



RFM Financial
Solutions, LLC

August 2017



By the Numbers: Back to School

Summer is winding down, which means school is about to be back in session. Now that both students and parents alike are getting into the scholastic mindset, let's take a look at a few statistics concerning education in the United States.



\$20,090

The average annual cost of tuition, room and board for a public, four-year in-state university in 2017.



69.7%

The percentage of high school graduates who were enrolled in university in fall 2016.



\$83.6 billion

The expected back-to-school and back-to-college expenses this year, according to the National Retail Federation.



70%

The relative amount of undergraduate students in 2011-2012 that had at least one nontraditional characteristic according to a 2015 study from the U.S. Department of Education.



\$1,347

The amount that parents are expected to spend on back-to-school shopping per student, according to Deloitte.

Nontraditional characteristics include: delayed undergraduate enrollment, part-time enrollment, having more than one dependent, etc.

the market at a glance

July

 U.S. Large Cap (S&P 500)	2,470.30 (1.93%) ▲
 U.S. Mid/Small (Russell 2000)	1,425.14 (0.69%) ▲
 International Large (NYSE International 100)	5,565.48 (3.65%) ▲
 U.S. Treasuries (U.S. 10-Year Treasury Yield Rate)	2.30 (-0.43%) ▼



The market in action

- Volvo announced that by 2019, all of their cars will either be hybrids or electric-based. They are the first US-based car manufacturer that has done so. This news came shortly before Britain announced that manufacturing new petrol and diesel cars will be banned starting in 2040.
- QVC and HSN, prominent television-based retailers, announced that the two companies will be merging in a deal worth a reported \$2.1 billion. In the deal, QVC's parent company, Liberty Interactive, will assume full control of operations pertaining to HSN.
- In the second quarter, Samsung out-earned Apple for the first time in at least the past three years.
- Wage growth over the past year was mostly stagnant, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Warren Buffett, known best for his successful investing career and generous philanthropy, donated over \$3 billion worth of stock in early July. Since 2006, Buffett has purportedly made over \$27.5 billion in charitable donations.
- In 2016, a total of \$17.8 billion was spent on television advertising during sporting events, according to figures from Kantar Media.
- 3 million Mercedes-Benz diesel vehicles from Daimler AG are being recalled in order to decrease emissions. The recall is slated to cost Daimler AG over \$250 million.
- Private equity firm KKR, owner of Toys R Us, reached a deal to acquire WebMD for a reported \$2.8 billion. The deal is expected to be finalized in the fourth quarter of this year.



Keep Reaching for Your Financial Goals

Few things are able to motivate us like self-improvement. However, despite our initial enthusiasm, our personal goals can very quickly seem like impossible challenges.

Financial goals are particularly difficult to accomplish. Spending money is inherent in modern life, and financial goals can easily get lost in other money issues. What's worse, the impact of financial goals is evident and immediate. Upon setting goals, our finances begin to define our success with clear positives and negatives. Financial goals are sensitive to our mistakes. A one-time slip-up, such as a costly purchase, can disrupt progress towards a goal for months or even years.

The success of a goal often comes down to the strategies and tools used to support them. However, valuable techniques are often abandoned as soon as a little bit of progress is made. Use some of these tips to help make your goal a reality:

Be reasonable – It's always important to be realistic. In regards to financial goals, it is essential. If you make your goals too extreme, you set yourself up for frustration and disappointment. It's better to have an attainable goal you can reach than an impossible goal that discourages you and could lead to giving up entirely. Once you have had some success, you can raise your expectations.

Set solid milestones and celebrate them – Milestones are a great way to track progress and boost your morale, but you need to make them an integral part of your life. If you've made it halfway to your goal, celebrate in some way and give yourself a taste of what success will feel like. Stay positive. Milestones are meant to show you how far you have come, not how far you still have to go.

Find some accountability – Telling someone else about your goals and having them check on your progress can help keep you disciplined. Even if your confidant only asks for occasional updates, being accountable for your actions can provide a great deal of encouragement to stick to your plan.

Automate what you can – Constantly trying to make the right choices can wear down your motivation. Automating your target savings or debt payments can help you avoid the potential mistakes and will allow you to save your energy for other challenges.

Break and build habits – It's often said that it takes 21 days to break a habit or build a new one. While the psychology isn't exact, it's clear that our habits are a lot easier to change than we usually imagine. If you can force yourself to stick to a plan for just three weeks, progress should become much easier.

Limit the number of goals – Reaching goals can be difficult, so don't try to accomplish several of them simultaneously. Begin only one or two financial goals at a time and don't create new ones until your current efforts have become second nature.

Bend so that you don't break – Interruptions are inevitable. Much like setting a realistic goal, it is important to have realistic expectations for your progress. If there is an unavoidable problem, adjust your goal accordingly and keep trying. Don't give up on a goal just because of an unplanned setback.

Reaching goals is a skill that takes practice and experience. In accomplishing one goal, you learn which strategies work best with your personality. Even if you fail, you have learned more about what it takes to reach success. The important thing is to be willing to try again.

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