

Back-to-School Readiness Framework

A quick self-audit checklist to run alongside “Winning Back-to-School 2026 on Amazon and Walmart.”



Most brands prepare for Back-to-School by optimizing inventory, pricing, advertising, and content separately. But peak-season performance is determined by how well those decisions work together. This checklist helps uncover the hidden gaps before they become missed revenue.

Work through each section below. If you can’t check a box, that’s your next action item.

01

Inventory Position

Stockouts and overstock both erode BTS revenue. Knowing your position early is the foundation everything else depends on.

- ☐ I know my current in-stock position for every core back-to-school SKU
- ☐ I’ve identified which SKUs are understocked and at risk of mid-season stockout
- ☐ I’ve identified which SKUs are overstocked and need to move
- ☐ I’ve built (or updated) a promotional plan around actual inventory, not projected inventory
- ☐ Replenishment shipments are staged in waves rather than one large batch
- ☐ I know which SKUs are at risk of stockout
- ☐ I’m tracking port/freight timelines for anything still in transit

02

Pricing Strategy

During BTS, pricing mistakes compound quickly because competitors, inventory levels, and demand all change simultaneously.

- ☐ Every SKU has a minimum profitable price floor that accounts for current tariff/cost increases
- ☐ Discounts are targeted at bestsellers and excess inventory, not applied sitewide
- ☐ I’ve run (or scheduled) a price elasticity check on key SKUs this quarter
- ☐ I have a rule for raising prices slightly when inventory runs low
- ☐ I have a rule for lowering prices when inventory needs to move
- ☐ Price changes are based on profit opportunity, not competitor reactions
- ☐ My pricing strategy tests both price increases and decreases based on elasticity

03

Advertising Structure

Ad efficiency during BTS hinges on keeping budget flowing to what’s selling and pulling it back from what isn’t.

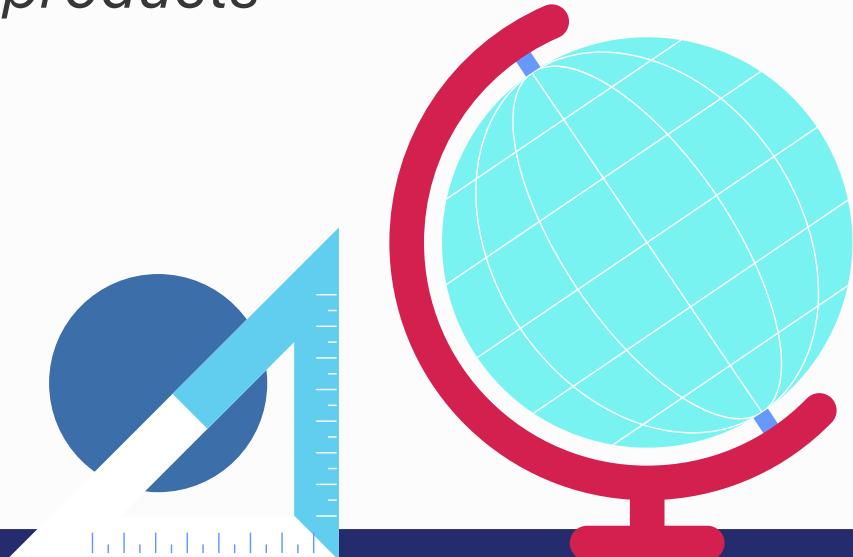
- ☐ Branded keywords run in their own campaign with a dedicated low-ACoS target
- ☐ Generic keywords are separated into their own campaign with their own ACoS target
- ☐ Conquesting campaigns (competitor terms) are isolated with higher ACoS thresholds and bid caps
- ☐ Campaigns are segmented by student age/audience (K-8 vs. high school/ college) where relevant
- ☐ I’m using long-tail keywords to control CPC where competition is high
- ☐ Negative keywords are in place to filter out poor-match traffic
- ☐ Ad spend automatically pulls back on items nearing stockout

04

Listings & Discoverability

Shoppers increasingly ask AI assistants for recommendations, and if your listings don’t answer the question, you don’t get the sale.

- ☐ Product titles, bullets, and A+ Content use natural, conversational phrasing (not just keyword strings)
- ☐ Listings answer common shopper questions directly (age group, use case, why it’s better)
- ☐ I’ve checked how key SKUs surface in Rufus-style natural-language search
- ☐ Listings answer natural-language questions
- ☐ Products surface for conversational shopping queries
- ☐ I’ve tested how AI shopping assistants describe my products



05

Timing & Budget

The brands that win BTS build their plan before the season starts, not while it’s underway.

- ☐ Campaigns are ready to launch at the start of summer, not mid-season
- ☐ I have a specific plan for Prime Day / July sales events as a BTS acquisition moment
- ☐ I’ve accounted for likely ad budget cuts (6-10%+) in my spend plan
- ☐ I’ve prioritized which categories/SKUs get the limited budget I do have

06

Ongoing Monitoring

A great plan built in July can still fail in September if nobody’s watching it in real time.

- ☐ I’m tracking sales velocity in real time, not just at week’s end
- ☐ I have a clear owner/process for adjusting price, inventory, and ad spend as conditions shift
- ☐ I’m revisiting this checklist at least every 2 weeks through peak season

QUICK GUT CHECK:

If you checked fewer than 15 of the 26 boxes above, the issue probably isn’t inventory or pricing alone. It’s that they’re not talking to each other. A stockout risk should pull back ad spend. A price change should reflect ad efficiency. A listing should reflect what’s actually in stock. Treat those connections as your most urgent fix; they compound the fastest when left unaddressed during peak weeks.

See how Agentis turns every checkmark into an always-on strategy

Agentis continuously coordinates inventory, pricing, advertising, and marketplace signals so these decisions stay aligned throughout peak season. See a live demo built around your category, your products, and your competitive landscape, with specific actions to drive profitable growth.

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