

Valentine's Day

Seven Insights for Reaching Last-Minute Lovers



Valentine's Day is more than just an excuse to exchange and consume vast quantities of chocolate. For brands, it's an ideal opportunity to increase sales and engage with customers. We look at seven consumer trends that offer clues on how best to reach and market to the UK's audience of lovebirds.

The last-minute lovers

Search queries around gift ideas start to appear in early January, growing steadily for six weeks and then peaking in the days just before Valentine's. The fact that up to 15% of shoppers are still undecided on what to buy their darlings a few weeks in advance of the big day is good news for advertisers – especially on mobile, where being present on the consumer path to purchase offers the opportunity to influence orders up to the final hour.



Romantic gestures go down to the wire

Easier online ordering and faster delivery times are helping forgetful people and passionate procrastinators come out looking like smooth operators. Those paramours who are poor advance planners are increasingly making use of mobile to find and buy last-minute gifts. In the UK, there's been a year-on-year increase of 41% in "last minute valentine's gift" searches overall, and 74% year-on-year growth on smartphone.

Women are more timely than men

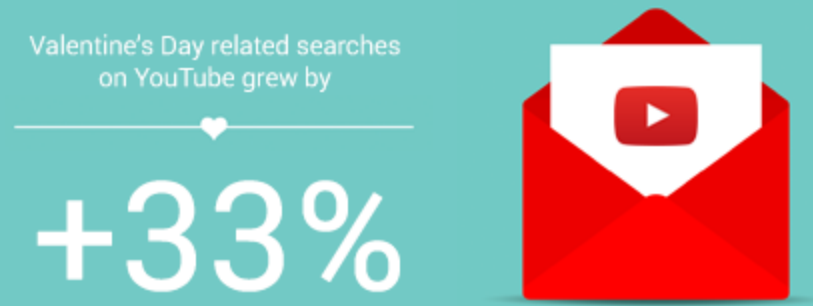
Women spend more time researching Valentine's gift ideas than their fellas... But the boys spend more money! UK research shows that 42% of males plan to spend more than £20 on Valentine's Day gifts, compared to 29% of females. The order of top gifts from men to women is: flowers, a card, chocolate and a romantic meal. The ranking of top gifts that women give to men? A card, flowers, chocolate and clothes.

Romantic traditions die hard

When it comes to Valentine's Day purchases, UK sweethearts are traditionalists, with cards remaining the number-one present of choice. Roses are another tried-and-tested favourite; queries for this petal-powered symbol of affection increase 16 times above the January average to reach their annual peak on Valentine's Day. Queries for restaurants meanwhile increase steadily in the weeks leading up to the holiday. These crest on Valentine's Day itself at a level that's four times higher than the January UK average.

A population of do-it-yourself Cupids

As an incredible source of inspiration, YouTube is showing 33% year-on-year increases in Valentine's Day related searches in the UK. Popular, relevant content includes make-up and cooking tutorials, product unboxing videos and make-it-yourself projects such as Valentine's cards, chocolates, cakes and decorations.



Mobile makes the heart beat faster

Of all Valentine's Day related searches in the UK, one-third are taking place on smartphones. In fact, Valentine's related queries on smartphones in the UK showed a 36% year-on-year rise between 2013 and 2014. That means brands who aren't advertising on mobile are missing a big opportunity to reach lovestruck consumers on the device that suits them best.

Don't forget the lonely hearts club

It's not romance and roses for everyone though! For example, YouTube views of Celine Dion's "All By Myself" peak massively on Valentine's Day each year. But this doesn't mean people are sad – in the UK, users are 50% more likely to make funny Valentine's related searches than romantic ones.

For brands aiming to capitalise on the most romantic day in the calendar, two key strategies are worth taking to heart.

First, it's essential to establish a **mobile presence** in order to reach undecided consumers looking for last-minute gifts for their loved ones.

Second, Valentine's Day is an amazing opportunity to engage with consumers via **branded content**. Collaborating with a relevant YouTube creator to produce an online video (such as a make-up tutorial, cooking how-to or DIY project) taps into a ready audience and gives consumers exactly what they're looking for at this thoughtful and warmhearted time of year.