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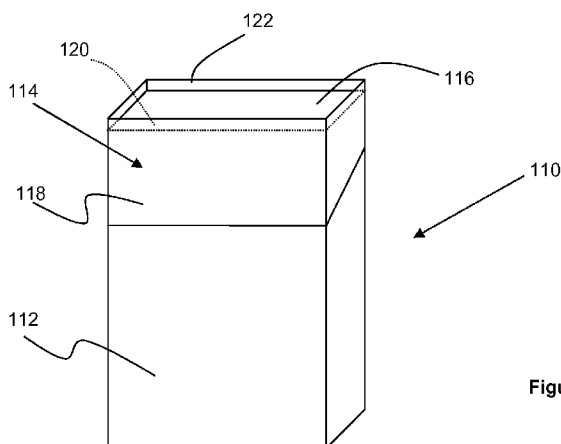


Figure 2

(57) Abstract: A container (100) for consumer goods comprises a front wall (112) and a rear wall (113) defining a space for receiving consumer goods between the front wall (112) and the rear wall (113). The front and rear walls (112, 113) extend in a longitudinal direction between first and second ends of the container (100). The container (100) further comprises a first end wall (116) located at the first end of the container (100) and extending in a transverse direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction, and a first spacer panel (120) depending from a first edge (126) of the first end wall (116) and a first edge (124) of the front wall (112). The first spacer panel (120) is folded about the first edge (124) of the front wall (112) through an angle of between 165 degrees and 180 degrees. A second spacer panel (122) depends from a second edge (130) of the first end wall (116) and a first edge (128) of the rear wall (113), and the second spacer panel (122) is folded about the first edge (128) of the rear wall (113) through an angle of between 165 degrees and 180 degrees. The first end wall (116) is spaced in the longitudinal direction from the first edges (124, 128) of the front and rear walls (112, 113) such that the first end wall (116) and the spacer panels (120, 122) define a recess at the first end of the container (100). The front wall (112), the rear wall (113), the first end wall (116), the first spacer panel (120) and the second spacer panel (122) are integrally formed from a single laminar blank (700).



CONTAINER HAVING RECESS

The present invention relates to a container for consumer goods. The present invention also relates to a method of forming such a container from a single laminar blank. Containers in accordance with the present invention find particular application as containers for elongate consumer goods, such as smoking articles.

Consumer goods such as smoking articles are commonly packaged in rigid box shaped containers, such as hinge-lid containers having a box and a lid connected to the box about a hinge line extending across the rear wall of the container. In use, the lid is pivoted about the hinge line to open the container and so gain access to a bundle of smoking articles housed in the box. The Japanese patent application JP-A-2009292514 shows a container where the upper end of the container is provided with a recess. This allows for an increased pack strength and additional space at the upper end of the container. However, the container is manufactured from multiple pieces and is therefore difficult to assemble at high speeds.

DE-8020237-U1 also describes a container having an end wall that is recessed. However, the end wall is formed from multiple overlapping panels, which results in a complex manufacturing process that requires the folding and accurate alignment of several panels to form the end wall.

It would be desirable to provide a novel container having high strength at one or more of the end edges and new design versatility. It would be particularly desirable if such a container could be assembled and filled using conventional high speed methods and apparatus.

The present invention provides a container for consumer goods, the container comprising a front wall and a rear wall defining a space for receiving consumer goods between the front wall and the rear wall. The front and rear walls extend in a longitudinal direction between first and second ends of the container. The container further comprises a first end wall located at the first end of the container and extending in a transverse direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction, and a first spacer panel depending from a first edge of the first end wall and a first edge of the front wall. The first spacer panel is folded about the first edge of the front wall through an angle of between 165 degrees and 180 degrees. A second spacer panel depends from a second edge of the first end wall and a first edge of the rear wall, and the second spacer panel is folded about the first edge of the rear wall through an angle of between 165 degrees and 180 degrees. The first end wall is spaced in the longitudinal direction from the first edges of the front and rear walls such that the first end wall and the spacer panels define a recess at the first end of the container. The front wall, the rear wall, the first end wall, the first spacer panel and the second spacer panel are integrally formed from a single laminar blank. At

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an angle of between about 165 degrees and about 180 degrees, the spacer panels are substantially parallel to the front and rear walls.

The terms “front”, “rear”, “top”, “bottom”, “side” and other terms used to describe relative positions of the components of containers according to the present invention refer to the container in an upright position with the opening through which the consumer goods are removed at the top end. In some embodiments, the container comprises a hinged lid which is pivotable about a hinge line. In such embodiments, the rear wall of the container is the wall comprising the hinge line.

The term “hinge line” refers to a line about which a lid may be pivoted in order to open the container. A hinge line may be, for example, a fold line or a score line in the rear wall of the container.

The term “longitudinal” refers to a direction from bottom to top or vice versa. The term “transverse” refers to a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction.

The term “panel” refers to a portion of the container formed from a single, continuous portion of the material forming the laminar blank. The term “wall” refers more generally to a facet of the container, for example the “front wall” defines a front facet of the container. A wall may be formed from a single panel, or a wall may be formed from two or more abutting or overlapping panels.

When referring to a spacer panel, the term “width” refers to the dimension of the spacer panel extending between the end wall and the front or rear wall to which it is connected.

By providing first and second spacer panels between an end wall and the front and rear walls, containers in accordance with the present invention benefit from increased strength and structural rigidity at the end edges where the spacer panels are provided. This improvement is maximised when the spacer panels are folded through an angle close to 180 degrees, since each spacer panel overlies the front or rear wall about which it is folded, therefore providing a double thickness of sheet material at the edge where the spacer panel is provided. Therefore, the first spacer panel is folded through an angle of between about 165 degrees and about 180 degrees, preferably an angle of between about 170 degrees and about 180 degrees, more preferably an angle of between about 175 degrees and about 180 degrees. Similarly, the second spacer panel is folded through an angle of between about 165 degrees and about 180 degrees, preferably an angle of between about 170 degrees and about 180 degrees, more preferably an angle of between about 175 degrees and about 180 degrees.

Providing first and second spacer panels also provides greater design versatility with respect to the shape of the end of the container. In particular, by varying at least one of the relative widths of the first and second spacer panels and the relative heights of the front and

rear walls, it is possible to provide an end wall which is perpendicular to the front and rear walls, slopes upwardly towards the front wall or slopes upwardly towards the rear wall. The skilled person will appreciate that many different designs and shapes are possible by varying the height of the front and rear walls and the widths of the spacer panels.

5 Advantageously, by utilising only two additional panels between the end wall and the front and rear walls, single laminar blanks used to form containers in accordance with the present invention can be constructed such that they are almost identical to blanks used to form conventional containers. This simplifies the assembly of containers in accordance with the present invention by permitting the use of existing manufacturing processes and apparatus with
10 minimal modification. Furthermore, since the end wall is formed from a single panel, the need for complex alignment of overlapping panels is eliminated when compared with prior art containers, such as the container described in DE-8020237-U1.

 In some embodiments, one or more spacer panels can be provided in a similar manner at the second end of the container. For example, a single, third spacer panel can be provided
15 between a second end wall extending in a transverse direction and one of the front or rear walls. In a similar manner to the first spacer panel, the third spacer panel is folded about the front or rear wall through an angle of between about 165 degrees and about 180 degrees, preferably an angle of between about 170 degrees and about 180 degrees, more preferably an angle of between about 175 degrees and about 180 degrees.

20 Preferably, the container comprises both third and fourth spacer panels at the second end of the container. In such embodiments, the container further comprises a second end wall located at a second end of the container and extending in the transverse direction. The third spacer panel extends between and is connected to a second edge of the front wall and a first edge of the second end wall. The third spacer panel is folded about the second edge of the
25 front wall through an angle within the ranges described above. The fourth spacer panel extends between and is connected to a second edge of the rear wall and a second edge of the second end wall. The fourth spacer panel is folded about the second edge of the rear wall through an angle of between about 165 degrees and about 180 degrees, preferably an angle of between about 170 degrees and about 180 degrees, most preferably an angle of between about 175
30 degrees and about 180 degrees. The second end wall is spaced in the longitudinal direction from the second edges of the front and rear walls such that the second end wall and the third and fourth spacer panels define a recess at the second end of the container. The second end wall, the third spacer panel and the fourth spacer panel are also integrally formed from the single laminar blank.

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In any of the embodiments described above, each spacer panel preferably has a width between the respective end wall and the front or rear wall to which it is connected of between about 1 millimetre and about 15 millimetres. Spacer panels having a width in this range can provide reinforcement at the end edges of the container and provide versatile design of the ends of the container, whilst still minimising the modification of existing manufacturing processes and equipment required to accommodate blanks incorporating the additional spacer panels.

Containers in accordance with the present invention may be of a hinged lid design such that the container comprises a lid pivotable along a hinge line, between a closed position and an open position in which consumer goods can be removed from the container. In these embodiments, the first end wall, the first spacer panel and the second spacer panel form at least a portion of the lid. Preferably, the hinge line extends across the rear wall of the container such that the lid also includes a portion of the rear wall.

As well as hinged lid containers, the skilled person will appreciate that the present invention can be applied to containers of alternative design, such as containers having a sliding mechanism for opening the container.

In any of the embodiments described above, the container is preferably filled with smoking articles. However, containers in accordance with the present invention can also be used with a variety of consumer goods other than smoking articles.

The container according to the present invention is preferably a rectangular parallelepiped comprising two wider walls spaced apart by two narrower walls. The two wider walls will usually be the front and rear walls and the two narrower walls will usually be side walls.

The container may be formed from any suitable materials including, but not limited to, cardboard, paperboard, plastic, metal, or combinations thereof. Preferably, the container is formed from a single folded laminar cardboard blank, wherein the cardboard preferably has a basis weight of between about 100 grams per square metre and about 350 grams per square metre.

In some embodiments, the assembled and filled container is wrapped in an outer wrapper. The outer wrapper is preferably a transparent polymeric film of, for example, high or low density polyethylene, polypropylene, oriented polypropylene, polyvinylidene chloride, cellulose film, or combinations thereof and the outer wrapper is applied in a conventional manner. The outer wrapper may include a tear tape. In addition, the outer wrapper may be printed with images, consumer information or other data. Preferably, the wrapper at least partially follows the contour of the recess formed at the first end of the container.

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As described above, containers according to the invention may be in the shape of a rectangular parallelepiped and it may comprise right-angled longitudinal and right-angled transverse edges. Alternatively, the container may comprise one or more rounded longitudinal edges, rounded transverse edges, bevelled longitudinal edges or bevelled transverse edges, or combinations thereof. For example, the container according to the invention may comprise, without limitation:

- One or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall, and/or one or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the rear wall.

- One or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall, and/or one or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the rear wall.

- One longitudinal rounded edge and one longitudinal bevelled edge on the front wall, and/or one transverse rounded edge and one transverse bevelled edge on the rear wall.

- One or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall and one or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall.

- Two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on a first side wall or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on a second side wall.

Where the container comprises one or more bevelled edges, preferably the bevelled edge has a width of between about 1 mm and about 10 mm, preferably between about 2 and about 6 mm. Alternatively, the container may comprise a double bevel formed by three parallel creasing or scoring lines that are spaced such that two distinct bevels are formed on the edge of the container.

Alternatively, the container may have a non-rectangular transversal cross section, for example polygonal such as triangular or hexagonal, semi-oval or semi-circular.

As described above, containers according to the invention find particular application as packs for elongate smoking articles such as, for example, cigarettes, cigars or cigarillos. It will be appreciated that through appropriate choices of the dimensions, containers according to the invention may be designed for different numbers of conventional size, king size, super-king size, slim or super-slim cigarettes. Alternatively, other consumer goods may be housed inside the packages and containers.

Through an appropriate choice of the dimensions of the containers according to the present invention, they may be designed to hold different total numbers of smoking articles, or different arrangements of smoking articles. For example, through an appropriate choice of the dimensions thereof, containers according to the invention may be designed to hold a total of between five and thirty smoking articles.

The smoking articles may be arranged in different collations, depending on the total number of smoking articles. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in a single row of five, six, seven, eight, nine or ten. Alternatively, the smoking articles may be arranged in two or more rows. The two or more rows may contain the same number of smoking articles. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in: two rows of five, six, seven, eight, nine or ten; three rows of five or seven; or four rows of four, five or six. Alternatively, the two or more rows may include at least two rows containing different numbers of smoking articles to each other. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in: a row of five and a row of six (5-6); a row of six and a row of seven (6-7); a row of seven and a row of eight (7-8); a middle row of five and two outer rows of six (6-5-6); a middle row of five and two outer rows of seven (7-5-7); a middle row of six and two outer rows of five (5-6-5); a middle row of six and two outer rows of seven (7-6-7); a middle row of seven and two outer rows of six (6-7-6); a middle row of nine and two outer rows of eight (8-9-8); or a middle row of six with one outer row of five and one outer row of seven (5-6-7).

Containers according to the present invention may hold smoking articles of the same type or brand, or of different types or brands. In addition, both filterless smoking articles and smoking articles with various filter tips may be contained, as well as smoking articles of differing length (for example, between about 40 mm and about 180 mm), diameter (for example, between about 4 mm and about 9 mm). In particular, the container may comprise smoking articles with recessed filters. In addition, the smoking articles may differ in strength of taste, resistance to draw and total particulate matter delivery. Preferably, the dimensions of the containers are adapted to the length of the smoking articles, and the collation of the smoking articles. Typically, the dimensions of the container are between about 0.5 mm to about 5 mm larger than the dimensions of the package or packages of smoking articles housed inside the container.

The width and depth of containers according to the invention may be such that, in the closed lid position, the resultant overall dimensions of the container are similar to the dimensions of a typical disposable hinge-lid pack of twenty cigarettes. The length of the container may be adapted such that either the overall dimensions inside the container are similar to the dimensions of a typical disposable hinge-lid pack of twenty cigarettes or that the overall dimensions of the entire container are similar to the dimensions of a typical disposable hinge-lid pack of twenty cigarettes, for example by providing shorter than usual cigarettes within the container. This may be advantageous in order to adapt the size of the container for relatively shorter cigarettes to the overall standard size of containers as used, for example in vending machines. Preferably, containers according to the invention have a height of between about 40

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mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a height of between about 50 mm and about 125 mm, wherein the height is measured in the longitudinal direction between the first and second edges of the front wall or the rear wall, whichever is longest.

Preferably, containers according to the invention have a width of between about 12 mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a width of between about 40 mm and about 125 mm, wherein the width is measured from one side wall to the other side wall of the container.

Preferably, containers according to the invention have a depth of between about 6 mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a depth of between about 12 mm and about 25 mm wherein the depth is measured from the front wall to the rear wall of the container.

Preferably, the ratio of the height of the container to the depth of the container is in between about 0.3 to 1 and about 10 to 1, more preferably between about 2 to 1 and about 8 to 1, most preferably between about 3 to 1 and 5 to 1

Preferably, the ratio of the width of the container to the depth of the container is in between about 0.3 to 1 and about 10 to 1, more preferably between about 2 to 1 and about 8 to 1, most preferably between about 2 to 1 and 3 to 1.

Where the container houses smoking articles, the container may further comprise compartments (for example for waste such as ash or butts) or other consumer goods, for example matches, lighters, extinguishing means, breath-fresheners or electronics. The other consumer goods may be attached to the outside of the container, contained within the container along with the package of smoking articles, in a separate compartment of the container or combinations thereof. In particular, such other consumer goods may be fully or partially housed within the recess in the container formed by the 165 degrees to 180 degrees folded spacer panels.

The exterior surfaces of containers according to the invention may be printed, embossed, debossed or otherwise embellished with manufacturer or brand logos, trademarks, slogans and other consumer information and indicia.

The present invention also provides a method of forming the containers described above, the method comprising a step of providing a single laminar blank and a set of consumer goods. The blank is then folded around the set of consumer goods so as to form a container having the features previously described.

Preferably, the folding step comprises folding the blank around the set of consumer goods to form a front panel, a rear panel and the first end wall extending in the transverse direction. Next, the first end wall is pushed towards the consumer goods to fold first end portions of the front and rear panels, wherein the folded first end portions of the front and rear panels form the first spacer panel and the second spacer panel respectively, wherein the

remainder of the front and rear panels form at least a portion of the front and rear walls respectively, and wherein the first end wall is spaced in the longitudinal direction from the first edges of the front and rear panels such that the first end wall defines the recess at the first end of the container.

Advantageously, this method of folding the blank to form the container allows existing manufacturing equipment to be used to fold the blank to the point where the end walls and front and rear panels have been formed, without modification of the existing equipment. The formation of the spacer panels can be carried out using a separate, additional pushing action downstream of the existing manufacturing equipment. It will be appreciated that a single pushing step can be used to form both the first and second spacer panels.

A similar method can be repeated at the other end of the container to form a single, third spacer panel at the second end of the container, or both third and fourth spacer panels. For example, to form a container having third and fourth spacer panels at the second end, the method may further comprise a step of folding the blank to form a second end wall extending in the transverse direction. Next, the second end wall is pushed towards the consumer goods to fold second end portions of the front and rear panels, wherein the folded second end portions of the front and rear panels form third and fourth spacer panels respectively. The third spacer panel extends between and is connected to a first edge of the second end wall and a second edge of the remainder of the front panel. The fourth spacer panel extends between and is connected to a second edge of the second end wall and a second edge of the remainder of the rear panel. The third spacer panel and the fourth spacer panel are folded respectively about the second edges of the remainder of the front and rear panels through angles within the ranges described above. The second end wall is spaced in the longitudinal direction from the second edges of the front and rear panels to define a recess at the second end of the container.

In an alternative method for forming a container having a first and second spacer panels as described above, the blank may be sequentially folded so as to form the first spacer panel, the first end wall and the second spacer panel. For example, the blank may be folded first to form the first edge of the front wall, and then folded again to form the first edge of the first end wall, therefore forming the first spacer panel. The blank can then be folded again to form the second edge of the first end wall and folded again to form the first edge of the rear wall, therefore forming the second spacer panel. The skilled person will appreciate that the order of the folding steps could be reversed, so that the second spacer panel is formed first, followed by the first end wall and the first spacer panel. This alternative method can be applied equally to forming third and fourth spacer panels where present at the second end of the container.

As described above, filled containers in accordance with the present invention can be wrapped in a polymeric film. Any of the methods described above for forming containers according to the invention can therefore further include a step of wrapping a polymeric film about the container. The method can further include a step of pressing the polymeric film into the recess so that the polymeric film conforms to the exterior surface of the container. In 5 embodiments which utilise a pushing step to form the spacer panels, as described above, the pushing step can be combined with the pressing step for conforming the polymeric film to the container. Alternatively, or in addition, the pressing step can simultaneously form a seal in the polymeric film. These embodiments all minimise the number of steps required to form, wrap 10 and optionally seal the container.

The invention will now be described further, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows a conventional hinge lid container suitable for housing a plurality of 15 smoking articles;

Figure 2 shows a container in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 3 shows a cross-sectional view of the container of Figure 2;

Figure 4 shows a preform for forming the container shown in Figure 3;

Figure 5 illustrates a forming step for transforming the preform shown in Figure 4 into the 20 container shown in Figure 3;

Figure 6 shows an alternative method of forming a container in accordance with the present invention; and

Figure 7 shows a single laminar blank for forming the container of Figure 2.

Figure 1 shows a conventional hinge lid container 10 comprising a front wall 12 and a rear wall spaced from the front wall 12. The front wall 12 and the rear wall define a space between them for receiving consumer goods. The container 10 includes a lid 14 pivotable about a hinge line extending across the rear wall. The lid 14 comprises a first end wall 16 of the container, a front wall portion 18 which forms part of the front wall 12, and a rear wall portion which forms 30 part of the rear wall.

A container 110 formed from a single laminar blank in accordance with the present invention is shown in Figure 2. In the same manner as the conventional hinged lid container 10, the container 110 in accordance with the present invention includes a front wall 112, a rear wall 113, a lid 114, a first end wall 116, a front wall portion 118 and a rear wall portion. However, the 35 container 110 also includes a first spacer panel 120 and a second spacer panel 122. The first

and second spacer panels 120, 122 are shown more clearly in Figure 3, which shows a cross-sectional view of the container 110.

The first spacer panel 120 extends between a first edge 124 of the front wall portion 118 and a first edge 126 of the first end wall 116. The second spacer panel 122 extends between a first edge 128 of the rear wall 113 and a second edge 130 of the first end wall 116.

One method for forming the spacer panels 120, 122 is to form a container preform which has a structure generally the same as a conventional container. A container preform 200 is shown in Figure 4. The preform 200 defines a front panel 212, a rear panel 213 and a first end wall 116. Each of the front and rear panels 212, 213 includes a panel portion 214 which will form one of the spacer panels 120, 122. To form the spacer panels 120, 122, the first end wall 116 is pushed towards the interior of the container preform 200 so as to fold the front and rear panel portions 214 inwardly. One example of a suitable pushing device 300 is shown in Figure 5, the pushing device comprising a pusher plate 302 mounting on a rod 304. Other suitable pushing means will be apparent to the skilled person.

Following the pushing step, the resulting container comprises a front wall 112, a rear wall 113, a first end wall 116 and first and second spacer panels 120, 122, as shown in Figure 3. The shape of the end of the resulting container is also represented by the dotted line in Figure 4 for comparison. The angle of the spacer panels with respect to the front and rear walls has been exaggerated for clarity of illustration. In practice, in this embodiment the spacer panels would be folded through 180 degrees and would be in contact with the front and rear walls.

An alternative method for folding a single laminar blank to form the container shown in Figure 3 is illustrated in Figure 6. In the alternative method, a series of automated folding devices 600 sequentially fold the laminar blank 602 to form the front wall, the rear wall, the first end wall and the first and second spacer panels. Five stages of the sequential folding process are shown in Figure 6. The skilled person will appreciate that the order in which the different panels and walls are formed can be varied by choosing appropriate folding devices 600.

Figure 7 shows a single laminar blank 700 for forming the container 110 shown in Figure 2. The blank 700 comprises panels that form the front wall 112, the rear wall 113, the first end wall 116, a second end wall 117, the front wall portion 118, and the first and second spacer panels 120, 122.

Connecting the first end wall 116 to the front wall portion 118 and the rear wall 113 with the first and second spacer panels 120, 122 allows the first end wall 116 to be formed from a single panel, as shown in Figures 3 and 7. That is, the first end wall does not comprise any overlapping panels. Advantageously, this makes the construction of the container 110 very

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similar to the conventional hinge lid container 10, therefore simplifying the assembly of the container 110.

Claims

1. A container for consumer goods, comprising:

a front wall and a rear wall defining a space for receiving consumer goods between the front wall and the rear wall, the front and rear walls extending in a longitudinal direction between first and second ends of the container;

a first end wall located at the first end of the container and extending in a transverse direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction;

a first spacer panel depending from a first edge of the first end wall and a first edge of the front wall, the first spacer panel folded about the first edge of the front wall through an angle of between 165 degrees and 180 degrees; and

a second spacer panel depending from a second edge of the first end wall and a first edge of the rear wall, the second spacer panel folded about the first edge of the rear wall through an angle of between 165 degrees and 180 degrees;

wherein the first end wall is spaced in the longitudinal direction from the first edges of the front and rear walls such that the first end wall and the spacer panels define a recess at the first end of the container;

wherein the front wall, the rear wall, the first end wall, the first spacer panel and the second spacer panel are formed from a single laminar blank.

2. A container according to claim 1, further comprising:

a second end wall located at a second end of the container and extending in the transverse direction;

a third spacer panel depending from a second edge of the front wall and a first edge of the second end wall, the third spacer panel folded about the second edge of the front wall through an angle of between 165 degrees and 180 degrees; and

a fourth spacer panel depending from a second edge of the rear wall and a second edge of the second end wall, the fourth spacer panel folded about the second edge of the rear wall through an angle of between 165 degrees and 180 degrees;

wherein the second end wall is spaced in the longitudinal direction from the second edges of the front and rear walls such that the second end wall and the third and fourth spacer panels define a recess at the second end of the container, and wherein the second end wall, the third spacer panel and the fourth spacer panel are also integrally formed from the single laminar blank.

3. A container according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the width of each spacer panel between the respective end wall and the front or rear wall is between 1 and 15 millimetres.

4. A container according to any preceding claim, further comprising a lid pivotable, along a hinge line, between a closed position and an open position in which consumer goods can be removed from the container, wherein the first end wall, the first spacer panel and the second spacer panel form at least a portion of the lid.

5. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the container is filled with consumer goods, such as for example smoking articles.

6. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the container is overwrapped with a wrapper, wherein the wrapper at least partially follows the contour of the recess formed at the first end of the container.

7. A method of forming a container of consumer goods, comprising:
providing a single laminar blank and a set of consumer goods;
folding the blank around the set of consumer goods so as to form a container according to claim 1.

8. A method according to claim 7, wherein the folding step comprises:
folding the blank around the set of consumer goods to form a front panel, a rear panel and the first end wall extending in the transverse direction; and
pushing the first end wall towards the consumer goods to fold first end portions of the front and rear panels, wherein the folded first end portions of the front and rear panels form the first spacer panel and the second spacer panel respectively, wherein the remainder of the front and rear panels form at least a portion of the front and rear walls respectively, and wherein the first end wall is spaced in the longitudinal direction from the first edges of the front and rear panels such that the first end wall defines the recess at the first end of the container.

9. A method according to claim 8, further comprising:
folding the blank to form a second end wall extending in the transverse direction; and
pushing the second end wall towards the consumer goods to fold second end portions of the front and rear panels, wherein the folded second end portions of the front and rear panels form third and fourth spacer panels respectively, the third spacer panel depending from a first edge of the second end wall and a second edge of the remainder of the front panel, the third

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spacer panel folded about the second edge of the remainder of the front panel through an angle of between 165 degrees and 180 degrees, and the fourth spacer panel depending from a second edge of the second end wall and a second edge of the remainder of the rear panel, the fourth spacer panel folded about the second edge of the remainder of the rear panel through an angle of between 165 degrees and 180 degrees, and wherein the second end wall is spaced in the longitudinal direction from the second edges of the front and rear panels to define a recess at the second end of the container.

10. A method according to claim 7, wherein the folding step comprises folding the blank to sequentially form the first spacer panel, the first end wall and the second spacer panel to form a container according to claim 1.

11. A method according to claim 10, wherein the first spacer panel is formed first, followed by the first end wall, followed by the second spacer panel.

12. A method according to claim 10, wherein the second spacer panel is formed first, followed by the first end wall, followed by the first spacer panel.

13. A method according to any of claims 7 to 12, further comprising:
wrapping a polymeric film about the container; and
pressing the polymeric film into the recess so that the polymeric film conforms to the exterior surface of the container.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein the pressing step simultaneously forms a seal in the polymeric film.

15. A method according to any of claims 7 to 14, wherein the consumer goods are smoking articles.

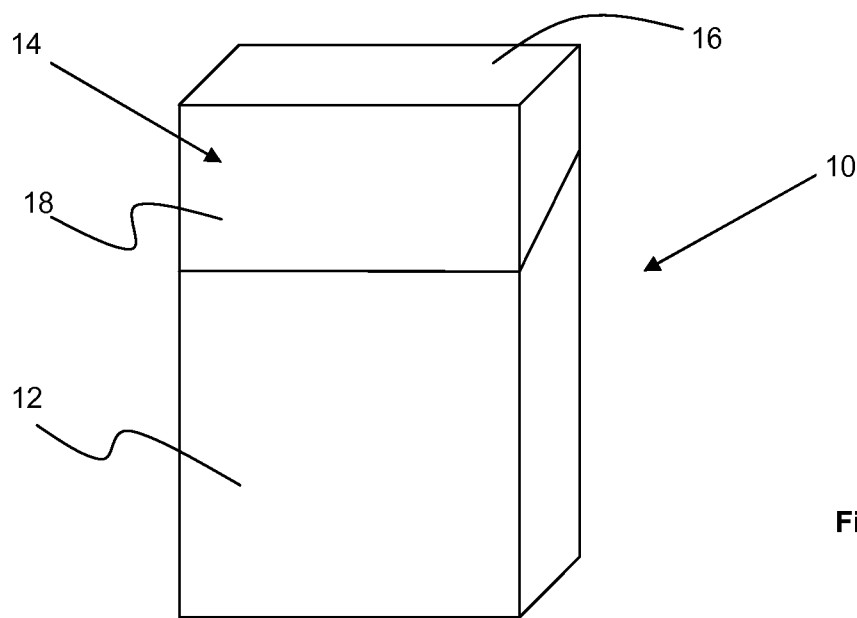


Figure 1

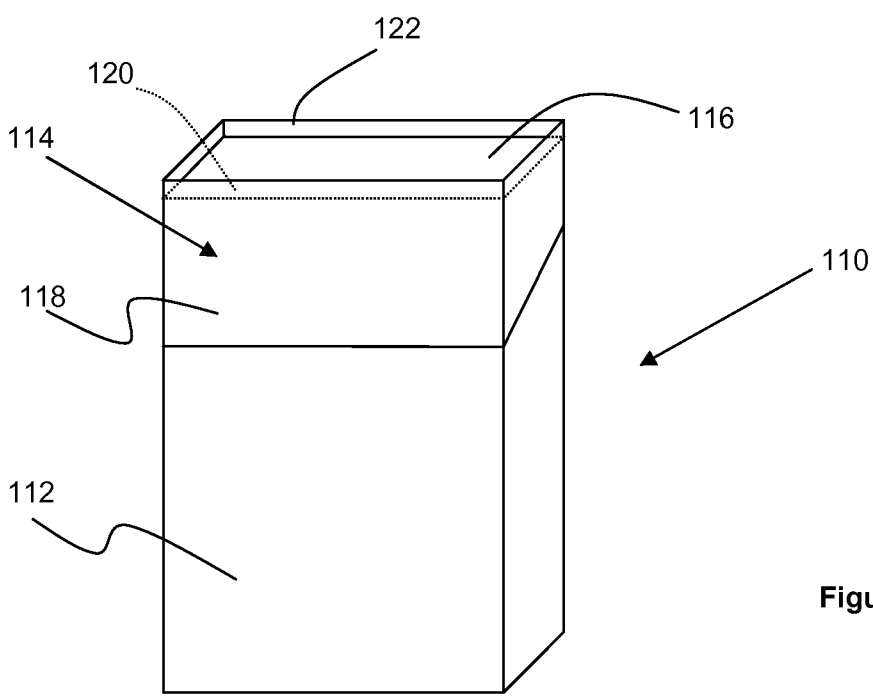


Figure 2

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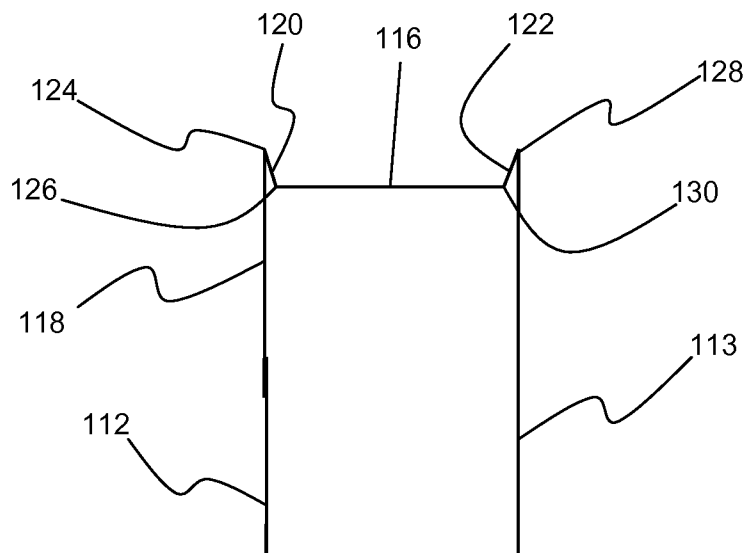


Figure 3

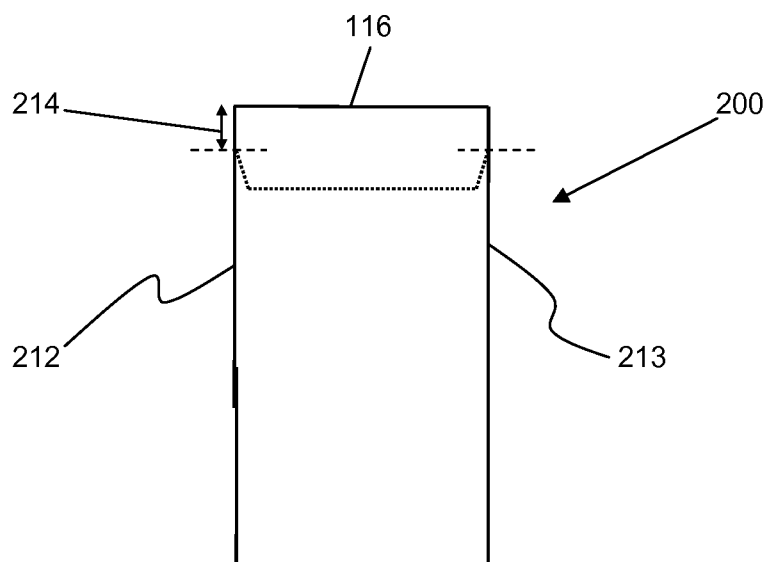


Figure 4

Figure 5

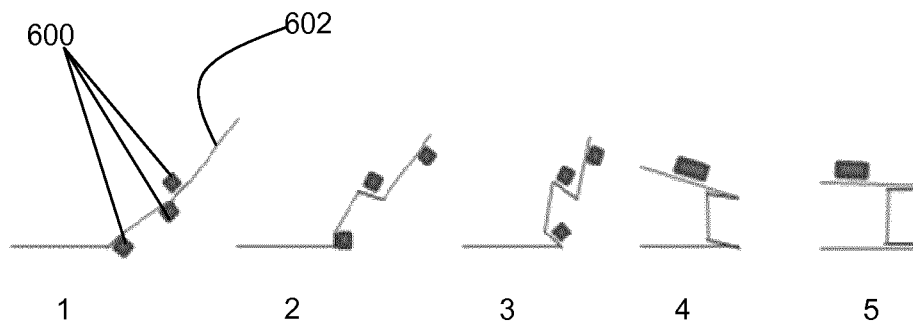
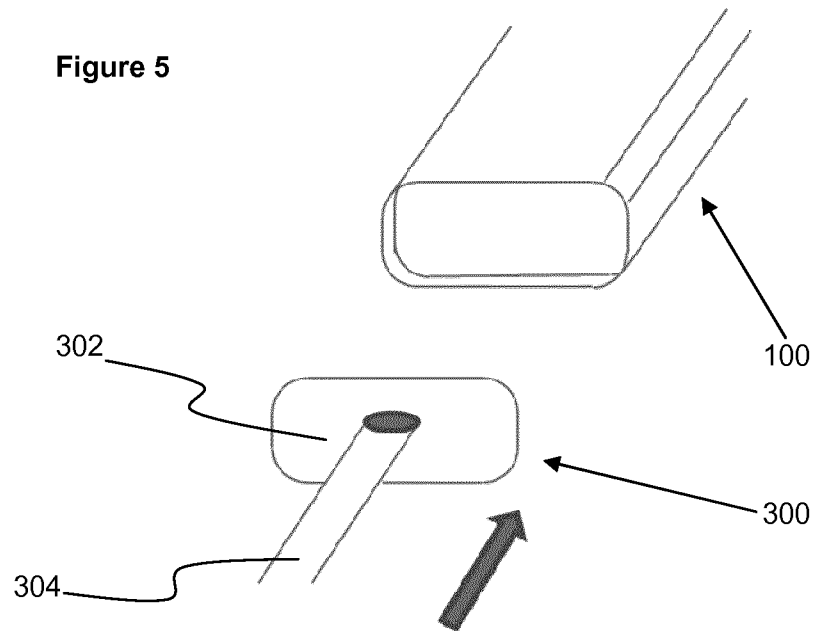
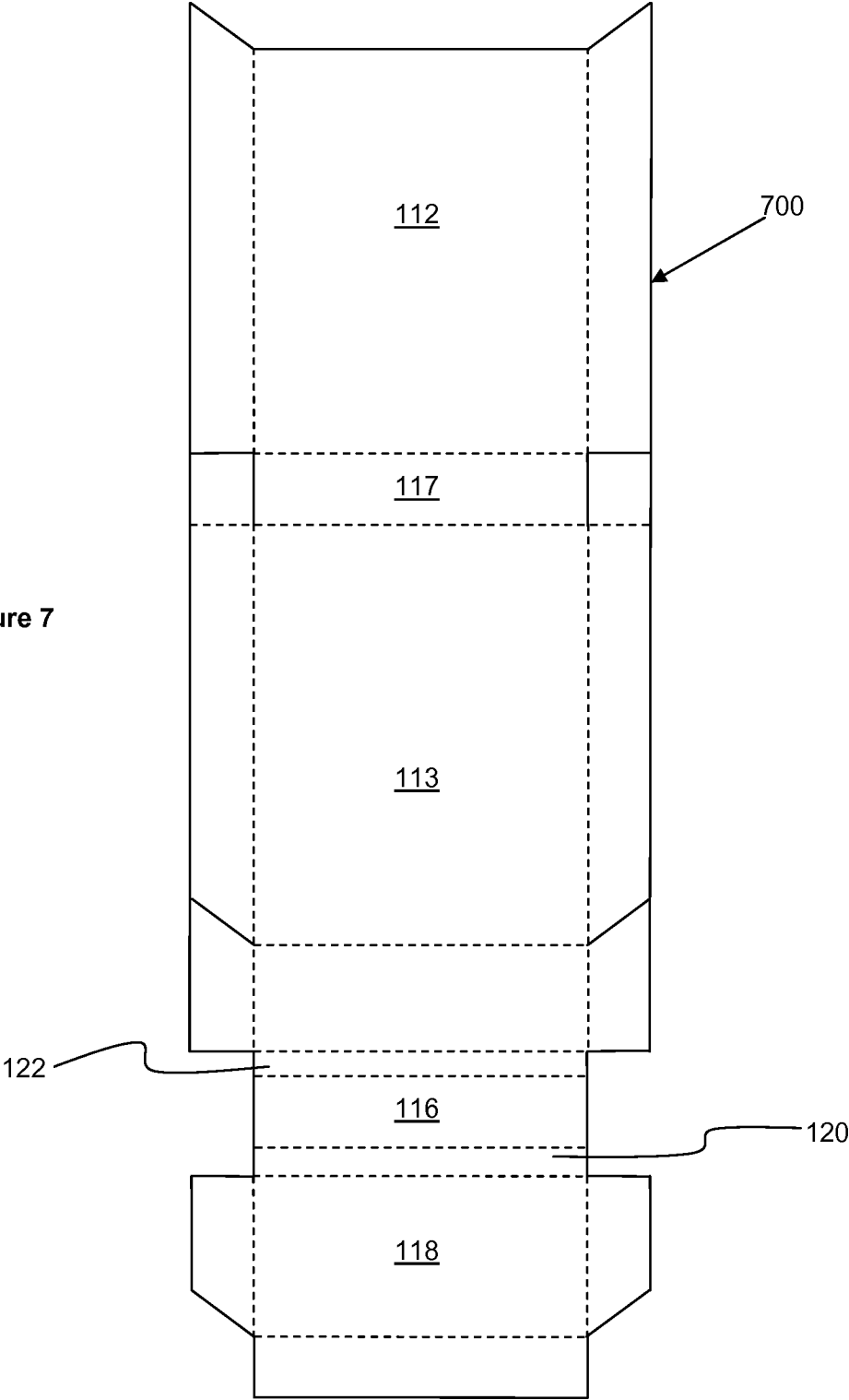


Figure 6

Figure 7



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/EP2013/076627

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. B65D5/02 B65B61/24 B65D85/10
ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
B65D B65B

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	DE 195 34 035 A1 (HENKEL KGAA [DE]) 20 March 1997 (1997-03-20) column 2, line 21 - line 46 -----	1-15
X	DE 299 17 276 U1 (STRAUB ALFRED [DE]) 5 January 2000 (2000-01-05) page 1; figures 1-9 -----	1-3,7
X	DE 80 20 237 U1 (COLOR DRUCK BAIERSBRONN WILHEL [DE]) 30 October 1980 (1980-10-30) page 4 - page 6; figures 1-4 -----	1-15



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

30 April 2014

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/EP2013/076627

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