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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 -11 among blacks; +45 in higher-income households



Group

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GENERAL POPULATION:

Overall Index	12	11	11	-1	-11	13	-12	-1
State of Economy	22	22	14	2	-20	22	-20	-2
Personal Finances	24	24	24	16	16	28	10	19
Buying Climate	-10	-14	-4	-20	-30	-4	-30	-20

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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	24	20	18	8	3	24	-5	9
Women	1	3	4	-8	-24	6	-25	-11
Age:								
18 - 34	11	10	12	-5	-7	12	-11	-3
35 - 44	6	-3	0	3	-14	9	-21	-4
45 - 54	16	16	3	2	-11	18	-12	0
55 - 64	15	13	6	-4	-25	21	-36	1
65 +	14	22	30	6	-10	35	-10	3
Income:								
Under \$15K	-33	-28	-29	-36	-48	-24	-56	-41
\$15K To \$24.9K	-34	-30	-6	-19	-25	-6	-35	-21
\$25K To \$39.9K	15	13	0	1	-14	15	-19	-3
\$40K To \$49.9K	30	24	21	2	10	30	-4	8
Over \$50K	45	40	45	37	18	48	12	33
Region:								
Northeast	14	12	4	-1	-18	14	-18	-5
Midwest	15	15	13	9	-3	18	-8	5
South	14	14	8	-3	-10	18	-15	-3
West	3	1	18	-5	-16	21	-23	-2
Race:								
White	19	17	15	4	-8	19	-10	3
Black	-11	-3	-5	-32	-39	0	-48	-25
Politics:								
Republican	31	28	21	10	-3	31	-12	9
Democrat	8	7	5	-2	-10	12	-19	-1
Independent	3	2	11	-9	-15	11	-17	-7
Education:								
< High School	-13	-17	-14	-26	-28	-7	-47	-28
High Sch. Grad.	4	3	-5	-6	-22	4	-22	-9
College +	26	25	28	13	2	30	2	14
Home:								
Own	19	16	15	4	-4	20	-5	6
Rent	-10	-5	-1	-14	-30	2	-33	-18
Marital Status:								
Single	7	12	12	-3	-14	12	-20	-4
Married	19	16	13	7	-4	19	-9	4
Sep/Wid/Div	-9	-7	-2	-20	-32	0	-32	-19
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	19	17	17	8	-5	19	-5	6
Part-Time	10	7	1	-10	-21	10	-29	-9
Not Employed	3	5	5	-9	-18	9	-21	-9