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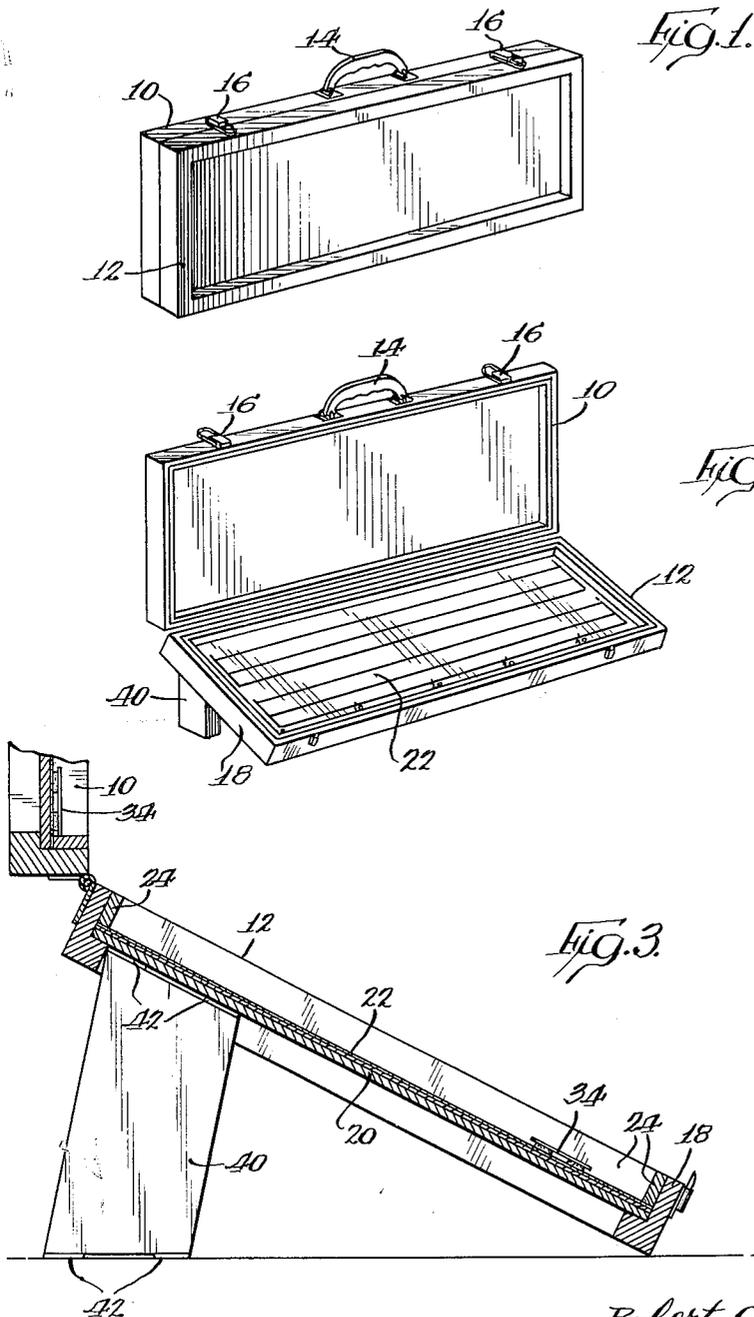
R. C. BLAND

3,080,664

DISPLAY SHELF PLANNING

Filed March 27, 1961

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



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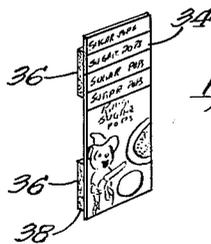
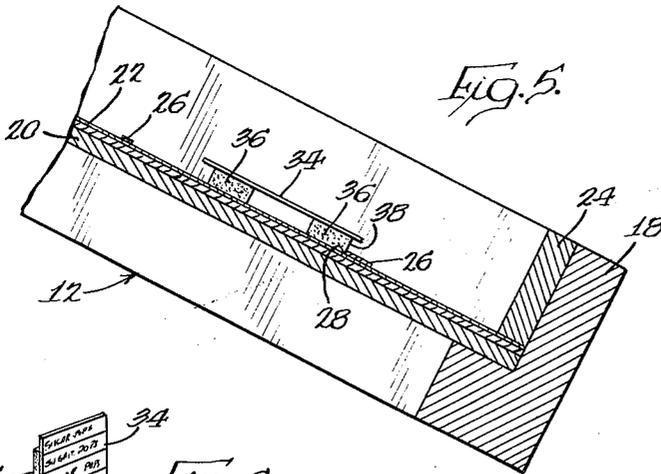
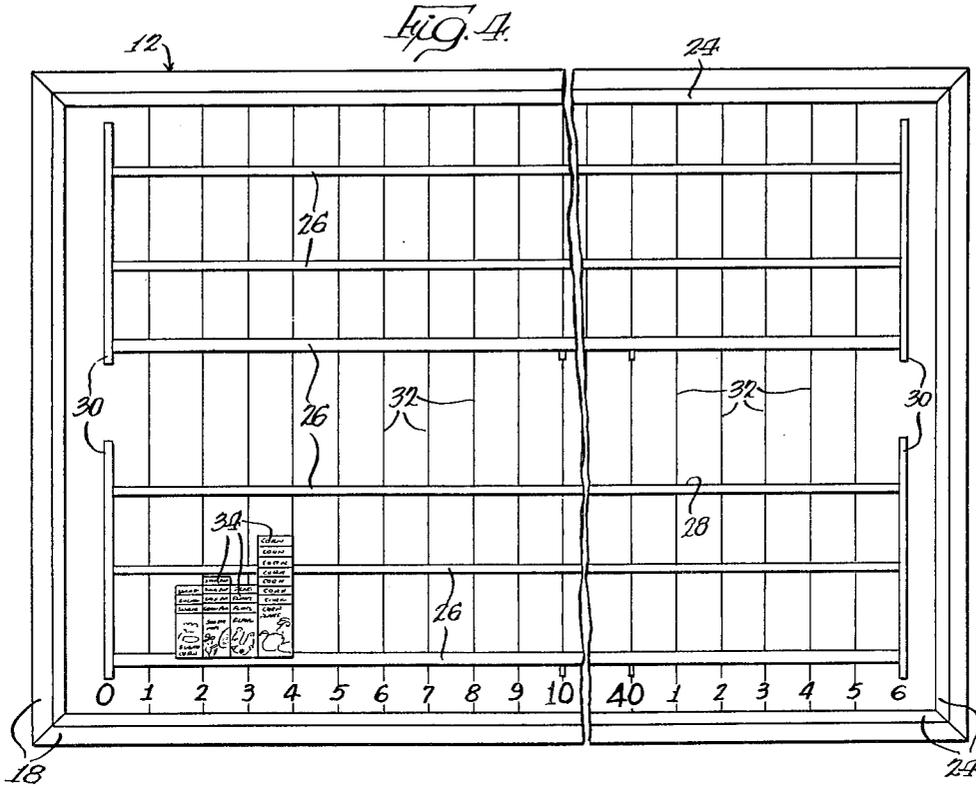
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DISPLAY SHELF PLANNING

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2 Sheets-Sheet 2



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DISPLAY SHELF PLANNING

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The present invention relates to advance planning of displays for articles of commerce, and particularly, to an improved method of and improved apparatus for planning the arrangement of merchandise on shelves.

By way of example, grocers are concerned with the most efficient utilization of shelf space for the purposes both of maximum storage of goods and optimum sales appeal for the goods. With many products, achievement of both results, or a happy medium between the two, is a matter of experimentation for each grocer; and the attainment of sales appeal for almost all products is a matter of taste personal to him. Heretofore, the grocer could conduct his experiments only by repeated manipulation of substantial quantities of the goods themselves, which obviously would consume considerable time, energy and patience. Also, where goods may be stored and/or displayed at will on shelves or on racks, the grocer would be put to considerable expense just in procuring supplies necessary for his experimentation. And all of this experimentation had to be carried out at night and on holidays to avoid conflict with his customers.

The object of this invention is to provide a convenient, economical and practical solution to the stated problems by providing a small experimentation kit whereby grocers and other merchants may experiment with shelf arrangements and merchandise displays in the privacy of their offices or homes and/or during store hours by the simple expedient of selectively arranging and rearranging relative minute reproductions of their merchandise.

It is a specific object of this invention to accommodate advance planning of merchandise displays by the simple procedure of placing on a small manipulatable board relatively minute flat reproductions of at least one face of each article to be displayed, and detachably engaging the reproductions with the board in positions aligned with horizontal lines and/or storage racks reproduced on the board thereby to simulate the placing of articles on shelves or in racks.

Another object of the invention is to provide apparatus for the stated purpose comprising a small manipulatable board having horizontal lines and/or relatively minute reproductions of storage racks thereon, and a plurality of relatively minute flat reproductions of at least one face of the articles of merchandise to be displayed, the board and/or the reproductions having means thereon for holding the reproductions in selected positions on the board.

A further object of the invention is to provide apparatus as aforesaid wherein the board and the reproductions have cooperable ridges on the opposed faces thereof for positioning the reproductions in predetermined relation to lines on the board to simulate the placing of articles on shelves.

A still further object of the invention is to embody the apparatus in a form convenient for use by salesmen, so that salesmen may carry the apparatus from store to store and assist merchants in selection of desirable shelf arrangements.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent in the following detailed description.

Now, in order to acquaint those skilled in the art with the manner of practicing the method of my invention, and of making and using the apparatus of my invention,

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I shall describe, in connection with the accompanying drawings, a preferred embodiment of the apparatus and preferred manners of making and using the same.

In the drawings:

5 FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of the apparatus of my invention, wherein the above described planning kit is incorporated in a conveniently carried suitcase, attache case, or the like;

10 FIGURE 2 is a perspective view of the case of FIGURE 1 opened for use;

FIGURE 3 is a fragmentary vertical section of the opened case;

FIGURE 4 is a plan view of the board forming part of the planning kit;

15 FIGURE 5 is a fragmentary vertical section of the board on an enlarged scale, the view showing the cooperation between the board and a reproduction; and

FIGURE 6 is a perspective view of a reproduction of an article of merchandise.

20 Referring now to the drawings, I have shown the preferred embodiment of my apparatus incorporated in a case comprised of two hingedly connected halves, namely an upper half 10 and a lower half 12, at least one half having a carrying handle 14 and the two halves having cooperating clasps 16 at the edges thereof opposite their hinged edges. The two halves are preferably substantially identical, and description of the lower half will suffice for both. As shown, the lower half 12 of the case is comprised of a rectangular frame 18 suitably formed in a conventional manner of four pieces of wood each of L-shape in cross-section. Secured to the interior ledge formed by the legs of the L-shaped pieces is a rigid flat backing sheet 20, such as a sheet of Masonite or the like, and secured to the inner surface of this is a planning board 22. Suitably, both the backing sheet and the board 22 may be held in the frame by molding strips 24. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the board 22 comprises a thin sheet of galvanized annealed steel. To the extent thus far described, the two halves of the case are of identical construction.

25 With reference particularly to FIGURES 4 and 5, the board 22 in the lower half of the case, i.e., the planning board, is provided on its interior surface or face with at least one horizontal strip 26, and preferably with a plurality of such strips. I prefer that these strips comprise pressure-sensitive adhesive tape, but other means may be provided to define horizontal lines representative of shelves. I also prefer that whatever means be employed to represent the shelves, the same be of such nature as to define horizontal ridges projecting forwardly from the surface of the board and facing toward the top thereof, as indicated at 28 in FIGURE 5. In addition, vertical strips 30 may be employed to define margins to a display, and vertical and/or horizontal lines 32 may be printed or otherwise formed on the board to assist in guidance of the user. Also, the vertical lines 32 may be numbered as shown to facilitate correlation of the display to the actual shelf arrangement of the user. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, these results are achieved and a particularly attractive display is provided by covering the face of the planning board with a graphically lined and numbered plastic sheath.

30 The display pieces provided by the present invention are flat relatively minute reproductions, preferably photographic reproductions, of at least one face of each article of merchandise to be displayed. For example, I have shown a display piece 34 in FIGURE 6 comprising a photographic reproduction of the front face of one box of dry cereal and the end faces of a plurality of like boxes stacked horizontally on top of the one box. If desired, the reproduction could be of just the front face

of one box, just the side face of one box, just the end face of one box or the end faces of a plurality of boxes, combinations of these and so on. To the back of each reproduction I secure attaching means to facilitate non-slip detachable mounting of the reproductions on the board. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the attaching means comprises at least one and preferably two small permanent magnets 36 which are secured to the reproduction by two-sided pressure-sensitive tape.

In use, the two magnets can readily be engaged with the magnetically permeable board 22, whereby the reproduction is detachably held in selected position on the board. Also, the magnets 36 are preferably rectangular and have a downwardly facing horizontal edge 38, thereby to define a ridge opposed to the ridge 28 defined by the upper edge of each of the strips 26. Thus, each reproduction can conveniently be located on the board in predetermined relation to a respective strip simply by sliding the lower edge of the lower magnet into engagement with the upper edge of the respective strip. When a particular reproduction is not in use, it can conveniently be stored by adhering it magnetically to the board 22 in the upper half of the case, and/or by adhering it to the surface of a lower layer of magnetically attached reproductions. In this manner, substantially an entire store inventory could be represented by the contents of a single case.

To facilitate use of the device, I prefer to provide means for retaining the planning board in an inclined readily accessible and viewable planning position. To this end, I provide two legs 40 for the case, each being of generally trapezoidal form and suitably formed of wood. As shown particularly in FIGURE 3, each inclined edge of each leg is provided with two felt pads impregnated with pressure-sensitive adhesive whereby the upper end of each leg may be detachably secured to the lower surface of the sheet 20 in the lower half of the case, and the lower end of each leg may be detachably adhered to a supporting surface, such as a desk, to retain the case in fixed position for manipulation of the reproductions 34. The hinges provided for the case are preferably of the fixed-stop support type to hold the upper half of the case substantially vertical when the case is set-up for use, whereby the stored reproductions 34 are exposed to the user's view for convenient selection from the "inventory supply," as shown in FIGURE 3. When the case is not in use, the legs 40 are readily moved for storage within the case, or within the exterior recess defined by each of the frames 18, whereby the legs are transportable with the case. To facilitate this latter result, each leg may also have pressure-sensitive adhesive pads (not shown) on one of its side surfaces.

With the apparatus above described, a store owner can quickly and easily make plans for the arrangement and storage of his wares, and salesmen are afforded means whereby they can perform a valuable service for their customers and at the same time convince the proprietor of an advantageous display of the salesmen's products. Also, once an arrangement has been set-up, it can be photographed to reveal exactly the ultimate shelf arrangement. In addition, I prefer to arrange the strips 26 in

a manner indicative of two sets of shelving, whereby an arrangement may be made on the upper set and another can be made on the lower set to compare the effectiveness of the two. Thus, it is apparent that all of the objects and advantages of the invention have been shown herein to be attained in a convenient, economical and practical manner.

While I have shown and described what I regard to be the preferred practice of the method of my invention, and the preferred embodiment of the apparatus of my invention, it will be appreciated that various changes, rearrangements and modifications may be made therein without departing from the scope of the invention, as defined by the appended claim.

I claim:

Apparatus for planning display shelf arrangements comprising a suitcase including two hingedly connected substantially identical halves each comprised of a rectangular frame and a magnetically permeable board mounted within the frame intermediate the faces of the frame, detachable legs engageable with the outer surface of the board of one of said halves within the interior of the frame thereof and adjacent the hinged side of the one half for sustaining said one half in an inclined position with the hinged side thereof in elevated position, said legs having adhesive pads on the ends thereof for detachably affixing the same to said board and a supporting surface, fixed stop hinges hingedly connecting said halves and for retaining the other of said halves in a generally vertical upwardly extending position when said one half is in its inclined position, a graphically lined plastic sheath on the inner surface of the board of said one half graphically depicting two sets of shelving parallel to the hinged sides of said halves, adhesive tape adhered to said sheath parallel to the hinged sides of said halves and representing horizontal shelves, a plurality of relatively minute flat rectangular reproductions of at least one face of the articles to be displayed, said reproductions and the graphic depiction of shelving being to the same scale, and at least one horizontal disposed permanent rectangular magnet on the back of each of said reproductions disposed parallel to its edges for detachably affixing the same selectively to the board of said other half as an inventory supply and to the board of said one half as part of a display, the magnet on each reproduction being engageable with the board to detachably affix the reproduction to the board and being engageable at its lower edge with the upper edge of the adhesive tape to locate the reproduction on the board relative to a depicted shelf.

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