

Confidence Stays Flat

Consumer ratings of current economic conditions remained stuck in a rut this week, at their lowest level in five and a half years.

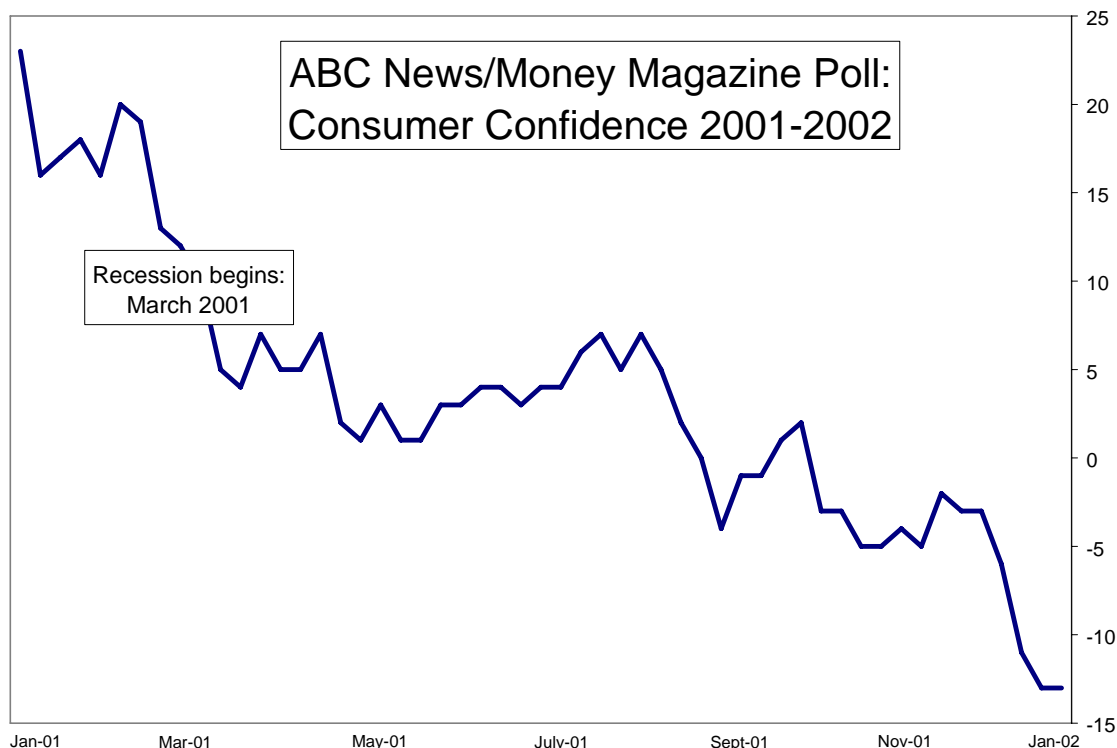
Just 32 percent of Americans rate the national economy positively, and just 41 percent call it a good time to buy things, down seven points since November. However, more, 57 percent, say their own finances are in good shape.

Dismal ratings of the economy have been dragging confidence down for months; positive views are now 10 points below their 16-year average. Ratings of personal finances are right at their average, and ratings of the buying climate are two points above average.

The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on these three gauges, stands at -13 on its scale of +100 to -100 for the third straight week. It last saw this level in August 1996.

	ABC News/Money Magazine Poll				
	Recent trend	Record high	2001	16-year	
Positive ratings of:	1/13/02	12/9/01	1/16/00	average	average
National economy	32%	37	80	50	42
Buying climate	41	47	57	43	39
Personal finances	57	62	70	63	57

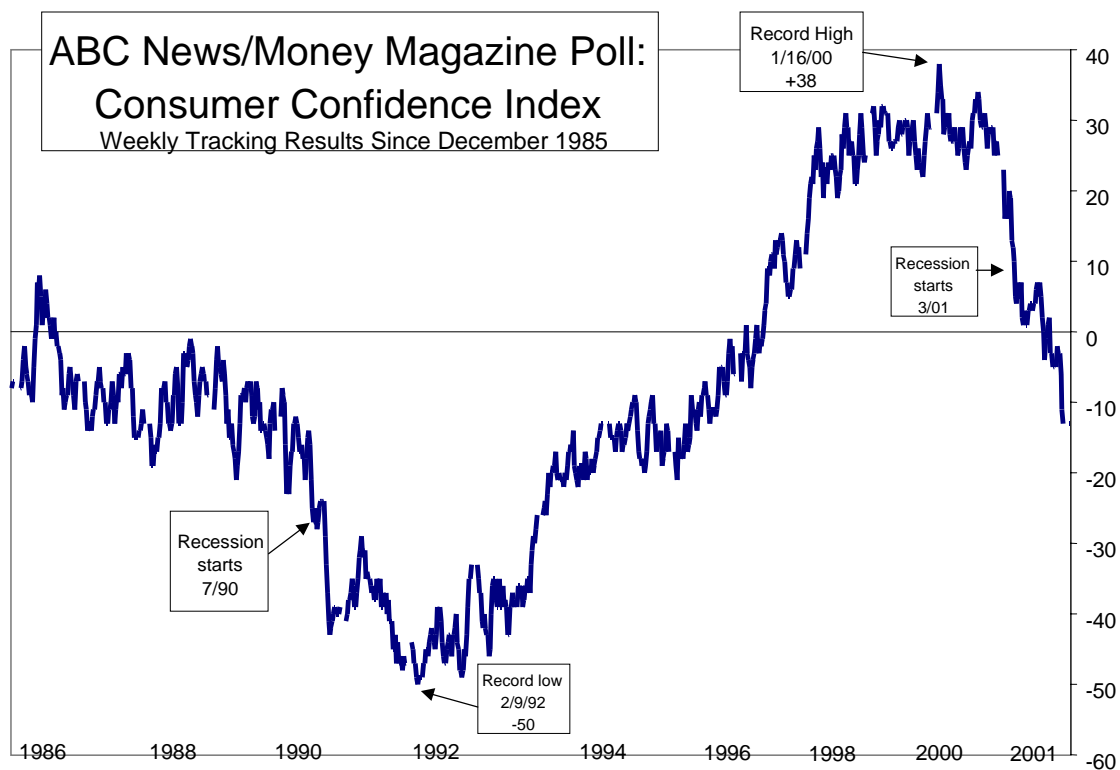
Note, the index measures views of current economic conditions. Expectations for the future have been looking brighter since mid-December.



2001 TREND – The index averaged +4 in 2001, down from a record setting +29 in 2000 – the largest year-to-year drop since this weekly poll began in late 1985. But it’s been far worse, averaging just –44 in 1992.

The index fell seven points in one week last January (tying the one-week record), six points in a week in February, five points in a week in March (when the recession officially began) and another five points in one week in April. It reversed another slide to gain ground immediately after the Sept. 11 attacks, but then lost five points in mid-October and another five points in a week in December.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	-13	
Last week	-13	
Jan. 7, 2001	+23	
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 is +13 in higher-income households compared to -50 in the lowest, +2 among college graduates while -49 among high-school dropouts, -7 among whites but -42 among blacks and -5 among men while -21 among women.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-two percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good, up one point from last week. The best was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

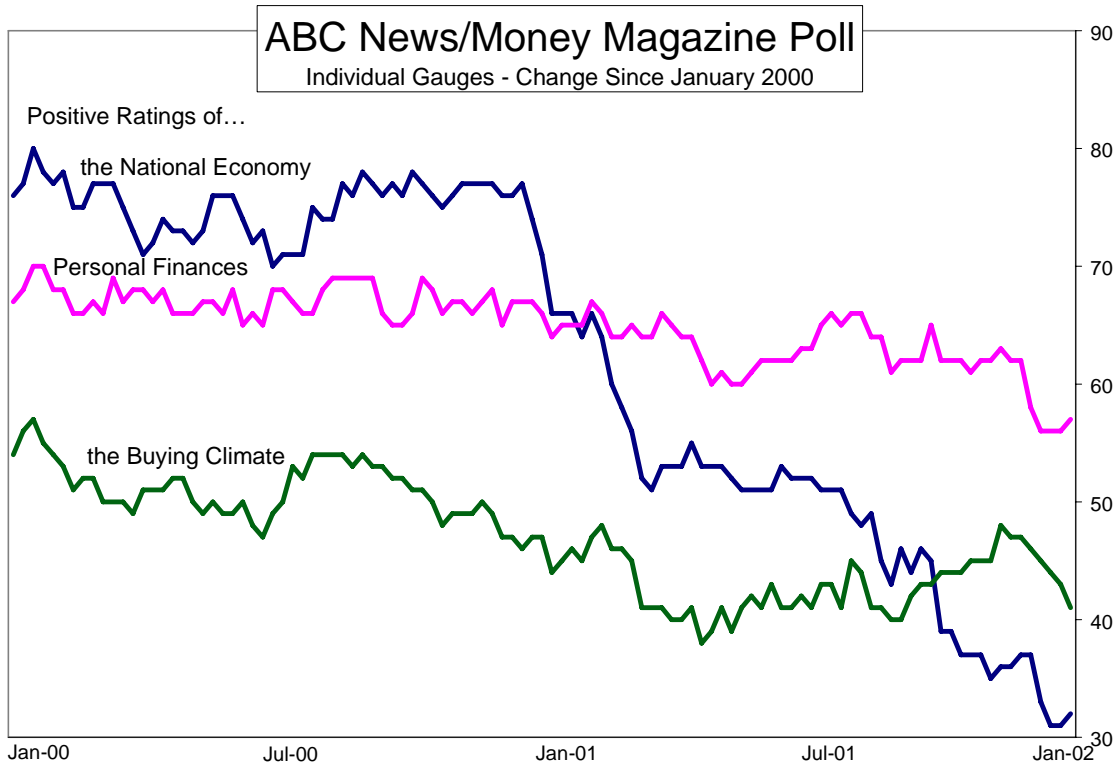
	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	32	2	30	68	50	18
Avg. since 12/85	42	4	38	58	39	19

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-seven percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, up a point from last week. The best was 70 percent, set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in January 2000. The worst rating was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	57	6	51	43	31	12
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE – Forty-one percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need, down two points from 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	41	5	36	59	40	19
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	36	61	41	21



METHODOLOGY - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index represents a rolling average based on telephone interviews with about 1,000 adults nationwide each month. This week's results are based on 1,018 interviews in the month ending Jan. 13, 2002 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/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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01/13/02	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	-13	-13	-6	-3	16	20	-13	3
State of Economy	-36	-38	-26	-22	32	32	-38	-3
Personal Finances	14	12	16	24	28	34	12	25
Buying Climate	-18	-14	-8	-12	-12	-4	-24	-14

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-5	-5	3	6	23	27	-6	9
Women	-21	-20	-14	-11	9	13	-21	-3
Age:								
18 - 34	-8	-6	6	2	17	23	-8	8
35 - 44	-10	-10	-15	-1	14	33	-15	4
45 - 54	-7	-17	-12	-6	17	19	-19	-1
55 - 64	-30	-17	1	3	24	24	-30	-1
65 +	-20	-21	-16	-15	8	25	-21	-3
Income:								
Under \$15K	-50	-48	-38	-36	-38	-18	-52	-36
\$15K To \$24.9K	-28	-24	-28	-21	-6	-4	-40	-23
\$25K To \$39.9K	-16	-19	-9	3	11	11	-24	-5
\$40K To \$49.9K	-8	-3	15	-1	30	30	-10	9
Over \$50K	13	10	13	12	47	47	3	28
Region:								
Northeast	-17	-11	-2	-7	10	27	-17	1
Midwest	-9	-9	-8	-1	21	21	-9	5
South	-9	-11	-9	0	18	20	-13	3
West	-20	-20	-2	-8	13	20	-21	2
Race:								
White	-7	-7	-2	4	19	22	-8	7
Black	-42	-46	-41	-44	-4	20	-46	-24
Politics:								
Republican	23	19	13	16	28	34	12	23
Democrat	-29	-29	-15	-20	14	18	-29	-7
Independent	-18	-17	-12	-3	8	14	-19	-3
Education:								
< High School	-49	-49	-23	-19	-14	-7	-49	-29
High Sch. Grad.	-17	-15	-10	-8	11	17	-18	-4
College +	2	0	1	4	28	32	-1	16
Home:								
Own	-8	-7	0	1	26	26	-9	8
Rent	-27	-27	-18	-16	-8	5	-27	-12
Marital Status:								
Single	-14	-19	-7	2	20	27	-19	3
Married	-6	-6	0	1	23	27	-7	9

Sep/Wid/Div	-40	-33	-25	-22	-16	-3	-40	-21
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-2	-4	3	6	23	26	-4	12
Part-Time	-15	-10	-4	-8	23	28	-15	1
Not Employed	-27	-27	-19	-14	3	7	-27	-9

END