

Education Market Timing: Your annual sales activity cycle

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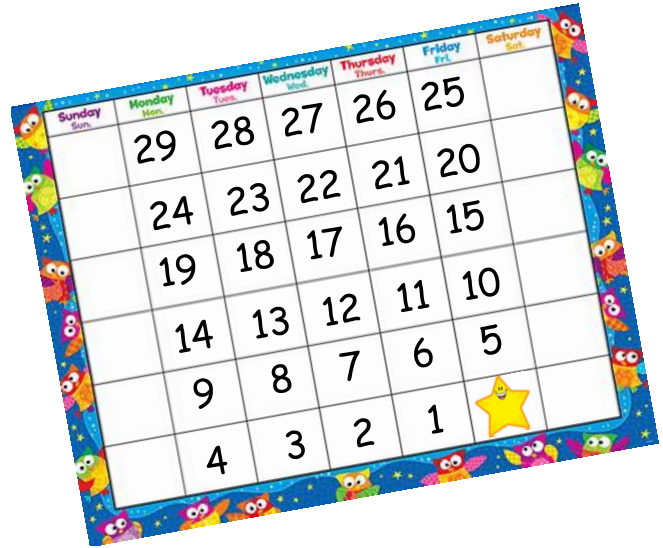
Unlike many business markets, where the end of a fiscal year means open-to-buy opportunities are rare and even routine replenishment can be stressed, in the Education universe this period can be lucrative to the reseller who has done its homework.

Traditional school districts' fiscal-year calendars tend to line up with their academic year schedules. Any funds left unspent at the end of the year will disappear, so merchants calling on schools know that the final months are a time for opportunistic buying.

Typically, merchants will drop catalogs to schools in January-February and follow up with increasing frequency of calls and visits into March, April, and May. As academic years vary from state to state and even district to district, and can change from year to year, it's important for your sales staff who call on schools to track closing and opening dates so they don't miss selling windows.

It's also important to not limit messaging at the end of the school year to just secretarial staff and buying agents – as pockets of funding can be sitting at nearly any level.

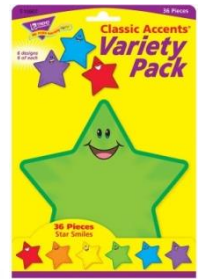
TREND products which do well at the end of the school year include certificates and awards for student assemblies and graduation ceremonies, and File 'n Save System® storage boxes that teachers use to stow and catalog charts and display materials. Teachers may need to change classrooms, subjects, or grade levels from one year to the next – and often they will not know their new assignment until close to the school opening date – so end-of-year cleaning and storage is a necessary process.



During the summer months, marketers' work is two-fold:

- Having deep conversations at school buildings and district offices to learn how procurement takes place; forging relationships with those individuals; and getting catalogs and literature to those people. (Be sure to draw on the extensive S.P. Richards' Dealer Services Library, and use the 360-page SPR School Supply Catalog in combination with your office products "big book.")
- For those merchants who sell via website, reaching out to individual teachers via email and Facebook. The 6-8 weeks before the opening day of school are the peak season for individuals buying, using their own funds. TREND products selling strongly at this time include general room décor (bulletin board sets, accents, trimmers, and letters), and motivational posters, banners, and stickers.

- Companies like MCH Strategic Data (mailings.com), MDR – Market Data Retrieval (schooldata.com), and Agile Marketing (agile-ed.com) can help you build email lists for educators in your area.



As the school year starts, this also means a fresh fiscal cycle has begun and discretionary funds are fully charged. Reach out not just to gatekeepers in the buying cycle, but also to rank-and-file staff so they know you are a local source of supply.

As teachers get their class and grade assignments, new teachers are brought on board, and new or remodeled classrooms come on line, this is an excellent time to sell TREND Bingo, flash cards, puzzles, and instructional décor and charts.



TREND is proud to be a partner in S.P. Richards' Heroes 4 Education™ program. SPR has distributed TREND for 17 years, and today over 400 strong-selling SKUs are available through the SPR network.

Since 1968, TREND has created display products that give personality and purpose to classrooms, meeting areas, workspaces, and events. Our fun games and tools help build basic skills at school, home, and on-the-go. And we help teachers and families track progress and reward student achievement with incentives and awards.

Educators and administrators recognize TREND's thoughtful design, durable quality, and value. As a merchant, TREND is a brand that communicates understanding and commitment to buyers and users in the educational market.