

Back to School Shopping

2026



How to ace back-to-school season

Parents, students, and teachers continue to show unwavering dedication to back-to-school (BTS) shopping. While shoppers remain focused on finding the best deals, there are still effective strategies to engage this audience efficiently.

Let's dive into the latest BTS trends, along with simple ways advertisers can elevate their next BTS campaign.



Audience trends: students



77% of shoppers plan to purchase back-to-school supplies **in-store** while **65% plan to purchase online**.



Most shoppers say that supplies are too expensive. As a result, **84% of shoppers** plan to be more active in seeking out discounts and deals, and **82%** prioritize value over brand.



Influencer reviews are key **98% of shoppers** trust creator opinions when choosing back-to-school products.

Audience trends: parents



Parents are budgeting around **\$858 per child** on BTS supplies, with total U.S. spending projected at **\$39.4 billion**.



The **average household** spent **\$1,325.85** on 2025 back-to-college shopping.



American **families** spent **a total of \$128.2 billion** on back-to-school and back-to-college shopping in 2025.

Audience trends: teachers

Teachers increasingly depend on Amazon Wish Lists to finance their classroom needs. Key items in demand include loose-leaf paper, glue sticks, backpacks, cleaning supplies and tissues.



The average teacher in the U.S. makes **\$74,495 a year** and spends an average of **\$860**, or approximately 1.2% of their salary, on school supplies throughout the school year.



Every year, more than **94% of teachers spend their own money** on school supplies and other necessities for their students.



U.S. teachers collectively spent **\$3.24 billion** on classroom supplies in 2025.

Back-to-school blitz: when shoppers hit the aisles

For both college and K-12 students, about half of back-to-school shoppers typically make their purchases **one to two weeks before classes begin**.



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Back-to-school blitz: when shoppers hit the aisles

67%

of back-to-school shoppers had already **started shopping** by early July in 2025

82%

planned to take advantage of July sales events like Prime Day, **Walmart Deals**, and **Target Circle Week**

51%

of families say they are **shopping earlier this year** specifically because they are concerned prices could rise

84%

still had at least half of their **shopping left to complete** in early **July**, showing shoppers are starting earlier but spreading purchases across the season



Top of the class:

4 strategies that pass the test

For both college and K–12 students, about half of back-to-school shoppers typically make their purchases **one to two weeks before classes begin**.

1

Omnichannel
Approach

2

Retailer's First
Party Data

3

Discounts in
Creative

4

Hyperlocal
Strategy

Top of the class: 4 strategies that pass the test

1

Omnichannel Approach

Leverage an omnichannel approach to reach consumers across their daily journey, promote your brand's messaging, and encourage them to shop.

Our Key Partners for your Omnichannel Campaign



Behavioral Data
& Contextual Data



ACR Data



Transaction /
Purchase Data



Behavioral Data



First-Party Purchase, Browsing,
and Behavioral Data combined
with Retail Media Data



Top of the class: 4 strategies that pass the test

2

Retailer's First Party Data

Harness the power of first-party retail data for BTS to surpass competitors and engage consumers seamlessly. Utilize retail data to pinpoint relevant audiences exploring competitive or complementary products.

Benefits of Retail Media Networks

- Deterministic data
- Future-proof, not reliant on cookies
- Reach consumers across their online journey
- Easily integrate into full-funnel campaign
- Measurable
- Accessible for non-endemic brands to maximize reach
- Cross format amplification for continuous engagement with their target audience

amazon.com

Walgreens

Walmart

Fanatics

TARGET

ebay



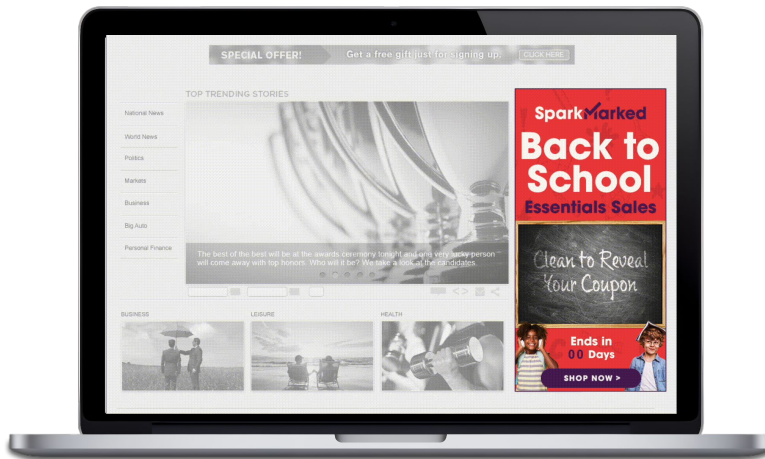
Top of the class: 4 strategies that pass the test

3

Discounts In Creative

Encourage product purchases by promoting a discount code across your ads, as shoppers actively seek deals to motivate their buying decisions.

Scratch to Reveal Ad Unit Featuring a Discount Code



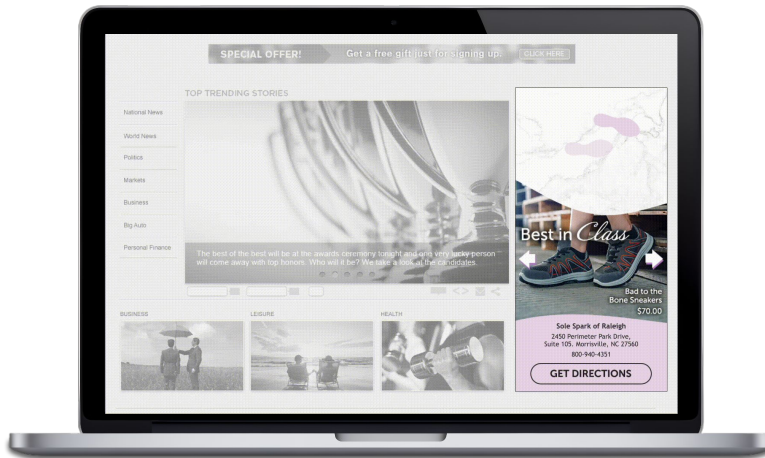
Top of the class: 4 strategies that pass the test

4

Hyperlocal Strategy

Use a hyperlocal approach by honing in on users who are visiting the stores where your products are offered in real time or previous visitation targeting to certain locations.

Map Feature / Find the Nearest Store Ad Unit





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