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(54) Title: A PACKAGE FOR TOBACCO PRODUCTS

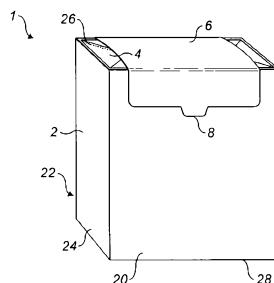


FIG. 1

(57) **Abstract:** A soft cup package (1) for tobacco products comprises a cup-shaped outer container (2) having an open face (26), and an inner enclosure (4) located in the outer container (2) and configured to surround the tobacco products. A moveable cover (6) is connected to a first side (22) of the outer container. The package further comprises an adhesive arranged to releasably secure the cover (6) to a second side (20) of the outer container with the cover (6) extending over the open face. The cover (6) extends across the majority of the width of the open face (26).

A Package for Tobacco Products

Description

The present invention relates to a package for tobacco products, and in particular, for smoking articles such as cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos and loose tobacco. For convenience, these will be referred to as "cigarettes" in this specification. In particular, the package of the present invention is a soft cup package which is re-sealable.

Any discussion of the prior art throughout the specification should in no way be considered as an admission that such prior art is widely known or forms part of common general knowledge in the field.

Soft cup packages are well known in the art, for example, from US 4,776,461. A soft cup package comprises a soft cup, typically made of paper, which is open at the top. A charge of cigarettes is surrounded by a wrapping, typically of metal foil, and is located in the soft cup. In US 4,776,461, the soft cup pack may have a conventional closing strip or revenue stamp extending over the open top of the soft cup. The closing strip or revenue stamp may or may not be re-attachable once opened. The closing strip or revenue stamp may prevent cigarettes from falling from the package, but does not provide for the re-sealing of the package. Re-sealing of the package is particularly useful in hot countries where humidity can affect the quality of the cigarettes. Thus, once the package of US 4,776,461 is opened, the cigarettes may deteriorate.

WO 02/066341 describes an enclosure surrounding cigarettes, which can be re-sealed. The enclosure is not a soft cup package having an outer cup located around an inner enclosure. The re-sealable cover is located on the inner enclosure.

The present invention provides, in a first aspect, a soft cup package for tobacco products, comprising: a cup-shaped outer container having an open face; an inner enclosure located in the outer container and configured to surround the tobacco products; a moveable cover connected to a first side of the outer container; the package further comprising an adhesive arranged to releasably secure the cover to a second side of the outer container with the cover extending over the open face, wherein the re-sealable cover is configured to extend across substantially the whole width of the open face.

Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, throughout the description and the claims, the words “comprise”, “comprising”, and the like are to be construed in an inclusive sense as opposed to an exclusive or exhaustive sense; that is to say, in the sense of “including, but not limited to”. Thus, the soft cup package is re-sealable to protect the tobacco products after the initial opening of the packet.

The present invention provides, in a second aspect, a method of applying a moveable cover to a soft cup package containing tobacco products, wherein the soft cup package comprises a cup-shaped outer container, and an inner enclosure located in the outer container and surrounding the tobacco products, the method comprising: affixing the moveable cover to a first side of the outer container, and providing an adhesive arranged to releasably secure the cover to a second side of the outer container with the cover extending over the open face, wherein the re-sealable cover is configured to extend across substantially the whole width of the open face.

The present invention provides, in a third aspect, a method of manufacturing a soft cup package containing tobacco products, comprising: forming an inner enclosure surrounding tobacco products; forming a cup-shaped outer container around the inner enclosure; the cup-shaped container having an open face; providing a moveable cover connected to a first side of the outer container; applying an adhesive arranged to releasably secure the cover to a second side of the outer container with the cover extending over the open face, wherein the re-sealable cover is configured to extend across substantially the whole width of the open face.

Thus, a soft cup package is manufactured which is re-sealable to protect the tobacco products after the initial opening of the packet.

The present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the following drawings: Figure 1 is a perspective view of the package according to a first embodiment of the present invention, in a sealed state;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the package according to the first embodiment of the present invention, in an open state;

Figure 3 is a plan view of a part of the first embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of a further part of the first embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 5 is a perspective view of the package according to a second embodiment of the present invention in a sealed state;

Figure 6 is a perspective view of a part of the package according to a third embodiment of the present invention in a partially unfolded state;

Figure 7 is a perspective view of the part of the package of Figure 6 in a folded state;

Figure 8 is a perspective view of the package according to the third embodiment of the present invention in a closed state; and

Figure 9 is a perspective view of the package according to the third embodiment of the present invention in an open state.

Figure 1 shows a soft cup package 1 for tobacco products, preferably cigarettes. The soft cup package 1 has a soft cup 2 forming an outer layer. The soft cup 2 is made of paper, and is open at the top. The soft cup has two major faces (front face 20, rear face 22), two side faces 24 and an end face (bottom face 28). An aperture or open face 26 is formed at the top of the soft cup 2, in place of a top end face.

A smoking article charge is located in the soft cup 2. The smoking article charge comprises an enclosure 4 of flexible material wrapped around the tobacco products. The smoking article charge has two major (front and rear) faces, two side faces and two (top and bottom) end faces. Tobacco products can be removed through a top face of the smoking article charge, and through the aligned aperture 26 of the soft cup 2.

The soft cup package 1 has a moveable cover 6 extending over the aperture 26 at the open top of the soft cup, and over the smoking article charge. The cover 6 is releasably attached to an exterior surface of the front face 20 of the soft cup 2. A permanently tacky adhesive is located on the front face 20 and/or on the cover 6 to allow the cover to be repeatedly opened and re-sealed. The permanently tacky adhesive is a pressure sensitive adhesive. The cover 6 is provided with a graspable

tab 8 which is not provided with adhesive. The tab 8 can be grasped by a user to open the cover 6.

Figure 2 shows the cover 6 in an open state allowing withdrawal of a cigarette. The inner 5 enclosure 4 extends over the open face of the outer container. The inner enclosure 4 is openable to allow access to the tobacco products through the open face of the outer container. The enclosure 4 comprises a plurality of flaps of material extending over the open face. The enclosure 4 has a top face formed by rear flap 10, front flap 12 and side flaps 16. The flaps 10,12,16 are folded against each other, and are not adhered 10 together.

A part of the inner enclosure 4 extending over the open face is attached to the moveable cover 6, such that opening of the moveable cover 6 opens said part of the inner enclosure 4. The part of the enclosure 4 attached to the moveable cover is a flap extending 15 adjacent the side of the outer container to which the cover is connected.

Preferably, the rear flap 10 is connected to an interior surface of the cover 6. As the cover 6 is lifted, the rear flap 10 is also lifted, away from the front flap 12. A tobacco product can be easily withdrawn between the rear and front flaps 10,12. The rear flap 10 is preferably 20 connected to the cover 6 by a permanent adhesive, and preferably by a line of adhesive 18 extending laterally across the cover 6 and rear flap 10. The permanent adhesive is sufficiently strong to permanently attach the cover 6 to the soft cup 2.

Figure 3 shows the enclosure 4, without the soft cup 2, in a closed state 25 corresponding to the cover 6 being closed. The rear flap 10, front flap 12 and side flaps 16 overlap to inhibit ingress of air into the enclosure 4. The enclosure 4 may be constructed as conventionally known from a blank, and may optionally have a line of adhesive 18 on the rear flap 10 for attachment to the cover 6. The enclosure 4 is formed from a single sheet of material, folded around the tobacco products. 30 The edges of the material overlap, and are not sealed or joined together.

Figure 4 shows the cover 6 of the first embodiment of the invention. The cover 6 is affixed to the rear face 22 of the soft cup, preferably with a permanent adhesive. A

first portion 30 of the cover is coated with the permanent adhesive in order to connect the cover to the soft cup 2. A second portion 32 of the cover 6 is not provided with adhesive. The second portion 32 extends over the top face, access aperture 26, of the soft cup. A third portion 34 is provided with a re-sealable, 5 removable, permanently tacky, adhesive. The third portion 34 is arranged to releasably attach to the front face of the soft cup 2. The tab 8 forms part of the third portion 34, and is not provided with adhesive.

The cover 6, and in particular the second portion 32, is dimensioned to extend over 10 the majority of the width of the access opening 26 formed by the open face of the soft cup. The second portion 32 extends laterally across substantially the whole width of the soft cup 2. The cover 6 preferably extends slightly less than the whole width of the soft cup, and at the lateral extremities, the access opening 26 is covered by the underlying side flaps 16 and optionally also the rear and front flaps 10,12. 15 The second portion 32 may be wider than the first portion 30.

The second portion 32 may have permanently tacky adhesive extending along the interior surface, adjacent the lateral edges, and preferably extending from the portion 30 to the portion 34 on each side. Such adhesive is configured to releasably 20 secure the cover to the top face of the inner enclosure, and so improve the seal around the tobacco products.

The cup-shaped outer container 2 and enclosure 4 forming a known soft-cup package are conventional, and can be made using the same manufacturing apparatus 25 known for manufacturing a soft-cup package without a cover 6. The cover 6 is applied to the cup-shaped outer container 2 after the outer container 2 and enclosure 4 have been formed. Embodiments of the present invention have the advantage that no modification is required to the manufacturing apparatus for forming the outer container 2 and enclosure 4. The cover 6 can be readily affixed to 30 the finished conventional soft-cup package, to form the re-sealable soft-cup package of the present invention. The outer container (soft cup) 2 and cover 6 therefore comprise two parts affixed together.

Figure 5 shows part of a package 50 forming a second embodiment of the present invention. Package 50 is substantially the same as the first embodiment of the package, unless otherwise described. Package 50 has a moveable cover 56 extending over a top face of the soft cup. The cover 56 comprises a covering part integrally formed with a rear major face 52 of the outer soft cup. The moveable cover 56 is releasably connected to a front major face 66 with a re-sealing strip 60. The re-sealing strip 60 is affixed to the moveable cover 56 with a permanent adhesive located on portion 64. The re-sealing strip 60 releasably attaches to the front face 66 of the soft cup with a permanently tacky adhesive located at portion 62. The re-sealing strip 60 has a graspable tab 58 which is not provided with adhesive. The tab 58 can be lifted in order to release the re-sealing strip 60 from the front face 66, and lift the moveable cover 56.

The cover 56 comprises two parts affixed together. The cover 56 comprises a covering portion extending over the open face of the outer container, and a fastening portion 60 attached to the covering portion. The covering portion forms a seal over the top face of the soft cup.

An interior surface of the moveable cover 56 is preferably attached to a rear flap of the inner enclosure, as described for the first embodiment of Figures 1 to 4. In particular, the moveable cover and rear flap may be connected by a line 68 of permanent adhesive.

Pressure sensitive adhesive may extend along the interior surface of the cover 56, adjacent the lateral edges. Such adhesive is configured to releasably secure the cover to the top face of the inner enclosure, and so improve the seal around the tobacco products.

The re-sealing strip 60 is described as separate from, and affixed to, the moveable cover 56. Alternatively, the re-sealing strip may be integrally formed with the moveable cover. In such an embodiment, a portion of the moveable cover 56 can be releasably attached to the front face of the package with a permanently tacky adhesive on the moveable cover and/or on a corresponding part of the front face.

A further portion of the moveable cover is not provided with adhesive, and acts as a graspable tab, analogously with tab 8 or tab 58.

Figures 6 to 9 show a third embodiment of the present invention. A soft cup package 70 has an outer container 72 in the form of a soft cup, in which is located an enclosure surrounding a charge of cigarettes. The package 70 has a cover 66 moveable over a top face, analogous to the first embodiment. The cover 66 is affixed to an exterior surface of a rear face of an outer container, soft cup 72. The cover 66 is initially in a folded state, folded against an exterior surface of the rear of the package 70, and does not initially extend over the top face of the package 70. The cover 66 is folded onto itself against the side of the outer container to which the cover is permanently connected. The cover 66 can be unfolded into an extended state to form a cover analogous to the cover 6 of the first embodiment.

Figure 6 shows the cover 66 in a partially folded state. The cover 66 is initially folded into three sections, a first section 73, second section 74 and third section 76. The first section is permanently connected to the rear face of the outer container with permanent adhesive in area 80. The first and second sections 74,76 are initially located between the first section 73 and the rear face of the outer container, and are thus held against the rear face of the soft cup. The cover 66 is folded into three overlying portions, corresponding to the first, second and third sections.

The second section 74 is preferably not provided with any adhesive. Alternatively, the second section 74 may be provided with a permanently tacky adhesive on one or both faces in order to releasably secure the second section to the first and/or third sections 73,76 when the cover 66 is in the folded state.

The third section is provided with a permanently tacky adhesive over area 82. The permanently tacky adhesive is located to releasably secure the cover 66 to a front face 90 of the outer container, when the cover 66 is unfolded. In the folded state, the adhesive on area 82 releasably secures the cover to the side of the outer container to which the cover 66 is permanently connected.

The third section 76 is provided with a graspable tab 78. The graspable tab 78 does not have an adhesive applied, and is arranged to be grasped by the consumer in both the initial, folded, state of the cover and the final, extended, state. In the folded state, the tab 78 extends beyond the open face of the outer container. In 5 particular, the tab 78 extends upwardly beyond the open face, and substantially parallel to the rear face of the container. The outer container may be initially surrounded by an overwrap. The overwrap may press the tab 78 against the top face or rear face. The tab is preferably configured to revert to the position described above, extending beyond the open face of the soft cup.

10

Figure 7 shows the cover 66 in the initial, folded state in which the cover 66 is attached to the outer container 72. The tab 78 extends beyond coincident top edges of the first, second, and third sections 73,74,76. The first section 73 has an area larger than the second and third sections 74,76. The area 80 is on a part of the first 15 section 73 extending beyond the second section, such that the area 80 can adhere directly to the rear face of the outer container 72. The first section 73 also extends laterally beyond the first and second sections 74,76. The laterally extending portions 84 may be provided with a permanently tacky adhesive, or alternatively, may not be provided with any adhesive. Figure 8 shows the package 70 with the cover 66 affixed 20 to the rear face 92 of the cup shaped outer container 72. The graspable tab 78 extends beyond a top face 96 of the outer container. Only the inner enclosure extends across the top face 96. The inner enclosure 94 surrounds the tobacco products, and extends over the top face whilst the cover 66 is in the folded state. In order to use the cover 66, the tab 78 is pulled upwardly. The first section 73 is 25 securely affixed to the rear face 92, and thus the cover 66 is unfolded. The cover 66 then extends over the top face.

The second section 74 may have permanently tacky adhesive extending along the interior surface, adjacent the lateral edges, and preferably extending from the area 30 80 to the area 82 on each side. Such adhesive is configured to releasably secure the cover to the top face of the inner enclosure, and so improve the seal around the tobacco products.

Figure 9 shows the package 70 with the cover 66 unfolded. The tab 78 is brought over the top face 96, and towards the front face 90 until the permanently tacky adhesive on the third section releasably attaches the cover 66 to the front face 90. The cover 66 thus extends over the majority of the width of the top face 96 of the package, and can be used to repeatedly cover the tobacco products 100, substantially as described for the first embodiment.

A further aspect of the present invention is a method of manufacturing a re-sealable soft cup package containing tobacco products. The method is applying a moveable cover to a soft cup package which contains tobacco products. The soft cup package comprises a cup-shaped outer container, and an inner enclosure located in the outer container and surrounding the tobacco products. The soft cup package, including the tobacco products, is already formed when the moveable cover is attached. The method comprises affixing the moveable cover to a first side of the outer container.

15 A permanently tacky adhesive is preferably provided to a part of the moveable cover, or alternatively to the second side of the outer container. The adhesive is arranged to releasably secure the cover to a second side of the outer container. The cover extends over the open face, and the cover extends across the majority of the width of the open face. The cover may be as described in any of the embodiments 20 above.

A further aspect of the present invention is a method of manufacturing a soft cup package containing tobacco products, as described in any of the embodiments 25 above. The method comprises forming an inner enclosure surrounding tobacco products. The inner enclosure is preferably formed by wrapping a blank around the tobacco products. A cup-shaped outer container is located around the inner enclosure; the cup-shaped container having an open face. The outer container is also preferably formed from a blank, and may be made from paper or other relatively 30 soft material. A moveable cover is connected to a first side of the outer container. The moveable cover may be integrally formed with the outer container or affixed to the outer container with a permanent adhesive. A permanently tacky adhesive is applied to the cover arranged to releasably secure the cover to a second side of the

outer container with the cover extending over the open face. The cover is extendable across the majority of the width of the access opening.

In use, any overwrap is initially removed from around the package of any of the 5 embodiment. In a package according to the first or second embodiments, the tab is grasped and used to lift the cover. In a package according to the third embodiment, the cover is extended out of its folded position, ready to reseal the package. A part of the inner enclosure covering the tobacco products may be lifted with the cover. A remaining part, or the required part(s), of the inner enclosure is lifted in order to 10 gain access to the tobacco products. One or more tobacco products is withdrawn. The package is then resealed by replacing the cover over the top face of the soft cup package, the cover being held in place by the pressure sensitive adhesive. The cover extends across the majority of the width of the open face of the soft cup, and the inner enclosure extends over any area not covered by the cover.

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The second embodiment shown in Figure 5 describes the cover 56 integrally formed with the outer container. Alternatively, the cover 56 may be attached to an exterior face of the outer container. The cover 56 may be attached with a permanent 20 adhesive, as described for the first and third embodiment. Alternatively, the cover may be integrally formed with the outer container, and the permanently tacky adhesive may be located directly on the integrally formed cover.

Any feature described in any of the embodiments may be used in combination with 25 any other feature from any embodiment.

- 11 -

Claims

1. A soft cup package for tobacco products, comprising:
a cup-shaped outer container having an open face;
5 an inner enclosure located in the outer container and configured to surround the tobacco products;
a moveable cover connected to a first side of the outer container;
the package further comprising an adhesive arranged to releasably secure the cover to a second side of the outer container with the cover extending over the open face,
10 wherein the re-sealable cover is configured to extend across substantially the whole width of the open face.
2. The soft cup package according to claim 1 wherein said outer container and cover are formed by at least two parts affixed together.
- 15 3. The soft cup package according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the cover is affixed to an exterior surface of the first side of the outer container.
4. The soft cup package according to claim 2 or 3 wherein the cover is affixed to the first side of the container with a permanent adhesive.
- 20 5. The soft cup package according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the cover is integral with the first side of the outer container.
- 25 6. The soft cup package according to claim 5 wherein the cover comprises a covering portion and a fastening portion affixed to the covering portion, wherein the covering portion is arranged to extend over the open face and the adhesive is arranged to releasably secure the fastening portion to the second side of the outer container.
- 30 7. The soft cup package according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the inner enclosure extends over the open face of the outer container, and the inner

- 12 -

enclosure is openable to allow access to the tobacco products through the open face of the outer container, and

a part of the inner enclosure extending over the open face is attached to the moveable cover such that opening of the moveable cover opens said part of the inner enclosure.

8. The soft cup package according to claim 7 wherein the inner enclosure comprises a plurality of flaps of material extending over the open face, and said part attached to the moveable cover is a flap extending adjacent the first side of the outer container.

9. The soft cup package according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the cover is in a folded state in which the cover is folded onto itself against the first side of the outer container, and wherein the cover is configured to be unfolded into an extended state to extend across the open face of the outer container.

10. The soft cup package according to claim 9 wherein said adhesive on the cover is arranged such that, in the folded state, the adhesive secures the cover to the first side of the outer container;
20 and in the extended state, said adhesive releasably secures the cover to the second side of the outer container.

11. The soft cup package according to claim 9 or 10 wherein the cover comprises a graspable tab, and in the folded state, the tab extends beyond the open face of the outer container.

12. The soft cup package according to claim 9, 10 or 11 wherein, in the folded state, the cover is folded into three overlying portions.

13. The soft cup package according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the outer container is an elongate cuboid having major front and rear faces, two longitudinally extending side faces, and a bottom end face;

- 13 -

wherein the open face is defined at a top end opposite to the bottom end face, and

the first side to which the moveable cover is connected is the major rear face, and the second side to which the moveable cover is releasably secured is the major front face.

14. A method of applying a moveable cover to a soft top package containing tobacco products, wherein the soft top package comprises a cup-shaped outer container, and an inner enclosure located in the outer container and surrounding the tobacco products,

the method comprising:

affixing the moveable cover to a first side of the outer container, and providing an adhesive arranged to releasably secure the cover to a second side of the outer container with the cover extending over the open face, wherein the resealable cover is configured to extend across substantially the whole width of the open face.

15. A method of manufacturing a soft top package containing tobacco products, comprising:

20 forming an inner enclosure surrounding tobacco products;
 forming a cup-shaped outer container around the inner enclosure; the cup-shaped container having an open face;
 providing a moveable cover connected to a first side of the outer container;
 applying an adhesive arranged to releasably secure the cover to a second side
 25 of the outer container with the cover extending over the open face, wherein the resealable cover is configured to extend across substantially the whole width of the open face.

16. The method according to claim 15 comprising forming said outer container
 30 and cover by affixing at least two parts together.

17. The method according to claim 15 or 16 wherein the step of providing a moveable cover comprises affixing a moveable cover to a first side of the outer

- 14 -

container after the cup-shaped outer container has been formed around the inner enclosure.

18. The method according to claim 15 or 16 wherein the cover is integral with
5 the first side of the outer container

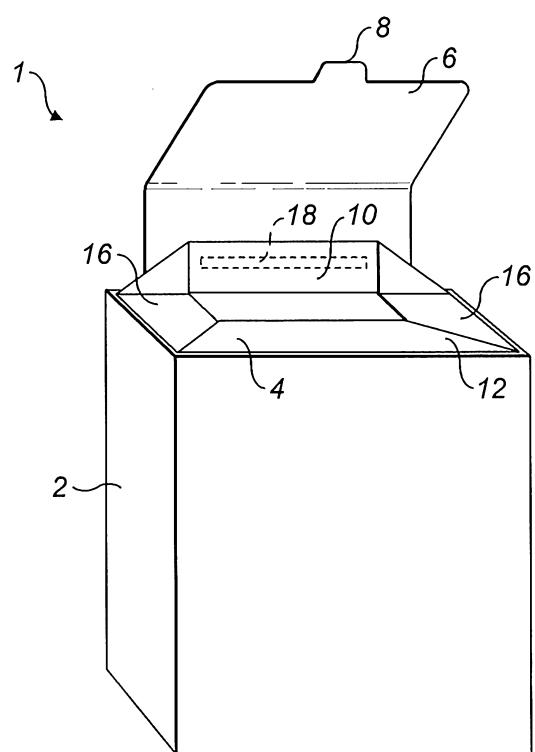
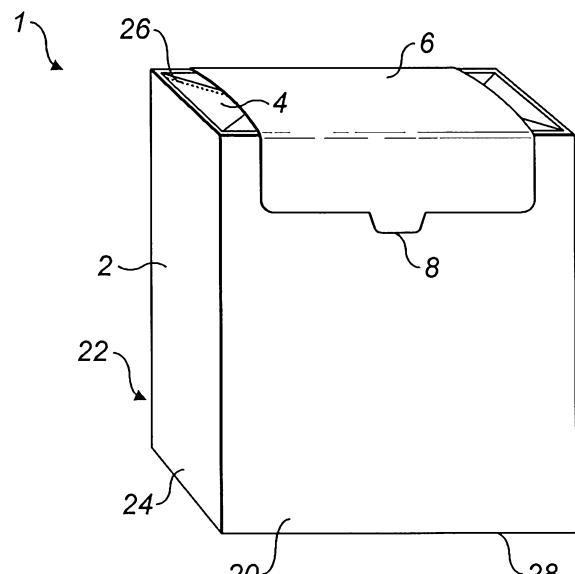
19. The method according to any one of the claims 14 to 18 wherein the inner enclosure extends over the open face of the outer container, and the inner enclosure is openable to allow access to the tobacco products through the open face of the
10 outer container, and

attaching a part of the inner enclosure extending over the open face to the moveable cover such that opening of the moveable cover opens said part of the inner enclosure.

15 20. The method according to any one of the claims 14 to 19 comprising forming the cover in a folded state in which the cover is folded onto itself against the first side of the outer container, wherein the cover is configured to be unfolded into an extended state to extend across the open face of the outer container.

20 21. A soft cup package as hereinbefore described and with reference to any one of the accompanying drawings.

1 / 4



2 / 4

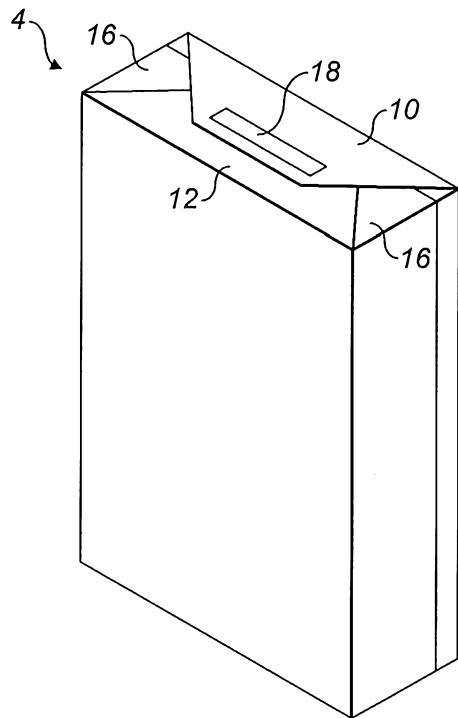


FIG. 3

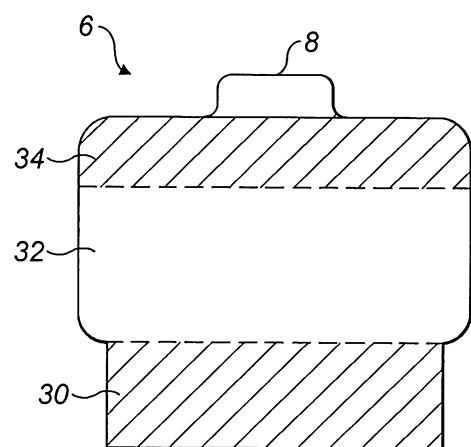


FIG. 4

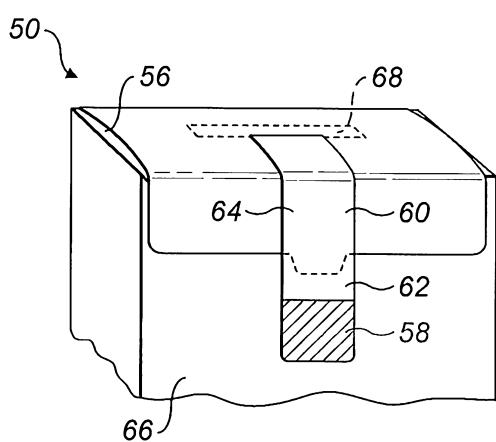


FIG. 5

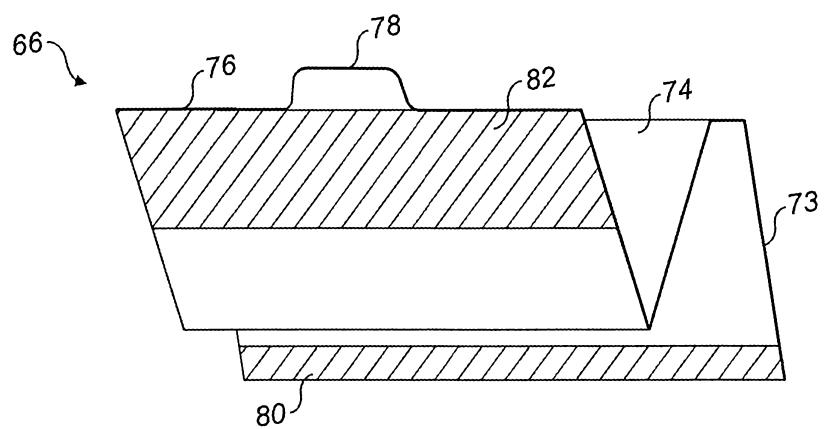


FIG. 6

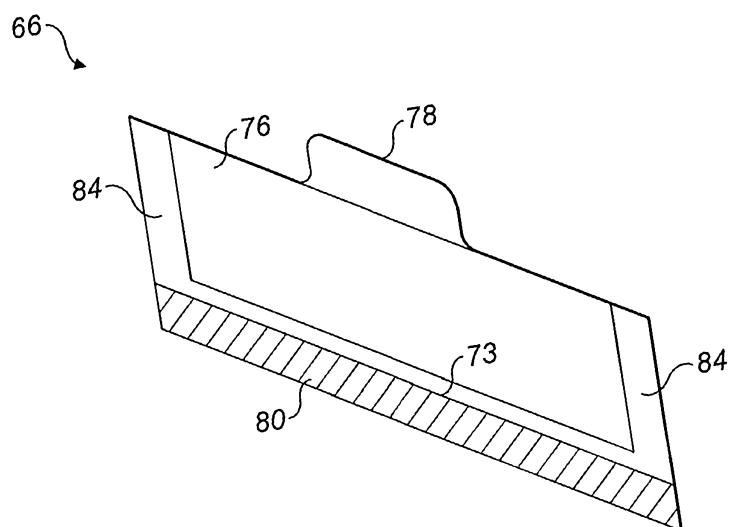


FIG. 7

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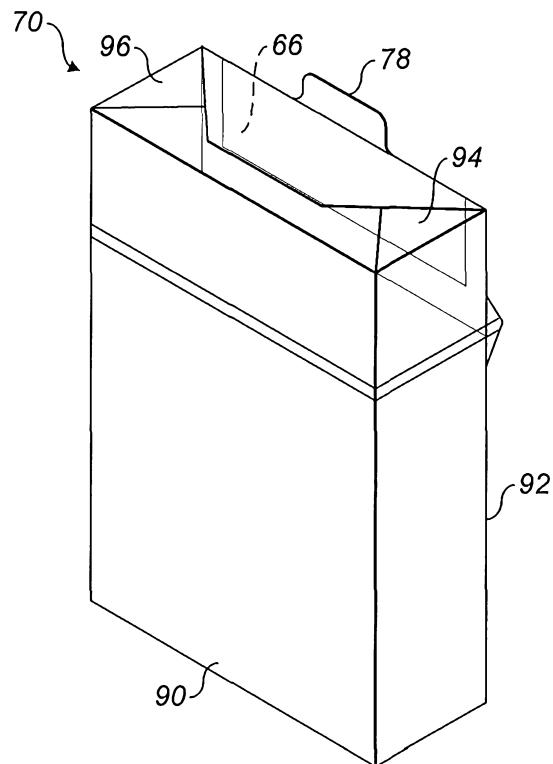


FIG. 8

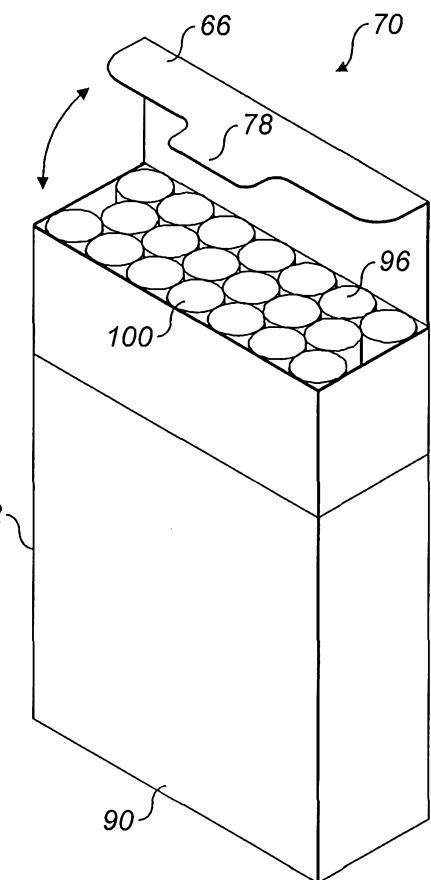


FIG. 9