



## Canadians do their homework in preparing for back-to-school

*Staples study reveals back-to-school shoppers give 'good value' top marks*

TORONTO, Aug. 18, 2014 - According to the Staples' Annual Back-to-School study, value is the top priority for back-to-school shoppers, with 81 percent of Canadians saying they look for a retailer that offers good value. The survey highlights the habits and concerns of the 11 million Canadians who will shop for school supplies this year. Highlights from the annual survey include:

- 81% of back-to-school shoppers look for a retailer that offers good value
- Nearly three quarters (74%) of Canadian back-to-school shoppers prepare their own lists
- Almost as many (71%) make their own budget
- While late August and early September are the busiest times for retailers, more than half of back-to-school shoppers (54%) consider shopping in July. And more than a third (36%) consider shopping in June
- Half of back-to-school shoppers (49%) find the season stressful – parents (51%) more than students (46%),
- Thirty-three per cent of Canadians, more than 11 million, will shop for school supplies this year, the same as in 2013;

The retailer has done their homework too and offers great value on essential back-to-school products such as the 150 sheet refill paper at 10 cents, Elmer's school glue for 89 cents, 10 pack of Staples brand pencils for 20 cents, and report covers for 5 cents.

"The study reveals how important the back-to-school season is to Canadian families," says Steve Matyas, president of Staples Canada. "At Staples, we recognize the importance of the season. Customers can rest assured we offer value, great service and convenience."

The survey also explored some of the main sources of stress during the season. Among back-to-school shoppers who find the season stressful, the leading stressors were financial pressures (85%) and finding all the items on a child's school list (84%).

Online back-to-school research is also a growing trend. Fifty per cent of back-to-school shoppers said they wish there were more online resources to help make shopping easier. That's up from forty-four per cent in 2013.

"Whether it's in store, online or via mobile, customers look for a seamless and stress-free shopping experience," continued Matyas. "That's why we've launched a robust Back-to-School

centre on [staples.ca](http://staples.ca) to offer more products, content and resources - everything students, parents and teachers need to have their best year yet."

Other survey highlights include:

- Eighty-two per cent of adult students who find the back-to-school season stressful find the in-store experience to be a stressor, well ahead of parents at 69%;
- Sixty-seven per cent of adult students who find the back-to-school season stressful reported that the pressure to follow trends and fashions is a stressor (while parents came in at 61%);
- Seventy-six per cent of parents prefer shopping with their kids (equal with 2013);
- Forty-seven per cent preferred one-stop shopping – finding everything they need in one store.

### **Shopping with a Social Purpose**

The survey also confirms what many adults already know: students care about giving back, perhaps even more than adults. Fifty-four per cent of students surveyed were supported Staples' new partnership with Me to We, the movement founded by Marc and Craig Kielburger to fund Free the Children and its life-enhancing community projects in developing countries.

"Students tend to be idealistic and committed to making a difference," says Matyas. "Their support of our Me to We partnership is one of the reasons why we know it's the right thing to do."

In June, Staples announced a partnership with Acco and Me to We to create a line of socially conscious and eco-friendly school supplies. With purchase of a Me to We product at Staples, Canadian consumers direct a percentage of proceeds to a family or child from a Free The Children community in Latin America, Africa or Asia. For the first time, students and parents have the power to make a big impact with their back-to-school purchases and help children in need.

Also this year, Staples is hoping its Annual School Supply Drive, which launched in 2006, will hit the \$10 million mark in monetary and product contributions for local charities. The supply drive – as well as a partnership in Quebec with the Breakfast Club of Canada – is at the core of Staples' Back-to-School program. This year's program is themed "Make Roar Happen" and features the support of pop superstar Katy Perry. Through these initiatives, Staples and its customers are able to provide tangible support to more than 240 local community groups – all focusing on Canadian students and their families. For complete information, visit [www.staples.ca/supplydrive](http://www.staples.ca/supplydrive).

Fans can join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtags #makeroarhappen and #goingback.

### **About Staples Canada**

Staples makes it easy to make more happen with more products and more ways to shop. Through its world-class retail, online and delivery capabilities, Staples lets customers shop however and whenever they want, whether it's in-store, online or on mobile devices. Staples offers more products than ever, such as technology, facilities and breakroom supplies, furniture, safety supplies, medical supplies, Copy and Print services and, of course, school supplies. Headquartered outside Boston with Canadian regional offices in Toronto, Laval and Vancouver, Staples operates throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. More information about Staples (SPLS) is available at [staples.ca](http://staples.ca).

### **About the Study**

On July 18th, 2014, Vision Critical conducted an online survey among 2,019 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists, including 618 back-to-school shoppers. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada.