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SELF-SERVICE FOOTWEAR MERCHANDISING DISPLAY UNIT

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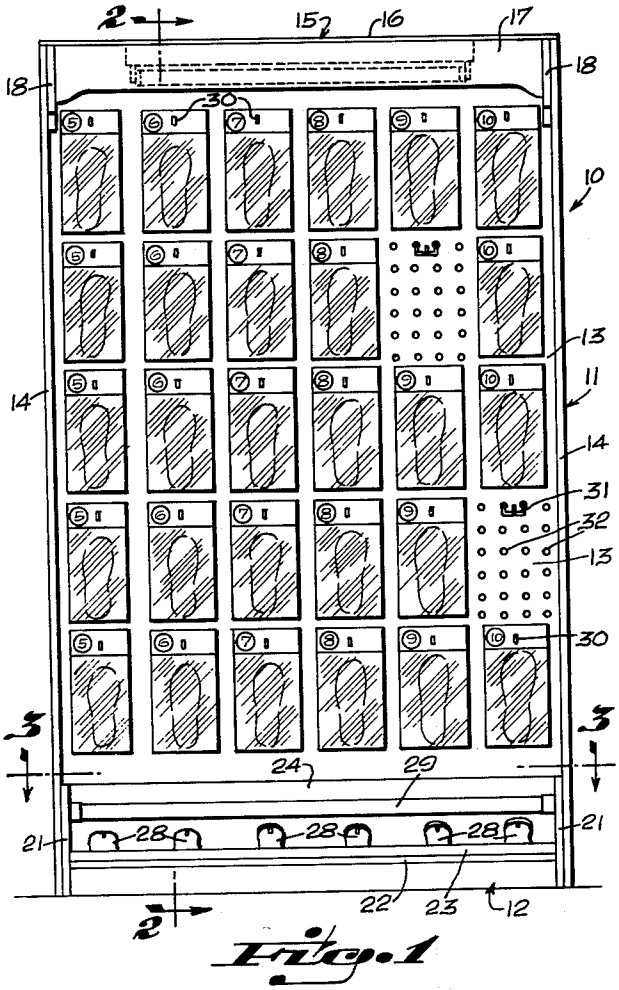


Fig. 1

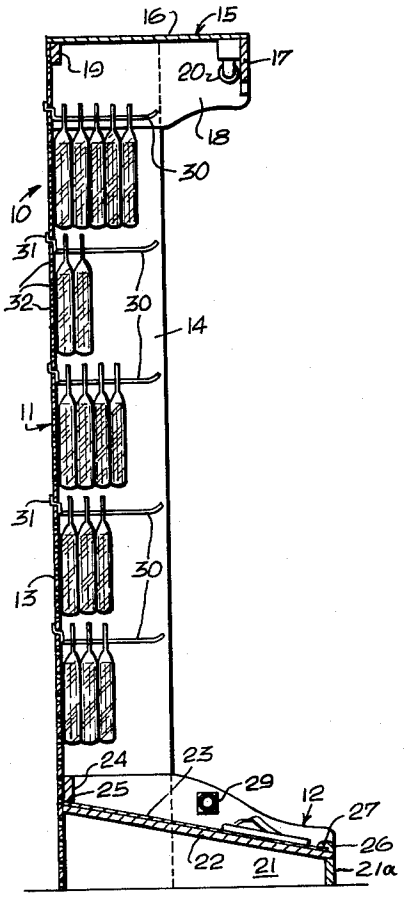


Fig. 2

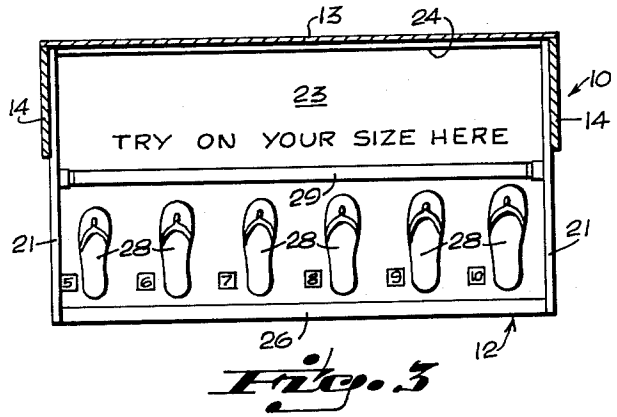


Fig. 3

INVENTOR.
MILTON BERK

BY

E. H. Schmidt
ATTORNEY.

United States Patent Office

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SELF-SERVICE FOOTWEAR MERCHANDISING DISPLAY UNIT

Milton Berk, 1655 NW. 10th Ave., Miami, Fla.

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My invention relates to self-service merchandising devices, and is directed particularly to a self-service display unit for merchandising footwear.

Because of the necessity of fitting footwear to the foot size of the purchaser, it has heretofore been assumed in the trade that personal service, that is, waiting on the seated customer in a shoe store, is necessary for making sales. Even in so-called self-service shoe stores, one or more salesmen are necessarily present to replace shoes on the shelves and assist in fitting. This personal service is not only time consuming, but also adds to the cost of shoes to the purchaser, and in the case of less expensive footwear such as thongs, sandals and the like, critically increases their sales cost.

It is accordingly the principal object of my invention to provide a completely self-service footwear merchandising display unit that not only efficiently displays the footwear for ease of selection both as to size, style and color, but also provides a simple means by which the customer may quickly and conveniently determine his size and the appearance on his foot of the displayed footwear for making an instant selection.

Another object of my invention is to provide a self-service display and stock storage unit of the character described that is compact and attractive, and thus particularly well suited for creating impulse sales in supermarkets, department stores, tourist attractions, and other places where there is high density traffic, and also in shoe, apparel and specialty shops, gift shops and other retail outlets.

A more particular object is to provide a self-service merchandising display unit of the character described that comprises an upright panel extending from the front of which are rows of hooks adapted to support and systematically display footwear of a full range of sizes, styles and colors; and at the foot of which, beneath the displayed footwear, is a platform having fixed thereon, samples of the various sizes on display, conveniently placed for the purchaser to instantly find the proper size by the try-on method, whereby a self-service selection of the proper size and color or style can instantly be made without the assistance of a sales person.

Still another object of the invention is to provide a self-service footwear merchandising display unit of the above nature that can be compactly shipped and stored in knockdown form, and which, once in use, requires little servicing other than to replace footwear sold.

Yet another object is to provide a footwear merchandising unit of the above nature wherein the footwear try-on platform can readily be removed for replacement when the display unit is set up for display and sale of a different style of footwear.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following description when read with reference to the accompanying drawings. In the drawings, wherein like reference numerals denote corresponding parts:

FIG. 1 is a front elevational view of a self-service footwear merchandising unit embodying the invention;

FIG. 2 is a vertical cross-sectional view thereof, taken along the line 2—2 of FIG. 1 in the direction of the arrows; and

FIG. 3 is a transverse cross-sectional view thereof, taken along the line 3—3 of FIG. 1 in the direction of the arrows.

Referring now in detail to the drawings, **10** designates, generally, a preferred form of footwear merchandising display unit embodying my invention, the same comprising, generally, an upright display stand **11** having at its base a forwardly extending platform **12**. The display stand **11** comprises an upright rectangular panel **13**, preferably of a perforated hard board, commonly known as "Peg-Board," secured along each side of which are forwardly extending side walls **14**. A forwardly projecting canopy **15** is provided at the upper end of the panel **13**, said canopy comprising a rectangular top panel **16**, a short downwardly extending skirt **17** secured to the outer end of said top panel, and side closure members **18** secured at their inner ends against inner top portions of the side walls **14**, and at their outer ends to the transverse ends of said skirt. A corner brace **19** is provided at the inside juncture of the upright panel **13** and the top panel **16**. A fluorescent lighting fixture **20** is secured against the underside of the top panel **16** and adjacent the inner surface of the skirt **17** to provide overhead illumination for the displayed merchandise.

The platform **12** comprises a pair of outwardly extending side wall members **21** secured at their inner ends against inside surface portions of the side walls **14** at the lower ends thereof. A short front piece **21***a* is secured between the outer ends of the side wall members **21** and serves as a support for the front end of a platform board **22** that extends from side to side between said side wall members. The platform board **22** is slightly upwardly inclined from front to back, and terminates in abutment with the upright panel **13** whereat it is secured.

Means is provided for replaceably receiving a rectangular try-on shoe mounting panel **23** upon the platform board **22**. To this end, a cross piece **24** is secured against the inside of the upright panel **13** and between inside portions of the side wall members **21**, in spaced parallel relation to the inner marginal edge portion of the platform board **22**. The cross-piece **24** defines, with the platform board **22**, a rear groove **25** for receiving the rear edge portion of the shoe mounting panel **23**. A piece of grooved, half-round molding **26** secured along the front marginal portion of the platform board **22** provides a front groove **27** for the shoe mounting panel **23**.

The shoe mounting panel **23** is made of a flexible material such as linoleum, to permit sufficient bending to insert its inner and outer edges in the rear and front grooves **25** and **27**, respectively, as illustrated in FIG. 2. Fixed upon the upper surface, as by cementing for example, are one each of the various sizes of footwear, indicated at **28**, displayed for purchase on the display unit panel **13** as hereinbelow described. As illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 3, the shoes **28** are preferably arranged in a row of consecutively increasing size from left to right.

As is best illustrated in FIG. 3, an elongated, tubular ultra-violet ray germicidal lamp **29** is secured between the side wall members **21** in spaced relation above and slightly to the rear of the front ends of the try-on shoes **28**, said lamp and the fluorescent lighting fixture **20** being wired (not illustrated) for connection to a source of electrical supply.

Means is provided for supporting and displaying footwear for self-service purchase on the inside of the rectangular panel **13**. To this end, a plurality of outwardly projecting wire hooks **30** are arranged in columns on the panel **13** in register with each of the try-on shoes **28**, the hooks of each column being equidistantly spaced, and in horizontal alignment with hooks of adjacent rows to provide a regular display pattern. The hooks **30** are formed at their inner ends with offset attachment means **31** adapted to fit into a pair of side-by-side adjacent perforations **32** in the peg-board panel **13**, for removable at-

tachment to said Peg-Board. This hook attachment means is known in the art and is not claimed herein as novel in and of itself.

Referring to FIG. 1, it will be noted that the displayed footwear, thong type sandals in the embodiment of the invention illustrated, are packaged in transparent bags prominently marked with the shoe size. Thus, the self-service purchaser, immediately after having determined shoe size by fitting the foot in one or more of the try-on shoes **28**, need only glance up along the displayed column in register with the correct size try-on shoe to select the particular color desired. While the displayed shoes in the illustrated example are shown in columns of the same size, they could also be arranged in rows of the same size, preferably with the most common shoe sizes arranged in the vicinity of eye level.

While I have illustrated and described by invention for use in the self-service merchandising of thong type sandals, it will be understood that the invention lends itself as well to the sale of other types and styles of shoes, particularly informal footwear of various style and fashion classes. In the interests of making the display unit more versitile with respect to changes in footwear style, I contemplate providing advertising side panels (not illustrated) supporting on the outside sample shoes of the type offered for sale in the display unit, and means, such as vertical guide channels, for removably receiving such side panels against the outer surfaces of the side walls **14** for ready change in accordance with changes in displayed footwear offered for sale.

It is also to be noted that the shoe mounting panel **23** with try-on shoes **28** mounted thereon has utility apart from the remainder of the merchandising unit, in that it can be used for convenient and rapid self-service size determination in retail outlets not having the available space for the entire display and merchandising unit.

While I have illustrated and described herein only one form in which my invention can conveniently be embodied in practice, it is to be understood that this form is given by way of example only, and not in a limiting sense. My invention, in brief, comprises all the modifications and embodiments coming within the scope and spirit of the following claims.

What I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. A self-service footwear merchandising display unit comprising, in combination, a platform member, a plurality of shoes of various sizes fixed upon said platform member for customer try-on to determine size, and means adapted to support pairs of shoes of the type and sizes of said plurality of shoes in close proximity to said platform member.

2. A self-service footwear merchandising display unit comprising, in combinaton, a platform member, a plurality of single shoes of various sizes fixed upon said platform member for customer try-on to determine size, and means adapted to support pairs of shoes of the type and sizes of said plurality of shoes in columns and rows facing said platform member.

3. A self-service footwear merchandising and display unit as defined in claim **2** wherein said columns are vertically arranged above, and in alignment with, one each of said plurality of single shoes.

4. A self-service footwear merchandising and display unit as defined in claim **2** wherein said shoe pairs supporting means comprises an upright panel member facing said platform member and including hook means for removably supporting shoe pairs.

5. A self-service footwear merchandising and display unit as defined in claim **3** wherein said shoe pairs supporting means comprises an upright panel member facing said platform member and including hook means for removably supporting shoe pairs.

6. A self-service footwear merchandising and display unit as defined in claim **5** including a support structure for said platform member, said platform member comprising a mounting panel, and means for removably securing said mounting panel in face-to-face relation upon said platform member.

7. A self-service footwear merchandising and display unit as defined in claim **6** wherein said platform member is of rectangular shape and wherein said mounting panel securing means comprises a pair of opposed parallel grooves in said support structure spaced by the width of said platform member, and wherein said mounting panel is of a resilient material to permit bending for insertion of opposed edge portions thereof in said grooves.

8. A self-service footwear merchandising and display unit as defined in claim **6** including radiant energy means for continuously sanitizing said shoes.

9. A self-service footwear merchandising and display unit comprising a flat platform member, and a plurality of shoes of various sizes fixed upon said platform for customer try-on to determine size.

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CLAUDE A. LE ROY, *Primary Examiner.*

W. D. LOULAN, *Assistant Examiner.*