

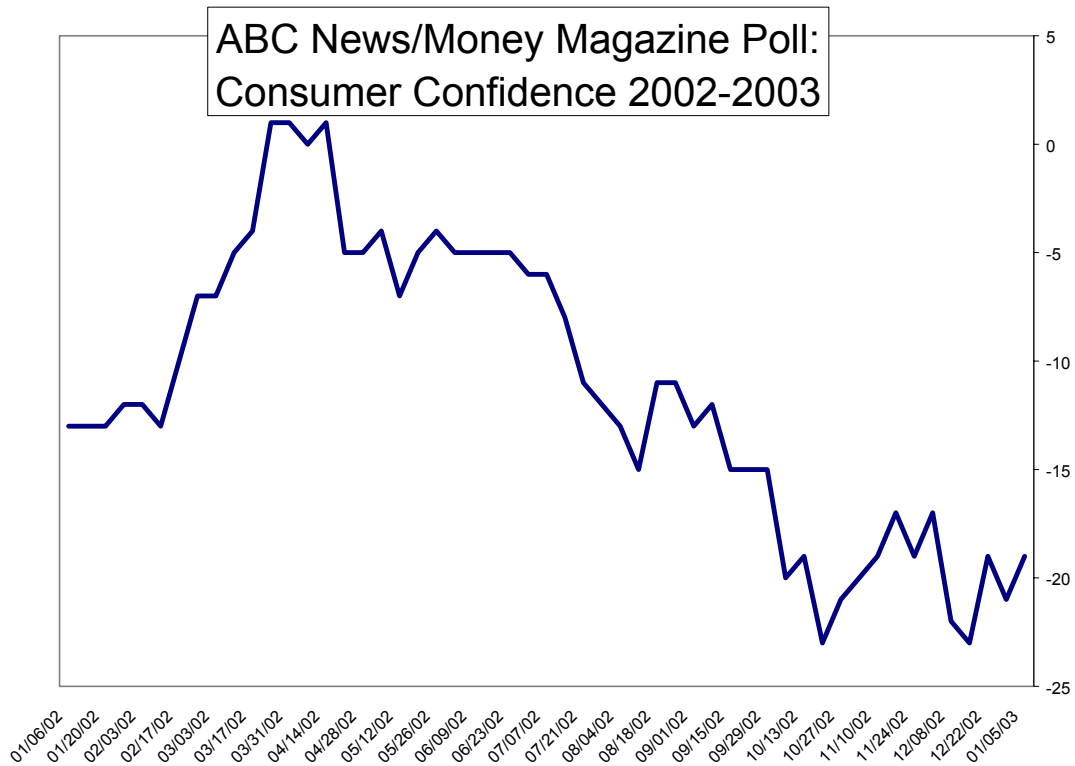
## Confidence Still in a Rut

The state of consumer confidence shows the impetus for George W. Bush's economic stimulus plan: Confidence has been stuck in a rut for the last three months, far below its level when the president took office nearly two years ago.

The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Confidence Index starts 2003 at -19 on its scale of +100 to -100; it's hovered between -19 and -23 since October 6. That's down from +17 the week Bush was inaugurated.

The index, based on Americans' ratings of the national economy, their personal finances and the buying climate, averaged -11 across 2002, its worst yearlong average since 1996.

Today just 28 percent of Americans rate the national economy positively and 37 percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things. More encouraging are ratings of personal finances: Fifty-seven percent say theirs are in good shape, up five points in three weeks.



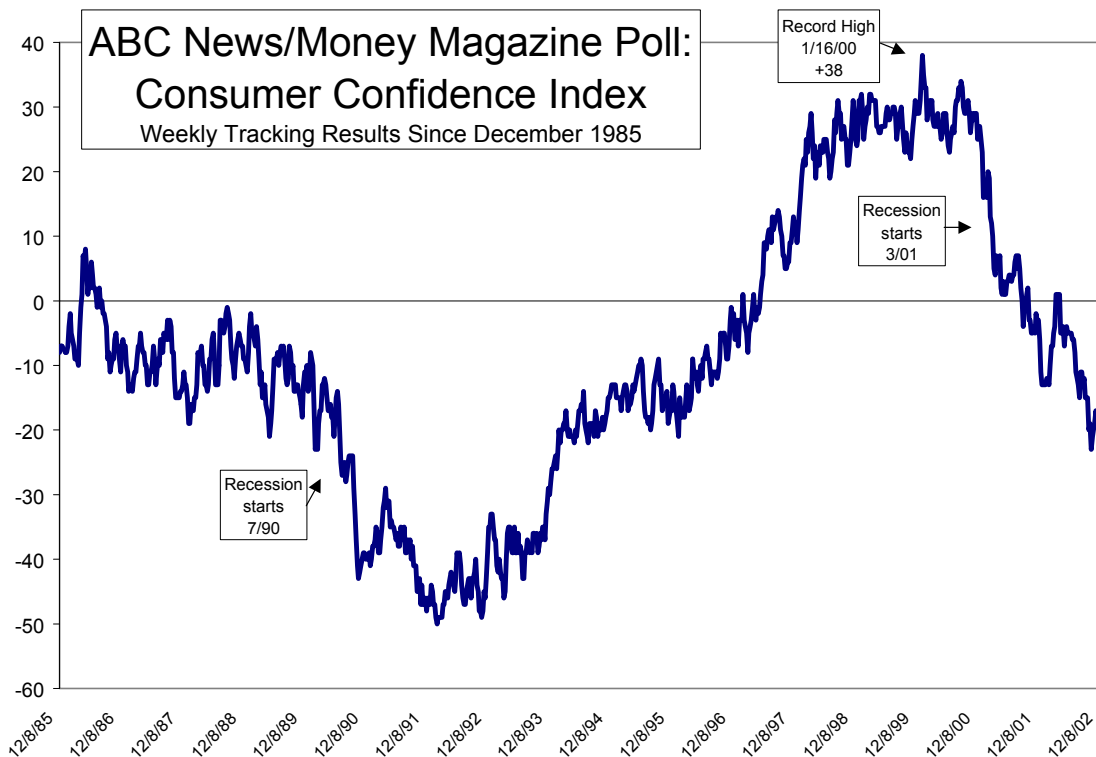
Positive ratings of:	ABC News/Money magazine poll			
	This week	2002 high	2002 low	17-yr. avg.
National economy	28%	45	25	41
Buying climate	37	45	36	39
Personal finances	57	63	52	57

Consumer Comfort Index      -19                      +1                      -23                      -8

A separate ABC News poll released today highlights some of the obstacles Bush faces as he tries to bolster the economy. His approval rating on handling the economy is a tepid 50 percent. Half the public thinks his tax policies favor the wealthy. And by a 10-point margin the public trusts the Democrats over Bush's Republican Party to create jobs.

TREND – The ABC/Money index peaked at +38 in January 2000, but went on to lose 36 points over the course of 2001 and another eight points throughout 2002.

At -19, the index still remains well above its all-time low of -50 in February 1992. (It averaged a record low -44 that year.) Its best one-year average was +29 in 2000, and its lifetime average is -8.



	ABC/Money Index	
Today	-19	
Last week	-21	
2002 high	+1	March, April
2002 low	-23	Oct. 20, Dec. 15
2002 average	-11	
2001 average	+4	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-8	

GROUPS - As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index stands at +12 among people in higher-income households compared to -49 in the lowest, -3 among college graduates while -46 among high-school dropouts, -16 among whites but -37 among blacks and -11 among men while -25 among women.

Here's a closer look at the three components of the ABC/Money index:

NATIONAL ECONOMY - Twenty-eight percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good; it was 27 percent last week. The best was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	28	2	26	72	48	24
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	38	59	39	19

PERSONAL FINANCES - Fifty-seven percent rate their own finances as excellent or good; it was 55 percent last week. The best was 70 percent, set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	57	5	52	43	31	12
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE - Thirty-seven percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need; it was 36 percent last week. The best was 57 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 20 percent in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	37	3	34	63	45	18
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	36	61	41	20

METHODOLOGY - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index represents a rolling average based on telephone interviews with a random sample of about 1,000 adults nationwide each month. This week's results are based on 1,007 interviews in the month ending Jan. 5, 2003 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

The ABC/Money index is derived as follows: The negative response to each index question is subtracted from the positive response to that question. The three resulting numbers are then 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 Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at:

<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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01/05/03

This Last 4 Wks 3 Mo. 1 Yr. 12 Mo 12 Mo 12 Mo  
 Week Week Ago Ago Ago High Low Avg

Group

GENERAL POPULATION:

Group	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Overall Index	-19	-21	-22	-20	-13	1	-23	-11
State of Economy	-44	-46	-48	-46	-38	-10	-50	-31
Personal Finances	14	10	8	10	12	26	4	17
Buying Climate	-26	-28	-26	-24	-14	-10	-28	-19

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Group	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
<b>Sex:</b>								
Men	-11	-16	-17	-16	-5	9	-17	-4
Women	-25	-26	-25	-22	-20	-4	-31	-18
<b>Age:</b>								
18 - 34	-4	-9	-10	-9	-6	10	-16	-4
35 - 44	-24	-28	-31	-10	-10	3	-31	-13
45 - 54	-31	-30	-16	-34	-17	6	-37	-13
55 - 64	-18	-19	-28	-25	-17	20	-30	-12
65 +	-31	-33	-36	-27	-21	-5	-36	-20
<b>Income:</b>								
Under \$15K	-49	-51	-50	-45	-48	-26	-54	-45
\$15K To \$24.9K	-44	-49	-51	-34	-24	-19	-55	-32
\$25K To \$39.9K	-43	-41	-29	-34	-19	1	-43	-18
\$40K To \$49.9K	-11	-20	-30	-25	-3	12	-30	-5
Over \$50K	12	10	6	3	10	33	-15	12
<b>Region:</b>								
Northeast	-17	-21	-29	-17	-11	2	-32	-15
Midwest	-18	-22	-17	-17	-9	4	-27	-11
South	-25	-25	-21	-26	-11	4	-26	-12
West	-10	-13	-19	-13	-20	9	-24	-7
<b>Race:</b>								
White	-16	-19	-19	-18	-7	7	-20	-7
Black	-37	-41	-47	-28	-46	-18	-51	-37
<b>Politics:</b>								
Republican	14	10	7	5	19	34	2	13
Democrat	-32	-35	-34	-34	-29	-14	-37	-25
Independent	-38	-37	-25	-23	-17	-2	-38	-14
<b>Education:</b>								
< High School	-46	-50	-59	-41	-49	-12	-59	-36
High Sch. Grad.	-26	-29	-25	-20	-15	-3	-29	-15
College +	-3	-5	-4	-12	0	13	-18	0
<b>Home:</b>								
Own	-13	-15	-14	-16	-7	9	-21	-7
Rent	-33	-35	-38	-27	-27	-9	-39	-22
<b>Marital Status:</b>								
Single	-15	-13	-18	-11	-19	10	-20	-8
Married	-14	-17	-17	-17	-6	11	-20	-7
Sep/Wid/Div	-38	-42	-38	-38	-33	-14	-42	-29
<b>Employ. Status:</b>								
Full-Time	-10	-12	-12	-16	-4	12	-20	-3
Part-Time	-21	-20	-15	-15	-10	14	-28	-9
Not Employed	-32	-35	-37	-26	-27	-13	-38	-24

\*\*\*END\*\*\*