

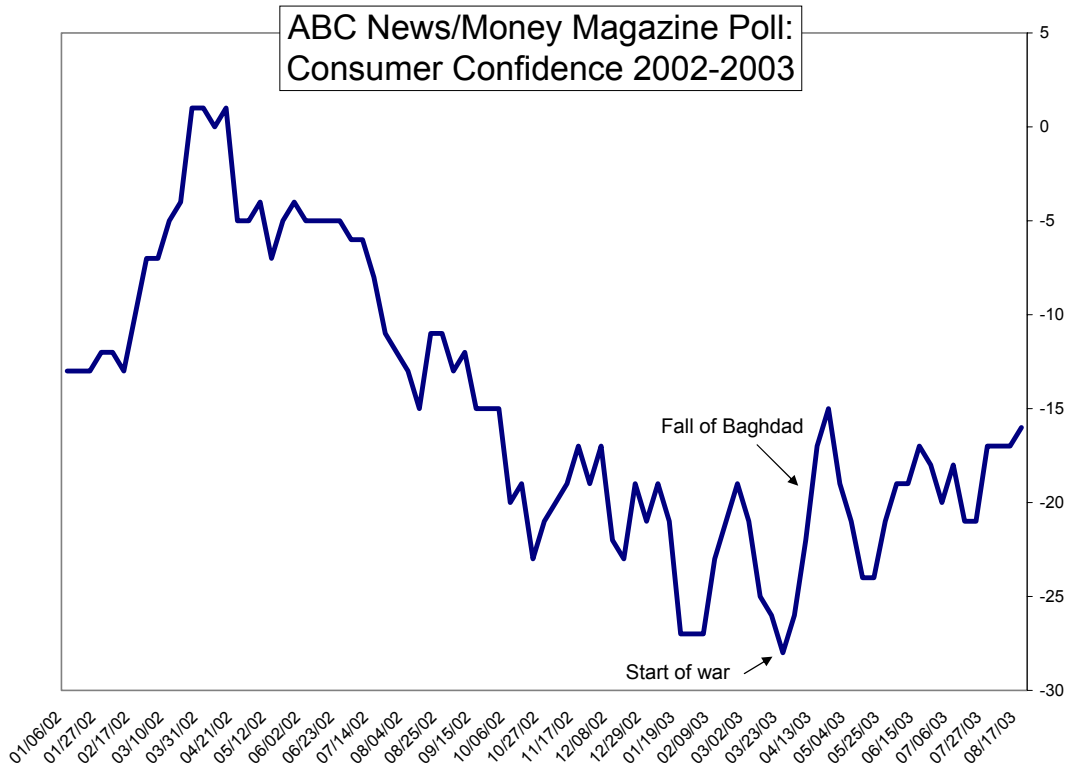
## Confidence on Hold, Again

Americans are holding a wait-and-see pose, with consumer confidence unchanged for the fourth straight week.

The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, made up of ratings of current economic conditions, stands at -16 on its scale of +100 to -100. It was virtually the same, -17, in the previous three weeks.

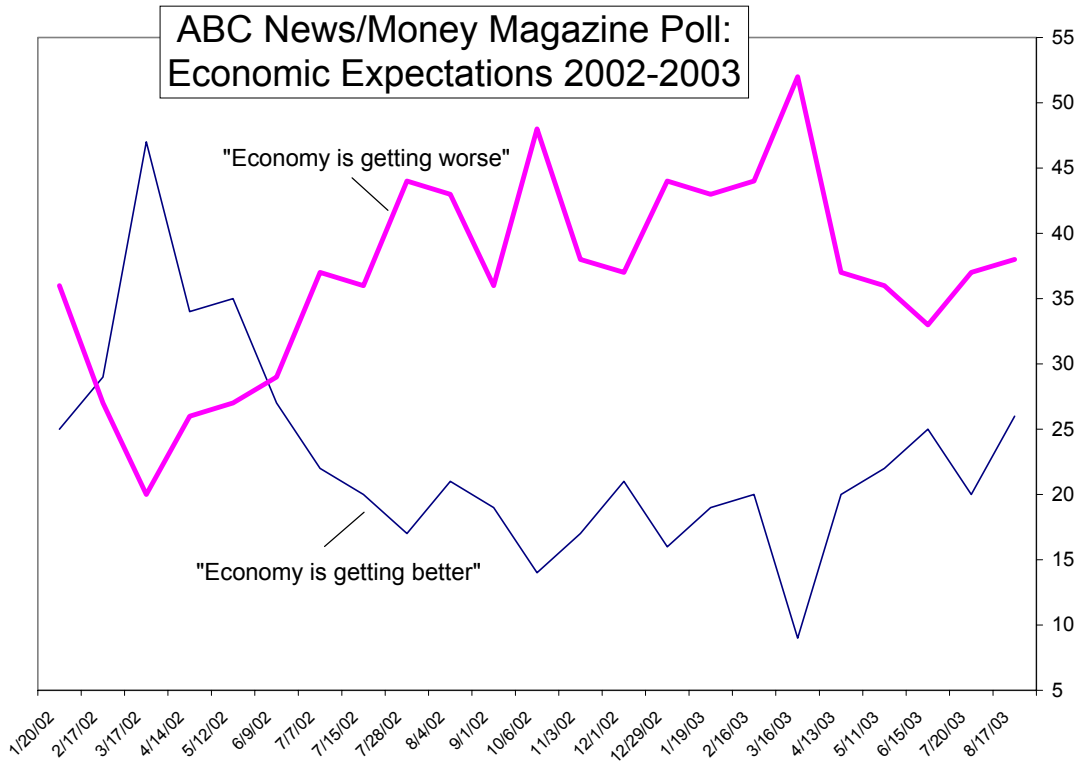
Fifty-nine percent of Americans rate their personal finances positively, up seven points since July 20. But far fewer, 38 percent, call it a good time to buy things, and even fewer, 29 percent, say the economy's in good shape.

	ABC News/Money magazine poll				
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2003 high	2003 low	17-yr. avg.
National economy	29%	27	31	21	41
Buying climate	38	40	41	32	39
Personal finances	59	58	60	52	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-16	-17	-15	-28	-9



LOOKING AHEAD – Expectations for the future direction of the economy improved slightly from last month. Still, more Americans continue to think the economy is getting worse than getting better, 38 percent to 26 percent.

	Getting better	Getting worse	Staying the same	Difference (better-worse)
8/17/03	26	38	36	-12
7/20/03	20	37	42	-17
6/15/03	25	33	43	- 8
5/11/03	22	36	41	-14
4/13/03	20	37	43	-17
3/16/03	9	52	39	-43

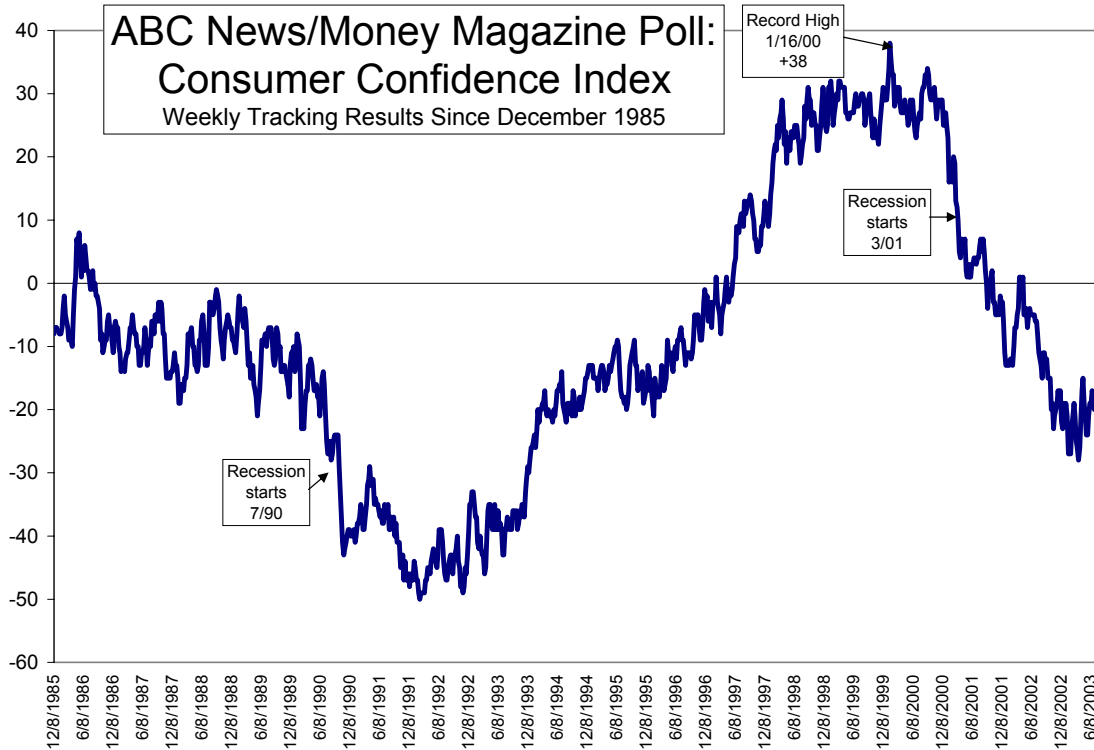


TREND – The index has averaged -21 this year, well off its average since Dec. 1985, -9. Its best year was 2000, when it averaged +29; its worst was 1992, when it averaged -44.

At -16 this week, the index is near its high for the year, -15 on April 20. It's 54 points off its record high, +38 in January 2000, but still 34 points better than its record low, -50 in February 1992.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	-16	
Last week	-17	
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 – Confidence, as usual, is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +9 among people in higher-income households compared with -45 in the lowest, +1 among college graduates while -50 among high-school dropouts, -11 among whites but -55 among blacks, -7 among men while -23 among women and +19 among Republicans, while -23 among independents and -40 among Democrats.

The index continues to be highest in the South, -9, compared with -16 in the Midwest, -20 in the West and -22 in the Northeast.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Twenty-nine percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good; it was 27 percent last week. The highest was 80 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The lowest was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

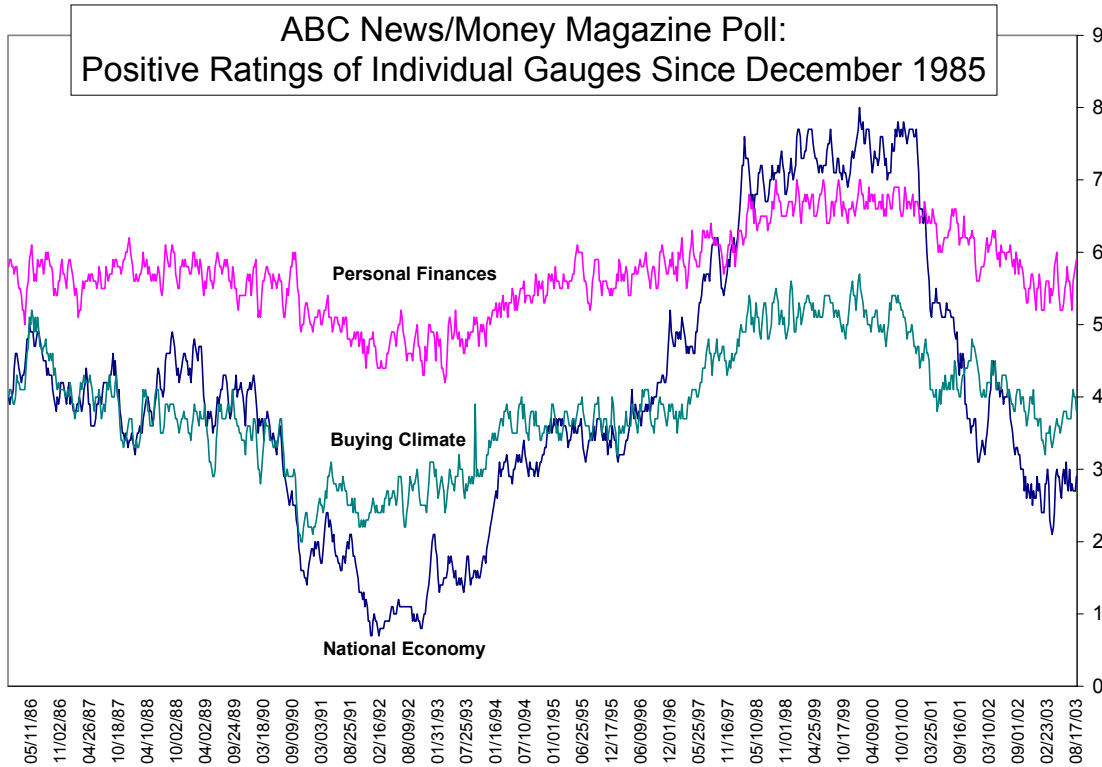
	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	29	1	28	71	43	28
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	37	59	40	20

**PERSONAL FINANCES** – Fifty-nine percent rate their own finances as excellent or good; it was 58 percent last week. 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	59	6	53	41	26	15
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; it was 40 percent last week. 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	38	2	36	62	42	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 1,005 interviews in the month ending Aug. 17, 2003, and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. The expectations question was asked Aug. 6-17 among 503 respondents and has an error margin of 4.5 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 Dalia Sussman.

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 or Lisa Finkel, (212) 456-6190.

08/17/03	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	-16	-17	-21	-24	-11	-11	-28	-20
State of Economy	-42	-46	-44	-48	-34	-34	-58	-45
Personal Finances	18	16	4	4	20	20	4	11
Buying Climate	-24	-20	-22	-28	-20	-18	-36	-26
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-7	-7	-13	-15	-2	-2	-19	-11
Women	-23	-25	-27	-32	-21	-14	-38	-27
Age:								
18 - 34	-12	-14	-21	-20	-9	2	-25	-13
35 - 44	-15	-16	-26	-17	-18	-9	-31	-19
45 - 54	-8	-11	-18	-40	0	0	-41	-24
55 - 64	-18	-16	-12	-14	-14	-8	-39	-22
65 +	-27	-29	-22	-31	-17	-15	-36	-26
Income:								
Under \$15K	-45	-42	-51	-59	-26	-26	-67	-49
\$15K To \$24.9K	-46	-49	-46	-41	-24	-24	-57	-41
\$25K To \$39.9K	-31	-32	-38	-37	-21	-16	-49	-31
\$40K To \$49.9K	6	-7	-14	-28	-15	6	-32	-16
Over \$50K	9	5	6	0	3	15	-15	4
Region:								
Northeast	-22	-27	-29	-34	-19	-11	-38	-25
Midwest	-16	-20	-17	-14	-6	-6	-34	-19
South	-9	-8	-21	-19	-19	-7	-29	-19
West	-20	-17	-15	-34	-1	4	-34	-15
Race:								
White	-11	-11	-15	-19	-9	-8	-23	-16
Black	-55	-64	-59	-56	-24	-21	-68	-43
Politics:								
Republican	19	18	10	8	5	19	-3	8
Democrat	-40	-39	-37	-45	-24	-23	-46	-36
Independent	-23	-23	-26	-26	-11	-9	-38	-24
Education:								
< High School	-50	-41	-49	-48	-21	-21	-59	-42
High Sch. Grad.	-23	-22	-19	-30	-19	-11	-40	-24
College +	1	-6	-12	-12	-4	1	-18	-9

Home:								
Own	-8	-11	-14	-19	-12	-8	-24	-15
Rent	-35	-33	-42	-36	-9	-9	-43	-31
Marital Status:								
Single	-23	-24	-33	-31	-3	1	-33	-18
Married	-6	-9	-15	-13	-9	-6	-27	-15
Sep/Wid/Div	-42	-37	-31	-46	-24	-21	-52	-36
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-5	-5	-10	-20	-5	-4	-20	-12
Part-Time	-17	-21	-34	-26	-17	3	-40	-23
Not Employed	-29	-31	-31	-27	-20	-20	-40	-29

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
8/17/03	26	38	36	1
7/20/03	20	37	42	1
6/15/03	25	33	43	0
5/11/03	22	36	41	0
4/13/03	20	37	43	0
3/16/03	9	52	39	0
2/16/03	20	44	36	0
1/19/03	19	43	37	0
12/29/02	16	44	39	1
12/1/02	21	37	42	1
11/3/02	17	38	44	0
10/6/02	14	48	37	1
9/1/02	19	36	44	1
8/4/02	21	43	34	0

Call for full trend.

\*\*\*END\*\*\*