

## US Cookware giants address cookware safety through new alliance

Cookware giants Groupe SEB and Meyer Corporation have teamed up to launch the Cookware Sustainability Alliance (CSA), a nonprofit organization that looks to foster robust policy discussions and enhance public understanding of the safety of cookware based on scientific research and verifiable data, it said.

While the cookware category has seen a lot of innovation, in recent years, “the industry has witnessed sensationalized claims and unfounded fears surrounding cookware manufacturing processes,” a release said. The reason for creating the CSA is due to new proposed laws banning PFAS across a range of products that “are springing up across the country,” and have either already passed or are in early stages, said Steve Burns, president of the CSA, a client of consulting firm Summit Strategy Group LLC.

“There are thousands of chemicals in the PFAS family,” said Burns. “Our point is simple: the chemical used in nonstick cookware is PTFE, which is non-toxic, does not bioaccumulate, is not water-soluble and therefore cannot be absorbed by the human body. Yet PTFE in cookware is being included in many of these PFAS bans. We are hoping to educate lawmakers about the unique qualities of PTFE in cookware.”

The release added that, “Proposals to ban fluoropolymer nonstick cookware ignore decades of science and U.S. and international policy that underpins fluoropolymer cookware

safety.” The CSA – which has technical experts on its team – will work with industry stakeholders, policymakers, scientific experts and consumer advocates to address pressing issues such as material safety and product durability, it said.

It wants to “ensure that discussions and decisions concerning cookware are grounded in scientific fact and data-driven analysis,” Burns said in the release. “Policymakers and stakeholders will benefit from technical experts that can discuss and answer questions about the safe and stable use of PTFE in cookware products.”

“As industry leaders, we have a responsibility to protect the health and safety of our consumers. Our goal is to continue delivering the highest quality materials for performance and convenience,” said a spokesperson for Meyer Corporation.

“Fluoropolymers have a proven decades-long safety record recognized by regulatory bodies worldwide. Their formidable properties have made cookware products essential for millions of consumers and businesses. The Cookware Sustainability Alliance will provide stakeholders with all the material they need to make well-informed decisions,” said a spokesperson for Groupe SEB. The Cookware & Bakeware Alliance, which promotes the cookware and bakeware industry, commended CSA members “for taking action on a topic that is important to them.” ■

Source: [www.hfndigital.com](http://www.hfndigital.com)

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## Dorm essentials spending expected to hit \$12.2 billion this BTC season

Back-to-College spending this year could come near to touching the record-breaking layout seen in 2023. Total back-to-college spending is projected to reach \$86.6 billion, the second-highest figure in the history of the annual spending intentions survey fielded by the National Retail Federation (NRF) and Prosper Insights & Analytics. Last year, total spending was forecast to hit a record \$94 billion.

College students and their families are expected to shell out an average of \$1,364.75 on items for the upcoming college year, in line with last year’s record of \$1,366.95. Purchases of home furnishings will come in second only to electronics, according to the forecast. The top five categories for college spending include: \$359.49 on average for electronics (\$22.8 billion total) \$192.40 for dorm or apartment furnishings (\$12.2 billion total) \$171.06 on clothing and accessories (\$10.9 billion total)

\$149.71 on food (\$9.5 billion total)

\$112.60 on shoes (\$7.1 billion total)

In line with recent years, the top shopping destinations for the back-to-college season are online (50%), followed by department stores (35%), discount stores (31%), and college bookstores, office supply stores and clothing stores (tied at 26%).

Collectively, 86% of consumer have squared away about half of their shopping for the Back-to-School (K-12 grades) and Back-to-College season. The top reasons consumers still have shopping to do are because they are waiting for the best deals (45%) or they don’t know what is needed yet (45%).

“Retailers have anticipated this early demand and are well-positioned to offer a variety of products at competitive prices,” said Katherine Cullen, NRF’s VP of Industry and Consumer Insights. ■ Source: [hometextilestoday.com](http://hometextilestoday.com)

## Back-to-college campaign aimed at sparking decorating excitement among Gen Z



Urban Outfitters, which offers a line of home décor along with its fashion and accessories, has launched a multi-pronged campaign incorporating Pinterest, influencers and an in-person experience to compel Gen Z consumers to find their style and make some back-to-college purchases in the process.

Calling the campaign “Shift Happens,” Urban Outfitters is targeting its audience via marketing, social and retail channels. A “Space Shift” in-person two-day event kicked off July 10 at The Chelsea Factory in New York, featuring 10 multifunctional spaces and experiences inspired by Pinterest trends and dedicated to showing Gen Z how they can create their personal sanctuaries.

“Every year, college-bound students turn to Pinterest to find inspiration for the school year ahead,” said Sara Pollack, global head of consumer marketing at Pinterest. “Whether it’s to design their new dorm room or to furnish their first apartment, Pinterest helps Gen Z students explore new aesthetics and discover fresh ideas. And this year, we’re partnering with Urban Outfitters to help bring them to life.”

Urban Outfitters tapped a group of Pinterest influencers to share their own aesthetics using UO products ranging from bedding and rugs to furniture and lighting. Visitors can view the spaces at Space Shift and shop influencer picks, which are also featured on the UO website. The retailer, in conjunction with Pinterest, is offering five people the chance to win \$5,000 in Urban Outfitters’ products to bring their Pinterest board to life.

Along with the Space Shift experience, Urban Outfitters will roll out 20 pop-ups in key college markets with products meant to complement its dorm and home-adjacent items, including lighting, bath accessories, drinkware and stationery as well as collegiate merchandise. ■ *Source: hometextilestoday.com*

## JCPenney ponies up \$40 million for supply chain upgrades

As part of JCPenney’s \$1 billion refresh strategy, the retailer is laying out \$40 million to increase order efficiency and speed for online shoppers.

The investment is going to the company’s Nevada distribution center in Reno, where Penney’s is updating the equipment and infrastructure with the Joey Pouch sorting system. The computerized system includes new induction process technologies, a fully automated sorter to assemble orders and a new packing system that includes invoice and shipping label printing for each order in the station.

In addition to improving the customer experience, the upgrade will dramatically reduce associate training time and will allow for more flexibility in staffing across the facility. There will be no impact to existing roles at the Reno DC due to the technology upgrade, according to JCPenney.

“When we announced our \$1 billion reinvestment strategy last year, this is exactly the type of upgrade we envisioned for our supply chain. This new system will provide JCPenney with the



best-in-class equipment and technologies to better support our associates and serve our customers,” said JCPenney CEO Marc Rosen.

The improvements to the Reno distribution center represent the latest progress in streamlining supply chain operations. Since last August, the company has also announced more than 100 store upgrades and its refreshed Rewards and Credit program as part of the reinvestment strategy. ■

*Source: hometextilestoday.com*