

Americans Choose Long-Term Financial Planning Over Immediate Financial Gains

MILWAUKEE, April 23, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- When it comes to managing money, the large majority of Americans today are not looking for shortcuts or get-rich-quick strategies. According to [Northwestern Mutual's 2013 Planning & Progress Study](#), three quarters of people prioritize long-term planning over short-term performance, and one-third say "slow and steady wins the race" best describes their approach to future financial goals.

To view the multimedia assets associated with this release, please visit: <http://www.multivu.com/mnr/59538-northwestern-mutal-2013-financial-planning-and-progress-study-long-term>

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"People's priorities are in place, but are their good intentions backed by demonstrable action?" asks Greg Oberland, Northwestern Mutual executive vice president. "On one hand, we're seeing strong evidence that people are saving more. On the other, we know that half of all Americans have no long-term plan in place, and nearly a quarter are taking on more risk than they would prefer because they feel the need to play catch-up."

The Best Financial Decisions in Life

The priority on long-term planning comes across loud and clear when looking at what Americans consider the most important financial decisions in life.

People aged 55+ believe the best financial decisions they ever made include:

- Saving early (40%)
- Paying off a mortgage (40%)
- Bought real estate at a good price (29%)
- Invested heavily in my 401k (27%)
- Made sure my family is protected (22%)

People aged 25-54 believe the best decisions they will have to make in coming years will be:

- Starting to save early (53%)
- Making sure my family is protected (52%)
- Relying heavily on my 401k (25%)
- Buying real estate at a good price (20%)

"Interestingly, there's consistency across generations with Americans valuing the importance of saving, paying off debt and managing risk," says Oberland. We often say that people can't expect to invest their way to prosperity, but rather see investing as one component of a larger holistic plan. This data indicates that's a message that is resonating."

Oberland also notes that a gap could exist between what people aspire to achieve and what actions they actually take. [Other results](#) from the 2013 Planning & Progress Study, revealed that nearly one in four (23%) Americans would like to be more cautious but feel they have a lot of catching up to do; and among them over half (52%) say it's because of unexpected expenses, 47% say it's because of debt, and 37% say it's due to a lack of effective planning for the long-term.

About the Research

[Northwestern Mutual's 2013 Planning & Progress Study](#) explores the state of financial planning in America today, and provides unique insights into people's current attitudes and behaviors toward money, goal-setting and priorities. Northwestern Mutual will release additional results and a series of multi-media materials over the coming weeks.

This study was conducted by independent research firm Harris Interactive, and included 1,546 Americans aged 25 or older who participated in an online survey between January 9, 2013 and January 23, 2013. Results were weighted as needed for age by gender, education, race/ethnicity, region and household income. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

About Northwestern Mutual

Northwestern Mutual is the marketing name for The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, Milwaukee, WI, and its subsidiaries. Northwestern Mutual is among the "World's Most Admired" life insurance companies in 2013 according to FORTUNE® magazine and has helped clients achieve financial security for more than 156 years.

As a mutual company with \$1.4 trillion of life insurance protection in force, Northwestern Mutual has no shareholders. The company focuses solely and directly on its clients and seeks to deliver consistent and dependable value to them over time.

Northwestern Mutual and its subsidiaries offer a holistic approach to financial security solutions including: life insurance, long-term care insurance, disability income insurance, annuities, investment products, and advisory products and services. Subsidiaries include Northwestern Mutual Investment Services, LLC, broker-dealer, registered investment adviser, member FINRA and SIPC; the Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management Company, limited purpose federal savings bank; Northwestern Long Term Care Insurance Company; and Russell Investments.

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