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## MarketWatch

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Big Spender

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### The \$20,000 Sweethearts 'candy' Going for the gold on Valentine's Day

By [Charles Passy](#), MarketWatch



#### The pitch:

Everyone loves Sweethearts, those Valentine's Day heart-shaped candies inscribed with such simple messages as "Be Mine" and "Marry Me." But given that the popular candy, made by the New England Confectionary Company (yes, the [Necco](#) folks) since 1866, isn't all that expensive, how do you give a box that's sure to impress? Necco has answered that question by introducing a \$19,995 jewelry version: a non-edible set of four half-ounce Sweethearts, made from 24-karat gold, that can be customized with the message of your choice. "Each year passionate fans reach out to inform us they love Sweethearts and are constantly seeking more extraordinary ways to express their love," says Necco marketing director Alyssa Hills of the inspiration behind the first-ever offering.

But the Necco folks warn that Valentine's Day comes but once a year, so potential buyers can't delay. Additionally, the offer for this "high-end gift as sweet as candy" is open only to the first 14 takers.

#### The reality:

Let's begin with the obvious: With gold currently priced at about \$1,300 per ounce, this Sweetheart is hardly worth its weight in, well, gold. Another obvious point: You can buy a lot of boxes of Sweethearts candies (the edible kind, that is) for the price of one of these gold versions—some 35,087 boxes, in fact (a standard Sweethearts box costs a mere 57 cents).

Plus, you have to ask yourself if the gold version really sends the right message: Relationship experts, psychologists and members of a certain [British singing group](#) have argued that money can't necessarily buy love and that gestures of other kinds can be just as powerful as a present of gold. The key, says marital counselor [Jacqueline Del Rosario](#), is finding your other half's "innate love language," since pricey "gifts alone are not a guarantee" of being taken as a sign of true feelings. It's a point backed up by a [new survey](#) by online dating site AYI.com, which found that only 8% of women wanted jewelry for Valentine's Day. (But 44% said they'd welcome a romantic dinner.)

Of course, there's the distinct possibility that the Necco folks recognized this all along: They readily admit the gold Sweethearts promotion was more an attention-grabber than anything else. "We're talking [Victoria's Secret million-dollar bra here](#)," says Necco's Alyssa Hills. The Necco folks also concede they haven't had any takers for the \$19,995 gold Sweethearts just yet, despite several inquiries. But no matter: There are still plenty of edible Sweethearts to go around—the company estimates they sell four million pounds of the popular candy in the six weeks leading up to Valentine's Day. ■

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