

# Valentine's Day's spending boost is a sign of the changing ad landscape

Article

**The news:** Valentine's Day spending is set to enjoy a comeback this year after a downswing during the pandemic, and a growing emphasis on romance among Americans has brands

eager to reach both single and coupled consumers.

**More on this:** Nearly two years of pandemic-induced isolation has made romance top of mind for Americans, who are set to spend **\$23.9 billion** on Valentine's Day this year. That would make 2022 the second-highest year on record, per the National Retail Federation.

- Spending will increase significantly from **\$21.8 billion** in 2021, driven by changing emphasis on relationships. According to a survey by **Match** and **The Kinsey Institute**, **62%** of single respondents said they were seeking more committed relationships, and the desire to enter a relationship in the next year was strong among both millennials (**76%**) and Gen Z ers (**81%**).
- Consumers who have already tied the knot are also feeling the love: **82%** of married couples in a late 2020 survey said they “felt more committed” thanks to the pandemic. Overall, 53% of US consumers plan to celebrate the holiday this year, and 76% of those celebrating say it’s “important” to do so during the pandemic.
- “Revenge” may not be the loveliest of emotions, but the desire to “revenge shop,” which helped drive record holiday season ecommerce sales, could also be contributing to higher spending.

**Brands playing the field:** Valentine's Day advertising may bring to mind romantic jewelry ads, but brands are increasingly catering to single consumers as well.

- Emerging technologies are playing a bigger role this year. **Instagram** is asking consumers to do a little retail therapy with a Valentine's Day live shopping stream titled the “Gift Yourself Guide.” **Samsung** is also testing the romance potential of the metaverse with a virtual scavenger hunt that will gift participants an NFT.
- **Shake Shack** is even partnering with **DoorDash** to create a limited-time dating site focused on how spicy users like their food.
- Brands are eager to digitally engage all those with love on the brain because user data relating to romance is highly valuable. Dating app profiles, for example, provide insight to a user's location, gender, hobbies, media interests, and more.

**The takeaway:** Despite all this, a deluge of lovey-dovey ads may not boost the mood of the estimated 50% of American adults who are single, and brands must also be considerate of consumers' and regulators' growing concerns about privacy.

- A growing number of brands are giving consumers the ability to opt out of receiving Valentine's Day ads—an option that's becoming more available and important to consumers. As of November 2021, **62%** of iOS users are opting out of data tracking after **Apple's AppTrackingTransparency** update.