

STRATEGY GUIDE

How to Ace Your Back-to-School Marketing Strategy

Getting ready to head back to the classroom can be weeks to months in the making. While supply chain issues, inflation, and rising costs continue to be top of mind for shoppers, we anticipate that the back-to-school (BTS) timeframe will be longer and flatter as shoppers try to balance finding the best deals with purchasing items before they sell out.

In this guide, we'll:

- Dive into 2021 shopping trends and explore expected impact on 2022
- Highlight key opportunities, from timeframes to audiences, to maximize your marketing campaigns
- Provide recommendations on targeting tactics that can drive results, from awareness through to conversion

Back-to-School by the Numbers

7.5%

Projected growth in back-to-school-related sales in 2022 compared to last year.¹

9.9%

Expected growth for in-store sales this back-to-school-season compared to 2019, and up 8.2% to last year.¹

\$67.46B

Expected retail back-to-school season sales, **59% of which are expected to be in-store.**²

Who

Reaching the right customers with your brand's messaging ensures effective impressions that increase foot traffic and drive sales for your brand. So, who are the key audiences you should be focusing on?

Snapshot of the Back-to-School Shopper



more likely to
be a Morning
QSR Goer



more likely to be
In Market
for Furniture



more likely to be
a Department
Store Shopper

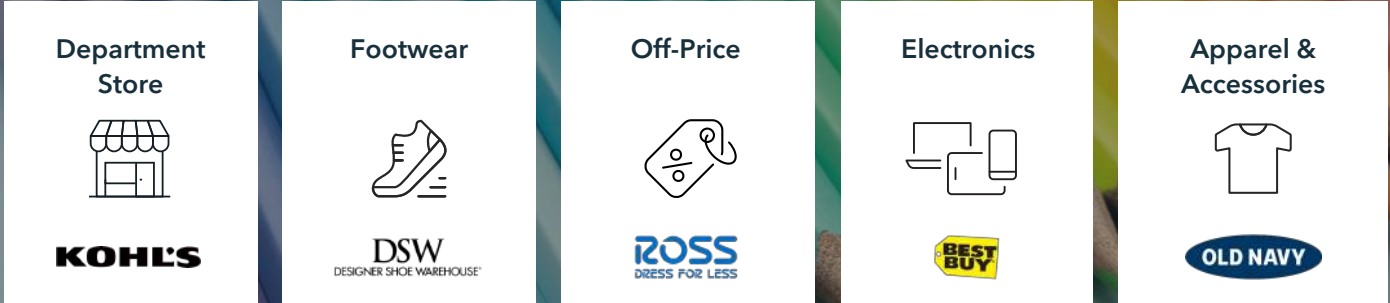
Source: GroundTruth Visitation Data. Compared to average for the timeframe of 7/1/21 through 9/30/21.

Audience	Overview
Location Audiences	<p>Accurately reach people who have recently visited any location, be it your own brand, a competitor or a category of brands.</p> <p>i.e. Macy's Shoppers, Target Shoppers, etc.</p>
Behavioral Audiences	<p>Combine visitation behaviors with demographic information to build sophisticated audience profiles.</p> <p>i.e. Department Store Shoppers, Discount Shoppers.</p>
Custom Audiences	<p>Create tailored segments by layering visitation data, behavioral attributes, demographic details, 1st party data, 3rd party data and/or purchase data.</p> <p>i.e. Layer on Big-Box Shoppers and add in 3rd party purchase data for audiences who purchased Kraft products.</p>
3 rd Party Audiences	<p>Integrate 3rd party audiences into your targeting mix. These can be layered on to hyper-focus on relevant audiences.</p> <p>i.e. Walmart App Users, Amazon App Users.</p>



Where

TOP VISITED BTS RETAILERS BY CATEGORY IN 2021



³ GroundTruth Visitation Data, Compared to average for the timeframe of 7/1/21 through 9/30/21.

GroundTruth Targeting Tip



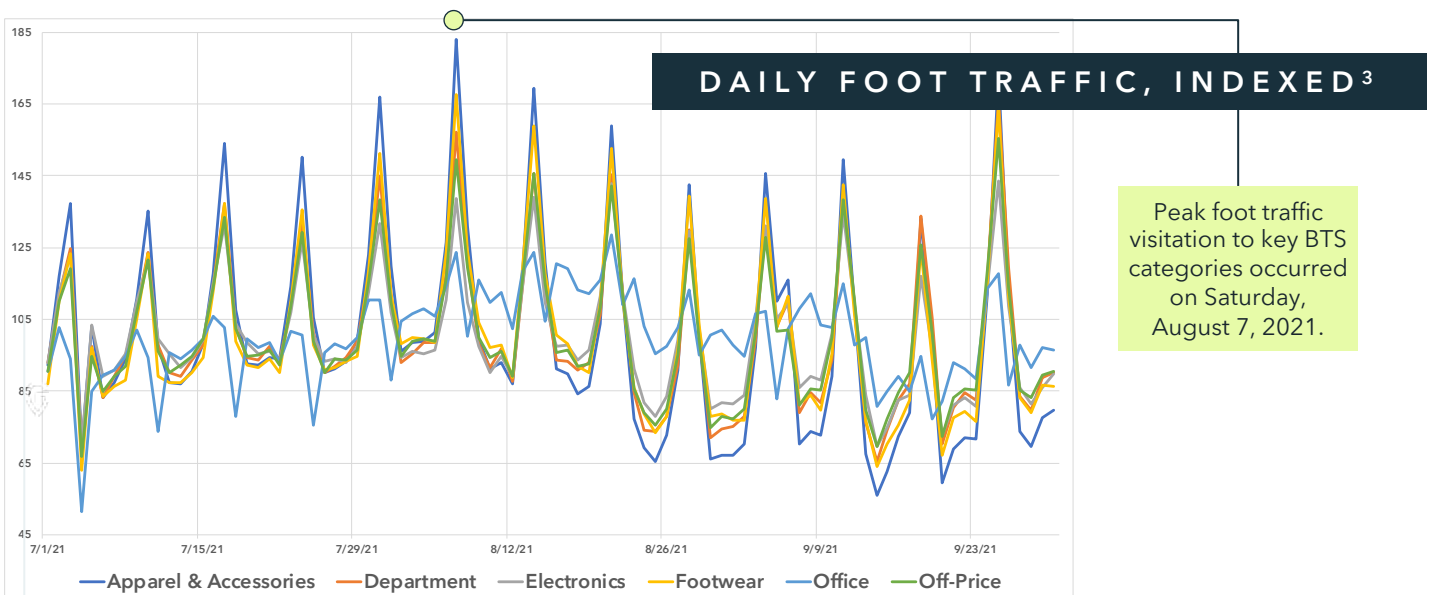
Back-to-School shopper audiences are **76%** more likely to be a Morning QSR Goer.³ What does this mean?

There is a huge opportunity between retailers and QSR brands to target the other's core audiences as the school year begins. In practice, this could look like Walmart targeting McDonald's breakfast audience with their current deals on school supplies, or vice versa. Tap into affinity overlaps to tap into new audiences!

When

It might seem that school just let out by the time that shoppers head back in store to stock up on school supplies. According to a study by LTK, nearly 1 in 3 consumers will shop for back to school-related items between late June and early July.⁴

While shopping can kick off as early as June, based on past visitation, we expect the biggest in-store shopping dates to hit in later summer months. Last year, foot traffic to key BTS categories such as Electronics, Office Supplies, and Apparel stores ramped up at the end of July 2021 with peak traffic to most categories on the first Saturday in August 2021.³



Tax-Free Days

Several back-to-school essentials, such as clothing, school supplies, electronics, are included in tax-free days, making it the perfect time for shoppers to maximize their savings while they stock up.

Not all states have tax-free days and qualifying items vary by state, but the results are clear—we see an uptick in in-store visits in states with these tax breaks. The top 3 states with the largest peaks in foot traffic during their tax-free days in 2021 were **Tennessee**, **Oklahoma**, and **Arkansas**. Tennessee saw a **47%** increase during their 3-day tax-free weekend.³



Which participating states saw the largest peaks in foot traffic during tax-free days in 2021?

% INCREASE IN FOOT TRAFFIC TO RETAILERS DURING TAX-FREE DAYS IN 2021

Tennessee: 7/30/21 - 8/1/21	47%
Oklahoma: 8/6/21 - 8/8/21	37%
Arkansas: 8/7/21 - 8/8/21	36%
Iowa: 8/6/21 - 8/7/21	34%
Alabama: 7/16/21 - 7/18/21	33%
South Carolina: 8/6/21 - 8/8/21	32%
Texas: 8/6/21 - 8/8/21	30%
Ohio: 8/6/21 - 8/8/21	28%
Virginia: 8/6/21 - 8/8/21	28%
New Mexico: 8/6/21 - 8/8/21	27%
Missouri: 8/6/21 - 8/8/21	26%
Mississippi: 7/30/21 - 7/31/21	22%
Florida: 7/31/21 - 8/9/21	20%
Connecticut: 8/15/21 - 8/21/21	16%
West Virginia: 7/30/21 - 8/2/21	16%
Massachusetts: 8/14/21 - 8/15/21	10%
Maryland: 8/8/21 - 8/14/21	4%

Source: GroundTruth Visitation Data. Compared to average for the timeframe of 7/1/21 through 9/30/21.

GroundTruth Targeting Tip



Ahead of tax-free days, target zip codes or designated market areas (DMAs) within bordering states to increase awareness of the tax-free days among out-of-state residents who would benefit from these deals.

Reach these audiences, drive them to your locations, and measure the impact on in-store visits.

How

Your consumers are more than their online behavior. The places people go are truer indicators of habits and intent than a visit to a website. That's why GroundTruth leverages physical world data to build unique audience and targeting solutions that help you understand and reach the right people at the right time.

So, what are some of the ways that GroundTruth can help you reach back-to-school shoppers with precision?

Reach Best-in-Class Audiences



Eliminate Wasted Dollars and Impressions



Maximize your BTS Strategy with GroundTruth Solutions

Reach Audiences Based on Past Visitation Behaviors



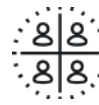
Behavioral Audiences

Connect with audiences based on a mix of intent signals across behavior and demographic attributes.



Location Audiences

Target audiences based on past visitation to specific category or brand locations.



Kochava Audiences

Plug in an additional layer of audience data with 3rd party audiences.



Retargeting

Reinforce your message and influence by targeting key audiences multiple times across multiple devices!



Reach Audiences in Real Time



Proximity Targeting: Define a geofence around a specific location to connect with audiences nearby and drive them to your location.



Retail Block Targeting: Reach shoppers within a shopping center boundary.



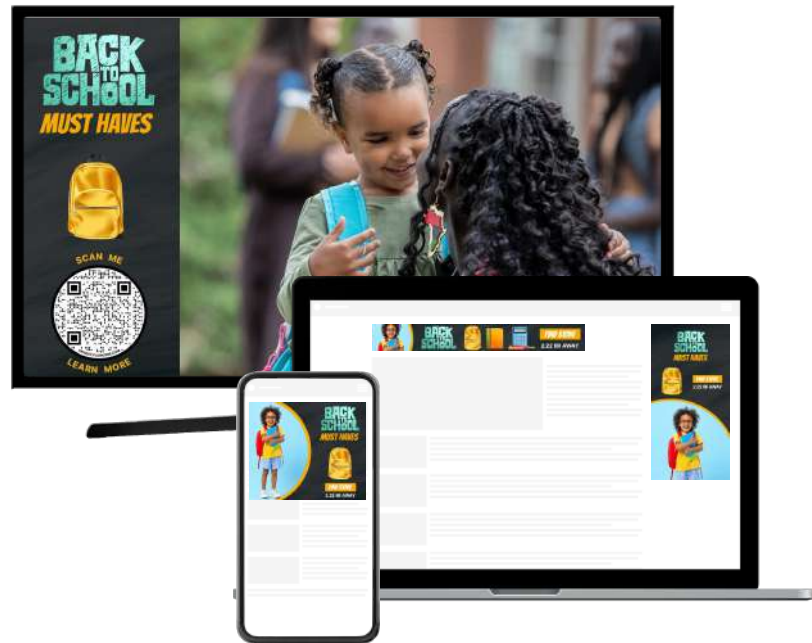
Neighborhoods: Use location targeting to identify residential areas frequented by your target audiences. Discover relevant areas with affinity to your brand that you hadn't considered before.



How

Targeting the right audience doesn't stop at the tactical level. The creative and messaging on your ads can make all the difference.

Having multiple creative sizes, keeping the copy succinct, yet powerful, and leveraging creative solutions such as GT QR Codes can drive up engagement, clicks, and ultimately visits.



What is a GT QR Code? GT QR Codes are the first intent-based quick response ad solution powered by Flowcode through next-generation QR technology.

These customizable QR codes allow marketers to go beyond impressions and brand awareness by creating digital and offline engagement opportunities with consumers through big screen TV ads with full closed-loop measuring capabilities.

Sources: ¹ [Mastercard SpendingPulse Report](#), ² [eMarketer](#), ³ [GroundTruth Visitation Data](#), ⁴ [Business Wire](#)

About GroundTruth

GroundTruth is the leading location-based marketing and advertising technology company.

We close the gap between expectation and reality with data-backed solutions by reaching your core audiences with relevant ads that drive them to visit your location.



GroundTruth is accredited by the Media Ratings Council for our location, place, and visit datasets. Better performance begins with more accurate and trusted data.



Interested in learning more?

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