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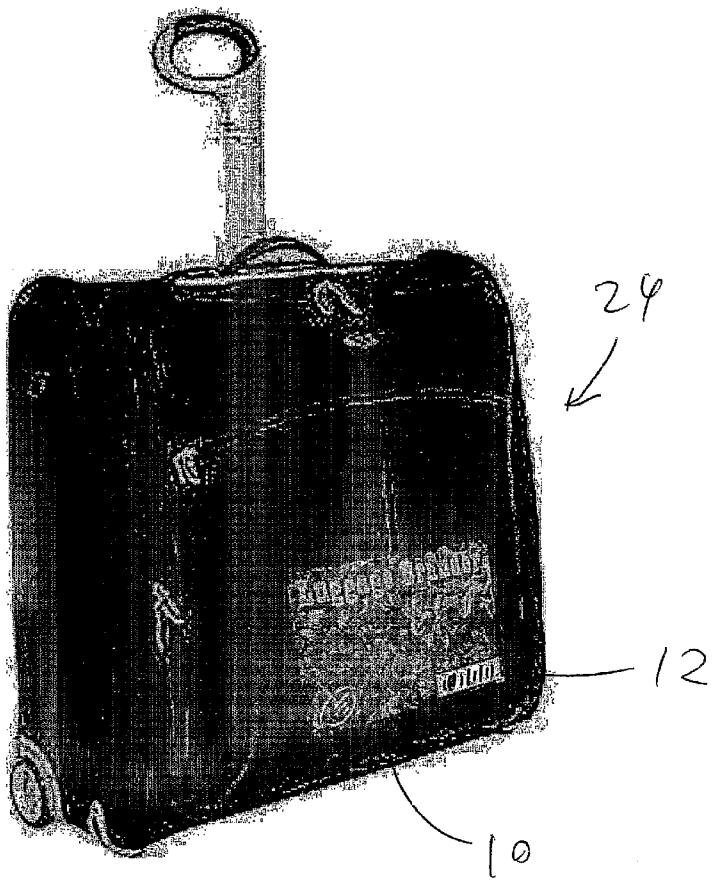
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(54) **Title:** LUGGAGE BRANDER



(57) **Abstract:** A luggage brander device for identifying luggage includes a label capable of being secured to luggage, including: a rear side including a securing device for securing the label to the luggage; an exposed front side; and a readable identification device capable of being read by a compatible scanner to determine information about the luggage for identification of the luggage. The securing device includes adhesive. The readable identification device is on the exposed front side, and is a bar code encoding the information about the luggage, or is a radio frequency identification (RFID) chip or tag encoding the information about the luggage. The readable identification device encodes ownership information for the identification of the luggage, or is used for location of the luggage as the identification of the luggage. The front side includes a predetermined logo visible on the label, or includes a predetermined decorative image visible on the label.

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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

LUGGAGE BRANDER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to luggage tracking and identification, and in particular to a luggage brander using bar codes or radio frequency identification technology to track and identify luggage.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

Travelers typically attached identification tags to their articles of luggage using removable straps or chains. Such identification tags typically are limited to displaying the printed name and address of the traveler, with such information being in relatively small type which cannot be read by travelers or luggage handlers at some distance from the luggage. For example, an airline passenger waiting for his suitcase at an airport luggage conveyor belt or carousel must initially attempt to distinguish his suitcase from other similar or identical suitcases on the conveyor belt, and must then grab the candidate suitcase in order to read the identification tag to verify his ownership of the candidate suitcase.

A need exists for an identification device which is easily tracked and identified from a distance.

There is the potential for such removable identification tags to be inadvertently removed during the loading or unloading to the luggage into or out of an airplane, train, bus, or other transports, preventing or otherwise hampering verification of a suitcase by the owner.

A need exists for an identification device which cannot be readily removed from the article of luggage associated with the identification device and the owner of the luggage.

In addition, such printed identification tags may be used to track articles of luggage by name of owner and by color, size, and type of luggage. However, for such tracking based on the printed identification tags to be performed, each tag must be visually inspected, and the information on each tag and about each article of luggage must be entered into a central luggage database. Accordingly, such tracking by visual inspection of each article of luggage is very inefficient in that it requires many workers at each step to handle, input, and review such information, which may be prone to mistakes, and which causes severe backlogs and lines of travelers during luggage processing.

A need exists for a fast yet accurate solution to efficiently identify and track luggage during travel.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A luggage brander device for identifying luggage includes a label capable of being secured to luggage, including: a rear side including a securing device for securing the label to the luggage; an exposed front side; and a readable identification device capable of being read by a compatible scanner to determine information about the luggage for identification of the luggage. The securing device may include adhesive. The readable identification device may be included on the exposed front side, and may be a bar code encoding the information about the luggage, or the readable identification device may be a radio frequency identification (RFID) device encoding the information about the luggage. The RFID device may be an RFID chip or an RFID tag. The readable identification device may encode ownership information for the identification of the luggage, or may be used for location of the

luggage as the identification of the luggage. The front side may include a predetermined logo visible on the label, or may include a predetermined decorative image visible on the label.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

Preferred embodiments of the invention are disclosed hereinbelow with reference to the drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a top front left perspective view of a first embodiment of a luggage brander device of the present invention using a bar code;

FIG. 2 is a top front left perspective view of a second embodiment of a luggage brander device of the present invention using an RFID chip shown in a cut-away view;

FIGS. 3-9 are examples of the first embodiment of the luggage brander device shown in FIG. 1; and

FIGS. 10-14 are examples of the second embodiment of the luggage brander device shown in FIG. 2;

FIGS. 15-18 are examples of articles of luggage having the first embodiment of the luggage brander device shown in FIG. 1; and

FIG. 19 is an example of an article of luggage having the second embodiment of the luggage brander device shown in FIG. 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A luggage brander device 10 is shown in FIGS. 1-19 which is capable of identifying luggage. The luggage brander device 10 includes a label capable of being secured to luggage, including: a rear side including a securing device for securing the label to the luggage; an exposed front side; and a readable identification device capable of being read by a compatible scanner to determine information about the luggage for identification of the

luggage. The securing device may include adhesive. The readable identification device may be included on the exposed front side, and may be a bar code encoding the information about the luggage, or the readable identification device may be a radio frequency identification (RFID) device encoding the information about the luggage. The RFID device may be an RFID chip or an RFID tag. The readable identification device may encode ownership information for the identification of the luggage, or may be used for location of the luggage as the identification of the luggage. The front side may include a predetermined logo visible on the label, or may include a predetermined decorative image visible on the label.

In a first embodiment shown in FIG. 1, the luggage brander device 10 includes a label having a space 12 for a bar code and a space 14 for a logo and/or words such as the words "LUGGAGE BRANDER" separate from a section 16 for art placed on the front side 18 of the luggage brander device 10. The rear side 20 of the luggage brander device 10 includes, for example, an adhesive or other securing devices for securing the luggage brander device 10 to an article of luggage.

In a second embodiment shown in FIG. 2, the luggage brander device 10 includes a label having the space 14 for the logo and/or the words such as the words "LUGGAGE BRANDER" separate from a section 16 for art placed on the front side 18 of the luggage brander device 10. The rear side 20 of the luggage brander device 10 includes, for example, an adhesive or other securing devices for securing the luggage brander device 10 to an article of luggage. Instead of having the space 12 for a bar code as in FIG. 1, the second embodiment of the luggage brander device 10 includes an RFID chip 22 or RFID tag internally embedded in the label of the luggage brander device 10 so as to not obscure the art in the section 16 on the front side 18.

The logo 14 of the company selling the package, such as a predetermined logo of Luggage Brander, Inc., is displayed on the front side 18 of the luggage brander device 10 over or next to the section 16 of the art.

The luggage brander device 10 is created with durable art imprinted on labels that are weather resistant and which adhere to luggage. The luggage brander device 10 is used in a unique luggage identification process which enables travelers to identify their luggage as it is loaded on the luggage carousel using, for example, bar code readers provided by an airport, bar code readers in cell phones or personal digital assistant devices of the owner of the luggage, or RFID detectors provide by an airport or in cell phones or personal digital assistant devices of the owner of the luggage.

The consumer has a choice of various art scenes depicted in the art section 16 in FIGS. 1-2 which brand and personalize or customize their personal luggage. For example, when the consumer purchases a luggage brander package, each package may contain five various sizes of the labels forming the luggage brander device 10. Each label has a personalized box 12, as in FIG. 1, where the owner may use an ink marker or other writing instruments to write his initials. The consumer is also given an opportunity to send in a personal information card to a predetermined luggage brander company with the card bearing the name, address, telephone numbers, etc., of the consumer. Such personal information is converted by the luggage brander company to a bar code which is sent back to the consumer to be affixed to the label in the box 12 with the art and logo to form the completed luggage brander device 10. This information acts as a secure database, and is not used or sold to direct mail companies.

The art on the label of the luggage brander device 10 may be product art, including, but not limited to:

1. horoscope, such as a special reading with a cost of $10.00 from one of Americas' foremost astrologers;

2. endangered species;

3. a cityscape;

4. nature scenes;

5. ocean or seaside scenes;

6. sports scenes; or

7. images from outer space.

Additional image selections may be licensed from major artists, and the luggage brander package may have a projected retail cost of $10.00, with bar code registration costing $5.00.

Examples of the luggage brander devices 10 of FIGS. 1-2 are shown in FIGS. 3-19, respectively. FIGS. 3-9 are examples of the first embodiment of the luggage brander device shown in FIG. 1 with the space 12 for a bar code, as shown in FIG. 3, and FIGS. 10-14 are examples of the second embodiment of the luggage brander device shown in FIG. 2 with an internally embedded RFID chip.

In use, the luggage brander 10 is mounted on an exposed surface of an article of luggage, such as the travel bags 24 shown in FIGS. 15-19. FIGS. 15-18 are examples of articles 24 of luggage having the first embodiment of the luggage brander device 10 shown in FIG. 1 using a bar code, and FIG. 19 is an example of an article 24 of luggage having the second embodiment of the luggage brander device 10 shown in FIG. 2 with an internally embedded RFID chip.

The luggage brander device 10 and a luggage brander package containing such a luggage brander device 10 may be sold individually, or may be sold in a co-branding strategic relationship with other companies in conjunction with other diverse products, such as articles of luggage from luggage manufacturers, cell phones from cellular phone suppliers or service providers, etc.

In order to achieve this technology breakthrough to manufacture and sell the luggage brander device 10, Luggage Brander Inc. will create relationships with major airports and their port authority so as to install bar code readers and/or RFID readers in air terminal luggage arrival areas.

In additional embodiments, the use of bar codes and RFID tags may be combined together, or individually combined with other indicative or detection technology, such as devices with elemental lead detected by X-ray technology.

MATERIALS TO USE WITH THE LUGGAGE BRANDER PRODUCT AND PACKAGE

The luggage brander device 10 may include:

1. an easy to apply label with peel off back;
2. weatherproof and waterproof surfaces;
3. inks or other substances with vibrant colors which adhere to the label surface;
4. a stand-alone display stand; and
5. a self-sealed envelope of the luggage brander package for containing the at least one luggage brander device 10 for easy use.

THE MARKET

With about 1.9 billion travelers using air, sea, and ground transportation, a majority of them using luggage that look alike. Accordingly, the luggage brander device 10 includes the features described herein to distinguish different articles of luggage from each other.

SALES CHANNELS

The luggage brander device 10 may be distributed and sold using an aggressive marketing campaign created on the Internet, with the campaign linking to major travel sites and offering the consumer an opportunity to purchase the luggage brander device 10 online. This direct response portion of the business may have a potential market of 54% of consumers, according to a Nielsen/Net Rating survey, and may be started with online travel agents, such as Expedia, Travelocity, or Orbitz. It is estimated that 37% of shoppers for travel-related sales first visit the websites of travel suppliers, such as airlines and hotels.

In 2005, the year to date, it is estimated that over 680 million people fly, and by 2015 it is estimated that over a billion people will travel by air.

A luggage brander website may offer a full product display of products, may accept all credit cards, and may create a direct response delivery system via third-party providers.

RETAIL CHANNELS

The luggage brander device 10 and luggage brander package containing such luggage brander devices 10 may be sold to retail consumers through:

1. airport news stands;
2. card shops;
3. supermarket checkout counters;
4. luggage retailers;

5. big box retailers; and

6. catalogue sales.

MARKETING AND ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

The luggage brander device 10 may be marketed, for example, through:

1. publicity in the travel trade;

2. news events to local TV outlets with a press conference at local airport baggage area demonstrating the use and the usefulness of the luggage brander device 10; and

3. publicity on the artistic talents used by the luggage brander device 10.

The luggage brander device 10 may be readily identifiable to consumers by advertising; for example, through the use of advertising expenditures directed to:

1. out-of-home advertising such as at airports or on airport shuttle buses;

2. print advertising in travel sections of newspapers and magazines;

3. ads in onboard airline magazines;

4. product inserts with monthly billing statements of major credit cards; and

5. short television advertisements, such as fifteen second spots on major cable systems in key metropolitan markets.

INTERNATIONAL APPLICABILITY

The luggage brander device 10 may be introduced and used in international markets as well, with the luggage brander device 10 including designs and characteristics to meet both the cultural and local taste of the consumer in such markets. For example, popular images such as "HELLO KITTY" in Japan may be displayed in the section 16 for art on the luggage brander device 10, and local languages may be used in the space 14 for the logo or in the box

12 for the bar code, until the bar code is affixed in the box 12, on the luggage brander device 10 in each individual market.

Similarly, the given name and surname of the traveler may be encoded on the luggage brander device 10 according to local custom, such as the given name listed first and the surname listed second as is commonly used in Western countries, while the surname may be listed first and the given name listed second as is commonly used in Far Eastern countries.

While the preferred embodiment of the present invention has been shown and described herein, it will be obvious that such embodiment is provided by way of example only. Numerous variations, changes and substitutions will occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the invention herein. Accordingly, it is intended that the invention be limited only by the spirit and scope of the appended claims.

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A luggage brander device for identifying luggage, which comprises:

a label capable of being secured to luggage, including:

a rear side including a securing device for securing the label to the luggage;

an exposed front side; and

a readable identification device capable of being read by a compatible scanner to determine information about the luggage for identification of the luggage.

2. The luggage brander device of claim 1, wherein the securing device includes adhesive.

3. The luggage brander device of claim 1, wherein the readable identification device is included on the exposed front side.

4. The luggage brander device of claim 3, wherein the readable identification device is a bar code encoding the information about the luggage.

5. The luggage brander device of claim 1, wherein the readable identification device is a radio frequency identification (RFID) device encoding the information about the luggage.

6. The luggage brander device of claim 5, wherein the RFID device is an RFID chip.

7. The luggage brander device of claim 5, wherein the RFID device is an RFID tag.

8. The luggage brander device of claim 1, wherein the readable identification device encodes ownership information for the identification of the luggage.

9. The luggage brander device of claim 1, wherein the readable identification device is used for location of the luggage as the identification of the luggage.

10. The luggage brander device of claim 1, wherein the front side includes:
a predetermined logo visible on the label.

11. The luggage brander device of claim 1, wherein the front side includes:
predetermined decorative image visible on the label.

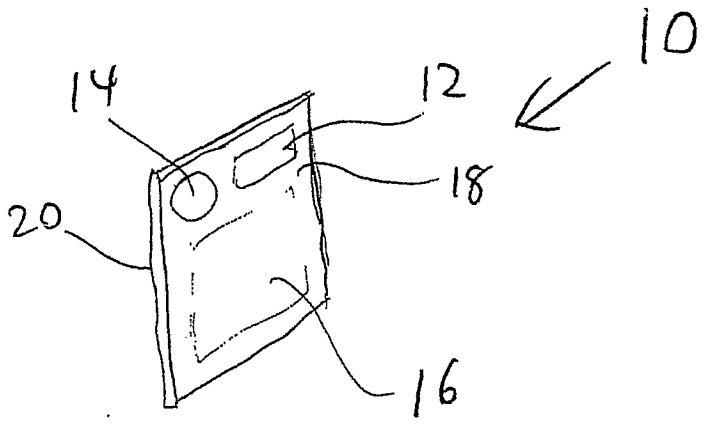


FIG. 1

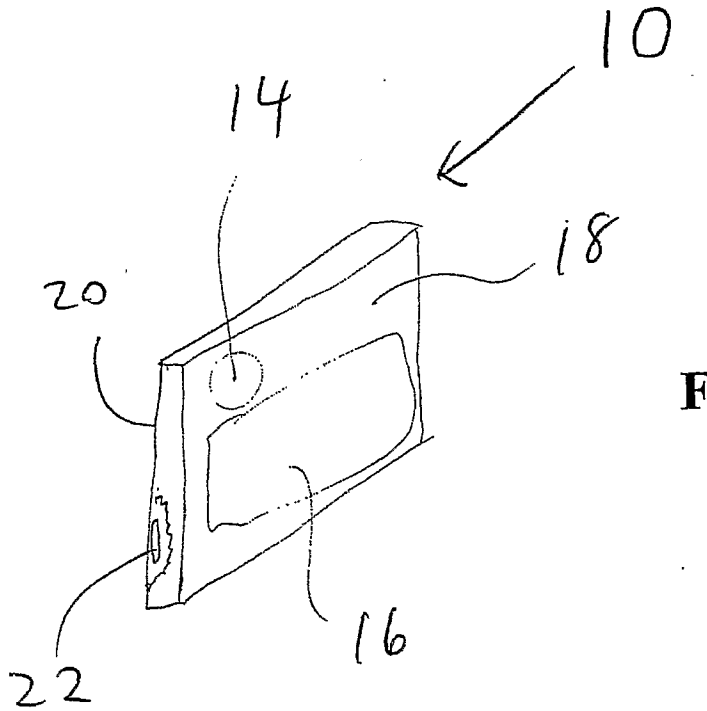


FIG. 2



FIG. 3

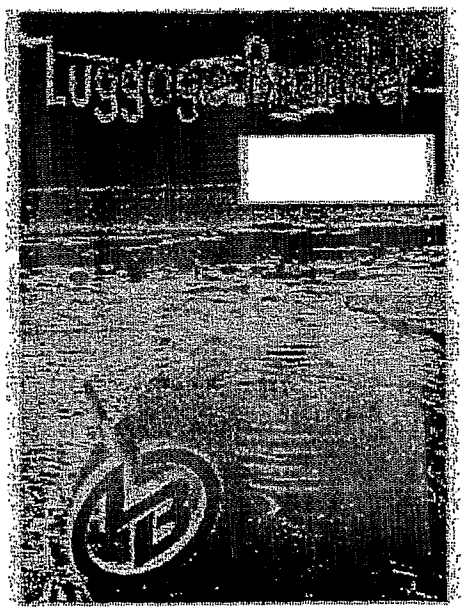


FIG. 4

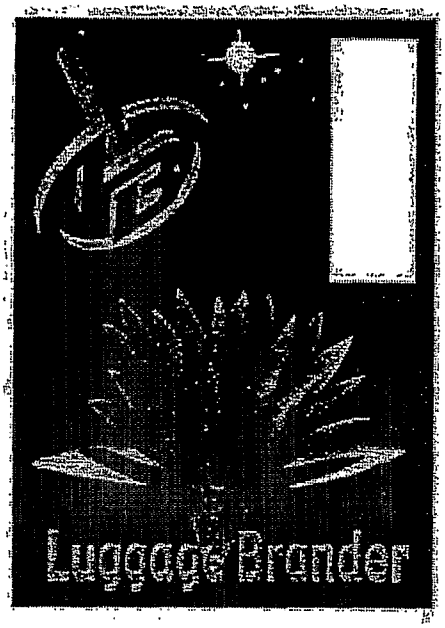


FIG. 5



FIG. 6



FIG. 7

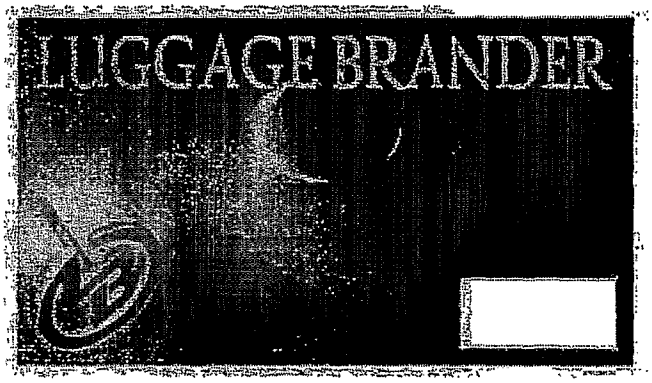


FIG. 8



FIG. 9



FIG. 10

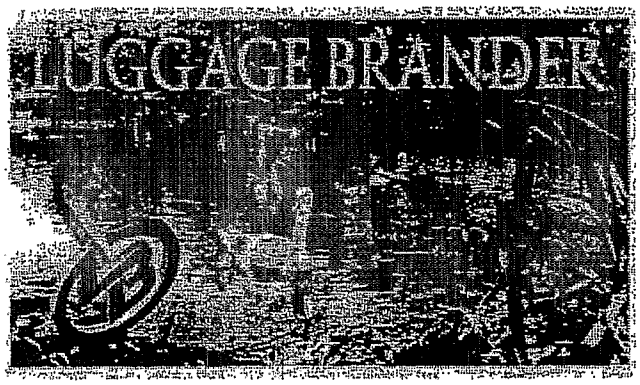


FIG. 11



FIG. 12



FIG. 13



FIG. 14

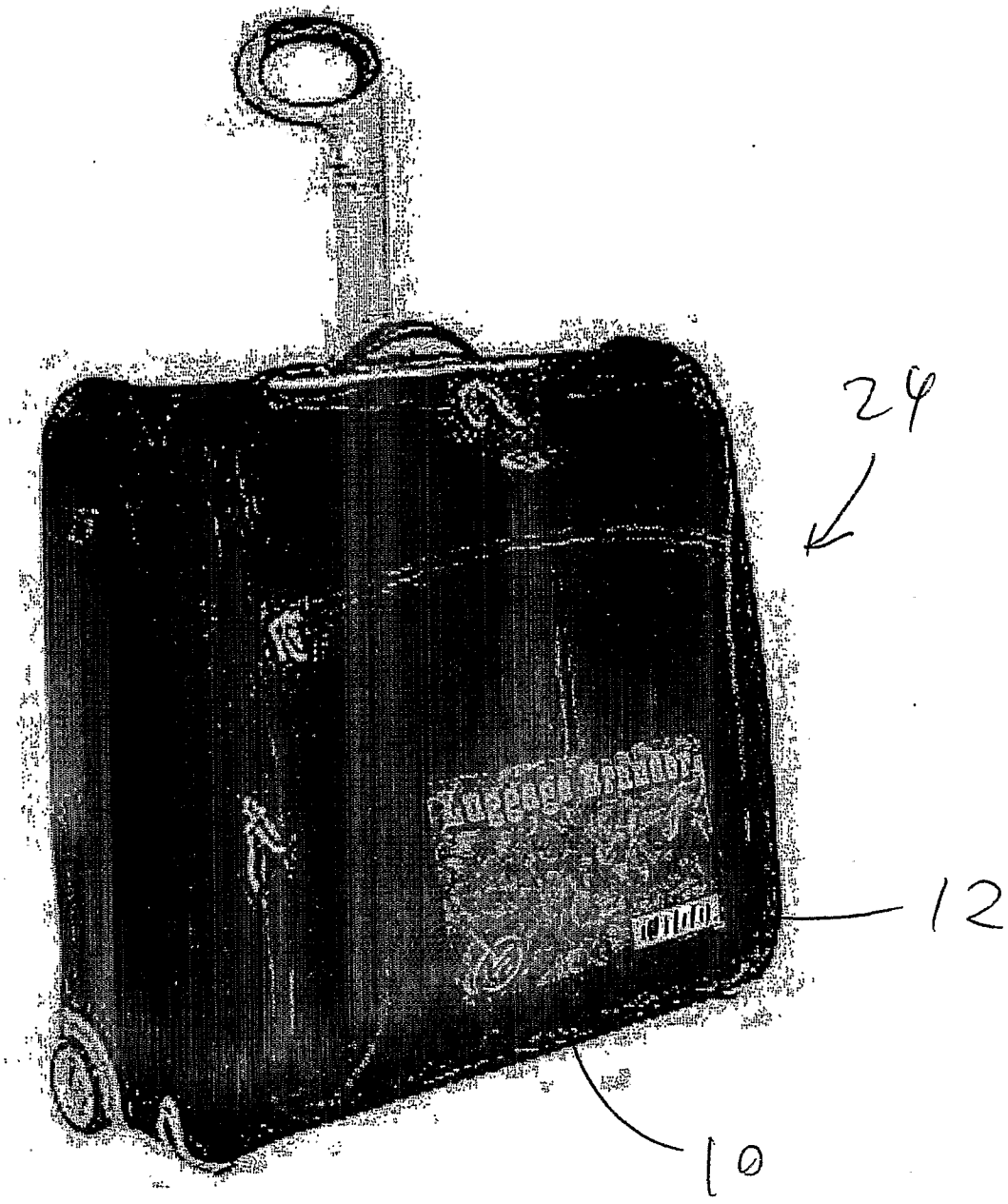


FIG. 15



FIG. 16

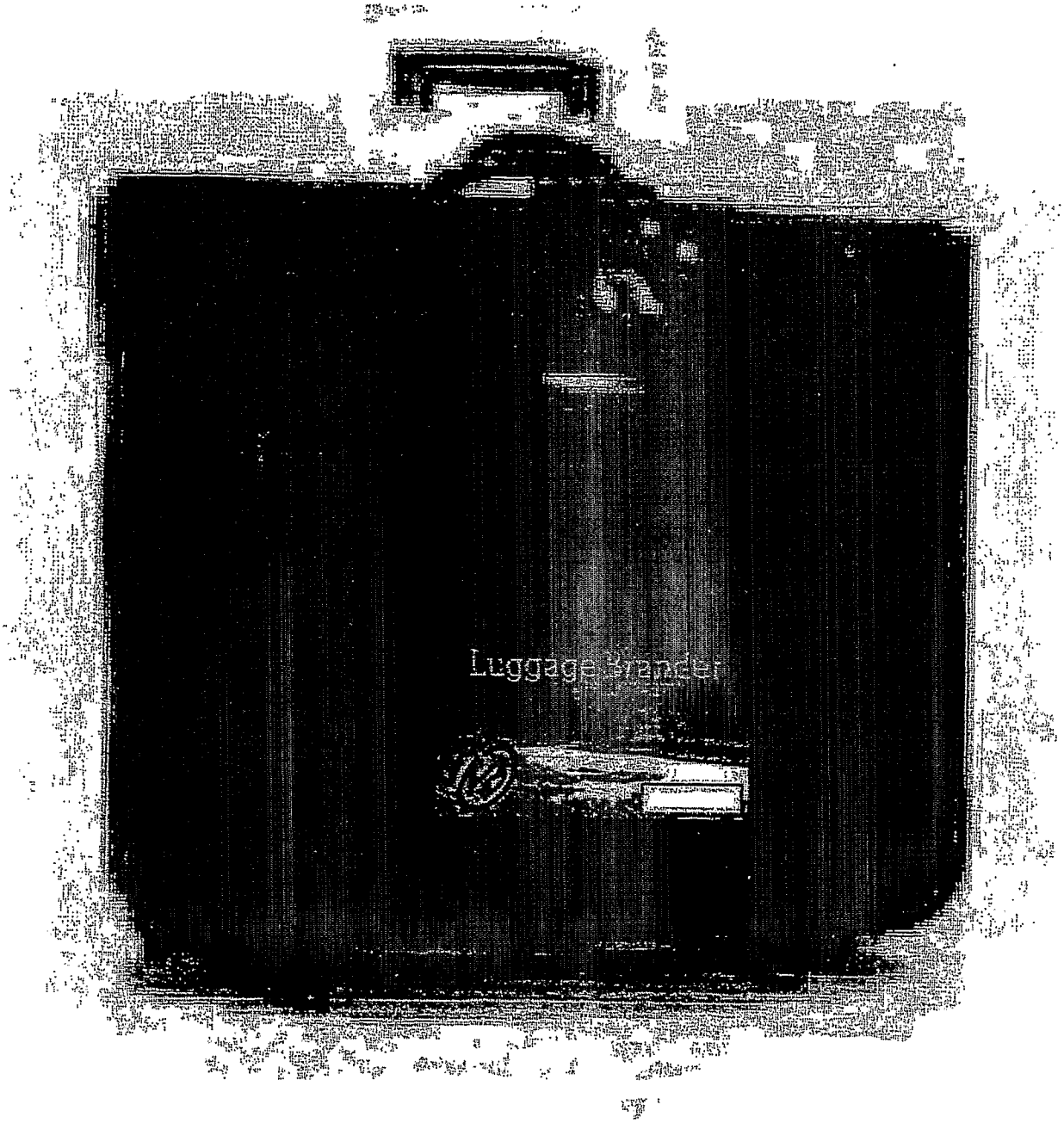


FIG. 17



FIG. 18

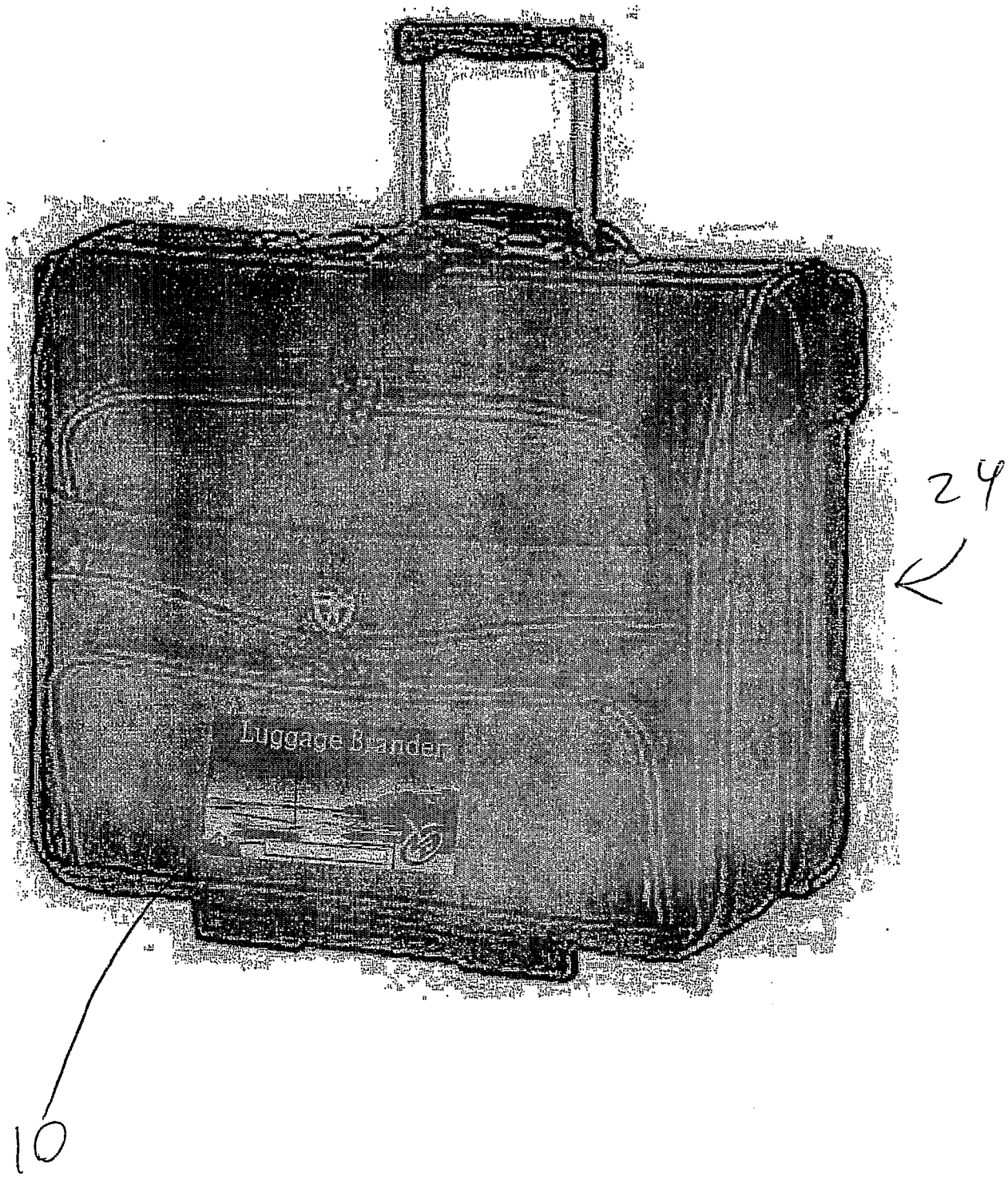


FIG. 19