

June 26, 2025

“This Halloween is shaping up to be a balancing act—some shoppers are planning to jump in early to beat price hikes, while others are holding out for last-minute deals. With treat preferences shifting and homemade goodies on the rise, retailers and manufacturers should be asking: Will we be stocked early enough? Will we be priced right for late shoppers? And will we be offering the right mix to meet evolving household needs? Staying nimble will be key to capturing both ends of the Halloween spectrum.”



Chris Costagli
Vice President,
Food Insights Lead,
NielsenIQ

“Increasingly, Americans are thinking more short-term in every aspect of their lives - which could translate into more impulse purchases, even for predictable, seasonal occasions. But this isn't a universal rise across all consumer groups: women, Gen Z, Boomers, and higher earners are driving this shift, while other groups remain stagnant. Brands should adjust the timing and urgency of their seasonal promotions to meet their target buyer's way of thinking.”



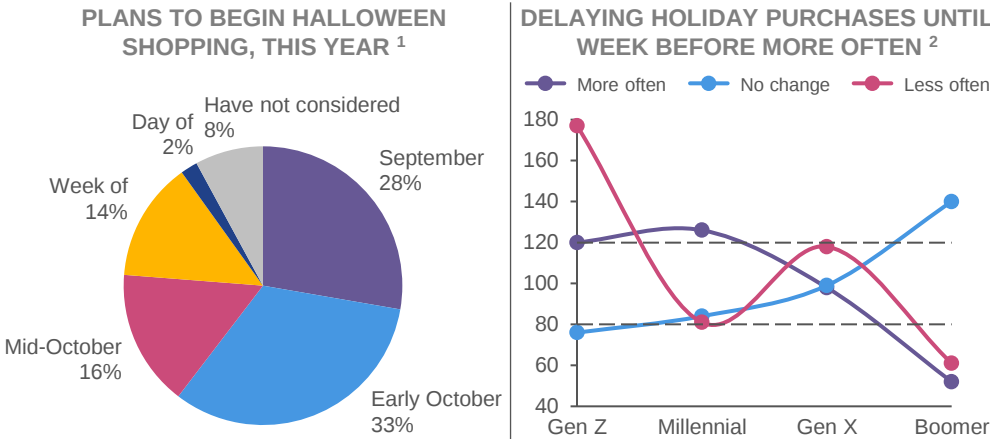
Rachel Bonsignore
Vice President,
Consumer Life
NielsenIQ

Retailers Will Face Dual Halloween Timelines This Year

Implications for Halloween this year

Cost pressure and availability concerns push Halloween shopping earlier

Over 75% of shoppers—especially families—plan to finish Halloween shopping by mid-October to manage rising costs and avoid shortages. While higher-income households remain disengaged, lower-income shoppers are already reacting to tariff concerns. Retailers should prepare for earlier demand and adjust inventory & promotions accordingly.



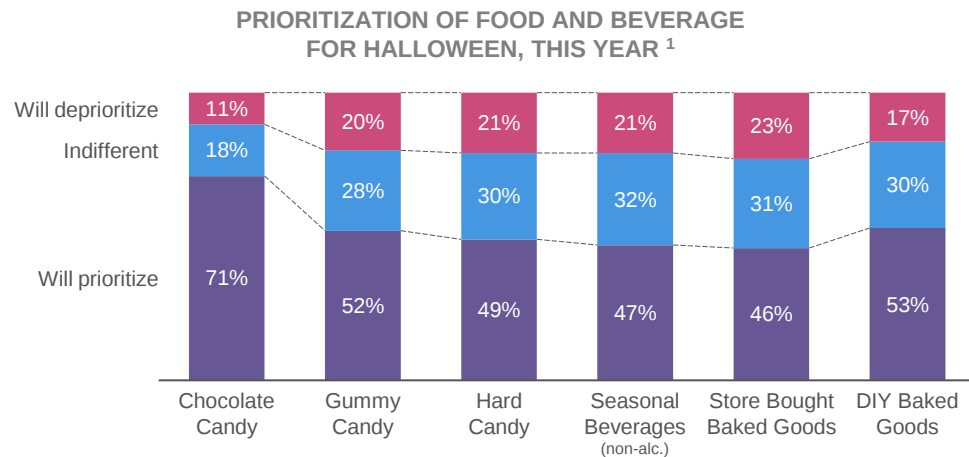
Retailers will face split Halloween timing

Some shoppers are holding out for last-minute Halloween deals, while others are shopping early to avoid rising prices and product shortages. With behavior split, retailers and manufacturers should be ready for both early planners and late bargain hunters with staggered promotions and flexible inventory strategies.



Trick-or-treaters may see a changing treat mix

Trick-or-treaters will still find chocolate this Halloween, but younger households are leaning toward gummy and hard candy. Many families are also prioritizing homemade treats over store-bought options to cut back on spending. Retailers and manufacturers should adapt assortments to reflect these shifts and spotlight DIY inspiration in their promotions.



Industry Analysts Source: ¹NIQ, BASES Quick Question Omnibus Survey, June 2025, n=591; ²NIQ BASES Quick Question Omnibus Survey, April 2025, n=1,005
Author: Chris Costagli, Vice President, Food Insights Lead

June 26, 2025

"One of the most important things candy and sweets manufacturers can do is put rigor behind their forecasts for retail partners, especially if they're planning to feature special pack designs that only fit a Halloween theme. Inventory at shelf must meet demand without creating overstock after the holiday and as shoppers become more pragmatic in their spending, promotions need to start early and be structured to drive incremental sales."



Steve Zurek
Vice President,
Strategic Analytics
& Insights,
NielsenIQ

"Halloween isn't just for humans—pet parents are increasingly joining the fun, whether by buying, crafting, or reusing costumes. But after years of inflationary pressure, even the most devoted pet lovers are rethinking how they spend on costumes and "trick-or-pet" treats. With costume paw-ties and social sharing driving seasonal buzz, creativity will be key—especially as more consumers lean into DIY solutions or repurpose past favorites. The real trick this year? Balancing festive flair with financial savvy."



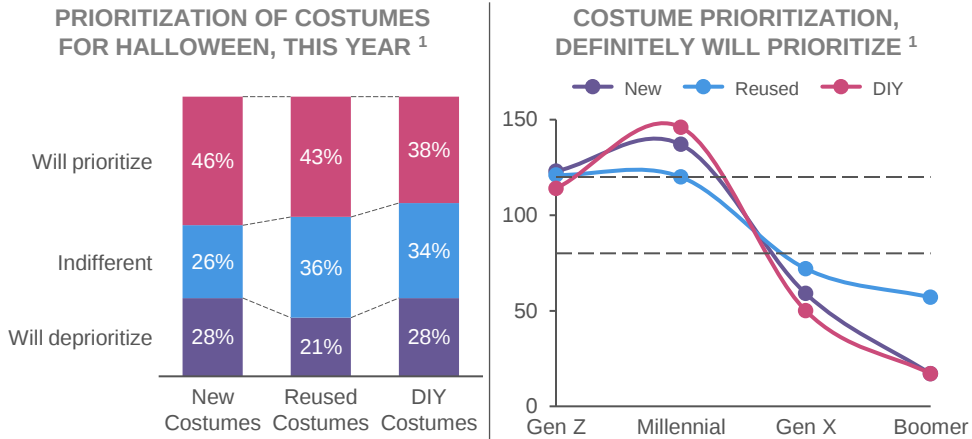
Sam Smith
Associate Client
Director,
Pet Vertical,
NielsenIQ

Millennials Lead A Make-It-Yourself Halloween

Implications for Halloween this year

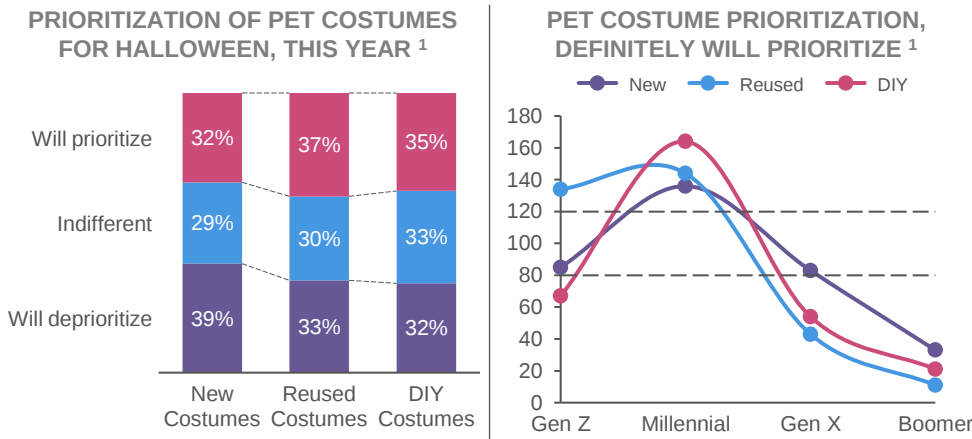
Prepare for a Halloween driven by flexibility and frugality

Gen Z and Millennials—especially Millennials—will lean into DIY and reused Halloween costumes. Higher-income households will plan smaller celebrations and delay decisions, prioritizing flexibility and inspiration over early spending. For brands, late-season agility and affordable, creative options will be essential to capturing demand.



Millennials will spend, Gen Z will reuse

Millennials will lead pet costume trends this Halloween with a mix of new, reused, and DIY looks, while Gen Z will favor creative, budget-friendly options. As others scale back, upper-income households will still participate—prompting pet brands to offer flexible, affordable ideas that drive late-season engagement.



This year's Halloween décor will be last-minute and made at home

Millennials will drive demand for Halloween décor that blends DIY creativity with new purchases—both indoors and out. Even higher-income households will prioritize flexibility and inspiration, signaling a shift away from urgency, toward intentionality. For brands, kit-based, budget-conscious décor solutions will be key to capturing engagement and spend.

