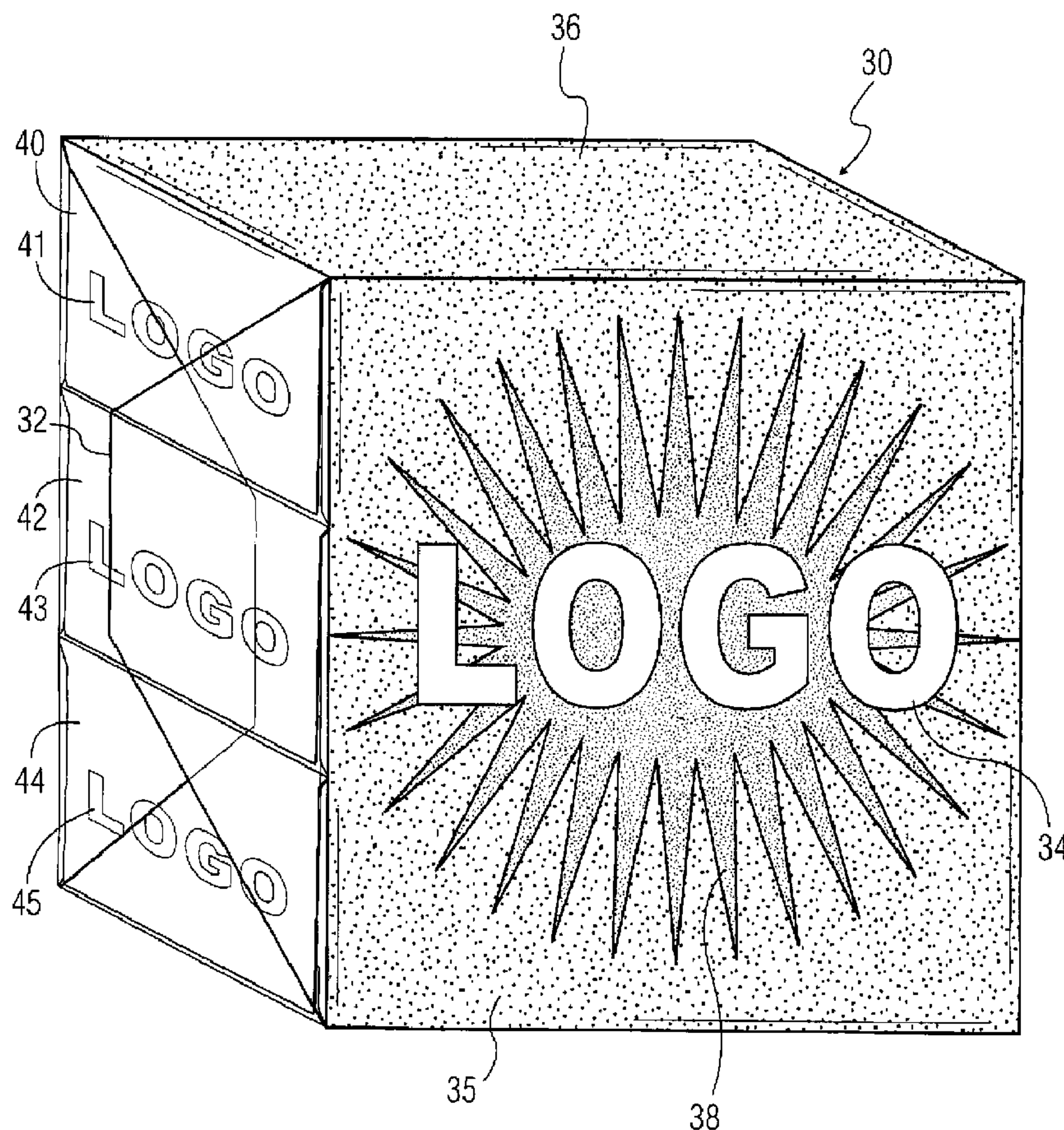




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(54) Titre : CONDITIONNEMENT MULTIPLE D'EMBALLAGES DE PRODUITS MUNIS D'INDICES  
(54) Title: MULTI-PACK COMPRISING A WRAPPER WITH INDICIA



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A multi-pack of packages of individually packaged products wherein there is a plurality of products packaged in individual paperboard cartons, the paperboard cartons being devoid of applied indicia like printing or coloration applied to the paperboard



(57) **Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):**

prior to carton forming. There is no printing of logos, trademarks or other product information prior forming the carton. The cartons do have a product identification that is embossed or debossed into the paperboard material of the cartons. The individual cartons are placed in a stack of two to twenty or more cartons and wrapped with a thermoplastic film material. The thermoplastic film material contains the required product indicia like colors and other decoration and product logos and trademarks.

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(54) Title: MULTI-PACK OF PRODUCT PACKAGES

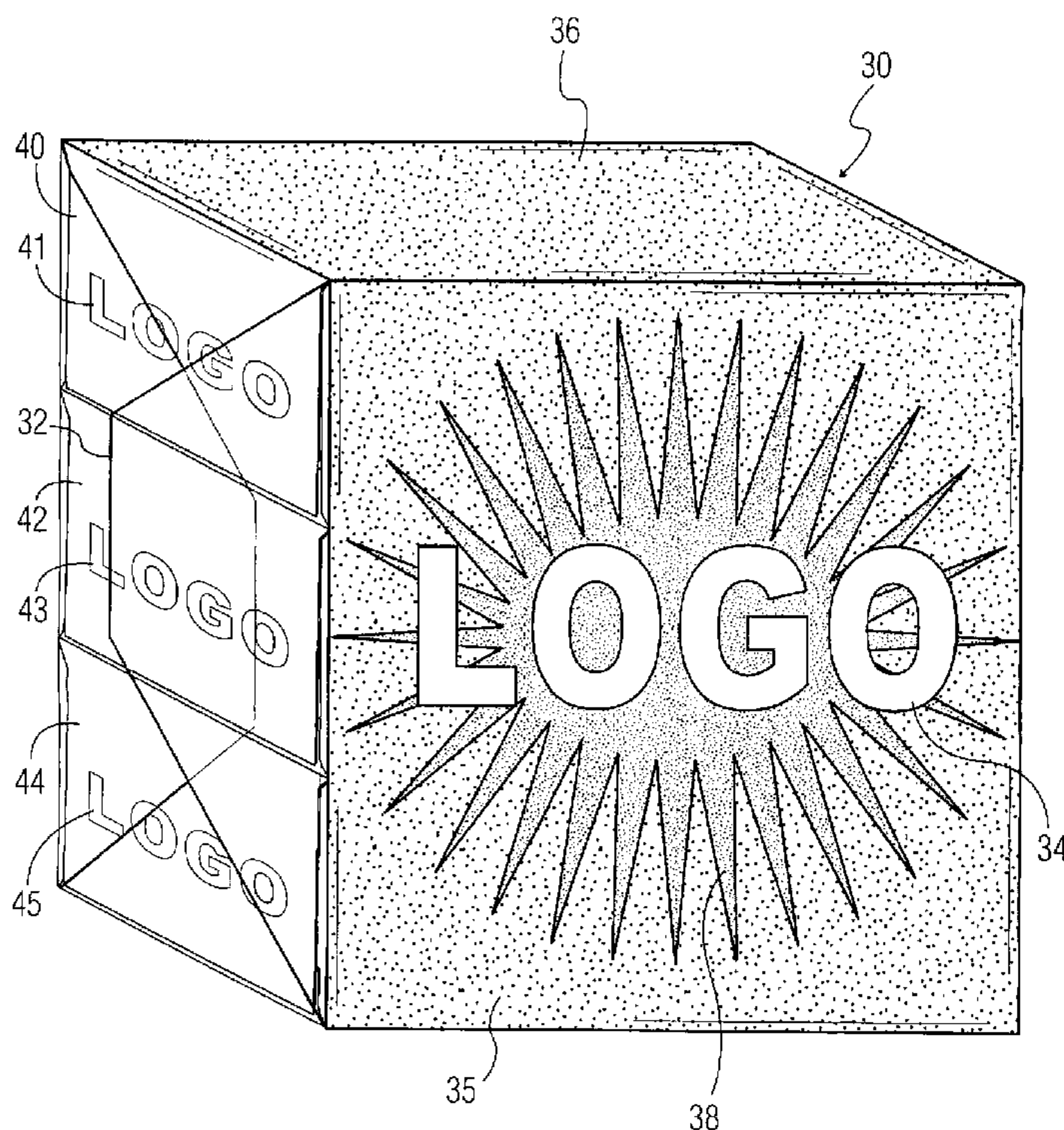


FIG. 4

(57) Abstract: A multi-pack of packages of individually packaged products wherein there is a plurality of products packaged in individual paperboard cartons, the paperboard cartons being devoid of applied indicia like printing or coloration applied to the paperboard prior to carton forming. There is no printing of logos, trademarks or other product information prior forming the carton. The cartons do have a product identification that is embossed or debossed into the paperboard material of the cartons. The individual cartons are placed in a stack of two to twenty or more cartons and wrapped with a thermoplastic film material. The thermoplastic film material contains the required product indicia like colors and other decoration and product logos and trademarks.

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## MULTI-PACK COMPRISING A WRAPPER WITH INDICIA

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present application is directed to a multi-pack of individual product packages where the packages of the individual product packages do not contain any printed color decoration or other printed information derived from the carton blank, all such printed information and color decoration being on an outer wrapper of the multi-pack. More particularly the present invention is directed to a multi-pack of individual cartons, each containing a soap bar, the cartons having an embossed or debossed identification of the product but no printed color decoration or other printed information derived from the carton blank.

[0003] It is common to package various products in multi-packs. A multi-pack is a plurality of individually packaged products that are bundled together and held in a wrapper material, such as a thin plastic material like shrink wrap, which is sealed to hold the bundled packaged products together until the wrapper is opened by the purchaser. These multi-packs are commonly used for relatively low value products such as soap bars. These are sold in bundles of from two to twenty or more individual cartons of soap bars. In many instances the multi-packs are just bundles of the products in the same package as they are sold individually. That is each individual package is color decorated and contains all of the printed information as to the product. In addition in many cases all of this same color decoration appears on the plastic wrapper material holding the bundle together. However, this requires the printing of the carton material as well as the relatively thin wrapper material. This increases the packaging cost.

[0004] The prior art includes U.S. Application Publication 2003/0234199 which is directed to a discrete packaging technique. There is disclosed a double package where the outer film package will contain some general information as to the

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product and the inner individual packaged products will contain the specific information including the logos. This is particularly directed to feminine hygiene products. This technique requires the printing of colors and various information on both the outer film material and the inner individual packages of the double package. U.S. Patent 5,411,140 discloses an embossed logo on a package that fits into a recess on another package. This will stabilize a stack of the products. U.S. Patent 1,936,395 discloses the packaging of three soap bars. The soap bars are nested using concave/convex surfaces. The group of soap bars are bound together by a band of cellophane film. U.S. Patent 3,283,992 discloses the embossing of bag film material to provide an anti-skid surface on the bag. In this way stacked bags are not likely to fall.

#### BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] Some aspects of the present invention provide for a more environmentally friendly package by making a package that is more recyclable. Unlike in the prior art, in some aspects of the present invention the individual product packages, such as paperboard cartons, will not duplicate the product information on the wrapper material nor the color decoration that is on the wrapper material. This will make the individual product packages more recyclable and will lower the cost for the individual packaged product and for the multi-pack. There is no need to put the individual product package material, like the paperboard carton material, through a printing operation. In addition the identification of the product after the removal of the wrapper will be by an embossed or a debossed product name or logo in the individual product package material that is of a size and type that it is readily discernable to a person. This embossing or debossing can be accomplished at the same time that the individual product package material is being die cut to form a carton blank. This can be incorporated into a processing step that must be accomplished in order to make the carton.

[0006] In one embodiment, the present invention is directed to a multi-pack of packaged products contained within a wrapper comprising a plurality packaged products wherein the packages are devoid of any printing or any applied color derived from the carton blank, but with each package having a clearly discernable

identification of the product embossed or debossed onto each package. The wrapper preferably substantially encloses the plurality of packaged products and has thereon the required product information, any printed color decoration and printed logos. The plurality of packaged products, preferably are packaged in a paperboard material with the individual product package being in the form of a carton. An identification of the packaged product is embossed or debossed into the paperboard material to give a clear indication of the product. A preferred embodiment is to have an embossed logo or product indicia on an upper surface of the individual package and a debossed logo or other product indicia on a lower surface of the individual package so that when the individual packages are stacked into a multi-pack, the embossed logo of one package will enter the debossed logo of another package to aid to stabilize the cartons in the multi-pack.

[0007] The wrapper material preferably is a thermoplastic material with the thermoplastic being either a monolayer or a laminate. Useful monolayer or laminate thermoplastic materials include polyethylenes and ethylene copolymers, polypropylenes and propylene copolymers, polyethylene terephthalates, vinyl polymers and copolymers and acrylic polymers and copolymers. The laminates include thermoplastic/paper laminates. A useful thermoplastic is biaxially oriented polypropylene.

[0008] The method of packaging the plurality of products in a multi-pack comprises providing a sheet of paperboard material, in a single step forming the paperboard material into a carton blank and embossing and/or debossing the paperboard with a product identification/indicia, forming the paperboard blanks into cartons, filling each carton with a product, closing each carton, accumulating the cartons into at least one stack, providing a wrapper having thereon the required product information, any color decoration and printed logos, surrounding the at least one stack of cartons in the wrapper, and sealing the wrapper to substantially enclose the at least one stack of products. The paperboard embossing or debossing is accomplished at the same time as the sheet of paperboard material is formed into the carton blank. The blanks are formed by die cutting away edge material to form carton flaps that are folded over to fully enclose the carton. The preferred packaged

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product is a packaged soap bar. However, any other products that are marketed in substantially the same manner as soap bars can use the techniques of some embodiments of this invention to create packaging and manufacturing efficiencies.

**[0008a]** According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a  
5 multi-pack of individually packaged products comprising: a plurality of packages, wherein each of the plurality of packages contains at least one product and is devoid of any applied indicia prior to forming the package; an identification of the product embossed on a first surface of each of the plurality of packages and the identification of the product debossed on a second surface of each of the plurality of packages, the  
10 first surface being opposite the second surface; and a wrapper surrounding the plurality of packages that holds the plurality of packages together to form the multi-pack, wherein the wrapper comprises visible product indicia.

**[0008b]** According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of packaging a plurality of products in a multi-pack comprising: providing a  
15 source of paperboard material; in a single step forming the paperboard material into a carton blank and embossing and debossing the paperboard material with a product identification; forming the carton blanks into packages, wherein embossing and debossing the paperboard material with the product identification comprises embossing and debossing the paperboard such that each of the packages, when  
20 formed, comprise the product identification embossed on a first surface of the package and the product identification debossed on a second surface of the package, the first surface being opposite to the second surface; filling each package with at least one product; closing each package; accumulating the packages into at least one stack; providing a wrapper having thereon visible product indicia; and  
25 enclosing the at least one stack of packages in said wrapper thereby holding the at least one stack of packages together to form the multi-pack.

**[0008c]** According to still another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a multi-pack of individually packaged products comprising: a plurality of packages,

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wherein each of the plurality of packages contains at least one product and is devoid of any applied indicia prior to the forming of the package; an identification of the product embossed on a first surface of each of the plurality of packages and the identification of the product debossed on a second surface of each of the plurality of  
5 packages, the first surface being opposite the second surface; and a wrapper comprising a thermoplastic film surrounding the plurality of packages that holds the plurality of packages together to form the multi-pack, wherein the wrapper comprises visible product indicia.

**[0008d]** According to yet another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a  
10 multi-pack of individually packaged products comprising: a plurality of packages, wherein each of the plurality of packages contains at least one product; an embossed feature on a first surface of each of the plurality of packages and a debossed feature on a second surface of each of the plurality of packages, the first surface being opposite the second surface; the plurality of packages arranged in a stack so that the  
15 embossed feature enters the debossed feature for adjacent packages in the stack; and a wrapper surrounding the stack that holds the plurality of packages together in the stack to form the multi-pack.

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### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] Figure 1 is a plan view of a blank for a package of the multi-pack, according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0010] Figure 2 is a perspective view of an individual package from the blank of Figure 1, according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0011] Figure 3 is a detailed view of section III of Figure 2, according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0012] Figure 4 is a perspective view of a multi-pack package of the individual packages of Figure 2, according to one embodiment of the present invention.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0013] The invention will now be described in more detail in its preferred embodiments with reference to the drawings. It is to be understood that the preferred embodiments can be modified in various ways but still be within the concepts of the invention.

[0014] The invention streamlines and reduces the cost of the packaging of individual packaged products that are sold in multi-packs. The multi-pack is a plurality of individually packaged products that are over-wrapped together by in a wrapper material. The packaged products are preferably each packaged in a carton. The cartons are formed from a carton blank. The carton blank may have been supplied with a color, such as white, but there is no additional printing of one or more colors, logos, trademarks or other applied indicia of product information prior to the forming of the carton. Thus, the carton blanks are devoid of any applied indicia. The individual cartons after forming, filling and sealing may have production dates and codes stamped or laser printed onto the carton. However, this is minimal and in many instances is required to meet legal requirements. This is done whether or not the carton blank has been printed, and is not included in the term "applied indicia."

[0015] Referring to Figures 1 and 2, there is illustrated a blank 10 for a package 40 that can be packaged in a multi-pack. The blank 10 has a top surface 12 with

depending side flaps 13 (a) and 13(b), first side surface 14 with depending side flaps 15(a) and 15(b), bottom surface 16 with side flaps 17(a) and 17(b), second side surface 18 with depending side flaps 19(a) and 19(b), and glue flap 20. On the top surface 12 there is an embossed or debossed logo 22 and on the bottom surface 16 there is an embossed or debossed logo 23. It is preferred that when the logo 22 is embossed that the logo 23 be debossed and when the logo 22 is debossed the logo 23 is embossed. As discussed in more detail below, this provides for a degree on interlocking of the packages 40 and the stabilizing of the package 40 before and after being over-wrapped. The flaps 17(a) and 17(b) can have an embossed or debossed logo 24/25 as may be useful. As an alternative, the over-wrap 32 (see Figure 4) that holds the multi-pack together can have decoration and/or logos on the side surfaces which removes the need for logos on the flaps 17(a) and 17(b).

[0016] The carton blank 10 is preferably formed from a sheet of paperboard material of a width to form two to ten or more carton blank widths across the paperboard material. The length of the blank 10 lies in the direction of the length of the paperboard material. The paperboard material is taken from a supply roll and passed to a die cutter/embossing and debossing roller. This roller will trim off excess material to form the flaps 15, 17, 19, 20 and make any needed score lines. In the present process it also will form the embossed areas and debossed areas 22, 23, 24, 25 simultaneously with forming the flaps 15, 17, 19, 20 and any score lines. This roller also cuts the blanks 10 to individual size and they are channeled to a blank holder/magazine for use. The logo 22, 23, 24, 25 will be embossed and/or debossed in a size and type to clearly indicate to a person the product within the package 40. There is no printing step between the paperboard being removed from the supply roll and passing to the die cutting/embossing and debossing roll. The produced carton blank 10 is devoid of any additional printing, applied color and applied indicia of product information. This reduces the cost of handling and printing the carton blank 10.

[0017] Figure 2 shows the carton blank 10 of Figure 1 folded to form the package 40. The package 40 is generally rectangular in shape and comprises the top surface 12 with the embossed logo 22 discussed above. The first side surface 14 does not carry

a logo in this embodiment, however the invention is not so limited and the first side surface 14 may be embossed or debossed with a logo. The flap 17 (b) is shown with embossed or debossed logo 24. The flap 13(b) underlays the flap 17(b) and is adhesively attached to flap 17(b). The package 40 will also be referred to as the package of an individually packaged product because one or more products (not visible) is/are inside of the package 40. The package 40 may also be referred to as a carton 40 and it is not limited to the rectangular shape illustrated.

[0018] Referring to Figure 3, there is shown a close-up view of section III-III of Figure 2 so that the logo 22 on the top surface 12 of the package 40 can be seen in more detail. Although illustrated as an embossed logo 22, the logo 22 may be debossed into the surface 12 of the carton material. The logo 22 is raised above the original surface level of the carton blank 10 because it is embossed into the surface of the carton blank 10. In embodiments where the logo 22 is debossed, the logo 22 would be lower than the original surface level of the carton blank 10. When the same logo is on both the top surface 12 and on the bottom surface 16, it is preferred that one be embossed and the other be debossed. In this way when the cartons/individually packaged products are stacked the embossing (i.e. raised surface portion) on one package 40 will enter into the debossing (i.e. lowered surface portion) of another package 40 and thus stabilize the stack of individually packaged products during the formation of the multi-pack and in the form of the multi-pack. Stated another way, when the packages are stacked to form the multi-pack 30 as in Figure 4, the logo 23 of a first package 40 will interlock with the logo 22 of a second package 42. The logo 23 of the second package will interlock with the logo 22 of a package carton 44. The packages 40, 42, 44 are interlocked when the lateral surfaces of the logo 23 of a first package 40 are in surface contact with the lateral surfaces of the logo 22 of the second package 42. In embodiments where the logo 23 is embossed and the logo 22 is debossed, the raised surfaces of the logo 23 slidably fit into the opening formed by the lower surfaces of the logo 22. Of course, either logo 22 or logo 23 may be embossed or debossed.

[0019] Referring now to Figure 4, there is illustrated a multi-pack 30 with top surface 36 and front surface 35. The multi-pack 30 comprises three packages 40, 42, 44 of

individually packaged products that are stacked on top of each other to form one column/stack. The packages 40, 42, 44 are surrounded by a wrapper 32. Although the wrapper 32 substantially encloses the packages 40, 42, 44 in the illustrated embodiment, the invention is not so limited. The wrapper 32 may be in the form of a band for example, so long as the packages 40, 42, 44 are contained within in the wrapper 32 in a stable manner. In such an embodiment, the wrapper 32 encloses the lateral sides of the stacked packages 40, 42, 44 of individually packaged products. Thus, the top surface 36, front surface 35 and the opposing bottom and rear surfaces (not visible) of the multipack 30 would be covered by the wrapper, but the sides could remain entirely free of wrapper 32 or could be partially covered by the wrapper 32.

[0020] On the front surface 35 of the multi-pack 30 is a logo 34 and a design 38. The logo 34 is printed onto the multi-pack wrapper 32 along with colors and other decoration on the multi-pack wrapper 32. The stippling represents on the top and front surfaces represent a coloration of the multi-pack wrapper 32. The package 40 has a logo 41, package 42 has a logo 43 and package 44 has a logo 45. These logos 41, 43, 45 would be embossed or debossed into the carton material at the time the carton blank 10 is formed.

[0021] The multi-pack wrapper 32 is preferably a plastic film, and more preferably a thermoplastic film with the thermoplastic being either a monolayer or a laminate. Useful monolayer or laminate thermoplastic materials include polyethylenes and ethylene copolymers, polypropylenes and propylene copolymers, polyethylene terephthalates, vinyl polymers and copolymers and acrylic polymers and copolymers. The laminates include thermoplastic/paper laminates. A useful thermoplastic is biaxially oriented polypropylene. The invention is not limited to a plastic as the wrapper 32 material and the wrapper 32 material may be a paper over-wrap or other material. In addition, the over-wrap can fully enclose the multi-pack 30 as is shown in Figure 4 or it can be a band enclosing the lateral sides but with the ends open.

[0022] In embodiments where the wrapper 32 material is a plastic film, it will preferably have a gram weight/square meter (gsm) of about 15 gsm to about 75 gsm.

The carton 40 material will have a thickness of about 300 microns to about 600 microns. The film wrapper 32 material preferably will be a shrink wrap material. However, it can be in the form of a band which will laterally enclose the soap bars but leave the ends open. This will allow the customer to detect the product fragrance prior to purchase.

[0023] The multi-pack 30 can be used for many different products. However, it is useful in the marketing of soap bars. Although only three packages 40, 42, 44 of individually packaged products are illustrated, where soap bars are the product, the multi-pack 30 will have between 2 and 20 packages of individually packaged products. Of course, the multi-packs 30 are useful for products other than soap bars. Additionally, although only one column of packages 40, 42, 44 is illustrated, the multi-pack 30 may comprise more than one column of packages. There is a distinct advantage in not printing the paperboard material used to form the packages 40, 42, 44. There is a savings in inks, and no need to put the paperboard material through one or more printing operations where each color usually requires a pass through a printing press. In addition, there are environmental advantages.

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CLAIMS:

1. A multi-pack of individually packaged products comprising:
  - a plurality of packages, wherein each of the plurality of packages contains at least one product and is devoid of any applied indicia prior to forming the package;
  - an identification of the product embossed on a first surface of each of the plurality of packages and the identification of the product debossed on a second surface of each of the plurality of packages, the first surface being opposite the second surface; and
  - a wrapper surrounding the plurality of packages that holds the plurality of packages together to form the multi-pack, wherein the wrapper comprises visible product indicia.
2. A multi-pack as in claim 1 wherein each of the plurality of packages is formed of a paperboard material.
3. A multi-pack as in claim 1 wherein the identification of the product is a logo.
4. A multi-pack as in claim 2 wherein the paperboard material is in the form of a carton.
5. A multi-pack as in claim 1 wherein the visible product indicia comprises product information, color decoration and printed logos.
6. A multipack as in claim 1 wherein the wrapper is a thermoplastic containing film material.

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7. A multi-pack as in claim 6 wherein the thermoplastic is a polyethylene, an ethylene copolymer, polypropylene, a propylene copolymer, a polyethylene terephthalate, a vinyl polymer or copolymer, or an acrylic polymer or copolymer.

8. A multi-pack as in claim 7 wherein the thermoplastic is biaxially oriented polypropylene.

9. A multi-pack as in claim 1 wherein the at least one product is a soap bar.

10. A multi-pack as in claim 1 wherein each of the packages is formed of a paperboard material having a thickness of about 300 microns to about 600 microns and wherein the wrapper is a film having a weight of about 15 gsm to about 75 gsm.

11. A multi-pack as in claim 1 wherein the plurality of packages are arranged in a stack so that the embossed identification enters the debossed identification for adjacent packages in the stack.

12. A multi-pack as in claim 11 wherein an interlock is formed between the adjacent packages in the stack by surface contact between lateral surfaces of the embossed identification and lateral surfaces of the debossed identification.

13. A method of packaging a plurality of products in a multi-pack comprising:

providing a source of paperboard material;

20 in a single step forming the paperboard material into a carton blank and embossing and debossing the paperboard material with a product identification;

forming the carton blanks into packages, wherein embossing and debossing the paperboard material with the product identification comprises embossing and debossing the paperboard such that each of the packages, when  
25 formed, comprise the product identification embossed on a first surface of the

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package and the product identification debossed on a second surface of the package, the first surface being opposite to the second surface;

filling each package with at least one product;

closing each package;

5 accumulating the packages into at least one stack;

providing a wrapper having thereon visible product indicia; and

enclosing the at least one stack of packages in said wrapper thereby holding the at least one stack of packages together to form the multi-pack.

14. A method as in claim 13 wherein forming the paperboard into a carton  
10 blank and embossing and debossing the paperboard material are all performed concurrently with a roller.

15. A method as in claim 13 wherein the product identification is a logo.

16. A method as in claim 11 wherein the carton blank includes a top surface and a bottom surface, the product identification is embossed and debossed into the  
15 paperboard material, when the carton top surface is embossed the bottom surface is debossed and when the top surface is debossed the bottom surface is embossed.

17. A method as in claim 13 wherein the wrapper comprises a thermoplastic film material.

18. A method as in claim 17 wherein the thermoplastic film material is a  
20 polyethylene, an ethylene copolymer, polypropylene, a propylene copolymer, polyethylene terephthalate, a vinyl polymer or copolymer, or an acrylic polymer or copolymer.

19. A method as in claim 18 wherein the thermoplastic film material is biaxially oriented polypropylene.

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20. A method as in claim 13 wherein the at least one product is a soap bar.

21. A multi-pack as in claim 6 wherein the thermoplastic containing film material is a monolayer or a laminate.

22. A multi-pack as in claim 6 wherein the wrapper is a shrink wrap  
5 material.

23. A multi-pack of individually packaged products comprising:

a plurality of packages, wherein each of the plurality of packages contains at least one product;

10 an embossed feature on a first surface of each of the plurality of packages and a debossed feature on a second surface of each of the plurality of packages, the first surface being opposite the second surface;

the plurality of packages arranged in a stack so that the embossed feature enters the debossed feature for adjacent packages in the stack; and

15 a wrapper surrounding the stack that holds the plurality of packages together in the stack to form the multi-pack.

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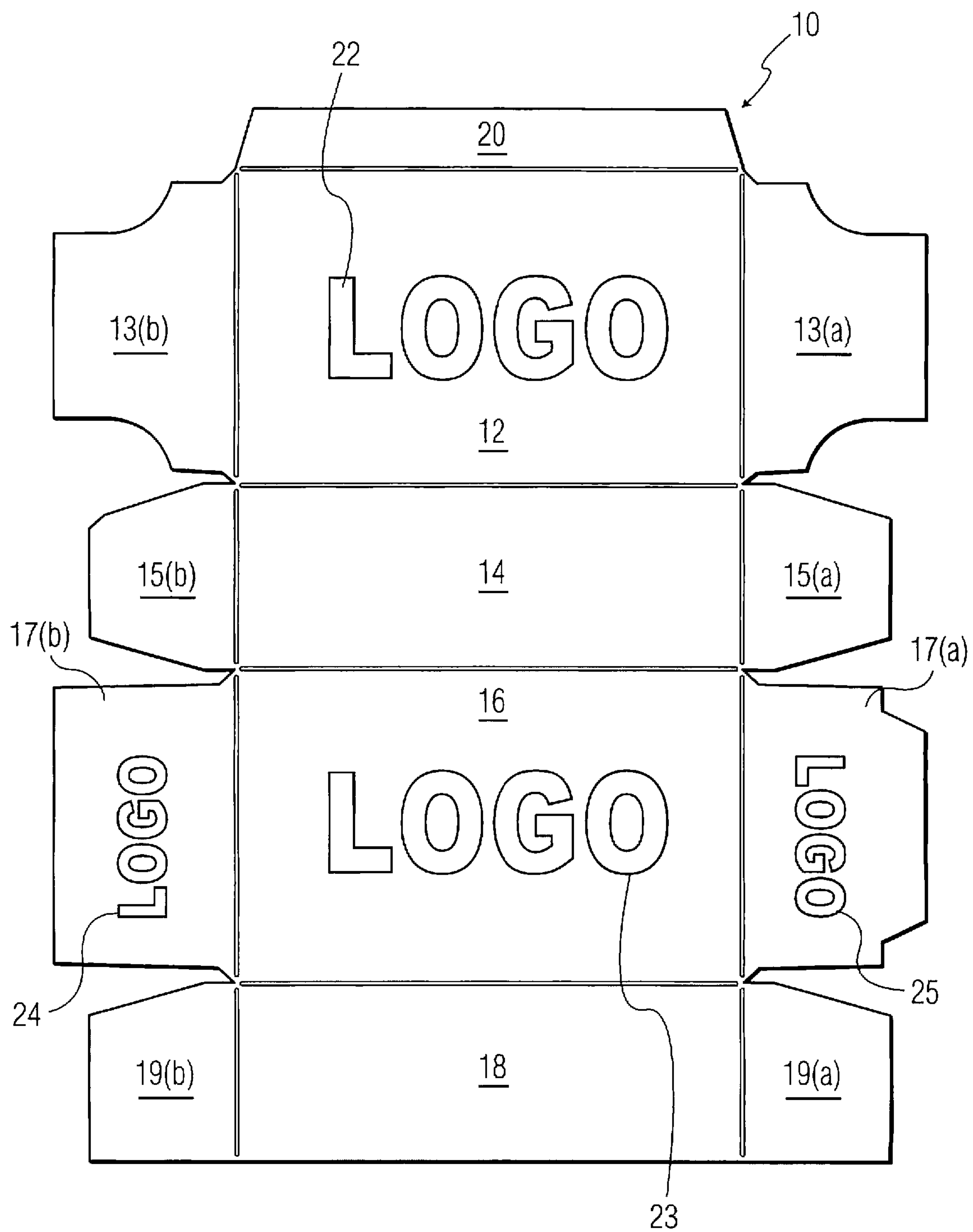


FIG. 1

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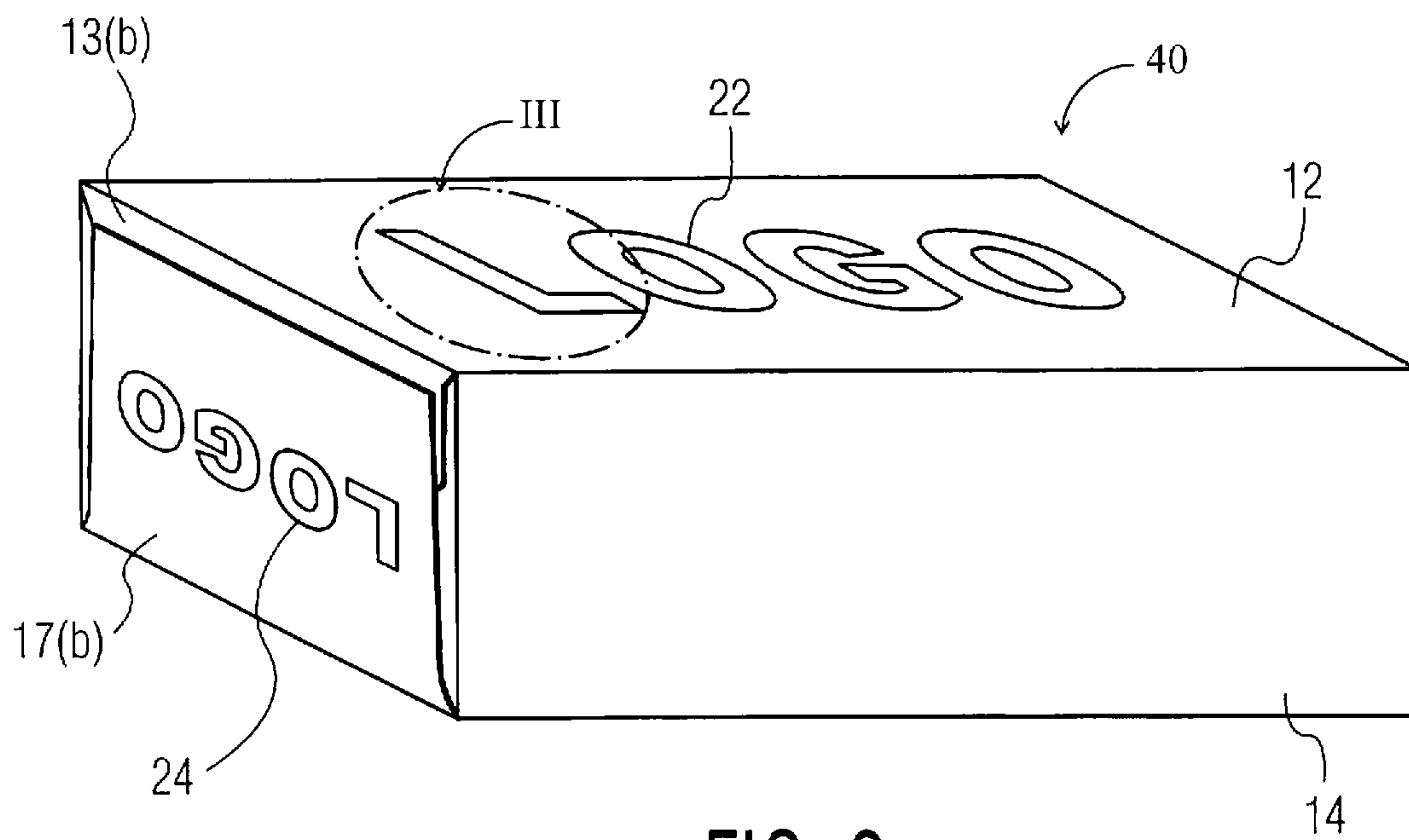


FIG. 2

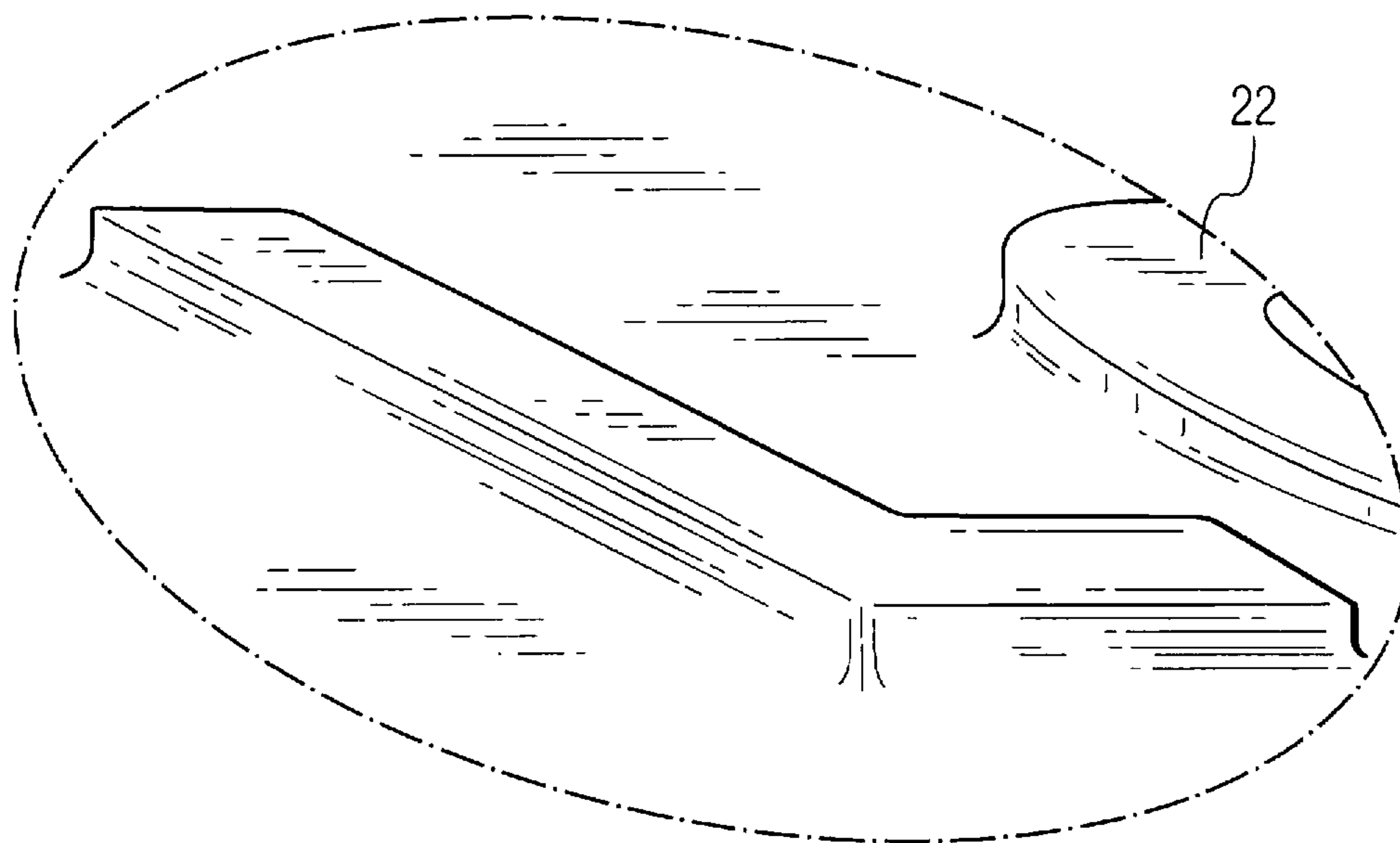


FIG. 3

3/3

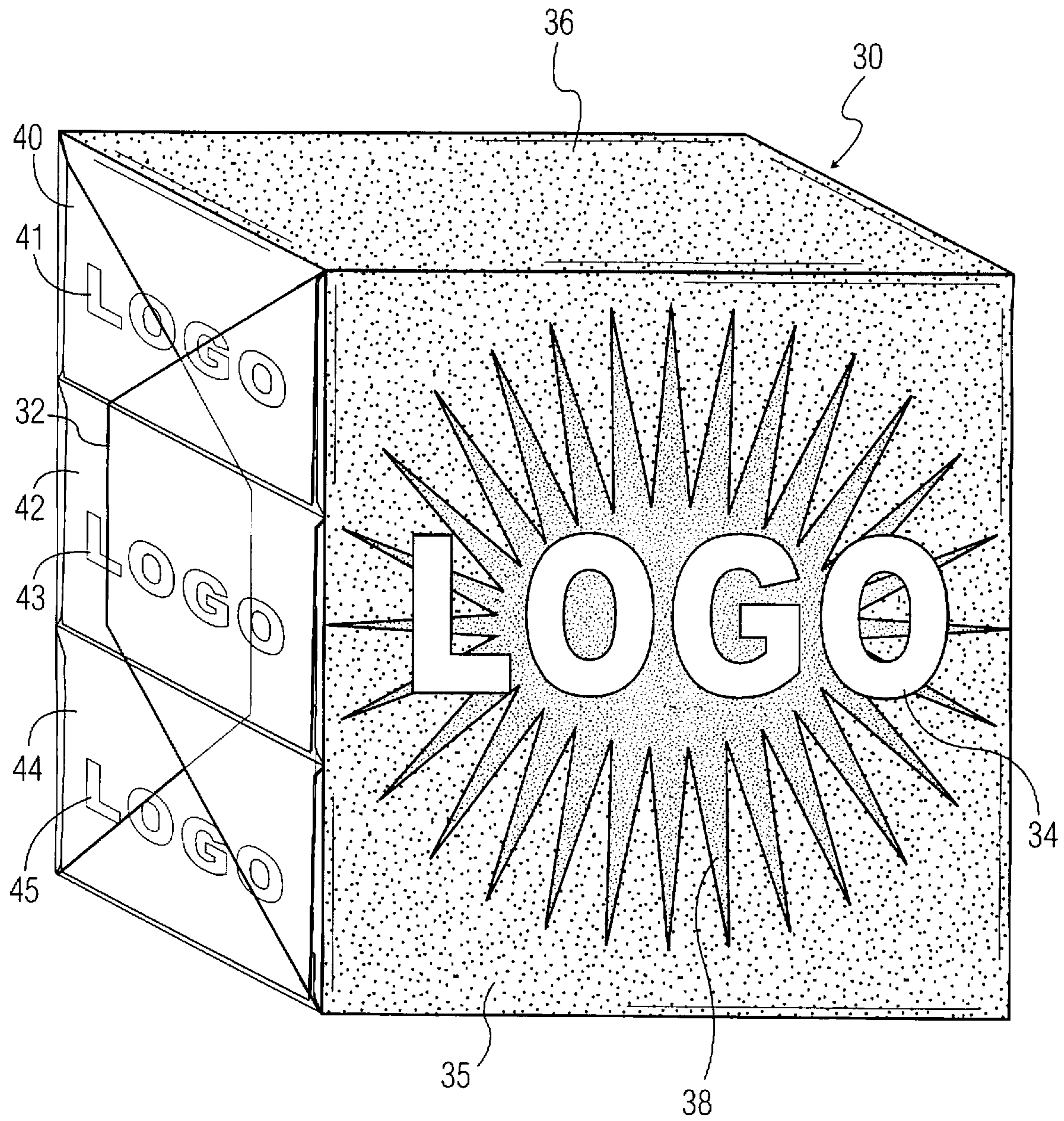


FIG. 4

