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ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 11/9/97  
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### Fewer Plan Cuts in Holiday Spending

Fewer Americans are planning to cut back on their holiday spending than at any time in the last decade, a positive sign for retailers entering their busiest season of the year, an ABC News/Money magazine poll has found.

With consumer confidence riding high, only 30 percent of Americans say they'll spend less on gifts for family and friends this Christmas. That's the fewest since ABC/Money polls in October and December 1987.

Seventeen percent say they'll spend more this year, about the same as the 18 percent the ABC/Money poll measured last month. That was its highest of the decade.

	Plan to spend		
	More	Less	Same
11/97	17	30	52
10/97	18	36	36
10/91	11	47	40
10/89	20	32	47
10/87	17	29	53

There are no guarantees for a strong shopping season; in a less positive sign, this week 43 percent call it a good time to buy things they want and need, the fewest since August. But that's still better than its average, 35 percent, in nearly 12 years of weekly polling by ABC News and Money magazine.

Moreover, 57 percent rate the economy positively, a huge 24 points better than average. And 59 percent say their own finances are in good shape, five points better than usual.

	Positive Ratings	
	Today	11-yr avg.
National Economy	57%	33%
Buying Climate	43	35
Personal Finances	59	55

INDEX - The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these views, held steady this week at +6 on its scale of +100 to -100. It fell last month after reaching a record high, +14, in mid-September. But it's still far above its lifetime average of -18.

The index is on pace for a record year. It's averaged +4 in the year to date; its previous best one-year average was -3 in 1986, and it's done as badly as -44 in 1992.

	ABC/Money Index	
1997*	+4	1991 -37
1996	-11	1990 -24
1995	-15	1989 -11

1994	-19	1988	-10
1993	-37	1987	-9
1992	-44	1986	-3

\*to date

GROUPS - Confidence lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, blacks, the poor and the less-educated. The index is +13 among men but 0 among women; +12 among whites but -29 among blacks; +37 in higher-income households but -44 in the lowest; and +22 among people who've attended college but -29 among high school dropouts.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- Fifty-seven percent rate the economy positively, up 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-nine percent rate their finances positively, up a point. 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-seven percent call this a bad time to buy things, up two points. 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	57% pos	59% pos	57% 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 1,049 interviews in the month ending Nov. 9 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. The Christmas spending question was asked of 523 adults Oct. 31-Nov. 9; 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 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.

11/09/97	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Group								
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GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	6	6	7	11	-7	14	-8	3
State of Economy	14	12	10	22	-8	24	-8	5
Personal Finances	18	16	18	24	14	28	10	19
Buying Climate	-14	-10	-6	-14	-26	-4	-30	-16
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	13	14	17	20	3	28	3	14
Women	0	-1	-2	3	-15	6	-19	-7
Age:								
18 - 34	-2	3	6	10	-5	17	-10	0
35 - 44	8	5	5	-3	-10	15	-13	2
45 - 54	9	6	8	16	-8	19	-12	3
55 - 64	11	11	6	13	7	26	-17	5
65 +	12	11	15	22	-10	35	-10	8
Income:								
Under \$15K	-44	-46	-31	-28	-40	-24	-56	-40
\$15K To \$24.9K	-20	-23	-20	-30	-30	7	-34	-18
\$25K To \$39.9K	2	3	7	13	0	20	-8	2
\$40K To \$49.9K	26	15	8	24	22	33	-4	11
Over \$50K	37	40	45	40	14	51	14	38
Region:								
Northeast	-1	-2	6	12	-11	14	-16	-1
Midwest	6	8	17	15	3	20	-8	7
South	9	8	1	14	-9	20	-13	1
West	8	8	9	1	-10	21	-10	4
Race:								
White	12	12	12	17	-5	19	-5	8
Black	-29	-32	-27	-3	-14	0	-42	-23
Politics:								
Republican	21	21	16	28	-9	31	-9	15
Democrat	2	-2	9	7	6	12	-10	2
Independent	4	7	3	2	-12	16	-16	-3
Education:								
< High School	-29	-29	-29	-17	-44	-5	-44	-25
High Sch. Grad.	2	-1	-1	3	-7	5	-19	-6
College +	22	24	26	25	8	30	8	19
Home:								
Own	16	17	13	16	0	21	-4	10
Rent	-18	-17	-7	-5	-19	2	-27	-15
Marital Status:								
Single	-7	-7	0	12	-7	12	-16	-2
Married	16	16	14	16	-3	23	-3	9
Sep/Wid/Div	-18	-19	-13	-7	-16	0	-29	-17

Employ. Status:

Full-Time	15	15	10	17	0	25	-1	11
Part-Time	-3	-2	15	7	-25	15	-25	-3
Not Employed	-3	-3	-1	5	-11	9	-21	-6

197. Compared to last year, would you say this Christmas you will spend more, less, or about the same on presents for friends and family?

	More	Less	Same	Don't Celebrate (vol.)	No Opin.
11/9/97	17	30	52	1	0
10/12/97	18	36	36	3	6
12/8/96	14	35	48	3	0
10/13/96	11	33	55	1	0
11/26/95	13	38	48	1	0
10/15/95	13	36	50	1	0
11/27/94	15	34	48	1	1
10/16/94	14	34	51	0	1
10/17/93	14	38	47	0	0
11/29/92	10	41	47	2	1
10/18/92	12	41	45	1	-
10/20/91	11	47	40	1	0
10/21/90	14	38	45	1	1
10/22/89	20	32	47	1	1
10/30/88	16	32	51	-	-
12/17/87	25	29	45	*	1
10/26/87	17	29	53	1	*
11/30/86	17	36	46	-	-
12/17/85	25	28	45	3	-