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PRE-LAUNCH APPS BEST ASO STRATEGIES

2024

THE ASO STRATEGY PLAN

You've developed an amazing & unique app.

You are ready to launch it , but you're not sure how or even where to start?

In this playbook, we will provide the necessary tools and strategies to release your app with confidence.
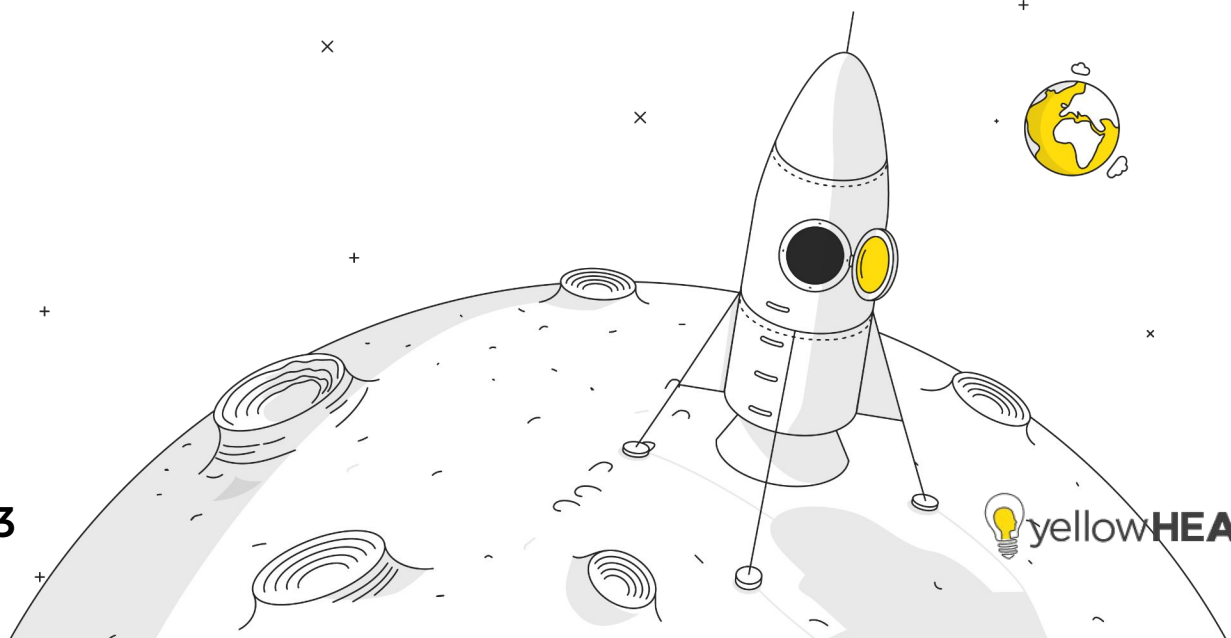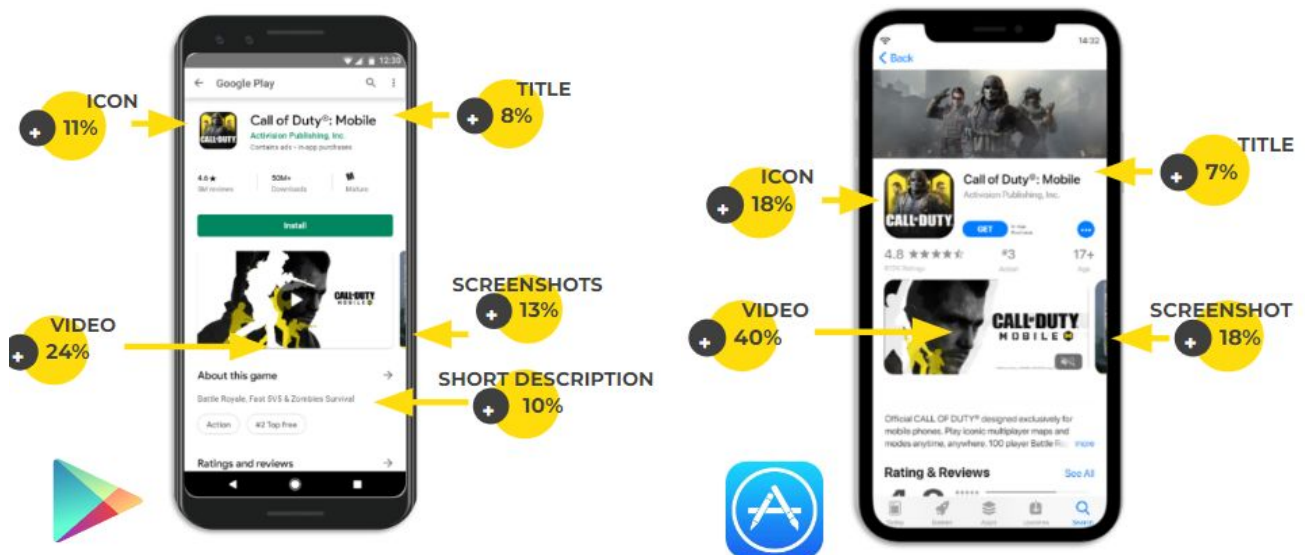
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PLAN YOUR STOREFRONT LISTING

Planning an engaging store front is one of the most important steps in developing your app. The Product Page First Impression assets have a lot of potential on CVR uplift.

The icon is one of the most crucial creative assets in your store listing as it is the only creative asset displayed in the Google search results or Apple Browse. The icon is larger in iOS, therefore it has a bigger impact on the potential CVR uplift. When designing for Android, keep in mind that different sizing and do not overload the icon with details.

App Preview Videos have a big impact on CVR growth for both platforms, however it is stronger for iOS since it is shown in search results before the screenshots and is autoplayed. The median potential CVR uplift for APV optimization is 40%. For both platforms, it is important to deliver your main message in your video within the first 5-10 seconds. You can read more about App Preview Video best practices here.

Keyword research and optimization is an integral part to a successful ASO strategy development. It's just a matter of finding the right, and most importantly relevant keywords. In order to find the best keywords, it is important to understand what words users will use to search for your app.

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The steps that we at yellowHEAD follow in order to find the best keywords for our clients' apps

1. Figure out what your top keywords are by breaking them down into different categories (branded, generic, competitors).

2. Use different keyword research tools to help find a large bank of relevant keywords. We like to use: AppTweak, SEMRush and Google Play Console (after going live).

3. Once a large keyword bank has been created, they are added to our ASO keyword tracking tools (MobileAction, AppTweak, SensorTower).

4. The keywords are filtered down to those with high relevance and high search popularity scores. The higher the score, the more often that term is searched.

    TIP: Your goal should be to target both high and lower search score keywords with lower difficulty scores (competition) and high relevance to your app. This approach will allow you to cover all possible options and unlock your app's full potential while targeting relevant keywords your competitors have yet to discover.

5. After identifying the most successful keywords, we incorporate them into the app's metadata. Remember, hierarchy matters – prioritize your most important keyword by including it in the title.

iOS Tip: While you soft launch your game/app, try running Apple Search Ads on a small budget to help you find your ASO keywords for your top countries.

Utilize broad match targeting to avoid missing out on relevant searches that may not have been covered by your exact match keyword list. This approach unveils unexpected search queries that you can later incorporate in your store listing's metadata.

CHOOSE YOUR CATEGORY AND TAGS

Category

Your primary category needs to be the right fit for your app. It should be relevant to what your app has to offer. This can impact your visibility from a browsing perspective on both platforms.

On the App Store, the secondary category does not impact your store's visibility. It can be chosen with keyword visibility in mind.

Android categories   iOS categories
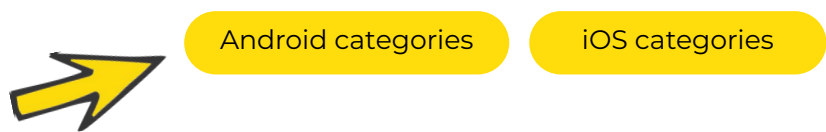
Tags (Google Play only)

Tags have an effect on where your app is displayed on Google Play, and the peer groups that your app or game is compared against. Tags are another way to help users search and discover the most relevant apps in the Google Play store. An app or game can have up to five tags to best describe the functionality and benefits.

At yellowHEAD, we can research the options for you and help you determine which primary category and tags are the best fit for your app and have the potential to bring you maximum browse impressions to support the ASO plan!

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PLAN FOR LOCALIZATION

Localization of your store assets can have a high ROI ASO activity, from both a visibility and a conversion standpoint.

App store localization is the process of adjusting an app store's metadata and creatives (i.e., app name, description, keywords, and screenshots) to different countries and languages.

Localized App Stores: Google maps
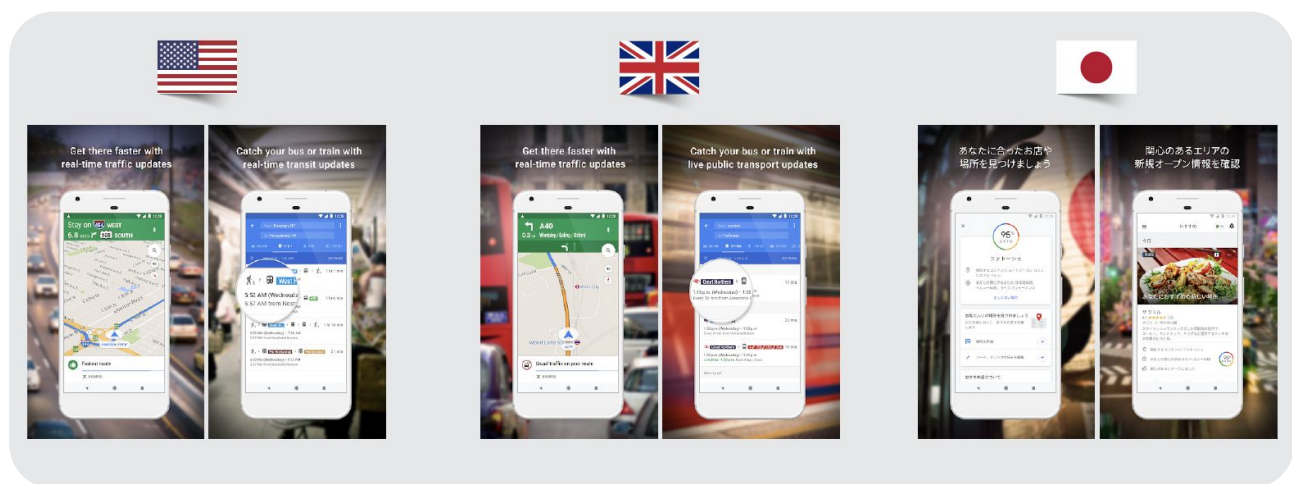
However, it's not just about localization…But culturalization as well.

Culturalization is about making your app culturally relevant within any region you plan on making it live in. This means not just translating the text, but also doing your research to better understand the users within that geo and how to best resonate with them.

This can be a tricky task, however it's important to make the user feel comfortable and 'at home' when using the app.

English geographies

Mexican geographies

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Localized Search Optimization at yellowHEAD

Based on your geo-target priorities, we customize the localization process for each country, including:

- In-depth Localized Keyword Research

- Creation of Optimized Listings for iOS & Google Play

- Ongoing Keyword Tracking

- Keyword Reporting

- Modifications to Store Listings

- Localized Creative Assets

- Localized Captions in Graphics

BETA TESTING

Testing your app or game before launch is crucial to the ASO strategy as this stage aims to eliminate any user experience issues or other product/technical problems, with minimal user impact to eventually release the best version of your app!

Collect valuable feedback from users and address all pressing issues before releasing your app.

Poor user experiences can have a negative impact on your star rating, leading to a decrease in Conversion Rate (CVR). Both Google Play and Apple's algorithms take CVR into consideration when ranking apps in the stores. This, in turn, affects the overall visibility of your app.

Conversely, a positive user experience and a high star rating, signal to the algorithm that your app is useful, functional, and helpful, therefore, it's more likely to receive a higher ranking. This can also positively influence users' decisions to download the app, leading to an increase in overall CVR, total downloads, and user retention.

Another positive outcome of this scenario is an improved position in the app's category ranking and an increased likelihood of being considered for featuring by the app store.
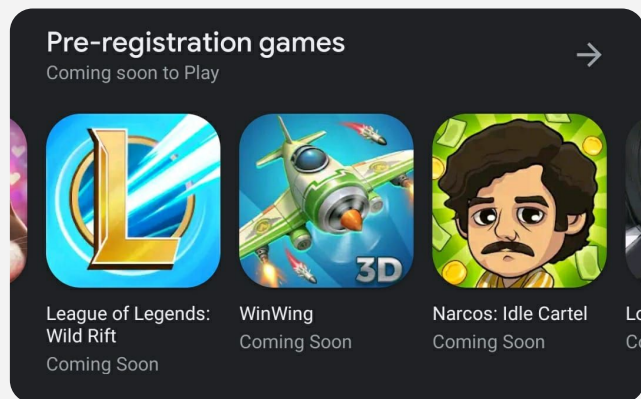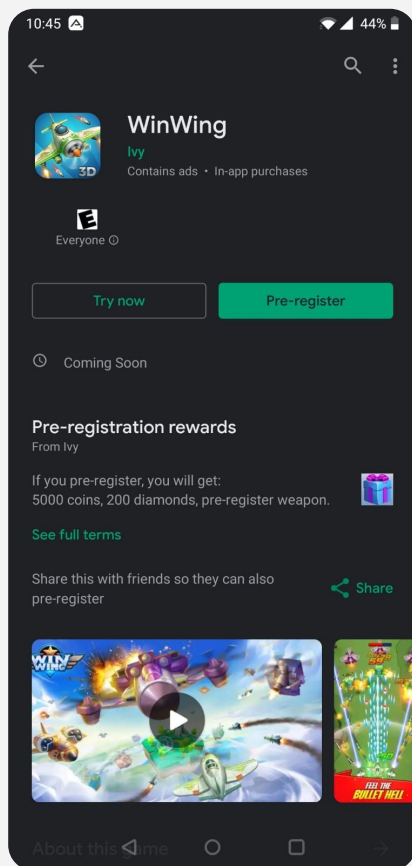
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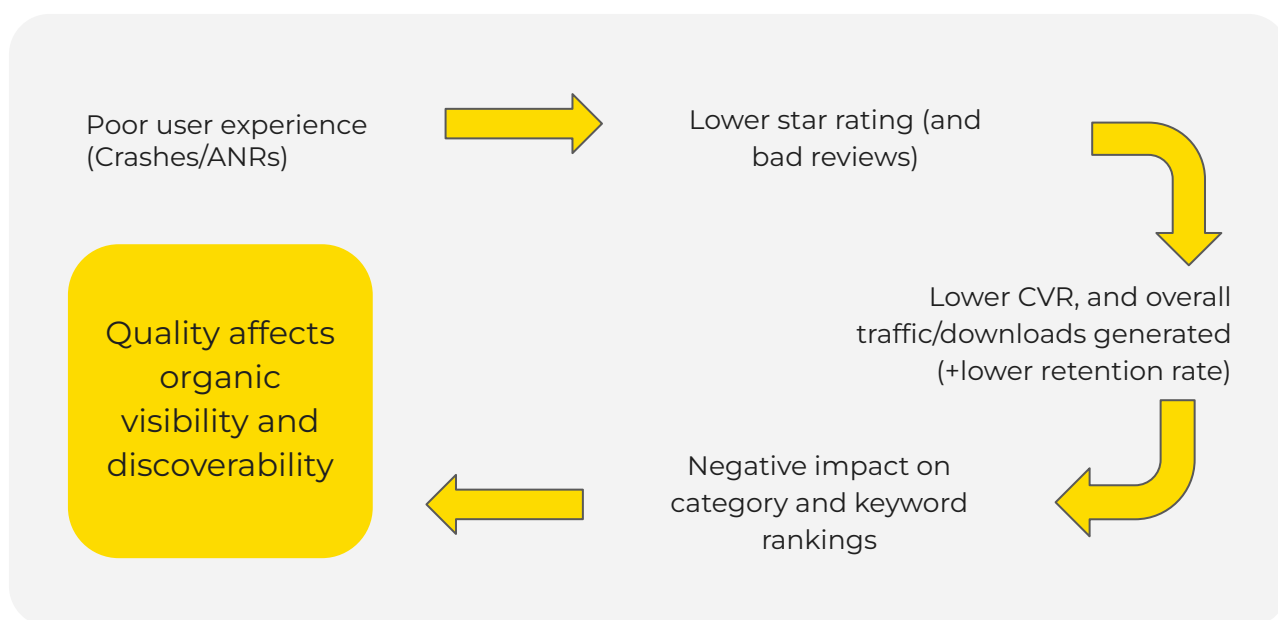
PRE-REGISTRATION / ORDER

Create excitement, anticipation and awareness of your app before launch to improve engagement and retention. Users will receive a notification at launch. Make sure your app is eligible for autoinstall so the app will be automatically download to their devices on launch day.
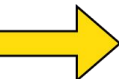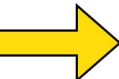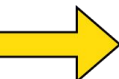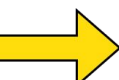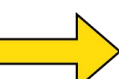
Remember! After you make your app or game available for pre-registration in a country, you need to launch it there within 90 days (GP) or 180 days (iOS).

How it works

Once pre-registration or pre-order is activated, your store listing becomes indexed and searchable in the stores or visible on the explore or browse pages. From here, users can learn about the app or game and the features it has to offer.

yellowHEAD Pre-registration Order Key Tips
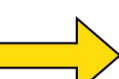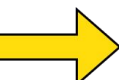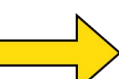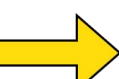## & Best practices

1. Before starting your pre-registration campaign, make sure that you've created a comprehensive store listing that includes all graphic assets

2. Drive traffic to your pre-registration listing in advance across your website and other promotional channels such as: deep links on third party websites, social media, press articles, email newsletters, etc.

3. Offer users pre-registration rewards (Google) - give users an in-app purchase for free after they pre-register for your app or game. A Google Analysis showed an increase in engagement (30 day retention) when compared to users who did not receive a pre-registration reward.

    -   Please note that a failure to deliver pre-registration rewards to users may result in suspension of your app from the Play Store

4. To encourage pre-registrations (Google), you can allow users to engage with your app or game before launch with a Google Play Instant version during your pre-registration campaign

5. Use Google App campaigns for pre-registration - Find people likely to pre-register for your app or game and to interact with the app or game after it's released

6. The keywords you put in your metadata will impact the ranking in search results, even though the app is still in the pre-registration status

7. For iOS only: Being a new app that is scheduled to launch soon is grounds to request a feature in the App Store. In order to get featured, you must write a story that explains why your app is an app that users will love and what makes you different from others. Make sure to showcase the app's most impressive creative assets and exciting features

8. Google offers the option to set up Promotional content for Pre-registration announcements - Inform pre-registered users of new content, instant app demos, milestone progress, or global release announcements

9. Google Play allows a/b testing of creatives while in pre-registration to optimize further your messaging and and increase CVR on launch

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iOS Pre-order user funnel

While in Pre-order (or pre-registration), users can discover your app through Search by directly searching for your app's name or via Browsing.

The funnel diagram above illustrates a random 'Browsing' session in the Games tab. Pre-order apps will be featured in the 'Coming soon' section, where users can choose to 'Get' the app. Clicking on the 'See all' button will display the complete list of upcoming apps.

When a user clicks on a specific app, they will be directed to the app's product page. Despite the app not being live yet, a full store listing will be presented, including a description of the app and creative assets.

After clicking the 'Get' button, users will receive a notification with the expected launch date, indicating that the app will be automatically downloaded upon launch.

At this stage, having a compelling store listing that aligns with your brand and follows ASO best practices is crucial for acquiring your initial user base.

LAUNCH PHASES & LIMITATIONS

Android

Phase	Capabilities / Limitations	Marketing opportunities	Visible on Google?	Public Ratings?
Internal testing	- Private APK up to 100 users - Send new APKs each day to QA teams on a wide range of devices - You can create a list of internal testers by email address (Users need a Google Account)	✕	✕	✕
Closed testing	- Invite up to 100k players via email or an *unlimited* number via Google Groups (Users need a Google Account)	✕	✕	✕
Open testing	- listed as 'Unreleased' or 'Early Access' (visible on the Play Store) - Unlimited user count (developers can limit the number of users who can access the game) - Test server loads, ANRs, crashes "in the wild" (open beta has no limit in users so you can test your setup)	- Social media - Email marketing campaigns - Invitations to join open beta (app cross-promotions) - UAC - ASO (Search)	✔	✕ Private feedback only
Soft Launch - Production testing	- All users within an entire geographic market are able to search and access the app - You can be featured in "recommended for you" - Monetization testing phase <u>Countries where a soft launch occurred are ineligible for pre-registration</u>	- Social media - Email marketing campaigns - App cross-promotions - UAC; Meta Ads; others - ASO: Search; Explore ('New Releases', "recommended for you") - Promotional content	✔	✔ Can leave public reviews
Pre-registration	- Build awareness, excitement, interest in the game before launch - Improve engagement and retention metrics once live - Pre-registration campaign often see a large increase in day one and day seven retention (users will receive a notification & auto-install if applicable) - The keywords you put in your metadata will impact the ranking in search results, even though the app is still in the pre-registration status	- Social media - Email marketing campaigns - Google Ads - App campaigns for pre-registration - App cross-promotions - UAC (with no Install button); Meta Ads; other - ASO (Search; Explore - featuring in "Pre-registration games"), Promotional content - Pre-registration announcements	✔	✕
Global Launch			✔	✔

All mentioned phases can run in parallel (except internal testing), for the same APK in different countries

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iOS

Phase	Capabilities / Limitations	Marketing opportunities	Visible on Apple?	Public Ratings?
Internal testers	- Up to 100 members of your team who hold the Account Holder, Admin, App Manager, Developer, or Marketing role as beta testers.	✖	✖	✖
External testers and groups	- Invite up to 10,000 external testers using their email addresses or by enabling and sharing a public link (which creates an open invitation for anyone to test your app) - Before testing can begin, the first build of your app must be approved by TestFlight App Review	✔ - You can then copy the link and share it on social media, messaging platforms, email campaigns, and more	✖	✖ Private feedback only
Soft Launch - Production testing	- All users within an entire geographic market are able to search and access the app - You can be featured in "recommended for you" - Monetization testing phase	- Social media - Email marketing campaigns - App cross-promotions - UAC; Meta Ads; other - ASO (Search; Browse)	✔	✔ Can leave public reviews
Pre-order	- Build awareness, excitement, interest in the game before launch - Improve engagement and retention metrics once live - You start being indexed for keywords - Apple will be able to index keywords and rank your app before the actual launch	- Social media - Email marketing campaigns - App cross-promotions - ASA; Meta Ads; other - ASO (Customers can pre-order your app from your product page, search results, and the Today, Games, or Apps tabs if your app is featured)	✔	✖
Global Launch			✔	✔

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# CONGRATULATIONS ON COMPLETING THE YELLOWHEAD ASO PRE-LAUNCH PLAYBOOK!

You're Now Equipped with the Best Strategies to Maximize Your App's Success

You've reached the final page of the yellowHEAD ASO Pre-Launch Playbook, and we're thrilled to have guided you through the intricate world of App Store Optimization (ASO) for pre-launch apps in 2024. Armed with the strategies, insights, and expert tips we've provided, you are now well-prepared to embark on your app's journey to success.

Your ASO Journey Begins Now

Remember that ASO is not a one-time task; it's an ongoing process. The strategies and insights provided in this playbook serve as a strong foundation, but your journey toward app success has just begun.

In the ever-evolving app ecosystem, staying ahead of the competition and adapting to changes in search algorithms, user behavior, and market trends are key to long-term success.

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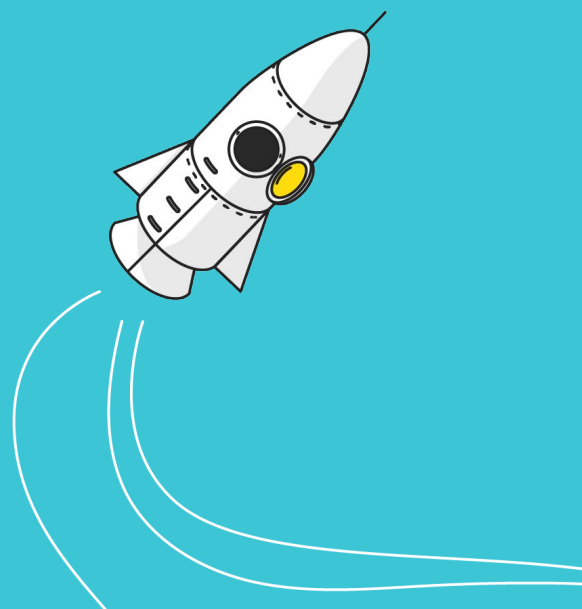
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info@yellowhead.com