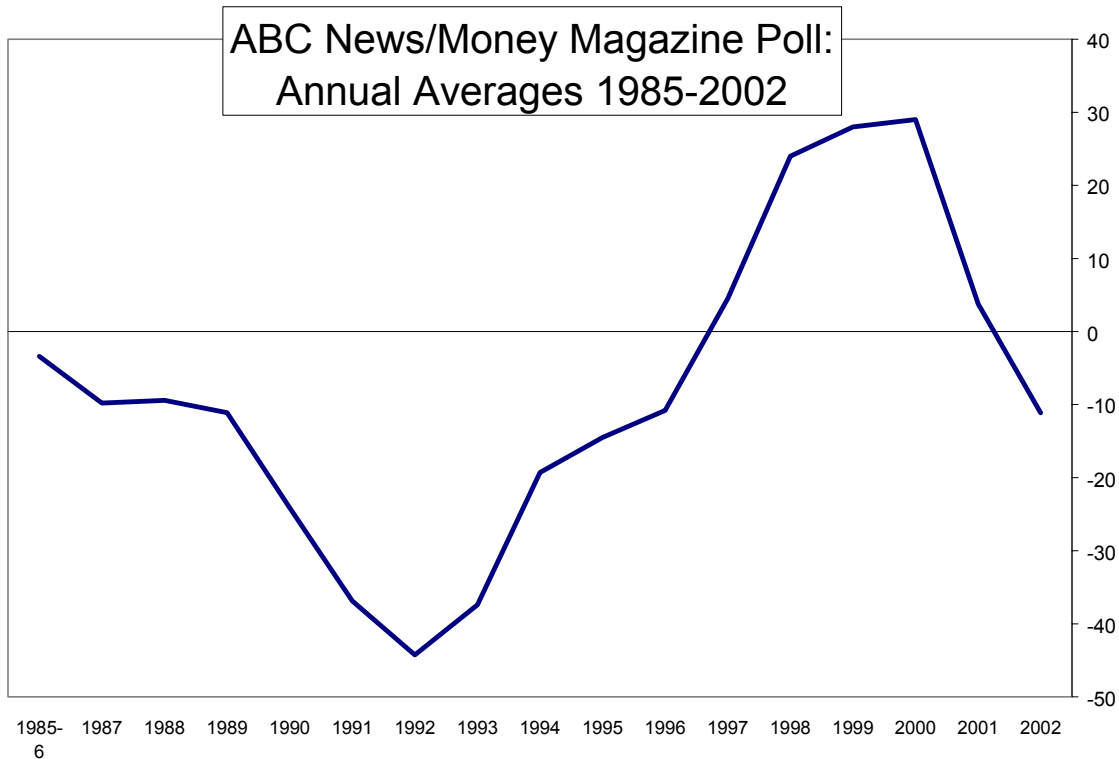


## **Confidence 2002: The Worst Year Since 1996**

After a rocky 12 months, 2002 stands as consumer confidence's worst year on average since 1996.

In a year that was marked by a sluggish economy, corporate scandals and a declining stock market, the ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on current economic sentiment, averaged just -11 on its scale of +100 to -100, a six-year low. On average, the index has lost 40 points over the last two years: It averaged +4 in 2001, and +29 in 2000, its best year on record.

It has been much worse, though, averaging a dismal -44 in 1992. Its lifetime average is -8.

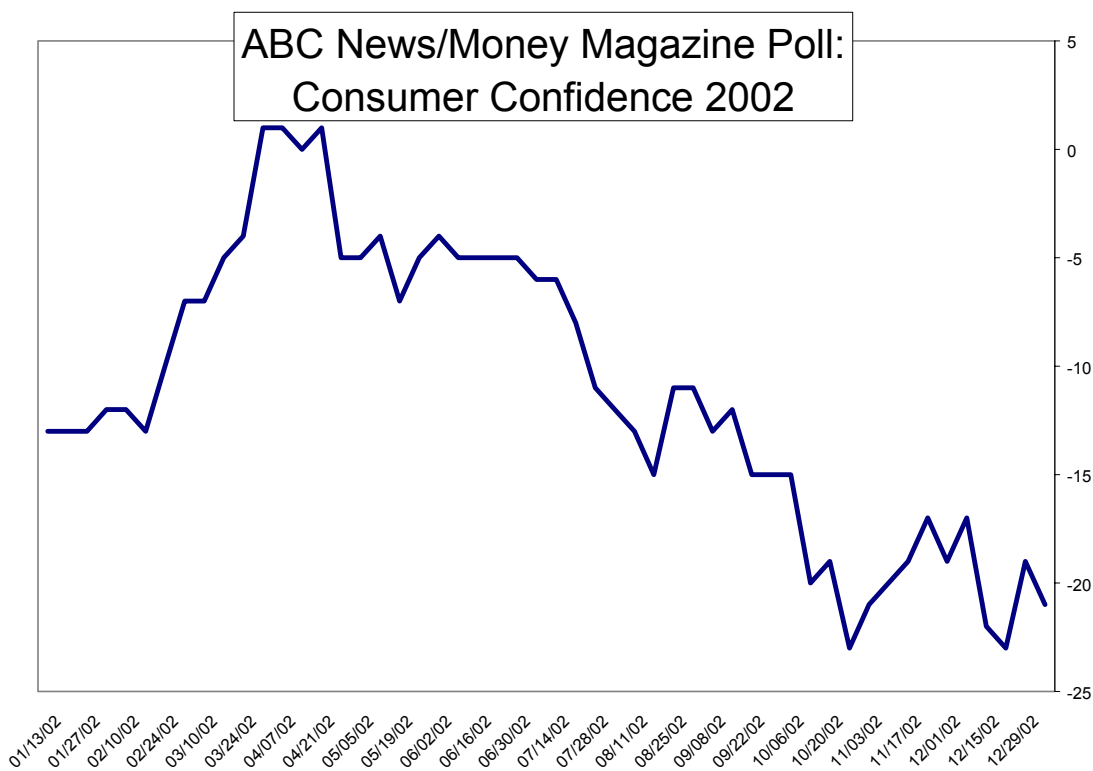


ABC/Money annual averages

2002	-11
2001	4
2000	29
1999	28
1998	24
1997	5

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE 2002 – The ABC/Money index has finished 2002 at -21. Confidence has had a bumpy year: It started at -13 in January, rebounded to +1 in March and mid-April, but slipped to -5 in late April. It fell further to -15 in August and mid-September, and bottomed out at -23 in October – a nine-year low. It edged up to -17 in November, but fell to -23 again in mid-December.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	-21	
Last week	-19	
2002 high	+1	March, April
2002 low	-23	Oct. 20, Dec. 15
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	-8	



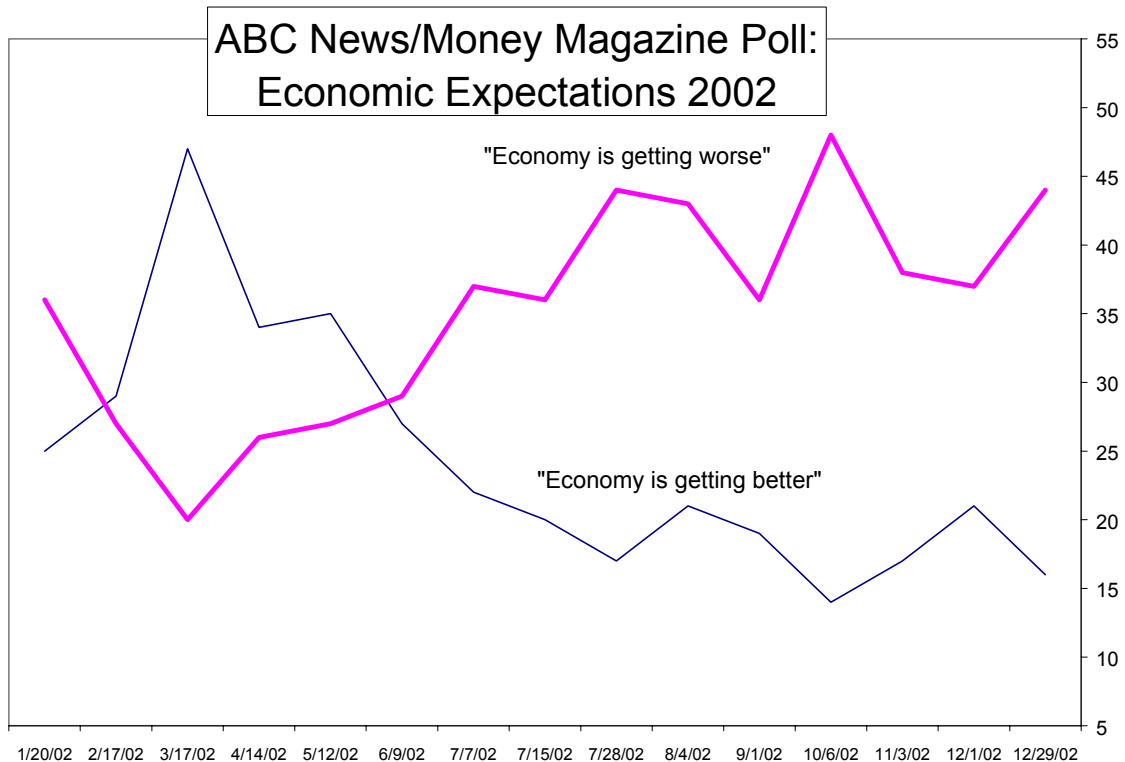
The index is based on Americans' ratings of the national economy, their personal finances and the buying climate. Just 27 percent rate the national economy positively this week; this rating started the year at 31 percent positive, and peaked at 45 percent in March.

Thirty-six percent call it a good time to buy things, matching its low of the year. That's down seven points since January and nine points since its 2002 high in April. Positive ratings of personal finances, while much stronger, have also slipped over the year: 55 percent say their finances are in good shape, down from 63 percent in April.

Positive ratings of:	ABC News/Money magazine poll			
	This week	2002 high	2002 low	17-yr. avg.
National economy	27%	45	25	41
Buying climate	36	45	36	39
Personal finances	55	63	52	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-21	+1	-23	-8

**LOOKING AHEAD** – Looking toward 2003, Americans aren't expressing much economic optimism. Only 16 percent of Americans think the economy's getting better, down five points from last month. Forty-four percent say the economy's getting worse, up seven points, and 39 percent say it's staying the same. Expectations for the future are measured separately each month in the ABC/Money poll.

	Economy is...		
	Getting better	Getting worse	Staying the same
12/29/02	16%	44	39
12/1/02	21	37	42
11/3/02	17	38	44
10/6/02	14	48	37



**GROUPS** - As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index stands at +10 among people in higher-income households compared to -51 in the lowest, -5 among college graduates while -50 among high-school dropouts, -19 among whites but -41 among blacks and -16 among men while -26 among women.

Expectations show similar differences. Optimism is higher among better-educated and higher-income people. It peaks among Republicans.

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

**NATIONAL ECONOMY** - Twenty-seven percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good; it was 29 percent last week. The best was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	27	2	25	73	49	24
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	38	59	39	19

**PERSONAL FINANCES** - Fifty-five percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, the same as last week. The best was 70 percent, set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	55	5	50	45	32	13
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

**BUYING CLIMATE** - Thirty-six percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need; it was 37 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	36	3	33	64	45	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 1,009 interviews in the month ending Dec. 29, 2002 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. The expectations question was conducted among 503 respondents Dec. 18-29; 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 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.

12/29/02	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	-21	-19	-17	-15	-13	1	-23	-11
State of Economy	-46	-42	-46	-40	-38	-10	-50	-31
Personal Finances	10	10	12	14	12	26	4	17
Buying Climate	-28	-26	-18	-20	-12	-10	-28	-19
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-16	-15	-9	-12	-6	9	-17	-4
Women	-26	-23	-24	-18	-19	-4	-31	-17
Age:								
18 - 34	-9	-7	-6	-9	-6	10	-16	-4
35 - 44	-28	-28	-24	-9	-13	3	-31	-12
45 - 54	-30	-25	-14	-21	-15	6	-37	-12
55 - 64	-19	-20	-23	-23	-15	20	-30	-12
65 +	-33	-29	-32	-23	-21	-5	-36	-20
Income:								
Under \$15K	-51	-48	-46	-43	-44	-26	-54	-44
\$15K To \$24.9K	-49	-49	-40	-27	-31	-19	-55	-32
\$25K To \$39.9K	-41	-39	-26	-24	-16	1	-41	-17
\$40K To \$49.9K	-20	-18	-15	-16	3	12	-30	-5
Over \$50K	10	10	8	5	3	33	-15	12
Region:								
Northeast	-21	-21	-28	-11	-9	2	-32	-14
Midwest	-22	-16	-11	-11	-8	4	-27	-11
South	-25	-22	-20	-22	-12	4	-26	-11
West	-13	-17	-9	-12	-21	9	-24	-7
Race:								
White	-19	-17	-15	-13	-8	7	-20	-7
Black	-41	-46	-43	-29	-45	-18	-51	-37
Politics:								
Republican	10	14	11	7	16	34	2	13
Democrat	-35	-35	-30	-30	-26	-14	-37	-25
Independent	-37	-29	-21	-17	-19	-2	-37	-14
Education:								
< High School	-50	-53	-51	-44	-41	-12	-59	-36
High Sch. Grad.	-29	-24	-20	-14	-18	-3	-29	-14
College +	-5	-4	-3	-7	-1	13	-18	0
Home:								
Own	-15	-13	-12	-12	-9	9	-21	-6
Rent	-35	-35	-29	-24	-23	-9	-39	-22
Marital Status:								
Single	-13	-13	-14	-10	-16	10	-20	-8
Married	-17	-15	-14	-12	-7	11	-20	-6
Sep/Wid/Div	-42	-41	-30	-32	-31	-14	-42	-29
Employ. Status:								

Full-Time	-12	-10	-10	-11	-1	12	-20	-2
Part-Time	-20	-21	-7	-11	-12	14	-28	-8
Not Employed	-35	-32	-30	-22	-27	-13	-38	-23

1. Do you think the nation's economy is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?

	Getting Better	Getting Worse	Staying the Same	No Opinion
12/29/02	16	44	39	1
12/1/02	21	37	42	1
11/3/02	17	38	44	0
10/6/02	14	48	37	1
9/1/02	19	36	44	1
8/4/02	21	43	34	0
7/28/02*	17	44	39	1
7/15/02*	20	36	43	2
7/7/02	22	37	41	0
6/9/02	27	29	43	1
5/12/02	35	27	38	0
4/14/02	34	26	40	0
3/17/02	47	20	32	1
2/17/02	29	27	42	2
1/20/02	25	36	39	1
12/9/01	24	37	38	1
11/11/01	16	48	36	1
10/14/01	15	46	39	0
9/16/01	9	44	46	1
8/12/01	16	46	38	0
7/15/01	13	40	46	0
6/17/01	17	45	38	1
5/20/01	13	47	39	0
4/22/01	12	44	44	0
3/25/01	13	49	37	1
2/11/01	13	45	41	1
1/14/01	12	40	47	1

Call for full trend.

\*ABC/Post

\*\*\*END\*\*\*