**Back to School 2022**

**Consumer Spending Is the Make-or-Break Factor**

Brands and retailers will have a good 2022 Back to School season if consumers continue to spend as they did during April 2022, when retail sales increasing 0.9%, which they also did during the three previous months.

More inflation; continuing supply-chain issues, resulting in less inventory in stores and online; and the possibility of a recession, which could negatively affect employment, could reverse increasing retail sales during the critical June–September shopping season.

Generally, households with incomes of less than $50,000 drive the economy, including Back to School; however, 13.6% of these households experienced income loss during April 2022.

**Allocation of Spending on Selected Apparel Categories, by Generation, March 2022**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Apparel Category | Gen Z | Millennials | Gen X | Baby Boomers |
| Clothing | * 29% | * 36% | * 49% | 57% |
| Shoes | * 27% | * 24% | * 24% | * 25% |
| Accessories | * 13% | * 13% | * 7% | * 3% |
| Jewelry and watches | * 15% | * 13% | * 11% | * 7% |
| Other apparel/accessories | * 16% | * 15% | * 10% | * 8% |

Morning Consult, April 2022

**Inflation May Affect Back-to-School Spending**

According to multiple sources, inflation is now most Americans’ top concern, replacing the pandemic. Other sources also emphasize the current inflationary trend is different than those of the past and may start to moderate as early as late 2022.

In its May 2022 U.S. Supply Chains and Inflation report, Morning Consult found many consumers are delaying certain types of purchases, especially non-essentials, or choosing less-expensive products. This trend is likely to continue into the Back-to-School season.

Morning Consult found inflationary pressures, such as price sensitivity and purchasing difficulty, were starting to affect higher-income households as these pressures have already affected those with middle to lower household incomes.

**Consumers Who Reported Experiencing Shortages During April 2022**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Percent | Purchase | Percent |
| #1: Specific types of groceries/food | * 61% | * #7: Electronics, computers or cellphones | * 24% |
| #2: A house or apartment | * 42% | * #8: Home appliances | * 23% |
| #3: Paper goods | * 36% | * #9: Furniture | * 22% |
| #4: A new vehicle | * 36% | * #10: Exercise and sports equipment | * 23% |
| #5: A used vehicle | * 34% | * #11: Clothing/Apparel | * 13% |
| #6: Home improvement supplies | * 33% |  |  |

Morning Consult, May 2022

**Back-to-School Shoppers**

According to Quantum Metric’s Making the Grade report, 71% of parents are making back-to-school purchases for their school-age children, compared to 27% for their college-bound children, but 61% of those students purchase for themselves.

Interestingly, 48% of purchases for supplies for school-age children and 29% for college-bound students are “gifts.”

The 2022 report also found many parents planned Back-to-School purchases for fall 2022 before the 2021–2022 school year ended and primarily because of inventory concerns. These earlier purchases are more likely for college than school-age students.

**Indices of Adults Who Purchased Children’s Clothing**

**Either in a Local Store or Online\* and with Children at Home**

**of Any Age by Generation in Selected Markets, 2021**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Generation | Tampa-St. Petersburg | Columbus | Des Moines, IA | Denver | Monterey-Salinas, CA |
| Gen Z | * 96 | * 79 | * 51 | * 82 | 91 |
| Millennials | * 105 | * 121 | * 129 | * 111 | * 114 |
| Gen X | * 121 | * 105 | * 113 | * 96 | * 115 |
| Baby Boomers | * 80 | * 59 | * 66 | * 79 | * † |
| Identify as LGBTQ+ | * 84 | * 115 | 133 | * 110 | * 125 |

Based on The Media Audit’s Fall 2021 surveys \*during the past four weeks †insufficient data

**College Student Insights**

Although August is the traditional month when college students start their back-to-school shopping, more than half start before August and 45% are shopping online more than before the pandemic, according to Student Bean’s Back to School 2022 report.

The report also revealed 84% of college students are more likely to click on an ad with a large discount and 94% will buy the product with a student incentive compared to those without such an incentive.

The health & wellness trend is very important to college students, as the report found 89% of those 16–24 want to be more physically fit during the coming school year and 85% are focused on improving their health.

**Top Products on Six US College Students’ Shopping Lists, 2022**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Category/Product | Percent |
| Food and drink: snack food | * 76% |
| Entertainment: music streaming service subscription | * 45% |
| Fashion: everyday clothing | * 81% |
| Heath & beauty: skincare | * 73% |
| Tech and mobile: laptop | * 66% |
| Homewares: bedding | * 60% |

Student Bean, May 2022

**Tweens and Teens and Media**

Piper Sandler’s Spring 2022 Taking with Teens survey revealed TikTok is now teens’ favorite social media platform at 33%, with Snapchat a close second at 31%. Snapchat’s 22% was the same as the fall 2021 survey while Facebook was the favorite of just 3% of teens.

The Common Sense Census 2021 report of media use by tweens and teens stated 53% of 13- to 18-year-olds said Instagram was their top social media site and Snapchat second at 49%. Among those 8 to 12, Snapchat was first at 13% and Instagram second at 10%.

Compared to Common Sense’s 2019 survey, fewer tweens (8–12) were gaming than were gaming in the 2021 survey, or 64% and 59%, respectively, however, teens (13–18) were gaming more, or 56% and 59%, respectively.

**TV/Video Screen Use Among Tweens (8–12) and Teens (13–18), 2021 vs. 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TV/Video Screen | Tweens | | Teens | |
|  | * 2019 | * 2021 | 2019 | 2021 |
| TV on a TV set | * 57% | * 62% | * 50% | * 52% |
| TV on other devices | * 18% | * 28% | * 33% | * 32% |
| Online videos | * 54% | * 58% | * 61% | * 77% |
| DVDs | * 7% | * 5% | * 4% | * 4% |
| Movies (in theaters) | * 3% | * NA | * 3% | * NA |

Common Sense, May 2022 (color represents change from 2019)

**Following Gen Zers into the Metaverse**

Although the metaverse concept is still a mystery to many, Gen Zers are very positive about the metaverse. In fact, Razorfish’s April 2022 study, The Metaverse, found 52% of Gen Zers said they feel most able to be completely themselves in a game.

More than Millennials, Gen Zers said the benefits for them in gaming were self-exploration at 45%, self-confidence at 40% and “a more authentic expression of myself” at 34%. This was even more among BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of color) Gen Zers at 50%.

The surveyed Gen Zers also said gaming has a positive effect on their relationships: 65% said they’ve developed new relationships and 64% strengthen existing relationships.

**What Gen Zers Want to Experience in a Game or Other Metaverse World, 2022**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Experience | Percent | Experience | Percent |
| #1: Making money | * 52% | * #8: Browsing products | * 29% |
| #2: Meeting new people | * 47% | * #9: Gaining an education | * 27% |
| #3: Bonding with friends/family | * 39% | * #10: Buying virtual goods | * 26% |
| #4: Traveling to a new place | * 37% | * #11: A date | * 21% |
| #5: Learning about another culture | * 36% | * #12: Raising a family | * 17% |
| #6: Building a career | * 33% | * #13: Marrying | * 11% |
| #7: Creating a personal identity | * 31% |  |  |

Razorfish, April 2022

**More Valuable Insights**

The Common Sense Census 2021 report of media use by tweens and teens offers several other revealing insights about tweens and teens that could be the basis for Back-to-School advertising promotions.

**Media Enjoyment Tweens (8–12) and Teens (13–18), 2021 vs. 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Media Enjoyment | Tweens | | Teens | |
|  | * 2019 | * 2021 | 2019 | 2021 |
| Watching online videos | * 67% | * 61% | * 58% | * 62% |
| Playing video games | * 52% | * 47% | * 43% | * 39% |
| Watching television | * 50% | * 48% | * 33% | * 27% |
| Playing mobile games | * 55% | * 45% | * 30% | * 28% |
| Reading for pleasure | * 38% | * 33% | * 24% | * 23% |
| Using social media | * 8% | * 12% | * 41% | * 34% |
| Using virtual reality | * 6% | * 9% | * 5% | * 5% |
| Listening to podcasts | * N/A | * 3% | * N/A | * 5% |

Common Sense, May 2022 (color represents change from 2019)

**Devices Owned By Tweens and Teens by Age Group,**

**Ethnicity and Family’s Household Income, 2021**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Demographic | Smartphone | Computer | Tablet |
| All tweens (8–12) | * 43% | 43% | 57% |
| All teens (13–18) | * 88% | * 64% | * 36% |
| Caucasian Americans (8–18) | * 65% | * 53% | * 45% |
| African Americans (8–18) | * 74% | * 55% | * 45% |
| Latinx Americans (8–18) | * 70% | * 55% | * 46% |
| Lower income (8–18) | * 68% | * 41% | * 40% |
| Middle income (8–18) | * 69% | * 55% | * 47% |
| Upper income (8–18) | * 65% | * 58% | * 47% |

Common Sense, May 2022

*Sources:* CNBC Website, 5/22; Morning Consult Website, 5/22; Quantum Metric Website, 5/22; The Media Audit Website, 5/22; Student Bean Website, 5/22; Marketing Chart Website, 5/22; Common Sense Website, 5/22; Razorfish Website, 5/22.

*Updated*: May 2022

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**Local Market and Station Information**