

3 Traditionally Offline Industries That Are Going Online

The list features some all-star companies that did a brilliant job of digitizing on the fly.

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They say that to survive, you must adapt. The past several months have proven that to be particularly true, especially among the numerous industries forced to digitally transform their operations overnight in an effort to stave off economic collapse.

Of course, the digitization of some industries, such as sales, marketing, and advertising, has been underway for many years now. However, there were several essential industries that had yet to hop on the bandwagon and were sent scrambling for solutions. Luckily for all of us, their perseverance paid off.

Here's a look at three such exemplars of resilience.

Healthcare

All sorts of health services inevitably found their way online during lockdowns, and many of them intend to remain web-based. In the U.S., calls are intensifying to retain telehealth as part of a much-needed healthcare revolution. Elsewhere, the UK's National Health Service recently approved Babylon Health

– which operates an AI-based triage interface to interpret symptoms – as a primary care provider.

Betterspeech is one example of a healthcare provider that plans to continue offering 100 percent online speech therapy beyond the pandemic in an effort to improve access for older patients and those affected by mobility or psychological issues.

Since shelter-in-place orders took hold, real estate agents have been selling property using virtual tours, with even larger agencies moving online. But there's more going on. Fintech investors have their eye firmly on a prize that would see buyers taking ownership pretty much at the same time they transfer funds. The potential rewards from designing a solution to the problem of lengthy real estate contract exchanges are thought to be worth about \$100 billion.

Ambitious “proptech” companies are hoping to automate many of the tasks real estate agents find time-consuming. They also aim to use technology to revolutionize the way we buy houses, much as fintech transformed how we move money and make payments. And the online revolution doesn't need to stop once you've exchanged contracts on your new home.

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Home Improvement

If you've ever felt impatient buying property, then it's likely you've also been frustrated by the process of trying to organize renovations. Getting quotes can become a time-consuming ordeal of waiting around for people to turn up, and the whole process is outdated. All that looks set to change, however. We're already starting to see the emergence of companies that recognize the difficulties property owners face and are busy providing time-saving online solutions.

Houseace utilizes tech to make renovations easier to arrange and understand. For homeowners who generally know little about building work, the primary benefit is they get information, property management, help and an online quote from a local builder – all in one place. Contractors essentially get to outsource their marketing and sales, which is precisely what customers tend to think they're terrible at doing.

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Houseace is just one of a growing number of enterprises that combines the offline with the online. And despite the internet revolution of recent years, evidence suggests that's exactly what people want. As convenient as the internet is, most people don't follow a straight line to the checkout when they shop. It sounds a little crazy, but as lucrative as ecommerce is, as fast as online sales are growing, they still represent less than 10 percent of the total retail market. Companies ultimately need the right mix of online and offline presence to cover a diverse range of consumer needs and preferences.

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