

THE  
*Sophisticated*  
MARKETER'S BOOK OF  
**WISDOM** 2018

50 IMPORTANT  
IDEAS FROM 18 INCISIVE MARKETING  
THINKERS



Seth Godin  
Scott Stratten

Shannon Brayton  
Maria Pergolino

The Marketoologist  
David Shing

Sue Unerman  
Mark Schaefer

Brad Gillis  
And many more...



# Welcome to our Book of Wisdom

Back in 2015, we launched *The Sophisticated Marketer's Podcast* to celebrate all of the fresh, original and irreverent marketing thinking out there. We wanted to unlock different perspectives on our profession, talk to marketing influencers and pioneers about the issues that matter, play games, crack jokes and generally entertain people. And that's exactly what we've been doing – but we've never managed to do it quite as spectacularly as we did in Season Six.

That's because the series of the podcast that we wrapped in early 2018 took things to a whole new level. It featured an incredible line-up of guests from the likes of Seth Godin and Scott Stratten to Tom Fishburne, the man behind *The Marketoologist* cartoon, LinkedIn's CMO Shannon Brayton, B2B marketing legend Maria Pergolino, rock god Brad Gillis

and cupcake queen Lori Joyce. It produces so much fresh insight on marketing that we felt we had to capture it.

That's exactly what *The Sophisticated Marketer's Book of Wisdom* is here to do.

In these pages you'll find 50 of the most important ideas shared by 18 great guests that helped to make this the most exciting season of the podcast yet. You'll also find links to all of our podcast episodes so you can experience them firsthand – and brilliant illustrations from our friends at ImageThink that visualise some of the key thinking from everyone who visited our studios.

Thanks to everyone who made this spectacular season possible. **It's been the most fun a marketer could hope to have with a microphone.**



**Jason Miller**

Global Content and Media Marketing,  
LinkedIn Marketing Solutions





## Seth Godin

Who better to open Season Six of our podcast than Seth Godin? The author of *Permission Marketing*, *Tribes*, *Linchpin* and *Purple Cow* is more than just a source of inspiration for better marketing strategies. He's also a vital source of inspiration for better *life* strategies.

### Reach doesn't matter

In Seth's view, one of the fundamental flaws in marketing strategies is the assumption that your job is to reach lots of people:

"Reach is almost always the wrong path. It's easy to collect a crowd on Main Street. You just parade a bunch of super models and people will stop. But that doesn't mean that you've earned any trust and it's trust and customer traction that build organisations."

"Being known by lots of people isn't really the goal; it's a by-product of certain kinds of marketing for certain kinds of products. What you're really seeking is to be trusted, to be heard, to be talked about, and to matter. And if we look at any brand that's succeeded, that is what they have done."

### The crucial difference between anecdotes and stories

Seth uses the example of "the boy cried wolf but the villagers didn't come" to illustrate how a great story can involve just nine words. Stories are universal because of the way each person can identify with them – and the result that identification leads to. Whether they happened or not is the least important thing about them:

"An anecdote is interesting because it happened to you - and it's only interesting because it actually happened. A story is more universal than that. A story involves tension, and it involves identity."

"There are wonderful stories that many powerful brands have been built around. They're about identity, about culture and the change that we seek to make. What we do when we do great marketing is we tell stories; stories that create tension, stories that lead to forward motion."



## Don't play a corporate game you can't win

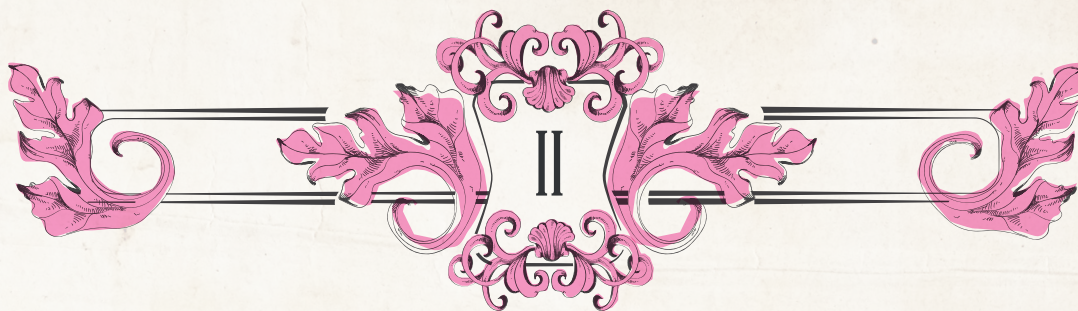
I asked Seth about trying to fit in with corporate culture. His answer will stay with me for a long time. It's wisdom for any marketer to live by:

"If you are working in a corporate setting where they want individuals to be fungible, cogs in the system and easily replaceable without the power to demand accommodation, then you can play that game. The question is: Can you win that game? And the answer is: No, you can't."

"Yes, one out of a hundred people in your starting class will end up as the boss, but 99 of you will be phased out because you're replaceable cogs in the system. The alternative is to play a different game, and it's the game of being sought out, being worth accommodating, being able to earn the shot at doing more interesting work. I agree with you that there are corporations where the only way to work there is to play their game. But I would point out that you don't have to work there."







## Shannon Brayton

As Chief Marketing Officer of LinkedIn, Shannon Brayton has a unique perspective on some of the most important changes taking place in marketing today. In fact, she embodies many of them. She shared her unique insight on the future of our profession – and how senior marketers need to respond.

### A successful CMO needs a clearly defined role

Why is CMO turnover so high, with the average tenure down 6 months in the last two years? As marketing requires mastery of more and more disciplines, it can breed confusion as to just what the CMO is responsible for:

“Formerly, the CMO was responsible for advertising strategy,” says Shannon.

“Now it’s a fully fledged role that involves a need to know a whole host of things: from internal communications to how to price and package a product properly, to understanding demand generation and product marketing. It’s different in every company and sometimes the expectations aren’t fully articulated. Some CMOs really want to focus on creative and others think of themselves as business strategists. I think the CEO has to be really clear on what they want out of the role and the CMO has to be ready to adapt and learn to get there.”

### Marketing and PR are converging – and with good reason

Shannon is one of a growing number of top marketers with PR instincts and experience written into their DNA. It’s increasingly important for marketers to be able to develop and communicate a coherent brand story. That story needs to work for both internal and external audiences, across different dimensions of business from recruitment to sales, and investor relations to product development. Marketing and PR have traditionally approached this task from different perspectives – and both perspectives are now equally relevant to the CMO role.

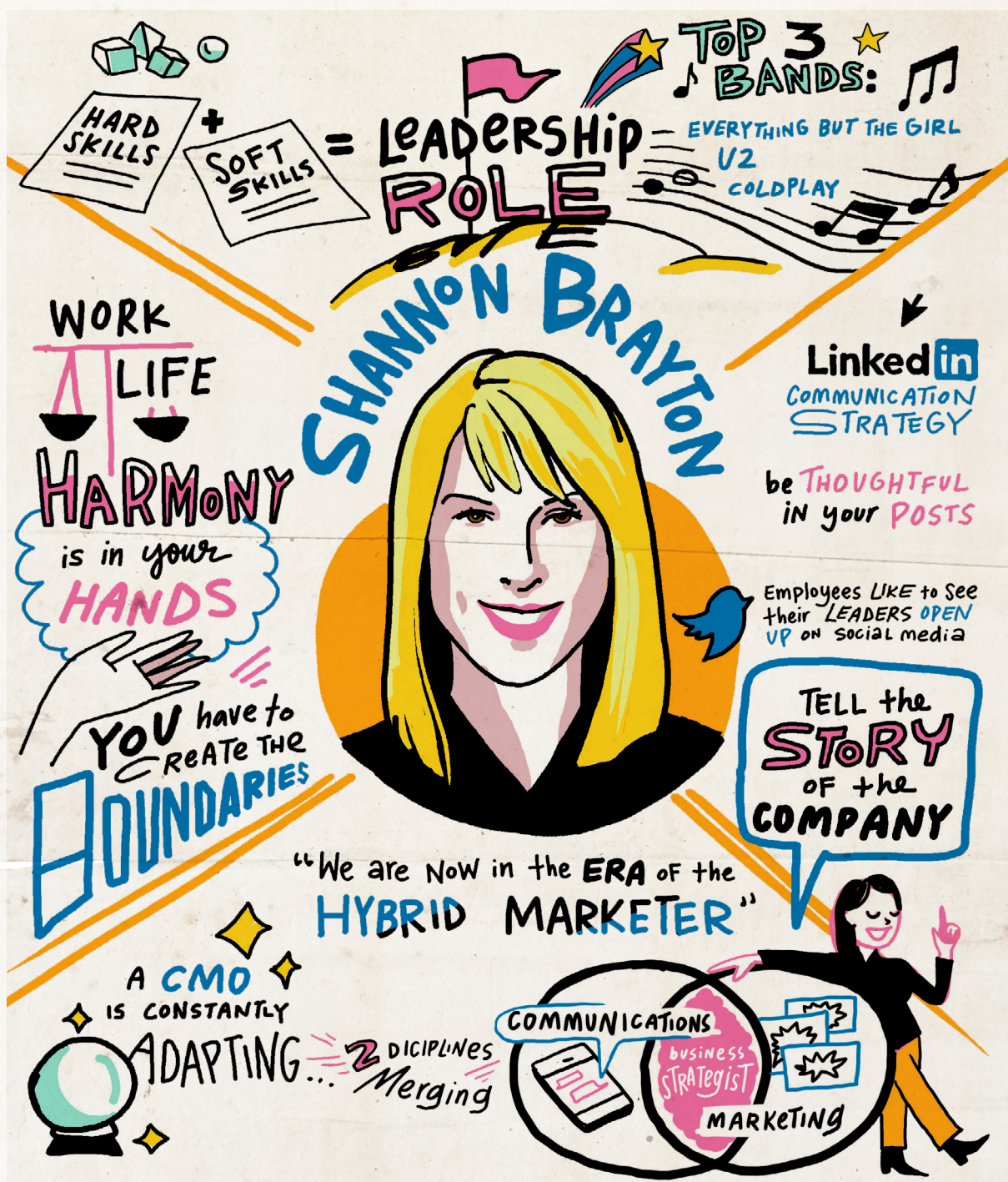
### Aim for work-life harmony to get ahead

Shannon admits that it’s increasingly difficult to maintain traditional ideas of the work-life balance. But that shouldn’t get in the way of genuine work-life harmony.



"It's really hard to shut off now and have a night when you're doing nothing related to work and not thinking about it at all," she says. "But I think you can get to a place where work and life are harmonised and integrated. I think a lot of it comes down to the boundaries that you create for yourself and your ability to make the calls that work for your life. I try to tell employees that the struggle is to make sure that you are in control. It's not about being at work during a set period of time."

Shannon's gets up and starts going through emails at 5am and makes it to the office by 6.40. At the other end of the day though, she commits to leaving the office at 4pm, spending time doing dinner, homework and stories with her children, and getting to bed at 10pm on the dot ready for that early start the next day.





# LIVE FROM FESTIVAL OF MARKETING

The LinkedIn Lab at Festival of Marketing featured a pop-up recording studio for the Podcast. The live podcast interviews we recorded with *Marketoologist* Tom Fishburne and Guinness World Records' Sam Fay were the result.

FEATURED

## The Marketoologist

Tom Fishburne shared the ideas behind some of his most successful Marketoologist cartoons:

### The cartoon Tom Fishburne is most proud of

This cartoon was inspired by Google's parent company Alphabet buying the home automation business, Nest Labs. It quickly went viral when Sir Tim Berners-Lee tweeted it from The World Economic Forum at Davos.



"There's pretty much endless material there," says Tom of the collision between marketing and technology. "The realm of digital has so much to be excited about, but we're in this awkward adolescent stage at the moment when bands are just jumping on the bandwagon without really thinking about their strategy."

### The most widely shared Marketoologist cartoon ever

Within three days of being released, this knowing take on the real drivers of innovation had become the most shared cartoon that Tom has ever drawn. It revisits a recurring theme about businesses crushing innovation by penalising failure.



### The cartoon that helps show why cartoons matter

This cartoon really resonated with me the first time that I saw it – because it absolutely skewers the concept that any old brand content will do, providing you can package it as a story. As Tom put it during our Podcast interview: "We're getting better at telling stories that aren't just thinly disguised press releases, but there's still far too much emphasis on quantity rather than the quality of a story. There's a firehose approach that we have to watch."





# LIVE FROM FESTIVAL OF MARKETING

FEATURED



## Sam Fay

As Senior VP for Global Brand Strategy, Sam was the ideal person to explain the opportunity for brands in bidding for Guinness World Records – and what we can all learn from the narratives of those that do.

### Record bids can be a great marketing leveler

The only criteria for a Guinness World Record is that it should be specific, verifiable and breakable. Beyond that, anything is possible, so the scope for creativity is immense. Sam told stories of big FMCG brands duking it out to create the world's largest bar of soap, or Jaguar doing the largest real-life loop the loop. But also the story of a fancy dress shop in Cumbria, UK, which unlocked massive awareness levels when it broke the record for the most people dressed as superman. This is a marketing opportunity where original thinking adds value, no matter what size your budget is.

### A narrative can be compelling whether it involves success or not

There's an obvious risk with world records as a marketing opportunity – what if your bid fails? The most inspiring part of my conversation with Sam was our discussion about what happens when brands fall short. I think it gets to the real point of storytelling for brands.

When Panasonic's bid to break its own record for the longest flight by a fixed-wing, battery-powered aircraft, the plane ended up ditching in the sea of Japan. The brand chose to embrace this failure, creating an uplifting film about the attempt, the students who worked with the company on it, and the impact the project had in helping them towards careers in science and engineering. It's an even more compelling and relateable story than if the plane had cruised to its destination untroubled.





## Lori Joyce

Lori Joyce was one of two childhood friends who built a global content brand and a baking empire as *The Cupcake Girls*. But she wasn't ready to stop there. Now the CEO of Betterwith, she's aiming to disrupt some of the world's most established brands through traceable, organic ice cream.

### A sense of purpose is the key to brand consistency

Cupcakes, the first store that Lori launched with her friend Heather White was all about providing comfort and nostalgia in a world badly shaken by the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. That sense of purpose meant they could draw creative inspiration from lots of different angles while still differentiating themselves as a coherent and consistent brand. The cover of a *Martha Stewart Living* magazine inspired Lori and Heather to paint the inside of their first store as if customers were stepping inside a cupcake. It encapsulated the comfort their brand had to offer and gave their business the best possible start in life.

### To get in people's heads, first get in their feed

Launching a new idea in ice cream is as much an exercise in B2B marketing as it is in consumer branding. And Lori sees content marketing in the LinkedIn feed as key to making it happen. She shares content enthusiastically, linking through to articles that support her vision for Betterwith and ensuring that she's always front-of-mind amongst the retailers and suppliers she's aiming to form business relationships with. Being a regular presence in people's feeds is the best way to get into their heads.



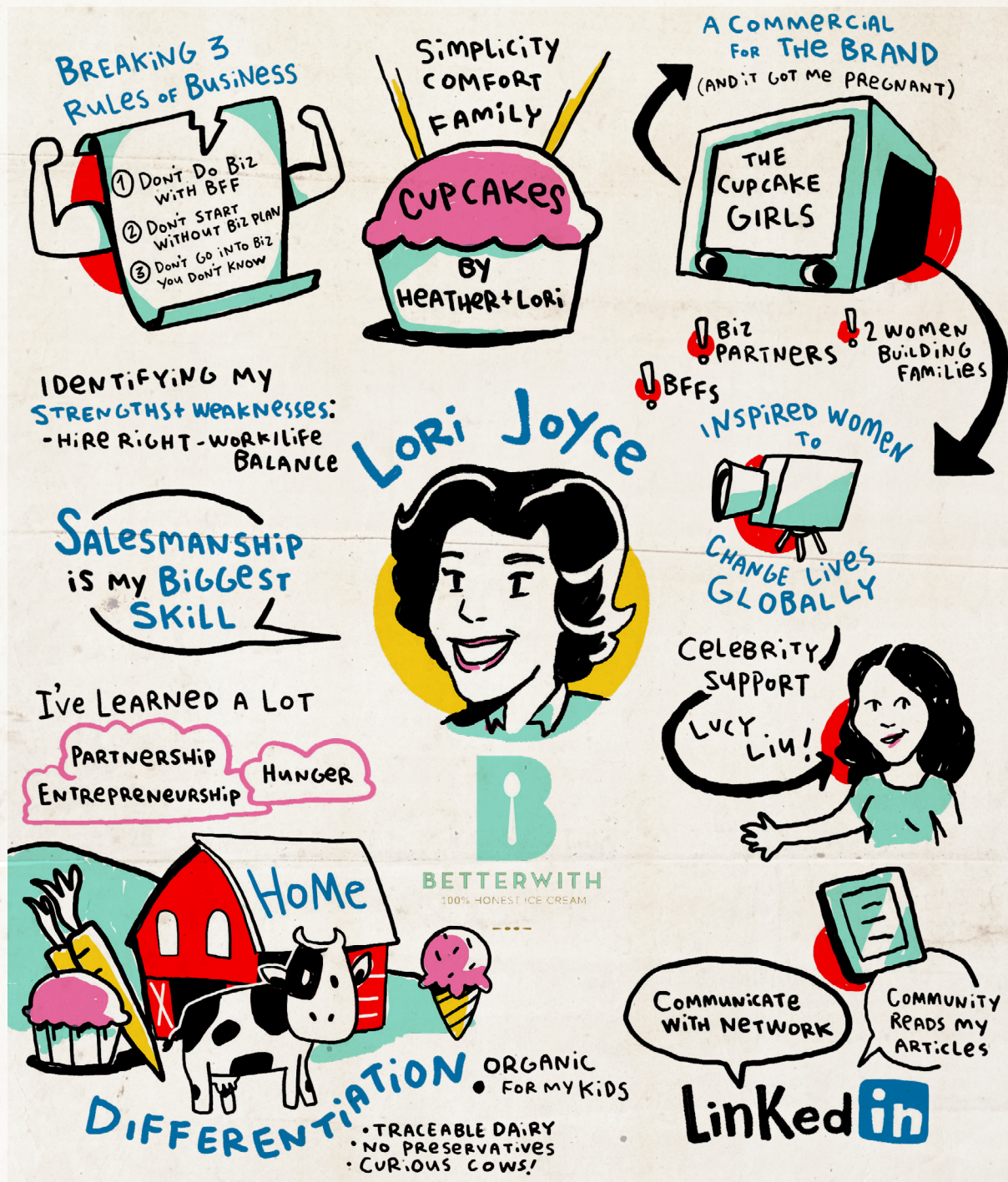


# Authenticity is the most disruptive idea out there

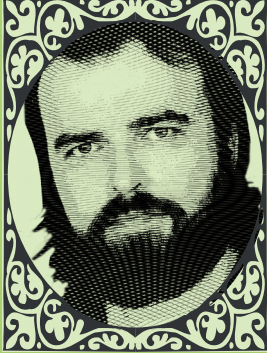
The most disruptive ideas are often rooted in authenticity rather than opportunism; they aren't necessarily easy to execute (which is why nobody's executed them before); and they require a special brand of stubborn determination to ensure that they happen.

This is the model of disruption that the Betterwith brand fits. The idea came from Lori's first experiences buying ice cream for her new family – and taking the trouble to read the ingredients on the back. She was indignant to learn that many of the products she was buying didn't even meet the technical requirements

to be described as ice cream. She was determined to provide a product that parents would be happy to feed to their children, with ingredients that were simple, easy to understand and traceable back to farms with the right values. This was a formula for disruption alright, but it was far from easy to follow. It took Lori two years to find the suppliers that she needed to fulfill her vision. That effort means she is now able to market an authentic, unique and '100% honest' ice cream when talking to retailers.







## Scott Stratten

Scott Stratten is a brilliantly original podcaster, hosting *UnPodcast*, *The Business Show for the Fed-up* with his wife Alison. He's a wise observer of our discipline, and a brilliant collector of thought-provoking marketing stories (most recently in his and Alison's new book *Unbranded*). And he's very, very funny. He shared several of the stories from *Unbranded* that have helped to shape his iconoclastic view of what marketing really means today.

### Automating personalisation is the opposite of branding

When a beloved pet passes on and you post a profound picture on Instagram, you don't expect comments like "Great picture!" However, that's what happens when you're connected to a well-known marketing influencer who's using a 'bot to automate their social media responses and scale the number of followers they have. For Scott, this is the polar opposite of what branding on social media should be. A brand isn't owned by marketers but by consumers; it's not about what you say but about what others say about you. Scaling engagement through data and automation misses the opportunity for talking to real, relevant people that any marketer should value. It shows that a lot of digital marketing experts still don't get what branding is really all about.

### Your social media strategy should just involve being awesome to people

Scott tells a great, uplifting story about a family with an autistic 14-year-old child who would only drink from one very specific plastic sippy cup. The boy ended up in hospital with dehydration when that cup started to fall apart, and the family couldn't replace it because it was no longer in production. The brand who made the cup, Tommee Tippee, saw the family's desperate pleas on social media, unearthed the mold used to make the original, and did a manufacturing run of 500 cups (a lifetime's supply), for free. It was a story that delivered exactly the right type of brand awareness, celebrated on both social media and mainstream news platforms. As Scott puts it, this is the kind of thing that happens when a brand sees the digital landscape in simple terms: an opportunity to be awesome for more people.

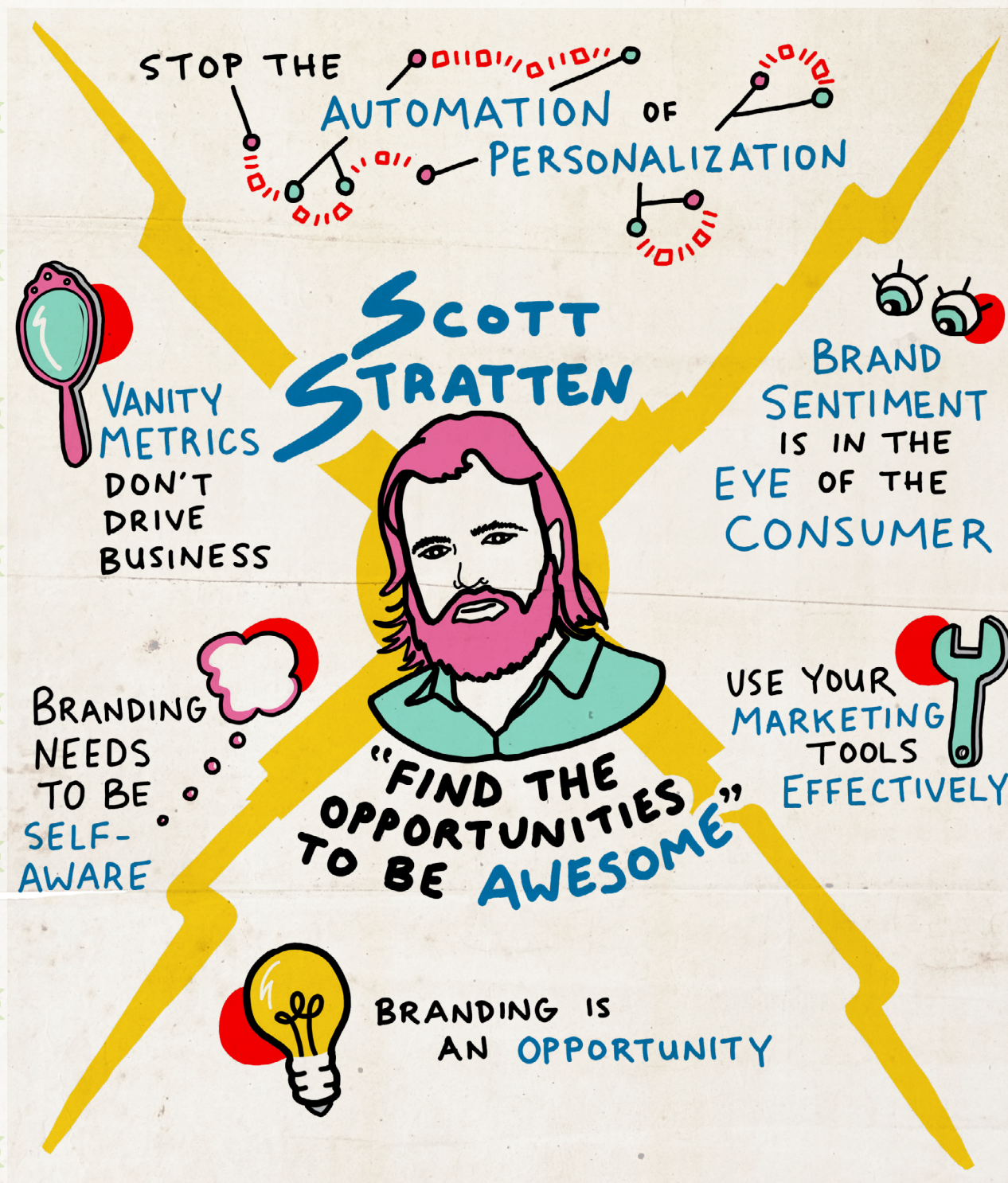
### Virality is vanity

When Scott posted a two-minute onstage rant about millennials on Facebook, he was thrilled to see it had reached 32 million people – the biggest viral hit he'd been involved with. The trouble was: that 32 million number brought him no business benefit whatsoever. He didn't book a single speaking gig on the back of the video. It wasn't just that the number of meaningful views was far lower (only 3.4 million people watched for longer than 10 seconds with the sound on so they could hear what he was saying). The video went viral because it was very funny – it made Scott look like a stand-up comedian. It didn't actually align with what he does for a living. That's often the case with brand content that goes viral – it distracts from, rather than supports, the bottom line.



## A few thousand extra views aren't worth your integrity

Why would an HR management brand decide to mark the death of Gene Wilder with a post entitled 10 ways to manage like Willy Wonka? Because like many marketers, those behind the content couldn't see that earning a through extra thousand views through newsjacking is never worth trading your integrity for. Audiences have longer memories and deeper values than brands often give them credit for – and once they see you seeking to profit from death and tragedy, you don't earn their respect back in a hurry.







## María Pergolino

Let me introduce you to the marketing leader who changed my life. Maria Pergolino didn't just give me my big break in B2B content marketing, when she hired me into a role at Marketo back in 2011. She also showed me just how exciting, innovative and value-adding such a role could be. That's because Maria is a living lesson in how to develop as a marketing leader, build and motivate a team, stay on top of trends, and keep delivering value for your business.

### Don't settle for following best practice - invent best practice instead

Maria isn't happy to simply follow the conventional playbook. Her view is that if you are going to spend a large slice of your time in the office, you have to make that time rewarding. That means staying original, thinking independently and being ambitious about how you differentiate your business.

### Learn from your peers' mistakes to avoid making them yourself

Maria has a striking memory for creative B2B campaigns – but also for campaigns that pushed the boat out that little bit too far. She pays close attention when competitors overstep the mark and get into trouble – and it's not because she secretly wants to gloat. As she puts it: “The ideas that go wrong are ideas I might well have said ‘yes’ to if they were pitched to me. That's why I pay such close attention to what doesn't work as well as what does.”

### You can't be effective unless you're aligned with finance

As a marketer, it's important to be aligned with sales, but it's just as important to be aligned with finance. Marketing activity often represents a business's third largest item of expenditure after people and facilities. Marketing and finance need to understand the basis for this investment in the same terms.

### Diversity has to be proactive

Diversity in your marketing team will never come about spontaneously. As a senior marketer, you have to go actively out of your way to seek sources of diversity in your team. You'll never get there just by hiring the right candidates when they're presented to you. You have to push and innovate to make sure that the right candidates are in the process to begin with.



## You don't have to invest directly in AI to benefit from AI

Marketers need to understand the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI), but they don't have to invest in it directly to benefit. Keep an eye out for potential suppliers and partners who are leveraging AI effectively to enhance what they can do for you.





# LIVE FROM ADVERTISING WEEK EUROPE

Our pop-up podcast recording studio at Advertising Week Europe gave us the chance to grab quick interviews with some of the festival's most influential voices, as they dashed between sessions. We caught up with Oath's digital prophet Dave Shing, MediaCom's Chief Transformation Officer Sue Unerman, Matt Wilson of Ball Street, one of LinkedIn's most successful video influencers, and Bing's Axel Steinman, a guru on the emerging word of voice search and AI.

FEATURED



## David Shing

### “Attention is the new leading metric”

Marketers obsess about how long content should be. In Shing's view, that's the wrong issue. An iconic brand can get its message across in six seconds – but an iconic brand doesn't necessarily have to, because it can also create a movie that captures the audience's attention for over two hours. As he put it: “this is all about finding a way to hold someone's attention for longer than six seconds. That's the leading metric.”

### “Brands aren't just seen”

In a voice-led world, brands will increasingly be heard, touched and sensed in other ways. What does your brand sound like? What's it feel like? Does it have a gesture that embodies it? Shing wants all marketers to start thinking in different dimensions.



## Sue Unerman

### “Diversity boils down to common human decency”

What we're asking for when it comes to diversity and inclusion really shouldn't be that much of a challenge. Add in growing evidence of the business benefits that accrue to genuinely diverse businesses, and it's really shocking that progress is so slow. If businesses can't handle a change that's so obviously required, what hope to they really have in an age of disruption?

### “Purpose influences buying decisions”

New research from MediaCom shows that one out of every three people has chosen to buy something because of what the company they are buying from does for the environment. Two out of three have chosen not to buy something because they disapproved of the way that a company acted.



# LIVE FROM ADVERTISING WEEK EUROPE

FEATURED



## Matt Wilson

### “Don’t confuse averages with rules”

There may be an average length for a successful video but that’s simply a statistic that reflects a broad range of content that succeeds at different lengths. You’ll hear plenty of marketing influencers insisting video content has to be 12 seconds or less to be viewed.

Matt’s videos are usually four minutes plus, and you barely notice that time go when you’re watching them.



## Axel Steinman

### “A voice search world doesn’t mean a screenless world”

Start a conversation about voice search and the chances are someone will quickly refer to the challenges of a ‘screenless world.’ But they might well be imagining a world that will never fully exist. The vast majority of people are visually oriented. They remember things better when they see them, and they can take on information faster that way. The great advantage of voice is that we can speak far faster and more naturally than we can type – but that doesn’t mean that all of the information coming back in response to a voice search has to be audio. It would be irritating and inefficient if it were.





## Jack Kosakowski



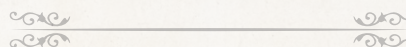
It's a huge missed opportunity that few B2B marketers have ever spent serious time working in sales. Jack Kosakowski is one very notable exception. He's the CEO of the US Division of Creation Agency, a full-funnel agency that takes a fully integrated approach to sales and marketing. He's a sales leader who became a marketing leader, and a social selling influencer who's also one of the most interesting voices out there when it comes to B2B marketing strategy. He has a unique perspective on the relative strengths of the two departments and what they really need to do to support one another more effectively. On the Podcast, we talked about what sales teams would really want to say to their marketing department, if they had the chance.

**“The less you talk about yourself, the more people will want to talk to you”**

As a marketer, it's easy to assume that your sales teams want you to sell for them: to put out content that bigs up your products and solutions and does their job for them. As Jack points out though, the last thing that sales teams usually want is content that goes on and on about how wonderful your brand and its products are. Top salespeople know that the less you talk about yourself, the more people want to talk to you. They want content that adds value and complements what they do – not that replicates selling.

**“Just because you created a great piece of content doesn't mean that it's giving me great leads”**

Lead quality issues are a frustration that comes between many sales and marketing teams. In a sense, we both have to be realistic about where and why problems occur. When sales teams complain about the value of a piece of content because of a lack of quality in the leads that it delivered, it's easy for marketing to get defensive. However, the problems often don't come from the content itself. Listen to the issues that your sales colleagues have – and if you feel an asset should have delivered better results, then try looking into targeting, distribution, timing, and all of the other factors that could be undermining its impact.





## "We don't just need marketing content - we need sales content"

Writing B2B marketing content that generates leads for sales is great. However, what's potentially even more valuable is helping sales teams to create content that addresses the barriers they face in conversations. If a sales rep keeps running into the same three reasons for prospects not buying your solution, then you have a great basis for a piece of content addressing those barriers in advance. Insights like these have real value. Build in regular meetings to help your sales teams raise them, and work with your reps to draft blog posts that give a compelling response.







## Jared Polin

There's never been more potential for leveraging video as a content marketing asset, and there's nobody who knows more about using video to build a following than Jared Polin. The founder of Fro Knows Photo started out as a photo geek selling cameras in a store, before building a global brand and a huge social media following through his passion for visual content. He shared ideas to help marketers navigate the pivot to video.

### No crew? No Camera? No problem

You may have no film crew, no fancy camera and nobody to help you – but Jared Polin insists that shouldn't stop you creating video. He argues that he can shoot images on an iPhone that are better than many captured on fancy digital cameras, for the simple reason that he knows what he's doing. Learn the basics of recording a presentable video and it's something you can do alone. The huge advantage is that this puts you in control. It's easy to create impactful video content quickly, as and when you need it.

### Comments and questions are your opportunity

Jared told me how, when he was starting out creating videos as a way of scoring more photography jobs, he made a point of answering every question that he was asked about being a better photographer. He even got people to Skype him on camera so that they could discuss their questions in a live chat. He treated every comment and question as a new content opportunity, and using video to answer those questions brought him closer to his audience.

### One-take can be a wonder

I've always argued that it's worth learning some basic video editing software – it gives you more flexibility and helps you control pace and length. However, as Jared argues, not being able to edit video shouldn't stop you creating and sharing it. Giving yourself the challenge of capturing everything you want to say in one take can be a great creative constraint. If you stumble and mumble a little, don't worry. It can humanise the content and show you're being authentic.

### Don't sweat the small stuff too much

It's fair to say that Jared doesn't lose too much sleep worrying about whether he should record video vertically or horizontally: "there are bigger things in the world to worry about than how somebody holds a camera." The most important thing about how you frame a video is that you're consistent and don't move the camera orientation mid-shot. Beyond that, get on with it and get it out there.



## Play at building stories with images

I asked Jared about how he sets about telling stories through a camera – and I think his answer says a lot about video storytelling as well. It involves thinking in advance about the story you want to tell and the shots you need to tell it. Train yourself to think in terms of a visual storyboard and seeing different frames in your head. If you're simply filming someone recording a podcast, that storyboard could include everything from wide-angles to tighter shots and details of a mouth talking into a microphone.







## Bryan Eisenberg

Any entrepreneur or executive would love to build a business like Amazon, but is it realistic to try? Bryan Eisenberg believes that it is. His book, *Be Like Amazon: Even a Lemonade Stand Can Do it* is a top seller on, you guessed it, Amazon. He dropped by the podcast to share the wisdom he'd uncovered by studying one of the most innovative businesses in history.

### True customer-centricity isn't about what your customers want today

Everyone talks a good game on customer-centricity. Bryan quotes research from Bain that found 80% of executives believe their businesses to be customer-centric. The problem is: only 8% of those businesses' customers agree. He suspects that's because, for most businesses, customer-centricity is about what your customers did last time around. For truly customer-centric businesses like Amazon, it's about anticipating what they will want to do tomorrow. That takes far more imagination and commitment.

Amazon's future-focused customer-centricity has led it into voice search with Amazon Echo and Alexa, and it could next be headed in the direction of drone deliveries and AI-generated fashion. But it's not a wholly new principle by any means. Walmart (the Amazon of its day) did something very similar. Bryan believes any business is capable of the same. It's not necessarily about data or resources – it's about a shift in mentality.

### Innovation doesn't have to involve new technologies

You don't need an R&D department or access to disruptive technology to innovate. You just need a way of doing things that's rooted in an understanding of customer needs.

Bryan tells some inspiring stories to illustrate this point. My favourite involves an air conditioning maintenance company that came up with the idea of using distinctive red screws, so that customers could see that their entire AC unit had been thoroughly checked. That reassurance helped to make the brand famous. Focusing on easily accessible innovation isn't a cop-out. There's no need to obsess about innovating with Virtual Reality (VR) or Augmented Reality (AR) when you can make a huge difference for customers just by improving your instruction manual.

### If you want to disrupt, don't eat the marshmallow

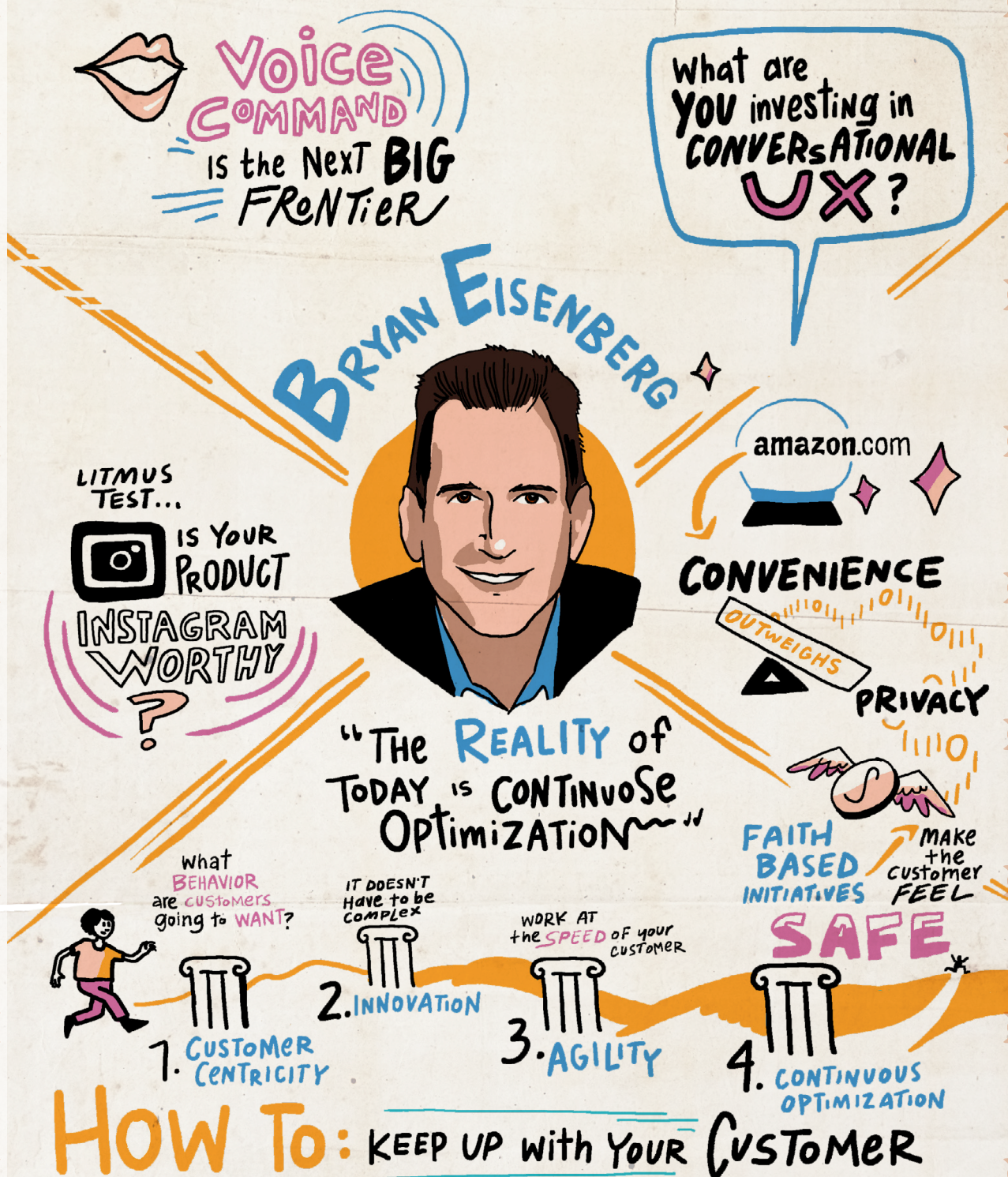
In a famous experiment that's also something of a YouTube sensation, kids were given a marshmallow and told that if they refrained from eating it, they could have an additional marshmallow later. They were then left alone with their marshmallow – and filmed as they wrestled with the dilemma of whether to scoff it.



As you might expect, the vast majority of kids ate the marshmallow. Less predictably though, when experimenters checked in with the same kids years later, they found that the most successful amongst them tended to be those that had held out for marshmallow number two.

For Bryan, this sums up the problem faced by most businesses today. They are so focused on the need for immediate revenue that they can't make a longer-

term plan to bring greater disruption to their industry. And this failure of delayed gratification holds them back. The great achievement of Jeff Bezos was to convince investors in Amazon that it was worth taking a longer-term view – and waiting for the second marshmallow. It allowed the company the time and space to design something different rather than just responding to the promptings of the market. That's what real disruption often requires.







## Mark Schaefer



Back in 2014, Mark Schaefer was contemplating the fact that the supply of free content being produced by brands was far outstripping the possible demand in the form of available human attention. In a normal market, too much supply and too little demand means falling prices. In this case, where content was already being given away for free, it would mean that brands and individuals would have to pay ever-larger amounts to get anybody to consume their content. Mark had introduced the world to the concept of Content Shock. It was a huge wake-up call for any marketer ready to listen – and it had a big influence on me. Mark’s visit to the podcast was an opportunity to explore the role of marketing in a content-shocked world.

“Everything that marketers currently worry about is a subset of the need to stand out”

As the costs of getting people’s attention escalate, marketing becomes obsessed with the need to stand out: every new skill that you need is directed towards it, and every marketing objective that you have depends on it. Planning different routes towards earning the attention you need (and deciding which content you can sustainably exchange it for) is the essence of marketing going forward. That doesn’t make content the only marketing strategy – but it does mean that any marketing strategy has to wrestle with the dilemmas that Content Shock represents.

“Marketers need a double dashboard”

We all know that marketing needs to speak the language of the business bottom-line if it’s to be taken seriously by the C-suite. The danger is that this dupes marketers into making promises that they can’t possibly keep. It’s great to talk about sales and revenues but not all marketing activity is going to lead directly to sales and revenues within a speedy timeframe. If you’re not careful you end up focusing solely on lead generation in order to keep the boardroom happy. Mark believes we need a double dashboard – one side monitoring the numbers that executives are interested in; another monitoring the metrics that show we’re on course to achieve those numbers. And that includes KPIs once derided as ‘vanity metrics’.

“Don’t get obsessed with authenticity - it’s values that matter”

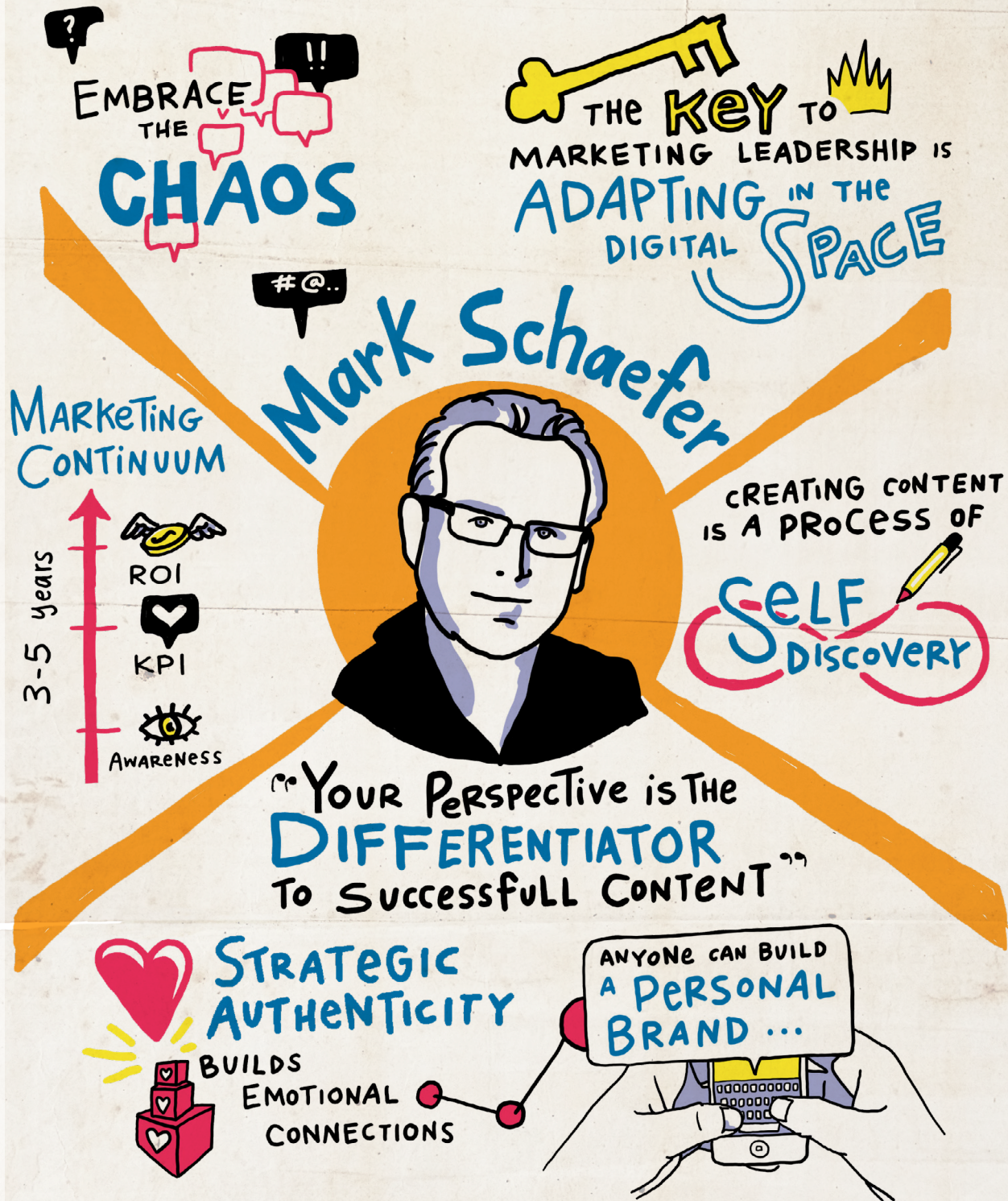
Mark isn’t a great fan of the buzzy concept of authenticity in marketing. As far as he’s concerned, claiming to be the same thing to all people at all times is a false promise. You’ll always vary your approach as a marketer based on the context and the audience. That’s fine, provided you can keep finding different ways to show what your most important core values are.



## "Brand awareness is more important than ever"

In a content-bombarded world, audiences desperately need heuristics or rules-of-thumb to help them quickly decide what's worth paying attention to. Being the brand that people recognise is the greatest possible competitive advantage in this context. As Mark puts it, brand awareness is the 'on ramp' that gets all other forms of marketing activity in the

game. You can't generate leads or create compelling customer experiences without it. And yet marketers must find ways to build awareness in an increasing advertising-free world. That's why developing a sustainable content marketing strategy that can exchange value for attention is so important.







## Ron Tite

How many people pursue a successful career in advertising, at the same time as living a parallel life as a stand-up comedian? How many have launched campaigns for the likes of Air France, Evian, Intel and Volvo – and also hosted the award-winning Canadian improvised talk show, Monkey Toast? Ron Tite shared his unique perspective on the intersection between storytelling, comedy and marketing.

### An insight isn't the same as a point of view

Ron defines Art as an interpretation of an observation that's intended to provoke a reaction in your audience. Great comedy starts with an insight, but what you do with that insight that entertains people and provokes them to think differently. Facts alone can't do this. Too many brands lead with insights but never develop those insights into a point of view. As a result they don't engage or entertain in the way that an artist would.

Interpreting the world and sharing your point of view involves taking risks – and that's too often another difference between art and marketing. Taking a stand means alienating some people so that others can respond more positively. An awareness that you're not trying to please everyone is a hallmark of great artists – and of the world's most influential brands.

### Acting like an artist is the only way to win the battle for time

The Expression Economy how brands are now battling for a share of people's time, not just with one another, but with every other source of content out there. In a situation where every potential audience member has the potential to "geek out on whatever they love" at any given moment, the only way to win that battle for time is to act like an artist. When people never have to watch anything they don't want to, you have to be something they actively want to watch.

### Because it's not just about one joke - or one campaign

The task of a comedian isn't to convince audiences that one particular joke or routine is funny – but that they themselves are inherently funny. This involves injecting communicating personality through performance, via your spontaneous reactions and interplay with the crowd.



The thing to avoid is appearing as though you are just following a carefully rehearsed routine. Brands that carefully script every interaction or piece of content will never achieve this. It can only really happen by empowering employees to express themselves in a way that reflects your brand personality.





# BRAD GILLIS & MINTER DIAL

Brad and Minter were two of my favourite guests in the whole of Season Six – not just because of what they had to say but because of who they are. The stories they have lived and helped to tell are genuinely inspiring, as are the insights they've taken from them.



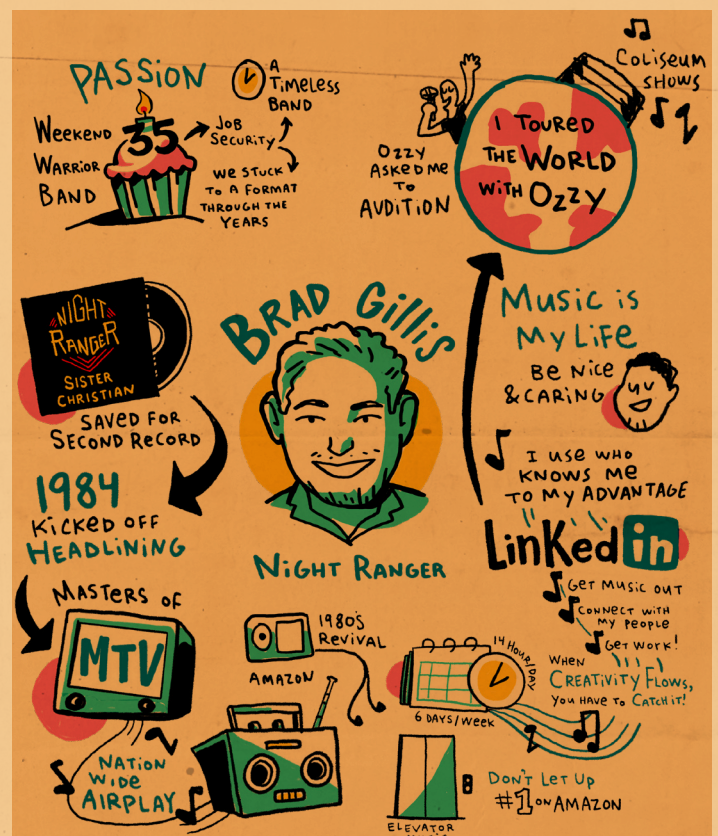
## Brad Gillis

If you think your business has felt the sharp edge of disruption then spare a thought for those who ply their trade with a Gibson Flying V. Back in the 1990s, Nirvana and the grunge scene seemed to make hair metal and heavy rock extinct overnight, turning off the media spotlight for once world-famous bands. It takes a special kind of musician – in fact, a special kind of professional – to come through all of that with integrity and authenticity intact. In fact, it takes someone like Brad Gillis: guitarist for Ozzy Osbourne, founding member of Night Ranger in the early 1980s, a man with three Platinum albums behind him and a unique take on succeeding on your own terms rather than just trying to please the media trend of the day.

## Personal branding doesn't mean pretending to be someone you're not

More than anything, Brad's story helps to bust an all-too-prevalent myth about personal branding: it's not about pretending to be someone you're not. Rather it's about communicating the value in who you are.

This is an artist who has stuck to his guns: he and his bandmates still write songs the same way that they did back in 1983. They didn't give up on their connections or try to copy others; they didn't try to milk the past until they'd sucked the soul out of it. They kept creating original music on their own terms, and Brad has been an expert at leveraging LinkedIn to explore different partnerships and collaborations that don't involve having to compromise. His personal brand isn't an alternative to authenticity – it's made that authenticity commercially viable.







## Minter Dial

Minter Dial has spent 27 years telling a story with huge personal resonance for his family and himself – but also for any member of the ‘Greatest Generation’ that fought in World War II, and anybody who lost loved ones in that conflict.

He began researching the story of The Last Ring Home when working as a marketer for an equities analyst. He kept digging during 16 years working as a senior marketer in the cosmetics industry. He published the book and produced the film telling the story of his lost grandfather and the ring that he wore, while launching and running his Myndset brand consultancy business.

The result is a short film that has won awards at festivals across America and shows the power of a story that has people genuinely committed to it.

## Great stories take time

Storytelling involves a whole different level of commitment to other forms of creative idea. To succeed a story has to have deeper resonance beyond a simple plotline. It has to matter on many levels. Because it matters, it often demands more time to tell it the right way, which is why great stories are often painstakingly pieced together over time. Don't give up on this form of content just because it can't be produced at the same pace as an ad.

## Stories travel when you can tell them in different timeframes

Minter talks about the very different processes involved in writing a book and making a film – and about the very ways you set about telling a story in different timeframes. He's found a way to communicate the story of The Last Ring Home in 30 seconds, 60 seconds, 26 minutes – and he's currently working on a two-hour cut. This flexibility in storytelling is an essential skill in a multi-platform age.





The background of the top section features two vintage-style microphones, one on the left and one on the right, both glowing with a blue and purple light. A central circular pop filter is also visible. The background is dark with stylized lightning bolts and a bokeh effect of light spots.

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