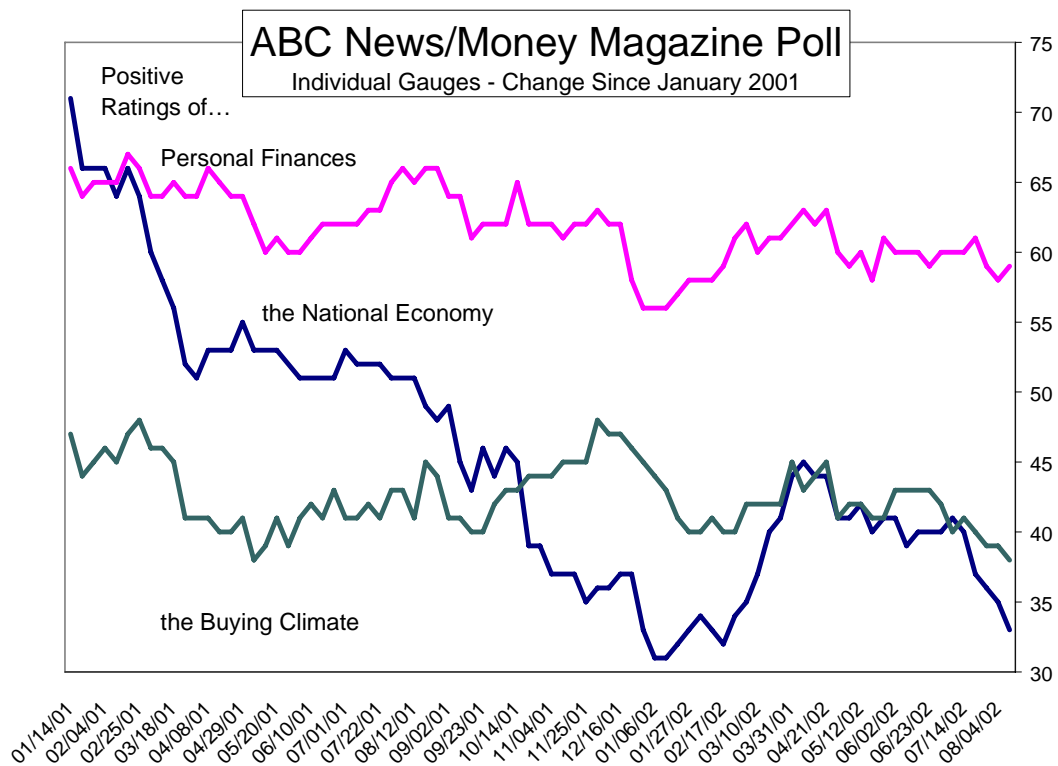


Ratings of Buying Climate Reach a 15-Month Low

Americans' positive ratings of the buying climate have slipped to their lowest level since early last year, just after the start of the recession.

Just 38 percent now call it a good time to buy things, down seven points since April to its lowest since April 2001. Even fewer, 33 percent, say the economy's in good shape, now its lowest since February.

Public ratings of personal finances have held higher and steadier, helping to shore up broader confidence. Fifty-nine percent rate their finances positively, within a point or two of where it's been since April 21.



INDEX – The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, which uses these gauges to measure current economic sentiment, stands at -13 on its scale of +100 to -100. It's down seven points in the last month, matching its lowest point (last reached in February) since the start of the recession in March 2001.

ABC News/Money magazine poll				
Positive ratings of:	This week	2002 High	2002 Low	16-yr. avg.
National economy	33%	45	31	41

Buying climate	38	45	38	39
Personal finances	59	63	56	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-13	+1	-13	-8

THE FUTURE - Expectations about the economy's future direction are also glum, a sign the recovery may have stalled. Forty-three percent this week say the economy's getting worse, about the same as in an ABC News/Washington Post poll last week that showed economic pessimism its highest of the year. Far fewer, 21 percent, say the economy's getting better; 34 percent think it's staying the same.

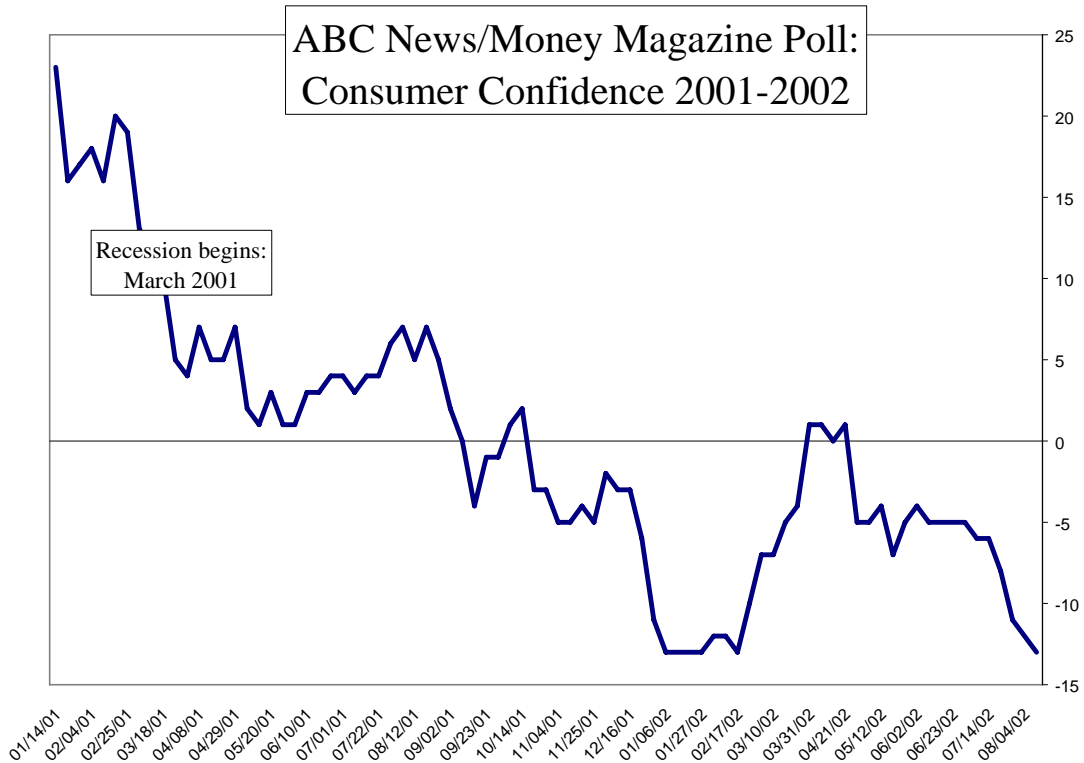


TREND – The ABC/Money index started the year at -13 and improved through early spring. It stumbled in late April and then stabilized until last month, when it began to drop in the face of corporate scandals, the declining stock market, and disappointing economic reports.

The index's all-time high was +38 in January 2000; its record low, -50 in February 1992. Its lifetime average in weekly polls since December 1985 is -8.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	-13	
Last week	-12	
Four weeks ago	- 6	
2002 high	+ 1	
2002 low	-13	
2002 average	- 7	
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 - 8



GROUPS – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +1 among people in higher-income households compared to -45 in the lowest, -4 among college graduates while -18 among high-school dropouts, -8 among whites but -37 among blacks and -5 among men while -20 among women.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-three percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good, down two points from 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	33	1	32	67	47	20
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	38	59	39	19

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-nine percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, up one point 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	59	5	54	41	28	13
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE – Thirty-eight 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	38	2	36	62	43	19
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	36	61	41	21

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 1,017 interviews in the month ending August 4, 2002 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. The result on expectations is based on 515 interviews July 24 – August 4 and 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 Daniel Merkle.

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

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

08/04/02	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	-13	-12	-6	-4	5	7	-13	-5
State of Economy	-33	-30	-20	-16	2	2	-38	-21
Personal Finances	18	16	20	20	30	32	12	21
Buying Climate	-24	-22	-18	-16	-18	-4	-24	-15

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-5	-6	-1	0	7	11	-6	2
Women	-20	-16	-10	-8	2	2	-21	-11
Age:								
18 - 34	-12	-12	3	2	12	15	-12	2
35 - 44	-9	-6	-9	-5	0	9	-17	-5
45 - 54	-11	-9	-7	-8	-1	6	-22	-6
55 - 64	-11	-13	-2	3	-1	20	-30	-6
65 +	-16	-14	-17	-16	9	9	-23	-13
Income:								
Under \$15K	-45	-45	-33	-51	-40	-23	-54	-42
\$15K To \$24.9K	-23	-22	-25	-26	-23	-14	-44	-26

\$25K To \$39.9K	-11	-9	-17	-9	-1	11	-24	-9
\$40K To \$49.9K	0	0	5	12	2	15	-14	3
Over \$50K	1	1	15	20	33	34	1	19
Region:								
Northeast	-21	-20	-10	-2	6	6	-21	-7
Midwest	-11	-12	-16	-1	8	13	-18	-5
South	-22	-13	4	-9	4	7	-22	-3
West	9	0	-7	-2	1	9	-21	-5
Race:								
White	-8	-7	-1	1	8	9	-8	0
Black	-37	-41	-33	-35	-13	-8	-51	-34
Politics:								
Republican	5	11	14	24	30	34	5	19
Democrat	-27	-26	-17	-16	-5	-2	-29	-18
Independent	-16	-15	-9	-10	-2	1	-19	-8
Education:								
< High School	-18	-24	-32	-30	-35	-12	-49	-31
High Sch. Grad.	-22	-20	-7	-5	-3	6	-22	-9
College +	-4	0	4	6	22	22	-5	6
Home:								
Own	-10	-9	-3	4	12	12	-10	1
Rent	-15	-17	-12	-26	-13	-6	-28	-18
Marital Status:								
Single	-7	-14	-5	-4	6	11	-19	-4
Married	-8	-6	0	-1	9	12	-8	1
Sep/Wid/Div	-26	-24	-24	-16	-11	-11	-42	-25
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-8	-5	1	6	15	19	-8	5
Part-Time	-9	-15	-4	-6	-4	14	-15	-5
Not Employed	-20	-19	-16	-18	-8	-5	-28	-18

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
8/4/02	21	43	34	0
7/28/02*	17	44	39	1
7/15/02*	20	36	43	2
7/7/02	22	37	41	0
6/9/02	27	29	43	1
5/12/02	35	27	38	0
4/14/02	34	26	40	0
3/17/02	47	20	32	1
2/17/02	29	27	42	2
1/20/02	25	36	39	1
12/9/01	24	37	38	1
11/11/01	16	48	36	1
10/14/01	15	46	39	0
9/16/01	9	44	46	1
8/12/01	16	46	38	0
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
Call for full trend.
*ABC/Post

END