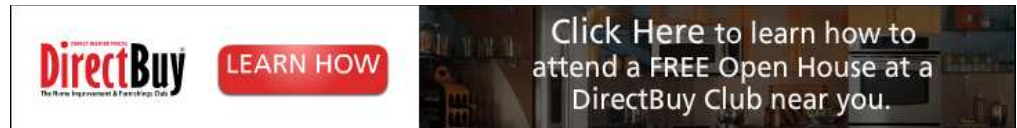


Autos Careers Classifieds Homes

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The banner features the DirectBuy logo on the left, which includes the tagline "The Home Improvement & Furnishing Club". To the right of the logo is a red button with the text "LEARN HOW". Further right is a photograph of a modern interior space, overlaid with the text "Click Here to learn how to attend a FREE Open House at a DirectBuy Club near you."

## Glass half full

Canadians have brighter outlook than most when it comes to the economy

By CHRISTINA SPENCER, NATIONAL BUREAU

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Canadians aren't exactly cock-eyed optimists about the economy -- until you compare us with the rest of the world.

A massive survey of consumers in 22 countries suggests the world is slowly shucking its sense of pessimism and preparing to spend anew. Canada, India and Brazil have been best at coping with the world financial crisis, the poll concludes.

For instance, 78% of Canadians expect family income to either increase or stay the same over the next year. We're not as exuberant as, say, the Saudis -- 84% of them expect pay hikes or at least income stability -- but we're not mired in a confidence meltdown like Icelanders, 60% of whom expect income to dip.

As well, about 44% of Canadians think this is a good time to buy a house, one of the highest confidence levels among countries included in the Leger Marketing/WIN poll.

And Canada has confidence when it comes to its banking system, ranking second only to Chinese consumers for faith in their lenders' stability.

'TURNED A CORNER'

"We're hearing from business leaders -- especially here in Canada -- that we've turned a corner," said Dave Scholz, vice-president of Leger Marketing. "We're not overly optimistic, but we're not saying it's bad, we're not saying it's going to get worse.

"We're just in a holding pattern."

It's a better result than the poll found for many nations. The WIN study asked 21,088 people about their attitudes toward the recession, their spending behaviour and the psychological toll, if any, the downturn had taken.

Based on those markers, Canada, Brazil and India coped best.

In general, Canadians tend to take a "moderate view of the economy," Scholz said. "Our consumerism hasn't slowed down much even though we are close to a country (the U.S.) that was hit quite hard."

Fourteen per cent of Canadians expected their pay to shrink. But even in good economic times, retiring people and seasonal workers expect income drop-offs, Scholz noted, so the figure is "a very good result."

The housing question in particular reflects Canadians' readiness to return to normal economic activity, since home ownership means taking on a sizeable debt over a long period. That 44% are comfortable with the idea indicates a "sense of stability" among consumers, Scholz said.

BANK CONFIDENCE

Scholz added the poll suggests Canadian banks "have held their heads above the water" and even earned some "pride and respect" among consumers.

The poll was conducted from mid-June to the end of July by WIN (Worldwide Independent Network of Market Research). Leger Marketing, one of the founding partners of WIN, conducted the Canadian portion of the survey of 1,000 online respondents July 7-8. Leger's results are considered accurate to plus or minus 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. Full poll results can be found at: [www.legermarketing.com](http://www.legermarketing.com).

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