



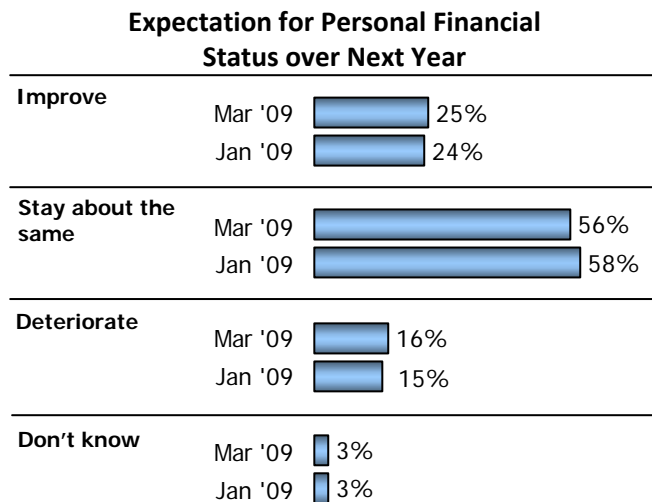
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: Mustel Group Market Research

Date: March 17, 2009

Re: British Columbians Show Optimism Regarding Personal Finances

More British Columbians expect their personal financial status over the next year to improve, than to deteriorate. While the majority (56%) anticipate no real change, 25% are optimistic that their financial status will improve, in comparison to 16% who think it will deteriorate over the year. A survey taken in January and repeated in March shows no change in expectations.

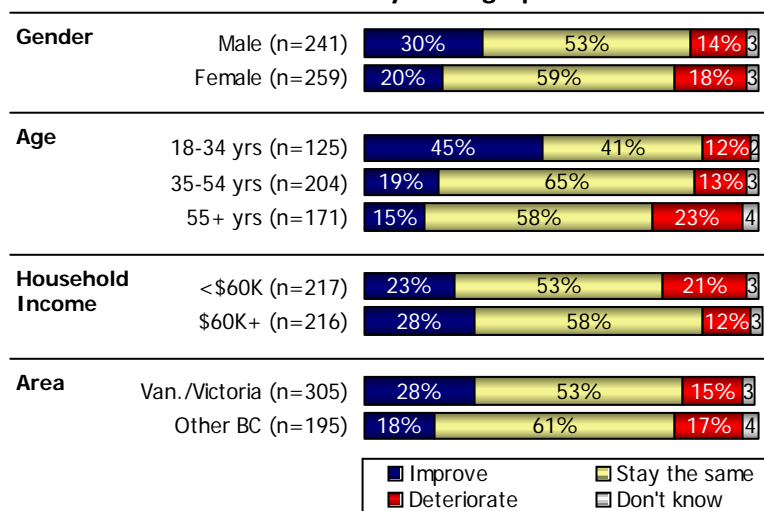


Base: Jan '09 (n=750)
Mar '09 (n=500)

Over the next year, do you expect your financial status to...

Males, those 18-34 years of age, those from above average income households, and residents of Metro Vancouver and Victoria are also more optimistic than others.

Expectation for Personal Financial Status over Next Year by Demographics



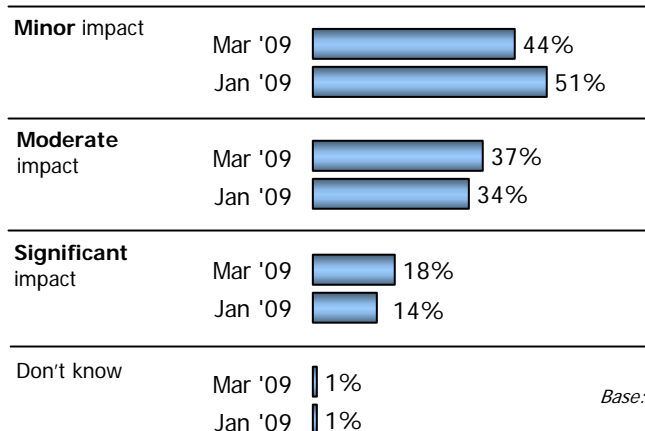
Over the next year, do you expect your financial status to...

Furthermore, less one-in-five British Columbians (18%) report that the economic slowdown has had a *significant* impact on them directly (defined in the survey as “you have had to reduce spending in many areas and change your lifestyle significantly”).

Instead the largest proportion, 44% report that the economic slowdown has had only a minor impact (“you are concerned but it has not impacted how you shop or your lifestyle in a major way”). For 37%, the economic situation has had a moderate impact.

However, these results represent a slight shift from the earlier measure in January. The proportion stating ‘minor impact’ has declined from 51% in January to a current level of 44%, and those who report to be significantly impacted has grown slightly from 14% to 18%.

Impact of Economic Slowdown

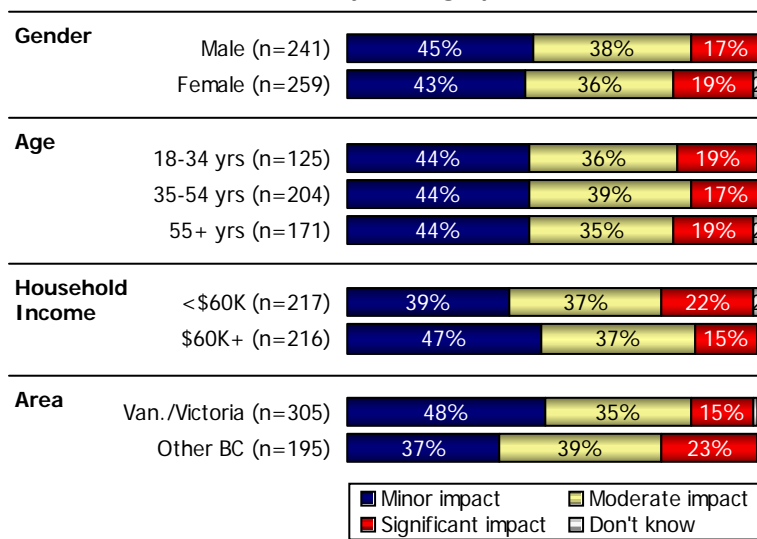


Base: Jan '09 (n=750)
Mar '09 (n=500)

To what extent, if at all, has the recent economic slowdown affected you directly? Has it had:

The findings are consistent across all demographic segments except those from below average income households and those residing outside of Vancouver and Victoria are slightly more inclined to have been impacted.

Impact of Economic Slowdown by Demographics



To what extent, if at all, has the recent economic slowdown affected you directly? Has it had:

For further information, please contact: Evi Mustel: 604-742-2240

Survey conducted: February 26 to March 8, 2009
Methodology: Random sample of BC adults, 18 years of age and over
Margin of error: January: n=750, ±3.6% at the 95% confidence level
 March: n=500, ±4.5% at the 95% confidence level
Sponsored by: Mustel Group Market Research