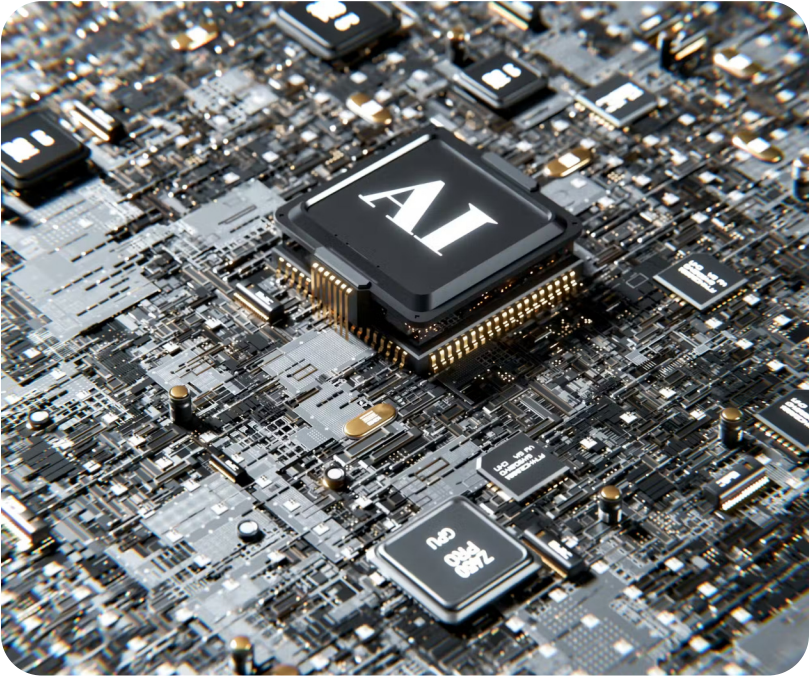


When AI Met Hollywood: The Mint Mobile "MINTernet" Campaign

Ryan Reynolds and Maximum Effort did it again—hijacking the cultural conversation around AI actress "Tilly Norwood" to launch Mint Mobile's 5G service. The campaign tapped into a red-hot debate about AI in entertainment, turning controversy into comedy while pushing a \$30/month price point. But did viewers get the joke, or did the meta-humor fall flat? Let's unpack what worked, what didn't, and why younger women weren't buying what Reynolds was selling.



The Cultural Context: Who's Tilly Norwood, Anyway?



Before Reynolds crashed the party, **Tilly Norwood** was making waves as an AI-generated "actress" created by comedian Eline Van der Velden. Hollywood agents were pitched on representing her. Industry professionals freaked out. The backlash was real: critics called her the poster child for AI stealing creative jobs.

Enter Maximum Effort, who spotted gold in the chaos. Their play? Introduce the *real* Tilly Norwood—an actual Mint Mobile customer—to promote the "MINTernet," Mint's new 5G service. The hook: Everything about Mint seems unreal (especially that price), but it's legit. Get it? Yeah, not everyone did.

The Numbers: Reynolds Delivers, But With Caveats

+10

Brand Recall

Points above wireless category benchmarks—Reynolds' star power cut through the noise

87th

Information Score

Percentile ranking for message delivery—viewers understood the \$30/month value prop

23%

Best Thing Rating

Viewers who cited Reynolds as the ad's standout element (vs. 14% norm)



The celebrity factor worked—Reynolds grabbed attention and the value message landed. But here's the twist: while older viewers and younger men dug the vibe, younger women (16-35) weren't feeling it.

Second-by-second data showed their engagement dropped notably when Tilly appeared. Translation? The meta-joke might've been too inside-baseball for some audiences.

The Double-Edged Sword: When Spoof Meets Skepticism

What Landed

- **Reynolds = Gold:** Viewers loved his "funny," "relatable," "authentic" presence
- **Clear Pricing:** \$30/month hit as affordable and competitive
- **Cultural Currency:** Those in-the-know appreciated the AI commentary

What Missed

- **Forced Humor:** Some felt the "real person/no AI" bit was disingenuous
- **"Dishonest" Vibes:** Second most common emotion—likely from the spoof-y tone
- **Reynolds Fatigue:** A few noted overexposure or questioned his Mint ownership

"I love Ryan Reynolds but for years \$15 was the advertised price for Mint Mobile and now it's double that amount removing the only incentive." — Female 50+

The spoof format confused some viewers, creating skepticism around whether the offer was genuine. Others didn't recognize the Tilly Norwood reference at all, making the joke land like a thud. Meanwhile, price-conscious fans mourned the loss of Mint's iconic \$15 promo—proof that you can't change the game without some backlash.

Viewer Voices: The Good, The Meh, The Brutal

"I love the actor that they chose as the spokesperson. I'd like the speed of which the information is presented, and I appreciate it being clear on the pricing." —Female 50+

"Boring and have used him before in an ad" —Female 21-35

"I don't like how much it seemed to be jamming in 2025 keywords to appeal, it felt very forced, and people want authentic rn." —Male 16-20



The verbatim feedback tells the real story. Older audiences appreciated Reynolds' charm and straightforward messaging. But younger viewers—especially women—found the ad "boring," "bland," and "lackluster." One Gen Z female summed it up perfectly: *"Idk it just boring."* Ouch.

The cultural reference that Maximum Effort banked on? It either resonated deeply or whiffed entirely, with little middle ground.

The Competitive Landscape & Path Forward

While "MINTernet is Real" beat category norms, it **significantly underperformed** against Mint's own "Fifteen Reasons Why" spot—as well as recent campaigns from Verizon, T-Mobile, and Google Fi. Meanwhile, Mint's share of voice (impressions) dropped notably between July and October 2025 on both linear and streaming, while T-Mobile and Verizon maintained dominance.

Embrace the Meta—But Explain It

Cultural references work when audiences are in on the joke. Consider layering in context for broader appeal, especially among younger demographics.

Diversify Beyond Reynolds

He's a proven asset, but overexposure is real. Test fresh voices or formats to keep the brand feeling dynamic and avoid spokesperson fatigue.

Win Back Young Women

This demo checked out early. Invest in creative that speaks to their interests, humor, and values—authenticity over cleverness might be the play.

The **MINTernet campaign** proves Maximum Effort's ability to ride cultural waves with wit and speed. But even the sharpest creative needs to connect emotionally across demographics. The data's clear: double down on what works (Reynolds, pricing clarity), refine what doesn't (accessibility of humor, younger female appeal), and keep pushing boundaries—just make sure everyone's invited to the party.