



5 Back to School Trends and Tips for Your Campaigns

Could Back to School 2021 be the year that kids rejoice MORE than their parents? These are the trends advertisers and brands should keep in mind to reach students (and parents) navigating back to school shopping this year.

1

Highest Spending Predicted Thanks to Combined Excitement and Shopping ‘Back Log’

That’s right. Experts are predicting high spending as students and their grown ups look forward to returning to school in person. Combine this with - in some cases - nearly two years of school at home, and retail sales will likely boom as shoppers play catch up.



Target is planning for “one of its biggest back-to-school seasons ever,” and smaller retailers like Gap are already feeling “customer exuberance” that is likely to bode well for back-to-school sales.
[DMS Insights]

\$32.5 Billion

2021 back-to-school spending will hit its highest level in recent years: \$32.5 billion for K-12 students, or \$612 per student.
[Deloitte]

\$4.56 Trillion

The NRF predicted that retail sales will range from \$4.44 trillion to \$4.56 trillion in 2021, growing between 10.5% and 13.5% YoY.
[eMarketer]



New estimates from Mastercard SpendingPulse show back-to-school sales jumping 5.5% YoY this year, with categories that cater to in-person activities seeing spikes.
[Mastercard Newsroom]

\$26.7 Billion

Back-to-college consumers will shell out \$26.7 billion, or \$1,459 per student.
[Deloitte]



2

Where Will Back-to-School Shoppers Spend Their Budgets?

Clothes and Tech. Consumers will spend the most on apparel and back to school supplies, but technology is a new and hot category post-pandemic learning.



Back-to-school spending on computers, smartphones, and tablets is expected to reach a whopping \$11.8 billion, with wearable tech seeing the most money.
[MorningBrew]

58%

Even as schools open for in-person learning, 58% of respondents said they plan to spend on online resources.
[Deloitte]

44%

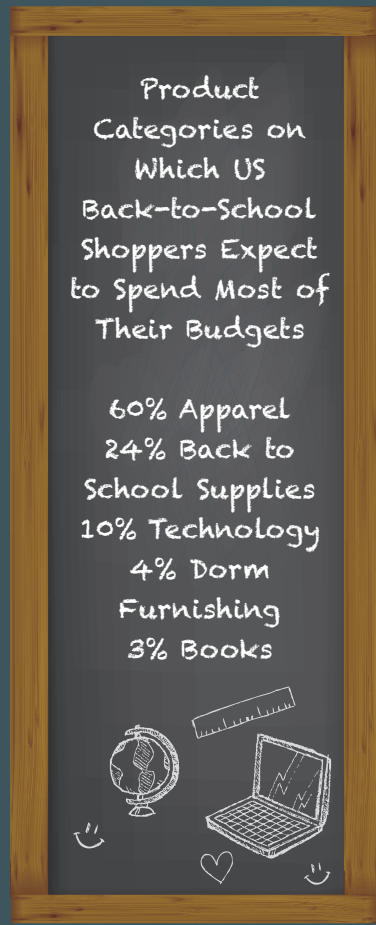
44% of surveyed households plan to purchase fewer “traditional” back-to-school supplies due to a renewed emphasis on tech.
[Deloitte]

37%

37% increase in tech spending estimated for K-12 students.
[Deloitte]

42%

42% increase in spend YoY projected in COVID-19-related personal hygiene products like wet wipes, hand sanitizers, and at home work stations.
[Deloitte]



3

Multichannel is the Move, Thanks to Ecommerce

Shoppers are accustomed to online ordering like never before thanks to the pandemic, but are also utilizing a multichannel approach like never before: they’re researching online, checking out products in store, returning to online sites, and more.

Young shoppers and young parents will be the most savvy in this area, so advertisers need to appeal to their multi-channel habits and offer cross-promotions, inspiring content, online activations, and targeted strategies to embrace the excitement of going back to school.

17.9%

US ecommerce sales are expected to grow 17.9% this year to reach \$933.30 billion. Ecommerce is now on track to surpass 20% of total retail by 2024.
[eMarketer]

34%

34% of consumers plan to use “buy online, pickup in store” and curbside pickup.
[Deloitte]



Parents of K-12 students are twice as likely as those of college students to use emerging tech to buy supplies.
[MorningBrew]

“When it comes to shopping, it’s apparent now that the consumer does not recognize any lines of demarcation at all [between in-person and online]. Shopping is all one thing to them now, no matter where it happens.”
(Matt Powell, senior sports industry advisor for NPD, DMS Insights)

4

Keep an Eye on Start Dates

We found conflicting research on back-to-school shopping times, with some reports predicting earlier shopping and others predicting later-than-ever trips.

59%

Deloitte predicts 59% of total shopping will be completed by the end of July.
[Deloitte]

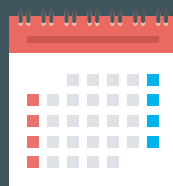


WWD predicts later back-to-school shopping, in August.
[WWD]

80%

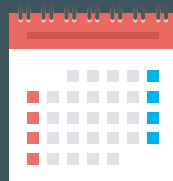
A 2020 Deloitte study found 80% of back-to-school shoppers are the most active from late July to early August.
[Deloitte]

Here’s when school starts:



United States

From mid-July to mid-September, depending on the state
Generally, the Northeast, East North Central, and West Coast start beginning of September or later
Generally, the Southern, Mountain and Central regions start mid to late August



Canada

Early September

Mexico

End of August

5

Give Shoppers What They Want: Back to School Discounts and Deals

Offer deals, discounts, incentives, and reward programs. Most importantly, include those discounts in your creative assets! Bidtellect’s [b]+studio consistently sees highest performance for headlines including a discount.

% or \$ Discount

Bundled Deals

Free Shipping

Flash Sale

Week-Long Sales Event

Giveaway

Contest

Promo Code

Loyal Customer Discount

Loyal Customer Pre-Sale

