

## 2024 Back to Class with Walmart Connect

Retail media study guide for connecting with Walmart customers shopping for Back to School or Back to College



Did you know?

The Back to Class season is one of the most anticipated shopping moments of the year.

In 2023, spending reached record highs

**\$41B**  
Back to School<sup>1</sup>

**\$94B**  
Back to College<sup>1</sup>

This year, the opportunity is bigger than ever, with many Walmart customers planning to spend an equal amount or more on standard school supplies. These same customers are concerned that purchasing all the necessary products in preparing to return to the classroom or dorm room will be too expensive. They plan to shop with Walmart to find **Every Day Low Prices** that meet their needs.<sup>2</sup>

To help advertisers understand shopper mindsets to build successful media strategies this season, we asked Walmart's back-to-class customers how they shopped last year and how they plan to approach it this year.

So, sharpen your pencils and get ready to study up on the latest insights and product recommendations from Walmart Connect. In this guide we'll take a look at [recent trends, shopping habits, customer motivations and top categories](#).



2024 trends

Making the most of the back-to-class opportunity with Walmart

As the Back to Class season approaches, many Walmart customers are still facing economic concerns. That's why they continue to choose Walmart to stretch their dollar further and find the best value for their money.

We're helping drive **meaningful connections** between brands and customers to help accelerate the discovery and purchase of the products that best meet their needs.

Back-to-class spending will be bigger than ever this year

Parents shopping at Walmart anticipate spending the same or more on standard school supplies this year than they did last year.

50% Plan to spend the same<sup>2</sup>

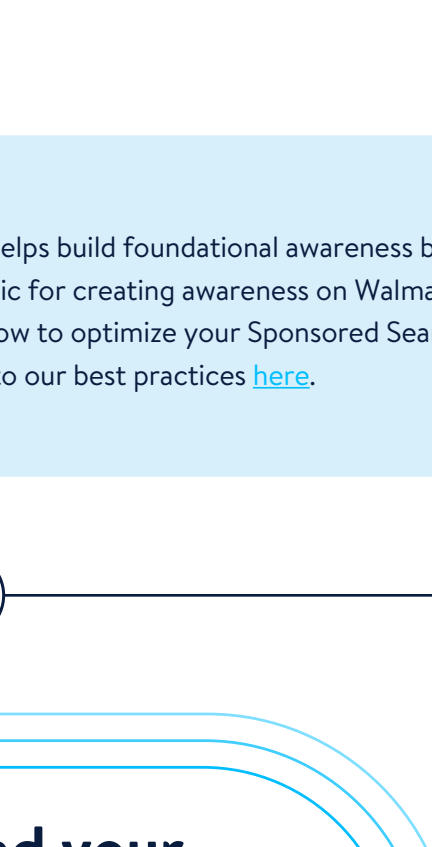
40% Plan to spend more<sup>2</sup>

Concerns about price remain high among customers planning to shop for back-to-class essentials this year.

78% of surveyed Walmart customers are extremely, very or somewhat concerned that it will be too expensive to purchase all the necessary products<sup>3</sup>

This year, customers plan to choose Walmart to help overcome price concerns

76% of surveyed Walmart customers said they will shop at Walmart for their back-to-class needs because of our low prices and affordability<sup>4</sup>



Last year, customers turned to Walmart for back-to-class essentials, driving online and in-store sales

+20% YOY online sales growth<sup>5</sup>

+3% YOY in-store sales growth<sup>5</sup>

Advertising will be highly influential on the Walmart customer's back-to-class shopping journey.

69% of surveyed Walmart customers said advertising on retailer's website or app help them discover new brands and products.<sup>6</sup>

Product recommendation

If you're launching a new product, set up a full-funnel campaign that helps build foundational awareness before optimizing for sales. Immersive video like CTV can be a successful tactic for creating awareness on Walmart DSP. Review the [New Item Jumpstarting optimization guide](#) to learn how to optimize your Sponsored Search campaigns. To build and optimize full-funnel display campaigns, refer to our best practices [here](#).

Shopping habits

Did you know?

Start early and expand your omnichannel advertising syllabus.

Walmart back-to-class customers start early, spend time researching their purchase decisions and move across channels, from virtual shelves and in-store aisles to scrolling social.

Last year, Walmart customers started their back-to-class shopping early, with most researching products heavily in July and completing their shopping in August.

Planning & researching<sup>7</sup> Shopping<sup>8</sup>



Walmart's back-to-class customers are omnichannel<sup>9</sup>

How surveyed Walmart customers plan to research back-to-class products this year

Research Shop or buy

57% online → in-store<sup>9</sup>

56% online → online<sup>9</sup>



Of the surveyed customers who plan to shop at Walmart during the 2024 Back to Class season, over 80% plan to visit a Walmart store.<sup>10</sup>

Product recommendation

Integrate in-store activations into your media strategy. Build awareness with TV Wall and In-store Audio, then raise consideration and drive sales with activations like In-store Demo and Pickup and Delivery Sampling.

Walmart Marketplace will play a bigger role for back-to-class customers this year

Walmart Marketplace gives customers access to even more brands and products. Nearly half of surveyed Walmart customers say they are likely to purchase back-to-class items on Walmart Marketplace.

46% of Walmart customers are likely to buy back-to-class products on Walmart Marketplace<sup>11</sup>

Customer motivations

Ace the test on what will motivate Walmart customers this season

From sales and discounts to students' influence, Walmart customers have very specific drivers when making purchase decisions.



Sales and promotions were major purchase drivers for Walmart's back-to-class customers.

Where surveyed Walmart customers found the most inspiration for their back-to-class shopping

24% Store displays & decorations<sup>12</sup>

35% Information & lists provided by the school<sup>12</sup>

57% Sales & promotions<sup>12</sup>

Last year, Walmart's July 2023 Deal Event drove back-to-class shopping increases in units sold vs. the Q2 average<sup>13</sup>

+120% Stationary

+19% Home Management

+34% Furniture

Product recommendations

Maximize rollbacks during this timeframe

- Run automatic and manual Sponsored Search campaigns for soon-to-be discount items to establish a baseline and gather insights on keyword and placement performance through on-demand reports. Consider launching upper-funnel campaigns (Sponsored Videos and Sponsored Brands) 3-4 weeks ahead to help build brand awareness.
- Stay competitive during rollback periods. Help ensure your discount/on-sale/seasonal items run across automatic and manual campaigns. Bid 30% above suggested bid prices and increase bid multipliers by 50-60% across Search In-grid, desktop and app.
- Integrate rollback language into Walmart Onsite Display creative and create synergies with pre-, during and post-period campaigns.

Did you know?

Though parents are in charge, kids and students have major influence on what parents and guardians buy when shopping for Back to Class.

What surveyed Walmart customers said about their children's involvement in shopping for school supplies:

47% Said their kid(s) were extremely or very involved<sup>14</sup>

44% Said requests from their kid(s) were the most influential<sup>14</sup>

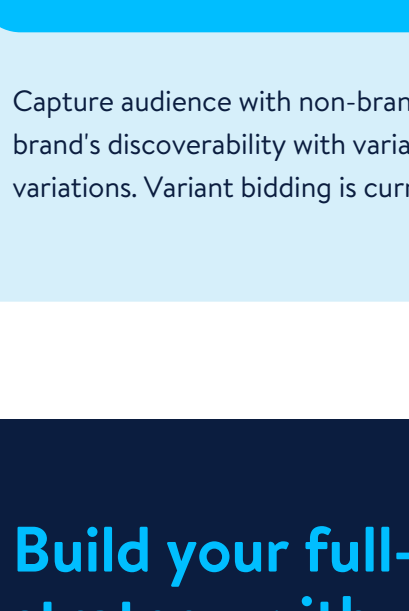


Reviews and ratings are critical to back-to-class purchase decisions for Walmart customers.

80% of surveyed Walmart customers said that consumer reviews/ratings assist them while they shop for back-to-class products and inspires their purchases<sup>15</sup>

Product recommendation

Ensure all your products have high content quality scores. Learn how to optimize your product listings with the [Content quality guide](#).



When planning lunchbox and family meals throughout the week, social media platforms and retailers serve up inspiration to Walmart customers

Sources surveyed Walmart customers typically use to discover new school snacks or meal ideas

52% Social media<sup>16</sup>

38% Retailers<sup>16</sup>

21% In-store advertising<sup>16</sup>

Product recommendation

Take advantage of Walmart social partnerships. For Managed Serve suppliers, use Walmart audiences to reach customers on Pinterest, TikTok and Meta. For in-store, create engaging experiences like In-store Demo to help raise awareness and consideration while delighting customers.

Top categories

Did you know?

This year, school supplies, school accessories and fashion are on the top of the list for Walmart customers.

Top products surveyed Walmart customers plan to shop for:

87% School supplies<sup>2</sup>

76% Clothing, shoes & accessories<sup>2</sup>

60% Backpacks, duffels & book bags<sup>2</sup>

57% Food & drinks<sup>2</sup>

Product recommendations

Harvest high-performing unbranded keywords from last year's back-to-class campaigns and consider activating or increasing bids/budgets, especially during high-traffic timeframes.

Utilize suggested keywords to uncover new keywords and help increase visibility in relevant search results.

Integrate more audience-driven display targeting strategies for broader, cross-category reach. Standard and macro-contextual targeting reaches single and cross-category context expansion based on relevancy. Persona targeting reaches different lifestyles and life stages. Add an optional demographic overlay to better segment or define desired audience attributes.

Did you know?

Walmart customers are shopping online for their school supplies.

The average order value for Stationery is nearly 50% higher online than in-store during the Back to Class season.<sup>17</sup>

Product recommendation

Creatively incorporate new keywords into seasonally relevant products in product detail page descriptions to increase relevancy scores and the ability to serve ads.



When it comes to children's clothing, Walmart customers are focused on products first, brands second

Of the top 10 searched keywords for apparel during the Back to Class season, only 1 (boys) and 2 (girls) of the top 10 search keywords are branded.<sup>18</sup>

Product recommendation

Capture audience with non-branded keywords and phrase using broad match. Help increase your brand's discoverability with variant bidding and promoting popular items, including size and color variations. Variant bidding is currently enabled on Sponsored Products only.

Build your full-funnel strategy with us

Get started

Study up on additional insights and best practices when it comes to using Walmart Connect's ad solutions. Our full-funnel offerings can help your business drive awareness, consideration and sales with Walmart customers and score top marks this back-to-class season.

Source: NRF, July 2023. <sup>1</sup>Back to Class Spending Growth by Retail Channel. <sup>2</sup>Walmart First Party Data, April 2023. <sup>3</sup>Back to School and College 2023 Survey Series. <sup>4</sup>Walmart Customer Spend Community, provided by Walmart Connect, survey conducted by the Walmart Connect Retail Insights Survey team. <sup>5</sup>Walmart First Party Data, December 2022, reflecting Jul. 15 - Sep. 30, 2022. <sup>6</sup>Walmart First Party Data, October 2022. <sup>7</sup>Walmart Back to School Survey. <sup>8</sup>Walmart Back to School Survey, provided by Walmart Connect. <sup>9</sup>Walmart Back to School 2023 Survey. <sup>10</sup>Walmart Back to School Survey, provided by Walmart Connect. <sup>11</sup>Walmart Back to School Survey, provided by Walmart Connect. <sup>12</sup>Walmart Back to School Survey, provided by Walmart Connect. <sup>13</sup>Walmart First Party Data, July 2023. <sup>14</sup>Walmart First Party Data, July 2023. <sup>15</sup>Walmart First Party Data, July 2023. <sup>16</sup>Walmart First Party Data, July 2023. <sup>17</sup>Walmart First Party Data, July 2023. <sup>18</sup>Walmart First Party Data, July 2023.