

[54] **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DISPLAYING PRODUCT**

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206/44 R

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206/44 R; 220/97 R, 97 C, 15

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Primary Examiner—William T. Dixon, Jr.
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—McNenny, Farrington,
Pearne & Gordon

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A method and apparatus for displaying and storing end closures for marketing purposes is disclosed. Several end closures of various shapes and sizes which are to be displayed are each individually mounted on one end of an open ended tubular carrier. The tubular carriers are stacked and nested with progressively smaller ones of the tubular carriers disposed within progressively larger ones of the carriers. The tubular carriers are each of a different axial length to identify the slight differences in lateral width of the various carriers to assist the prospective purchaser in restacking the carriers. Each of the end closures is removably disposed on its associated carrier so that the prospective purchaser can remove the end closure for inspection and then replace it on the carrier for storing.

4 Claims, 3 Drawing Figures

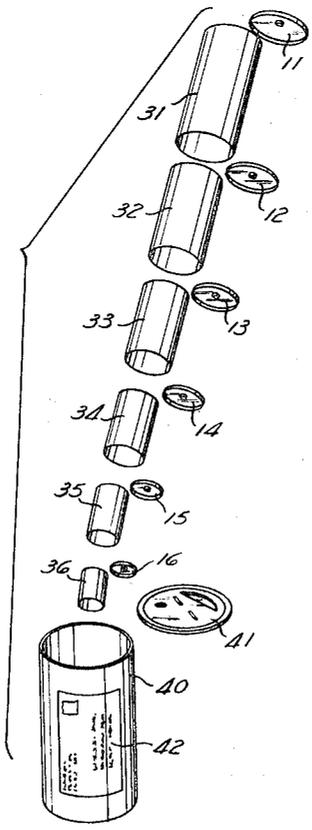


Fig. 3

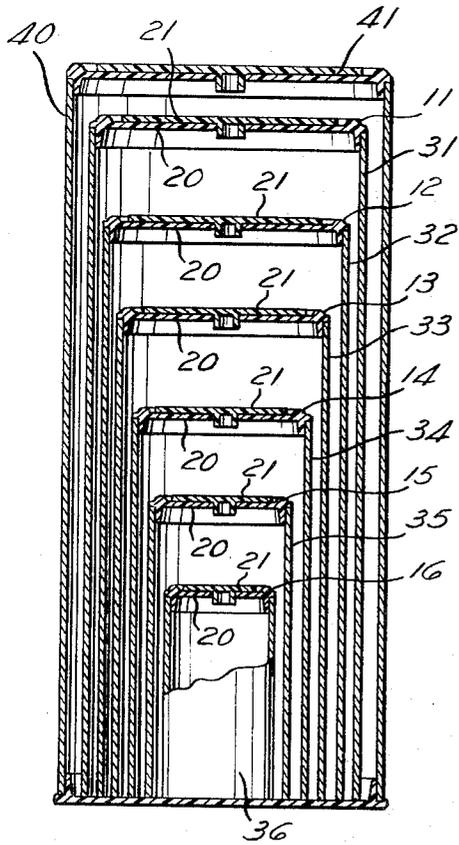
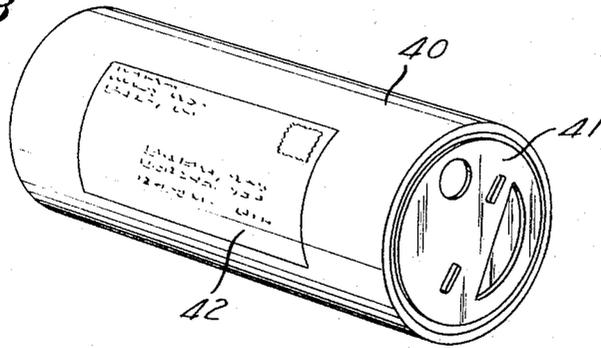
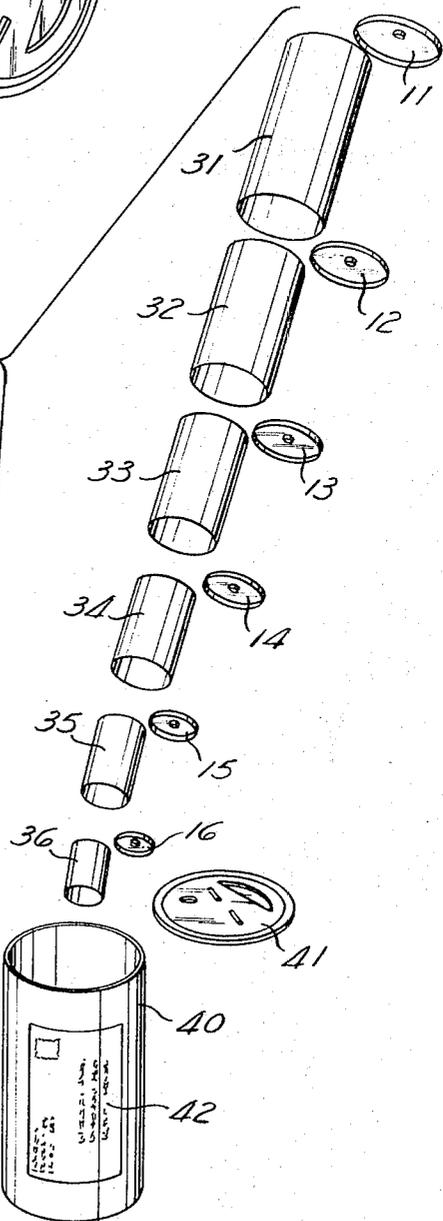


Fig. 1

Fig. 2



METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DISPLAYING PRODUCT

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to a method and apparatus for displaying articles, and more particularly to a method and apparatus for displaying end closures for tubular containers.

It is well known that the method and apparatus which is used for displaying an article for sales purposes is a significant factor in the sales and marketing of the article. In spite of this, end closures for tubular containers (whether round or of other cross sectional shape) have been for many years and currently are displayed to prospective purchasers by placing loose end closures randomly and haphazardly in a large container or on a desk or table. This does not add to the market appeal of the end closures, does not associate the end closures with its source of manufacture, permits the end closures to become lost and separated from one another, and encourages discarding of the end closures by the prospective purchaser because they can not be conveniently stored.

The present invention overcomes these and other problems and disadvantages of prior art methods and apparatus for displaying end closures by providing a method and apparatus which add to the market appeal of the product, positively identify the source of the end closures, assist in preventing the end closures from being lost or separated, and encourage retention of the end closures by the prospective purchaser due to the novelty appeal of the display and the convenience of storing the display.

According to the principles of the invention, several end closures of a specific type but of various sizes and with various features are each individually mounted on one end of an open ended tubular carrier. The tubular carriers, each having an end closure mounted on one end, are then nested and stacked with progressively smaller ones of the tubular carriers disposed within progressively larger ones of the carriers. The tubular carriers are of substantially different axial lengths with the carrier of greatest lateral width having the greatest axial length and carriers of progressively smaller lateral widths having progressively shorter axial lengths to identify the slight differences in lateral widths of the carriers so that restacking of the carriers is facilitated. Further in accord with the principles of the invention, each of the end closures is removably disposed on its associated carrier so that the prospective purchaser can remove the end closure for inspection and then replace it on the carrier for convenient storing. The nested and stacked carriers and end closures are placed in a shipping container for transmittal to the prospective purchaser, and one end of the shipping container is sealed with an end closure of the type which is displayed by the carriers to demonstrate the durability of the end closure to the prospective purchaser.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

These and other features and advantages of the invention will become more readily apparent upon an understanding of the preferred embodiment of the invention shown in the drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a cross sectional side elevational view illustrating the method and apparatus of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is an exploded view, reduced in size, further illustrating the method and apparatus of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 3 is a perspective view, reduced in size, further illustrating the method and apparatus of FIG. 1.

Referring now to the drawings in greater detail, a plurality of end closures **11**, **12**, **13**, **14**, **15** and **16** are shown which are of generally circular lateral cross section. Each end closure is of the same type and includes a plastic cap **20** and a disc **21**. The disc **21** is snapped into a suitable opening in the center of each cap **20** for rotational movement, and the disc **21** is provided with suitable openings (not shown) which may be aligned with other openings (not shown) in the cap **20** to open and close the end closure. Each of the end closures is of a different lateral width, and each includes a different feature such as a different pour opening, pour spout, shaker opening, or spoon size opening. A more detailed description of this type of end closure is set forth in U.S. Pat. Nos. 2,961,132 and 2,961,133, both issued on Nov. 22, 1960 and incorporated herein by reference.

A plurality of tubular carriers **31**, **32**, **33**, **34**, **35** and **36** are provided, and each carrier is cut to a different axial length for reasons described below. The end closures **11** through **16** are each mounted on one end of the tubular carriers **31** through **36**, respectively, and the other end of each carrier is left open. The tubular carriers **31** through **36** are then nested and stacked with progressively smaller ones of the tubular carriers disposed within progressively larger ones of the carriers.

Each of the end closures **11** through **16** is removably mounted on its associated carrier and is retained thereon only by frictional engagement of the end closure with the carrier. In this manner, each end closure may be removed from its associated carrier for inspection by the prospective purchaser. However, because the carrier provides a specific place for putting the end closure after such inspection, the prospective purchaser is encouraged to replace the end closure on the empty carrier rather than discard the end closure.

In the preferred embodiment illustrated in the drawings, the six tubular carriers **31** through **36** range in lateral width (which is the same as outside diameter because the carriers are of circular shape) from approximately two and one-half inches to approximately one and one-half inches, and the wall thickness of each carrier is approximately one-thirty second of an inch. Because the lateral width of adjacent ones of the tubular carriers **31** through **36** is therefore only slightly different, it is difficult to distinguish each carrier from the next larger or next smaller carrier when the carriers are unstacked, so that restacking of the carriers by the prospective purchaser after inspection would be awkward or difficult in the absence of a means to distinguish larger and smaller adjacent ones of the carriers. To overcome this problem, the carriers **31** through **36** are of successively diminishing axial length so that the carrier **31** of greatest lateral width has the longest axial length and the carrier **36** of smallest lateral width has the shortest axial length. In order for this aspect of the invention to accomplish its intended result, the difference between the axial length of adjacent carriers must be significant so that it can be easily distinguished, and

in the preferred embodiment the difference between the length of any two adjacent carriers is at least one-half inch. In this manner, the prospective purchaser is encouraged to restack the carriers 31 through 36 and place them in the shipping container 40 for storage purposes so that discarding of the end closures is discouraged.

Each of the carriers 31 through 36 is also provided with the trade name or trademark of the source of the end closures, so that anyone who views any one of the unstacked end closures will be informed of the name of the source from which they can be obtained. Additionally, a description of the particular features and advantages of each end closure 31 through 36 may be imprinted on its associated carrier. In this manner, the information pertaining to each end closure which is displayed will not be separated from the end closure.

As further shown in the drawings, the nested and stacked carriers and end closures are placed in a shipping container 40, and an end closure 41 of the same type as that which is carried by the carriers 31 through 36 and is to be displayed to the prospective purchaser is permanently fastened such as by glue to provide the sole means for closing the top of the container 40. The shipping container 40 is then provided with a suitable shipping label 42 for transmittal to the prospective purchaser of the end closures. In this manner, the end closure 41 demonstrates the durability and strength of the product which is displayed, since the end closure 41 must survive the hazards of mailing or shipping to the prospective purchaser, and because the prospective purchaser must break the end closure 41 in order to open the top of the shipping container.

Although a preferred embodiment of this invention is illustrated it is to be understood that various modifications and rearrangements of parts may be resorted to without departing from the scope of the invention disclosed and claimed herein.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of displaying a plurality of end closures of various lateral widths by a prospective seller of said end closures to a prospective purchaser of said end closures comprising providing a plurality of open ended tubular carriers of various lateral widths, cutting the carriers to different axial lengths so that the carrier of greatest lateral width has the greatest axial length and carriers of progressively smaller lateral width have progressively shorter axial lengths, mounting said end closures on only one end of said tubular carriers, arranging said tubular carriers in nested stacked relation with progressively smaller ones of said tubular carriers disposed within progressively larger ones of said tubular carriers, placing said nested stacked carriers in a shipping container, and closing said shipping container with an end closure of the same type which is carried by said carriers to demonstrate the durability of the end closures to the prospective purchaser.

2. A method as defined in claim 1 including transmitting said shipping container to said prospective purchaser, opening said shipping container, unstacking said tubular carriers, removing at least some of said end closures from their associated tubular carriers, inspecting said removed end closures, remounting said removed end closures on only one end of their associated tubular carrier, and rearranging said tubular carriers in nested stacked relation with progressively smaller ones of said tubular carriers disposed within progressively larger ones of said tubular carriers.

3. A method as defined in claim 2 including identifying the source of said end closures by placing the name of said source on at least some of said tubular carriers.

4. A method as defined in claim 2 including identifying the source of said end closures by placing the name of said source on all of said tubular carriers.

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