GAME DESIGN PORTFOLIO

Zeus Mendoza

Senior Game Designer

Social play and progression in live games

Pokémon GO
Star Wars: Galaxy of Heroes



Sacramento, California ZeusTMendoza@gmail.com

PORTFOLIO

Selected Case Studies

Approximately 15 years across game design, systems balancing and testing.

SLIDES

03–07

Golden PokéStops and Gimmighoul

Pokémon GO

Owned the connected feature set, from mobile reward design and tuning through console connectivity and the in-game debut.

08–11

Mk 5 Stun Gun

Star Wars: Galaxy of Heroes

Diagnosed a shared progression bottleneck and selected acquisition sources that supported eligible players and economy health.

Golden PokéStops and Gimmighoul

CAMPAIGN GOALS

Connect audiences across Pokémon GO and Scarlet/Violet through Gimmighoul and Gholdengo. Support daily activity and new-user acquisition during the promotion.

FIXED REQUIREMENTS

Console connectivity, Postcard-driven Vivillon patterns in Scarlet/Violet, evolution requirements and the coordinated website/video launch timing.

MY DESIGN OWNERSHIP

Owned the connected feature set. Defined mobile rewards and coin sources, tuned acquisition and encounters, and delivered the in-game debut.



Connectivity launch: February 27, 2023 [1]

Gimmighoul Gameplay



Send a Postcard

Pokémon GO to Scarlet / Violet

IN SCARLET / VIOLET

Vivillon patterns follow Postcard origin.

DAILY ACCESS

Coin Bag



Attract Gimmighoul

Gimmighoul



Catch for Coins

Golden Lure Module

After Five Postcard Days



Turns a PokéStop Gold



Spin for Coins

Collect

999



Gimmighoul Coins

Evolution Goal

Use Coins to Evolve Gimmighoul Into



Gholdengo

Pokémon #1,000

My connected feature design, reconstructed from the released player flow.

REWARD PACING

Choosing the Golden Lure Cadence

EVIDENCE

7 days of cohort resource inflow and outflow

→

MODEL

Compared 2–7 transfer-day cadences, accounting for expected payouts, engagement drop-off and economic impact.

→

SHORTLIST

Four or five transfer days

MODEL-INFORMED CHOICE

Four Days	Modeled candidate
Five Days	Selected for more conservative resource release

WHY FIVE

Daily Coin Bag access already gave players a return incentive. Five transfers preserved a longer-term lure milestone while protecting the economy.

Daily Coin Bag access offers accelerated personal progress. Shared Golden Lures give players without the console game access to coins, items and rare Gimmighoul encounters.

VALIDATION AND DELIVERY

Testing the Experience and Resource Balance

SPREADSHEET CHECKS

Ran known variables through the calculator to evaluate expected reward outcomes.

DAILY TEAM DOGFOODING

Used the feature with the team to check how the gameplay and rewards felt in practice.

PARTNER ALIGNMENT

Maintained discussions with The Pokémon Company about campaign expectations and Gimmighoul’s identity.

IMPLEMENTATION TRADEOFF

Reused Rocket Battle technology for random global Golden PokéStop spawns, building on an existing framework to save implementation time and cost.

LIVE MONITORING

Watched resource inflow and outflow in dashboards and telemetry during the event to guide tuning.

Community Participation Beyond Launch



Ultra Unlock: 10th Anniversary Edition, July 2026

Later live-event use after my Niantic tenure.

OBSERVED PARTICIPATION

Repeat participation and player-organized events.

Players praised rewards and wanted the feature back.

GAMEPUR

“What’s really nice about the Gold Pokestop are the multiple benefits they give you and other players…”

Zack Palm, September 14, 2023 [6]

POKÉMON GO HUB

“Shout out to the trainers who managed to drop Golden Lures, we appreciate you!”

kittypokemonsalot, August 6, 2023 [7]

DESIGN LESSON

Shared rewards let players contribute to their communities and create reasons to return.

Press quotes reflect later feature use in 2023.

Diagnosing a Shared Gear Bottleneck

PLAYER PROBLEM

Shared demand for Mk 5 Stun Gun across characters and crafting recipes slowed progression at mid-to-high gear tiers.

CONVERGING EVIDENCE

Dashboards showed slowing gear advancement and acquisition falling behind demand. Community sentiment reinforced the frustration of hitting a progression wall.

MY OWNERSHIP

Sources, quantity/frequency tuning and shop placement. Cross-team coordination and ongoing monitoring.



Mk 5 A/KT Stun Gun



Public gear progression UI, EA / Capital Games [5]

Selecting Sources With Broad Reach

SOURCE	DESIGN REASONING
PvE Nodes	Prioritized high-activity nodes accessible to eligible players at level 72 and above.
Early Guild Raid	Targeted the first accessible guild raid to give the additional supply broad reach.
Shard Shop	Paired progression relief with a more useful sink for the shard economy.

Event rewards and purchase packs/bundles provided additional acquisition paths.

Conservative Supply and Ongoing Tuning

Started conservatively, then revisited supply as telemetry and new character gear requirements changed demand.



LIVE CHECKS

Resource inflow/outflow, progression activity, retention and community feedback.

Acquisition flow reconstructed for this portfolio.

RETROSPECTIVE

Outcomes and Economy Lessons

OBSERVED DIRECTION

Less progression frustration

More character progression

Improved retention

Retrospective, directional observations informed by dashboards and community feedback.

WHAT I WOULD IMPROVE

Before launch, model acquisition and usage across the economy. Use simulations and spreadsheet calculators to identify shared-item bottlenecks and adjust proactively.

HOW I WORK

I connect reward pacing to player motivations and economy health, then use testing and live feedback to guide decisions.

References and Credits

1 **Pokémon Day Connectivity Launch**

The Pokémon Company, February 27, 2023

2 **Gimmighoul and Golden PokéStops**

Official released mechanics and coin progression

3 **Postcards and Console Connectivity**

Official Coin Bag and Golden Lure requirements

4 **The 1,000-Pokémon Milestone**

The Pokémon Company franchise announcement

5 **Galaxy of Heroes Gear UI**

EA / Capital Games, via Gamers Decide

6 **Golden PokéStop Player Benefits**

Gamepur, Zack Palm, September 14, 2023

7 **Golden Lures and Community Appreciation**

Pokémon GO Hub, kittypokemonsalot, August 6, 2023

8 **Ultra Unlock: 10th Anniversary Edition**

Official event artwork and rewards, July 2026

Project ownership, decisions and observations reflect my firsthand work. Diagrams and decision summaries are portfolio reconstructions. Outcome statements are directional observations.

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