





The back-to-class shopping season is looking more normal than last year and spending is expected to reach **record** levels.

Retailers are utilizing services offered throughout the pandemic, such as **BOPIS** and **curbside pickup**, to help families and students feel comfortable while shopping for back-to-school items.

**Katherine Cullen**

Senior Director of Industry and Consumer Insights at  
The National Retail Federation

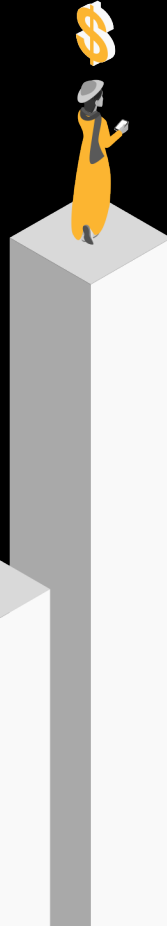




This year's back-to-school season will be marked by a lot of uncertainty. Most campuses will nonetheless reopen for full-time, in-person classes while implementing their own set of safety measures. More than ever, back-to-school season will stir a complex mixture of feelings of **excitement and anxiety**.

**Sandrine Crener**

Program Director at Harvard Business School



The 2021 back-to-school spending is expected to reach a record

**\$37.1 billion**

up from \$33.9 billion in 2020 and an all-time high



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Consumer confidence and spending will be the driving force that helps to **reinvigorate** the U.S. economy. Back-to-school and the upcoming holiday shopping seasons will contribute to **elevating profits** to the levels we saw **prior to the pandemic**.

**Tom McGee**  
President and CEO of ICSC

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Source: [ICSC](#)



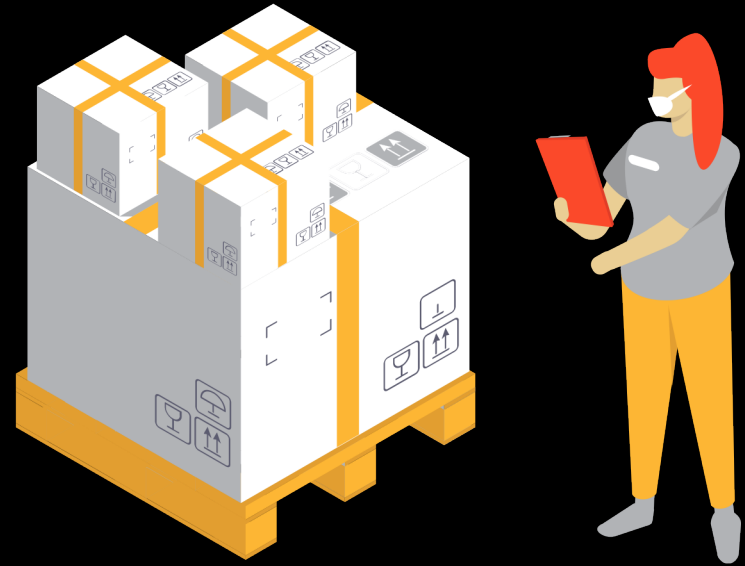
I think it's going to be a **fantastic back-to-school season**. But we also need to recognize that we have a lot of work to do in stores to ensure they **feel supported** enough to **deliver this growth in business**.

**Ron Thurston**

Former VP of Stores at Intermix, Author of "Retail Pride: The Guide to Celebrating Your Accidental Career"

50%

of back-to-school shoppers say they are concerned for stockouts and plan to shop earlier in 2021





Parents are planning much further ahead due to **issues in the supply chain**. This year, people are buying **much earlier** than they had in the past, knowing that if they wait too close to the school season, then they may not be able to get the things they want for their children.

**Mary Rodgers**

Director of Marketing Communications at Cuisinart

# Hey,

Did you know? You can find our Back-to-School podcast special on the RETHINK Retail website: [click here](#)

**38%**

of back-to-school  
shoppers plan to  
make more  
purchases online  
this year





While this year's back-to-school season will better **reflect pre-pandemic shopping patterns** than in 2020, it's expected that the **convenience** and **ease** of online retail has created a **permanent shift** towards **online shopping** for everyday essentials.

**Jason Stuckey**

General Manager, North America at Linnworks



46%

of consumers will  
sacrifice cost savings  
for a more convenient  
shopping experience



Whether returning to in-person learning, continuing to learn from home or moving into a dorm room for the first time, Target is prepared to help our guests with everything they need for the season—with the best assortment, shopping experience and value—all in **one convenient click or trip.**

**Jill Sando**

Executive Vice President and CMO at Target

Source: [Target](#)



The last year has been full of difficult decisions for everyone, so we're trying to **ease decision making** for her with **handsfree styles**, and the **versatility of a portable workspace** since back-to-school is about teachers as well as students.

**Beatrice Mac Cabe**

Chief Creative Officer at Vera Bradley

86%

of back-to-shoppers  
say sales and  
promotions will  
influence their  
shopping choices





This year, **social media** platforms are likely to play a bigger role in the back-to-school shopping experience than in the past.

**Mina Fader**

Managing Director of Wharton's Baker Retailing Center  
at the University of Pennsylvania

Social media is an integral part  
of the shopping journey for

**41%**

of K-12 parents



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