

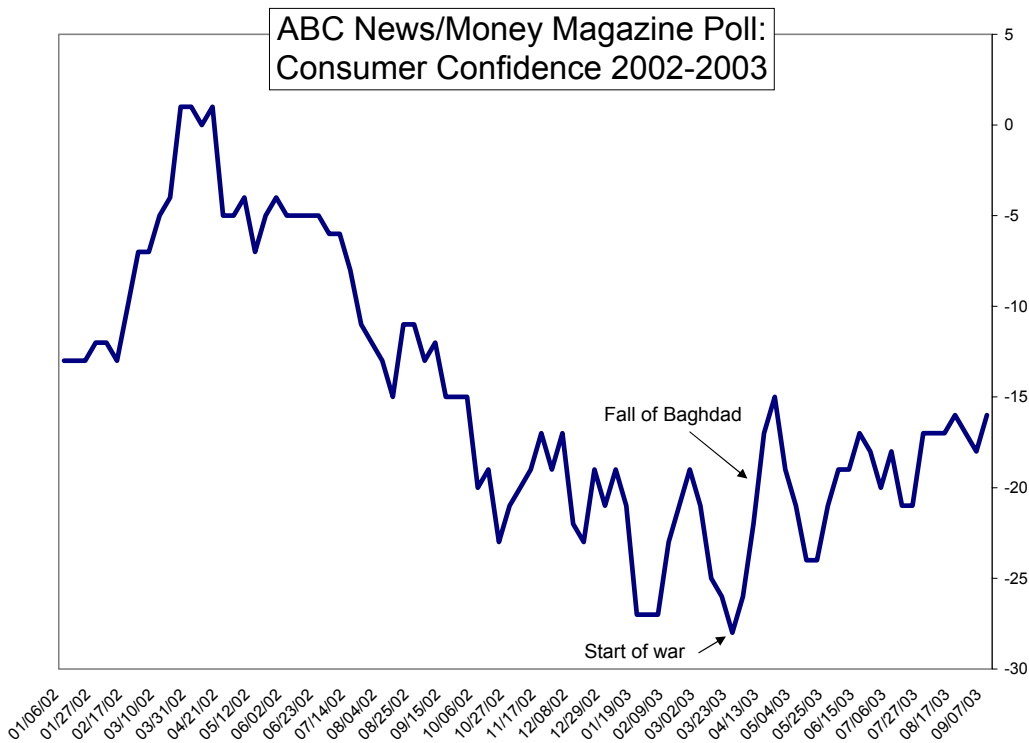
Near Its Best of the Year, Confidence Shows Resilience

It could be worse: Consumer confidence was essentially level again this week, holding the line against high gasoline prices and other economic concerns.

The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on ratings of current economic conditions, stands at -16 on its scale of +100 to -100, one point off its high for the year, reached in April. It's been flat (-16 to -18) for the last seven weeks.

Thirty-one percent of Americans rate the economy positively, matching the 2003 high, but 10 points below the average since this weekly poll began in late 1985; and 39 percent call it a good time to buy things, matching the average. Many more, 56 percent, say their personal finances are in good shape, just one point off the long-term average.

Steadiness in ratings of the buying climate is something of a surprise, because this gauge has been significantly correlated with gasoline prices – and unleaded regular now goes for \$1.72 a gallon, up from \$1.40 a year ago.

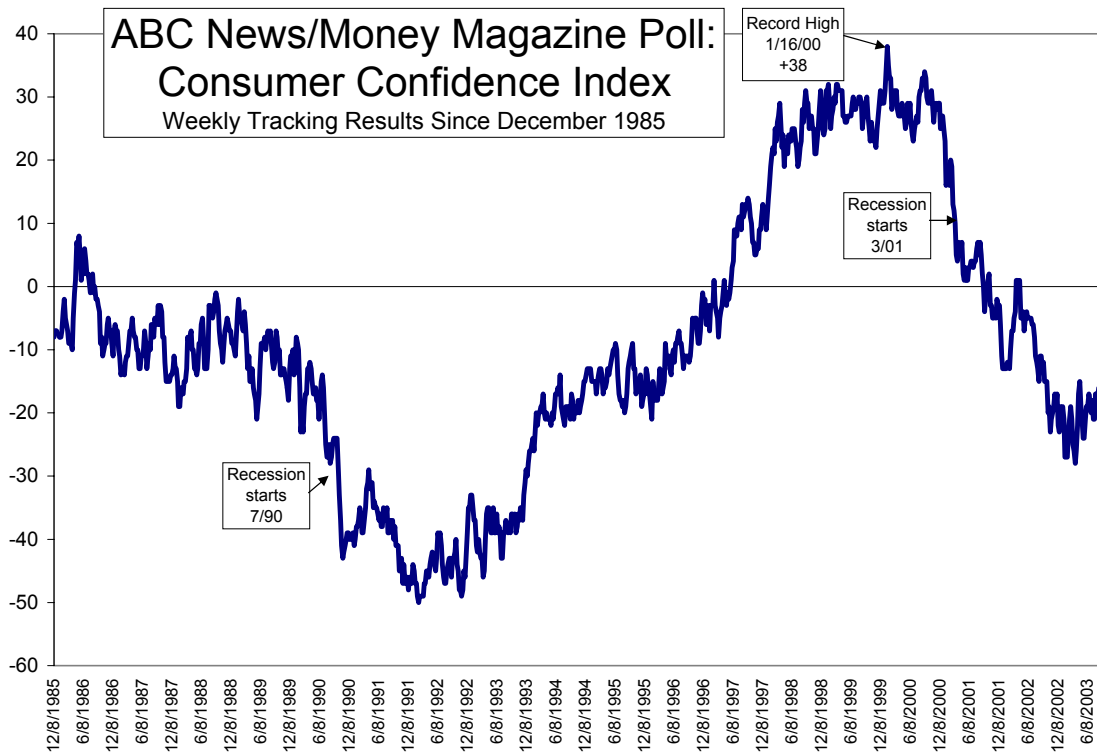


ABC News/Money magazine poll					
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2003 high	2003 low	17-yr. avg.
National economy	31%	30	31	21	41
Buying climate	39	37	41	32	39
Personal finances	56	56	60	52	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-16	-18	-15	-28	-9

In a separate ABC News poll this week, Americans by nearly 2-1, 63 percent to 34 percent, said the economy is a bigger problem than terrorism. It was a much narrower 51-46 percent split a year ago.

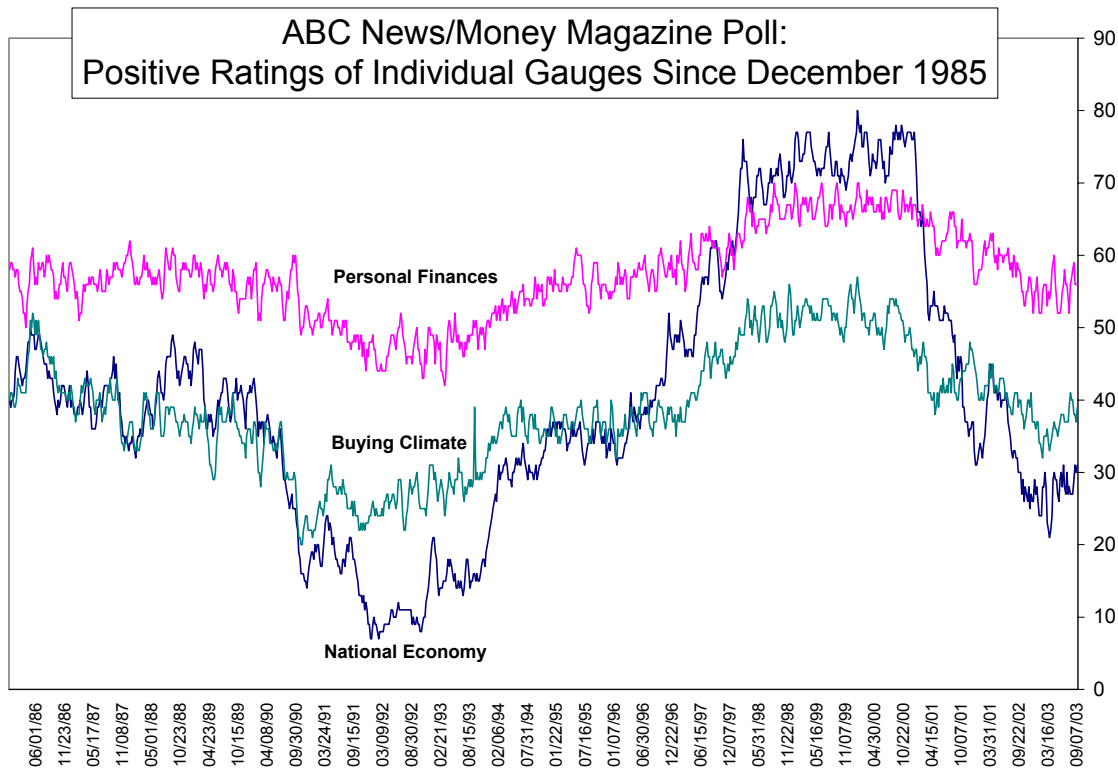
TREND – The ABC/Money index has averaged -9 in the past 17 years, ranging from a high of +38 in January 2000 to a low of -50 in February 1992. It's averaged -21 so far this year, shaping up to be its worst year on average since 1993.

ABC/Money Index		
Today	-16	
Last week	-18	
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 – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +8 among people in higher-income households compared with -53 in the lowest; 0 among college graduates while -45 among high-school dropouts; and -13 among whites but -45 among blacks. It's -3 among men while -28 among women, and +14 among Republicans, while -20 among independents and -41 among Democrats.

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



NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-one percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good; it was 30 percent last week. The highest was 80 percent 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	31	2	29	69	42	27
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	37	59	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-six percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, the same as last week. The best was 70 percent Aug. 30, 1998, and matched in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	56	5	51	44	29	15
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE – Thirty-nine percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 37 percent 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	39	4	35	61	42	19
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 1,007 interviews in the month ending Sept. 7, 2003, and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

The ABC/Money index is derived by subtracting the negative response to each index question 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>

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09/07/03	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	-16	-18	-17	-19	-12	-12	-28	-20
State of Economy	-38	-40	-46	-44	-36	-36	-58	-45
Personal Finances	12	12	16	10	18	20	4	11
Buying Climate	-22	-26	-20	-24	-18	-18	-36	-26

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-3	-6	-7	-11	-9	-3	-19	-12
Women	-28	-28	-25	-27	-14	-14	-38	-27
Age:								
18 - 34	-11	-18	-14	-19	2	2	-25	-14
35 - 44	-19	-17	-16	-16	-22	-9	-31	-19
45 - 54	-15	-13	-11	-21	-13	-8	-41	-25
55 - 64	-22	-16	-16	-19	-22	-8	-39	-22
65 +	-18	-23	-29	-22	-20	-15	-36	-26
Income:								

Under \$15K	-53	-51	-42	-64	-36	-36	-67	-50
\$15K To \$24.9K	-33	-35	-49	-48	-35	-27	-57	-42
\$25K To \$39.9K	-32	-36	-32	-30	-20	-16	-49	-31
\$40K To \$49.9K	4	8	-7	-19	-12	20	-32	-15
Over \$50K	8	3	5	10	10	15	-15	4
Region:								
Northeast	-18	-28	-27	-31	-24	-11	-38	-26
Midwest	-15	-20	-20	-22	-8	-8	-34	-19
South	-13	-10	-8	-8	-10	-6	-29	-19
West	-20	-17	-17	-25	-7	4	-34	-16
Race:								
White	-13	-14	-11	-17	-8	-8	-23	-16
Black	-45	-43	-64	-42	-27	-21	-68	-44
Politics:								
Republican	14	13	18	12	9	19	-3	8
Democrat	-41	-39	-39	-39	-23	-23	-46	-37
Independent	-20	-26	-23	-25	-14	-13	-38	-25
Education:								
< High School	-45	-54	-41	-50	-42	-23	-59	-43
High Sch. Grad.	-27	-25	-22	-23	-14	-11	-40	-25
College +	0	-1	-6	-7	-1	1	-18	-8
Home:								
Own	-8	-10	-11	-15	-9	-8	-24	-15
Rent	-36	-38	-33	-35	-20	-18	-43	-32
Marital Status:								
Single	-19	-24	-24	-18	1	1	-33	-19
Married	-10	-10	-9	-13	-11	-6	-27	-15
Sep/Wid/Div	-35	-38	-37	-46	-27	-21	-52	-37
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-6	-7	-5	-11	-6	-5	-20	-12
Part-Time	-17	-19	-21	-29	3	3	-40	-22
Not Employed	-28	-29	-31	-26	-25	-21	-40	-30

END