

BESPOKE INTEL

Monthly Macro

November 2023



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Key Takeaways – Heat Map

NOVEMBER 2023

Bespoke surveys 1,500 Americans each month, with geographic distributions in-line with the US Census. The survey always takes place during the week containing the 12th of the month and poses 100 questions that we group into six sections: Sentiment, Labor Markets, Personal Finances, Housing, Activity, and Investors. By breaking down *Consumer Pulse* into these sections, we can show, not only top-down sentiment trends and their drivers, but individual areas of strength or weakness with respect to demand, budget, and trends.

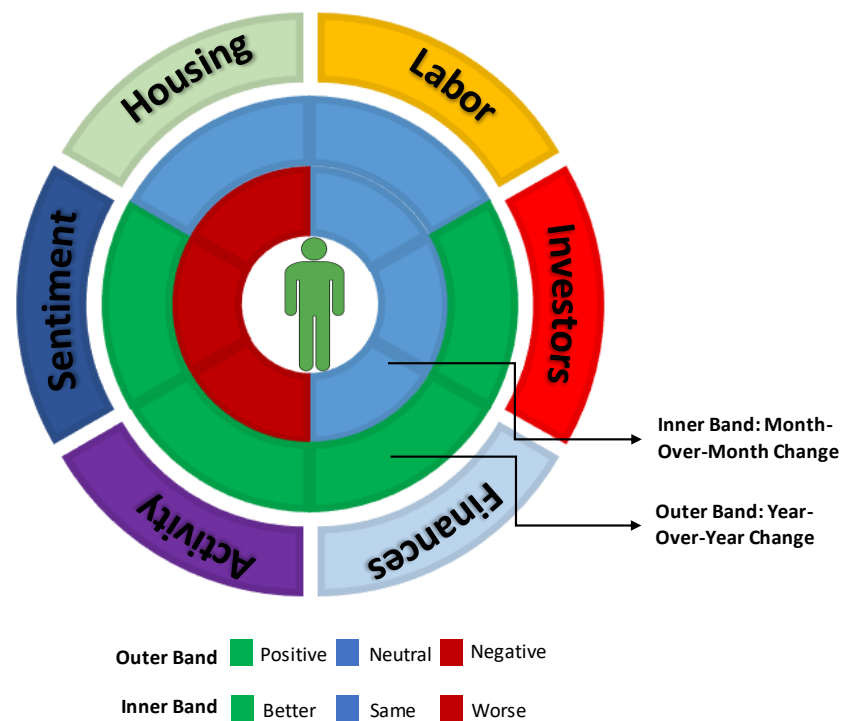
The next pages break down key trends we saw for each of the major categories covered in our monthly survey. Following our category summaries, we delve into a detailed analysis of individual questions, broken up by section.

November results were somewhat weaker sequentially, but the changes were modest in magnitude even if they were broadly lower.

Changes in Heat Map Versus Last Month

- **Labor Market:** On balance, labor markets were unchanged versus both October and compared to a year ago.
- **Housing:** This month was very weak relative to other recent data points from our respondents engaged in the housing market.
- **Consumer Sentiment:** While consumers are generally showing sentiment improvements relative to a year ago, this month was nonetheless improved compared to a year ago.
- **Personal Finances:** While income was weaker and financial sentiment weakened, delinquency data showed some improvement this month.
- **Investor Sentiment:** Despite the strong equity market rally which tends to lead to more positive feelings about the stock market, our respondents saw bearish sentiment increase alongside higher bullish sentiment.

Bespoke Consumer Heat Map





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Key Takeaways: Sentiment

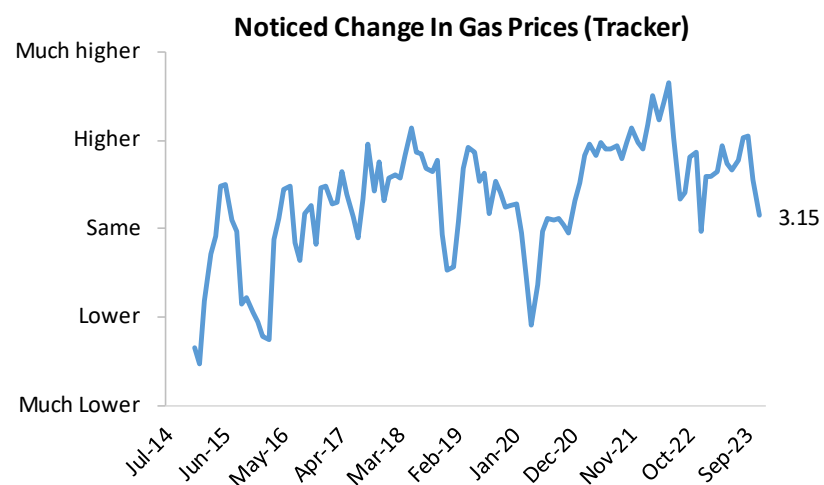
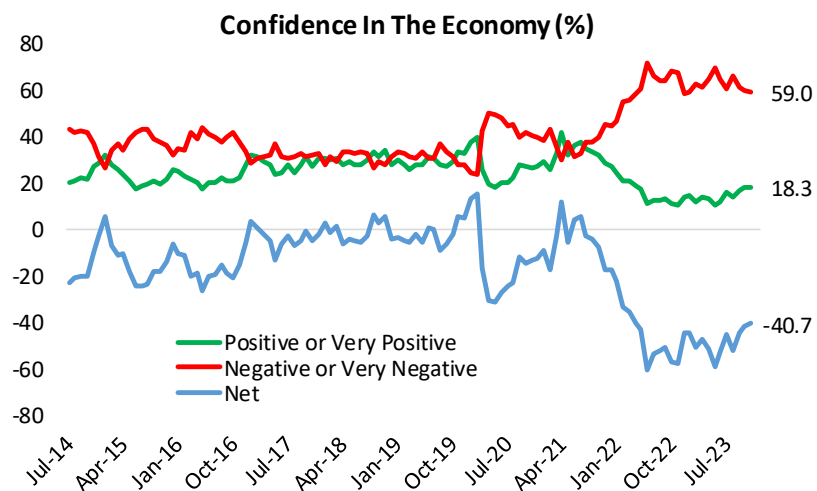
NOVEMBER 2023

Key Takeaways

- Net economic confidence was up very modestly to the highest levels since early 2022.
- Falling gas prices are starting to make an impact on consumer sentiment.

Our respondents reported the highest net economic confidence since early 2022. The uptick in how respondents feel about the economy is not dramatic; the current reading would still be by far and away the weakest in survey history were it not for the last several months. The improvement in net sentiment has come with an improvement in the share of respondents reporting either positive or very positive sentiment and with a decline in the share of respondents who feel negative or very negative about the economy at large.

Given the drop in gas prices, consumers are starting to feel less pressure at the pump. During late 2021 and early 2022, reported cognizance of gas prices tilted hard towards prices being high. Since peaking above \$5 per gallon in early 2022, gas prices retreated to \$3.10 by the end of the year. An uptick to the high-\$3 range this year once again pushed up observations from consumers that gas prices were climbing. But the recent push back from \$3.90 to \$3.20/gallon gas is once again pushing consumers towards neutral sentiment on gas prices.





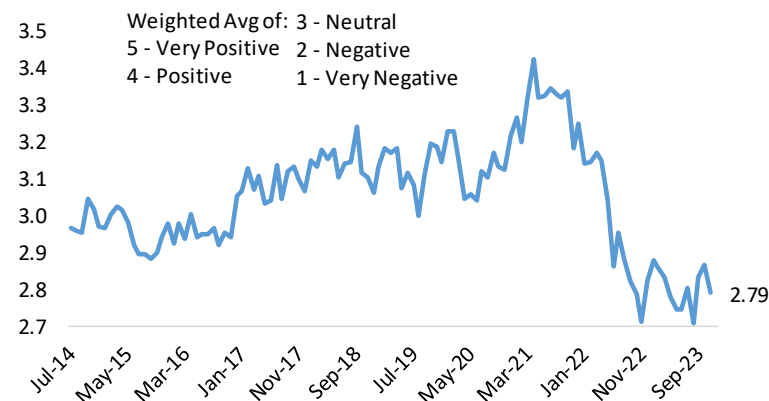
Key Takeaways

- Sentiment towards personal finances dropped sequentially after improving over recent months.
- The share of respondents that report living paycheck to paycheck has dropped sharply over the last few months.

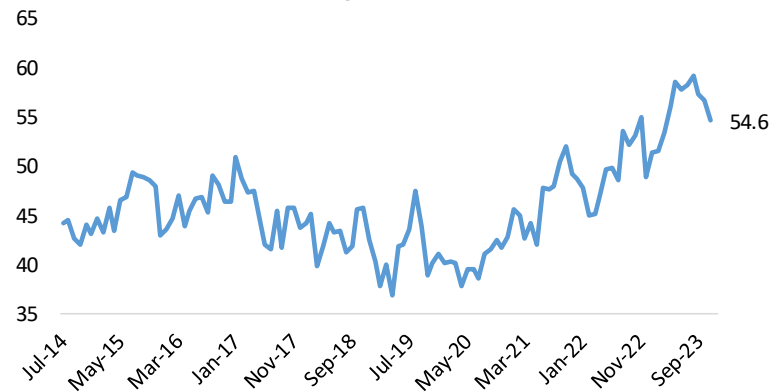
Like general economic sentiment, our index capturing how our respondents feel about their personal finances has remained at very weak levels over the past year. Prior to this year, the index has remained around 2.9 or higher for the entire history of our data. But after surging to unprecedented highs during the pandemic, it has since collapsed to record lows and stayed put. High inflation followed by high interest rates, the high cost of homes, and slowing wage growth are all potential factors in the weak reported financial sentiment.

The good news is that the share of respondents who report that they live paycheck-to-paycheck fell to 54.6% in the most recent data. That's a sharp drop from the record highs logged back in August when 59.2% of respondents reported that they lived paycheck to paycheck.

Current Feelings Towards Personal Finances (Tracker)



"Living Paycheck to Paycheck": Agrees or Strongly Agrees (%)





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Key Takeaways: Housing

NOVEMBER 2023

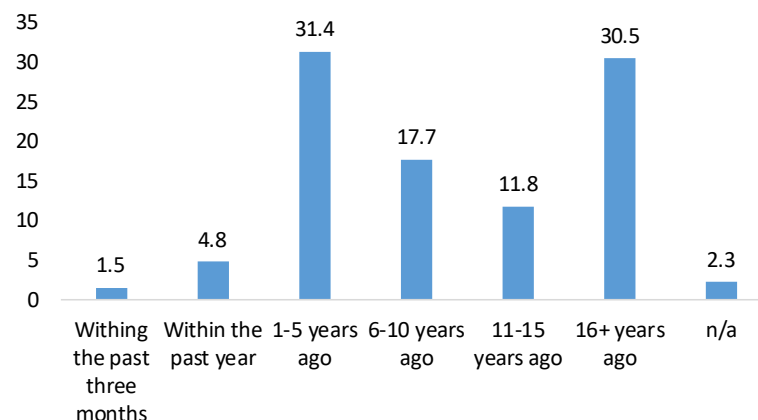
Key Takeaways

- Most homeowners are long-tenured with one-third living in their home for over a decade.
- Interest in construction as reported by building permits fell to new cycle lows in November.

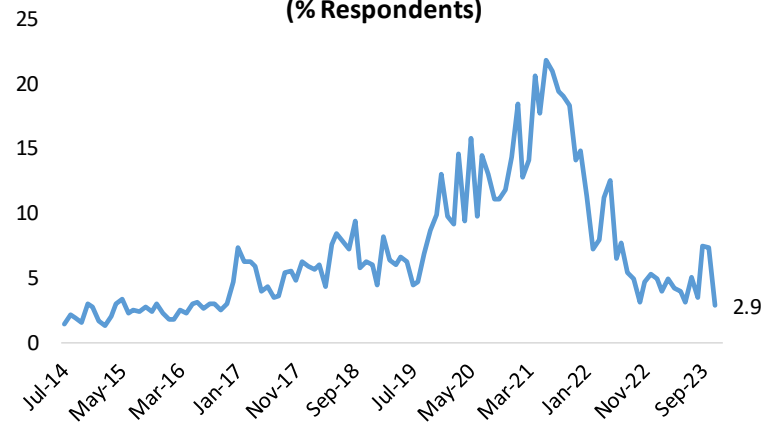
Roughly one-third of our respondents who report home ownership say they've occupied their house for between a year and 5 years. Another third have lived in their home for 6-15 years, while the final third have lived in place for at least 16 years. In other words, the majority of homeowners take a very long time to move, which makes sense given the transaction costs and hassle of moving.

This month saw a sharp drop in the share of respondents who report that they applied for a building permit. This proxy for larger-scale construction activity has slowed despite the fall in mortgage rates this month. The share is down to the lowest levels in eight years, a new cycle low.

Date of Home Purchase (% Homeowners)



Applied For Building Permit In Past Month (% Respondents)





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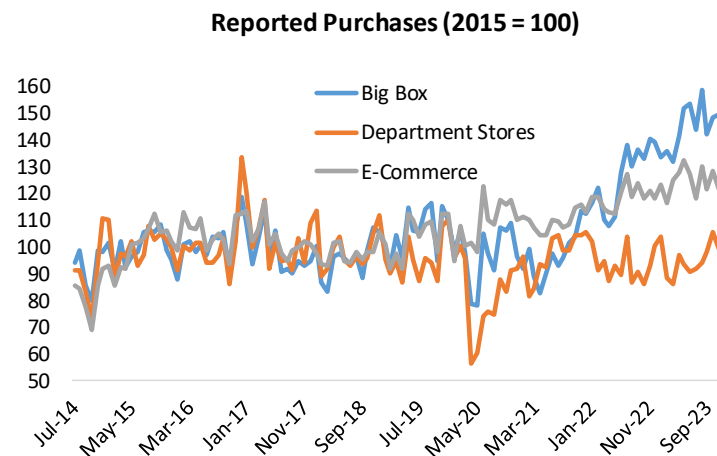
Key Takeaways: Activity

NOVEMBER 2023

Key Takeaways

- Big box chains continue to lead reported purchase activity as we hit peak holiday shopping.

With consumer spending ramping up for the holiday season, big box stores continue to see a major advantage in consumer foot traffic. Their volume has risen more than 50% since the pandemic hit. That compares to purchase volumes that are basically flat. E-commerce activity reported by our respondents is in between the other two major purchase options.





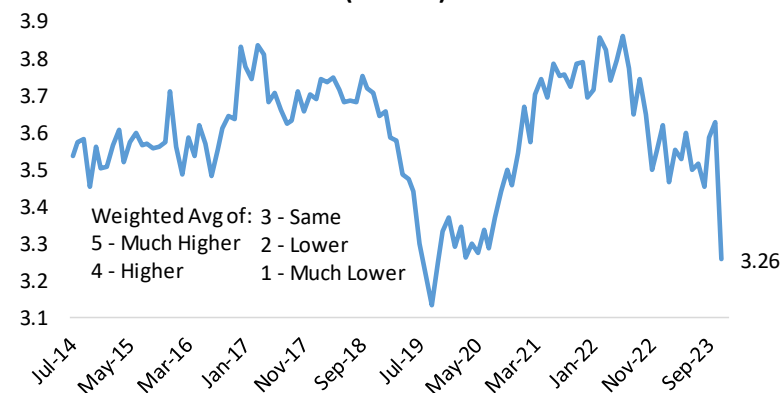
Key Takeaways

- A huge drop in interest rate expectations shows our respondents are watching mortgage rates...or the Fed?
- Moderately bullish stock market sentiment rose despite a lower percentage of very bullish respondents.

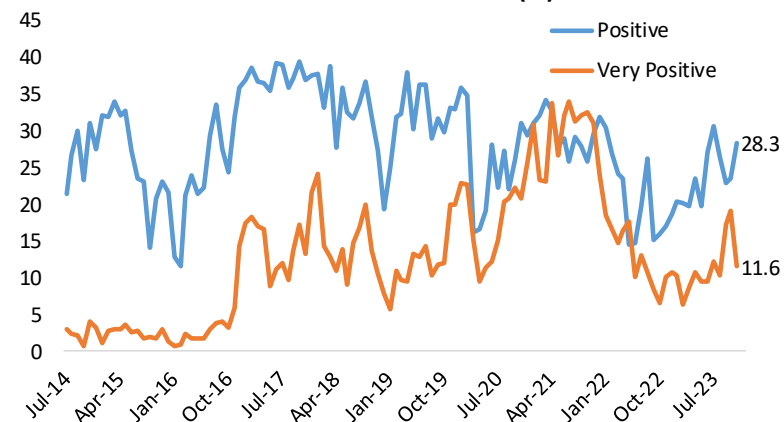
As shown at right, November saw a dramatic decline in expectations for interest rates over the next year. Respondents now expect similar-magnitude declines as they did at the start of the last easing cycle. During 2019, interest rate cuts ahead of the emergency cuts driven by COVID convinced households that we survey of a rapid forthcoming decline in interest rates. It's a similar story now, even though the Federal Reserve has not yet cut, or for that matter even discussed cutting rates.

Despite the sustained rally in US equity markets over the past month, the number of aggressively bullish respondents dropped even as the number of bullish respondents rose sequentially. On balance, respondents were slightly less bullish than the prior month but only very slightly so.

Expectations for Interest Rates One Year From Now (Tracker)



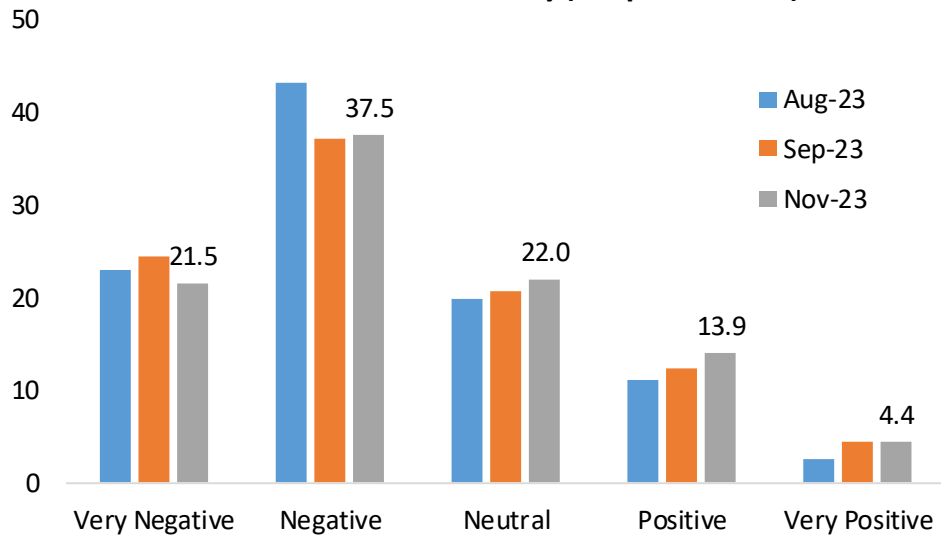
Stock Market Sentiment (%)



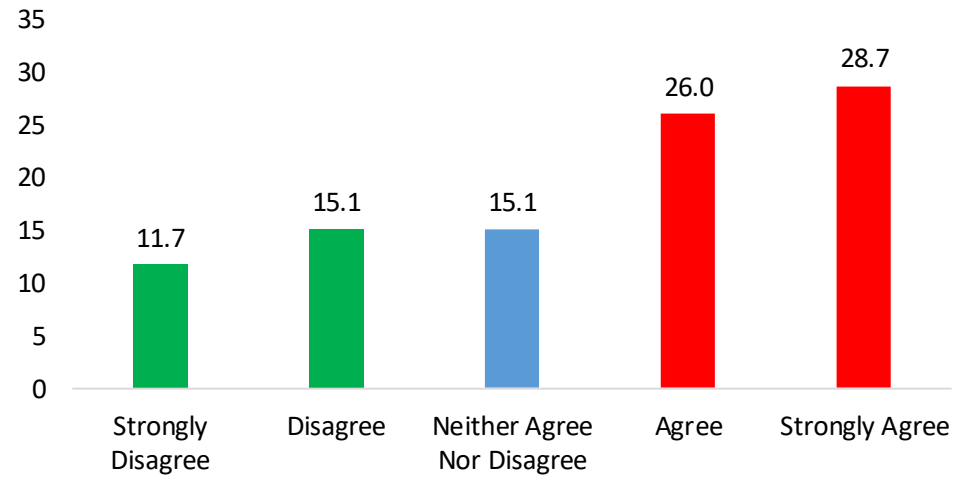
Charts

Confidence in the economy

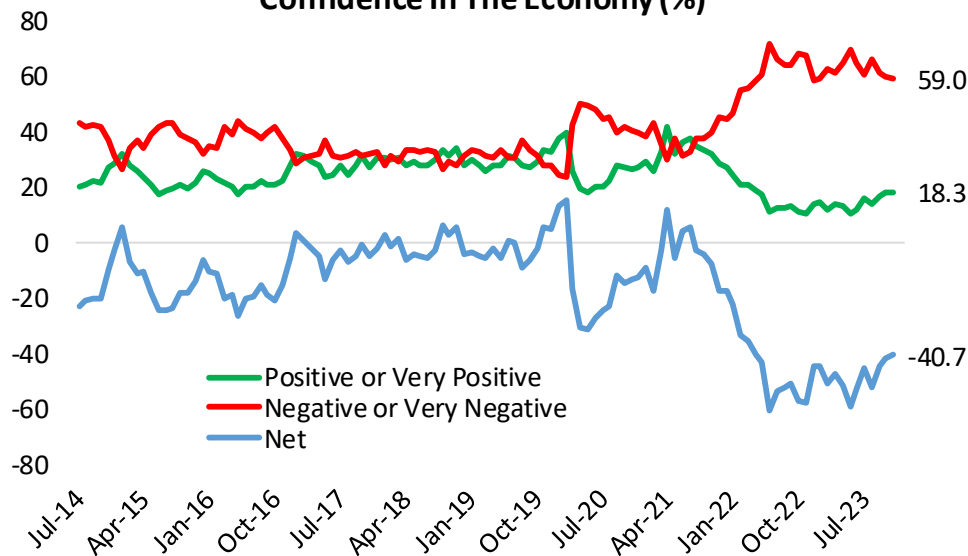
Confidence In The Economy (Respondents %)



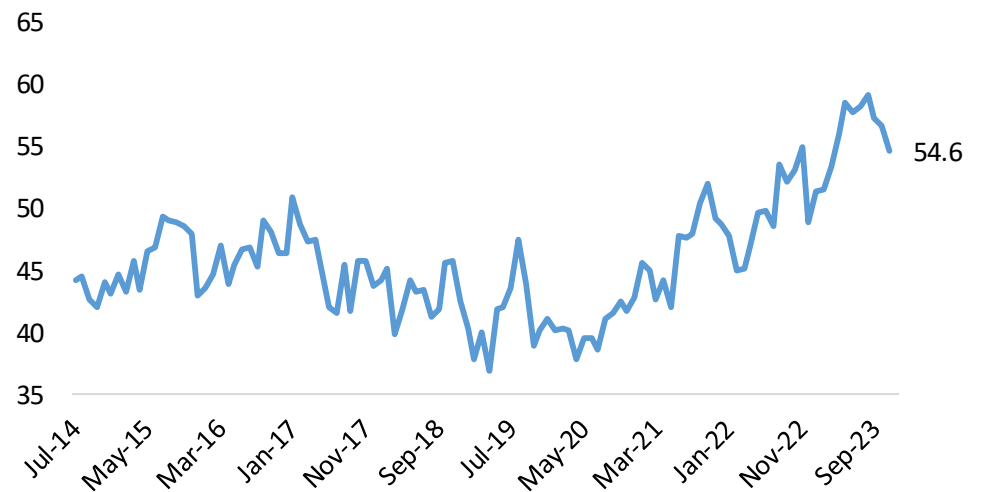
I consider myself living paycheck to paycheck (% Respondents)



Confidence In The Economy (%)

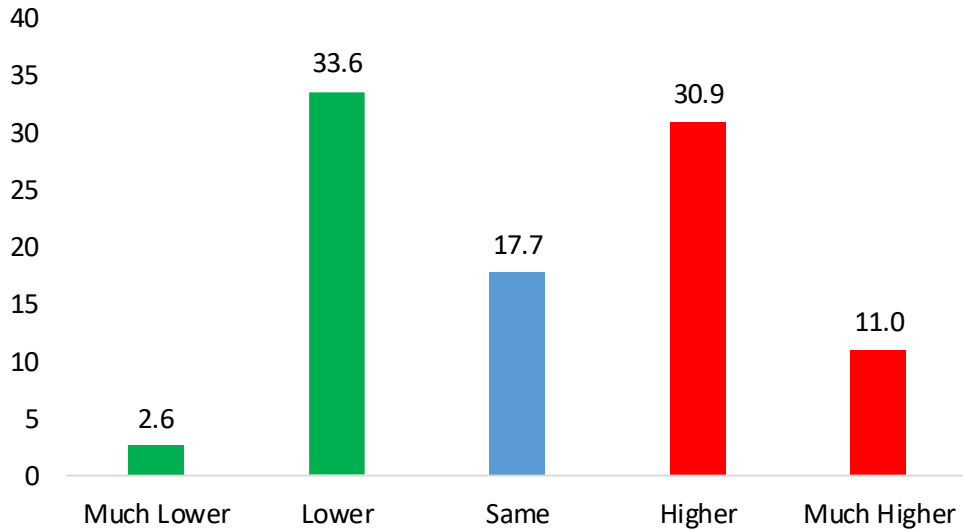


"Living Paycheck to Paycheck": Agrees or Strongly Agrees (%)

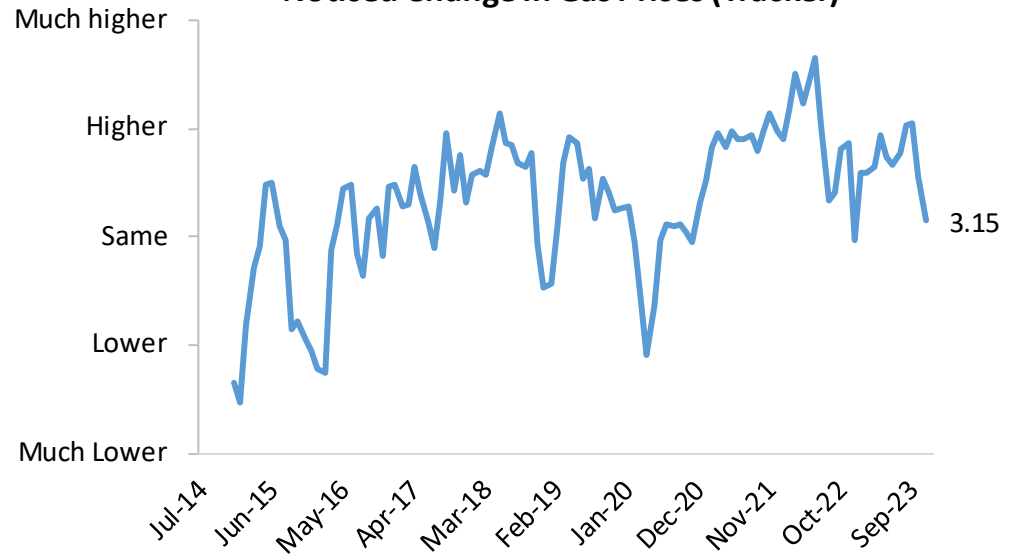


Gas and Broad Prices

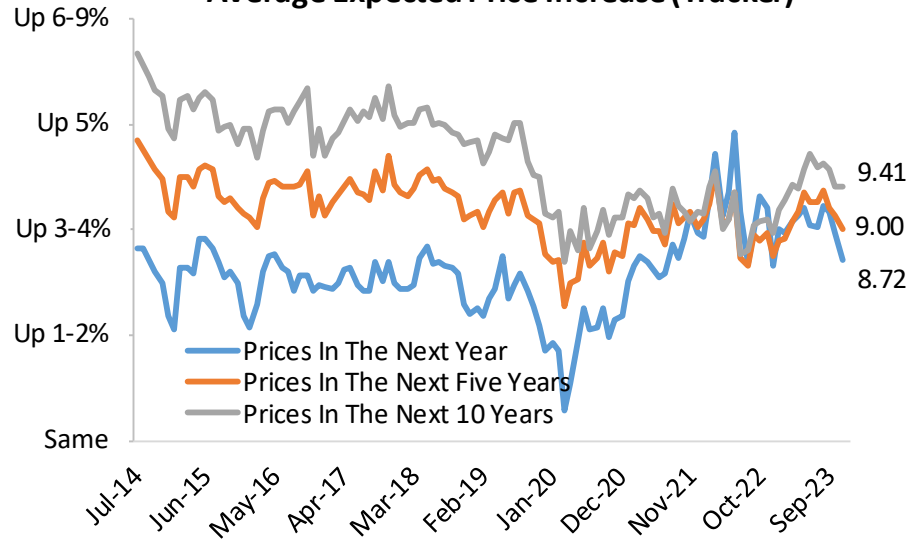
Noticed Change In Gas Prices (% Respondents)



Noticed Change In Gas Prices (Tracker)

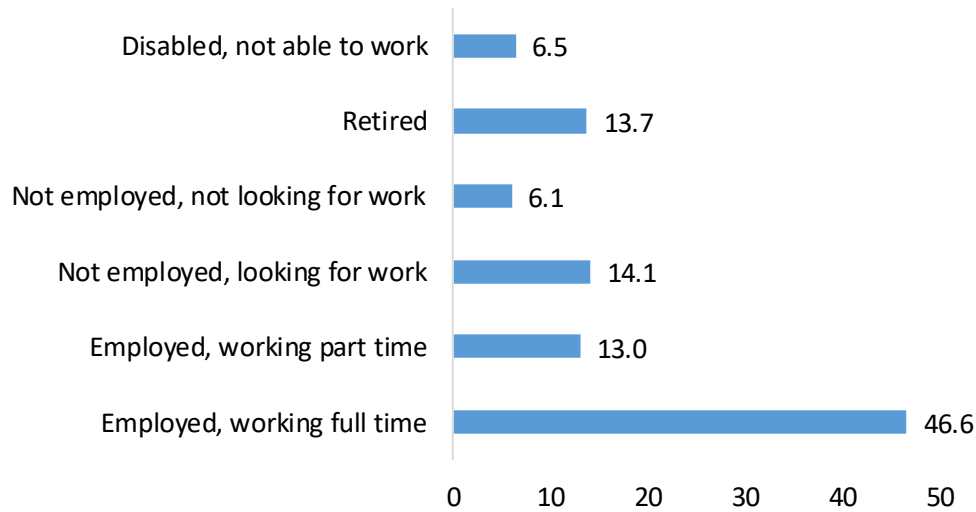


Average Expected Price Increase (Tracker)

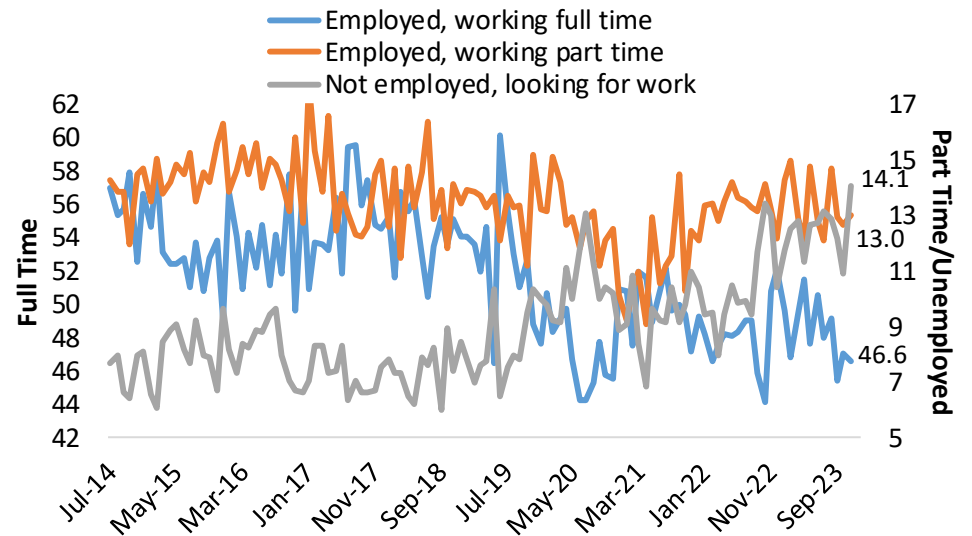


Employment

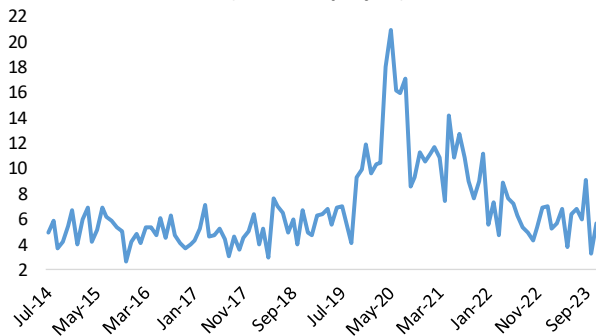
Employment Status (% Respondents)



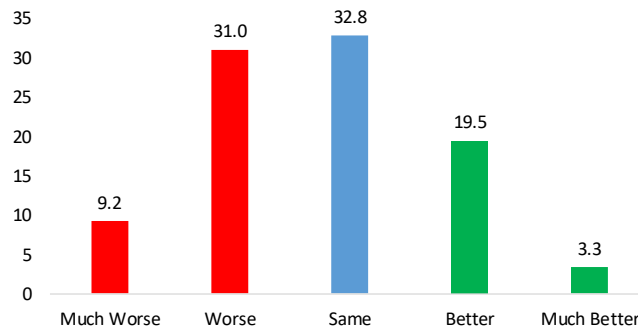
Employment Status (% Respondents)



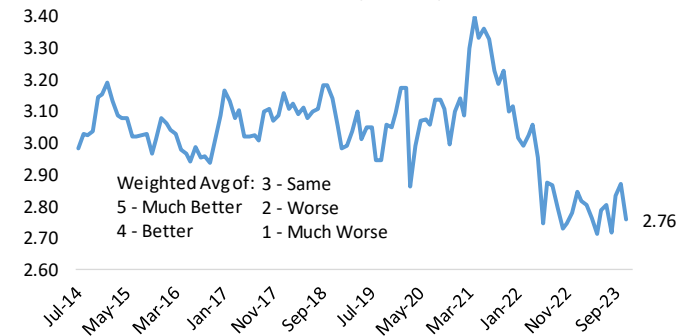
Filed For Unemployment Assistance In Past Month (% Not Employed)



Expectations For US Unemployment Level One Year From Now (% Respondents)

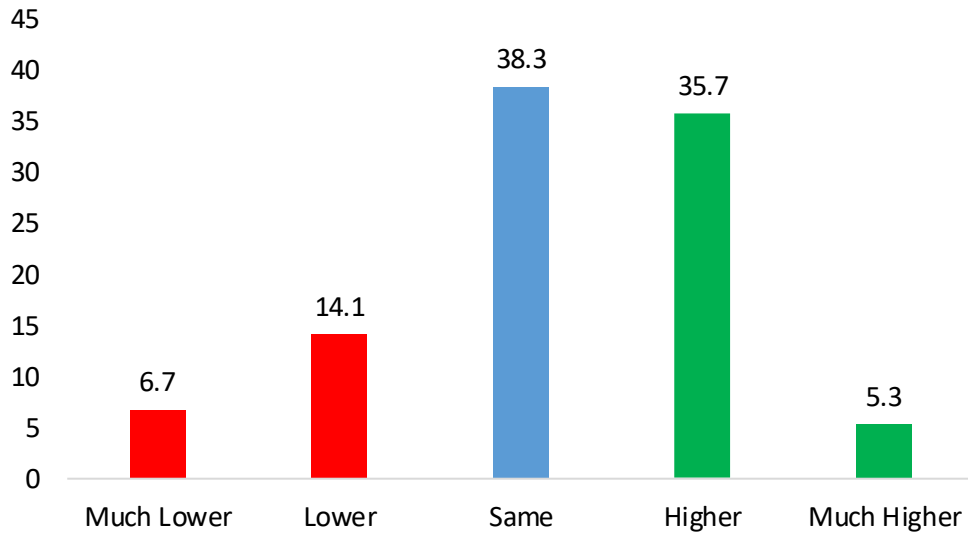


Expectations For US Unemployment Level One Year From Now (Tracker)

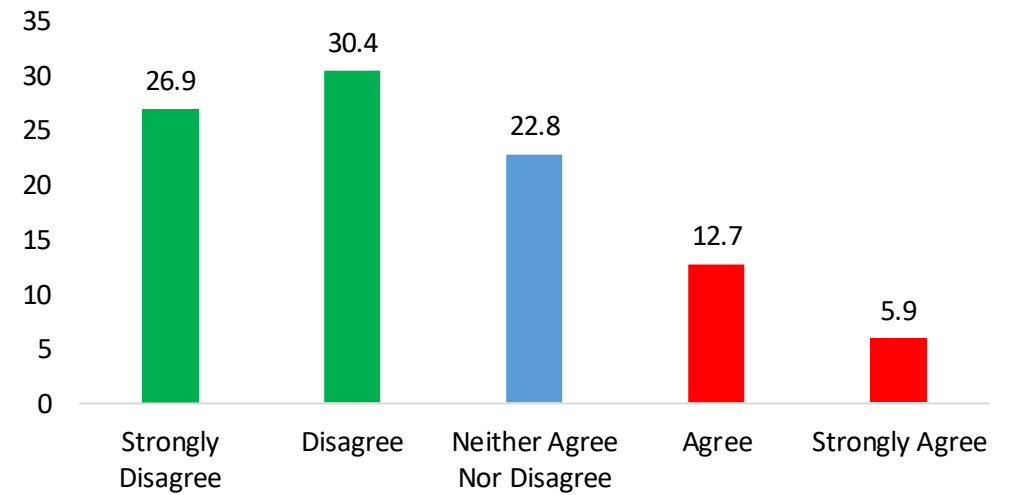


Income and Job Security

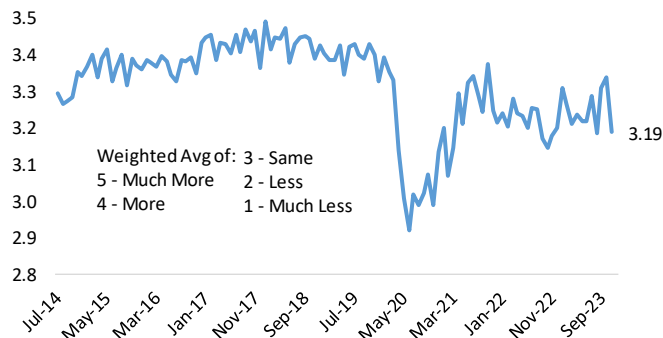
Current Income vs 1 Year Ago (% Respondents)



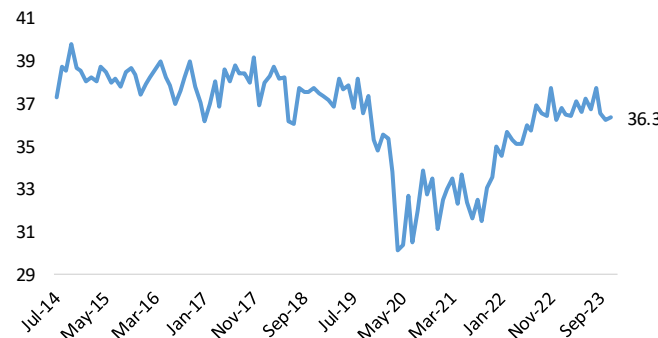
"I am concerned that I will lose my job" (% Respondents)



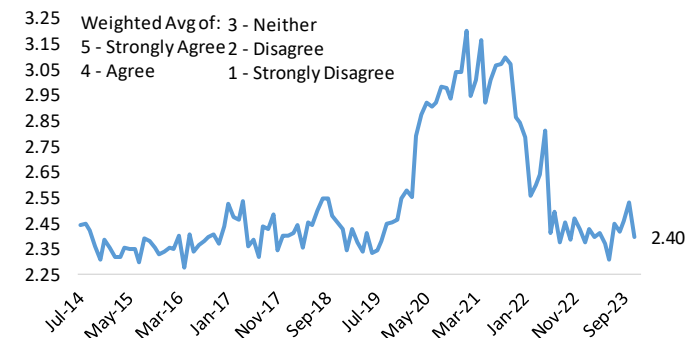
Current Income vs Year Ago (Tracker)



Hours Worked (Average)



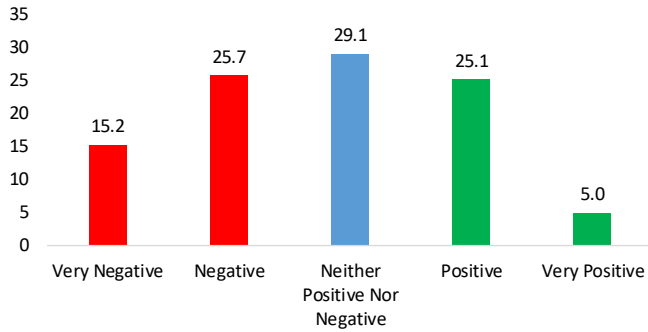
"I am concerned that I will lose my job" (Tracker)



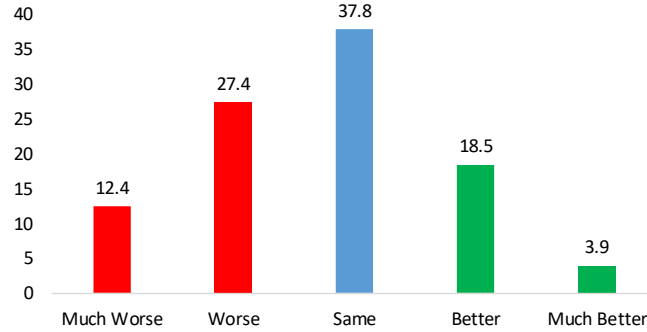
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Personal Finances

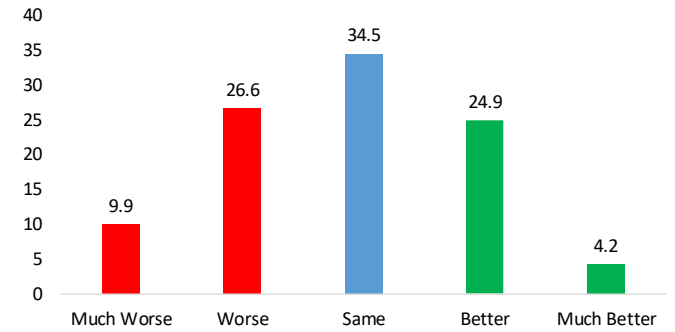
Current Feelings Towards Personal Finances (% Respondents)



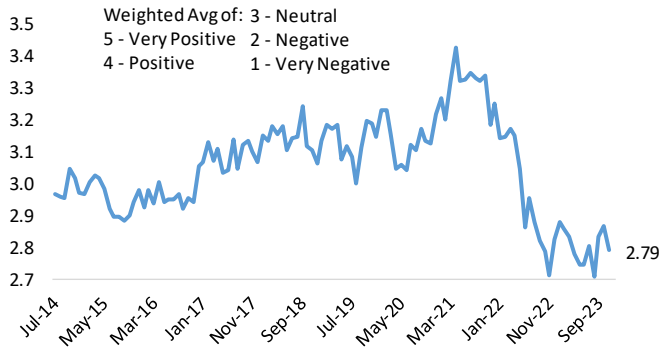
Feelings Towards Personal Finances vs Year Ago (% Respondents)



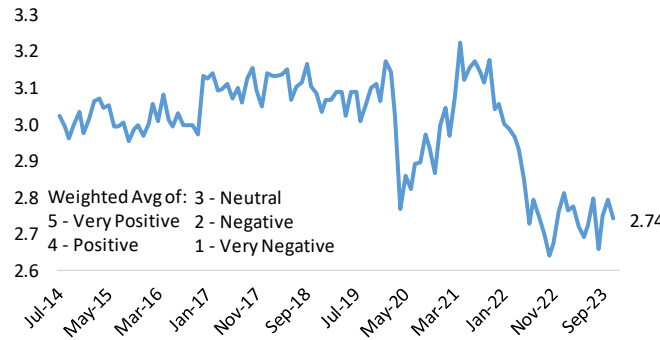
Financial Condition Compared to the Average Person (% Respondents)



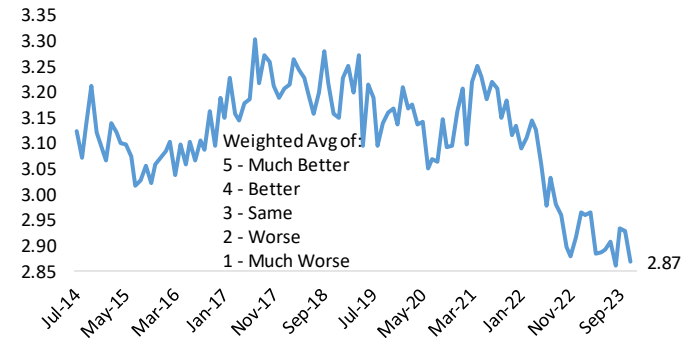
Current Feelings Towards Personal Finances (Tracker)



Feelings Towards Personal Finances vs Year Ago (Tracker)



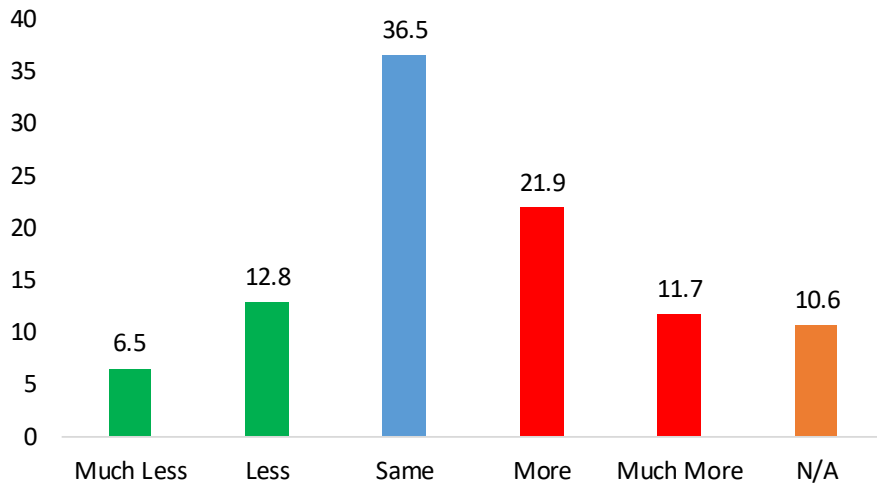
Financial Condition Compared to the Average Person (Tracker)



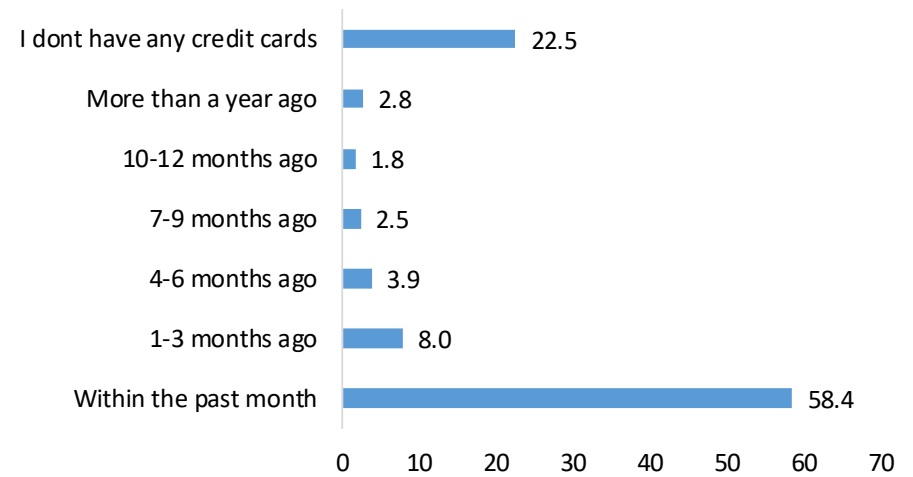
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Current credit card debt

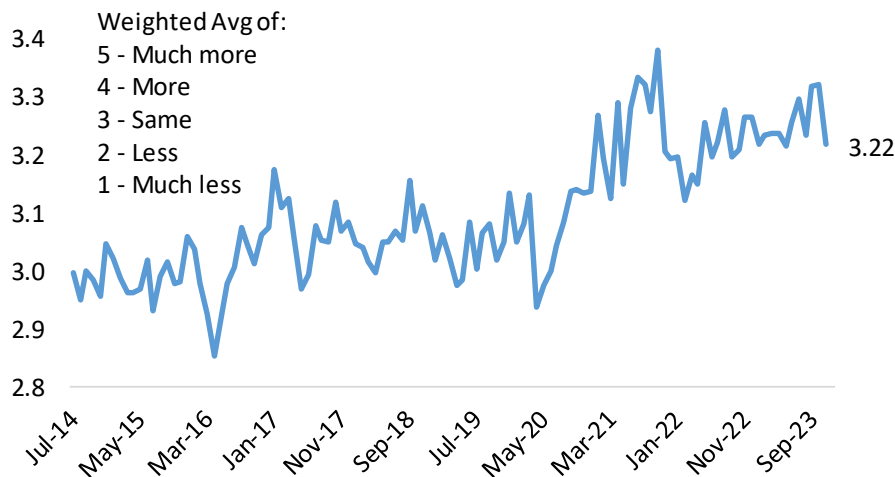
Credit Card Debt vs Year Ago (% Respondents)



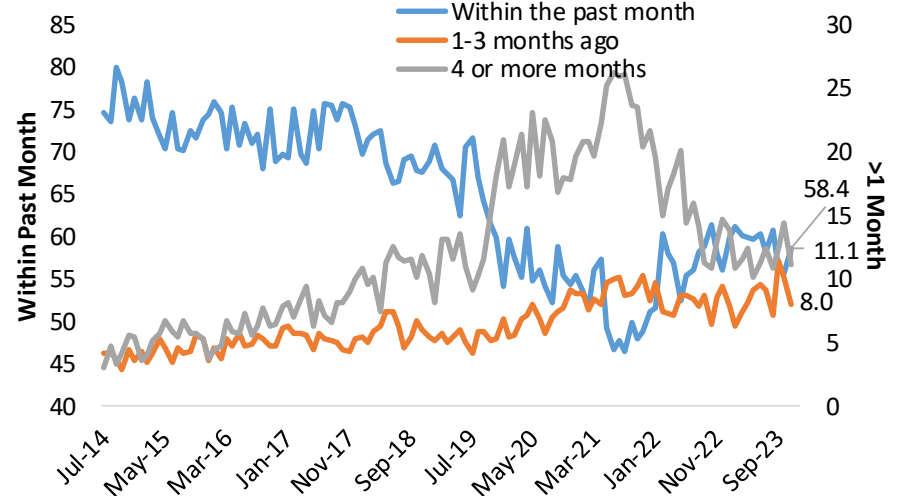
Date of Last Credit Card Payment (% Respondents)



Credit Card Debt vs Year Ago (Tracker)



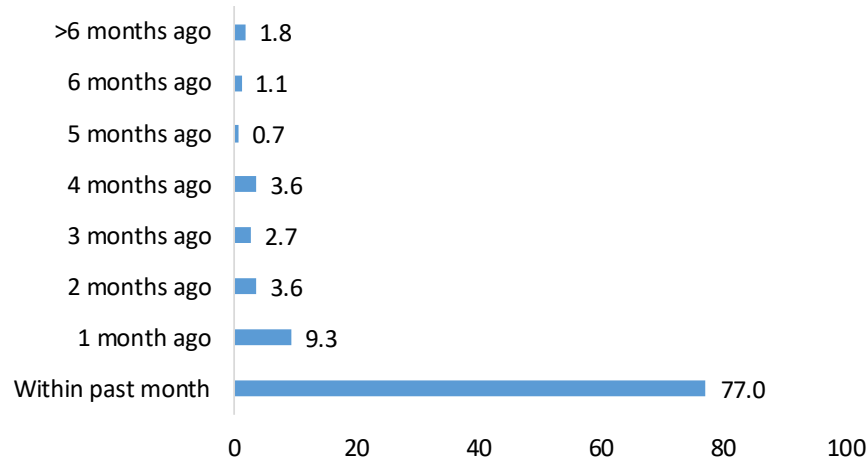
Date of Last Credit Card Payment (% Respondents)



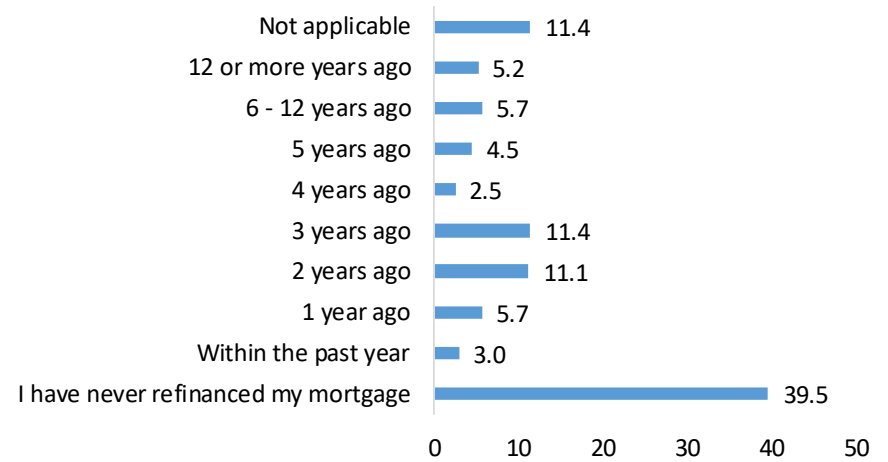
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Mortgage Payments

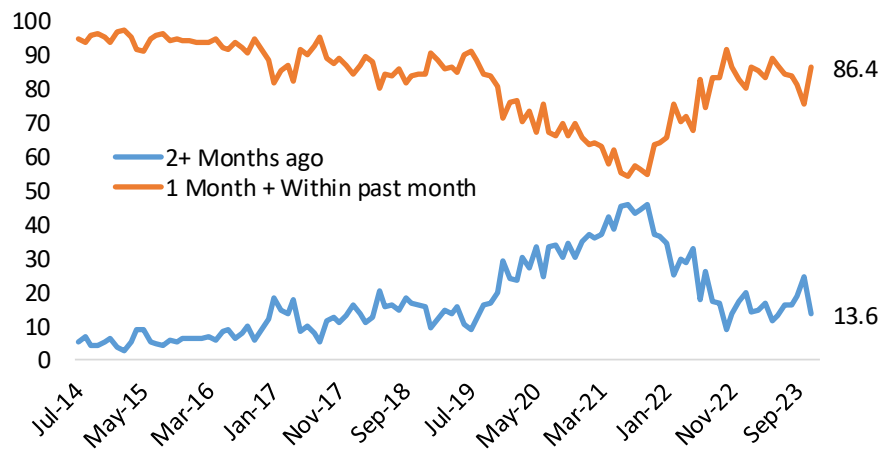
Last Mortgage Payment (% Homeowners)



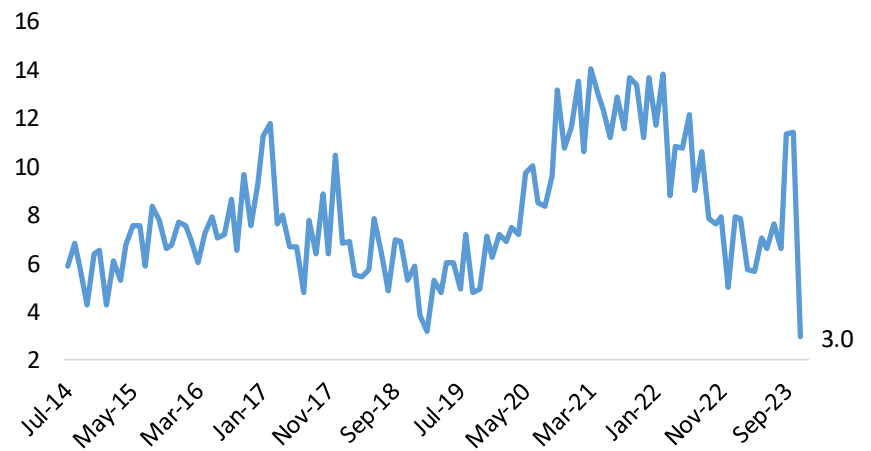
Last Time Refinanced Mortgage (% Homeowners)



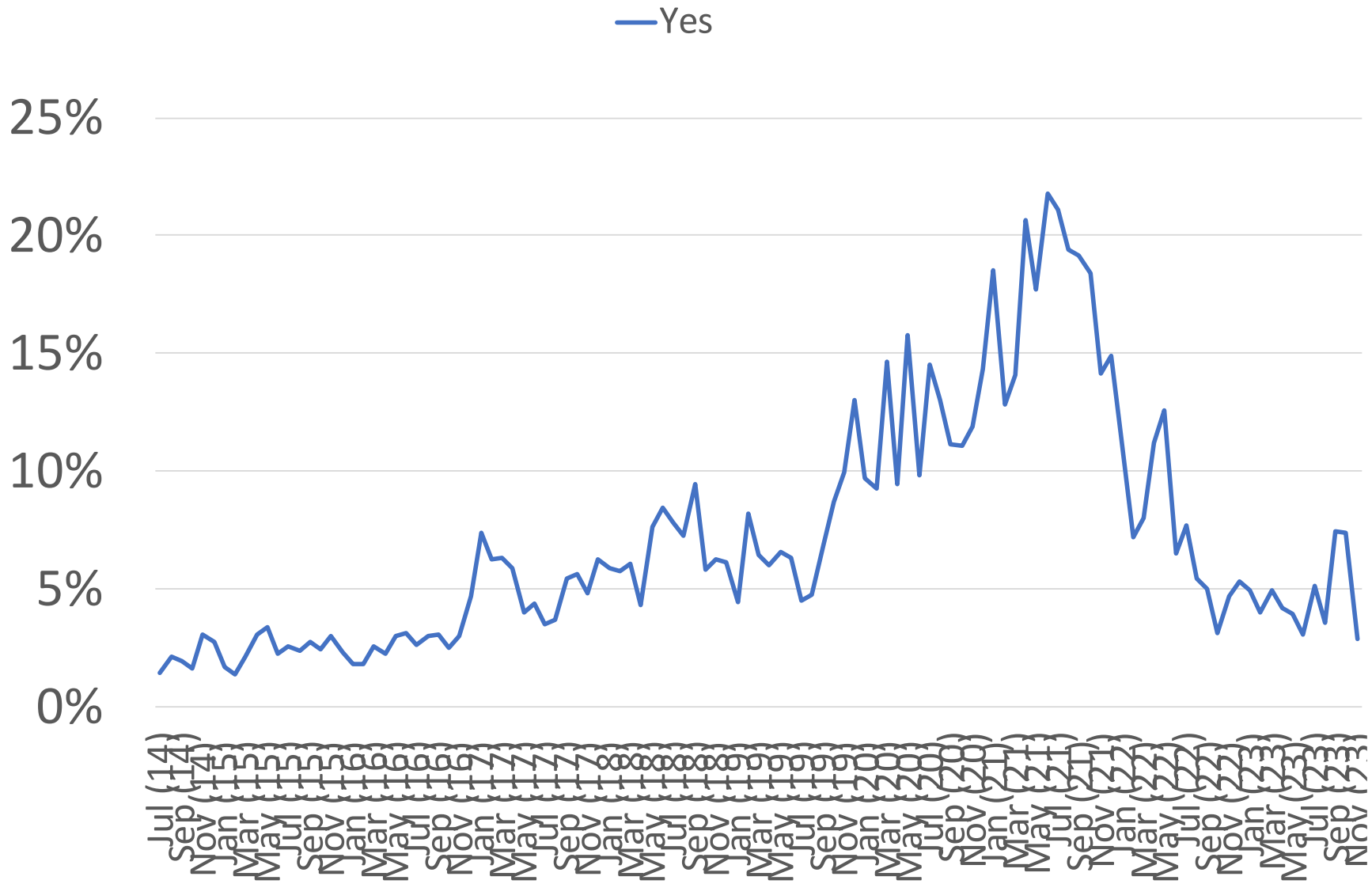
Last Mortgage Payment (% Homeowners)



Last Time Refinanced Mortgage: Within past year (% Homeowners)



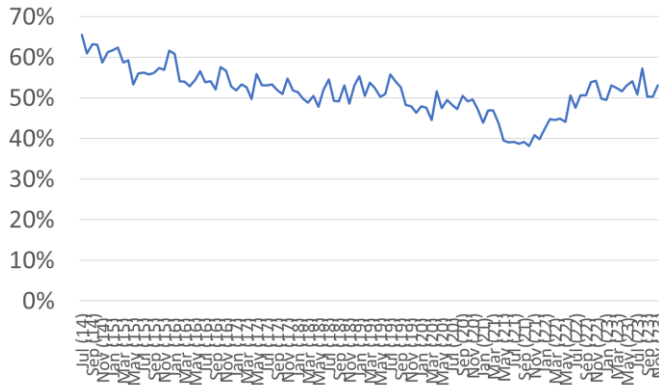
Have you applied for a building permit in the past month?



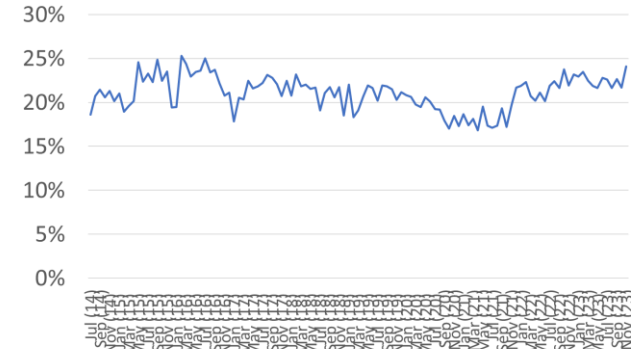
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Likelihood of purchasing a house in the next year

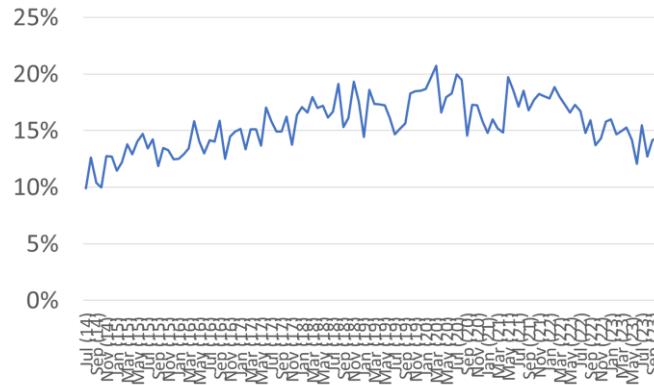
—Very Unlikely



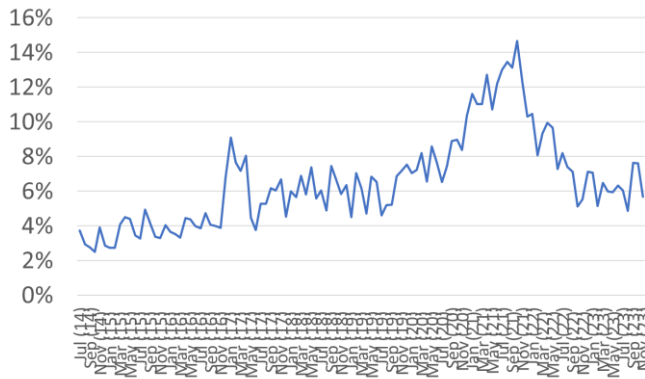
—Unlikely



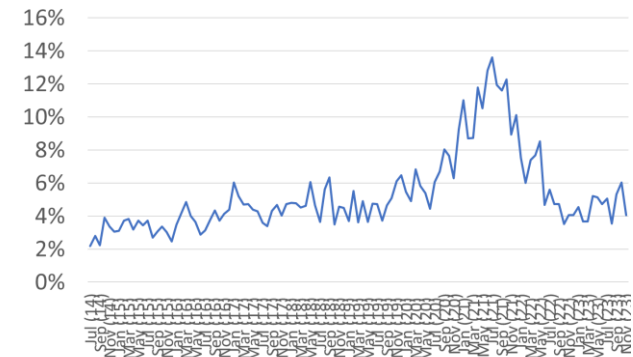
—Somewhat Likely



—Likely



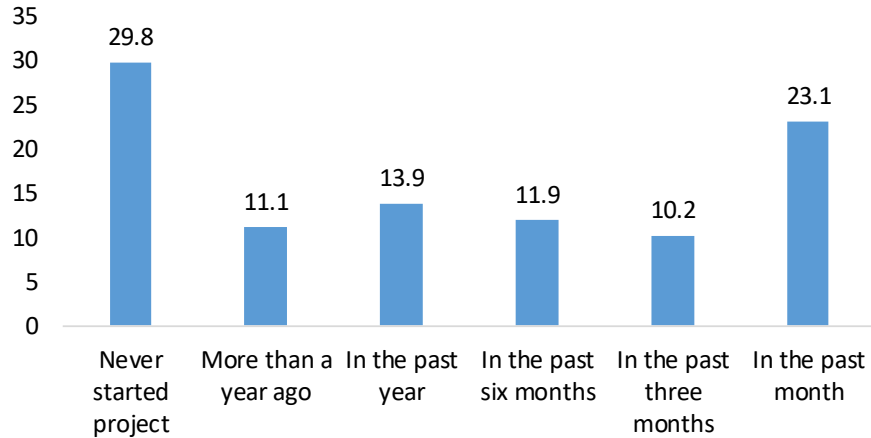
—Very Likely



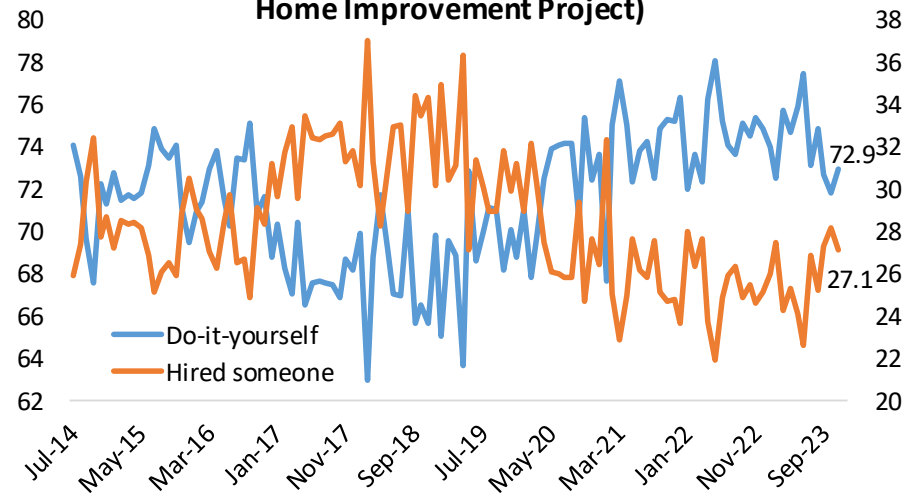
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Home Improvement

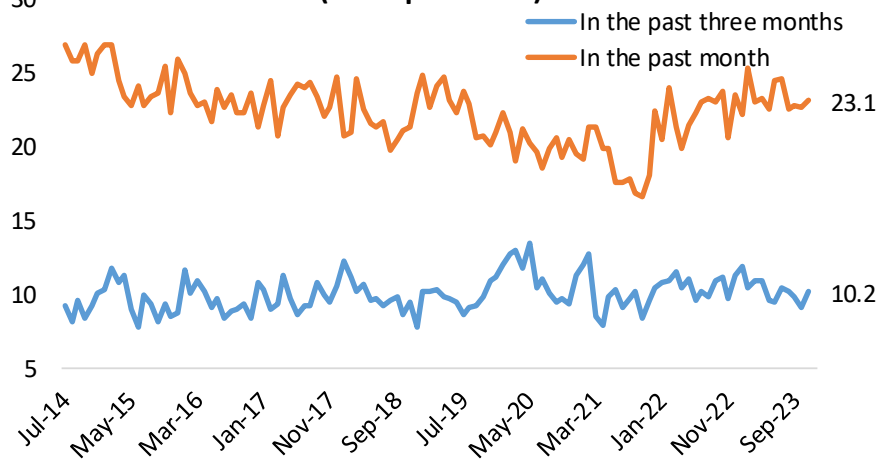
Last Time Starting A Home Improvement Project (% Respondents)



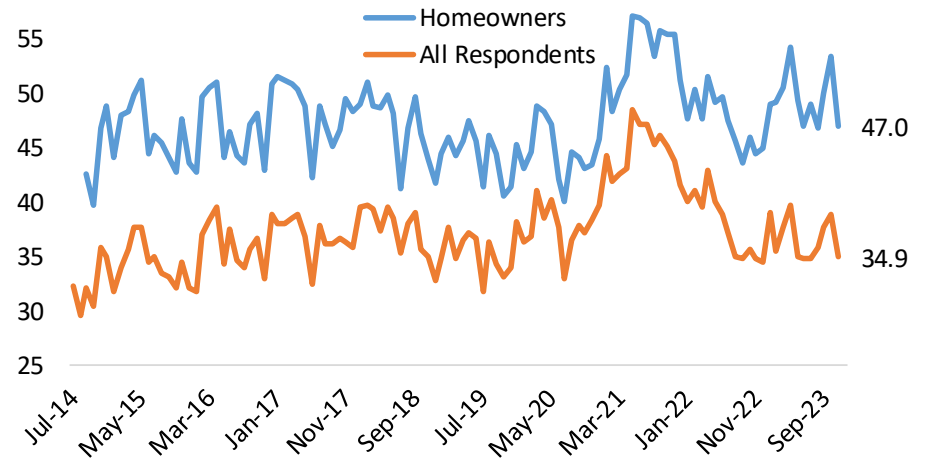
DIY vs Hired Help (% of Respondents Who Have Done Home Improvement Project)



Last Time Starting A Home Improvement Project (% Respondents)



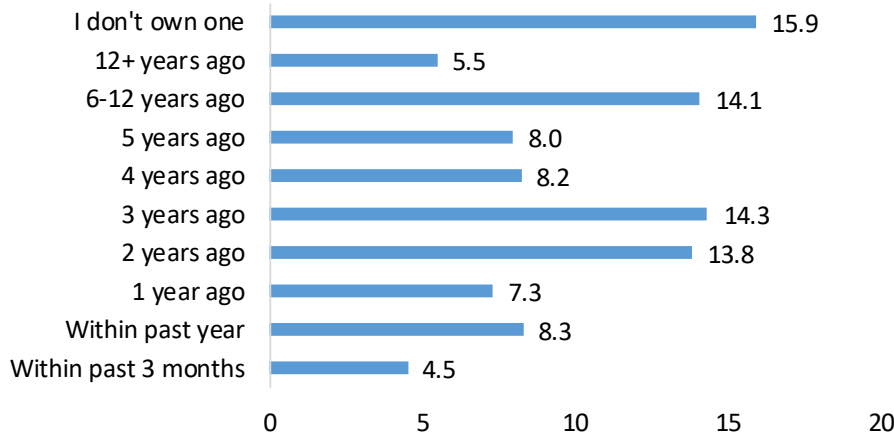
Plans To Start A Home Improvement Project In Next Six Months (% Respondents)



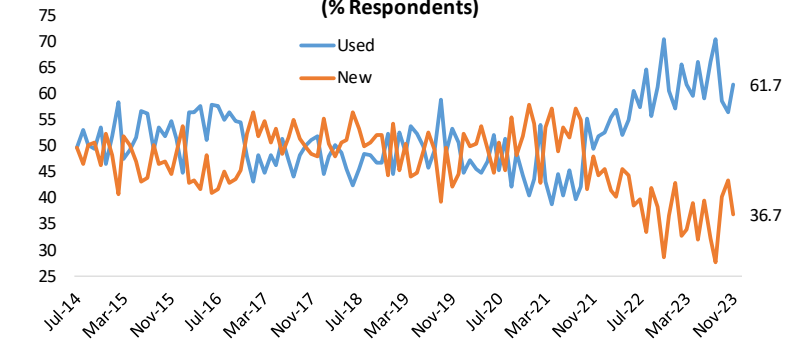
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Auto Purchases

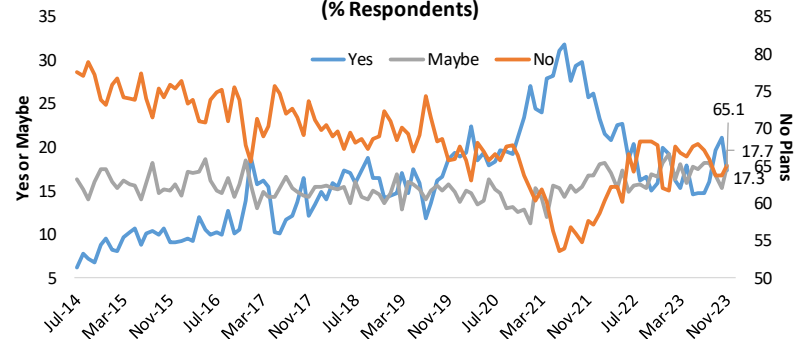
When Did You Purchase Your Primary Automobile (% Respondents)



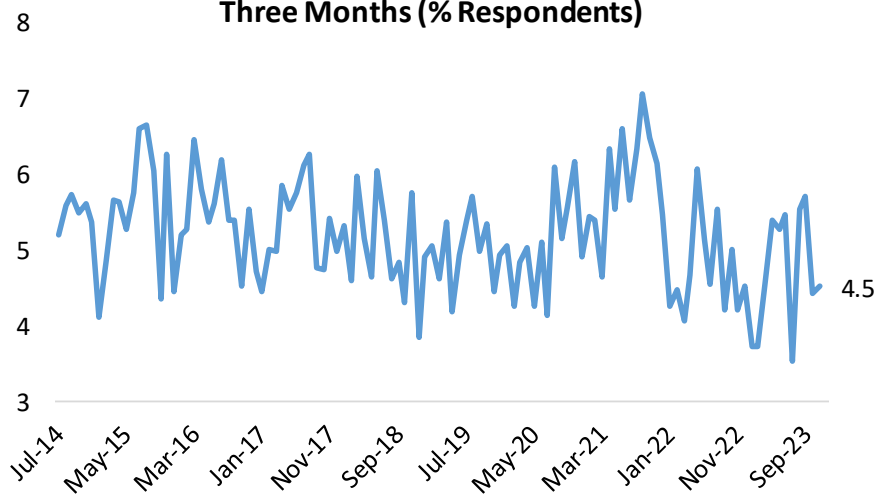
Purchased Car During Past Three Months: Used vs New (% Respondents)



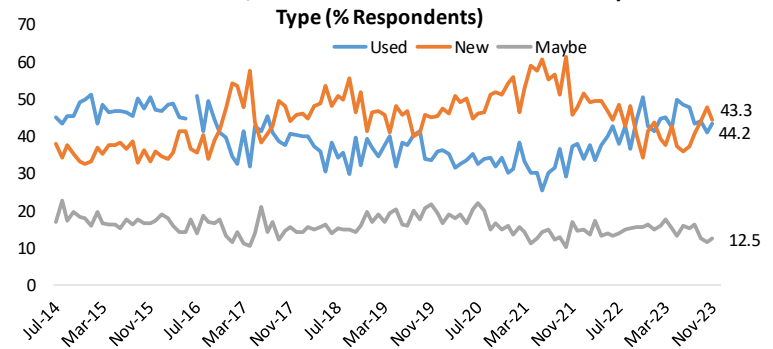
Plans to Purchase/Lease Vehicle In The Next Six Months (% Respondents)



Purchased or Leased Primary Automobile In Past Three Months (% Respondents)

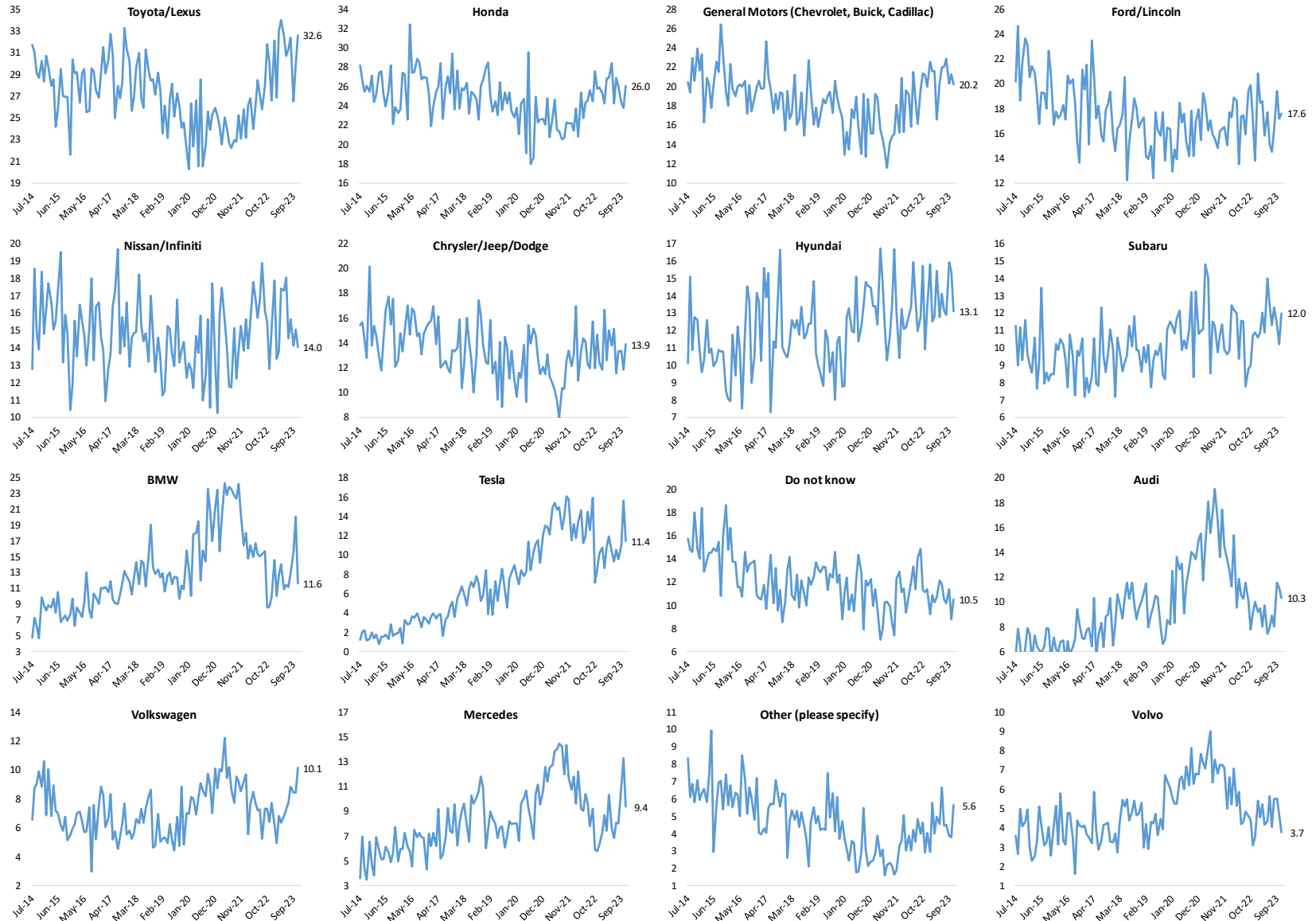


Plans To Purchase/Lease Vehicle In The Next Six Months By Sales Type (% Respondents)



Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

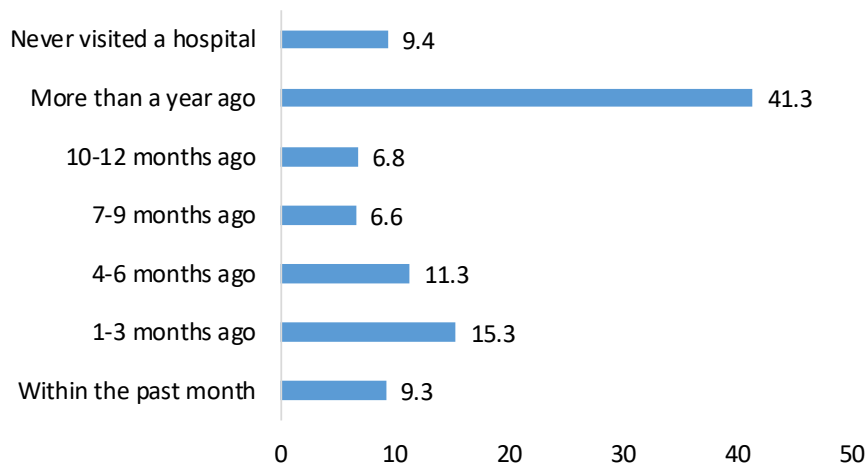
Expected Auto Purchases (Most Likely to Choose)



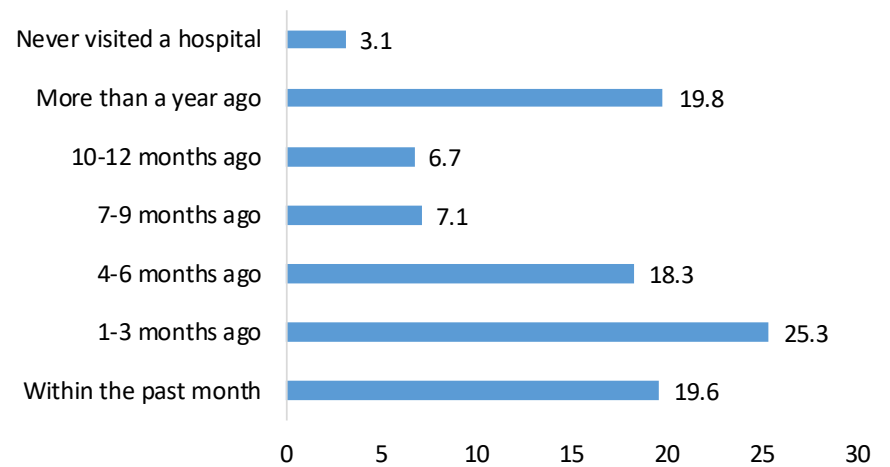
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023 (respondents said yes or maybe to buying a new car in the next 6 months)

Healthcare Utilization

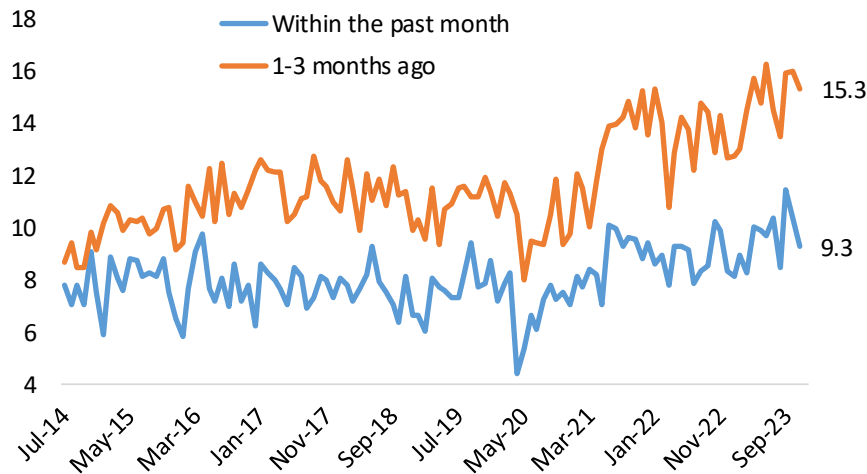
Last Hospital Visit (% Respondents)



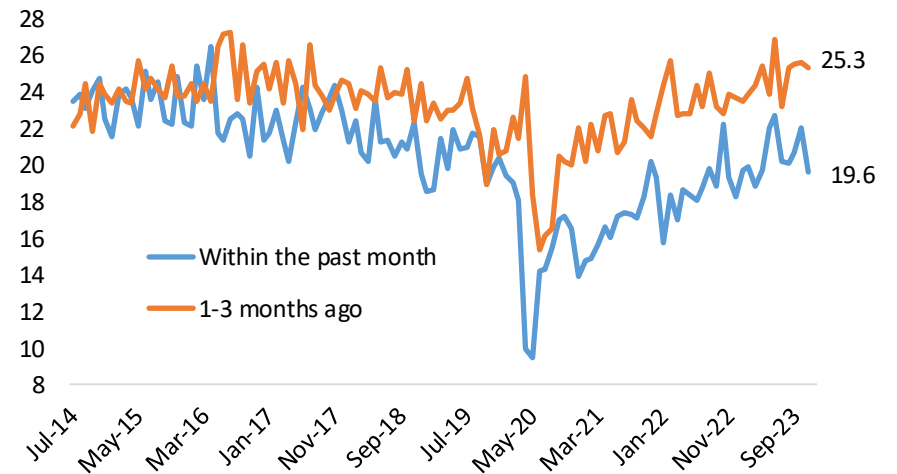
Last Doctor's Visit (% Respondents)



Last Hospital Visit (% Respondents)



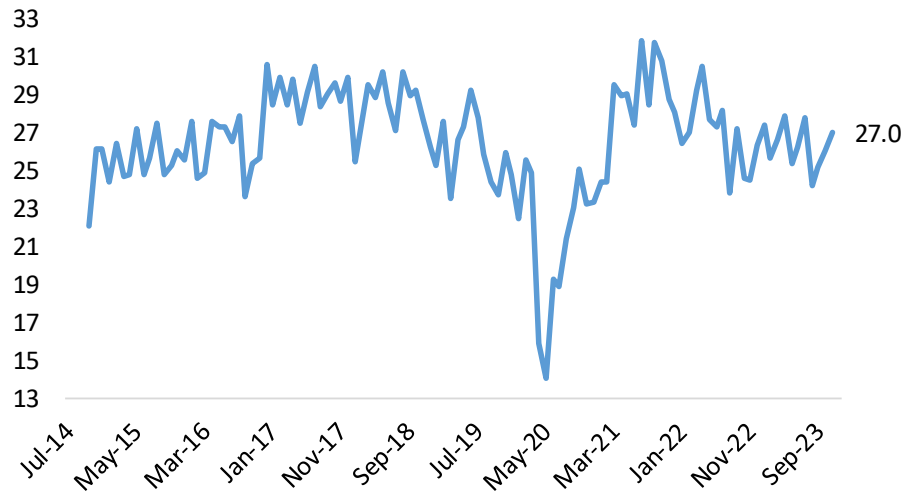
Last Doctor's Visit (% Respondents)



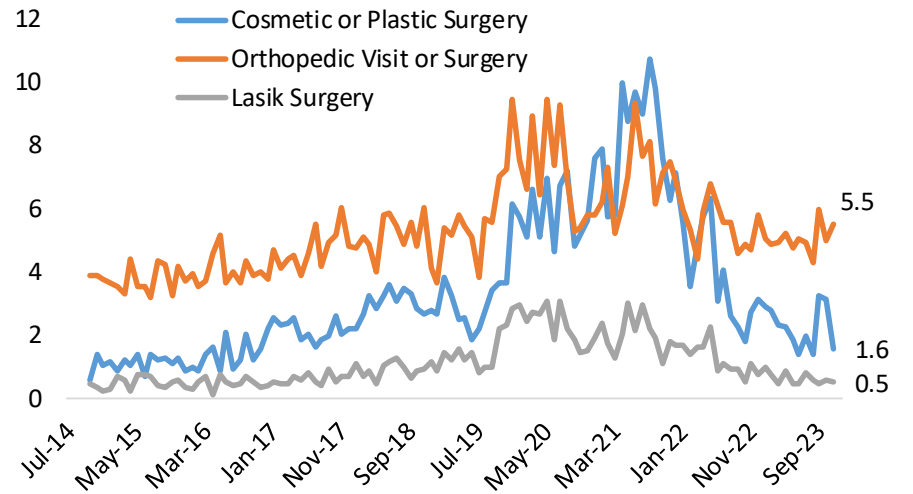
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Healthcare Procedures

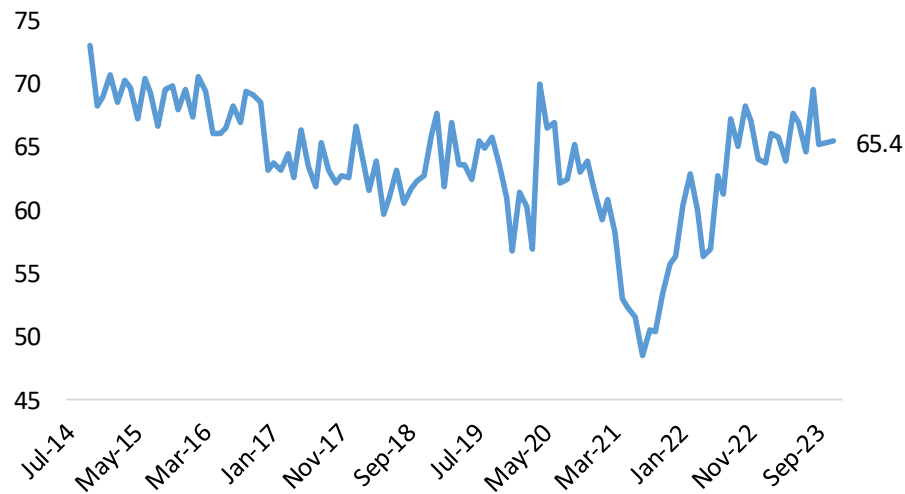
Dental Visit: Past Month (% Respondents)



Elective Surgery: Past Month (% Respondents)

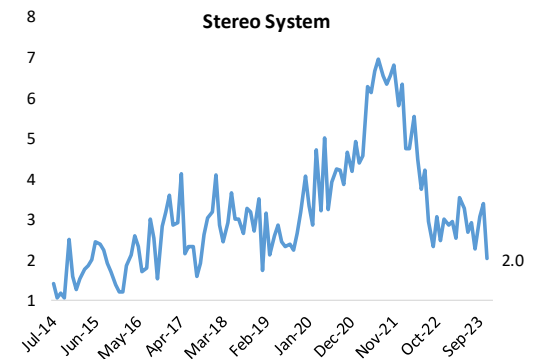
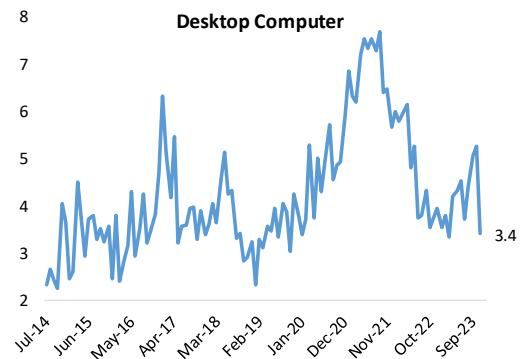
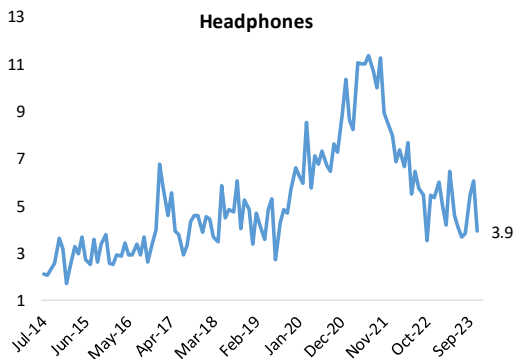
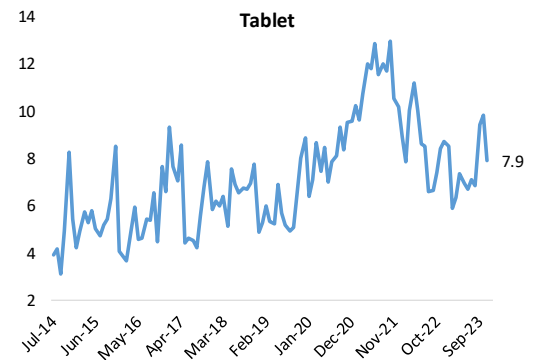
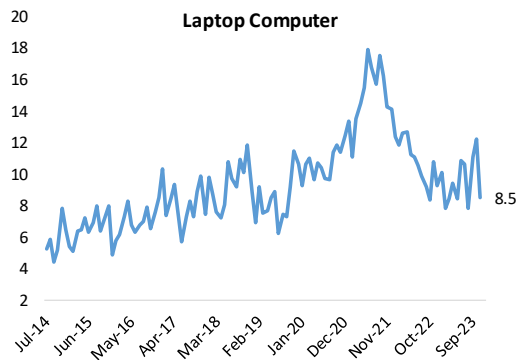
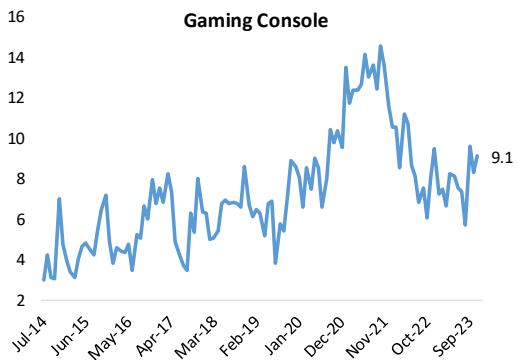
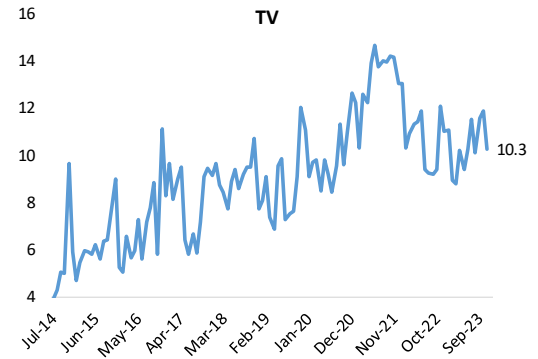
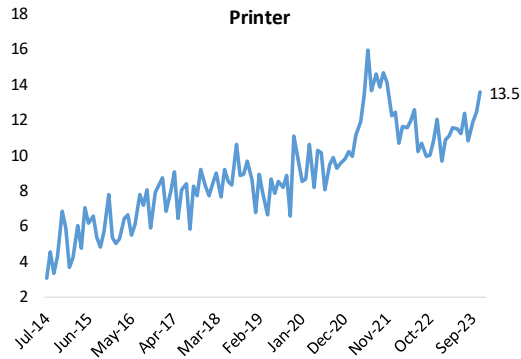
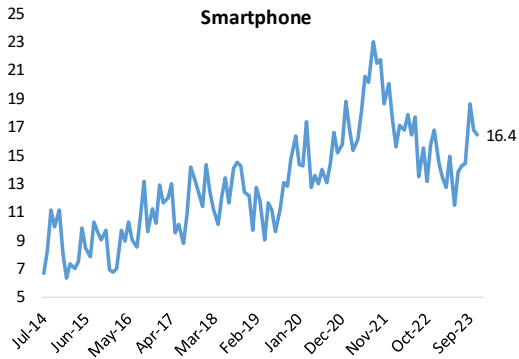


None Of The Above: Past Month (% Respondents)



Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

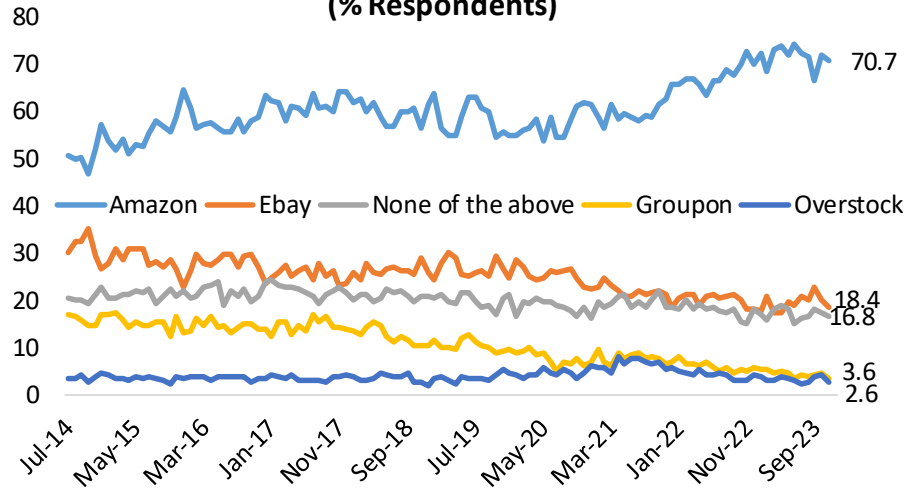
Electronics – Plans to Purchase



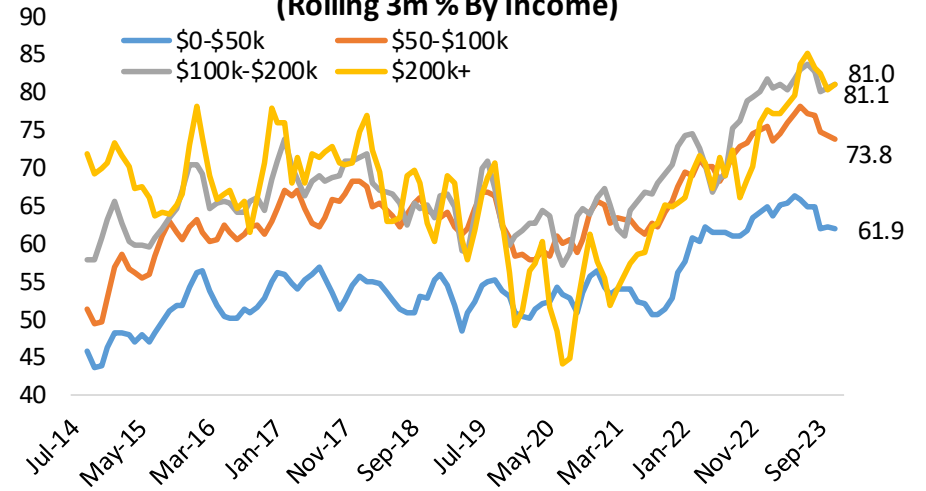
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

eCommerce

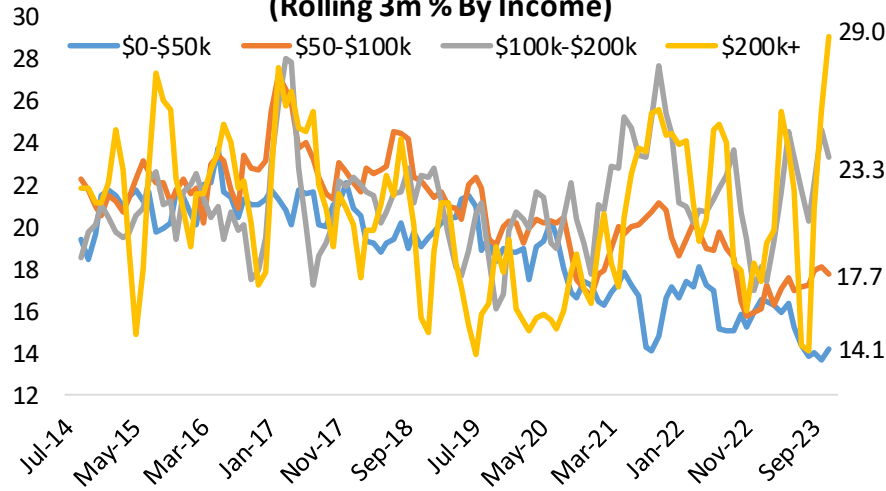
Have Purchased Items During Past Month
(% Respondents)



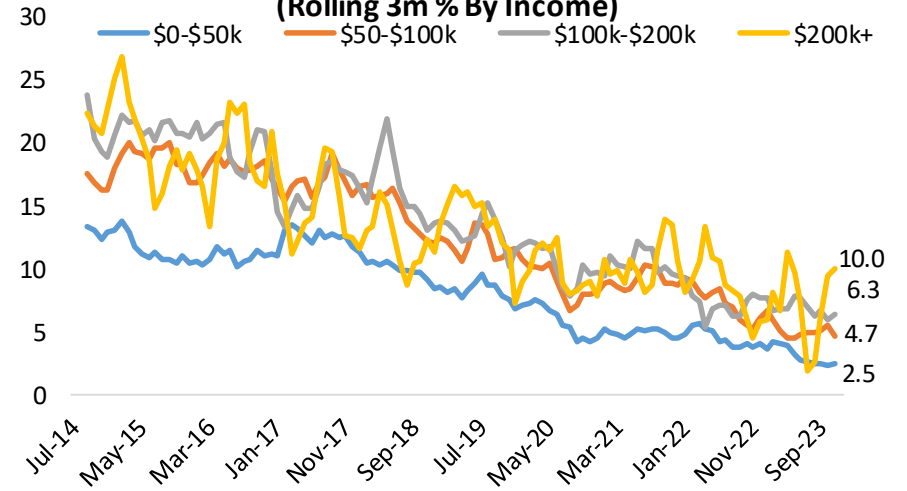
Purchased From Amazon In Past Month
(Rolling 3m % By Income)



Purchased From Ebay In Past Month
(Rolling 3m % By Income)



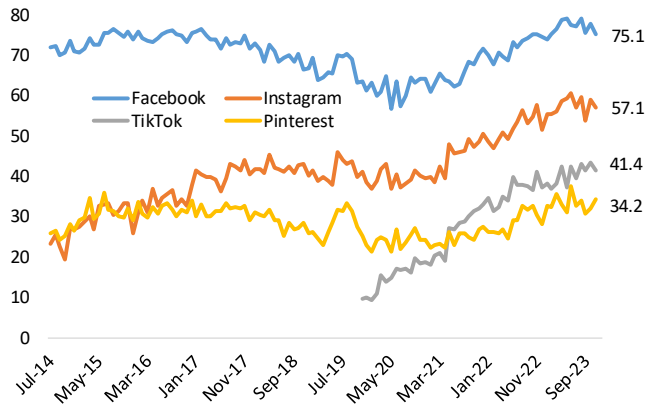
Purchased From Groupon In Past Month
(Rolling 3m % By Income)



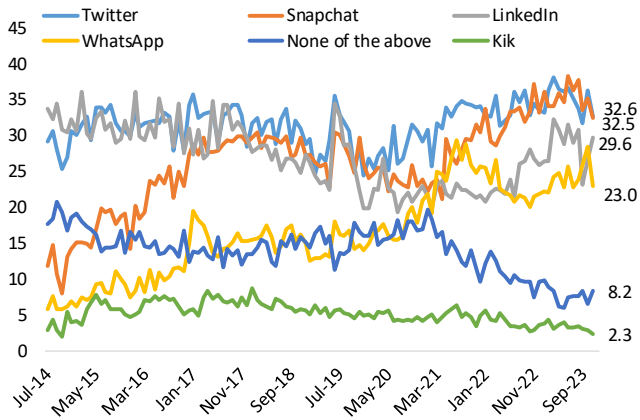
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Social Media

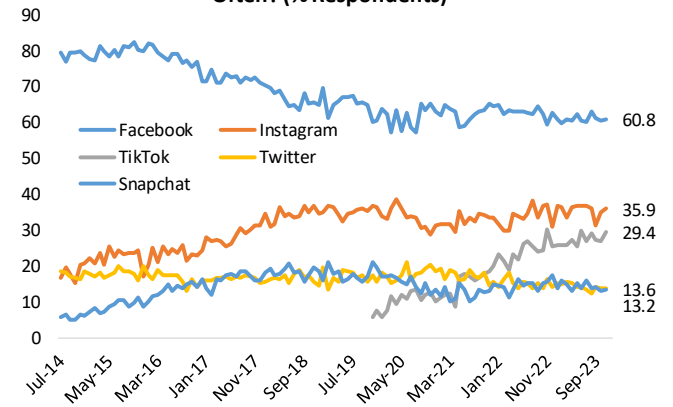
Social Media: Has Account, Majors (% Respondents)



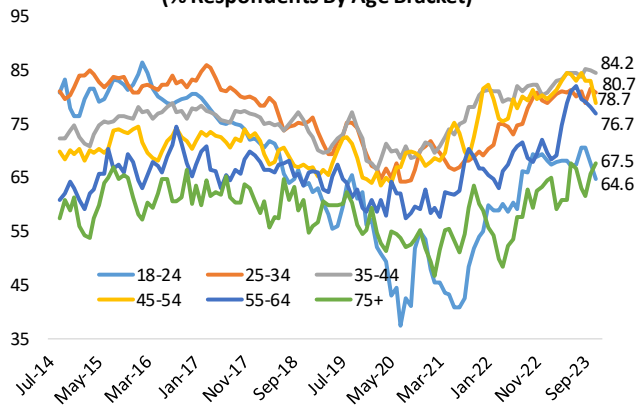
Social Media: Has Account, Minors (% Respondents)



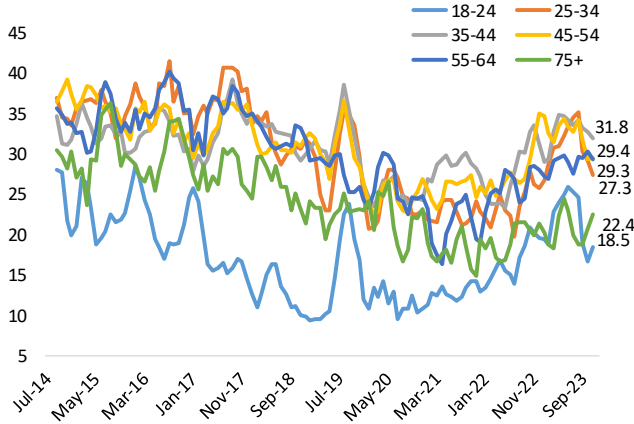
Social Media Websites: Which Two Do You Use Most Often? (% Respondents)



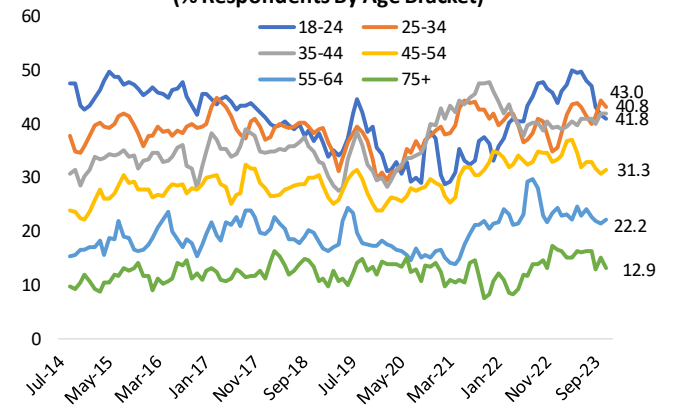
Has Facebook Account (% Respondents By Age Bracket)



Has LinkedIn Account (% Respondents By Age Bracket)

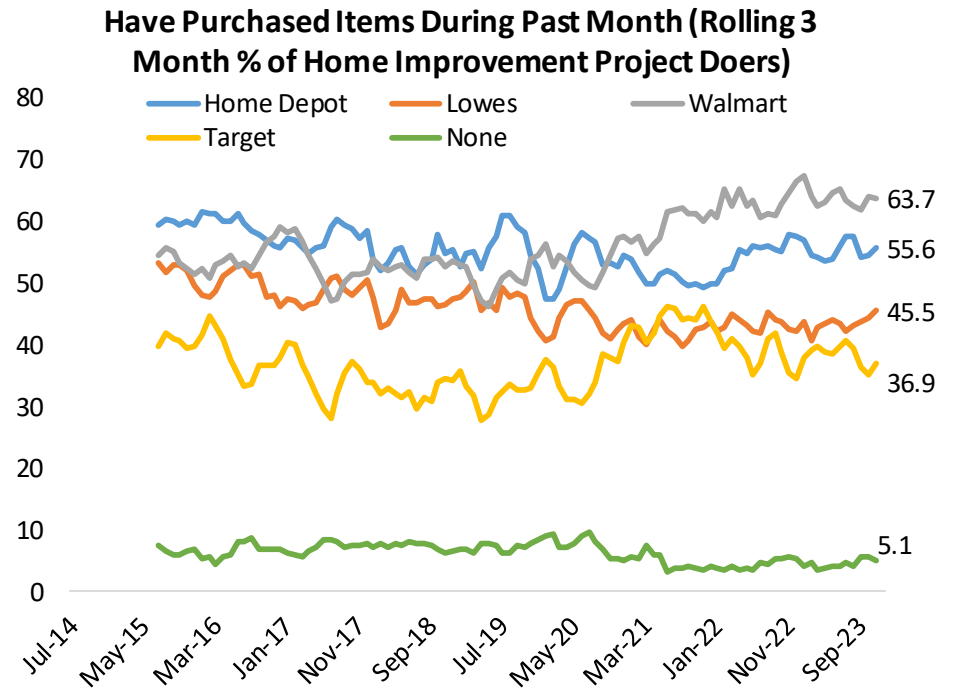
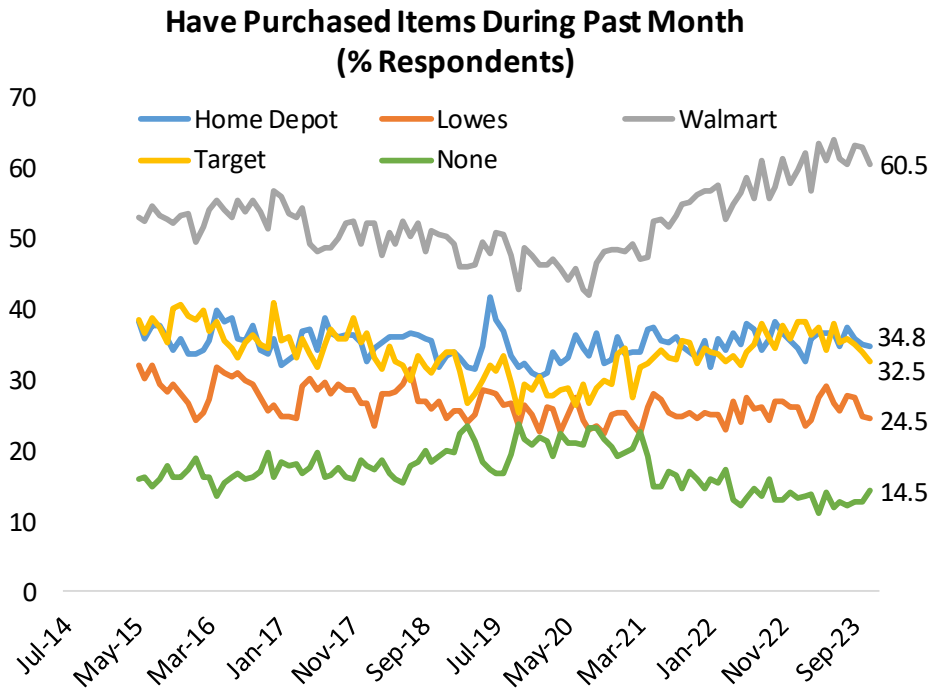


Has Twitter Account (% Respondents By Age Bracket)



Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

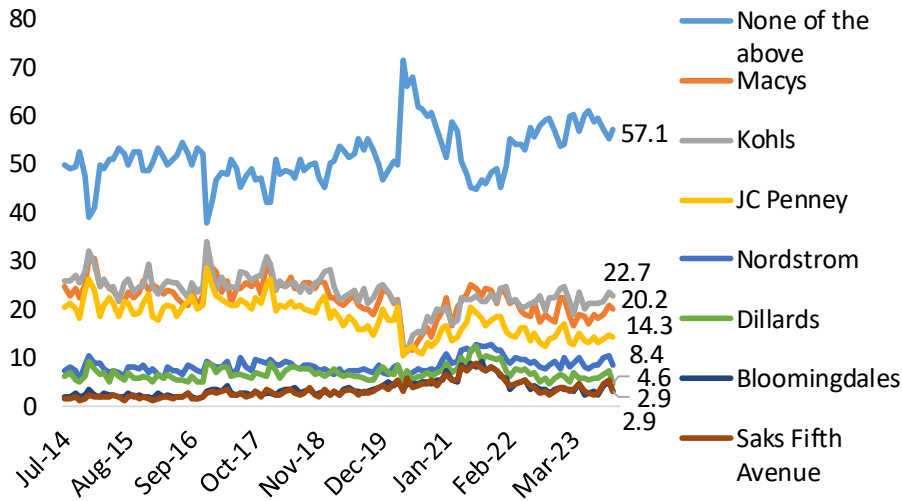
Home Improvement Retail



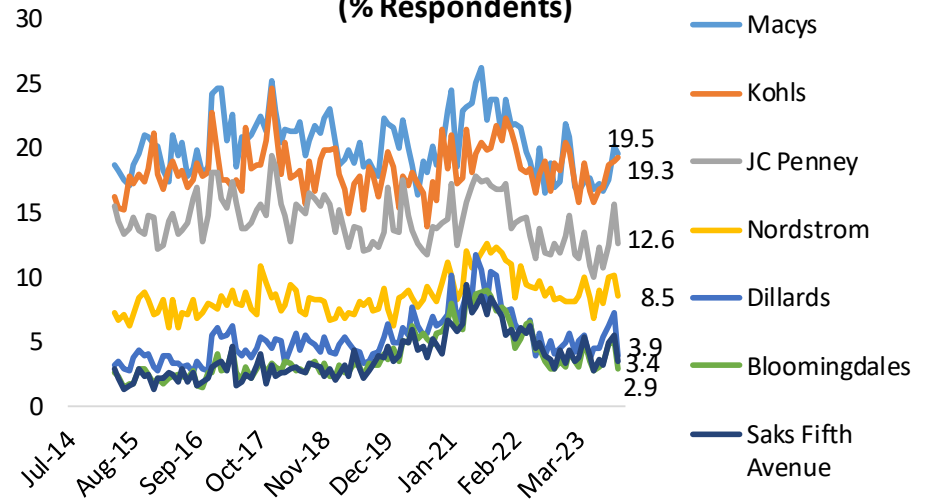
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Department Stores

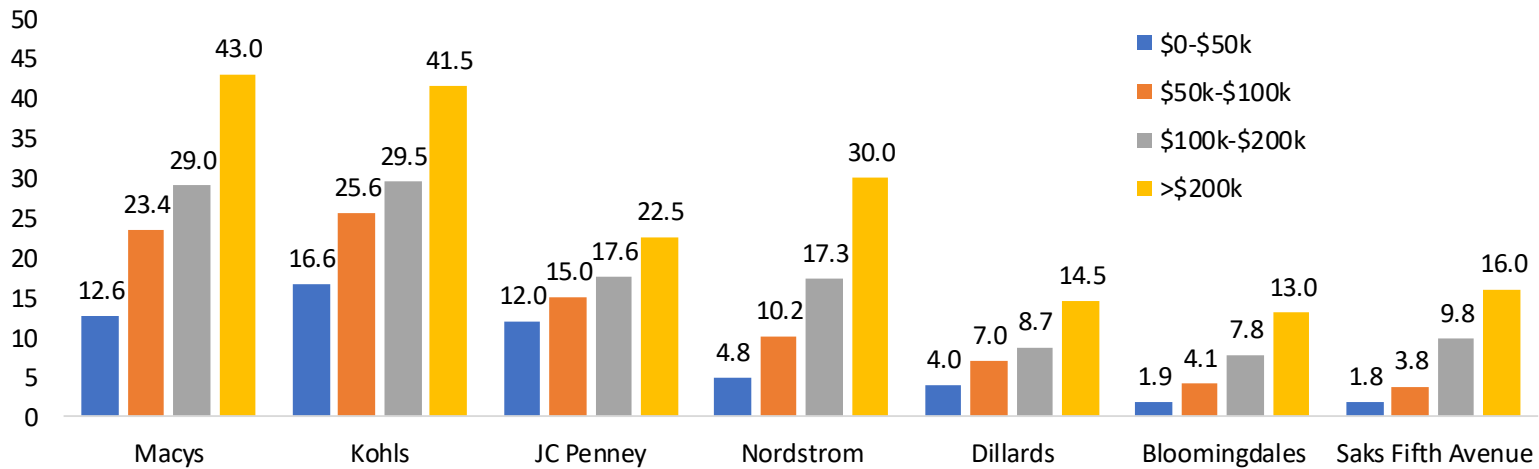
Department Store Visits: Past Month (% Respondents)



Department Store Website Visits: Past Month (% Respondents)

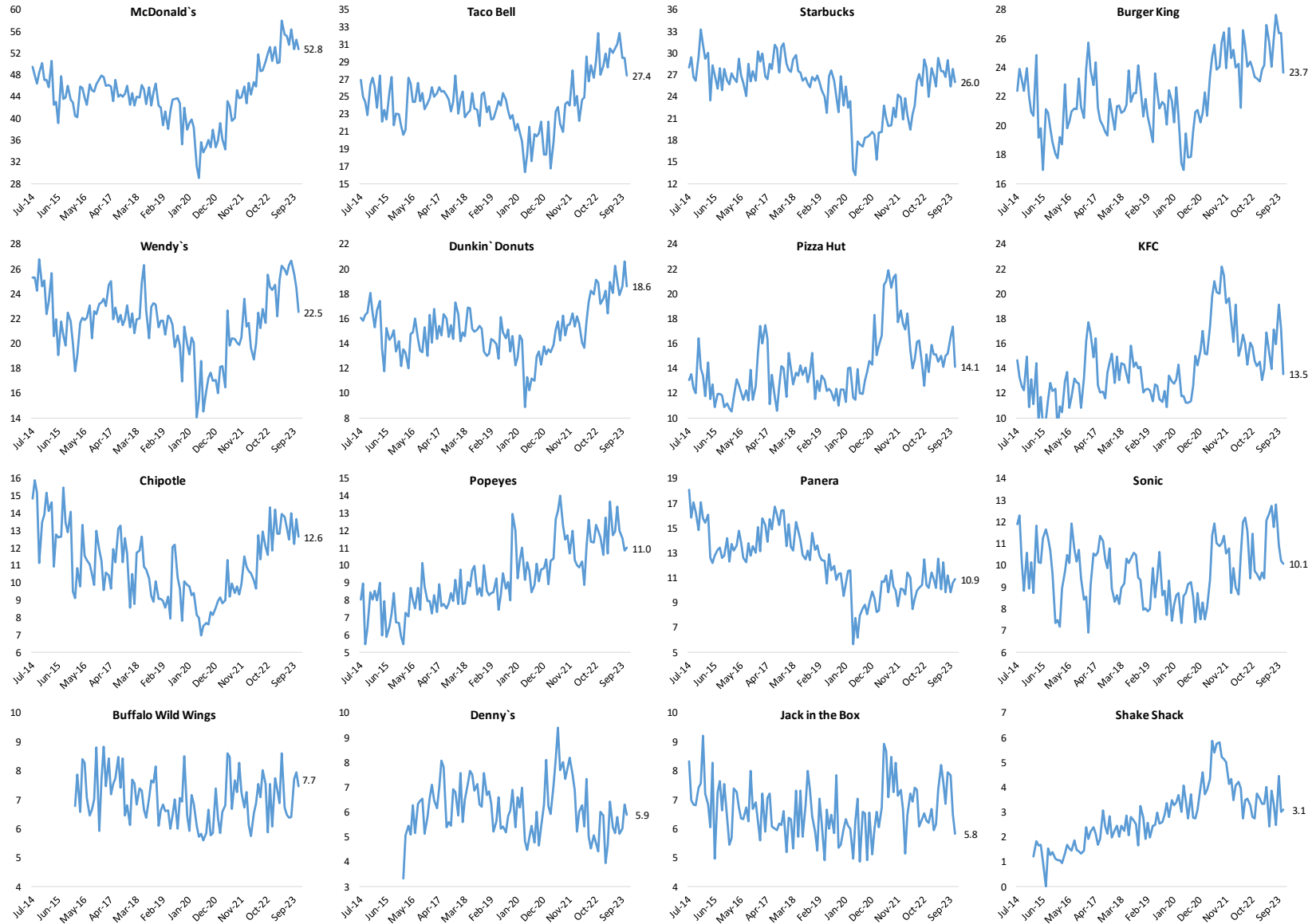


Department Store Visits This Month (3 Month Rolling % Respondents By Income)



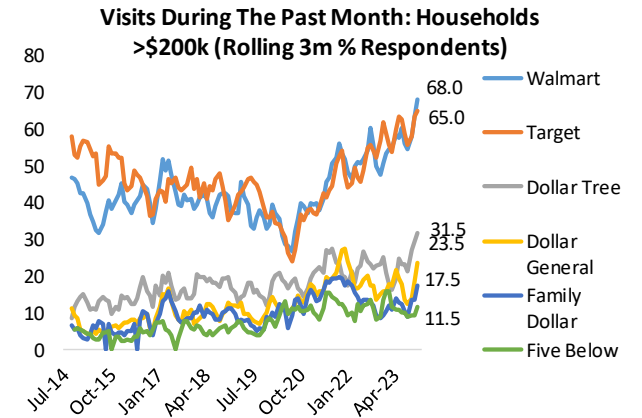
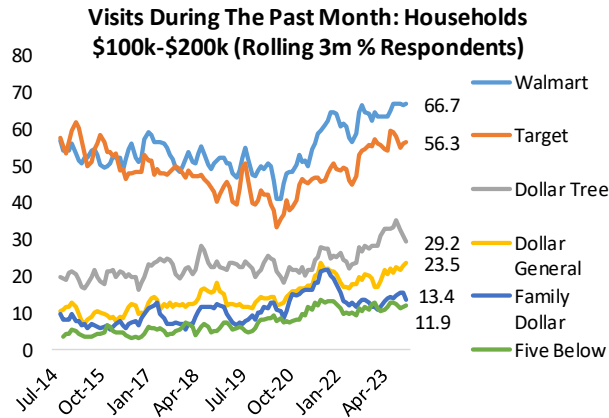
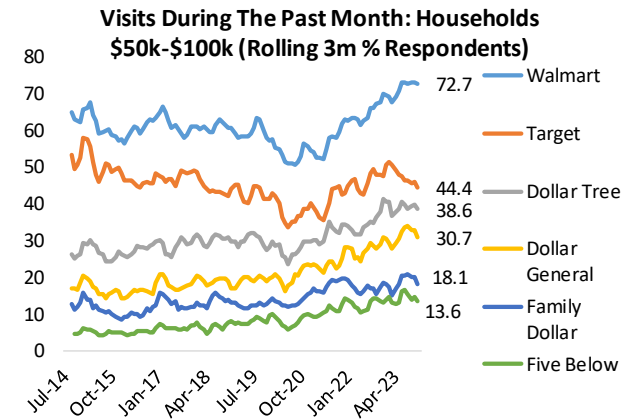
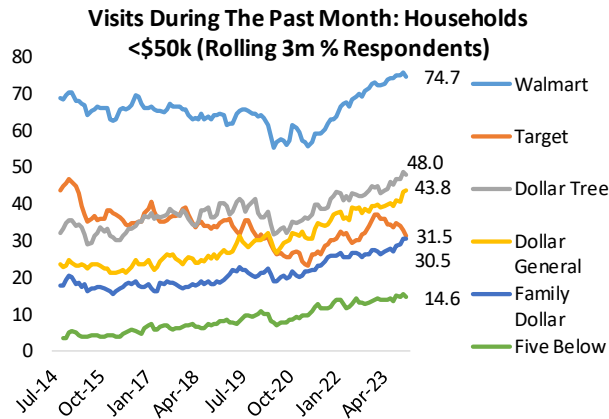
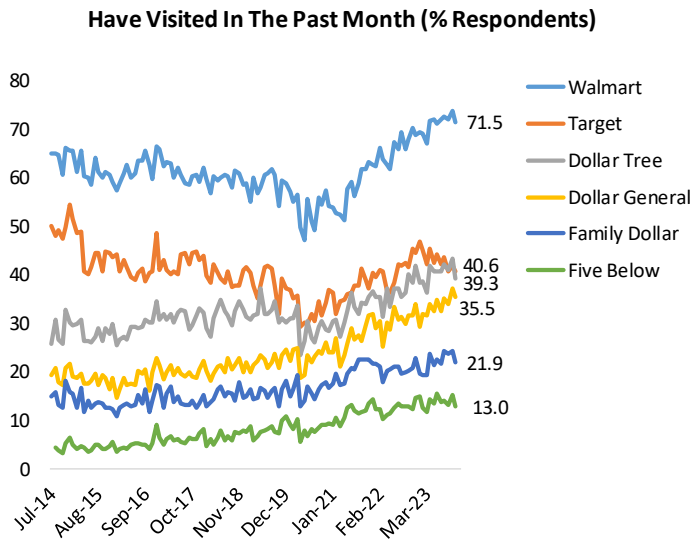
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Restaurants – Visited in Past Month



Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

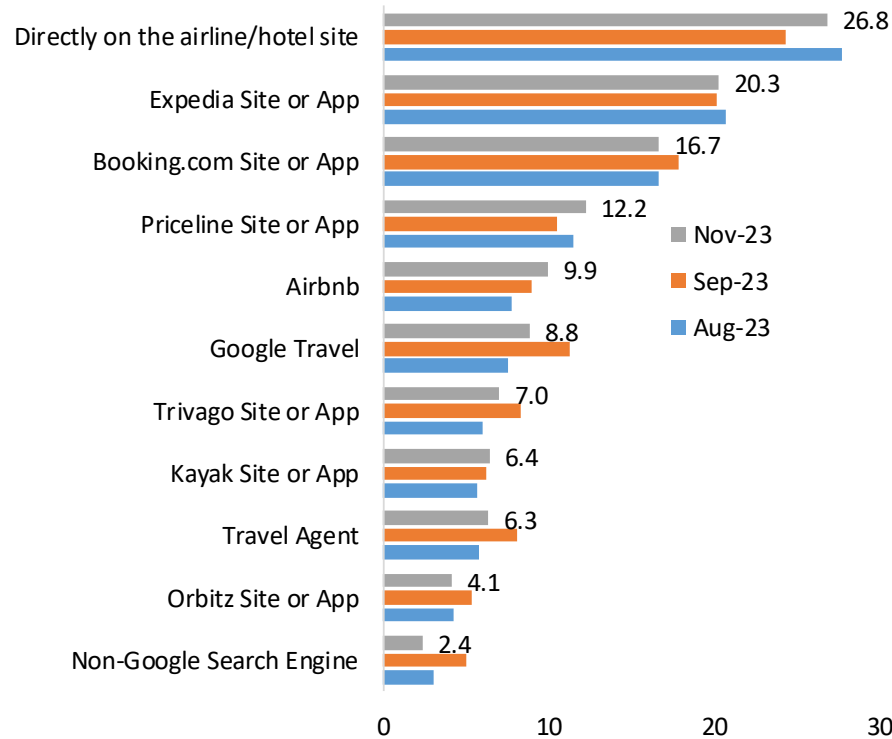
Big Box Retail



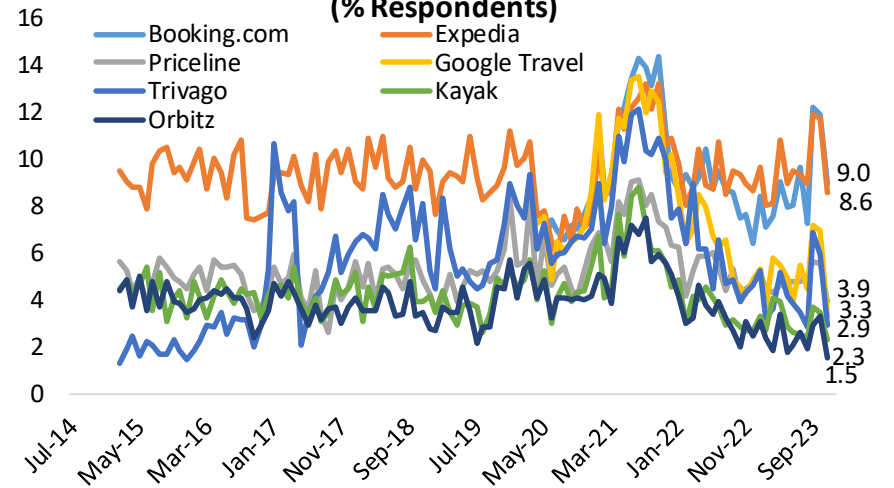
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

OTAs

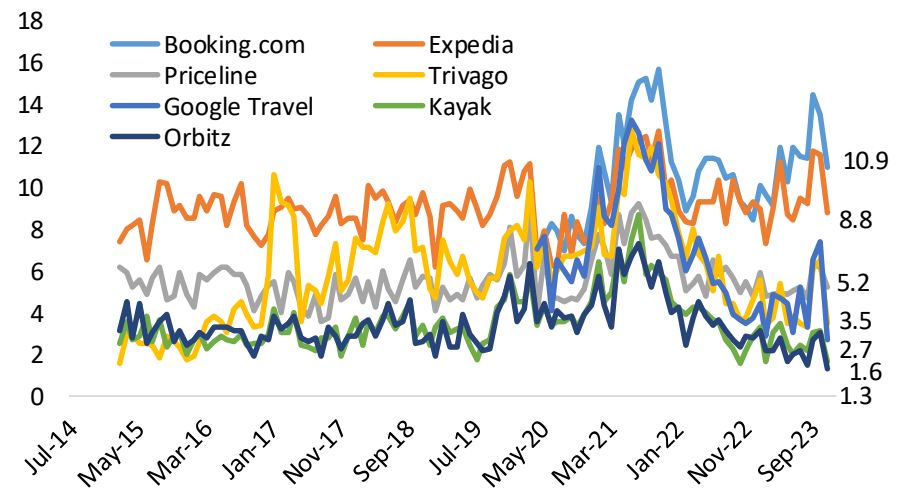
If You Were Looking To Book Travel Today, Where Would You Start Your Search? (% Respondents)



Booked A Flight In Past Three Months (% Respondents)



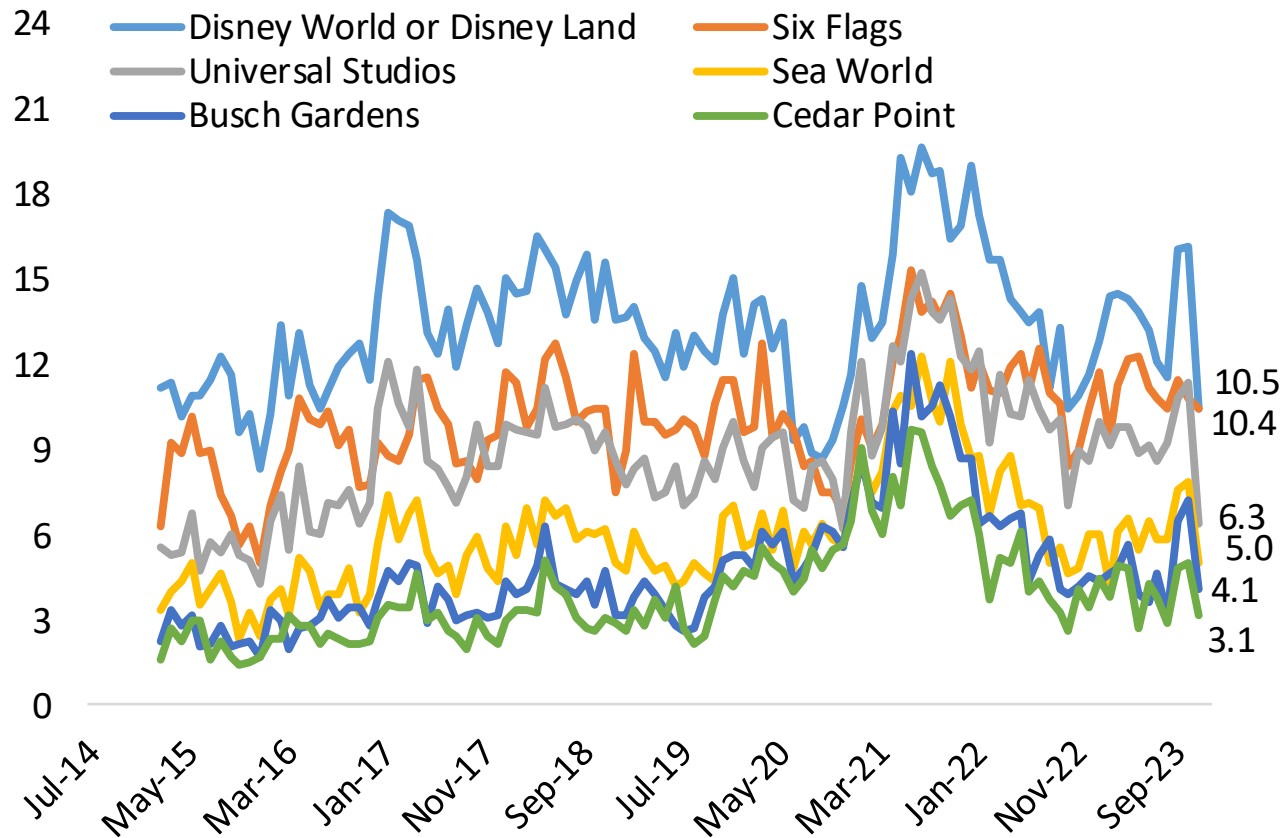
Booked Hotel In Past Three Months (% Respondents)



Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Theme Parks

**Plans To Visit Theme Parks: Next Six Months
(% Respondents)**

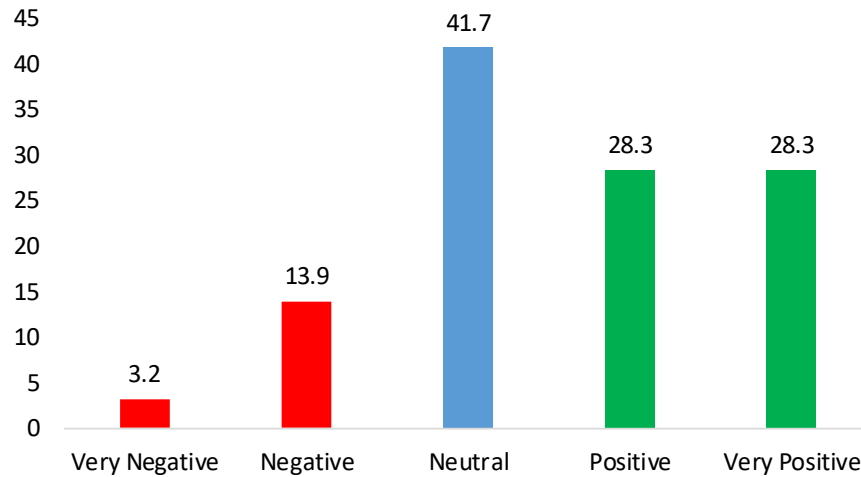


Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

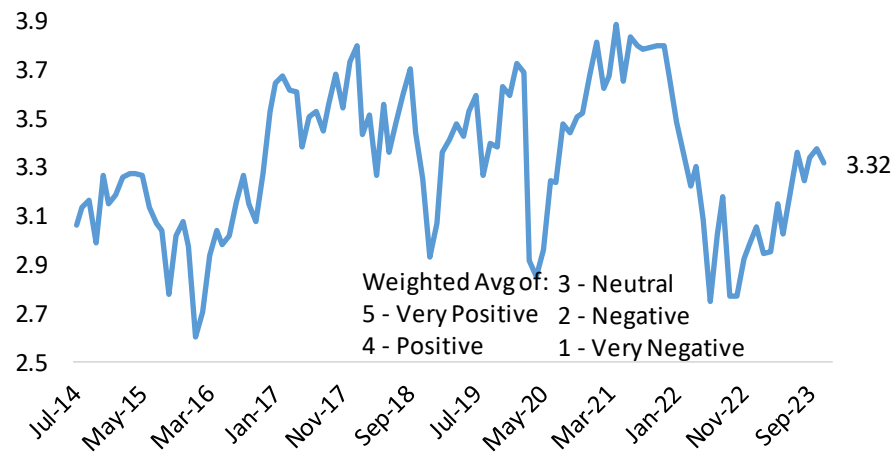
Investors

Investor Stock Market View

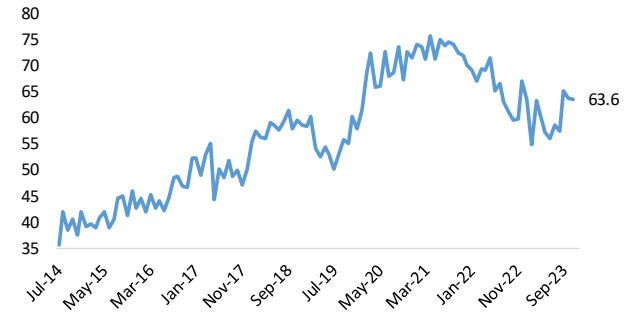
Current View of Stock Market (%)



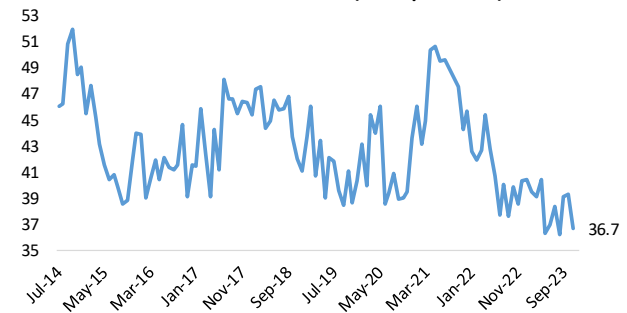
Current View of the Stock Market (Tracker)



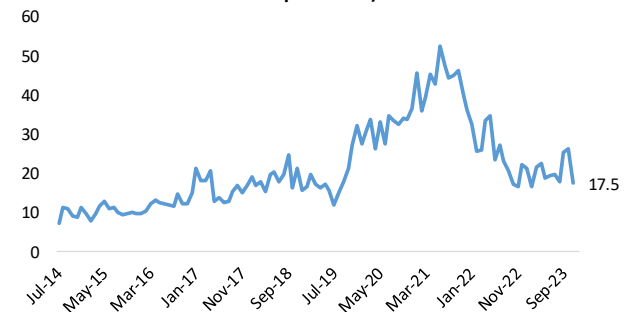
Do You Follow The Stock Market On A Regular Basis? (% Respondents)



Invest In Stocks, Bonds, Commodities, Real Estate, or Other Financial Product? (% Respondents)



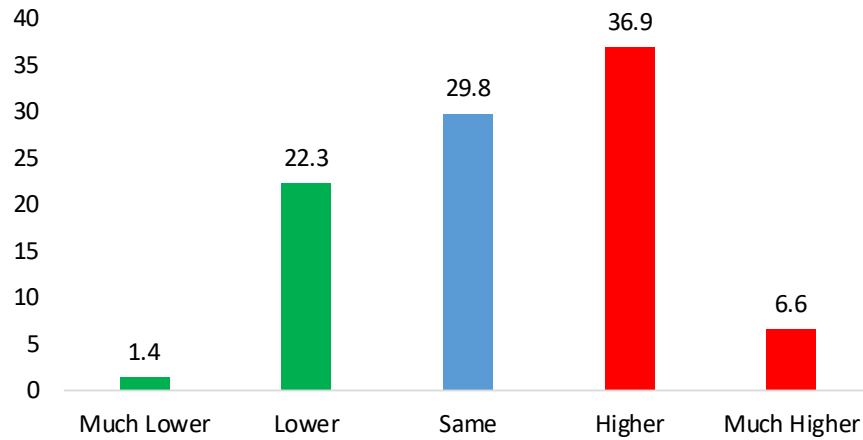
Do You Currently Have Any Investments In Gold (% Respondents)



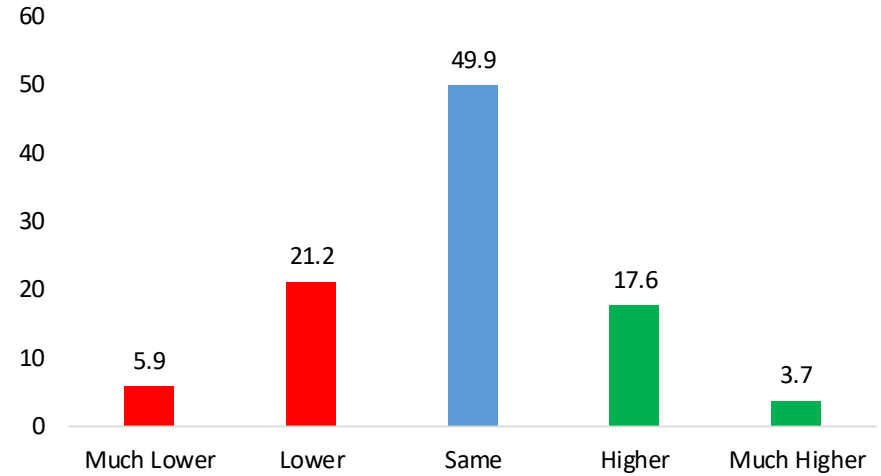
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Investors: Interest Rates and Risk

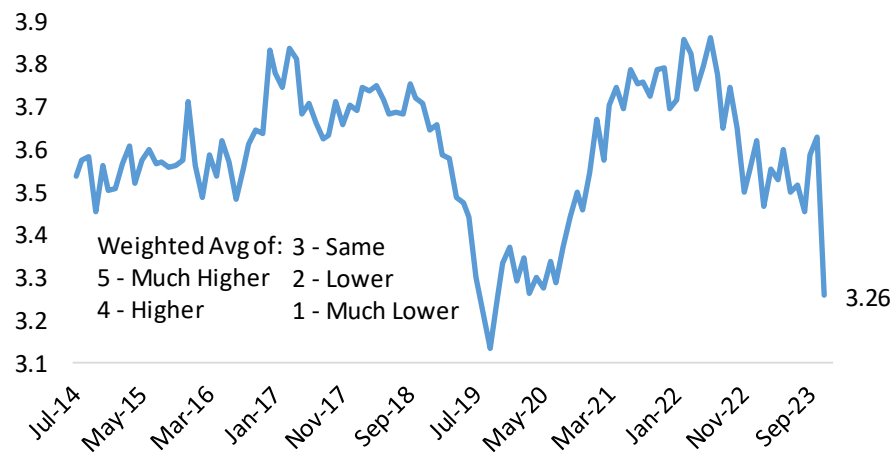
Expectations For Interest Rates One Year From Now (%)



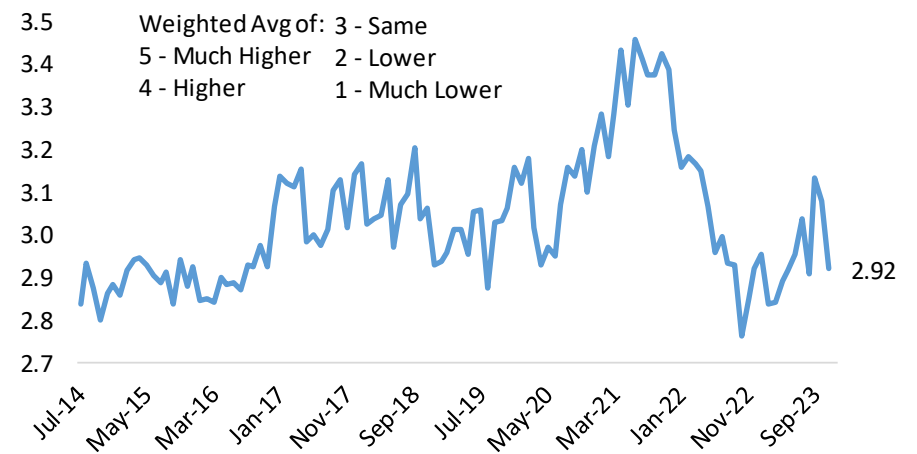
General Risk Tolerance Versus One Year Ago (%)



Expectations for Interest Rates One Year From Now (Tracker)

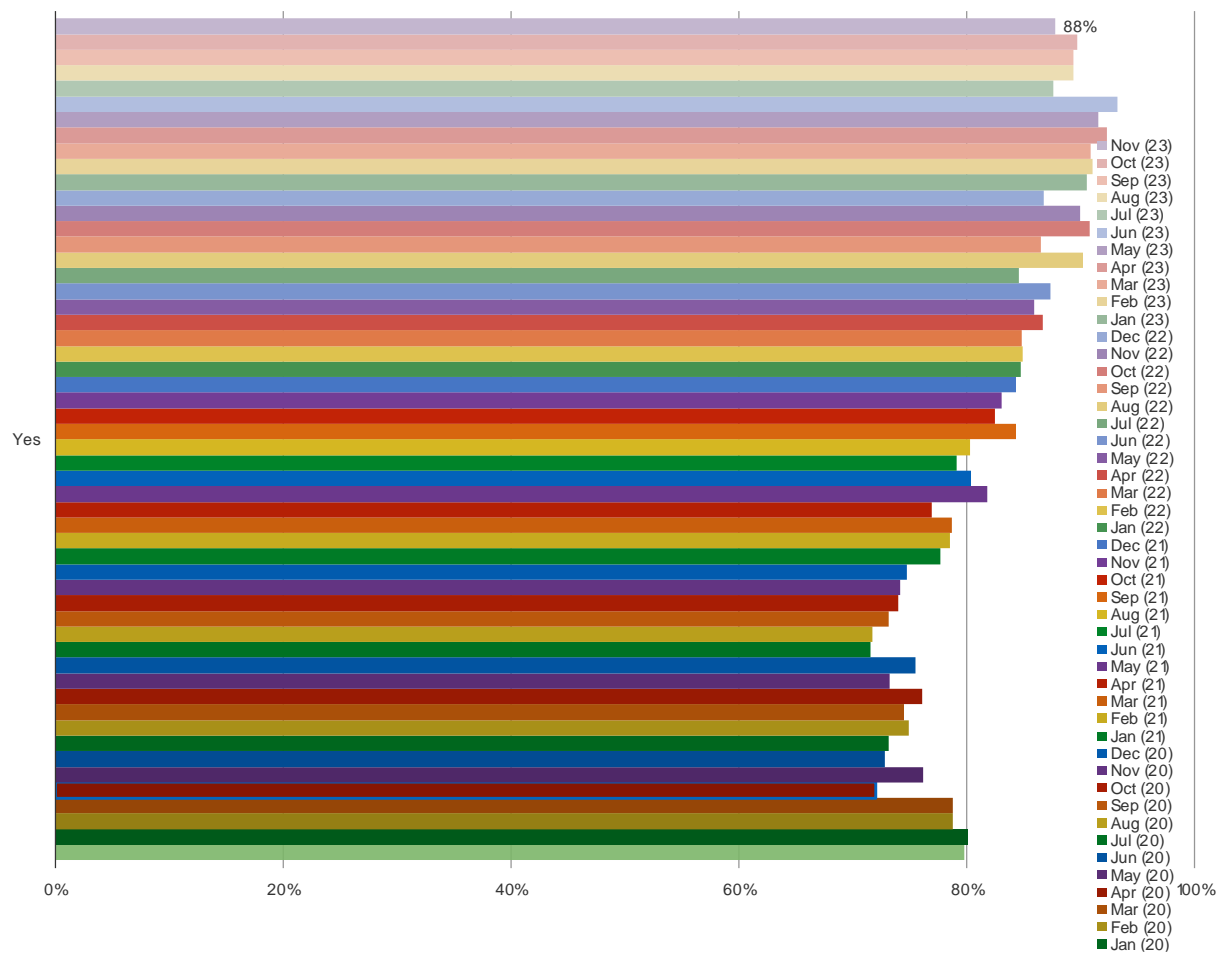


General Risk Tolerance Versus One Year Ago (Tracker)



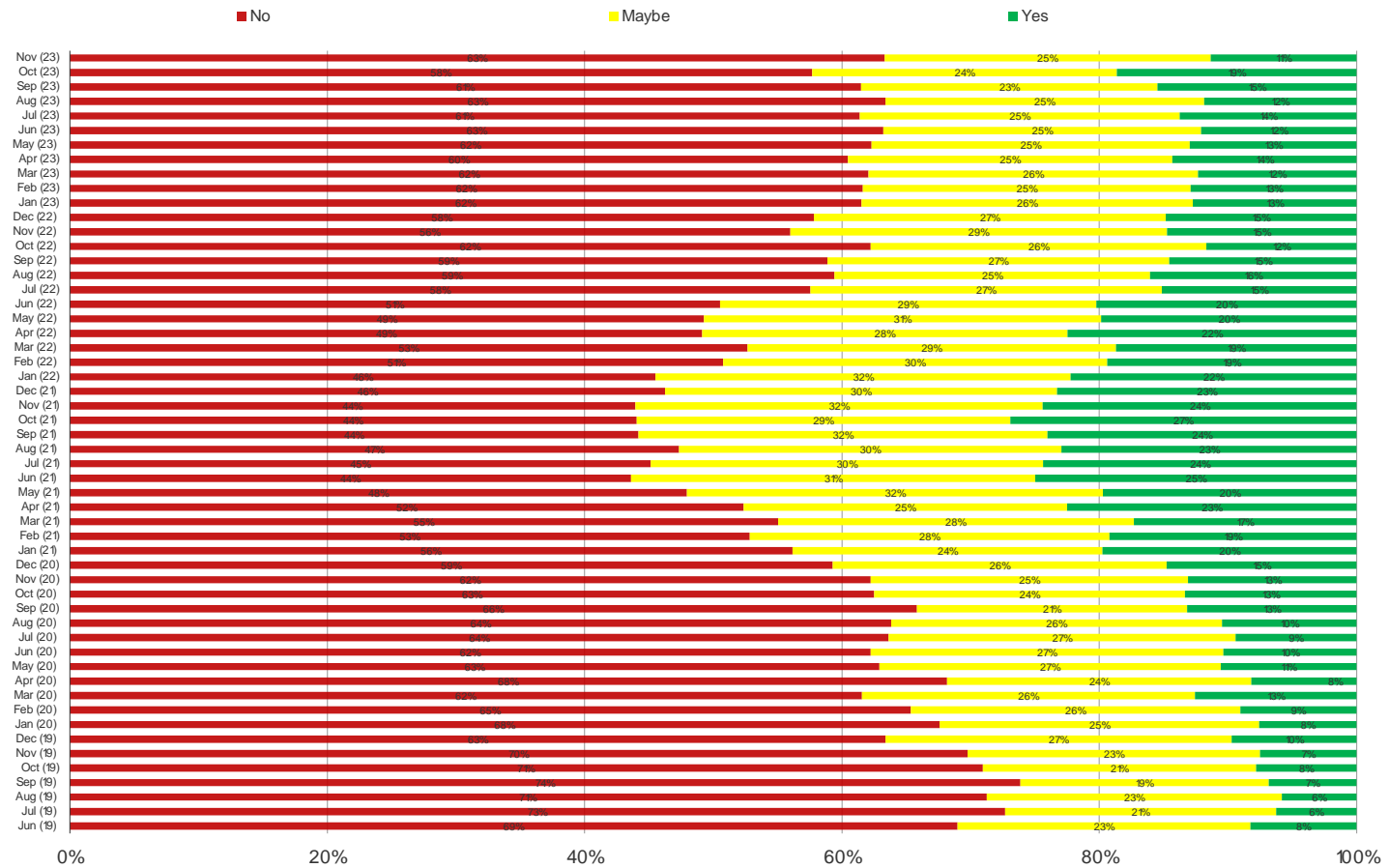
Bitcoin

Percentage of Consumers Aware of Bitcoin



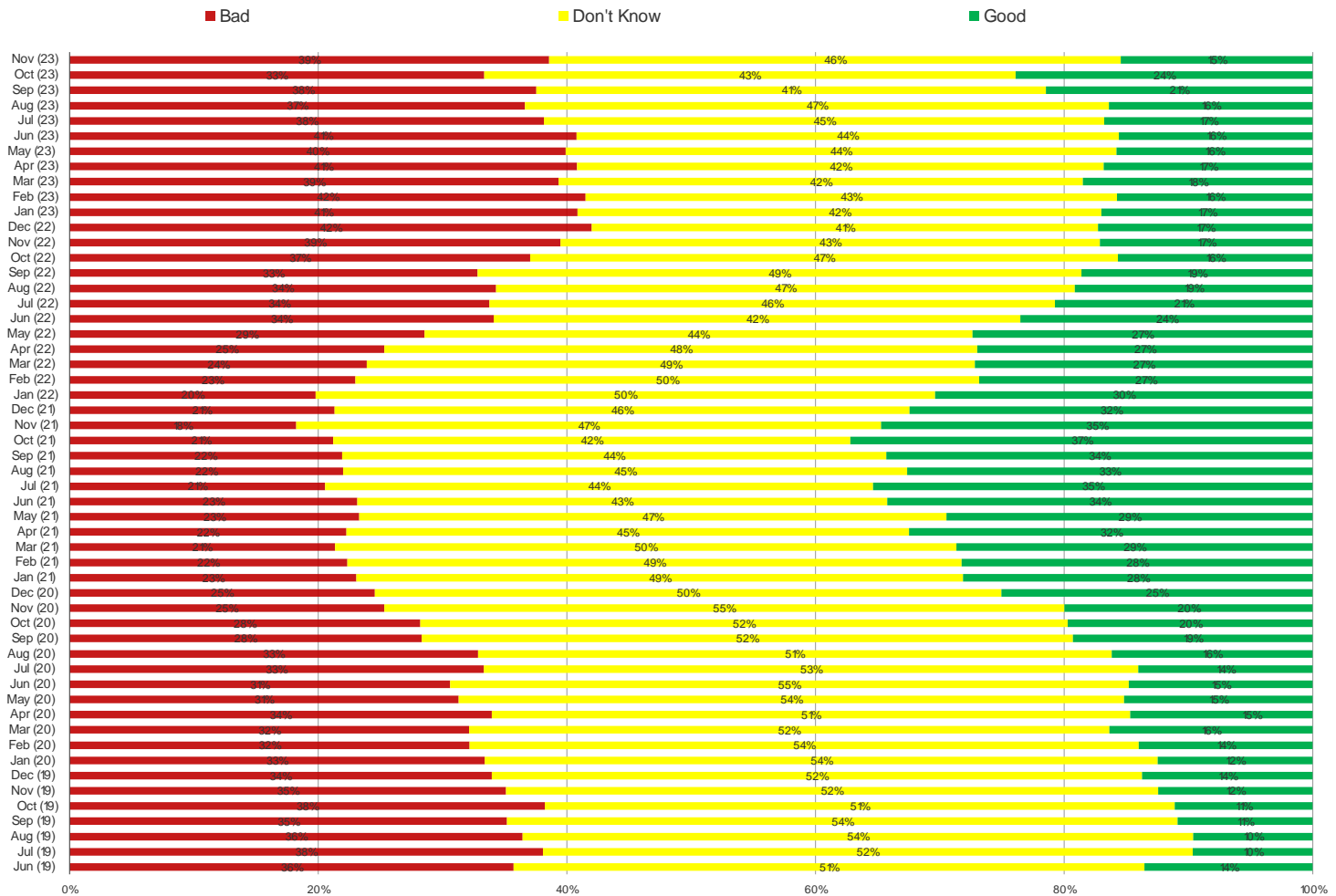
Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Among those aware of Bitcoin: Do you have interest in buying Bitcoin?



Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Among those aware of Bitcoin: Do you think Bitcoin would be a good or bad investment right now?

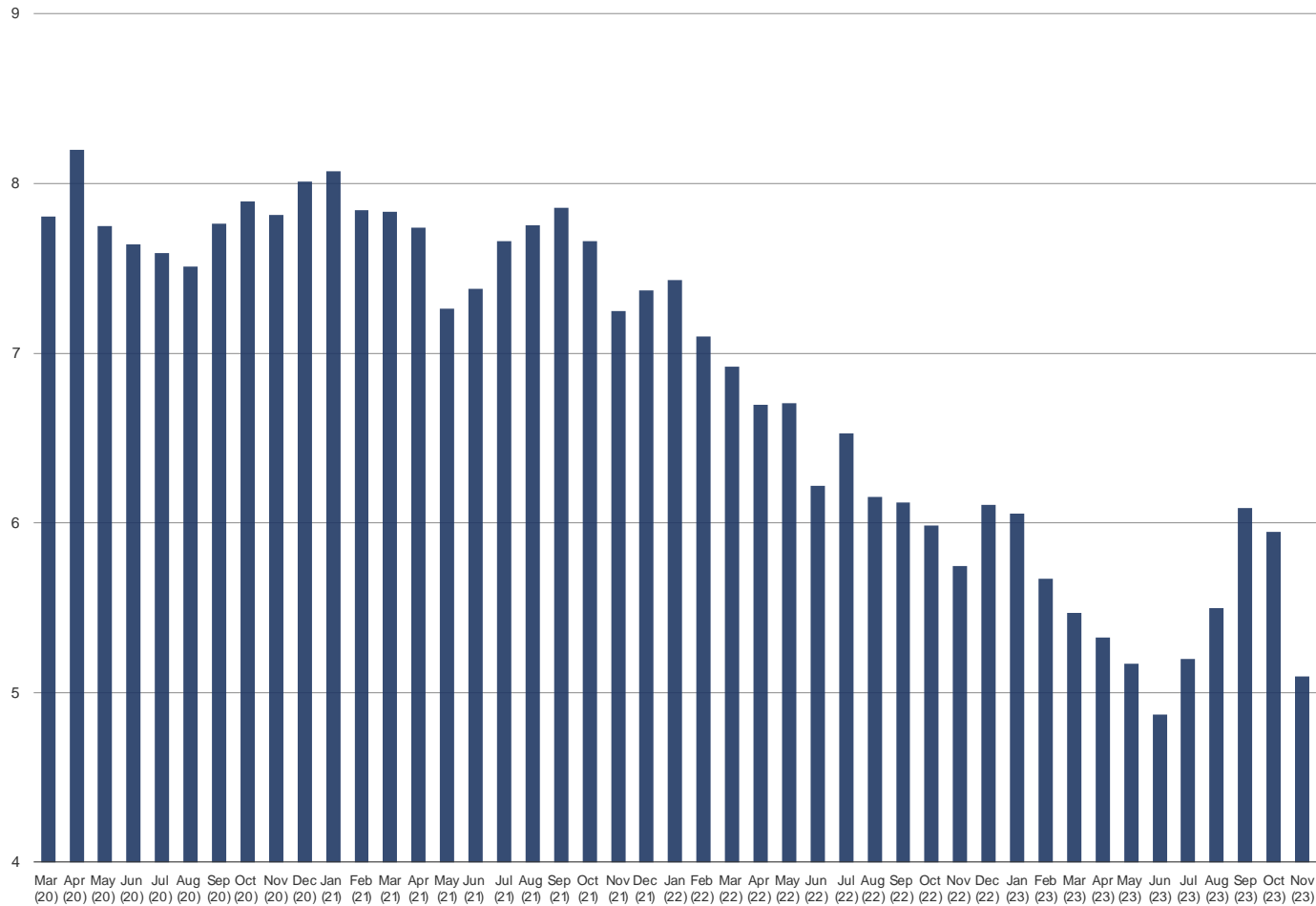


Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023

Covid

Please rate your level of concern with the Coronavirus (also being referred to as Covid-19 or the Novel Coronavirus).

POSED TO ALL RESPONDENTS



Note: Latest Datapoint is November 2023