



AWARD

## Media Innovation

WINNER

## M&M's - M&M's Messages

Agency

## BBDO New York, Mediacom

To all the celebs seeing their exes  
on the red carpet tonight:

### BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

There were two driving factors behind the "M&M's Messages" campaign: plateau and decline in sales of key products, and justification of impulse placements in stores. The core products of milk chocolate, peanut, and peanut butter had made up the majority of sales, but in recent years growth of those core flavors had plateaued or declined.

Chocolate is an impulse-buy category. Therefore prime retail real estate is key. While M&M's core flavors hadn't changed in a meaningful way, other operators in the category were producing fun and intriguing variants of their products each year. These fun new inventions were stealing prime in-store real estate from classic M&M's. It was time to imagine a brand-new experience. Taking inspiration from the most-shared meme categories on the internet, the company created M&M's Messages: 50+ unique M&M's bags featuring witty messages in the voices of the iconic M&M's characters, from Emotional Support Candy to Miss Your Face to Have a Great Day Pretending to Do Work. The new packs were launched on the night of one of the most talked-about events in entertainment culture: the Oscars.

### CREATIVE STRATEGY

The creative strategy aimed to make bags of M&M's spontaneously shareable. It tapped into the kind of shareability normally reserved for memes and gifs, to bring the brand into work, friendship, relationships, and more. The strategy aimed to engage in the hundreds of little sharing occasions of the brand's audience throughout the day. The company wanted to make M&M's the pioneer of a new chocolate occasion — impulse gifting, the act of buying chocolate spontaneously for someone else, to celebrate everyday occasions beyond the tentpole holidays where the mass audience already gifts chocolate.

The company needed to show its audience that they could use M&M's Messages packs to remark on any occasion in their life.

### CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

M&M's Messages aimed to secure unprecedented retailer buy-in to reverse sales declines of M&M's classic variants. By boosting product awareness and salience among consumers, they hoped to move these important product lines to outperform the category.

### WHAT ROLE DID YOUTUBE PLAY?

YouTube extended this campaign beyond the eight TV spots launched during the Oscars. Mars used over 50 different audience segments as part of the "M&M's Messages" campaign, blending affinity, custom affinity, day of week, topics and keywords. It used popular topics on YouTube, such as makeup tutorials, music videos, and DIY projects, to highlight many of the custom pack messages and ran custom pre-roll ads for certain packs before relevant content using YouTube Director's Mix to create dynamic videos. This drove home the idea that there was an M&M's Messages bag available to add witty commentary to any of life's moments for the audience.



### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

- **The M&M's Messages program secured more retailer orders than any M&M's promotion in the brand's history**
- **22-30% sales growth in stand-up pouch formats** — formats that skew to gifting and sharing occasions, further proof of success in creating new everyday sharing and gifting behavior

**22-30% sales growth**



And if *that* ex wins...

### WHY DID THIS CAMPAIGN WIN?

This campaign showed the strongest use of YouTube as part of an innovative media campaign. The use of YouTube's Director Mix tool to customize videos for maximum relevance, integrated with the reach of TV, and the synergy with in-store displays and pack availability, amplified the success of the campaign in raising demand and salience for M&Ms.

### LESSONS LEARNED

**Speaking to the Right Consumers at the Right Moment:** M&M's successfully used YouTube as a platform to extend and customize its campaign launch following the Oscars. The campaign on YouTube met consumers with personalization based on content they were seeking, and aligned with the offline experience M&M's was offering with its pack design.

"This campaign did a **strong job of canvassing the context** and where it will show up with emotional trigger."

**Amanda Richman**, CEO, Wavemaker

"They used the platform, they used the timing, **it was just perfectly matched.**"

**Andrés Ordóñez**, Chief Creative Officer, FCB Chicago

