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Valentine’s Day Survey
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INTRODUCTION

The 2014 Valentine’s Day Survey was conducted in the last two weeks of January with the purpose of providing insights into consumer behavior and attitudes regarding the Valentine’s Day holiday. Some of the many questions answered by this survey include:

- How do consumers intend to spend money on Valentine’s Day?
- Does relationship status matter when it comes to Valentine’s Day?
- Do men and women approach Valentine’s Day differently?
- How is Valentine’s Day treated in the workplace?

Respondents were drawn from an online sample of 898 U.S. consumers. The sample was 48.7% male and 51.3% female, with a mean income of $51,700. About half of the respondents (53.1%) live in a suburban area and a majority of them (78.2%) are White. The mean age for respondents was 35 years.

VALENTINE’S DAY SPENDING

HOW MUCH DO CONSUMERS PLAN TO SPEND?

Valentine’s Day is commonly thought of as the holiday of romance and romantic exchanges. So, we wanted to know how much people were planning to spend on the holiday. We asked respondents to report how much money they expect to spend on Valentine’s Day on gifts and other activities.

**FINDING:** People are planning to spend $38 (median).

WHO DRIVES VALENTINE’S DAY SPENDING?

Some have pointed to a growing trend that, contrary to traditional gender norms, women are spending more money on tokens of romance than men. We wanted to see if there was evidence of this trend in Valentine’s Day spending. It turns out the trend does not appear to have made its way to Valentine’s Day.

**FINDING:** Men are planning to spend significantly more ($63.58) than women ($42.34), on average.
We were also interested to know how a person’s relationship status influences Valentine’s Day spending. Specifically, is there a romantic arc such that romantic spending increases during dating but decreases after marriage? Or does romantic spending continue to increase the longer one is in a relationship?

**FINDING:** Men, especially men in relationships, are the big spenders.

**FINDING:** There appears to be an arc in spending in that people spend more with increased commitment until they get married.

**WILL CONSUMERS SPEND MORE OR LESS THIS YEAR?**

Recent figures suggest that the U.S. economy is gradually improving and that consumer spending has increased from last year. Will these trends be evident in consumers’ intentions with regard to spending on Valentine’s Day? We asked consumers if they were planning to spend more, less, or about the same this year compared to last year and why they were planning to do so.

**FINDING:** 85% of people plan to spend the same or less money than last year.

**FINDING:** 59.4% of people in a committed relationship said their change in spending was due to a financial situation.
Valentine’s Day brings with it gift expectations. Are these expectations being met? What do we expect to receive and what do we really want? We asked respondents what they would ideally like to receive and what they actually expect to receive on Valentine’s Day.

The most popular Valentine’s Day gifts that people wanted to receive in an ideal world were experiences and non-market items. This was true for both men and women, and for people who reported being single or in a relationship. However, men were more likely than women to select a meal at a nice restaurant, and an expression of love that’s not material as one of their ideal gifts.

Contrary to their aspirations, people expect they will actually receive typical and non-market gifts. This was true regardless of gender and relationship status.

**FINDING:** People want to receive an experience on Valentine’s Day, but most people expect they will receive something typical.

**WHO GIVES THE IDEAL GIFT?**

If experiences are the ideal gift, then who is planning to give experiences on Valentine’s Day? We asked respondents about their gift-giving plans for the holiday.
FINDING: Men were much more likely give the ideal gift than women, particularly if they were in a serious relationship.

HOW DO PEOPLE FEEL WHEN THEY RECEIVE NOTHING?

If men like the romance and spend more money, do they feel worse when Valentine’s Day is a dud? Moreover, do men and women feel differently if their significant other did not spend money on them on Valentine’s Day?

FINDING: Men and women respond differently to being slighted on Valentine’s Day. Men feel indifference. Women experience sorrow and disappointment.
VALENTINE’S DAY IN THE WORKPLACE

Valentine’s Day presents a conundrum for the workplace. On the one hand, the holiday is celebrated nationally and typifies early February as the time for romance. On the other hand, romance is not entirely consistent with the workplace environment. We were interested to see how people viewed these opposing dynamics. We asked respondents if Valentine’s Day should be celebrated in the workplace.

**FINDING:** The majority of people (55%) believe that it should be celebrated in the workplace. Men more so than women.

Knowing that respondents believe that the holiday should be celebrated in the workplace, we wanted to know how people viewed workplace gift exchanges on Valentine’s Day.

**FINDING:** Employee-employee gift-giving was considered the most appropriate. Boss-employee gift-giving was considered the most inappropriate.

FLIRTY FUN FACTS

WHO LIKES THE ROMANTIC SIDE OF VALENTINE’S DAY?

With so much attention put on the romance aspect of Valentine’s Day, we wanted to ask respondents if they like or dislike the romance involved in the holiday.

![Who Likes the Romantic Side of Valentine's Day?](chart.png)
FINDING: Men in any relationship like the romance of Valentine’s Day. Only unmarried women in committed relationships like the romance of Valentine’s Day.

WOULD YOU REPLACE VALENTINE’S DAY?
We gave respondents a few options for alternative holidays and asked whether they would prefer the alternative to Valentine’s Day.

FINDING: 35% of people did not want to replace the holiday.
FINDING: Women wanted to keep the holiday more than men.

DO YOU LIKE THE DATE?
Respondents were asked if they would prefer if Valentine’s Day always fell on a weekend.

FINDING: Single people are less willing to change the date of Valentine’s Day than people in a serious relationship.
ABOUT THE GEORGETOWN INSTITUTE FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH (GICR)

The Georgetown Institute for Consumer Research, sponsored by KPMG, conducts and disseminates scientifically rigorous research that leads to innovative and actionable insights about consumers.

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