

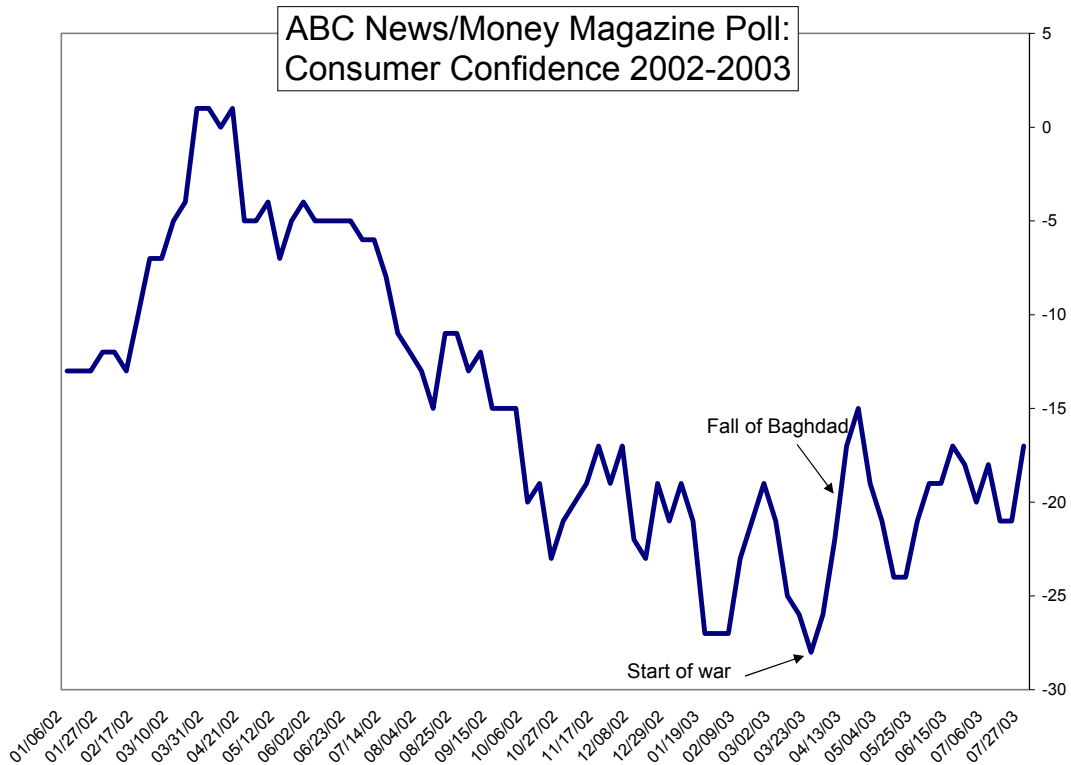
Confidence Advances, Though Still Weak

Consumer ratings of current economic conditions moved up this week, breaking out of a mid-July slump to regain one of their best levels of the year – although hardly a strong one.

The weekly ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index stands at -17 on its scale of +100 to -100, up four points from last week, a real gain. It's reached or exceeded this level only three times this year: -17 on June 15, -15 on April 20 and -17 on April 13. But those are well off its lifetime average, -9 in weekly polls since late 1985.

The index is based on public views of the national economy, personal finances and the buying climate. The second two both advanced this week, but ratings of the economy – which are the farthest from their long-term average – remained in a slump.

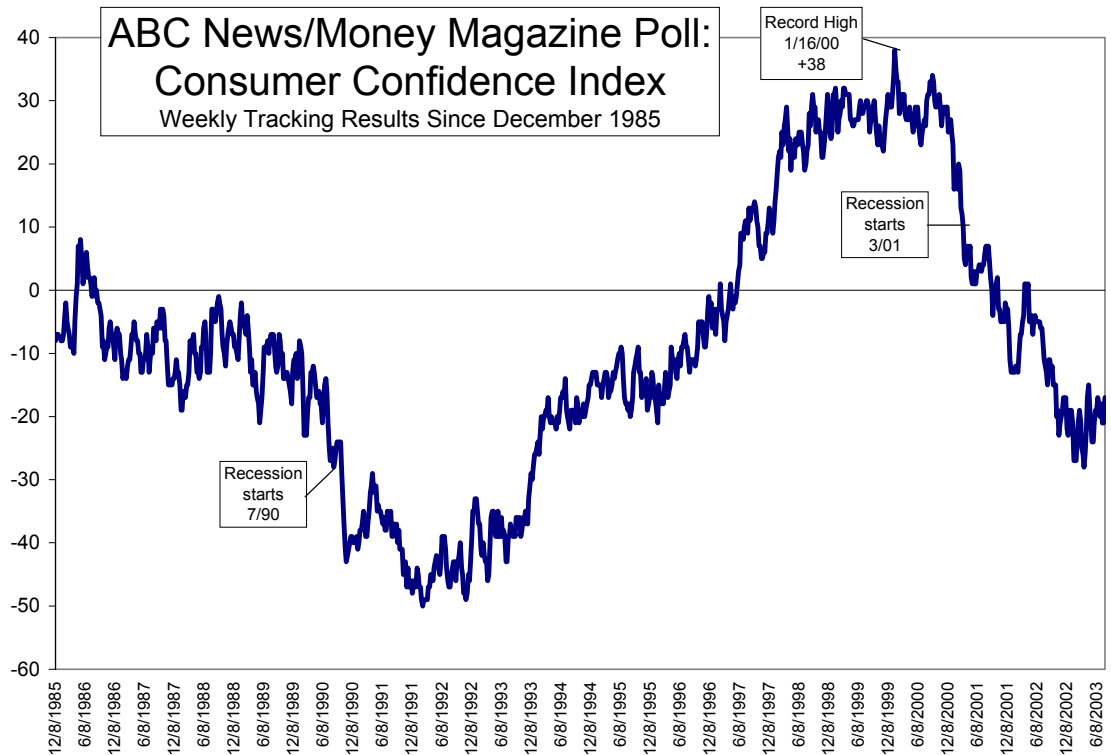
This week 41 percent say it's a good time to buy – just above its 17-year average, and the most this year. Fifty-six percent rate their finances positively, four points more than last week and about the same as its long-term average.



The overall index remains lower than average because of ratings of the national economy – just 27 percent rate it good or excellent, 14 points below the 17-year average.

	ABC News/Money magazine poll				
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2003 high	2003 low	17-yr. avg.
National economy	27%	28	31	21	41
Buying climate	41	39	41	32	39
Personal finances	56	52	60	52	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-17	-21	-15	-28	-9

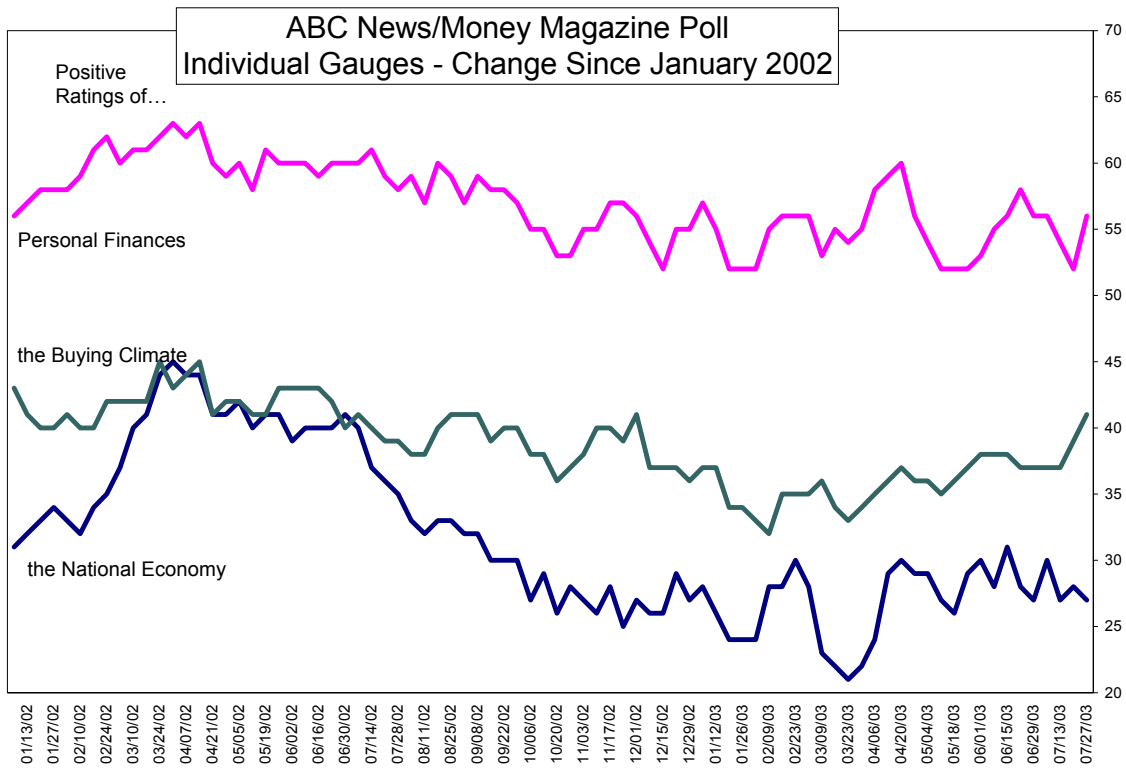
TREND – The index has averaged -21 this year, so far its worst year on average since 1993. The index’s worst year ever was 1992, when it averaged -44. In its best, 2000, it averaged +29.



	ABC/Money Index	
Today	-17	
Last week	-21	
Recent low	-28	March 2003
Recent high	+1	March, April 2002
2003 average	-21	To date
2002 average	-11	
2001 average	+4	
2000 average	+29	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 is typical, the best-off Americans (index +12) are more confident than the worst-off (-46). The index is -11 among whites compared with -66 among blacks; -9 among men, but -24 among women; and +14 among Republicans, while -20 among independents and -39 among Democrats.

The index is worse in the Northeast (-23) than in the West (-8), Midwest (-18) and South (-17).



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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Twenty-seven percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good; it was 28 percent last week, compared with an average of 41 percent since 1985. The highest was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The lowest was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992. For the third straight week, 30 percent say the economy is in "poor" shape, the most since December 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	27	1	26	73	43	30
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	37	59	40	19

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-six percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, a four-point increase over last week's 2003 low of 52 percent. The average since 1985 is 57 percent. The best was 70 percent, on Aug. 30, 1998, and last matched in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	56	5	51	44	31	13
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE - Forty-one percent rate the buying climate positively, compared with 39 percent last week. The lifetime average is 39 percent. The best was 57 percent on 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	39	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 1,002 interviews in the month ending July 27, 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 Telis Demos.

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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07/27/03	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	-17	-21	-20	-19	-12	-11	-28	-20
State of Economy	-46	-44	-46	-42	-30	-30	-58	-44
Personal Finances	12	4	12	12	16	20	4	11
Buying Climate	-18	-22	-26	-28	-22	-18	-36	-26
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	OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS							
Sex:								
Men	-9	-13	-10	-12	-6	-2	-19	-11
Women	-24	-27	-27	-25	-16	-14	-38	-27
Age:								
18 - 34	-14	-21	-15	-10	-12	2	-25	-13
35 - 44	-17	-26	-24	-21	-6	-6	-31	-19

45 - 54	-16	-18	-15	-28	-9	0	-41	-24
55 - 64	-16	-12	-25	-22	-13	-8	-39	-22
65 +	-24	-22	-15	-21	-14	-14	-36	-26
Income:								
Under \$15K	-46	-51	-64	-52	-45	-26	-67	-49
\$15K To \$24.9K	-50	-46	-41	-47	-22	-22	-55	-40
\$25K To \$39.9K	-34	-38	-29	-20	-9	-9	-49	-30
\$40K To \$49.9K	-13	-14	-11	-21	0	0	-32	-16
Over \$50K	12	6	10	6	1	15	-15	3
Region:								
Northeast	-23	-29	-23	-28	-20	-11	-38	-25
Midwest	-18	-17	-23	-16	-12	-6	-34	-19
South	-17	-21	-12	-14	-13	-7	-29	-20
West	-8	-15	-22	-20	0	9	-34	-14
Race:								
White	-11	-15	-16	-13	-7	-7	-23	-16
Black	-66	-59	-30	-48	-41	-21	-66	-41
Politics:								
Republican	14	10	9	9	11	15	-3	7
Democrat	-39	-37	-25	-37	-26	-23	-46	-35
Independent	-20	-26	-26	-26	-15	-9	-38	-23
Education:								
< High School	-43	-49	-43	-40	-24	-18	-59	-41
High Sch. Grad.	-19	-19	-19	-24	-20	-11	-40	-24
College +	-6	-12	-11	-6	0	0	-18	-8
Home:								
Own	-9	-14	-16	-14	-9	-9	-24	-15
Rent	-40	-42	-28	-30	-17	-9	-43	-29
Marital Status:								
Single	-25	-33	-25	-18	-14	1	-33	-17
Married	-10	-15	-14	-16	-6	-6	-27	-15
Sep/Wid/Div	-38	-31	-30	-26	-24	-21	-52	-35
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-6	-10	-9	-13	-5	-4	-20	-12
Part-Time	-25	-34	-34	-19	-15	3	-40	-22
Not Employed	-30	-31	-27	-24	-19	-19	-40	-29

END