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ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 7/13/97  
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Consumer Confidence  
Extends its Record

Consumer confidence forged further into record territory in this week's 11-year-old ABC News/Money magazine poll, with advances in Americans' ratings of both their family finances and the buying climate.

Fifty-seven percent now rate the economy positively, tying the record; 63 percent say their own finances are O.K., also tying the record; and 47 percent call it a good time to spend money, the most since August 1986.

The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these three gauges, advanced to +11 on its scale of +100 to -100, its highest in more than 600 consecutive weeks of polls.

The index has risen very sharply, up from -8 four months ago, as more people felt the benefits of a growing economy. It averaged -30 from 1990-95, hampered first by recession and then by slow-growing income; but even in the second-half of the 1980s it managed only -9. Confidence hasn't been near its current level since the index reached +8 back in May 1986.

The ABC/Money index has averaged 0 this year, its best January-to-July average since the poll began in late 1985. Its previous best seven-month average was -2 in 1986.

ABC/Money Index

Today	+11	Record High
1997 average	0	
1996 average	-11	
1990-95	-30	
1986-90	-9	
Full average	-19	

The ABC/Money index has gained 12 points just since May 18, its run-up following sharp first-quarter advances in economic growth. Investors seem to share the wider public's confidence, pushing stocks to new highs. And economic satisfaction has boosted Bill Clinton to a career-best approval rating, 64 percent in last week's ABC News/Washington Post poll.

GAUGES - Positive ratings of the economy are leading the index; they're 25 points above their 11-year average. Ratings of personal finances and the buying climate are nine and 12 points better than average, respectively.

While views of the economy and finances are at record highs, ratings of the buying climate are five points below their record, set in May 1986. The government reported today that inflation was only 1.4 percent in the first half of this year, its lowest in any half since 1986 - a remarkable feat with unemployment near a 24-year low.

Positive Ratings

	Today	11-yr avg.
National Economy	57%	32%
Personal Finances	63	54
Buying Climate	47	35

GROUPS - Confidence lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, blacks, the poor and the less-educated. But the gap between men and women is narrower than usual; today it's 13 points (+18 among men and +5 among women) compared to a 12-month average of 20 points.

The index is +16 among whites but -16 among blacks; +47 in higher-income households but -24 in the lowest; and +30 among people who've attended college but -8 among high school dropouts.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- Fifty-seven percent rate the economy positively, tying the record of June 22 and July 6. It's averaged 50 percent this year; the average for the life of the index is 32 percent. The worst, 93 percent negative, was in late 1991 and early 1992.

PERSONAL FINANCES - Sixty-three percent rate their finances positively, tying the record of April 13, June 15 and June 22. It's averaged 60 percent this year; the average for the life of the index is 54 percent. The worst was 58 percent negative March 14, 1993.

BUYING CLIMATE - Fifty-three percent call this a bad time to buy things, down a point this week. It's averaged 60 percent this year; the average for the life of the index is 65 percent. The worst was 80 percent negative Nov. 2 and Oct. 28, 1990; the best, 52 percent positive May 11, 1986.

	National Economy	Personal Finances	Buying Climate
This week	57% pos	63% pos	53% neg
1997 Average	50% pos	60% pos	60% neg
Full Average	68% neg	54% pos	65% neg
Worst	93% neg	58% neg	80% neg
Best	57% 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 1,023 interviews in the month ending July 13 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 Gary Langer.

For details contact the ABC News Polling Unit, (212) 456-2621. ABC polls are available in the ABC News area of America Online (keyword "ABC Polls") and on ABC News' internet site, ABCNEWS.COM.

07/13/97	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Group								
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GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	11	10	9	1	-9	11	-13	-4
State of Economy	14	14	12	-6	-22	14	-24	-6
Personal Finances	26	24	26	26	14	26	10	17
Buying Climate	-6	-8	-12	-18	-18	-6	-30	-22
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	18	14	21	14	2	21	-5	7
Women	5	6	-3	-11	-20	6	-25	-13
Age:								
18 - 34	8	6	-1	5	-12	8	-23	-5
35 - 44	5	3	7	-1	-3	9	-21	-5
45 - 54	4	5	18	-7	-19	18	-19	-2
55 - 64	4	3	21	-2	-24	21	-36	-2
65 +	35	35	13	12	9	35	-12	1
Income:								
Under \$15K	-24	-28	-45	-50	-53	-24	-56	-44
\$15K To \$24.9K	-8	-8	-15	-8	-37	-8	-40	-23
\$25K To \$39.9K	-5	-6	11	3	-9	12	-19	-5
\$40K To \$49.9K	15	10	1	2	11	26	-4	7
Over \$50K	47	47	48	29	27	48	12	31
Region:								
Northeast	5	5	3	-3	-14	5	-26	-8
Midwest	13	7	18	5	2	18	-8	4
South	7	10	8	-6	-14	10	-15	-5
West	21	18	4	11	-9	21	-23	-5
Race:								
White	16	16	13	5	-6	16	-10	1
Black	-16	-19	-25	-24	-38	-10	-48	-28
Politics:								
Republican	26	23	25	13	6	26	-12	7
Democrat	1	6	12	2	-10	12	-19	-3
Independent	10	6	-3	-3	-18	10	-18	-9
Education:								
< High School	-8	-17	-16	-13	-36	-8	-47	-31
High Sch. Grad.	-7	-5	-6	-7	-21	-3	-22	-11
College +	30	29	26	12	9	30	2	12
Home:								
Own	18	18	20	8	-5	20	-7	4
Rent	-7	-11	-19	-18	-24	-7	-33	-21
Marital Status:								

Single	11	9	-5	-2	-19	11	-26	-7
Married	14	13	18	7	-4	18	-9	2
Sep/Wid/Div	0	-1	-17	-19	-18	0	-32	-21
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	15	16	17	7	-2	17	-5	4
Part-Time	0	-4	-2	-2	-21	5	-29	-12
Not Employed	9	6	-3	-7	-16	9	-21	-12