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Pokémon Board of Directors

GWCIA 30

Letter From the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to GWCIA 30! I'm beyond excited to be your chair for this committee. My name is Wretam Purkayastha, and outside of this, I'm the Vice Head Delegate of the GW Model UN team. I'm originally from Edison, New Jersey, and when I'm not competing, I'm usually working out, running, or playing Pokémon Scarlet on my Switch 2 (thank god for the new update).

Now, for this committee, it's something that speaks to the 7th grade me. I remember playing Pokemon Alpha Sapphire on my battered 2DS system. When I looked back this summer at the state of the company, I was almost shocked. The idea of reselling, scalping, and borderline misuse of the cards and games has made me upset. So what I want is for you guys to step into the shoes of the Pokémon Board of Directors at a critical moment.

This is your chance to rebrand Pokémon, bring fresh energy to the TCG, reinvent the anime, and make sure the world falls in love with catching 'em all again. I can't wait to see what crazy, creative, and maybe even legendary ideas you all bring to the table!

Best of luck,

Wretam Purkayastha (Level 50 in TCG Pocket, 40 in Pokemon GO, owner of a Shiny Giratina in Platinum after 2.3k Soft Resets)

Introduction to the Committee

It is the year 2022. The release of Pokémon Scarlet and Violet was expected to mark a new era in the franchise's legacy. Marketed as the first true open-world Pokémon adventure, fans were promised a revolutionary experience, a game that would raise the bar for what a Pokémon game could be. Hype was at an all-time high. But when the games finally launched, that excitement quickly gave way to disappointment. Reviews poured in describing the games as glitchy, lifeless, and at times, downright dull. What should have been a triumphant step forward instead felt like a warning sign: that the magic of Pokémon might be fading.

Now, that disappointment has rippled through the entire brand. From the increasingly stagnant Trading Card Game (TCG) to an anime struggling to reinvent itself after Ash Ketchum's departure, there's a growing sense that Pokémon is at a crossroads. The Pokémon Board of Directors have taken notice. Internal discussions have begun to circulate, centered on a single urgent goal: revitalization. This is no longer just about fixing one bad game; it's about rebranding the entire Pokémon experience.

The mission is clear. Pokémon must become exciting again. It cannot be a profit machine but must be genuinely beloved. That means bold decisions for the TCG, a creative overhaul for the anime, and a renewed focus on storytelling, quality, and joy. After all, this isn't just a franchise; it's a global cultural icon. And right now, it's in desperate need of a spark to bring it back to life.

Main Issues

The Pokémon brand is separated into three: **the anime, the Trading Card Game (TCG), and the video games. All** three are in dire need of attention. While Pokémon remains a global cultural icon, these issues risk dulling the shine of a franchise once synonymous with magic, excitement, and nostalgia.

1. The Anime: Life After Ash

For more than two decades, Ash Ketchum was the face of Pokémon. His long journey finally came to a close in 2023, a historic but risky decision. On the one hand, fans celebrated his long-awaited victory as world champion. On the other hand, the anime now faces an identity crisis. The new protagonists, Liko and Roy, have struggled to capture the same level of emotional connection with audiences worldwide.

- **Declining Viewer Engagement**: Without Ash, Pikachu, and the familiar nostalgia, ratings have dipped, especially in Western markets.
- **Creative Stagnation**: Storylines feel repetitive, often mirroring old arcs without the freshness that could hook a new generation.

- **Global Disconnect**: While Japan remains engaged, international fans have not embraced the reboot with the same enthusiasm, threatening Pokémon's global cultural dominance.

If the anime fails to reinvent itself in a meaningful way, it risks fading from relevance at the very moment when Pokémon needs a bold, unifying narrative.

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2. The Trading Card Game (TCG): A Victim of Its Own Popularity

Once a fun, accessible hobby for kids and collectors, the TCG has increasingly become dominated by **resellers, scalpers, and speculators**. Cards that should bring joy now spark frustration.

- **Scalping & Reselling**: Limited sets sell out instantly, only to reappear on resale sites at 5–10 times the price. Kids and casual fans, the primary audience, are the ones who aren't able to get these items.
- **Accessibility Issues**: Pokémon cards are no longer a simple playground pastime. Collectors now need deep wallets, creating a barrier between the franchise and its fans.
- **Competitive Play Decline**: With emphasis on high-value cards, the competitive scene feels overshadowed. The TCG risks losing its identity as a strategic game, becoming instead a speculative market

3. The Video Games: From Innovation to Frustration

Pokémon video games are the heart of the franchise, but the recent trajectory has been rocky. While *Pokémon Legends: Arceus* hinted at bold innovation, *Scarlet* and *Violet* became infamous for their technical issues.

- **Technical Failures**: Poor graphics, buggy gameplay, and frame-rate drops made the "first open-world Pokémon" feel rushed and unfinished.

- **Recycled Formulas**: Despite the open-world promise, core gameplay remained repetitive. Fans wanted exploration and immersion but got fetch quests and empty landscapes.

- **Franchise Fatigue**: Annual releases create quantity over quality. Game Freak's small development team struggles to meet deadlines, leading to undercooked experiences.

Without major innovation and better quality control, Pokémon risks losing its crown as the "most reliable" video game franchise for casual and hardcore fans alike.

The Challenge

Together, these three issues paint a picture of a franchise at risk: an anime without a face, a card game without accessibility, and video games without polish. Delegates must step into the role of the Pokémon Board of Directors and find bold, creative, and fan-centered solutions to rebrand and revive the world's most iconic franchise.

Goals for the Board

As the Pokémon Board of Directors, your task is not only to solve problems but also to set a vision. Pokémon must reestablish itself as a franchise that is **innovative, accessible, and joyful**. The ultimate goal is simple: **make Pokémon beloved again.**

To get there, the board should focus on three overarching goals:

1. **Reignite the Magic**: Bring back the sense of wonder and adventure that defined Pokémon for generations of fans.

2. **Ensure Accessibility**: Make sure the games, anime, and TCG are truly for everyone, not just collectors, resellers, or hardcore fans.

3. **Prioritize Quality Over Quantity**: Slow down where needed, improve the polish of releases, and create experiences that last.

Guiding Questions

- **Anime**: How can the Pokémon anime capture global audiences without Ash as its central character?
- **Trading Card Game (TCG)**: What concrete steps can be taken to make the TCG accessible again for kids and casual fans in the face of scalping and reselling?
- **Video Games**: Should Game Freak slow down its release cycle to prioritize higher-quality games, even if it means lower short-term profits?
- **The Brand as a Whole**: What should Pokémon's core identity be moving forward—a kids' series, a nostalgic brand for adults, or a hybrid of both?

Character List:

Executive Leadership

1. **Tsunekazu Ishihara**
   Position: President, Representative Director, and CEO – The Pokémon Company
   Agenda: Ishihara chairs the board and focuses on unifying Pokémon's global brand strategy across games, merchandise, media, and competitive play. His priority is to maintain Pokémon's position as a cross-generational entertainment juggernaut and ensure alignment among the three parent companies: Nintendo, Game Freak, and Creatures Inc.
2. **Takato Utsunomiya**
   Position: Representative Director – The Pokémon Company
   Agenda: Utsunomiya advocates for continued growth and innovation in the Pokémon

Trading Card Game. He leads efforts to expand the competitive circuit, improve digital TCG integration, and modernize the global rollout of new card formats.

3. **Kenji Okubo**
   Position: President and CEO – The Pokémon Company International
   Agenda: Okubo represents the Western market and champions localization, retail partnerships, and licensing strategy. He works to adapt Pokémon's messaging and products to fit regional markets while ensuring consistency with the global brand.
4. **Leon Suh**
   Position: Chief Financial Officer and Head of Consumer Products – TPCi
   Agenda: Suh's focus is on revenue maximization and brand-safe merchandising. He oversees financial modeling for product lines and licensing while maintaining long-term fiscal health.
5. **Kaz Kobayashi**
   Position: Vice President, Treasurer and Controller – TPCi
   Agenda: Kobayashi ensures that all financial operations meet compliance standards and supports cross-border financial planning. He reports on risk management, revenue tracking, and internal financial audits.
6. **Junichi Masuda**
   Position: Chief Creative Fellow – The Pokémon Company
   Agenda: Masuda leads conversations on the artistic and emotional tone of the franchise. He ensures new content remains true to Pokémon's core values and continues to resonate with both nostalgic and new audiences.
7. **Satoshi Tajiri**
   Position: Founder – Game Freak
   Agenda: Though less active, Tajiri serves as a philosophical guidepost for the board. His focus is preserving the soul of Pokémon by safeguarding its themes of discovery, friendship, and nature.
8. **Kazumasa Iwao**
   Position: Game Director – Game Freak
   Agenda: Iwao pushes for modernization in game mechanics and open-world exploration. He represents the creative teams leading the evolution of core Pokémon gameplay and directs innovation without sacrificing the brand's DNA.

9. **Takuya Iwasaki**
   Position: CEO – ILCA, Inc.
   Agenda: Iwasaki serves as the voice of partner studios, particularly in outsourced remake and support projects. His agenda centers on technical execution, project coordination, and ensuring quality control across co-developed titles.
10. **Tetsuya Iguchi**
    Position: Executive Producer – Pokémon Anime (TV Tokyo and OLM Inc.)
    Agenda: Iguchi drives storytelling expansion through the anime, leading discussions on global distribution and narrative transitions. His role includes overseeing new protagonists, adapting themes to modern audiences, and aligning anime arcs with game cycles.
11. **Tsunami Saito**
    Position: Head of Media Strategy – TV Tokyo
    Agenda: Saito handles broadcast strategy and international syndication. He leads efforts to negotiate streaming deals and extend the reach of Pokémon's multimedia storytelling across platforms.
12. **Shuntaro Furukawa**
    Position: President – Nintendo
    Agenda: Furukawa advises on hardware partnerships, release timing, and cross-franchise promotions. He ensures Pokémon's roadmap complements Nintendo's broader ecosystem and leverages platform innovation.
13. **Hirokazu Tanaka**
    Position: Former President – Creatures Inc.
    Agenda: As a legacy advisor, Tanaka brings historical knowledge and insight into Pokémon's sound design and card development. He consults on preserving authenticity in new products while encouraging experimentation in art and sound.
14. **Atsushi Taira**
    Position: Chief Strategy Officer – Creatures Inc.
    Agenda: Taira works on TCG innovation, including integration with digital and VR technologies. He spearheads strategy surrounding the next generation of Pokémon card mechanics and interactive experiences.
15. **John Hanke**
    Position: CEO – Niantic Inc.

Agenda: Hanke is focused on location-based gaming, live events, and the long-term development of Pokémon GO. He pushes for deeper AR features and integration of mobile experiences into the core Pokémon ecosystem.

16. **Takahito Utsunomiya**
    Position: Chief Operating Officer – Nintendo
    Agenda: Utsunomiya coordinates internal Nintendo logistics and R&D collaboration. His agenda includes ensuring smooth platform launches and developing future-proof distribution pipelines for Pokémon titles.
17. **Shigeru Miyamoto**
    Position: Representative Director – Nintendo
    Agenda: Miyamoto offers guidance on intuitive design, franchise expansion, and legacy-building. He advises on cross-brand integrations and helps keep Pokémon accessible to younger players.
18. **Masahiro Sakurai**
    Position: Director – Super Smash Bros.
    Agenda: Sakurai acts as an external advisor for competitive integration and character crossover. His interest lies in ensuring Pokémon characters remain relevant in gaming culture and are well-represented in the broader Nintendo family.
19. **Tsunekazu Nagase**
    Position: Executive Vice President – Creatures Inc.
    Agenda: Nagase focuses on card mechanics, balancing, and global player trends. He serves as the board's authority on competitive TCG development and long-term meta health.
20. **Eric Medalle**
    Position: Former Art Director and Graphic Designer – Pokémon series
    Agenda: Medalle's agenda is maintaining brand consistency through visual design. He consults on logo creation, UI refinement, and aesthetic evolution across all products and regional variants

Works Cited

(To be added)