

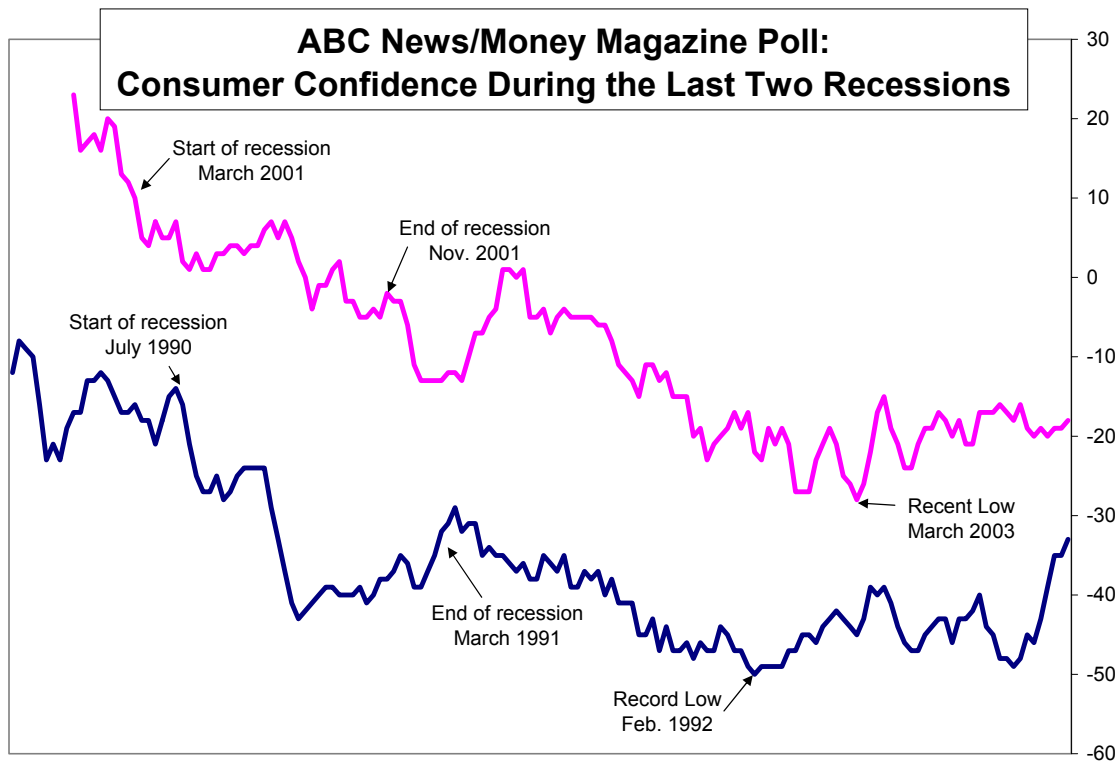
Despite Signs of Recovery, Many Americans Don't See It

While George W. Bush today said the economy's "gathering strength," consumer confidence remains stalled, with recovery yet to hit home for many Americans.

Seventy-one percent say the economy's in bad shape, mirroring the ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index in a long-running slump. The index stands this week at -18 on its scale of +100 to -100, its 23rd straight week between -16 and -21.

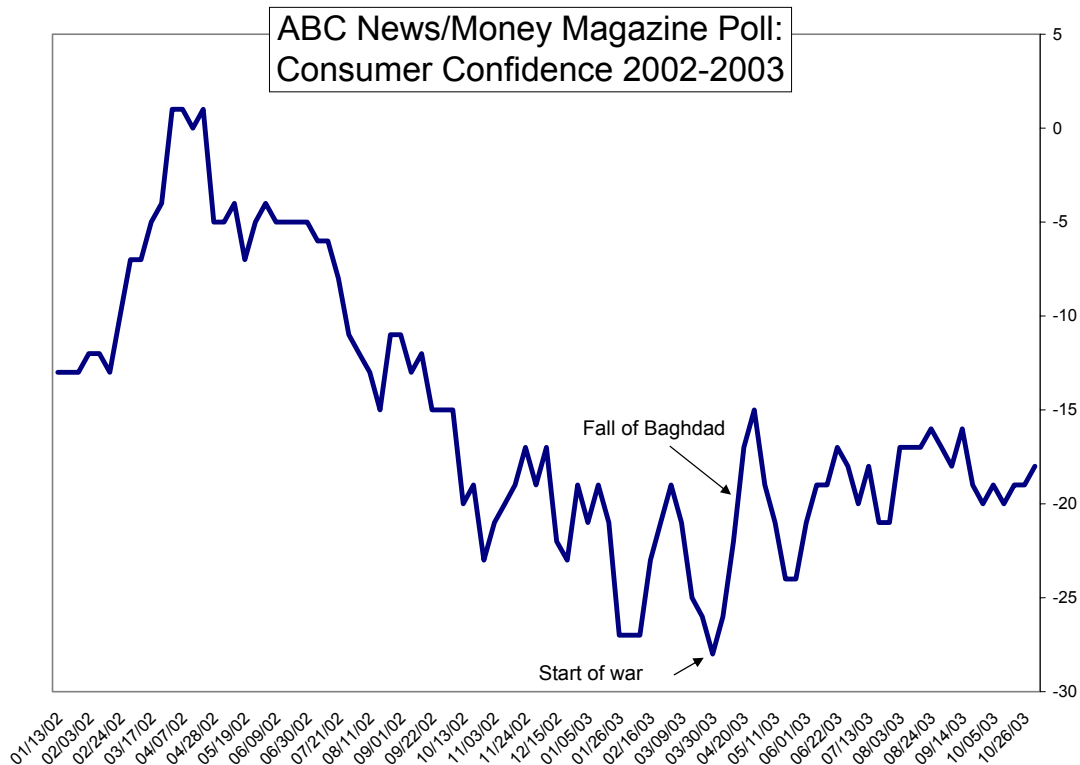
That's worse than average – the index has averaged -9 in weekly polls since late 1985, and far below its highs of the late '90s through 2000. While the latest recession officially ended nearly two years ago, confidence reached its lowest point in nearly a decade last March (-28), and is now still well below its level during the 2001 recession.

Though confidence overall was much lower during the 1990-91 recession, it followed a similar pattern, recovering much more slowly than the economy itself. While the recession officially ended in March 1991, consumer confidence actually bottomed out at an all-time low 11 months later, in February 1992.



The index is based on public ratings of the economy, buying climate and personal finances. Just 29 percent say the economy is in good shape (compared to an average of 41 percent) and 37 percent call it a good time to buy things (its average is 39 percent). Many more, 57 percent, say their household finances are OK, matching the average.

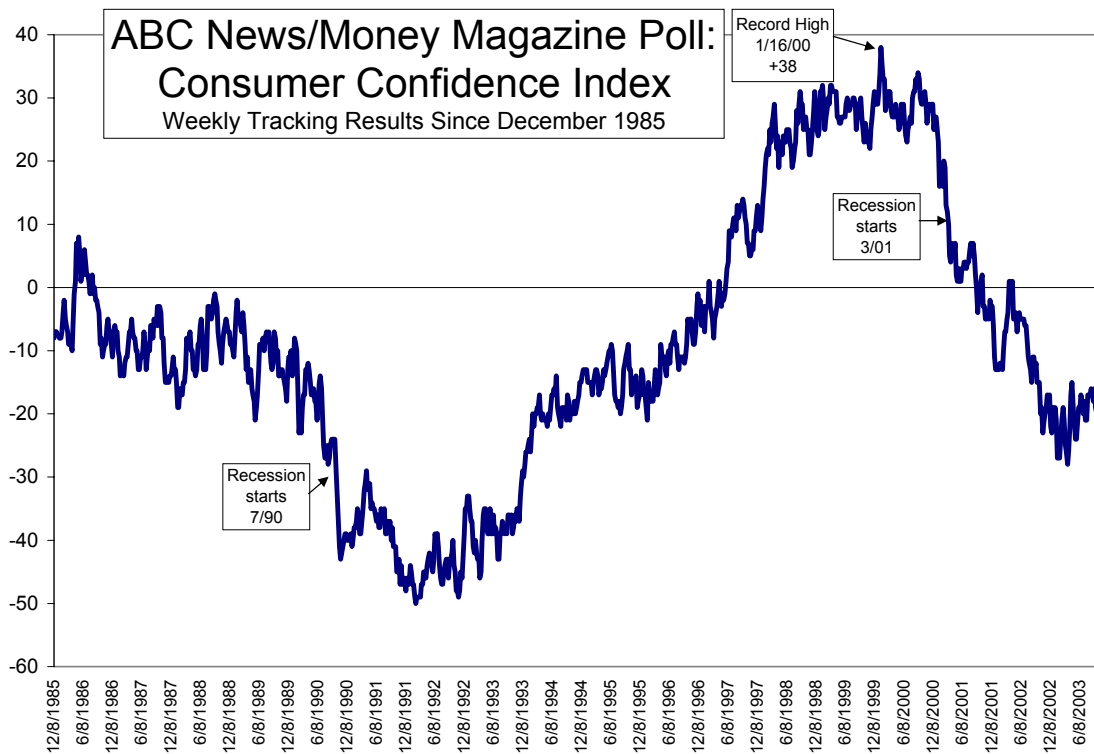
ABC News/Money magazine poll					
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2003 high	2003 low	17-yr. avg.
National economy	29%	28	31	21	41
Buying climate	37	37	41	32	39
Personal finances	57	57	60	52	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-18	-19	-15	-28	-9



TREND – The ABC/Money index has averaged -20 so far this year. That's well off its all-time average of -9, and is the worst annual average since 1993. The 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.

ABC/Money Index		
Today	-18	
Last week	-19	
Recent low	-28	March 2003
Recent high	+1	March, April 2002
2003 average	-20	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 while -52 among lower-income people, -14 among college graduates while -43 among high-school dropouts, -17 among whites but -37 among blacks, and -8 among men while -28 among women. There’s a partisan gap, with the index +13 among Republicans, -24 among independents and -37 among Democrats.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Twenty-nine 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.

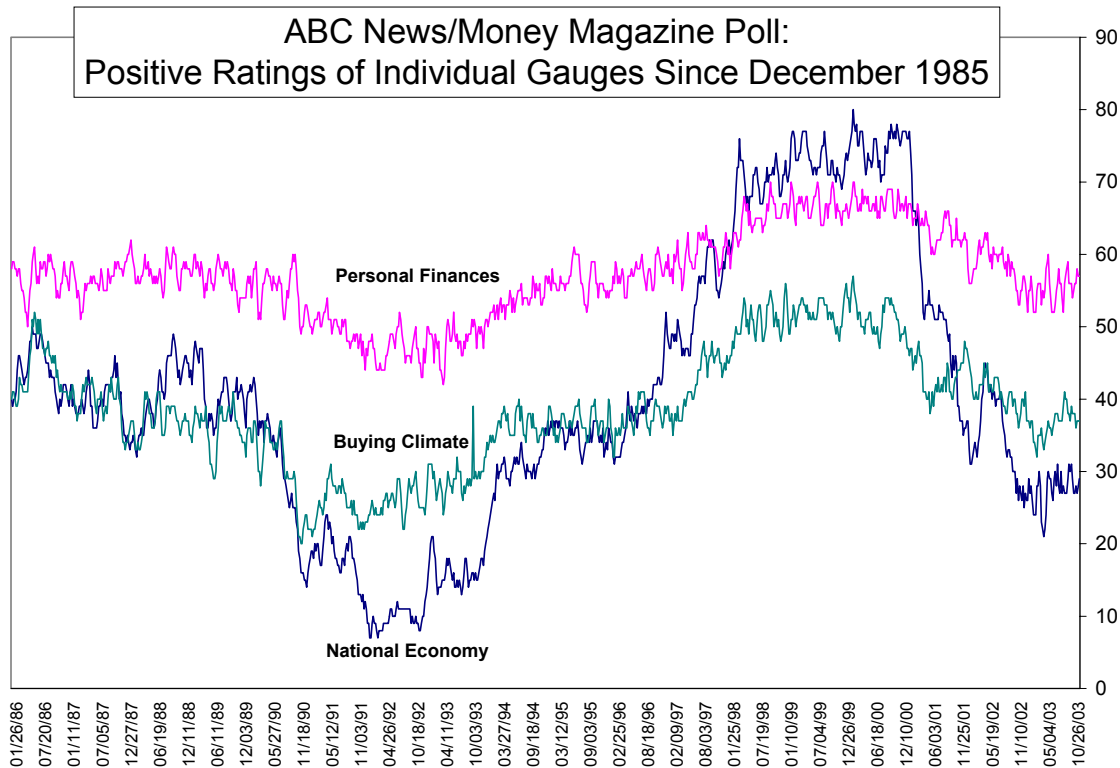
	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	29	1	28	71	48	23
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	37	59	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-seven percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, unchanged from 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	57	6	51	43	29	14
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE – Thirty-seven 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	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. 26, 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.

10/26/03	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	-18	-19	-19	-17	-21	-15	-28	-20
State of Economy	-42	-44	-46	-46	-44	-38	-58	-46
Personal Finances	14	14	12	12	6	20	4	10
Buying Climate	-26	-26	-24	-18	-26	-18	-36	-26

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-8	-9	-12	-9	-13	-3	-19	-11
Women	-28	-28	-25	-24	-29	-20	-38	-28
Age:								
18 - 34	-18	-20	-15	-14	-16	-4	-25	-15
35 - 44	-10	-17	-21	-17	-11	-10	-31	-19
45 - 54	-20	-12	-14	-16	-33	-8	-41	-23
55 - 64	-27	-25	-30	-16	-22	-8	-39	-23
65+	-18	-21	-20	-24	-31	-15	-36	-26
Income:								
Under \$15K	-52	-58	-53	-46	-43	-37	-67	-52
\$15K To \$24.9K	-43	-49	-44	-50	-34	-27	-57	-43
\$25K To \$39.9K	-28	-26	-38	-34	-24	-16	-49	-33
\$40K To \$49.9K	-2	-2	-8	-13	-9	20	-32	-13
Over \$50K	5	5	8	12	-15	15	-15	4
Region:								
Northeast	-19	-23	-13	-23	-29	-12	-38	-26
Midwest	-9	-8	-24	-18	-27	-8	-34	-20
South	-19	-17	-15	-17	-23	-6	-29	-18
West	-24	-28	-23	-8	-6	4	-34	-18
Race:								
White	-17	-17	-15	-11	-17	-9	-23	-16
Black	-37	-35	-43	-66	-36	-23	-68	-45
Politics:								
Republican	13	14	11	14	8	19	-3	9
Democrat	-37	-38	-41	-39	-35	-25	-46	-38
Independent	-24	-26	-17	-20	-29	-13	-38	-25
Education:								
< High School	-43	-41	-31	-43	-24	-23	-59	-43
High Sch. Grad.	-13	-13	-25	-19	-29	-13	-40	-25
College +	-14	-15	-10	-6	-15	1	-17	-9
Home:								
Own	-6	-8	-11	-9	-21	-6	-24	-15
Rent	-43	-43	-38	-40	-24	-18	-43	-34
Marital Status:								
Single	-35	-37	-25	-25	-19	-7	-37	-22
Married	-3	-2	-7	-10	-19	-2	-27	-14
Sep/Wid/Div	-34	-37	-43	-38	-33	-21	-52	-37
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-8	-10	-11	-6	-13	-5	-20	-11
Part-Time	-20	-23	-18	-25	-23	-7	-40	-24
Not Employed	-31	-29	-29	-30	-32	-21	-40	-30