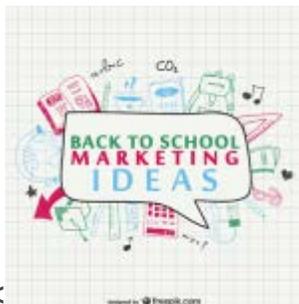




It's Time to Get Back to Back to School Marketing

For local retailers, salons, restaurants and other businesses that stand to benefit if back to school shoppers decide to visit their stores, it might seem like mid-summer; but in reality, the time is right for them to get back to back to school marketing.

4 Ways to Get Back to School Shoppers to Shop Your Store this Year



< Early back to school shoppers are already on the move. With hundreds of dollars to be spent kitting out local students during the next few weeks, it's time to put your back to school marketing plan into action.

Lots of local businesses stand to make revenue gains if they can lure back to school shoppers in during July and August. In fact, the [National Retail Federation](#) estimates that parents responsible for getting K-12 aged children ready to hit the books again will spend almost \$700 on average, per family. That's a lot of paper.

In the 2014 Back to School Survey, parents were asked to weigh in on how they will spend money allocated for back to school expenses this year. Here's some of what they had to say:

- 80% say the economy is affecting their budget and purchasing decisions
- 34% will buy generic items and more than one quarter plan to make do with last year's items
- More than 25% will wait for sales and shop in the week or two right before school starts, and
- About 8% will wait until school actually starts – or even later – to buy
- 19% plan to shop online
- The average teen will spend about \$35 of their own money on school items and pre-teens will spend more than \$20 each

All of this presents an additional challenge to be overcome for the local retailers, salons that want to serve up student hair styles, restaurants that want back to school shoppers to stop in while shopping and other local businesses that count on back to school shopping to provide a boost to late summer revenues.

If your business will be competing to earn back to school shopping dollars, these four back to school marketing ideas might help.

4 Back to School Marketing Ideas that can Boost Summer Revenues

1. Concentrate on Micro-Marketing Campaigns

Local businesses usually can't compete with big brands on traditional media, but Main Street has one advantage those big chains don't have, and that is

the advantage of local access. Extend marketing offers that can be conveyed to employees by local businesses, to school district employees by local school offices, to local parents by local PTAs, YMCAs, youth organizations, churches and other family-friendly organizations.

2. Invest Time in Locally-Optimized Content

Web content including pages on your site, blog articles and social media updates can all help you bring local online search traffic to your turf and back to school shoppers to your door. Big brands will be running ads and displaying coupons, but big brands won't be speaking directly to the back to school shoppers that live in your city or neighborhood.

3. Demonstrate (Viral) Value and Convenience

Back to school shoppers have to make their dollars stretch. Demonstrate through coupons, comparisons, examples and graphic content why local shoppers should visit your business before school starts and why they should share this information with everyone they know!

4. Appeal to Local Back to School Shoppers' Civic and Social Identity

Choose a local school, cause or charity to benefit when local shoppers frequent your retail store, salon, restaurant or other local business and spend back to school shopping dollars there.

Use social networks, email and other marketing channels to remind local consumers of the economic benefits of spending money locally vs. making back to school purchases online or with large chains.