

Back-to-School Shopping - US - January 2013

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“Changes in the prevalence of technology in the classroom have altered the way BTS shoppers research and make purchases. As tablet computers take a more prominent role in delivering education, retailers of traditional supplies may feel a decrease in the demand for ‘old-school’ supplies such as notebooks and pens.”

– Ika Erwina, Apparel, Retail, and Technology Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- How can retailers hedge against deeply entrenched saving behaviors?
- What can retailers do to stand out amidst showrooming behaviors?
- Is tailoring BTS marketing message to generational groups essential?
- What are the potential implications of digital technology on BTS market?

Consumers’ anticipated spending on kindergarten through grade 12 back-to-school (BTS) clothing, accessories, shoes, electronics, and supplies reached an all-time high for the Fall 2012 BTS shopping season. The average person with children in grades K-12 intended to spend \$688 on their children, which is a 32.9% increase over anticipated spending for 2011. However, while consumers may be feeling more comfortable with increased spending on school items, budgeting habits adopted during the recession continue to hold and savvy BTS shoppers practice a variety of money-saving tactics. The retail landscape for the BTS market increasingly encapsulates the complex structure of shoppers.

BTS shoppers vary dramatically by many factors including age, affluence, gender, region, and generation. What works for one consumer may not work for another, so it is imperative that BTS retailers carefully pinpoint their target market, identify their preferences, and address their needs during the BTS shopping season.

This report builds on the analysis presented in Mintel’s *Back to School Shopping—U.S., January 2012*, as well as the June 2011 report of the same name.

For the purposes of this report, BTS shopping refers to shopping for supplies, clothes, accessories, shoes, computers, and electronics for students aged 5-17 who attend kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, and high school. This shopping usually takes place during the late summer and early fall in anticipation of students’ return to school. Analysis of college students’ BTS shopping is limited to discussion of select marketing outreach that offers insights into how leading companies target older teens during the BTS shopping season. However, BTS shopping by college students is not included in market size and segment data, or in the consumer research commissioned for this report.

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DID YOU KNOW?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

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