



Ask the Expert

Back-to-school



Key takeaways from our Q&A with Experian experts

As the back-to-school season approaches, marketers are gearing up to capture the attention of eager shoppers and savvy parents alike. In our Q&A video with Experian experts, we dive into the intricacies of crafting successful back-to-school marketing campaigns. From navigating changing consumer behaviors to using data-driven strategies, here we recap the key insights and actionable takeaways from our experts, providing you with the tools to excel in this crucial marketing season.

What marketing trends do we anticipate we'll see this year?

- 1 Campaigns will start earlier.** We anticipate marketing efforts to start earlier than usual for the back-to-school season. Brands will initiate campaigns with special promotions to gain mind and market share ahead of their competition. The traditional back-to-school season is also extending. Marketers should consider prolonging their campaigns to capture the attention of consumers who are taking more time to make purchasing decisions.
- 2 Online shopping will continue to rise.** Online shopping, which surged during the pandemic, is here to stay. Busy parents appreciate the convenience it offers. We expect brands to focus on improving online and mobile shopping experiences, including options for in-store pickup and delivery. Marketers should prioritize their online presence and optimize their e-commerce platforms to cater to the needs of families shopping for back-to-school supplies.
- 3 Budget consciousness.** With increasing inflation and tighter home budgets, households are becoming more discerning about spending on back-to-school supplies. Marketers should target their efforts toward products that offer value and necessity, ensuring their advertising resonates with these priorities.
- 4 Strategic advertising placement.** With the need for precision in budget allocation, advertisers must be strategic in where they place their ads. Utilizing data-driven insights to target specific demographics and channels will maximize the impact of advertising spend.



How have consumer behaviors around back-to-school shopping changed in recent years?

- **Investment in at-home tech.** With the rise of in-home classrooms due to the pandemic, families may have invested more heavily in technology needed for school, cutting back or delaying technology purchases they may typically make for back-to-school.
- **Simplified shopping journeys.** The rise of seamless shopping experiences like Amazon lists offer one-stop solutions where parents can easily find and buy all required supplies in one place. This shift away from traditional retail experiences (like browsing through aisles for specific items) streamlines the process for parents, guiding them directly to the exact brands and quantities required for back-to-school. By minimizing decision fatigue and optimizing convenience, this approach saves consumers both time and money.

What tips and strategies do we recommend for brands and agencies?

Brands

- **Maintain an evergreen presence.** Launch your official back-to-school marketing campaign early but ensure a consistent presence throughout the season to stay top of mind for customers. Experian's TrueTouch™ audience insights can help you understand which platforms resonate most with your customers and prospects so you can make informed decisions about which channels to invest in, such as email, digital video, or specific social channels.
- **Tailor messaging to consumer motivations.** Identify what resonates most with your audience, whether it's price, quality, or novelty. You can use insights from Experian to map your messages to purchase behaviors.
- **Build loyalty programs that deepen customer relationships.** Use your customer data to build loyalty programs that deepen the relationships with your customers, such as notifying customers about new arrivals or understanding their broader interests to enhance the overall customer experience. Collaborating with Experian can provide you with a comprehensive view of customer profiles and potential back-to-school prospects within your existing customer base.
- **Prioritize offering value and convenience to consumers.** Provide flexibility in shopping options, including in-store, online, and buy online, pick up in-store (BOPIS). Utilize or offer in-store services like Shipt, Instacart, or DoorDash to save time for busy families.

Agencies

- **Engage early.** Initiate conversations with brands earlier than in previous years to ensure timely planning, execution, and optimization.
- **Extend campaign duration.** Extend the duration of your campaigns to reach a broader audience, particularly those making purchasing decisions closer to the start of the school year.
- **Use new data and insights.** Utilize new data sets and insights to make informed decisions about budget allocation and target audience. Lean on the teams within Experian to gather industry trends and incorporate them into your activation strategies, budget planning, and execution.
- **Adapt your channel strategy to evolving consumer habits.** As consumers shift toward seamless shopping experiences that are online, you should focus on reaching them on the digital channels where they're actively making purchases. Shift your marketing spend to platforms like connected TV (CTV), social media, and influencers. This shift in spending will allow you to reach potential and existing customers with authentic content and shoppable experiences.

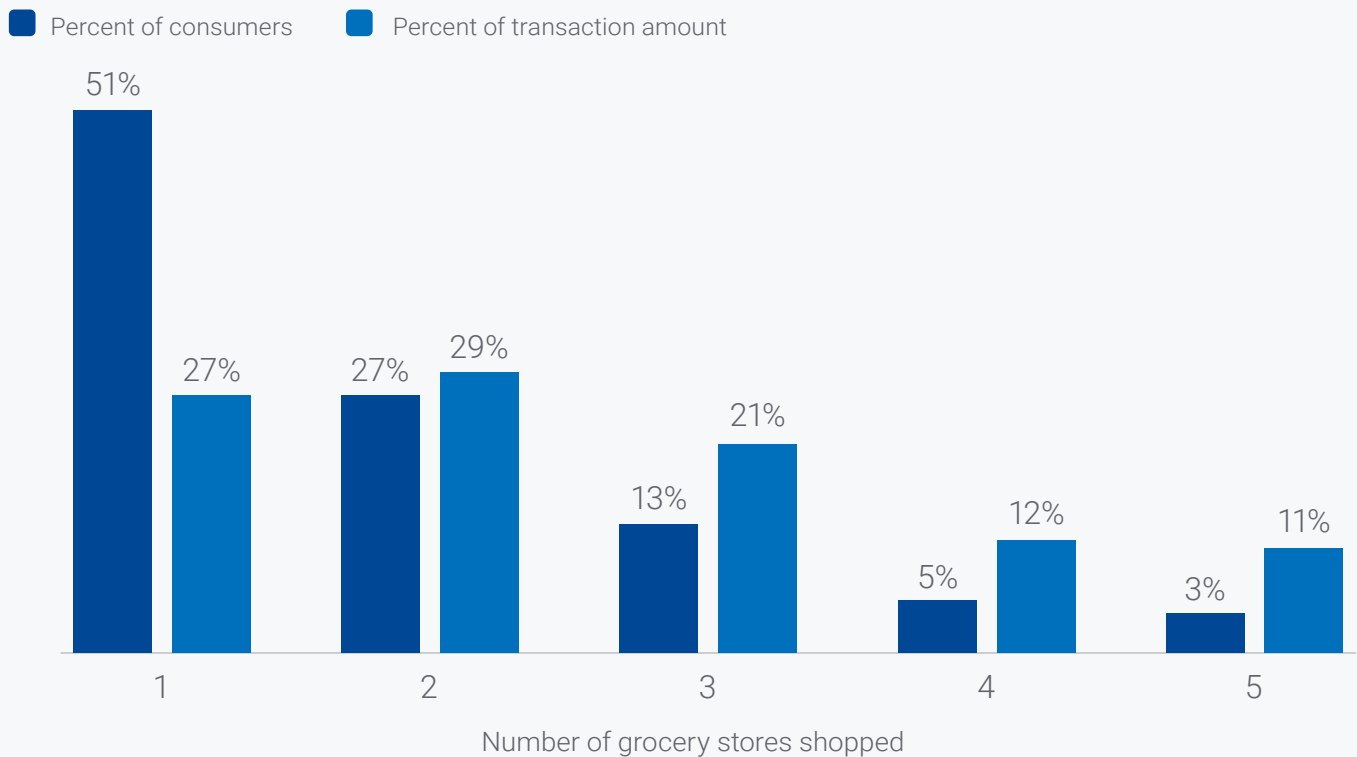


What is top of mind for CPG brands?

- **Opportunity to introduce new products.** The back-to-school season presents an opportune moment for CPG brands to launch new snacks and convenient foods tailored for busy weekdays.
- **Utilize consumer insights.** Partnering with data providers like Experian can help CPG brands bridge data gaps by accessing our extensive consumer data on 126 million U.S. households and 250 million individuals which is ranked #1 for data accuracy (as validated by Truthset). CPG brands can use this data to gain valuable insights into market trends and consumer behavior to create targeted marketing plans that will resonate with their back-to-school audience.

For example, 79% of U.S. consumers only shop at 1-2 stores for their groceries, accounting for 56% of total grocery spend.*

Percent of grocery consumers and transactions by number of stores shopped



*Experian looked at our purchase-based data to understand retail trends over the past year. Our purchase-based data covers credit and debit card usage across 500 top merchants.



Which Experian audiences do we recommend for targeting for back-to-school?

Experian's syndicated audiences are available for activation on-the-shelf of most major platforms. When you choose Experian, you gain access to:

- 2,400+ audiences across 15 verticals
- 30+ activation platforms and distribution to 200+ media platforms
- Our commitment to privacy and accuracy in audience building

We are ranked [#1 in data accuracy](#) from Truthset for 15 different attributes, including the presence of children and other key demographic data points that can power targeted awareness campaigns for back-to-school and beyond.



Back-to-school focused

Actively purchasing supplies during back-to-school season

- Back to School Spend

High spenders at back-to-school supply stores

- Back to School High Spend

Frequently shop at back-to-school apparel stores

- Back to School Apparel

Frequently shop at back-to-school supply stores

- Back to School Supplies

All of our back-to-school audiences are available by life stage:

- PreK
- Elementary school
- Middle school
- High school



Family structure

Reach parents with school aged children of various ages or mothers with school-aged children. Parents are key decision makers during the back-to-school season.

Mothers with children

- Lifestyle and Interests (Affinity) > Moms, Parents, Families
 - Mothers with only 1 child
 - Mothers with 2+ children
 - Mothers with toddler child(ren)(4-6 yrs old)
 - Mothers with tweener child(ren)(7-12 yrs old)
 - Mothers with teenage child(ren) (13-15 yrs old)
 - Mothers with high school child(ren) (16-18 yrs old)

Likely to have children in the household

- Demographics > Presence of Children
 - Ages: 4-6
 - Ages: 7-9
 - Ages: 10-12
 - Ages: 13-15
 - Ages: 16-18





Financial data

Target students in the market for student loans or those with specific financial profiles that indicate potential purchasing power.

In-market for a new student loan

- In-market Financial FLA Friendly* > In Market > Student new loan

Age of a student loan

- Financial FLA Friendly > Student Loan Age

Annual discretionary spend

- Consumer Financial Insights > Discretionary Spend
 - Clothing/Apparel
 - Education



Shopping behavior

Narrow down targeting to consumers who have spent or visited big box grocery, office supplies, or children's apparel stores.

Households that shop at office supply and big box stores

- Retail Shoppers: Purchase Based > Shopping Behavior
 - Children & Family: Families with Kids: High Spenders Office Supplies: High Spenders
 - Big Box and Club Stores
 - Telecommuters and SOHO (Small Office/Home Office)

What households buy

- Purchase Transactions
 - Home Office/Business
 - Clothing and Apparel > Frequent Spenders

Likely to buy products because of children

- Psychographic/Attitudes > Shopping Behavior > Child Influenced



Snacks and beverages

Identify and target high spenders or frequent buyers in categories like snacks and beverages to reach proven buyers likely to convert.

Likely to spend on food, snacks, and beverage products

- Purchase Predictors > Shoppers All Channels > Food Snacks Beverages

Frequently purchase candy, snacks, beverages

- Purchase Transactions > Food and Beverage > Frequent Spenders

**"Fair Lending Friendly" indicates data fields that Experian has made available without use of certain demographic attributes that may increase the likelihood of discriminatory practices prohibited by the Fair Housing Act ("FHA") and Equal Credit Opportunity Act ("ECOA"). These excluded attributes include, but may not be limited to, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, disability, handicap, family status, ancestry, sexual orientation, unfavorable military discharge, and gender. Experian's provision of Fair Lending Friendly indicators does not constitute legal advice or otherwise assures your compliance with the FHA, ECOA, or any other applicable laws. Clients should seek legal advice with respect to your use of data in connection with lending decisions or application and compliance with applicable laws.*





Healthy choices

Connect with consumers who prioritize making healthy food choices for their families.

Frequently buy pre-made meals

- Retail Shoppers: Purchase Based > Health and Fitness > Healthy Food Meal Kit Service Spenders

Committed to exercise and healthy choices

- Psychographic/Attitudes > Health and Well Being > Healthy Holistics

High spenders at organic/natural grocery stores

- Retail Shoppers: Purchase Based > Grocery > Organic/Natural Grocery Stores: High Spenders



For a full list of Experian's syndicated audiences and activation destinations, download our [syndicated audiences guide](#).

How can Experian support custom audience creation?

5,000

demographic, behavioral, purchase, and attitudinal attributes

2,300

attributes assigned to each household

250

attributes per person

Our data, comprised of over **5,000** demographic, behavioral, purchase, and attitudinal attributes, empowers advertisers to craft highly specific custom audiences tailored to resonate with individual retailers or CPG brands. Whether it's combining demographic attributes like age and household income with our purchase predictor audiences to identify households likely to spend for a high-end electronics retailer, Experian Marketing Data ensures marketers have the tools they need to launch meaningful campaigns that resonate with their audience.

With an average of **2,300** attributes assigned to each household and around **250** attributes per person, the depth of our data empowers marketers with complete insights to precisely target audiences and deliver personalized messaging.

Need a custom audience? We can help you build and activate an Experian audience on the platform of your choice.



Connect with our audience team



Which channels do we anticipate will be the most successful?

CTV and social

Why CTV and social?

- **Expand reach beyond purchasers.** CTV viewership includes a significant portion of younger demographics, providing an opportunity to influence the purchasing behavior of both parents and children -- maximizing the impact of your marketing efforts.
- **Advanced targeting capabilities.** Utilize detailed targeting options available on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and X to reach specific demographics relevant to back-to-school shoppers.
- **Flexibility in campaign creation and execution.** CTV offers flexibility in campaign execution, allowing marketers to adapt and optimize their strategies based on real-time insights and trends. Social media platforms offer diverse ad formats and creative options, allowing marketers to tailor their campaigns to fit their brand messaging and objectives.
- **Cross-screen reach.** CTV enables marketers to achieve cross-screen reach, ensuring their message reaches consumers across various devices and platforms. With the prevalence of mobile devices and desktop usage, social media channels provide an opportunity for marketers to engage with their audience across multiple screens, maximizing campaign reach and effectiveness.

How will signal loss affect the tactics and strategies marketers will use?

- **Signal agnostic tactics.** Marketers need to pivot toward tactics that are not reliant on specific signals such as cookies. This means exploring [alternative methods](#) to reach and measure campaign performance effectively, regardless of signal loss.
- **Universal IDs.** As cookies become obsolete, marketers should look toward universal IDs like [UID2](#) and ID5. These IDs maintain user privacy while offering effective tracking across different platforms.
- **Integrate an identity graph.** The diminishing effectiveness of browser-based IDs highlights the importance of identity graphs. Marketers should integrate first-party data with other identity solutions, combining online and offline data to create robust user profiles and enhance targeting capabilities.
- **Diversified data collection.** Embracing diverse data collection methods will ensure you can have a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior without solely depending on cookies. At Experian, we primarily rely on robust offline profiles to build our audiences and utilize various data points to link offline profiles to the digital environment. In a post-cookie era, the direct collection of consented first-party data will be a crucial alternative to third-party cookies. Experian offers a solution for seamless first-party data collection through our [Activity Feed](#) product, assisting in gathering anonymous user-level activity on your website. We also expect to see more pick up of data collaboration in the market, using addressable IDs and identity resolution to power connectivity between partners and their data sets. Through Experian [Collaboration](#), your data partnerships thrive, ensuring data can be securely shared yielding rich consumer insights that power smarter marketing strategies. This ensures that signal loss from cookies has a minimal impact on your marketing efforts.



How can Experian's measurement solutions help marketers?

- **Incrementality and sales lift reporting.** Utilize these metrics to gauge the true impact of your advertising efforts during the back-to-school period. Understand how your targeted and personalized ads influence consumer behavior and drive sales.
- **Link media exposures with consumer actions.** With Experian's [measurement solutions](#), marketers can seamlessly connect their media exposures with various consumer actions, whether they are offline purchases, online transactions, website visits, or even physical store visits. This allows for a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of your campaigns across different touchpoints.
- **Diverse KPI options.** Explore a wide range of key performance indicators (KPIs) tailored to your back-to-school marketing objectives. Whether it's measuring brand awareness, customer engagement, or conversion rates, Experian's solutions offer flexibility to track and analyze the metrics that matter most to your campaign's success.
- **Comprehensive dashboards.** Access user-friendly dashboards with intuitive visualizations that present campaign results in a clear and digestible format. Gain insights not only into overall performance but also key demographic characteristics of your audience. Understand who is engaging with your ads and identify actionable patterns for optimization.

Experience the difference with Experian for your back-to-school campaigns

Connect with us →

