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PACKAGING MEANS AND METHOD
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This invention relates to packaging means and more particularly to a packaging means and method adapted to bind and display a plurality of sales items on a counter or the like.

Christmas and other greeting cards are often sold packaged in boxes. Such boxes frequently contain a plurality of stacked cards each of which has an identical frontispiece and an identical message page. Such contents are known in the trade as "solid packs." Sometimes there are several stacks in the box, and each stack comprises cards of a single frontispiece and message page, while the various stacks differ in these features. Such contents are known in the trade as "boxed assortments."

A principal need of the prior art has been a packaging and display method that would connect boxes of cards so that they may be sold as "packs" of several boxes, or alternatively so they might be broken off and sold individually. This need has been strong, since it has been demonstrated in other selling fields that such "packs" tend to sell more items since buyers tend to accept the implied suggestion to buy more than one unit.

However, hitherto binding together of such boxes into "packs" has not been practical because of another seeming inconsistent object. This latter object has been to allow free accessibility of contents of a sample box in the "pack" so as to permit and encourage the buyer to inspect such contents before he decides on buying or not. This inspection is highly desirable from a selling point of view, since most customers will not become interested in boxed articles unless they may browse and inspect samples thereof themselves. Yet prior art methods of preparing "packs" have not been adaptable to forming "packs" of boxes containing such non-fungible goods since they invariably involve making it difficult or impossible to inspect the goods in one of the boxes without damaging the packaging or creating apprehension of doing so. Either is insufficient to discourage browsing and hence sales.

Another need in card display and packaging means has been a throwaway advertising message. Most people prefer relatively conservative card boxes, but the needs of the selling art make attention-getting wrappers advantageous. Such wrappers can indicate price or other selling information in bold letters that might be objectionable on the boxes themselves.

A principal object of the invention therefore is to provide a means of binding a plurality of boxes together into a pack in such a way as to permit access to the contents of the pack without disrupting the characteristic of plurality, thus permitting the customer to inspect the contents of a box and then to replace the removed contents and restoring the pack to its entire original appearance.

Another object of the invention is to provide means of separating the plurality of boxes in order to sell them individually, where desired, without marring or defacing the selling message comprising the plurality.

Another object of the invention is to provide such a means and method that also serves as a throw-away advertising message.

Still another object of the invention is to provide such a means and method so as to facilitate ease of handling, displaying, and storage by the reduction of small units to larger ones.

Other objects and a fuller appreciation of the advantages of the invention will become apparent upon understanding of the hereinafter disclosed detailed description.

In the drawings:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment constructed in accordance with the principles of the invention;

FIGURE 2 is a section view of the embodiment of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 3 is an exploded perspective view of the embodiment of FIGURE 1 showing the components of the invention; and

FIGURE 4 is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIGURE 1 with parts removed in order to show certain internal details and also to show a preliminary stage of assembly;

FIGURE 5 is a section view entirely like FIGURE 4 but showing internal details of a second embodiment of the inventive principles.

Referring now to the drawings, wherein like numerals identify like parts in all views thereof, the invention comprises in general a plurality of boxes 10 stacked in overlying relation and bound together by a sheet 20 inserted and folded in a certain manner and held in place by a stack of cards 30 and a removable clamp-over lid top 40.

As best shown in FIGURES 2 and 3 the inventive principles are adapted to package a plurality of packed Christmas or other card boxes together. It should be understood that the inventive principles may be employed with boxes containing other articles of merchandise, so long as those articles are packed similarly to cards, as described hereinafter. It should be understood that the boxes may contain several side by side stacks of cards (not shown) instead of a single stack. The exact same inventive principles as hereinafter described apply in these and all similar situations.

A first box 10a is stacked with cards 30a and capped with a cover 40a so as to present a ready-to-sell item. A second box 10b is then placed on top of the first box 10a in bottom to top overlying relationship. A sheet 20 of approximately sufficient length to girdle the stacked boxes in the vertical plane is passed under box 10a and up to opposite sides of the stacked boxes and into the open top of box 10a from respective sides thereof. As shown in FIGURE 4, the ends 21 and 22 of the sheet 20 are folded down inside box 10a so as to lie substantially coextensive with the adjacent sides and bottom of the said box. The ends 21 and 22 may meet and overlap, or they may merely closely approach each other. If the ends meet and overlap, they may be separate or affixed. If, affixed, they may be glued or the like, or the entire sheet may be a continuous loop of sufficient circumference to lie flush and coextensive with the sides and bottom of the uppermost box as foresaid.

FIGURE 5 shows a cross section of a pack assembly employing a continuous loop designated 20a. This loop may be one piece, or may be a looped sheet such as 20 in FIGURES 1 through 4, further wherein the loop closes upon itself and is glued or otherwise affixed into a complete annulus. In all other principles loop 20a performs just as does sheet 20.

A stack of cards 30 is then placed in normal position inside box 10. Lid top 40 is then applied to box 10. As best shown in FIGURES 1 and 2, the lid top 40 tends to clamp over the box 10 so as to press sheet 20 against the upper edges 11 and 12 of box 10 and thereby hold the sheet firmly in place. The tucked-under ends 21 and 22 are also held down by stacked cards 30 and the preexisting sheet 20 from top 40. The entire ends 21 and 22 of sheet 20 that extend inside box 10 are thus held firmly in place by this combination of mechanisms.
What is claimed is:

1. A retail display package comprising a plurality of relatively shallow boxes stacked top to bottom in overlying relation and terminating in an uppermost box, a sheet girdling said stacked boxes in a vertical plane, said sheet passing over the opposed upper edges of said uppermost box and lying substantially flush with the inside surface of said uppermost box between said edges, contents within said uppermost box disposed to press upon said sheet therein, and a removable clamp-over lid-top upon said uppermost box, said lid-top in close fitting relation with said upper edges so as to grasp said sheet therebetween.

2. A retail display package comprising a plurality of relatively shallow boxes stacked top to bottom in overlying relation and terminating in an uppermost box, a sheet having two ends and girdling said stacked boxes in a vertical plane, each said end passing over an upper edge of said uppermost box and terminating inside said uppermost box, contents within said uppermost box disposed to press upon said ends, and a removable clamp-over lid-top upon said uppermost box, said lid top in close fitting relation with said upper edges so as to grasp said sheet therebetween.

3. A retail display package comprising a plurality of relatively shallow boxes stacked top to bottom in overlying relation and terminating in an uppermost box, a sheet having two ends and girdling said stacked boxes in a vertical plane, each said end passing over an upper edge of said uppermost box and terminating on the floor thereof, contents within said uppermost box disposed to press upon said ends, and a removable clamp-over lid-top upon said uppermost box, said lid top in close fitting relation with said upper edges so as to grasp said sheet therebetween.

4. A retail display package according to claim 3 wherein said contents comprise a stacked plurality of cards substantially coextensive with the interior volume of said uppermost box.

5. A retail display package according to claim 3 wherein said contents comprise more than one stacked plurality of cards, each said stacked plurality being arranged side by side with each other stacked plurality, the totality of cards being substantially coextensive with the interior volume of said uppermost box.

6. A retail display package comprising a plurality of relatively shallow boxes stacked top to bottom in overlying relation and terminating in an uppermost box, a sheet girdling said boxes in a vertical plane, said sheet passing over the opposed upper edges of said uppermost box and lying substantially flush with the inside surfaces of said uppermost box between said edges, contents within said uppermost box extending substantially from top to bottom thereof and disposed to press upon said sheet therein, and a removable clamp-over lid-top upon said uppermost box, the planar upper surface of said lid-top being in close engagement with said contents, and the clamp-over portion of said lid-top being in close fitting relation with said upper edges so as to grasp said sheet therebetween.

7. A retail display package comprising a plurality of relatively shallow boxes stacked top to bottom in overlying relation and terminating in an uppermost box, a sheet having two ends and girdling said stacked boxes in a vertical plane, each said end passing over an upper edge of said uppermost box and terminating on the floor thereof, contents within said uppermost box extending substantially from top to bottom thereof and disposed to rest upon and press upon said ends, and a removable clamp-over lid-top upon said uppermost box, the planar upper surface of said lid-top being in close engagement with said contents, and the clamp-over portion of said lid-top being in close fitting relation with said upper edges so as to grasp said sheet therebetween.

8. A retail display package according to claim 7 where-
in said sheet is substantially coextensive with those sides of said stacked boxes which are girdled thereby.

9. A retail display package according to claim 7 wherein each said card has a message page and said sheet has figures thereon, the figures on the portion of said sheet coextensive with the bottom of said package being a fascimile of said message page, and the figures on the portion of said sheet coextensive with the girdled ends of said package being printed matter.

10. A retail display package according to claim 7 wherein a series of perforations appear in said sheet, said perforations being coextensive with and overlying the interface between the top and bottom respectively of each adjacent pair of stacked boxes at both girdled ends thereof.

11. A retail display package according to claim 10 wherein said sheet is fabricated in a printable material selected from the class consisting of paper, plastic and cellophane, and metal foil.

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