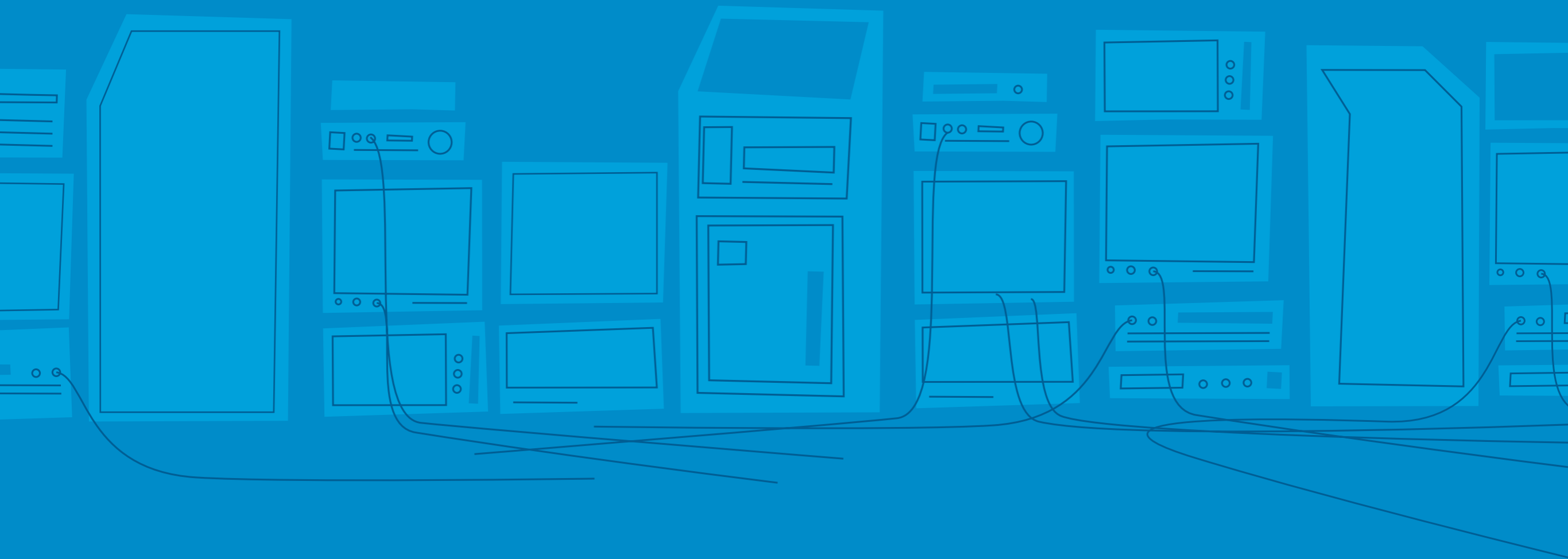


CONTENT MARKETING'S ROAD TO THE TOP

FROM BUSKING YOUR IDEAS TO PLAYING TO THE MASSES



As AC/DC warned budding musicians, “It’s a long way to the top if you wanna rock ‘n’ roll.” Any great musician must earn their dues and learn their craft if they are to hone the creative instincts that can put them at the top of their game. Evolution is an essential part of becoming an important and influential artist.

If you wanna get to the top in content marketing, there’s a journey to take as well. Content marketing’s core purpose is to inform, inspire, and entertain. It takes learning what you’re good at, figuring out what others want,

discovering how to give it to them, and then somehow managing to get better at it all. Like a musical artist going from garage to stadium, it takes passion—but it also takes practice. Knowing what you’re aiming for, and how to get there, can make a big difference to whether you flourish as a content artist—or end up in a creative dead-end.

This e-book is your rock ‘n’ roll guide to a career in content marketing. We’ve analyzed the four key stages that every successful content marketer passes through on their journey from

newbie to superstar, and for each one, we’ve looked at the actions that will help get you to the next level. We’ve even worked in some inspirational listening to act as the soundtrack for your content marketing development, from artists who’ve shown the value of being able to learn and grow.

THE YOUNG GUN

In many ways, this first stage in the content marketing journey is the most exciting time of all. You're operating under the radar: practicing on your own, scoring gigs where you can, firing your passion, and absorbing all of the skills and ideas that you need to define yourself as an artist.

This is a time to explore what you like, what you don't, and what approach to content makes everything click for you. The key is to soak up ideas and knowledge everywhere that you can. Read relevant blog posts, comment on them, and start conversations. Join online groups, start asking questions and giving your own views. Be at any event that you can, network like crazy, and grab a few moments with your favorite speakers to ask their advice.

Amid all of this, you'll need to start scoring your first content marketing gigs. Your LinkedIn profile is the shop window for your emerging talents. Make sure that it reflects your passion for content. Write a summary that captures what you're about, and include links to posts that you've written and ideas that fire your creativity. As you start to perform, ask other content marketers for recommendations based on what you've created so far.

WORK TO GET NOTICED!

40X

Users with 100% complete profiles are 40x more likely to receive opportunities to connect on LinkedIn.



YOUR MUSICAL INSPIRATION

Are You Experienced?

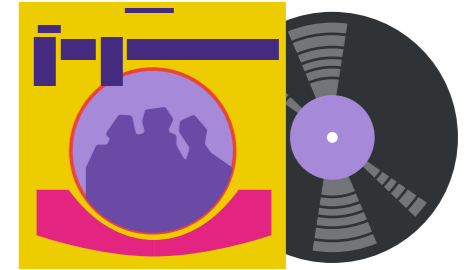
The Jimi Hendrix Experience

Very few people had heard of Jimi Hendrix in October 1966 when he started recalling this debut album. Fifty years later it's regarded not just as one of the greatest debuts—but as one of the greatest albums full stop. Jimi's success seemed to come out of the blue, but that wasn't really the case. His big moment really came when he was playing nightclubs in New York City and was spotted by Keith Richards' girlfriend Linda Keith. She kept referring him to producers until he found the right support to showcase his talents. The appetite he showed in his young gun years was the key to his explosive success later on.

Want more inspiration of how hard gigging and an openness to new ideas can prepare you for stand-out creativity? How about The Beatles' journey towards recording *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, or Davie Bowie's preparation for *Ziggy Stardust* and the *Spiders from Mars*?

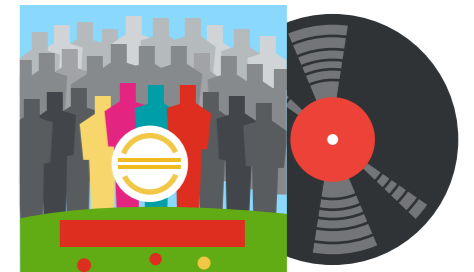
HERE'S HOW TO ROCK THE YOUNG GUN PHASE AND PREPARE FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF YOUR CAREER:

Learn your craft by reading influential industry books such as *The Elements of Style* by Williams Strunk Jr. and *Content Rules* by Ann Handley and C.C Chapman.



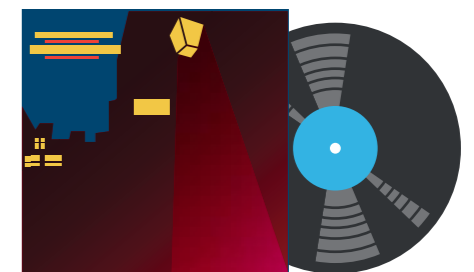
Are You Experienced?
Jimi Hendrix

Follow industry thought leaders on LinkedIn and Twitter, and get on their radar by commenting, liking, and sharing their posts.



Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band
The Beatles

Find a kick-ass mentor—someone to guide you through the tough times and celebrate the good.



Ziggy Stardust
David Bowie

THE EMERGING ARTIST

Congratulations—you're getting noticed. But now is definitely not the time to rest on your laurels. When you have people's attention, you need to use it to impress. It's time to start defining your own content marketing world view: the themes, ideas, and content marketing style that you can own. At the same time, you need to keep on hustling. You've got the momentum, and you've got the creative energy. Don't let it dissipate.

Make time to analyze the content that gets your own heart pumping and compels you to share with others. This will help you to identify the themes and ideas that you're most passionate about. Don't be afraid to mix your own experiences and early learnings into your thinking as well. That's a key part of developing your particular content marketing world view.

Once you've found your content marketing sound in this way, don't keep it to yourself. Apply the creative principles and ideas that you're developing to giving others what they need. You'll be able to engage an audience around your world view when you start to demonstrate why it matters. Apply it by thinking creatively and strategically about people's objectives and how your approach can make a difference to them. You'll find that you are honing your content marketing style and delivering commercial results at the same time.



START TO APPLY YOUR STRATEGY

The emerging artist phase is when enthusiastic and creative content marketers start to think strategically about what differentiates them and how that can be applied to solving marketing problems.

37%

Having a strategy will help you stand out when you consider that only 37% of typical UK B2B marketers have written their strategy down.

YOUR MUSICAL INSPIRATION

(What's the Story) Morning Glory?

Oasis

The soundtrack to the second half of the 1990s, *(What's the Story) Morning Glory?* was written at breakneck speed—with a new track reportedly laid down every 24 hours. The relentless pace was a result of the Gallagher brothers' supreme confidence in the style and sound that they wanted to create and their enthusiasm for wearing their musical inspiration on their sleeves (the album's prominent influences included both The Beatles and REM). Meanwhile innovative 'compression' production techniques helped to give it an overpoweringly loud, almost-live sound.

Want more inspiration on how finding your creative groove can get the world's attention? How about Black Sabbath setting the parameters of heavy metal with *Paranoid* (also their second album) or Queen honing their uniquely eclectic musical style, breaking the U.S. market and giving the world "Bohemian Rhapsody" on *A Night at the Opera*?

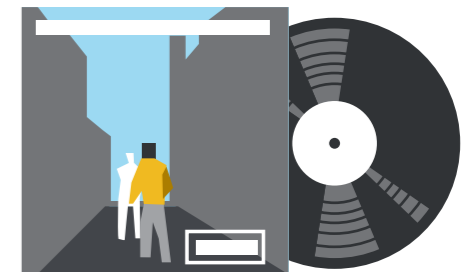
HERE'S HOW TO ROCK THE EMERGING ARTIST PHASE AND PREPARE FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF YOUR CAREER:

Read widely to improve your knowledge and your writing style, finding ideas and techniques to add to your portfolio.



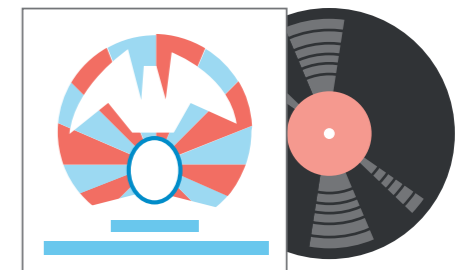
Paranoid
Black Sabbath

Use social listening and keyword research to determine how your audiences are thinking and what you can do to help them.



(What's the Story) Morning Glory?
Oasis

Ask for brutally honest feedback from your team and peers, and use it to make better content.



A Night at the Opera
Queen

THE COLLABORATOR

You've tasted success, raised your profile, and honed a distinctive voice. Now it's time to surround yourself with a group of like-minded folk who share your passion for thought leadership and want to team up.

This is an important transitional moment for content marketers, and it requires new skills to make it work. You'll need to marry your passion and forceful opinions with the ability to identify skills complementary to your own, and work with others to bring out their best. It helps if you think carefully about whom you want to work with. Make sure they share your appetite for transforming the conversation!

Your collaborators can include fellow content marketing influencers but also your customers and partners within your business. You'll be able to co-produce content that has even greater credibility and create fusions and mash-ups that offer unique insights and take content in new directions. The opportunities are exciting. To make the most of them, let your team-working skills take center stage, listen to others, share the credit, and give helpful and constructive criticism.



USE MEETINGS TO KEEP
YOUR CONTENT ON TRACK

78%

of the most effective U.K.
marketers say internal
content marketing meetings
are valuable. 56% meet daily
or weekly.

YOUR MUSICAL INSPIRATION

Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out!

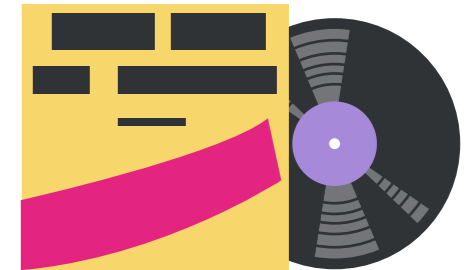
The Rolling Stones

As if being one of history's greatest ever live concert albums weren't enough, *Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out!* is also a masterclass in the value of collaboration for different markets. The Rolling Stones' 1969 U.S. tour included unforgettable performances with Terry Reid, B.B. King, Chuck Berry and Ike and Tina Turner.

Want more inspiration for your content marketing co-creation? How about the legendary songwriting partnership of Elton John and Bernie Taupin at their best on *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*, or the role of Malcolm McLaren and cover artist Jamie Reid in creating the Sex Pistols' *Never Mind the Bollocks*.

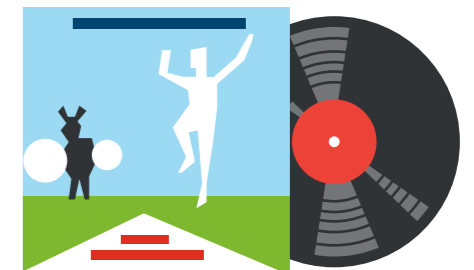
HERE'S HOW TO ROCK THE EMERGING ARTIST PHASE AND PREPARE FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF YOUR CAREER:

Clarify your company's core narrative and hone your sense of purpose. How can you help your different audiences?



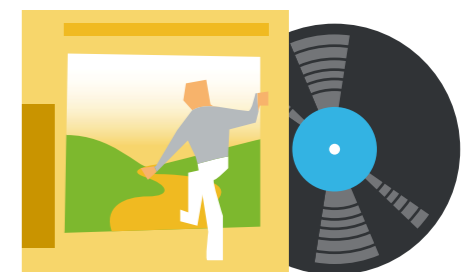
Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols
The Sex Pistols

Identify the most relevant influencers to collaborate with where your different audiences are concerned. Which line-up will sell out your shows for each market and each target group?



Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out!
The Rolling Stones

Collaborate internally too, working cross-functionally with sales to develop clear content objectives.



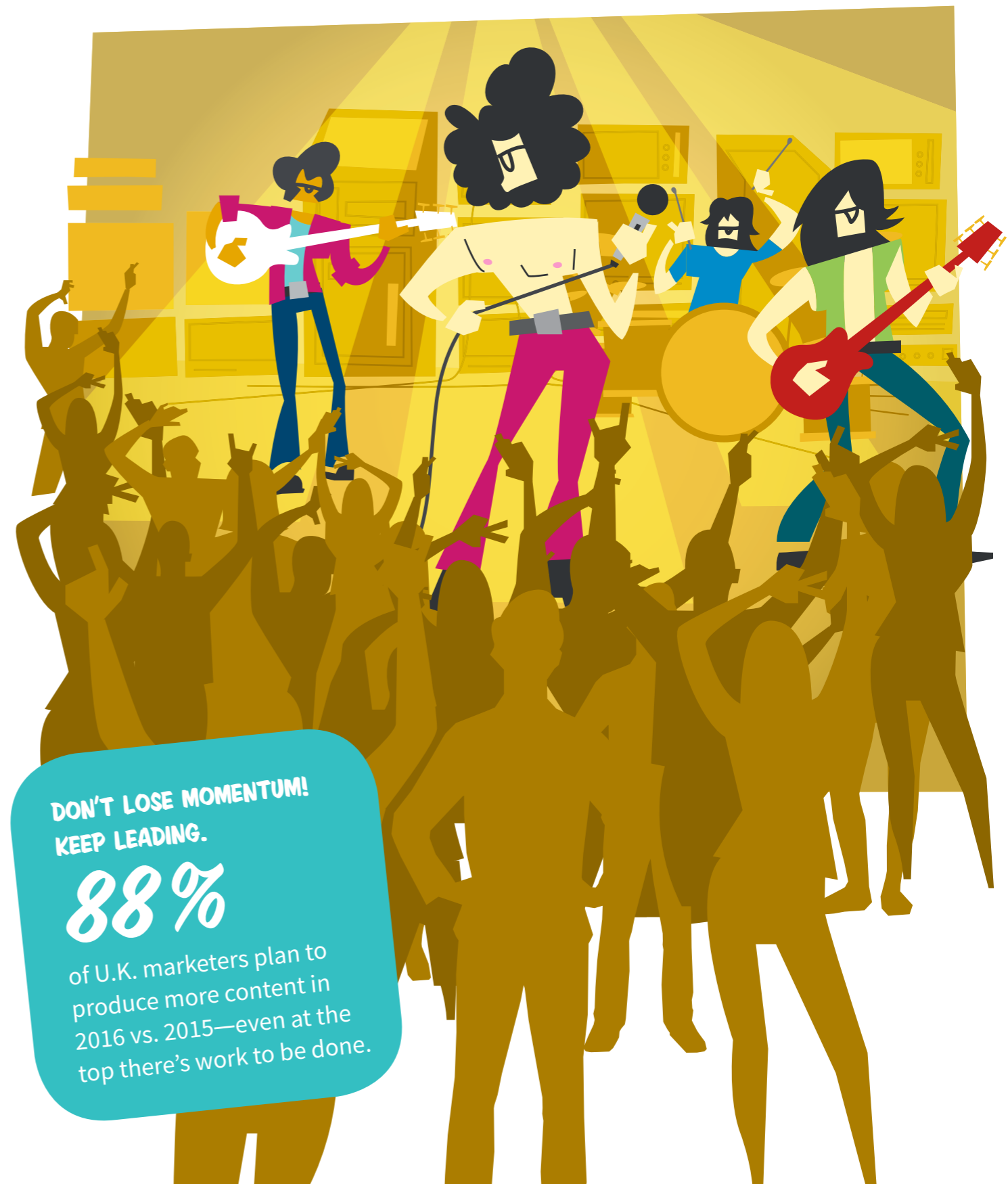
Goodbye Yellow Brick Road
Elton John

THE CRACKERJACK

You're at the top of your game, reaching all of the audiences that you need to, and generating real traction for your ideas. How can you keep yourself at the pinnacle? Stay hungry and humble by using your position to learn more about your audiences and what they need. Keep challenging yourself to use content to address those needs and you'll keep pushing yourself to produce your best work.

Apply the same hunger that you did in your early years in content marketing to new revenue-driving opportunities: write books, keynote at events and offer your consulting services. At the same time, use the position you've worked so hard to establish to ditch the 'Yes Man/Woman' attitude. You'll need to prioritise your time and energy and stay focused on what matters to remain on top of your game.

The Crackerjack phase is when most rock stars go truly global – and the same is true of content marketers. Now's the time to invest in understanding the particular cultures of different countries and regions – and finding new inspiration for your content. If you're working within a global organisation, use your hard-earned teambuilding skills to inspire Young Guns and Emerging Artists in markets where you've had less of a content presence to date. Expand your horizons, welcome new cultural influences, and you'll be on your way to true content marketing transcendence.



**DON'T LOSE MOMENTUM!
KEEP LEADING.**

88%

of U.K. marketers plan to produce more content in 2016 vs. 2015—even at the top there's work to be done.

YOUR MUSICAL INSPIRATION

A Moon Shaped Pool

Radiohead

Want a blueprint for continuously challenging your creativity and finding new ways to express yourself through content? It's hard to look further than Radiohead, who redefined what digital meant for music with their pay-what-you-want release of *In Rainbows*. Was that enough to rest on their laurels for a while? Of course not. For 2016's release of *A Moon Shaped Pool* the band cleared all content from its website and band members' social media profiles, creating a blank space for reinvention through innovative stop-motion animated music videos, video vignettes shot with collaborators, and embossed postcards with lyrics sent to fans. With constant creative challenge like that, it's no wonder the album became the fifth by Radiohead to be nominated for the prestigious Mercury Prize.

Want more inspiration for staying creatively hungry at the top of your game? How about *London Calling*, the seminal album from The Clash, with its fusion of punk, reggae, ska, pop, and lounge jazz? Or Motörhead marrying their early raw power with slicker sound and songwriting and creating *Ace of Spades*?

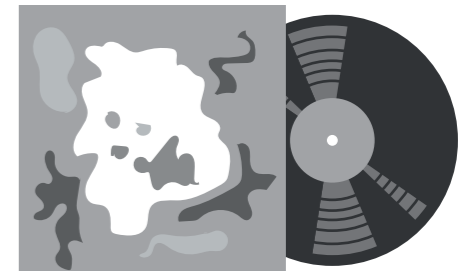
HERE'S HOW TO TURN YOUR CRACKERJACK PHASE INTO SUSTAINED SUCCESS AT THE TOP OF THE CONTENT MARKETING GAME:

Continue to learn from the young guns and emerging artists out there—they're a great source of challenges to keep your thinking fresh.



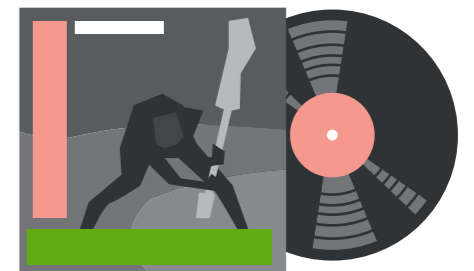
Ace of Spades
Motörhead

Stay up on new marketing technologies as they emerge, whether that's new social platforms, new analytic tools, or the evolving worlds of coding and SEO.

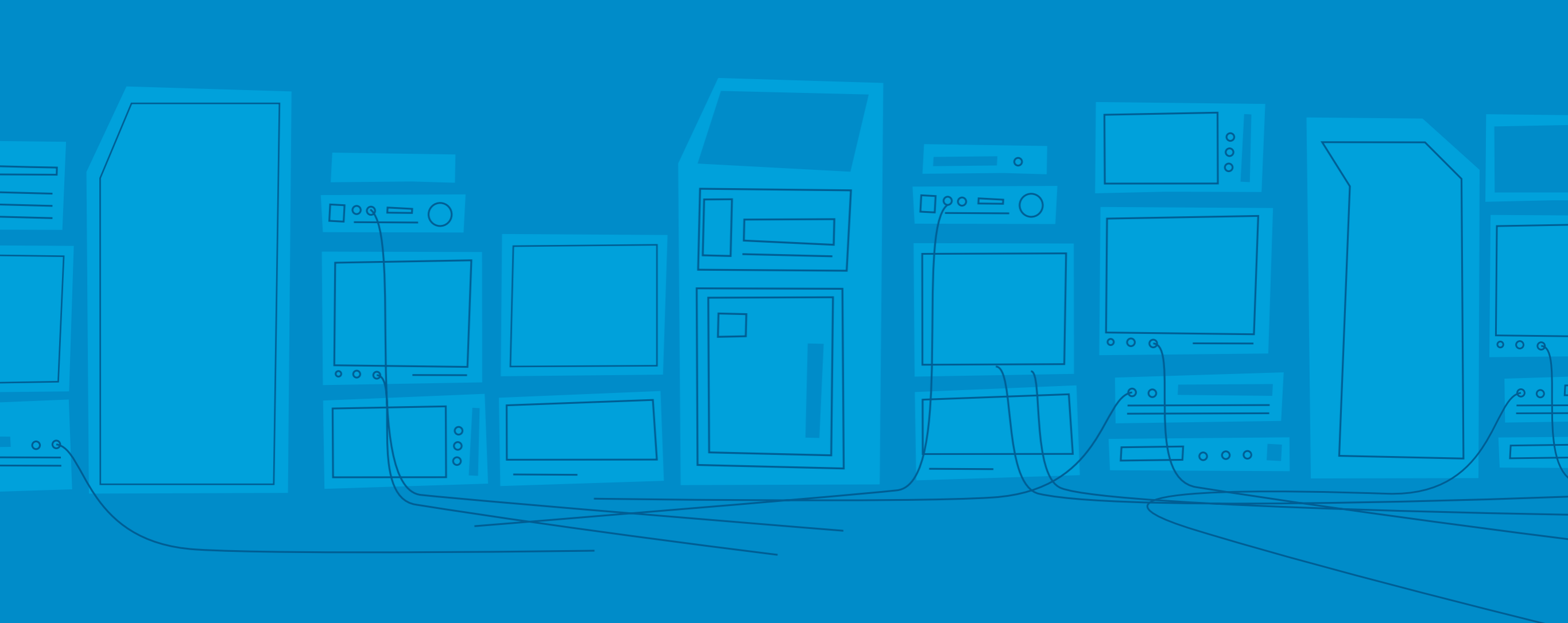


A Moon Shaped Pool
Radiohead

Expand your creative horizons by exploring the content that connects across different markets and cultures.



London Calling
The Clash



BECOMING A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CONTENT MARKETER

On your road to the top, you'll have balanced the need to keep evolving as an artist with the confidence to know what you believe, know what you're passionate about, and craft strategies and compelling content around those principles. You're not just a successful and sought-after content marketer—you're also a multi-dimensional one. And that means you'll have the ability to put together the perfect line-up, lead and inspire, and play to sell-out crowds for a long time to come.