

# Back-to-school shopping could determine overall health of the national economy

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• By: Christina Boomer

MESA, AZ - At the Walmart off Dobson Road in Mesa, Rick Bhakta shopped for back to school supplies with his wife, 9-year-old son, and 5-year-old daughter.

The Valley business owner said this year, they decided to take a frugal approach.

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After the school district sent them a list of what is needed, Bhakta explained how they checked to see what they already had at home before hitting the store.

"So we are using a lot of stuff we had last year like crayons, they're still good you know, we're not going to buy new crayons," he said.

In a recent survey of shoppers, the National Retail Federation found many parents are approaching the shopping season in a similar fashion.

They found more families using coupons, buying sale items, and buying generic brands.

The National Retail Federation said K-12 and college back to school shopping combined is the second biggest shopping event behind the holiday season.

That means what you buy for your kids, and how much, has a big impact on the economy.

Economists believe this particular shopping season is more important than ever because experts will be watching retail sales to gauge the health of the overall economy.

Dennis Hoffman, an economics professor at ASU's W.P. Carey School of Business said, "Back to school is a very important barometer for a number of economists watching the economy because it is a reflection of consumer confidence."

He added that, "all buyers, I think, are more careful than they were a few years back. It looked like we were coming out of the recession at a reasonably good clip early in this calendar year and then clearly we've hit a hesitation in May and June. People are starting to wonder about July. That's why back to school will really be very important. If back to school can provide some momentum to rekindle growth in this economy it would be seen as very, very, important."

Darren Wright, of Wright Wealth Management agreed that consumers are still watching what they spend, "adding to the worry that high unemployment and stock market volatility are weighing down the economic recovery."

He said of the back to school shopping season thus far, "The poor sales that are being reported cast fresh doubt on the durability of the recovery and have all eyes on Wall Street watching how back to school sales go this season. Traditionally retailers rely on back to school sales as a barometer of demand for the remainder of the year, so sales will be closely watch over the next few weeks. There is still a sense out there that many shoppers are focusing on deals and limiting buying mainly to necessities."

Wright also had these "smart back to school shopping" tips for parents on a budget.

1. Take inventory on what your child still has from last year.
2. Start now and start looking for bargains before the last minute shoppers start rolling in.
3. Watch for promotions such as shipping deals or bonus items when you purchase like pencils, pens, etc.
4. Separate wants from needs (keep supplies to the necessary and useful instead of fancy and fun
5. Make a list and get your child involved.
6. Recycle and have fun doing it. Going green is the fun and "in" thing to do, so grab your child and redo a lunch box or put stickers on a back pack, etc..
7. Buy quality when needed over quantity. Buy 5 good pens versus 24 cheap pens that will leak.
8. Buy in bulk
9. Help your school while you shop. Your school may participate in e scrip etc.
10. Plan now for next year.

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LET'S UP WE GET SOME GOOD ECONOMIC INDICATORS AND THAT WE ARE ON OUR WAY OUT OF THIS RECESSION. HAVE A HAPPY TUESDAY!



Don't forget the gun.



Let's see, my class the list says I will need an ipod, a cell phone, a laptop...oh yeah and crayons

**stealthmode27**  
1:41AM, Aug 03, 2010

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