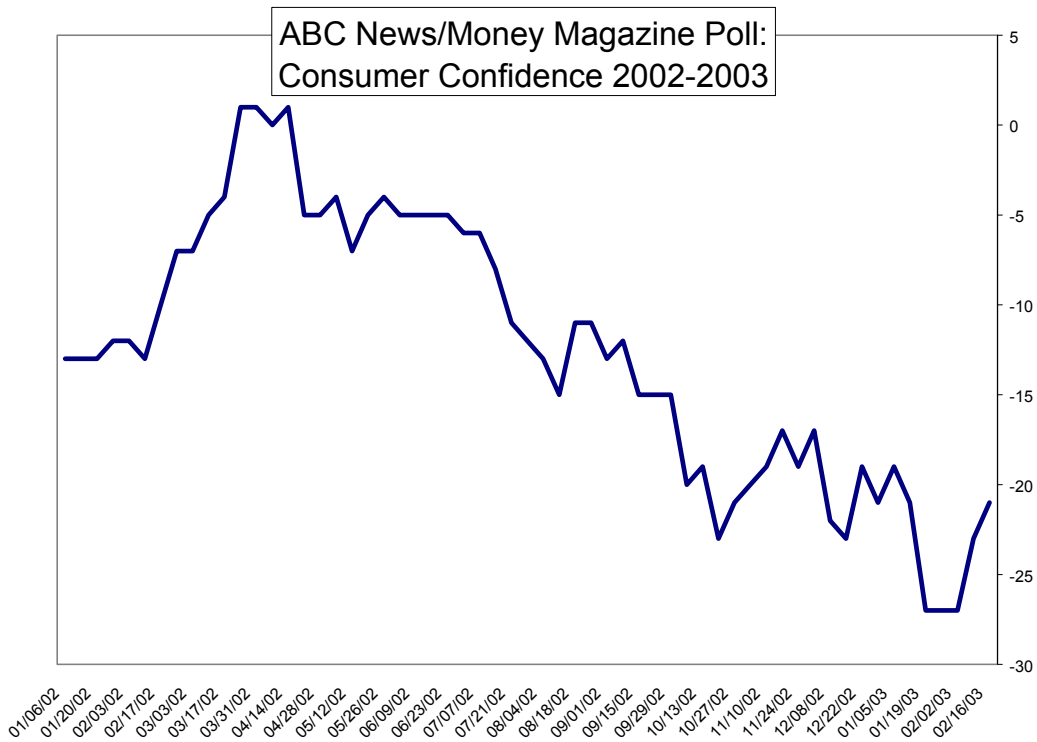


Current Economic Ratings Gain a Bit, But Pessimism for the Future Continues

This week brings mixed news for consumer confidence: Ratings of current economic conditions have made up all of last month's losses, rebounding from a nine-year low. But looking ahead, economic pessimists still outnumber optimists by more than 2-1.

The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on views of current conditions, stands at -21 on its scale of +100 to -100, up six points in two weeks. It had fallen six points to -27 the week of Jan. 19, one of the largest one-week drops in its 17-year history.

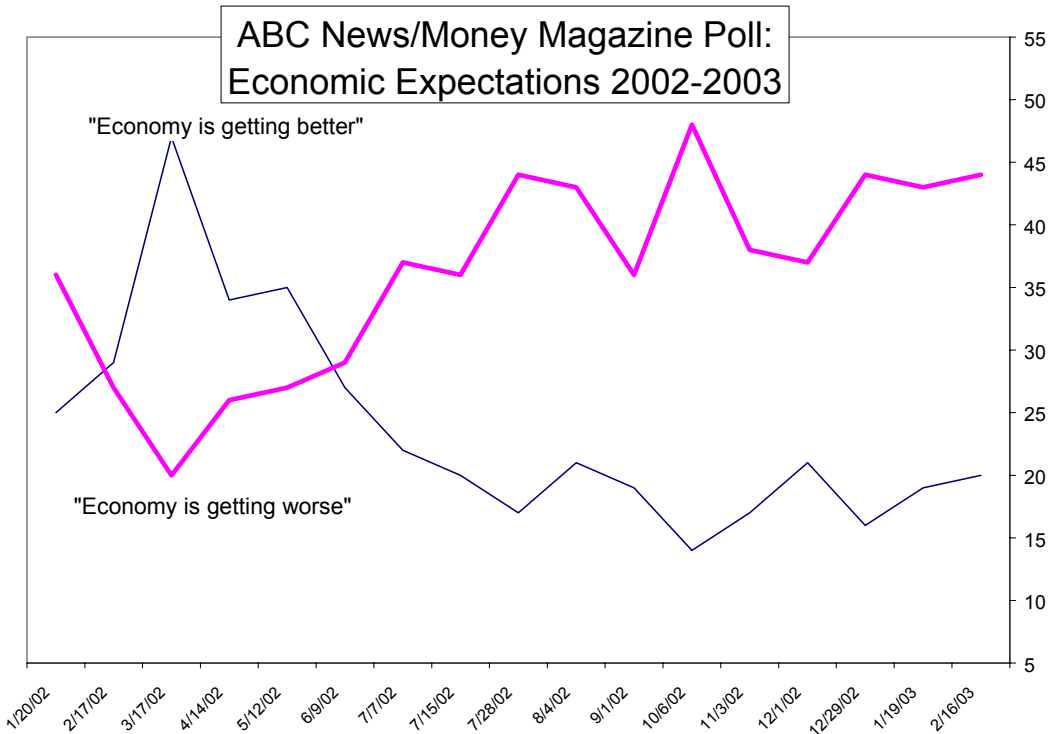
Positive ratings of the buying climate gained three points this week, to 35 percent; they had been slipping amid rising gasoline prices. Twenty-eight percent rate the overall economy positively and 56 percent say their own finances are OK, each up four points in the last two weeks.



Positive ratings of:	This week	ABC News/Money magazine poll			
		2/2/03	2002 high	2002 low	17-yr. avg.
National economy	28%	24	45	25	41
Buying climate	35	33	45	36	39
Personal finances	56	52	63	52	57

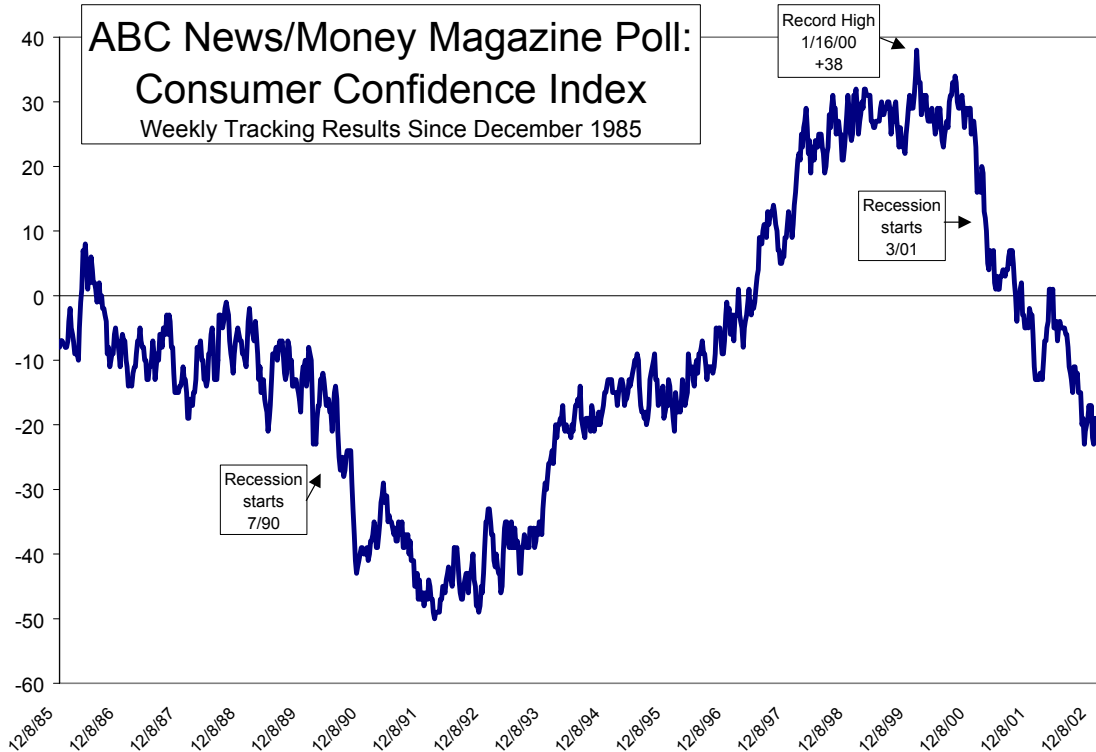
Consumer Comfort Index -21 -27 +1 -23 -9

LOOKING AHEAD – But expectations for the future have not improved since last month: Forty-four percent of Americans think the economy is getting worse while just 20 percent say it’s getting better (the rest, 36 percent, say it’s staying the same.) That’s about the same as it was in mid-January.



TREND – At -21, the ABC/Money index of current sentiment is 12 points below its 17-year average. It peaked at -38 in January 2000, and bottomed out at -50 in February 1992. Last year it averaged -11, its worst year since 1996.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	-21	
Two weeks ago	-27	
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	-9	



GROUPS - As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index stands at +1 among people in higher-income households compared to -49 in the lowest, -9 among college graduates while -29 among high-school dropouts, -21 among whites while -28 among blacks and -13 among men while -28 among women.

The index is a bit higher in the West, -11, than elsewhere. Similarly, expectations are a little less glum in the West, where 37 percent say the economy is getting worse; it's in the mid-40s elsewhere.

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, the same as 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	1	27	72	44	28
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	37	59	40	19

PERSONAL FINANCES - Fifty-six 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	56	6	50	44	27	17
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE - Thirty-five percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need; it was 32 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	35	3	32	65	44	21
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 1,003 interviews in the month ending Feb. 16, 2003 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. The expectations question was conducted among 501 respondents Feb. 5-16; that result has a 4.5-point error margin. 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>

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

02/16/03	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	-21	-23	-27	-17	-10	1	-27	-13
State of Economy	-44	-44	-52	-44	-32	-10	-52	-33
Personal Finances	12	10	4	14	22	26	4	16
Buying Climate	-30	-36	-32	-20	-20	-10	-36	-21

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-13	-15	-14	-7	1	9	-18	-5
Women	-28	-31	-38	-25	-19	-4	-38	-19
Age:								
18 - 34	-11	-14	-24	-5	0	10	-25	-6
35 - 44	-17	-25	-27	-13	-16	3	-31	-14
45 - 54	-25	-25	-28	-23	-12	6	-37	-14
55 - 64	-39	-39	-25	-19	-10	20	-39	-14
65 +	-28	-25	-31	-31	-17	-5	-36	-21

Income:								
Under \$15K	-49	-50	-60	-45	-54	-26	-61	-45
\$15K To \$24.9K	-37	-41	-48	-34	-31	-19	-55	-33
\$25K To \$39.9K	-25	-31	-36	-16	-4	1	-43	-20
\$40K To \$49.9K	-16	-16	-16	-7	-2	12	-30	-6
Over \$50K	1	-4	-2	-1	10	33	-15	10
Region:								
Northeast	-22	-25	-24	-27	-9	2	-32	-16
Midwest	-25	-26	-26	-13	-9	4	-27	-12
South	-23	-24	-29	-25	-5	4	-29	-14
West	-11	-18	-24	4	-17	9	-25	-8
Race:								
White	-21	-22	-21	-13	-5	7	-23	-8
Black	-28	-33	-53	-39	-43	-18	-60	-38
Politics:								
Republican	5	5	4	6	9	34	0	12
Democrat	-38	-38	-42	-31	-23	-14	-42	-27
Independent	-20	-29	-38	-15	-7	-2	-38	-16
Education:								
< High School	-29	-38	-43	-39	-34	-12	-59	-36
High Sch. Grad.	-33	-37	-39	-23	-4	-3	-40	-17
College +	-9	-9	-12	-4	-5	13	-18	-1
Home:								
Own	-18	-20	-21	-16	-5	9	-24	-8
Rent	-27	-31	-40	-18	-19	-9	-40	-24
Marital Status:								
Single	-13	-11	-20	-7	-9	10	-20	-9
Married	-18	-22	-25	-15	-1	11	-27	-9
Sep/Wid/Div	-37	-39	-37	-30	-38	-14	-42	-29
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-8	-12	-19	-8	0	12	-20	-4
Part-Time	-30	-33	-20	-12	-6	14	-39	-11
Not Employed	-33	-34	-40	-27	-22	-13	-40	-25

1. Do you think the nation's economy is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?

	Getting Better	Getting Worse	Staying the Same	No Opinion
2/16/03	20	44	36	0
1/19/03	19	43	37	0
12/29/02	16	44	39	1
12/1/02	21	37	42	1
11/3/02	17	38	44	0
10/6/02	14	48	37	1
9/1/02	19	36	44	1
8/4/02	21	43	34	0
7/28/02*	17	44	39	1
7/15/02*	20	36	43	2
7/7/02	22	37	41	0
6/9/02	27	29	43	1
5/12/02	35	27	38	0
4/14/02	34	26	40	0
3/17/02	47	20	32	1
2/17/02	29	27	42	2
1/20/02	25	36	39	1
12/9/01	24	37	38	1

11/11/01	16	48	36	1
10/14/01	15	46	39	0
9/16/01	9	44	46	1
8/12/01	16	46	38	0
7/15/01	13	40	46	0
6/17/01	17	45	38	1
5/20/01	13	47	39	0
4/22/01	12	44	44	0
3/25/01	13	49	37	1
2/11/01	13	45	41	1
1/14/01	12	40	47	1

Call for full trend.

*ABC/Post

END