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American Drivers Have an “Inferior Interior” Complex About Their Cars

New driver habits survey by Milliken & Company’s YES Essentials® finds Americans are embarrassed by car stains and smells

Spartanburg, S.C. (March 4, 2008) - Americans are doing more than just driving behind the wheel at least 12 hours each week. Longer commutes and more obligations force drivers to eat meals, conduct business, and even groom themselves within the confines of their cars. All of this activity leads to messy on-the-go disasters that contribute to a less-than-perfect car interior. A recent survey from Milliken & Company’s YES Essentials brand revealed 72 percent of Americans have stains on their car interiors. The survey also found the unsightly stains and unpleasant odors that result from this added wear and tear have led to driver dissatisfaction – a sort of “inferior interior” complex.

The survey found 60 percent of American drivers acknowledged they like their car’s interior less than its exterior. The survey also revealed stains and odors on a person’s car interior cause a tremendous amount of embarrassment. Nearly two out of five drivers (37 percent) admit they would be embarrassed to drive around someone whom they wanted to impress—such as a date, client or colleague. Forty-eight percent of Americans have even felt the need to apologize for the state of their car’s interior before letting a passenger get in.

Not only are people unhappy and embarrassed by their car’s interior, but they also feel others might get the wrong impression about their lifestyle and habits - based on what’s found inside their car. Nearly eight in 10 (77 percent) drivers believe the inside of someone’s car reveals a lot more about their interests and lifestyle than the outside.

Despite these concerns, Americans continue to engage in activity that leads to a dirty car interior, as nearly 60 percent of all vehicle owners eat or allow someone to eat in their vehicles¹, and the average person eats 32 restaurant-purchased meals in their car every year².

“If given the choice, nobody would eat in their cars, but the typical American leads a commanding life full of responsibilities, and they don’t have time to sit down at the kitchen table or relax in the office break room for all of their meals,” explains Sidney Locke, business development manager at Milliken & Company, and a member of the research team that developed the YES Essentials technology. “When free time does arise, we don’t want to spend hours cleaning the inside of our cars and hundreds of dollars for other people to clean it for us, so it gets delayed, and the mess gets even worse.”

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¹ Kelly Blue Book Marketing Research and Taco Bell Corp

² NPD Group



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For those who feel their car's interior is important for making a good impression, Milliken & Company's YES Essentials offers an easy solution. YES Essentials high-performance line of automobile fabrics and mats resists stains, odor, and static, keeping car seats and mats clean and fresh.

"Consumers can look for the YES Essentials tag on car seats and mats to identify the stain, odor, and static resistant technology," says Locke.

YES Essentials allows American drivers to stop worrying about the spills and spoils that go along with an active lifestyle, giving active drivers the peace of mind to get on with their lives without the embarrassment of an "inferior interior." The innovative technology of YES Essentials products enables dirt to be easily removed with just a little soap and water and prevents odor-causing bacteria.

"The fabric repels liquids, odors, and inhibits static. We've spilled coffee on our Wrangler's seat at least once (that we noticed), and it's wiped right off without leaving any sticky residue," says Ben Stewart, automotive editor at Popular Mechanics.

To review a complete list of vehicles equipped with YES Essentials and to learn how to order custom-made seats and mats for any make and model, go to www.lookforthetag.com.

About the 2008 YES Essentials Survey

The 2008 YES Essentials Survey was conducted by Kelton Research between January 9, 2008 and January 14, 2008 using an email invitation and an online survey. Quotas are set to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population of drivers age 18 and above. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentage expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample. To view complete survey results, please visit the YES Essentials Web site for a downloadable file.

About YES Essentials

YES Essentials floor mats, seat covers, and interior automotive fabrics feature advanced stain repellency, odor elimination, and antimicrobial technologies. The product line is among the family of innovations developed by Milliken & Company, one of the world's largest textile and chemical companies and a leading supplier to the automotive industry for more than 50 years. For more information, please visit www.lookforthetag.com.

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