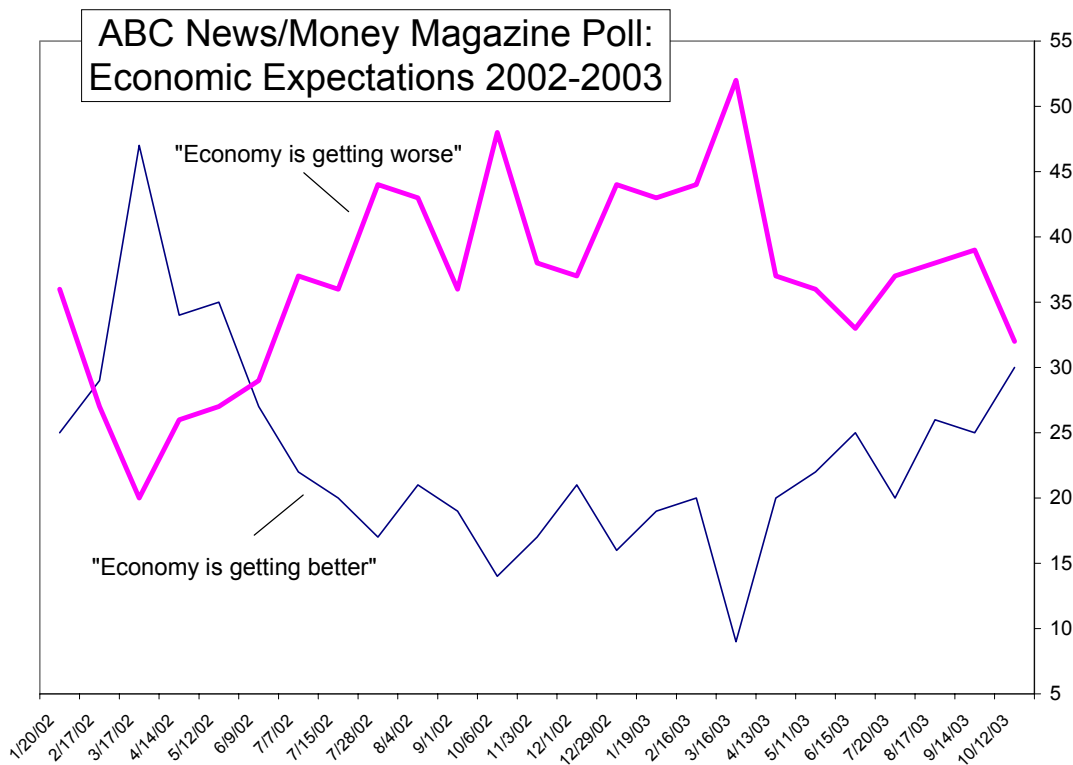


## Economic Outlook Improves a Bit, Current Ratings Stay Flat

Views of the economy's future are somewhat brighter, with the number of people saying the economy is improving at its highest level in nearly a year and a half.

Thirty percent of Americans in the latest ABC News/Money magazine poll say the economy's getting better – not a rousing number, but up 10 points since the summer to its best in 17 months. About as many – 32 percent – say it's getting worse. Last month, pessimists outnumbered optimists by 14 points; last March, the gap was 43 points. The rest, 35 percent, say it's holding stable.

While expectations are improving, the ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on current views of the economy, is stable at -19. This is its 21<sup>st</sup> straight week between -16 and -21.

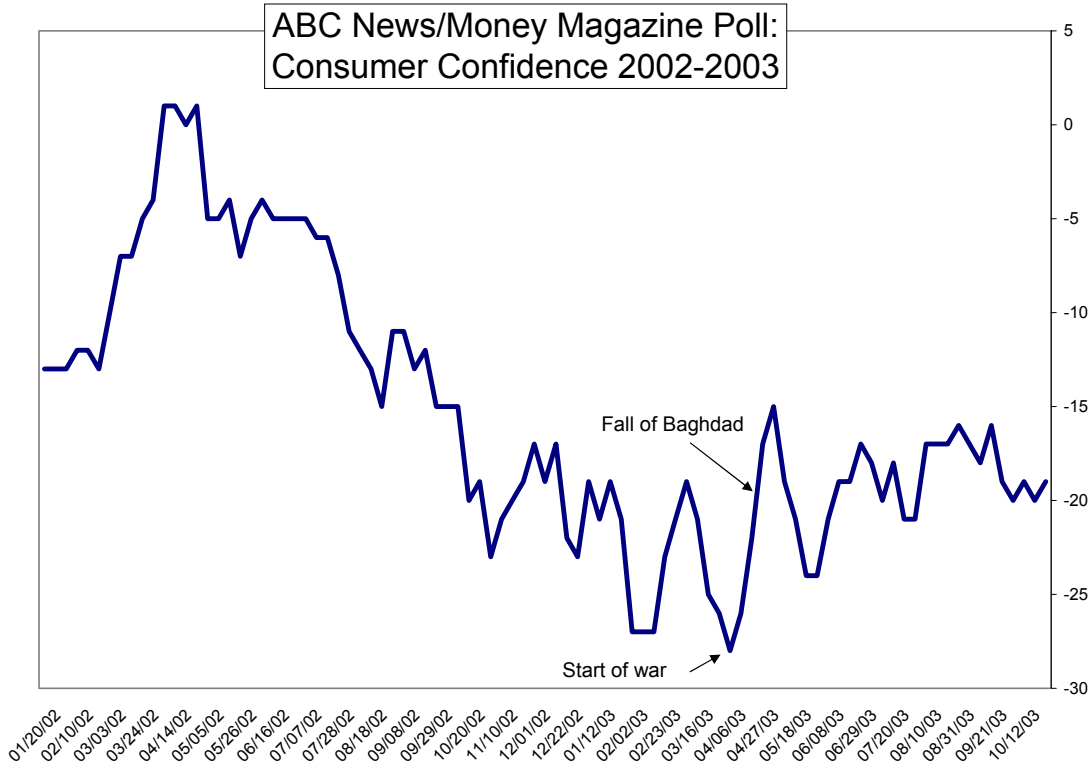


	Getting better	Getting worse	Staying the same	Difference (better-worse)
10/12/03	30	32	35	- 2
9/14/03	25	39	34	-14
8/17/03	26	38	36	-12

7/20/03	20	37	42	-17
6/15/03	25	33	43	- 8
5/11/03	22	36	41	-14
4/13/03	20	37	43	-17
3/16/03	9	52	39	-43

INDEX – The index, on a scale of +100 to -100, is based on ratings of the economy, buying climate and personal finances. Just 27 percent say the economy is in good shape, and 37 percent say it's a good time to buy things. Far more, 58 percent, say their household finances are OK.

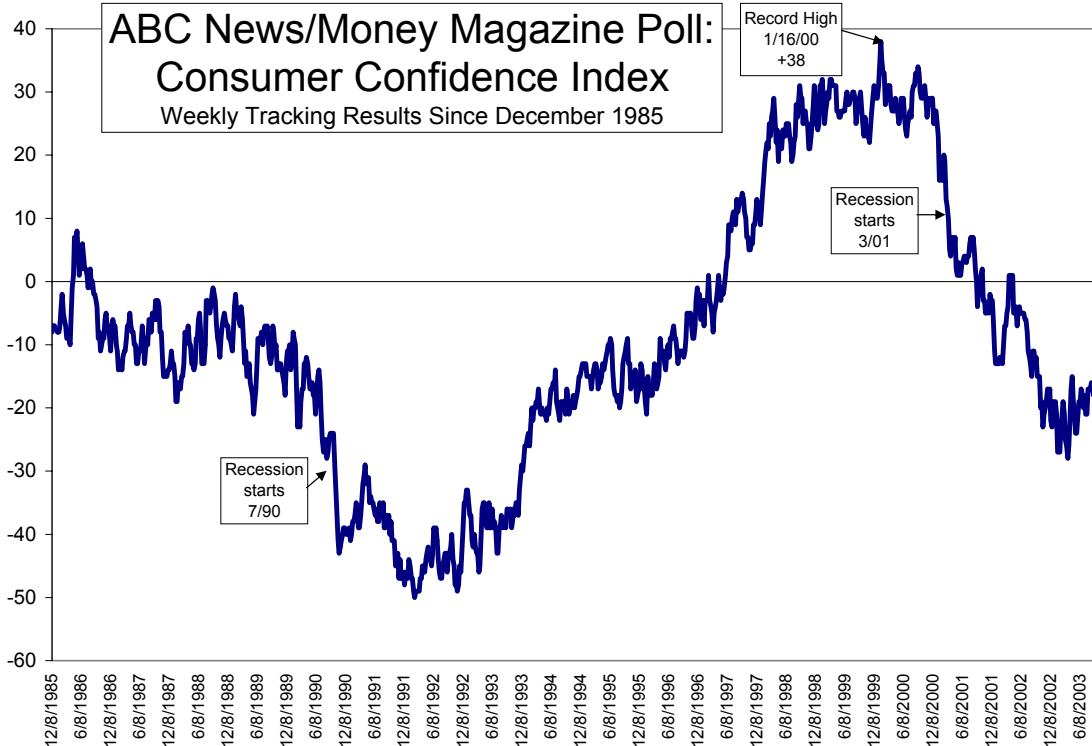
ABC News/Money magazine poll					
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2003 high	2003 low	17-yr. avg.
National economy	27%	28	31	21	41
Buying climate	37	36	41	32	39
Personal finances	58	56	60	52	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-19	-20	-15	-28	-9



TREND – The ABC/Money index has averaged -21 so far this year, 12 points off its career average, -9. It peaked at +38 in January 2000 and cratered at -50 in February 1992. Its best one-year average was +29 in 2000; its worst, -44 in 1992.

	ABC/Money Index
Today	-19
Last week	-20

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 – Confidence, as usual, is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +5 among higher-income Americans and -52 among lower-income people. It's -15 among college graduates while -39 among high-school dropouts, -17 among whites but -30 among blacks, and -10 among men while -27 among women. There's a partisan gap, with the index +5 among Republicans, -19 among independents and -35 among Democrats.

Men are 15 points more apt than women to say the economy's getting better.

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 28 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	1	26	73	45	28

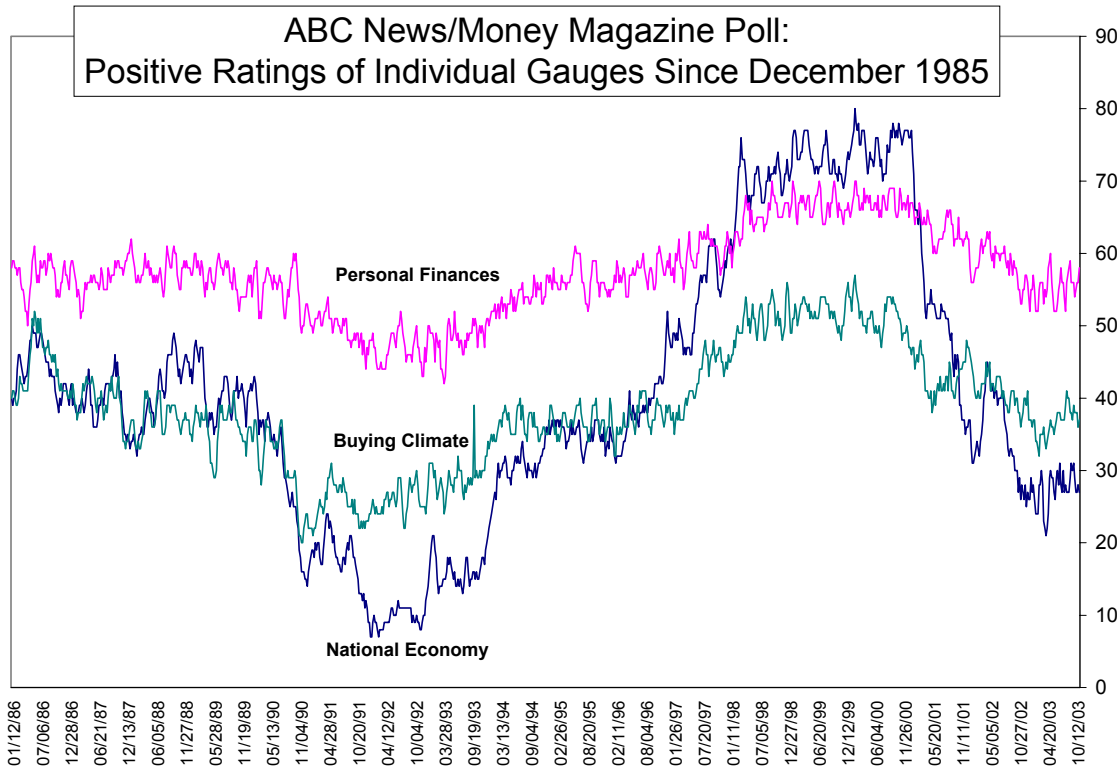
Avg. since 12/85    41            4            37            59            40            20

**PERSONAL FINANCES** – Fifty-eight percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, compared with 56 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	58	7	51	42	26	16
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

**BUYING CLIMATE** – Thirty-seven percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 36 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	37	3	34	63	44	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 1,003 interviews in the month ending Oct. 12, 2003, and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. The expectations question was conducted among 502 respondents Oct. 1-12; that result has a 4.5-point error margin. 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.

10/12/03

This Last 4 Wks 3 Mo. 1 Yr. 12 Mo 12 Mo 12 Mo  
 Week Week Ago Ago Ago High Low Avg

Group

GENERAL POPULATION:

Group	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Overall Index	-19	-20	-19	-21	-19	-15	-28	-20
State of Economy	-46	-44	-42	-46	-42	-38	-58	-46
Personal Finances	16	12	8	8	10	20	4	10
Buying Climate	-26	-28	-24	-26	-24	-18	-36	-26

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:

Men	-10	-12	-8	-14	-13	-3	-19	-11
Women	-27	-26	-28	-28	-23	-20	-38	-28

Age:

18 - 34	-23	-19	-15	-17	-7	-4	-25	-15
35 - 44	-16	-16	-20	-26	-9	-9	-31	-19
45 - 54	-14	-16	-18	-24	-32	-8	-41	-24
55 - 64	-26	-36	-27	-18	-30	-8	-39	-23
65+	-15	-16	-18	-23	-28	-15	-36	-26

Income:

Under \$15K	-52	-56	-59	-55	-46	-37	-67	-51
\$15K To \$24.9K	-43	-42	-31	-34	-36	-27	-57	-43
\$25K To \$39.9K	-32	-42	-41	-43	-25	-16	-49	-33
\$40K To \$49.9K	-1	-1	-7	-9	-15	20	-32	-14
Over \$50K	5	6	8	6	-5	15	-15	4

Region:

Northeast	-22	-24	-22	-28	-18	-12	-38	-26
Midwest	-13	-22	-22	-20	-19	-11	-34	-20
South	-15	-13	-15	-19	-25	-6	-29	-19
West	-28	-22	-17	-22	-9	4	-34	-17

Race:

White	-17	-18	-15	-15	-17	-9	-23	-17
Black	-30	-34	-53	-54	-27	-23	-68	-45

Politics:

Republican	5	9	14	7	6	19	-3	9
Democrat	-35	-37	-43	-37	-33	-25	-46	-38
Independent	-19	-22	-22	-24	-24	-13	-38	-25

Education:

< High School	-39	-45	-37	-56	-30	-23	-59	-42
High Sch. Grad.	-14	-15	-30	-19	-22	-14	-40	-26
College +	-15	-14	-6	-12	-12	1	-18	-9

Home:

Own	-8	-11	-10	-15	-17	-8	-24	-15
Rent	-42	-42	-42	-43	-22	-18	-43	-33

Marital Status:

Single	-35	-31	-24	-33	-10	-7	-35	-21
Married	-5	-5	-9	-15	-16	-5	-27	-15
Sep/Wid/Div	-34	-41	-40	-36	-37	-21	-52	-38

Employ. Status:

Full-Time	-14	-12	-8	-12	-16	-5	-20	-12
Part-Time	-21	-20	-11	-36	-7	-7	-40	-23
Not Employed	-24	-28	-34	-31	-25	-21	-40	-30

1. Do you think the nation's economy is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?

	Getting Better	Getting Worse	Staying the Same	No Opinion
10/12/03	30	32	35	3
9/14/03	25	39	34	2
8/17/03	26	38	36	1
7/20/03	20	37	42	1
6/15/03	25	33	43	0
5/11/03	22	36	41	0
4/13/03	20	37	43	0
3/16/03	9	52	39	0
2/16/03	20	44	36	0
1/19/03	19	43	37	0
12/29/02	16	44	39	1
12/1/02	21	37	42	1
11/3/02	17	38	44	0
10/6/02	14	48	37	1
9/1/02	19	36	44	1
8/4/02	21	43	34	0

Call for full trend.

\*\*\*END\*\*\*