April 3, 2013

New Survey Reveals ‘Disownership’ is the New Normal

One in two Americans has rented, leased or borrowed traditionally-owned items in the past two years

SAN FRANCISCO--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Sunrun, the nation’s leading home solar company, today announced survey results revealing a national trend toward disownership. The survey explored consumers’ shifting attitudes and behaviors around renting, borrowing or leasing items like automobiles, bicycles, clothing, tools and home appliances, versus owning them. The study was commissioned by Sunrun and conducted online by Harris Interactive® in February 2013 among 2,252 U.S. adults ages 18 and older.

More than half of Americans has rented, leased or borrowed the sorts of items people traditionally own in the last two years (52 percent), and more than 8 out of 10 Americans (83 percent) said they would rent, lease or borrow these items, instead of buying them, if they could do so easily.

According to survey results, Americans anticipate a notable increase in disownership in the short term. Survey results indicate continued growth can be expected, as nearly one in four Americans (24 percent) is more likely to engage in “disownership” now than five years ago. Nearly double that percentage (49 percent) plans to “disown” traditionally-owned items in the next two years. When asked what would make them more likely to rent, lease or borrow items people traditionally own, Americans’ leading reasons were saving money and cutting down on storage and/or maintenance (53 percent and 39 percent, respectively).

“These results show we’ve entered an age in which Americans recognize they can get more value by owning less,” said Sunrun co-Founder and co-CEO Lynn Jurich. “At the same time, smart companies are creating innovative business models that offer consumers more flexible choices for accessing the things they want and need.”

Not Just Coastal, Urban or for the Young

While cultural shifts have been known to start with the young and urban – take Facebook for example – it’s not just twenty-somethings leading the disownership trend. In fact, older Baby Boomers[1] have a large hand in it. Nearly one in four Americans 55 years or older (24 percent) reported being much or somewhat more likely to rent, lease, or borrow items traditionally owned today than five years ago. More than half of those aged 45 – 54 (52 percent) and 39 percent of those 55 years and older has rented, leased, or borrowed these types of items in the last two years.

More than any other age group, Americans 55 and older are more likely to engage in this behavior because they don’t want to maintain, pay for maintenance or store the items over time (47 percent, vs. 27 percent of those age 18-34, 41 percent of those age 35-44 and 37

percent of those age 45-54).

Disownership is popular across the country and not just in urban or coastal hubs: 50 percent of survey respondents from the South plans to rent, lease or borrow traditionally-owned items in the next two years, along with 46 percent of those in the Midwest.

Smart Choices for Smart Consumers

Older Boomers[1] aren't the only demographic that's become smarter about saving time, money and work through disownership. Americans with college degrees and those with incomes of $75k+ are also leading this cultural consumption revolution: almost 60 percent of Americans with a college degree or higher education (57 percent), and those with total household income of $75k+ (58 percent), have leased or borrowed traditionally-owned items in the past two years.

In fact, if they could do so easily, 88 percent of Americans with total household income of $75k or more would rent, lease or borrow items instead of owning them – significantly more likely than both the 77 percent of those with incomes less than $35k and the 82 percent of those with total household incomes of $35k-$74.9k.

"We'll see this trend escalate as more Americans realize they have disownership options," continued Jurich. "For example, when Sunrun teaches more homeowners every day that they can install solar panels and not have to own or maintain them, they choose us."

Third-party-owned solar has become the preferred way for homeowners to go solar in the nation's top solar markets since Sunrun introduced the business model in 2007[2]. With third-party-owned solar, Americans can go solar without high upfront cost, plus save money on electric bills. Sunrun owns, insures and maintains the panels on a homeowner's roof. Families typically pay a lower rate for the solar power than the rate charged by their local utility company.

In addition to solar panels, other items Americans said they would rent, lease, or borrow instead of buying or owning them, if they could do so easily, include:

- Vacation houses/rooms (i.e. short-term rental): 52 percent
- Heavy equipment tools (e.g., trailers, tractors, bulldozers): 50 percent
- Books/textbooks: 41 percent
- Household tools (e.g., lawnmowers, leaf blowers, saws, carpentry tools): 26 percent
- Cars/trucks: 25 percent
- High-end, Luxury-brand apparel or accessories: 12 percent

Additional Consumer Resources

Along with today's survey data, Sunrun has published "The People's Guide to Disownership," which includes:

- Everyday tips for engaging in disownership

- Suggestions for top items to disown in 2013
- Lexicon of common disownership terms, and more.

Click here for an infographic illustrating key data.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Sunrun from February 15-19, 2013 among 2,252 adults ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact Victoria Krammen at Sunrun@sutherlandgold.com.

[1] Defined here as Americans aged 55 and older

[2] http://pvsolarreport.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=657:third-party-solar-900m-for-california&Itemid=2

About Sunrun

Sunrun is the nation's leading home solar company and invented solar power service, a way for homeowners to go solar without high upfront cost. Sunrun owns, insures, monitors and maintains the solar panels on a homeowner's roof, while families pay a low rate for clean energy and fix their electric costs for 20 years. Since Sunrun introduced solar power service in 2007, it has become the preferred way for consumers to go solar in the nation's top solar markets. More than 34,000 homeowners in 10 states have chosen Sunrun, and the Company partners with over 30 leading local solar companies who together employ more than 3,000 workers. Sunrun has attracted enough capital to support the purchase of $1.5 billion in solar systems from investors including U.S. Bancorp and raised $145 million in venture capital from Accel Partners, Sequoia Capital, Foundation Capital, and has Madrone Capital Partners.

For more information visit: www.sunrunhome.com

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is one of the world's leading market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. Known widely for ***the Harris Poll®*** and for pioneering innovative research methodologies, Harris offers proprietary solutions in the areas of market and customer insight, corporate brand and reputation strategy, and marketing, advertising, public relations and communications research. Harris possesses expertise in a wide range of industries including health care, technology, public affairs, energy, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, media, retail, restaurant, and consumer package goods. Additionally, Harris has a portfolio of multi-client offerings that complement our custom solutions while maximizing our client's research investment. Serving clients in more than 196 countries and territories through our North American and European offices, Harris specializes in delivering research solutions that help us - and our clients—stay ahead of what's next. For more information, please visit **www.harrisinteractive.com**.

Sunrun
Susan Wise, 415-580-6874
susanw@sunrunhome.com
or
Victoria Krammen, 415-848-7178
vkrammen@sutherlandgold.com

Source: Sunrun