



JUNE 2024

Back-to-School 2024 Global Insights & Strategy



OUR REPORT

The enclosed report reflects a combination of affiliate channel performance for Acceleration Partners clients, economic insights and recommended strategies to implement within the affiliate channel.

Client performance data included in this report is from brands who were partnered with Acceleration Partners in 2022 and 2023, whose products/services align with [Back-to-School](#) shopping.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **KEY BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOPPING TIMEFRAME:** Back-to-School shopping begins to peak in mid-July and run through end of August. Saturday & Sunday are the biggest shopping days, representing 34% of total revenue.
2. **LIFT IN ORDER VALUE:** Back-to-School 2023 average order value was a key driver to the **19% increase in revenue Y/Y** across the AP portfolio. **North America AOV was up 4% Y/Y**, however **UK/EU was up 23% Y/Y**.
3. **AFFINITY PARTNERS SHINED:** Affinity partners, which include student discount sites, showed strong Y/Y revenue growth; **up 90% in North America** and **up 297% in UK/EU**.
4. **INFLATION WILL IMPACT BUYING TRENDS:** For Back-to-School, 51% of consumers will be buying generic or less expensive brands and **38% will be looking for sales** more than they typically have in the past.
5. **SOCIAL BUYING ON THE RISE:** Buying product through social media platforms has grown dramatically since Back-to-School 2023 and each generation has a different preference on which platforms they buy from.
6. **INSIGHTS INTO ACTION:** For a successful Back-to-School season, leverage AP's recommended affiliate strategies, which focus on engaging and converting shoppers.



2023 Back-to-School Hindsight & Insights



BACK-TO-SCHOOL Y/Y PERFORMANCE*

↑ 7%
Traffic

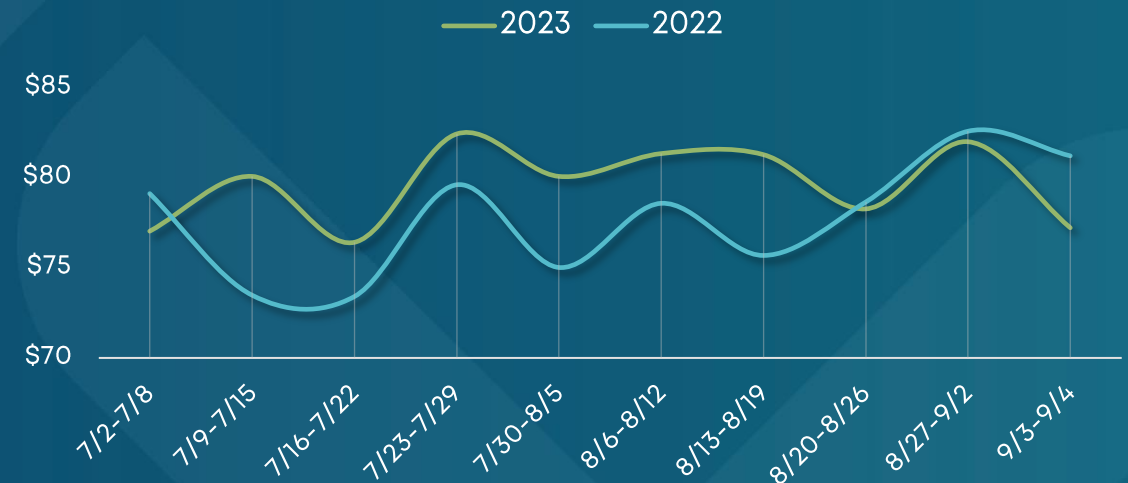
↑ 16%
Orders

↑ 19%
Revenue

KEY INSIGHTS

- Consumers opted to spend more on Back-to-School throughout Summer compared to last year, as shown by a consistent increase in AOV, up 3% Y/Y.
- In the US, Labor Day (9/4) represented the lowest AOV of the Back-to-School season, however it was the 2nd highest revenue day due to an increase in promotions.
- An 8% increase in conversion rate also contributed to the growth in top-line performance metrics.

AVERAGE ORDER VALUE BY WEEK



July through early September is a key Back-to-School shopping period for northern regions, including North America, UK and Europe.

AOV was up 4% in North America, however UK / Europe AOV was up 23% - a signal that Back-to-School shopping rebounded significantly post COVID.



NORTH AMERICA

↑20%

Revenue

↑20%

↑26%

↑42%



UK / EUROPE

↑47%

Revenue

↑38%

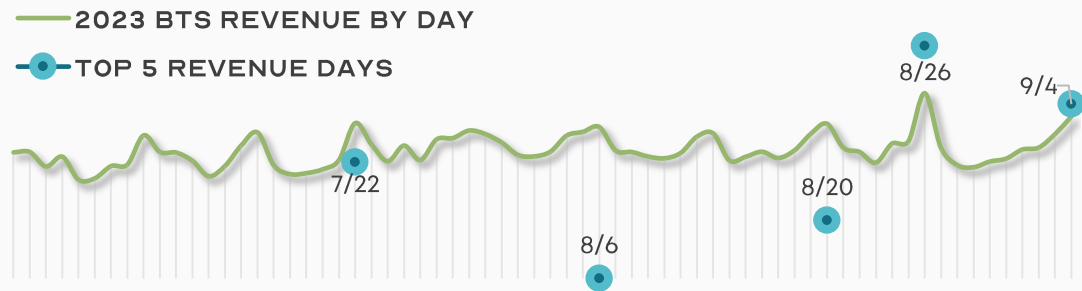
↑70%

↑45%

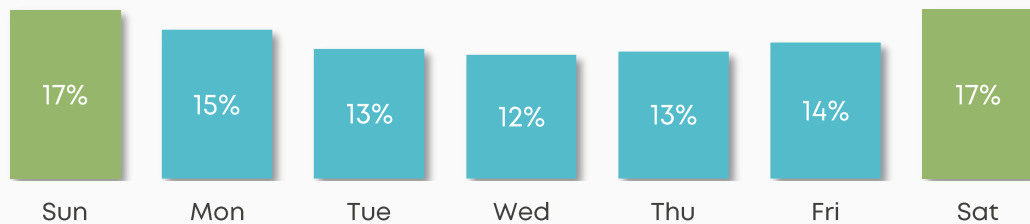


Saturday and Sunday are key eCommerce buying days for consumers, especially during the Back-to-School season.

Saturday and Sunday combined represented 34% of total Back-to-School revenue, with 4 out of the Top 5 revenue days falling on a Saturday or Sunday.



BTS % OF REVENUE BY DAY OF WEEK



TOP 3 VERTICALS BY Y/Y REVENUE

Clothing ↑8%

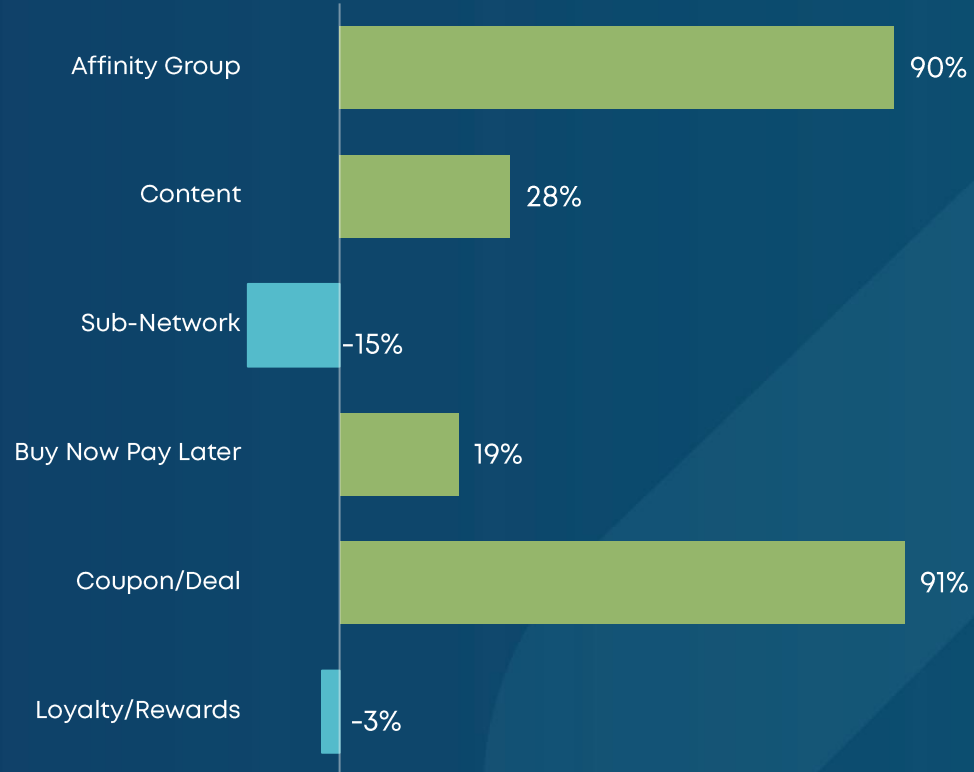
Accessories ↑26%

Health & Beauty ↑42%

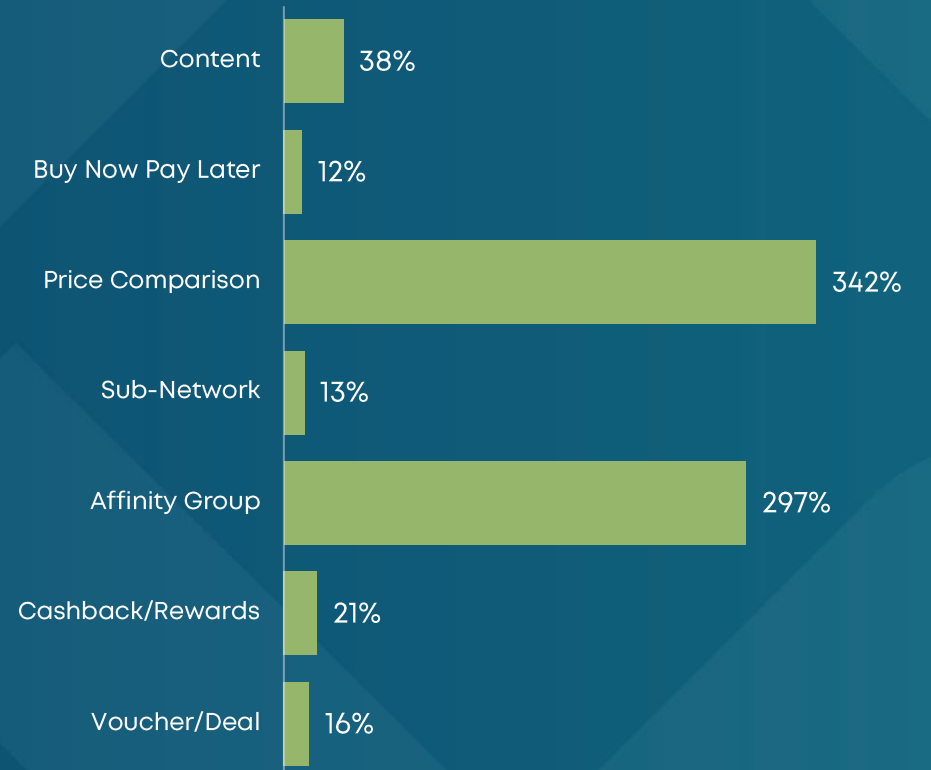
- Skincare brands were up 55% Y/Y and the key driver of growth for the Health & Beauty vertical.
- Shoe brands also had a strong showing during Back to School 2023, up 13% Y/Y.



NORTH AMERICA Y/Y REVENUE BY PARTNER TYPE



UK & EUROPE Y/Y REVENUE BY PARTNER TYPE

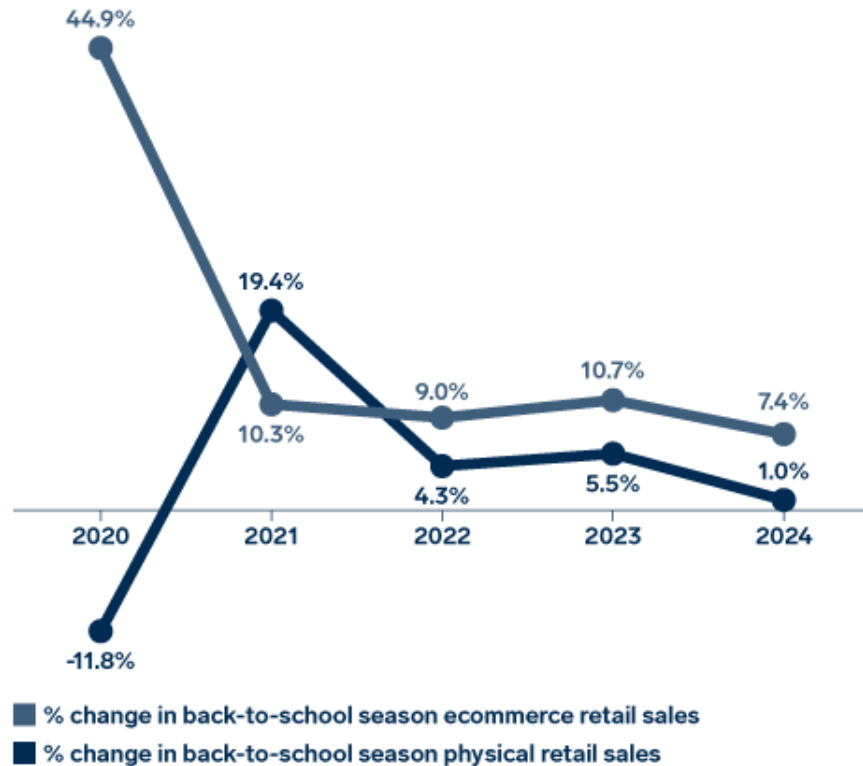


Economic Trends

A look at economic trends impacting Back-to-School 2024



Ecommerce Sustains Higher Growth Rates in Back-to-School Shopping Than Physical
% change in US back-to-school season ecommerce vs. physical retail sales, 2020-2024



Back-to-School ecommerce sales in the US are expected to grow **7.4%** in 2024 according to eMarketer, outpacing in-store retail sales which are expected to grow **1%**.

↑ **7.7%**

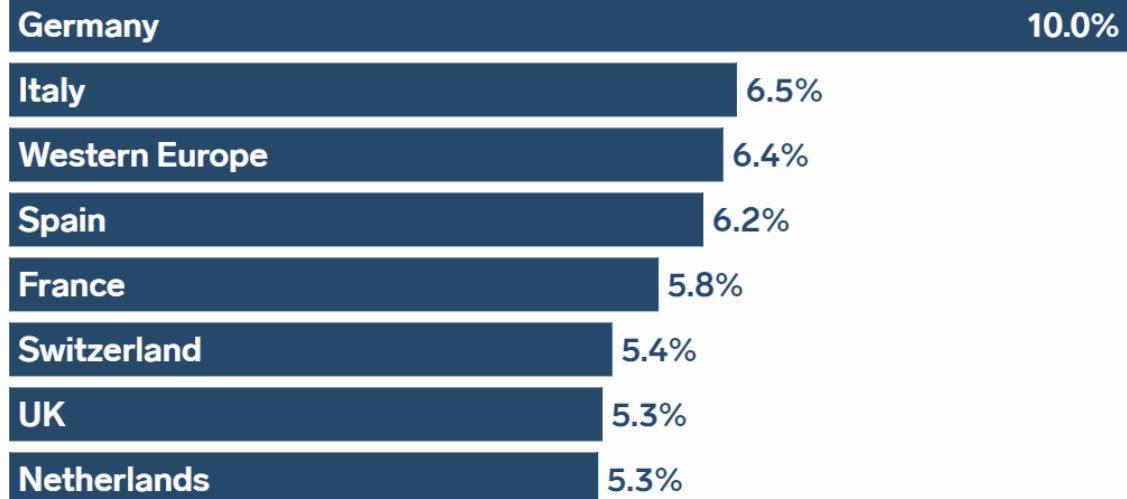
Grades K-12 Back-to-School Ecommerce Y/Y Sales Growth

↑ **7.1%**

College-Bound Back-to-School Ecommerce Y/Y Sales Growth



Retail Ecommerce Sales Growth, by Country 2024, % change

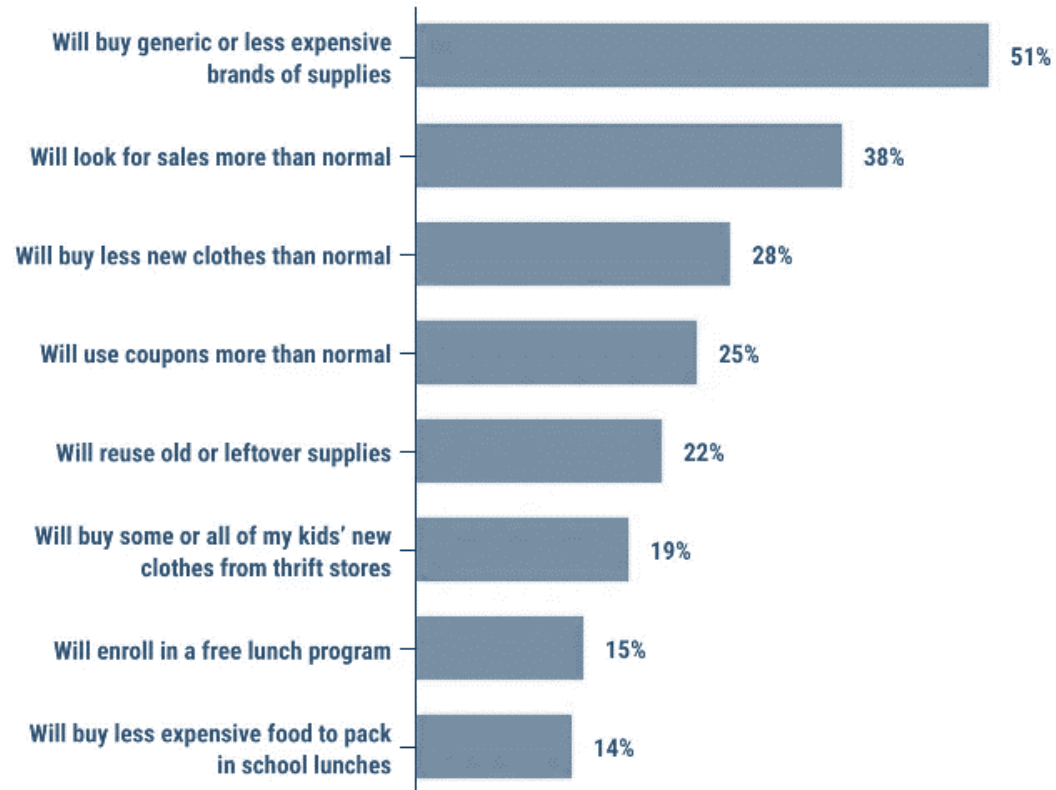


Similar to the US, eMarketer predicts that ecommerce retail sales will grow **6.4%** in Western Europe in 2024, outpacing in-store retail sales growth which is expected to be **3.5%**.

We expect similar growth numbers for the Back-to-School season based on the overall 2024 Ecommerce growth expectations.



How will inflation impact your back-to-school shopping this year?



Inflation has had a major impact across the globe and is expected to effect consumer shopping behavior this Back-to-School season.

Based on a survey by Finance Buzz, **51%** of consumers will be buying generic or less expensive brands and **38%** will be looking for sales more than they typically have in the past.



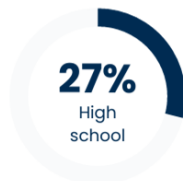
A recent survey by LTK indicates there is a clear difference in buying behavior between Gen Z, Millennials and Gen X for Back-to-School products.

Gen Z

Who are they shopping for?

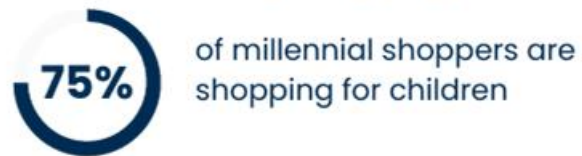


Top shopped groups:



Millennials

Who are they shopping for?

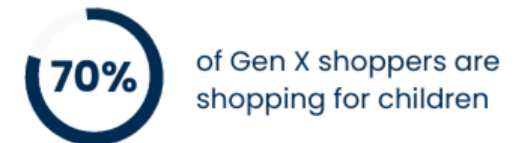


Top shopped groups:

- 01 Elementary school
- 02 Middle school & preschool (tie)
- 03 High school
- 04 College

Gen X

Who are they shopping for?



Top shopped groups:

- 01 High school
- 02 Middle school
- 03 Elementary school
- 04 College
- 05 Preschool



Social buying continues to grow across the globe and is expected to be a primary platform for Back-to-School purchases.

Targeting ads and partnerships on social platforms that resonate with your target demographic will be key to gaining brand visibility during Back-to-School season.

Platforms on Which US Social Buyers Have Made a Purchase in the Past 12 Months, by Generation

% of respondents in each group

	Gen Z (15-26)	Millennials (27-42)	Gen X (43-58)	Baby boomers (59-77)	Total
Facebook	23.4%	63.1%	67.0%	76.1%	60.9%
TikTok	67.1%	50.3%	28.7%	10.5%	35.5%
Instagram	50.9%	53.5%	30.5%	12.1%	34.3%
YouTube	24.8%	34.4%	29.1%	19.0%	26.4%

Social Commerce Platforms on Which UK Consumers Have Made a Purchase/Payment in the Past 6 Months, by Generation

% of respondents

	Instagram	Facebook	TikTok	YouTube
Gen Z (18-25)	37%	28%	43%	37%
Millennials (26-41)	28%	29%	26%	28%
Gen X (42-57)	12%	22%	12%	15%
Baby boomers (58-75)	4%	17%	3%	6%
Total	19%	25%	20%	21%



2024 Back-to-School Affiliate Strategies





Capture Back-to-School shoppers by running competitive offers through the Affiliate channel that coincide with key shopping events & holidays.

US MAJOR RETAILER EVENTS

- Walmart+ Week: June 17-23
- Amazon Prime Day: July (Date TBD)
- Target Circle Week: July (Date TBD)

STRATEGY: LEAN INTO KEY SHOPPING EVENTS

US SALES TAX HOLIDAYS

In the US, 19 different states offer sales tax holidays to help families save on Back-to-School purchases. Sales tax holidays usually run in July and August and timing varies by state.

Visit <https://financebuzz.com/back-to-school-sales-tax-holidays> for a full list of states that participate.

MAJOR HOLIDAY SALES

- (US) Independence Day: July 4
- (UK) Summer Bank Holiday: August 26
- (US) Labor Day: September 2





Ensure your affiliate program has a variety of Back-to-School creative for partners to share

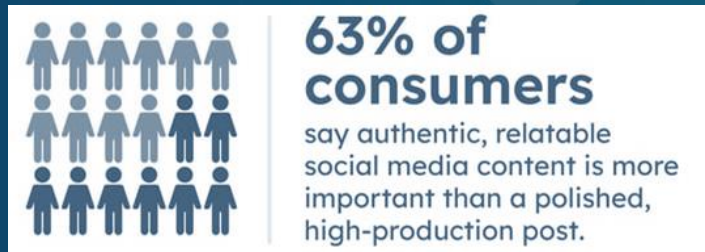
Providing enticing and authentic creative in a variety of formats will allow your affiliate partners to promote what they feel will best resonate with their audience.

AP recommends having these 3 creative formats available:

1. Short-form video content
2. Best-sellers product list, with links to imagery and product details
3. Static banners/images in a variety of sizes that can be weaved into content or posted on social.

STRATEGY: ENSURE PARTNERS HAVE FRESH CREATIVE

What types of content do consumers prefer for learning about products and services?





Shoppers are on a budget this Back-to-School season. Provide affiliate partners with discount codes and product deals to promote – starting mid-July through August.

VARIETY OF OFFERS

To ensure your offers don't become stale to affiliate partners and Back-to-School shoppers, AP recommends:

- Weekly affiliate exclusive offers – change up each week with a variety of ways to save.
- Clear out inventory and help consumers save by discounting “sale” products with plentiful inventory.

WEEKEND STRATEGY

Saturday & Sunday are the most popular shopping days. Use these days to push offers that add incremental value:

- New Customer Offer
- Threshold Offers to Drive Up AOV (Example: \$10 off \$100+)

STUDENT & TEACHER DISCOUNTS

With Gen Z and teachers often buying for themselves for Back-to-School, partnering with affiliates who offer discounts to students/teachers behind a closed portal can help drive conversions.





Ensure your brand is visible with Buy Now, Pay Later and Card-Linked Offer partners.



CONSUMERS ARE IN DIRE NEED FOR STRESS RELIEF:

98% of shoppers will experience new challenges as the school year starts up—and over **70%** will prioritize purchasing from brands that make efforts to ease that stress.

The combination of flexible payment options and the opportunity to stretch their dollars through offers and cash back bring a new level of convenience to online and in-store shoppers. These partner types have been growing at a tremendous pace over the past year:

↑23%

Buy Now, Pay Later
Q1 2024 Y/Y

↑200%

Card-Linked Offers
Q1 2024 Y/Y





Thank you!

To leverage these insights, contact your Account Director or
marketing@accelerationpartners.com

