

ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX – 11/14/99

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Confidence Ends Slide

Consumer confidence inched up this week after falling to its lowest level in a year last week.

The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index stands at +25, up slightly from last week's +22. But even with this increase, confidence remains in a fall slump -- at about the same level as October's average of +24, the lowest-rated month so far this year.

From January through September, the index – based on the public's ratings of the buying climate, national economy and personal finances – averaged a record +29 on its scale of +100 to -100. It reached record highs, +32, three times this year, in January and March. Though off its peak from earlier in the year, confidence is still much higher than its 13-year average of -12.

This week 70 percent of Americans rate the economy positively, far above the poll's 13-year average but down from a high of 77 earlier in the year. Sixty-six percent say their own finances are in good shape, and 52 percent call it a good time to buy things.

Positive ratings:	Today	----- Since 12/85 -----		
		Highest	Lowest	Average
National Economy	70%	77	7	38
Personal Finances	66	70	42	56
Buying Climate	52	56	20	37

INDEX – Despite its recent slump, the ABC/Money index has averaged +28 so far this year, and is well on its way to breaking the full-year record of +24 set last year.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	+25	
Last week	+22	
Record high	+32	(1/17, 3/7, 3/14)
1999 average	+28	
1998 average	+24	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-12	

Call the ABC News Polling Unit, ext. 2621, for a chart tracking the ABC/Money index over time.

GROUPS – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans: The index is +54 in higher-income households compared to -27 in the lowest; +42 among college graduates but -10 among high-school dropouts; +28 among whites but +1 among blacks; and +34 among men compared to +16 among women.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- The poll asks: Would you describe the state of the nation's economy these days as excellent, good, not so good or poor? Seventy percent say excellent or good, up one point last week. The record, 77 percent, was set Jan. 10 and tied in March, April and July. The worst rating was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	70%	9	61	30	21	9
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	41	21

PERSONAL FINANCES - The poll asks: Would you describe the state of your own personal finances these days as excellent, good, not so good or poor? Sixty-six percent say excellent or good, up two points from last week. The record, 70 percent, was set Aug. 30, 1998, and tied this January, June and September. The worst was 42 percent March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	66%	6	60	34	23	11
Avg. since 12/85	56	4	52	44	31	13

BUYING CLIMATE - The poll asks: Considering the cost of things today and your own personal finances, would you say now is an excellent time, a good time, a not so good time or a poor time to buy the things you want and need? Fifty-two percent say excellent or good, up two points from last week. The record was 56 percent Nov. 29, 1998; the worst rating, 20 percent, was set in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	52%	4	48	48	32	16
Avg. since 12/85	37	3	35	63	41	22

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 1,038 interviews in the month ending Nov. 14 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. Fieldwork 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 Daniel Merkle.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at:

<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

11/14/99	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	25	22	24	25	25	32	22	28
State of Economy	40	38	42	42	42	54	38	46
Personal Finances	32	28	32	30	34	40	28	33
Buying Climate	4	0	-2	2	0	12	-4	4

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	34	33	32	36	36	44	30	35
Women	16	11	15	14	15	31	11	20
Age:								
18 - 34	17	16	24	24	17	35	16	27
35 - 44	23	23	16	28	27	40	13	28
45 - 54	33	26	25	19	29	41	13	28
55 - 64	28	22	27	22	29	47	13	27
65 +	25	20	25	31	29	37	17	27
Income:								
Under \$15K	-27	-28	-36	-26	-25	-11	-42	-23
\$15K To \$24.9K	12	2	4	-6	5	12	-15	-1
\$25K To \$39.9K	20	21	8	20	23	38	8	24
\$40K To \$49.9K	35	28	39	49	38	56	27	42
Over \$50K	54	55	58	58	54	67	53	60
Region:								
Northeast	23	24	37	25	30	42	16	29
Midwest	25	22	29	26	30	41	20	32
South	29	24	17	27	15	31	14	23
West	18	14	14	18	32	43	13	28
Race:								
White	28	26	28	29	30	37	26	31
Black	1	-3	-7	-3	-4	22	-10	5
Politics:								
Republican	41	40	41	32	35	49	32	39
Democrat	30	20	15	23	29	35	15	26
Independent	13	14	20	24	21	34	13	24
Education:								
< High School	-10	-21	-19	-27	-3	6	-27	-10
High Sch. Grad.	15	16	16	20	15	31	12	20
College +	42	38	41	44	43	52	38	45
Home:								
Own	34	32	35	31	34	40	26	34
Rent	5	0	-3	10	1	26	-3	11
Marital Status:								
Single	23	20	12	35	20	36	8	24
Married	28	27	35	27	32	41	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	7	-3	-9	4	-3	18	-9	6
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	33	32	34	33	34	44	30	36
Part-Time	29	17	24	8	17	38	5	22
Not Employed	11	8	9	17	13	26	6	16

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