



Your Performance TV Guide to Back-to-School.

Back-to-school is back in business. Last year's combined back-to-school and back-to-college spending topped over \$108B, up from \$101B the year prior. And yes, you can bet it broke records like other seasons which we've investigated this year. Now that in-person attendance is back in full swing, we're anticipating another big year for the books. So, pencils up, heads down and open up those notebooks—this is one report you're not going to want to miss.



Introduction.

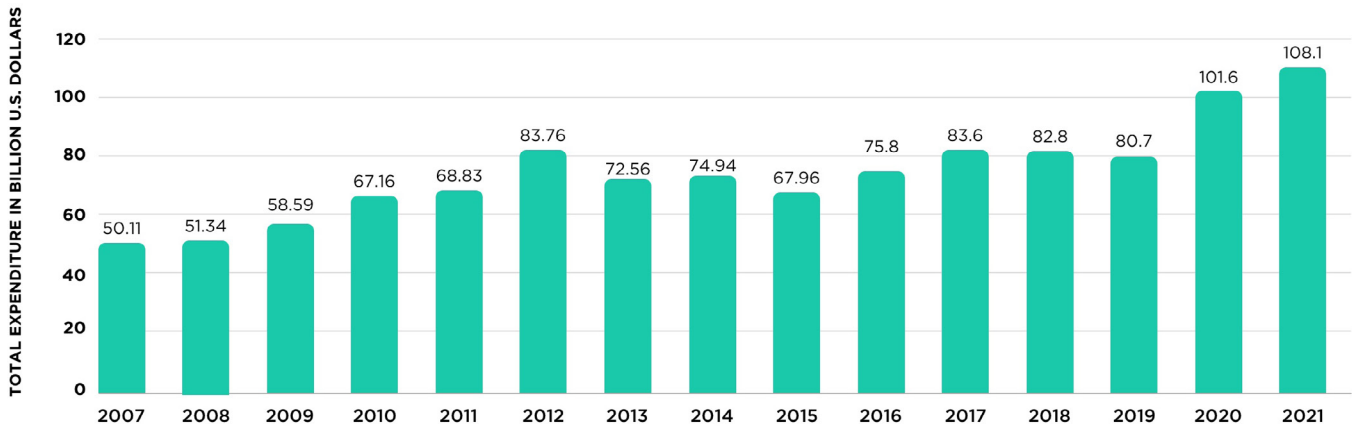
“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,” said Nelson Mandela, former Unesco Goodwill Ambassador and former President of South Africa. The impact of the last two years’ shook the world, and the education sector was no exception. But, things are taking a turn for the better. Last year, a giant stimulus bill channeled \$122 billion to schools¹, and a few months ago the Department of Education announced a broader effort to support students, schools and communities recover from the pandemic, investing over \$220 million² to support learning and development across the country.

This year, the current economic backdrop is driving needs-based and price-based decisions, with three-quarters of Americans³ planning to spend the same or less on back-to-school, and look for commodities with ancillary value that extends well into the fall season. Keep reading as we give you a lay of the land this season.

Time to Get Schooled: Last Year's Learnings Are In.

Despite the pandemic impacting the back-to-school season, back-to-school expenditure still continued to trend upwards over the last year. Research firm Statista revealed that expenditure broke records last year and topped \$108B⁴ in spending.

**Total Combined Back-to-School and Back-to-College
Expenditure in the United States From 2007 to 2021**
(in billion U.S. dollars)

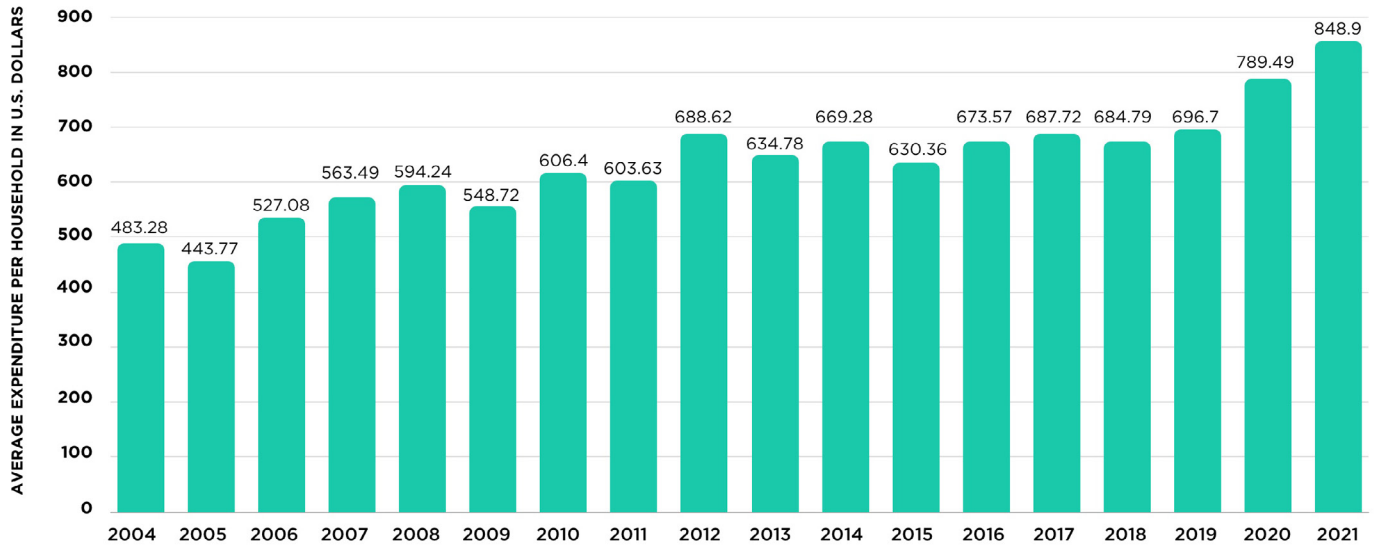


Source: Statista Back-to-School Market Report 2022

Similarly, average back-to-school and -college spending per household also increased almost eight percent from \$789.49 in 2020 to \$848.90⁴ last year.



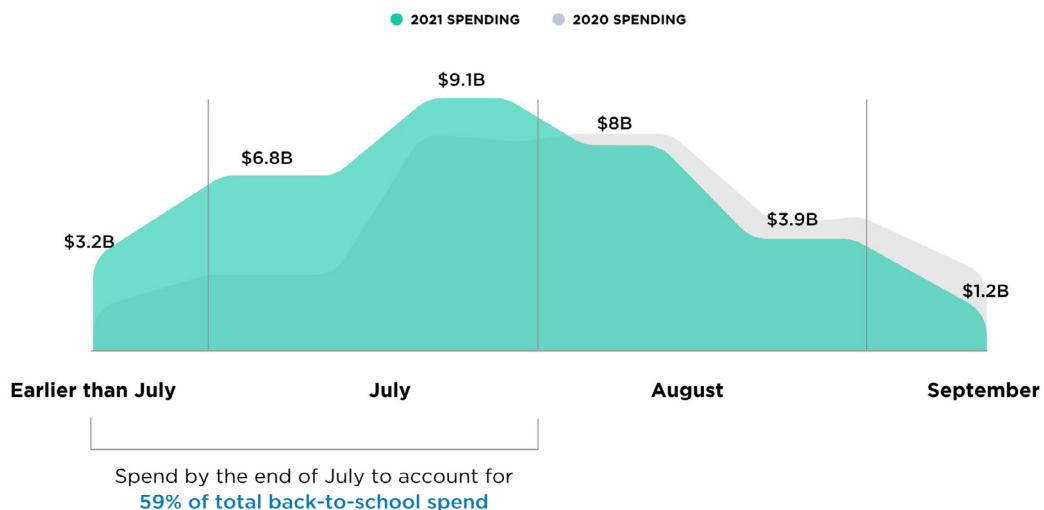
Average Planned Back-to-School Spending Per Household in the United States From 2004 to 2021 (in U.S. dollars)



Source: Statista Back-to-School Market Report 2022

Not only were shoppers spending more, they were spending earlier than usual, with over half⁵ of back-to-school spend wrapping up by the end of July.

Back-to-School Spending Timeline

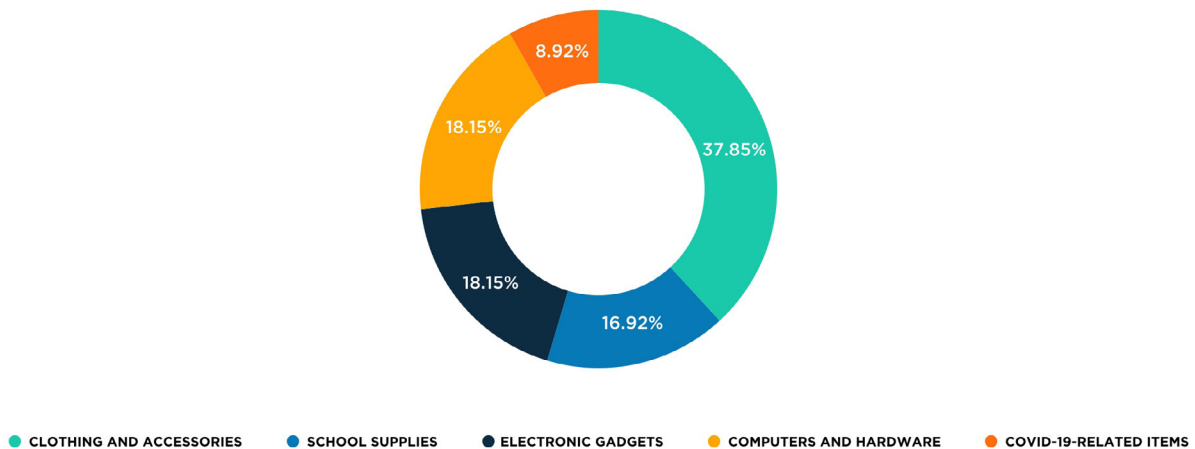


Source: 2021 Back-to-School Survey, Deloitte



We also looked at the product category breakdown of spending during back-to-school last year, where clothing and accessories (37.85%) made up most of the expenditure, followed by electronic gadgets and computers and hardware at 18.15% each.

Share of Back-to-School Spending in the United States in 2021, by Product



Source: Statista Back-to-School Market Report 2022

So, is 2022's back-to-school season doomed for detention or will it make the grade this year? Read on to find out.



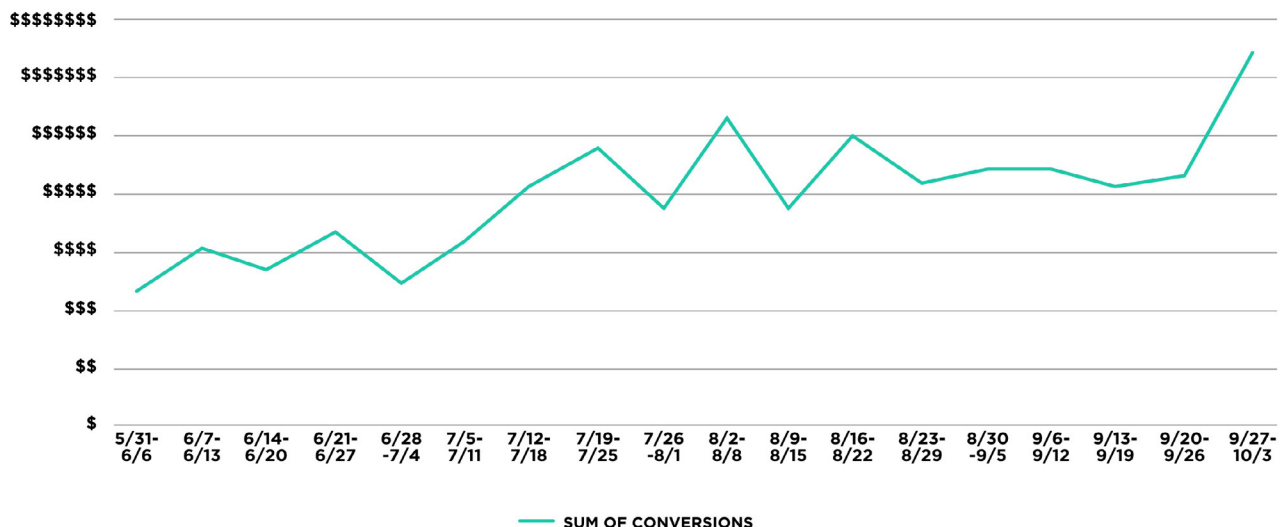
Why You Can (and Should) Sit With Us This Year.

MNTN Performance TV is This Year's Valedictorian

We looked at key back-to-school verticals last year across the major performance metrics and boy, do we have a story to tell. We charted revenue and conversions from summer last year all the way through to the end of the back-to-school season (not forgetting to include those last, last minute stragglers) and saw conversions peak in August as shoppers filled their carts. Conversions increased by over 100% from the beginning of August versus the end of summer (marked by Labor Day).

Ecommerce and retail verticals led the charge in driving this spike in conversions, as consumers also decided to both shop for back to school products and upgrade their wardrobe while they were at it, as we transitioned into the fall season. Since shoppers have fall on their mind earlier than usual, it's a great opportunity for advertisers to not only capitalize on the return to school, but the changing of the seasons, too.

Weekly Conversions From Summer Through Back-to-School



Source: MNTN Performance TV Data (May 31 to Oct 3, 2021)



We also tracked conversions against ad spend. Overall, conversions stayed relatively level the whole stretch of time—though ad spend flattened during the month of July. However, as we entered the back-to-school season, we saw conversions increase by 12% from the start of August to the end of September.

The big takeaway? Expect your campaign efforts to be rewarded with residual gains from your campaign efforts—had advertisers pumped up more spending in July, we might have seen these conversions increase even more from the month of August.

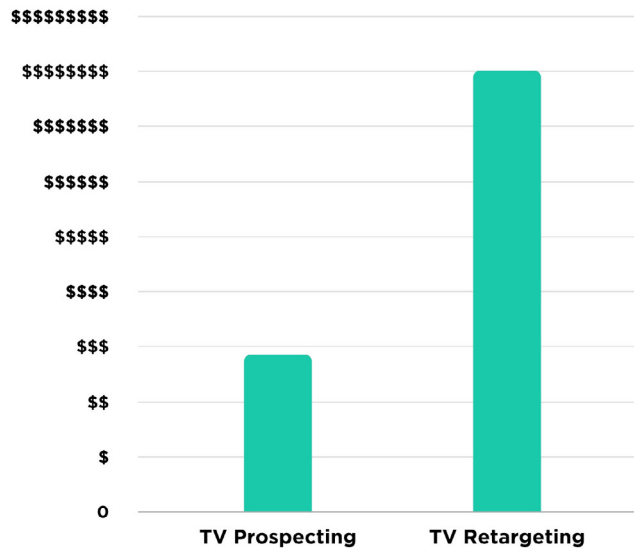
Retargeting Rules the School

Next, we switched things up a little by also analyzing a cross-section breakdown between advertisers who ran Connected TV retargeting campaigns and prospecting campaigns from summer until the end of back-to-school.

CTV retargeting revenue outperformed prospecting revenue on average by 184% over the back-to-school period from the start of August to the end of September, which highlights the importance of leveraging your existing customer base and reconnecting with them during this time, all through the season.



Average Daily Revenue During Back-to-School 2021



Source: MNTN Performance TV Data (Aug 2 to Oct 3, 2021)

Although retargeting revenue stayed steady through most of summer, we observed a last minute boom at the tail end of the back-to-school season as fall purchases started to pick up.

However, this is only the tip of the iceberg. While it's clear that retargeting campaigns drove the most revenue, we wanted to understand the true impact of performance when advertisers ran these campaigns together versus one or the other.

Retargeting + Prospecting vs. One Campaign Type

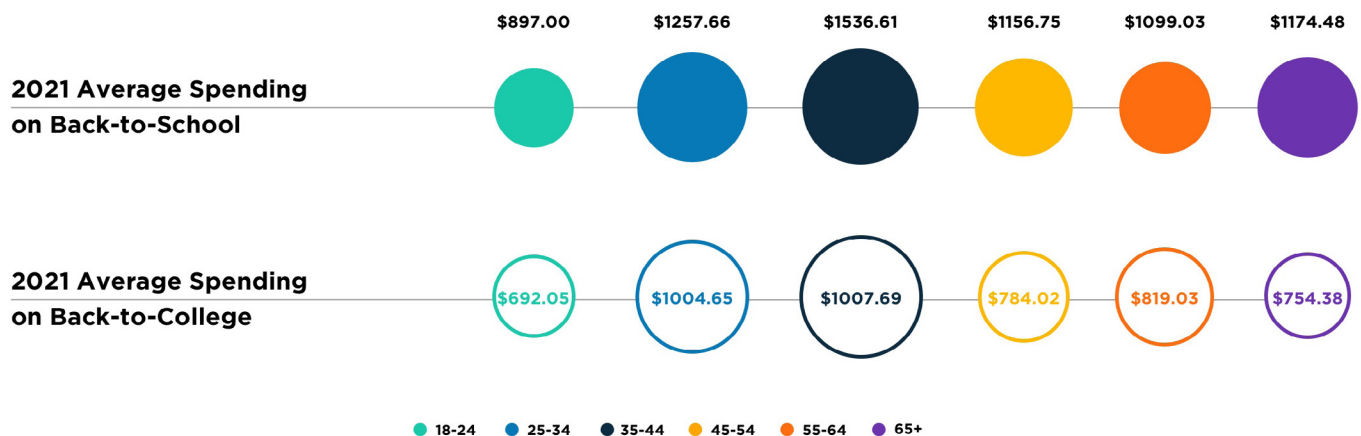
Running retargeting and prospecting campaigns together produced a 184% higher revenue versus. Prospecting-only campaigns. This confirms our best practice of launching prospecting campaigns first, followed by retargeting campaigns to reach last-minute shoppers. But more about that later.



Back-to-School Isn't Only For Students.

Who makes up the back-to-school audience? We looked at the age group split of back-to-school shoppers, with 35-44 year olds leading the way in both back-to-school and -college spending for their Gen Z and Gen Alpha kids.

Consumer Spending by Age

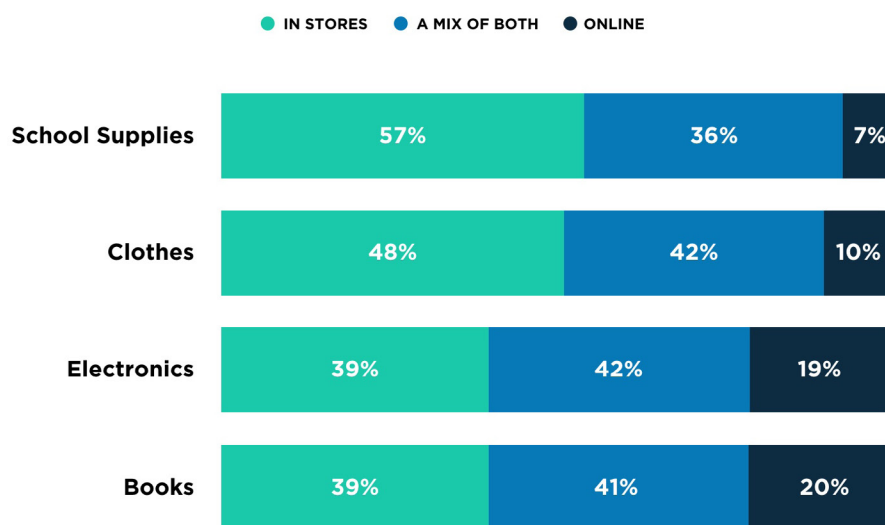


Source: NRF's Annual 2021 Back-to-College Spending Survey, conducted by Prosper Insights & Analytics



This year we expect a big resurgence in in-person shopping—the return to stores is expected to grow 8.2% YOY⁷ this season. A survey conducted by Morning Consult⁸ detailed that the majority of parents would be shopping exclusively in-store or a mix of in-person and online.

Back-to-School Parent Shoppers Online or In-store Purchase Plans



Source: Morning Consult, 2022



How to Get the Bag This Back-to-School.

Before launching your campaign, review your overall goals, as this serves as your north star. MNTN Performance TV makes this a step easier by allowing you to choose your goal accordingly and then automatically optimizing your campaign:

- **Return on Ad Spend (ROAS)**
Drive the highest revenue on your campaign budget.
- **Cost Per Acquisition (eCPA)**
Drive the highest volume of conversions on your campaign budget.
- **Cost Per Visit**
Drive the highest volume of visits on your campaign budget.
- **Cost Per Completed View**
Drive the highest volume of completed TV views on your campaign budget.

Next, we'll look at the type of campaigns that you should be running, when and why.





Prospecting Campaigns

Although we have seen retargeting drive more revenue than prospecting efforts, never underestimate the power of prospecting as it greatly influences your retargeting efforts.

Prospecting campaigns drive new audiences to your site, increase brand awareness, and fill your retargeting audience.



Retargeting Campaigns

Retargeting campaigns create a cycle of people who visit your site, leave, and return to make a purchase. They also raise brand awareness, and serve to remind customers of the products they have previously viewed, and encourage them to come back and convert.

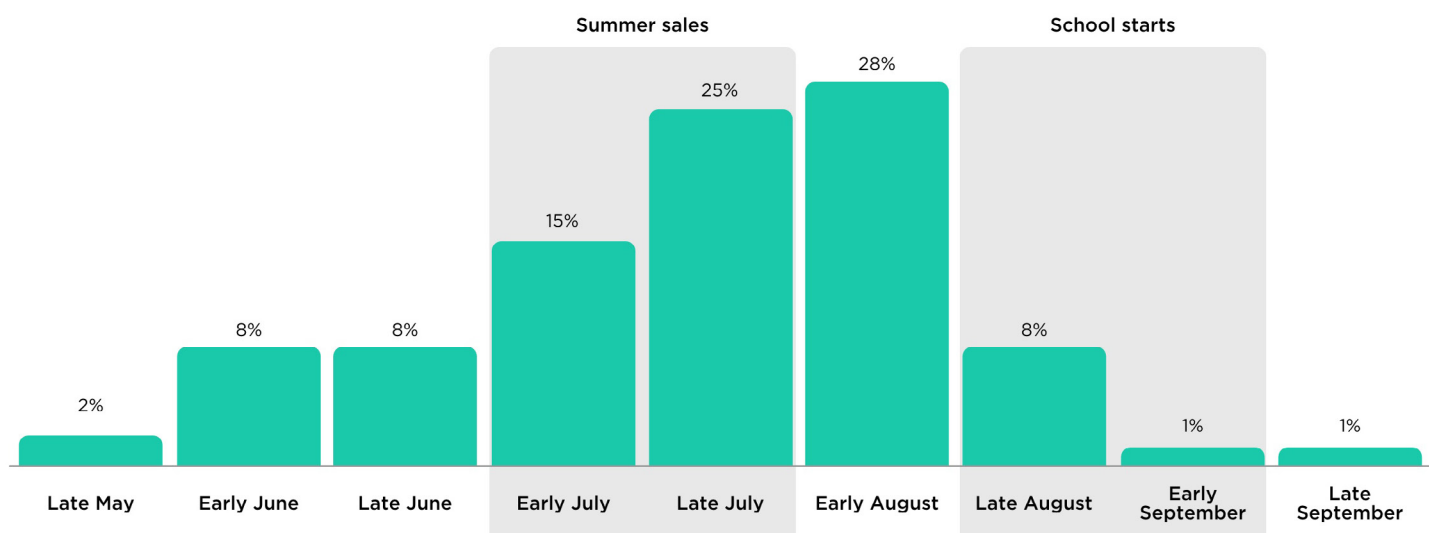


Timing and Budget

Research indicates that most shopping will occur in late July and early August⁹, with almost half (43%) of adults waiting for early shopping events (like Amazon Prime Day)—and a third are waiting for Labor Day and the ‘usual’ summer holiday sales.



Timeline of Expected Back-to-School Shopping



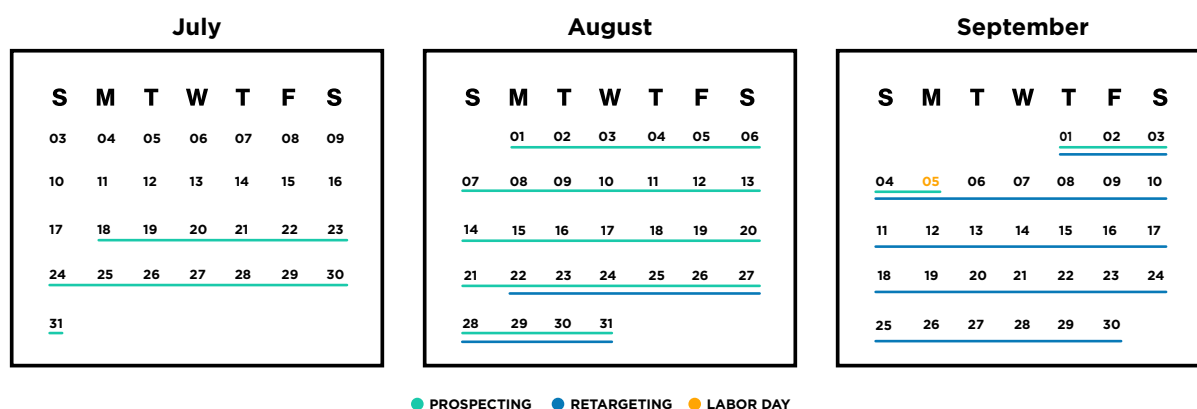
Source: Morning Consult, 2022

Based on these findings, we suggest:

- Start your prospecting campaign seven weeks out to generate a large site visitor pool. We recommend weighting 60%-90% of your budget on upper-funnel campaigns to start, to widen your audience pool.
- Set aside 10%-40% of your budget for lower-funnel campaign efforts, like retargeting, to re-engage your audiences. Launch these one to two to weeks out alongside your prospecting campaigns and keep these on for at least a month afterward.



We used Labor Day as a marker for the start of the academic year, however since the academic year varies from school to school, we suggest using the calendar below as a guide to plan your campaign schedule.



Audiences

If you're been searching high and low for the ideal [audience segments](#), look no further. Get your campaign in top shape—starting with these audience segments via MNTN's integration with Oracle Data Cloud.

01 Back-to-School Shoppers:

Unsure of where to start with your back-to-school audience segmentation? Start here, with this catchall of anyone who has exhibited interest in the season. Search term: "Back to school."

- Merkle > Lifestyle > Experian > Interest > Back to School
- Gravy Analytics > In-Market > In-Market Back to School Shopper
- Cuebiq > Seasonal Audience > Back to School Shoppers



02 Millennial Parents:

Statistics show that this group are the biggest spenders during Back-to-school. Search term: “Millennial Parents.”

- Oracle > Lifestyles > Parents and Family > Millennial Parents
- Stirista > Lifestyles > Millennials > Millennial Parents

03 Amazon Shoppers:

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em. Prime Day has been moved to mid July, and the majority of shoppers follow suit, seeking deals from this big box retailer. Search term: “Amazon.”

- AnalyticsIQ > In Market > Amazon Shoppers
- Audiences by Oracle > Retail > Shopping Styles > Purchase Channel > Amazon Shoppers
- Experian > Retail Shoppers: Purchase Based > Seasonal > Holiday Shoppers: Big Box Stores: Amazon

04 Bargain Hunters:

Although back-to-school shopping starts earlier this year, shoppers are being extra price sensitive in light of the wider economic climate. Search terms: “Bargain”.

- Oracle > Retail > Shopping Styles > Price Sensitivity > Deal Seekers and Bargain Hunters
- Interest > Shopping > Bargain Hunting Shoppers
- Zipline > US Data > AmeriLINK Consumer Buying Behavior > Buyer Bubbles - Purchase Clusters > United States > Bargain Hunters



Chalk it Up to Success With Creative.

There is no one-size-fits-all rule for creative, especially between prospecting and retargeting campaigns. At a minimum, you should include a clear call-to-action and your company or brand's URL prominently positioned on your creative.

Here are some campaign specific guidelines to follow:

- Prospecting campaigns are primarily used to drive awareness. Use this as an opportunity for brand storytelling, including highlighting your offering, product features and benefits. Utilize MNTN's Multi-Touch feature to reach consumers wherever they are (but make sure you match the creative look and feel for an immersive ad experience).
- Retargeting campaigns go hand-in-hand with flash sales and last minute promotions. Here's your chance to highlight any deep discounts to draw in shoppers, whether it's a 50% discount or BOGOF.

If you're in a bind and not sure where to start, we recommend leaning on a resource like [QuickFrame by MNTN](#) to help create multiple creative assets in a pinch, which can then be used for A/B testing.

For ongoing creative needs throughout the back-to-school season and beyond, tap into our [Creative-as-a-Subscription™](#) service, which provides an ongoing supply of Connected TV creative included with your media investment.



Reach the Top of the Class With MNTN Performance TV.

Explore more about the world of Connected TV to help you run A+ campaigns all through the year.

Learn More

[Visit mountain.com](https://mountain.com)

Sources:

¹[COVID Derailed Learning For 1.6 Billion Students. Here's How Schools Can Help Them Catch Up, Nature.com](#)

²[U.S. Department of Education Announces Over \\$220 Million Dollars in Investments from Government, Private, and Public Sectors to Support Student Recovery, US Department of Education](#)

³[Back To School Shopping Trends 2022, Inmobi](#)

⁴[Back-to-School Market, Statista](#)

⁵[2021 Back-to-School Survey, Deloitte](#)

⁶[Back-to-Class Data Center, National Retail Federation](#)

⁷[Big Growth Forecast Forecast For Back-to-School Sales, Retail Customer Experience](#)

⁸[Back-to-School Shoppers Are Ready to Head to Stores, Morning Consult](#)

⁹[Previewing Back-to-School Shopping This Year and the Influence of Economic Uncertainty, Morning Consult](#)