

Back to School Shopping - US - January 2021

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumer behavior and back to school shopping
- How the recession will grow consumers' prioritization of value and help mass merchandisers to gain share over other retailers
- The changing approach to back to school shopping
- The importance of the social element to back to school shopping

Disruptions to students' learning situations caused by the pandemic created new needs for school, which contributed to sales growth but created lasting disruptions to the back to school shopping patterns. Consumers are still doing back to school shopping, and that will continue; but many are rethinking their needs and spending, looking for alternative ways to save, such as trade-in programs and sales events. Despite being a practical purchase, the social aspect of shopping for school remains important, and consumers want retailers to offer them experiences to interact with others, even if it's virtually. Moving forward, expect to see more occasions to save throughout the year and virtual experiences, such as gaming, become a bigger part of back to school shopping.



"No matter where school is taking place, the back to school shopping season will always be a key time of year for consumers and brands. The pandemic shifted how and when consumers shop for school, as well as what they're buying. New needs emerged in 2020 and will continue to emerge as learning settings evolve."

– Alexis DeSalva Kahler,
Senior Analyst, Retail and
eCommerce

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