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ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 8/10/97  
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Rating of the Economy  
Reaches a New High

Public ratings of the national economy pushed to a new high this week, exceeding 60 percent positive for the first time in the 11-year-old ABC News/Money magazine poll.

Ratings of personal finances and the buying climate lost a little ground, however, and overall consumer confidence - based on these three gauges - slipped from last week's all-time high.

Sixty-one percent of Americans now say the economy is in excellent or good shape, the most in more than 600 weeks of continuous polling. That's nearly double the average, 32 percent positive, since this poll began in late 1985.

Sixty-two percent rate their own finances positively, down two points from last week's record high. And 43 percent call this a good time to buy things they want and need, down three points.

INDEX - The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these results, stands at +11 on its scale of +100 to -100, down from last week's record +13 but still extraordinarily high.

Boosted by the growing economy, low unemployment, low inflation and higher per-capita income, the index has jumped from -1 in mid-May to last week's +13. Over its lifetime, by contrast, it's averaged just -19, ranging from -9 in the second half of the 1980s to -33 in the first half of the '90s.

ABC/Money Index

Today	+11	
Last week	+13	record high
1997 average	+1	
1996 average	-11	
1991-95	-33	
1986-90	-9	
Full average	-19	

This week's poll coincides with more positive economic news: a drop in producer prices for an unprecedented seventh month, and a rise in retail sales in July. (The buying climate component of this poll reached its recent peak on July 20).

GAUGES - Positive ratings of the economy are leading the index; they're 29 points better than their 11-year average. Ratings of the buying climate and personal finances both are eight points better than average.

	Positive Ratings	
	Today	11-yr avg.
National Economy	61%	32%
Buying Climate	43	35
Personal Finances	62	54

GROUPS - Confidence lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, blacks, the poor and the less-educated. The index is +20 among men but +3 among women; +17 among whites but -3 among blacks; +40 in higher-income households but -28 in the lowest; and +25 among people who've attended college but -17 among high school dropouts.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- A record 61 percent rate the economy positively, up two points this week. It's averaged 51 percent this year; the average for the life of the index is 32 percent. The worst was 93 percent negative in late 1991 and early 1992.

PERSONAL FINANCES - Sixty-two percent rate their finances positively, down two points from last week's record. 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-seven percent call this a bad time to buy things, up three points 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	61% pos	62% pos	57% 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	61% 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 1,032 interviews in the month ending Aug. 10 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.

08/10/97

This Last 4 Wks 3 Mo. 1 Yr. 12 Mo 12 Mo 12 Mo

Group	Week	Week	Ago	Ago	Ago	High	Low	Avg
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GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	11	13	11	-2	-11	13	-12	-2
State of Economy	22	18	14	-2	-22	22	-22	-3
Personal Finances	24	28	26	16	16	28	10	18
Buying Climate	-14	-8	-6	-20	-28	-4	-30	-21
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	20	23	18	13	-2	23	-5	9
Women	3	4	5	-14	-20	6	-25	-11
Age:								
18 - 34	10	6	8	-2	-12	12	-12	-3
35 - 44	-3	9	5	3	-11	9	-21	-4
45 - 54	16	14	4	0	-9	18	-12	0
55 - 64	13	21	4	-3	-15	21	-36	0
65 +	22	23	35	-8	-12	35	-12	3
Income:								
Under \$15K	-28	-24	-24	-35	-46	-24	-56	-42
\$15K To \$24.9K	-30	-17	-8	-22	-28	-6	-35	-21
\$25K To \$39.9K	13	7	-5	-6	-12	13	-19	-3
\$40K To \$49.9K	24	21	15	8	16	26	-4	8
Over \$50K	40	41	47	36	17	48	12	32
Region:								
Northeast	12	8	5	-5	-26	12	-26	-6
Midwest	15	14	13	5	2	18	-8	5
South	14	18	7	0	-9	18	-15	-3
West	1	7	21	-8	-17	21	-23	-3
Race:								
White	17	18	16	1	-8	18	-10	3
Black	-3	0	-16	-20	-31	0	-48	-25
Politics:								
Republican	28	26	26	9	-2	28	-12	8
Democrat	7	8	1	-7	-10	12	-19	-1
Independent	2	8	10	-6	-16	11	-17	-8
Education:								
< High School	-17	-7	-8	-33	-34	-7	-47	-29
High Sch. Grad.	3	-2	-7	-7	-19	3	-22	-10
College +	25	29	30	14	2	30	2	14
Home:								
Own	16	16	18	2	-3	20	-5	5
Rent	-5	2	-7	-13	-32	2	-33	-19
Marital Status:								
Single	12	11	11	3	-17	12	-20	-4
Married	16	17	14	3	-4	18	-9	4
Sep/Wid/Div	-7	0	0	-23	-29	0	-32	-19
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	17	16	15	8	-5	17	-5	6
Part-Time	7	10	0	-10	-18	10	-29	-10
Not Employed	5	9	9	-13	-19	9	-21	-10