

Consumer Confidence Gains Some Ground

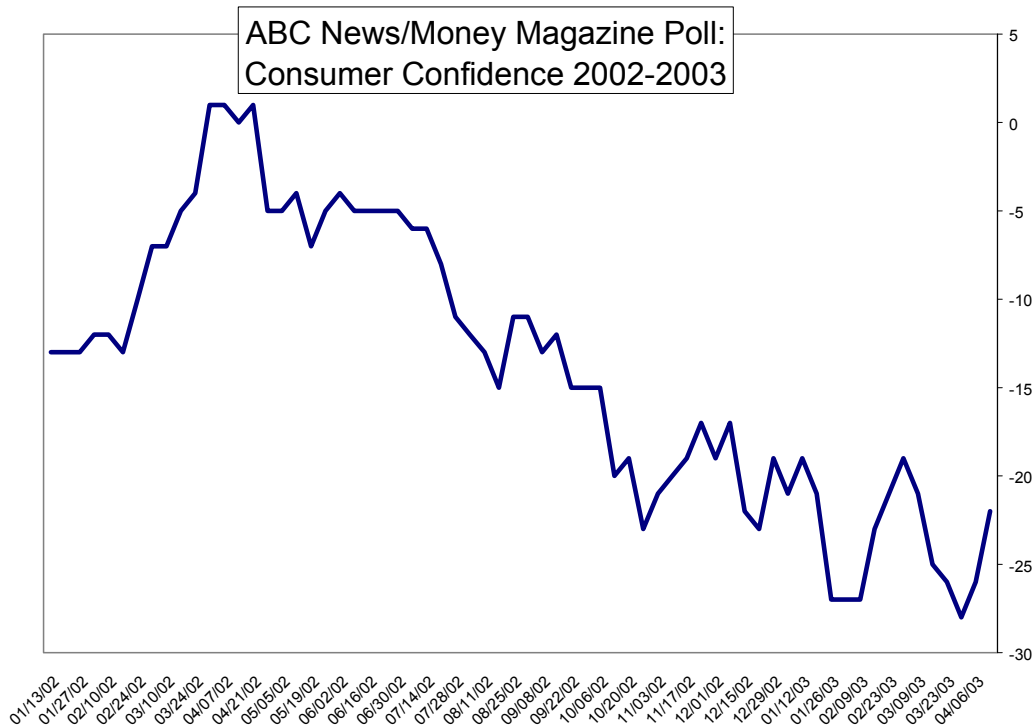
Consumer confidence gained ground this week, reversing its prewar losses amid U.S. advances in Iraq and moderating gasoline prices at home.

Confidence still is quite weak, with the ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index well below its long-term average. But, at -22 on its scale of +100 to -100, the index is up four points this week and up six points from two weeks ago, its lowest in nine years.

Just 24 percent of Americans rate the economy positively, and just 35 percent say it's a good time to spend money. But substantially more – 58 percent – say their own finances are in good shape, up five points since early March and the most since September.

One possible factor is a sense of optimism based on U.S. military advances in Iraq. And more direct economic factors also may be at play: Gasoline prices, which peaked in mid-March, have inched lower in each of the last three weeks.

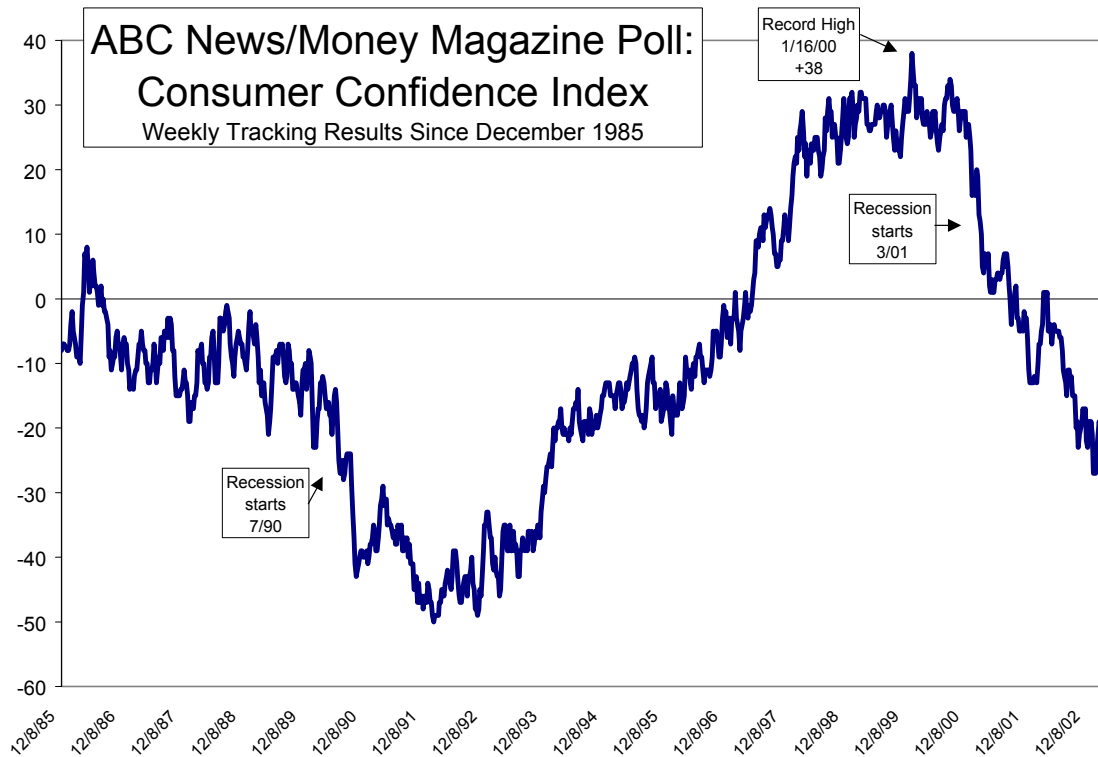
ABC/Money Index
4/6/03 -22
3/30/03 -26
3/23/03 -28
3/16/03 -26
3/09/03 -25
3/02/03 -21



Despite this gain, the ABC/Money index remains 13 points below its 17-year average. Ratings of the finances are about average, and ratings of the buying climate are close. But the national economy is another story: its 24 percent positive rating is far below the average of 41 percent.

Positive ratings of:	ABC News/Money magazine poll				
	This week	Last week	2003 high	2003 low	17-yr. avg.
National economy	24%	22	30	21	41
Buying climate	35	34	37	32	39
Personal finances	58	55	58	52	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-22	-26	-19	-28	-9

TREND – The ABC/Money index peaked at +38 in January 2000, the year it averaged a record-high +29; and tanked to -50 in February 1992, the year it averaged a record-low -44. It's averaged -24 so far this year, compared to an average of -11 last year – its worst since 1996 – and a 17-year average of -9.



ABC/Money Index	
Today	-22
Last week	-26
Two weeks ago	-28
Recent high	+1
2003 average	-24
2002 average	-11
2001 average	+4
2000 average	+29
	2003 low
	March, April 2002
	To date
	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 is +5 among people in higher-income households compared to -48 in the lowest, -12 among college graduates while -38 among high-school dropouts, -18 among whites but -44 among blacks and -10 among men while -32 among women.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Twenty-four percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good; it was 22 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	24	1	23	76	50	26
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	37	59	40	19

PERSONAL FINANCES - Fifty-eight 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	58	6	52	42	30	12
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 34 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	45	20
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 April 6, 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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04/06/03	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	-22	-26	-25	-19	0	1	-28	-15
State of Economy	-52	-56	-54	-44	-12	-12	-58	-37
Personal Finances	16	10	6	14	24	26	4	14
Buying Climate	-30	-32	-28	-26	-12	-10	-36	-23

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-10	-12	-15	-11	6	9	-18	-7
Women	-32	-37	-34	-25	-5	-5	-38	-22
Age:								
18 - 34	-13	-17	-25	-4	7	10	-25	-8
35 - 44	-20	-17	-14	-24	-3	-1	-31	-15
45 - 54	-32	-41	-31	-31	-5	6	-41	-18
55 - 64	-18	-22	-31	-18	7	8	-39	-17
65 +	-30	-33	-30	-31	-5	-5	-36	-24
Income:								
Under \$15K	-48	-53	-45	-49	-43	-26	-61	-46
\$15K To \$24.9K	-49	-54	-51	-44	-31	-19	-55	-36
\$25K To \$39.9K	-34	-40	-41	-43	1	1	-49	-24
\$40K To \$49.9K	-5	-10	-28	-11	3	12	-30	-9
Over \$50K	5	7	0	12	27	29	-15	7
Region:								
Northeast	-28	-32	-23	-17	-3	2	-36	-19
Midwest	-19	-31	-29	-18	-4	4	-34	-15
South	-20	-22	-27	-25	1	4	-29	-16
West	-22	-18	-18	-10	7	9	-25	-9
Race:								
White	-18	-21	-23	-16	5	5	-23	-11
Black	-44	-49	-38	-37	-26	-18	-60	-38
Politics:								
Republican	2	-1	1	14	31	34	-3	10
Democrat	-39	-45	-46	-32	-15	-14	-46	-30
Independent	-19	-22	-25	-38	-4	-4	-38	-19
Education:								
< High School	-38	-38	-45	-46	-15	-12	-59	-37
High Sch. Grad.	-27	-32	-30	-26	-9	-4	-40	-20
College +	-12	-15	-15	-3	12	12	-18	-4
Home:								
Own	-18	-21	-19	-13	7	9	-24	-11
Rent	-32	-36	-37	-33	-18	-9	-40	-26
Marital Status:								
Single	-17	-21	-21	-15	-5	10	-25	-10
Married	-16	-20	-22	-14	7	7	-27	-12
Sep/Wid/Div	-45	-45	-40	-38	-19	-14	-52	-31

Employ. Status:

Full-Time	-12	-16	-18	-10	12	12	-20	-7
Part-Time	-40	-40	-19	-21	0	14	-40	-15
Not Employed	-28	-32	-37	-32	-15	-13	-40	-26

END