

Confidence Still in a Lull

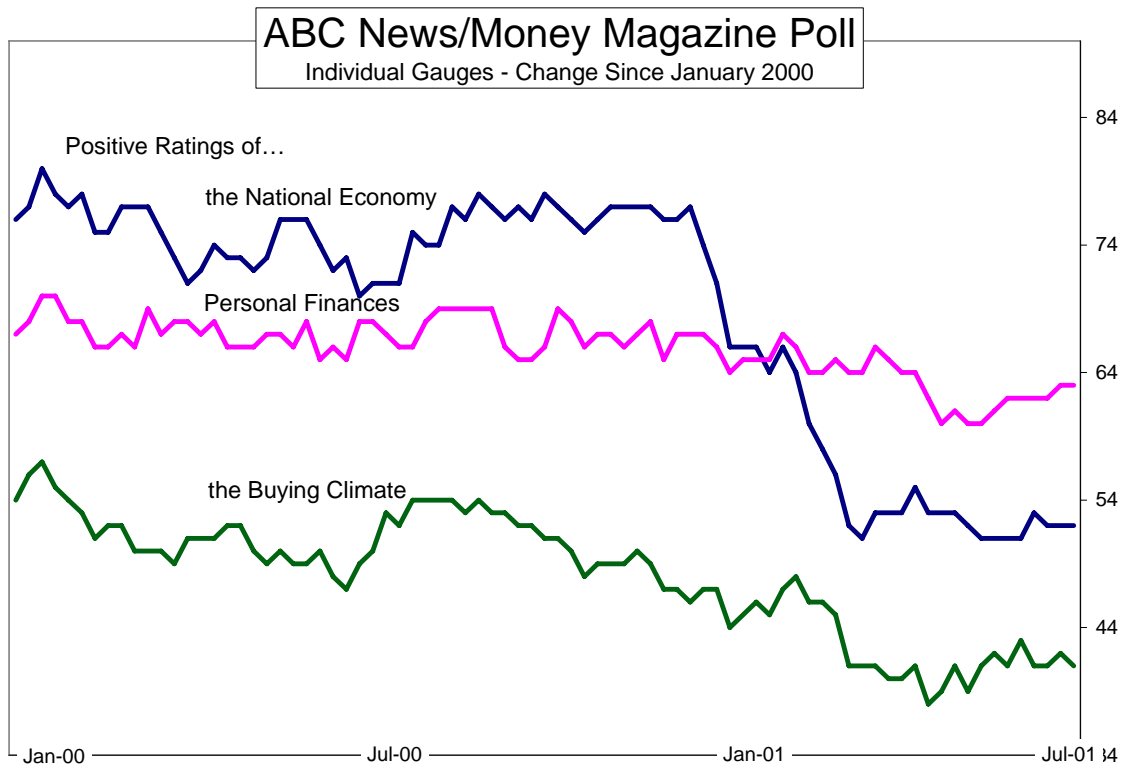
Consumer confidence was unchanged this week, extending a lull that began in April.

Today 52 percent of Americans say the economy is in good shape, down 19 points since January but still 11 points above its 15-year average. Sixty-three percent say their own finances are good and 41 percent say it's a good time to buy things – both also down since the start of the year, but holding above average.

This week's ABC News/Money Magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on these ratings, stands at +4 on a scale of -100 to +100. Its lifetime average, depressed in the early 1990s, is -9.

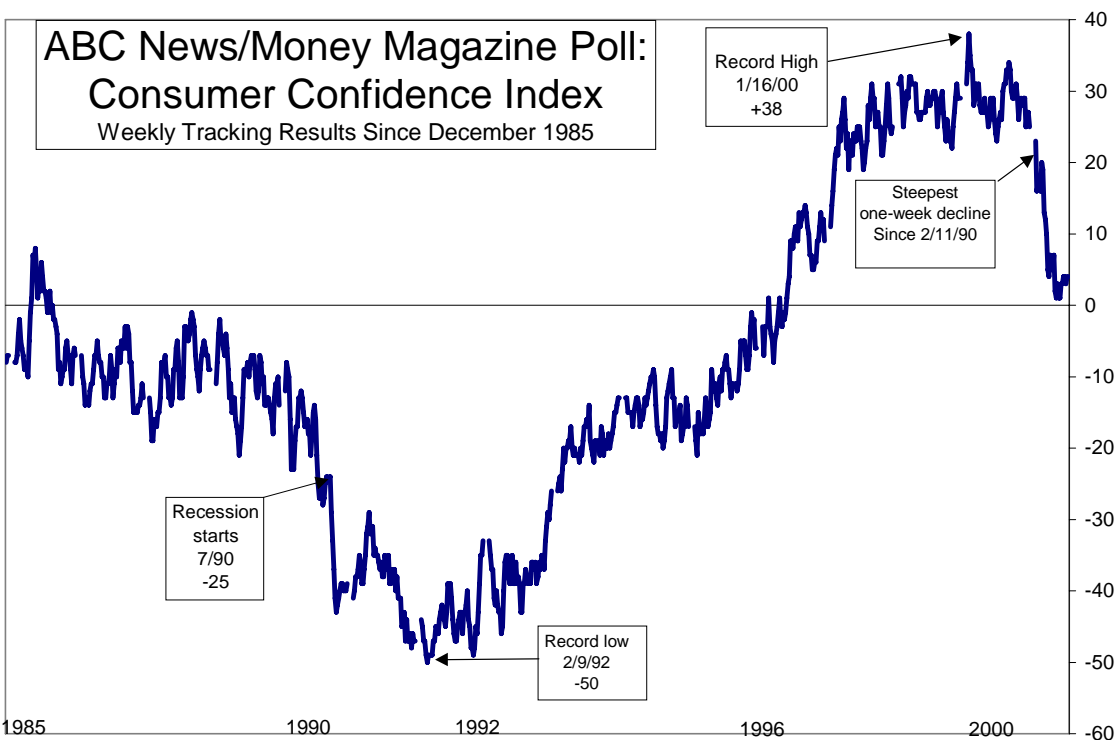
Expectations for the future are also slumping. Four in 10 Americans say the economy is getting worse, and 46 percent say it's staying the same. Just 13 percent think the economy is improving.

	Recent trend		Record high	15-year average
Positive ratings of:	7/15/01	1/7/01	1/16/00	
National economy	52%	71	80	41
Buying climate	41	47	57	38
Personal finances	63	66	70	57



TREND – The index fell seven points in one week in January (tying the one-week record), six points in one week in February, five points in one week in March, and another five points in one week in April.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	+ 4	
Last week	+ 4	
Five months ago	+19	
Jan. 7, 2001	+23	
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	- 9	



GROUPS – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +35 in higher-income households compared to -31 in the lowest, +20 among college graduates while -27 among high-school dropouts, +9 among whites but -25 among blacks and +8 among men but 0 among women.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Fifty-two 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	52	2	50	48	36	12
Avg. since 12/85	42	4	38	58	39	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Sixty-three percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, unchanged from last week. The best was 70 percent, set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in January 2000. The worst rating was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	63	5	58	37	27	10
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE – Forty-one percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need, down one point from 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	41	3	38	59	41	18
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	36	62	41	21

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 1,027 interviews in the month ending July 15, 2001 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. The question on expectations was conducted among 511 respondents July 4-15, 2001; 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 Kate Miltner.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at:
<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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07/15/01	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	4	4	4	5	27	34	1	18
State of Economy	4	4	2	6	42	56	2	31
Personal Finances	26	26	24	28	34	38	20	30
Buying Climate	-18	-16	-14	-20	6	8	-24	-7

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	8	9	13	11	35	45	7	24
Women	0	0	-4	0	19	27	-9	12
Age:								
18 - 34	10	10	10	14	35	36	0	20
35 - 44	5	5	0	6	24	34	-1	17
45 - 54	-7	-4	-3	3	34	40	-7	18
55 - 64	12	6	1	-12	21	51	-12	16
65 +	-3	-1	8	3	14	43	-6	16
Income:								
Under \$15K	-31	-34	-51	-28	-19	-8	-51	-26
\$15K To \$24.9K	-18	-31	-25	-25	0	14	-40	-12
\$25K To \$39.9K	-8	-8	-17	-9	14	32	-18	8
\$40K To \$49.9K	-4	-5	10	18	26	51	-10	24
Over \$50K	35	37	37	32	60	68	23	48

Region:								
Northeast	5	7	5	-9	29	42	-9	18
Midwest	1	4	9	10	27	46	0	21
South	6	6	5	3	22	30	-5	15
West	2	0	-2	17	33	42	-4	19
Race:								
White	9	10	10	11	31	38	4	22
Black	-25	-26	-26	-31	0	20	-39	-8
Politics:								
Republican	21	24	23	26	31	48	19	32
Democrat	-3	-3	-5	-2	28	37	-13	13
Independent	0	-2	-5	-2	26	39	-12	13
Education:								
< High School	-27	-28	-38	-29	-1	13	-44	-18
High Sch. Grad.	-7	-6	-10	-2	16	29	-11	10
College +	20	20	26	20	44	53	14	34
Home:								
Own	12	12	12	8	33	42	7	24
Rent	-19	-18	-17	-1	10	17	-19	1
Marital Status:								
Single	7	14	-1	2	33	42	-13	17
Married	6	7	12	13	31	38	6	24
Sep/Wid/Div	-10	-18	-26	-18	4	27	-29	-5
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	13	13	11	10	37	40	8	25
Part-Time	11	5	2	1	33	40	-5	18
Not Employed	-12	-9	-5	-1	10	29	-12	7

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
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
7/09/00	21	28	50	0
9/12/99	21	23	56	1
5/23/99	24	26	49	1
1/31/99	28	21	50	0
1/03/99	29	21	47	2

*Call for full trend.

END