

Valentine's Day, or Valentine's Nay?

In the wake of Valentine's Day, [Jack Harmsworth](#) scrutinises the holiday and it's commercial motivation

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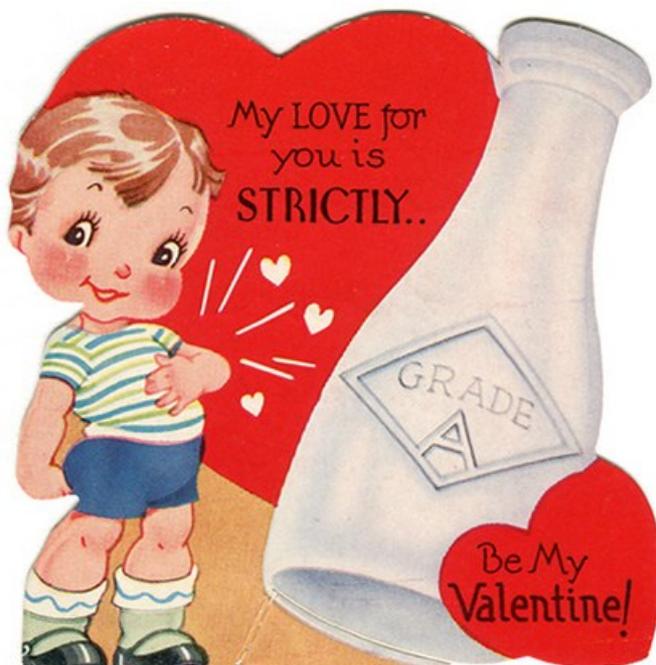


Image: Karen Horton

Love it or hate it, that day of the year has appeared again: Valentine's Day.

Whether you've cosied up to a takeaway in the front room, or calculated how many days last week's soup will last you when confronted by the eye-watering cost of eating out, one thing is for sure: Valentine's Day is big business. Like many national celebrations, Valentine's Day has become an opportunity for shrewd marketing managers and savvy accountants to up quarterly sales.

The profitability of such holidays has clearly not eluded business owners who are keen to cash in on spend-ready consumers out to impress loved ones. This has resulted in a Valentine's Day mega-industry.

In the US the Valentine's market is worth \$17.3bn with companies ranging from Victoria's Secret to simple flower sellers cashing in.

The biggest profiteers of Valentine's Day undoubtedly go to jewellers, with \$4.5bn spent on the shiny stuff in the US last year (no pressure guys).

In an effort to keep consumers interested, companies have diversified their product range to the downright bizarre. A quick search online reveals the possibility of getting your hands on a unique pair of 'Brief Jerky' underwear, because nothing says 'I love you' more than chewing two-year-aged cured beef

off of your lover's hips for 60 minutes.

Valentine's Day has also entered the 21st century in fashionable form with digital companies getting in on the act. Online dating sites experience their very own Christmas at this time of the year with a spike in lonely singletons looking for someone special. Surprisingly Canada is the keenest in this department, with Canadians spending the most amount of time on online dating forums and apps according to web measurement company comScore.

However, all this clicking for love has come with a new risk to users as con artists have seen there is money to be made. According to the Victoria Derbyshire programme, cybercrime in this department has accrued over £39m for con artists promising the chance of love and instead leaving people out of pocket, although at least that saves the awkward middle date part for most of us.

It is perhaps worth noting the apparent travesty and desperation of our generation's existence in the age of excessive commercialism where national holidays are up for sale. Even the celebration of love has been reduced to a panic purchase of flowers you're not sure she'll like and an overpriced bottle of prosecco you'd feel ashamed to serve at your own dinner party.

All in all, Valentine's Day represents to many a time of nervous chatter or loneliness and self-loathing.

There is only one winner: private business – a symptom of the underlying angst of the young generation.

Instead, ignore the pressure. Go ahead and have that takeaway with your mates in the front room, or your partner if you have one. Ultimately, that's going to be where you're most likely to find love anyway.



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