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# Bank & Entrepreneur

AFRICA

THE  
SOLAR  
POWER  
ISSUE

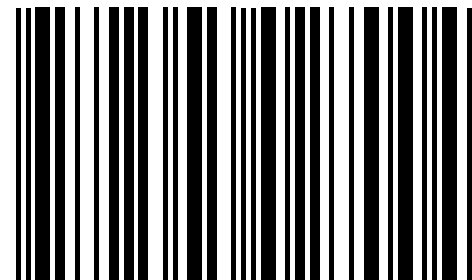
**TECH  
FOR HIRE**

Jude Onu is dedicated  
to pulling off the perfect  
solar installation.  
Every single time

HERE COMES  
**THE SUN**

*Sun King's **Tuga Omoyemi** is  
relentlessly pursuing a  
solar-for-all agenda*

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## Betting on Solar

*Panels, Panels Everywhere*

**S**olarBotanic Trees, a British startup, is on the verge of full-scale commercial production of 'solar trees' which will serve as clean energy charging stations for electric cars, and also be used to power people's homes. The idea is to place solar panels on a rounded surface like the canopy of a tree, and then insert a battery storage system within the tree trunk.

Meanwhile, **Spain** – one of the world leaders in renewables – hit an impressive renewable energy milestone on May 16, 2023, when its mainland was powered solely by renewable energy (solar panels, wind turbines, and hydro energy) for nine straight hours.

These two recent examples project the promises offered by solar energy: sustainable, renewable, plentiful, and providing a long-term, low-risk investment opportunity for anyone or entity looking to reduce energy expenses.

Although Sub-Saharan Africa boasts 60% of the world's solar resources, it currently only hosts 1% of the global solar PV capacity, with 600+ million people – over 50% of its population – lacking energy access.

Therein lies an **opportunity**. With national grids struggling to meet their population's full electricity requirements, rooftop solar panels offer the potential of delivering clean, renewable power to millions of customers for whom affordable electricity has remained out of reach.

In Nigeria, we found two bright lights:

- **Sun King.** The company that's changing how people and companies gain electricity access across Africa and Asia. In this edition of **Bank & Entrepreneur**, **Tuga Omoyemi** talks authoritatively about the

company's intuitive household and commercial solar range: from pay-as-you-go options to higher-end solar hybrid inverters. In terms of energy independence, security and access, you can almost hear Tuga say: "We are covering territory – quickly".

- **Jude Onu.** An established solar electrician whose intensity right from childhood led him to his current entrepreneurial career. In our chat with Jude, he went straight to the point, naming solar panel, battery and inverter brands that he's impressed with.

Against the backdrop of skyrocketing fuel costs and dipping spending power, the economic case alone for solar energy is crystal clear. And here are two of my final thoughts:

- Energy is no longer merely a cost to be glossed over. According to author **Michael E. Porter's** classic view of strategy, companies create advantage either by keeping costs low or through differentiation. The choices that a company makes about its energy sourcing and consumption can profoundly influence its cost structure, its ability to compete, and its capacity to reduce business continuity risks (such as maintaining operations when the grid fails);
- In addition to its flexibility in providing energy access to areas of the world not yet connected to a national grid, solar power is often praised for lowering greenhouse gas emissions by diminishing fossil fuel use, and for its positive impact on air pollution and health;
- For individuals, a higher quality of life for everyone is clearly within reach. Solar power makes this status achievable and non-negotiable.



April 15, 2012 | Cat Spring, Texas. (L-R): **Dave Agbakoba** (Founder, Solar Jooce); **Cas Van Woerden** (Owner, The Animal Farm); **Anne Agbakoba** - on a solar learning tour of the Animal Farm permaculture centre. The farm, which produces 25 acres of vegetables and flowers, runs largely on solar.

*Anne Ngori*

**ANNE N. AGBAKOBA**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



# Solar. for everyone.

**T**he **Sun King** brand has impacted an incredible 21 million households in 40 countries across Asia and Africa.

**Tuga Omoyemi** – a member of the global leadership team – leads Sun King's EasyBuy business in West and Central Africa. In Nigeria, he has built a socially relevant and vibrant team that makes solar energy easily accessible to both the unserved and underserved. Bringing reliable and cost-effective energy solutions to the doorstep of these segments enables them reach their potential, while also providing the foundation for living safer and more productive lives.

In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 – providing clean and affordable energy – Tuga is actively building and replicating a life-changing solar-access model across West and Central Africa.

He answers two key questions sent in by *Bank & Entrepreneur Africa*'s diverse reader base:

## **Why would anyone (corporate or individual) choose Sun King instead of the competition?**

Unlike our competitors, Sun King works nationwide through our 68 Nigerian retail branches and the company's network of distribution partners. This means that potential customers can book an at-home energy assessment through Sun King's 8,400 field executives. From sales and installation, to servicing and ongoing support, Sun King's field executives offer end-to-end customer support.

“  
***Sun King products are known for their quality. From cost-effective and durable lamps to powerful home and business energy systems, as well as modern entertainment and energy storage systems, Sun King's broad array of products unlock a higher quality of life. Sun King's products come with a two- or three-year warranty, which provides customers with peace of mind***  
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In addition to the benefits I have just mentioned, our customers don't need to bear the brunt of high upfront costs. They can get solar installed on

the day of purchase with a small down payment. Again, the implication is that from day one, customers enjoy uninterrupted solar power, which they pay as they go for as little as ₦1,000 per week. Once they have completed the plan, the system unlocks permanently and they continue to enjoy free solar energy.

## **How does Sun King work with other Nigerian businesses?**

Partnerships are a cornerstone of Sun King's proven business model. We partner with a diverse set of businesses to distribute, finance and sell our products in order to unlock commercial goals and create a cleaner, greener environment for the communities that these businesses work within.

For example, **LAPC Microfinance Bank** Limited purchases Sun King products, which are offered to their customers on affordable financing plans.

**TotalEnergies** redistributes our broad range of products through their 540 service stations, allowing Sun King to reach consumers across Nigeria. and offering kerosene customers a green and safe alternative.

Sun King works with scores of small and medium-sized businesses through a range of different distribution, financing, and strategic partnerships.

For Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), visit [www.sunking.com](http://www.sunking.com)





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## **Tuga Omoyemi**

Vice President, Sun King,  
PayGo West and Central Africa





# CURIOUS TALENTED TRUSTED

**J**ude Onu is from Enugu state (Nigeria), and currently lives in Lagos with his wife and four children.

His journey as a solar technician started at the age of 10 when, growing up with his grandmother, they suffered through life in a village (Uda community, Igbo-Eze North Local Government Area, Enugu State) with no electricity supply at all. During these endless blackouts, the one person who had a generator would switch it on, with practically every villager gathering around the location to watch television. And the crowd was only allowed to sit on the bare floor, whether inside or outside the building.

Young Jude just could not stop wondering if there were other means of lighting up the village.

Chatting with **Anne Agbakoba**, he shares more about his trajectory into Renewables and some of the brands he has come to trust in the business:

## **Tell us a little bit more about yourself, Jude**

Well, one day, while still living with my grandmother in rural Nigeria, I went to visit a friend and was fascinated by how he had powered a touch lightbulb with a 1.5v finger

**“**  
*I have been in the solar installation business for seven years. My clients – both big and small, residential and commercial – will tell you that I am very good at what I do, and they are more than happy to give me referrals*  
**”**

battery. That was my starting point. I immediately ran home, reproduced my friend's concept, and was proudly able to light up my grandmother's house. However, I was only a child with little or no money at my disposal, so it was impossible to keep buying finger batteries to maintain the newfound lighting. For years, I asked everyone and anyone about alternative sources of light that did not require being tied to the grid. Finally, in secondary school, I began to hear about solar energy, which led me to start experimenting with small solar bundles and installations. I formalised my training at St. Joseph Technical School, Ugbaike, and afterwards perfected my craft by understudying a private solar electrician.

## **What advice would you give someone who is shopping for a solar-inverter package? For example, advice about sizing, batteries, inverters, solar panels, etc?**

Investing in a solar system is a smart solution, which pays for itself over time.

Before embarking on any project, I first do a **load audit**, which helps the customer determine their energy use (what exactly they would like to power). This guides me in correctly gauging the size of the system they require.

After that, my first piece of advice is not to compromise on materials. High prices do not always mean better quality. And lower prices do not necessarily mean that a product is fake. Users should always consult a solar installer/ technician for guidance in selecting original components for the entire installation. Whatever the budget, we will usually find a bundle to fit the customer's needs.

Now, let me mention some brand names that I have found to be efficient.

For **solar panels**, I would go for names like **Canadian Solar, Jinko, Longi, and Q cell**.

Regarding **inverters**, I have had a good



experience with brands such as **Victron**, **SMA**, and **Deye**. These three Inverters are very rugged, and they offer a **5- or 10-year warranty**. Another set of less expensive, but equally good inverters are **Felicity**, **Gennex**, **SRNE**, **Luminous**, and **Pragmatic**. These ones offer warranties of one or two years.

And then **deep-cycle batteries**, of which lithium-ion and lead-acid are the two common types. **Lithium-ion** batteries store more energy, hold energy longer than other batteries, and have a higher Depth of Discharge. They are also more expensive. Affordable Lithium-ion batteries include **Felicity** and **SRNE**, and they both have a **5-year warranty**.

Some of the lead-acid batteries whose performance I have been impressed with are **Rita**, **Quanta**, **HBL**, **Monbat**, and **Trojan**.

**What is so special about you as a solar electric technician? Why would a potential customer choose you in particular?**

I love what I do, and since childhood, I have been passionate about introducing electricity to places and people that lack it. This means that I put my very best into my work. I apply best practices such as always using top quality products that offer good warranties.

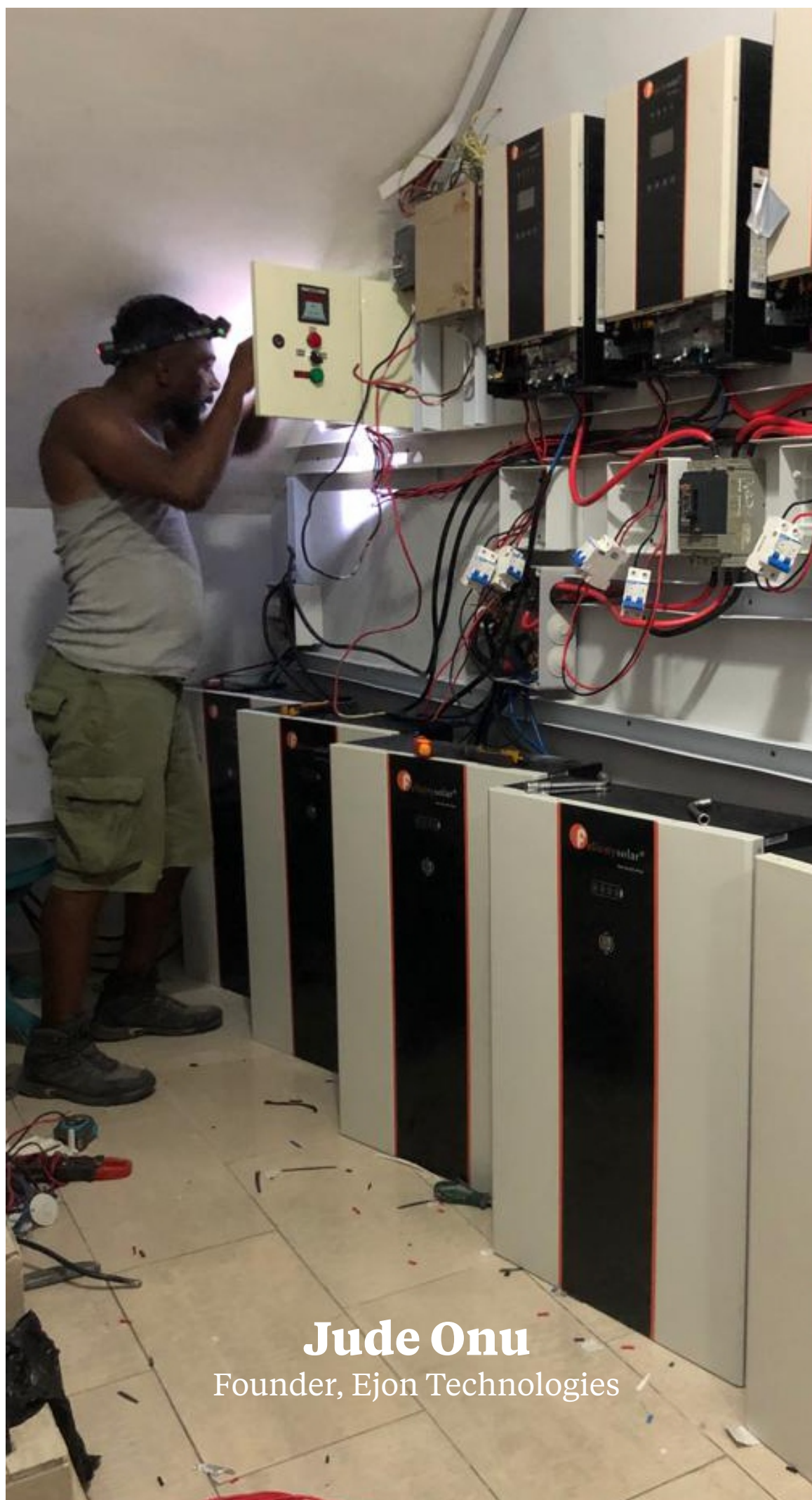
There are installers who, for example, provide a quote for 400-watt panels, but purchase 300-watt units, and change the product sticker to read 400 watts! I would never do that. Customer satisfaction is far more important to me than dishonest enrichment.

Today, I have been in the solar installation business for seven years. My clients – both big and small, residential and commercial – will tell you that I am very good at what I do, and they are more than happy to give me referrals.

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**Jude Onu**  
Founder, Ejon Technologies