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This report looks at the following areas:

- Usage and consideration levels of personal loans and adjacent products
- Motivations behind opening personal loans
- Future plans to open personal loans
- Most important factors when evaluating personal loans
- Behaviors of current personal loan owners
- Attitudes toward personal loans and debt

In an environment of rising debt levels, the affordability of financial commitments and manageability of budgets are paramount. Rationally, consumers respond to this mandate for responsible debt management by ranking interest rates as far and away the most important factor to be considered when evaluating personal loans. However, despite this acknowledgment of the superior significance of interest rates, only one in three personal loan customers compared rates from multiple lenders before selecting their personal loan. This gap between awareness of the impact of high interest rates and the willingness to scour the marketplace may shrink as rising rates intensify the penalty for missed payments.

The greatest driver of change in the personal loans market will doubtlessly be consumer reaction to the current inflationary climate. The Federal Reserve has continually increased the federal funds rate throughout 2022 in an effort to fight persistent inflation, causing consumers to feel the impact of rising interest rates on their variable-rate loans, including credit card APRs. In addition to the challenge that inflation poses to the affordability of daily purchases, this has worsened the penalty for missing payments on existing debt.

This presents the personal loan market with a sizeable opportunity, as more consumers are turning to personal loans both to meet short-term payment needs and to refinance their existing debt. However, reluctance to assume further debt may cause consumers to be hesitant to pursue large projects like



"The personal loan market is on the precipice of burgeoning consumer consideration with rising inflation and interest rates driving debt levels higher and necessitating solutions to managing regular expenses and existing debt."

- Patrick Rahlfs, Senior Research Analyst

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Personal Loans - US - 2022

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home renovations or vacation planning due to the disadvantageous current rate environment.

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Table of Contents

OVERVIEW

- What you need to know
- · This Report looks at the following areas
- Definition
- Market context

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Top takeaways
- · Consumers are increasingly lender-agnostic

Figure 1: Personal loan ownership, 2022

· Millennials are already sure of impending loan needs

Figure 2: Plans to apply for personal loan, by generation, 2022

Women are more likely to seek loans for everyday expenses

Figure 3: Personal loan motivations, by gender, 2022

Market overview

Figure 4: Category outlook, 2022-27

- Opportunities and challenges
- Refer-a-friend offers can sway young consumers

Figure 5: SoFi Personal Loan Refer-a-Friend email, 2022

- Credit card debt creates new market but corresponding challenges
- Key consumer insights
- Millennials are most open to non-traditional lenders

Figure 6: Personal loan attitudes, by generation, 2022

Just 33% of consumers compared rates from multiple lenders

Figure 7: Personal loan behaviors, 2022

MARKET SIZE

US loan debt is accelerating in growth

Figure 8: US debt composition, 2003-22

Credit card originations rebounded in 2021

Figure 9: Year-over-year change in number of accounts, by loan type, 2004-22

Credit cards are the loan type most frequently in serious delinquency

Figure 10: Percent of balance 90+ days delinquent on loans, by loan type, 2003-22

MARKET FACTORS

Disposable personal income remains suppressed

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Figure 11: Year-over-year change in disposable personal income, 2012-22

• TV spend on personal loan products has risen in mid-2022 Figure 12: Personal loan cross-category spend, 2019-2022

COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES AND MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- NetCredit ramps up TV spend for its "more personal loan"
 Figure 13: NetCredit Personal Loan television ad, 2022
- Upstart provides the statistics to support its personal loan
 Figure 14: Upstart Personal Loan direct mail piece, 2021-22
- American Express illustrated its loan's advantage against credit card debt

Figure 15: American Express Personal Loan direct mail piece, 2022

 Citibank targets existing customers with personal loan marketing

Figure 16: Citibank Personal Loan direct mail piece, 2022

THE PERSONAL LOANS CONSUMER – FAST FACTS PERSONAL LOAN USAGE AND INTEREST

Two thirds of US consumers are in debt

Figure 17: Types of debt, 2022

Personal loan providers split market share fairly evenly

Figure 18: Personal loan ownership, 2022

Personal loans from traditional banks are losing popularity
 Figure 19: Personal loan ownership, 2022

BNPL has matched bank-issued personal loans in usage

Figure 20: Personal loan usage and interest, 2022

PERSONAL LOAN MOTIVATIONS

• **Reasons for personal loans are disparate** Figure 21: Personal loan motivations, 2022

Women are more likely to seek personal loans for everyday expenses

Figure 22: Personal loan motivations, by gender, 2022

PERSONAL LOAN PLANS

 Nearly 40% of Millennials plan on applying for a loan in the next year

Figure 23: Plans to apply for personal loan, by generation, 2022

Higher-income consumers plan for loans with more certainty

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Infographic Overview

Powerpoint Presentation

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Figure 24: Plans to apply for personal loan, by age and income, 2022

FACTORS IN CHOOSING PERSONAL LOANS

- Interest rates are of top concern among product details
 Figure 25: Most important factors in personal loans, 2022
- Millennials crave ease of application and speed of funds
 Figure 26: Factors in choosing personal loan, by generation,
 2022
- Recommendations can sway young consumers
 Figure 27: Personal loan referrals, by generation, 2022
- Lower-income consumers seek pre-qualification offers
 Figure 28: Factors in choosing personal loan, by income,
 2022

PERSONAL LOAN BEHAVIORS

Only one in three consumers compared rates before applying

Figure 29: Personal loan behaviors, 2022

 35-44 year olds are facing growing balances, prompting lender comparisons

Figure 30: Personal loan behaviors, by age, 2022

Parents are having trouble with loan payments
 Figure 31: Personal loan behaviors, by parental status, 2022

PERSONAL LOAN ATTITUDES

 60% of consumers would refinance if offered a sufficiently low rate

Figure 32: Lending and debt attitudes, 2022

Millennials consider the widest variety of lenders
 Figure 33: Personal loan attitudes, by generation, 2022

APPENDIX - DATA SOURCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

- Data sources
- Consumer survey data
- Marketing creative
- Abbreviations and terms
- Abbreviations

What's included

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