

AWARD

Grand Prix, Creative Innovation, Meeting the Moment

WINNER

Match – Match Made in Hell (MMIH)

Agency

Maximum Effort, Better Half, Dotted Line Communications



BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Match, an icon in online dating, has high awareness but continues to face fast-growing competition, challenging its ability to stay top of mind for U.S. adult daters. December marks the start of peak season for the dating category and Match's goal was to be more top of mind and build brand consideration within this time frame. However, with COVID-19 peak season in 2020 it was going to be different as the pandemic had already had a major impact on the way singles dated.

Match had an opportunity to move quickly to meet a shared cultural moment to resonate with singles stuck in a pandemic. Match partnered with creative partners Ryan Reynolds' agency, Maximum Effort, and Taylor Swift to create a video campaign designed to be shared like YouTube content. The aim was to drive buzz, organic conversation, shares, and views, and sustain momentum via paid media through the end of January.

CAMPAIGN & BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

Match's primary goal for "Match Made in Hell" ("MMIH") was to become more top of mind for target audiences (U.S. adult daters, ages 25-49) during peak dating season, and to build brand consideration. Secondly, the company aimed to drive traffic and signups to the Match.com app. The campaign rollout was designed to maximize return, with phase one involving no paid media and phase two broadening its reach through TV and digital media.

GOALS

- 100 key outlets press hits
- 30% increase in social media conversation
- 10M video views
- Drive traffic and signups to the Match.com app

CREATIVE STRATEGY

Findings from Match's "Singles in America" study highlighted how people had shifted to more intentional dating and sought more meaningful romantic relationships in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Match wanted to meet this moment by creating a campaign that would bring to life what daters were all feeling, while creating an optimistic look to 2021.

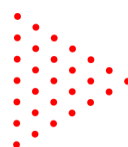
"MMIH" embraced humor with a nod to the resilience of singles and created space for consumers to laugh at some of the difficulties of 2020, while inviting singles to feel optimistic and "make 2021 your year."

The communications strategy was designed to earn engagement and reach. The campaign started with phase one, organic YouTube content, fueling viewership over phase two with paid media. Launching with long-form hero content was followed by supplementary videos, BTS, and shorter cuts optimized for various social contexts. The supplementary content was designed to be slowly released across the first 48 hours to fuel coverage and conversation. Key content included a Couch Conversation with the two main characters, a Giphy page, and social media posts.



WHAT ROLE DID YOUTUBE PLAY?

Match utilized the organic reach, amplification, targeting, and buzz-creating abilities of YouTube in a multi-phased approach for "MMIH," to drive performance of its most successful campaign yet. It started with a phase one organic rollout, which leveraged the social media followings and reach of creative partners Ryan Reynolds and Taylor Swift to earn PR and drive views of the YouTube post. In phase two, Match deployed a paid media strategy targeting consumers ages 25-39 and utilized TrueView for Action to drive traffic and signups to the Match app. By buying through auction and primarily using TrueView for Action, Match could ensure that it was optimized towards a signup goal.



OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Match outperformed all KPIs indicating earned coverage and word of mouth, while also seeing overwhelmingly positive sentiment:

- **+100** stories in the first 24 hours for the "MMIH" video
- **14M** views on YouTube on day one of campaign
- Trended on YouTube for first two days of campaign
- **+800** earned media stories in total
- **+5B** total media impressions
- **40%** increase in consideration and favorability relative to prior YouTube campaigns

+40M views on YouTube to date



WHY DID THIS CAMPAIGN WIN?

Match built a strong campaign based on a key insight and successfully tapped into a timely and culturally relevant strategy that met the moment like no other. Additionally, Match took a creative approach to harness the power of YouTube's reach, amplification, and buzz to deliver on its brand goals. Designed to look and feel like a regular YouTube video instead of an ad, the "MMIH" campaign served viewers different ads based on the last ad they had seen as part of the campaign, leaning into sequential messaging. The "MMIH" campaign was designed to act more like YouTube content and utilized sequential messaging so that the viewer would see something different every time.

Match deployed a different formula to planning, starting with organically driven views and conversation, building into paid media strategy. YouTube's Video action campaigns were expertly leveraged as a call to action tool to help drive signups on the Match app. Connected TV was also used in the third phase of the campaign to sit alongside traditional paid media. The positive impact of this campaign is undeniable both in the reach of the campaign and the strength of response.

LESSONS LEARNED

• Adapting to Meet the Moment:

In 2020, we were collectively faced with unprecedented circumstances and it called for an unprecedented approach to advertising. Finalists created messaging relevant to the times we're living in and Match notably did this by injecting humor, relevance, and a level of cinematic quality to break the clutter of 2020 messaging.

• Speaking to the Right Consumers at the Right Moment:

Match gave YouTube viewers the first glimpse of its highly entertaining campaign. YouTube was also the natural home for the campaign once the omnichannel strategy had been deployed, allowing viewers to seek out more content featuring the two main characters.

"It's perfect from a creative standpoint. The craft, tone of voice, perfect for the channel.
The perfect way to use YouTube."

Raig Adolfo, Chief Strategy Officer, 360i

"All the ads in 2020 were zigging and **Match was zagging.**"

Carla Eboli, EVP, Energy BBDO

