

SURVEY#: 507 DATE: 2/06/96 TO 9/09/99 #INT: 1 GEN USA
ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 9/7/97
EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AFTER 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 10, 1997

Another Record High
For Consumer Confidence

Consumer confidence skipped even higher this week, setting another record in the 11-year-old ABC News/Money magazine poll.

Sixty-two percent of Americans now rate the economy positively, 61 percent say their own finances are in good shape and 48 percent call it a good time to buy things. None of those sets a record in itself, but together they're the best they've been since this weekly poll began in December 1985.

The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these three measures, stands at +14 on its scale of +100 to -100, up a point from last week. That boosts its average for the year so far to +3, also a record.

ABC/Money Index

Today	+14	record high
1997 average	+3	
1996 average	-11	
1991-95	-33	
1986-90	-9	
Full average	-19	

Confidence has been on a tear all summer. Boosted by the growing economy, low unemployment, low inflation and higher per-capita income, the index jumped from -1 in mid-May to +13 in early August, and on to today's +14. 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.

GAUGES - Positive ratings of the economy are leading the index; they're 30 points better than their 11-year average. Ratings of the buying climate are 13 points better than average; ratings of personal finances, seven points better.

	Positive Ratings	
	Today	11-yr avg.
National Economy	62%	32%
Buying Climate	48	35
Personal Finances	61	54

Today's rating of the economy ties the record, set the week before last. Ratings of personal finances are three points short of their record, set Aug. 3. And ratings of the buying climate are their best since August 1986.

GROUPS - Confidence lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, blacks, the poor and the less-educated. The index is +27 among men but +2 among women; +19 among whites but -10 among blacks; +46 in higher-income households but -43 in the lowest; and +28 among people who've attended college but -5 among high school dropouts.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- Sixty-two percent rate the economy positively, up a point this week to tie the record set Aug. 24. It's averaged 52 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-one percent rate their finances positively, down a point this week. It's averaged 60 percent this year; the average for the life of the index is 54 percent. The best was 64 percent positive Aug. 3; the worst, 58 percent negative March 14, 1993.

BUYING CLIMATE - Fifty-two percent call this a bad time to buy things, down two points this week and the least since August 1986. 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	62% pos	61% pos	48% neg
1997 Average	52% pos	60% pos	59% neg
Full Average	68% neg	54% pos	65% neg
Worst	93% neg	58% neg	80% neg
Best	62% 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 1,035 interviews in the month ending Sept. 7 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.

09/07/97	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	14	13	11	4	-11	14	-11	0
State of Economy	24	22	22	8	-16	24	-16	0

Personal Finances	22	24	24	20	10	28	10	19
Buying Climate	-4	-8	-14	-16	-26	-4	-30	-19

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	27	28	20	16	4	28	-5	10
Women	2	-1	3	-6	-25	6	-25	-9
Age:								
18 - 34	14	17	10	-2	-10	17	-11	-2
35 - 44	8	-4	-3	3	-19	9	-21	-3
45 - 54	12	16	16	13	-5	19	-12	2
55 - 64	26	17	13	13	-22	26	-22	4
65 +	14	21	22	8	1	35	-10	5
Income:								
Under \$15K	-43	-47	-28	-44	-49	-24	-56	-41
\$15K To \$24.9K	3	-12	-30	-19	-32	3	-35	-20
\$25K To \$39.9K	19	20	13	12	-9	20	-19	-1
\$40K To \$49.9K	31	31	24	-4	5	31	-4	9
Over \$50K	46	51	40	44	22	51	12	35
Region:								
Northeast	10	14	12	2	-10	14	-17	-3
Midwest	12	15	15	17	6	18	-8	6
South	20	13	14	-1	-15	20	-15	-1
West	9	8	1	1	-23	21	-23	-1
Race:								
White	19	18	17	9	-4	19	-10	5
Black	-10	-14	-3	-36	-48	0	-48	-23
Politics:								
Republican	26	28	28	24	-1	31	-12	11
Democrat	7	11	7	4	-19	12	-19	0
Independent	16	8	2	-9	-8	16	-17	-6
Education:								
< High School	-5	-18	-17	-21	-46	-5	-47	-27
High Sch. Grad.	1	5	3	-8	-18	5	-19	-8
College +	28	29	25	22	6	30	2	15
Home:								
Own	21	21	16	15	-2	21	-4	7
Rent	-4	-9	-5	-20	-33	2	-33	-17
Marital Status:								
Single	8	6	12	-6	-5	12	-20	-3
Married	23	21	16	16	-9	23	-9	6
Sep/Wid/Div	-13	-10	-7	-24	-26	0	-29	-18
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	25	22	17	15	-4	25	-5	8
Part-Time	9	8	7	-6	-20	10	-29	-7
Not Employed	0	1	5	-7	-18	9	-21	-8