog via a widget. (You can also set up [Plurk](#).)
3. **Set up your [Facebook Account](#)** (if you don't have one yet). Integrate your blog with your Facebook account.
4. **Use [Hellotxt.com](#) or [Ping.fm](#)** to update all your online status at the same time.
5. **Create your [Multiply.com](#) presence.** You would need this to interact with the Multiply community.
6. **Set up your photo hosting account.** I personally use [Flickr](#) because you can directly embed Flickr photos.
7. **Set up your [MyBlogLog Account](#) community.** It has a cool widget where you can see who your visitors are.
8. **Configure your blog in [Technorati](#).**
9. **Install [Google Analytics](#) on your blog.**
10. **Create your [YouTube account](#) for your videos.**

Step #7 Put Up and Strategically Locate Advertising Billboards in Your Virtual Home.

I made a lot of mistakes with AdSense. Thus, I would like to share with you the **Basic Truths I learned about AdSense:**

1. **You start earning in AdSense once you are getting 1,000 page views per day, on average.**

So, when you are starting out, don't focus on earning money from online advertisements. Concentrate on marketing your website and building traffic for your blog.

2. **AdSense Income is a function of Traffic, Click Through Rates and Cost Per Click.** You can influence all these factors if you set up your blog properly.

Some Maven Secrets:

Traffic – You can boost traffic by marketing your blog online or offline, or by increasing the subscriptions to your blog.

Click Through Rates (CTR) – You can improve CTR by placing the ads strategically on the top left sidebar or inside your blog post above the fold. You can also optimize it through AdSense Custom Channels feature.

Cost Per Click – You can increase this by targeting niches that are very competitive, like electronics or mobile phones.

Step #8 Write Your First Post by Announcing Your Advocacy, Virtual Address and Community.

The first blog post is usually the hardest to write because it feels awkward and there is a tendency to procrastinate on starting or finishing it. Let me help you with some ideas on how to overcome these potential barriers.

Tips on Writing Your First Blog Post:

1. **Why?** You can start the blog post by giving a background on the title and a one-sentence description about your advocacy. Focus on answering why you started the blog in the first place.
2. **Capture the Emotions.** The key to a successful first blog post is just to capture the moment. You want to record history as it happens. I often go back to my first blog post and relive the emotions I had at the time that I wrote it.
3. **Write to your audience.** Don't write to yourself -- write to the people you are targeting to read the blog. What would you say to them? A warm welcome is appropriate, and sharing with them what they can expect from you is helpful too.
4. **Just do it.** Don't worry about the people who will be reading your blog. Be satisfied with the fact that you were able to publish what you wanted to say on your own terms and in your own medium.

Step #9 Write the Next 10 Pillar Articles that would Define Your Brand and Advocacy.

Before you launch your blog, you need to write the first 10 posts. These articles will define your virtual home, so take the time to write them well.

Tips on Writing Your First 10 Articles:

1. Write with the Heart and Edit with the Mind.

Capture your emotions in your blog post. Own the blog post by personalizing it. Make sure that you are the only person who can write it based on your unique experiences.

2. Write Timeless Articles.

How do you make an article timeless? Timeless is defined as a piece of writing that you can enjoy reading forever. The key is to write about your learning, insights and observations. You can also create case studies, document your experience, or make a historical account.

3. Write Viral Posts.

There are three simple ways of writing viral posts:

- a. Make a list of anything – Top 10..., Best of...
- b. Post wacky pictures or videos
- c. Be controversial in your opinions or do an exposé

Step #10 Invite People to Your Virtual Home and Community by Marketing it Online and Offline.

This is the fun part!

If you believe you have a great site that is worth raving about, it is easy to market your site to friends, family and other people.

There are Five Sources of Traffic:

- 1. Search Engines Traffic.** Write a viral post targeting the right keywords for your niche that people would love to link to or forward in an email.
- 2. Social Media Traffic.** Build your community of friends in Multiply, Facebook and Twitter, where you can share your advocacy and blog posts.

(Here are the more advanced ones:)

- 3. Pay Per Click Traffic.** Get instant traffic by targeting people who are already looking for your information or product in the search engines.
- 4. Maven Marketing.** Building your “expert” status is the exponential way to generate traffic.
- 5. TV, Newspaper and Radio Traffic.** Get featured in newspapers, magazines, TV and radio.

The Blogging Secrets of Our Awesome Planet
A Step-by-Step Guide to Launch Yourself
From Blogger Wannabe to **Internet Maven**

WORKSHEET

Advocacy Name (65Chars): _____

One Sentence Description (150Chars): _____

Unique Domain (2-3 words.COM): _____

Personalized Email Address to Use: _____

Virtual Real Estate Location:
(Blogger, Typepad or Wordpress) _____

Design of your Virtual Home:
(Get a Designer or Use Standard Templates) _____

Set up your Blog Community:
(Feedburner|Google Analytics|Technorati,
Multiply|Facebook|YouTube|Twitter/Plurk,
Flickr|MyBlogLog|Ping.fm/Hellotxt.com) _____

Put Ads on your blog? (Yes/No) _____

Title of First Blog Post: _____

Outline of the next 10 Blog Posts: _____

Traffic / Marketing Strategy to Use:
(Search Engine, Social Media, PPC, Maven
Marketing, Tri-Media Traffic) _____