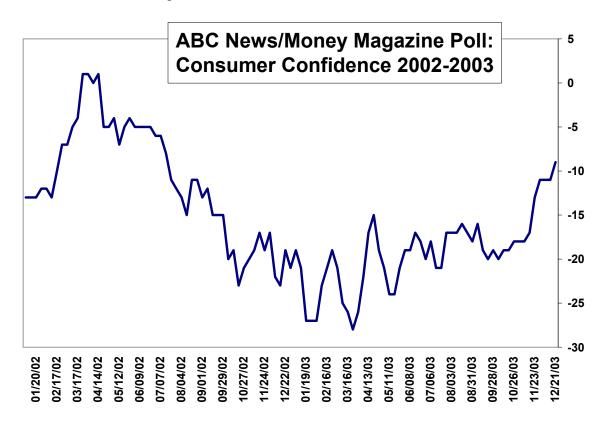
Confidence, Continuing to Improve, Reaches 17-Month High

Consumer confidence continues to edge up, this week reaching its best level in 17 months and matching its career average.

The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on current ratings of the economy, personal finances and the buying climate, is now at -9 on its scale of +100 to -100. It was -11 last week and -18 six weeks ago.

Improving economic ratings are helping to lift the index. Thirty-eight percent now say the economy's in good shape – far from ideal, but up 10 points since mid-October to its best level since July 7, 2002.

This week's index matches its overall average in 18 years of weekly polls. It drifted below average in July 2002, was at -19 at this point last year and bottomed out at -28 in March, as war with Iraq neared.

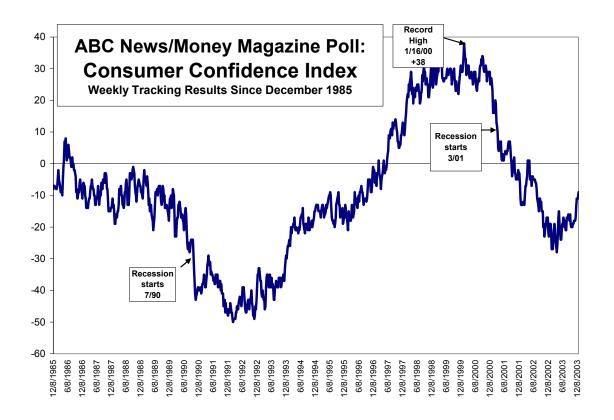


In the index's other measures, 42 percent call it a good time to buy things, three points above average, and 56 percent say their own finances are OK, about average.

		ABC News/Money magazine poll						
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2003 high	2003 low	18-yr. avg.			
National economy	38%	35	38	21	40			
Buying climate	42	43	43	32	39			
Personal finances	56	56	60	52	57			
Consumer Comfort Index	z – 9	-11	- 9	-28	-9			

The boost in confidence coincides with a recent improvement in George W. Bush's economic ratings. In an ABC News/Washington Post poll this week, more Americans approved than disapproved of his work on the economy – a first since April. And while 40 percent still said most Americans are worse off now than they were before Bush took office, that's down from a high of 52 percent three months ago.

TREND – The ABC/Money index has averaged just -19 so far this year, on pace for its worst annual performance since 1994. Its best one-year average was +29 in 2000; its worst, -44 in 1992. The index has been as low as -50 in February 1992, and as high as +38 in 2000.



	ABC/Money Inc	xex
Today	- 9	
Last week	-11	
Six weeks ago	-18	
Recent low	-28 Ma	arch 2003

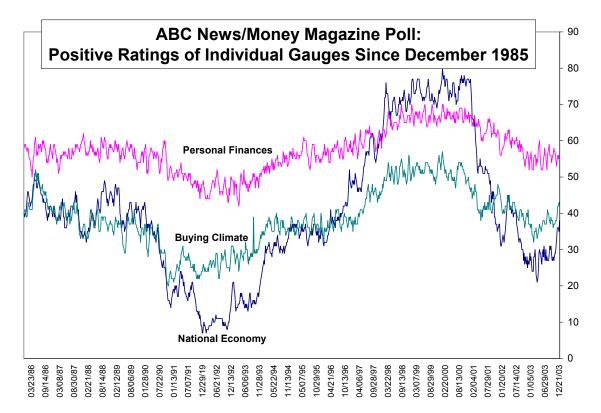
Recent high	+1	March, April 2002
2003 average to date	-19	
2002 average	-11	
2001 average	+4	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-9	

GROUPS – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +20 among higher-income people while -46 among those with the lowest incomes, +6 among college graduates while -34 among high-school dropouts, and -4 among whites but -37 among blacks.

The recent gap between men and women – it was 18 points a month ago and 16 points last week – is closing. This week's index is -7 among men and -12 among women. That's a 12-month high for women, and 15 points better than their 12-month average. Men are three points below their 12-month average.

Partisan and regional differences persist. The index is +34 among Republicans, -11 among independents and -37 among Democrats. It's better in the West (-2) and the South (-7) than in the Northeast (-12) and Midwest (-18).

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



NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-eight percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good; it was 35 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	38	2	36	62	43	19
Avg. since 12/	85 40	4	37	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-six 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.

		Po	s. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This	week		56	5	51	44	30	14
Avg.	since	12/85	57	5	52	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE – Forty-two percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 43 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	4	12	3	39	58	40	18
Avg.	since 1	2/85 3	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 1,000 interviews in the month ending Dec. 21, 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.

12/21/03 This Last 4 Wks 3 Mo. 1 Yr. 12 Mo 12 Mo 12 Mo Week Week Ago Ago Ago High Low Avg

Group								
CENEDAL DODILIAMION.								
GENERAL POPULATION: Overall Index	- 9	-11	_13	-20	_10	-9	-28	-19
State of Economy		-30			-13 -42	-24		
		-30 12				20		
		-14						
			-20		-20			-20
		OVERAI	LL IND	EX BY	DEMOGR	APHIC	GROUPS	
Sex:								
Men	-7	-3	-3	-10	-15	-1	-19	-10
Women	-12	-19	-21	-28	-23	-12	-38	-27
Age:								
18 - 34	-7	-10	-13			-4	_	-15
35 - 44	-14	-14		-21		-8	_	-18
45 - 54	-4	- 5		-16		-4		
55 - 64	-8	-13		-27		-8		
65+	-14	-14	-12	-18	-29	-9	-33	-23
Income:								
Under \$15K	-46	-47				-42		-52
\$15K TO \$24.9K	-28	-41	-49			-28		-43
\$25K To \$39.9K	-26	-26	-11			-11		-32
\$40K To \$49.9K	-2	0	- 7	-14	_	20		-12
Over \$50K	20	25	17	8	10	25	-8	7
Region: Northeast	-12	-12	-19	-12	-21	-12	-38	-24
	-12 -18	-12 -18	-19 -8	-12 -26		-12 -7	-38 -34	-24 -19
Midwest South	-10 -7	-10 -11		-26 -17		- 7 - 6		-19 -17
West	- 7 -2	-11 -3	-19 -1	-17 -23	-22 -17	-0 -1		-17 -18
Race:	2	J	Τ.	23	1 /		71	10
White	-4	- 5	-7	-17	-17	-4	-23	-15
Black	- 37	-40	-44	-44		-23	-68	-45
Politics:	<i>J</i> ,	10			10	20	0.0	10
Republican	34	31	17	10	14	34	-3	11
Democrat	-37	-39		-42		-25		-38
Independent	-11	-12	-19	-21	-29	-11	-38	-24
Education:								
< High School	-34	-36	-40			-23	-56	-42
High Sch. Grad.	-19	-23	-25	-28	-24	-13	-40	-25
College +	6	6	6	-9	-4	6	-17	-7
Home:								
Own	-4	-3	-2		-13	0	-24	-13
Rent	-25	-30	-37	-40	-35	-25	-43	-35
Marital Status:								
Single	-22	-21	-25	-26	-13	-11	-37	-23
Married	7	5	3	-11		7	-27	-11
Sep/Wid/Div	-35	-38	-41	-38	-41	-21	-52	-39
Employ. Status:	_	_	_			_		
Full-Time	0	- 5	- 6	-12	-10	0	-20	-11
Part-Time	2	0	-21	-19		2	-40	-23
Not Employed	-26	-23	-19	-30	-32	-17	-40	-29