

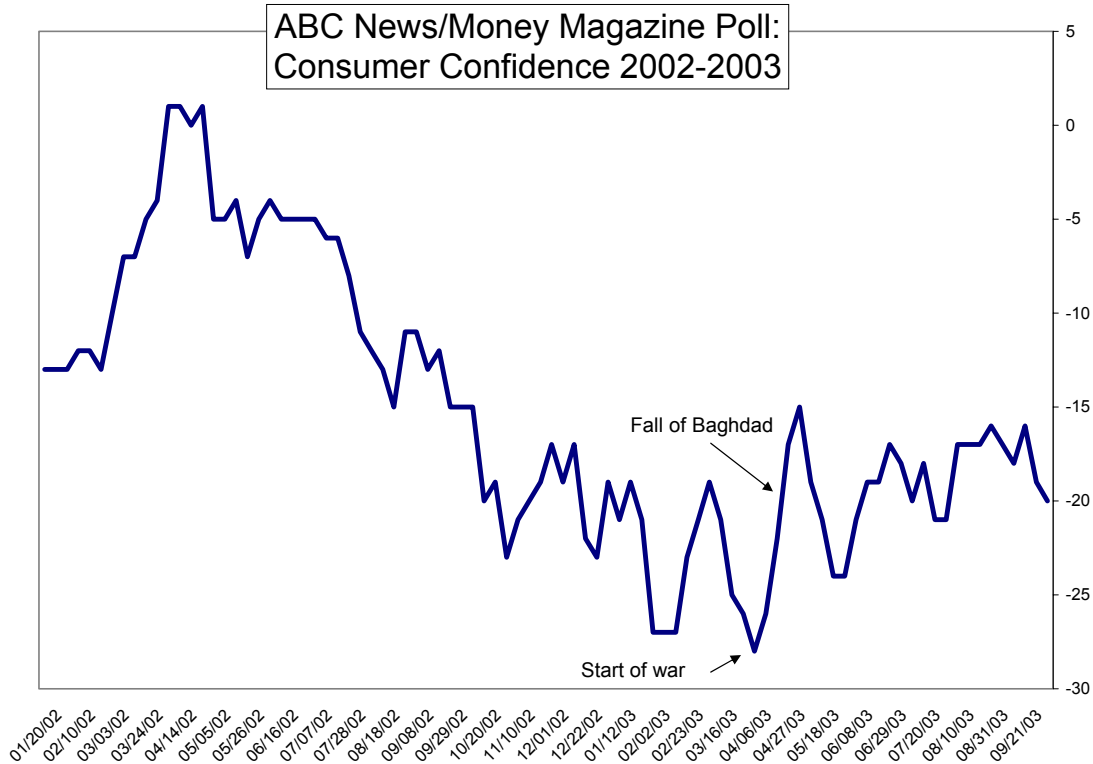
Confidence Inches Down

After a relatively flat summer, consumer confidence inched down a smidgen.

In its final reading of the summer season, the ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index stands at -20 on its scale of +100 to -100 – about its average for the year, but well off its long-term average of -9. It was a tad higher, -16, two weeks ago.

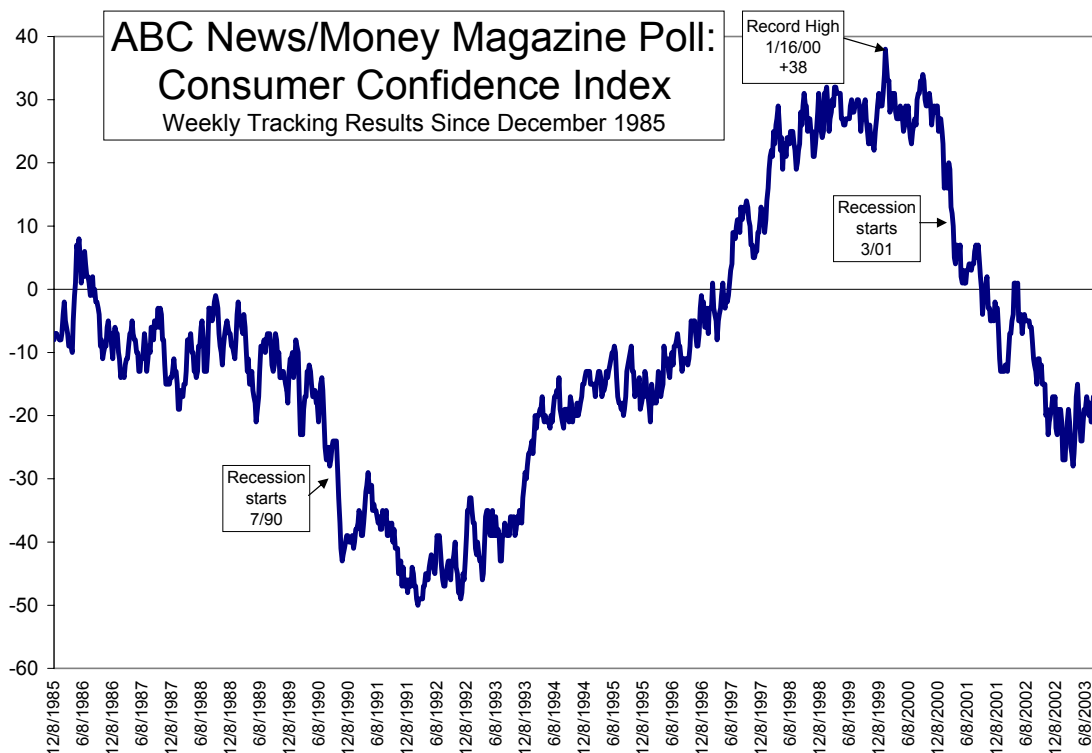
The index is based on views of the national economy, personal finances and the buying climate. This week 38 percent of Americans call it a good time to buy things and 55 percent rate their finances positively, each near its weekly average since late 1985. But just 27 percent say the economy's in good shape – 14 points below average.

	ABC News/Money magazine poll				
Positive ratings of:	This week	Two weeks ago	2003 high	2003 low	17-yr. avg.
National economy	27%	31	31	21	41
Buying climate	38	39	41	32	39
Personal finances	55	56	60	52	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-20	-16	-15	-28	-9



TREND – The ABC/Money index has been as high as +38 in January 2000 and as low as -50 in February 1992. Its best one-year average was +29 in 2000; its worst, -44 in 1992. The index has averaged -21 so far this year, on track to be its worst year on average in a decade.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	-20	
Two weeks ago	-16	
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, -9 among college graduates while -35 among high-school dropouts and -17 among whites but -44 among blacks. It's -10 among men while -28 among women, and +10 among Republicans, while -21 among independents and -42 among Democrats.

The ABC/Money index is lower in the Midwest (-26) and West (-23) than it is in the South (-17) and Northeast (-12).

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Twenty-seven percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good; it was 29 percent last week. The highest was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The lowest was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

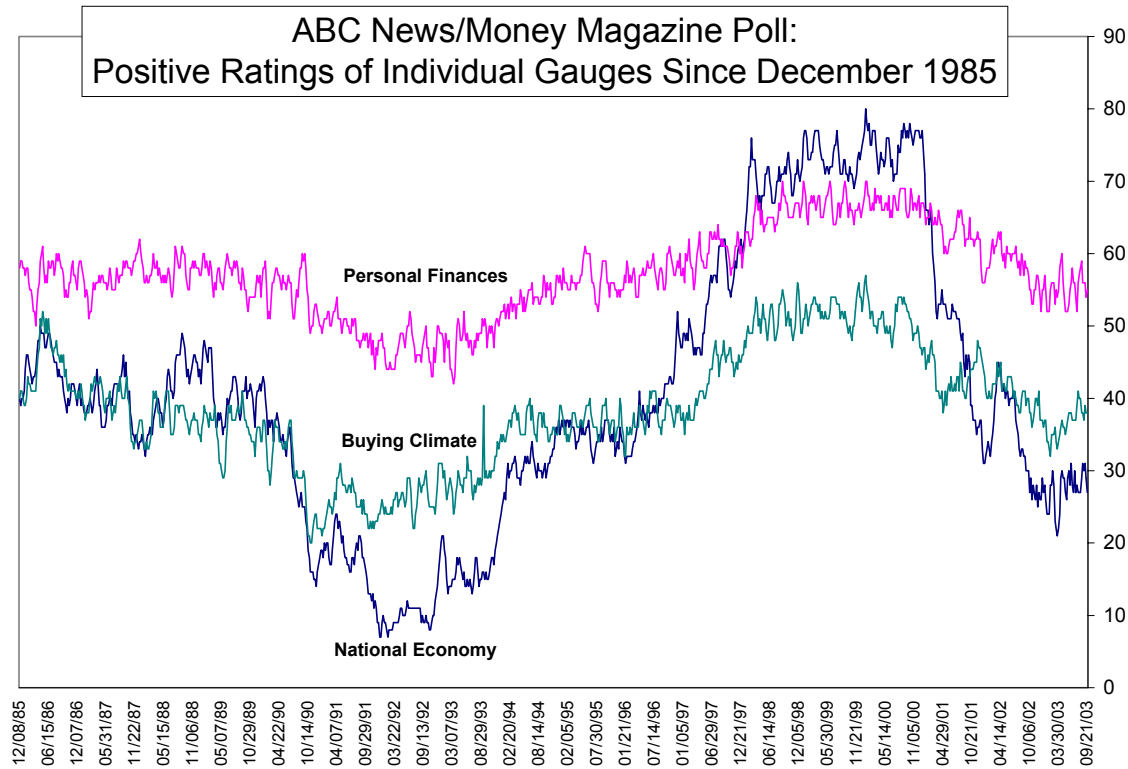
	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	27	2	25	73	44	29
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	37	59	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-five percent rate their own finances as excellent or good; it was 54 percent 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	55	5	50	45	31	14
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE – Thirty-eight percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things, the same as 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	38	3	35	62	45	17
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 1,004 interviews in the month ending Sept. 21, 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>

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934 or Lisa Finkel, (212) 456-6190.

09/21/03	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	-20	-19	-17	-18	-15	-12	-28	-20
State of Economy	-46	-42	-38	-44	-40	-36	-58	-45
Personal Finances	10	8	12	16	16	20	4	11
Buying Climate	-24	-24	-24	-26	-20	-18	-36	-26

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-10	-8	-5	-7	-13	-3	-19	-12
Women	-28	-28	-26	-27	-15	-14	-38	-27
Age:								
18 - 34	-18	-15	-14	-15	-7	2	-25	-14
35 - 44	-21	-20	-18	-18	-11	-9	-31	-19
45 - 54	-16	-18	-9	-17	-22	-8	-41	-25
55 - 64	-27	-27	-20	-20	-21	-8	-39	-22
65 +	-18	-18	-24	-20	-17	-15	-36	-26
Income:								
Under \$15K	-53	-59	-47	-66	-41	-36	-67	-50
\$15K To \$24.9K	-35	-31	-41	-46	-29	-27	-57	-42
\$25K To \$39.9K	-43	-41	-33	-21	-24	-16	-49	-31
\$40K To \$49.9K	-14	-7	20	-15	-23	20	-32	-15
Over \$50K	8	8	2	13	6	15	-15	4
Region:								
Northeast	-12	-22	-31	-27	-13	-11	-38	-26
Midwest	-26	-22	-15	-24	-14	-8	-34	-19
South	-17	-15	-6	-9	-17	-6	-29	-19
West	-23	-17	-20	-15	-11	4	-34	-16

Race:								
White	-17	-15	-12	-15	-13	-8	-23	-16
Black	-44	-53	-54	-38	-21	-21	-68	-44
Politics:								
Republican	10	14	17	13	7	19	-3	8
Democrat	-42	-43	-39	-28	-26	-23	-46	-37
Independent	-21	-22	-24	-23	-18	-13	-38	-25
Education:								
< High School	-35	-37	-53	-40	-46	-23	-59	-43
High Sch. Grad.	-28	-30	-23	-20	-11	-11	-40	-25
College +	-9	-6	-1	-9	-7	1	-18	-8
Home:								
Own	-12	-10	-8	-14	-10	-8	-24	-15
Rent	-40	-42	-38	-27	-24	-18	-43	-32
Marital Status:								
Single	-26	-24	-22	-23	-6	1	-33	-19
Married	-11	-9	-8	-10	-14	-6	-27	-15
Sep/Wid/Div	-38	-40	-38	-35	-24	-21	-52	-37
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-12	-8	-6	-7	-8	-5	-20	-12
Part-Time	-19	-11	-14	-34	-14	3	-40	-22
Not Employed	-30	-34	-29	-26	-22	-21	-40	-30

END