



## Hold on to Your Cup! These Customer Findings Drove the Refreshed Cupholder Design for the New Ford Fusion

- Cupholders – a seemingly small convenience with a big impact – have been moved forward, rotated and redesigned for the new 2017 Ford Fusion
- Ford research, including a new Nielsen survey, took the automaker around the globe in search of what customers want and need from their cupholders
- Insights about beverage containers, customers and cupholder design show people use cupholders not only for bottles and cups of varying shapes and sizes, but also mobile devices and loose change; insights helped Ford refine cupholders in the new Fusion

**DEARBORN, Mich., Apr 25, 2016** – At Ford, every detail matters, and customer experiences matter most.

That's why, in designing the new 2017 Ford Fusion, the automaker set out in search of what makes cupholders – a seemingly small convenience – so important to customers. In the end, customer feedback drove substantial changes to the refreshed Fusion console design, including a new take on the common cupholder that customers will surely appreciate.

The replacement of the traditional shifter with a rotary gear shift dial freed space for two newly designed cupholders – both with available ambient lighting. The new cupholders are now one in front of the other, with the front cupholder 6 inches forward from their location on the 2016 Fusion. It's a small move with big effects, allowing Ford to extend the armrest by nearly 3 inches and to expand the armrest bin by an extra half-gallon, comparable to your average 2-liter soda bottle or four 16.9-ounce water bottles. For even more storage, a pocket added to the front console is a perfect spot for a wallet and various other items.

“Being dissatisfied with your cupholders may be a minor annoyance, but it's a daily one, which over time detracts from the overall car experience,” said Jolanta Coffey, Ford instrument panel and console manager. “On the other hand, when you like your cupholders, they can make your vehicle feel like home. For Fusion, we set out to develop a beautiful interior, paying attention to the details that make people fall in love and stay in love with their car.”

Research reveals the following cupholder facts:

### 1. **Bottles win big**

In the U.S., people say drinks in bottles reign supreme. According to a new Nielsen survey, 79 percent of Americans say they use cupholders for bottles. A majority of people – 52 percent – say they typically use cupholders to carry cups of coffee and tea. Ford research also found North American customers use large soft-drink cups more than other parts of the world, and they're much likelier to drink on the go. In Asia, people tend to bring wide tea bottles into the vehicle.

## 2. **Putting satisfaction within reach – literally**

People value cupholders that are within effortless reach. That’s easier said than done – given the range of possible arm lengths and seat positions. For the new Fusion, Ford studied driver ergonomics to balance the needs of as many drivers as possible. By moving the cupholders, designers ensured Fusion cupholders are an easy reach for at least 95 percent of the population.

## 3. **Holding more than cups\***

Among non-beverage items placed in cupholders, phones by far are the most common. Roughly half say they use their cupholder to store their mobile device, followed by 28 percent who use it for loose change. Food is placed in cupholders by 19 percent of respondents, while 14 percent use it for gum or mints, and 12 percent for wallets. Millennials and teens are much more likely than their elders to use cupholders for non-beverage items. Gender plays a role as well. Men are more likely to use cupholders to store their wallet and change, while women tend to use cupholders consistently.

## 4. **Get a grip**

A great cupholder is roomy enough for an extra-large container, yet capable of holding a skinny one without it tipping over. Ford again did its homework, for the first time using its tactical robot arm [RUTH](#) to verify the Fusion cupholders, as well as the spring-loaded resistance grips within them, meet customer preferences for resistance and feel. RUTH measured things like how much effort it takes to insert a bottle and how much tension the grips exert as a cup is being pushed down.

## 5. **The three cups**

Cupholders must be deep enough to hold taller containers, but shallow enough that you can easily pluck out a small cup. Ford found most cups fall between three basic scenarios: your average half-liter recyclable water bottle, the 20-ounce plastic bottle typically used for juices and sports drinks, and the 30-ounce soft-drink cup found at many fast-food restaurants. If a cupholder can help hold all three, it can likely hold most any cup.

In total, the 2017 Ford Fusion has up to six cupholders in the console, front door pockets and rear center armrest. Regardless of region and what drivers may store in their vehicle’s cupholders, they are in constant use – and therefore an important aspect of interior design at Ford.

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