



Sweet Solution: M&M'S Case Study

How Our Creative Approach Boosted a Global Confectionary Company's Holiday E-Commerce Sales by 95% During a Pandemic

initiate-it

The Challenge

In mid-2020, M&M'S was facing flat e-commerce sales for the remainder of the year due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. At that time, the world was in lock down, retail businesses were closing shop and everyone was struggling to find ways to stay positive.

With this backdrop, initiate-it recognized a real business opportunity for its client M&M'S, which is one of the world's most popular and best-loved brands. The agency had been providing strategic digital marketing services for M&M'S, including professional photography of M&M'S products at the agency's in-house studio. The agency/client relationship had evolved into a trusted partnership as a result of initiate-it's creative approach and executions designed to drive sales of M&M'S candies, gift items, apparel and accessories.

We uncovered two key facts in our research to help boost 2020 sales for M&M'S:

1. Since people would probably be staying home

and staying safe for the remainder of the year, the holiday period would be enjoyed and savored in a unique way unlike any other year. Families throughout the world would have more time with their loved ones and to appreciate the important things in life.

2. Due to the pandemic and the decline in physical retail sales, the projections for e-commerce sales were expected to go through the roof.

Based on the research and our expertise in how to engage audiences through innovative digital marketing tactics, we recommended a comprehensive holiday retail activation campaign including a **digital e-commerce Holiday Gift Guide** along with a **portfolio of creative assets*** to be leveraged across the client's communication ecosystem.

*For the first time ever in marketing materials, the client agreed to allow images of people wearing M&M'S-branded clothing as visuals for the holiday gift guide. While this represented a huge leap of faith for M&M'S, the decision was based on their trust in initiate-it's proven production skills and confidence in the agency's expert advice to give lifestyle photography a try.

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Elements of the Holiday Sales Campaign

1. Coordinate tastefully art-directed aspirational **lifestyle art imagery** that would highlight the fun and unique holiday gifts on display and also showcase the products in a very real and relatable holiday setting that would stimulate desire and motivation to purchase the gifts.
2. Create an e-commerce **digital Holiday Gift Guide platform** featuring a family wearing colorful matching M&M'S-themed PJs as they celebrate a cozy holiday at home. The Holiday Gift Guide also accentuated a buyer's ability to personalize M&M'S candies with the logo of a favorite football team or with special messages and clip art.
3. Collaborate with the client's internal creative team to share the **high-quality visual assets** across the paid social media ecosystem.

Results of Our Creative Approach

1. M&M'S had a sizzling holiday season with an overall e-commerce **holiday sales increase of 95%**, practically doubling sales over the same period in 2019.
2. **Compelling lifestyle photography** elevated the M&M'S brand imagery through a unique genre that captures real people in real moments of their lives. Sales of the gifts featured with initiate-it's recommended aspirational lifestyle approach skyrocketed with PJs selling out with a 788% increase and sales of gifts overall increasing 120%.
3. Due to these sweet sales results, the client planned **more occasion-based lifestyle photography in 2021** for the main M&M'S holidays such as Valentine's Day and Mother's Day.



Want to learn more about our creative approach using our in-house production studio for photography and videography? Contact us today and let's talk!

Call 703.853.5588 or Email hrhoads@initiate-it.com