

How Pokémon Go could benefit your business

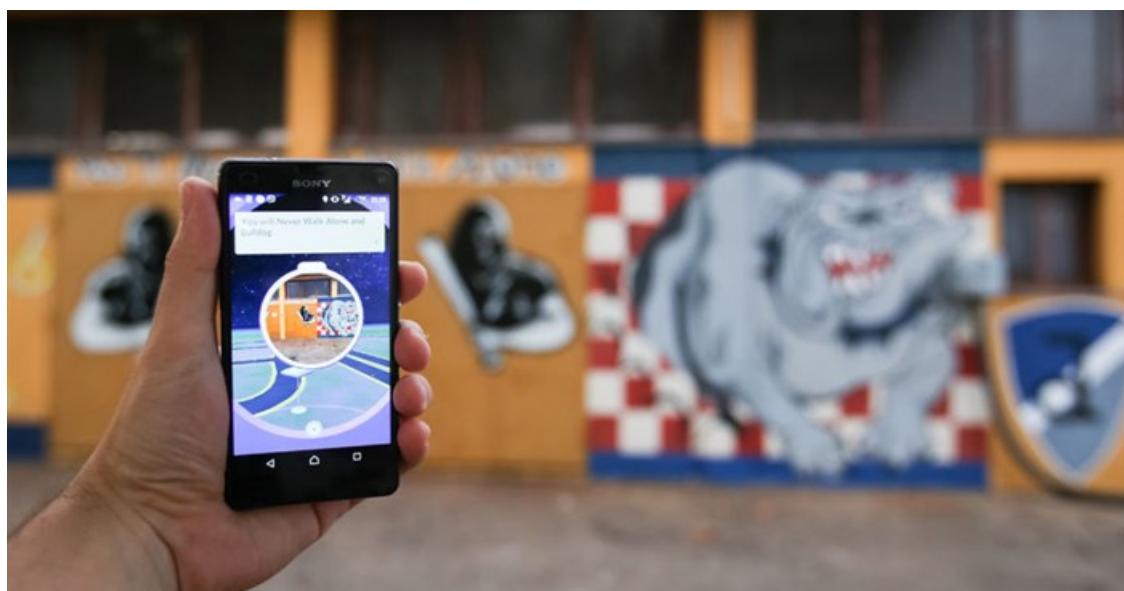
By Leigh Andrews

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You've heard of B2B and B2C, but are you ready for O2O? The new online-to-offline trend is lighting up markets across the globe, particularly with the growing Pokémon Go phenomenon.

Chances are strong that your social media newsfeeds were flooded with images of friends and family either taking part in or marvelling at crowds of people converging in common places and then simply staring at their screens Pokémon Go activities this past weekend.

It's quite literally the biggest online-to-offline trend we've seen yet, and also predicted as just the [starting point](#) as [augmented reality](#) - yes [AR, not just VR](#) - looks set to shake-up business as we know it.



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Let me backtrack a little: Confused about "online-to-offline"? At its simplest, O2O is a sign that business is following the slow but steady consumer shift offline... sort of. While the digital boom of the past two decades means consumers can find almost anything they want online, it also means they're bombarded with unwanted advertising that constantly interrupts and distracts them.

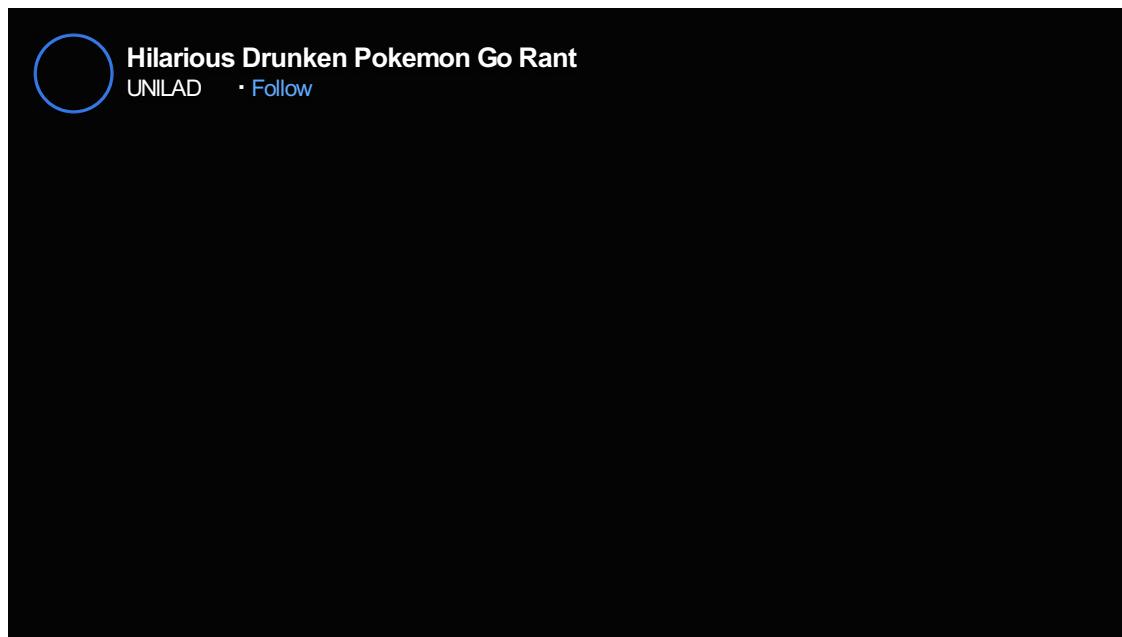
It makes sense if you take off your marketer's hat for a minute and replace it with your consumer hat. Think about it. We check our emails less often, limit our social media check-ins and bookmark interesting articles to read later. Much, much later. But we're not stopping them entirely. If anything, we're redefining the way we interact online – bringing it offline.

Taking the leap from online-to-offline

For business then, adapting to this trend is all important. Last week, [eMarketer investigated](#) how China's marketers are adapting to the new O2O world, particularly in the retail and ecommerce space, in an interview with the senior VP and head of ecommerce practice at Razorfish in Shanghai.

The main take-out is that it's all about enabling your consumers to interact with your brand wherever they may be. The increasing offline attention shift means businesses need to adapt to this – not by calling a day on their digital offering, but making sure customers can engage them just as easily in the traditional space as in the real-time realm.

[A quick Google search](#) shows that the majority of O2O news hails from Asian countries, but there's no denying the global impact of the biggest online-to-offline shift yet: With the growing popularity of Pokémon Go, we're seeing more and more millennials – consumers of the future – using their online devices to interact in the offline space by actually talking to each other and running around in groups – it's the rise of digitally enhanced team power, but it's not limited to the teenyboppers. See below as proof:



That's right: The video has views in the eight figures, almost 40 million. Proof that it's funny, because it hits home for many. In fact, Pokémon Go has [just partnered with McDonald's in Japan](#), in a deal that sees the fast food restaurants function as 'training gyms' for enthusiastic players. It offers a new level of interaction that blends together the ease of online transactions with the humanness of traditional purchasing.

Bar a few [mishaps](#), this definitely seems to be the way [most businesses will go in future](#), with [Engadget](#) reporting from Niantic Labs founder John Hanke's panel discussion at this past weekend's Comic-Con that custom locations or Pokestop-function changing elements, like a 'monster-healing pokécenter', would be cool updates, with more lures resulting in more online-to-offline visits. [Click here](#) and [here](#) to find out how to set up a Pokémon Go lure in your physical shop, sure to result in foot O2O traffic.

'Virtually enhanced bricks-and-mortar business', here we come!

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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