in|market insights

Foot Traffic Report:
Back-to-School

Overview

At inMarket, we analyze location data from over 50 million anonymous consumers per month, verified by comScore. This first-party data powers our suite of location-based ad products that segment, retarget and recover patrons — while also enabling our partners to reach shoppers via mobile precisely when they're inside a store. It's also very useful as a tool to understand the retail industry and the impact of seasonal trends on those businesses.
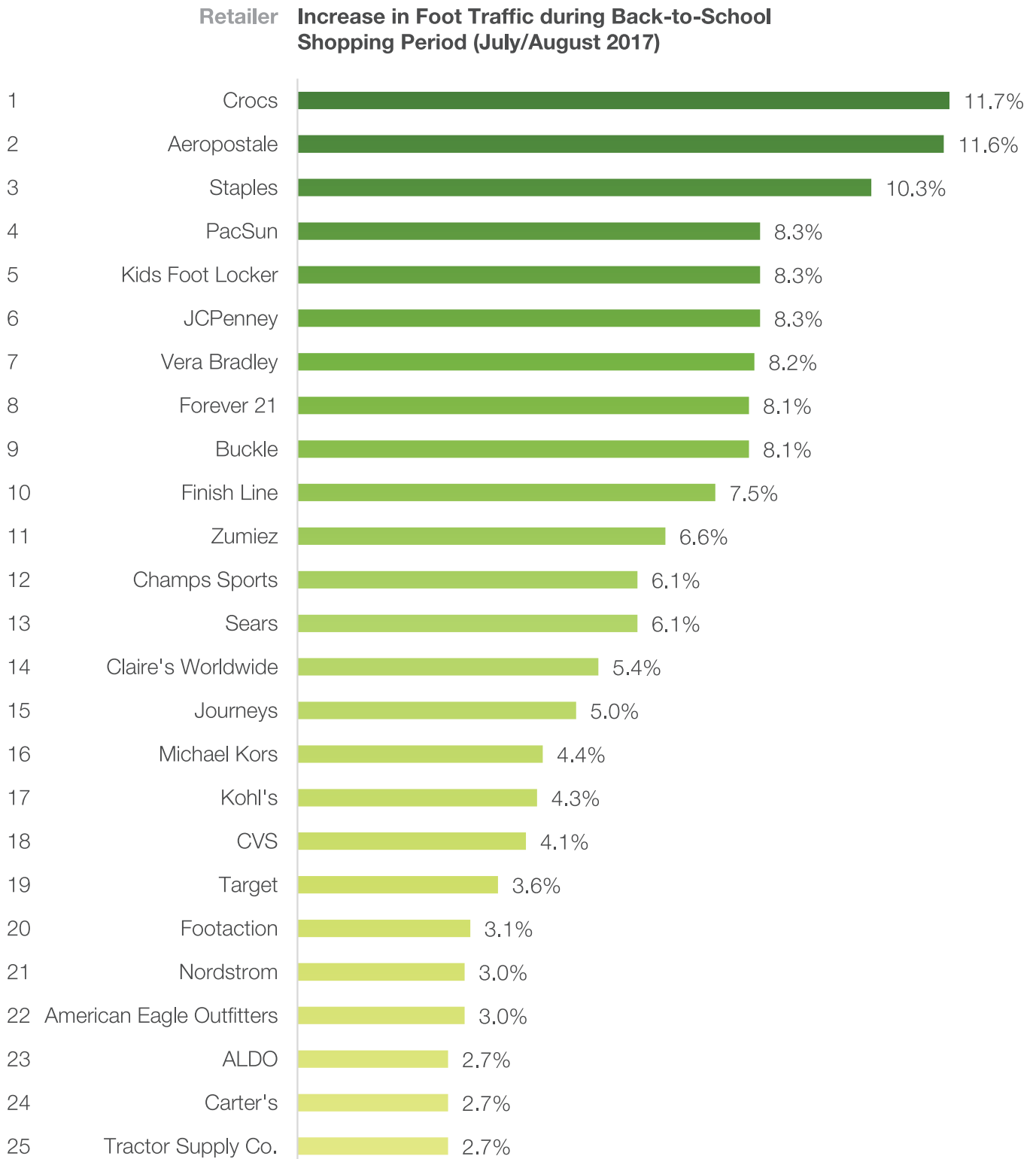
In this Back-to-School Retail Report, we're utilizing inMarket Location Data to uncover visitation trends at U.S. retailers during July and August, 2017, and to compare that performance against the rest of the year. Anecdotally, we know that back-to-school is a vital time period for many retailers — and we're aiming to quantify that impact with this report. With that in mind, we're focused on ranking businesses by percent increase of foot traffic during the time period — and not total foot traffic. (Otherwise, this would just be a ranking of largest retailers.)

For more inMarket inSights reports — including tons of data on restaurants, casinos, grocery and generational shopping habits, visit inMarket inSights. If you have any questions about this retail back-to-school report, please contact us today.

Back-to-School Shopping: Top 25

Based on inMarket Location Data

	Retailer	Increase in Foot Traffic during Back-to-School Shopping Period (July/August 2017)
1	Crocs	11.7%
2	Aeropostale	11.6%
3	Staples	10.3%
4	PacSun	8.3%
5	Kids Foot Locker	8.3%
6	JCPenney	8.3%
7	Vera Bradley	8.2%
8	Forever 21	8.1%
9	Buckle	8.1%
10	Finish Line	7.5%
11	Zumiez	6.6%
12	Champs Sports	6.1%
13	Sears	6.1%
14	Claire's Worldwide	5.4%
15	Journeys	5.0%
16	Michael Kors	4.4%
17	Kohl's	4.3%
18	CVS	4.1%
19	Target	3.6%
20	Footaction	3.1%
21	Nordstrom	3.0%
22	American Eagle Outfitters	3.0%
23	ALDO	2.7%
24	Carter's	2.7%
25	Tractor Supply Co.	2.7%

Are Crocs Cool? Location Data Says Yes

Crocs. GQ has debated their coolness as recently as July. Slate called them the "weirdest fashion footwear trend of 2017." And yet, if you're still a nonbeliever, just take a look at the location data. **Crocs** led all retailers during the back-to-school shopping season with an 11.7% increase in foot traffic over its monthly average. It's proof that everything old will be new again. Despite the influx, Crocs actually lost a major patent battle in August that could have serious repercussions for the company.

Pumped Up Kicks

Here's one thing that Gen Z has in common with its older counterparts: You still need a new pair of shoes for the new school year. Footwear chains Kids Foot Locker (5th), Finish Line (11th), FootAction (20th) and Aldo (23rd) all rank in the Top 25 for increase in traffic during July and August.
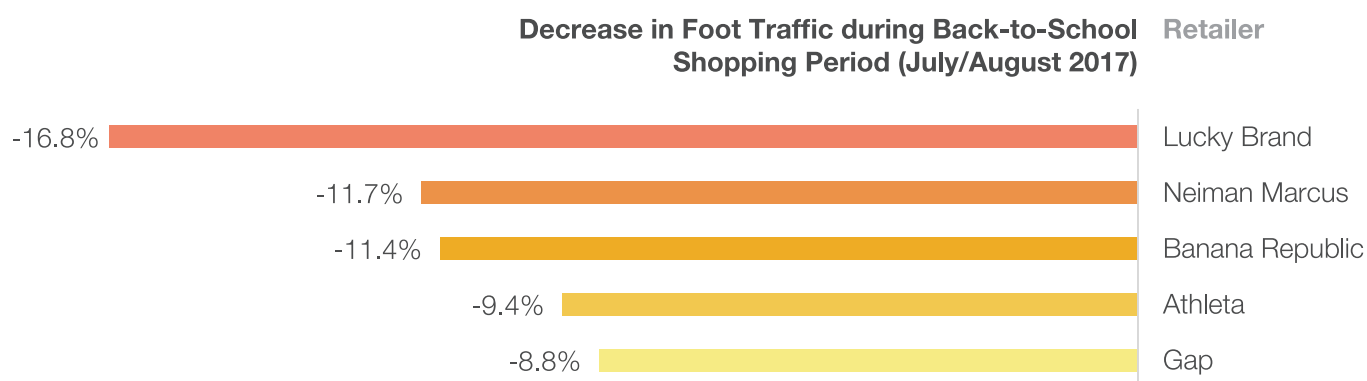
Malls: Still Got It

Despite wide reporting of the demise of malls in 2017, many mall-centric retailers are still thriving during back-to-school season. Aeropostale ranks 2nd overall for foot traffic increase during July/ August 2017, while PacSun, Kids Foot Locker and Forever 21 all rank within the top 10. Smaller, mall-centric stores are also outpacing the larger department chains like **Sears, Kohl's** and **Nordstrom** in terms of back-to-school spike. **JCPenney** is the exception, ranking 6th overall for influx in foot traffic over the summer months.

Who Lost Ground?

Decrease in Foot Traffic during Back-to-School Shopping Period (July/August 2017) — Retailer

-16.8%	Lucky Brand
-11.7%	Neiman Marcus
-11.4%	Banana Republic
-9.4%	Athleta
-8.8%	Gap

Lucky Brand struggled in terms of foot traffic during the 2017 back-to-school period, suffering a 16.8% dip in traffic in July/August. The company has recently taken steps to better serve its modern, omnichannel customers. **Neiman Marcus,** which put itself up for sale earlier this year, also saw a decrease in foot traffic during back-to-school shopping, with an 11.7% decrease in total foot traffic at the designer chain over the summer.

Two Gap-owned retailers — **Banana Republic** and **Athleta** — and the **Gap** itself all saw decreases in overall foot traffic during the 2017 season. While Gap announced the closure of 200 locations on 9/6/17, they appear to be shifting focus toward athleisure with the expansion of Athleta over the next three years.

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