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ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 5/4/97
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Consumer Attitudes Up This Week

Consumer sentiment this week rose to tie its second best showing of 1997, a year which so far is the best on record for the ABC/Money Index.

The index, based on views of personal finances, the economy and the buying climate, stands at -1 on its scale of +100 to -100, up two points from last week and just shy of the over 10-year high of +1 recorded three weeks ago. The index, which moved upward this week on strengthened views of the economy, also hit -1 on April 6.

Its current level is a significant eight points above its average -9 in the second half of the 1980s and a distant 29 points from its dismal -30 average from 1990-95.

	ABC/Money Index
Today	-1
1997 average	-3
1996 average	-11
1990-95	-30
1986-90	-9
Full average	-20

GAUGES - The index went up because more people are viewing the economy positively - 49 percent rate the economy as "excellent' or good," up three points from last week. That may sound less than ebullient, but it's a far cry

from this question's lifetime average of just 32 percent or its 15 percent average during the last recession and its aftermath.

The economy measure has hit 49 percent positive four other times this year and has been as high as 51 percent positive once this year (Feb. 9).

The other two measures were unchanged this week.

Three weeks ago 63 percent of Americans rated their own finances positively, the most ever in weekly ABC/Money polls since December 1985. This week, for the second in a row, it's at 59 percent, still a healthy majority and two points above its pre-recession average.

This week 41 percent call it a good time to spend money on things they want and need - unchanged from the past three weeks and well above the index's lifetime average of 34 percent and its recession/aftermath average of just 26 percent. It's also at the highest level of the year.

All three ABC/Money measures are far above their averages from 1990-93, when faith in the economy was at its recession-inspired low point.

Positive ratings for...	Today	1990-93	1986-90
National economy	49	15	41
Buying climate	41	26	39

Personal finances 59 49 57

GROUPS - Confidence customarily lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, blacks, the poor and the less-educated. The index is +15 among men , but -15 among women; +3 among whites, but -17 among blacks; +31 in higher-income households. but -44 in the lowest; and +13 among people who have attended college, but -31 among high school dropouts.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- Fifty-one percent rate the economy negatively, down three points this week. It's averaged 52 percent this year, compared to 85 percent from 1990-93 and 59 percent from 1986-90. The best, 52 percent positive, was Dec. 1, 1996. The worst, 93 percent negative, was in late 1991 and early 1992. The average for the life of the index is 68 percent negative.

PERSONAL FINANCES - Fifty-nine percent rate their finances positively, unchanged. It's averaged 59 percent this year, compared to 49 percent in the 1990-93 slump and 57 percent before the recession. The worst was 58 percent negative March 14, 1993. The full average is 54 percent positive.

BUYING CLIMATE - Fifty-nine percent call this a bad time to buy things, unchanged again this week. It's averaged 61 percent this year, compared to 74 percent during the 1990-93 slump and 61 percent before the recession. The worst is 80 percent negative Nov. 2 and Oct. 28, 1990; the best, 52 percent positive May 11, 1986. The full average is 66 percent negative.

	National Economy	Personal Finances	Buying Climate
This week	51% neg	59% pos	59% neg
1997 Average	52% neg	59% pos	62% neg
Recession Average (mid-1990 to 1993)	85% neg	51% neg	74% neg
Pre-Recession Avg. (1986 to mid-1990)	59% neg	57% pos	61% neg
Full Average (1986-now)	68% neg	54% pos	66% neg
Worst	93% neg	58% neg	80% neg
Best	52% pos	63% pos	52% pos

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. Interviewing by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa. This week's results are based on 1,031 interviews in the month ending May 4 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points.

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 Jeff Alderman.

For details contact the ABC News Polling Unit, (212) 456-2621. ABC polls are available in the ABC News area of America Online.

Here are the full results:

05/04/97	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	-1	-3	-1	-3	-13	1	-14	-7
State of Economy	-2	-8	-6	-4	-24	4	-28	-13
Personal Finances	18	18	22	20	14	26	10	16
Buying Climate	-18	-18	-20	-26	-28	-18	-30	-23

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	15	14	11	6	-2	15	-5	5
Women	-15	-17	-13	-11	-22	-5	-25	-16
Age:								
18 - 34	1	2	0	-8	-12	5	-23	-7
35 - 44	5	2	-1	-8	-10	5	-21	-8
45 - 54	2	-5	-10	-1	-13	12	-22	-7
55 - 64	-6	-10	1	12	-9	17	-36	-6
65 +	-10	-7	6	2	-18	15	-18	-4
Income:								
Under \$15K	-44	-45	-41	-45	-43	-32	-58	-46
\$15K To \$24.9K	-20	-18	-20	-16	-36	-8	-40	-25
\$25K To \$39.9K	3	-3	-2	-1	-13	5	-19	-7
\$40K To \$49.9K	15	0	1	12	-2	26	-10	7
Over \$50K	31	27	32	28	24	37	12	27
Region:								
Northeast	1	-7	-6	-2	-19	2	-26	-11
Midwest	5	7	3	-2	-8	10	-8	1
South	0	-4	-9	0	-9	2	-15	-8
West	-10	-7	10	-8	-17	11	-23	-7
Race:								
White	3	-1	1	2	-9	7	-10	-2
Black	-17	-15	-18	-31	-32	-10	-48	-30
Politics:								
Republican	13	14	10	9	1	17	-12	4
Democrat	-3	-10	-4	-4	-11	10	-19	-6
Independent	-9	-6	-4	-8	-20	-3	-25	-12
Education:								
< High School	-31	-31	-25	-33	-36	-13	-47	-34
High Sch. Grad.	-6	-5	-11	-12	-21	-4	-22	-13
College +	13	10	14	14	4	17	1	9
Home:								
Own	3	3	5	6	-4	10	-7	1
Rent	-13	-18	-19	-24	-30	-11	-36	-23
Marital Status:								
Single	3	0	-3	-16	-16	3	-26	-10

Married	5	2	5	6	-7	10	-9	-1
Sep/Wid/Div	-25	-24	-22	-21	-31	-9	-32	-23
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	12	6	6	3	-1	12	-5	2
Part-Time	-6	-3	-8	1	-11	5	-29	-15
Not Employed	-17	-16	-10	-11	-28	-5	-29	-15