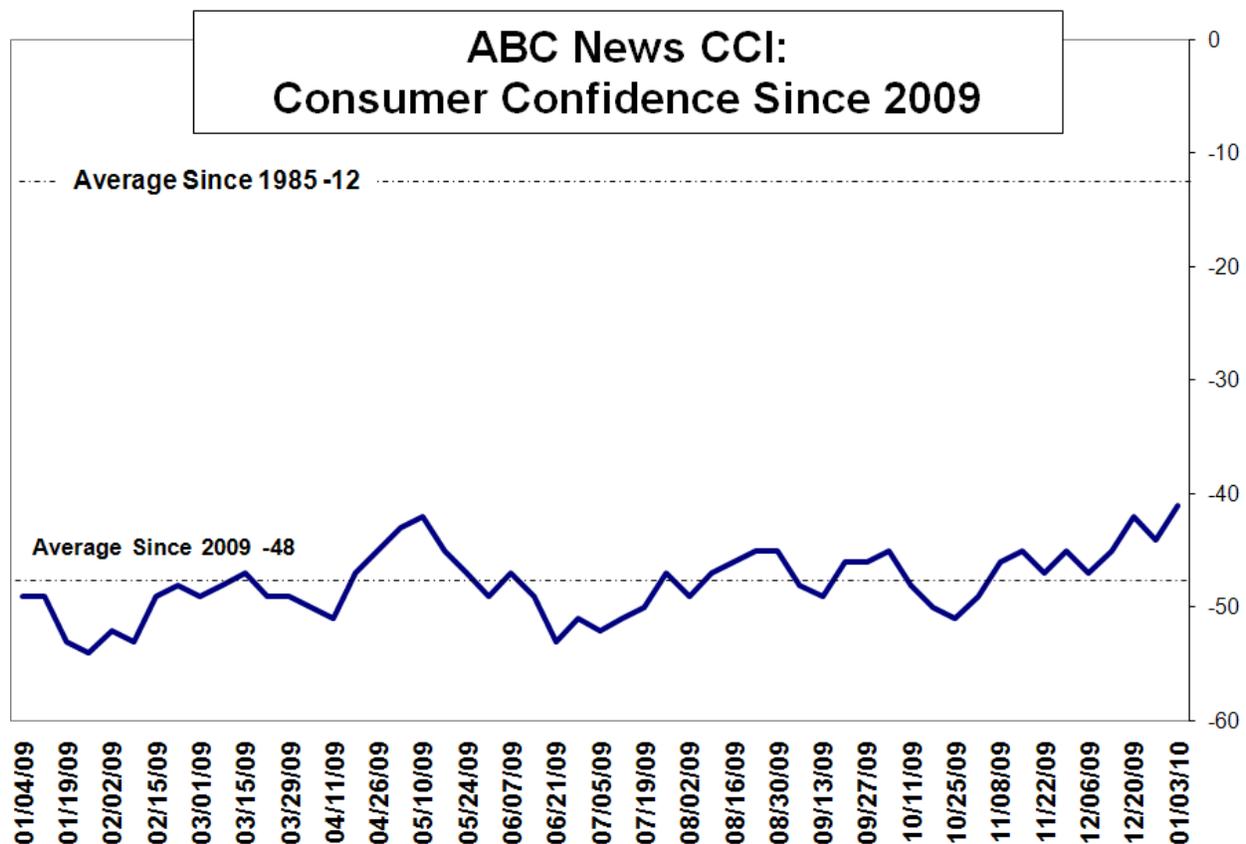


Consumer Confidence, 2010: Off to a Less Gloomy Start

Consumer confidence is off to a less-awful start in 2010, with the ABC News Consumer Comfort Index rising this week to its best in 16 months.

Better is far from good: The CCI stands at -41 on its scale of +100 to -100, far lower than its 24-year average of -12, much less its record highs a decade ago. But it's its best since September 2008, up 10 points since late October and 13 points better than its record low about a year ago.

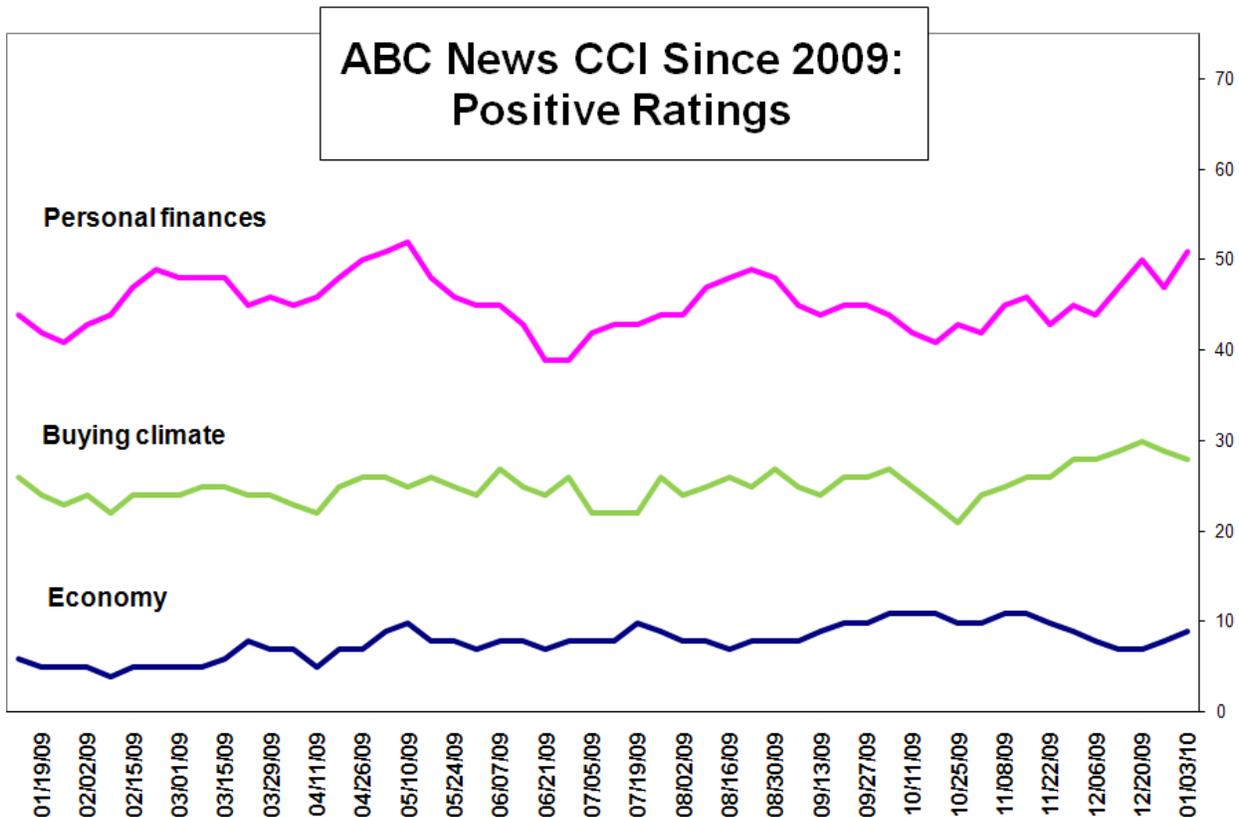


While final retail sales figures for December are yet to be released, one component of the CCI indicates a break in retailers' favor: Positive ratings of the buying climate rallied by 9 points from Oct. 25 to Dec. 20.

Since Christmas those ratings have moderated – but better views of personal finances have taken up the slack.

INDEX – Indeed 51 percent now rate their own finances positively, up 4 points in a week to a majority for the first time since May. That’s 6 points better than its 2009 average and just 6 points below its long-term average in weekly polls since late 1985.

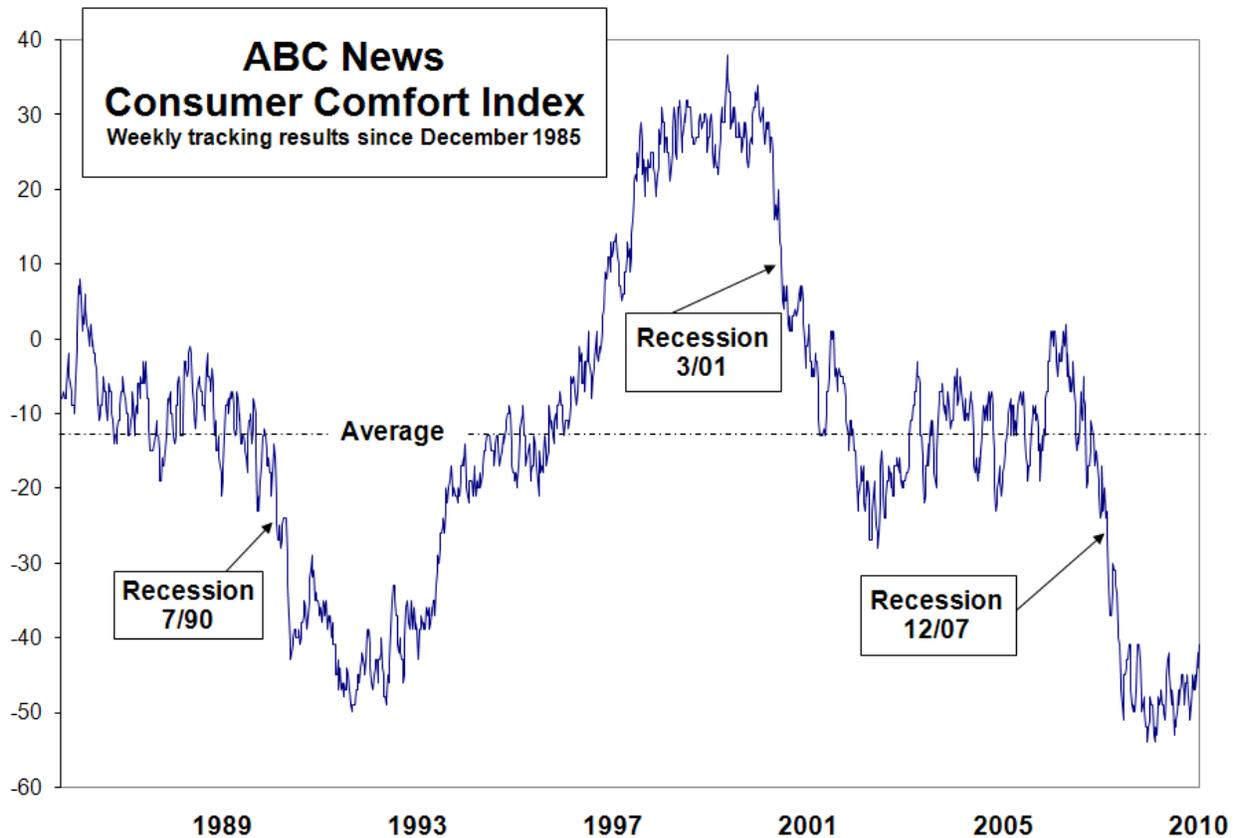
Ratings of the buying climate are holding steady at 28 percent positive, starting the year 9 points worse than the long-term average. But the third component of the CCI, views of the national economy, continue to weigh it down. They’re just 9 percent positive, 29 points below average.



ABC News CCI				
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	Averages	
			09/10	'85-'10
National economy	9%	8	8	38
Buying climate	28	29	25	37
Personal finances	51	47	45	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-41	-44	-48	-12

TREND – The CCI’s signs of life follow a year of dubious records. The 2009 opening was -49, its worst annual start on record. The 2009 average, -48, was the index’s worst yearly average. And the CCI bottomed out at -54 last Jan. 25, matching its record low.

The next milestone for the CCI is to exceed -40, something it's been unable to do for a record 90 consecutive weeks. And even then it'd be far from strong; the index hasn't seen positive territory since March 2007.



	ABC News CCI	
This week	-41	
Last week	-44	
2009 high	-42	Dec. 20 and May 10
2009 low	-54	Jan. 25, record low
2009 average	-48	Worst full year
2000 average	+29	Best full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Average since 12/85	-12	

GROUPS – The CCI, as usual, is higher among better-off Americans, but has been negative across the board for 45 weeks straight, the longest such run in data since 1990.

It's -6 among those with the highest incomes but -66 among those with the lowest (their best since August), -33 among people who've attended college vs. -49 among high school dropouts (their best since April 2008), -32 among men while -50 among women, -38 among homeowners while -51 among renters and -38 among whites (best since October 2008) vs. -60 among blacks.

Partisan differences remain, but narrower than usual. The CCI's -39 among Republicans, compared with -47 among Democrats and -39 among independents. That 8-point Democratic-Republican gap compares with an 18-point gap last year, 41 points in 2008 and 32 points long-term.

Here's a closer look at the three components of the ABC News CCI:

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Nine percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 8 percent last week. The highest was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 4 percent Feb. 8, 2009.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	9	1	8	91	49	42
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	34	62	40	23

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-one percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 47 percent last week. The best was 70 percent, last reached in January 2000. The worst was 39 percent June 28 and 21, 2009.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	51	4	47	49	30	19
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	51	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Twenty-eight percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 29 percent last week. The best was 57 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 18 percent, last reached Oct. 19, 2008.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	28	2	26	72	46	26
Avg. since 12/85	37	3	34	63	42	21

METHODOLOGY – Interviews for the ABC News Consumer Comfort Index are reported in a four-week rolling average. This week's results are based on telephone interviews among a random national sample of 1,000 adults in the four weeks ending Jan. 3, 2010. The results have a 3-point error margin. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

The index is derived by subtracting the negative response to each index question from the positive response to that question. The three resulting numbers are added and divided by three. The index can range from +100 (everyone positive on all three measures) to -100 (all negative on all three measures). The survey began in December 1985.

Analysis by Peyton M. Craighill.

ABC News polls can be found online at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

01/03/10	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg

Group	-----							
GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	-41	-44	-47	-45	-49	-41	-54	-48
State of Economy	-82	-84	-84	-78	-88	-78	-92	-84
Personal Finances	2	-6	-12	-12	-10	4	-22	-9
Buying Climate	-44	-42	-44	-46	-48	-40	-58	-50

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-32	-31	-41	-40	-40	-28	-49	-41
Women	-50	-54	-50	-49	-56	-45	-60	-53
Age:								
18 - 34	-35	-37	-43	-38	-43	-31	-61	-44
35 - 44	-49	-53	-56	-42	-58	-35	-62	-49
45 - 54	-39	-39	-40	-50	-50	-36	-65	-48
55 - 64	-47	-45	-49	-47	-52	-39	-65	-51
65+	-40	-42	-44	-55	-43	-40	-56	-48
Income:								
Under \$15K	-66	-68	-72	-74	-77	-57	-84	-73
\$15K To \$24.9K	-65	-66	-68	-74	-67	-40	-81	-65
\$25K To \$39.9K	-54	-54	-53	-57	-60	-49	-73	-60
\$40K To \$49.9K	-43	-40	-42	-45	-49	-27	-68	-47
Over \$50K	-24	-27	-29	-19	-35	-19	-35	-28
\$50K To \$74.9K	-31	-37	-46	-36	-47	-24	-54	-38
\$75K To \$99.9K	-34	-40	-38	-12	-33	-12	-52	-30
Over \$100K	-6	-8	-3	-3	-26	5	-34	-15
Region:								
Northeast	-46	-43	-40	-54	-47	-38	-62	-49
Midwest	-44	-45	-49	-42	-50	-41	-58	-49
South	-41	-40	-47	-52	-52	-39	-59	-49
West	-34	-44	-45	-29	-40	-19	-58	-42
Race:								
White	-38	-40	-45	-44	-46	-38	-52	-46
Black	-60	-57	-49	-59	-61	-41	-68	-55
Politics:								
Republican	-39	-40	-41	-32	-36	-28	-42	-36
Democrat	-47	-50	-41	-51	-62	-40	-65	-53
Independent	-39	-37	-51	-50	-44	-37	-59	-48
Education:								
< High School	-49	-55	-56	-78	-68	-49	-82	-66
High Sch. Grad.	-51	-51	-51	-50	-51	-46	-65	-55
College +	-33	-34	-39	-33	-42	-30	-46	-38
Home:								
Own	-38	-40	-42	-35	-43	-35	-49	-42
Rent	-51	-49	-52	-69	-65	-47	-71	-59
Marital Status:								
Single	-47	-42	-46	-46	-48	-34	-66	-50
Married	-34	-38	-42	-37	-42	-33	-47	-41
Sep/Wid/Div	-51	-53	-55	-62	-64	-50	-70	-60
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-28	-33	-37	-35	-43	-28	-45	-38
Part-Time	-53	-53	-48	-48	-50	-31	-67	-50

Not Employed

-51 -48 -52 -53 -55 -48 -64 -56

END