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ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 10/19/97
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Confidence Slides Again

Consumer confidence fell this week to its worst since June, continuing a monthlong slide in Americans' views of the economy and their finances.

Fifty-seven percent rate their finances positively, the fewest in seven months; just 54 percent say the economy's in good shape, down eight points in five weeks and the fewest since early June. Views of the buying climate are steady, though, with 47 percent calling this a good time to spend money.

The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these gauges, stands at +5 this week, its lowest since June 8. The index hit a record +14 on Sept. 7 before turning down in the last month. It's averaged +3 this year, a record.

ABC/Money Index

Today	+5	
Sept. 7	+14	record high
1997 average	+3	
1996 average	-11	
1991-95	-33	
1986-90	-9	
1986-present	-19	

The index jumped sharply last spring and summer, boosted by the growing economy, low unemployment, low inflation and higher income. But it stalled with the fall; ratings of the economy are eight points below the record they set in the summer, and ratings of personal finances are seven points below their Aug. 3 record.

Views of the buying climate are just one point below their recent high, 48 percent positive last month. The record was 52 percent in May 1986.

GAUGES - While it's lost ground in the last month, confidence still is much better than usual. Ratings of the economy are 21 points better than their average since late 1985. Ratings of the buying climate are 12 points better than average; ratings of personal finances, two points better.

	Positive Ratings	
	Today	11-yr avg.
National Economy	54%	33%
Buying Climate	47	35
Personal Finances	57	55

GROUPS - Confidence lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, blacks, the poor and the less-educated. The index is +15 among men but -4 among women; +11 among whites but -32 among blacks; +47 in higher-income households but -39 in the lowest; and +25 among people who've attended college but -36 among high school dropouts.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- Fifty-four percent rate the economy positively, down a point this week. It's averaged 53 percent this year and 33 percent for the life of the index. The best was 62 percent positive in August and September; the worst, 93 percent negative in late 1991 and early 1992.

PERSONAL FINANCES - Fifty-seven percent rate their finances positively, down two points and the least since March 16. It's averaged 60 percent this year and 55 percent for the life of the index. The best was 64 percent positive Aug. 3; the worst, 58 percent negative March 14, 1993.

BUYING CLIMATE - Fifty-three percent call this a bad time to buy things, unchanged this week. It's averaged 58 percent negative this year and 65 percent for the life of the index. 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	54% pos	57% pos	53% neg
1997 Average	53% pos	60% pos	58% neg
Full Average	67% neg	55% 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. This week's results are based on 1,039 interviews in the month ending Oct. 19 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 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.

10/19/97	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	5	7	11	11	-7	14	-9	2
State of Economy	8	10	20	14	-16	24	-16	4
Personal Finances	14	18	22	24	18	28	10	19

Buying Climate	-6	-6	-10	-4	-24	-4	-30	-17

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	15	17	23	18	-5	28	-5	13
Women	-4	-2	0	4	-9	6	-19	-8
Age:								
18 - 34	0	6	8	12	-11	17	-11	0
35 - 44	8	5	13	0	-19	15	-21	0
45 - 54	6	8	7	3	6	19	-12	2
55 - 64	0	6	12	6	8	26	-17	5
65 +	12	15	18	30	-5	35	-10	7
Income:								
Under \$15K	-39	-31	-34	-29	-40	-24	-56	-40
\$15K To \$24.9K	-28	-20	-3	-6	-30	7	-35	-19
\$25K To \$39.9K	0	7	12	0	-19	20	-19	1
\$40K To \$49.9K	6	8	28	21	8	33	-4	11
Over \$50K	47	45	39	45	21	51	12	36
Region:								
Northeast	-4	6	9	4	-17	14	-17	-1
Midwest	12	17	18	13	5	20	-8	7
South	-1	1	7	8	-8	20	-14	0
West	15	9	10	18	-10	21	-17	3
Race:								
White	11	12	17	15	-5	19	-10	6
Black	-32	-27	-24	-5	-22	0	-42	-22
Politics:								
Republican	19	16	24	21	-5	31	-12	13
Democrat	3	9	4	5	-7	12	-10	2
Independent	1	3	10	11	-9	16	-17	-4
Education:								
< High School	-36	-29	-13	-14	-32	-5	-44	-25
High Sch. Grad.	-3	-1	-1	-5	-9	5	-19	-7
College +	25	26	27	28	3	30	2	18
Home:								
Own	12	13	17	15	-1	21	-4	9
Rent	-14	-7	-3	-1	-20	2	-27	-15
Marital Status:								
Single	-5	0	1	12	-20	12	-20	-2
Married	13	14	19	13	0	23	-7	8
Sep/Wid/Div	-17	-13	-11	-2	-20	0	-29	-17
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	12	10	17	17	-1	25	-5	10
Part-Time	0	15	10	1	-22	15	-29	-5
Not Employed	-5	-1	1	5	-9	9	-21	-7