

Culture Pop

Finding comfort in control: **Adults embracing kids' toys**

Two recent examples show how adults are leaning into children's toys and games to gain a sense of accomplishment and control.

the**lab**



The toys and game **resonating with adults**

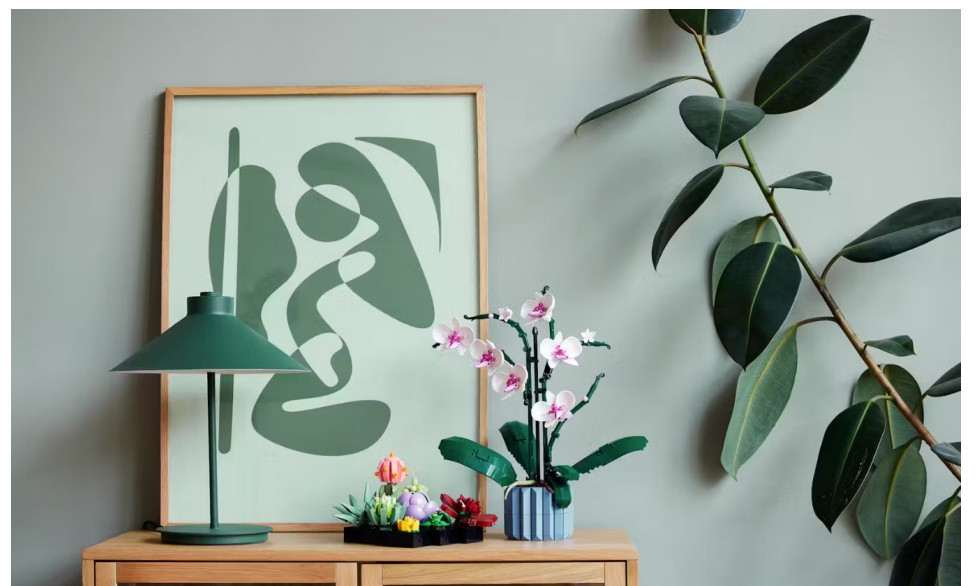
The phrase “we’re all kids at heart” gets thrown around from time to time but with nostalgic toy brand LEGO claiming its adult market has at least quadrupled over the past decade, maybe there’s more truth to this than we generally believe.

Building on this, in the last week we’ve noticed platforming game ‘Only Up!’ skyrocket in popularity amongst the gaming community with its rage inducing, concentration commanding and unfathomably fulfilling premise.

Players are challenged to traverse unique worlds of obstacles, with only one goal in mind – moving up! Compared to most games, Only Up! has a short average completion time of 4-5 hours but the catch is, one false step and your character will start plummeting to the ground below, passing all the challenging obstacles you’ve already cleared before being back at ground zero.



Only Up!



LEGO

Why are adults spending their time playing with **kids' toys and fighting uphill battles?**

Aside from the creative expression and active relaxation, the backdrop of the current cultural landscape has a part to play. With heightened financial constraints and lingering uncertainty, finding a (small) sense of control through a clear end-to-end challenge where a sense of reward and achievement is possible, offers some respite.

*"Once you're done, there's this little microcosm and **you** get a real sense of accomplishment, especially if it was a ton of pieces."*



Adult Fandoms Are Driving the Lego Market to New Heights

The decades-old toy for kids is building on its longtime popularity with increasingly elevated sets designed specifically for AFOLs (short for "Adult Fans of Lego").

Text by
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Beyond the cultural context, there's a **behavioural reason why these activities hook us in**

A variety of Behavioural Science principles are at play, helping to explain why adults are committing to these activities.



Goal Commitment: When individuals commit to a goal, they are more likely to exert effort and persist until it is accomplished.

The tangible reward for completing a LEGO set, compels users to finish the set, despite the time commitment and focus required



Optimism Bias: the tendency to underestimate the likelihood of negative events or risks occurring to while overestimating the likelihood of positive events or outcomes.

Even with the sheer scale of the challenge to beat Only Up!, players overlook the odds against them and overestimate their ability to finish the game



Loss Aversion: For humans, the pain of losing hurts twice as much as a gain feels good. We tend to prefer avoiding losses to acquiring equivalent gains.

The fear of losing progress or starting over creates a heightened emotional response. This fear of loss can increase engagement and motivation as players strive to avoid failure and protect their progress

Thought-starters for brands



Playfulness – how might you think about bringing play into your comms / offering at a time when people are looking for some relief?



Goal commitment bias – how can you present an achievable goal to your consumers that they want to take on and complete?



Optimism bias – how can you deliver an experience that balances reward and challenge and taps into your consumers self-belief?



Loss aversion – how can you protect your consumers' progress and achievements and mitigate any losses or hardship?

Thank **you** 👩