

NOTE: ADD Qs for HOTLINE

ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 6/21/98

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Consumer Confidence Humming in High Gear

Consumer confidence continued to hum along in high gear this week, undaunted by Asia's economic troubles or the skittish stock markets, the latest ABC News/Money magazine poll has found.

Ratings of the national economy, at 69 percent positive, are down from their peak of 76 percent in February but still nearly twice the average since late 1985. Sixty-five percent also rate their own finances positively, and 53 percent call it a good time to buy things.

These ratings extend the extraordinarily high level of consumer confidence that's prevailed all year, boosted by rising incomes, low unemployment and low inflation. Confidence soared in the first quarter, then eased off in April and May, but has remained far above its norm throughout the year.

	Today	Positive Ratings	
		Record high	12-yr. avg.
National Economy	69%	76	34
Personal Finances	65	68	55
Buying Climate	53	54	36

INDEX - The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on ratings of the economy, personal finances and the buying climate, was unchanged this week at +25 on its scale of +100 to -100. It reached a record high of +29 on March 22, and remains far above its lifetime average of -17, or even its previous best year, an average of +5 in 1997. Call the Polling Unit, x2621, for a chart tracking consumer confidence over time.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	+25	
March 22	+29	Record high
1998 average (to date)	+22	
1997 average	+5	Best year
1992 average	-44	Worst year
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low

BETTER/SAME - A wildcard question this week finds continued optimism for the future, as well: Seventy-nine percent of Americans say the economy is improving (30 percent) or staying the same (49 percent); just 21 percent say it's getting worse. That reading, much more optimistic than usual, has been steady for the last three months.

GROUPS - High as it is, confidence still lags in economically vulnerable groups. The index is +36 among men compared to +14 among women, +29 among whites but -15 among blacks, +63 in higher-income households but -36 in the lowest and +46 among people who've attended college but -10 among high school dropouts.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- Sixty-nine percent of Americans rate the economy positively, down one point this week. The best was 76 percent Feb. 22; the worst, 93 percent negative in late 1991 and early 1992.

PERSONAL FINANCES - Sixty-five percent rate their finances positively, unchanged. The best was 68 percent March 22; the worst, 58 percent negative March 14, 1993.

BUYING CLIMATE - Fifty-three percent call this a good time to buy things, up one point. The best was 54 percent March 22; the worst, 80 percent negative in fall 1990.

	Positive ratings for...		
	National Economy	Personal Finances	Buying Climate
This week	69%	65	53
Full average	34	55	36
Best	76	68	54
Worst	7	42	20

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 1,031 interviews in the month ending June 21 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. The wildcard question is based on 511 interviews June 10-21; those results have a 4.5-point error margin. Field work by ICR Survey 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 Gary Langer.

For details contact the ABC News Polling Unit, (212) 456-2621. ABC News polls are available on America Online (keyword "ABC Polls") and at ABCnews.com on the Internet.

06/21/98

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:

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	25	25	23	29	9	29	5	16
State of Economy	38	40	42	42	14	52	8	27
Personal Finances	30	30	28	36	26	36	14	25
Buying Climate	6	4	-2	8	-12	8	-14	-5

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:

Men	36	35	37	37	18	39	13	25
Women	14	15	9	20	1	20	-6	7

Age:

18 - 34	21	17	16	27	0	29	-2	11
35 - 44	31	34	18	37	5	37	-4	15
45 - 54	19	23	29	18	14	31	2	16
55 - 64	34	36	36	28	17	47	-5	19
65 +	19	18	32	29	23	35	-2	21

Income:

Under \$15K	-36	-38	-40	-26	-35	-18	-47	-32
\$15K To \$24.9K	-4	3	9	12	-15	16	-34	-6
\$25K To \$39.9K	20	21	23	24	6	25	-6	12
\$40K To \$49.9K	50	54	46	54	2	54	2	30
Over \$50K	63	57	52	63	48	63	33	50

Region:

Northeast	26	27	23	15	0	27	-4	12
Midwest	36	38	25	34	17	38	6	21
South	18	16	22	25	8	29	-6	15
West	22	20	20	40	10	40	1	14

Race:

White	29	29	29	33	15	33	10	21
Black	-15	-12	-8	-8	-31	4	-34	-15

Politics:

Republican	46	42	39	34	26	46	16	29
Democrat	19	21	22	25	12	26	-2	12
Independent	19	18	21	30	-4	30	-4	12

Education:

< High School	-10	-14	-26	-14	-16	1	-38	-17
High Sch. Grad.	9	10	18	22	-3	22	-7	7
College +	46	46	43	48	26	48	22	33

Home:

Own	31	32	28	36	20	36	12	23
Rent	9	6	10	9	-18	11	-18	-3

Marital Status:

Single	31	23	24	30	3	31	-7	10
Married	26	30	27	36	16	36	13	23
Sep/Wid/Div	10	2	6	2	-9	18	-22	-4

Employ. Status:

Full-Time	36	34	32	35	13	36	10	23
Part-Time	8	13	16	23	-1	27	-5	8
Not Employed	12	13	8	20	7	25	-8	7