



# The Monthly Focus: School Bag Essentials

Shopper opportunities for the back-to-school season

August 2024



## Category Challenges in Context

Back-to-school season is upon us and parents across the country will be counting down the days to the first day of term as they look forward to some well-deserved R&R. And as with any other nationwide event, retailers and suppliers will be eyeing up the opportunity to tap into the surging demand for those “school bag essentials”. And let’s be clear, there’s a lot more to it than pencils, protractors and football boots.

The back-to-school rush isn’t just about equipping students with the tools they need for learning; it's also about ensuring they have the right nutrition and energy to perform well throughout the day! Healthy snacks, convenient lunchbox items, on-the-go breakfast solutions and healthy drinks will all be on the shopping list and the grocery sector has the potential to significantly benefit from this seasonal shift in shopper behaviour.

For suppliers, this season offers a prime opportunity to introduce new products, highlight existing ranges, and align with the health-conscious priorities of parents. Retailers, meanwhile, can capitalise on this by curating specialised in-store displays, offering bundle deals, and using digital marketing strategies to drive awareness and increase sales.

Getting the strategy right will be key to making the most of the opportunity.

This month’s Monthly Focus explores the shopper opportunities available for both retailers and suppliers during this year’s back-to-school season.

No self-respecting school bag would be complete without a fresh set of stationery for the start of a new term, and it's interesting to note that as far as Grocery is concerned Stationery items can be a driver of the shopping trip in the first place – much more so than a lot of other General Merchandise categories.

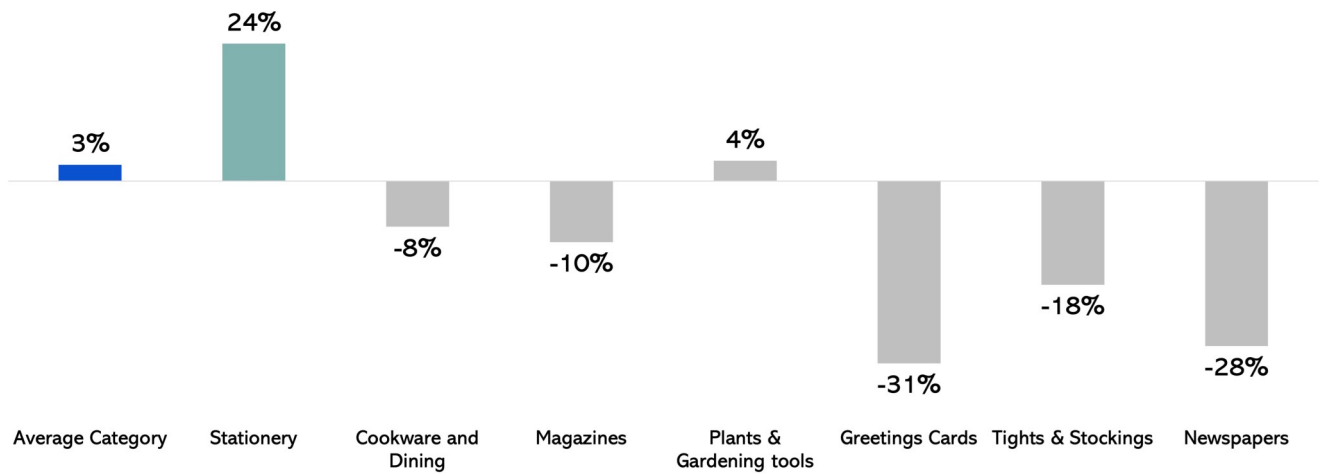


Figure 1 – Main reason for trip to store comparison across General Merchandise categories.

Stationery is also much more likely to show promotional incrementality than we see on average, meaning not only can it be a category to get shoppers to store, but if executed well could drive basket spend for others shoppers too.

However, as with anything there's always a watch-out; what use are these aforementioned 'strengths' if shoppers can't find what they want once they get to store? Figure 2 shows just how important this is as shoppers are significantly more likely to request improvements to signage and category navigation than they are in the average category.

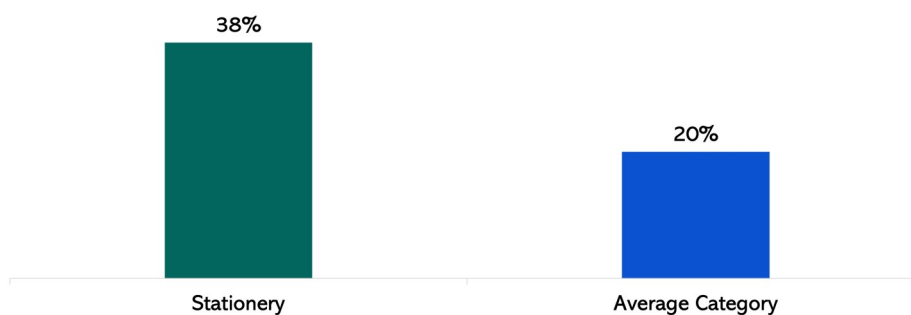


Figure 2 - Requested Improvements: Navigation. Stationery vs Average Category

If retailers are to use the traffic driving opportunity of categories like Stationery effectively, then perhaps this strategy should include the wider 'back to school' occasion. One such area then, could be the 'kids' lunchbox' occasion – also critically important for parents and kids alike at this time of year.

Understanding the occasions for which a shopper purchases a category is certainly of key importance when it comes to how the category, and any of its promotions, are positioned and communicated in-store.

As figure 3 shows, there are a number of categories that could form part of the kids’ lunchbox occasion and for any of these categories the knowledge that this is a key occasion for that category could present a huge opportunity for tailored execution and innovation linked to events like ‘back-to-school’.

### % of purchases bought for 'kids' lunchbox'

All Categories		7.8%		
1	Apples	24.1%	11 Kids Confectionery & Chocolate	15.6%
2	Cheese Snacks	23.2%	12 Cereal Bars & Breakfast Biscuits	15.5%
3	Soft Fruit & Berries	19.2%	13 Sweet Biscuits & Bars	15.5%
4	Grapes	18.9%	14 Everyday Wrapped Bread	15.3%
5	Pears	16.7%	15 Prepared Fruit	15.3%
6	Cooked Meats	16.3%	16 Butter, Margarines & Fats	15.1%
7	Jams & Spreads	16.3%	17 Chocolate Multipacks/Treat Size	14.7%
8	Multipack/Small Packaged Cakes	16.2%	18 Total Stone Fruit	14.5%
9	Pre-packed Block Cheese	16.2%	19 Melons	14.4%
10	Organic Fruit & Vegetables	15.7%	20 Bananas	14.3%

Figure 3 – Top 20 Categories bought for Kids’ lunchbox occasion

Let’s drill in to one of these categories a little more and look at Cereal Bars & Breakfast Biscuits for example. This category in particular sees a significant over index on the shopper mindset of ‘buy more to try new and different’, meaning the innovation opportunity is certainly there to be realised. Indeed, sticking with the fact that this category is key for the kids’ lunchbox, this over index in attitudes to innovation is particularly driven by households with kids vs. those without. Similarly, the same shopper group for this category are also specifically requesting more innovation and new choices by comparison to others.

The final piece of the puzzle for this Cereal Bars & Breakfast Biscuits opportunity comes when we continue to dig deeper and take a look at impulsivity. ‘Households with Kids’ shoppers are significantly more likely to buy the category on impulse, thus necessitating the need for secondary display and POS to capitalise on this opportunity.

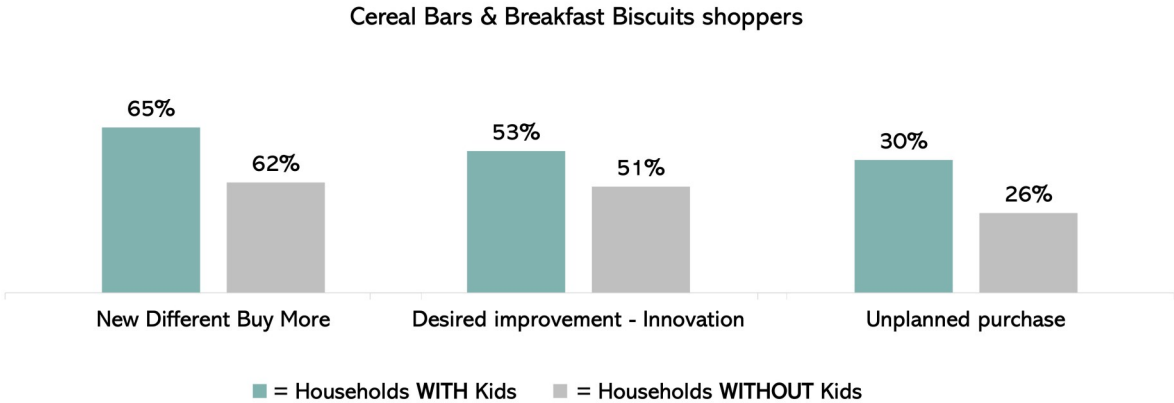


Figure 4 - Cereal Bars Comparison Households with Kids vs Households without—New and different, improve: innovation, and unplanned purchase

This brings us back full circle to the ‘back to school’ and ‘kids’ lunchbox’ opportunity, in such that this logical occasion link can be the perfect impulse communication to shoppers and as the data tells us, this is a category where it’s much more likely to be successful.