FSQ

My Back-to-School Advertising Cheat Sheet

(for a more selective shopper)

Note to self: In 2026, consumers are more price conscious, less brand loyal, and use multiple channels throughout the buyer journey.

Connect with In-Market Shoppers

I want my campaigns to reach:

School Year Shoppers

Shoppers visiting Dollar Tree, Five Below, or Marshalls for affordable school supplies.

✓ ~~Parents recently spotted at Chuck-E-Cheese, Legoland, and Carter's, indicating they likely have children in K-12 classrooms.~~

Buyers currently visiting Target, Staples, or Office Depot in May or June, getting a head start on school supply shopping.

College & University Shoppers

✓ ~~College athletes often spotted at campus sports facilities and shops like Dick's Sporting Goods, Nike, or Adidas.~~

Students recently spotted at college campuses for the first time and who visited Bed Bath & Beyond, IKEA, or The Container Store, likely prepping for dorm move-in.

University professors ages 45-65+ who are frequently on campus during the school year and visit traditional back-to-school retailers before the semester starts.

Did you know?

70% of shoppers plan to complete their buying in brick-and-mortar locations.[1]

Shoppers who sometimes switch for deals jumped from **50%** in 2025 to **75%** in 2026.[2]

37% of shoppers will only buy sale items, **37%** are shopping earlier, and **34%** are reusing prior-year supplies in order to stretch their BTS budgets. **3**

67% of shoppers began purchasing by early July, the highest rate since 2018, but **84%** still have at least half their list left mid-season.[4]

Source: Sensormatic[1], InMar[2] PwC[3], NRF[4]

Measure Campaign Success on Store Visits & Sales

I want to use omnichannel measurement to understand questions like:

- Which channels drove the most incremental foot traffic?
- Did exposed visitors make purchases?
- Did my media expose brand loyalists or net new customers?

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