

Confidence Holds Steady

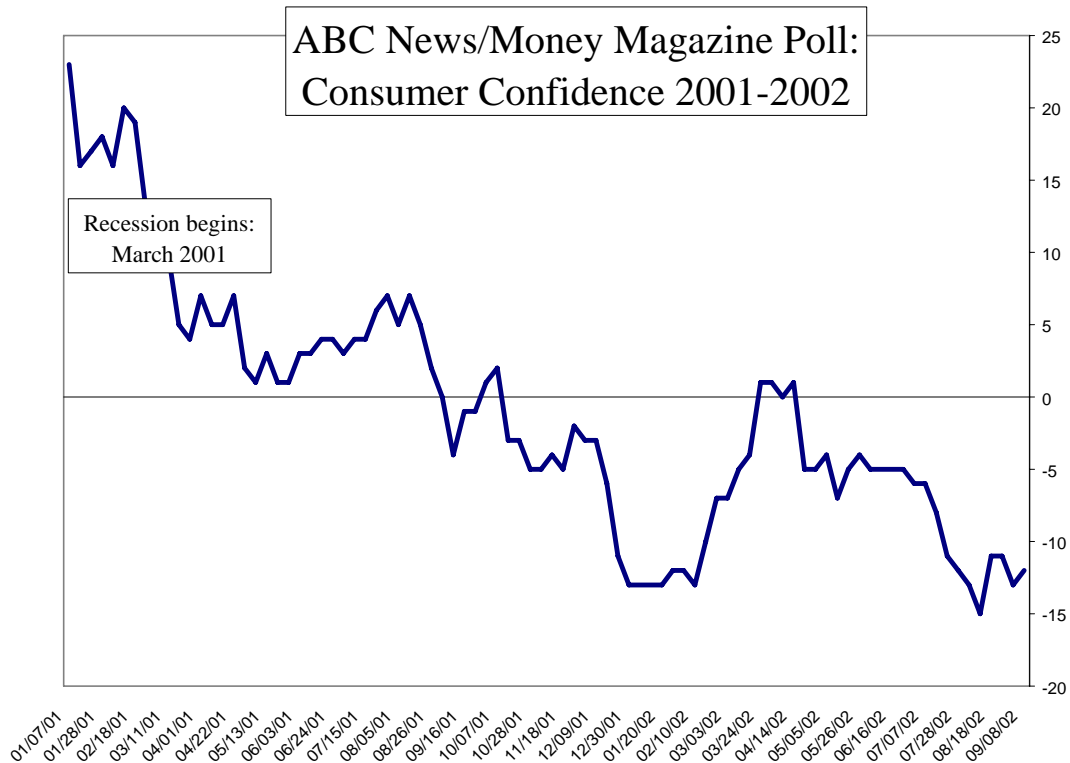
Consumer confidence held steady this week, with broadly negative public assessments of the buying climate and the overall economy balanced by Americans' mostly positive ratings of their personal finances.

Fifty-nine percent say their own finances are in good shape, four points off its peak this year. By contrast, just 32 percent say the economy's in good shape, 13 points below its best of the year last March.

It's a far cry from the economy's glory days in 2000, when ratings of the national economy routinely exceeded those of personal finances, rather than lagging them, as today, by 27 points.

The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort index, based on these gauges (plus ratings of the buying climate, now 41 percent positive) stands at -12 on its scale of +100 to -100; it was -13 last week, compared to +1 in April.

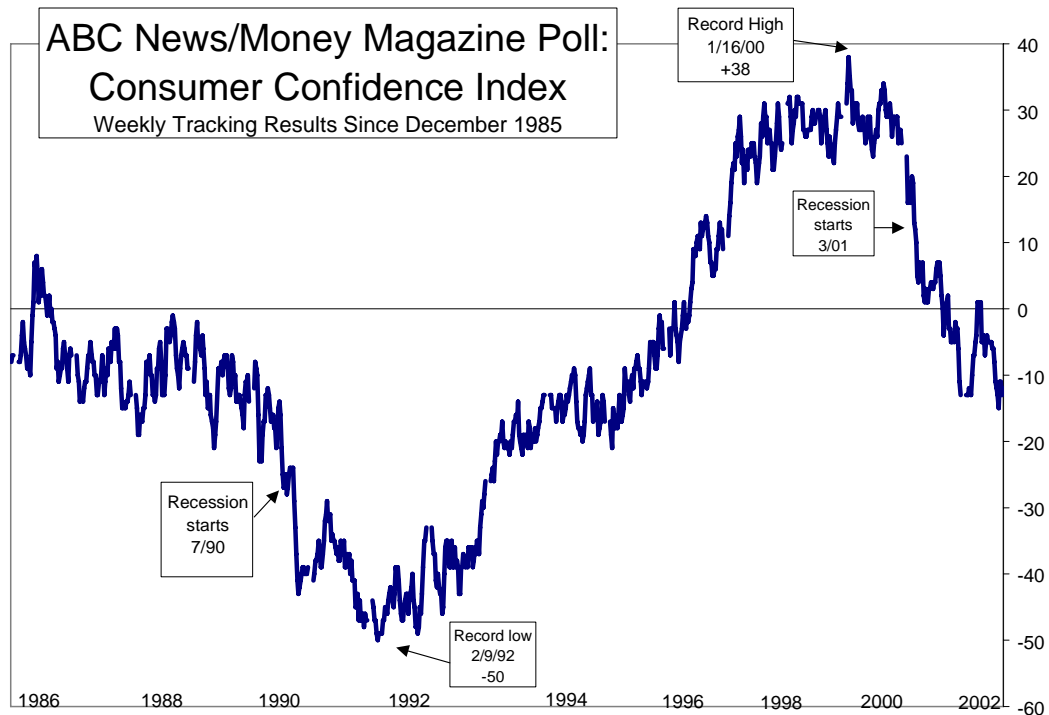
ABC News/Money magazine poll				
Positive ratings of:	This week	2002 High	2002 Low	16-yr. avg.
National economy	32	45	31	41
Buying climate	41	45	38	39
Personal finances	59	63	56	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-12	+1	-15	-8



TREND – The ABC/Money index started the year at -13 and improved to +1 in March and mid-April. It slipped to -5 in late April and then held steady between -4 and -7 until July, when it headed down in the face of corporate scandals, the declining stock market and disappointing economic reports. The index dropped from -8 on July 14 to -15 on Aug. 11, its lowest since April 1996.

The index’s all-time high was +38 in January 2000; its record low, -50 in February 1992. Its lifetime average in weekly polls since December 1985 is -8.

ABC/Money Index		
Today	-12	
Last week	-13	
Two weeks ago	-11	
Two months ago	- 6	
2002 high	+ 1	
2002 low	-15	
2002 average	- 8	
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	- 8	



GROUPS – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +10 among people in higher-income households compared to -36 in the lowest, -1 among college graduates while -42 among high-school dropouts, -8 among whites but -27 among blacks and -9 among men while -14 among women.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-two percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good, unchanged from last week. The best was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	32	1	31	68	48	20
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	38	59	39	19

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-nine percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, up two points from last week. The best was 70 percent, set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in January 2000. The worst rating was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	59	4	55	41	27	14
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE – Forty-one percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need, holding steady for the third week in a row. 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	41	1	40	59	41	18
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	36	61	41	21

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 1,002 interviews in the month ending September 8, 2002 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 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 Julie Crandall.

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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09/08/02	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	-12	-13	-15	-5	-4	2	-15	-6

State of Economy	-36	-36	-36	-20	-14	-8	-38	-24
Personal Finances	18	14	14	20	22	30	12	20
Buying Climate	-18	-18	-24	-14	-20	-4	-24	-15

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	-9	-6	-5	5	3	10	-9	1
Women	-14	-20	-23	-13	-10	-3	-23	-13
Age:								
18 - 34	2	-1	-12	1	3	10	-12	0
35 - 44	-22	-28	-22	-2	3	9	-28	-8
45 - 54	-13	-13	-7	2	-4	6	-22	-7
55 - 64	-22	-17	-8	-9	-17	20	-30	-6
65 +	-20	-19	-19	-20	-18	0	-23	-15
Income:								
Under \$15K	-36	-38	-42	-54	-49	-23	-54	-41
\$15K To \$24.9K	-35	-32	-26	-40	-25	-14	-44	-27
\$25K To \$39.9K	-20	-31	-20	-11	-12	6	-31	-12
\$40K To \$49.9K	-12	-14	-11	4	4	15	-15	2
Over \$50K	10	9	0	28	22	33	0	16
Region:								
Northeast	-24	-22	-21	-14	-1	2	-24	-9
Midwest	-8	-10	-8	2	-1	4	-18	-6
South	-10	-13	-24	-2	-7	7	-24	-5
West	-7	-9	0	-6	-5	9	-21	-6
Race:								
White	-8	-11	-12	-1	-1	8	-12	-2
Black	-27	-26	-28	-35	-23	-8	-51	-34
Politics:								
Republican	9	9	5	16	18	34	5	17
Democrat	-23	-28	-32	-22	-16	-12	-32	-20
Independent	-14	-12	-13	-6	-3	1	-19	-9
Education:								
< High School	-42	-42	-31	-35	-36	-12	-49	-31
High Sch. Grad.	-14	-18	-20	-11	-12	-3	-22	-10
College +	-1	-1	-5	11	11	13	-5	4
Home:								
Own	-9	-11	-14	3	2	9	-14	-1
Rent	-20	-21	-13	-25	-17	-8	-28	-19
Marital Status:								
Single	1	-2	-4	2	2	10	-19	-5
Married	-11	-14	-13	0	1	11	-14	-1
Sep/Wid/Div	-27	-24	-27	-25	-28	-14	-42	-26
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-6	-4	-7	7	10	12	-8	3
Part-Time	3	-21	-20	-5	-8	14	-21	-6
Not Employed	-25	-25	-23	-20	-19	-8	-28	-19

END