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ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 8/3/97
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Confidence Jumps to a New Record

Consumer confidence jumped to another record high in the 11-year-old ABC News/Money magazine poll this week, with Americans giving their best-ever ratings to the national economy and their personal finances.

A record 59 percent now say the economy is in good shape, far above the 11-year average of 32 percent. Sixty-four percent rate their own finances positively, also a record. Fewer, 46 percent, call this a good time to spend money, six points short of the record set in May 1986.

The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these three gauges, now stands at +13 on its scale of +100 to -100, up four points this week. That's its best ever since this weekly poll began in December 1985.

HIGH - Consumer confidence is extraordinarily high. Over its lifetime the ABC/Money index has averaged -19, ranging from -9 in the second half of the 1980s to -33 in the first half of the '90s. Until now it dipped into positive numbers only briefly, in 1986, peaking at +8 on May 11, 1986.

That record held for more than a decade, until confidence began soaring this summer. Boosted by the growing economy, low unemployment, low inflation and higher per-capita income, the index jumped from -1 in mid-May to +9 in mid-June, +11 in mid-July - and now +13.

It's averaged +1 so far this year, its best ever January-through-July average.

ABC/Money Index

Today	+13	record high
1997 average	+1	
1996 average	-11	
1990-95	-30	
1986-90	-9	
Full average	-19	

GAUGES - Positive ratings of the economy are leading the index; they're 27 points better than their 11-year average. Ratings of the buying climate and personal finances are 11 and 10 points better than average, respectively.

	Positive Ratings	
	Today	11-yr avg.
National Economy	59%	32%
Buying Climate	46	35
Personal Finances	64	54

GROUPS - Confidence lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, blacks, the poor and the less-educated. The index is +23 among men but +4 among women; +18 among whites but 0 among blacks; +41 in higher-income households but

-24 in the lowest; and +29 among people who've attended college but -7 among high school dropouts.

EXPECTATIONS - Expectations of continued economic growth also are strong. In a separate question, just 20 percent say they think the economy is "getting worse," among the fewest in more than 170 polls since 1981.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- A record 59 percent rate the economy positively, up three points this week. It's averaged 51 percent this year; the average for the life of the index is 32 percent. The previous record was 57 percent positive in June and July. The worst, 93 percent negative, was in late 1991 and early 1992.

PERSONAL FINANCES - A record 64 percent rate their finances positively, up two points this week. It's averaged 60 percent this year; the average for the life of the index is 54 percent. The previous best was 63 percent this April, June and July. The worst was 58 percent negative March 14, 1993.

BUYING CLIMATE - Fifty-four percent call this a bad time to buy things, unchanged this week. It's averaged 59 percent negative 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	59% pos	64% pos	54% neg
1997 Average	51% pos	60% pos	59% neg
Full Average	68% neg	54% pos	65% neg
Worst	93% neg	58% neg	80% neg
Best	59% pos	64% 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 1,035 interviews in the month ending Aug. 3 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. The result on expectations is based on 520 interviews July 24-Aug. 3 and has a 4.5-point error margin.

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.

08/03/97

	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
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Group

GENERAL POPULATION:

Overall Index	13	9	10	-1	-11	13	-12	-3
State of Economy	18	12	14	-2	-20	18	-22	-4
Personal Finances	28	24	24	18	14	28	10	18
Buying Climate	-8	-8	-8	-18	-28	-4	-30	-21

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:

Men	23	20	14	15	-1	23	-5	8
Women	4	-1	6	-15	-21	6	-25	-12

Age:

18 - 34	6	7	6	1	-17	12	-17	-4
35 - 44	9	3	3	5	-4	9	-21	-4
45 - 54	14	9	5	2	-8	18	-12	-1
55 - 64	21	11	3	-6	-12	21	-36	0
65 +	23	20	35	-10	-12	35	-12	2

Income:

Under \$15K	-24	-27	-28	-44	-52	-24	-56	-42
\$15K To \$24.9K	-17	-15	-8	-20	-31	-6	-35	-22
\$25K To \$39.9K	7	1	-6	3	-15	12	-19	-4
\$40K To \$49.9K	21	15	10	15	9	26	-4	7
Over \$50K	41	46	47	31	21	48	12	32

Region:

Northeast	8	11	5	1	-21	11	-26	-7
Midwest	14	9	7	5	6	18	-8	4
South	18	9	10	0	-11	18	-15	-4
West	7	10	18	-10	-21	18	-23	-3

Race:

White	18	15	16	3	-7	18	-10	2
Black	0	-10	-19	-17	-37	0	-48	-26

Politics:

Republican	26	20	23	13	-3	26	-12	7
Democrat	8	7	6	-3	-8	12	-19	-2
Independent	8	4	6	-9	-16	11	-17	-8

Education:

< High School	-7	-10	-17	-31	-36	-7	-47	-29
High Sch. Grad.	-2	-5	-5	-6	-18	-2	-22	-10
College +	29	25	29	13	3	29	2	13

Home:

Own	16	13	18	3	-4	20	-5	4
Rent	2	-2	-11	-13	-30	2	-33	-20

Marital Status:

Single	11	9	9	3	-16	12	-20	-5
Married	17	13	13	5	-6	18	-9	3
Sep/Wid/Div	0	-1	-1	-25	-25	0	-32	-20

Employ. Status:

Full-Time	16	14	16	12	-3	17	-5	5
Part-Time	10	10	-4	-6	-22	10	-29	-10
Not Employed	9	3	6	-17	-20	9	-21	-10