SURVEY#: 507 DATE: 2/06/96 TO 9/09/99 #INT: 1 GEN USA

ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 8/17/97

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Expectations are High For Economic Progress

Record levels of confidence in current economic conditions are fueling expectations for the future, with seven in 10 Americans predicting that they or

their families will be better off in the next generation.

In the course of the next 25 years only 20 percent think they'll be worse off financially than they are now, an ABC News/Money magazine poll has found. Seventy percent expect they or their families will do better.

That hopeful outlook accompanies a summerlong boom in consumer confidence, which reached a record high in this 11-year-old weekly poll on Aug. 3 and is just a point below that level today.

In this week's results, 61 percent rate the national economy positively, matching the record set last week; 62 percent rate their own finances positively; and 45 percent call this a good time to spend money.

The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on those three measures, stands at +12 on its scale of +100 to -100, up a point this week. It reached a record +13 two weeks ago.

ABC/Money Index

Today	+12	
Aug. 3	+13	record high
1997 average	+2	
1996 average	-11	
1991-95	-33	
1986-90	-9	
Full average	-19	

Boosted by the growing economy, low unemployment, low inflation and higher per-capita income, the index has jumped from -1 in mid-May to +12 today. Over its lifetime it's averaged just -19, ranging from -9 in the second half of the 1980s to -33 in the first half of the '90s.

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 are 10 points better than average; ratings of personal finances, eight points better.

	Positive Ratings			
	Today	11-yr avg.		
National Economy	61%	32%		
Buying Climate	45	35		
Personal Finances	62	54		

GROUPS - Confidence lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, blacks, the poor and the less-educated. The index is +24 among men but +1 among women; +19 among whites but -11Jamong blacks; +45 in higher-income households

but -33 in the lowest; and +26 among people who've attended college but -13 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, unchanged 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, matching 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-five percent call this a bad time to buy things, down two 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	55% 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 1,033 interviews in the month ending Aug. 17 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. The question on expectations for the future was conducted among 513 Americans Aug. 6-17; that result 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.

	Week	Week	Ago	Ago	Ago	High	Low	Avg
08/17/97	This	Last	4 Wks	3 Mo.	1 Yr.	12 Mo	12 Mo	12 Mo

GENERAL POPULATION: Overall Index	Group								
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Buying Climate	Personal Finances	24	24	24	16	16	28	10	19
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