

Challenger brands to watch in 2022: Thursday - for knowing what to sacrifice

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Thursday combines witty observations of dating in your 20s, talk-worthy marketing stunts and authenticity to bring a new dating experience to life - but for just one day of the week.



It's a dating app that users can only access on a (you guessed right...) Thursday, and it launched into the already saturated dating category with a big pink bang in May 2021.

Founders Matthew McNeill Love and George Rawlings were frustrated with how the leading dating apps were used. Date seekers would scroll numbly for hours or waste hours of time messaging people before committing to a date – or worse, simply swiping for the hell of it and completely ghosting matches.

In their view, dating apps had made dating boring and were simply contributing to the already insane amount of time we spend glued to our screens each day. Matt and George's single friends had told them that they were reluctant to risk wasting their precious weekends with potential dud dates, so for them, Thursday was the best day to meet up with a potential lover over a pint. For Matt and George, it seemed like a natural opportunity to sacrifice six days of the week and overcommit to Thursdays.

Thursday is a gamified way of arranging a date. Users can only match, message and meet their potential dates, reinforced by a countdown looming before their potential perfect match disappears forever. It's an approach that keeps users on their toes and encourages them to get out there and meet people, leaning into a "F*** it, why not?" mentality of frustrated early 20s singles, who feel as though they've lost some of the best years of their lives to the pandemic. "For us, it's not about keeping people on your product," Matt McNeill Love told the Breaking Social podcast. "It's about using tech to get people off your product."

Thursday appears to have grown authentically and effortlessly. But, they have artfully crafted their challenger brand by knowing the mindset and expectations of young city-dwelling daters. How?

They know where to place their brand

Most of Thursday's viral activity sits on LinkedIn and on meme accounts. While this might seem like an odd balance of platforms, they create prime fishing areas for early 20s/30s urbanites. "Going viral is the dream," Matt McNeill Love said. "You hit a reaction in someone that is so relatable they want to share it with their friends."

They embrace constraints

From taking a projector onto a London tube, to getting an intern to hold up a cardboard sign attached to balloons outside Liverpool Street station, the Thursday team show their boldness and not-too-serious take on the world of harsh messaging we have lived with during the pandemic.

They've created a community based on a clear mindset — Spontaneous Singles

Thursday recently launched real-life events called 'Thursday After Party', where only users and single people are able to join. Their first few events in London and New York were such a success they had to find ways to open other venues for more parties that same night.

They have a clear point of view and project this into the world

Thursday believe that 'there's more to life than dating apps' and they project this belief in everything they do. From turning off the app for six days of the week to creating those real-life events, Thursday poke fun at the mundanity of the swipe, scroll and spaced-out approach to dating we have become comfortable with.

So what's next?

Matt has talked about Thursday's ambition to be playing ball with the big three dating apps, Hinge, Bumble and Tinder. I have no doubt that this year they will reach that goal if they keep impatiently pushing the category forward.

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